



MAKING **THE** DIFFERENCE

An oral history of Probation in Northern Ireland
at its Centenary and in the 25th year of the
Probation Board for Northern Ireland



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and in the 25th Year of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

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Cover: Painting of PBNI Headquarters by Colin Davidson (1998)

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Foreword

by PBNI Chairman Ronnie Spence CB

As chairman of the Probation Board of Northern Ireland (and a former student of Irish history) I am delighted to contribute the foreword to this publication.

PBNI initiated this project as one of the steps being taken to mark the centenary of probation but it quickly acquired a life of its own because of the interest from current and former probation staff. What has emerged is not just a valuable contribution to the history of our profession and the story of how offenders have been managed, it is also a fascinating record of the experiences of those involved in providing this difficult and demanding service on behalf of the whole community.

PBNI is today embarking upon a major increase in its responsibilities for managing offenders. I hope that this publication about probation's past will help to inspire those who face the challenges that lie ahead.

In conclusion, it is a timely opportunity to thank all those, particularly Brendan Fulton who led the project, who have contributed to an absorbing publication that will undoubtedly attract considerable interest.

Introduction

Memory

One had a lovely face,
And two or three had charm,
But charm and face were in vain
Because the mountain grass
Cannot but keep the form
Where the mountain hare has lain.

William Butler Yeats

'We have only advanced because we have history.'

Ruth Cordoso

The idea of dealing with offenders within the community has a long and valued history in Western society. In Ireland this was exemplified by the Brehon Laws which were in vogue 600 years ago. They were replaced by English Common Law. Within this new framework deportation and then punishment and reform through institutions became the dominant plans. The modern resuscitation of the in-society response can be traced to the second half of the nineteenth century. It was the beginning of the twentieth century before Government translated that into an arm of state policy and practice – the Probation Act 1907. This booklet wishes to mark that centenary and that of the first probation officers in 1908.

In this society our identity is based on memories. In the probation world we have been in danger

of fracturing that identity through neglecting our memories. This is an attempt to restore something of that identity. It set out as a project to obtain the oral testimonies of some of our former staff. It has grown in extent and nature. In order to render their memories more understandable and to provide a context some narrative history is included. This is not intended to be the definitive history of Probation in the north eastern part of the island. Indeed the hope is that it will encourage others to enter this comparatively neglected field. Neither are the testimonies that it contains meant to be representative. They are the thoughts of a sample of participants. We hope that those staff and board members who are not specifically included feel some connection to the voices and events that are. It is not meant to be the voice of the tens of thousands of men, women and children who, as defendants, probationers, community service givers, prisoners or separated parents, experienced the service across the years. May it at least be evocative of the human relationship which forms the basis of probation services.

Through this marking of the centenary we can retrace our roots to the pioneers of the service. Three links are sufficient to bridge the gap. One of those pioneers worked until after the end of the Second World War. The post war generation carried that baton until the early 1970s when it was passed to the current couriers who are in the process of handing it on again.

Acknowledgements

In covering the first 60 years I wish to acknowledge particularly Alistair Morrison, John Beresford and Bob Webb who had the far-sightedness to summarise some of the history to that point and to take note of what the post-war practitioners were doing and saying. Without their endeavours our history would be a good deal more mythical than is healthy.

I record my thanks to Barbara Stott, Sam Chapman, Breidge Gadd, Bill Griffiths, Bob and Geoff Currie, Maeve and Tim Magowan, Tom Millar and the groups of current and ex-staff who gave their time, recollections and permission to reproduce. Thanks are extended to the many who helped in the collation of this publication. Significant assistance came from the staff of the Probation Board, particularly Lisa Maginnis, Cheryl Lamont, David Van De Merwe, Maura Canavan, Louise Cooper, Laura Duncan, Peter Wilgar, Kate Jones, Beth McCann, Colin Smyth, Jacqueline McGrath, Helen Smith, Veronica O'Neill, John Bourke and Paul Doran. I am indebted to Mairead Burns for her transcriptions of testimonies and her indefatigable pursuit of photos and papers and facts. Kieran Hill provided some invaluable help with editing. Wise feedback was offered by Peter Denley, Val Owens, Liz McShane, Sheila Parkhill and Rita O'Hare. Ongoing perspective was available from Rosemary Bass and Leon Rogan. Trevor Parkhill delivered support and professional objectivity in his role as editor.

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We acknowledge permission to use photos from Linenhall Library for the David James Hogg collection of W H Collins, Presbyterian Historical Society for photo of J McAdam, Wesley Weir and Belfast Central Mission Historical Archive for photos of Miss Curran and the Mission Sisters, Jean McVeigh for those of staff in 1960s and 1970s, Diane Halley for those of her father and colleagues in 1950s, Florence McMahan for photo of her husband, Maud Thompson for those of her colleagues in 1960s, Big Lottery Fund for photo of Breidge Gadd, Extern and NIACRO for those of personnel and facilities and Colin Davidson for the use of the cover painting.

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Chapter 1

Formative Developments 1850-1920

(The greater part of the research in this chapter is the work of **Bob Webb** who has graciously allowed it to be used. Bob is a manager with the Extern Organisation.)

The Emergence of Probation

The Probation System was formally established on 1 January 1908 when the powers of the Probation of Offenders Act of the previous year became operational. From that time it was possible for a probationer, subject to a probation order, to be supervised by a probation officer. However a new service was not constructed. It was rather a matter of a subsequent slow merging and extending of services and resources that were already in existence.

Charitable services in Belfast

The evidence available suggests that it was in Belfast that this new development first took effect. The city's industrialisation which had gathered pace throughout the nineteenth century was accompanied by a corresponding growth in the population. By 1900 it had superseded Dublin as the largest city in Ireland and indeed was then the fastest-growing city on these islands. Even though living conditions in the city had been improved by public investment there was considerable apprehension about its effectiveness. In response to these worries an impressive array of charitable

and philanthropic organisations had grown up. The concern of these organisations was underpinned by a desire to differentiate between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' cases. This was evident in a whole range of services, including criminal justice matters. Encouraged by the comparatively limited role of the state, the philanthropic ethos drew in business men, industrialists, clerics and other men and women associated with the churches.

The Spiritual Mission

A common factor among those involved was a deeply-held religious belief. An evangelical propensity had taken hold and gathered momentum in the second half of the nineteenth century. A primary motivating feature of evangelism was a spiritual Mission. In time, this imperative became increasingly interwoven with the concern to address social problems. Change became discernable in the responses to children and young people in trouble or considered to be in need of care and protection. However, this move away from a punitive response initially took on an institutional form—the establishment of Reformatories and Industrial

Schools. St Patrick's Boys' Home in Belfast, one of the first industrial schools in Ireland, and the Malone Reformatory, were established by 1873. A corresponding focus on women resulted in three penitentiaries being established in Belfast, associated with the Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic denominations. Although this may be seen as a response to social issues there was as yet no state-sponsored initiative to take this forward within the community itself.

If the objective was spiritual outreach this could mean that the undeserving needed to be saved too; indeed it can be argued that it was the undeserving that demanded more time and effort in order to be reached. This view was later exemplified by William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army which established services in Belfast in 1905. Along with the rescue work of the various homes, the community-based Missions through their inclusivity came into contact with people in trouble or who were at risk of getting into trouble.

The Drink Question

The growing recognition of a need to attend to the social condition brought the spotlight on to 'the drink question'. From the 1840s, the temperance issue had given rise to a mass movement initiated by Father Theobald Mathew, a Cork Capuchin, which was phenomenally successful: *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (p. 537) estimates that by 1842 at least 2 million – and perhaps as many as 5 million - of the 8.25 million people in Ireland had taken the pledge. The temperance movement had a major impact on social thinking and helped

to shape how people came to view social problems, including crime to such an extent that, in 1891, the Presbyterian General Assembly could confidently state 'everyone could see that intemperance is at the root of most of our poverty, lunacy and crime'. The abstinence momentum in Ulster was continued by the spread of the 'Catch My Pal' movement founded by the Presbyterian minister Rev. J. Patterson.

Community-based Responses

In addition to the temperance and evangelical movements a number of community-based initiatives became evident from the middle of the nineteenth century. These focused on practical means of helping people who by a variety of routes found themselves on the wrong end of the law. The Belfast Female Mission was founded in 1859, the year of the Ulster Revival. The Mission divided the city into districts; agents were assigned to a particular district. It extended its role to help 'fallen' women and children in need. The Mission was therefore able to offer an alternative to the penitentiaries.

The Cripples Institute (CI) acted as a kind of umbrella organisation with affiliated bodies. They covered a wide range of work including lodging houses for men and women, homes for destitute children and day nurseries and prison gate Missions. The Prison Gate Mission for Women, founded in 1876, provided employment and somewhere to live for women discharged from prison. It employed a Missionary, Miss McLean, to go to the prison and to visit the courts. Similarly a Prison Gate Mission for Men (PGMM) was established around the same time. One agent was a Mr Harrison who visited the prison and

attended the police courts. Mrs Harrison managed the home. However they emigrated to Canada in 1906.

The Belfast Midnight Mission Rescue and Maternity Homes (BMMRMH), founded in 1860, aimed to reach out to the women and girls who frequented public houses around Belfast. A band of ladies went out at midnight to talk with these women, invite them back to the houses that had been purchased for their accommodation. The Mission had a full time Missionary, Thomas Clokey. The BMMRMH did have a presence within the courts: it is unclear when it began but in 1915 it was reported that their agent had been attending the police

courts and had spent two days in the Recorder's Court.

The Methodist Belfast Central Mission (BCM) was established in 1889. BCM was concerned with those who had lapsed or were unconnected with the churches. It therefore engaged with a full range of practical and social issues. The Mission staff included men and women - the latter were variously known as Mission sisters or deaconesses. BCM viewed its rescue work in terms of involvement in the slums and the police courts.

Another significant mission was the Presbyterian Belfast City Mission which, as did the female Mission, sought to organise its work by dividing Belfast into districts with an agent or missionary assigned to each district. The missionaries were all male and gave practical help to individuals and families in trouble.

The Salvation Army established itself in Belfast in 1905 and sought to carry out work with both men and women, particularly in the provision of accommodation for both. A rescue home was initially set up in Wellington Park before eventually moving to Thorndale in north Belfast. A positive working relationship developed between the matron and the prison chaplain, leading to an involvement in the courts which resulted in the home giving places to women who had been through the court system.

The Catholic Church also had a Revival in the second part of the century, the social side of which was manifested through the Society of St Vincent de

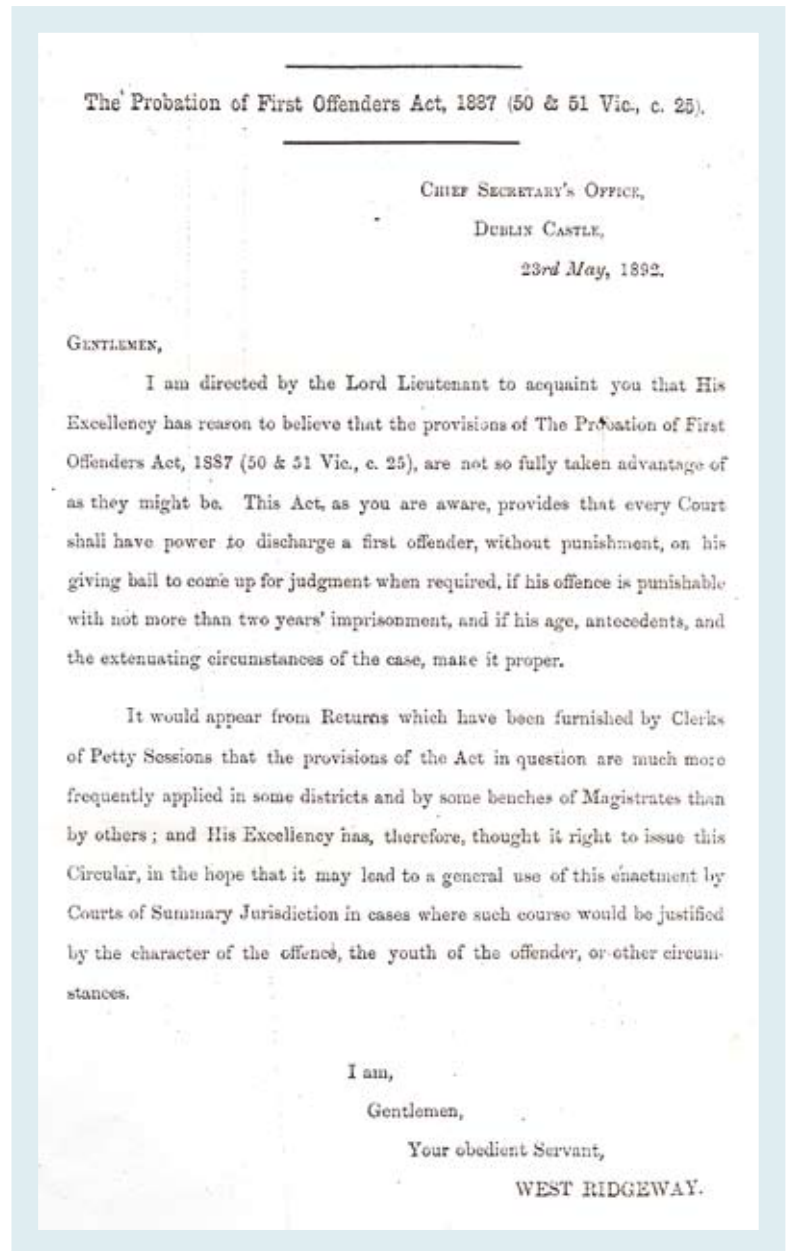


Home visit by BCM Mission Sister c 1900

Paul (SVP) that had been first established in Dublin in 1844. It took root in Belfast in 1850 with a conference in St Mary's Parish in Chapel Lane. The society, which had been set up initially in Belgium as a means of coordinating the response of the Catholic Church to the largely urban problems of poverty accruing from industrialisation, grew by means of a network of conferences established throughout the city and throughout the North. At the same time the Sisters of Mercy opened convents in Belfast and Derry. The range of practical and social issues addressed by the Societies mirrored their Protestant counterparts. Like other voluntary societies and missions they found their way into the court setting.

State Intervention in the Community

The first non-custodial responses of the state found expression in such statutes as the 1847 Juvenile Offenders Act and the 1887 Probation of First Offenders Act that opened up the possibility of offenders entering into recognizances with the Courts. What developed was a legal discourse very much in tune with the deserving and undeserving culture, with a second chance being offered to the deserving. It appears likely that this was a legitimisation of actions which were already being taken by courts and that members of the church societies were being asked to act as overseers of the recognizances on an informal basis. However, it can be deduced



Chief Secretary's Circ.

from a Chief Secretary's circular of 1892 that usage of the 1887 Act was patchy at best.

The circular contains two portents of future obstacles to the development of the probation idea. The power of the Magistracy to block or foster the availability of the probation option was to remain a live issue for next hundred years. 'Youth' and 'first

offender' were categories which remained associated with probation long after such restrictions had been removed in law. The 1907 Probation Act was an important turning point. For the first time the Magistrates were able to appoint probation officers to supervise defendants on a formal basis through a probation order.

Probation of Offenders Act 1907

Probation Order	Probation Officer's Duties
alternative to a sentence condition of recognisance supervision for three years menu of conditions	to visit or receive reports from supervisee to see that he observes the conditions of recognisance to report to the court as to his behaviour to advise assist and befriend
- honest and industrious life	to endeavour to find suitable employment
- abstention from intoxicating liquor - prohibition re association or location (undesirable people or places)	

The First Probation Officers/Missionaries

Evidence tells us that early appointments in Belfast came from Belfast Central Mission, Belfast City Mission and St. Vincent De Paul. At least three of the Central Mission staff were involved in 'probation work' before and after the Probation of Offenders Act 1907. The most prominent and well known was Miss Elizabeth Curran. Eric Gallagher in his book *At Points of Need* states that 'by 1908 the deaconesses, officially referred to as the Sisters of the Mission, had established a reputation for caring, which brought them into the field of probation work. Increasingly the sitting magistrates were glad to hand over Probation of Offenders Act cases to them.' Miss Curran left the BCM in 1919 but she continued as a probation officer until after the Second World War.



BCM Mission Sisters Miss Elizabeth Curran (rear right)
Nurse Elliott (f right) Miss Martin (f left)

It is from within the ranks of the Belfast City Mission we find another of the first officially- designated police court missionaries/probation officers, Mr William Henry Collins. He was a Presbyterian church elder who worked for many years as a missionary. He was appointed by the Presbyterian General Assembly temperance committee as a Police Court Missionary in 1909 and continued his court work until his death in 1913. He was replaced by Mr James McAdam who continued as a probation officer and later became the first senior probation officer 1946-1948. Mr McAdam was active in the 'Catch My Pal' movement in his local area of East Belfast. After the First World War we find evidence that the SVP society had an agent who was involved in court work - Mr John B. Farrell, an ex-Royal Irish Constabulary officer. He continued to work as a probation officer until the late 1940s.

Use of Probation

While new possibilities were thus opened up, by and large the limited engagement persisted within the Belfast courts with recognizance still being used extensively and probation being used mostly for less serious offences such as simple larceny. Reports from the Belfast police courts from the period post 1907 still indicate that it is 'deserving' cases that receive non-custodial solutions. 'Of good character' is a feature that is mentioned. On occasion a character reference is presented by a clergyman or employer. The issue of respectability looms large with frequent references to 'respectable looking' or 'respectably dressed' etc. This was accompanied by the creation of separate courts for children and young people (Children Act 1908). It was not the intention of



W H Collins (second left) giving out temperance leaflets in a Shankill Rd 'pub'. (D J Hogg Collection, 1909)

the legislators that these should later become the predominant focus of Probation in this northern part of the island.

Probation work was more extensive than would be suggested by a look at the work of the small number of probation officers we are able to identify. The espousal of temperance narrowed the social focus while giving concentrated attention to a real and contributory problem, the misuse of alcohol. The probation officers who came to the work through temperance aims may have retained that particular emphasis in the work for their society but would have had a much wider focus on their work as a probation officer. Officers appointed after 1908 would continue their links with their voluntary society. In effect they could have two employers,

their sponsoring society and the magistrates. That can explain the duality and perhaps even the ambivalence of the job titles, 'police court missionary', 'probation officer' which remained in popular usage into the 1930s. (See oral testimony of Sam Chapman p. 49)

Not all the early interventions in the court sprang from a temperance initiative or from a temperance-based committee or society. However, given the considerable influence of the temperance movement, it was no surprise that the missionaries' involvement in the courts would carry with it a strong temperance dimension. Consequently there was very little scope for the development of a psychological approach.

Extension of Powers

In 1914 the flexibility of the Probation Order was increased with the facility to add conditions in respect of place of residence and use of alcohol. In the case of alcohol it was again formalising restrictions which were already being imposed by courts. It also gave recognition to those societies that aimed to take on probation cases under the 1907 Act or those persons placed on licence from industrial schools or borstal. Recognition meant appointing probation officers from such societies and contributing financially 'towards the expenses incurred by the society...' The evolution of the Probation system in Belfast was influenced by the vibrancy of localised charitable societies. On this

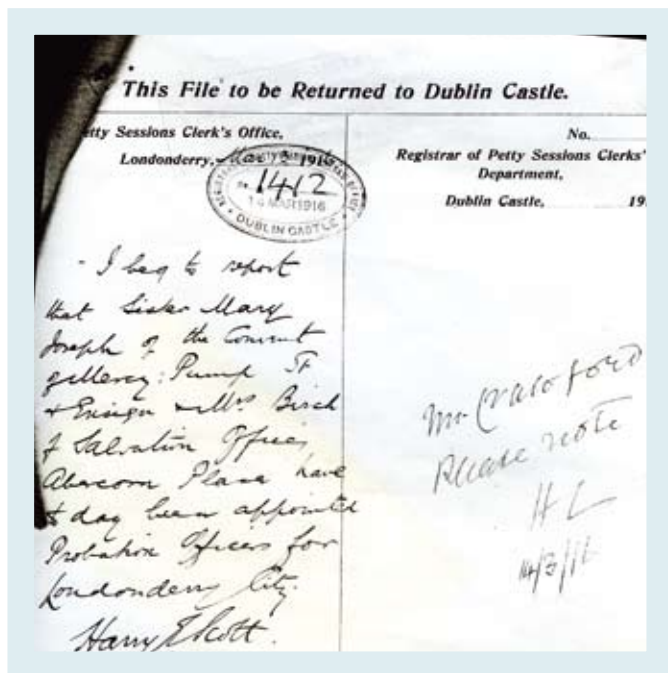
evidence it would be reasonable to conclude that this factor shaped the early provision in the other main centres of population.

Developments in Londonderry

In the city of Londonderry evidence from the period of the Great War reinforces this opinion. In this setting the organisations involved were the Sisters of Mercy, the Salvation Army and National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). In 1916 three Probation Officers were appointed by the Magistrates for the period of one year (renewable) allowed by the legislation – Sister Mary Joseph of the Convent of Mercy in Pump St, Mrs Jennie Birch of the Salvation Army, Abercorn Place and



W H Collins (second left) in precincts of the court overseeing a man signing a temperance pledge. (D J Hogg Collection)



Correspondence between Clerk and Dublin Castle.
(PRONI, HA/9/2/416)

Mr James Wedlock, Inspector, NSPCC, St Columb's Court. Sister Mary had specific responsibility for probationers from the Catholic denomination, Mrs Birch for those from the Protestant denominations and Mr Wedlock for all. The NSPCC restricted Mr Wedlock to dealing only with persons up to the age of 16 years. All were on a part-time basis and they accepted only expenses. Sister Joseph carried out these duties for another 20 years.

Socialist Strands

Thus, the religiously based charitable societies can be demonstrated to have contributed significantly to the emergence of a Probation system. An

additional strand which deserves to be taken into consideration is the work of the trade union/socialist movement which organised its own structures and responses over the same period. It believed in collective action and had an expectation that government, local and central, should intervene more readily to alleviate distress and manage social problems. It is not possible to trace the trade union motivation to particular individuals at the beginning of this story: suffice to say however that it does feature subsequently.

PROBATION OFFICERS' CLAIM FOR REMUNERATION.

This Claim should be sent in on the first day of the month succeeding each Quarter,—i.e. 1st April, 1st July, 1st October and 1st January.

The sum allowed is 8/- for the first Quarter the person is under Probation, and 4/- for each succeeding Quarter.

If a full Quarter has not been completed on the date the Return is forwarded, the Claim should be made for the Quarter in which the full Quarter is completed.

Thus the Claim for a person placed under probation on the 1st of June for three months should not be made until the 1st of October, as the 3 months will not be completed until the 31st of August. Broken Quarters cause much confusion.

Travelling charge can be made for distances over one mile from the Court House. The actual Tram Fare can be charged or 2d. a mile by Bicycle.

PO claim for remuneration doc. (PRONI, HA/9/2/416)

Chapter 2

Cinderella or Oliver Twist? 1921-1945

Ministry of Home Affairs

In 1921 authority for criminal justice was devolved from Westminster to the new Northern Ireland administration. While the local Magistracy retained responsibility for the appointment of probation officers, control of policy passed from Dublin Castle to the Ministry of Home Affairs in Belfast. In its early years the new administration was preoccupied with internal security. An accompanying economic slump meant that Government finances were stringently allocated.

Alternatives to prison were not on the agenda. The fledgling probation service was largely left to fend for itself. The service remained predominantly focussed on Belfast and on young persons. Despite the economic downturn the political/religious divide created parallel communities which, perhaps paradoxically, helped to stabilise the crime rate. There was little impetus for change.



WH Collins in the Police Court to the left of Police Sergeant. (D J Hogg Collection)

Probation Rules

In acknowledgement of developments in England and Wales in 1928 the Ministry of Home Affairs issued Probation Rules. Although very limited in nature these could be described as the first set of standards for the service. They included the initial statement regarding frequency of contact with probationers.

The appointment and setting of qualifications regarding the post of probation officer remained under the authority of the Magistracy for each Petty Sessions area. Despite the publication of the Rules the use of the probation option even for juveniles declined proportionately for the next 7 years – 41% to 14%.

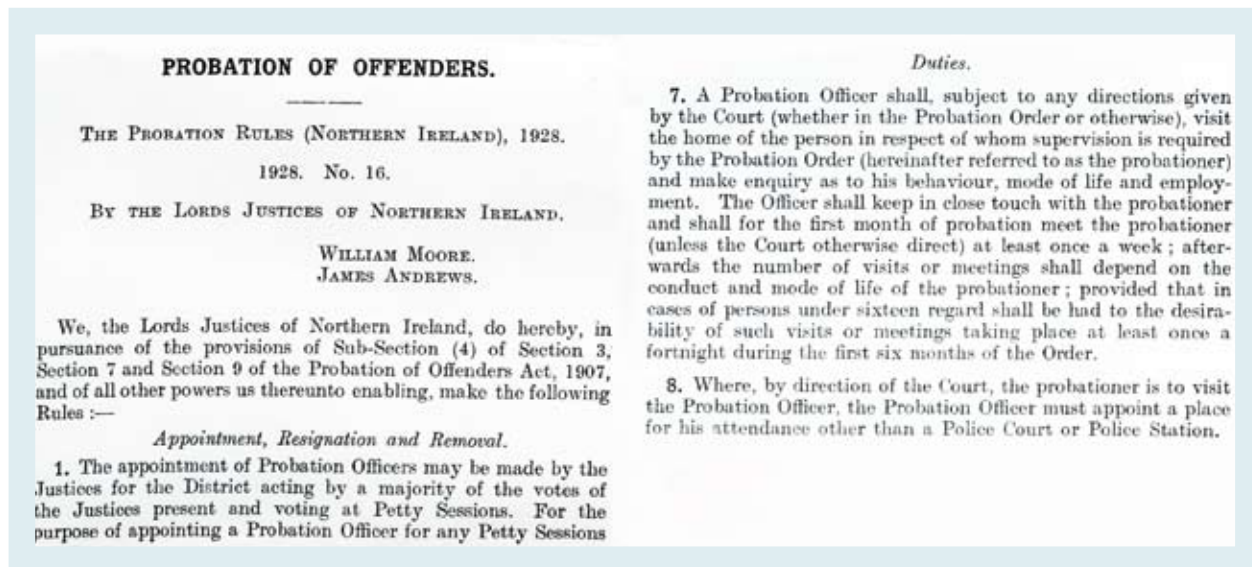
Probation Champion

Probation did not have any champions in positions of political authority. However, they did have at least one MP who was prepared to exert pressure on the Minister of Home Affairs, Sir Dawson Bates, and his Department. Robert Crawford, MP 1921-38 and later leader of the Temperance Party tabled parliamentary questions during 1929 on the

development of the service. In June he received the following reply from the Minister, 'I am entirely with the Hon. Member in the view that every chance should be given to young offenders before they are sent to jail. We had a great many magistrates who took a contrary view in regard to Probation Officers but recently the Minister of Finance agreed to increase the fees'. The small numbers of probation officers, their part-time status, lack of structure and training militated against their being effective lobbyists.

Government Review

Little fresh social legislation was initiated by the Northern Ireland Parliament during these years. However, new white papers and legislation



Copy of Probation Rules, 1928.

at Westminster prompted some comparative consideration. Following on from the appointment of a Departmental Committee on Social Services in Courts of Summary Jurisdiction in England in 1934, a committee on the Protection and Welfare of the Young and the Treatment of Young Offenders (NI) (known as the Lynn Committee) was established in 1935. By this stage NI had fallen considerably adrift of developments in England and Wales where use of probation was at 19% in adult courts of summary jurisdiction and 54% in juvenile courts while NI was at 4% and 14% respectively. The Committee was chaired by Sir Robert Lynn and Robert Crawford was appointed as a member. Submissions were invited from interested groups and individuals. One Resident Magistrate, commenting on the role of the probation officer, stated that he had never ordered a whipping but he thought it appropriate that such an officer should perform the role if the need arose.

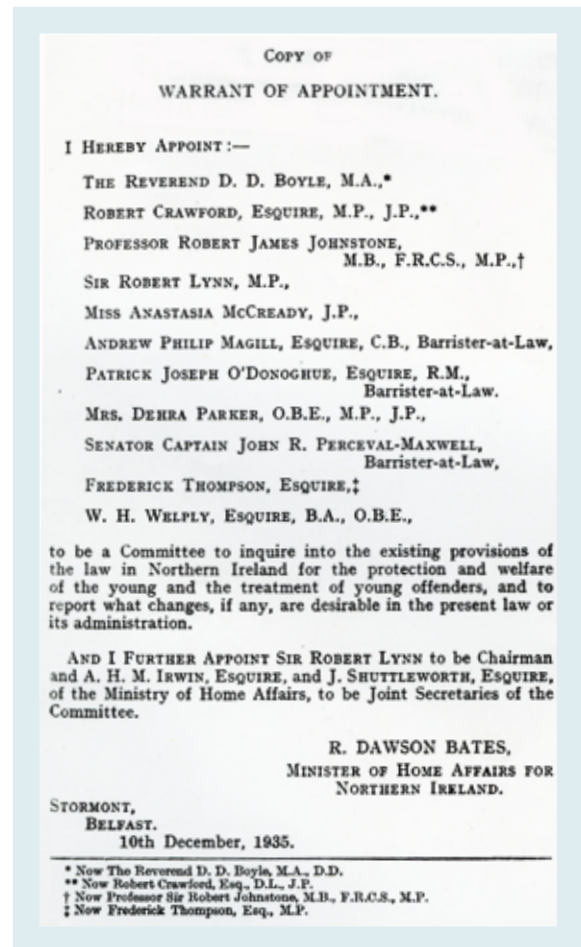
1935

Probation Orders

	U 16	16-21	Over 21	Total
Males	199	64	10	273
Females	4	5	3	12
New Orders commenced in Belfast				119
		In Rest of NI		7
497 Children and Young Persons resided in Reformatories and Industrial Schools				

The Dog Licence Fund

In 1936 the Ministry of Home Affairs assumed authority for the appointment of probation officers but still only in response to recommendations from Magistrates. Funding of the service came from the Dog Licence Fund which was collected by Clerks of Petty Sessions. Through licences costing 5/- the fund raised a remarkable £25,000 per annum.

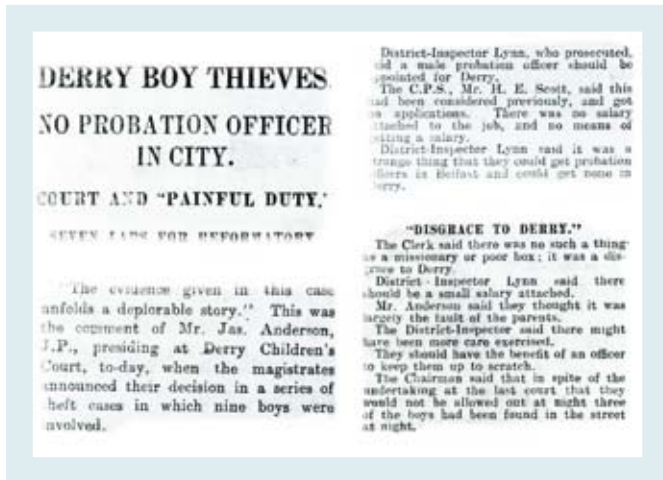


Lynn Committee warrant of appointment. (PROBI, HA series)

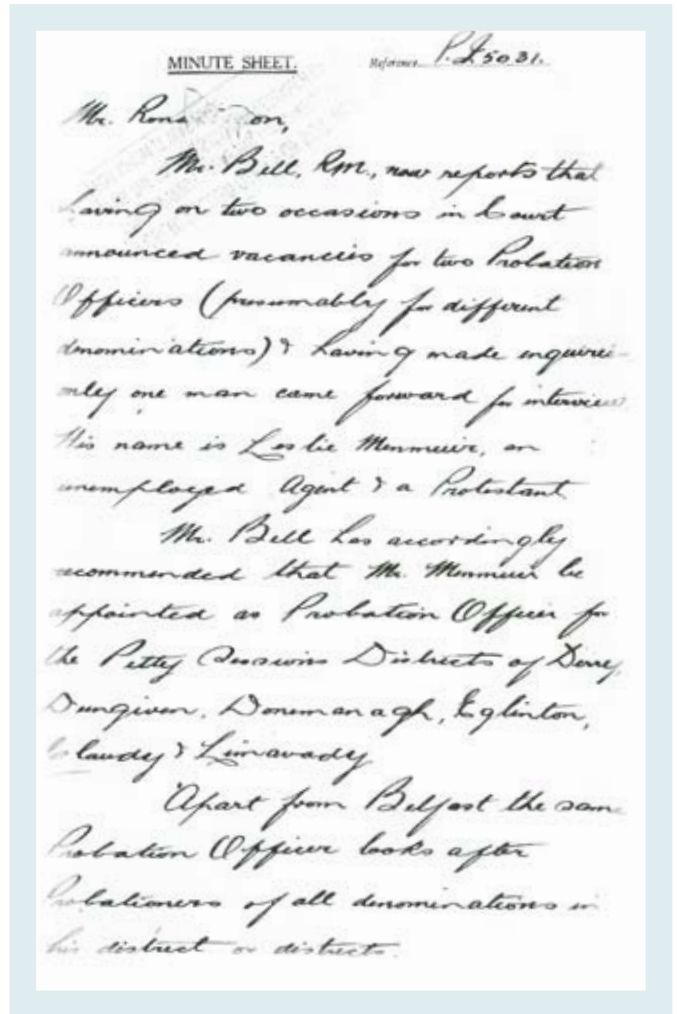
Salaries of Clerks of Petty Sessions were also paid from this fund. The surplus was allocated between Ministry of Home Affairs and Local Authorities. Even though rates of pay had risen, the overall cost of the probation service that year was only £312- hardly a drain on resources.

The Derry vacancy

The problems are illustrated by the situation regarding probation officers in Derry at that time. During 1936 Sister Mary Joseph retired. The issue of a vacancy received some publicity and two men were eventually appointed after an informal recruitment process to supervise on a denominational basis.



Excerpt from Belfast Telegraph 22/1/1935.



Excerpt from letter re division on grounds of religion. (PRONI, HA/9/2/416)

Rates of Pay per case per quarter

1-5 12/- (60p) 6-20 9/- (45p) 20+ 6/- (30p)

Rates were 25% higher for cases outside Belfast and Londonderry County Borough areas.

Catch 22 Probation Style

No probation officer no cases
No cases no pay

1939- 10 Probation Officers (part-time)

Ballymena - Robert Hewitt

Belfast - Sarah E Curran, Jane Bell, Mary Fallon,
James McAdam, John P Farrell

Co Londonderry - Leslie Menmuir, Patrick Nash

Lower Bann - John Leonard

Portglenone - Archibald Strong

The Lynn Committee Report

The Lynn Committee produced their report in 1938. It was a seminal government document. It provides a window onto a less known scenario of Northern Ireland in that era. The report included an outline of the nature of delinquency and the notable contributory factors, betting and gaming, cinemas, dance halls, street trading, as well as unemployment and inadequate housing. Recommendations are made regarding restrictions on street trading by young people and dance halls. There is a suggestion that government should grant-aid the setting up of a child guidance clinic by Queen's University staffed by a social worker and assisted by a psychologist. It is a glimpse of more lateral thinking.

Fifty years later Probation was to bring in its own forensic psychologist, Claire Gormley - a first among probation services in these islands.

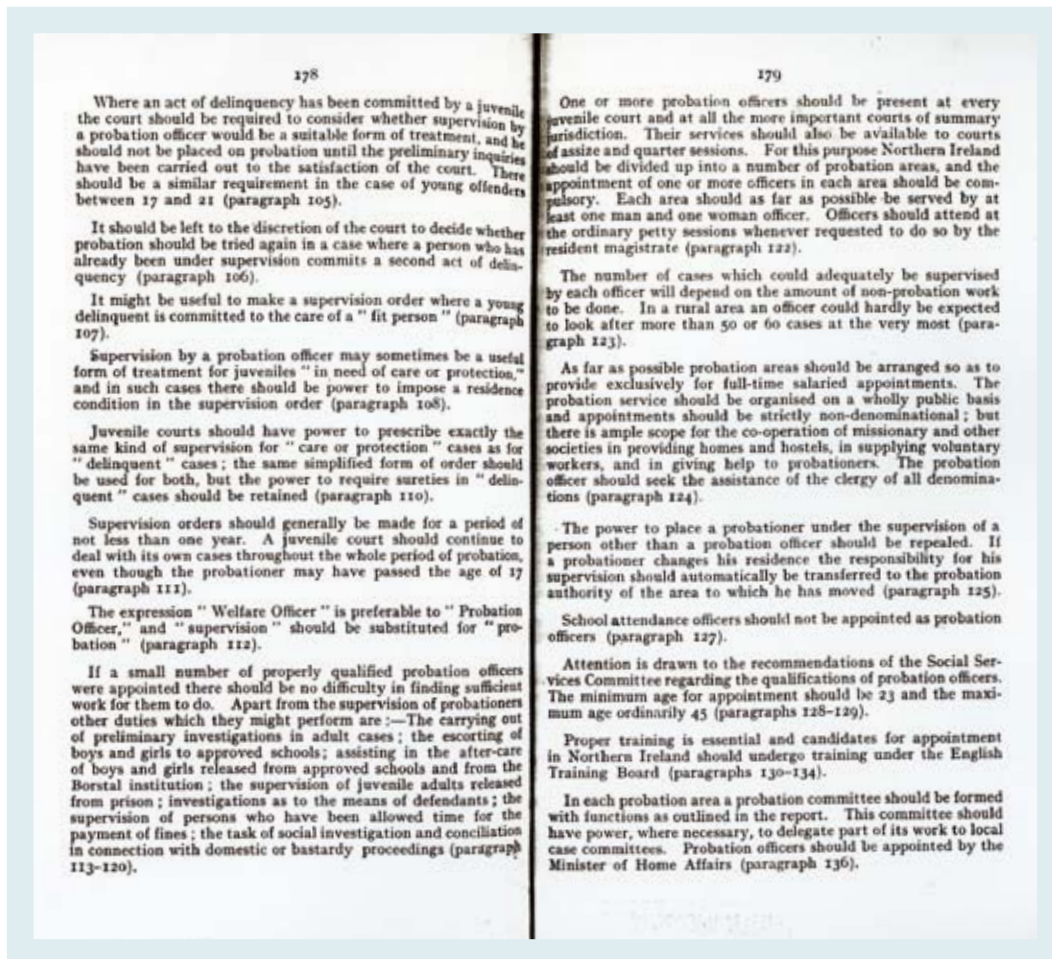
Centrally the report recommends that the Probation Service is taken more seriously and developed on closer lines to Great Britain.



Claire Gormley.

The war clouds looming from the east forestalled implementation. The service remained in its unreformed state during the period of World War Two. However, there was a more than twofold increase in caseloads between 1938 and 1941 coinciding with an upsurge in indictable cases sentenced at petty sessions. The increase was

threefold for males aged 16 and over. The annual total of females increased from 29 to 83, of whom only a fifth was under 16 years. Cases in Belfast constituted an even greater proportion of the whole-75% to 88%. With average caseloads reaching ninety there were some moves to full-time working in 1940.



Some of the Lynn Committee Report Recommendations - Cmnd 187.

Chapter 3

A Full-Time Service 1945-1969

During the war period there had been a debate about the comparative level of services available in N Ireland compared to the rest of the UK. This translated into a post-war agreement between Westminster and Stormont that N Ireland would enjoy the same standards of social services as those prevailing in Great Britain provided that there was parity of taxation. The pool from which resources for courts and offenders might be drawn became potentially larger.

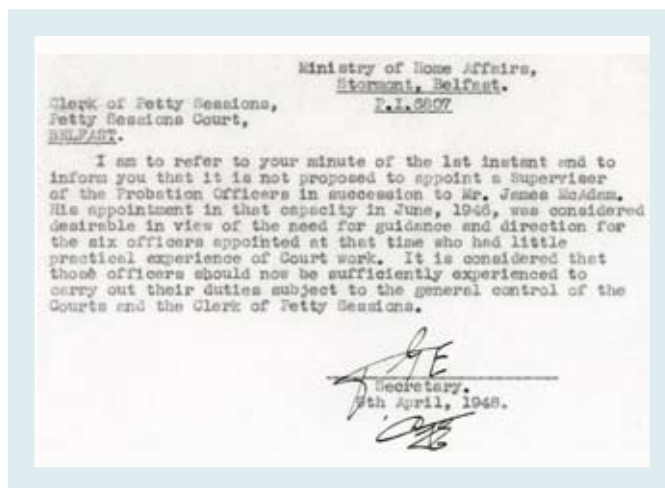
New Entrants

There was an immediate infusion of new full-time probation officers into the service in Belfast. Sadie Shields, Sarah Harvey, Cecil Duke, John Halley, John McKenna and Dan Dobbin were the new recruits with James McAdam being elevated to Acting Senior Probation Officer. He may be regarded as the first leader of probation. Hitherto, it had been a collection of individuals. However, the concept of

probation officers acting on their own responsibility was still predominant. The senior role was deemed as 'to act as a sort of instructor to the new P.Os...' His supervisory position was not renewed on his retirement in 1948. Such a role was not confirmed until the new structure emerged two years later.



Belfast Telegraph 5th Feb 1946.



Extract from Min of Home Affairs memo April 1948. (PRONI, HA/11/20)



James McAdam

Some of the new entrants' backgrounds re-affirm the connection to the religious voluntary societies of the past. Sadie and Sarah had associations with the Legion of Mary and Salvation Army respectively. We understand John McKenna to have been involved with St V de P. However, there is also representation of the

trade union/socialist idealism through John Halley. He and Cecil Duke also carried on the mantle of those who, having served in the forces during the war, wished to build a better society for all.

New Probation Act

The recommendations of the Lynn Committee had been put on hold over the period of hostilities. A fresh committee was set up to look again at the issues covered. As the new report endorsed the thrust of that Committee, fresh legislation was drafted and passed into a new Probation Act (NI) 1950. The Ministry of Home Affairs assumed responsibility for the organisation, appointment and funding of the Probation Service for the whole region. After 40 years the supply and oversight of Probation Officers passed from the Magistracy to the Civil Service. Staff became civil servants with salary and pension to match.

1950 - The New Model Probation Order

After conviction
With consent (14+)
Duration 1-3years
Supervision only by a probation officer
+/- damages or compensation
+/- Condition of residence for 12 months
+/- Condition of mental health treatment

In addition it became a duty of the Probation Officer on the direction of the court to enquire into the circumstances or home surroundings of any person with a view to assisting the court in determining the most suitable method of dealing with him. Its companion Act (Children and Young Persons (NI)) made it necessary for probation officers to be informed of young persons coming before the court so that he/she might prepare a report such as that described above.

The Probation Service expanded to take on the new duties and to provide services across the whole of NI. Probation usage outside Belfast rose by over 100% in the first four years of the operation of these two acts. However the service did not have the capacity to take on all the new responsibilities. In some areas reports to the juvenile court were supplied by county welfare officers.



Photo of 1950s Probation Officers and Typists. L to R Rear - Ron Clark Paddy McMahon John Halley John McKenna F-Sadie Shields and two unknown staff.

I consider it essential that if an officer does not live within a reasonable distance of his Headquarters he should at least live within his area, and in as central a position as possible. Apart from the fact that due to the nature of his duties, an officer may be required by either the Police or the Welfare Authorities after normal office hours, he should live in the community in which he works in order to become better acquainted with local conditions and people, especially employers youth leaders, etc. Lots of contacts that probation officers make, which are of benefit to probationers, are made in circumstances remote from their official work.

Extract from letter by Cecil Duke, then Senior Probation Officer, to Ministry July 1955. (PRONI, HA/11/20)

Workload	1955
Probation Orders	1279
Supervision Orders	32
Prison After-Care	8
Borstal After-Care	4
Home Surroundings Reports (HSR)	936
Matrimonial Cases	1000 (Belfast)
Staffing	
Probation Officers	14 (full-time) 1 (part-time)



Map of region showing locations of Probation Officers.

By this stage the N Ireland region had been divided into seven divisions with offices within the key Courthouses in each. The new structure allowed for central planning and responses to gaps in the provision of service. Probation Officers were expected to live within their petty sessions' areas.

After-Care

The 1953 Prison Act (NI) had brought new responsibilities in relation to the After-Care of specific categories of sentenced prisoners- Preventive Detention, Corrective Training. By 1960 there were 53 persons subject to such post-release supervision. The after-care role had traditionally been carried out by the Discharged Prisoners Aid Societies- one, under the auspices of the St Vincent de Paul Society, serving the Catholic community and the other covering the various Protestant denominations. That work of visitation of prisoners and families and support on release of the general prison population was continued by them. Indeed Catholic discharged prisoners returning to Belfast could be employed in a wood yard established and run by the St Vincent de Paul for that purpose. Strong personal connectors between probation and these services had already been established. John P Farrell who was the agent of the Catholic Discharged Prisoners Aid Society for at least fifteen years between the wars also acted as a probation officer (part-time) simultaneously. He ceased his after-care role on being appointed as a probation officer on a full-time basis in 1940. His successor, John McKenna, had also become a probation officer after World War Two.

Training and Methodology

When taking responsibility for the Service the Ministry of Home Affairs had created a link with the training provision for Probation Officers operated by the Home Office in London. Newly recruited Probation Officers were able to attend the Home Office Training Course (Theoretical) at Rainer House. As they were not able to undertake the supervised field placements section of the course they did not receive the professional qualification. Nevertheless, this brought an infusion of knowledge and provided an opportunity to learn new skills and methods which they could develop in their engagement with offenders and their families on their return to their home area.

The moral reform of the individual had been overtaken by the casework approach- still based on the individual but with a psychological rather than a religious foundation. Attendance at the course also widened the professional networks accessible to the staff. Formal and informal relationships were created with Home Office Inspectors and Trainers and with individual practitioners in services which had reached a more mature stage in their evolution and were more adult-oriented in their services. Through these relationships they gained connections with the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO).

This was the Professional Association and the negotiating arm in regard to the pay and conditions of service which had first come into being in England in 1912. As civil servants in N. Ireland Probation Officers were now eligible to join the N I Civil Service Association which negotiated with government on their behalf. The NICSA leadership were attentive to the needs of this small staff group. However, staff needed to look to England for specialist professional support. On account of the comparative isolation and lack of structure NAPO was to play a more enhanced role in the development of the service in addition to its members over the next 30 years.

Crime and Society

Crime rates began to rise at the end of the 1950s and then steadied before a significant increase from 1965 onwards. Over the 15 years the staffing increased gradually to take account of the expansion in caseload. However, workloads remained high.

1964

Probation	1920
Supervision	47
Borstal After-Care	46
Prison After-Care	73
H S Reports	1245
(6:8 Probationers have no previous convictions)	
Matrimonial Cases	1450
1 Principal Probation Officer	
20 Probation Officers	



Probation Office Chichester St Belfast. The Administrative Staff June 1963 Rear Eileen Crilly and Frances Lindsay (typists) Front Maud Thompson (clerical officer) and Florence Jamison (typist). It was 1959 before the first Clerical Officer was appointed. Prior to that time the Senior Probation Officer performed most of his own filing. In 1958 the first Clerk/Typist was supplied to the Derry office.

The material improvement in living conditions in the 50s and 60s was reflected in social change. A society which had been over-reliant on institutions and residences as a response to solving social problems began to consider more flexible responses. Probation staff were awakening to the possibilities for a community –based organisation such as theirs. They began to question some of their own practices. Service hitherto had been delivered on the basis of division by gender and by religious denomination. Outside Belfast the religious dichotomy had not been maintained because of an absence of choice of staff.

There was also a recognition that they needed to establish a more visible local knowledge and skill base while maintaining their recently established networks with the probation world in Great Britain. Social Work became the natural port of call. The different Social Work disciplines were entering into collaboration towards integrated professional training and development.

- 1965** The first Senior Probation Officer appointed with responsibility for training was Barbara Stott who also became the first female senior.
- 1966** The first probation Officer appointed who already held an accepted social work qualification was Maurice Nelson.
- 1967** The first Probation Officer seconded to Queen’s University to undertake professional social work course (psychiatric option) as an alternative to attending Home Office Rainer House Course was Florence Simpson
- 1969** The first Senior Probation Officer appointed to Coleraine to provide Probation placements for the new Social work course (New University of Ulster) was John Eastwood.

A significant rise in the crime rate here may have brought added urgency to the introduction of the changes. As an example of the pressure that was being exerted Harry Diamond M.P (Falls) in 1968 asked the Minister of Home Affairs via a parliamentary question, ‘Will he give this great experiment a reasonable chance?’ At least the civil servants recognised that after 60 years it was beyond the experimental stage.

Recollections



Barbara Stott

Barbara Stott commenced her training just before World War Two and had a career as a Probation Officer in Lancashire before coming to Northern Ireland in 1965 as the first female Senior Probation Officer and the first Senior with responsibility for training. She retired just before the creation of the Probation Board. In her retirement she lives in Cheshire.

Motivation to become a probation officer

I was very high-minded. I wanted to do missionary work and wrote to the Methodist Church. They advised me to do social work before I went on the mission field. I undertook a social work certificate at Liverpool University just before the Second World War. During the course I did a probation placement. I got very involved with juveniles and the Juvenile Court in Liverpool. Frank Dawtry, the general secretary of NAPO, was also an influence. During the course I heard him speak. That confirmed my decision to become a probation officer. I told the Methodist Church that I was not going to be a missionary.

Her first job in Probation

I started work in Widnes. I covered the whole of Widnes and Warrington through a caseload of juveniles and women. My predecessor was Sam Cowan, a Police Court Missionary. My caseload varied between 30 and 100.

Reports for the Courts

When we received notification we prepared home circumstances reports. You could put over the views of parents; so often parents are blamed for juvenile delinquency. However, very often you find that parents have tried very hard with their children. I used to support mothers. I think they had a very hard life. I was very uncritical.

Accountability

The Probation Committee (my employer) was made up of Magistrates. They liked us to report on the cases which I didn't like doing. In Warrington they used to take the records to their homes to read. I objected and refused to do that. I wasn't going to have the record bandied about someone's house.

Style of Supervision

Authoritative. The Serving of the order was very important and was supposed to be carried out within the precincts of the

court. The message was 'You have not been let off. You have made promises to the court. You are expected to keep them. I will try to help you to keep them. If you had been sent away from home you would have been assigned according to your religion. While you are under my supervision I expect you to attach yourself to some kind of youth organisation such as boys' brigade or scouts.' A lot did do. This was followed by weekly 'reporting'. I set them up with voluntary placements and educational opportunities and we organised trips to New Brighton.

Moving to Northern Ireland

I applied for a Senior post at Warrington. When I wasn't successful I decided to look elsewhere. There was a vacancy for a Senior Post in N Ireland. I had a friend from N Ireland and used to go to stay with her. When I was flying in (for interview) I just thought I was going to work there. I got the hunch.

The N Ireland Probation Service

The service was Individual - very carefully guarded, individual work. They resented interference of any kind. In comparison with Lancashire it was more individual. Cecil Duke was in charge (Principal Probation Officer). After I had been there for a while he asked me how I was

getting on. 'Are you all right? They said that anyone who was coming to this new post they were going to make their life hell?' I replied 'If this is hell why am I so happy?' I felt that my senior colleagues gave me a hard time. I challenged that. In the end they were too nice to be mean.

Coming in from outside

Everybody else seems to have expected to be appointed as Senior Probation Officer when I was successful. In the beginning I was staying in a hotel in Donaghadee. I took them all out for an evening in a boat around the Copeland Islands and into the Dunallen for supper. It was the first social outing they had all had together.

Changes

I started staff meetings. It was titled 'a group'. Social Work had teams. In teams somebody felt very much in charge and watched over what others were doing. They resented that very much. When I said 'group' they were prepared to meet together under that term. However, I was told 'You can't teach a dog new tricks.' I used to buy buns and cakes for the meetings. That was the only way we got by in the beginning.

Training Conference

I organised a Training conference. I

brought good people from London and Liverpool and Denis Hall, my old Chief from South West Lancashire. I wanted him to talk about enlargement to the service. We were at a stage in the service development when we were going to take more people on. The conference went down very well and helped create more contacts with the Services in England and Wales.

Gender

The first women's meeting in South West Lancashire was held in my house - 10 female officers. Women were inferior then. We didn't end up inferior. We wanted to be part of the service not an appendage. We gained confidence. We became less individual and more service minded which I brought ...to Northern Ireland

Training

I developed a programme where staff met people from the other agencies they were working with such as the Training Schools, Borstal and Hospital Psychiatrists. They hadn't done that before. That became part of the induction for new staff. By that stage probation officers were meeting up with more of the other disciplines on their professional courses.

Probationers

I loved them. I never saw any difference between people inside and outside courts. I used to see myself supporting the person who was on probation. I used to go to any family to support the one on probation.

Ministry of Home Affairs

I got great support from Mr Blackburn but then he died suddenly. There was also Don O'Dowd and Ronnie Sterling. The latter knew more about Probation than many probation officers.

Changes in NI service

It became a much more helping service. We changed the tone. We stopped writing those official types of court letters summoning probationers to their appointments in accordance with the conditions of their order etc. Then Social Work Training changed it really and the people that came in with new attitudes.

NI

I was happy. I loved NI. I like the people. I liked their way of living. It was very narrow. Maybe I was very narrow too.

Through-Care and After-Care

The 1960s also saw the expansion of the probation service into the field of Through-Care. The role had traditionally been carried out by the Discharged Prisoners Aid Societies- one serving the Catholic community and the other covering the various Protestant denominations.

Influenced by policy changes in England and Wales the ministry decided that services in this area should be led by the statutory body and supplemented by the Voluntary sector. More responsibility passed to the probation service resulting in After-Care being added to the title of the organisation. It was recognition by the state that it had responsibilities for the consequences of custodial sentences and an attempt to support the return to community in a manner that might reduce the likelihood of reverting to crime. Voluntary organisations still had a part to play but in a supplementary sense rather than as the main service suppliers.

In 1968 the Treatment of Offenders (NI) Act extended statutory after-care supervision by a probation officer to most prisoners serving six months or more. It also signalled the creation of Young Offender Centres (YOC) (under 21) and the demise of Borstal Training. However it was to be another decade before a purpose built YOC (Hydebank) was to emerge.

This legislation signalled a shift towards a more adult oriented service. In 1967 persons 17 years plus made up about 10% of those under supervision. By 1970 this adult figure had doubled.

Recollections



Bob Currie

Robert (Bob) Currie was the first Probation Officer to undertake a Prison Welfare Role in a Prison in Northern Ireland and was responsible for researching and planning the unit and the role to be undertaken. In 1970 he was appointed as the first Senior Prison Welfare/Probation Officer. His brother Jim, later to become Director of NSPCC(NI), was also a probation officer at that time. Bob's son, Geoff, has followed him into the probation service in Ontario.

Career pre-probation

I graduated from the International Training College for Officers of the Salvation Army, London in 1955 with an Officers Commission. I was appointed to the South Yorkshire Division working in the coal mining villages around Barnsley and Leeds. I married my wife Ida, also an Officer, in 1956. In 1960 returning to Northern Ireland, I joined the NI Prison Service and following training in Belfast Prison, was appointed to H.M Borstal Millisle as a Disciplined Officer working with inmates in the 16-21 years of age group.

Joining Probation

While working at HM Borstal Millisle I was interviewed for a Probation Officer position, was successful and appointed to Belfast Petty Sessions Court Office, working a Juvenile caseload in Belfast districts of Shankhill Rd, East Belfast and Hollywood. In 1964 I completed the Home Office Probation Training Programme at Rainer House London - a four-month residential course.

My interest in Through-Care

On returning to Belfast from Rainer House I was seconded to conduct a study of homelessness amongst discharged prisoners in Belfast. During this 6-month study I was located within the Prison on Crumlin Rd, interviewing every prisoner on a daily basis who was being discharged. This interesting period allowed me to work closely with the discharged Prisoners Aid Societies. It also allowed me to have direct access to the existing men's Hostels at that time; working closely with Prison Chaplains, community Social Workers, Alcoholic Rehab Units within the City and Prisoners' families. A report was completed and submitted to the Ministry in 1965.

Becoming a through-care specialist

Following the Mountbatten Report on

Prisons it was decided that Northern Ireland should appoint a Probation Officer to work as a Prison Welfare Officer in Belfast Prison and after discussions with Cecil Duke, Principal Probation Officer and Don O'Dowd from the Ministry, I was asked to establish a Welfare Unit in Crumlin Rd. Prison. We looked to Scotland where the Home and Health Department had formed their own individual Prison Welfare Service commenced by a former Senior Probation Officer, Mr. Peddie. I began 8-week hands on placement in three Scottish Prisons and the Prison Welfare H.Q.

The Scottish experience

It was during this period at Perth Prison that I observed the 'Training for Freedom' Programme, developed in Scotland, whereby selected prisoners (Long Term and Lifers) were engaged in a working out Programme – working in the community and returning to the Prison at night. They were housed in a separate Unit outside the Main Prison but inside the perimeter fence. Prison Welfare Officers provided the ongoing support during this pre-release period before the Probation Service took over the parole responsibility after discharge. This very successful programme for Long-term offenders was efficient, cost effective and had the approval and co-

operation of the Prison Officer ranks from Governor down to the newest recruit. It was on this programme that we based the 'Working Out Programme' at Crumlin Rd Prison a few years later.

The establishment of Prison Welfare Unit at H.M. Prison, Crumlin Road Belfast

In May 1967, final plans were approved with Don O'Dowd, Cecil Duke and Governor Mullin. An office was provided in the main administration building of the prison and we were ready to go. Newspaper reporters in Belfast were interested in this new development and a couple of articles were published and within days the prison population began submitting their names for the Welfare Officer interviews. During these early days a Young Probation Officer, Breidge Dolan (now Gadd) joined the Prison Welfare unit becoming the first woman ever to work in Belfast Prison. Each Wing had a cell set aside for use by the Prison Welfare Officer and the Chaplains for interview purposes and all prisoners in any Wing had access to the Prison Welfare Officers.

Through-Care Parole Supervision

Special emphasis was placed on those Prisoners who would be eligible for parole on discharge i.e. Young Offenders,

Corrective Trainees, Preventative Detainees and certain Life Sentence Men. A system of through-care involving the Welfare Officer and the Supervising Probation Officer was established to provide the prisoner and his family with a contact within and without the prison.

The Working Out Programme

Based on the 'Training for Freedom' Programme in Scotland, we embarked on a well-planned programme for selected Long Term and Life Sentenced men. The plan was to provide a pre-release programme of three years before their release date. The programme enabled the men to engage in a one day per week 'day parole' accompanied initially by welfare officers, and later, selected prison officers. To allow the individual to visit the city, use public transport, handle cash, engage in job interviews etc... The first prisoner selected for this programme was serving a Life Sentence for Murder and was in his 17th year of a 20-year sentence. He was placed in employment at a city Flour Mill and worked the night shift returning to the Prison each morning. Employers became part of the rehabilitation scheme.

Prison Welfare Expansion

Soon the Prison welfare unit was fully operational and expanded its service to

other institutions in Northern Ireland: Magilligan Prison, Armagh Women's Prison and when Internment was introduced in N.I. a Welfare Unit was established at the Long Kesh Centre later to become the MAZE Prison. Because of this exciting development within the Probation Service in N.I. many stalwart probation officers with great experience were attracted to Prison welfare work, Sadie Shields, Will McClelland, Elizabeth Kennedy and Kay Atcheson to name but a few.

H.M.S. Maidstone

Another Interesting aspect of Prison Welfare took place when the Royal Navy Ship the Maidstone was used as a prison ship by the military forces to detain men arrested under the Special Powers Act. The Maidstone had a skeleton crew of navy personnel and a full complement of prison officers under the command of a Governor. I used to visit the Maidstone twice weekly on Belfast Lough to interview men who had been detained overnight.

Volunteers

Volunteers have always played a special role in the field of corrections. The Discharged Prisoners Aid Society supplemented by the Volunteers from the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)

provided excellent volunteer work. NIACRO created a refreshment area in the Crumlin Rd Courthouse opposite the Prison to supply refreshments for families who travelled many miles to visit their fathers and husbands.

Moving to Canada

In 1973 as a family, Ida and I emigrated to Canada with our four children all under the age of 16 years and settled in Southern Ontario. Within 2 weeks I was supervising a caseload of Juveniles in the City of Toronto, population of 3 million people. In 1976, I transferred to the Adult Division and moved to the City of Mississauga, one of the fastest growing communities in North America (now with a population of 700,000). I joined a Probation Staff who used a team approach to probation supervision. Our total office caseload then was 1800 adults. I worked the Drug and Alcohol caseload of 130 clients for many years. In 1983 I entered Management and became the Area Manager for the City of Mississauga Probation Service with a staff of 40 until I retired in 1993.

TROUBLE IS Mr CURRY'S BUSINESS

by ALEX LINDSAY

WITH HIS battered brown briefcase he looks like any other business man but to 36-year-old Robert Curry "the office" has bars on the window. His clients may include murderers, thieves, and embezzlers. Each day he listens to the problems of a country's criminals. Mr. Curry, father of four, is Northern Ireland's first prison welfare officer, a bold new move by the Ministry of Home Affairs to help prisoners adjust to their new environment. After months of research and training, he has just begun his two year "term" inside Belfast's Crumlin Road jail. In those two years he will pioneer a full prisoners' welfare unit.

"There has been a crying need for this sort of thing inside Northern Ireland's prisons," he said. "Social and welfare workers on the outside do an admirable job. But it is inside, with the prisoner, that troubles hit hardest."

With his experience in the hard world of a Belfast shipyard, where he started life as an apprentice shipwright, Mr. Curry is anything but the glib do-gooder. He has run a youth club in London's Elephant and Castle area. He has been both borstal officer and a full-time worker with the Salvation Army.

It was his latest job as a probation officer that got him seconded to the prison service.

A shock

When he arrives in his office, a short distance from the main gate, each morning, he sorts through a pile of mail for prisoners.

"There are some things that are better broken to the prisoner in person," he said. "To any of us a letter telling of a seriously ill child is a big enough shock. But in prison that sort of thing can break a man."

"Even little things that seem minor problems to you or me become mountains in the eyes of a prisoner."

Later he will interview prisoners who want to see him—but not in his usual office, although the barred windows make it virtually escape proof. There is another comfortably furnished office, converted from a vacant cell, deep in the heart of the jail.

Mr. Curry is building a strong follow-up system on the outside, using voluntary social organisations and the probation system to help prisoners after release. A special "hot" line direct to his office, by-passing the prison switchboard, is to be installed so that former prisoners, or wives and relatives of existing ones, can talk to him in confidence.

"The type of help I can give varies with the individual, even the sentence he is serving," said Mr. Curry. "Usually it is domestic, matrimonial or connected with employment."

Belfast Telegraph, 1967

MR. ROBERT CURRY, of Cherryhill Avenue, Dundonald, is a man who has been sent to prison for an extended term—and is feeling very pleased about it.

He is Northern Ireland's first prison welfare officer and will move into a new office right inside Belfast jail at the end of this month. The appointment, which has just been announced, comes hard on the heels of Lord Mountbatten's statement that more prison welfare officers are needed.

"The aim is eventually to provide a complete welfare service in the prisons," Mr. Curry told me.

"In the past we have been well served by the discharged prisoners' aid societies, but the Ministry felt there was now a need for a professional, right there in the prison."

Mr. Curry was on the Borstal staff at Millisle for two years, and in the probation office for four. Before taking up his new post he spent six weeks touring prisons in Scotland.

AN INSIDE JOB



Mr. Curry: A decrease in prison tension.

"Every prison governor I talked to told me that as soon as a welfare officer was appointed there was a tremendous decrease in tension," Mr. Curry said.

Children and Young Persons

Legislation in regard to children and young persons was also updated. (The Children and Young Persons (NI) Act 1968.) The age of criminal responsibility was raised to 10 and clearer definitions were drawn between the courts' powers in relation to care and protection and crime for those 14 years and over. Probation remained the key court service in respect of young persons charged with offences. For the first time a group of new Probation Officers were recruited directly upon graduating from University. They came with expectations of a career path and presented a sharp contrast with the core of existing staff who were second careerists often without opportunities for third level education. School Attendance Officers/Education Welfare Officers formed a noticeable current in this stream.



L to R: Maud Thompson CO, Kay Acheson PO, Phil Christie (Dornan) and Linda Boomer, Typists, Probation Office, Petty Sessions Courthouse, Belfast c. 1968.

Chapter 4

A Period of Expansion 1969-1981

The Ministry of Home Affairs agreed a plan for expansion of the Service to meet these new responsibilities. Moreover, there was recognition that even when these new services were delivered any comparison with England and Wales showed significant under-usage by courts of alternatives to custody particularly for older offenders. Concerned by the increase in persons being sent to institutions in NI the policy makers did not ignore these figures as in the past. The proposed action plan needed to take account of three strands:-

- a) An increase in the capacity of the service to take on the additional work arising from the legislation already passed in 1968.
- b) Capacity for development, forward planning, oversight, supervision and support.
- c) Increasing professionalism.

Implementation of the modernisation plan

Staffing

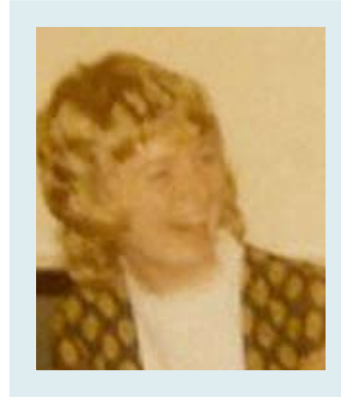
By 1976 the number of Probation Officers had risen to 45 with seven ancillaries (assistants).



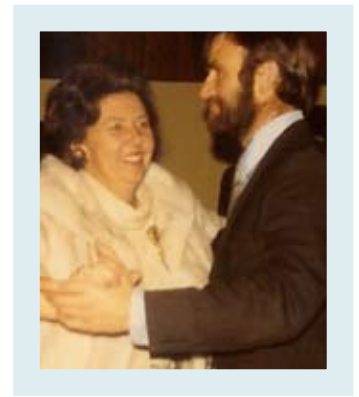
Rear: John McKenna, Sadie Shiels, Will McClelland, Jimmy Carr, Paddy McMahon. Front: Jack Dykes, Marjorie and John Halley, Breidge Dolan (Gadd) at John Halley's retirement event, 1974.



Rear: Gerry Lavery, Leon Rogan . Front: Shawn Davies, Jean McVeigh, Anita McGeary.



Irene Matthews.



Jean Fleming and Brendan McGeary.



Harry Fleming, Eric Culbert (standing), Phil Dornan, Aileen Culbert, Jean Fleming, Dan O'Kane.



A staff and family social event in early 1970s. Includes Jimmy Carr, Barbara Stott, Maureen Blackburn, Sean Neeson Sam, Vi Chapman and Sylvia Jordan'.

Development

In 1970 a post of Senior Prison Welfare Officer (Bob Currie) was established followed by a new post of Assistant Principal Officer (Jack Dykes) in the following year. Two additional Seniors (Brendan McGeary and Victor McElpatrick) were given responsibility for the induction, supervision and support of trainees and students. An agreement was reached with the Home Office for the Probation Inspection team there to assist with oversight of the service in Northern Ireland. It carried out an inspection in 1973. The ensuing recommendations reinforced the arguments for a long term development plan.

Professionalism

NI Probation's retention of current staff and successful recruitment depended on the projection of a professional, progressive and developing agency. The response was the introduction of a trainee grade based on salary linked to Home Office trainees rather than a student grant. Persons recruited were expected to obtain a professional qualification within four years and return as probation officers. By 1976 there were 23 trainees at different stages of their journey.

It was an era of integration. The previously separate disciplines within social work - medical, psychiatric, child care, geriatric and probation - came together. A new more generic social work qualification was established – Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW). The collective process had a strong impact in N I. Solid connections were made with social workers across the different services. The

isolationism was over. Many probation officers would now qualify through integrated training programmes which created mutual understanding and essential networks. Existing Probation officers without the professional qualification were offered the possibility of secondment on salary to similar courses. When that process was completed no new Probation Officers could be recruited without holding the necessary social work diploma.

The Civil Conflict

The great optimism that had pervaded the probation service with the changes to responsibilities at the end of the decade evaporated in the face of civil conflict erupting in the summer of 1969. It had an abnormal impact on all the criminal justice agencies as well as the whole society. Emergency legislation passed in 1970 which introduced mandatory custodial sentences for certain offences relating to the unrest, such as riotous behaviour, made a wholly unexpected type of prisoner eligible for the new supervised licence on release. Probation staff pressed for the exclusion of those persons processed under emergency legislation from the supervisory element. By 1973 the Minister had suspended the licence provision of the Act and introduced new release provisions. The after-care part of 'the great experiment' was put on ice.

Recollections



Maeve Magowan

Maeve Magowan joined the service in 1969 and stayed for two years. Maeve was the first full-time married female Probation Officer. She resigned from the service to bring up her family and her son, Tim, followed into the service 29 years later. (See pages 78-83) She worked at a time when there were still restrictions on the nature of the work according to gender.

Motivation

When I was in Queen's University studying Honours Psychology, I secured a placement, off my own bat, in the Probation Service under the supervision of Miss Barbara Stott, for whom I hold a real affection and with whom I still keep in touch. In the following long hot summer I worked as a 'helper' in the Girls' Training School in Whiteabbey, again to gain experience. That certainly opened my eyes! My dissertation was on Juvenile Delinquency. As a result I wanted to work with young people. I was able to go straight into Probation without having done any Social Work training, which was amazing. I suppose when you are young - 21/ 22 years- you think you are going to solve the world's problems. Maybe one has a more black or white view of the world compared to when one is older, and it merges more into shades of grey.

Probation work undertaken

Initially I was presented with the full spectrum of tasks, although I hadn't any experience, except what I had seen in the placement with Miss Stott two years previously: Pre Court Reports; supervision of those placed on probation; matrimonial work, despite having had absolutely no training. As regards the latter work, one learned on the job and from wonderful colleagues like Sadie Shields, Florence Simpson and Elizabeth Kennedy. Even though they weren't married they seemed to know a lot more than I, who was only married a couple of months. I grew to respect them all enormously.

Matrimonial work

In those days very often we saw estranged wives whose husbands were not supporting them. So they were sent into us in a little room on the right of the front door in The Petty Sessions, Belfast, to see if there was any way their marriage could be rescued, before setting down the Separation route. Usually it was too late as regards reconciliation, and then it moved fast into the separation stage. An odd time, however, I do recall intervention helped, and we were able to assist couples face their differences, discuss their problems and try to work out a strategy for the future.

Her role

Being young and idealistic, I tried to relate to the young people in trouble, to really try to work with them to keep them out of trouble - in a way befriend them, reason with them, maybe do a lot of negotiation on their behalf, and also to support the parents as best I could. However I realized that often so much in life conspired against them: awful places that some of them lived in; the inadequate relationships and circumstances that they lived with; the poor expectations they, their parents and even schools had of them: and the different ethic they and their families lived by than one would have had oneself.

The service that she joined

When I joined the Probation Service in 1969, I was very much aware of a service in flux, with the 'old brigade' and the new entrants. That produced its own tensions; certainly some of the former regarded the latter with suspicion. I hoped that we weren't arrogant, for I'd little to be arrogant about. Rather I really needed to be taken in hand and trained. However for me there was no induction, no easing-in. I felt at that time there was uneasy and diffident leadership, yet despite that, good work was often done.

For example, Barbara Stott, whose heart was in the right place, had a warm and caring approach. Sam Chapman was my hero- kindly, knowledgeable, sensitive, hard-working, great fun - an excellent Probation Officer, who always had the interests of the client at heart.

The sentencing of girls

If they hadn't been in trouble before, they were 'let off' or put on Probation which some people considered being 'let off' also. If they had offended before, they could end up in training school. It was quite prissy the way it was organized.

The type of offences

I don't remember grievous bodily harm or carrying weapons, taking or peddling drugs, or what you might consider terribly serious. A lot of it was theft and shop-lifting.

The relationship with the families

I tried to work with the families. I thought it was very important to have two parents on my side who would understand what I was trying to do. Occasionally that didn't work and one could be accused of harassing the young person if they weren't fulfilling their obligations about contact. Yet one had to do something about that.

Influence

I think reports were listened to. Commander Mullan was one RM whom I recall with respect. One often felt very responsible. I remember a report I did about a girl I had on probation, who had re-offended. The Bench decided that they would send her to Whiteabbey Training School. Her solicitor afterwards said to the parent, 'the probation officer, - she was responsible for getting your daughter sent to Whiteabbey.' I hadn't said anything directly and hadn't made any recommendations. I wrote about facts as they were and tried to write up a report about the family as I saw them. At the time, I had a few sleepless nights afterwards thinking about her. Should I have said more or less? I wonder what became of that girl?... I haven't thought about her for years and years, and here I am worrying about her. The family probably blamed me. I was the one who was responsible in their eyes. That is what I'm left with. If one had been able to talk about the case with a good supervisor beforehand and afterwards, perhaps it wouldn't have imprinted itself so much that I am remembering it after all these years.

Accountability

My impression would be that things were slack by modern standards. It depended on the consciousness of the individual probation officer how much he/she visited and how much he/she wrote up the files.

Working in those troubled times

We lived in Antrim. Sometimes I came into work after there had been horrific happenings during the night. I well remember Bloody Friday and hearing explosion after explosion sitting at my desk in the law courts. I recall thinking on the day of Internment, 'Is this is the right thing to do? Surely this will antagonize people in the Nationalist community.' We didn't visit that day, we went home early or did a visit in a 'good' Protestant area. I remember visiting in streets with barricades, glass all over the road and bricked-up houses. However we kept going. We didn't think much about our own safety.

I remember one shock, which illustrates how vulnerable we were during the so-called 'Troubles'. I had a young woman on probation, whose husband I had met a couple of times when visiting. One night on a television news report I saw this hooded man, - obviously a member of a particular paramilitary group. I heard his voice and I knew immediately it was my

client's husband. I found that very scary. One night not long after this at home in Antrim, my front door knocked and there he was with her on the front door step. He had brought her to my house for me to 'sort her out'. I don't know how I got rid of them that night. It was all very inappropriate and it was kind of scary.

Oversight or supervision

We each were under the direction of a senior probation officer and we were meant to meet with him/her regularly. They were supposed to keep an eye on our work. I do Counselling now, but in terms of 'off-loading', or taking one's 'stuff' to a supervisor, that really wasn't done in those days. It very much depended on who your supervisor was, how useful this was, or indeed if it happened at all. There wasn't much uniformity in approach, but they were changing times.

Being the first married woman

As the first married woman, I was conscious about not letting the side down. When I realized I was having a baby, I thought it best to resign, as I couldn't imagine going into court very pregnant etc. How times have changed!

When my children were up a bit, I toyed with the idea of going back. However

I discovered that I would have to do another qualification. I was caught by the transition. So I went into teaching. I ended up in a pastoral role in school very often trying to sort out children who had got into different kinds of trouble.

Court Duty

One frosty morning I was due to take court reports to the Barron Hall, Glengormley where a court was sitting. I couldn't get my car started. Time was running out so I had no alternative but to run down to the main Antrim – Belfast road and shamelessly thumb a lift. A coal lorry stopped. I was very grateful for his lift to the door on time, except when I clambered inelegantly down from the high cab, who was standing there on the pavement outside but the family I'd visited a few days before to prepare one of the reports. Talk about a red face!

On another occasion I was in Holywood Court which was held in the Orange Hall. On the wall there was a portrait of the Queen, and probably King Billy too. One defendant was called and he was representing himself. When the RM addressed him, the poor man was SO overcome and couldn't quite get the word out that he wanted. He was looking for 'Your Worship,' but instead he looked

all around frantically, eyed the Queen, and eventually came out with 'Your Majesty'. Much guffawing behind hands especially from the Solicitors' bench! There were many stories like this that brought humanity and lightness to sometimes horrible stuff.

Positive outcomes

I do have some good memories of some apparent 'successes', but you never know exactly how much influence one really had. A young person may fall in love, or some teacher takes an interest in him/her, or their Granny works magic or other factors intervene, or it's a product of all of these. Hopefully an odd time the support of a kindly, empathetic and genuine Probation Officer helped.

Working under Emergency legislation

The introduction of internment without trial by the Government in August 1971 brought fresh dilemmas and challenges to Probation. When such emergency measures had been used almost 20 years previously there had not been a probation welfare presence inside the prisons. There was no strategy to measure against. In response to the creation of institutions at Long Kesh and other places to hold internees Probation sent in staff to provide a social welfare service.

The external interest in NI generated by the publicity surrounding the escalating violence had the unforeseen consequence of reducing the isolation of the service. The support of key staff in the Northern Probation areas of England quickly turned into new alliances with their regions. It also resulted in pressure for the N Ireland region to be accepted as a branch of the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO). This widened the debate as to what role the Northern Ireland service should play in the relation to the management of offenders who

Probation officers to stop political work

By Peter Evans
Home Affairs Correspondent

The National Association of Probation Officers has instructed members to refuse to supervise politically motivated offenders charged under conspiracy laws and to decline to prepare social inquiry reports on them.

The ban, effective from December 1, comes after a resolution at the association's annual conference in May. Guidelines have been prepared by the association's professional committee, which has appointed a panel under the committee's chairman, Mr Murray Bruggan.

When such a case comes up the probation officer involved will seek the panel's advice.

An association memorandum

to the Home Office says that although the resolution refers to politically motivated offences charged under the conspiracy laws there are other political offences in which similar difficulties might arise. Conference speakers said that officers were social workers, not political policemen, and must not become agents of political control.

Mr Bruggan said yesterday that probation officers were not the proper people to attempt to alter the political views of others, however much one might disagree with them. Conversely some offenders might maintain that their offence was politically motivated, whereas it could be seen not to be.

The association's memoran-

dum adds: "Where offending is incidental to the attainment of a political objective which is associated in the mind of the offender with a cause to which he is committed beyond personal considerations, and where that cause is seen as a justification for actions which are illegal, the question of advice to the court or supervision of the offender becomes not only academic but irrelevant in terms of a probation officer's training, expertise and experience.

"We believe that where offences have an obvious (patent) political background, intervention by the probation officer cannot avoid a political significance beyond his terms of reference."

were involved in paramilitary and sectarian violence. In 1975 the NAPO Annual Conference adopted a policy against involvement in statutory work with politically motivated offenders. Debates on these issues involving first the Ministry of Home Affairs and then Northern Ireland Office (1972 onwards), Judges and Magistrates, Probation Management and the Professional Associations (NAPO and NIPSA) continued for the next ten years. In the interim a consensus evolved within the courts and the prisons which were translated into practical agreements. Normally preparation of pre-sentence reports and statutory supervision were to be restricted to persons not dealt with under the Emergency Legislation in the Diplock Courts. Service was offered to persons in custody on the basis of voluntary uptake. This approach to delivery of service created space for probation staff to operate within all neighbourhoods across the geographical jurisdiction.

Fresh methods

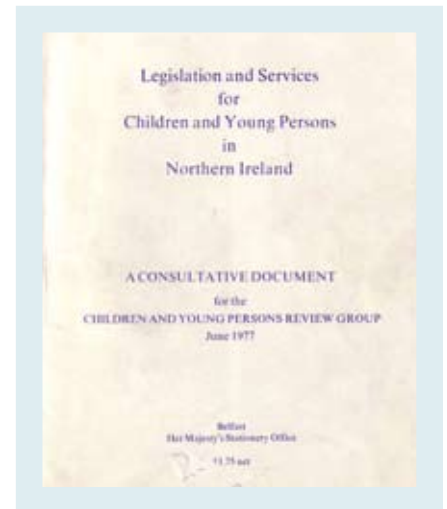
The new professionalism, the enhanced horizons and the turmoil within communities all had a radical influence on the manner of delivering the service. The casework approach with its focus on the individual was viewed as 'time served'. It was difficult to ignore the influence of family and community in the surrounding society. Practice placements and study tours in Europe, United States and New Zealand widened horizons. These experiences brought new ideas back to the mix. A range of group methods were experimented with. Alliances were formed with other disciplines such as youth and community, education, social work and psychology. In contrast to some of the

messages emerging from the research world, optimism abounded. The individualism of staff was treated as a bonus. In a service still working with a predominantly younger age group Intermediate Treatment became a favoured method of working within the probation order. IT fitted well with the 'justice' approach adopted by probation during this time. Although clearly viewed as bolstering probation orders in a manner which made them viable alternatives to custodial orders for young people the service entered into close co-operation with the Training Schools staff to create and make full use of quality resources.

The Welfare/ Justice Debate

Even though the Probation staff were pretty clear that they favoured a justice-oriented approach to the management of young people a much more open debate was taking place externally. Ever since

Scotland had opted for a welfare model, followed by England's hybrid approach, N Ireland had choices to make. Health and Social Services had integrated in 1973. There was pressure to envelop young offender services as well. In January 1976 the Ministers of



Frontispiece of Review Group Consultative Document.

State for Health and Social Services and at the NIO appointed a joint Review Group to look at legislation and services relating to children and young people and to consider the future administration of the Probation Service. In June 1977 the Group published a consultative document seeking comment. Emotionally Probation felt as if it had been 'returned for trial'. Submissions were prepared by the Service and NAPO and NIPSA.

The 'adjournment period' lasted over two years. The Review Group Report (known as the Black Report after the Chairman Sir Harold Black) was published in 1979.

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>PARAGRAPH NO</u>
<u>CHAPTER 7 - THE PROBATION SERVICE</u>	
The probation service should remain a separate service specializing in dealing with offenders and serving the criminal courts.	7.4
The probation service should be administered by a Board drawn from a wide spectrum of the community in Northern Ireland.	7.5
A written code of practice should be drawn up by the probation service ⁷ in consultation with courts and with the approval of the Secretary of State ⁷ .	7.6
The probation board should have responsibility for the management of the custodial establishment.	7.7

Key Recommendations of Review Group Report.

To staff in Probation it felt like a kind of liberation.

The end of matrimonial work

As well as preparing to begin a new era it was also a time to let go. When faced with the introduction of divorce and consequent revisions in the arrangements and services for dealing with family separation, Probation, firmly led on this issue by Bill Griffiths, felt that it was not appropriate to continue to provide matrimonial services in the Civil Courts. It was time to commit to be an offender-only service.

The Voluntary Sector

As we have seen probation emerged at the end of the nineteenth century from voluntary sector organisations with religious foundations. The seventh decade of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of more secular oriented voluntary bodies wishing to play a part in the criminal justice scene.

Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) was formed in 1971 by a group of interested individuals and organisations with the purpose of becoming a lobby group for changes in the system and developing services. It started with a staff of two led by Bob Byers as Organising Secretary under a committee chaired by Bessie Maconachie as Chairman. In the early years it undertook advice, advocacy, recruitment and use of volunteers, services to families of prisoners and accommodation. It was timely that the Voluntary sector should change to take account of the movement of responsibility on the statutory side. The Civil Servants were supportive of this development. The Discharge Prisoners' Aid societies which had been left with a narrower focus

sent representatives to the NIACRO Committee. Later in the decade Extern followed onto the field. It was founded in 1978 by committed academics and practitioners (such as John Fairleigh, Pat Patten, Breidge Gadd, Rita O'Hare and Val Patterson) coming together with a desire for innovative services,

particularly alternatives to custody (community service and hostels) and the development of positive identity roles for offenders. Extern managed the first probation hostel and created a social firm involving offenders in the recycling and retailing of furniture.



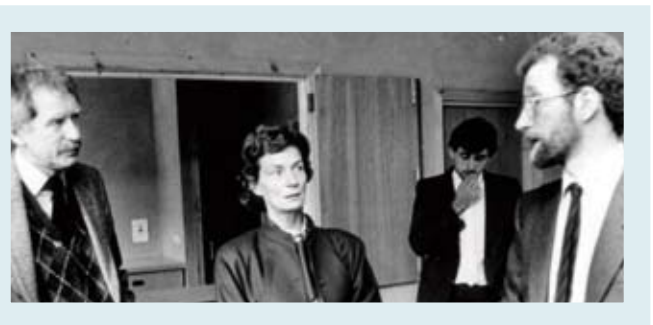
Crumlin Rd Visitors Centre 1980s. Managed by NIACRO and SCF with funding assistance from PBNI.



Chair of NIACRO Rev Harold Goode and Deputy Chair PBNI Julian Crozier, 1990s.



Restyle.



John Fairleigh (Chair), Lady Jane Prior (Patron) and Paul Casey (Chief Executive) confer. In the background is Mark Rogers.

Community Service

The new Voluntaries had joined with criminal justice practitioners in pressing government to introduce a range of alternatives to custody. The most significant of these, the Community Service Order, was made available to the courts in 1979 under the auspices of the probation service. The concept of reparation to community was in tune with the times and culturally more empathetic. It was also a direct challenge to those forces within communities who were advocating unofficial punishments. It had visible benefits for offenders, community and the probation service and was to prove popular with the courts. It also supplied Probation with a bigger footprint in the adult courts as courts sought suitability reports on a new range of offenders prior to sentence.

Organisational Development

In the period from 1969 restrictions on the delivery of service according to gender or denomination had disappeared despite the re-alignment of huge swathes of the population on a sectarian basis. The service had expanded and developed more layers. In preparation to the introduction of Community Service the new in-house team, managed by Sam Chapman, underwent a team development programme. This was viewed as so successful that it was rolled out into a full organisational development and became an element of preparation and induction for Probation's new status.



Left to right: Heather Steele, Kevin McCann, Marge Rourke, Harriet Wray, Sarah Heron, George Hoy, John Simpson, Carmel Greene, John Moore and Ian Magill at the 10 Year celebration of Community Service.

Recollections



Sam Chapman MBE

Sam Chapman was brought up in the Sandy Row area of Belfast. In 1930 at the age of ten he came into contact with a police court missionary, an encounter that shaped his ambition. He left school at 14 years of age and had to wait for more than 30 years before achieving that ambition. His later Churchill Scholarship brought South Pacific ideas to the introduction of Community Service.



His early influences

Our religious experience in those days was 'hell fire' gospel. You'd burn in hell if you weren't saved - that sort of thing. It was only when I met up with Rev. W. J. Thompson (photo on left) that it all changed. (He founded a home for boys from court, later called Arlington. The current Thompson House hostel is named after him). At home we were reared to help fellow members of society and that was good for me. I was brought up in a very poor home but there were people even worse off than me. The Boys' Brigade taught me discipline, and again the opportunity of helping others.

Motivation for becoming probation officer

At the age of 10 I'd been brought to juvenile court for kicking football in the street. My mother brought me down to the old court house. About 12 or 14 of us were marched in front of Mr O'Donoghue RM. A police man read out, 'under the byelaws of the City of Belfast – playing football in the street'. I wasn't picked up in the street, but someone had betrayed me. I learned about 'informers' at that stage!

RM immediately fined us each 7 shillings. How were we to find the money? 7 shillings was a man's wages, almost. I was in an awful state, 'crying my eyes out' outside the court when a man came over and asked my mother what the problem was? She explained that we had been fined and the difficulties this caused with her husband unemployed. This man took us back to the court to meet the clerk. He pointed out to him our circumstances and he got it reduced to sixpence or thrupence a week. I thought it was wonderful how this man could do this. My mother shook hands with him. He put his arm round her and told her to come back to him if there was any problem. I asked the Clerk who this man was and was told, 'that's the Police Court Missionary'. I made up my mind that I was going to be a Police Court Missionary. If I could help people coming before the courts, that would be my life.

Becoming a probation officer

While I was working as a French polisher in the Civil Service I had two unsuccessful interviews for probation. After the second one a member of the panel gave me some informal feedback. He said that I was the best candidate but did not have the background education. He recommended me to seek further education. 'You're the ideal candidate to be a probation officer. Probation needs people like you.' At further education Matt Salters was my English teacher and he inspired me. From there I became an education welfare officer. Eventually in 1967 I was offered a post in Probation.

Preparation for Rainer House Training

In preparation you were asked to bring some example of work with you. As I was only dealing with the early stages of crime I couldn't think of anything appropriate. Out of the blue this happened and I always say, this was meant to be. I was doing relief in the matrimonial office at the Petty Sessions office on a Friday at lunch time. I answered the phone. A wee boy's voice, 'Is that the probation office?' I said, 'Yes.'. 'Are you a probation officer?' I said, 'Yes, I am.' 'Could you help me? My mummy's up the stairs on the top floor and she is going to throw herself out of the window 'cos my daddy's beating her up.' 'I will come up. Meantime

I want you to go up the stairs, take your mammy's hand, hold it, don't leave it till you hear the bell.' When I got there I had never seen anything like it in my life. She was black and blue. She should have been in hospital. She said, "My husband will be here at 4 o'clock and if you're here he will massacre you. He has even beaten up a policeman.' I tried to persuade her to go to the hospital but she wouldn't have it. I heard the door, he came walking up the hall, and he sort of grabbed me. I guessed that he loved the son so I told him who I was and that he had asked me to come. Well, I could see the change in his whole attitude. Eventually he agreed to take his wife to the hospital while I stayed with the boy until they came back. He then cooked me a meal and he talked about his behaviour. Two or three times he threatened me but I just kept my nerve and focused more on the interests of the young boy. I kept contact with that family for many years and it turned out well.

I wrote it up, called it 'Crisis Intervention' and took it to Rainer House. I found the lectures marvellous. My tutor there, Betteridge, was so impressed by the case description that he referred it to the Tavistock Institute, which offered me a place with funding on their course. However, I didn't accept the offer as I was just married and I still wanted to be a probation officer. They assured me that

I would make a good one. 'So realize the importance of the job you are doing as a probation officer – never take defeat, just keep going on, you're an influence.' I took that home and applied it to my life.

The Ballymena area in the early 1970s

I enjoyed Belfast but Ballymena was a different experience. Most people were working. There was a fairly robust community spirit - different from working in the Belfast area where things weren't like that. They hadn't got the sort of the feud influence though that was about to change. It was a culture in which people welcomed you into their homes.

The courts in the Ballymena area

There was more humanity in the court in Ballymena. Arthur Jack, RM depended a good deal on the probation officer's report and the probation officer's work with the family and he paid tribute to that. Shawn Davies (Coleraine area) and I were taken into his confidence. He always enquired about people he had put on probation. The RM was a marvellous man. I learned from that experience. The Courts were different. The magistrate's court was conducted like a family court.

The Belfast courts were more law centres. The solicitors and barristers in Ballymena

were also different. Jack McCann had great humour as well as a lot of common sense. Billy Cummings was the same.

Churchill Scholarship

I had started to read about New Zealand and community service and I met a probation officer from New Zealand who was a speaker at the presentation of the Wooton Report in London. I decided to apply for a Churchill Scholarship to go to see community service. I was successful and travelled accompanied by my wife Vi. The New Zealand service was well organized. They did their community service at the weekend. There was a dual purpose in that – most people got involved in heavy drinking at the weekends. That was when a lot of the crime was taking place. The problem was well addressed by having the community service on a Saturday and Sunday. In addition all the participants met up with staff, including a psychologist on a Tuesday night for a debriefing. They talked about the jobs they did and who would benefit from their labours. You really got to find out how it was affecting their family and working life.

New Zealand society

Well it was easier to do in New Zealand because there was full employment. We had unemployment. They were able to take chances and do things that we couldn't do.

We had to be careful we weren't doing jobs that unemployed people should have been doing. Most of the people getting involved were Maori people.

Community Service here

When we started I tried out some of the New Zealand ideas here. One example was the decoration of a Church of Ireland church hall in East Belfast. The hall was in a bad state and we painted it. The women of the parish came in and made the workers their dinner every day. That was great because they would talk to the lads. When the job was finished there was a special service on the Sunday. The Minister asked me if they would come to the service. I didn't think they would come but they all came. They all came, not because I asked them, but because the women made them their dinner. I encouraged that kind of connection with the beneficiaries. In some places it worked very well by giving the public a better understanding of people who were in trouble with the law. It helped them realize that they were ordinary people. I would have liked to have seen that extended more. I still think community service is a good idea; it's certainly better than going to prison.

Obstacles to establishing Community Service

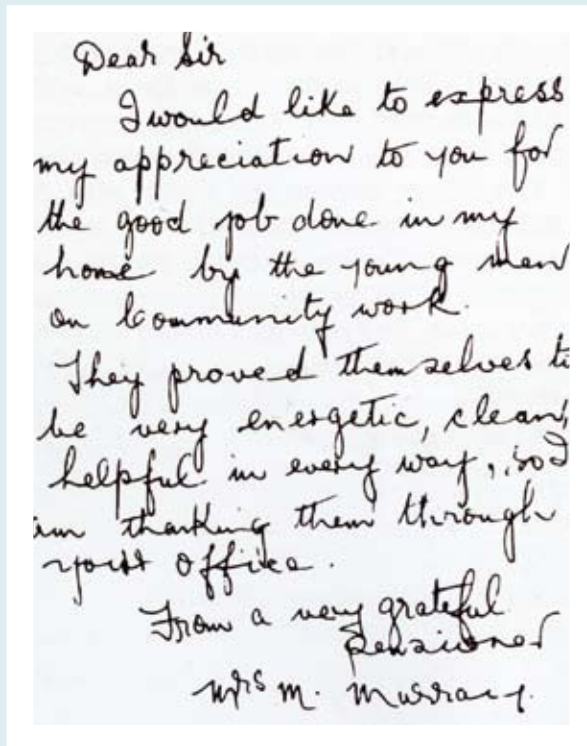
Some people just didn't like the thought of

offenders coming to work in their place. You had to get over that. The best way of doing so was when those who did accept it and felt rewarded for having it would spread that message.

His impact

Well, I think I still have an impact on people. Sometimes when I go shopping I meet a man whom I got a job for over 20 years ago. He is still carrying it out well. I say to

myself, 'There it is, keep believing in them and they'll come through.' I never believed that prison does anything for anyone. Some people have to go to prison, but I don't think prison itself does anything for you. Prison doesn't stop people. All it can do is take them out of society for a while. That crucifies other people. A man leaves a family, money stops going in there. You are creating more problems. Prison for me was a disaster at trying to rehabilitate people.



Chapter 5

Twenty-five Years of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland

THE AIM OF THE BOARD IS TO HELP PREVENT RE-OFFENDING

The New Board

The Implementation Plan for the Black Report recommendations was translated into the Probation Board Order (NI) 1982. In December 1982 the Board (PBNI) was established as a Non-Departmental Public Body with a Chair, Deputy Chair and 10-18 other members appointed by the Secretary of State for a period of three years. Jim Grew, a businessman from Co. Armagh, became the first Chairman. Staff assumed the status of public servants rather than civil servants. The Board set out to establish a clear understanding about purpose and priorities. That process was capped by decisions by the Board to devise an aim and a set of strategic objectives and to issue a Corporate Plan.

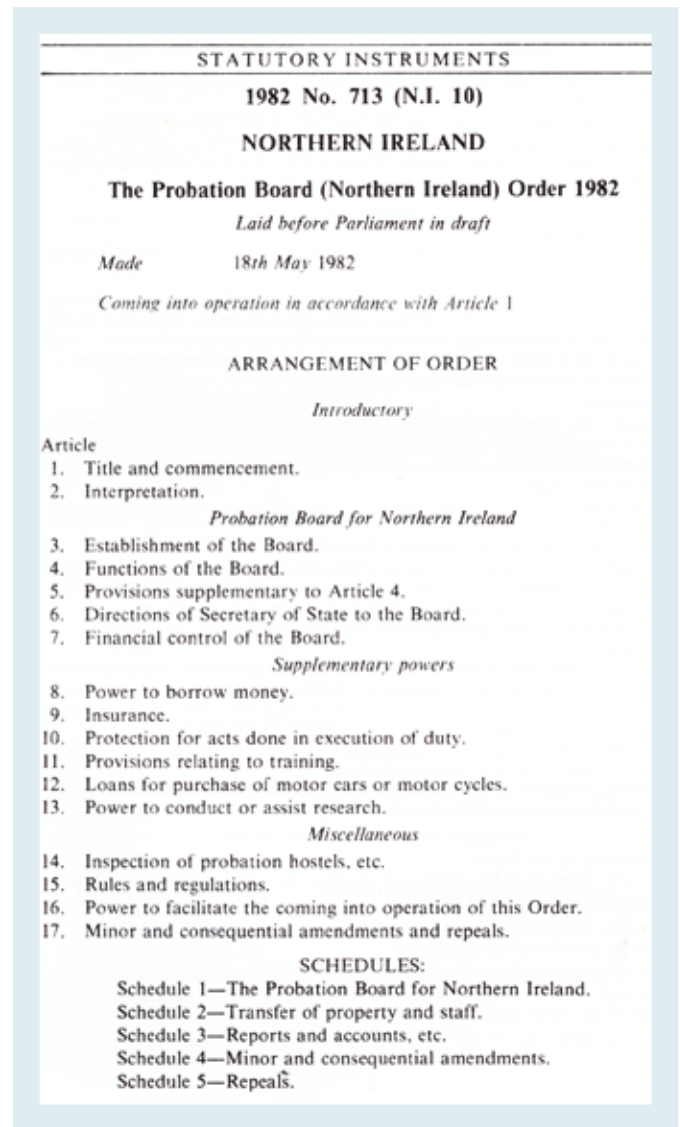


Ann McCleary - The first externally recruited Finance Officer.

By 1984 the Board had published a five year plan with the first set of annual corporate objectives in the following areas – re-offending, courts, prisons, community development, professional practice, cost effectiveness and human resource development. Each specific objective was reviewed on an annual basis. This management by objectives approach was facilitated by a change to a functional management structure. It was an enormous process of transition. The most radical change was apparent in the new responsibilities for the funding of voluntary and community organisations. Some expenditure such as the support for the probation hostel (Extern) derived from commitments transferred from NIO. Other services had to be purchased while at the same time establishing policy guidelines and boundaries.

Administrative Staff

During the life of the first board administrative functions were carried out on an interim basis by Civil Service staff but this arrangement was then tapered off giving an opportunity for PBNI to recruit its own finance personnel and other specialists. These seconded staff then returned to resume their civil service careers while the majority of the original typists and clerical staff accepted appointments with PBNI. These are the unheralded staff within the organisation. It has been notable how such successive service support staff have committed themselves to the social work principles, values and practices.



Front of Probation Board Order 1982.

Recollections



Bill Griffiths (extreme right) at an offenders' and prisoners' art exhibition 1985. Left to right: John Moore, Oliver Brannigan, Jane Lindsay, Walter Dalzell, Breidge Gadd, Jim McCallen and Alan Darnbrook.

Bill Griffiths

Bill Griffiths was born and educated in England. He obtained his certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) at Manchester and became a probation officer in Southampton. He was the first external leader of the Probation Service here and the first to be called Chief Probation Officer (1977-1985). He guided the organization through the period of the Black Report and the establishment of the Board.

Motivation to become a probation officer

When I was at school my father was put on probation and I got to know his probation officer quite well. I was impressed by him. Apart from stuff at home, I had a privileged start, good school, Cambridge and Voluntary Service Overseas. At Cambridge the world was your oyster but in truth I was never ambitious - I felt happier with the idea of some sort of mediatory career, which is how I saw Probation. The psychology isn't too difficult to unravel.

Coming to Northern Ireland

I went from Southampton to the Home Office Inspection Unit. The Northern Ireland Office asked the Home Office to inspect the NI Probation Service. My boss Rob Spiers asked me to do it with him. We inspected at the height of the troubles in the early 1970s. We were here for three weeks or so over a period of three months.

With hindsight you always see your motivation as being more precise and clearer than it probably was. My friend, Nick Hinton, then Director of NACRO, described the Chief Probation Officer's job in NI as the best job in Western Europe. He exaggerated but the challenge was exciting. I was not enamoured of probation in England and Wales and didn't like the way things were going. I thought Northern Ireland would be more substantial. It sounds like 'Pseud's corner' but I think Probation needs to be bold. It's a bold concept. Probation in England was anything but bold. At the time I thought the unrest in Northern Ireland was politically the most important issue in the United Kingdom. However naïve it sounds I thought that Probation should be bold enough to make a contribution to 'solution'.

The funding of projects

I was interested in statement and in action. Probation is here. Probation matters. The



2008 (left to right rear) Brendan Fulton, Peter Denley, Oliver Brannigan, Sam Pollock; (front) Rita O'Hare, Elaine Peel and Val Owens.

Voluntary Sector is here. The Voluntary Sector matters. Locking up is not the only way of dealing with offenders. One of the most important aspects of the Probation legislation we designed for Northern Ireland was that it gave the Board the authority and funds to spend on the voluntary sector.

The Northern Ireland Probation Service at his point in joining

The NI Probation Service couldn't be bold because it lay beneath the dead hand of NIO as a civil service department. This isn't about individuals or good will. Several civil servants were terrifically good friends of probation – Ronnie Sterling and John McClenaghan were just two - but the civil service as a

whole is a dead hand on anything which requires external action. It isn't designed for that. It exists to protect ministers. The best civil servants understood this and were fully behind the expansion of the Service and creation of the Board. In the Service itself there was fear of what was happening on the streets. Unsurprisingly, the top of the service tended to hide. When Rob and I inspected the service we had come across some outstanding work. I knew how much potential there was.

The future of probation at that time

The obvious need was to burst into adult work but first we had to resolve the then burning question of whether probation should retain juveniles and the under 17s. It was the hot corrections topic in the UK and, indeed, internationally. Scotland had gone down the most extreme welfare route in Europe. England and Wales had come up with a compromise.

Northern Ireland was still deciding and had set up the Black Enquiry. I never liked welfare as a model for dealing with bad behaviour—the main reason for the failure of probation in England and Wales was its attachment to welfare in a criminal justice world. I would much rather kids take their medicine in court than be stuck in the hands of people who place them in care.

Dealing with young people

Intellectually, the deciding argument for me was the big increase in the number of children taken into care in Scotland following their changes in the law. When children go into care, safeguards and rights get lost. I have never seen a system of care that works very well. The issue of principle was: 'if you do something wrong, you get the chance to argue your case and have your behaviour dealt with on its merits in a judicial process.'

The recommendations of the Black Report

Northern Ireland became unique in retaining a criminal justice approach to youngsters. The system is full of flaws but I think kids do better. Social Services didn't see the outcome coming. They expected a welfare system for young offenders and didn't fight their corner very well.

The structure of a probation service

You can't run a probation service in the Civil Service. You can't run any externally focussed activity from the Civil Service, that's not what it's about, that's not why a Civil Service exists. Working in two great Departments of State made me convinced of this. Probation needed as much independence as we could get. The Board arrangement of broad based membership is a more intelligent way of engaging with the community.

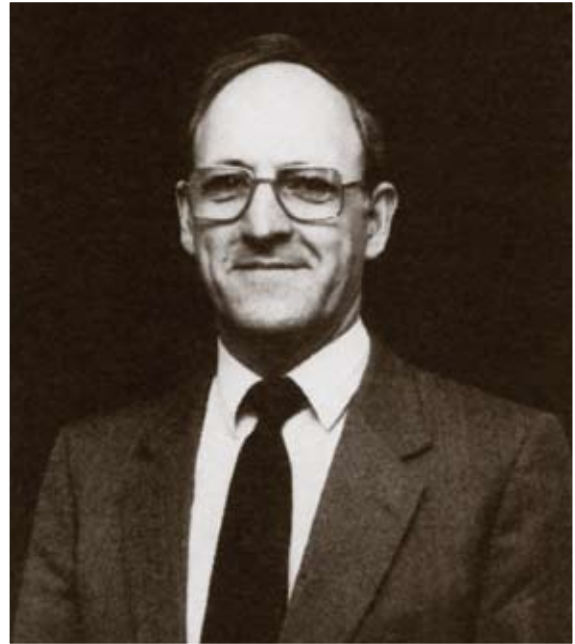
The make-up of the Board

We were stunningly lucky with our first Board and our first chairman, Jim Grew. He was a byword for integrity.

The introduction of Community Service

Again, we were fortunate in the support of the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lowry. He was very pro community service. He used his influence – a few words from him were far more powerful than many words coming from me. It was an easier sell to some of the NI courts: they liked its aura of firmness.

We were pretty lucky with the people we had running it, especially Sam Chapman. He was such a beacon of goodness. It was a bit like El Cid really- ‘Send him out.’ Albert Brown came along and consolidated a tight administrative scheme. In its pomp, I think the Community Service Scheme we had here was outstanding. It was as good if not better than any I have seen. The meaning of probation is ‘to test’. Anything you do with non- custodial options is built on the concept of contract and holding people to account. You have to mean what you say and say what you mean. We got some good schemes. It was an excellent bridge-head into the adult courts for the full range of probation activity.



Albert Brown

The Board and the Community

The essence of a Board is to say to the public ‘crime and all its concomitants are not something we can wash our hands of. It is not something that we can apply simplistic solutions to. It is something with which we all have to engage because it is part of all our lives’. The Board is the community’s representative. The Board is a way of engaging the community in a realistic and honest manner with people’s behaviour.

The Board's Mission Statements

The purpose of Probation is to keep people out of trouble.

Above everything else you wanted a Board that was committed to the concept of probation because in N I with mayhem on the streets all the instincts were going to be punitive and repressive. How could it be otherwise? Probation is there to demonstrate that it doesn't have to be like that.

You have to be hard, you have to be firm, you have to hold offenders to account. But you can do that without locking them up and the Board had to develop some real conviction in this view before it could represent it externally.

The things that mattered to probation in NI were:

- (1) we had to establish a recognisable probation service doing things that probation services do. I wanted us to do them better than elsewhere and I'm conceited enough to think we succeeded.
- (2.) Because of sectarianism, we wanted a service that was a healthy institution. I think that was achieved. A male and not exclusively but largely Protestant

organisation was transformed into a body that looked like N I as a whole. I'm not saying that we were free from all the sectarian stuff, of course not, but I think there were a lot of young people who came into the organisation wanting to be conservative, as it were, without having to sell out completely on where they were coming from in terms of identity.

- (3) I wanted a service that would contribute to the political process, to do something which was mediatory towards sectarian violence and offending. I wanted to do that head on. I probably never understood how frightened people were – I never understood sectarianism in the way you understand it if you are born into it.

The impact of probation

England and Wales have more probation officers than the rest of Europe put together but also have more people in prison. That's got to be wrong. What's the point? One of my huge satisfactions is that the prison population went down in N I. The NIO Research Unit concluded that this was due to the impact of probation in the adult courts.

The funding of voluntary organisations

We got half a million pounds to dispense – a decent screw. All I remember is being hugely pro voluntary organisation. I wanted to establish the principle of their being active in criminal justice. I felt that if organisations like Save the Children (SCF) weren't interested in getting their hands dirty and running punishments then inevitably you would be keeping power within the traditional measures of control.

Moving on from N I probation

I thought the service was pretty healthy, we had some great people. Look how well so many of them have done. I was confident about the Board. There were positive influences there. I thought the legislation was sound, we had good staff and I thought Breidge Gadd was a better long term bet for chief probation officer than me.

The future of Probation in NI

If anybody asked my advice I would say 'leave the Board alone'. Probation in NI is well grounded, much more so than in England and Wales. NI probation has been more consistent and more resolute; much of this is down to an independent and community-minded Board.

It has established boundaries and well-developed negotiating processes. If it is converted into some sort of agency these boundaries will become blurred and Probation's negotiating powers diminished.

Agencies seldom contribute to government policy – it's one-way traffic – and I can't think of many agencies that have been truly successful or really served the interests of good governance.

Relationship with Sentencers and Courts

In regard to Courts the Board set out to be an organisation which exercised significant influence upon sentencing practice. In order to achieve this it used its more independent position to establish new kinds of relationships with Judges and Magistrates, the Legal Profession and the Courts Service. By the end of the third year half the annual total of social enquiry reports was being supplied to the magistrates court with less than a quarter in the juvenile court. At last probation was systematically becoming a service for all ages.

New Methods

There was a search for new tools and resources with which to be more effective with more mature subjects. Staff were trained in a new integrated assessment model (Masud Hoghughi) and progressive social skills for group work. (Priestly, Philip and McGuire, James).



Joan Broder

Reparation and restoration

Further exploration of the concept of reparation brought a greater recognition of the need for more involvement of the victim in the criminal justice process and exploration of the impact of the offending and the consequent

prosecution and court process on him/her. The Board assisted by providing some funding to the fledgling Victim Support schemes and some staff and board members made a commitment of voluntary time. Extern dedicated Joan Broder to developing victim support and mediation services. Ray Schonholtz and Howard Zehr, USA, visited and provided inspiration and models of working. In 1988 Joan was seconded to PBNI for a period of four years to spread knowledge and skill in relation to victim issues and victim-offender mediation.

Prisoners

The first Board set out to pursue the resolution of identified problems amongst prisoners and to promote successful re-integration into the community. The Government Research Unit carried out research on prison welfare and through-care on behalf of the Board and these findings provided the action steps for developments over a number of years.

A practical resolution involving consent and sharing of information was found to the issue of reports on and licence of paramilitary prisoners whose cases were being considered by the Life Sentence Review Board. Supervision was not normally to be part of any licence imposed by the Secretary of State. This was a very significant move forward as this was the last part of a jigsaw that had been incomplete for nearly a decade. Traditional approaches were abandoned in an attempt to provide a welfare service dealing with needs but delivered in a manner which made it more likely to be utilised and beneficial. Seminar programmes were devised on

mutually agreed topics, often bringing in outside experts and external service providers including their own resettlement personnel. It opened up new models of working which merited consideration for all prisoners.

Prisoners' families

Feedback from the relatives of prisoners indicated that families had needs arising from the imprisonment of one of their members and that a service should not depend on the consent of the prisoner. A response to this was the formation of Prison Link, a joint venture between Probation and NIACRO providing information and services to prisoners and families with its own office in central Belfast and its own identity. It opened up more understanding of the particular needs of children caught up in this life situation and the possible long term consequences.

The research had pointed to needs on release for all prisoners. A more extended range of accommodation and better employment opportunities was provided through use of the PBNI's funding of Voluntary Organisations. That source was also used for the provision of Crèche and Family Centre facilities at Belfast, Maze and Magilligan Prison by NIACRO, Save the Children and Ulster Quaker Service. NIACRO, SCF and Extern became the largest beneficiaries of this new funding outlet. Grants were also given to some community-based organisations which were working with known offenders in local areas. Consequently PBNI became convinced of the potential effectiveness of such schemes where local people were involved or

managing them. Partnerships were formed with local communities which came into being in response to local offending. Car crime in West Belfast was the most high profile example of this. Projects focused at the most critical times and locations of offending have been successfully used in reducing crime and the impact on the community.



Prison Link Leaflet.

Screws out of uniform, some say. Spies for the system. Too nosy to be wholesome. You just want to see inside heads to place reports on files.

Or, you are bent on supporting a policy of criminalisation of prisoners of war. Willing, divisive agents of devious political strategists, you must be ostracised. Letters to the press about you contain veiled threats.

Or, you must be magicians waving wands to repair relationships fractured by divorce, rape, incest, alcoholism, crime, violence. You must write favourable reports for those lifers locked in for ten or fifteen years, make phone calls, order flowers or parcels, visit mums and kids.

Or, you lazily monopolise a role coveted by others, earning money for short hours, preventing prisoners from confiding in prison officers – you are do-gooders, just tolerated in institutions, not needed.

Or, you are idealists, I hope. If you can keep your integrity while others try to undermine it, if you can think rationally and recommend humane, radical solutions while others boil bloody in bitter hatred, if you can persevere to have the truths you see recognised and addressed, if you can teach that Justice without Mercy is Cruelty, and that ex-offenders have a right to Society, yours will be the recognition not yet bestowed.

'H' Block, Maze

Life Sentence Prisoner .

Recollections



Tom Millar MBE

Tom was a member of the first generation Probation Board, becoming chair of the influential Community Development Committee. After a period as Deputy Chairman he succeeded Jim Grew to become the second Chairman in 1988.

Motivation to join the Board

About 7 or 8 years before the inception of the Probation Board I was invited to join the Board of Visitors at Maze Prison. I had to be co-opted on to the Discharged Prisoners Aid Society committee and be a representative from them on to the Board of Visitors. It gave me a flavour of what the Society, based on the Crumlin Road, did. That involvement was instigated by a Minister (of religion) of mine who thought I would be interested in this on account of a social conscience and my personal faith. During that time at the Maze I had a lot of contact with prisoners. I could see what prison was doing to them and to their families. I had contact with prison staff and with probation officers. I had contact with organizations like the Quakers who ran their visitors' centre. Little did I know that in the not too distant future I was going to renew all those acquaintances.

The first Probation Board

The whole concept was exciting because like myself quite a few people didn't know much about probation. We were a group of people who came in together, trained together, learnt together and worked together as a great team. There was great camaraderie and a sense of friendship. Those were outstanding times. From a personal point of view I could see what prison was doing to people or not doing to people. The idea of offering alternatives was very appealing and very exciting to me. The thing that probably struck me most was how broad-minded the whole concept of probation was.

Induction

The Secretariat brainwashed us first of all. You can't understand what we were supposed to be doing by meeting in a committee once a week or once a month. The real key was to get out and to meet our 'clients' (I think we called them). I'm a meeting person, I love meetings but only secondary to getting out and meeting the clients, meeting the guys who were on probation, talking about how they felt now, how they thought they were going to develop in the future and of course being involved in the projects which the Board funded.

The Board's use of its new funding powers

One of the things that I can remember clearly was asking all of the organizations to compete for the money so that it wasn't just a hand out. They had to give, what you'd call nowadays, their business plan, their objectives. When I look back they were all really good at it. But that was only part. They really had to get talking to people in the projects and see what they were achieving with individuals. There were so many things about relationships and attitudes that couldn't be put down under a business plan.

Chairman of Community Development Committee

Yes, it was brilliant for me. I was hands-on because I was Chairman of that particular part of the budget. I didn't ever agree to give money without talking to people. A member of the committee and I would go out or they would come in and we would chat. Having given funds we followed up and paid visits – planned, organized visits hopefully in a helpful and constructive way to make sure that we were getting good value for money and that they were getting good value for the money. I was always impressed with the openness of that whole environment. That probation and community sector helped me personally widen my whole approach to life and to people and our attitudes to helping each other.

The reaction to the Board's new powers

I hope we didn't demonstrate power. I hope we demonstrated standing alongside the organisations. We had some interesting visits and obviously one or two stand out in your mind. I once visited the Save the Children project at Minnowburn Farm where children, from disadvantaged backgrounds, were taken to understand animals and the way of farming. I was asked by a photographer to stand beside a horse. I was really quite nervous about the whole thing and trying not to show this nervousness



Ramoan House Intermediate Treatment Centre (SCF).

and keeping talking as I usually do to keep a relaxed atmosphere. As I was having the picture taken I remember saying to some of the children, 'I hope this doesn't become a dart board with a caption on it somewhere.' To which one of the children replied in a broad Belfast accent, 'Yes Mister, the caption would probably be, "Only fools and horses"'.

Victims

Victims' issues are not new issues. You would think to hear some people that they had just arrived since the setting up of the Assembly in 2007. Actually the Board back then was very sensitive to victims. There were two groups in particular, the Victim Support Group and the Rape Crisis centre. The Board worked closely with each of those for a period giving grant aid and offering help. I think that balanced approach gave a credence to the Board. Sadly the legislation was such that that couldn't continue.

Relationships with Judges and Magistrates

One of the things that always struck me about the Board was its informality. In informal settings we began to meet with judges, with magistrates and we created relationships which meant that when we had substantive business to present formally we had an open door to go and present them.

I can well recall doing both those things, informally and formally. We didn't always get what we wanted, but we were well received.

The relationship with the NIO

Well that wasn't always a straightforward relationship because the Board was open-minded and innovative and wanted to try new things. The NIO were set in their ways, were nervous about letting go and anxious about what we might get up to if we had too much scope on our own. There were always healthy tensions, maybe some not so healthy. That said, there were certain individuals in the department who were very, very supportive and very helpful. I can always remember John Ledlie, Permanent Under Secretary. He thought outside the box, he could relate to us and we could actually have a sensible debate.

Dealing with Community and Public

When I came into the Probation Board it wasn't totally new. What was new to me was I had to meet groups with whom I wouldn't have known all their associations. I can well remember the Chief Probation Officer of the day inviting me to a group and me saying that I wasn't quite sure whether I should go or not. She made it clear it was a bit late because they knew all about me. But I think the thing I found even in those meetings and with those community groups

in the community was that they actually appreciated you going out and being open with them so long as you didn't kid them on.

Support of community groups

I realized that we were in the risk business. The whole ethos and concept of what the Board was about, i.e. to help prevent re-offending involved a bit of risk. That being the case, we had to just go out there and talk to people often in the knowledge that they were not as structured as we would have liked them to have been. I think we took risks we didn't realize we were taking but we also took risks with our eyes open and I would have certainly no regrets about taking any of those risks.

The impact on you

Well personally I had evolved. From my first day going into the Maze prison to the probation board, my middle class, private sector background got quite a rattle. I had come to realise that there were other people in life in different environments with different backgrounds with different baggage who had different needs and I was made aware and more alert to those needs. Hopefully in the passage of that time I became more sympathetic to them. Probably that whole period did more for me than I did for it as an individual. It broadened my mind and made me much more tolerant.

Life after Probation

Post- Probation board I was invited by NIACRO to become Chairman. That was brilliant because here I was again out in the coalface seeing people who were doing projects to help offenders and potential offenders. That was the most natural progression to me. The NIACRO scene was just like probation. It was a relaxed scene, there was an informal atmosphere. All of that I found good.

The business community and criminal justice

The business community in general doesn't really think of offenders. The business community in general, and I was one at one stage, want to employ a guy who has a good background, a good cv in whom we can trust and from whom we get a good day's work. In a sense there is an enormous education programme to undertake because offending covers such a wide range of individuals. There are lots of those people who are probably not employable but there is a much greater number who with a bit of help, a bit of tweaking and a bit of support could slot into regular employment. In a competitive work place that risk isn't taken by many business people.

Residential and Day Centres

Recognition of the larger proportion of adults on court orders was represented by the opening of a specialist day centre in Belfast. This move was endorsed by legislation in 1989 authorising additional requirements of attendance and participation at day centre or specified programme for up to 60 days to be inserted in a probation order. (Treatment of Offenders (NI) Order 1989). This was complemented by a Residential Programme at Ramoan in Ballycastle, a site where SCF had previously managed an equivalent programme for young people.



Ramoan team receiving Investors in People award from Board Members. L to R: David Thompson, Christine Hodges, Dorothy Wilson, Brian Stuart, Francesca Graham (Dep Chair), Eileen Bell, Brigie Rodgers, Jacqueline McWilliams, Maura McCann, Brian McCaughey and Damien Tracey.

What Works

Evidence-based practice highlighted the relevance of cognitive theories which had arrived on the Gulf Stream from North America. A new group work programme based on a melange of these cognitive ideas was developed and applied within the day centres and special activity bases. The experience of working in the closely knit urban communities influenced PBNI, in adopting the cognitive approach, not to neglect the social dimensions of employability, accommodation and monetary viability.

This approach was also applied to a category of offender which had begun to attain much higher levels of public anxiety and more knowledge by us of their impact, - sexual offenders. In 1992 PBNI, in partnership with NSPCC, set up a specialist programme (Alderwood) in a discreet location. The project was influenced by Ray Wyre and the core programme used a cognitive approach shaped by the work of David Finkelhor but also employed a day centre dimension. A separate programme for the partners and friends of the offenders was added in 1993 at a time when Social Services joined the partnership. Although now led by PBNI Alderwood operates under the overall umbrella of MASRAM and NISOSMC. Alderwood has also provided the base for a similar partnership programme in respect of domestic violence. The programmes gained credibility through their results and the knowledge and expertise of the multi-disciplinary staff. Credibility also flowed from PBNI's determination to invest finance and staffing into partnership approaches before statutorily being required to do so.

Relationship with Prison Service

In 1995 the Prison Service became a Next Steps Agency. This change of status necessitated construction of a Framework Agreement to regulate the provision of the Social Welfare service within the Prisons and Young Offenders Centres. Each establishment has a separate contract between Governor and Probation Manager containing a budget and objectives which are reviewed annually. This was extended to cover the overall relationship between both organisations. It has resulted in more clarity of role and more partnership in relation to shared objectives.

Operating in a Post-Conflict society

From the viewpoint of PBNI, working in troubled communities across N I, the ceasefires came like sunshine on blossoming leaves. The possibilities for managing offenders in a post-conflict society were evident. PBNI could envisage how fresh entrants as well as ex-offenders and ex-combatants could make a contribution. It recruited a new grade of staff with community work skills (professional qualification in youth and community work) and followed on an experimental recruitment of ex-offenders (known as New Careerists) who wished to work directly with offenders. The contract of employment was conditional on concurrently registering for third level education and training leading to a youth and community qualification. This was a dramatic commitment by University of Ulster, Belfast Education and Library Board along with Probation. After the trial period neither of these posts was transformed into permanent establishments. However, the participants brought new insights and realism to the tasks.

Criminal Justice (NI) Order 1996 (CJO)

Modernised legislation and a renewal of the institutions were the next steps. The CJO introduced the concept of community sentences – probation order, community service order and combination order with a purpose of rehabilitation, protection of public from harm or prevention of re-offending. These orders were placed as sentences in their own right at the upper end of seriousness where the offender has considerable restrictions placed on their liberty. The element of consent to the order was retained. A unique sentence – a custody probation order was added to the range.

A pre-sentence report prepared by a probation officer became a de facto pre-requisite before sentencing. The Magistrates no longer controlled the filter through which Probation had accessed cases since 1908 and before - 90 years of dependency of varying degrees. The fact that it had been a comparatively benevolent and harmonious relationship in more recent years did not make the independence any less satisfying. Indeed by the time of its happening use of the probation order had been transformed. Three quarters of its usage was in relation to adult offenders.

Criminal Justice Review

The CJO came into operation in 1998, the same year as the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, which stipulated that there should be a Review of the Criminal Justice System to ensure that it had the confidence of all parts of the community. The findings of the Review were published in 2000. Overall it was an endorsement of the philosophy and

working practices and aspirations of Probation over the previous generation.

The pre-sentence restorative youth conferencing process in the new Youth Courts has been given over to the Youth Justice Agency while PBNI retained a significant role in relation to reports and orders. The possibility of pilots in relation to adult court was put forward but without a timetable.

There was an acceptance that Prison and Probation should remain separate organisations but with greater co-ordination at management level, staff interchanges, joint training programmes and offender behaviour programmes. The accompanying research papers were a reminder that we have different characteristics from those jurisdictions where an all-in-one unitary service is effective. After-care, support and supervision were recognised as functions of probation. Release packages should be the outcome of combination with the Prison Service. That has metamorphosed into a joint Resettlement Strategy.

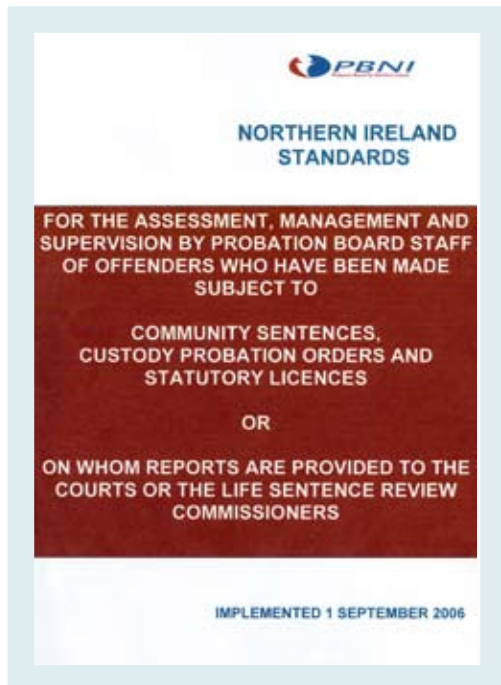
The CJ Review did recommend that Probation should become an executive agency but because of the opposition to that change of status it was not included in the Implementation Plan of the following year. Instead the decision is being left to the Northern Ireland Executive when it assumes responsibility for criminal justice matters. Sentencing practice under the CJO 1996 has resulted in the supervision of more serious and persistent offenders. The need of Courts for greater understanding of potential for harm and

likelihood of re-offending has placed more onus on assessment within the pre-sentence report. In order to meet these expectations and to provide greater consistency new models of assessment have been introduced.

Standards and performance indicators covering reports and all statutory orders were introduced in 2000 and they have since been revised and consolidated. They are now composed of 308 pages compared to the two pages of the 1928 version. Performance against standards is subject to monitoring, to audit and to independent inspection. The nature of accountability has been changed.

Victims

Legislation following on from a Review recommendation in respect of services for victims empowered PBNI to provide information to victims in cases where non-custodial sentences were in operation. The service, begun in 2005, is supplied through a Victim Information Unit which is separate from the rest of the organisation, completing the circle which had been started by the Board two decades earlier.



Northern Ireland Standards.



Victims Leaflet.

Recollections



Breidge Gadd CBE

Breidge joined the Probation Service in 1969 and worked in a variety of locations and roles before becoming Chief Probation Officer in 1986. She was Deputy Chief during the life of the first Board 1982-85. She retired from PBNI in 2000 after 14 years at the helm. She is currently an N I Board member of the Big Lottery and a weekly columnist on *The Irish News*.

The First Board 1982

Bill Griffiths had a very clear idea of what a Board should be and do. The people who were concerned with governance at that time were Bill, John Chalmers (Deputy Sec NIO) John McClenaghan (Ass Sec NIO and member of Black Committee) and Randall Watson (first Probation Board Secretary). It seemed to me that the four of them had an extraordinary grasp of what a Board should do. Ray Laverty (NIO) was responsible for the elements of the legislation. I think the legislation was excellent and has stood the test of time. In my view the appointment of the first Board members was one of the best Boards we ever had. It included political representatives, councillors, as well as a strong contingent of senior private sector and public sector people. Jim Grew (first Chairman) and the others who were appointed knew that the Board should be policy making, and monitoring. They were all very clear that they did not take professional decisions.

Board Secretary

The first Board took off brilliantly because of Randal Watson. He was superb. He didn't come with particular knowledge of probation but he did know how to establish an effective Board. His successor, Brian Lyttle, brought a different but also beautifully honed set of skills - how to engage positively with the civil service.



Randal Watson



Brian Lyttle

Probation in Community prior to 1982

Prior to 1982 communities weren't organised but they were awakening. The 1970s saw the birth of power at community level and the communities in the areas, where most of our work was, beginning to take on roles and responsibilities beyond what communities do in a normal society - almost acting as political representatives.

The introduction of Community service 1979

It was quite a culture shock for staff in probation at that time who saw themselves as social workers. For the first time they were faced with having to supply supervision in the community which wasn't primarily about reform or rehabilitation on an individualised offender basis. It also was tied in with what David Faulkner would describe as the 'Introduction of Managerialism' into Probation. Bill Griffiths had an influence on this. If we didn't change, start defining the objectives of what we were doing and fit in more with what society was wanting us to do, we would become irrelevant. Jim Black, then working as a trainer in the civil service, came in to undertake an organisational change programme with us. That was also the first time that we became involved systematically with the community and voluntary sector.

Working with Community

My first memory of realising that we had no choice but to work in partnership with community was of going, as Deputy Chief, to a women's forum. It was extraordinary because this was the early 80s. Nevertheless it was a real community-based grassroots group of both Catholic and Protestant women (Joyce McCartan and Sally McErlean were members) who worked together on issues of common concern. The very fact that a group of community people had demanded to see a senior person in Probation was also new. Sally was spokeswoman. Why were we working 9-5? They needed us to be out when offenders were the problem and not when we wanted to work. 'The whole notion', she said 'of sitting in your office, seeing probationers for half an hour a week and thinking you were doing a good job'. That for me was a Damascus moment.

Then in a senior management meeting we came up with the statement: 'Helping communities deal with their own problems of crime'. I still think that is brilliant. While it referred then to our specific community development it could be equally adapted to all probation work.

Because of our civil conflict we had no choice but to work closely with the

community; nevertheless in any society I consider this relationship to be critical to the success of probation. There were some Board members who were uncomfortable with this close working relationship in areas where there was also intense paramilitary activity, but most understood that that was the nature of the job.

Board and victims

The Board initially funded victims' organisations but then we were told that in fact our legislative remit did not allow us to fund victims' groups. We argued that we should continue to have this power because of the whole concept of restorative justice and indeed rehabilitation of the offender. We had to cease our funding of the victim arena but I reckon no-one else was appointed by government to take over. There was a failure of government at that time to properly fund victims.

Role of Probation Officers in Court

In the beginning we saw our expertise as identifying the human side of the offender for courts. We did this well. Forty years ago I remember probation officers like John Halley and Eric Culbert wrote brilliant reports and in not much more than a page. Then the government instructed us that our job was to advise on sentencing. Being advisors on sentencing led us away from our main

purpose and probation officers were out of their depth. We were not legal experts We should never have been asked to do this in the first place. Eventually we negotiated with the Courts that our job was to talk about possible impact and effectiveness of different sentences and to let the courts get on with it.

Gender differences

In my early years in an area they wouldn't give a young woman like me serious male cases to supervise. Similarly men were not allowed to supervise female probationers. When I worked out of the Lurgan Office I had to prepare court reports and supervise all females for the whole of south and west of Northern Ireland.

The move toward work with adults pre-prison

You are talking about a time of transition from individual to organisational. At the heart of the service you had a core of very professional motivated people. Remember Brendan McGeary and Victor McElPatrick were appointed Seniors to supervise trainees backed by very able staff prepared to take students. There was good professional practice going on and a clear grasp of role and the nature of change. The professional change in working with adults, backed of course by legislation came about through the use of Priestly and McGuire and later

the whole cognitive approach to changing behaviour.

The perception of offenders

I was surprised and pleased to see that one of the most recent surveys here came up with the response that the majority of offenders still valued the probation officer. Is he helpful? Is he not helpful? Will he help me get a job? Will he be the bridge? Will he be the smoother? I think it is extraordinary the tenacity of that relationship given all that surrounds it. The quality of the service offered to offenders always had to be measured by what they thought of staff. Take for example George Hoy. Offenders on probation and community service orders loved George. They could understand him, he was helpful and he called a spade a spade whereas some of the staff who had better academic qualifications 'passed by' clients. Offenders can quickly identify staff who care about them or who are easy enough in their own skin.

Voluntary Organisations and Community Organisations

I think collectively we were ahead in making that distinction between the voluntary and community sector. For a time there was tension between PBNi funding –to give to the community groups or the bigger voluntary organisations? Eventually we collectively worked it out. We established

that the voluntary sector was best suited to working with the dangerous and higher risk offenders and the Community groups were better with locally based less serious offenders.

Partnerships

During the 80s we had extended discussions about the nature of partnerships especially purchaser /provider ones. In the 90s we were assisted by input from a marketing consultant, Ray Winston, who helped us to think through our relationships using a customer/consumer model. It resulted in a different relationship with the Legal Profession and it helped us in our, at times very difficult, relationship with prisons.

Paramilitaries and preparations for post-ceasefire justice systems

We weren't involved in any way in formal politics but because of our role in communities we had to be involved in trying to stop punishment shootings and exclusions. Also our work in Prison Welfare brought us into contact with prisoners and ex-prisoners of all shades of political motivation. Paradoxically during the Troubles, having to be very clear about our role and our professional boundaries provided a good template for what the role of a probation service in a normal society actually is or should be.

What Works

All during my time of working in probation there was a vibrant international debate about what worked in preventing offending and reoffending. Professionals and governments engaged in that sort of discussion. That seems to have tapered away. I think the discussion needs to be re-invented.

I was at a recent conference in Scotland on Alternatives to Prison and the England and Wales Lord Chief Justice was recommending that sentencers needed to get out and see what probation does. He would not sentence unless he had experienced what was happening. That brings us back to where we started – linked to the Courts: a strong community Board within a Department that oversees courts.

Public Protection

The notion that the primary aim of probation was to protect the public was disastrous. That is the key role of the police. I am not saying that probation doesn't contribute to that. Probation's primary role is to rehabilitate. It is my view that sooner or later the Probation Service will have to re-invent itself to be there for the courts as a social rehabilitation social work service. Its work in supervision and rehabilitation is its contribution to public protection.

The future roles of probation

I think that it is now a critical time for probation to benefit from a wide-ranging discussion amongst politicians, criminologists, and even the media about how much it can actually take responsibility for and be accountable for. It should not have to pretend it can be all things to all men or women, nor should the government impose impossible jobs on it and then castigate and scapegoat the service when it fails.

Offender as Citizen

The Millennium ushered in the leadership of Oliver Brannigan with special emphasis on standards, partnership and the concept of the offender as citizen. Action steps were laid out to minimise the exclusion of the offender from mainstream services which had been gathering apace. Only where the likelihood of harm to others was predominant was it deemed appropriate to initiate or maintain dedicated offender-only services in relation to general and mental health, education and training, accommodation and care. Pursuit of this concept was helped at departmental level by government policy on cross-cutting and at agency level by initiatives such as Supporting People where PBNI was able to add specialist value to a generic core managed by the Housing Executive.

Employability had been another area where plans to increase the likelihood that offenders' job prospects

would be uplifted by the general economic tide were implemented under the auspices of the Department of Employment and Learning. NIACRO has been lead agency on behalf of Probation and Prisons in local and E C sponsored schemes. As a clear desistance factor in regard to re-offending it has been a constant strategic objective of the Board since 1982 and has been targeted through a variety of projects involving statutory and voluntary (NIACRO and Extern) partners during that time. The increasing formalisation of recruitment of workers has resulted in less inclusion for the ex-offender in the world of work.



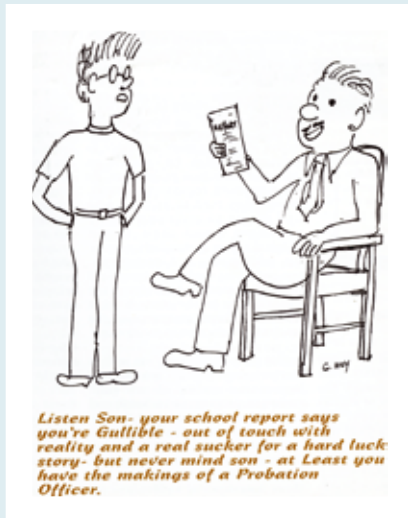
Poster for European employment conference NIACRO, PBNI and Probation & Welfare Service (ROI).

Recollections



Tim Magowan

Tim Magowan is the son of Maeve Magowan, (see page 39) the first full-time married probation officer who resigned from the service to bring up her family. He became a probation officer in 2000 and remained until 2003. He moved on to Tear Fund Ireland where he oversees the management of 400-500 volunteers. See www.tearfund.org



Cartoon by George Hoy.

Motivation for joining Probation

My degree had been in law so I had an interest in seeing how the law outworked itself; I then went and worked for Christian Aid for five years. I had seen lots of projects around the world engaging people who were on the sidelines of society and I felt quite strongly that I wanted to do something like that in NI. I had always had an eye on the Probation Service because I felt it would join those two lines of my life in some ways. There were two key people: my mum, who had told stories when I was young about being a Probation Officer, and a friend called Brian Stout, a Probation Officer. I really liked the sound of the cognitive approach which Probation practised.

His social work training course

I found it a really impressive course. We were taught a framework of values, knowledge and skills at QUB. We spent a lot of time looking at values, respect and empowerment and anti-oppressive practice. Where were the areas that were oppressing people? How could you take steps to challenge those? I found the anti-oppressive practice very challenging and it fitted in some ways with my experience in Christian Aid. We then spent a lot of time developing our theory base, our understanding and then linking that to skill. Developing some listening skills was extremely helpful. In my Probation placement we were taught a style of motivational interviewing - finding where people are, where they would like to go and then discovering the stepping stones.

The Probation Service he joined

Such a step up from writing a report a month and supervising four or five to writing eight reports a month and supervising a caseload of 30 in a rural area; not only was your work-rate high but also the level of risk that you were managing was just so much higher. I was working within standards that had just come in. Looking back I found ways to work it. I was good at developing partnerships with the local Whitefields. They had time. I contracted them to do very specific bits of work based on my assessment

and that meant I could get the job done and the young person was getting good quality service. Whitefield was being used and I was able to get home at a reasonable hour at night.

Whitefield House and their range of services

I understand Whitefield is part of the Youth Justice Agency now. In the areas I worked in they had a number of centres with a teacher who could provide some educational support and a couple of social workers who could provide some offence focused work such as an alcohol management, anger management or maybe just a basic offending or skills training programme. I felt those worked well for the low to medium risk. I think what I found difficult was that I had a caseload of maybe seven or eight who were high risk and it just felt like, no matter however hard we tried, they just kept re-circling round in the system. I felt that we didn't have enough resources to throw at them. I just couldn't find all the bits in the jigsaw. They re-circled round and slowly went up the tariff ending up in Hydebank.

The relationship with the families

I tended to manage the relationship with the family. As part of the standards you had to visit the family. It was good in that you built up contacts and relationships and that

was constructive. Very often they saw you as being someone who was helpful to them. Lots of those families were very dysfunctional and needed considerable support, more than I had the resources to give.

How the families perceived you

I thought that they would feel threatened. Generally they perceived me very well. I found that style of motivational interviewing very helpful. 'My job is to help you and your son or daughter to achieve their goals. How can I help you do that?' That gave me leverage with some of the parents and they were able to take on particular tasks. I guess there were times when because of the change in the way Probation was working, that you were being more assertive with people in particular at the report stage and saying, 'We have tried to set goals and it hasn't worked. You are not engaging so I can't recommend to the court that you should get a Probation order.' At that stage some parents found that difficult. There were even more difficult situations that arose involving violent death and suicide. Nevertheless, generally they saw me as someone who, at least, was trying to help.

Support from the Probation Service

Síle (McLean) was a very emotionally supportive manager. She took time with me and helped me to work things through.

Indeed the two managers that I had were very good but they were juggling so many things. It was also helpful to know that more specialist support would be made available to me via Probation if I felt I needed that.

The Resident Magistrates

Some of them were brilliant. One Magistrate was fantastic. If there was a complicated question he would very often bring me into his chambers afterwards and outline where his thinking was. As he requested a report he asked me in particular if I could check on A, B and C. I loved that as it felt like we were working together trying to solve a problem – he from the legal side and I from a more social side. There were other magistrates to whom probation just felt like an inconvenience... I would like to take more time with some of those magistrates to promote understanding. So some of them loved us and some of them found it a little bit harder.

Preparing Pre-sentence Reports to the new Standards

I was trained in writing reports like that. I liked it. I liked the more forensic nature of trying to understand what were the range of triggers but also what is the big catalyst here? Generally I found it intriguing getting all the different professional views. We were trained in the new assessment tool.

There was rigour to what we were doing. I felt we could stand over it and say there was a reason why somebody's viewed as medium risk. Therefore it flows on as to why this person is getting a probation order or whatever else. The thing which worried me when writing those reports and recommending sentences was our ability to deliver - delivering the solutions particularly with something as multi-faceted as offending, is much harder.

The relationship with the young persons under supervision

It's a funny job. In most jobs you keep your success stories whereas this subverts it entirely. You keep the disasters you have had and you lose the ones that you do well. So there was a lot of it that I loved. I guess particularly what I liked was working on the puzzle of it and then helping them to find some kind of goal. One really simple example was a young guy, from an offending family, with a whole string of offences. Very simply he wanted a motor bike. He was a 17 year old bloke, he wanted a bit of freedom and wanted to impress the girls. Once we worked out that he wanted a motor bike then it became really easy for him to think, 'getting a job is quite a good idea, I can save up for the motor bike'. I loved helping them to find their pathways but the tensions were always with the workload. I remember

a young guy came into me at half three on a Friday afternoon and he talked about self-harm. I had my reports to finish and my notes to write up for the day, and I sat there thinking I don't have enough time for you. That was a shock for me. In two years I had gone from a more altruistic person to one who was being triggered by writing reports rather than being focussed on the person sitting in front of me.

Accountability

I came into a standards regime, so it was what I knew. I liked the fact that everyone was treated consistently, that there was clarity, that if you didn't show up for your third time you were going back to court. It also helped with that motivational methodology. The downside of it was in my perception we were 100% focused on accountability issues. There is validity in that but it definitely felt that the question we were answering was how could we be accountable more than how could we be effective.

Direct contact work

I farmed as much of this as I could out to Whitefield. I was more like a manager. I was setting up Whitefield or a school interaction or a mentor. Actually the quality of the service they were getting was good and varied and I guess I was fortunate I was

there at a time when there were some more resources in the community that you could pull in.

Impact

For the lower risk ones, I think we probably did a good job. I can remember a girl who drank a bit much and got involved in a fight. We put her through an anger management programme. That genuinely did seem to switch lights on for her. With the higher end ones I think we struggled. I had a particular group who were really high risk and I think most of them went through the Watershed programme. It felt too highbrow for them. They needed some intense family therapy and they needed someone like a chef who in one case literally came out of the blue and gave this kid an opportunity. His offending went 'through the floor' because somebody was giving him attention and skill and a couple of hundred quid in his back pockets. How could you get more of those people around?

The system

I think the system was tilted towards keeping people out of the system and that's a really good thing. Once in the system efforts were made to get them back out again. At that lower end that definitely works. I was part of the juvenile bureau and that was great - how to keep them out of the system, put in

intervention. At the higher end I began to share some of the harder line magistrate's views. More and more this is about resources - a more structured programme, some kind of package with an educational placement and money attached to it as a centre piece, and possibly some kind of residential facility. But I realize that you are trying to join together lots of Government silos.

Social peers' perception

Well I think they viewed it very positively. I remember a GP saying to me that the Probation Board was like the SAS. They're the guys you get in when things are really bad. It did feel at times a bit like that. Not the macho image of the SAS but that we came into play generally when people had fallen through the other social systems. I think people had a certain respect for that. I think the other agencies recognized that there was real professionalism to what we do. That was added to as we began to write even better reports because of the procedures we were putting into place and because we had clear standards.

Moving on from the Probation Service

I have very fond memories of the Probation Service. I genuinely loved the Farrington factors and loved to focus on that. I loved the management skills which it gave me but

I guess I really missed what I had been doing in Christian Aid development issues... There was a lovely camaraderie within the staff. People were amazingly supportive. I don't

think I ever worked with a team that were so willing to go out of their way to help each other and that's really stayed with me.

Professional registration

For more than 30 years the probation service has required all persons appointed to probation officer posts to have social work qualifications acceptable to the Council for Education and Training or its equivalent. That body has been replaced by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) which has established a code of practice for workers and their employers and a registration system. Simultaneously, the professional qualification was revised to a Degree in Social Work with an assessed first year in employment.

The 40 year old aspirations of probation professionalism have been achieved:-

- an accredited professional training in work with offenders integrated into an internationally respected profession yet locally grounded,
- an integrated trade union and professional association,
- a government, employer and trade union approved regulatory body with protection for offenders and their families.

Consumer feedback

In 2005 PBNI commissioned consumer research from PriceWaterhouseCooper into the views of persons under supervision. In addition to obtaining their immediate views it was intended to form a baseline for future measurements. Satisfaction levels with probation officers and the service delivered were reported as high. Nearly two thirds perceived the experience as exceeding any expectations that they had in the beginning. The researchers remarked that one can normally expect lower satisfaction ratings where consumers feel an element of compulsion. This finding may underline the significance of 'consent' that is still an element in these orders and the competence of social work trained practitioners.

The views of probationers 2004

- I would rather do probation than go to jail.
- If you breach your probation order you will be taken back to court and put back into the hands of the judge.
- They are flexible up to a point, then you will be threatened with court.
- You can call in and see them anytime if you want.
- They do the job they are supposed to do.
- I am happy enough, I'm nearly finished, only a month to go .I have no complaints.
- If you tell them something they don't want to hear they are straight on the phone to the Police.
- It happened to me. I thought it was confidential.
- If I get on with her she gets on with me.
- He is dead on I just think probation is stupid.
- They say too much and pretend they care.

Attributes of Probation Officers

PATIENT FAIR HELPFUL CONSIDERATE
SUPPORTIVE INFORMATIVE

- Makes me take responsibility for my behaviour
Has made a difference to my life
- I just stuck with her and things improved.
- My first one talked down to me, I went and asked for her to be changed.
- They dig right into your personal life . . .

Probation

- It makes you realise you don't want to be in court again
- It stops you from going to jail
- It's a waste of time You don't gain anything



Excerpt from PricewaterhouseCoopers Service User Evaluation, 2004.

New legislation

Issues of risk, dangerousness and public protection have headlined the discussions about criminal justice since the Criminal Justice Review. Government has brought forward legislation which will extend and enhance the role of probation as it embarks on its second century. Courts will be given powers to impose two extended prison sentences for the more serious types of violent and sexual offences and a new type of custody probation order for the less serious. Decisions regarding release dates followed by probation supervision will be delegated to a

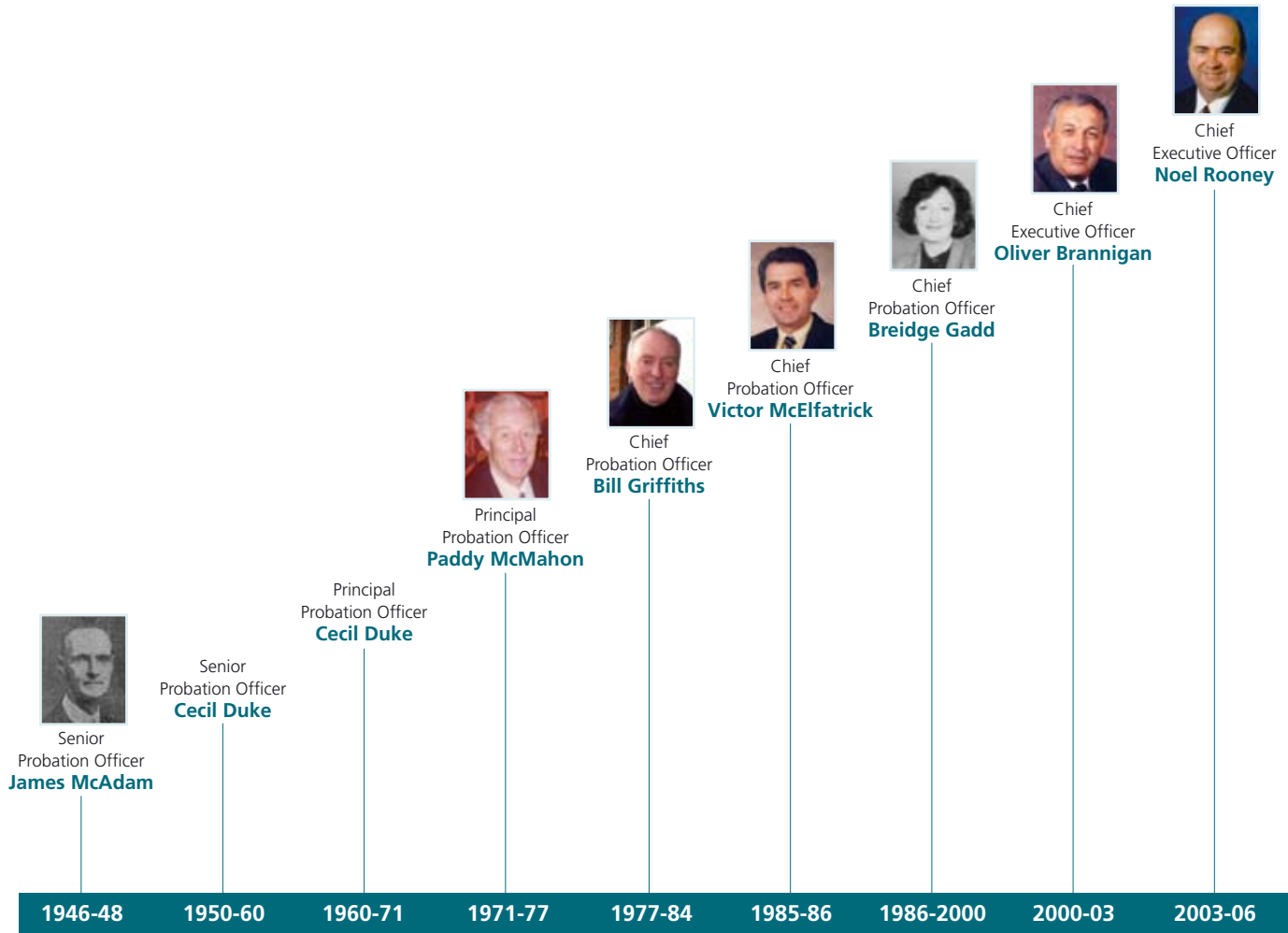
new Parole Board. This represents another turn of a circle. As outlined in Chapter 3, in the post-war era Probation Officers had responsibilities post-release in respect of longer term prisoners serving sentences of preventive detention and corrective training and for shorter term prisoners as a result of the Treatment of Offenders Act 1968. Such extensive post-release responsibilities will have implications for the ratios between prison and probation expenditure and human resource. Investment in Probation in the past at the pre-custody stage has been associated with less need for investment in institutions.


Probation Board as at 2007




Yearly expenditure	£17m
Staff (average)	348
Offenders/Clients	3,709 (daily average) 1:8 has no previous convictions; 1:2 has seven or more previous convictions
Pre-Sentence Reports	6,381
Grants to voluntary and community organisations	= £1.2m (shared among 60)

Time Line of Leaders





Chief
Probation Officer
Brian McCaughey




Chief
Management Officer
Corporate
David Van Der Merwe




Director of Probation
Brian McCaughey




Chairman of Probation Board
Ronnie Spence




Chairman of Probation Board
Brian Rowntree




Chairman of Probation Board
Sean Curran



Chairman of Probation Board
John Simpson



Chairman of Probation Board
Tom Millar



Chairman of Probation Board
Jim Grew

2006-08

2006-08

2008-

2004-

1998-2004

1991-98

1988-91

1988

1982-87

Recollections

25 Year staff



The views of a range of staff who have worked in Probation for 25 years or more were sought. In the space available it is only possible to provide a sample of their views and comments.

Motivation for joining

"I had been with customs and excise drugs squad... Much as I liked customs and excise I was very much in the prosecuting role catching and chasing people. The novelty of that wore off very quickly. I thought I'd like to work for the other side with people whom I'm currently chasing." **(TMcL)**

"I joined because I wanted to make a difference. I trained as a teacher but I always wanted to do social work. I liked probation initially because you knew everyone. You could go to headquarters and knock on the door and talk to anyone." **(MW)**

“Well I became interested in probation because when I was in .. 6th form we had a careers talk from a Probation officer.... he took us to court. ...I found it absolutely fascinating and decided that’s what I want to do, and I did.” **(RB)**

“When I was about 11 I read *Borstal Boy* by Brendan Behan and I thought that’s what I want to be - a Prison Governor. In 1970 it wouldn’t have been possible for someone from my community to join the prison service. The next best was the Probation Service. Also when I was ... 15/16, runaway children from a Training School had broken into and stayed in caravans close to home. I remember thinking, how bad must things be for children to... run away. ...I’m so lucky I’m going to have to do something about this.” **(RO’H)**

“At the time that I did apply I was also looking seriously at a route into civil airline flying. There are actually huge similarities in the modern requirements to work along with clear procedures which maybe weren’t so apparent at that time.” **(JM)**

The early organisation

“Well it felt as if I was joining a stereotypically left wing, Guardian-reading group. I was in the students unit in Linenhall St. It was just taking off at the time. What really struck me was the old carbon reports; the awfulness of trying to gather information and then to get corrections made... [my] biggest memories are of the beginning of Intermediate Treatment and with Jimmy Boyle trying to get all of that off the ground....” **(ST)**

“I joined .. in 1978. I... was the administrative staff for the start up of community service. It was Sam and me for the first 6 months and then Carmel Green and George Hoy. We were bombed out ... twice. I remember passing the bomb not realizing that’s what it was. Afterwards Sam was running around the town looking for me. The Carmels and the George Hoys were very prominent people. I remember doing typing for Carmel, checking and rechecking and checking it again, before giving it back. She was a formidable woman.” **(GB)**

“We said we could do everything, we were masters of employment and programmes and everything. we didn’t have the resources. Nowadays the resources are there....It was the old sort of community work. ...Projects like Passport to the Future,

expeditions to Antarctica, were going on. I loved the creativity... I remember Barbara Stott was my Senior when I was.... a trainee...I covered from Linenhall Street to Larne on a bus and a train. Barbara Stott went off to England for three months She left me her car, she insured it, and also left me her caseload. She had trust. You can imagine what that was like." **(BG)**

"I came in as one of a group of about 18 or 19 trainees. (Breidge Gadd was the training manager at that point) We did a 5 week induction in Belfast. The benefit of that time spent together was that over the years we gave a lot of support to each other. I wonder now do the staff coming in twos and threes get the same support." **(MS)**

"Reflection also on the risks we took in the days before risk assessment and the type of work where we got involved in helping ..- moving furniture, Christmas parties for families...Training from Alan Darnbrook about Community involvement and keeping people out of custody." **(KH)**

"At the age of 23 I ...returned having a little experience of the Probation Service in England. A couple of...things that struck me were the exciting calibre of staff ...- Brendan McAllister (Victims Commissioner), Alice Maitland (Youth Justice Director), Val

Patterson etc. The motivation, innovation and client interest was tremendous. We also felt quite autonomous...." **(PD)**

Court in the early years

"The perception was that you were on the side of the defendant. We were always called. 'What can you say that is good about this man?' ...When you did a report for Crown Court you used to have to hang about for days....You were soft because you weren't felt to be very important by the defence." **(BG)**

"I started as a trainee in 1982 in a group of four...I have identified with them throughout my service life. I was really impressed by the likes of Siobhan Taylor standing up in court arguing with the resident magistrate and told to sit down every so often.....An RM told me to sit down and behave myself. If he wanted my opinion he would ask me for it. He was right. You didn't recommend custody. No-one ever thought an offender was too dangerous to supervise. You just took the order." **(GMcK)**

"There was no risk assessment in those days." **(MS)**

The Community Service team

"I spent 16 years in that team. They were very professional. It was very family orientated. I

was just 17 years of age, only out of school. From Sam's perspective I was his child. There weren't standards....It was very autonomous, very supportive.Now you have very little autonomy. I don't think it's as effective as it was.....It's become so formal. The advantage for my generation is that we know a lot of people whom we can talk to if there's something bothering us." **(GB)**

Changes

"We were just driven by a different set of values. Now we are crime, statistic, risk and public protection driven. We seem to take an inordinate responsibility for the last of those. When I remember starting it seemed to me to be left wing, it seemed to me to be for values for people. We weren't saying that committing crime was a good thing but we put it into a context of deprivation and other kinds of social issues that might have been around in addition to 'the Troubles'.I remember people like Fred Cackett, with a value system, integrity and intelligence." **(MMcC)**

"A big change from where we started, where we felt we were social workers, is the social component. For someone coming out of prison now we are more likely to sit in our office instead of doing some tangible like taking them to the dole or to the housing office." **(ST)**

"I think Custody Probation Orders is one of the best developments lately. They give us and the clients more accountability. We are still developing their use. They are tackling the clients who are highest risk." **(GMcK)**

"Really since the 1980s there has been constant change, IT, management by objectives, better communication, Hoghugh and his assessments, social skills, Priestly and Maguire and then the different cognitive programmes. The most difficult thing for me is the introduction of PIMS... It has got in the way of making time for people and challenging people that change has to happen. I do believe that we do influence people's lives and the longer I do my job the more convinced I am that we do make a difference." **(MW)**

"The biggest change ...is how we have become more publicly accountable now and the focus of the media as a result of more high profile cases- unheard of 15/20 years ago. There are also the demands made by legislative change – we're now led by legislation and we are going down the correctional road as opposed to the care road. That's allegedly what the man in the street expects of us - that we become a public protection agency." **(TD)**

"I actually think that one of the biggest

changes is coming upon us very fast- the new sentencing legislation. We will become a very high profile organization. Staff who join in the next 10 years will have a very different experience. Can we carry forward the values we have into an organization that becomes much bigger and which is going to be hidebound by what Stephen Nolan says on a Monday morning? We, who are older, will experience that conflict more than people coming in." **(RB)**

"I was employed along with Noel O'Donnell to launch Community Service in the West of the Province and many including existing colleagues at the time said it would never work.....It was pooh-poohed just like a lot of the new stuff that's coming in, and now it's the flagship of probation **(TMcL)**

"Criminal Justice Order and Standards of Supervision..... Multi disciplinary approach to work has had to come to the fore as we deal with more serious and challenging offenders. Further public protection considerations are now the major driver." **(PD)**

How we were perceived

"Do gooders" **(ST)**

"Coming from the Creggan in Derry when I became a probation officer it was like becoming a cop. When all the troubles

were going on, it was exactly like joining the authorities. That made it quite difficult; whatever kind of housing estate you were coming from." **(JQ)**

"Whenever I joined the probation service, my father said to me, 'Sure you're too small to be a police woman.'" **(ST)**

"In the 80s you had to be so very careful. I think everyone of us just went straight back to social work roots to cope - non-judgemental, basic respect for others. That's what guided us through those very difficult years. We were equated with other authorities but because we had this great ethical structure we were protected." **(BG)**

"I was in Magilligan in the very early days as a trainee. Some prison staff really had it in for us. ('when in doubt blame the welfare'). I don't know how many times I was searched and asked for ID going from block to block. I felt paranoid after a while. Do these people think I'm in the IRA? Obviously that has radically changed." **(JQ)**

"It's about partnerships too. That's one of the great recent happenings. It's not working in isolation as one agency." **(MMcC)**

"But it has become so much more two way which is really good, because we also get

information, which is helpful and relevant to us for risk assessment, that we wouldn't have got years ago." **(MS)**

The perception of offenders

"The clients have changed drastically. Back then I think we were accepted by clients because they knew we were there to try and do them good. ...Well, in fairness you were told you were to advise, assist and befriend. That just about encompasses everything. What do you not do, if you assist, advise and befriend." **(GMcK)**

"Well we have swung the other way, where we have very little serious time. It's all about just producing things for Key Performance Measures." **(JQ)**

"You were out working along with juveniles and spending a lot of time in the homes. You ended up dealing with family issues, housing etc." **(BG)**

"In the early days we did the access and custody of children reports in matrimonial proceedings." **(ST)**

A meeting with the Chief

"I remember Bill Griffiths 'throwing his toys out of the pram' because we dared to say, 'we couldn't prevent re-offending we could only help prevent it'. I just remember

him because I hadn't long started and I was terrified of him. Now we don't have conversations about issues we have conversations about forms." **(MMcC)**

An early prison visit

"I remember visiting a man who was being released from Crumlin Rd Prison. Before the visit I got a message asking me to bring up his suitcase, which I did. As I came in the gate it was opened and searched. It was full of burglary tools. I was carrying them into the prison! ... I stopped being naïve after that." **(MS)**

The offices

"[one] of the new offices was a house on the Comber Road. We had our office upstairs and George McCartney, Senior Probation Officer, had an office downstairs. It was difficult to find space for interviewing. George had been a Lieutenant Commander during the war." **(MC)**

Offenders get a better service now?

"Well they may get a more professional focussed service." **(ST)**

"They'd say we were a lot more strict and if they put a foot out of line or don't show up etc for three appointments – bang!" **(JQ)**

Staying with probation

"I wouldn't have the confidence to move anywhere else." **(ST)**

"I've always enjoyed the challenge and the diversity of the work and that's the thing that kept me going." **(MS)**

"I think it is the mixture of the buzz from being involved in the courts and doing something positive for people while being able to challenge them and give them responsibility for their own lives." **(BG)**

"A stubborn kind of loyalty when I think of the people in probation. I think it's important that we are still there even though I criticise it. There's still that thread that runs through the service that is worth hanging on to." **(MMcC)**

"In probation – every day is different and there's a new challenge. Particularly in my office I meet a range of people. I came from a typing pool in the Courts where you were hardly allowed to sneeze or you were grounded." **(HMCC)**

"I always preferred Probation because I felt it was a more defined role, rather than social services which was more 'wishy washy'. I always liked in the past the way in which staff in teams always supported each other.

I was with Barbara Gillespie and Val Owens in the Maze during the difficult time of the great escape and felt that then." **(MC)**

"I absolutely love my job. I have friends not in the organization who have gone to five or six different jobs while I'm still in the same job. I think it's a great organization to work for and it's been very good to me. I think equally that I have been good to it. I could never imagine working anywhere else, so I will wait for the gold watch as well." **(MQ)**

Impact

"Nobody really would give some of these people 'the time of day' let alone anything else. Our sitting down and talking to them in a way that's meaningful is so important. I wouldn't like that to be lost in the future..." **(CD)**

"I interviewed a lady recently (in regard to a member of her family)... she came in and shook hands. She says, 'Long time no see. I remember you telling me that if I didn't get my act together I was going to end up in gaol and I thought if I end up in gaol no-one's going to want me'." **(TMCL)**

"One of the interesting things came out of the probation decision to employ ex-offenders as project leaders/deliverers. One of them was somebody I had supervised

as an offender in a previous life. I was now working with him because he came to the team to run groups. I just found that amazing. ...It was interesting to watch someone just step into very different shoes and take on a different role and yet identify with what the people he was working with had gone through." **(RB)**

"For me one of the important things was how we as an agency behaved in the Maze prison throughout the 70s and 80s. Our attitude was non- judgemental, non- controlling and non- directive. One thing was how John Bourke, as a manager, managed our situation during the hunger strikes – he was the manager in the Maze - Social welfare services in this kind of situation had never clearly been defined.We didn't allow our agency to become a part of something it shouldn't have become." **(RO'H)**

Practice in the early years

"Ideas were openly welcomed. Individual practices were allowed. The words 'Health and Safety' rarely featured. Pre standards the job was fantastic and fulfilling. This is not to say all practice was of a high standard. ... [but] the abiding memory was of a vibrant people-centred organisation which was thriving. This development of well rounded practitioners is something I feel we have lost

to a degree when I talk to some new staff who feel this job is now overly stressful less fulfilling and no longer a lifelong career.This raising of standards enhances on the one hand and takes a toll on the other." **(PD)**

The future

"The need to support staff in the work has never been greater and this is the current challenge facing us as we continue in NI at least, if not on the mainland, to be afforded a central role in the management of offenders." **(PD)**

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Recollections



Former Staff

Views, reflections and comments were sought from a number of veteran ex- probation staff. A selection of these is presented below.

Joining the service

"I joined the Service in 1974. The Belfast Office then was in Linenhall Street. For me it was a very family orientated organization. Everybody knew everybody else. That was before decentralization. If you had any problems or difficulties or something you wanted to discuss, there was always a colleague near at hand whom you could chat with. Once decentralisation came into operation, everybody scattered into different areas. It wasn't easy to communicate with colleagues on that same basis." **(MP)**

“When I joined, the word organisation wasn’t used. It was a small ‘service’. If you worked in Belfast you still related to all the other rural offices. There were one man or woman offices. People came together a lot. We organised football. It would have been quite common on Saturdays in the days when Intermediate Treatment was in vogue to head off to Derry or Strabane and spend the whole day there with your team (probationers). Health and Safety wasn’t exactly an issue. I remember squeezing 5 boys into a mini to go off to play 5-a-side. We felt as if we had more autonomy. Accountability was more to peers than it was to management. There wasn’t really a modern notion of management in the service then – one Principal and a few seniors. The bulk of the people who influenced what you did, when you were a new officer then, were your peers. They were quite challenging. It was peer supervision but it wasn’t called that.” **(VO)**

“It was more of a democracy with flexibility. I came into the service in 1979. I was so lucky to be picked because things were beginning to grow and develop. You were afforded opportunities to do completely ‘mad’ things but a lot of them actually worked. Modern bureaucracy has restricted what you can do. I hope young probation officers coming in now can still have that feeling of excitement

though it is probably quite constrained. I think a lot of our accountability was to our clients as well as our peers. I don’t know if that’s been whittled away because of monitoring and inspections which are meant to improve that.” **(EP)**

“I started in probation in ‘78 among a big group of trainees. They were a mixed band, extremely friendly. It was like a family. As the agency grew I found there was greater objectivity a greater gap between the senior and the probation officer. It became more like some other organisations that I had worked for. It was always Belfast based. In the North West we always said that the world ended at Glengormley. You made your way to Belfast for meetings. You looked to see what way the lamp posts were painted before you parked your car.” **(TM)**

Looking back

Towards the end of my career, I was dealing with ‘lifers’ and sex offenders. There seemed to be a greater emphasis on recording than there was with the offender, if you got it down, everybody was happy. I did enjoy my time in probation, it treated me well. It was totally different to any other job that I had done. I didn’t start until I was 40 and I had 25 years of it. I had very interesting experiences.

I remember to my horror one time in Derry, when I was driving along and there was two men standing with guns running their own checkpoint. I couldn't turn back. They were moving round like the army. They were checking driving licences. As I wound down my window one of them said to me, 'Go you on, Terry, because you'll be in a hurry.' **(TM)**

Working in the courts

When you think back to the 70s, I recall our times spent in the juvenile court. There were some adult cases. 1979 - that was the beginning of adult work taking off through our community service and doing reports in the adult court. Before that you were sitting in court waiting for the crumbs that fell off the table on to your lap. **(VO)**

When I went to the Coleraine area I was dealing with two Resident Magistrates covering the different Petty Session districts – one had no time for probation and the other gave us everything. With one it was a matter of 'give us cases but more appropriate ones' and with the other 'give us anything.' **(SD)**

I started as a volunteer in Annesley Street, Belfast looking after clients who were put on probation but didn't need a probation officer every day in the week. So I would go and visit on a regular basis and then if there was a bigger problem you could call

in the probation officer. I was then asked if I would consider joining the service. I became a probation assistant in the Court team for some years. I carried reports to the juvenile court every day it was sitting. In those days there was more respect. The new probationers would say to me, 'Who am I getting as a probation officer? What's he like? Will he be cross?' **(EMcM)**

Change

The biggest change for me was that when I arrived about 1970 I was asked, 'Where do you want to work?' Then in the 2000s, when you had students – absolutely top rate, but they couldn't get a job in probation in Northern Ireland. You saw so many going across the water. Some have come back, but I've known those who decided to stay on in England. That was a big change. The size then also meant opportunity. **(SD)**

Fund raising

"I remember us going to Bill Griffith saying we wanted to do work with the community. He told us to go out and raise the money ourselves so we organized a disco and a cake sale- standing in the freezing cold selling cakes, but we couldn't bring ourselves to tell them it was for offenders because we knew they wouldn't buy them." **(EP)**

“A lot of the group work with kids was funded through a mixture of fund raising and donations and from our own pockets. That was true about the World Cup trips. People didn’t really mind using their own money.” **(VO)**

Working with the family

“We worked so much more with families then than we do now. We really had to work with parents to work with the young people. We also did a lot of the work in the home. There were more links with parents and families. Now we approach people as if they don’t have families....That was one of the unintended consequences of having better office accommodation...We are seeing people on a one to one basis and holding them accountable for their behaviour. We are not working with the wider social network.” **(VO)**

“We were sent out with a probation order to a family. We had a probation order for one person in that family but it was very obvious that all of the people in that family were involved in that order. We had to try and work with all the members of the family. I am not sure how much the Service has succeeded in monitoring what service the family gets from probation. That’s where all our work lies. If that’s not happening we don’t know how good we are.” **(LR)**

Prison Work

“One day I came into the office and a Senior said, ‘You’ll be moving.’ ‘Where am I moving to?’ ‘South Belfast.’ ‘That’s fine.’ Then he said, ‘It’s the Maze Prison.’ ‘When did that move to South Belfast?’ ‘I really meant South of Belfast and you’ll only be there for three years.’ ‘I’ll only be there for three months if I don’t like it.’ I found the work interesting. After being released for a few years, lo and behold I found myself back in the Crumlin Road prison and then into Maghaberry before I retired. I always remembered what a Senior Probation officer had said when I first joined ‘Just treat everyone as a human being and you’ll find it ok.’ **(MP)**

Community Service

“I started with Community Service in 1979... Sam Chapman said to me, ‘Community Service Orders are coming in and you are the very lady for that.’ I started as a sessional supervisor. Those were the days before seatbelts. You just put 5 or 6 in your car and off you went. When I think back at some of the things we were involved in. We were working up at a church in West Belfast. I said to one of the boys, ‘..... it’s a pity we couldn’t clean that ‘wee’ round window.’ I went out to make the tea. When I came back he was standing at the top of this mobile scaffold. I had to creep up to him and say ‘Will you get down!’

I got promotion and became a Community Service Organiser. I enjoyed every minute of it." **(HW)**

"After some considerable years Albert Brown asked me to join Community Service. I found myself driving like a mad thing round South and East Belfast, North Down and North Down and Ards. One hour in Portaferry, the next in Newcastle. I had meals on wheels most days. I went home at night and wrote up the files so that when I went in next morning, I had got shot of that task, knowing that there was going to be more to come again that day. My mother used to say, 'Does Mavis Pickering ...have to do this?' I had great support from all the seniors that I had. I felt that people did respect you for what you were. Perhaps that was how you got your community service orders completed." **(EMcM)**

Workloads and Support

"There was lots of caring went on. We had to care for one another because it was such a dramatic situation we found ourselves in. The Falls Road from '71,'72 right up to the 80s was unbelievably difficult, we just got on with it, we did support one another when we could but with very large caseloads often we just didn't have the time. The support system has to be protected; it can only be protected by giving people time to think." **(LR)**

Values

"I think everybody had a similar value system. I joined in '78 as a trainee and went straight onto the training course. In my second year I was trainee in Linenhall Street, I loved it. It was just so exciting. I felt a camaraderie. In 'Robinsons' on a Friday night you learnt more about your job listening to everything that had happened during the week. Everyone I worked with seemed to share similar views of the world. They believed in people, there was a non-judgmental attitude. No matter what people did there was a respect for the human being.I think that is the cement that held people together and maybe still does." **(CC)**

"The other value that probation people hold is a dislike of injustice and a desire to ensure fairness wherever possible." **(EP)**

Perceptions of service users

"It was a kind of missionary role. The client was central, but that also showed a lack of awareness of the victim. That was both the victim of the client and the victim in the client. We were in and out of families during the '70s and didn't see or didn't know that there was sexual abuse going on. Also we didn't address victim issues or the impact of what people had done. Very often we didn't appreciate the job being about public protection. ...In the end we probably got

better results than we deserved because of the nature of our interaction. The manner of interaction now between some people is definitely disrespectful but on the positive side it is much more clued into victim issues and issues of public protection. It is very hard to get the balance right..... We may be doing the right things now but we may not be doing them in the right way." **(VO)**

The Trainee Grade

"When I was interviewing on the social work courses, probation trainees 'stood out a mile' at interview by what they had learned in the year before they went on a course. There were social work assistants in the same position but they didn't get direction, supervision, support or the experience. They weren't given live cases that challenged. Our trainees were and they benefited. I was disappointed when the trainee grade disappeared from probation." **(SD)**

Prison Link

One of my fondest memories in the organisation was because Breidge had the guts to go ahead with something unusual and that was the setting up of Prison Link. Prisoners' families were very much the forgotten victims. It was a complete eye opener. I was very lucky in the staff, like Betty Quinn who was just wonderful. Betty never went on to qualify as a social worker but she

just had that natural insight into what people needed and how they felt. She was always prepared to go the extra mile. It was a shame that the statutory organisation Probation had to divest that service to the voluntary organisation..... A lot of those women came to events in Prison Link and were able to say to other women "it's actually ok to accept the Service." **(EP)**

Working with paramilitaries

Most of them in the beginning were the families of paramilitary prisoners who were so incredibly needy. In some respects it had a knock on effect with these prisoners we were working with as well because we had a greater understanding of what made them tick and what motivated them. They did start to accept the services and accept that wives and mothers did need help and support. And so we were working with people who really wanted your services which in a selfish way was gratifying." **(EP)**

Impact

"I was sent to West Belfast, didn't want to go and then I didn't want to change. You did home visits and you got to know people. It was very rewarding in those days. I had an employment unit at one time. I used to take them for interviews for jobs.

I took a fellow up to a hotel and he got a job. That was very satisfying.” **(HW)**

“I remember meeting the man in a supermarket who had two children with him. He asked me did I remember him. He said, ‘I have been to University and have completed my degree. You used to hunt me down, as regards my education’ – those were the gems you met along the way.” **(LR)**

“I was mainly based in West Belfast. I remember one case of a probationer. His mother was a person who talked incessantly. In the middle of a conversation she said ‘Are you a Catholic yourself, Miss Scott?’ I said, ‘Actually I’m not but if you would like a Catholic officer I can arrange it.’ She replied, ‘No, it will be all right.’ The next week I visited, the table was set, and a meal was all ready for me.” **(MP)**

“I couldn’t leave without commenting on the impact that Val Owens has had working in Alderwood for so many years, acknowledged not only by clients but by so many other organisations. It’s probably one of the biggest impacts that there has been the last ten years in probation.” **(EP)**

“One of the memories I have is of the football team that I organized in the 1970s. Some years later ...I happened to meet that

whole team, they were now 19 and 20 andone of them said, ‘That football kept us out of prison.’ They’d never been in trouble after.” **(VO)**

Working with partners

“The work with women is something I’d like to think I’d made an impact on. I still get individual contact from some of those women who have got on with their lives. It’s great to see women moving on in a way that they wouldn’t have done other than through making contact with our organisation.” **(VO)**

Partnerships

“I have really enjoyed working with other agencies. Probation has a good history of that. There was a time when we were struggling to have any foothold in the criminal justice system. Probation wasn’t highly regarded. The Board and leaders have to be thanked. That gave us the confidence to link in with other organisations as equals. We have a much better relationship with the police now. Social services is not as close as it might be. It is quite close with voluntary organizations. In criminal justice or indeed in anything you can’t do things on your own these days and I hope that will continue.” **(VO)**

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The Way Ahead

Thanks to all who have contributed to the past 100 years of Probation and 25 years since the inception of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

The Probation Service seems to be, yet again, at a critical crossroads in its development. Whilst the policy of primarily dealing with offenders within the community prevails, shifts towards a more punitive approach are now in evidence.

In Northern Ireland, thanks in no small way to all those referred to in this book, the Probation Board demonstrates itself as one of the most effective Probation Services currently operating in the UK and Ireland. The service's strengths are:

- Its focus on achieving positive change in the lives of offenders, thus reducing crime and the harm it does
- Delivering its services locally in the offenders homes, within a wider family context, in his/her community and along with wider voluntary and community providers
- Building positive (not collusive) relationships with offenders holding them to account for their actions
- Balancing care versus control, prioritising public safety
- Applying NI Standards and service requirements and continuing to deliver an individualised case management approach
- Partnering, purchasing and brokering services from a strong and vibrant community and voluntary sector

The Probation Board prioritises public protection and public safety, but cannot provide “prisons in the community”.

With the advent of new Public Protection Sentences in Northern Ireland, the level of public and media scrutiny will be greatly increased. With all offenders now on some form of supervision after being released from custody, re-offending in the community could be presented as failure on the Probation Service’s part.

In Northern Ireland, probation supervision must continue to be interpreted as a period of ‘testing out’. The control, supervision and surveillance of offenders must go hand in hand with assisting them to change.

In Northern Ireland, we have substantial evidence over the past 30 years of conflict to show that punitive measures alone do not change offenders. Offenders represent some of the most socially deprived groups in society and the Probation Board in Northern Ireland must work to ensure that in any new political dispensation each new government department understands, acknowledges and delivers on its commitments to making Northern Ireland safer through a strategy to reduce offending.

The Probation Board is now a central and leading Criminal Justice organisation in Northern Ireland. The Probation Board should now assume a lead role in advising on the allocation of funding across Criminal Justice in all work aligned to the Assessment and Management of offenders in

Northern Ireland. Whether as a Non-Departmental Public Body or as an Agency within a Department of Justice, the Probation Board is stronger and more influential than at any stage in its history.

Future challenges will no doubt include:

- Implementation of the New Sentencing Framework (Criminal Justice NI Order 2008)
- Consequentially growing the organisation by 30% - 40%
- Devolution of Policing and Justice
- Managing government, public and media expectation
- Increasing victim awareness in offenders and developing involvement of victims
- Enhancing Community Service as a service to the Community

Creativity, inclusiveness and delivery of local services through its own staff, along with the voluntary and community sector must continue to be central to PBNI.

The ultimate test for the future will be to embed its Social Work values and principles in a much larger organisation, striving in its efforts to

Challenge, Change and Protect

Brian McCaughey

Director of Probation

Mission –

To make the community safer through our work in managing offenders

Aim –

To reduce crime and the harm it does by challenging and changing offender behaviour

Vision –

To be an excellent organisation delivering best practice probation services and playing a central role in the management of offenders in Northern Ireland.

This book recounts the story of one hundred years of the Probation Service in Northern Ireland. First established in 1908 by the Act of the previous year, it has developed into a widely-recognised professional service under, since its foundation in 1982, the Probation Board of Northern Ireland. Most striking of all are the recollections of former Probation Officers whose collective memory reflects much of the soul of this service.



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