

The Retired Prison Governors

In co-operation with: The Prison Governors Association

NEWSLETTER



Founded in 1980 by Arthur Williamson – 33 years of continuous publication

ISSUE 69

EDITORIAL

AUTUMN 2013

CONTENTS

**Public Service Pensioners
AGM**

The Blame Game

RPGA Weekend Break

Lesley Lloyd Rees

Clickers Corner

A New Hope

Your Letters

Alfred Smith

Puzzle Page

Pensioners Benefits

Peter Atherton

On Becoming Treasurer

Right is Right

Ennui

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Prison Governors Association, Retired Prison Governors Association or those of the Editor



No doubt like me many of you will remember the first day you joined the service and also remember the numerous pieces of advice passed on to you by those who had lots of experience and years in the job.

I well recall my first day at Nottingham prison where the advice given to me by a disgruntled officer of God knows how many years service was to ask what on earth was I doing joining an organisation where standards and discipline had sunk so low. He went on to say that he only had a few weeks left to serve and could not wait to get out of the job fast enough.

I remember him saying that the MP's had abolished the death penalty and how could officers be expected to look

after prisoners for the rest of their incarceration. He went on to say that there was a rumour that prisoners might get access to the radio. "It's not the service I joined, nor the service I want to be in any more" and if I had any sense I would resign now before I got in too deep. I recall thinking at the time what a dinosaur he was and why was someone with such negative views allowed to work with new entrant officers. I'm glad I did not take his advice and am pleased to say that I enjoyed my thirty plus years. I met lots of interesting people, lived through many various experiences and look back with fond memories at all the establishments and other places my career took me to.

But as we all know time moves on and I look now at some of the conditions current staff have had imposed on their working conditions. I sincerely hope that I am not as big a dinosaur as the officer I referred to earlier but I now

thank God that I do not have to undergo the current pressures which staff of all grades, employed in our penal establishments have to work under today. I know from the emails I receive via the register that many of you feel the same way.

Lots of you commented on how well you enjoyed the crossword page included in the last edition so another one to keep your grey cells active is contained in this edition.

AGM

Details of our AGM are contained further on in the Newsletter and your committee would love to welcome as many of its members and partners to the event as possible.

Retired Prison Governors Management Committee

Chairman.... Graham Smith, Secretary.....Ray London, Treasurer Graham Mumby- Croft, Membership Secretary.... Harry Brett

Newsletter Editorial Team.... Mick Roebuck, Paul Laxton, Jenny Adams – Young, Letters Editor.....Bob Duncan

Social Secretary.... Charles Smith, Senior Member.... Jim Blakey PSpC Representatives....Charles Smith, Paul Laxton.

RPGA-MAIL REGISTER

The e-mail register has now been operational for over 12 years and has proven itself to be an effective means of rapid communication between members.

It offers updates on current prison events and allows members to keep in touch with each other.

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

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

Please remember that if you change your email address you must inform Mick Roebuck, otherwise you will cease to receive further updates.

PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONERS AGM 2013



By Charles Smith

The meeting was held at Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD on Wednesday 22nd May 2013. It was attended by Charles Smith and Paul Laxton as representatives of the RPGA.

INCREASING THE PSPC MEMBERSHIP

The meeting was very well attended with the addition of representatives of several Retired Public Service Associations who have Rejoined or Joined as new members to have access to the Representation by the PSPC at national level.

There was a general discussion on the suggestion that, Constituent Organisations should make contact with other Retired Public Service Organisations with which they are in contact or are aware of, who are not currently members of the PSPC to encourage them to apply for membership.

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

The up rating of constituent organisations subscriptions for the next year was agreed to be increased in line with pension increases at 2.2%. The subscription for the RPGA with a membership of less than 1000 will therefore be increased from £78 to £80.

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2013

PENSIONERS INDEXATION CAMPAIGN

The PSPC has continued to build on the campaign against the Government's decision to switch the indexation method from RPI to CPI from April 2011 for public service pensions and the State second pension and from April 2012 for the prices component of the basic State pension triple lock. We have continued to work closely with the National Pensioners' Convention (NPC), Occupational Pensioners' Alliance (OPA), Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (CSPA) and AGE UK in opposition to the switch. The organisations' RPI-CPI campaigning group has continued to meet regularly throughout the last year to coordinate activities.

As in 2012, members from each organisation in the campaign group, including members of PSPC constituent organisations, took part in a leafleting lobby of the three main political parties' autumn conferences. This helped to keep our campaign fresh in politicians' minds. This year we also lobbied on the proposed new single-tier pension, the abolition of age related allowance for over-65s and freezing of the allowances for existing over-65s.

The campaign group organised 'RPI Action Day' on 8 April. RPI Action Day involved members writing to their MPs to tell them how the switch to CPI indexation was continuing to affect them. This date was chosen because benefits and pensions were up-rated during that week. A joint press release was issued to also raise awareness.

An indexation conference had been planned to take place, but unfortunately due to the continued unavailability of Government spokespeople, the decision was made to postpone this event. We hope to organise an event later in 2013 or 2014 and to possibly include other campaigning issues that the PSPC is working on.

PSPC RESPONSES TO OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS CONSULTATION

The ONS launched their first consultation in June 2012 on establishing a new measure of CPI. Representatives of the campaign group, including those from PS PC Constituent Organisations, met with Ainslie Restieaux, Head of Prices Development and Derek Bird, Head of Prices Division at the ONS in June to discuss the consultation. Throughout the year the PSPC has also been represented on an RPI-CPI User Group working with the ONS, the Royal Statistical Society and the NPC which fed into the consultation process. The PSPC response stated our belief that CPI, even if amended to include housing costs, is not fit for purpose as a compensation index for pensions. We raised the outstanding issue of the 'formula effect' -the difference between RPI and CPI that led to RPI running at around 1 per cent higher. Our response pointed out that the solution is not to just make RPI more like CPI.

Later in 2012 the ONS issued a consultation on changes to the formulae underlying RPI the PSPC response to this consultation agreed with the Royal Statistical Society response that there was no statistical case for a simple change in RPI formulae until the ONS completed its outstanding work programme on the formula effect. Both PS PC responses were made available on the PS PC website.

As a result of the consultations two new indices -RPIJ and CPIH were introduced to sit alongside RPI and CPI. This will give the Government more scope to use another measure to index public service pensions. We continued to discuss the issue at another meeting between representatives of the campaign group, including those from PSPC Constituent Organisations, and Ainslie Restieaux from the ONS in May 2013.

PENSIONS WHITE PAPER: THE SINGLE TIER PENSION

The DWP published the White Paper on the single-tier pension at the start of 2013. The main proposals under the new system would mean a single flat-rate amount of £144 a week indexed in line with the 'triple lock' that currently applies. Qualification for the full single tier pension would require 35 qualifying years, with a minimum qualifying period of between 7 and 10 qualifying years. The White Paper laid the ground for the abolition of contracting out.

The major issue for pensioners is that those who are already retired, or reach state pension age before the introduction of the single tier pension in 2016 would remain on the current system. The PSPC believes that the reforms should not go ahead in their current form. The NPC have held two 'round table' events in which the PS PC has been represented. The purpose of these meetings was to see if there were areas for joint campaigning once the Pensions Bill was drafted. Likely areas of joint campaigning were National Insurance Contributions, exclusion of pensioners, level of single-tier pension, increase in State Pension Age, number of qualifying years for women and the lack of respect for built up SERPS rights.

PENSIONER REPRESENTATION ON PENSION BOARDS

In July representatives of PSPC met with Paul Kirk -a member of the HM Treasury, the team responsible for implementing policy on scheme governance as laid out in the 'Hutton' Public Service Pensions review. The Treasury were consulting on future scheme governance for the public service schemes. The PSPC argued for consideration to be given to pensioner representation on the Pension Boards that will oversee the administration and governance of public service schemes. We ensured that the Treasury was fully aware of the activities of pensioner organisations which can provide such representation.

The PSPC secretariat also wrote to the Chairs of the Public Bill Committee for the Public Service Pensions Bill in November 2012 urging the Committee to give serious consideration to establishing mandatory pensioner representation on each Pension Board. The PS PC recommended that any pensioner representative(s) should be drawn from appropriate membership organisations rather than through direct election. Although this isn't required by the Public Service Pensions Act, the profile of issues has been raised considerably.

AGE-RELATED PERSONAL ALLOWANCE

An e-petition was launched in March 2012 to oppose the phasing out of the age allowance and to seek a debate in Parliament on the topic. Although the e-petition was organised by an NPC member the PSPC has been working to highlight the issues and publicise the e petition. The number of signatures reached 100,000 earlier in the year and a Parliamentary debate was held on 29 April 2013.

PSPC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

During the past year, the Executive Committee has met three times to co-ordinate the above work to protect the interests of public service pensioners. As always, thanks are due to Brian Sturtevant, Chair of PSPC, the other PSPC officers and members of the Executive Committee and to Nick Kirby, Anita Brown and Anne Cray who support us as part of the secretariat provided by the NUT.

MOTIONS

Motion 1

(a) The Scottish Retired Teachers' Association asks the AGM to consider whether, in the event of a YES vote in the forthcoming Scottish Referendum, it would be appropriate for the SRTA, and other constituent Scottish organisations to retain membership of the PSPC.

(b) If such membership were to be retained, how effective could the PSPC, as a United Kingdom organisation, expect to be in furthering the general interests of Scottish Public? service pensioners.

SRTA

The Proposer of this Motion said that his association had sought information on this matter from The Scots Nationalist Party as to whether, in the event of a yes vote and separation of Scotland from the UK, they would accept the representation of the UK PSPC, but had received little information to date and that whilst the SRTA did not want to influence their members in the forthcoming referendum, they were obliged to give them all possible information in respect of this matter.

This provoked a degree of debate, as it became apparent that virtually all constituent members of the PSPC would or could have members residing in Scotland who would be affected to some degree in terms of future representation by the PSPC. In the event of a yes vote.

It was agreed that more information and assurances would be required before this AGM could make a decision on the motion and that it be remitted to the Executive Committee.

Motion 2

This AGM notes the presentation to Parliament on Monday 14 January 2013 of the long-awaited White Paper on State Pension Reform - The Single-Tier Pension: A Simple Foundation for Saving.

Whilst acknowledging that the framework of the proposals in the White Paper will eventually produce a more straight forward and comprehensible State Pension Scheme for future pensioners in a few decades time, this AGM recognizes that there are major drawbacks in the proposals: that the level set for the Single- Tier State Pension is way below that of the Official poverty threshold. That any benefits of a single -Tier State pension will be denied to current pensioners and those who qualify for a State Pension before 2017 That the accompanying abolition of the contracted out rate of National Insurance Contributions (NICs) could have significantly detrimental consequences for existing Defined Benefit Private Sector Pension Schemes and the terms and conditions of public service employees.

This AGM therefore agrees to campaign together with all other willing organizations concerned with State Pension issues against the white paper and to press for reforms of the current State Pension system that will improve the lots of both current and future pensioners

Motion 2 was passed by the meeting

London Prisons of Yesteryear



Horsemonger Lane Jail

Built as a model prison in 1791, and renamed Southwark County Gaol in 1859. The gatehouse had gallows on the roof and it was here that Charles Dickens witnessed a double hanging in 1849. This led him to write to The Times condemning public execution and helped lead to its abolition in this country. 131 men and 4 women were executed at the jail between 1800 and 1877.

The jail itself closed in 1878 and was demolished in 1880. Newington Recreational Ground marks its site.

Gatehouse Prison

Built in 1370, it was originally part of a prison which existed in Westminster Abbey's gatehouse. Sir Walter Raleigh was imprisoned in it on the eve of his execution at the Tower of London in 1618. It is believed that the saying, "stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage" was written here by the poet, Lovelace, in 1642. In 1689, Samuel Pepys was imprisoned in it. It was demolished in 1776 and the site is now occupied by Westminster School's Crimean War Memorial (the tall column) which stands in front of Westminster Abbey, in Broad Sanctuary

Coldbath Fields

This large prison in Clerkenwell was also known as Clerkenwell Jail.

It was built in 1794 on the site of what is now the Royal Mail sorting office at Mount Pleasant. It was renowned for the harshness of its punishments, including enforced silences and solitary confinement.

By the mid nineteenth century, its name had changed to Middlesex House of Correction. It was closed in 1877 and demolished in 1889.

BLAME GAME



By John Ramwell

I was fascinated and confused when I read the review by Jeni Russell in my paper recently. She was covering Adrian Raine's book, 'The Anatomy of Violence'.

I thought I might share this fascination and confusion with you.

After a few years in post few of us would be shocked at the crimes that brought our charges into prison. We may well have been reviled, even angry, when the offences were particularly heinous but I doubt there were many, if any, who made ill-balanced judgements based on offences when it came to dealing with those in our care.

On the other hand I suspect we all had strong views on the often disturbing backgrounds from which many of our prisoners came from. Did we temper any revulsion of the crimes with an appreciation of their social background? Well, not wanting to sound sanctimonious, I think I did. One case in particular comes to mind when a notorious offender, without candour, told me of his background and upbringing. He was neither trying to gain sympathy nor understanding, he was simply telling me 'as it was', It was pretty horrifying none the less. I thought at the time, "There but for the grace of God go I."

Before blame can be fairly and squarely placed for any aberrant behaviour we must wonder about the nature and nurture case for all human activity.

If our bad behaviour can be the result of inadequate parenting and/or damaged genes, cannot good behaviour also be attributed to good and caring parenting and wholesome genes? It is noteworthy that some universities are now taking social background into account when selecting students, much to the chagrin of the private education sector. I digress.

I watched the first in the series, 'SKINT', a documentary about the people from an estate in Scunthorpe by Channel 4. (Do not underestimate Channel 4 for thought provoking programmes). Many of our 'clients' came from such estates.

Why is it we had so few from ordinary middle class backgrounds? Most of my career was spent with young offenders and well-spoken and educated prisoners were rare and required some protection from the main stream. What does this tell us?

Despite this obvious link between social background and anti-social behaviour there is much research to show that many criminals cannot be held responsible for their actions in the same way you and I would be. Some sociologists and criminologists, in the light of such awareness, even question the right of society to follow their instincts for retribution.

These 'ologists' are finding evidence to show that violent and serious antisocial activity is shaped by a combination of biological as well as social factors; factors which cause brain damage; brain

damage that does or may exonerate those responsible. They are talking of such as birth trauma, genetics, poor nutrition, cruel and incompetent parenting and serious social disadvantage. There has even been the suggestion that ‘authorities’ are neglectful in creating a lethal pool of potential offenders.

Such re-shaped brains, it is said, do not work like ours in that they don’t share our ability to exert self- control and free will.

All this starts to beg the question, ‘do we need a completely new approach to offenders because it is understood they are trapped by the limitation of their malfunctioning minds?’

I recall, as a young and enthusiastic hospital officer serving at Wandsworth Prison, attending a criminology course where we told that any biological tendency to commit crime did not exist and that we were all products of our environment.

Today it seems this stance is not quite so clear cut.

Recent scientific advances are demonstrating that the physical reality of what goes on within the body can no longer be ignored. Our resting heart rate, for example, is one physical factor. Sixty beats per minute is considered healthy BUT, hang on ... it’s not as simple as that. Apparently a low resting heart rate is associated with chronic under-arousal which causes excessive fearlessness and with it a need for excitement which only danger can calm. This danger can be provided by social (sporting) or antisocial (crime) activity.

Seemingly the effect of low resting heart rate starts young: three-year-olds will grow to become more aggressive. They don’t have to become antisocial – bomb disposal officers have very low resting heart rates. Much depends on the social setting , which brings us back to the estate in Scunthorpe, (the only town, we were told by the programme maker, with a swear word in its name).

Conscience and blame lie together in so much as you act against your conscience and you will blame yourself even before anyone else does.

As children we learn to behave because we are punished when we misbehave. Being caught for taking my cricket bat to primary school when I had been told not to and paying the price ensured I did not repeat-offend. It is the accumulation of such experiences as well as the will not to anger or upset those over us that keep us in line; that is, create a conscience.

On the other hand, research shows that future criminals do not learn from bad experiences: that it is possible to identify them by testing. It can be shown that part of their brain has not developed normally. The offending part of the brain is the prefrontal cortex. It is largely inactive in criminals as well as those with antisocial personality disorders as it is the area responsible for anger management, planning, problem solving and risk assessment.

Should we or should we not take the biology of the brain into account when dealing with offenders. Do we or do we not mistreat violent criminals and does simple retribution work?

Rhetorical questions? Maybe.

Retired Governors Weekend Break



By Charles Smith

The above event was held at The Hinton Firs Hotel in Bournemouth, during the very cold spring when the change to warmer weather was just becoming perceptible, but to keep exposure and frostbite at bay, it was essential that gloves, scarf and woolly hat were still kept within easy reach. However the hotel was as warm and welcoming as ever and it was pleasant to meet old friends once again.

Due to various health and mobility reasons Don and Iris Drew, Mick and Mary Roebuck, Barbara Longstaff and Kath Smith could not attend, their absence was quite evident and their individual contributions were missed

by the rest of us. It was good however to see Joe and Betty Greenhalgh with us once again and their son Mark who made their attendance possible by acting as their chauffeur. Due to commitments that the hotel had previously made, the evening entertainment and dancing which had on previous occasions been held in the Main lounge was not on offer. But as an alternative the large rear lounge was made available for other options. On the Friday evening a quiz night was held and we split into individual groups to compete. At the end of a keenly fought Quiz the winners by a very small margin were Pat Lynch and Charles Smith with the group including Maurice Eccles a very close second.

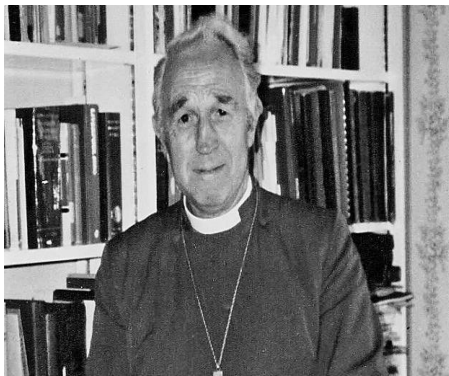


Through all of this however, Joe Greenhalgh continued to display his skills on the snooker table, pretty much in the manner of Paul Newman as Fast Eddie in the 1961 Hollywood film “The Hustler“. With Mark Greenhalgh giving a creditable performance as his opponent Minnesota Fats. To round each evening off, the bar was the preferred option with wide ranging conversations from good times as National Servicemen to good times in the service now long gone but not forgotten. We were seated in the dining room as usual at the large round tables and the catering standards were as good as ever, but some felt that the choices of food available was more limited than previously, but maybe that was a casualty of the “austerity” that we are all supposed to be in together?.



The area surrounding Bournemouth is by now reasonably familiar to us, but there was still much to see and many interesting and pleasant places to visit, easily accessible by car or, by making use of the bus passes, whilst we still have them. It was said by those who attended to have been an enjoyable event and there was a general desire that they continue in the future.

The Right Reverend Leslie Lloyd Rees



With the permission of Telegraph newspapers

The Right Reverend Leslie Lloyd Rees

Priest who ministered to Britain's prison population and accompanied criminals to the gallows.

The Right Reverend Leslie Lloyd Rees, who has died aged 94, was suffragan Bishop of Shrewsbury in Lichfield diocese from 1980 to 1986; before that his entire ministry of 38 years was spent as a prison chaplain and from 1962 to 1980 he was Chaplain General of the Prison Service. During his time he created the modern prison chaplaincy service. Previously most chaplains served for

short periods, being detached from parish work for perhaps three years before returning to traditional ministry. Lloyd Rees saw the need for chaplains to serve for much longer periods to provide continuity of ministry, and to gain experience of working in demanding situations. The Home Office immediately recognised the need for this, but the Church was initially reluctant to release a significant number of able clergy from the parishes. Lloyd Rees used his considerable persuasive powers to change the Archbishop of Canterbury's mind and the chaplaincy service grew from a small cohort of full-time chaplains, augmented by many part-time assistant chaplains, to become a complement of more than 100 long-serving clergy of differing denominations and faiths. Leslie Lloyd Rees was born on April 14 1919 at Pontardawe in the Swansea Valley and attended the local grammar school. He was encouraged to seek Holy Orders by his Anglo-Catholic parish priest and, at only 17, went to the Society of the Sacred Mission's theological college at Kelham in Nottinghamshire. After six years' rigorous training he returned to Wales in 1942 to become curate of St Savior's church, Roath. At the same time he undertook part-time chaplaincy work in Cardiff Prison and after three years felt drawn to embark on this specialist ministry full time. He was entirely suited to it, combining a warm humanity and a delicious sense of humour with an interior toughness and a deep dedication to the work of a priest. His first appointment was to Durham Prison, where he served from 1945 to 1948. He then went to the desolate Victorian prison on Dartmoor, where he stayed for five years, serving also as vicar of Princetown. By way of contrast, he was next posted to Winchester, remaining there from 1955 until appointment as Chaplain General in 1962. The prison regimes of those early years were much harsher than they would later become, and the chaplains provided a vital focus on Christian compassion in starkly inhuman surroundings. Until the abolition of capital punishment in 1965 Lloyd Rees was called upon on many occasions to minister to condemned criminals during their final hours and to accompany them to the gallows. This was not a ministry of which he spoke much afterwards, but he was always opposed to capital punishment. Ministry to prison staff and their families was no less important to him. He was aware of the strains and stresses that prison work inevitably created for them, and he spent long hours ministering to their needs. Appointment as Chaplain General removed Lloyd Rees from the front line of the ministry to the Home Office, which he always regretted, but he took frequent opportunities to visit prisons. An important part of his work was the recruitment of suitable chaplains and their training engendering a sense of common purpose among them and increasingly ensuring that the spiritual needs of prisoners of non-Christian faiths were adequately met. He was appointed honorary canon of Canterbury Cathedral in 1966 and a Chaplain to the Queen in 1971. In 1980 Lloyd Rees was made suffragan Bishop of Shrewsbury. Over the next six years he became an immensely popular bishop; humble, assiduous in visiting the parishes and supporting their clergy. He did not dwell unduly on his prison experiences, but was known to break the ice at the beginning of confirmation or institution service with the remark; "I spent 38 years in prisons, so I suppose that some of us might have met before". On his retirement in 1986 he returned to Alresford, near Winchester, where he had always retained a home, and began a much-valued ministry in the parish and in the diocese as an honorary assistant bishop until ill health intervened in 2004. He maintained his concern for the Prison Service, and for more than 50 years celebrated Holy Communion in a prison chapel on Christmas Day. His wife, Rosamund, died in 1989, and he is survived by a son; another son predeceased him.

The Rt Rev Leslie Lloyd Rees, born April 14 1919, died July 4 2013.

The son who predeceased him was Chris Rees, an Assistant Governor, who died at about the age of about 48 while serving at Parkhurst.

Leslie Lloyd Rees died on 4 July 2013 aged 94.

By John Sandy

He was Chaplain General from 1962 to 1980 and served in the Prison Service for 38 years. Leslie was passionate about all things Welsh, particularly Rugby Football and was an early Debenture holder at Cardiff Arms Park. He was Asst.Chaplain at Cardiff, Chaplain at Durham, Dartmoor, Winchester, and Hon. Canon Canterbury Cathedral. Chaplain to the Queen, Suffragan Bishop of Shrewsbury and on retirement went to live in Alresford Hampshire where he was an Assistant Bishop of Winchester. He was a member of the Parole Board, Chairman of Langley House Trust, and Chaplain on Cruise Liners. It was his wish that his Thanksgiving service should be held at a service of Parish Communion at the church he attended in Alresford. It was his attention to detail and discipline that he requested the Hymns, Prayers and the detail of the Sermon to be used which included his often used phrase about his work in Prison...." it was coal face work, difficult and costly." He called it the "Ministry of the dirty Towel " ,of getting hands dirty by washing feet in practical acts of service. A ministry he exercised with devotion, courage and care. He did this in the Condemned Cell and on the Landings to Prisoners and Staff with compassion and Christian Hope. His life was long and full but he always said do not call it successful-we are not called upon to be successful but faithful. Those of us who knew him would say he was both faithful and successful.. He was a deeply spiritual man, well rooted in this world. His personal Prayer was "Good Lord, for what has been.. Thank You. To what will be... Yes " We will remember him for his humour, his sense of fun, a twinkle in the eyes and a very warm smile. Leslie married his childhood sweetheart, Ros who with his eldest son predeceased him His funeral was held on the Isle of Wight, mostly conducted by his family. Peter Meech wrote to me saying that he has a lasting memory of singing "Guide me o thou Great Redeemer " accompanied by a Trumpet played by a Grandson... evoking visions of Cardiff Arms Park. His Thanksgiving Service at Alresford was taken by The Rt.Reverend John Dennis, Assistant Bishop of Winchester in a packed church attended by 5 retired Chaplains including Bob Payne and Tom Johns, and myself. Leslie made people feel special. He listened, encouraged and affirmed It was a privilege to know and work with him.

Message From the chair.



With the next AGM looming on the 22nd of October at Newbold Revel I have been reflecting on how time passes so quickly and what will the next year bring for RPGA members. I know that our editor, and I suspect a lot of our readers, welcome letters and articles from members about how they have adapted to retirement and the opportunities that we have been able to explore as a result of the freedom retirement has given us. Personally more of the same will be fine for me as I seem, after 4 years, to have settled into this retirement malarkey with great ease and I often describe it as the best job I have ever had. Six Saturdays and one Sunday every week cannot be bad. Mind you there are no more holidays and rest days and going sick is not

possible either. I have resisted the temptation to do some work [an art I perfected whilst in HMPS I hear some of you cry] and have volunteered to do stuff to hopefully put a bit back after my 40 years and 5 weeks serving the Crown. I thought I would like to tell of an example that now takes some of my time such as being a Magistrate which I will not dwell on as a couple of "Your Worships" have already written eloquently on the subject quite recently. I am also a qualified invigilator for local universities and although there is a payment [about £10 per hour] the work, if you can call it that, is fairly intermittent but I enjoy the role of enabling the exam process whilst at the same time being vigilant. You need to apply to the university and then of course the interview and yet another CRO check plus a bit of training. My first exam was at Headingley, Leeds and consisted of 400 students in the large sports hall taking the same exam. There are around 10 invigilators working with a senior lecturer and our job is to patrol the room to support the great unwashed and make sure they are conforming to the rules. I have to say that walking up and down those isles instantly reminded me of one of my first duties at HMP Stafford in 1969 i/e patrolling the mailbag shop [8 stitches to the inch] except the prisoners were more polite and better dressed. Also there is a requirement to escort the prisoners, sorry students, to the loo if they can't avoid the need for just 2 hours or so whilst taking the exam. I also found myself watching them with great suspicion and in particular the ones that glanced at me to see if I was watching them and so on, all great fun. All those students just starting off in life is good to see. Anyway off to Old Trafford this week to see England beat the Aussies in the third test, a great delight to be at the cricket on a Thursday and Friday without having to book a days leave.

Hope to see some of you at the AGM 22nd October and a free buffet to boot.

Graham Smith JP RPGA Chairman

Clickers Corner



by Mick Roebuck

Most followers of this column will by now know how much I like to bring freebies to readers'

attention. In this edition I bring without any shadow of doubt two of the very best. The first of these and top of the tree is www.filehippo.com. Once loaded you will see on the opening page a whole selection of excellent free downloads which even those with limited technical knowledge will be able to understand. If you are still unsure of what any of the downloads do, simply click onto it and a full description of what the programme offers appears on your screen. If suitable for your needs then one click on the install/download button will load it onto your system.

My second recommendation is a word processing option akin to Open Office. There is no need to purchase expensive Microsoft or other such word processing utilities when this free download from www.kingsoftstore.co.uk will give you all the facilities and functionality you require.

Those of you using Microsoft Works will find this freebie worthwhile installing as it will open some of those email attachments sent by users who have composed in other formats.

Windows 8

Microsoft has received several complaints regarding its new operating system and will shortly be releasing Windows 8.1. If you are thinking of updating your o.s., or perhaps purchasing a new computer it might well be prudent to await the release of this upgrade, which I'm led to believe is imminent.

Re Loading Your O.S

Although my PC is only 4 years old it had become slow and unpredictable in its behaviour. I considered purchasing a new model, but thought that first I might try wiping off my hard drive and starting everything from scratch. If it went wrong I had lost nothing and I would then go to the expense of purchasing a new P.C.

Never having attempted such a procedure before, I entered the task with extreme care. I am pleased to report that whilst it took the best part of two days it was a simple procedure and my P.C. is operating as well if not better than the day it was first installed.

It struck me when putting this article together there may be some of you who might like to attempt this on your own system; if so read on. **But do be warned that I take no responsibility if it does not work for you.**

The very first thing is to check that you have all the required software on disc to load back onto your computer. Without these you cannot proceed. If yes the next thing is to save to, disc, memory stick,

Cloud or similar storage device any item such as documents, photographs etc, you wish to retain.

Having done that it's simply a matter of restoring your computer to the beginning of time. Once you select this option on your computer you sit back and let it get on with its job. This process will wipe all items from your hard drive. Once completed you simply re-install your operating system disc and let it do the rest. After this you reinstall all your other programmes, including your broadband connection software. Although only four years old, my Windows 7 found 148 updates which, required downloading. Some other software programmes also required to download numerous updates. It was downloading these updates which took most of my time.

Should all of the above be a little to adventurous for you to undertake you could try to refresh your PC with the free www.xp-smoker.com/refreshpc.html

Download.

This works by resetting all your Windows (sorry, but it's only for Windows OS) services and registry settings to their factory defaults. There are no difficult tasks to perform with this programme as it goes to work without undue fuss.

Do ensure you select the correct Windows OS from the list on the left hand side of your screen, and make sure you decline all the extras on offer.

After running the programme you will need to restart your computer.

Yet a third option you may wish to try is to uninstall some programmes which you downloaded and wished that you hadn't or programmes which you no longer require.

Again this is simple to achieve by simply going into your control panel and selecting from under the Programmes tab "uninstall" - this will list on screen all the programmes on your computer. Select the one you wish to remove then let your computer do the rest. Please note that you can only remove one programme at a time and a restart may be required to make the changes come into effect.

Updating Your Drivers

Drivers are a pieces of software downloaded into your computer when you install programmes on your system.

Manufacturers often upgrade these drivers without telling you, subsequently some drivers can become outdated and slow your system down. Another great freebie can be found at www.iobit.com/driver-booster.php

Once downloaded you set the programme in motion. It scans your system and produces on your monitor a list and the current state of your drivers.

Simply click against those which it shows as needing an update and let the programme get on with it.

A New Hope? Another radical review of the Criminal Justice System.



The Queens speech announced a radical shake up of virtually all parts of the criminal justice system (The Offender Rehabilitation Bill).

Probation Trusts are to be scrapped and replaced by a National service run from London with around 130 local offices. This new service will be supervising the most serious offenders around 35,000 with companies like G4S

and the voluntary sector taking over the supervision of over 200,000 people. Payment based on their success in stopping reoffending will also be introduced.

People sentenced to short terms of imprisonment (around 50,000 people a year) will be supervised upon release. Part of the supervision will include drug testing and a requirement to seek approval to move from their local area.

The prison system is to be radically overhauled with around 50% of prisons being refocused as resettlement centres with prisoners being moved to these to these establishments for final resettlement training.

The results?, well prison numbers will certainly increase at least in the short term as people are returned for breaching their supervision requirements the payment-by-results system is as yet untested on a large scale and so a "deferred judgment" is the fairest way of assessing this proposition. The Probation Service is going to go through another significant upheaval as it is centralised and slimmed down to deal with only the most serious offenders. As yet nothing has been announced on how the court probation services will be affected (if at all). Magistrates could see an increase in their workload if breach proceedings are brought before them.

I welcome the introduction of supervision for short sentence prisoners, but will it be robust and what will it include? Refocusing prisons and rebranding them as resettlement establishments will only work if they are funded to deliver the service.

At the moment most prison governors are having to make additional savings and currently many prisoners do not have access to the treatment courses they need.

If these changes work it will doubtless be a significant improvement on the current system - the question is will it work? Only time will tell.

John Berry OBE JP

YOUR LETTERS

Edited by Bob Duncan



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How quickly the months roll by, and so many dear colleagues have departed. Sad as it is, it is inevitable with a retirement group, but you wonder why sometimes why so many good people leave so early whilst you remain. deaths of colleagues are circulated by email to those registered, but not all of our colleagues use that service, so they will I am sure understand why we try to repeat the information in the Newsletter even if in some cases it is a little dated.

The other factor about our membership is that we were public service. Some held a real aversion to the Departments move to encourage private sector prisons, others were a little more tolerant but still dubious about the claims that they could do it much better and cheaper. There is no doubt that there has been the odd very successful private prison, but it is not across the board, and the political determination to continue this trend beggar's belief in light of some of the evidence. G4S has had enough bad publicity in recent months that one would feel it was out of the running for more. Not so! So I could not resist including extracts from the 'Times' on their latest achievements. I am sure it will bring a gleam to some of you.

'Britain's newest privately run jail opened without lavatory paper for its inmates, according to a report outlining a shambles at the poorly performing prison.

There were also delays in providing prisoners with toiletries, underwear and other essential clothing at Oakwood prison in the West Midlands run by G4S. Drugs, alcohol and mobile phones have been found in the jail's special unit for vulnerable prisoners. Inadequate perimeter fencing allows drugs and mobile phones to be thrown from an adjacent road and collected by inmates.

The report on Oakwood jail's first year by the Independent Monitoring Board, highlights design faults caused by Ministry of Justice cost - cutting and delays in providing inmates with essential clothing and provisions. Builders were still at the prison when it opened in April last year with cells still needing to be fitted out. On one occasion there was no bread because the kitchen had run out and the hot water supply was sporadic. Staff were unable to use the approved internal radio system because of black spots owing to the metal design of the jails buildings. The Government has had to spend £400,000 to ensure the system

worked. Cell furniture made of light fibre-wood had been broken up and used as weapons against staff.

The damning report is embarrassing for the Ministry of Justice and G4S and the Minister, Chris Grayling, who had praised the jail's excellent facilities and highlighted the cheaper cost of holding prisoners there, rather than older jails.

Penal reformers criticised the way G4S had handled the opening of the 1,800 place jail, and Frances Crook, chief executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, asked 'How much more evidence does the government need before they stop handing over justice services to private security corporations like G4S'?

The watchdog's report showed how a combination of poor design, inexperienced G4S staff and other failings led to serious problems at the prison.

However, politicians being self-believers, they are pressing on with what is called 'benchmarking' which overall will reduce public sector prisons' cost by about 20% to make them competitive with the private sector. One has to ask what the real cost will be!

When the Home Affairs committee undertook a review of rehabilitation in prisons, they interviewed the Director, **Phil Wheatley** and in particular about local prisons. His response was that because of the size and rapid turnover, they could do little more than 'warehouse prisoners'. Is this what the whole Service is likely to be doing in the near future!

We, in the RPGA, were fortunate, we served in a period when the Service still had a vision and a purpose, was prepared to innovate, and despite a number of industrial disputes and overcrowding, all staff worked as a team and there was a certain 'esprit de corp.' Very often there was a 'we can achieve mentality' prevailing and it felt a privilege to working alongside many of our staff. One fears from what I observe that so much of that has been lost, and is likely to get worse.

News from you. A short note from **Tim Turner**, who reports that retirement has been good and he fully recommends it. He fills his days with golf, walking, gardening, horse racing (though I suspect not as a jockey) and messing around with classic cars. He is well settled in Dorset, but enjoys the scope to travel which includes Russia to New Zealand.

Mike Selby has as usual kept in touch. In April he was off to hospital to have a shoulder mended as it was interfering with his golf, playing one-handed was apparently curiously erratic. All appears to be OK now. Hearing news of Margaret Thatcher, it reminded him of one of his contacts with her.

'Soon after she became Prime Minister she paid a ceremonial visit to the Home Office. Gathered around her were various departments staff anxiously awaiting her interrogation. She charged up to the Prison Board and D/G **Dennis Trevelyan** and barked," What are your

problems?” The rather mumbled reply said there was a decision required about whether staff at young offender establishments should go into uniform. “Uniform, um, what else?” “Well, there was an escape of 3 category A inmates from Brixton prison. ‘SACK THE GOVERNOR’. Problem solved - she moved on to the next group.

Fortunately for me the order was disobeyed.

I think we are all pleased that Mrs Thatcher’s order was disobeyed, as Mike continued to have a distinguished career, and has made very good use of his retirement. He is an ardent supporter of the RPGA and the Newsletter would not be the same without his many varied and valuable contributions. I am always delighted to hear from him as I know you all are. Good on yer!

Mike has also sent an article about Norfolk Island. As this is some thing quite different and unique it is included as a stand alone article, it is fascinating and well worth reading.

Alan Rawson is still troubled with his back, and now the specialists are rethinking their original diagnosis. His ability to walk even short distances is very limited. Despite this we agreed we would venture back to his favourite hotel in Croatia. To effect this we had to find a flight from Manchester (which are more limited) which met our dates and get medical clearance for him to travel. Having accomplished that we eventually managed to book. Alan now has a mobility scooter to get himself around the village, about a fortnight after booking and paying, he managed to turn the scooter onto himself whilst perfecting a three point turn. This resulted in a broken ankle, which meant hospital then a nursing home whilst he recuperated. He now needed a medical note to say he was unfit to travel, the whole business of cancelling and getting at least some money back took for ages. We did not think it prudent to ask his doctor for a further ‘fitness to travel’ certificate this year.

Despite his ‘handicap Alan was determined to attend **Bernard and Marjorie Marchant’s** Silver wedding celebration at a hotel in Hertfordshire. Unfortunately I could not be there as we were away in Austria. **Alan**, as I said made it, but not without incident as he had a ‘funny turn’ whilst in the underground and staff called an ambulance. Alan assured them he was OK, but they carried out a number of tests, and then felt he was probably alright to finish his journey. I understand they had most enjoyable time. **John** and **Jean Childs** were there (John has not been too well of late) but **Bill Brister** was unable to get there due to the heat.

Too many colleagues have left us in the short time since our last Newsletter and tributes to some are included. I would just like to add my comment on my friend **Joe Witty**. We trained together back in the mid sixties at the Staff College in Love Lane. In those days we trained on a 12 day fortnight with only 2 weekends off a month. Joe was an enthusiastic learner he wanted to know everything. His questions at every session were legion. We all

accepted this as 'That's Joe', except on our weekend off, when there was only one good train to London (this was an age when not everyone had a car!) which departed very close to a hopefully sharp end to that last Friday session. Did that worry Joe? No. Peer pressure in numbers eventually came to bear, and Joe on those critical Fridays just about managed to curb his tongue.

We both served at separate dispersals in the same period and often conferred on particular inmates and on policy.

On approaching retirement I was recruited by a company running the immigration centre at Harmondsworth. As I made it clear that I would not undertake any work until formally retired, about a fortnight before I took up post, they phoned to say they had managed to secure another ex governor. Whom I enquired? "**Joe Witty** ", they replied, "but you will still be our senior adviser." "Just as, well" I said, "we know each other well but that does not mean we always agree."

Later in our time together there, I mentioned to **Joe** that I would be away the next week as I was going abroad with **Alan Rawson**, Joe just nodded and said nothing. When we arrived at our particular hotel in Rovinj in Croatia we walked down to the dining room for dinner and the first people we saw sitting dining near the entrance were **Joe and Mary!** Mary served on the RPGA for many years so I was able to keep in touch with Joe.

Joe was a bit of a lad in his younger days, by all accounts, a very good rugby player whom I believe had an International Trial. He was also a matelot, and saw a lot of the world, that is when sober as he was a good drinker. Once Mary came along, and I believe they met on Portsmouth station as Joe was just back from sea and Mary was waiting for a train, Joe put all that behind him and became teetotal.

Joe served at, Blundeston, Wakefield, Gartree (during the riot) Lowdham, New Hall, Askham, Onley, Long Lartin and Feltham

Joe was an extraordinary character and it was a privilege to know and work with him for periods.

Mike Selby has sent me a typical story about Joe that well fits his earlier life!

He once told me whilst we were chatting at a Governor's Conference, that he had been requested to visit Singapore to advise them on their prison - presumably not Changi of evil memory. He then gritted his teeth and jutted out his jaw and said 'And I know the first thing I am going to do. I'm going up the steps to the Raffles Hotel and at the top I am going to f... them. The last time I went up those f... stairs I was a matelot in uniform and they chucked me out, threw me down those stairs. I am going to enjoy telling them that'

As Mike says, Joe was never one for half measures!

Just in from **John Sandy**, more news about Joe. John said that he joined the service in 1960 having just left the Navy. He was interviewed **by Eric Towndrow** the then Governor of Portsmouth. After training he was posted to Gaynes Hall Borstal, where I was the AG11 Deputy Governor.

Part of my brief was to expand the physical activities. On hearing this, **Joe** approached me to say if I was thinking of introducing Rugby Football he would like to help. I asked him if he had played much Rugby. Eventually I got it out of him that he was a Hooker and played for the Royal Navy, the Combined Services, United Services Portsmouth/Hampshire and then London Irish. He was selected and played in an Irish Trial and was selected to play for Ireland, but despite a RN Captain coming to see him he turned it down. At that stage he was selected in preference to Ronnie Dawson who went on to captain the Lions. He had in fact been selected to be in a team in the Navy that was going to the Antarctic to do Geo Physical work and felt bound to honour that posting. What a real value to have at Gaynes Hall. We had a full fixture list and got an awful lot of the ball!!! And what is more we won almost all of our matches.

I got to know Joe very well and started to encourage him to think about becoming a Governor grade. He applied for the competition and we spent many hours together whilst I was helping him prepare. He passed and with Mary's support worked hard and made a significant contribution to our Service.

Thank you John for providing such an insight on Joe

Joe's funeral was held on 22nd August at All Saints Church, West Haddon, and a number of colleagues were able to be there including **Charles Smith, Jim Blakey, Harry Brett, Nick Brooke and their wives, plus John Dring, John Pudney and myself.**

Joe's son' Richard was kind enough to let me have a copy of the oration prepared by the family. This is consistent with all the above, but additional information gives an even more vivid picture of the character that was 'Joe'.

Joe was born 11th May 1934 in Liverpool and lived with his parents, five brothers and sisters and grandmother in the seriously impoverished 'Scotty Road' area until bombed out and relocated in Anfield, where his home backed onto Liverpool's football ground.

Joe won a scholarship to the Catholic grammar School, but left at 15 to work as a messenger boy for the Blue Funnel shipping line. After forging his father's signature **Joe** joined the Fleet Air Arm at 18 and served for 8 years as an electrical aircraft mechanic, including a period on an Aircraft Carrier during the Korean War.

It was during this time that Joe discovered an exceptional talent for rugby and played for the United Services team as the first ever 'ordinary rank' to do so. He had trials for Ireland

and signed as a professional rugby league player, but a persistent foot injury caused by a plane slithering across the aircraft carriers deck, prevented him earning a living at the sport.

In 1955 **Joe** met Mary. He claims he was inebriated at the time, and that over the next 2 years of his courtship he was in that state at the beginning or the end! They were married at Portsmouth Cathedral on March 30th 1957, and Joe left immediately to play the last game of the season for the United Services.

Joe left the Fleet Air Arm in 1958 and moved to Canada with a scooter but not his wife, who stayed behind to work as waitress for a summer season to pay for the scooter. Mary eventually joined him in Saut Ste Marie where he was working at 2 if not 3 jobs, as an electrician, cleaning burnt out buildings and as a Prison Guard.

They came home after 2 years when Mary was pregnant with Richard. **Joe** applied to join the English Prison Service but was told his services were not required, so he joined the army. Without telling Mary. He re-applied, saying 'They did not know what they were missing' and was accepted in December 1961. (Nor did they know what they were getting!) **He had to buy himself out of the army in the significant sum then of £25.**

Joe 'retired' in 1991, which actually meant he went from Prisons straight into working as a consultant at Heathrow and Gatwick Immigration Centers. Ever restless he finally did part time work in and around the village until his illness stopped him working.

In the 80's and 90's Joe and Mary became committed runners, competing in many marathons, and Joe pursued a love sailing on the open sea, especially on tall ships crossing the Channel and the North Sea.

They lived in the village from 1983 and loved it, finding the residents most welcoming, and both enjoyed the village social life until Joe's Progressive Supranuclear Palsy affected his ability to communicate. He had PSP for 10 years and it took a great physical toll, but he remained totally mentally alert throughout. It should be mentioned that when Joe eventually had to go into a home, having been cared for at home for several years. She visited him there virtually every day without fail. So they were able to prepare for Joe's farewell together. It was good to see so many of the 'careers' who had looked after Joe at his funeral.

John Pudney is well and looking remarkably robust for his 81 years. On retirement he worked for awhile for NACRO, which fitted in as his wife was still working. They then purchased a long boat, so the slow pace of life clearly suits them. They are residing in the Chelmsford area. **Nick Brooke** is still working, dabbling in the Cayman Islands when they need him, and also as a consultant for an American company who are bidding to build prisons in Europe. He too resides in West Haddon when not travelling.

I was sent a lovely photo of my friend **Rabbi Kurt Stern M.B.E.** talking to Prince Charles at a function he was attending and felt it would give the Newsletter 'elegance', but the editor says it has a copyright on so cannot be used (no bottle these youngsters!). Which is a pity, but anyway Kurt is a wonderful chap who along with some colleagues visits every Orthodox Jew who comes to prison. Now in his eighties he has been known to walk to Pentonville from north Islington, as they cannot drive on the Sabbath. Kurt was born in Bratislava; he was one of seven children. His wonderful childhood with his family came to an end in 1939 with the arrival of the Germans. He still remembers vividly the first time he saw an opened-topped car with 20-30 SS soldiers in their black uniforms, arriving from Vienna; it was really frightening. Soon all foreign Jews were to leave their homes for a tented camp on the Austrian border. On May 29th 1939 his father told Kurt and his brother they were leaving for England with another 8 children, and that the rest of the family would follow later with the aim of settling in America. But that was not to be. His Grandmother, parents and his 2 brothers were on the last transport to Auschwitz from Slovakia and were murdered there; whilst his sisters went to a work camp. So Kurt grew up in a strange country as refugee at the age of 12. They travelled through Europe, crossed from Harwich and were initially billeted in London until the blitz and then were evacuated to Ely. This was a bewildering time as their 'hosts' knew nothing of the Jewish customs and they lived in fear of offending their faith. They were still receiving mail from home at this point which gave them some comfort. When war was formally declared after the German invasion of Poland, the chief Rabbi, Dr Hertz addressed via the radio all Jewish children billeted in non Jewish homes to say now that we were at war, it was permissible to eat all 'milchig' food. Letters from home were so eagerly awaited, read over and over again, but also brought sorrow that they were not with their parents. Despite all that Kurt applied himself to his school studies and adapting to a British way of life.

He is a model citizen, has run his own business, and throws himself into charitable work. He loves his adopted country and is an ardent supporter of the monarchy. One feels humble in his presence. He never complains about what happened, but will never talk about Germany. We have remained friends since my retirement and take 'coffee and cake' together when we can manage to meet up; it has taken a long time to fully understand his past and what he went through. He still visits Pentonville, and occasionally asks my help, which is always a pleasure. I could say so much more, but that is enough; it is just another example of what wonderful people we are privileged to meet working in the Prison Service. Of course the public would not believe it!

The passing of **Ted Williams** also brought back many happy memories for me. **Ron Curtis** advises me that Ted died on 16th May in Dorchester, after many months of unhappiness and 4 weeks of dogged courage. A funeral service was held in May, and a Memorial service to celebrate his life was held at the Friends Meeting House in Leicester in August. Many

colleagues will remember Ted as a tutor on their Staff Course in Love Lane. He was later Governor of Long Lartin and Glen Parva from where he left the service on early retirement. He remained in Scraptoft, Leicester with his wife Pat whom, in due course, he cared for over a long illness before she died. He lived latterly in a retirement home in Leicester and then Dorchester.

Ted was a slightly unusual character, rather staid and with strong moral principles, but somehow we clicked and remained friends. He was tutor to my group on our staff course in 1964. He was 'the new boy' and the established tutors, **Brian Eames** and **Bill Driscoll** used to play games and forget to tell Ted something or not give him the handouts for our group. It had its amusing side. Ted had not moved into quarters, so lived in college and was always around. He sometimes managed to persuade a few of us to join him for a drink in the old 'hole in the wall' club. We were always amazed how he could make a small sherry last an hour and half.

One other member under training and in Ted's group was **Paul Clairemont**, a very bright young man but bit of a rascal, but I will not go into all that. I will however, relay our first evening on that course. We were all assembled in the lounge and **Brian Eames** was outlining what was expected of us all. He made clear that although we were conditioned to a 12 day fortnight, as we were now going on attachment for 3 weeks, and as an exception there would be no weekend off for 3 weeks. Paul's hand went up immediately, I need the weekend off. **Brian** looked at him and said '**Mr. Clairemont**, you have today joined a disciplined service, I do not expect to have to repeat myself, but for once I will make an exception; there is no weekend off for the next 3 weeks. Hand shoots up, **Mr. Clairemont** you are not making a very good start to your career. Hand stays up," in 2 weekend's time I am getting married to **Tundy**. She is the daughter of a Nigerian Chief who is flying the family over for the wedding, and **Tundy** is jet black and is 8 months pregnant!" **Mr. Clairemont** see me at the end of this session. He did get married on the due day! Later in the course **Tundy** would come up and stay in digs in Wakefield and Paul would disappear overnight. **Ted** as he was in college all the time would often seek out one of his group to discuss his work and general progress. I cannot remember all the excuses we made to explain Paul's absence when he was looking for him.

So sad to hear of **Peter Atherton's** departure. We worked together at the college; both governed Wellingborough and shared dispersal experience. I recall many a weekend when we were running training for what was then members of the Board of Visitors. He was a man of many qualities, great leadership ability, and lived by the values he believed in.

John Dring has been kind enough to send me a note on his funeral.

There was a massive turnout, too many to fit into the crematorium chapel in the Wirral (where Peter moved to when he retired as DDG a few years ago). **Michael Spurr** provided

an excellent eulogy paying tribute to Peter's massive contribution to the Service, his leadership in difficult times and the values that dominated his life. He was someone who truly cared about his work and greatly valued those who worked alongside him. The retired Chaplain General took some of the service. Six uniformed officers from Long Lartin carried Peter's coffin.

Those attending included **Martin Narey, Brodie Clark, John Simmonds, Ian Lockwood, Neil Clifford, Chris Sheffield, Danny and Sue McAllister, Dave Roberts, Jim Mullen, Clin Allen, and Peter Bennet** (and other colleagues from the International Centre for Prison Studies with whom Peter had been working overseas) and many more senior staff and Governors from around the country.

After the service, Dorothy and family hosted a lunch in celebration of Peter's life.

It was a moving and sad day but undoubtedly gave remembrance to his life, his work and the character of one of our finest.

Mike Selby sent his own tribute to **Peter Atherton**, which is reproduced in a special tributes page elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Peter Meech kindly advised us of the death of The **Right Reverend Leslie Lloyd Rees**, former Chaplain General to the Prison Service from 1962 – 1980. He died peacefully on the 14th July at Blackwater Mills Rest Home on the Isle of Wight. On leaving the Service he was appointed as suffragan Bishop of Shrewsbury in the Lichfield diocese. A full obituary is printed separately with the permission of the Times along with which is also a tribute from John Sandy.

Had a message from **Barbara Longstaff**, who was very unwell for a bit, but is now recovered. She reports on her voluntary work with Rev Jenny Webb of St Johns Church in March. Once a month they go to the Alzheimer's home and do a service for them. She sings the hymns with a couple of other people and we take it in turn to read a passage from the Bible. She is also involved with James Trundle, the organist at St John's, who plays at funerals and weddings and Barbara sings at them. Sometimes we have 3 funerals a day, but it is quite satisfying. (Not sure that was phrased as well as ought to be!) All money received goes straight into the charity box.

I can vouch for that, as I attended the funeral of a dear friend in March at St Johns and Barbara was there large as life and leading the singing. We had a quick chat and she was looking very well.

I had a brief chat on the phone with **Larry Stones** who also resides in Kent. He is well and enjoying retirement, and spends considerable time involved with the welfare of ex servicemen, Dover, Deal and Canterbury all used to have a big military presence. The British

Legion Band plays regularly in Kent. Of course many 'bandsmen' trained at Marines School of Music in Deal before it was bombed by the IRA. I believe Larry was ex RAF.

Geoff Lister has kindly written to say how much he enjoyed the Letters section in the last edition. He goes on, "At my age there are usually names about which I have no knowledge, but this time it seemed packed with people with whom I had served at some time." Thank you **Geoff**. That of course is due to colleagues who write to me. See how much your efforts are appreciated. And **Geoff** had returned the honors by writing his own 'memories'. He also reminds me that both he and **Bill Brister** have passed their 80th Birthday, and that **Roland Adams** is 90 this year. (They do say it is the good ones who die early.)

I was sorry to hear that Geoff had a car accident earlier this year, apparently rather strangely running into the back of a funeral procession which stopped suddenly on a slip road. However he managed to take evasive action and gave the rear car a glancing blow resulting in two rather crumpled wings. Happily no one was hurt in any way. The repair centre lent him a small Aygo to play with, which Geoff did not like and was pleased to get his own car back. Glad everybody was OK. At your age that is about as close to a hearse that you would want to be!

I was fascinated by **Bill Keast's** story and realized that I had joined at Portland as an AG2 in 1950, just a matter of weeks before he arrived. I first worked in Drake House as a second to **Reggie Llewellyn** and remember Bill as the official photographer operating that ancient wooden chair which held receptions still as their photographs were taken. I had a similar task working opposite **Norman Bishop** when on Saturday nights I was the cinematographer operator for the institution.

I learnt so much in those first few weeks. Firstly that it is unwise to run boxing matches in Borstal Institutions as that was certainly the cause of the first of the riots that Bill mentions. Aggression and high emotions in large groups are highly dangerous. Having organized the event, I was responsible, but the kindness and generosity of **Commander Venables** and **John Wailen** who were Governor and Dep. at the time saw me through it without a word of blame.

I was unmarried at that time and had a key to the back gate as I was living within the wall in a small flat above the mess. That is where I learnt my second lesson that you cannot govern without having the support and help of offenders. One day, visiting the ablutions, I locked myself out of my room and was stranded on the landing in my underpants. What an embarrassment! But the mess red band who came from Leeds and was on his third Borstal sentence, and only years younger than myself, immediately came to my rescue. He went to the blind side of the building armed with a knife steel, shimmied up a drain pipe, punched a neat hole in the window, slipped the catch, climbed in and let me in. I wonder if that hole is still there!

What a team we had together at that time. Next door to Drake House, **Roland Adams** was in charge of Raleigh, **Jackson Burford** in Benbow, **Ernie Stratford** in Grenville and **Norman Bishop** in Nelson. Rodney was still in a bombed - out state. We all worked very long hours, in every night until nine and frequently called out for scarpers hunting during the night. We had a day off a week except when we had a weekend off once a month. I remember I was paid £340 per annum which was barely enough to live on.

I recall my pride at surviving a whole year without a single absconder and after digging out all the old camping gear, reproofing it and taking the first Camp at Portland since the war, to Hazelbury Bryan deep in the Dorset countryside. By then Hugh Kenyon had become Governor. At the weekends we marched the Training Grades around the island or went on more civilised walks with the Senior Training Grades and Discharges.

Our greatest glory was that we had full employment. Everybody was engaged in trade training or some other purposeful activity. A few remedials attended classes in the daytime but other education was confined to the evenings. It was with greatest regret, which must be shared by others that during my service full employment gradually declined with increasing dependence on education.

A Borstal sentence was a three year indeterminate one; it was possible to be discharged in nine months but most did about a year with a few doing two months longer for having absconded. After – care was not well developed at this stage. There were no probation officers working within the institution. We only had one official whose designation I forget, but he was a relic of the Police Court Commissioner system. We were visited by a Borstal after – care agent once a month from the organization in London headed by Frankie Foster, Strangely a few ex-inmates revisited the Borstal after discharge which we always thought was a bad sign.

Of the other names mentioned, I was glad to hear news of fellow Yorkshireman, **Harold Parr**. I am pleased he has recovered from his operation and wish him well. I believe that at some time we both attended the same West Riding primary school. I always remember his warm hospitality when I visited Lincoln, his retirement party and his wife cooking us lovely fish suppers.

It was good to hear news of **Al Papps**. Congratulations on his golden wedding anniversary. I served with him in P7 and remember having an enjoyable supper with his family in Wandsworth and meeting him again at the gathering for the demise of Regional Director held much later at Newbold Revell.

From my five year stint at Pollington in the sixties my wife and I remember **Danny and Joan Ozanne** and the pleasure it gave us when Danny was accepted for the Staff Course. I hope he remembers my hard working wife, Grace, who was very much at the centre of social life

there. We knew every child of the staff and were able to choose individual Christmas presents for them which were delivered by **Mr Guntrip**, the gardens officer, who made a very good Father Christmas and came down a makeshift chimney in the Officer 's Club.

Another highly significant figure at Pollington was **Pete Towers** who later became a governor but then was my most energetic P.E. Officer. We assembled a fleet of Moonraker canoes in the carpentry workshop and then took a party of boys on a canoeing camping trip, putting them in the water at Borough Bridge and paddling down the Ouse through York, Selby and Cawood to Goole. It took him about a week and I thought it quite magnificent. I wonder if it could happen today.

But that is all very much in the past and we now have very little contact with the Prison Service. I still chat occasionally to **Roland Adams** and **Alan Rawson** and sometimes offer a helping hand to **Brendan** when he is doing an obituary on someone I have served with. We still keep in touch with **Mary Mole, Gay Attrill** and **Daphne Lawson** who also visited us recently. But what gives me most pleasure is when a total stranger pops up and claims that I was his governor in some establishment or other. It has happened twice recently, once when I was walking across the market square in Lichfield and a second time when **Grace** and I were having our flu jabs at the local health centre.

You will have gathered by now that I never regretted joining the Prison Service and have been proud to be a member. There has at times been hardship, especially when frequent moves had the potential to damage family life, but life was wonderfully varied and always gave great satisfaction. We are belittled, criticised and sometimes scapegoated but our purpose gives us the strength to overcome these things. As northern, working class boy it certainly gave me opportunities to serve in ways that I could never have imagined. But as you remarked we are privileged to have served at the very best of times

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A Visit to Norfolk Island

By Mike Selby

If you are travelling between Australia and New Zealand, a stop over at Norfolk Island for about 5 days is a rewarding experience.

This is the pimple, about 2 miles by 4 miles, discovered by Captain Cook as an uninhabited island covered by the elegant Norfolk Island Pine. Indeed it was the pine which was responsible for the island's use as a convict station. It seemed a splendid idea to William Pitt and the Admiralty to chop down pines to use them for ships masts, then in short supply.

However, when this was tried it was discovered that the pine was short grained so the masts snapped. Somehow a paradigm of the whole futility of the Convict experience. Norfolk Island played its part and after two years of the arrival of the First Fleet there were more convicts in this space than the whole of vast Australia.

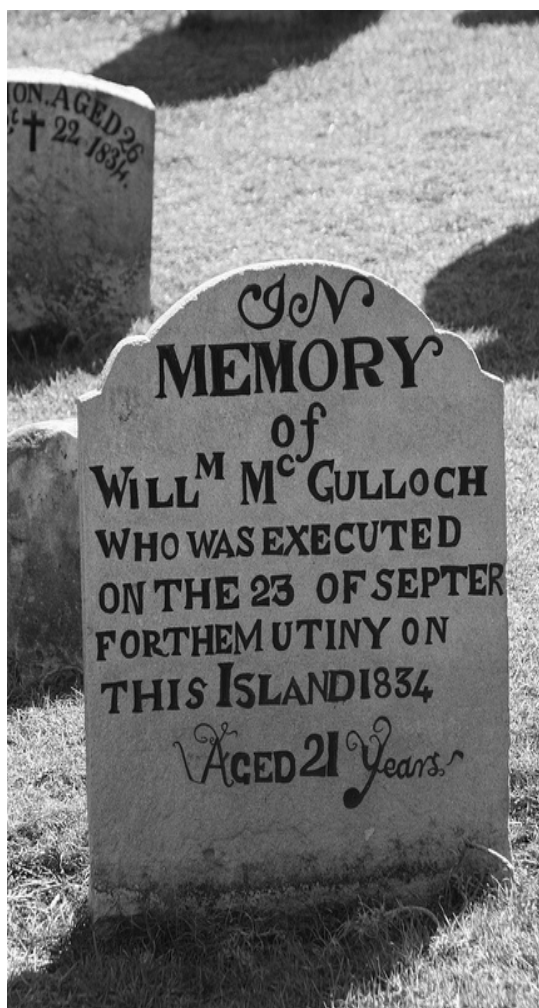
But is it worth visiting now? Yes. How? From either Sydney or from Auckland – a relatively short flight; and a good deal shorter than it used to be by sail. All arrivals are by air as there is no harbour. The Cemetery is a fascinating record to the disasters that beheld those trying and failing to land by boat. We stayed in a self catering bungalow in the middle of the island; you can get the required information and booking in either Sydney or Auckland.

You can gain some useful facts from Google – including details of a pleasant golf course- but what it does not convey is the sheer oddness of the whole set up. There is the utter isolation; climb to the top of Mount Pitt –not too arduous- and you see before you the whole island and then nothing but the vast blue of the Pacific ocean and you start to get an

insight in how it felt to be a convict or a guard, with 6 weeks of sailing to reach Botany Bay.

Go to Kingston, by the sea, where the intricate, well preserved remains of the prison remind you of its original purpose. This includes Gallows Gate; men welcomed death rather than a convict's life on this island. There is Quality Row where the staff lived, the store houses and the barracks and Government House where the Superintendent lived- still furnished. Then a step away is Emily Bay, named after the wife of an early soldier, a gorgeously beautiful bay ideal for gentle bathing and snorkelling, and all virtually to yourself. It is near Bloody Bridge and you learn its grim history.

The guide books are good and the tours excellent. You will be energetically reminded of the second task of the Island which was to provide accommodation for the former Bounty mutineers who found Pitcairn



Island too crowded.

There are other delights- Anson Bay, in the middle of the island an enormous Banyan tree, a complete curiosity, and a dull Victorian gothic Church set in the middle Surrey type parkland. But inside is a treasure- the kauri timber carvings and a rose window by William Morris of stunning beauty and 4 windows by Burne –Jones. Curiously this is not used as their Church by the Islanders. I attended Evensong on Sunday in the old Commissariat Store in Kingston now called All Saints Church. The singing is strong, slow and deliberate -the result of singing whilst rowing back the whaling boats in the 1880's. Their National Anthem is of this nature but very moving.



The shopping facilities are simple but excellent. A curiosity is that since one of the main exports of the island is pure seed there is no importation of vegetables, only those grown on the island are sold – so you will miss the super store packaging but gain delicious produce including the avocado pears which are enormous as well as delicious.

The weather is sub tropical- fresh, clean, and splendidly warm. The island is hauntingly beautiful, full of ghosts, the paradox of inhumanity in an earthly paradise.

What a different and fascinating article and something for the more adventurous of you to consider, especially as quite a few travel to Australasia.

Mike says for those interested there are several relevant books; Maconochie's Experiment by John Clay; Punishment short of death by Margaret Hazzard; Fatal Shore by Robert Hughes and Norfolk Island Story by R.S.Hillier. There is also an article about Captain Alexander Maconochie by Mike in the PSJ of January 1989, which will be in the Prison service Library and the Norfolk Island library.

Note from the Editor.

How interesting to read this and other adventures our members have experienced and sent in for publication in this Newsletter.

Many of you have lots of such experiences and memories which we would all like to read about, so do put fingers to keyboard or pen to paper. The closing date for submissions to the next newsletter is Valentines' Day 2014.

Do remember that your Newsletter is only as good as those who contribute towards it.



Obituary Alfred Smith Prison Governor and Inspector

Printed by kind permission of the Scotsman

It says much of the man that even years after he retired as governor of Scotland's toughest jail he still received the odd phone call from former inmates asking for his help. Invariably he pointed them in the direction of someone better equipped to assist but the contact spoke volumes about the respect each had for the other. On other occasions during his service a letter of appreciation would arrive: one, suspected to be from a notorious jailbreaker, remarked that it had been good to be under his control; another, from the

grateful mother of one of the country's most feared convicted murderers, thanked him for organising a visit despite it apparently being initially vetoed by the Scottish Office. Smith, a former food canning factory labourer, ran Peterhead Prison during some of its darkest hours and, though the place was a powderkeg, he understood the hard men. He also knew the rules inside out. He knew exactly how far he could go legally and when to step back. "There's only one rule," he used to say. "Obey all the rules." A great leader, ably assisted by a strong staff whom he respected and supported, he led by example, tackling head-on the many challenges and incidents he encountered in his career. Once, much to his chagrin, he found himself overruled – by the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Just as he believed a violent rooftop siege was reaching its conclusion she wielded her power and sent in the SAS to snuff out the protest. Although disappointed to no longer have control of the situation he realised that, within the rules, intervention by government or armed forces was a possibility. A few months later he became HM Deputy Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland – the most senior non-civilian position within the service – based in Edinburgh and far removed from the muck and bullets operation he had previously enjoyed. Born in Edinburgh, the roots of his interest in the prison service stemmed from his father, a stonemason who had also been foreman of works at jails in Edinburgh, Greenock and Peterhead. But he did not initially follow in his footsteps. After an education at the capital's St Cuthbert's Primary School and Holy Cross Academy, he joined the RAF Police and served at Dyce in Aberdeen. His next job was at Crosse and Blackwell in Peterhead, a large factory producing tinned goods, where he worked for a few years. Eventually, encouraged by his father, he took the prison service entrance exams and began his career as a prison officer at Greenock in the early 1960s. Determined to rise through the ranks, he applied for a governor's course and spent some time training at Leeds and Wakefield. He became an assistant governor, then deputy and finally governor, serving at jails including Greenock, Perth, Barlinnie and at borstals and young offenders' institutions at Polmont, Noranside and Glenochil. In addition, he served three terms at Peterhead, the grim Victorian jail on the north-east coast that housed dozens of Scotland's most dangerous men. He had a great affinity with Peterhead – not only the prison but the town, its people, industries and local football team – and he married a local "quine", as girls are known in the area's Doric dialect. Unlike some governors, who were reluctant to consider Peterhead as a preferred career destination due to its constant troubles, he relished the prospect and signed up whenever the opportunity arose. Among the inmates he encountered were Jimmy Boyle, infamous then as a convicted murderer and man of terrifying violence but now totally reformed and a renowned sculptor; Thomas "TC" Campbell and Joe Steele, two men convicted but later cleared of the notorious Glasgow Ice Cream war murders which claimed the lives of a family of six; and Australian-born armed robber William Varey, responsible for the first break-out in 13 years. He was recaptured while quietly enjoying a pint in the bar of a nearby village hotel. During the 1980s the jail was plagued by prisoner unrest, riots and rooftop sieges, hunger strikes and dirty protests. Sieges could go on for days. However, on occasion, Smith was able to deploy humour to defuse incendiary situations and had been known to entice inmates down from the roof by making them tea, coffee and bacon and eggs, with the aromas wafting up to the rooftops. He would say: "Gentlemen, we've made all this for you – all you have to do is come down and get it." Where he could, he built up relationships with the men, vowing to rehabilitate them as best he could and taking a keen interest in their state of mind, sometimes keeping his own private notes from meetings. At times he was able to get inside their heads and accurately predict their next moves. With some there was a mutual respect, others he regarded as predators. One of the worst outbreaks of violence came in October 1987 when prison officer Jackie Stuart was taken hostage, beaten and chained on the roof. Smith was in constant liaison with the rioters when, after several days and nights and on the eve of the Tory Party conference, an exasperated Margaret Thatcher called in the SAS. Smith feared the hostage could have been killed by inmates during the operation but by good fortune he was released. With a few flash-bangs the crack squad took command of the situation and rescued Mr Stuart, who was greeted by his boss with typical gallows humour: "You'll do anything for overtime, Jackie." The following March, Smith was about to take up his post with HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland when, as outgoing governor, he addressed the annual prison officers' conference, outlining his philosophy. "The biggest favour we can do for any ordinary inmate and the way in which we can best improve his quality of life," he said, "is to separate him from the predators who live beside him. "Only by removing the pressures applied by grossly anti-social and evilly disposed inmates and by removing the intimidation which is their stock in trade, can ordinary inmates be allowed to serve their sentences in peace." He said almost every improvement had been abused by some inmates, stressing that "you cannot buy good behaviour nor can you appease predators by giving in to their demands" and maintaining that privileges, concessions and improvements should only go to those who deserve and have earned them. He spent the next two or three years with the inspectorate (as high office as he could achieve) before retiring to Peterhead in the early 1990s. There he cared for his wife Anna, who developed motor neurone disease, and was devastated by her death in 2003. He is survived by their three sons, Alfie, Gerald and Paul, and their extended family, who were by his bedside when he passed away following a deterioration of his health over several months.

Born: 29 November, 1930, in Edinburgh. Died: 26 June, 2013, in Peterhead, aged 82.

Puzzle Page

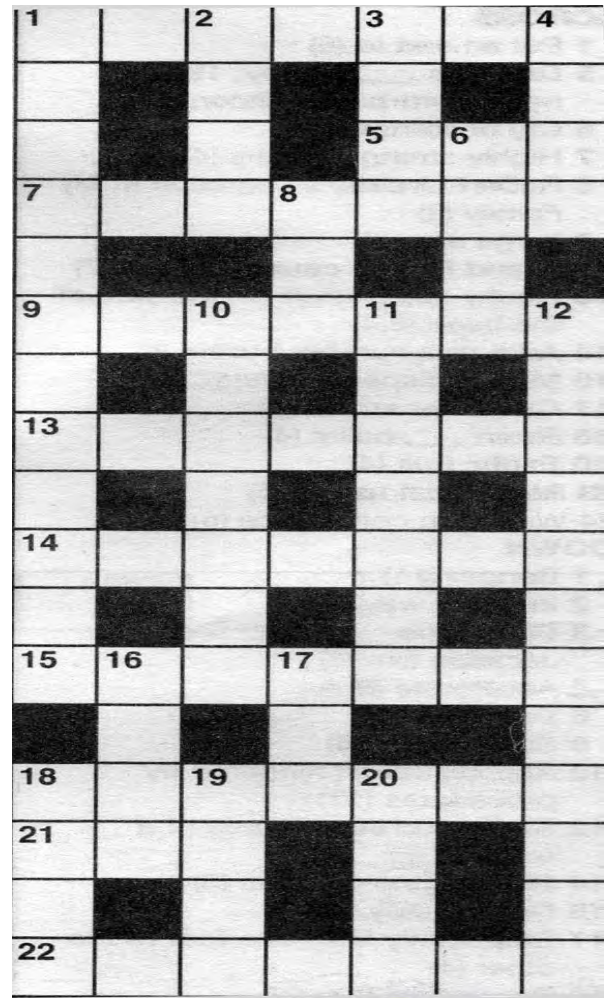
Crossword Clues

Across

1. Initially British rail put nine heavy weights into this establishment, 7
5. Take off the front of your face to become the top of the pack, 3
7. It was on this novice mound that novices were trained, 7
9. All of Robin's men..... 7
- 13.....but only one of Freddie's gang, 7
14. Shun, stop, refrain, 7
15. Its the final one in the final word. 7
18. I can't remember what this is called? 7
21. This will make me change colour, 3
- 22..Sounds as though it's something extra used by the priest, 7

Down

1. Did they put male bovines in this forest of incarceration ? 8,4
2. Sometimes people are said to stand by this, 4
3. Sounds as though you can knot this land, 4
4. You will find no elephants in this clue at Christmas, 4
6. Type of hammer, 4
8. Henry V ? 3
10. Locks of hair, 7
- 11, Worn by some to show they are trustees,7
12. Powerful distinguishing qualities, 6, 6
16. At cricket they are barmy, 4
17. Can be a bow or a cup, 3
18. Dads can increase in number, (anag) 4
19. One arrives closely in this clue, 4
20. Put one in little Sally to set off, 4



SUDOKU

7		5		4			3	
	8							
				9				5
	3			2			7	
	9			5				
5				1				2

The anagrams below all spell out the names of penal establishments. Can you solve all eight?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1.nasty wagers | 5. lost no half |
| 2. a dark hell | 6. had rum |
| 3. revolting king | 7. I owe mother |
| 4.holy eyeballs | 8. Weak I fled |

How many of the following questions can you answer? Award yourself 1 point for each you get correct.

- 1.Name the 10 different ways of being out in a game of cricket.
2. Name 10 authors who have been depicted on UK postage stamps.
3. Name the ten most mentioned animals in the Bible.
4. Name the ten types of lightning.
5. Name the ten oldest cities in the UK .

Brain Teaser. Can you identify the following. Clue they all have the same theme running through them.

T N H A 1000 E	3 S to H	99 R B	7 L G S I T B S	50 W T L Y L	24 H F T
H C T 19 N B	76 T L T B P	8 D A W	12 D O C	2 L B	O 16

All answers to be found inside the back page.

PENSIONER BENEFITS... THE REAL TRUTH



By Paul Laxton

I would guess that very few of us are not aware of the ongoing debate regarding universal pensioner benefits. A universal benefit is one that is paid in full to all those in the eligible category, regardless of financial circumstances and herein lies the source of the controversy. Historically the Labour Party has sought to claim the moral high ground by defending the universal principal in the welfare state and has attacked its opponents for supporting means testing, which theoretically aims to target benefits at those in need rather than enhance the position of those perceived to be better off. In reality when in government Labour soon found reasons either to continue or introduce new means tests to the welfare state it created. However, the old age pension has remained non-means tested since the implementation of the 1946 National Insurance Act, which established the insurance principle and paid out at the qualifying age subject only to having a full contribution record irrespective of wealth.

Old age pensions were first introduced in 1908 for those over the age of 70, but had been means tested. Unemployment benefit now known as Job Seekers Allowance was introduced a year later, based on the insurance principle and universally available to those in trades covered by its provisions. Its scope was gradually extended until all workers were covered by the same National Insurance Act (although married women were initially excluded.) Unemployment benefit is the other great survivor of benefits paid out universally by the welfare state. The reason for this is actually very simple; the old age pension and the job seekers allowance are remarkably ungenerous. The current old age pension of £110 per week is well below the poverty line of £168 (figure for 2011 taken from a report published by the National Pensioner Convention in September 2012) excluding housing costs. Job Seekers Allowance is even less generous, a little over £71 per week for a mere 26 weeks after which the claimant is forced on to means tested social security benefits.

Successive governments have ducked the inadequacy of the basic old age pension. Mrs Thatcher's government linked pension rises to prices rather than to earnings which since then until the last five years had always risen faster than prices. Indeed had the old age pension continued to be linked to rises in earnings throughout the period it would have been worth around £158 in 2010, as opposed to the £97 actually paid as an old age pension, and therefore much closer to the poverty line figure quoted in the NPC report. In 2010 the Coalition government did restore the link with earnings, introducing its "triple lock," linking it to the higher of wages or prices subject to a minimum of 2.5%. However, what it gave with one hand it took back with another. In this period of austerity prices are outstripping wages and the government has chosen to link pensions to the Consumer Price Index which almost always shows a lower rate of inflation than the previously used Retail Price Index. The low purchasing power of the pension is deeply rooted in our 19th century history. Liberal thinkers, ministers and industrialists each from their different perspectives were agreed that maintaining one's self and one's family was a matter for the individual worker, and that provision for times when one could not work such as old age, were likewise a matter for the individual. It was up to them to save. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act legalised the distinction between the deserving poor who worked, (and therefore made no claim on the public purse) and those who did not, for whom there must be a deterrent regime that would have the twin benefit of strengthening the moral fibre of the poor and keeping down costs. The workhouses created by the Act were only marginally more humane than the nation's prisons, although in theory you were free to leave at any time. The first old age pensions were deliberately set below subsistence level in line with the principle that handouts benefits paid at a level which discouraged self reliance were inherently immoral. Social insecurity remained institutionalised.

In the 20th century the gap would gradually be filled by workplace pension schemes. The golden age of the workplace pension in the private sector began after the Second World War and lasted around three decades. Both our main political parties have contributed to their destruction. The Conservatives encouraged people to ditch their workplace pension and instead purchase private pension plans. Lured by extravagant promises many workers purchased these plans and found themselves victims of a scandal which dwarfs that of the PPI sales of recent years. The only beneficiaries were insurance companies and their commission earning salesmen. Labour's negative contribution was the £5 billion annual levy on private pension schemes, which when adjusted for inflation, took around £100 billion out of pension schemes and therefore out of pensioner's pockets during the period 1997 to 2010. Around 5 million private sector workers were covered by defined benefit contributory pension schemes (i.e. those linked to final or average salary), in 1990, the year John Major replaced Margaret Thatcher as Conservative Prime Minister. By 2009 this had dropped below 2 million and is still falling. This represents around 8% of the private sector workforce. In contrast more than 80% of public sector workers are in defined benefits schemes making people like us pensions aristocrats according to the Daily Mail. The reality for most public sector pensioners falls far short of a gilded retirement. The average public sector pension is around 5k per year and only when combined with an old age pension tops the 10k mark. As an income it falls some 20% below the minimum wage.

Government attempts to top up poor pension provision are actually the root cause of the current debate on so called pensioner benefits. Instead of restoring the link with earnings governments have provided free prescriptions for the over 60's, given free TV licences to the over 75's, and since the millennium, brought in winter fuel payments and free bus passes, the last of which for some mysterious reason appears to be the most controversial. So what do they cost?

- Free bus travel £1 billion
- Winter Fuel Payments £2.2 Billion (the value of these has shrunk from 1/3 of bills to 1/8)
- Free TV Licences £600 million
- Free prescriptions for the over 60's £4 billion
- Free eye tests £100 million

Total cost = £7.9 billion. According to the Sun this is worth £670 per year per pensioner.

Of course £8 billion per annum is a substantial piece of government spending. However, looked at another way, if the government were to give it back as a pension increase and leave it to pensioners to decide how to spend it, this would not take us very far forward. Of the nation's 11million or so old age pensioners, 4 million are eligible for pension credit of up to £34 per week. Unless the pension credit was raised all of them would lose some or all of the estimated benefit value of £13 per week. This is a classic example of the principle of choice not working. The 1.3 million who do not claim their pension credits would, however, benefit. Even if pension credit were, raised to a maximum £157 per week for a single pensioner, it is still £11 short of the official poverty line. It is clear from these figures that there is no justification for reducing welfare spending on pensioners.

However, for those who do not hold to the universal principle, this misses the point. They argue that by targeting benefits, money can be redistributed to those who really need them. Even staunchly right wing Conservatives appear converted to the old socialist principle "To each according to his needs, from each according to his means." It's time to look at some more figures.

- 6.4 million pensioners have incomes below the income tax threshold
- 4.5 million pensioners pay the standard rate of tax
- 0.25 million pensioners are higher rate taxpayers

The solution according to some prominent members of the coalition is to cap eligibility for pensioner benefits at pension credit level. In terms of public spending it would appear to save (7.15 million x £670 =) £4.8 billion rounded up. If free prescriptions were left alone, and they don't appear to be a target at the moment, that saving is halved. It's still a significant sum of money, but as an argument it collapses like a house of cards. Firstly, proponents are unable to cost the administration of means testing and these include the Pensions minister. Secondly, the "cliff edge" effect of means testing would leave those just above pension credit level worse off than those still eligible. Thirdly, there are no guarantees that the illusory savings would actually be spent on the worst off in our society. Pre-election tax cuts not only would offer nothing to those in receipt of pension credit, but would also offer nothing to the 2.4 million pensioners with incomes above pension credit level, but below the income tax paying threshold. They would simply be £670 per year poorer, (half that if prescriptions were excluded from the cap) despite having an income of less than £10k per annum. There is no way on earth such a brutal financial hammering for people who are demonstrably poor can be justified. Fourthly, the argument that the bus pass is lavished on wealthy people such as Lord Sugar, singled out by Nick Clegg is patently ludicrous. People such as Lord Sugar simply do not claim the bus pass. Indeed 3 million eligible pensioners do not. This is an example of the better off opting out of a benefit to which they are entitled, and they should be praised for doing so, not excoriated in a cheap sound bite. The truth is that the loss of the bus pass by anything up to 7 million pensioners would have a devastating economic effect. The seaside cafes, the banks, leisure centres and other businesses patronised by pensioners who use their bus pass regularly would feel a massive pinch. 25% of bus pass use is for voluntary work and caring for relatives and friends. Working parents who rely on their own retired parents for child care would be hit. Social services would have to pick up the slack for caring. It is a little known fact that a third of care is provided by pensioners. There would also be a massive effect on the NHS. Pensioners unable to go out would suffer from depression and make greater demands on the NHS. The overall health of elderly people would suffer as they became less active and more isolated. It is an urban myth the rising number of older people is crippling the NHS. The truth is that the maximum demand made by individuals on the NHS is typically in the last year of life. This is true whether average life expectancy is 70 or 90. Healthy pensioners contributing to their community are in the best interests of our society as a whole.

Around £136 billion from the welfare budget is spent on pensioners. This includes pensions, health and social care and other welfare payments such as housing benefit. Old age pensions cost around £74 billion and pension credit a further £8 billion. The figure includes the £8 billion spent on so called "pensioner perks." It sounds a horrendous sum until one considers two key points. Firstly pensioners have spent their working lives contributing to their pensions and health care via a working lifetime of national insurance contributions and general taxation. They are merely claiming from an insurance fund to which they have contributed, in many cases handsomely. Secondly more than half of pensioners continue to pay income tax and of course pay a range of indirect taxes and other charges. They also provide a range of unpaid services given and discharge burdens that might otherwise fall on the state. For example, grandparents enable families to choose work over welfare. Pensioners are actually net contributors to the economy and indeed make a disparate proportion of contributions to that massive folly, the green energy policy.

Is this a case of so far, so smug? As members of the RPGA by the very nature of our former employment, we rank amongst the better off - pensioners. All of our members will be paying income tax and some will even be paying at the higher rate. We have the good fortune to be members of the Civil Service Pension Scheme which is one of the best in the country, perhaps bettered only by the Police. It is also the case that we have done rather better than our colleagues who remain in harness during this period of austerity. Since I retired in 2010, we have had pension rises of 3.1%, 5.2% and 2.2%, whereas our working colleagues endured a 2 year pay freeze followed by a rise of 1%. In real terms that is a pay cut and it has been accompanied by increased pension contributions. It makes it easy for those looking to cut spending to come knocking at our door. I have already demonstrated the unfairness, the administrative complexity and the economic illiteracy of means testing, although none of this will stop blinkered clowns from going ahead anyway. If there is a fair solution it lies in the tax system. Administratively it is relatively straightforward to adjust tax codes to allow us to pay a 20% tax on so called pensioner perks. Using the Sun's figures that would be £134 per annum, a little over £11 per month, half that if prescriptions were excluded. 60% of pensioners would not pay any extra tax at all. However, there is one big caveat to overcome before I would pay this extra tax without complaining and that is the shortfall in taxes received by the Inland Revenue, estimated to be around £35 billion per annum, as a result of tax dodging. Whether or not a significant percentage of this is legal is not the point. It is not acceptable for global companies to be avoiding their moral duty to pay taxes in the countries where they do their business. Surely it is not beyond the wit of government to tax multinationals on the basis of their transactions in the UK thus forcing them to pay up. I don't believe that companies like Starbucks would pack up and go home, thus handing over UK high streets to their rivals. The government should aim to reduce that gap by two-thirds. My message is, "Come back when you really do occupy some moral high ground, and come back with something sensible". We need to be very alert to what the parties have to say in the run up to the next election, especially as there seems to be an emerging consensus amongst them that it is the turn of pensioners to take a hit.

Speaking of Pensioners.

To commemorate her birthday, actress and vocalist, Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the American Association of Retired Persons. (AARP). One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favorite Things' from the legendary movie 'Sound Of Music'. Here are the lyrics she used:

You know the tune so why not sing along.

Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the pipes leak, when the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favorite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache, When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

No doubt these lyrics ring a few bells with some of us

How the Grades Relate.

If like me you retired before the new grade assimilations came into being you may not be able to equate how the manager alpha grades line up with the old governor numeric grades, so I thought for us Neanderthals it might be worthwhile publishing a crossover list. As you will see much has happened in terms of name changes since Fresh Start in 1987. Pay and Grading gave us the mix of letters and numbers in 2000 and whether you were level two or three depended on whether you were appraised by the Governor or Deputy Governor. The system applied whether you were a governor grade or a treasury grade as they were now part of the same pay structure. This nomenclature gave way within a few years to one where grading was denoted by letter only. The service began to use the term Senior Operational Manager to denote grades A to D and Operational Manager to denote grades E and F, who carried out roles traditionally discharged by governor grades. The current system whereby governor grades have pay band numbers was introduced last year. The PGA has campaigned for the service to reinstate the term "Assistant Governor" to describe operational managers in pay bands 7 and 8 below Deputy Governor, which would take us full circle.

Governor 1, Senior Operational Manager 1A, became simply A, now Governor band 11. These are the senior I/C roles in what are now called complex prisons, almost entirely large locals and the high security estate (which we knew as dispersals).
Governor 2, Senior Operational Managers 1B and 1C, then simply B and C (governor 2 grade split into two grades B & C linked to the size and complexity of the prison) now Governor band 10
Governor 3, Senior Operational Manager 2A, re-titled Senior Operational Managers 1D and 2A, then all grouped as Senior Operational Manager D. 1D had denoted those I/C of the smallest prisons but all of these were upgraded to Governor 2 in 2008. The new equation is pay band 9, Deputy Governor in a complex prison
Assistant Governor I, joined with Governor 4 after Fresh Start, then Operational Manager 2B or 3A (respectively Deputy Governor in a less complex prison and Functional Head reporting to the Deputy Governor), both re-titled Operational Manager E, now pay band 8. Is either a Deputy Governor in a standard prison or a Head of Function in a complex prison
Assistant Governor II re-titled Governor 5 after Fresh Start, then Operational Manager 2C or 3B, subsequently Operational Manager F. Now pay band 7. Heads of Function in standard prisons.
Manager G grew out of 3C, first coined in 2000. Manager G's were not defined as operational, and thus were not Governor grades.

Thanks to John Berry for this grading tour



Tribute to Pete Atherton.

By Michael Selby

My close contact with Pete Atherton occurred in possibly unique circumstances. This was when he was Governor of Wellingborough Y.O. Prison and I Governor of Grendon Psychiatric Prison. It was just before Christmas in 1989 that Grendon had to be emptied at short notice-electrical failure. This was a tricky operation considering that the patient/inmate population had been selected for their instability and propensity for violence. However, the exercise to transplant temporarily to various establishments was successful. It was decided by Brian Eames, the Deputy Director General, that to maintain therapy the prisoners should be regathered and Wellingborough was selected. That this involved cross Regional authority was a minor matter considering the opposition, led by the local M.P.-making predictable headlines-and various staff unions. Pete Atherton accepted the order, understood the reason and provided positive acceptance, concealing his own discomfort.

So early in February 1990, I walked into Wellingborough prison, up to his office –Pete got up from his chair, we shook hands, he handed the prison over to me and walked out of the gate. The Grendon prisoners occupied the A,B,C and D wings part of the original design and the remainder of the Wellingborough population, with their own staff, E and F wings –additional accommodation of dreadful design and building quality and, incidentally, very insecure.

During the next 9 months Pete kept away but was quietly supportive. In late September the population returned to Grendon. Pete walked into my/his office, I handed the prison back to him, we shook hands after a tour of the prison and I walked out of the gate. He wrote me a letter of thanks and appreciation which I have kept.

Without Pete Atherton's honourable support it could have been a disaster. I salute his memory.

Peters Career History

Peter joined the Prison Service as an Assistant Governor 2 after graduating from Nottingham University in September 1969. Upon completing his 8 month Staff Course he served as unit manager at Lowdham Grange Borstal (1970-73). He moved to Long Lartin as Unit manager before being promoted to Assistant Governor 1 when becoming Deputy Governor of Nottingham (1976-78). He then moved to the Prison Service College Wakefield as a tutor in The Development Department (1978-83).. before being promoted to Governor 3 as Deputy Governor Of Wakefield High Security Prison. (1983-87) After further promotion to Governor 2 he spent a period in headquarters as an assistant to the then Deputy Director General (1987 – 88).. He was then appointed Governor of Wellingborough Young Offenders Institute (1988-90), the establishment being rerolled as a Cat C prison where he continued to serve until 1991. Upon promotion to Governor 1 he took up post as the Governor of Long Lartin a position he held until 1994. Moving on again he became the inaugural head of the Prison Service Standards Audit Unit. In October 1998 he became Area manager to the London South East Area. In 2000 he became Director of High Security prisons . Just 3 years later he was appointed as Deputy Director General of the Prison Service retiring in 2007. Peter then joined several of his colleagues working for the International Centre for Prison Studies.



On Becoming the RPGA Treasurer.

by
Graham Mumby-Croft

This is my first article for the Newsletter in my capacity as Treasurer of The Association and I would like to begin by thanking my predecessor Jim Blakey for all the hard work and effort he put into the role. During the years that Jim held this position the associations finances have been extremely well managed and Jim handed over to me a set of accounts that balanced to the penny and were fully audited. I am sure that you will all wish to join me in offering thanks to Jim for a job extremely well done, and to wish him all the very best in his “second retirement”.

In the spring edition of the Newsletter Jim gave a detailed, account, of the rather surreal trials and tribulations of the process of informing the banks of the change of treasurer, and the interminable forms that he and I were both required to complete. In my case it also involved a visit to my local branches of Lloyds TSB and Barclays to produce my passport, and 2 other forms of ID in order to prove that I am indeed who I say I am, and not an international money-launderer seeking to gain access to the vast wealth of the RPGA in order to transfer this into some obscure offshore account.

After detailing the frustrations that he and I had experienced, Jim was hopeful that we were in sight of success and finished his account with the words *“The proof of the pudding will be when Graham starts signing cheques. Watch this space”*. Unfortunately Jim's words proved to be somewhat prophetic.

I met with Jim at his home on the 22nd February to complete the handover process and Jim's very last act as treasurer was to write to both Lloyds TSB and Barclays to inform them that with effect from that date I was now the treasurer of the RPGA, with full authority to manage the accounts, and to sign cheques, and to please forward all future correspondence to me, at my home address. Both Jim and I were of the view that we had done all that we needed to, and in the following weeks we received no response from either bank, and so we both assumed that everything was OK and our requests had been actioned. Subsequent events were to prove that despite our years of managerial and financial experience, when it comes to dealing with “The Banks” we were both naive innocents who the banks would chew up and spit out with contempt.

One of my first official task as treasurer was to deal with the invoice for the printing and distribution of the Spring newsletter, a not inconsequential sum of £1796, and when I sent a cheque to the printing company I included a covering letter to explain that I was the new treasurer and that this was the first large cheque I had written against the associations account and would they therefore let me know when the cheque had cleared, or if there were any problems. All seemed well when within a few days I received an email to inform me that the cheque had cleared with no problems. All was looking well.

At around the same time, the end of March, I received a bank statement from Lloyds TSB, the statement was addressed to Jim Blakey, but sent to my address. Well I thought, at least they have got it half right, and foolishly thought that a simple telephone call to the bank would resolve the problem. Once again I was to be proved to be naive in these matters as my “simple phone call” ended up being 4 telephone calls and 5 emails, and conversations with 4 different employees of the bank, and a letter signed by Jim, Ray and Graham before eventually, at the end of July, I received a bank statement from Lloyds TSB that was both addressed to me by name, and to my home address. At the same time I also received written confirmation that I was recognised as the authorised person to manage the accounts and to sign cheques.

Also at the end of March I received a bank statement from Barclays. Unfortunately this had been forwarded to me by Jim, as it had been sent to him, both by name and address.

Having learnt my lesson regarding telephone calls to banks I decided on this occasion to pay a visit to my local branch of Barclays to hopefully resolve this situation with an actual person. I had supposed, (as it was to transpire-somewhat foolishly), that as the cheques that I had signed had been honoured by the bank, the fact that the statement had been sent to Jim rather than me was an oversight by the bank. When I enquired into this situation at my local branch I was absolutely stunned to be informed that Barclays had not actioned Jim's request for the details to be changed and that as far as they were concerned he was still the treasurer. Further investigation revealed that the reason behind this, as far as Barclays was concerned, was that the documentation to implement the changes contained errors and that having received no response when they wrote to Jim on the matter, they simply closed the case and as far as they were concerned the authorities on the account remained unchanged.

This in itself was bad enough, as I knew that had Jim had received no such letter because if he had he would have contacted me and together we would have addressed the issues, but my next question was received in stunned silence when I asked how it was that if the bank did not recognise me as a signatory to the RPGA account they had cleared a cheque, signed only by me, in the sum of £1796? The eventual response was that I was provided with the documentation to make a formal complaint to Barclays. At this point I could not resist throwing them a curve ball by asking how I could make a formal complaint about my treatment as a customer of the bank, when as far as they were concerned I was not actually recognised as a customer of the bank.

The answer to this was to provide me with another wheelbarrow sized bundle of forms to complete in order to make the required changes. Luckily I had had the forethought to take with me all the required evidence of identification so this could be verified immediately but the forms still required the signatures of Ray and Graham as Secretary and Chair and this involved sending all the documentation as a "round robin" from one person to the next in order to ensure that it was all correctly signed and authorised.

The good news is that at the end of June I received notification from Barclays that all the required changes had been made and that I was now authorised to sign cheques and recognised as the responsible person for the account. This was further confirmed when in the first week of July I received a bank statement from Barclays addressed to me by name, and to my home. Success-and after only 9-months of form filling, letters and phone calls.

As Jim Blakey once commented to me in the middle of this process, "He would never have thought it possible to find himself dealing with 2 major banks whose poor practices, procedures and inefficiency made the Prison Service look slick and professional".

Those of you who have managed to follow all the plot twists in the story may now be asking, "what about the complaint regarding the bank clearing the cheque for £1796? The banks response, after a "thorough investigation" (their words, not mine) wrote to inform me that the reason this cheque was not queried was because "our cheque clearing facility is very busy and not all cheques can be scrutinised". So there you have it, the banks are just too busy to ensure that your money is safe.

Putting all of this to one side I am pleased and honoured to be the treasurer of this association and you can rest assured that the farcical events surrounding my taking over the role from Jim have not dampened my enthusiasm for the task. I also promise that in my next submission to the newsletter I will try to be much more upbeat.

CREDIT CARDS.

First I need to make clear that I am no financial whiz. I can barely keep my own accounts in order and so this article comes from an average credit card user and not from anyone with any particular financial savvy. I simple thought it a good idea to bring to your attention, should you not already be aware, that the costs and rewards emanating from these cards are not always very transparent and are consequently worthy of note.

According to MoneySupermarket.com there are ten reasons to use a credit card. These are:

1. to spread payment
2. to cut the cost of debt
3. enable overseas spending
4. purchase protection
5. earn cash back
6. earn air-miles
7. acquire a credit rating
8. charity donation
9. acquire discounts
10. save money on groceries.

All in all a plug for the old plastic.

BUT ... yes, there's always a 'but'.

The reality is that many consumers are unable to take advantage of these benefits because they carry a balance on their card/s from month to month, paying finance charges that can go to a whopping 23%

Apart from high interest rates the credit card companies, a.k.a. the banks, charge transaction fees which are, in the main, borne by the retailers and service providers who in turn must adjust their prices to cover these transaction fees; fees which vary depending on the size of the retailer or business. A large concern such as a supermarket chain may pay about 0.4% whereas as a small local store serving your neighbourhood about 1%. This is hardly fair competitive trading.

So when you and/or your friends go flying off to the 'Costalot' on air-miles or claim any other rewards, remember they were not free but paid for by both retailers and you, the customers. In effect the banks could be viewed as encouraging some needless consumption by steering us into spending on goods and services we could perhaps well live without.

The European Union are planning to cut transaction fees on debit and credit cards in the EU. They estimate the market is currently worth £112bn but it is fragmented and expensive. The Union wants to cap 'interchange fees' to a maximum of 0.3% of a transaction.

The British Retail Consortium (BRC), which represents shopkeepers in the U.K. has welcomed the plan arguing that if retailers pay lower transaction fees, they can pass on such savings to their customers, though I, for one, am not holding my breath.

The banks, on the other hand, will tell us that the present fees accurately reflect the costs of processing the transactions involved.

Who do you believe? I'm sticking my colours to the BRC mast.

By John Ramwell

ENNUI



By John J Ramwell

Oscar Wilde, in his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, has one of his characters declaring that ennui is, "the only horrible thing in the world."

I read this recently and wondered what the word 'ennui' meant. My dictionary defined it as follows, ' *a feeling of weariness and disgust; dullness and languor of spirits arising from satiety or want of interest; tedium.* In a word, read boredom.

The question I am asking is, do we ever get bored to the extent of feeling weary, languid and in want of interest? This is a very personal question which is rhetorical and only you can provide the answer. I almost said, 'an honest answer' but I believe we would struggle to answer this question honestly, even to ourselves. We would fool ourselves in the attempt.

If, indeed, you are honest you might privately admit to being bored from time to time. Holidays can be truly boring at times as we wrestle to fill every waking hour with something interesting and different. After all, no one wants to be bored on holiday but away from familiar surroundings where there is usually some diversions to be found, it is likely you will get bored enough to wish you were on your way home already. There is a limit to just how long it is possible to remain continuously engaged.

How often will we admit to being bored? Instead we tell our friends and family just how wonderful our recent holiday was. Most often, hopefully, this description is justified but I doubt you would ever admit to periods of boredom. "Yes, we had a great time though on Tuesday afternoon I was terribly bored." I don't think so!

It seems that boredom must be avoided at all costs and certainly never admitted to. I was surprised the other day when my teenage grandson, who is pretty street wise, said on Facebook that he was bored. Mind you, he was probing among his friends for a party somewhere, anywhere. Boredom among teenagers goes with the territory and is particularly vexatious but they rarely, if ever, admit to suffering from it. They need to persuade their friends that their lives are overflowing with activities.

Leo Tolstoy said that boredom was the desire for desires. If he was talking about anticipation, the longing for something not immediately available, then I believe I disagree with him. It is rare these days to have to wait for anything and if we do, it is not for very long. We live in an age of immediate gratification. With what anticipation I waited a week for my photographs to be developed and returned to me in the time before digital cameras. Each photograph was valued and pored over. Gone are albums; just thousands of photographs stored on your hard drive. Not that I would want to turn back the clock. I do occasionally enjoy flipping through my pictures on the iPad and sharing them around among my bored? friends and family. We have not learnt patience. The last few decades have convinced us that it is available NOW and because 'you're worth it.' I do not mean to rant. It is, after all, the way the world has changed. It is just that sometimes I am a little slow in keeping up.

The point of this piece, which I seem to be losing right now, is to suggest that you embrace boredom. Apparently in small doses it is good for you. Stop and smell the roses. Not new advice I know. Whilst having a good and prolonged sniff let your mind wonder; your thoughts to take

you where they will. Recent research shows that we come up with enlightened ideas and improved abilities, even strokes of genius after short periods of boredom. I emphasise short periods as it is readily accepted that, over prolonged periods, boredom is destructive of the mind. Have you ever been laid up, stuck in the horizontal position for any length of time and found yourself counting the patterns of the wall paper and then getting frustrated and mad because you have lost count and have to start again? How some of our charges, many of whom were already mind damaged, coped with being illiterate and locked for years in a single cell. I cannot imagine.

So embrace and welcome boredom. Allow your mind to relax and explore your thoughts as they whirl about like a flock of starlings that seemingly dart aimlessly around the sky. No to music, no to reading, no to any distraction. Just silence.

My favourite time for calling on boredom is in the mornings whilst having a lie in. Off goes the Radio. After a while I find I don't miss John Humphries. I just lie there thinking ofnothing. "Time you got yourself up," shouts up my wife. "Not yet," I reply; "I'm too busy getting bored"

It was Thomas Carlyle who said, "I've got a great ambition to die of exhaustion rather than boredom."

I'll share a secret. If I get too bored for my own good my answer is to write an article for the RPGA Newsletter.

Prisons Histories.

Wandsworth Prison

Queen Victoria delayed the opening of Wandsworth prison, after ordering the removal of the latest and expensive invention of the time - integral toilets. She reasoned that most of her subjects who had committed a crime did not have the luxury of a toilet in their homes, so why should inmates have such luxury in their prison cells?

Prison Hulks

The cells throughout the hulks are numbered consecutively, beginning from the lower deck upwards; and prisoners of the worst character, or during their period of punishment, are classed in the lower deck, and rise upwards as they progress in character, from the lower to the middle, and from the middle to the upper deck; so that the highest number, containing the men of best character, is on the upper deck.

Brixton

The design of the prison was completed in 1819 but it was not a success, so that the Prison Authorities wanted to demolish it in 1853. Obviously they did not succeed in that plan. Brixton also has the doubtful honour of being the first English prison to work prisoners on the tread-wheel.



Right Is Right and Wrong Is No Man's Right

By Roger Outram

I thought that you might be interested in my Irish experience as it all started with an e-mail from the PGA. Sometime towards the end of 2008 the PGA asked the membership of the RPGA in an e-mail if anyone was interested in helping a solicitor in Ireland - the locals object to it being called southern Ireland – with a claim for damages against the Irish Attorney General and others. I casually put my name forward, mostly out of curiosity, and eventually received a letter from a Solicitor in County Kildare. He had a client, who had been savagely attacked, by a fellow prisoner, at Wheatfield Prison, Dublin, in January 2003. The extent of the attack was horrific with the use of a weapon, a “Stanley” craft knife

type, involving a deep cut from just below his right ear through his cheek up to and across his nose and three further deep cuts on his back, flank and torso, requiring in excess of 120 stitches. He wanted to pursue a claim for compensation on the basis of failure to provide a proper “Duty of Care”.

Normally I am not well known for my sympathy with the criminal fraternity and on the face of it this fellow was no exception to the rule. At the time of the assault he was serving two terms of eight years for an aggravated burglary as a joint enterprise with others. There was some interesting features in the papers that I had received so I investigated further and came to the conclusion that the Irish Prison Service had a medieval approach to custody, and this was an incident worthy of some attention.

The facts of our case were very simple our man was - almost needless to say - a drug addict and had been taken to the medical facility for his daily dose of methadone. The dispensary was part of a complex of three waiting rooms colloquially called “the cage”, which turned out, on inspection, to be aptly named being three inter-connected barred areas, just off the main corridor, each giving access separately to the prison doctor's office, the prison dentist and the dispensary. These three areas being about twelve feet by eight feet each with a wooden bench seat along the longer wall. The prisoner had been put in the dispensary “cage” along with about nineteen other men, all waiting for their single daily dose of medication.

This area was staffed from outside the gate by one officer supervising the movement and a nurse supervising the dispensary hatch and the men were released from the “cage” one by one to receive their medication and then sent on their way. In the area there was no alarm bell, no telephone, no CCTV, no personal radio for the supervising officer and the only apparent means of raising an alarm was to shout.

Soon after our man was put into the area he was set upon from behind by another prisoner – whom he did not know - with a proprietary “Stanley” type knife which he saw clearly as it came round, from behind, in front of his face. Probably intended to cut his throat but missing that target and slicing his face into two parts. The attack continued, with our man, on the floor with three further long cuts to his torso. Meanwhile the supervising officer apparently stood and observed until another officer arrived and opened the gate pulling our man out. He was taken to the local hospital where first aid was administered and followed by extensive plastic surgery to his face.

It transpired that the attacker had wrongly believed that our man had been involved with his wife. Our man eventually got a message of apology from the attacker but the police never even interviewed him and no case was brought against him.

What intrigued me most about the case was the response to the claim, by the Attorney General's office, whose defence, in a nutshell was essentially that, firstly “the incident never happened” or secondly “if it did it was the prisoner's responsibility for being in prison”. Fundamentally the authority's defence was that “They could not guarantee any prisoners safety” and that was the entire basis of the defence when it was presented in court. Of course as a plain statement of fact that has to be right but they were neatly avoiding the point that as the custodian they have an absolute responsibility to protect those in their care as far as is both possible and practicable regardless of their opinion about their worthiness as individuals or that has always been my philosophy.

I asked the solicitor to send me all the reports, antecedent's and any other related documents and suggested that a visit to Wheatfield prison, to view the scene of the incident, might be useful. Papers duly arrived with no reports included from the officers present at the scene. No witness reports, no names of those present and, it transpired that although the incident was reported to the Irish Police “Garda”, the key officers present were not seen by the police until fifteen months later with the reasons given, in court, for the delay being for leave and sickness. The authority initially refused me permission to visit the prison and view the scene. The Solicitor applied to the court for an access order which was refused. However a further application to the High Court was successful, but with very clear restrictions. I was not allowed to view anything other than the actual scene of the assault nor was I allowed to ask any questions of the staff. They were unable to have me blindfolded between the gate and the scene though.

Apart from his antecedents I knew little about the victim. He was previously a petty criminal, the type of which we are all familiar. I met him some time later on my visit to the prison and found him to be a quietly spoken and relatively shy man. I discovered that there was an unusual feature to the offence, for which he was serving time for, and that had allowed the trial judge to mitigate his sentence. This was his intervention with his accomplices during the robbery demonstrating some empathy with his victims. The house was occupied and the lady of the house asked the robbers not to go into a specific bedroom which had been the room of a child of the house who had recently died and she was concerned that it would be disturbed. Our man told the others to leave the room alone and not to go in. There was another incident during the robbery when one of the family children came downstairs with no clothing on and our man insisted that he should be dressed as it was cold.

I visited Wheatfield Prison in March 2009 in company with the victim and the solicitor. The solicitor was not allowed further than the administration offices and I was escorted with the prisoner to the scene. The most interesting features of the visit were being able to observe that the incident area was bereft of any means of raising an alarm or communication and the description of “the cage” was absolutely accurate even if inappropriate. The access searching at the gate was at best Laissez-faire and at worst disgraceful. By UK standards Wheatfield Prison

would be described as a Category B type establishment and the gate entry was equipped with all the expected paraphernalia, x-ray machine, electronic metal detection portal and hand held metal detectors.

On entry the solicitor and I were allowed into the gate lodge where the key safe was left open. We were asked if we had mobile phones. I didn't but the solicitor did so the gatekeeper escorted the solicitor across the gate area to the lockers leaving me in the gate lodge alone with the keys. You can be forgiven for thinking that this was foolhardy but I behaved myself. I was less well behaved when I went through the search process. I placed my coat and shoes in the plastic box for x-ray and had deliberately worn a short sleeved shirt which was now exposed I had retained my wrist watch and glasses and also left a one pound coin in my trouser pocket. As I walked through the portal I held my left arm above my head so that my watch would indicate high on the portal and because I have two replacement hips these machines were also activated mid-line. The female officer watching me through was content with the watch and when I said that I had metal hips she just waved the wand up and down my sides and got the expected indication at my hips. There was no request for me to remove my watch or glasses and no rub down search. This was a major failing of the entry search procedure as I eventually pointed out at the trial. I was able to say that I could easily have secreted a craft blade under my watch strap and the pound coin in my pocket could easily have been anything metallic.

I returned home and wrote a comprehensive report based on the information available which was sketchy in the extreme. The authorities were understandably reluctant to disclose anything relevant and the reports and statements that were made available revealed an inadequacy in both report writing and evidence gathering. There was no evidence that risk assessments were undertaken and no operating procedures were made available. You will be amazed to know that although this offence was committed in a secure cage/room, in which apparently twenty men were accommodated cheek by jowl, the weapon was never retrieved and no evidence was given that it was even searched for. The perpetrator, even though he committed this offence in plain sight of staff was never officially identified, there was no evidence that anyone was searched before entering or prior to leaving the scene, neither was there a list of either prisoners in the "cage" or of staff attending the scene. No comprehensive statements were available, probably never made, from those present but there was a report to the governor charging our man for fighting for which he was duly punished.

I attended in the Dublin High court as an expert witness in April 2009 and spent almost 9 hours in the witness box over a three day period. I have to say that this unusual experience was both interesting and to some degree amusing to be able to observe at close quarters the mental athletics that the Council for the defence was obliged to undertake to try and make the defence sound credible. The most exciting part of the cross examination was when we discussed my entry through the gate lodge when the Senior Council for the defence suggested that I should have expected to be searched sympathetically and differently to other visitors because I was there in a professional capacity, wearing a suit and looking respectable, was the phrase used. I was obliged to point out to him that, in my experience, villains didn't all wear striped jumpers and have broken noses, some wore suits and came in the guise of professional people and that I had expected to be searched properly. The Judge was amused by my comment and his words to the council were "That put you in your box Mr Clarke".

The case lasted three days and when the judgement was given months later the finding was in favour of our client and an award of €40K made. I am pleased to say that in his Judgement the Judge said:

"I have received evidence from Mr Roger Outram, a retired United Kingdom Governor, who I found to be an impressive witness. He considered that the defendants had failed in their duty of care. He was critical of the system, and considered the supervision to be inadequate, particularly in the light of previous assaults having taken place at that location. He had never seen a prisoner so seriously injured in the course of his career. Under cross examination, he conceded that you cannot prevent prisoners attacking fellow inmates."

This judgement was appealed and the appeal court upheld the appeal indicating that the original trial Judge misadvised himself in that:

"..... I would emphasise that, if the plaintiff is to succeed in his claim, it is obvious that he must be able to identify the precise respects in which the defendants were in breach of their duty of care and what standards they failed to meet. Any criticism of the standards operated in the prison should be related to the facts. That, in turn, may give rise to the need to resolve conflicts in the evidence."

22. In all of the circumstances, I am of the view that the High Court decision did not correctly address the issues. For that reason, I would allow the appeal of the defendants and the cross appeal of the plaintiff. I would set aside the order made in the High Court and remit the case to that court for further hearing."

And so back to Court we went in March 2013 ten years after the assault took place. Clearly the word mañana contains an element of urgency not recognised by the Irish. This time the case, before a different Judge, lasted 6 days and my spell in the witness box was 3½ days with yet another mauling from the defence council who just went over the same ground over and over to try and get me to say something different from what I had previously stated. He did his best but he didn't have much to work with and the Judgement has been delivered this June. The Judge has found once again for our client and awarded the greatly increased sum of €150K on this occasion. We will wait now with bated breath to see if there is another appeal.

In any event this is a landmark case as it is the first time in Irish history that a case brought against the Attorney General has ever been won in Irish History. I have to say that I harboured misgivings about involving myself in a case against a service, albeit a foreign one, that I was proud to be part of for 32 years. Nevertheless, "Right is right and wrong is no man's right" as my grandma would say and I am proud to have done something to help put right what was so manifestly a wrong.

RETIRED PRISON GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

REUNION AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2013 Reunion will take place at the Prison Service College Newbold Revel on Tuesday 22nd October 2013 starting at 1030hrs.

As well as time to chat and reminisce, we have arranged for an address from College Staff and a tour of the College to update us on what the College does now. We have also arranged for a member of the PGA Committee to give us a brief on what are the current themes affecting current PGA members.

There will be an informal complimentary Buffet Lunch with further time to socialise.

The Annual General Meeting will take place at 1415hrs, followed by a Church Service at 1530hrs. A limited number of single rooms are available for those wishing to stay overnight. Breakfast and evening meals may also be purchased in the dining room by those wishing to do so.

If you wish to attend please complete and return the Reply slip by Tuesday 8th October 2013.

.....

RETIRED PRISON GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

REUNION AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

I /we would like to attend the RPGA Reunion and AGM

I/ we do/do not require accommodation at Newbold Revel. **(Please amend as appropriate)**

I/we..... would like to book a room on the following days.

Number of rooms required..... for the following dates.....

Print name..... signature.....date.....

Reunion and Annual General Meeting at Newbold Revel on 22nd October 2013

At the time of going to press the cost per room per night has not yet been quoted by Newbold Revel. We estimate that it will be no more than 25 pounds per night. Please make cheques payable to this amount. Monies will be refunded if Newbold quote a lesser price.

Cheques made payable to the RPGA

**Please return ASAP to Ray London, 14 James Court, Eynesbury, St Neots Cambs PE19 2QQ
07858 263941 raymond_london@hotmail.com**

Answers to puzzle page

Crossword

Across 1 brixton, 4 ace, 7 leyhill ,9 outlaws, 13, dreamer, 14 abstain, 15, last dot, 18 amnesia, 21 dye, 22 surplus.

Down 1 bullwood hall, 2 idly, 3 thai, 4 noel, 6 claw,8 hal, 10 tresses, 11, armband, 12 strong traits, 16 army, 17 tie, 18 adds, 19 near, 20 sail

Prison Anagrams

1 Strangeways , 2 Drake hall, 3 Kirklevington, 4 Hollesley Bay, 5 Foston Hall, 6 Durham, 7 Whitemoor, 8 Wakefield

Quiz answers.

1. Cricket. Caught, LBW, Run out, Stumped, Handling the ball., Obstructing the field, Hitting the ball twice, Hitting your own wicket, Timed out. Bowled out

2. Authors on UK stamps. Charlotte Bronte, Robert Burns, Thomas Gray, William Shakespeare, Thomas Hardy, Emily Bronte, Walter Scott, Edward Lear, George Eliot, John Keats.

3.Ten most mentioned animals in the Bible Sheep, Lamb, Lion, Ox, Ram, Horse, Bullock, Ass, Goat, Camel.

4. Types of lightning. Anvil, Ball, Bead, Cloud to air, Cloud to cloud, Cloud to ground, Forked, Ribbon, Sheet, Staccato.

5. Ten oldest cities in the UK. Ripon 886, London 1066, Edinburgh 1125, Chichester, 1135, Derby 1154, Lincoln 1154, Oxford 1154, Winchester 1155, Exeter 1156.

Answers to Brain Teaser

TNHA1000 E =The night has a 1000 eyes. 3 STH =3 Steps to heaven. 99 RB =99 Red balloons. 7 LGSITBS = 7 Little girls sitting in the back seat. 50 WTLYL =50 Ways to leave your lover. 24 HFT = 24 Hours from Tulsa. HCT19 NB = Here comes the 19th nervous breakdown. 76 T LTBP = 76 Trombones led the big parade. 8 DAW = 8 Days a week . 12 DOC = 12 Days of Christmas. 2 LB = 2 Little boys. 0 16 = Only sixteen

You could be really smart if you could name the artists who made all of these songs a hit.

Sudoku

7	1	5	6	4	8	2	3	9
9	8	4	2	3	5	1	6	7
2	6	3	7	9	1	8	4	5
4	7	2	9	1	6	5	8	3
8	3	6	5	2	4	9	7	1
1	5	9	8	7	3	4	2	6
6	2	1	3	8	9	7	5	4
3	9	7	4	5	2	6	1	8
5	4	8	1	6	7	3	9	2

Eighteenth Report

of the Inspectors to visit the different

PRISONS OF GREAT BRITAIN**BEDFORD COUNTY GAOL AND HOUSE OF CORRECTION****(INSPECTED 21ST July 1857)**

The prison affords accommodation as follows:-

	Males	Females	Total
Cells certified for separate confinement	176	8	184
Cells not certified for separate confinement	12	7	19
In association	47	12	59
In Debtors	8	2	10
Total	243	29	272

The number of prisoner on the day of inspection was :-

Males..... 61

Females..... 9

Debtors..... 4

Total74

Daily average Number :- Criminals..... 100, Debtors..... 5 Total 105

The discipline of this gaol is well maintained; but I would observe with respect to the use of guard bed, that although I see no hardship in requiring a certain class of prisoners to sleep on the same description of bed our soldiers use when on guard, the gaol act requires that "every prisoner shall be provided with suitable bedding" and the term "suitable bedding" is clearly defined in the general regulation for prisons, which direct that, " the following articles of bedding shall at least be always supplied viz., hammock or bedstead, mattress and pillow, sufficient number of blankets or coverlet"

Fifty prisoners from the county of Middlesex are received in this prison, under a contract with the visiting justices of the Coldbath Fields House of Correction.