

---

# Book reviews

---

**Working with the Mentally Disordered Offender in the Community.** By Philip J. Vaughn and Douglas Badger. *Therapy in Practice Series, No 47* (ed. Jo Kampling). London: Chapman & Hall. 1995. 257 pp. £16.99 (pb).

This is an easy read. It is also a quick read at just over 200 pages, excluding the last chapter on key issues for the future and the helpful appendix which is a complete publication of the Home Office guidelines on social supervision.

Before reading this book myself, I decided to conduct a little market research study. I gave this book to the social worker and CPN that work in my forensic psychiatry service. I received rave reviews! They thought that this should now be the standard book for all practitioners involved in the community care of mentally disordered offenders. I am sure that this is so.

The book is as up to date as possible in the review of policy and legislation, though it suffered from a loss of detail at the expense of its general overview. For example, the Mental Health Act is covered in one and a half pages. The chapter on discrimination was thought provoking, the chapter on prevention was interesting, and covered diversion, and an excellent section on acting as the appropriate adult under the Police Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and probation orders with psychiatric treatment.

Chapter 8 on the supervision of restricted patients in hospital and the community should be read by psychiatrists involved in this work. Herschel Prins is mentioned a great deal in this chapter and elsewhere in this book. His advice on the management of these difficult cases and the 'intrusive style' necessary deserves a wider psychiatric audience. The completeness of this short book is illustrated by the chapter on residential and day care services and the needs of this forgotten tribe of workers who often, without any full training, manage this difficult client group in the community.

I have saved the best till last, Chapter 4, on the assessment of risk. I was told by my in house review team of social workers and

community nurses that this chapter should be required reading for *all* who work with mentally disordered offenders.

It would be churlish for me to pick out all of the deficits in this book, and the few areas of emphasis that I would disagree with – so I have decided not to.

In summary if you are a psychiatrist who works in this field, consider buying this book even though you are not the target audience. It deserves a place in every psychiatric library, if there are any copies left after it is purchased (as it should be) by social workers, probation and nursing practitioners, their managers and teachers.

P. R. SNOWDEN, *Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, Edensfield Centre, Mental Health Services, Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 3BL*

**Eighty-Five Not Out: essays to honour Sir George Godber.** Edited by Stephen Lock. London: King Edward's Hospital Fund. 1993. 78 pp. £2.50 (pb).

In an interview with Greg Wilkinson (1983), I said that my main medical hero was Sir George Godber, who was Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health for 13 years up to 1973. Sir George had his 85th birthday in 1993, and to mark the occasion, a seminar was held by King Edward's Hospital Fund. The ten short papers that were given there have been collected into a *festschrift* edited by Stephen Lock, who was then Editor of the *BMJ*. They are concerned with the future directions of British medicine, rather than this monolithic figure himself. Unfortunately, none deals directly with mental health services, which were always one of Sir George's special interests and in which he undoubtedly played a critical role.

He did the same with the GPs' Charter of 1966, which was the biggest influence in moving general practice out of the corner shop; the primary-secondary care relationship is in fact a recurring theme here. Iona Heath writes that many politicians and managers want to save money by getting GPs to do much of the