

The Retired Prison Governors Newsletter

Founded by Arthur Williamson in 1980—39 years of continuous publication



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NEW HMPPS CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPOINTED

By the time this edition of the newsletter hits your doormat the new CEO of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will just be getting to grips with her new job. Dr Jo Farrar becomes the first female Head of the Service with a start date of the 1st of April. Let us hope that does not prove inauspicious. Dr Farrar is moving from being Director General for Local Government and Public Services at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Her C.V. begins with the Parole Unit of the Prison Service in 1987 so her career has come full circle via the Home Office, the Cabinet Office, MHCLG as mentioned above, as well as two Chief Executive roles in local government. The first of those at Bridgend Borough Council is tinged with controversy. In 2012 a job evaluation exercise (JES) was held which saw a large number of council staff roles downgraded, but her own and other senior posts were exempt from the process. The Trade Unions were not amused and made much of her £170,310 pay package. Given that JES is a more than a decade-long running sore between the PGA and the employer, I would guess that the NEC will be on high alert.

The weighting of the Duty Governor role will be just one of many issues sitting in her in-tray. On the face of it, given the huge problems that the Service faces, it is small potatoes, until you remember that getting the trust of, and boosting the morale of senior managers on the front line is hugely important. Staff at all levels will also be watching closely how successful she is at resisting micro-management from ministers, whether she is prepared to take an axe to the bindweed of bureaucracy, and whether she will break with tradition and stop wasting money on expensive and useless management consultants. More than anything Dr Farrar will be judged on whether or not the anarchy in our prisons can be curbed, and whether decency can once again be truthfully described as one of our core values. The battle to restore staffing levels is one Dr Farrar will have to embrace and win.

Shortly before the end of her time at Bath and North East Somerset Council ended, Dr Farrar gave a lecture at Bath University entitled "Transforming Public Services in a Time of Austerity." It's easy to find on the internet, but little is applicable to HMPPS. After four successive in-house appointments, Dr Farrar is the first outsider since the ill-fated Derek Lewis to take the job. In fairness, Mr Lewis was far more of an outsider coming in from the private sector, and in some ways Dr Farrar's appointment harks back to the days when the operational head was a generalist senior civil servant. No doubt she will be mindful of the fate of Mr Lewis and her immediate predecessor Michael Spurr, both of whom were ousted so that the Secretary of State was not.

We wish Dr Farrar luck... and no-one should be in any doubt that she will need it.

PAUL LAXTON, Editor

CONTENTS

- P 01 Editorial - Paul Laxton
- P 02 RPGA E mail register - Harry Brett
- P 03 The Things You Find in Cupboards: A Riposte - Peter Quinn
- P 04 Reminiscences of (mostly) Good Times in Prisons - Peter Mate
- P 05 Sentencing Policy: Some Observations - John Ramwell
- P 06 Civil Service Pensioners AGM October 2018 Report - Paul Laxton
- P 07 From the Chair - Graham Smith
- P 08 Your Letters - Bob Duncan, Harry Brett and Roger Outram
- P 17 Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales 2018 - Phil Wheatley
- P 18 The Website - Roger Outram
- P 18 From The Treasurer - Graham Mumby-Croft
- P 19 Computer Corner - Graham Mumby-Croft
- P 22 Membership Report - Harry Brett
- P 22 Notice of next RPGA Annual General Meeting
- P 23 Brian Hayday R.I.P. - Brian Walshaw
- P 23 Bedford Prison into the Millennium - Francis Andrew McGilway

Editor's Note: Like Mr McGilway I also have Bedford on my c.v. One can only despair at the decline of a once flagship establishment thanks to a government which cares little for the staff who work in prisons and even less for those incarcerated within them.

RPGA: E-MAIL REGISTER

The E-Mail register has been operating for around 13 years and has proved itself to be an effective means of rapid communication between members. It offers updates on current prison service developments 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 register then please send an E-Mail from the address you wish to have registered to Harry Brett at h_brett@sky.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 E-Mail address you must inform HARRY BRETT, otherwise you will cease to receive further updates.

THE THINGS YOU FIND IN CUPBOARDS: A RIPOSTE.

Since John Berry has taken my name in vain in the autumn Newsletter, I am prompted to rouse myself from my post-retirement lethargy (there are those unkind enough to say that I got used to it while working) and send a response. John recounts that we never worked together though he frequently called in my Cleland House office when performing his sterling staff welfare duties. Like many other elements of the job, I believe his function has now virtually disappeared, NOMS thinking that the only staff welfare issues arising these days are post-incident. John has many qualities, principal among them being that he is a fellow Glossopian and, at the time, the only other Governor colleague to share that privilege. Trevor Gadd nearly counted since, though not born there, he had a lovely little cottage within borough boundaries at the foot of the Snake Pass. Another with such an advantage of birth, though not a Governor, is NOMS main grade civil servant Steve Gorman, last heard of addressing a criminal justice conference in Barcelona a couple of years ago under the aegis of the EU, something else likely to disappear in our present bewildering political muddle.

But to the point of this piece: John found an aged example of my scribblings in a Justice of the Peace magazine tucked away in a courtroom cupboard. I wrote a lot for Justice of the Peace of old and I guess most of my articles ended up in cupboards rather than being read. This reminded John of my work redrafting The Prison Rules and Young Offender Institution Rules of 1999. Although I managed that exercise, my job was actually to be the intermediary between the various policy holders and other stakeholders (Boards of Visitors, unions, special interest groups etc.) and the lawyers who would do the drafting.

Sometimes the recommendations reaching me would conflict with others and resolving this was time-consuming and frustrating. Never mind the statutory convention that regulations are drafted in the masculine, trying to explain to some that 'he embraces she' wouldn't wash with many even then. Re-ordering was necessary as some rules disappeared and others were adopted hence, to John's and others' annoyance, rule 43 became rule 45. Segregation was still lawful but, not surprisingly, it had to be under the correct rule.

I say 'not surprisingly' but it did catch a number of establishments by surprise. The most vehement criticism came from the Association of Members of Boards of Visitors. My only defence (m'lud) was to remind AMBOV that they had been apprised of this in correspondence many months previously and that governors had had at least a month's notice by way of a Prison Service Order. But who had time to read yet more bumf from HQ when they had nicks to run?

My proudest personal achievement was when the Board accepted the abolition of the former rule 47(21). This resulted from a two-pronged exercise, partly from an academic study by criminologist friend Nancy Loucks and my own survey, written up in the Howard Journal in 1995. To remind readers, this had it that 'A prisoner is guilty of an offence against discipline if he ... in any way offends against good order and discipline.' Try getting out of that. The story goes that, after the Board meeting Tony Pearson remarked that 'Quinn will be dancing around the corridors now' to which, if anyone remembers my fine physique, Richard Tilt is said to have replied 'Quinn doesn't dance – he lumbers'.

I hardly write these days: the odd contribution to The Guardian or to Private Eye which probably, quite rightly, end up in cupboards too. Perhaps in many years' time, some old Glossopian Governor will find them there and be prompted to write to this Newsletter saying 'Lo and behold, I found an article by Peter Quinn'. By then, I shall probably be in the great HQ in the sky and arguing that NOMS still hasn't paid me my transfer grant.

PETER QUINN

Reminiscences of (mostly) good times in Prisons

As a member of the RPGA, I have cause to remember what were mostly good times with Prisons, in and out over the past 30 plus years. I finally retired after the onset of bowel cancer and major surgery some four years back. I hope you will put up with my recollections of mostly good times over these years.

Following a decade through the seventies (and my twenties) working in the Music Business, I re-trained as a 'Home Office Sponsored Student' in the Probation Service, commencing work in SW London Probation, followed by Middlesex and Inner London PS. It was there I experienced my first Prisons placement at HMP Wandsworth, as a seconded Probation Officer. Having led some pretty wild teenage years in and out of trouble, and between a series of trips out to India and Afghanistan, I needed approval from the then Governor, who agreed my earlier adventures were in the past, and could be 'laid to rest'. I subsequently went on to spend four years (85-89) on the renowned G,H, and K VPU, holding the largest sex-offender population (450) in Western Europe. With a couple of prison colleagues and a supportive SPO, we devised the initial sex-offender treatment programmes – working alongside other specialists at Albany and Maidstone (I recall Ray Wyre and Dave Coupland). Groundbreaking stuff, long before the Home Office heard about Canada leading the world in Programmes! We ran Groups for offenders against boys, against girls, incestuous fathers and Rape Programmes...learning as much from the Men, as they learned from us.

My next Prisons secondment (1995-99) was as Senior Probation Officer at HMP Thorpe Arch/Rudgate (joining the day of amalgamation to HMP Wealstun) and later incorporating Wetherby YOI. Again I was interviewed by departing Governor Granville Barnard about my youthful transgressions, and again my sins were forgiven...(a little like my last Confession at age 12...bless me father, for I have sinned etc...)

I had a wonderful Governor for my Wealstun years, the fabulous Stacey Tasker (I had known Ron at Wandsworth, and later followed Stacey to HMP Leeds in my first Governor post...more later). I think I probably had a 'crush' on her, but you wouldn't mess with Ron! I had a large and difficult Probation Team at Wealstun, who I think regarded me as having 'crossed sides' to the Prison Service...and I suspect I probably had found my new niche. I worked to David Pike, and I think even David will agree I halved his workload...he subsequently rewarded me with a successful Nomination for a Butler Trust gong...and I took him to Finland through a massive Euro Social Fund Grant funding our work-out scheme... After a year's secondment to Area Manager Peter Earnshaw and Jim Lewis (AMs were still London based in the late 90s) I finally 'jumped ship', applying for Direct Entry as an Operational Prisons Manager. Eight weeks study at Newbold, and eight weeks in Uniform at HMP Everthorpe, and I achieved my dream, landing near home at HMP Leeds (2000-2005)...with the wonderful Stacey! Five years avoiding anything to do with Probation or Resettlement...Security Governor and a period acting up as Head of Res...and stories to tell that could keep me in After Dinner speaking for years to come. Security Governors in Local Prisons do see another side of life! Great boss in Phil Buck, a man of massive integrity, from whom I learned so much... A wonderful team, spawning key managers Amy Rice, Paul Whitfield, the list goes on...we were a bright and perky crew, and a great team. If I introduced anything at Leeds, it was probably through manager/staff supervision systems, and a huge push on Decency and Diversity.

New challenges working with Women at HMP/YOI New Hall (2005-2008), with my now good friend Sarah Snell. Huge self-harm issues, the like of which I'd never experienced in the Male sector... but also a new experience of prisoners prepared to talk to me, as a Governor...I loved sitting down in Association with my 'gals', learning about their lives, hearing their stories, and talking to me in a way the men didn't know how...or were too frightened to be seen talking to a 'suit'.

At the time I led on Equality Impact Assessments, and became called upon as the only Manager in the Area who could achieve 'green' scores. (Probation always knew how to do these things).

My last seven years in the Prison Service were based at Yorkshire and Humberside Area Office/NOMS, leading on MAPPA and Public Protection for the Northern Region. My new NOMS boss was my old boss from Probation, the wonderful Howard Mills, and these days, another dear friend...to whom I owe so much. He gave me a long rein, and I loved my job up to the time of my Health crisis, when Partial and Full Retirement became attractive.

I have loved my time with the Prison Service, nearly every day of it; no two days were the same. I always hated routine...and this was the job for me. If this brief summary meets your approval, I may introduce some interesting characters from the journey in Part 2...staff of course.

Peter Mate

SENTENCING POLICY: SOME OBSERVATIONS

It's been a while since I wrote anything for the Newsletter so here comes a contribution. Needless to say I would have no problem with rejection or with liberal - or otherwise - editing. I served at HMP Bedford for several years back in 1978 as Principal Hospital Officer and so was particularly interested in Francis McGilway's piece on the history of this Prison found within the pages of our Autumn issue. His mention of Albert Pierrepoint's comment in his book that, 'Capital punishment, in my view achieved nothing except revenge,' and the article by Paul Laxton on 'Prison is no Place for Old Men,' came together, in my mind, for having a strong connection. For the record I served 36 years in 12 different establishments and, again for the record, I enjoyed every day - well, most days - of it. I retired 23 years ago and, apart from the RPGA and the daily radio and TV news, I have all but lost all touch with the Service. From what I hear the Service has changed out of all recognition and not, certainly not, for the better: but, all the same, I still have opinions and it is these I would appreciate being able to share.

Let me start by quoting from Pauls' article when he says that there is very little evidence that prison is a very effective deterrent for sex offenders. I might add that other research shows that prison holds very little deterrence for the vast majority of offenders. If we agree that this is the case then there are two important reasons for incarcerating offenders: to protect the public and to provide retribution. Both are perfectly proper although the protection of the public lasts only as long as the prisoner remains a prisoner and retribution is about satisfying the victims of crime and society at large and is not about distracting offenders from re-offending. I have often thought that open prisons do nothing to protect the public in that prisoners remain there at their own will - by and large - and, also, by and large, they are not persuaded that further offending is not on their future agenda. Of course this does not include most 'white collar criminals' nor most older first-time offenders whose imprisonment meant shame and often the collapse of relationships with family and friends. The fact they have been apprehended and then sent through the justice system is most often quite sufficient to make the point; the point that crime does not pay. These offenders are unlikely re-offenders.

Clearly there has to be some persuasion against offending but I believe that prison is not the threat many in our society believe it is. Damage to reputation, fracturing of relationships and friendships and loss of economic value have to be uppermost in the minds of most of us, whenever thoughts turn to making a few dishonest bucks. Of course deterrents are rarely going to influence the perpetration of crimes of passion. When intense anger surfaces, nothing but nothing says, 'Hang on there, you're likely going to make matters worse'. Lash out first, pick up the tab later, is how it works. So if Prison is not the deterrent we imagine it to be, what does Society have to do to punish and deter whilst protecting itself?

Long-term sentences for serious offences, such as peddling drugs or serious physical and sexual abuse will always be appropriate, as clearly justice is done and society has protected itself. The issue of how we deal with low-key persistent offenders such as petty crimes of acquisition, drug charges and domestic violence without having recourse to prison requires we find an alternative to short-term imprisonment. The list of these options is long and all have been tested. We know that education and personal counselling of a specialist and caring nature has benefits, but these commodities are thin on the ground and expensive. In the race for resources offenders will always lose out when set against child care, homelessness and genuine poverty. The case for spending a lot in order to save even more is one we often hear. Even though the case for this simple equation is often true, the seed-corn funds for projects to stay re-offending is just not available. We often hear that the UK is the fifth largest world economy and so it is, but it remains an economy on the edge where every penny counts. Further taxation will be counterproductive even when it means targeting the wealthy. Austerity is here to stay and funds to provide meaningful alternatives to imprisonment will remain elusive.

We should continue to (and I dislike this expression) 'think outside the box.' Imagination, leadership and effective management hold the solutions: but then none of these three attributes are readily brought to bear in our attempts to reduce short term imprisonment, no matter how much we may think outside our boxes. So it is over to Society. Prison only has a limited function. We have the right to protect ourselves and victims rightly want justice. As attitudes change and Governments respond, we may yet find meaningful alternatives. In the meanwhile, hopefully, I've described the issue by providing my opinion. This is all I can do, all I ever set out to do. Like global warming, it is easy to demonstrate the problem; another matter to provide the solution.

JOHN RAMWELL

CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONERS ALLIANCE AGM OCTOBER 2018

Immediately following PGA Conference, Harry Brett and I set off for Kenilworth to attend the AGM of the Civil Service Pensioners Alliance in our capacity as group delegates. I refer you back to the last edition of the Newsletter, in which Don Makepiece, Vice-Chair of the CSPA, contributed an article on its' day-to-day work. I joined the CSPA on retirement, started attending meetings, got elected to the Committee, and in March 2017 became Chair of the West Yorkshire Group.

In most ways the AGM is very similar to the AGMs and annual conferences of trade unions and other representative bodies up and down the country, except obviously that delegates are older and there are no issues about taking time off work to attend. The format is readily recognisable: reports, motions and guest speakers. The venue is a hotel, until 2017 a faded country pile, but then like the PGA came an upgrade to a four star hotel, the Chesford Grange near Kenilworth, still remote but at least not next to an airport. There is an overnight stay with dinner, and unlike the PGA venue the bar does sell cask ale. The AGM voting strength, should a card vote be called was 37,560, again rather different to the PGA. The CSPA can afford a General Secretary, a Deputy General Secretary and an Assistant General Secretary, all on professional salaries, along with appropriate clerical support. Like the PGA the CSPA is neutral in terms of political party allegiance, although that stricture did not appear to apply to the anti-Brexit rhetoric of the outgoing General Secretary.

As with all voluntary organisations, the CSPA spends sometime contemplating its navel. Along with motions on finance and discipline there were a number of motions relating to organisation, as the CSPA grapples with the problem of mothballed branches where there aren't sufficient volunteers to form a committee. It was notable that yet again all of the Executive Committee were re-elected unopposed. Those of you active in other organisations will be all-too-familiar with that state of affairs as voluntarism declines.

There was more than a little disquiet expressed by delegates at the steep rise in travel insurance premiums in 2018 in the CSPA travel insurance scheme. Despite the steep rise in premiums owing to a rise in claims, the scheme remains excellent value if you are a frequent foreign traveller and there are no worries about the insurer looking for a loophole to avoid paying you out. A motion to renegotiate the scheme and separate out European and rest of the world travel was lost after the EC pointed out that world-wide travellers would be the most likely sufferers from such a change, and that the "one size fits all" uniqueness of the scheme would be lost.

With no visible enthusiasm the AGM concurred with the EC that the proposed increase in State Pension Age (SPA) to 68 by 2046 should be accepted: however, speakers were very quick to seize on the final clause of the motion in which it was made clear that if life expectancy falls then not only should a review of the increase in SPA take place, but also that a reduction should be actively considered. As you might expect there were motions on NHS waiting lists, social care, the banking facilities available at post offices, transport, energy, housing and digital exclusion. The EC is mandated to pursue step-free access at railway stations, harry the government about fuel poverty and cold homes, and campaign to stop utility, insurance and other companies from penalising people who cannot or choose not to do their business on line.

Sadly the EC did not support a clause in a motion on social care that would have committed them to campaigning for care homes to be brought back into the public sector, and succeeded in having the motion remitted. I have written before about the shambolic and sometimes inhuman nature of private sector provision, and the contempt with which care workers are treated by employers intent on squeezing out every penny of profit at the expense of both staff and clients. Those who believe that the principle of public sector provision is every bit as important as substantially increased funding, will be back next year for another go.

PAUL LAXTON



From the Chair

Welcome to this edition of the RPGA Newsletter. I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year and are looking forward to another year of trips and adventures. It is 10 years at the end of March since I retired and I have to say it has been an excellent experience so here is to another 10 years: bring it on!

I was reflecting today [23rd February 2019] that it is 50 years ago exactly that I joined the “Modern Prison Service”. I remember the date as it is the same as my niece’s birthday. Living in Swadlincote near Burton- Upon- Trent at the time, the interviews and the one month’s POUT induction were at HMP Stafford along with 8 other recruits. So began my 40 years and 5 weeks’ service as it did for us all at some time. Do you recall your beginnings with HMPS? If so please tell us about it.

My first posting following Leyhill training, where we all watched Concorde take its’ first flight, was to HMP Sudbury, governed by one Charles Miles whose son was to marry my cousin [both teachers] which I kept very quiet at the time as you can imagine. My first day was Whit Monday 1969, an odd day to start, and all the training with keys, locks and most of the security stuff was immediately put on the back burner as it was Cat. D you see. We had an RPGA meeting at Sudbury last year and I asked if it might be possible to visit, so I hope to do that in May. Ironically my last day in HMPS was 31st March 2009 and we were in Cuba on holiday, so we and a few fellow travellers sat with a glass of something and toasted my “career” ending overlooking the Caribbean Sea. It’s funny how things end up!

Our last autumn RPGA committee meeting was, for the third year running, held at the PGA Annual Conference venue at Radisson Blu Hotel near East Midlands Airport. We are obliged to Andrea Albutt and her Committee for allowing us to share the facility. It also gives me the opportunity to address their conference for a few minutes about the RPGA and selling the option of membership to staff approaching retirement. One of our priorities for the next year is to increase membership and the challenge is to contact as many prior to retirement as we can. One decision that we made at that meeting was relating to future AGMs. As I reported in the last Newsletter, attendees were few on the ground at Stratford-on-Avon and cost us dearly in proportion to the event. The 2019 AGM this year will be on the 8th October at the Radisson Bleu Hotel, East Midlands Airport.

We are currently transitioning losing Bob Duncan from our Committee and Roger Outram taking over the letters and correspondence liaison role, so if you wish to write and/or email Roger is the man you need to contact. His details are in this edition.

I am pleased with the Association’s recent progress and, in particular, our financial footing as a result of Graham Mumby-Croft’s restructuring of membership subscriptions, our working link to the CSPA via Harry Brett and Paul Laxton ,work on the website from Roger Outram and our ongoing commitment to inform and be informed on your behalf. As ever, I ask that members contribute to the newsletter on retirement issues, anecdotes and anything from your careers that will be of interest to our readership.

GRAHAM SMITH, RPGA CHAIRMAN

Dear Mr Brett,

Thank you for sending the Autumn Retired Governors newsletter to me. As always it made very interesting reading. Not least the life and career of Adrian Arnold. He was a very busy man!

He had moved on from Huntercombe before I joined the Admin staff in 1978 but his name was still on everyone's lips. A couple of weeks ago I got together with our friends Retired HSO Barry Parfitt and his wife Tricia and, as is often the case, the subject of Huntercombe came up. We were trying to recall the names of each of the governors that we had known, and the most memorable for Barry was Mr Arnold. He talked about all the good work he had done here and how very much he was missed when he moved on.

[I left in 2005 to become Peters carer following his stroke. I saw many changes both before and since.] My husband, Peter, did not know him, of course, as he had left long before Peter worked here, but it struck me as a huge coincidence that their names should appear alongside each other in the list of those who had passed away. [Peter in February and Mr Arnold in May]

By the way, would you please correct my name in your records. I am Christine, (not Barbara as on your postal address label..) Thanks

Christine Fincham

YOUR LETTERS SPRING 2019

Margery Marchant is now well settled in her care home and well looked after by the staff. Her family visit regularly and are very supportive, but Margery still misses Bernard very much. She says she is also getting very forgetful: but on the phone, we have a nice chat about former times and the wonderful characters we were privileged to work with.

The event of the Year, which only comes to full fruition in March, is the marriage of **Kate Lomax** (nee: Warburton) and **Kit Jarman**. They were both members of the 21st Staff Course in 1964, which by coincidence consisted of 21 members. I was one of those, but was unaware at the time that these two had a bit of a 'relationship.' For different reasons both decided after a few years in the Service, that it was not for them, and set off on new careers; Kate with the probation service and in due course marriage to **Brian**, also a probation officer. Kate remained a friend of my family and we kept in touch over the years. Kate did not give up entirely on the prison service, as much, later on, she was accepted as an Independent Monitoring Board member at Onley.

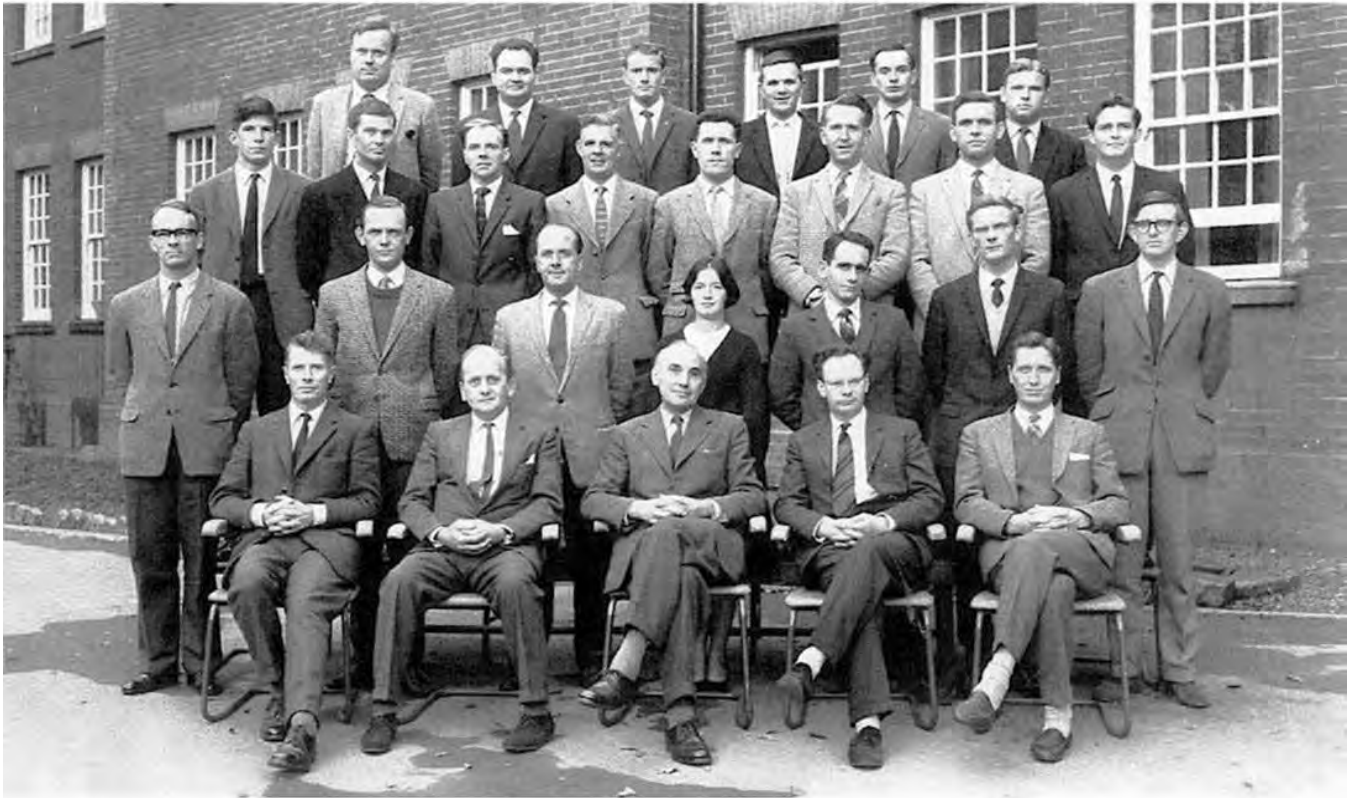
Kit was more elusive, after resigning from Portland Borstal, he trained for the Ministry, once qualified he joined the Royal Marines as a Chaplain. He also married somewhere along the line. I was aware to a degree of some of that but then lost complete contact, as did Kate.

Brian died, but not before both of them had been on a thrilling cruise to the Antarctic. Kate decided she would venture on another cruise on her own. Looking around the ship's library, she came across a copy of Croxford, the directory of all vicars. Thumbing through, she alighted on the name of **Rev. C Jarman**, with his current address and telephone number. He had left the Marines, become divorced,

and moved over to the Scottish Episcopal Church and was based in Oban. Kate made the decision to make contact and subsequently to meet up, so set off on the long journey from Rugby to Oban.

Kit had been ill with cancer for 3 years, and at one point was unable to wash or dress himself, or even walk. He states he received excellent care and support in Scotland, nothing short of fantastic. With that and his Royal Marines background, he set about learning to walk again, which he achieved. He then set about organizing a sponsored walk to raise money for the various charities that had given him so much support and encouragement.

Where it all Started
The 21st Staff Course 1964



Barry Smith George Shore Bob Duncan Dave Sherwood Derek Twiner Kit Jarman
Stephen Pryor Paul Clairmont Dave Alderson Norman Lewington Joe Witty Kelvin Wyatt Bob Mole Alan Dunton
Hamilton Smith John Miller John Williams Kate Warburton Howard Jones Teg Davies Colin Scott
Ted Williams Wilf Booth David Hewlings Brian Emes Bill Driscoll

In the summer of 2018 they came down to visit me, Kit had clearly matured into a fine 'young' man' from all the life experiences he been through. We had a lot to talk about having not been in touch for 50 years. The relationship between Kit and Kate has matured, and in November they became engaged, and the wedding (after some ecclesiastical hiccups were eventually resolved) will be held in The Chapel of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford on 30 March 2019.

Both are strong-willed and neither really wanted to leave their current abode and local friends. Such is love that it was resolved, Kate will sell her house and is buying a bungalow in a nearby village, and Kit will move down.

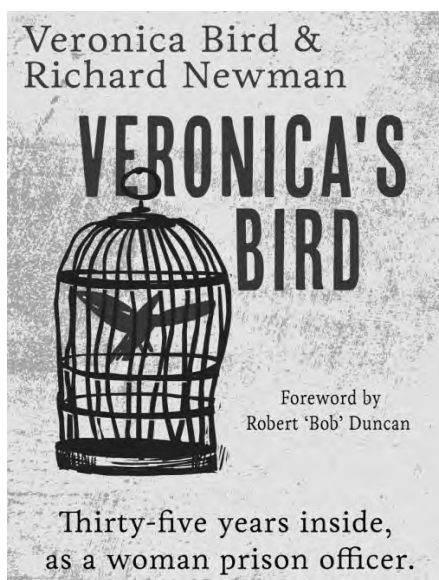
I just find it so romantic that a flicker of a flame 50 years ago has now burst into a full burning bush. But then the 21st staff course was full of so many intriguing characters, unfortunately so many have departed, so it is great to have such a happy story to tell.

Bill Abbott sent me an article about the 'LYKE WAKE WALK' with a heading 'Why would anyone want to hike 40 miles in less than a day? Because this 'death march' is the Yorkshire equivalent of climbing Everest. I served with Bill at Pollington Borstal and he introduced me to the walk which I undertook with him. On a later occasion, we had a friend from Belgium staying with us who was a very keen walker and wished to tackle the walk. My wife was pregnant at the time but insisted that I should undertake the support role by driving them there and meeting up during the walk at various points to ensure they were OK to continue and to pick them up at the finish. Jane had already been admitted to hospital, but birth had been slow. I phoned the hospital from an isolated phone box on the moor, only to discover that my daughter had been born an hour ago. Once the walk was successfully completed we all made a speedy drive to Wakefield hospital. So the walk has a special memory for me, as Bill kindly reminded me in his email.

Bill was a great walker, and every weekend on duty he would take a group of Borstal Lads up to the fells and undertake a walk. Normally they would all return between 4 and 5pm, in time for the evening meal. On one occasion it was gone 6 pm, and as the Duty Governor I was getting anxious (no mobile phones in those days). It turned out that a local farmer had spotted them tramping over the fell on a wet afternoon, and had invited them all in for a slap-up tea.

What a lot we lost when some idiot politician decided that Youth Custody was the 'in thing' with all sentences now determinate. I remember it well as I had recently been posted to Wellingborough Borstal and discovered that there was only one other person out of all the staff who understood how to calculate release dates, taking all the relevant factors into account. So training had to be implemented immediately. All staff now had to be in uniform. In the current trend to 'normalize' prison, I can imagine some bright spark in the Ministry of Justice someday in the future coming up with the amazing idea of 'why not put staff in Young Offenders establishments in civilian clothing!'

Good to hear from **Danny and Joan Ozanne**, though Danny does not write a lot these days, but we had a chat on the phone. He has early signs of dementia but remains active, and at 90 years of age must be one of the oldest members. If we talk about the 'old days in the service' his mind is as clear as a bell.



Veronica has had a busy schedule of meetings and media interviews, in addition, she has sold her current property and bought a bungalow nearby which suddenly came on the market, and was a property that she had felt she would like. So has had to face the upheaval of moving and now has builders in as it needs upgrading.

Sales of the book have done well, and Veronica has already made donations of over £1,000 to York Cancer Care, Butler Trust, and Shannon Trust, and smaller donations to Kidney research and M&S. The book is still selling well, and she is still being asked to give talks to about her life and the book to many and varied organization.

For those who remember **Abi Sheikh**, he has not had a good 2018, his wife, Zarina's medical condition has deteriorated and she is only able to walk a few feet. Abi has had a chair lift installed and modified the bathroom to help with the condition. He adds, life now is one continuous round of hospital appointments, some as far away as 30 miles. The most recent hospital appointment confirmed that Zarina has the onset of Parkinson Disease, which is only going to get worse. Then to add to his woes, the water main outside his house burst badly damaging the block paving. The leak was repaired the same day, but then the battle to repair my drive began in earnest and is still going on. For 3 months Zarina could not leave the house because they had blocked the area with barriers. Despite all that Abi says he is healthy as can be for a diabetic, but does get tired a lot easier now. He is also proud that his children and grandchildren are all doing well in their chosen careers. But looking around he says he feels much luckier than many, a colleague of great faith and determination, and an example to all of us.

Rev Tom Johns sent a Christmas card but no news this year.

Always a delight to hear from **John and Jean Childs**, he says they have the usual ailments of those who reach the age of 85, and have various hospital appointments etc, but do get out every day for a walk and possibly a latté. They also had a family reunion with Simon and family from Hong Kong, and David and wife from Singapore. They now have 6 grandsons and 2 great-grandsons, so they are kept busy. They too have kept in touch with **Margery Marchant**, who is now in a care home and well looked after there, and they plan to visit her in early 2019. John also thanked the team for producing the Newsletter and helping everyone to keep in touch with colleagues.

Always great to hear **from Ron and Sue Curtis**, I served with Ron both at Dover and at the Staff College. They mention that Sue's mother is now 90, and they took her on a 'Down Memory Lane' to Cornwall where she grew up, and they visited places which she remembered and met up with family and friends who still live there. I quote 'Mum was in her element.' Well done Ron. Their mother still remains able to live independently at home, but unfortunately has the early onset of Alzheimer's so will gradually need more help. I cannot claim to know Sue's Mum, but I know where she lived, as when we were at Dover Borstal and had to undertake 'abscond duties', Ron always insisted we undertake it in the road she lived in! They made one trip to the continent last year to visit their son Simon who is based in Eindhoven but travels all over the world with his work. Ron asks how all these managers would be able to keep in touch without the internet.

They also managed a stay on Holy Island during Lent; Ron had always wanted to experience being cut off by the tide twice a day! They also enjoyed the special peace and quiet this Island offers. My wife, Jane was a great organizer and planner. When our children were quite young, she arranged a visit to Holy Island with precise instructions on the time to start the journey and time to arrive to achieve a safe crossing of the causeway. For once she got it all wrong; we arrived only to find the tide already sweeping in. So we drove on up to Berwick on Tweed and spent several hours there whilst the tide turned, touring the delights of this walled town lying on the river Tweed, and which has been fought over incessantly by the Scots and English during the 12th to 15th centuries and has changed hands 13 times before becoming English territory in 1482. Ron also mentions the sad news that **Caryl, Max Morrison's** wife passed away in a hospice in 2018. We both knew Max from his time at Dover.

News from **Steve and Lesley Metcalfe** who fume over the mess that the politicians are making over Brexit, but as he says, it will pass in course as all things do. We all endorse that. As well as his summer sailing, he has now taken up a new obsession, Bridge, which started almost accidentally, but now he is an addict – he plays 3 tournaments a week. He says he never got over retiring but Bridge helps. He even sent me cutting from the Sunday Times by Jeremy Clarkson headed ‘Who the hell thought this game made sense? It’s as stupid as cricket.’ I will not print it all as it would fill up 2 pages, also some of us like cricket. But there you are, any other colleagues finding retirement difficult, Bridge is the answer. Pleased to see that Steve still has time to read a decent Newspaper!

News of **Chris Scott** via **Harry**; “Thank you for the email and its very interesting attachments; having read them all, I am more than ever relieved that I am no longer working in the Prison Service. I just do not see how Governors today can do their job with such a level of political interference in operational matters. The latest daft idea of providing pepper spray to officers might sound good at the Tory Conference, but in reality makes it more difficult for officers to establish good relationships with prisoners. How can officers and prisoners establish maintain good relations on a one to one basis while the officer has a can of pepper spray attached to his or her belt? It’s just stupid and does nothing to promote good relationships and a positive atmosphere.

I trust you are well Harry. Thank you for your regular updates on prison matters.

I forget most things these days so I do not know whether I have told you that I have both Alzheimer’s and Vascular Dementia. The main symptoms are forgetfulness and episodes of confusion. You sending those attachments have been very helpful to me as I am advised by the Geriatrician to keep my brain busy. I had to concentrate hard when reading them, so thanks again. We moved from the Midlands to be nearer to our eldest daughter, it was a sensible family decision, but Mary and I are not entirely happy as we have lost contact with friends and neighbor’s of many years. Dementia is a dreadful disease which cannot be cured but only slowed down a little by medication. My GP tells me that it will only get worse and worse until it gets better. I asked what this meant and he said that it gets better for patients when it is so advanced that they don’t know anything. All that said, as the Monty Python song said ‘We must look on the bright side of life’ It’s a lovely afternoon here and the dog wants a walk. That will get me out into the sunshine and one can’t be downcast when having a walk in the fresh air and sunshine.” How true and brave of Chris to remain so positive and cheery despite his debilitating medical condition.

Further news from **Colin Tanswell**, who unfortunately was involved in a serious accident on Friday 13th July, whilst pruning the Wisteria at the front of the house, he fell from the ladder breaking three vertebrae. It was a task he had undertaken many times before, but he had failed to allow for the slippery lawn after a long dry spell. His consultant is happy that his bones are mending although he remains in some pain and still undergoing physiotherapy. So all you elderly colleagues be sure to firmly fix your ladder before you go scabbling up to prune your trees. We need your membership!

Colin had replaced his love of running with cycling, but had planned to give that up in Mid August 2018 when he would have been 80; the accident brought it to an end 6 weeks early. They had also planned to visit his younger son who now lives in Winnipeg in Canada in September. That had to be postponed due to the accident, and they now hope to go in April.

He writes that it is good to be reminded of former times together and in particular the preparations to get Newbold Revel ready for Prison Service use. He distinctly remembers the RC Priest whom he liaised with over the furnishings for the chapel; he was very demanding, although it was very worthwhile to look and see the results of our endeavors at the Thanksgiving Service on the Grand Opening. He states he certainly remains proud of his contribution which was a highlight of his career; and thinks that we can both consider that we were greatly instrumental in its initial success, although without **Bill Driscoll's** arm twisting it would never have seen the light of day. I endorse what Colin writes, and remember the occasion well, **Douglas Hurd**, as Home Secretary and his charming wife were the guests of honour, and we all had a splendid buffet, no expense spared!

Colin says he has not been back since 2002, when he gave up being Chair of the Prison Service Athletic Association. 'I have no doubt there have been many changes, although we were assured that the expensive furnishings in the lounges would be long lasting!'

He also mentions he well remembers **John Sandy** as they first met in 1961 at Gaynes Hall when Colin was 'a mere CO' and John an AG11, they had remained in touch as John was the patron of the PSAA, but they last met up in 2002. I was pleased to put them in touch with each other. John in response informed me that Colin was a 'breath of fresh air at Gaynes Hall and a delight to work with between 1961-63. A positive' can do man' then we met up again when I was Head of P7 and he was instrumental in getting Newbold Revel ready for opening.

I also asked John to update me on what he had been involved in since retirement. He was just off to Hospital for a minor operation but promised to do so once he had recovered. All went well medical wise, and true to his word he followed up with a full response.

'Since I retired in 1990 I have been much involved in a wide range of Community activities starting with The Church at both Diocesan and Local level, I was employed by the Diplomatic Service for ten years as an Escort looking after VIP Government Visitors. I have been closely associated with the Police in Community work. I set up a local community organization to breathe new life into Godalming and was Chairman of a Vulnerable Needs Housing Association. Very involved with the Royal Surrey County Hospital and the League of Friends of Milford. For 8 years Chairman of our local state of the art Day Centre and have been a Governor of the local large Comprehensive Academy. Over a period of 5 years built an all- weather Cycle Jumps Track catering for catering for all age groups and riders up to and including Internationals. For 10 years a member of The High Sheriffs Youth Awards Scheme. As a Waverly Councilor I was the National Chairman of the Better Government for Older People, a strange and challenging experience being the only Conservative on a wonderful Group! You asked me to 'blow my trumpet', but that is all in the past now. Currently I am The Chief Guide at the The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst; I remain a Governor at the local Academy. I also continue with Clare to help run the local village fete which we have organized for the last 25 years

Our three children have produced 9 grandchildren which we adore and it is great when all 17 of us get together. We meet up with Colin Honey regularly for lunch which is always fun although both of us are beginning to feel our age.

I never fail to give thanks for my time in the Prison Service and the training and opportunities I had with such a wonderful group of men and woman. It was training that helped me in retirement which has lasted for 29 years, and I still have the urge to carry on.'

Thank you, John, for so much news; your sentiments so aptly express the feelings about the Service that many of your retired colleagues would wholeheartedly endorse. You clearly still have a zest for life, but also the right to slow down a bit.

Some colleagues will remember **Tom Robson**, who was on the National POA Committee and now retired. I knew him when he was one of the Trustees of the Shannon Trust, and I was Chair. He is well but has no contact with the Trust now. It was great to hear from him. He writes 'The Service has indeed fallen into disrepair. It will take some investment and determination to turn it around. Interested to see who takes the helm, I hope it is someone who will stand up for our great Service against all those who care little about it (mainly in the political field); always good to have a moan. Keep up the good work.

As I write it has just been announced that Dr Jo Farrar is to be the next Director General of the Prison Service. She is a former council chief and senior Whitehall official and is currently director-general for local government and public services at the housing and communities ministry. So by definition, like most of her senior civil servants in the Ministry of Justice, she knows little about the Prison Service. Her appointment on the **1st April 2019** may be an omen of what is to come!

My computer has a mind of its own and annoyingly lands me up where I do not expect to be. However, recently it took me to one of the social sites, and fiddling around I discovered information on some former colleagues.

Kevin Brewer now lives in Nimes in southern France but appears to travel extensively on his beloved motorbike, so it would appear he has become one of the 'hairy bikers'. He clearly likes the warm sunshine of southern France and bewails rainy days and the fact French wine keeps going up in price. Kevin appears to be in touch with **Peter Leonard** .



Kevin Brewer and Chris



Peter Leonard

Peter and I served together at Wellingborough Borstal. Chris and Peter will celebrate 50 years of marriage on 27th September 2019, so our very best wishes for their future from all of us.

Almost finally but by no means least, delighted to be in touch with **John and Ice Ship** and receive news and greetings from the 'Land of Smiles' (Thailand). He says he picked up news of Paul Wallen's medical problems from the Last Newsletter and let the staff at the Mount know by social media. They were delighted that he was on the road to a full recovery. He says that they are both still enjoying life in SE Asia, and after being together for ten years, Ice decided to make an honest man of him and they married in the latter part of 2017. From the photo, you sent you both look blissfully happy. Congratulations to you both from all of your colleagues.

John says 'my heart issues seem to be on the back burner for now, though I still see the heart specialist every three months, but it means we can still enjoy our travelling, mainly in this part of the world, but we spent Christmas of 2017 with my brother in Stratford upon Avon. Ice wanted to see snow and despite my advice that a white Christmas was unlikely we went ahead with the trip, an hour after our arrival we walked through a blizzard in Covent Garden, the obsession with seeing real snow was quickly lost and we had to retire to a local hostelry to drink some Gluehwein. We were also able to make a trip to Edinburgh and Reykjavik and to catch up with some former colleagues from Brixton and **Jeanne Bryant** from Wandsworth, and my last manager, **Brian Pollett**, both of whom were looking disgustingly well. Jeanne visited us in Bangkok last year along with her partner and sisters. We have a few more visitors scheduled for this year. We decided we would not visit Europe last year but then a very good flight deal cropped up, so we visited Austria, Hungary and Turkey, a most enjoyable trip which has already given the boss some future travel ideas! Plenty to see in this part of the world as well, so we ventured to Xi'an in China, home of the Terracotta Warriors, I had always wanted to visit China, and would go back, but not during Chinese Holiday week when about 1 million Chinese people are also visiting g Xi'an. (I was privileged to visit China in the 1990,s when only the officials were allowed cars, and everyone else used a bike; to see Tiananmen Square a vast sea of bicycles was very impressive.(They also managed trips to Singapore, Malaysia and Cambodia, all within a couple of hours flying time. These foreigners know how to maximize sightseeing tours!)

John writes 'that the biggest change was the decision they took to move out of Bangkok; much as we like Bangkok, the traffic and crowds, coupled with the never-ending polluted air, was becoming unbearable. So we decided to move 200Kms south to Prachuapkirihan province, just outside of Hua Hin. (I am sure everyone knows exactly where that is!) We've got a small house in a gated community in the countryside. Our traffic jams are limited to sometimes getting stuck behind the farmer when he is moving the cows across the road. We are only minutes from a large sandy beach, being south of the popular tourist town Hua Hin it's pretty quiet, but we go there for the occasional meal or pub visit. We take advantage of the Tuk Tuk pick up from the house for about £7.50, more expensive than Bangkok, but just about affordable, even in these Brexit days, but I won't start on that. (What a relief, we are unable to escape it!)



The latest Safety in Custody, including Deaths in Prison, Assaults and Self Harm statistics are printed on the page opposite. Phil Wheatley's comments on the Report are set out below.

“The latest Safety in Custody Quarterly makes truly worrying reading for anyone who cares about the health of our prison system. There is no good news, rates of death from all causes have increased, self harm and violence between prisoners and towards staff have increased to reach the highest level since these statistics were first published. It should be remembered there is a time lag in the data and this publication only covers the period up to end September. Anecdotally there have been more recent signs that things may be starting to move in the right direction. Even if the rising trend comes to halt soon it will be a very long haul to get back to the levels of safety we had in the period before the end of 2012 when major cuts in funding led to so many experienced staff being encouraged to retire early and standardised lower staffing levels were imposed across the Prison Service.”

Phil Wheatley








Please send Letters to: 12 Grove Park, Magazine Lane, Wisbech, PE13 1LF

E-mail: roger@rsoutram.co.uk

Other contact: Telephone 01945 582624

Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to December 2018 Assaults and Self-harm to September 2018

Main Points

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|---|---|---|
| <p>Number of deaths increased compared to the previous 12 month period</p> |  | <p>There were 325 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to December 2018, up 10% from the previous year. Of these, 4 were homicides, up from 3 incidents in the previous year. There were 92 self-inflicted deaths, up from 70 in the previous year, 3 of which occurred in the female estate, compared to 2 incidents in the previous 12 months.</p> |
| <p>Self-harm incidents continue to rise, reaching new record high</p> |  | <p>In the 12 months to September 2018, there were 52,814 incidents, a 23% increase from the previous year, and a new record high. Incidents requiring hospital attendance increased by 4% to 3,179, the highest figure in the time series. On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents is up 12% at 15,316.</p> |
| <p>Assaults and serious assaults continue to rise, reaching record highs</p> |  | <p>In the 12 months to September 2018, there were 33,803 assault incidents, up 20% from the previous year. Of these, 3,949 (12%) were serious, up 6% from the previous year. Both of these figures are the highest in the time series. Similarly, quarterly assault incidents increased by 5% to 9,082 incidents.</p> |
| <p>Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults continue to rise, reaching record highs</p> |  | <p>There were 24,138 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the 12 months to September 2018, up 18% from the previous year. Of these, 3,019 (13%) were serious assaults, an increase of 2% in the number of serious incidents from the previous year. Both figures are record highs. Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults saw an increase of 1% in the latest quarter, with 6,373 incidents.</p> |
| <p>Assaults on staff continue to rise, reaching record highs</p> |  | <p>There were 10,085 assaults on staff in the 12 months to September 2018, up 29% from the previous year. There has been a change in how these incidents are recorded since April 2017 which may have contributed to the increase. See the guide for more information. Of these, 997 (10%) were serious assaults on staff, up 27% from the previous year. In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff increased by 12% to a new record high of 2,820 incidents.</p> |

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody and HMPPS Immigration Removal Centres in England and Wales, with figures in quarterly summary tables presented on a 12-month rolling basis over an 11-year time series. Supplementary annual tables, providing more in-depth statistics on a calendar year basis, underlying data files with pivot tables providing lower level granularity, and a guidance technical document are also available alongside this bulletin, at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics.

Dear Readers

Sadly you are not taking the opportunity to write to me and I guess that the fact that I am not well known to you is the reason. This section of the Newsletter has hitherto been the backbone of the publication alongside the many interesting and diverse articles written by you the members of the association. While the articles are really interesting and informative they don't serve the purpose of the letters page which is to allow members to share anecdotal events and activities in their own lives. We are in this association, I guess, because of the desire to maintain some contact with those who have shared our experiences within a service that we have loved and among people we have admired.

In an effort to bring our Association into the 21st century we have created a website that contains back copies of the Newsletter. We have separated out articles written by colleagues and filed by the author's name in a library of contributors hopefully with your help we can develop the website to include many things that interest us all.. Some guidance from you the members would be greatly appreciated. The website can be found at <www.rpga.org.uk>. You will need a password to enter the full site. All that is required to access a password is to be a member of the RPGA and have your e-mail address registered with Harry Brett.

Back to the matter of the Letters page While I have not received any contribution at all my dear friend Bob Duncan continues to generate wonderful news from all his friends and colleagues and in spite of his retiring from the committee, we are fortunate indeed that he continues to be willing to share his news with us.

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FROM THE TREASURER

As I write this I am in the process of completing the work to send the accounts off for audit, and in doing so I have suddenly realised that this must be my eighth year of being the Treasurer! Doesn't time fly when you are having fun?

Because I am in the middle of preparing for audit I am not yet in a position to give the actual year-end figures. but what I can say is that we certainly remain solvent, and in fact the accounts are looking healthy enough for me to say that I feel confident that no increase in subscriptions will be required within the next 12 months. That is, of course, dependent on there not being a significant increase in the cost of the dairies from the PGA.

One thing I have noted is that I am still getting the occasional member who, having changed their standing order to reflect the new cost, failed to cancel the old one, resulting in me getting two payments from them, often on the same day. I obviously go through the bank statements very carefully, but as I believe I have stated before, the information I get from the bank regarding where the payment has come from is quite limited, and often does not include the full name of the sender as the bank's system obviously seems only capable of providing a limited number of letters/digits on a statement.

I have written to those that I have picked up as paying twice, and will of course be reimbursing them the overpayment, but once again I would ask all members to please check your accounts to ensure that you are not paying us twice, or paying at the wrong rate. Annual subscription without a diary is £13 and with a diary is £20. If this is not what you are paying then please instruct your bank to pay the correct amount.

GRAHAM MUMBY-CROFT

COMPUTER CORNER

In the early days of online computer scams life seemed quite simple because the majority of scams were emails, often originating in countries such as Nigeria, and usually offering easy money for lodging large amounts of cash in your bank account. Of course the scam was if you gave your bank account details you were far more likely to find your own money going out rather than vast riches coming in. The giveaway of these emails was that the offer was simply too good to be true, and that the email was often written in very poor English with appalling grammar and syntax. However, we all know stories of someone who fell for the scam, lost money they could ill afford, and in the process learned a valuable, but expensive lesson in safety on the internet.

Unfortunately scams have become much more sophisticated, and the people who perpetrate them are now often professional criminals, either expert in computers, or working with someone who is, and as a consequence the range and sophistication of scams has improved to a level where criminals are often able to replicate genuine websites, and to generate email addresses that are almost identical to real ones.

So, for example, you may receive an email that looks as if it from your bank, it is addressed to you personally and the sending email address seems to be genuine. This often is sufficient to fool the majority of people into responding, and unfortunately on occasions giving over bank account details which allow the thieves (because it is a scam) to access the account, and to extract money. Many banks are now taking a harder line in cases where the account holder has willingly given account details allowing access to their account, and in a number of cases have refused to refund any amount lost.

So it is worth remembering that in general scams have two main aims. They are to either get you to pass over your bank details so that they can access your account directly, or they aim to try to get you to click on a link, which by doing so usually then downloads a piece of malicious software (MALWARE) to your computer that will then infect your computer with something nasty that in one way or another is seeking to extract money from you.

In order to protect you the National Cyber Security Centre, (which is part of GCHQ) has issued guidance on its website which can be accessed by copying and pasting this link into your browser www.snipca.com/30083 You can also visit the website HaveIBeenPawnd? at <https://haveibeenpawnd.com>

This site will tell you if your email address, and therefore potentially some of your personal details, have been included in any known cases of hacking. You may have read of cases where in security breaches, such as with TalkTalk, tens of thousands of account details were hacked (stolen). Some security breaches are bigger than others, such as the one at Yahoo where millions of account details were breached. So do not be surprised when you go onto the HaveIBeenPawnd site to find that your details have indeed been part of a leak from somewhere.

In this case the action to take is to change your passwords on everything that you use. Remember there are a number of free password generators that can be very helpful in a situation like this. One of the best is LASTPASS. These help to generate completely random and unbreakable passwords. As an aside you may not be aware that every year security companies publish the list of top ten passwords used by people to log into the internet or other online services, and every year the most commonly used are: 123456, or Password, followed by qwerty, (first 6

keys on the top line of a keyboard). Other common passwords are people's own name or a pet's name. Unfortunately passwords such as these take only seconds to break using sophisticated computer software, whereas a randomly generated password of 10 characters can take millions of computer hours to break even using sophisticated software. The reality is that criminals will always look for the easy codes to break simply because they take less time and effort.

As an additional line of defence many sites offer the option of what is known as "Two Factor Authentication". What this does is add an extra element into the log in process which involves the site you are logging into sending an authentication code to your mobile phone. You then enter this code into the site as the final element to gain access. In this way even if your password or computer has been compromised, unauthorised access cannot be gained. This is well worth using, especially on banking sites.

One of the major problems with trying to keep secure is the fact that criminals -- and let us not forget that some of these scams are encouraged and funded by foreign governments -- are always looking at new ways to infiltrate people's systems in order to commit crime. As more and more people live their lives through their smartphone, so the criminals have turned their gaze in that direction and, as a consequence, there has been a sharp rise in the number of cases of scams directed at smartphone users, mostly through scam telephone calls but some in messages or emails. There are also an increasing number of cases of some smartphone applications being infected with viruses. So my advice is to be aware at all times, and if you are not sure if something is genuine, then most likely it is not so ignore it, and delete it. With regard to smartphone applications the advice is to only ever download them from the Google Play Store, for Android phones, or the Apple Store for iPhones.

I have to admit that I am a great fan of the BBC website and have the BBC News website set as my Home Page whenever I log in to the internet. If you have never used the site, or if you do use it but have never really explored all that is available I can thoroughly recommend that you spend some time and see what it has to offer. If you sign up to an account with the BBC, which is absolutely free, then you have the option of being able to personalise your home page to carry the sort of items that are of interest to you, as well as being able to localise your news to include what is current in your area, and details on local weather.

The site does use cookies, (these are small bits of computer code that allows websites to load more quickly and to remember your preferences) but these are not obtrusive, and of course there are no adverts. The site also gives you access to both the BBC iPlayer where there are literally hundreds of hours of television programmes available (very handy if you have missed something) and the new SOUNDS application which does the same thing for radio. I spend hours listening to radio programmes that I have missed, especially comedy programmes on Radio 4.

To find the BBC Home site simply type bbc.co.uk into your search facility and then clicking on BBC-Home. Across the top you will find a number of TABS that include the iPlayer and SOUNDS. Just click away to look around the site as you have no need to fear that you may click on anything that will either download any unwanted junk, or try to charge you money.

Are you baffled by the jargon of computers? If so here are a few explanations that you may, (or may not) find useful, or at least enlightening:

32bit/64bit This is a measure of how much data a computers processor unit can handle based on access to physical memory. Most older computers are 32bit and modern ones, less than 10-years old are 64bit. The good news is that 32bit optimised software will run on a 64bit machine and 64bit software will run on a 32bit machine, albeit slightly slower.

USB 2.0/3.0/3.1 USB stands for Universal Series Bus and simply means a standardised system for computers to connect to peripheral items such as keyboards, mice and external drives like a CD. The standards for USB are controlled by an International body to ensure that USB is the same from any source, anywhere in the world. The main difference in the numbers relates to the speed at which they can transfer data. The original USB 1 has been superseded now, but transferred data at the rate of 12mb/sec. The latest USB 3.1 transfers data at the rate of 10gb/sec or almost 1000 times faster. You may not be aware but USB is colour coded inside the connection with USB 1 being white, USB 2 black and USB 3 blue. USB also delivers power as well as data.

USB A/B/C This refers to the type of connection on the end of the lead. USB/A is the standard oblong connection at your computer. USB/B is the smaller square type of connection, usually used on printers and other peripherals, although this is now almost redundant. USB/C is the latest micro connection and connects to and charges items such as mobile phones and tablets. Many newer laptop computers come with at least 1 USB/C port.

Wi-Fi Contrary to popular belief Wi-Fi does not stand for Wireless Fidelity but is actually a trademark name for the Wi-Fi Alliance, which is the organisation that oversees the standardisation of the system and compliance with Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) regulations. The current IEEE standard is 802.11ac so if you are looking for any item of Wi-Fi equipment then this is the compliance standard to look for in order to achieve the best speeds and quality.

SD Cards Secure Digital cards are Memory Cards that fit into portable items such as cameras, phones and Tablets to provide memory storage function. They come in a range of sizes of Standard, Mini and Micro, and a range of capacities and data transfer rates. They also come as SDHC/SDXC/SDUC depending on their capacity.

CPU Central Processor Unit. This is the computer chip at the heart of any computer that does the actual work of carrying out the calculations that make a computer work.



Codec Stands for Compressor/Decompressor and is a piece of computer code that tells the computer how to record and play different types of media (usually music or video).

GRAHAM MUMBY-CROFT

Membership Report – February 2019

We have had a slight reduction in membership from 422 to 419. We welcome new members Vicky O’Dea and Luke Serjeant. We are sorry to announce the deaths of Brian Baldwin and J R Penson. We have also been informed of the deaths of ex-governor grades and ex-colleagues whom many will know: Duncan Scales (serving Governor), Bill Ginn, Shaun McCabe, Tom Reilly, Colin Steele, Mel Atkinson and Brian Noble. Our condolences go out to their families and friends. We have also had Newsletters returned for C D Grave and J L Philips, so if anyone is aware of their new address then please let me know. I can be contacted at h_brett@sky.com or 01477 760075.

Some members may have joined the CSPA because of the attractive travel insurance it offered. It has been noted that over the last 2 years prices have increased considerably- doubling in fact- with my own going up from £374 to £504 this year alone. John Berry also received a hefty increase this year and so sought other quotations, and has found that the Forces Pension Society offered annual travel insurance for £374 as opposed to the £469 AXA (CSPA) were demanding. There is a £40 joining fee to join the Forces Pension Society and of course you have to be ex-forces or your parents have to have been in the forces to qualify. I am not ex-forces but I did try comparisons with Benenden, StaySure and Compare the Market, not finding anything (with my current medical restrictions stated) that came near the CSPA quote. John Pudney also sought a quote from Forces Pension Society and because of his current age of 80+ then the quote from CSPA was lower so it will be dependent very much on your current age and medical restrictions.

Whilst mentioning the CSPA, they are currently heading a campaign to ensure that widows do not have to give up their pension entitlements if they later re-marry or cohabit. They are also fighting hard to ensure the BBC do not remove the right to free TV licences for the over-75s. We would encourage members to join or remain members of the CSPA, as we believe they still offer excellent value as well as assistance on legal advice and IT assistance. Anyone who is interested in joining the CSPA should contact me and I will send them joining instructions.

HARRY BRETT

THE NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RPGA WILL BE HELD AT THE RADISSON BLEU HOTEL, EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT ON TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER AT 2PM. LUNCH WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM 13.00. PGA CONFERENCE WILL BE TAKING PLACE SIMULTANEOUSLY AT THE VENUE SO THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET FORMER COLLEAGUES STILL IN HARNESS AND PERHAPS OBSERVE SOME OF THE DEBATES IN THE CONFERENCE HALL. **THOSE PLANNING TO ATTEND SHOULD CONTACT RAY LONDON EITHER BY E MAIL AT raymond_london@hotmail.com OR BY TELEPHONE ON 01480 390135 BY 1st SEPTEMBER 2019 .**

BRIAN COURTNEY HAYDAY 1929-2019 R.I.P.

Brian was born in Portsmouth on 8 August 1929 and passed away on 6 March 2019. He joined the prison service in 1958 and was first posted to Rochester as a prison officer. He was then posted to various establishments: Kingston, Portland, OTS Wakefield, Winchester, Bristol, Reading then finally the Regional office for the South East as Assistant Regional Director. He retired in 1988 but was brought back into service in 1989/90 to deal with issues at HMP Holloway and instigated the introduction of male Senior Officers into a female establishment, which in turn opened the gates for cross-gender deployment throughout the country. He was part of the team who compiled the report for Lord Justice Wolfe after the Strangeways riot. Between 1990 and 1999 he worked for Crown Agents taking overseas senior prison officials courses, finally finishing in 1999 to spend a happy retirement with his wife Wendy.

BRIAN WALSHAW

Bedford Prison into the Millennium

2000

Andrew Cross appointed as the 50th Governor.

29-8-2000

Drug Detection Dogs become operational in the Prison Service.

2-10-2000

Human Rights Act introduced.

18-9-2001

Royal visit by Princess Anne.

Charity Workshop in C Wing basement converted into Induction Unit for new prisoners

1-6-2004

Joined Bedford as Head of Residence and a member of the Senior Management Team, where Guy Baulf was the 51st Governor, transferring there in February 2004.

19-9-2004

New regime introduced at Bedford, allowing prisoners "up" and "down" time for each wing on a daily basis.

10-12-2004

Operational Capacity for Bedford, increased from 464 prisoner places to 494.

4-4-2005

New Indeterminate Public Protection sentences (CJA 2003) introduced, for 2nd serious offenders. These replaced the "automatic" life sentences.

Bedford's budget for 2005/2006 was £12,083,415. Cost per place was £36,648 and cost per prisoner was £24,258

19-9-2005

Implementation of new prisoner self harm procedures, called Assessment Care In Custody and Teamwork "ACCT", replacing the outdated system aimed at the care for vulnerable, suicidal prisoners.

2004-2005

High Performance status granted.

2005-2006

High Performance status granted again. Paul Kempster appointed as 52nd Governor.
Bedford's budget for 2006/2007 was just over £11,000,000, less than 2005/2006

November 2006 Offender Management launched.

2007 Frank Flynn appointed as 53rd Governor.

Bedford's budget for 2007/2008 was just over £11,000,000, slightly more than 2006/2007, but less than 2005/2006. Bedford's prisoner turnover showed that 90% of the transient population changed every 50 days.

9-5-2007

Prison Service moves from the Home Office to the Ministry of Justice

9-6-2007

New Early Release Scheme for prisoners introduced.

29-8-2007

Prison Officers go on strike.

1-4-2008

National Offender Management Service in place throughout Prison Service.

27-5-2008

Implementation of the Integrated Drug treatment System at Bedford "IDTS", which allowed the prescribing of Subutex and Methadone to prisoners, with heroin addiction.

14-8-2008

Prison Population in England and Wales, reaches all time high of 83,841 prisoners.

2009 Ian Blakeman appointed as the 54th Governor.

Bedford Prison remains a "Local" Prison, serving the Courts where prisoners are sentenced or remanded in custody, before being allocated to a "Training" Prison, if necessary. It offers two main workshops, an industrial cleaning course, part time education, a library, gymnasium and a "first night" induction wing for new receptions. There are no offending behaviour courses available to prisoners and the regime is split into "up" and "down" time, in terms of association / activity.

September 2012

Bedford Prison is reported as having the unenviable record for the highest number of suicides in England & Wales during 2011/2012. Between 2000 and 2008 there were 14 self inflicted deaths. The names of the prisoners concerned have been redacted in the interests of taste and decency.

6-11-2016

Major riot at Bedford Prison, causing over £1 million damage to the main wings.

2018

Bedford placed on "special measures" in May. In September due to insufficient progress Peter Clarke, the Chief Inspector of Prisons triggered an "urgent notification" warning to the government regarding conditions in the jail. Mr Clarke said "the decline in standards is as sad as it is inexcusable."

FRANCIS ANDREW McGILWAY