

BOOK REVIEWS

IMPRISONED FATHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN **Gwyneth Boswell and Peter Wedge. Jessica** **Kingsley Publishers, 2002; pp 175; £15.95, pbk.** **ISBN 1 85302 972 6**

One of the most pernicious effects of imprisonment is the removal from prisoners of their ability to take responsibility in any meaningful sense for their own lives. In terms of their contact and relationship with their children this is particularly acute. Access to visits may be a basic right, but the quality and length of the visit depends on facilities available at the prison concerned. With the prison population in England and Wales at a record level more children than ever before are affected by the imprisonment of a close relative. Overcrowding means that the Prison Service is unable to honour its commitment to keep prisoners as near to home as possible to facilitate contact. Possibly as a result of this, and of the increasingly stringent security procedures visitors must undergo, the number of visits to prisons has been falling at an alarming rate over the last few years.

Imprisoned Fathers and Their Children starts by briefly reviewing the literature on prisoners and their family relationships, and looking more generally at the loss of a father for other reasons, bereavement, family break up etc. The book consists mainly of a report of research undertaken 'in the late 1990s' by the authors on behalf of the Department of Health. They interviewed a total of 201 imprisoned fathers in 25 prisons and YOIs and 25 prisoners' children aged between 3 and 19 years, as well as 127 prisoners' partners/carers and prison and voluntary sector staff. Throughout the book the views of those interviewed are expressed as though quoted. While this is positive, providing a strong basis in experience for the authors' conclusions and a much needed opportunity for prisoners, carers and particularly the children's voices to be heard, the fact that all the 'quotes' are paraphrased by the authors somehow reduces their impact.

After highlighting the characteristics and perceptions of the prisoner fathers in the sample the authors move on to describe the effects on the children as described by carers and the children themselves. This, predictably, makes for disturbing reading. Most of the children had shown distress or behavioural disturbance following their father's arrest and imprisonment. Sometimes the arrest had been witnessed by the child. In other cases the press treatment of the court case, the manner in which the child had been told or found out, or abuse from other school children had been particularly significant. For many children the absence of their father and the gruelling routine of prison visits was described as the cause of their distress.

The inadequacy of ordinary prison visits as a means of maintaining relationships between imprisoned fathers and children is described in detail by prisoners, carers and children. Security arrangements which mean that prisoners are unable to move from their seats to play with their children, the lack of play provision at many prison visits sessions so that children are bored and consequently difficult, and the limits on physical contact between prisoners and their children at many prisons, are all vividly illustrated. Special family, or children's visits schemes, are then described in far more positive terms. Of course these visits are available only to very limited numbers, are not universally available and often rely heavily on the input of voluntary sector organisations and, indeed, of volunteers.

The authors then describe the relationship support systems available to prisoners and their families including parenting courses for prisoners, the role of the probation service and the reluctance to involve social services and the relatively low uptake of help and support from voluntary sector support services. They conclude with a chapter entitled 'Strategies for Change', which includes recommendations for change based on the research.

Disappointingly the book looks a little dated even though it has been recently published. References to security procedures, and home leave, and the absence of any reference to booked visits (the bane of many prisoners' families' lives) make it clear that the research was conducted in the early part of the late 1990s. No mention is made of the fact that many procedures have changed quite fundamentally, and that Prison Service internal instructions cited have been superseded. Only two references cited in the bibliography are dated later than 1998. There are probably very good reasons why this Department of Health commissioned research has not been published earlier, but a little more work to explain procedural changes since the research and to bring the references to relevant literature up to date would have been helpful.

That said, the body of British research relating to prisoners' families is depressingly small and this book is undoubtedly a significant and valuable addition to it. Helping prisoners' children make sense of their situation, investing resources in parenting courses for prisoners, supporting those caring for their children and particularly improving the quality of contact between children and their imprisoned fathers may have a significant and positive impact on children's lives.

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REBUILDING COMMUNITY: POLICY AND PRACTICE IN URBAN REGENERATION
John Pierson and Joan Smith. Palgrave, 2001;
pp. 234; £47.50, hbk. ISBN 0-333-74765-8

Our understanding of the United States is so conditioned by that country's global role that it can be hard to appreciate the extent of organising and campaigning that takes place there within and across communities. Half of the 12 chapters in this book are about the US and they provide a very useful marker for non-US readers.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there were regular exchanges of ideas between the two countries on urban renewal policies and practice. UK trainers and researchers also made widespread use of the US literature on community organisation. Then the links seemed to weaken.

The editors of *Rebuilding Community* give both a snapshot of current issues as well as an analysis of developments in the US. What struck me was the assumption that efforts made by community organisations to influence city and state policies are considered to be part of the normal landscape of political discourse; a contrast to the UK, where community groups all too often appear to have their energies focused entirely on survival - dealing with short-term funding and negotiating with partnerships.

Two of the US chapters which make for fascinating reading are Frank Pierson's account of broad-based organising and the light it throws on our understanding of two key elements in the regeneration process - citizen engagement and the exercise of political power; and, secondly, the chapter by Anne Kubisch and colleagues on evaluating comprehensive community initiatives. In contrast to UK writers on evaluation, American researchers appear to be ready to take a step back and review the 'state of the art'. This particular chapter is an excellent example of giving such an overview.

Much of the content of the US chapters demonstrates how many of the issues currently facing UK policymakers could have been anticipated. Apart from one chapter on anti-poverty programmes in France, the remaining chapters take the reader through much more familiar UK social policy territory. Sarah Pearson and Gary Craig provide a thoughtful commentary on regeneration and neighbourhood renewal policies. This includes some challenging questions concerning the continuing area focus of these policies and the extent to which they beg the question of 'community'. Both they and Chris Miller, in a separate chapter, bring together evidence concerning the difficulties and dilemmas surrounding the 'community involvement' imperative required of local authorities and other agencies. This makes the chapter by Peter North and Irene Bruegel on community empowerment particularly stimulating. Their central argument is that, in the long run, it may be rational for communities not to sign up for partnership agreements - because this stance will give them more leverage.

The chapter by Joan Smith provides a sophisticated analysis of some key ideas. She suggests that there is a 'fundamental argument between the concept of social exclusion, which sees rebuilding social solidarity through public resources, and communitarianism, which emphasises enforcing a shared morality and nurturing social responsibility under the watchful eye of the justice and welfare systems.' She makes the point that New Labour's law and order agenda follows closely on from the family responsibility and crime and order agenda in the US, rather than earlier Labour policy towards offending and disadvantage. She is critical of the idea of social capital and the chapter ends with an important summary of the issues surrounding women-centred community organisation.

Perhaps because it comes after Joan Smith's analysis, the concluding chapter by John Pierson does not stand out. He attempts, correctly, to point up the connections between the US and UK contexts but, by going into detail on the Citizen Organising Foundation's work in the UK, I do not think he uses the opportunity to pull together the complex and important themes raised in the preceding chapters.

Overall, however, this volume is an important contribution to our critical understanding of urban regeneration. In addition to being an essential text on academic courses, it will also be stimulating and challenging reading for policymakers and practitioners. A minor quibble is that one or two references are missing, and one content area that I thought could have been added, especially given that there is a chapter on France, is the European policy context. Maybe that is the next volume.

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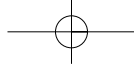
MAKING A DIFFERENCE: PRACTICE AND PLANNING IN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION
Alan Dearling and Alison Skinner (eds). Russell House Publishing Ltd, 2002; pp170; £16.45, pbk. ISBN 1-898924-39-2

In contrast to much of the literature which has emerged to critique New Labour's approach to youth justice *Making a Difference* attempts to provide ideas and strategies which might be utilised to exploit the opportunities which have arisen as a consequence of the government's concerns regarding youth justice and control. Advocating the need to develop initiatives which are child-centred, enabling and empowering, holistic, fair and appropriate the book draws on practitioner expertise and research findings to provide practical ideas and information on a diverse range of issues for those working directly with young people

Within the overall context of providing guidance on project and staff/volunteer development the chapters largely fall into three categories. First those which concentrate on strategies and initiatives within particular contexts, that is, communities/neighbourhoods, schools, and other institutions. Second those, which describe different approaches to working with young people such as, social action, interagency working, befriending, and mentoring. And third those which outline particular methods of engaging young people for example, through games and activities; working away from base and encouraging young people's participation in particular strategies and activities.

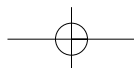
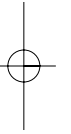
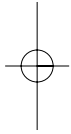
Although the constituent chapters of the book vary in length and degree of coverage each provides an overview of activity and/or research findings, good practice guidance and references to other relevant material. Of particular note are the chapters that integrate practical examples and case studies. For example, Alan Dearling provides interesting insights into the considerations, difficulties and rewards of engaging with young people 'away from base'. Brian Williams analyses international and domestic initiatives and research findings to suggest a good practice guide for working with the victims of young offenders. Alison Skinner and Gwyneth Boswell describe a range of promising group-work models that may prove useful in working with violent men in both community and institutional settings. While John Pitts describes and reflects upon the development of various violence reduction initiatives in primary and secondary schools as a response to dealing with youth crime and violent victimisation.

While some of the issues tackled are highly specialist overall *Making a Difference* provides an introduction and general overview of a range of strategies and techniques that will be of use to those providing services to children and young people at both management and



practitioner levels. Notwithstanding some reservations regarding the structure and organisation of material *Making a Difference* provides a timely and relevant contribution to the consideration of child-centred provision within and related to the youth justice context.

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DRUGS AND CRIME

**Philip Bean. Willan Publishing, 2002; pp. 224;
£16.99, pbk. ISBN 1-903240-36-0**

This book is extremely well written and has been particularly well researched, principally in the United States, from where Bean relates most of his evidence. The book presents a holistic view of the world of drug abuse and the 'link' with crime ranging from the sentencing of offenders, treatment facilities, policing drug markets and informers and corruption. There is also a chapter devoted to the problems associated with women drug users and crime.

The question of the link between drugs and crime has been prominent on the academic and political agenda for some considerable time. Bean has investigated this link, and is convinced that the suggestion by Hammersley et al (1989 cited in Bean, 2002: 12) that 'rather than tackling the "drugs problem" in the name of crime prevention, it may be worth while to tackle crime in the name of drug abuse', would be worthy of consideration.

Although the majority of examples in Bean's work are based on evidence from America, he quotes Tonry and Wilson (1990: 2), as stating that American literature is scant and poor in quality. Bean's examination of the theoretical paradigms is interesting; he maintains there was a shift in the 1990s from the sociological to the psychological model albeit retention of the former remained to a certain extent. However, there are two main categories, psychology and economic models, both being utilised as and when theorists delineate their usage concomitant with the political agenda, i.e. in the 1960s, discussion about social deprivation was unheard of. Bean discusses the three models identified by Anglin and Hser (1990 quoted in Hough, 1996:8): the moral; the disease; and the behavioural. The moral and behavioural models look towards treatment, with the disease model incorporating the Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous 12-step programmes, and Bean states this latter model dominates American treatment programmes.

On the sociological front, Bean looked at the three models identified by Mike Hough (1996:8 cited in Bean, 2002: 20), coping, structure and status models; and their non-association to the 'main theories of mainstream sociology of deviance'.

When attempting to accommodate the link between drugs and crime, Bean came to realise that none of the foregoing 'fitted the bill' but believes the framework provided by Paul Goldstein (1985), goes a long way to supply a structure for future research. This work is mainly associated with violence, but has been developed and modified to include all crimes, the systemic model in particular, which draws special attention to the impact of drug abuse on the community.

Although treatment agencies are not euphoric with coercion of drug users into treatment, it is coerced patients that stay longer and hence, treatment is more successful.

Intervention must occur at some stage of the user's career. Saying this, the available resources within the United Kingdom are minimal and waiting lists for places are huge.

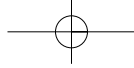
Bean advocates the use of Drug Courts, whose success rate in America is high. The judge has complete responsibility for these courts, and the success rate depends on the commitment of the judge, although it is difficult to comprehend the judge overseeing the whole process. Prosecution and defence work in tandem, together with the police and other agencies, to ensure success within the ten-point system, in an attempt to break the link with crime. Bean believes the DTTOs introduced in the UK are now outdated and advocates change, preferring the drug courts of the American system, and goes a long way to highlight the need for change in the UK.

Although Bean discusses mandatory drug testing, he says little of the CARAT initiative which was introduced into prisons. This scheme goes a long way to helping people, not just whilst they are incarcerated, but the throughcare facilities provide the necessary support on release, which is when the majority lapse.

On women, Bean accentuates the additional problem of women and drugs, particularly in view of childbearing and the social norms surrounding female deviancy, and in particular women's fears of admitting to their addiction for fear of losing their children. He quotes Rosenbaum's (1981) work regarding women's narrowing options in relation to treatment and the difficulties for them in attempting to return to the conventional world. Treatment facilities for women are far less prevalent than those for men, and although some wish to go for treatment, they are denied the option because of availability. When women enter prison their problems are exacerbated ten fold over their male counterparts; when a man is incarcerated, his partner normally keeps the home and children together, and visits regularly; for women, the problems encountered are enormous; hence she is given prescribed medication. Bean cites a Hansard Written Answer which states "The prison service recognises that many women received into custody have complex medical histories....." (Hansard, Written Answers 14 July 1998: col.98). Bean does forget that portion of the prison population that receive little or no assistance, i.e. those with short sentences who are regular visitors to Her Majesty's establishments.

The numbers of women being incarcerated has increased rapidly over the last decade and a large proportion of these are women who import drugs into the country. These women enter the criminal justice system, and are given extremely harsh sentences, frequently not understanding a word of English. The most problematical for many of them is that they are not able to see or speak to their families during their incarceration. Although telephones are available, the telephone system in the country of their origin, is sometimes insignificant, and with little or no money, they are unable to purchase the necessary cards to contact their families.

Finally, Bean looks to the future and a way forward, with treatment, mandatory drug testing and supervision, as the mainstay. He also suggests a drug research centre, not the



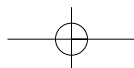
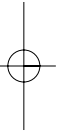
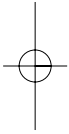
odd researcher coming up with a different viewpoint, but a collegiate centre where policy issues could be investigated thoroughly before introduction.

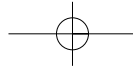
A thoroughly good book for anyone working or who is interested in the drug/crime debate.

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REPARATION AND VICTIM-FOCUSED SOCIAL WORK

Brian Williams (ed). Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002; pp. 207; £15.95; pbk. ISBN 1 843 10 023 1

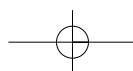
This is a very useful publication that provides a clear, comprehensive review of current measures that engage with the victims of crime. Whilst the editor states that the text is designed to provide practitioners with the essential knowledge required to practice effectively (p. 14) it will also be of value to students and researchers trying to keep on top of this rapidly changing field of study.

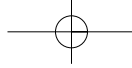
The book contains eleven chapters that discuss a range of different topics relating to victims. The general themes include, reparation, victim support services and probation practice. Chapters are conveniently broken down into useful sub-sections and the font and presentation make it easy to read. This is complimented by minimal use of practitioner jargon or convoluted acronyms. When discussed, research findings are summarised succinctly and care is taken to make the material as accessible as possible.

Following the editor's introductory chapter Jo Goodey examines compensation for the victims of violent crime in the European Union. To do this she provides a critical review of state compensation before going on to look at compensation for victims in Britain, France and Italy. The problems relating to the harmonisation of compensation orders across the European Union and the likelihood of such standards being implemented equally by all the member states are also discussed. In chapter three, Wemmers provides an interesting discussion of restorative justice by examining research evidence that compares whether victims prefer decision-making power or procedural justice. She makes a convincing argument that in cases where victims and offenders share common goals victims prefer to be heard in the justice process rather than determine sentencing outcomes.

Chapter four reviews family group conferences. In it, Guy Masters provides an up-to-date synopsis of recent research findings that consider the victim's experience of such conferences. Chapter five by Jim Dignan outlines the growth of reparation orders. Drawing on his own research he assesses the problems of implementing reparation orders as well as the role and participation of victims.

Chapter six focuses on the provision of victim support services for the victims of crime in rural areas. Susan Moody explores the particular issues relevant to victims living in remote rural locations, and the problems of providing effective victim support to such communities. Charlotte Knight and Karen Chouhan discuss support for the victims of racist abuse and violence in chapter seven. They catalogue the failures of the current criminal justice system to understand, or respond, to racially motivated offending. They



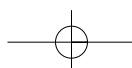
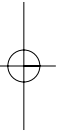
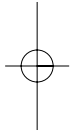


end with recommendations designed to identify the needs of racially assaulted victims. Chapter eight by Barbara Tudor reviews probation work with the victims of crime. Here the focus is primarily on reparation and the requirements placed upon the probation service to work with victims.

Sandra Walklate examines victim impact statements in chapter nine. She explores what victim impact statements are, and what their purpose is, before going on to look at implementation issues and victim participation in the criminal justice system. Chapter ten by Jane Dominey discusses the ability of pre-sentence reports to adequately address victim issues. The final chapter, eleven, cites the Edinburgh Domestic Violence Probation Project as an example of good practice when working with abusive men. The authors (Morran, Andrew and Macrae) quote the importance of consulting women to ensure that a full understanding of the nature and extent of domestic violence is reached.

Overall, the contributors to this text provide detailed reviews on a range of recent developments that attempt to engage or respond to the needs of the victims of crime. Given the remit of this text I only have one real criticism, which is that it lacks a concluding chapter that draws together the central themes and issues relating to reparation and victimisation. However, as a guide to recent developments in the sphere of victim-orientated practice this text will be of undoubted value to a wide readership.

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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND RESPONSIVE REGULATION

John Braithwaite. Oxford University Press, 2002. pp314; £37.95, hbk., ISBN 0 19 513639 X

In this book, John Braithwaite brings together the two strands of scholarship to which he has contributed over the years – those set out in its title – and adds ambitious offerings on their potential for “world peacemaking”, “sustainable development” and “transforming the legal system”. He admits, in the book, to being an incurable optimist, and the titles and contents of these three final chapters certainly reflect this position. Readers must judge for themselves how persuasive they find his arguments for the potential contribution of the lessons of restorative justice and business regulation for these wider arenas.

Essentially, he argues that restorative justice has proved itself useful outside criminal justice already (for example, in school anti-bullying strategies and in prison discipline). He gives examples of “restorative diplomacy” (p. 170) which have worked, and argues that this approach could be used more widely and more imaginatively. Using examples from both restorative justice and corporate crime, he makes a case for transforming the legal system by resolving potentially costly disputes informally. If this sounds utopian, suffice it to say that many were sceptical about the likely impact of the case made in *Crime, Shame and Reintegration* in 1989, but few people dismiss its importance now.

The book updates, and at times critiques, the author’s previous works on restorative justice and corporate crime. The somewhat dry area of business regulation is brought alive with case examples and extended quotations which are separated from the main text in boxes, and the same device is used to illustrate the arguments advanced in favour of wider use of restorative justice practices. There is a good deal of repetition, and the book is by no means an easy read, but it makes important claims and produces a wealth of evidence to support them. Sometimes, the author’s optimistic outlook means that little weight is given to gloomier prospects. For example, he uses the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a possible model for peacemaking in other countries without mentioning the limitations and disappointments of the victims’ experience of the TRC. However, his unrivalled experience and contribution to the two main bodies of knowledge which he synthesises in the first part of the book serve as a good basis for the more speculative approach he goes on to take.

As ever, Braithwaite’s style is appealing. In a chapter on “worries about restorative justice” he deals with most of the criticisms of his previous work. Unlike many academics, he is quite comfortable accepting that he has been wrong about some things, and this is a useful contribution to our understanding of the field. Even where one disagrees with his arguments, they throw light on the issues.

Interestingly, he argues that concern about victims of crime being used as 'props' by youth justice professionals whose main concern is to get young offenders a better deal arises mainly in the UK and has not been an issue elsewhere. He does not speculate about why this might be. He accepts that expressions of moral indignation and the use of restorative interventions as an excuse for lecturing offenders are counter-productive but do often occur. The best way of achieving a non-judgemental process in which feelings are disclosed and reintegrative shaming achieved is, he argues, by ensuring that facilitators have proper training and both parties in victim-offender mediation have plenty of supporters to back them up. The blistering criticisms of authors such as Harry Blagg and Kathleen Daly are taken seriously: Braithwaite accepts that restorative justice has sometimes succumbed to a kind of colonialist cultural appropriation. He clearly very much regrets the continued over-representation of Aboriginal people in Australian custodial institutions and the failure of restorative approaches to make significant inroads into the problem. However, he argues that this can be overcome and "plural aspirations" can be designed in (p. 145). Some practical examples would have been helpful here. Similarly, in dealing with the criticism that restorative justice is all very well in rural communities but less attainable in socially fragmented inner city areas, the experience of projects in cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Sydney is mentioned, but the only concrete example of offenders' and victims' communities of care given is the involvement of homeless people's "street families" (142) in restorative interventions. It must be said, however, that the author has dealt with this issue thoroughly in his more recent work on restorative justice.

Implicitly, this book sets out an agenda for future research and practice. For restorative justice advocates, it makes the future look very bright indeed. For supporters and sceptics alike, it provides plenty of food for thought, and it is likely to be very influential.

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