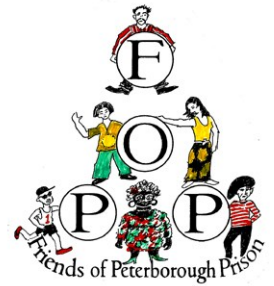


**FRIENDS OF PETERBOROUGH PRISON**  
**SUPPORTING THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF PRISONERS**



**VOLUNTEERS NEWSLETTER WINTER 2018**



**Message from Jen**

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas. I hope to be able to say it in person to many of you at our Christmas meal on 12<sup>th</sup> December, but for those who won't be there I hope you have a very happy time with family and friends.

The FOPP directors and I really appreciate your commitment to volunteering, supporting prisoners, their families and friends. You obviously, like me, feel strongly about offering something to people who have often not had very much in their lives. At our Annual Meeting in October, it was good to hear from Damian Evans that he also recognises and values the contribution that we are making. Damian provided us with an update and explained that the male side of the prison had recently been inspected by HMI. The inspection of the female side took place last year and the report can be viewed here if you are interested. <http://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/peterborough>

Damian explained that prison staff are working on improvements relating to healthcare and violence reduction, and he was very pleased to tell us that the number of reportable violent incidents had dropped from 65 to 40 per month, good progress towards the target of one incident per day for 900 male residents. We were very pleased that Damian was able to attend and he has agreed to meet me and another director in March and to attend our annual meeting next year in October so that he touches base with FOPP, in one form or another, every 6 months.

I'm coming to the end of my first year as chair; I've been learning a lot and I've been really enjoying it. My fellow directors and I have had to grapple with one or two curve balls that have been thrown our way, but mainly I feel that FOPP has had a very productive year. One of the highlights has been the successful transition of Kim Newcombe, the Playworker, to becoming a member of Sodexo's staff. As you may recall this was always the intention for the role and we're pleased that Sodexo recognise the value of the work that Kim has been doing in the male visits hall. We hope they will develop the role to its full potential. We've also held three volunteer events with one still to come – the Christmas meal. I thought last year's Christmas meal was a great success and a good opportunity to socialise with other volunteers and have a lovely meal together. I hope this year will be the same – I'm certainly looking forward to it! I asked at the annual meeting if anyone had any suggestions for a different venue and received a couple. I will certainly investigate these for next year but unfortunately it was just a bit too late to organise somewhere else for this year so we'll be at the Woodman in Longthorpe.

When I first joined FOPP, I started by volunteering in the Tea Bar until my DBS came through, and I still do the odd shift now and again as I really enjoy serving refreshments and chatting to visitors. I also help Kim in the visits hall – I love children so I particularly enjoy this once a fortnight. I've been volunteering in the Education department for about two years now. I help out in an ESOL class – I've been surprised by how rewarding I find this time. I help learners individually through the lesson, explaining the meaning of words, grammatical points and providing any other support that might be needed to learn the English language. One of the things that this has brought home to me, if I didn't quite realise it already, is how incredibly difficult the English language is. The teacher is amazingly patient and understanding with the learners and she makes the lessons as varied and interactive as possible, which of course makes a difference to everyone in the room. I love it, and I hope you enjoy your volunteering experiences and can recommend it to others!

As always please feel free to contact me or Jane Ryan if there is anything you would like to suggest to FOPP or you have any other feedback. Thanks again for all that you do



WELCOME TO.....

Those who joined us  
in 2018

Maureen– Tea bar

Lucille– Tea bar

Poppy– play area



AND FAREWELL AND  
THANK YOU TO.....

- \* Phil
- \* Amir
- \* Danni
- \* Kevin

## Volunteering with Storybook Dads & Storybook Mums By David Hobbs

I became a FOPP volunteer in 2016 to help run Storybooks Dads, which enables residents to record bed-time stories for their children back home. Although I occasionally help with Storybook Mums in the female library I am usually based in the male library. I had been a volunteer reader at RNIB for 26 years, making audio recordings of books and documents for people with impaired vision. When RNIB closed their Peterborough recording studios I wanted to use my audio experience in another role and the Storybooks scheme appealed to me because it is a way to help children who have a parent in prison. There are **over 200,000 children** affected by parental imprisonment in the UK and such children are **three times more likely to suffer mental health issues.**

The idea of Storybooks is simply to help prevent imprisoned parents losing contact with their families. **Over half** of imprisoned parents do lose contact. But those who keep in touch are **up to 6 times less likely to re-offend** so it has the potential to benefit the children, the residents and the whole of society.

The scheme began as the idea of volunteer Sharon Berry in 2002 at HMP Channings Wood and soon afterwards in Dartmoor. Sharon launched the Storybook Dads charity in 2003 to attract funding. Storybooks now operates in over 80 prisons.

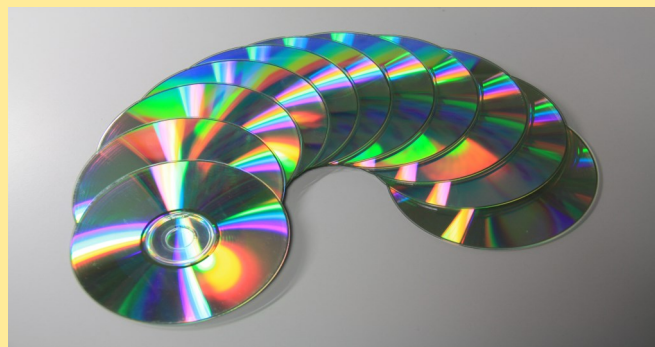
Although aimed primarily at parents, we can also record stories read by grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, provided there are no access restrictions in place.

We record stories on a studio-quality digital recorder (in stereo). They are then edited to minimise background noise and take out any stumbles from the reader and any interruptions from me. Following this, the editor will typically add background music and a host of life-like sound effects that really make the story come alive and it is then copied to a CD for sending out to the child's carer. Of course, many residents have never recorded any audio before and are often quite nervous at the prospect and some just have poor reading skills and will need frequent prompting. When the reader arrives for his appointment I sit down with him and ask about the child who the story is for and spend a few minutes explaining how we are going to make the recording. I tell him that I will be with him in the room during the recording, but I want him to imagine he is alone with his child and to be as natural as if just they were in the room. I assure him that nothing I overhear will go outside the room and that I will explain what he must do every step of the way, and generally put him at ease. There is a different relationship between me and a resident that I like to think puts him more at ease so that we end up with a more relaxed recording than when it is done by a prison officer. I am always flattered by the profuse thanks that residents give once we have finished the recording, but I often say that I'm pleased they have found it helpful or enjoyable but that I really do it for their children!

It can be an emotionally exhausting experience for them, especially when they are saying goodbye at the end of the story and I have had many big tough men in floods of tears at this point. When this happens I just assure them again that nothing I hear will go outside the room and we just sit and talk for a little while, usually about their children or partners and how much they are missed.

The audio editing is all done on site, often by one or two residents who have the appropriate skills, but on occasions I get to do some of this work, too. Whoever is responsible for the final editing it is always very rewarding when a resident tells me a few weeks later that their child was thrilled to get such a brilliant story!

If you visit website <http://www.storybookdads.org.uk/audio.html> you can listen to some Storybook examples.



**We are following in some great footsteps.....**

In 1780 Elizabeth Gurney was born in Norwich into a rich Quaker family. Elizabeth was well educated, which was unusual for a girl in those days. She helped her mother when she visited the poor and sick. Later, although Elizabeth had 11 children, she continued to do her charity work.

She first visited [Newgate Prison](#) in 1813 and was horrified by what she saw because there were over 300 women and children crowded into a very small space. Many were sleeping on the floor with no beds or covers. Elizabeth returned with warm clothing and straw for the sick women and children.

Prisoners had to pay for everything in gaol (prison) and prisoners bought food, drink, and coal for a fire, from the gaoler (prison warden). There were no toilets, just a bucket in the corner, and little drinking water. Children were sent to prison for stealing bread, wool or for damaging trees. Punishments for rich people were very different from those for poor people. A poor child who poached (stole) a rabbit might be transported (travel by prison ship) to Australia. A person with some money who poached a rabbit might be fined, then set free.

In 1817 Elizabeth organised a group to help female prisoners at Newgate prison. She provided items for the women so they could sew, knit and make goods to sell. She started a prison school for the children to give them something to do.

*'I have provided a school for the children and other prisoners which has brought me much peace and satisfaction,'* said Elizabeth Fry.

In 1818 Elizabeth was asked to speak to people in Parliament about the prisons. The 1823 Gaol (prison) Act was passed by Parliament, and some improvements were made. Female warders now looked after female prisoners. Elizabeth visited prisons all over Britain and argued for improvements. She wrote a book about prison conditions. She helped improve conditions on prison ships travelling to Australia. Prisoners were no longer chained to the decks during the voyage. She gave parcels of useful things to the women for their long journey.

[Elizabeth Fry](#) also set up a training course for nurses. She continued to help others until she died on 12 October 1845



- “When thee builds a prison, thee had better build with the thought ever in thy mind that thee and thy children may occupy the cells. ...”

Elizabeth Fry





To Jayne Stokoe who was shortlisted for and won the Small organisation Dedicated Service award at the PCVS Volunteer Awards held on 1st November

IF YOU  
**LAUGH**  
A LOT,  
WHEN YOU GET OLDER  
YOUR WRINKLES WILL BE  
IN THE RIGHT PLACES.

**Why was the parrot in prison?**

**Because it was a jailbird!**

**Why did the picture go to Jail?**

**Because it was framed!**

*Jokes taken from jokes4us.com*



**Thank you for all your help and support during 2018  
FOPP would not be here without you!**

*WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR*