

CHAPTER 11.

PRISON EXPERIENCES.

Leyhill Prison was formerly an American ^{open} Army Camp .
 It was set in, and surrounded by, magnificent
 Gloucester countryside and adjoining a rare arboretum, ^{which was}
 part of the estate of the Earl of Ducey, on whose
 estate the prison was located. The arboretum contained
 rare trees from all over the world, planted by former
 Earls to commemorate their world wide travels. I came
 to love the spring and the autumn which ^{yielded with}
 the best of American New England Autumn
 scenes.

The prison entrance was open, apart from the obstructing
 bar which was raised by the officer on gate duty, and although
 the Prison sign ^{at the entrance} pointed out the same ominous
 warnings about the dangers of ^{unauthorised} entering, or escaping,
 the general scene was, ^{for me,} like a graduation day from hell
 to heaven. Reception was relaxed, the reception
 officer friendly and helpful, and the sight of prisoners
 walking around with bronzed sun burnt bodies, after the ^{prison grey skins}
 we had left behind, gave Tom and I
 the kind of hope and encouragement we needed. Not so ^{for}
 Frank. The prospect of having to 'do his own thing'
 worried him, after ten years of doing the same things,
 at the same time every day on the instructions of the
 officers, and with mates who like himself were serving
 life sentences, ^{to} be thrust into a 'free'
 prison regime amongst all kinds of prisoners serving
 short or long sentences, ^{alarmed him}. He immediately
 began to talk about applying to be 'sent back'.

Being 'sent back' is one of the main punishments
 available to the staff of an open prison and it is
 used as an effective weapon in maintaining discipline.

But, here was Frank within hours of arriving in a near 'prison
 paradise', wanting to go back to the Scrubs. I later
 observed that in every case, those first days following a lifer's
 arrival from a closed prison are extremely testing and
 difficult days for them.

When the first ^{single} room becomes available ^{it} is allocated to them, and they are able to shut themselves off when they feel like it, ^{and it is them that they begin to} assume a kind of normality.

Communal living in a cubicled open ward with no doors and no privacy and including, as it does, the noise and ~~exuberance~~ of short term men constantly being released or admitted, creates tensions which are unbearable for men who 'have no release date'. I observed a marked difference between lifers arriving from Portsmouth, Wakefield or the Scrubs. Each prison regime affected men differently, and gave them all ^{the} characteristics ^{stamp} which in turn enabled you to guess ^{which prison} they had ^{come} from. My initiation to Leyhill was a stormy one, I was put to work cleaning out the officers club, situated within the prison grounds. ^I It was a job to fill in time until I was seen by the reception board and allocated to a regular job. ^{On} my first working morning, the officers wives were holding a keep fit class in the club.

I watched them come in, hang their coats in the cloak room and then ^{enter} the main hall. ^{My thoughts were that} at least, they seem ^{ed} to trust me not to steal anything. Within minutes I saw a couple of inmates, one of whom I recognised, enter the cloakroom and as quickly ^{disappear} again. That evening I was in the Billiard Room watching a game of snooker when two officers entered, picked me out and ordered me back to my cubicle. ^{There} ^{they} proceeded to 'turn me over'. This 'turn over' procedure was common in closed prisons, officers would ^{where} open your cell and turn everything over to see if you had anything illegally in your possession. I had not been led to expect ^{procedure in Leyhill open prison} procedure in Leyhill. I was put on ^{charge for the} Governor's next morning to explain my part in the stealing of £12 pounds from the coat of an officer's wife. I did not know in which hut the man ^{who I had seen go into} ^{he} cloakroom was billeted, but I made it my business to find out, and before the last tally at nine o'clock ^{that night 2.} found him.

He was a red headed young lifer, with many years of his sentence behind him. I was apprehensive ^{about} facing him, and clearly could not accuse him of the theft even though he had been 'out of bounds in the cloak room of the officers mess, ~~for~~ ^{THIS} offence, which ^{could} mean serious punishment for him. He threatened me with all kinds of a beating if I 'grassed'.

I maintained an apparent confident calm, although in such circumstances I always got an angina tension pain and looking straight at him, said, "Look here son, I have no doubt that you can, and might well do, all the things you say, but that is irrelevant to me. I don't know whether you took the money for a joke, or to get me into trouble. Or whether you need the money for some reason that doesn't interest me, I do not intend to get you into any trouble and, as far as I am concerned, I'll carry your can. I hope you feel pleased with yourself. I don't think much of you, ^{framing me with} a petty thieving offence. I am old enough to be your father, you should be bloody well ashamed..

"Lifers that I have met up to now seemed to me to be bigger guys than you, but I suppose I have got to learn."

I walked out on him and before I had gone many yards he caught me up. He was keen to 'square' it up with me, apologised for what he had done, ^{he} had intended it as a lesson for me and, ^{hoping} that it would get me off to a bad start. That was why he had done it.

Next day I was up before the Governor, an enlightened, sensitive, and in all ways that mattered, a civilised man. He appeared to be as embarrassed as I was, and I was sure did not envisage me as a petty thief. He carried out the procedures prescribed for such a situation.

My confrontation with the red headed lifer quickly converted him into a helpful prison friend, and when, seen after, he was allocated a room at the end of my wing, we talked about a whole range of world problems and especially about music which was one of his loves. It wasn't long before he was sent back for committing another offence. He could not live within the freedom of an open prison.

I was pleasantly surprised to have the Chairman of Leyhill Prison's elected Council as my prisoners friend at the hearing. The incident died and to my knowledge no one ever learned the real truth of the theft.

News of my problem swept around the prison community and I was immediately on the list of well known prisoners. It was clear that there was a noticeable hostility to well publicised people such as myself, politicians were tolerated, policemen detested, and these attitudes were expressed to me very soon after I arrived at Leyhill when I was persuaded, against my better judgement, to stand for election as Chairman of the Council.

The Council, unique in Britain's prisons, was made up of an elected Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Treasurer, for whom voting took place every six months, when the Chairman had to retire. Finance for the Council came from a small levy on each inmate and additionally from profits made from prison club activities. The members of the Council in addition to those elected by the whole prison, included the Chairman of each of the prison clubs covering a wide range of activities from Cricket, Soccer, Rugby, Billiards, Bowls, Business, Music, Pottery, Variety, Drama to religious clubs such as the Church of England Mens Society.

Each of the clubs was governed by a constitution without which it could not operate, and was required to hold regular monthly meetings and an election meeting every six months.

The lifers and long sentence men were mainly suspicious of the Council and the clubs, seeing them as instruments of the prison authorities. I saw real potential in such enlightened innovations and for that reason I decided to accept nomination as Chairman of the Council. There were two other nominations.

I finished a bad second of three to a poor opponent. He was serving out a sentence for an offence which would normally have ensured his certain defeat, but I was a politician so far as the 'con's' were concerned, and ~~even~~ he was better than me. I was quick to realise the significance of that defeat and it was a very important lesson to me. The victorious candidate was due for Home Leave, granted to prisoners prior to release, and unfortunately came back from it both too late and too drunk and was 'sent back' to serve out the rest of his sentence in a closed prison.

The Vice Chairman was one of three men in Leyhill at that time who was typical of a 'special' kind of offender. He and two others were all polite con men, courteous in the extreme and a pleasure to be with even in prison. When they were released, having served their sentence, they would immediately commit another offence, mostly against some unsuspecting widow, and be back inside very quickly. One of them had spent over thirty years inside for sums amounting to just over £3,000, costing the taxpayers huge sums of money far in excess of the gravity of the crimes.

The Vice Chairman by comparison was a 'short term' man, he had spent only fifteen years inside in a continuing series of sentences. Inevitably he lacked experience of chairing a meeting of any sort, let alone of prisoners ^{a meeting} consisting of solicitors, accountants, bank managers ^{and even} bank robbers!!

The Prison Council slumped under his Chairmanship through a period of sharp and purposeless controversy and although I was able to impress myself upon the discussions to such an extent that I was asked to stand again next time, I decided that I would never stand again but instead concentrate my efforts on the initiation and development of purposeful clubs.

I could see all kinds of possibilities for myself. *some would* pass the time purposfully *and* others *would also* assist other prisoners. *At the same time I was able to gain a* valuable insight into practical and progressive ways of suggesting reforms to the basic prison structure.

I set up the Leyhill Variety Club which arranged shows for men in the prison and which also performed for approved outside audiences such as senior citizens *and* physically *and* mentally handicapped *people*.

A Business Forum brought in *Business Executives to address it,* such as Sir Monty Finniston then Chairman of British Steel, Sir Frank Price, Chairman of British Waterways, Civil Servants to explain the problems facing Britain, and *trade Unionists including the marvellous* character, Sir Victor Feather. These meetings had a valuable spin off when some of the men *were* assisted to find employment on release as a result of the club activity.

The Debating Society was well established when I arrived, but I played a full part in *reviving* it. We debated with all kinds of local and regional organisations especially encouraging those lifers who were willing to 'have a go.' I saw men who were petrified the first time they had to speak in a debate *develop* until they could *move* a resolution and reply to the debate.

The club was allowed fortyfive members and the list was always over subscribed.

I founded a Music Society and organised to *play* records selected by members, provided through the County Library enabling us to spend many Sunday afternoons listening to our own Promenade Concerts. Indeed when I learned that Boris Brott, formerly conductor of the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra was the Conductor of the Welsh Symphony Orchestra, I invited him through the Governor to bring the Orchestra into prison. *He accepted the invitation.*
but on my leaving Leyhill I believe the project was not pursued.

Together with another prisoner I revived a defunct Bowling Club and built the membership up to forty-five. *Some* of the men got to work restoring the surface of the *Bowling Green*. One of the Senior Officers put up a trophy as an incentive *and* with his 'inside' encouragement we built bowling into a thriving summer activity. We were given permission to invite teams in to the prison and to arrange 'outside' fixtures.

Our playing oponents were all aware that we were prisoners and that we included 'lifers' in our team and yet without exception *they* willingly shared countless hours of sporting competition with us. The highlight *was* when members of the Welsh International *Bowling* Team came in *to Leyhill* to give us a training session and later, during that winter, took part in a sporting Brains Trust. Starting as a group *off* of inexperienced players, we began to give the other teams 'a good game, and later in the summer even beat one or two of them.

I got much satisfaction in working with men,

I also got satisfaction, although it was really no business of mine, when I saw tough men nervously approach the tea table, during the interval of a bowls match, and sit between two friendly visitors. Having been cut off from normal conversation for over a decade, at first they simply could not *communicate*.

but gradually their nervousness left them and they began to react normally. A game of bowls was giving men confidence, and restoring them from abnormality to normality. At the same time they gained a confident feeling that they could be accepted by society when they were released.

Of course one or two did not respond, remaining arrogant and objectionable, and never changed their attitude despite repeated opportunities. It was noticeable that when men had been life sentenced in their teens, ten or more years later, when confronted with normal people, they would imagine that things were as they would have been ten years earlier. The clock had somehow stopped for them at the moment when they were first imprisoned.

They saw themselves as contemporary to people ten years younger than themselves.

Lifers were especially catered for by a prison club in which the Governor took a great deal of interest, indeed of which he was the innovator. It was the Resettlement Club and its main activities permitted lifers to go out into the Community to work for approved people or organisations, under the supervision of the person who collected them and was responsible for returning them to the prison by six o' clock on either the Saturday or Sunday evening. I worked on one such project although mainly within the prison. The project was the Frampton Cottrell Community Centre which the lifers and villagers were reconstructing, I suggested as our contribution to the Centre we design and make a ceramic mural depicting 1,000 years of the village's life and the scheme was agreed and finally completed. We had discovered that one of the villagers had been Governor of Queensland, Australia and another was directly related to William Green, one time President of the American Federation of Labour. He had come from family roots in the village, all of which added to the interest in the mural.

The present punishment regimes, by their very reactionary approach to the whole range of problems of crime and punishment, turn to tough solutions. 'What they want is a spell in the army'. The prisons and Borstals should be tougher". If there are two applicants for a prison officers job and one has a military background, he will ^{be the one to} get the job so, when prison regimes are reviewed, it is the tougher physical training aspects which are given priority.

I was understandably absent from the ceremony organised to open the Community Centre and unveil the mural but, at the ceremony there were representatives of the State of Queensland, ^{and} from the Labour Department of the American Embassy, and the ceremony was performed by the Local M.P. ^{Many} people in the local community, by their intelligent ^{approach had} made such a prison and community venture possible and successful. ^{who was} ^{and} Involved in the Frampton project was Jeffrey Spittal a librarian in Bristol University to whom no request for help went unheeded.

The Frampton Cotterell Community are the beneficiaries of that effort and it was an example of what could be done by men in prison aided by others in the Community, ^{when rehabilitation was an important part of the prison's purpose.}

The most remarkably successful prison club was L.A.D.S.-the Leyhill Amateur Dramatic Society. It was under the personal and complete control of a local drama teacher, Madge Organ, and through a whole range of her special talents, she was able to enthuse, yet discipline, a constantly changing group of prison ^{fr}actors, stage hands, set designers and builders, wardrobe hands and others.

Her work was supported by a group of amateur actresses from the surrounding areas who combined with her to stage four to six plays a year. The plays they performed ranged through, 'Nude with Violin', 'The Lion in Winter', 'School for Wives', 'Conduct Unbecoming' and our own 'Geordie' play 'Close the Coalhouse Door.'

The real triumph of her work, from my point of view, occurred when a play written by a young and talented Lifer, after being performed by L.A.D.S., won the award for the best original play in the County Art Festival. All of that ability and quality was generated from inside a 'civilised' prison by one person.

The ^{Prison} Theatre audiences were invited by the Governor and filled the house of 200 seats on at least four nights ^{of the} week ^{of the} ^{performances}. The first night was performed in front of the toughest audience any actor could face, fellow prisoners. That was a whole new experience for me, and it made me realise the tremendous potential for the use of all forms of Art in prisoners' rehabilitation.

L.A.D.S. convinced me that ^{by} giving many of the ^{prisoners} an opportunity to step outside of themselves and into the shoes of other characters, ^{it ... could some-} times ^{... reveal aspects and qualities in them} that ^{had} never been ^{suspected}.

The role of the 'arts' in reform and rehabilitation ^{it} remains ^{largely} unexplored and, with some few notable exceptions, totally disc^{on}nect^{ed}.

Broadcasters who took time out of their busy schedules to come and talk to us included Frank Bough who gave the men an insight behind the scenes on Sports Report. Brian Redhead gave us all kinds of insights into all kinds of subjects in his own lively manner, Robin Denselow talked to us about his programme on Solzhenitsyn and David Taylor, of 'World in Action' gave us an insight into T.V. Reporting.

Another great attribute in Leyhill was the prison newspaper, the Leyhill News. It was published once a week for distribution throughout the prison and also to the Officers Training College. The Editor, a prisoner, had to apply to the Librarian Officer for the job which lasted for a period of no longer than six months. He had to be able to write, type as well as edit, duplicate and then distribute.

I edited it for one full spell of six months and two occasions stood ^{on} in when the appointed Editors had to return to closed prisons for trial or other legal proceedings. I wrote two columns, one humorous under the psuedonym of Shiek-O-Toole, the other under my own name, TDAN S. reversed, Dr. Snadt.

It was noticeable how quickly ^{knobs} lifers adopted animals, fish, ^{and} cats were a feature of Leyhill Life, ^{and} so much so that every now and again it was necessary to have humane 'kills'. The road to the dining room at meal ^{times} ^{was} lined by an escort of cats, most of ^{which} ^{lived} wild.

Some of the art work, especially the paintings and matchstick crafts, reached standards of excellence which were unbelievably high. On one occasion for the 1976 Open Day, an annual event when prisoners' families are invited in to the prison for a day, I organised an art Festival and of ^{out} the 280 prisoners over 100 entered. With very few exceptions the entries were of a commendably high standard.

This response encouraged a few of us to enter for the Koestler Awards, an annual art competition founded by Arthur Koestler following his own experience in the Death Cell in Spain during the Spanish Civil War, It was open to prisoners serving sentences in Britain's prisons. I won two commendations for ceramic pieces, while one of my colleagues won a first prize for a painting.

I also took advantage of available correspondence courses, and tried hard and unsuccessfully to get a course linked with Bristol University innovated as a joint prison/ University project. My experience since my release, with University Authorities confirms my view, reached as a prisoner that a huge gulf exists between the theory and practice of subjects related to crime and punishment.

While I did not place a high a value on my prison educational attainments I retained certificates informing me that I had satisfied the examiners in Social Welfare, Psychology in Industry, Practical Psychology and Human Relations.

Arising from the various Club activities I arranged and produced an annual festival of music and the spoken word in nearby Tortworth Church and I carried on with this Festival until 1980, four years after my release. It had become clear to me by 1980 that, unless I was able to be present at rehearsals or when the music and readings were being written or chosen, the quality of the performances were reduced by the irrelevance of some of the selected items performed. Rather than develop a policy argument, I decided to withdraw in 1981.

Prison Officers working at Leyhill, ranged from a minority who could see a great deal of merit in the Open System and who fully cooperated in Club Activity, and a majority who saw it as an easier job with better working conditions than prevailed in closed prisons. A minority existed who really made their presence felt by being hostile to every progressive effort that the Governor proposed. They could never communicate with us, or with visitors from the various societies who came in to the prison. They reacted against the visitors and those who cooperated with us, as though they were offenders, too.

The Officers Training School arranged a special discussion group in Leyhill between a group of selected prisoners and a group of young officers. I thought it was a good innovation. During the course of one of the discussions one of the brighter trainee officers ^{carefully} referred to a paper which he handed to me.

It is worth reproducing, if only as an indication of the level of intelligence being sought at that time by the Prison Department to fill posts in this most difficult of jobs,

Example 1. He flew _____ underline the appropriate
Flewed _____
Flied. _____ the appropriate word.

Example 2. 1 3 6 9 12 15 _____ 21. fill in the missing number.

Example 3. Multiply 726 x 54.

Example 4. Rough/smooth, Fast/Slow,
Rich/Poor, Young/ _____ fill in the missing

Example 5. Add 1357 + 2446 + 9713 = 8264. "

There were few jobs where such questions could do any other than dissuade the applicants from wanting the job at all. The questions above were totally irrelevant to the needs of the job, to say the least.

Just over a quarter of all Leyhills' prisoners were lifers, sent to Leyhill from a closed prison as part of the effort to help them to adjust, during the final period of their life sentence, to normality before being given a ^{release} 'date'. For men serving a life sentence, the sentence remains depressingly endless until they are given a 'date'. That date has the effect of announcing to them, 'You are born again' and, when they are called to the Governor to be given their good news, it echoes around the prison and lifts everyone's spirits for a day or two.

A 'knock back' for a lifer means another two years before the chance comes around again. The person 'knocked back', normally slips into a deep depression from which it takes him a good deal of time to recover.

Parole procedure is an extremely unsatisfactory arrangement. The procedure of report, interview and a hearing by a local parole board member, and then the long wait for the result, is a worrying, tense experience, in many ways comparable with the waiting period between charge and sentence.

I was 'knocked back' on my first parole application and had to wait almost a year before I was released on the second application. The simple guide lines for breaking down your sentence are one third remission, one third parole, one third to serve. If you are lucky you need only serve two years of a six year sentence. I served three years or half the period.

When a lifer arrives in an open prison he is extremely tense, clearly nervous and apprehensive. Without exception, every one I watched on arrival, reacted in a larger-than-life objectionable fashion, which in every case turned out to be out of character when he had time to adjust to the new conditions.

By the time their release date arrives they are almost normalised, and they are sent out to a Prison Hostel, where they live for six months and work in a job found for them. Without a job they will not be released. After they have completed the six months Hostel Probationary period they are 'free' to go back into the world on an unending licence and always subject to recall.

There are many of them who have lost home, family and friends and they find it much harder to adjust. Those who committed their killing because of an alcoholic complaint, nurse a real and secret dread of how they will react when free. This was brought home to me, on my last visit to Leeds in 1976, I met one of the released lifers in the reception, picked up for some minor offence committed while drunk.

Some weeks later I met one of the Leyhill Lifers, who I knew very well, ^{and} he had committed a breach of Hostel rules, ^{and} was back on the reception wing at the Scrubs. Both these men were freed after an appearance before the respective Governors.

By comparison with the time served by lifers my three years seemed trivial, but that is not the way I viewed it. As time goes by from a month to six months, to a year and then to two years with Birthdays and Christmasses begin ^{ing} to be counted in one, two, and three, your temper begins to wear thin. Short sentence men come in and have no regard to your edgy state. You learn in correspondence that a loved relation has died, or a friend has died and you realise that a part of your life is passing. Such happenings are ^{more} painful and punishing when you are 'inside'. You are really cut off from the things that matter and so time begins to elevate minor ^{events} into important ^{happenings}. Inconsequential ^{events} that would normally not merit attention develop into issues of conflict while tensions build.

My second clash with a lifer occurred through a silly incident. I had taken on the job of producer and Director of the Leyhill Variety Club and was trying to get a new ^{group of musicians} together. This meant reshuffling a group who had been completely occupying the theatre for months and monopolising the only set of drums. The drummer was a young lifer who spent almost every spare waking minute practising the drums, and was set ^{fast} to be the prisoners' Gene Kruper.

His close friend, and that meant almost a guide dog relationship in prison circumstances, had been told by a disgruntled trumpet player that I intended to get a new drummer, and that John was 'out'.

Walking back to the wing, I was jumped ^{on} from behind and almost strangled. I managed to shake ^{myself} free, ^{restrain my} ~~and~~, and, by shouting, ^{stop him in his tracks.}

It was ^{John's friend} ~~John~~ who assured him in 'rough' language that he was wrong in his assumptions and he went quickly ~~off~~ ^{his way}. The incident was repeated a second time, and shocked as I was, I had visions of being killed. I decided to get John and him together and confront them. I did and, as a result, my attacker was reassured, and became ^{so} slavishly friendly to me as to make it embarrassing.

The experience was frightening in every sense, and although I never reported it, I sometimes felt that if something similar happened after his release and I read about it in the Press, I would feel some responsibility for not having reported my view of that man. He was potentially dangerous.

Spending so much time in the company of lifers had made me extremely interested in each of them and made me many friends among them. I was fascinated by the methods used in the handling of them. While I was in Bedford Prison I had talked to an officer who had been present at the hanging of Hanratty in Bedford on the 4th April, 1962.

Subsequently I talked to a number of prison officers who had been involved in the carrying out of hangings. ^{The death penalty was abolished in November 1965.}

I met ^{at different times,} ^{I was told,} two lifers in prison who had been sentenced to death and reprieved by Silverman's Bill. I was able to talk to them about their terrible experience of having almost got to the point of stepping on to the gallows ^{then} being snatched back.

Both of them had then been in prison for over eleven years
... eleven years.

Work for prisoners at Leyhill provided a reasonably wide choice of jobs. These were limited training facilities for those prisoners who wished to become painters and decorators whilst fifty men worked on maintaining the buildings, sixty-five on the farm and market garden and twenty-eight in a highly active printing shop. The laundry employed twenty, and the woodwork machine shop another thirty-five and the Library and the Officers Training School another twenty-five jobs.

Compared with closed prison, these jobs imposed a discipline in effort and time, and created a routine which I found valuable and which was also valuable in the rehabilitation of the lifer. He had to get to work on time,

come back for lunch, and then finish afternoon work and come back to his room in time for evening roll call, or 'telly' as it was called.

I worked for a long period in the library during which time I analysed weather forecasting charts, and later I was lucky enough to get the job as Hospital Orderly which, in Leyhill, was a much sought after job. In that job I met every incoming prisoner as they came through the reception procedure

and I was aware of the type of men that were being admitted. It was noticeable in the final months of my time there

that many more short sentence men were being admitted, and I could foresee a lot of problems in integrating them with lifers and other long term prisoners.

By the Spring of 1976 I had gone through the full circle encompassing experience of a lifer. In Armley I had met a man who had killed someone and within hours was inside, possibly for life. I had sensed his shock, bewilderment, fear, apprehension, and his sense of blindness as to his future. A drunken Saturday afternoon brawl and then prison for ever? I had talked to a detestable psychopathic murderer who had killed one of his common law wife's children in the most brutal fashion.

the prison

I talked to men caught up in killing with a widely differing range of motives. I had talked to men reprieved, men released and even to the two ^{men} back inside after serving life sentences.

In all I talked to over one hundred and fifty of them with over a thousand years of prison experience behind them. My understanding of life and death issues ~~was~~ ^{was deepened in} a way that ~~was~~ ^{was} in itself unique. I rubbed shoulders with another one hundred and fifty men who had served long sentences for serious crimes. I ~~was~~ ^{was} a prisoner and yet felt that I was a student on a travelling scholarship. Moving from closed local prison to closed local prison and sharing experiences with prisoners the way I had ^I learned the depths of human sorrow and despair and ~~had~~ ^{had} also seen great relief and unshared joy.

I confess some surprise that since my release, although I have spoken at many Universities at the invitation of students, I have not spoken a single word to any of the hundreds of academics ~~concerned~~ ^{concerned} to teach students social subjects related to crime and punishment. I can only conclude that these professions have as tight a community as the establishment of which they are very much a part.

If the numbers of long-sentence prisoners are few by comparison to the thousands of petty criminals who continually fill our local prisons, their problems make up in complexity for the volume of simple problems presented by ~~the~~ ^{the} thousands of petty criminals.

The bulk of recidivists seem to travel on an invisible conveyor belt through every local prison wing in Britain, ^{and} every prison wing ~~through~~ ^{through} which they pass is overcrowded,

occasionally.

It seemed to me that the majority of recidivists I met would opt for being two or three to a cell rather than banged up on their own.

I also learned to my surprise when I asked 'regular' Armley prison inmates, if they would not rather go to Strangeways Prison, Manchester, that 60% of them opted to stay in Armley Prison. Yet Armley was a slack, dirty, overcrowded prison when compared with Strangeways.

The influencing factor is discipline. Armleys lack of it is preferred by Armley regulars to the 'pristine' cleanliness and sharper discipline of Strangeways.

It is a sad reflection on, and indictment of, our society that these preferences reflect the views of the numbers of victims of social crime; the inadequate, the alcoholics, the homeless and friendless, the compulsive gamblers, and such like classifications of offenders, described sometimes as the 'flotsam and jetsam' of our prison population. To them, the outside world is much more inhospitable, more hostile, than even the worst of the degradation of our prison system.

At the time I was travelling the prison circuit the population figures of the prisons I was in illustrate the reality of overcrowding as I experienced it.

Name of Prison	Type of Prison	Total Accomodation	Average Population	Highest Population	Population	When Built
Bedford	County	170	273	317		1848
Birmingham	City	602	945	1,018		1845
Leeds	City	592	940	1,025		1840
Liverpool	City	1,045	1,436	1,569		1854
Wormwood Scrubs	City	1,007	1,419	1,488		1874

These figures are taken from the official report 1975.

I was sentenced to prison and went down on 28th April 1974, and the five prisons I lived in were clearly the worst and most overcrowded of Britain's local prisons as the above figures show.

All Local Men's Prisons. Total accomodation

Accomodation Average Highest 261

All Prisons	10,815	10,036	11,056
The 5 Prisons I was in.	3,416	5,013	5,417

I was in a three'd up cell in Armley Prison ,Leeds and in Wormwo d Scrubs. I was in a dormitary wing in Bedford.

The degree of overcrowding is clearly seen from the official figures of the Prison Department..

	1970	1971	1975	1978	1979
Two in a cell	4,886	6,212	10,342	11,016	11,752.
Three in a cell.	9,288	8,238	5,298	5,082	4,833

I have presented a broad picture suggesting that our prisons contain two differing mainstreams. There are the overcrowded local prisons, where the problems are of numbers and excessive movements in and out, aggravated by inadequate buildings and obsolete facilities, and there are the long-term prisons, where the prison populations are located for lengthy periods of time. Problems connected with this latter group relating to their imprisonment and ultimate release, are complex. Because, associated with their crimes, are the problems of their victims, their victims' families and those of the prisoners' own families.

immobility