

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Whether financial or in kind we thank the following for their invaluable support:

- The Valentine Trust
- Five Anonymous Donors
- Shaftesbury Society of Quakers
- Pitt-Rivers Charitable Trust
- Golden Bottle Trust
- Tom's Field
- St Michaels Church, Pen Selwood
- The Mothers Union
- Robin Hill Stores – collection box
- Marnhull Stores – collection box
- Graham Cole
- Our seen and unseen 'Friends'
- Rachel Davies
- Our Anonymous 'Friend' accountant
- Daniel House ACCA, MAAT
- Alice-Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Trust

For partnership working

- Nordcat
- Barnardo's

SATURDAY ROTA

Can you spare 2.5 hours around lunch time on a Saturday just once every 2/3 months? Welcome the visitors in our little kitchen in the Visits Centre outside the fence and offer hot or cold drinks whilst they wait to make their visit inside. It's interesting and very easy.

Please contact us via:

info@friendsofguysmarsh.co.uk if you are interested in our work, wish to learn more or would like to contribute in any way.



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Charity No. 1168102

www.friendsofguysmarsh.co.uk

PATRONS

Mrs Anthony Pitt-Rivers CVO DL
Dr Fay Weldon CBE

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Vice President: Terry Francis
Hon. Vice President: Derek Ross
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Graham Woollard
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News *for* Friends

Newsletter of the Friends of Guys Marsh Prison No 14 - Spring 2017

Friends of Guys Marsh Prison (FOGM) has recently appointed Giles Fearn as Chairman, following Jonathan Davies' departure last December when he moved to Essex. Jonathan was Chair for the past 6 years during a period that saw FOGM assist the prison identify the greatest number of opportunities and programmes to rehabilitate prisoners – the principle remit of FOGM. The committee have all expressed how they will miss “Jonathan's energy, vision and understanding in dealing with the many varied aspects of prison, prisoners and government policies”.
See Page 5



Giles has most recently been a School Governor in the last six years, serving one term as the Parent Governor elected representative with Dorset Council. He has also been a member of the BBC's South West Audience Panel, whose role is to provide advice and feedback to the BBC trust via the Audience Council.

At the start of his career, Giles was commissioned into 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards in 1986 and served in Germany and the UK, during this time he also served in the 1st Gulf War.

Following his commission, he worked in London in the security industry before setting up his own Corporate Gift Business. He and his family moved to Dorset in 2003 with the birth of their third child. He joined the TA in 2007 and became a full time reservist in 2010, working in Tidworth and Bulford.

Giles is married with three teenage children and they live in Marnhull.

He is a keen supporter of local affairs and is looking forward to the challenges of supporting FOGM.

The committee are delighted to have a new Chair whose understanding of the hardships of life is first hand but whose belief is that “everyone should be given a chance”.

Read about the many initiatives in Guys Marsh, of the progressive Growth Project, and how our Yoga funding has gained positive outcomes.

NOEL "RAZOR" SMITH

Friends of Guys Marsh raised over £1000 after hosting a sold-out talk in June 2016 given by the reformed prisoner Razor Smith, now known as Noel Smith after he had served his last sentence in 2010. A successful six-book author and lecturer on the life of crime and prison, he wrote his first book "A Few Kind Words and A Loaded Gun", which reached 28th on the Times Literary Best-sellers list, whilst serving his penultimate sentence in prison.

Smith managed to amuse and silence his audience at the same time with tales of "how an innocent 14 year old boy" became a criminal with 65 alleged convictions in one afternoon and his subsequent 32 years on the "merry-go-round" of committing major robberies with his gang, with their proceeds totalling £1.4 million, and the resultant times in jail.

He also explained how, when first entering prison, he ensured that other inmates "gave respect" - stare them straight in the eye and spit on the ground. Going on to speak movingly of how he managed to teach himself to read whilst in solitary confinement; then to write and eventually turn his energy to the productive life he now has as commissioning editor for "Inside Time", the monthly newspaper for prisoners.



Also speaking movingly of his voluntary "time" in HMP Guys Marsh was Toby Langton-Gilks who, some four times a week, works in the prison as a musical tutor, running "Urban Beat Shop" and Music Technology courses for the prisoners.

The audience listened to a compilation of songs and poems created by the prisoners, with lyrics expressing some of the fears, regrets and woes of the prisoners' lives.

The money raised has funded a prisoner who has applied to FOGM to finish a City and Guilds, Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) course. With a qualified IQA in place, the Guys Marsh PE Department will be able to offer, and assess, a wide range of courses resulting in Diplomas in areas such as Personal Training, which will help prisoners secure lasting work on their release.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Friends of Guys Marsh Prison - can you spot the difference? Our new name, hardly a revolution but a necessary word addition to qualify us for the status of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in order to be in line with current thinking and giving us an umbrella for legal protection.

This change also necessitated re-registering with the Charity Commission and, as our subscribing Friends will know, setting up a new bank account. Unofficially though we are still FOGM with the same goals and aspirations.

COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES

During the past year we have had to say a reluctant goodbye to Jonathan and a warm welcome to Giles as our new Chairman. To celebrate Jonathan's motivating work and friendship we enjoyed a super evening before he moved away to be nearer his growing family. With Giles' lead we are focusing on ways to help prisoners cope with lock-up periods, a time when personal worries become more exaggerated and tensions build. In-cell occupations can alleviate this stress. We are providing a variety of appropriate quiz books and creative hobby items, initially to the more vulnerable men and gradually to a broader section of inmates. Several of our supporter 'Friends' have kindly responded to a request for art materials and playing cards – all items needing frequent replenishing due to their popularity.

Donations of colour pencils/ crayons, drawing books etc. would be welcomed at any time - notify: info@friendsofguysmarsh.co.uk for us to get in touch with you.

Last year we funded an Assessors' course for a Gym Orderly; he can now sign off the qualifications for men passing their Gym Instructors exams. We have recently paid for two more men to gain Assessor status for other subjects giving many more men opportunities for later employment.

Morsbags are being made in the prison following an enquiry we followed up and recommended to the Governors. Prisoners are sewing bags made from unused strong material, which are then given away containing a message of explanation; the only cost is the special labels advertising the idea and FOGM is providing these. It's a great recycling idea for everyone with spare material - Go to www.morsbags.com for the pattern and to obtain the Morsbags labels to make your own at home.



Our Events sub-committee are planning some interesting fundraising ideas for the autumn and beyond. Our web site will give final details. Of course, covering our projects needs other financial support and we are fortunate that a few Trusts have responded regularly over the years for some specific ongoing commitments and small organisations sometimes surprise us with unexpected donations, which is wonderful. New larger projects though need bidding for in competition with the vast charitable field.

FROM OUR VIEWPOINT

For years Governors' budgets have been reduced annually creating very hard challenges to maintain the required standards. With the recent poor publicity surrounding prisons in general and notably for Guys Marsh, both government and public focus has been turned towards the importance of rehabilitation which especially concerns our prison's own specified function. After the Prison Inspector's December report the Ministry of Justice recognised that to achieve the demands required of it Guys Marsh needed special support. This was quickly implemented with a badly needed injection of funding. With realistic reforming initiatives under consideration and some already underway, moral has been boosted and the general air of optimism is good to feel.

YOGA IN GUYS MARSH

YOGATHON

On January 26th a Yogathon was organised at HMP Guy's Marsh for the charity Mind. It took place in the Gym and was attended by both the men and staff.

Thank you to the "studio" Poole for lending us the extra mats.

We raised over £1,000 for the charity and the day was enjoyed by all. I looked at the twenty-odd prisoners and prison officers on the mats: I knew that some had practised yoga quite a lot, and several had never done it before, it was a wonderful day and the combination of both staff and residents working together was great. The first session was taught by Noel who has been in custody for 11 years. Noel has been practicing Yoga for 8 years and has signed up for a Yoga Teaching Diploma correspondence course. I am assisting him with this as well as other projects, such as the Growth Project and the planning of a 10 week Mindfulness based yoga course which will come in line with the Stop Smoking happening towards the end of March.

Sarah Ryan taught the second session followed by myself, Sally, then Daniel finished the day with an Ashtanga practice. Daniel is a very experienced teacher who covers for me when I am away.

The class in the chapel on Fridays continues to be supported with the attendance rate varying each week. It's been suggested that we move the regular class to Tuesday and the mindfulness based yoga course takes its place on Friday and visits can then be rearranged for the weekend for people on the course.

The guys who practice Yoga regularly notice a real change in how they feel both mentally and physically – with a calmer mind and relaxed body, using the mindfulness techniques that they have learnt helps them to stay focused and more mindful of their patterns of thoughts and behaviour towards themselves and others. We are doing some wonderful work here at Guys Marsh: giving prisoners and officers the chance to experience yoga is so valuable and a significant boost to the community within the establishment.

Sally Rainbowchild - Yoga Instructor

THE POWER OF YOGA

My name is Noel, I have been practising yoga now for many years. Yoga has changed my life for the better in so many ways, I feel a sense of calmness all the time, I am more connected to myself and others, my concentration and memory have improved whilst enhancing my creative flair. I feel I have reached a state of happiness and peace; I am mindful of all my thoughts and actions and am able to handle any potential high risk situations with a positive attitude. Yoga has helped me become a better person, more grounded and loving, and it will be a major part of my life upon release.

Subscriptions should be sent to:

**The Treasurer
Friends of Guys Marsh Prison
Lymburghs Farm
Marnhull
Sturminster Newton
Dorset
DT10 1HN**

*Gift Aid

Please use this form for yourself or a friend by cutting along the dotted line. If you are a UK taxpayer you can make a Gift Aid declaration which will increase the value of your subscription/donation to Friends of Guys Marsh by 25%.

This is only allowable provided you have paid at least as much tax as we are reclaiming, either as income tax or capital gains tax.

If you are a higher rate taxpayer you can reclaim the difference between the higher rate of tax you pay and the basic rate of tax we reclaim when you complete your self-assessment tax return.



Visit the Jailhouse
Café open
Monday to Friday
from 10 am to 2.30 pm



SUBSCRIPTION FORM

- I'd like to become a Friend of Guys Marsh Prison
- I wish to renew my subscription

Please tell us how you heard about Friends of Guys Marsh Prison

Name:

Address:

email:

The information you provide on this form will be stored on the Friends of Guys Marsh Prison database and will not be passed to or shared with any other organisation.

Annual subscription: £10 £25 £50 Other

I enclose a cheque for: £..... made payable to: **"Friends of Guys Marsh Prison"**.

I would like to pay by standing order – please send me a form .

Date:

*Gift Aid declaration:

I am a UK taxpayer and wish Friends of Guys Marsh Prison to reclaim tax paid on my donations . (see explanation opposite):

Signed:

Please use this form for yourself or a friend by cutting along the dotted line.

A LETTER OF THANKS

Dear Friends of Guys Marsh,

I have recently been informed that the full amount has now been paid to Aid Training for the Assessor Award course. This has been a collaboration between the prison and your organisation. Without your generous donation I would not be able to even attempt something like this and it will only enhance the opportunities in my future progression. I have studied every year to achieve my qualifications, which has led to me attaining my Open University Degree in 2014.

It took me six years to gain this and I have used it since to assist over two-hundred learners during my three years as an Education Mentor for Weston College. Particular mention needs to be made to Graham Woollard and Becky Dixon for their efforts to arrange the payments.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the opportunity you have given me and I will of course keep you informed as to how I succeed during these next months of intense studying. Once again, I appreciate your time and consideration to help people like me to give something back to society.

Shaun

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

On the Committee

Join us as our **Secretary**, attend monthly meetings, take the Minutes plus a few other duties.

We are also looking for **Vice Chair** and a prospective **Treasurer**.

People with fundraising, social media, public relations or IT skills are always welcome to take a role or as a deputy for it.

Casual Commitment

Our Saturday refreshment rota (see details page 12) benefits from a large pool of volunteers and new people are very welcome.

There are volunteering roles within prison. If you have an expertise which could aid prisoners' rehabilitation and have an ability to pass this on please contact us. We will investigate the opportunities available with the Governor for you.

Please contact us via our email address – info@friendsofguysmarsh.co.uk – we will respond as soon as we are able.

Visit our www.friendsofguysmarsh.co.uk to find more about our charity and to read back-numbers of our annual Newsletter.



PRISONER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Friends of Guys Marsh Prison and other organisations associated with the prison were invited to join staff and prisoners for the morning.

The chapel was filled to capacity for the latest Achievements award ceremony, it was a great atmosphere and applause was strong and genuine.

There was a very positive report from Steve Robinson, Deputy Governor, after the inspection last December many aspects were being investigated to promote improvement. Dr Sarah Lewis had set in motion the Growth Project. See page 8 for more details.

We then listened to a brilliant compilation of work written and sung and played by individual prisoners which Toby had recorded and made into a CD, reflecting the feelings, moods and regrets of many of the men. All very emotive to listen to and it endorsed the extremely valuable work that Toby is doing within his Urban Beat Shop.

During the ceremony, Andy from Changing tunes, played the guitar and sang Banish Misfortunes. Andy is always happy to keep in touch with men after they have completed their time at Guys Marsh, and says 'a coffee is always on hand' and time to talk.

The next part of the ceremony was announced by two very enthusiastic men, Wilson and Noel, both had volunteered to help with the Growth Project.

Fourteen names were nominated for the Learning Journey, three were picked as winners.

Guy had asked to be challenged to read books which he would not normally interest him.

Grant was chosen for his determination to complete an IT course, that was interrupted by his tutor leaving, but his persistence enabled him to complete the course successfully.

Miles, after a reluctant start had become a star learner, happy, determined and walking tall.

Wilson was commended for his peer mentoring and out of twelve nominations was one of three mentioned for the community award.

Leon was commended for his completion of his Art course.

The entire community of Mercia wing were commended for their enormous support and attitude during the fire that affected their wing. The most improved wing was Saxon.

Tyrone and Dan were chosen from twenty six nominations for the Personal Progression award.

The audience was invited back to the library for coffee and cake which gave us the opportunity to discuss further the exciting improvements which the staff with the cooperation of the inmates are trying to implement.

As Steve Robinson said at the beginning:

"together we can change this place to be a better place, you deserve better and if people are treated decently they will go back out into the world being decent."

THE GROWTH PROJECT

In September 2016 Dr Sarah Lewis of Penal Reform Solutions began two projects at HMP Guys Marsh. Both projects aimed to capture the current “as is” environment, and by documenting the key concerns and underlying issues that were experienced, to uncover those aspects of practice which promoted personal growth and a rehabilitative climate.

Both of these projects were carried out by a Growth Team; a team of researchers, recruited from across the prison estate and led by Dr Lewis. Team members were trained in research methods, as well as relational skills .

For the first project they constructed Improvement Boards on each wing, engaging the men and staff in suggesting improvements to their environment.

Interviews were also carried out in other areas of the prison, to capture the views and concerns across the estate. The Improvement Boards enabled staff and residents to suggest proposals and provided up to date information about each proposal, with an evaluation of progress and an opportunity to celebrate achievement, once a proposal was actioned and embedded.

A Master Improvement Report was collated monthly by Dr Lewis and shared with Governor Robertson, to then share with staff. These structures formed the basis of communication and highlighted which aspects of the prison required development, promoting the message that all staff and men were agents of reform.

The second project not only provided a snapshot of the valued aspects of practice at the prison, but also created an educational opportunity for staff and men, to learn and reflect upon which elements of practice create a rehabilitative environment.

To enhance engagement of both the staff and men, the second project used photo-essays to articulate the valued elements at Guys Marsh and the underlying importance behind each image. Over 40 individuals participated in the photo project and both staff and residents took part. Over 180 photo-essays were displayed in a photographic exhibition over a two day period and the project aimed to discover rehabilitative aspects of practice and inform the future “to be” environment.

Three similar photo-projects have been carried out by Dr Lewis in Norway, in high, medium and low security prison environments. They embraced the same appreciative approach, with prisoners as researchers . Following a collaborative analysis by the Growth Team, the principles of growth highlighted from the photo project at HMP Guys Marsh were broadly in line with the findings from Norway.

Check www.friendsofguysmarsh.co.uk

Goodbye to a friend

We marked Jonathan’s trusteeship and his inspiring work as acting Chairman with a lovely evening, which began delightfully with Mr & Mrs Pitt-Rivers invitation for drinks at Manor House where we presented Jonathan with a specially designed hand-painted plate signed by us all.

After this we enjoyed dinner at The Crown to thank Jonathan and Gaenor and wish them all the very best for their new life in Essex.



A Poem

WHAT HAVE I DONE?
By Grant

What is this,
Another day
Where I am wasting away,
Stuck looking at these walls.
This is no way I want to live.
Is this now my life?
No way.

I’m going to use this time
To change my ways,
Make something better
Than this existence
That is not to be.

This is not what I saw,
Not this, any day,
Being stuck looking at four walls
Is not what I saw.
It’s no life,
But a catastrophe.

This is my first time in jail.
I did not expect
To be sat here on this bed,
Wanting more than this existence.

Screw it all
What a way to live
In a jail
With no life but regime and ignorance.

Staff looking at me
Thinking, is he a major crim,
But this is not for me
Being here,
No way.

I was homeless
No family to say
You’re going to end up in jail soon
Unless you change your way.

Using this time to better myself
Is what I’m going to do.
This system’s not for me
It’s no place to be,
I want more than this every day

Only I can make sure
This never happens again,
This is not for me

This is not the end to my life,
I want my freedom back,
I miss walking the streets
More every day.

The only creditable thing
That I can do
Is to make sure
I don’t come back even one day.

Can I See My Dad?

Family Days, organised by staff and Barnardo's are held monthly for small groups of selected prisoners who take part in well-designed and organised family activities. A good lunch is cooked by the catering students giving them realistic work experience and the families a sense of normality. FOGM cover the expenses for the food and any extras for the children on special occasions: small gift from Father Christmas in December and Easter Eggs in April.

One of our committee was keen to be further involved working with the families in the prison and has now completed the Barnardo's volunteer training programme. Helping with the crafts and games activities and seeing the families working together and being a close unit is very rewarding and gives hope for their future.



Easter Egg gift bags

Reading Challenge

For the second year, prisoners and staff were given a reading ahead challenge with around 135 people taking it up with enthusiasm. The challenge was set by the Assistant Librarian to encourage a greater interest in books. The library is well stocked with a wide range of books on diverse subjects.

After a period of two months in which to read several books of their choice the challenge for the readers was to write up their critiques for submission to the competition. In September the entrants all read their pieces to the audience after which the judge gave awards for the best.

On the subject of reading, it is not uncommon for men who end up in prison to be unable to read and find it difficult to engage with learning. That is where a scheme run by the Shannon Trust is so effective. A staff member volunteered to train literate men to mentor others in need of help by using the Toe by Toe programme, specially designed to introduce non-readers to read in stages that they can cope with. This is done discreetly and men are not embarrassed by this approach. We are delighted that the programme which had been closed due to loss of a volunteer has now been reintroduced into Guys Marsh with the arrival of this staff member.

Weekend Visiting Experience

The crèche is very popular with the children in the Visits Hall. When parents start talking 'boring' things they can safely wander off into the crèche to play happily under the fun supervision of Barnardo's trained volunteers and parents appreciate a bit of private time too! Earlier in the year the crèche was in need of an uplift and the men on the Painting and Decorating NVQ course completely redecorated it into a much brighter space. Fresh colourful pictures and murals jolly up the walls and we have done our bit by supplying new craft and play materials. The photo below right shows recent purchases which we commissioned Barnardo's to choose and install for us. This also included a doll's house but that is awaiting assembly.

The Visits Hall, a grey rather clinical space, is also undergoing a make-over. Again the Painting and Decorating students have painted the walls ready for prisoners' lively art work to be displayed. FOGM agreed that the high chairs and baby rockers had long passed their sell-by date and badly needing replacing, so we organised the delivery of new ones (see photo below left).

Overall the room looks so much more inviting and less intimidating for children.



Some of the new high chairs and baby rockers for visiting families

A lovely selection of the new toys for the crèche

