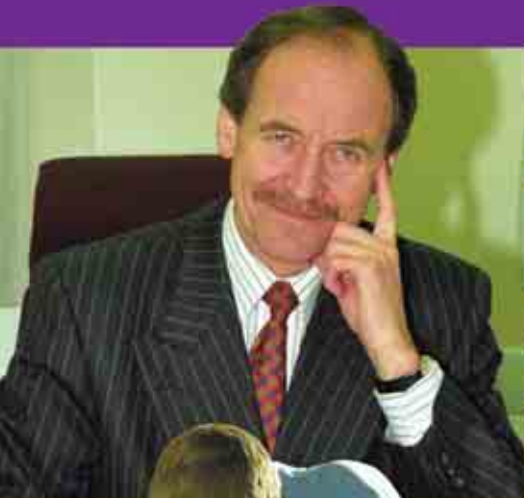
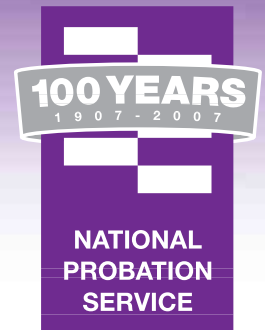




A CENTURY OF CUTTING CRIME

1907-2007





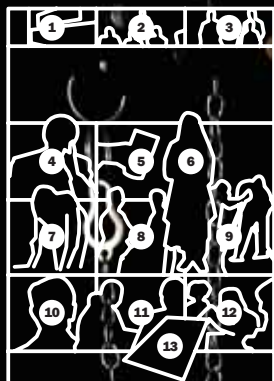
Home Office

National Offender Management Service

This brochure is produced as part of the staff celebrations for the Probation Service centenary in 2007. It is published by the National Probation Directorate communications unit, part of the National Offender Management Service.



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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to write the foreword for this centenary brochure. Looking back over probation's long history, we can take great pride in that Victorian spirit of enterprise which launched it and the myriad of ways in which it has developed.

The centenary is being celebrated at a time of change, when staff are uncertain about the service's future. But interpreting history is an important means of thinking about the future.

More than anything else the centenary should remind us that probation is an activity, not just an organisation. The activity which we now call probation pre-dates 1907, the date when we somehow took our name from the Act. The service has jolted between various incarnations, but if you look at our activities over the past 100 years you can see that they have grown and developed because we have been able to fulfil a need.

Some of those activities, such as family court work, are reasonably no longer our concern, but others like parole and public protection have developed profoundly and become part of our DNA. We have made it our business to follow offenders into the community and, wherever they are, our staff have been the intermediaries between that person and society, whether we are imposing control, or acting as a route to other services and opportunities.

Whatever the future for the National Probation Service, our activity will not cease and probation will remain as the term most commonly used to mean constructive work with convicted offenders in the community. I want to end with a quote.



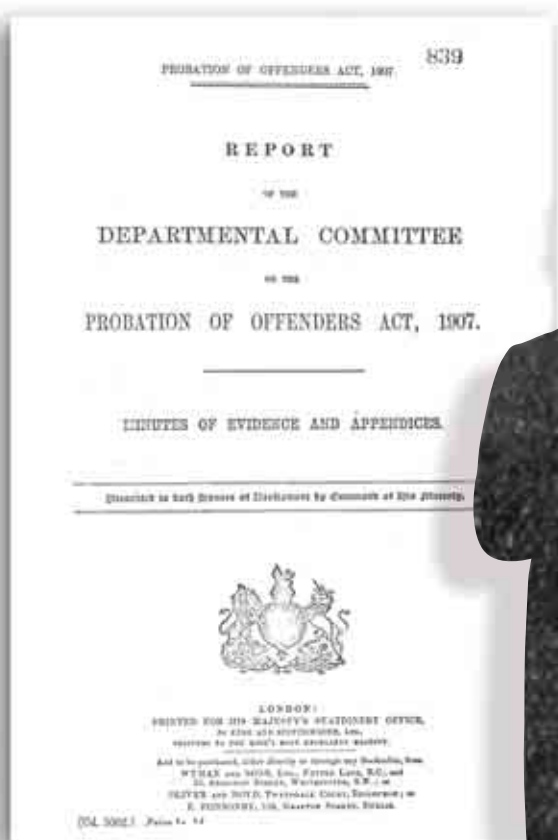
"I hope that the years to come may see a general appreciation of the importance not merely of punishing criminals but of attacking the causes of their criminality."

That was not written in 1907, but in 2006, by the current Lord Chief Justice, Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers. As long as probation remains at the centre of this activity it will always have a role and, therefore, a future.

Let us make this centenary year both a celebration of our past and an anticipation of our future.

Roger Hill
Director of Probation

Our Heritage



George Nelson,
the first probation officer.

"We are proud of our probation system and, looking back over 70 years, we feel grateful to our predecessors who, seeing the need for treating certain offenders in the open, first supplied the new methods tentatively to a few selected men and women guilty of minor offences, arranging for them to be supervised by voluntary workers."

"The pioneers of this most flexible and humane of penal measures can hardly have envisaged the remarkable development which has resulted in some 1,100 whole-time professional probation officers now being employed in England and Wales with upwards of 46,000 probationers of all ages under their supervision." Home Secretary Gwilym Lloyd George, October 20, 1954, speaking in London at the opening session of the United Nations European Seminar on Probation.

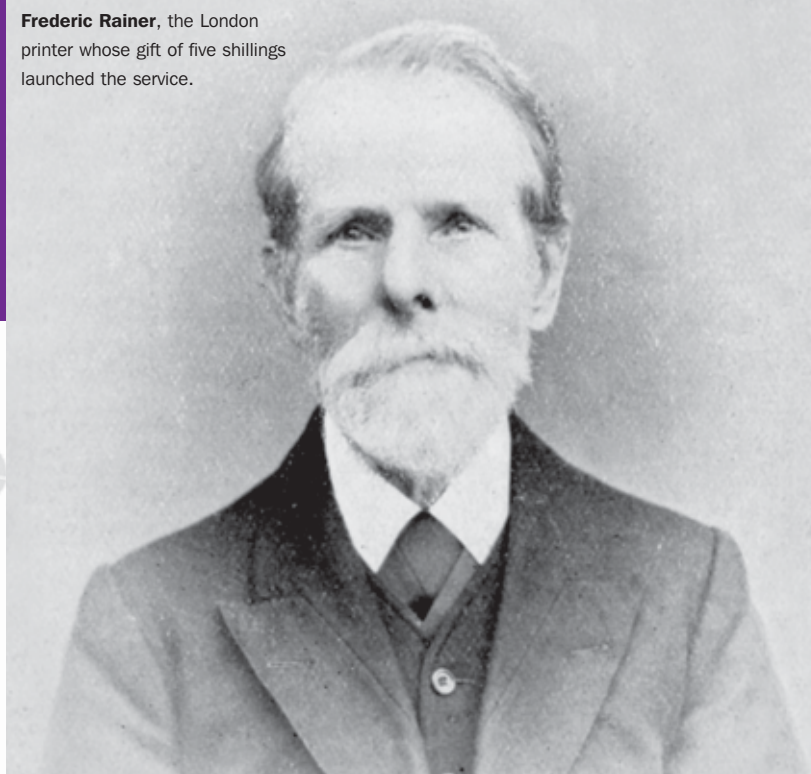
A gift of five shillings from London printer Frederic Rainer to the Church of England Temperance Society in 1876 launched what was to become the National Probation Service for England and Wales. Rainer hoped that the money would be used to rescue people who fell into crime through drunkenness, regarded as the main social evil of the time and the cause of most petty crime.

That year, the society appointed its first special missionary, George Nelson, to Southwark Police Court. A year later it appointed a second missionary, William Batchelor, to Bow Street and Mansion House police courts. Their role was to deflect petty criminals from the capital's overflowing prisons at a time when jail was the punishment for first offenders – men, women and children.

Over 30 years later, by which time the Society had 124 missionaries and 19 mission women,

1876 Printer Frederic Rainer makes gift of five shillings to Church of England Temperance Society to rescue people who fell into crime through drunkenness. George Nelson appointed first court missionary to Southwark Police Court.

Frederic Rainer, the London printer whose gift of five shillings launched the service.



the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 laid the foundations of the modern service. The Act turned voluntary pioneering into statutory responsibility. It enabled courts to release offenders on probation, introduced a probation order and probation officers, specified officers' duties, first used the phrase 'advise, assist and befriend,' enabled the court to vary probation conditions, gave powers to convict and sentence for breach of probation and established Probation Rules. One year later, out of 1,043 courts, 763 had a probation officer and probation orders were made in 570.

In its first two decades, the majority of staff were part-time. It took a departmental committee in 1922, followed by an Act in 1925, to recommend the appointment of full-time officers with proper training and a recommended caseload of 50-60. Each petty sessional division became a probation area and the regulation of conditions and duties led to higher uniform standards.

Two world wars delayed the development of probation work but by 1948 a single probation order was in force and inquiry reports before sentence were the norm.

By the time the service celebrated its golden jubilee in 1957 there were approximately 30,000 people on probation, with an average caseload of 55.9 for men and 38.1 for women. Representatives of the service were entertained to tea at Lancaster House by the Lord Chancellor and the Queen Mother.

Local celebrations made the front page of the *Kettering Leader* and *Guardian*, Northampton, which noted that "as late as 1952, the service in Northamptonshire was still being operated on a semi-voluntary basis, with inadequate office accommodation and no clerical staff."

In 1957 the Northamptonshire service had six full-time officers including Principal Probation Officer Geoffrey Lampard who, within two years of his appointment, had secured new headquarters for the service and an increase in staff.

Change accelerated over the next 50 years. Probation's work with juvenile offenders diminished in the 1960s, to be balanced by an increase in work with offenders inside or leaving prison. The 1970s saw the introduction of one of probation's greatest successes – community service (now unpaid work).

By the 1980s drug treatment was top of the government's agenda because of the fear that Aids would spread to the heterosexual population through intravenous drug users. The probation service pioneered the notion of getting offenders into treatment as a way of reducing offending.

The 1990s were a decade of great change. The 1991 Criminal Justice Act introduced the concept of National Standards and the early release of prisoners on licence. Change continued into the new millennium with the establishment of the National Probation Service under its first Director General Eithne Wallis in 2001. The 54 probation services were reduced to 42 probation areas, each managed by a probation board. This was followed three years later by the establishment of the National Offender Management Service to oversee both prisons and probation.

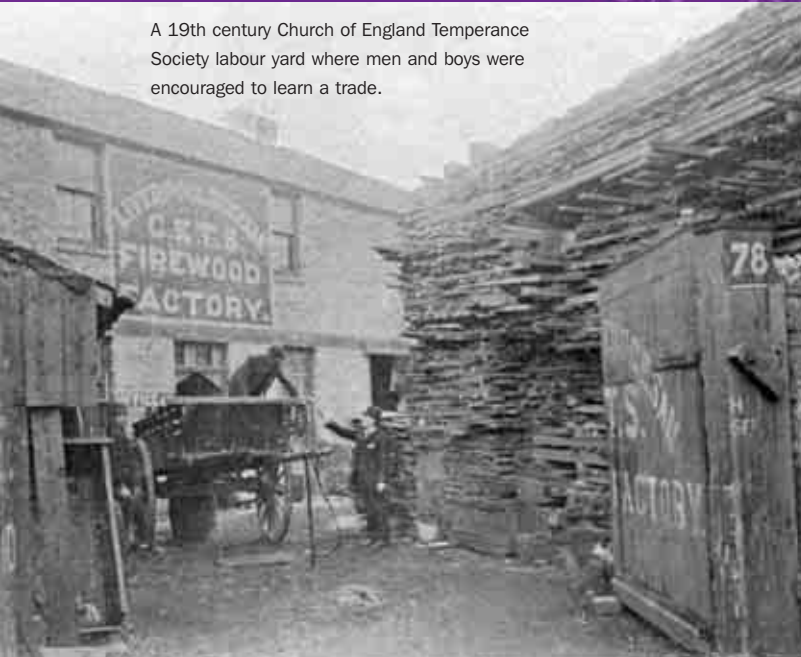
But the biggest change is yet to come, with the publication of the Offender Management Bill which seeks to turn boards into trusts and open the provision of services to the voluntary and private sectors.

1877 William Batchelor appointed missionary to Bow Street and Mansion House police courts.

1879 Summary Jurisdiction Act allows people to be released on recognisance.

The Work

A 19th century Church of England Temperance Society labour yard where men and boys were encouraged to learn a trade.



“A period of two or three years under a probation officer has saved thousands of people from becoming thoroughly bad....”

“For that reason I believe that probation has prevented crime more than any form of punishment. It might be argued that the world at large regards the offender who has been placed on probation as one who has got off scot free and that, therefore, probation is no deterrent. That was true in the past, and may be true now, but becomes less true as the public gets to know what is required of probationers.”

Alfred Nick, JP, of Thames magistrates court, writing to the Home Office on November 20 1935.

In its early years probation work was firmly based on Christianity. Nelson and Batchelor, police court missionaries armed with their bibles, toured courts, factories and police stations. They worked tirelessly with thieves, vagabonds, drunkards, prostitutes and pilferers, urging them to sign the pledge and give up the demon drink. It was the Harris Committee report in 1936 which recommended ending the links with the Church of England and the establishment of a state service.

Probationers were people released on bail by the courts. The Mission supervised them, opened homes for boys, the most famous of which was Padcroft in west London, and labour yards to provide training and employment.

Much of the work was with juveniles and almost exclusively with first-time offenders. A casebook from 1916 is a meticulous account of work with 68 juveniles, aged from eight to 15. A Home Office study into the increase in juvenile delinquency during 1955/56 in Cheshire, Hull, Hampshire and the West Riding blamed overspill estates, unsettled families, higher rates of detection and new estates created for families attracted to the opportunities offered by the coal mining industry. Up to the 1960s most probation work was with juveniles and people up to the age of 20, until the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act handed responsibility for juveniles to social services.

The probation order was introduced in the 1907 Probation of Offenders Act, which also for the first time used the phrase ‘advise, assist and befriend.’ Indeed, a young offender at Leicester juvenile court, introduced to his probation officer Mr Francis Hale, was told: “Mr Hale will visit you from time to time or you will have to visit him. He will advise you and, if necessary, try to find you work. He will be a friend to you.”

The concept of probation as a law enforcement agency is relatively recent, with Home Office Minister Paul Boateng coining the phrase: “We are a law enforcement agency. It is what we are. It is what we do.”



George Nelson and William Batchelor, the first probation officers working in the London courts.



Act also introduced a single probation order of between one and three years and social inquiry reports for all adult cases.

War affected probation as it did all public services. A report of an inquiry by the National Association

of Probation Officers into war-time problems outlined concerns such as rations for approved schools, subsistence allowance for officers doing firewatch duty, the availability for Home Guard duty and the position of probationer evacuees. When the Blitz started in 1940, many children from cities and big towns were evacuated to the relative safety of the country. Those under supervision were accompanied by probation officers who relocated to be with their charges.

The seeds of the modern service were sown in the 1990s. The 1991 Criminal Justice Act introduced combination orders and the early release of prisoners on licence. The decade also saw concerns that the Probation Service would be amalgamated with the Prison Service. These proved groundless, although the two services have now been linked in the National Offender Management Service, established in 2004 – a move that enables a more seamless approach to rehabilitation for those moving from custody back into the community.

A realisation of the benefits that probation skills bring means that modern work is increasingly dominated by the concepts of public protection, risk assessment and a drive to discover what works in the management of offenders. In its early years staff worked almost exclusively with first-time petty offenders affected by alcohol. The 21st century officer is now working increasingly with dangerous and prolific offenders, many of whom have mental health problems and/or a dependence on drugs.

The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 outlined statutory objectives for the service which included public protection. When the National Probation Service was established in April 2001 it used, for the first time, the phrase 'punishment, rehabilitation and public protection.'

In the 1890s missionaries became involved in matrimonial disputes and attempted reconciliation. This was formalised in the 1950s with the establishment of the Family Court Welfare Service. This responsibility ended in 2001 when the Family Court Welfare Service, guardians ad litem and the Official Solicitor's Office merged to form a new agency, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).

From the outset, probation officers worked with huge caseloads. In the 1950s, for example, caseloads of 100-130 were not uncommon. They also complained about lack of office accommodation. In the early days staff flitted between their own homes and offenders' homes. In the 1920s resourceful London mission woman Nina Blyth set up her office in Blackfriars library. Rose Mary Braithwaite, who joined the London service in 1939, had her first office in a pub in the East End, the Horn of Plenty in Limehouse.

In the 1960s, the decline in juvenile work was balanced by an increase in the number of offenders supervised on release from custody, established in the 1948 Criminal Justice Act. This landmark

1901 Death of Queen Victoria.

1902 End of hard labour.

Unpaid Work

New scheme for young offenders

THEY'LL PAY BY WORKING

By Colin Lewis

YOUNG Burnley lawbreakers convicted in court can be

scheme is likely to be implemented.

Mr Wade, who is based at Burnley House of

region, and we have hopes that it will work in

area.

"The idea behind scheme is to compel offenders to make some reparation to society for their offences. It would be ideal to try to

which would be a

Unpaid Work, formerly community service and briefly community punishment, is one of probation's success stories. It came about in

the 1970s as a result of the Wootton Report and its aim was to deprive offenders not of liberty but of leisure. It tapped into the accepted wisdom of reparation being a means of righting wrongs. It was formally introduced in the 1972 Criminal Justice Act and pilots started in Nottinghamshire.

For the first time offenders received a sentence calculated in hours rather than months. They were required to report once a week to a community service unit and perform largely manual work – painting and decorating, graffiti cleaning, gardening etc – for the benefit of the community.

In its first three years in London, 75,000 hours of work were completed. Now the figure across England and Wales is 6.5 million hours a year. Charities, churches, schools and community groups now benefit from the unpaid work performed by offenders. Skills gained can be formally accredited and lead offenders into employment.

In 2005 unpaid work was branded Community Payback with its own logo, but the concept of paying back to the community is not new. When the scheme was launched in Burnley in 1976, the Burnley Express reported on the scheme under the headline *They'll Pay By Working*. It quoted probation officer Walter Wade, in charge of marketing the scheme to employers and the community, as saying: "The idea behind the scheme is to compel offenders to make some reparation to society for their offences."

A recruitment leaflet produced for the Home Office around this time boasted: "Not everyone takes kindly to community service. But the great majority of offenders have completed their work satisfactorily and some have carried on with it on a voluntary basis afterwards."

The bulk of work performed by offenders is little different now from its origins 30 years ago. But some more unusual schemes have caught public attention. In Dorset offenders work on renovating tanks at the Bovington Tank Museum. In Bristol they have helped refurbish HMS Great Britain, a prominent international tourist attraction. In Bedfordshire they work at the RSPB centre in Sandy.

And in London bunk beds, toys and aids for handicapped children were made by offenders and taken out to orphanages in Romania as part of a five-year charity effort by London Probation and the Metropolitan Police.



1905 First probation officers appointed in Birmingham Children's Courts.

1907 Probation of Offenders Act. London Police Court Missionaries appointed as 'officers of the court' known as probation officers.



for young offenders

ALL PAY WORKING

By Corn Lewis

High hopes

Agreement

1910 Winston Churchill appointed Home Secretary.

1912 National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) founded.

1914 Outbreak of World War One. Criminal Justice Administration Act introduces conditions of residence to probation orders.

The Staff



"I have found him (the probation officer) satisfactory. May I describe the sort of man he is? He is of the educated artisan class, a man of intelligence and a clear cold mind, who investigates cases without sentiment, but thoroughly and efficiently. He is altogether an excellent man for the post, because being of the artisan class, he knows what questions to put, he knows the sore places, and his judgement is good."
Mr John Rose JP, magistrate at Tower Bridge Police Court. Report of the Departmental Committee on the Probation of Offenders Act. May 1909.

George Nelson and William Batchelor, the first Christian missionaries, were the first of a breed of men and women who believed that working with offenders in the community was a fairer and surer way of turning them away from crime. Now, 130 years later, the service numbers 21,000 staff throughout England and Wales.

Staff continued to be police court missionaries, employed by the Church of England, until 1937. The last missionary to be appointed

in London was Georgina Stafford, who took up her post on November 1, 1937 at the age of 24 – the day before all staff became state employees.

Home Secretary Gwilym Lloyd George commented on probation's heritage in 1954: *"The pioneers of this most flexible and humane of penal measures can hardly have envisaged the remarkable development which has resulted in some 1,100 whole-time professional officers now being employed in England and Wales, with upwards of 46,000 probationers of all ages under their supervision."*

But the relationship between the Home Office and probation staff was not always an easy one. A 1962 report to Home Secretary R A Butler from the Departmental Committee on the Probation Service chaired by Ronald Morrison QC opined: *"There are no substantial grounds for criticising the way in which the Home Office has carried out its role as central authority, but strained relationships have developed, for a variety of reasons, between the Home Office and probation committees and between the Home Office and the service."*

A recruitment leaflet produced for the Home Office by the Central Office of Information in the 1970s painted a cartoon picture of staff (and offenders) in bell bottom jeans and tank tops and summed them up as follows: *"Every probation officer has a different style. Peter, only a few years in the Service, is patient, unhurried and quietly spoken. He says little himself except for the occasional pertinent question, and this seems to work well."*

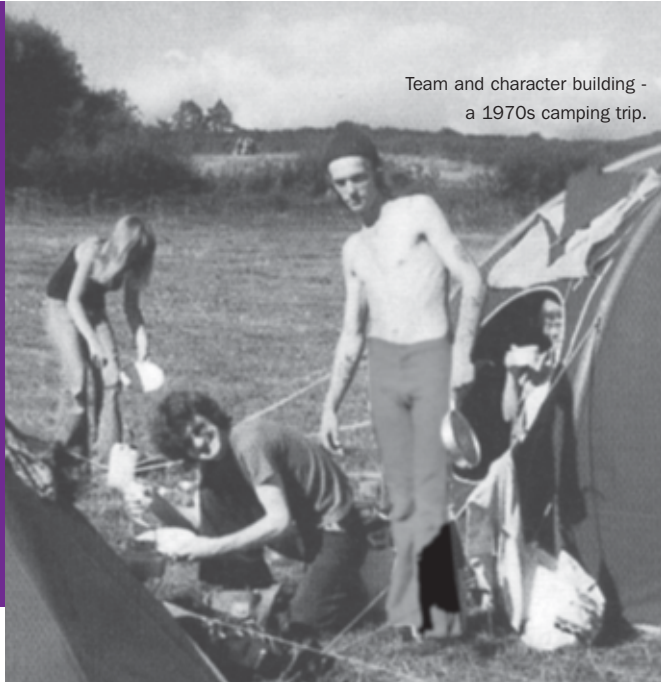
Few, if any, staff would have gone into the service for the salary. In the early years many staff were volunteers or part-time. The salary in 1919 was £200-250 for men and £120-150 for women. The previous year a special London allowance was paid of £15 for men and £7.10s (£7.50) for women because of the high cost of living in the capital.

1919 Probation officers call for formal training.

1925 Criminal Justice Act establishes probation committees. Appointing probation officers becomes a requirement of the courts.

1933 Children and Young Persons Act introduces juvenile courts. Age of criminal responsibility raised to eight.

Team and character building -
a 1970s camping trip.



Thanks to considerable effort by a group of women officers, equal pay was achieved in 1955. In 1968 the Home Office Research Unit recommended a salary for basic grade staff of £750-1,350 a year, with £1,450-1,650 for senior probation officers and £1,750-2,000 for principal probation officers. Staff received their biggest pay rise in 1972 thanks to the recommendations of the Butterworth Committee of Inquiry into pay and conditions, which did for probation what Burnham had done for teachers.

Specific training for probation officers was surprisingly slow. In the 1940s only a third of probation officers were formally trained. According to one retired officer: *"One scraped up knowledge as one went along."*

By the 1950s there was a chronic shortage of staff. To relieve this and lessen caseloads the Home Office allowed direct entry of more mature men, aged 28 and over, who received two years' on-the-job training. The scheme lasted until the 1960s.

The basis for entry to the service was traditionally a diploma in social work. A report to Home Secretary R A Butler by the Departmental Committee on the Probation Service in 1962 stated: *"Today the probation officer must be seen essentially as a professional caseworker, employing in a specialised field, skills which he holds in common with all other social workers."*

Thirty years later, Home Secretary Michael Howard ruled that a social work diploma was inappropriate for a service based on public protection and holding offenders to account on behalf of the courts. In its place came a specialised probation training programme. However its introduction was delayed for two years and as a result there was a gap in recruitment and training which affected all parts of the service and again led to staff shortages and a period of little or no growth and no fresh entrants to rejuvenate the service.

The last 15 years have also seen a wider diversity of staff grades with probation service officers, court officers and breach officers taking some of the load off probation officers. London appointed its

first black male officer in 1953 and its first black female officer in 1961. Now the service is regarded as a leader for its commitment to diversity in recruitment of staff.

The work of a probation officer received some welcome publicity in 1952 with the release of the film *I Believe in You* starring Cecil Parker and Celia Johnson and with Joan Collins and Laurence Harvey as juvenile delinquents.

From 1959-1962 ITV ran a series entitled *Probation Officer* starring Honor Blackman.

Not so lucky was *Jack of Hearts*, a probation officer drama of the late 1990s which, broadcast opposite an England international football game, drew the lowest prime-time audience the BBC had had since the sixties.

More recently, in 2001, Steve Coogan starred in the feature film *Parole Officer* about the work of a probation officer. The same year a mock-up of a probation office in Hammersmith was used in the film *'102 Dalmatians.'*

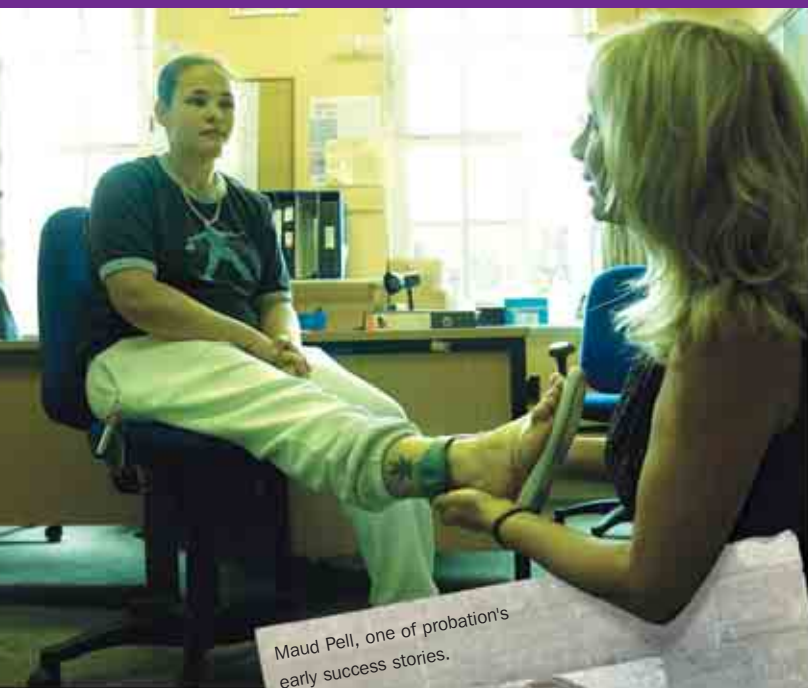
Now the hunger for crime stories ensures that the work of probation officers is frequently showcased on television.



1935 NAPO produces first probation handbook.

1937 Summary Procedure (Domestic Proceedings) Act establishes matrimonial conciliation as statutory duty of probation officers.

The Offenders



Maud Pell, one of probation's early success stories.



"We wish to draw special attention to the importance which was emphasised strongly in the evidence of using the probation system at the earliest possible stage in an offender's career. Too often, both in the case of juveniles and adults, probation is only applied when other methods have failed, with the result that the probation officer starts his work with much-diminished chances of success." Report of Departmental Committee on the Training, Appointment and Payment of Probation Officers, chaired by Sir John Baird MP, to Home Secretary Sir Edward Shortt in 1922.

The first probation officers worked largely with juveniles and adult men. For many years only women supervised juveniles – until the 1960s when adult and juvenile work was amalgamated.

A case book from 1916 describes two eight year olds convicted of stealing £1.16s (£1.80) rent money from a seven year old as he took it from tenant to landlord. One is described as "sub-normal if not mentally defective, a tiresome boy." His co-accused is "still in infants school being so backward through persistent truancy."

From 1910-1912 Charles Jackson was supervised following release from prison. His case record, pictured opposite, as was the custom at the time, also included his photograph.

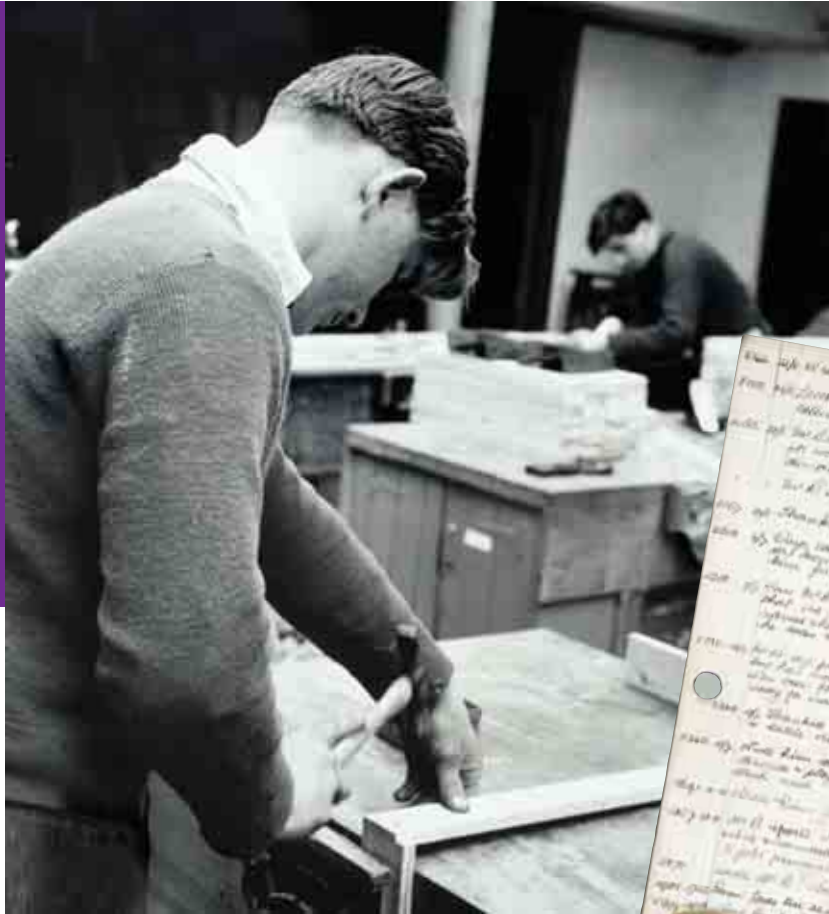
One of probation's early success stories concerns a female offender called Maud Pell. Maud's parents were prosecuted by the NSPCC in Northampton in 1896 for child neglect. Father Harry was acquitted but mother Mary, an alcoholic, was sentenced to four months' hard labour and died in jail.

While the hearing was taking place, Maud, then aged 14, was arrested buying gin for her mother and was brought into court and described in the local newspaper as presenting "a shockingly neglected appearance, being hardly more than half clothed."

1948 Criminal Justice Act introduces prison after-case and gives Home Office power to fund hostels.

1952 Central Council of Probation and After-care Committees formed.

1962 Morrison Report leads to more research into the work of the probation service.



Maud was sent to the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institute in Euston Road, London, and eventually trained as a maid and settled in Fulham. Her transformation was so dramatic that the Institute used her in its own publicity material and Maud kept in touch with her supervisor throughout her life.

The number of offenders being supervised in the community grew from a handful in 1876 to around 200,000 a year now. The major growth has been during the last few decades with an increase in the number of people being sentenced by the courts and growing numbers being released on licence from prison with longer periods of contact required as licence conditions.

In 1908, for example, there were 8,023 people on probation; in 1919 9,665; in 1938 29,401; in 1950 31,043; in 1960 41,790. By 1970 there had been an explosion in probation caseloads. According to figures presented at the Principal Probation Officers' annual conference, that year there were 134,304 on probation and the service had written almost 300,000 court reports.

In probation's early years the majority of the caseload consisted of low-risk first-time offenders. Now the reverse is true. The service is increasingly supervising serial offenders who have the potential to cause considerable public harm.

Crimes committed by offenders while on probation or on licence from prison inevitably hit the headlines. The year 2005 was noted for a spate of high-profile serious crimes committed by offenders under probation supervision, notably the murder of Chelsea banker John Monckton and of teenager Mary Ann Lenerghan in Reading.



Not all offenders who commit crimes while on probation give any hint of their criminal potential. February 1945 saw the first appearance for theft at Lambeth Juvenile Court of Ronnie Biggs, who was placed on probation. Nine months later he appeared at the same court charged again with theft and was again given

probation, with a condition of residence at Macgregor House probation hostel. In 1963, while again on probation for theft of a bicycle, he committed the Great Train Robbery.

Probation's original focus was on offenders whose major problem was alcohol abuse, and the link between alcohol and crime was recognised at an early stage. In the mid-1950s information from the United States and Canada suggested that drugs were becoming a more significant factor in offending. Now, drug abuse by offenders dominates much of probation casework while alcohol has only recently re-emerged for serious policy consideration.

Janice Bruce was sentenced to a month in Holloway for the theft of £5 in the 1960s. Her fellow inmates were Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies, notorious for their part in the Profumo Scandal which contributed to the downfall of the Macmillan government.

She was subsequently given two months' probation after the probation officer at Marylebone magistrates court pleaded her case. Janice credits this officer with helping her to turn away from crime and stayed in touch with her for many years. Later, Janice wrote about her experiences in the semi-autobiographical novel Peckham Cry under the name of Janice Cooke.

1963 Age of criminal responsibility raised to 10. London Government Act turned Home Office-administered London Probation Service into Inner London Probation Committee with finances handled by the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police.

1964 Criminal Justice Act makes matrimonial conciliation and supervision of children part of probation officer's statutory duty.

1967 Criminal Justice Act introduces parole supervision and establishes the Parole Board.

1969 Children and Young Persons Act prohibits probation orders for under 17s.

The Way We Work



How do probation officers work with offenders to prevent them re-offending? What techniques and interventions do they use? Nelson and Batchelor had only one tool – their bibles – which they used to persuade people to sign the pledge and give up the demon drink.

But the Church of England Temperance Society recognised early on the importance of a settled home and employment in turning people from crime. The Society opened homes for men and boys in Bethnal Green, Camberwell and Ealing in the 1880s. In 1901 the home for boys in Bethnal Green was moved to Padcroft in West Drayton and became a shining example of reform.

As long ago as 1890 the Society recognised that the surest way of diverting people from crime was to provide them with jobs. By 1890 the Mission had opened two labour yards in Ealing and Chelsea.

During the 1970s and 1980s schemes to get offenders into employment proliferated. By the 1990s education, training and employment (ETE) was a key part of probation work with probation

areas working with a large number of voluntary sector partners to deliver training. Links have also been forged with employers willing to offer ex-offenders a second chance.

Community service, now unpaid work, was always seen as a route for getting offenders into paid work. Skills gained through projects involving painting and decorating, environmental work, catering, building and horticulture can now be accredited through training providers. In North Yorkshire, for example, offenders who carry out a year's unpaid work providing food for a local luncheon club can achieve a first-year catering certificate – the first step on the road to becoming a professional chef.

The landmark Criminal Justice Act 1972 introduced community service, bail hostels and day training centres. Initially there were four day training centres – in London, Sheffield, Liverpool and Pontypridd. They were targeted at persistent petty offenders who, instead of being sent to prison, would attend a programme to improve their social and employment skills. Offenders attended for

1971 Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work set up to take over training of probation officers.

1974 Criminal Justice Act introduces community service, supervision of suspended sentences and intensive supervision.

1984 Publication of first statement of national objectives and priorities for probation.

1988 Plans to abandon 'advise, assist and befriend'.



60 days on a conditional order. The needs of offenders have not changed but 60 days' attendance became increasingly difficult as levels of employment increased, and the day centres were eventually phased out by the 1991 Criminal Justice Act.

Hostels, or shelters, predate probation. They were established in the 19th century, mainly by religious bodies, to house homeless boys and fallen women. Many were taken over by the probation service or jointly managed.

The 1972 Act launched a programme of building what were known as bail hostels throughout England and Wales. The programme was part of government policy to provide substantial alternatives to custody. The government had a programme for building over 100 hostels. By 1974 four new hostels were opened in Sheffield (two), Birmingham and Northampton; 15 properties had been purchased; 11 properties for which planning permission was available were under negotiation, and 18 properties had been identified for which planning permission had yet to be obtained. At the time the cost of providing a new place was £3,500. A new 10-bed hostel cost £35,000 – up from £20,000 in 1972.

From the outset there were concerns among local residents about having groups of offenders housed near them. A draft paper to the Probation and After-care Committees in 1975 warned: *"The public entertain great fears in relation to offenders and whenever a hostel is proposed there is always some degree of neighbourhood objection."*

Hostel managers were encouraged to hold open days and to co-opt local people on to their management committees.

The Probation Service now operates 104 Home Office-approved premises with access to other places managed by the voluntary sector. Public concern about the location of hostels and the nature of the offenders now housed in them continues, but hostels remain the safest form of accommodation outside prisons.

From the 1970s probation services were experimenting with group programmes for different types of offenders. Many of these were successful, but their development was rather uncoordinated. In the 1990s the Chief Inspector of Probation, Sir Graham Smith, pictured above welcoming Prince Charles to Sherborne House, a day training centre in Inner London, in the 1970s, attempted to audit projects working with offenders that, through evaluation, could demonstrate reduced reconviction. He found a handful, the most successful of which had just shut down.

Undeterred, Smith's 'what works' initiative introduced more rigour into the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes and led to a national curriculum of accredited programmes, delivered uniformly over the whole country, to address areas such as sex offending, domestic violence, drink-driving, anger management and poor thinking skills. It remains a fitting legacy of an HM Chief Inspector who directed and encouraged innovations while simultaneously firmly but gently pressing for higher standards.

The key to probation work is careful assessment of the risk an offender poses to the public. In 1967 a report on the use of the Jesness Inventory on offenders was pessimistic. Attempts had been made to produce a prediction instrument for offenders which estimated the risk of reconviction. A variety of mathematical techniques was used but no useful instrument resulted. The report concluded: *"The best was a deviance score derived from a probation checklist used by the supervising officer to assess the kind and degree of problems presented by the offender at the beginning of the order."*

But probation persisted, and, together with the Prison Service, produced OASys, the ground-breaking offender assessment system which is now used throughout the service and which has been copied by probation services in many other countries.

1991 Criminal Justice Act gives inspectorate statutory basis.

1992 Cash limits placed on probation service.

1993 Probation Service Act consolidates previous legislation.

1996 OGRS – Offender Group Reconviction Scale – introduced.

The Present



Newly-qualified staff working for London Probation Area.

“This approach would not be possible without the significant progress the Prison Service and the National Probation Service have made in investing in and improving the performance of prison and community sentences in recent years.” Home Secretary David Blunkett. Reducing Crime – Changing Lives November 2003, the government’s response to the Carter Report.

The 21st century has seen some of the most far-reaching changes in the history of probation.

The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 created for the first time a National Probation Service consisting of 42 probation areas, managed by Boards and with the same boundaries as their local police services.

The National Probation Directorate was established as a directorate of the Home Office. This is the body which supports the 42 areas, manages innovation and co-ordinates the implementation of government policy.

NPS was launched on April 1 2001 with a new logo and a clear remit of public protection, the reduction of re-offending and the enforcement of breached orders or licences.

The Act renamed probation and community service orders as community rehabilitation and community punishment orders. (At the same time it was mooted to rename the service the Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Service but the government stepped back from this because of the strong connotations of the word Probation.) The Act gave areas a statutory duty to work with the police service to establish multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) for the management of the most dangerous offenders in the community and to contact the victims of these offenders where conviction had resulted in a sentence of a year or more in custody. MAPPA and victim work remain at the core of the service’s public protection work.

The creation of the National Probation Service on 1 April 2001 was understandably unnoticed by the public, who imagined that it was national already. Internally however, the changes were profound. The speed with which policy was translated into practice accelerated. Performance improved as new, ambitious targets for enforcement and the completion of orders were set and, by and large, achieved. Governance attempted to balance a strong centre with local accountability. Views diverged whether the yoke of managerialism was being thrust upon the service, or whether clearer expectations were being embraced as the inevitable strings attached to an injection of new staff and money. Whatever, the Service emerged resuscitated from a somewhat neglected corner of criminal justice after a relatively fallow period.

Whether pushed or pulling, the NPS’s innovations of the early “noughties” resulted in a service equipped in evidence-based solutions to offending, better able to assess and manage risk, and better at putting the public’s protection and victims at the centre of its raison d’être. Tell-tale signs, like the inter-dependent police and probation multi-disciplinary teams, that would have been unthinkable two decades earlier when useful communication was seldom exchanged between the services, underlined how real gaps had begun to close.

1997 Crime (Sentences) Act abolishes need for offenders to consent to community sentence. Sex Offenders Act introduces registration of sex offenders.

1998 Crime and Disorder Act introduces child curfew, DTTOs, YOTs, sex offender orders and new racially-aggravated offences.

1999 Joint prison/probation services accreditation panel established to consider ‘what works’ to reduce re-offending. Home Detention Curfew introduced.

2000 Criminal Justice and Court Services Act creates the National Probation Service and probation boards. Prisons Ombudsman assumes responsibility for probation.



In 2003 later came the publication of the Carter Report into sentencing and the management of offenders – Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime. The report, whose recommendations were broadly accepted by the government, inter alia, identified a gap in the supervision of offenders who were released from custody into the community and the poor co-ordination of services such as health and education which could play a key role in rehabilitation.

Author Patrick Carter, now Lord Carter, recommended the establishment of a National Offender Management Service (NOMS) which would provide end-to-end management of offenders from the start of sentence to the end. It also noted how sentencing had gradually drifted, with equivalent offenders getting harsher punishments.

But the most controversial part of the government response introduced an element of contestability to probation work, as it had already been introduced in prison work. The government response stated: “The new National Offender Management Service will also ensure greater value for money by encouraging the greater use of the private and ‘not for profit’ sectors in prisons and in the community wherever it can demonstrate its greater cost effectiveness.”

The report went hand in hand with the Criminal Justice Act 2003 which introduced a single Community Order with 12 Requirements, extended sentences for public protection and a new Suspended Sentence.



2001 National Probation Directorate, National Probation Service and probation boards come into effect. ACOP wound up. Names of community sentences changed. MAPPA - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements – established. NPS has statutory duty to contact victims of violent and sexual crimes.

2003 OASys – Offender Assessment System – implemented across prisons and probation.

2004 Publication of Carter Report – Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime. Government response proposes establishment of National Offender Management Service.

2006 Publication of National Offender Management Service Bill proposes end to probation's status as sole provider of community interventions.

The Future



“No single provider can meet all the needs and challenges of victims and offenders. There are already over 1,100 organisations funded by NOMS to work with offenders.” Home Secretary Dr John Reid in his foreword to Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships. 2006.

Home Secretary Dr John Reid, appointed in 2006, has been given the responsibility for steering the changes to the Probation Service aimed at improving re-offending rates and better protecting the public.

The Home Office publication Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships spelled out the changes facing probation in the future – how NOMS will increase contestability to secure the best services.

The major change, contained in the Offender Management Bill presented to parliament in November 2006, will end probation

Boards' monopoly on the provision of probation services and replace Boards with Trusts.

The strategy envisages a five-year programme of competitions in prison and probation services worth £9 billion and covering around 25% of current annual expenditure on adult offender services.

There's nothing new under the sun.....

“It must be remembered that in this country much of the best social work has been accomplished by voluntary organisations, and probation offers a field in which private enterprise may be looked upon to yield good results.” Departmental Committee on the Training, Appointment and Payment of Probation Officers, chaired by Sir John Baird MP, reporting to Home Secretary Sir Edward Shortt. 1922.

And finally.....

“It (a community order) made me realise that what I had done was wrong and I needed to be punished. But people have got to realise that rehabilitation is the only way forward. People will continue to commit crimes unless they manage to change, but it took a lot of support from probation to help me to be different.”

Clair, an ex-offender from Kent, 2006.

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