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Reviews

Report on the Work of the Prison Department, 1983.
Cmnd 9306. London: HMSO. 1984. Pp 101.
£7.60.

The annual Prison Department report is now available in your local friendly Government Bookshop. As always it is lavishly illustrated with photographs such as 'a new living unit at Feltham Youth Custody Centre' (without a living thing in the picture). This year the Director-General begins his personal report by telling us '1983 was a year rich in incident for the Prison Service'. Ominous and correct. The Deputy Director-General goes on to tell us of the serious disturbances that took place at Albany and Wormwood Scrubs, the former incident being ended by a MUFTI squad. MUFTI stands for Minimum Use of Force Tactical Intervention and the squad is armed with batons and shields. He also reports 11 hostage-taking incidents, the highest total ever in a single year; an Assistant Governor at Parkhurst was held hostage for two days.

Training in techniques for dealing with hostage incidents is therefore a priority.

The Report makes no attempt to explain these sinister developments. The population figures remain at totally unacceptably high levels (average daily population of 43,500) and more people (17,055) than in any year, except 1980, are in double or triple cells. 'The pursuit of greater efficiency and the improvement of management are not separate from the pursuit of humane and purposeful prison conditions', the Director-General tells us. There is even a chapter on 'The Prison Service and Society', but this deals with things such as Boards of Visitors, the Press Office, and staff trips abroad. Presumably the new building programme of 14 prisons and 10,600 prison places is part of the response to the crisis, but is it really cost-effective in a modern society to keep on building more prison places? New prisons to replace the old ones, yes, but more prison cells? Hasn't that something to do with 'The Prison Service

and Society'? Is it not time we sent fewer people to prison?

The Home Secretary's abolition of indefinite borstal sentences and introduction of youth custody produced a slight fall in the numbers of young men and women in gaol (4 per cent drop for the year), and presumably the greater eligibility of medium term prisoners (i.e. anyone serving six months or over) to parole will bring another small fall. It remains to be seen whether this will be offset by the withdrawing of parole from violent men and drug traffickers serving five years or more and the minimum 20 years of custody for non-domestic murderers. Surely what is required is Parliamentary courage to reduce the custodial sentencing powers of courts.

The chapter on 'Health and Medical Services' is of great interest this year. First there is a new Director of Prison Medical Services, Dr Kilgour, the first outsider ever to be appointed to this post, then there is frank admission of the difficulties in recruiting both doctors and hospital officers. There is also brief acknowledgement of the formation of the Prison Medical Association, 'a new forum in which medical officers are able to discuss clinical matters of mutual concern' which is independent of the Home Office. No remedies are suggested for the medical recruitment problems other than advertising, but there is now, at long last, a campaign to recruit trained male nurses directly into the Prison Service.

With so many questions unanswered you might think there would be a heavy emphasis on research in the Report: not so. Among 282 paragraphs there are eight on research, and the findings of important studies, e.g. the social work needs of prisoners, are not even discussed. Medical research gets no mention at all. Knowledge is power, but it seems that in this field, as in so many others, the Government has yet to learn this.

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The Retreat, York: An Early Experiment in the Treatment of Mental Illness by Mary R. Glover. Sessions of York, The Ebor Press, York. 1984. Pp 106. £3.95.

The Retreat, York, is to the history of British psychiatry what York Minster is to the history of medieval church architecture. In their individual ways each one is uniquely important.

The Retreat itself offers an example *par excellence* of the way, common enough in English history, in which private individuals, in this case, Quakers, filled a yawning gap in

the facilities available in the public sector for, in this instance, the humane treatment of the mentally ill.

From its inception in 1796 The Retreat succeeded, against the odds, in all it had set out to do, and in so doing blazed a trail to be followed by John Conolly and others of his ilk in the development of the 'moral treatment' of the insane. As an illustration of its pre-eminence, in 1812 Andrew Duncan senior came from Edinburgh and in a veritable paean wrote: 'The Retreat at York is, at the moment, the best regulated establishment in Europe, either for the recovery of the insane, or for their comfort, when they are in an incurable state' (Hunter, R. A. and Macalpine, I. (1963) *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*. Oxford University Press).

Fortunately, the history of The Retreat has been magnificently recorded. Samuel Tuke, the grandson of the founder, William Tuke, published in 1813 *Description of The Retreat, An Institution near York for Insane Persons of the Society of Friends*. The author, although not himself a medical man, had a penetrating insight into the needs of the mentally ill and his book had a profound influence on the subsequent design and ethos of institutions elsewhere in the country. Second in importance is the centenary publication in 1892 by Dr Daniel Hack Tuke (*Reform in the Treatment of Insanity: Early History of The Retreat, York: Its Objects and Influence with a Report of the Celebrations of its Centenary*. London: Churchill), in which he reviews in some detail the history and achievements of The Retreat.

The present slender volume by Mary R. Glover, and completed after her death by Janet and Elizabeth Glover, adds very little to the sum total of our knowledge of this venerable institution. Nevertheless, what the book does do is to give us well-drawn pen pictures of members of the Tuke family, a remarkable dynasty of Quakers who had a controlling hand in the destinies of The Retreat, generation after generation.

I personally welcome this book mainly, perhaps, for selfish reasons: it gives me an opportunity to add a footnote concerning the link between the Tukes and our College. Dr Daniel Hack Tuke, great-grandson of 'Old William', the founder, was a much respected member of the Medico-Psychological Association, and in 1881 was elected its President. What is more pertinent is that several hundreds of his books, all inscribed with his bold signature, were bequeathed to the Association and now form the valuable hard core of the College's collection of anti-quarian books.

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Honorary Librarian

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