



**FOPP**  
**FRIENDS OF PETERBOROUGH PRISON**  
**VOLUNTEERS NEWSLETTER WINTER 2019**

### **Message from Jen**

Hello everyone and welcome to the Winter Newsletter. You may be reading this on our new website, which has been brilliantly developed by David Hobbs, with many hours of work. We really hope you like it and that you have signed up to the members' area (see David's article below for details).

We had a very interesting October annual meeting. Damian Evans (the prison Director) gave us an update on achievements and challenges during the year and briefly touched on future developments for the prison. He was also very keen to thank FOPP volunteers for all the support we provide. Please read Charles Hooper's article below for more details.

I hope you've all had a good year volunteering with FOPP – we're always keen to hear from you about your experiences so don't hesitate to get in touch. I would, of course, also like to thank you for your volunteering work.

We have our Christmas party on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December and I hope you'll be able to come, as it's usually a very good evening out. If you can't make it, I'd like to wish you (rather early!) a very happy Christmas, and I hope you have a lovely time with family and friends.

### **Director's briefing at Annual Meeting 9 Oct 2019**

The director began the meeting by thanking volunteers for the positive contribution they make to the prison.

Other points were:

2019 has been a much better year than 2018. Much work has been undertaken on safety procedures. Male violence has been reduced. The prison is more settled and stable. Staff turnover has been reduced resulting in more experienced staff able to mentor new staff. The female restricted status residents have been absorbed.

The key worker process has been implemented on the male side and is being introduced on the female side with the aim of completion by November. Twenty-four new staff have been recruited. All residents will have a key worker and 45 mins has been allocated for each resident although the time includes admin processes as well as face-to-face contact with the resident.

Reconfiguration is progressing on the male side. 14 new staff of all grades and specialisms have been recruited. The prison is now serving Northamptonshire courts as well as existing Cambridgeshire courts. The remand population is increasing whilst long term residents are being moved out. The aim is to house remand residents and sentenced residents with four years or less to serve. This will help to squeeze out re-directs from Bedfordshire and London who are usually unhappy when located to Peterborough. However, there will be a greater churn of residents with shorter sentences and on remand.

More time has been spent on the female side, particularly managing residents with complex needs such as self-harm, mental health and drug use. A new strategy has focussed on the management of individuals and their individual needs. The activities regime is being expanded with a new hospitality training area, an expanding area of employment. A new healthy lifestyles course will be introduced in November utilising the domestic science area.

An imminent inspection is likely on the female side.

There was a discussion on the library provision. The immediate focus has been on opening the libraries. Recent figures show that the libraries are open for 60-80% of the time. Three officers, PCOs, have been appointed as library officers. They also may have other duties which could interfere with their library role. There are 8,500 books in both libraries. Book losses are minimal at 3-4%. Residents who wish to work in the library complete an orderly peer worker form and should have level 2 literacy. The three library offices are not able to obtain membership of CILIP but could benefit from advice and support.

Residents released on Fridays have access to all the necessary support services. Sodexo is part of a project that has leased 15 accommodation units for 'hard to place' released residents.

The Prison Service has standardised on using City & Guilds qualifications. Numeracy and literacy skills are taught instead of Functional skills. The qualifications have been broken down into small units and residents obtain a certificate for successfully completing individual units as well as the whole course. Numeracy and literacy have 100% pass rates currently. ICT focuses on projects related to eg spreadsheets. Additional qualifications are available in eg COSH.



### Our New Website

For the past few months I have been beavering away in the background, building the new FOPP website, ably assisted by fellow director Jen and her husband, Alan. We were excited to go live with it in time for the Annual Meeting.

It has been quite a long journey. Many of you will remember completing an online survey at the beginning of the year to help us decide what features you felt were important to include, but we had already spent quite a lot of time knocking around different ideas even before then. I've tried to incorporate as many of your ideas and suggestions as possible and hope you will be pleased with the final version. Not that this is really a truly final version of course, because we hope and expect that it will continue to evolve as we think of new ways to make it ever more useful to existing volunteers and attractive to potential recruits.

One of the main reasons for building a new site from scratch was to try and make it visually appealing and give a better idea of what volunteering in the prison is really like. Although the old site did contain most of the information that a potential volunteer might need, website design has moved on enormously in recent years and we can achieve things now that were really not feasible using the previous design. We have tried to pack a lot more information in without overloading the casual visitor, for example by making extensive use of "accordions" where the bulk of the text is hidden from view until the accordion is expanded.

We have been helped by Niki Audsley, Sodexo's publicity manager who is responsible for their website content. She took the trouble to check over the entire site for possible security concerns (but it was all OK), made some very helpful suggestions for improving some aspects of the design and provided us with a selection of photos from inside the secure areas of the prison, all of which I have used somewhere or other. I've put a photo and short caption at the top of most of the pages that a casual visitor might land on, to try and catch the visitor's interest and persuade them to read on. I think the selection of photos we were given leaves a nice impression of the prison and staff, showing that there can be lots of smiles inside HMP Peterborough.

We've tried to set out the website so the first-time visitor can embark on a logical "journey" by

working through each of the main tabs from left to right. In some cases (e.g. First Days), at the end of each section there is a button to move directly to the next stage of that journey without having to back to the menu tabs.

You felt very strongly that we should have a Members Area where we can share sensitive information that we would not want to make public. You will see that I have included one, and you will need to register as a user before you can view this part of the website. The registration page is password-protected, and Jane will send you this temporary password so you can access it and set up your own personal username and password for future use. We will add more functionality to the Members Area soon.

Most of you felt we should have a shorter web address. Unfortunately, fopp.co.uk was already taken, so we have purchased the domain name foppweb.co.uk. If you type that into your browser (the www. prefix is optional) you will find us. We will be arranging for the old address ([www.friendsofpeterboroughprison.co.uk](http://www.friendsofpeterboroughprison.co.uk)) to transfer visitors automatically to the new site. Have a look and see if you think we have done a reasonable job of updating things.

Finally, you will see that we only have two articles under "Our Activities/Experiences" and we would like lots more. So please try and find time to send in a short article to Jane, describing what you do in your volunteering role and how well it matches what you expected when you signed up, and we'll add it to the website.

David Hobbs.

(FOPP director and volunteer).



**FAREWELL AND THANK  
YOU TO.....**

**\* Janice and Marj**



**WELCOME TO.....**

**Those who have joined  
us in 2019**

**Leanne– play area**

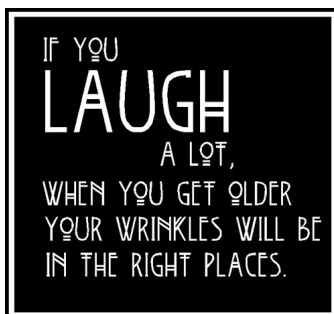
**Sarah– gym**

**Paige-education**

**Christine–education**

**Joanne –education**

**Elissa– education**



**What happened to the man who stole an**

**Advent Calendar?**

**He got 25 days!**

*Found in a Christmas cracker*

**What do you call a famous prisoner? A cell-ebriety!**

*Jokes taken from jokes4us.com*

Continuing our look at great prison reformers.....

## John Howard

### His early life

John Howard, after whom the Howard League is named, was born in 1726 in Hackney, East London. He was the son of a prosperous middle class family, and had a comfortable start to life. He was apprenticed to a London wholesale grocery firm, his income meant he could have an apartment, servants and two horses.

John Howard married twice. In 1753, he married his landlady Sarah Lordore, but she died only two years later. This sudden change in life again led him to travel, both for interest and to reflect upon his own future.

John Howard returned to Cardington in Bedfordshire and married Henrietta Leeds, who died in childbirth, leaving her husband to care for their young son John.

### High Sheriff of Bedford

During this period John Howard became established as a country gentleman in Bedfordshire. He was a model landlord, a horticulturalist and practised the role of public servant he considered to be appropriate for his status. John Howard was a nonconformist, but despite this he was appointed High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, and with this title came the responsibility for the county gaol.

He was appalled by the conditions and human degradation he discovered. This spurred him to visit other prisons in England and then Europe in the search for humane prison conditions. During the mid 1750s many gaols held religious dissenters and debtors, alongside common thieves and felons. Many of the debtors were respectable local tradesmen who could not be released from prison until money was raised to pay off their creditors.

John Howard criticised the gaoler of Bedford. Traditionally, once gaolers had been appointed they were left to manage their gaol in the fashion they chose and made their own living as best they could. This usually resulted in bribes, favours and profits, which were to the detriment of the prisoners under their care. Many prisoners were forced to pay for their period of incarceration and this meant paying for their bedding, food and other facilities. In 1753, for example, a prisoner was charged 2s 6d per a week for the sole use of bedding and sheets; the price to share bedding would have been 1s 3d a week, and to transport a prisoner to London the gaoler would have charged £6.



**“O Shame to man, that there should be such a place, such a picture of hell upon earth. ...”**

**John Howard**



## Tour of England and Wales and on to Europe

John Howard decided to tour English counties confident of finding a good example for Bedford gaol to follow. He was allowed to visit cells, dungeons and torture chambers, to talk to the gaolers, turn-keys and even the prisoners themselves. He was horrified to find that the malpractice in Bedford was common all over England and Wales.

In 1755 John Howard wrote: "Ely Gaol was the property of the Bishop and because of the insecurity of the old prison and the gaoler chained the victims down on their backs on the floor, across which several iron bars, with an iron collar with spikes about their necks and a heavy iron bar over their legs".

Many gaolers would not allow prisoners to leave the gaol, even if they had been found innocent, unless they or their families paid for their release. This often meant that poorer prisoners languished in gaol unnecessarily.

Having investigated prisons in England and Wales, John Howard felt compelled to visit Ireland and Scotland and then to almost every country in Europe, including Russia.

At a time when travel was usually uncomfortable and often dangerous, he travelled nearly eighty thousand kilometres on horseback and spent some £30,000 of his own money in his determination to improve prison conditions. He entered prisons in disguise in defiance of governments who feared the power of his pen. He was captured by pirates and held in France quelled a riot single-handed and more than earned John Wesley's tribute to him as 'one of the greatest men in Europe'.

John Howard made seven large scale journeys between 1775 and 1790, the first two of which are described in his book *The State of the Prisons In England and Wales*. He sought to bring about reform through personal initiatives, by arousing the consciences of influential people and stirring them into action. He also visited gaolers personally to persuade them to comply with the minimal regulations that did exist. John Howard's work had influence as far afield as Germany, America and Russia. He died in Kherson in the Ukraine of 'gaol fever', a form of typhus, in January 1790. A monument was erected there to mark his life and achievements, and was renovated in 1990 to commemorate the bi-centenary of his death.

John Howard's role in the development of the international penal reform movement cannot be denied, and the importance of his life and work is reflected in this inscription on his statue in St. Paul's Cathedral.

**"This extraordinary man had the fortune to be honoured whilst living, In the manner which his virtues deserved: He received the thanks Of both house of the British and Irish Parliaments, For his eminent services rendered to his country and to mankind"**

<https://howardleague.org/john-howard/>



Congratulations to Hilary Keegan, announced as runner up for the John Cheetham Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual PCVS award ceremony.

**Thank you for all your help and support during 2019  
FOPP would not be here without you!**