



# Shannon News

## Toe by Toe contributes towards Healthy Prisons

Summer 2008

The concept of a healthy prison was first set out by the World Health Organisation. It has been developed by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and is now a widely accepted definition of what ought to be provided in any custodial environment.

It has four key tests:

- **Safety:** prisoners, even the most vulnerable, are held safely;
- **Respect:** prisoners are treated with respect for their human dignity;
- **Purposeful Activity:** prisoners are able, and expected to engage in activity that is likely to benefit them;
- **Resettlement:** prisoners are prepared for release into the community, and helped to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

Toe by Toe fits into all four key tests, and this is certainly worth mentioning to your Governors, especially if an inspection is looming.

The Inspectorate's positive view of Toe by Toe can be seen in the following excerpts from recent Inspection Reports:

### Learning & Skills

#### • HMP Bullingdon

'The Toe by Toe mentoring system was available to teach people to read.' (5.15)

#### • HMP Highpoint

'The Toe by Toe and Story Book Dads programmes were well promoted.' (5.9)

#### • HMP Buckley Hall

'The well-used Toe by Toe mentoring system supported

prisoners' reading development.'(5.12)

### First Night Centre (FNC)

#### • HMP Blundeston

'Buddies from the therapeutic wing were brought on to the FNC, as were Listeners and Toe by Toe Literacy mentors if appropriate.' (1.6)

### Resettlement

#### • HMP Maghaberry

'A particular strength was the focus on families and a range of new programmes had been developed including ... the Toe by Toe Reading Scheme.' (8.4)

### Purposeful Activity

#### • HMP Birmingham

'The library was well managed and well-resourced. It was active in promoting learning, running a reading group and the Toe by Toe reading support initiative...' (HP30)

### Foreign Nationals

#### • HMP Birmingham

'Other prisoners, Toe by Toe mentors, helped to explain documents ...' (3.63)

#### • HMP Acklington

'...prisoners spoke highly of the English classes they attended and appreciated the help they got from other prisoners who were mentors under the Toe by Toe Scheme.' (3.88)

### Applications and Complaints

#### • HMP Acklington

'a prisoner-mentor with the Toe by Toe scheme said that with staff support, he helps prisoners who had difficulty with reading and

**"If I had one pound for every solicitor's letter, probation letter, and personal letter that I have read for other prisoners; and one pound for every letter I have written, and form I have filled out, for other prisoners, I would have a very successful business"**

**Richard**

**Toe by Toe Mentor  
HMP Stanford Hill**

writing. '(3.132)

The fact that Toe by Toe activity is mentioned under so many different headings clearly illustrates its contribution to the four key tests for a Healthy Prison.

It also shows that our mentors are helpful in many areas of a prison.

To find out if your prison has a forthcoming inspection see the Announced Inspection Schedule at:

[www.inspectorates.justice.gov.uk](http://www.inspectorates.justice.gov.uk)

You can also read the latest inspection reports on this site.



## Behind Every Successful Man ...

Some years ago I was listening to the Libby Purves programme on Radio 4 and was amused by one of the guests who told a delightful story of how he set up his charity.

Apparently, when he retired, his wife was slightly alarmed at the thought of having him at home all day. She told him, *"marriage is for life, but not for lunchtime,"* and suggested that he take up some voluntary work to keep busy.

He contacted the Prison Reform Trust and joined their Prisoner Pen-pal scheme.

The man, of course was Christopher Morgan, and the wife, Ann Morgan.

As some of you will already be aware, Ann had a bad fall in the spring. She became seriously ill and died in hospital in May.

As well as being instrumental in starting Shannon Trust, Ann did a great deal behind the scenes to ensure its success.

A trustee for many years, her home became the Shannon Trust Head Office in the early days and she was always a great hostess at the many Shannon Trust meetings held there.

Through her unbounded support for Christopher, Ann's contribution to the success of Shannon Trust has

been immense.

A memorial was recently held at the Morgan family home in Sussex. It was very clear from the speeches of friends and family that Ann was a caring, compassionate and strong-minded lady who will be truly missed by her husband, children, grandchildren and her many, many friends.

On behalf of all those people, not only prisoners, who have had their lives improved through Shannon Trust we say;

**"Thank you Ann"**



## Diary Dates



### 18th to 19th September

#### Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) National Conference

Shannon Trust will have a publicity stand and we will be telling IMB members all about Toe by Toe. Keele Univesity is the venue and speakers include Maria Eagles, Phil Wheatly and Stephen Shaw.

### Women in Prison Magazine

The October edition will contain a feature on Toe by Toe with contributions from female prisoners from various women's prisons. The article has been written by a Toe by Toe mentor at HMP Downview.

[www.womeninprison.org.uk](http://www.womeninprison.org.uk)

## Good News from Rye Hill

Earlier this year I went to meet Caroline Grey, our facilitator at Rye Hill, and to present several completion certificates. Good news in itself but the story that emerged as I spoke to one mentee and his mentor was even better.

Pete had worked long and hard to get his certificate. He had been a complete beginner with significant difficulties and had been fortunate to work with Dave, a committed and experienced mentor.

Feeling more confident after his success he had started to go to the chapel and get involved with activities there.

Sometime later he came to Dave and told him he had a story he wanted to write and asked for his help - this was right up Dave's street as he had recently finished a Creative Writing course.

The story was duly written and shown to the Chaplain who liked it and wanted to use it as part of the Easter service which was to be

attended by dignitaries from outside. What was more, he asked Pete to read it!

With a lot of reassurance and practice, and with Dave standing beside him, Pete managed to read the story t/he/y had written.

Not a bad achievement for someone who a year ago could not read at all!

Lorna Jones

Shannon Trust Representative  
*(Rye Hill is a privately-run Cat-B training prison near Rugby.)*

## The Field Force gets Stronger

We are very pleased to welcome the following to our teams:

Claire Philipson- Yorks and Humber Area  
 Sheila Alder - HMP Chelmsford  
 Jacky Burns - HMYOI Lancaster Farms  
 Becky Webster - HMP Preston  
 Hannah Bates - HMP Styal  
 Della Holbrook - HMP Belmarsh  
 Suzanne Carthy - HMP Wandsworth  
 Vanishta Rughoo - London Area  
 Ayesha Masood - HMP Send  
 Sharon Raymond - HMP Holloway  
 Kimberly Watts-Leo - HMP Wormwood Scrubs  
 Billy Doyle - HMP La Moye, Jersey  
 Tad Jones - East Midlands Area  
 Laura Beth Moreton - North West Area  
 David & Rothly O'Brien - HMP Lancaster Castle  
 Patricia Watts - HMP Greenock  
 Joyce Lythgoe - HMP Barlinnie

## Shannon Trust in Numbers\*

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>73%</b> | Total number of prisons currently running the Toe by Toe Reading Plan   |
| <b>61%</b> | Proportion of Toe by Toe Facilitators who work in the Education, Learning and Skills Department   |
| <b>20%</b> | Proportion of Toe by Toe Facilitators who are Prison Officers   |
| <b>15%</b> | Proportion of Toe by Toe Facilitators who are Librarians  |
| <b>5 %</b> | Other Toe by Toe Facilitators - includes three admin officers, one chaplain, one print shop supervisor. <i>*all figures as at July 2008</i> |

We have a further 18 new volunteers currently in the process of joining us. Three of our long-standing volunteers have left - Gerard Downes, Joanna Monckton and Jean West. We thank all three for the time and effort they have dedicated to Shannon Trust over the years.



## Empowerment Through Words

### Clare - Toe by Toe Mentor at HMP Send



I got involved with Toe by Toe at HMP Cookham Wood and when I was transferred to Send prison I was delighted that Toe by Toe was in operation here and eagerly volunteered to carry on the work. I was impressed by how well it was co-ordinated, involving members of the Learning and Skills team as well as the Chaplaincy. There is an excellent training programme for new mentors.

We have just started a scheme which worked well at Cookham whereby the mentors give a talk to the girls during Induction so that they get to know us and feel more able to approach us as their peers, rather than feeling embarrassed about having to go to someone official to ask them for help.

We now have regular meetings in the Library with two volunteers from Shannon Trust. We are able to discuss any improvements that can be made or any problems that arise. It is very beneficial and also enables us as mentors to meet together to give feedback to each other as a cohesive team.

So far, one of my mentees has completed the course just before she was released. She was from Colombia and her English was extremely poor before she came to prison. I was able to give her more confidence in speaking, reading and writing English and her development over the five months she did Toe by Toe was incredible. I am now working with a woman who has severe dyslexia. The steps are very small but we are making good progress.

**'I feel really privileged to be part of such a worthwhile scheme'**

I feel really privileged to be part of such a worthwhile scheme and hope that it is available to more prisons in the future. Women find it difficult in this society to find their own voice and when it is hampered by difficulties with reading and writing, they feel shy to communicate their feelings effectively. I hope this scheme will allow more women to have the confidence to branch out and have the footholds to progress in life.

Clare - HMP Send - June 2008



# High Security Success



**Four** years ago Officer Colin Fosher was given two red books by a Governor at HMP Woodhill, a category A prison near Milton Keynes, and told to 'have a go'. Not one to shirk from a challenge that is exactly what Colin did.

At a recent Eastern Area Meeting Colin told a group of Toe by Toe Facilitators and Shannon Trust Representatives about the long journey towards one of our most successful Toe by Toe Reading Plans.

At first he could not get basic skills test results from the Education Department and therefore had to assess prisoners' reading with a newspaper. He found it difficult to interest his colleagues .

However, over the years his perseverance and belief in the value of teaching prisoners to read has paid off. Woodhill now has 48 prisoners learning with Toe by Toe and Colin believes there are probably a lot more who need it.

## **"Brand new students are quite fragile"**

Colin says now his colleagues are convinced of the benefits, he has all the support he needs. He suggested that prisoner behaviour has improved and alarm bells and assaults have dropped by 50%.

At Woodhill the terms 'tutor' and 'student are preferred. Weekly meetings are held with both. Tutors earn 50p a day and students earn 30p a day.

Colin recognises that careful matching of tutor and student is vital - brand new students are quite fragile so he works hard to ensure they are matched with a tutor that they can 'gel with'.

Award ceremonies are held in the prison chapel. Each prisoner is photographed as a Governor presents him with a certificate. The photos are then sent to the prisoner's family if he so wishes. Food is provided. All this is paid for by the prison!

Prisoners from other wings are invited to the ceremony as this is a good way to encourage new recruits.

Progress is regularly checked by staff to ensure that learning is happening. Colin recognises that some Toe by Toe tutors could try and manipulate their position for their own gain. He has had to sack a tutor in the past.

**"...alarm bells and assaults have dropped by 50%"**

Colin told us that his job has been made easier because he has the full support of his Governor. There is now a senior officer on each wing who oversees Toe by Toe. Colin has written a 'Toe by Toe Protocol' for them.

Sadly for us, Colin retires this month. We thank him and wish him a long and happy retirement. However, the best thank you comes from Craig, (see below).

## **Craig's Letter**

I have always had problems with reading. I could read some words in a newspaper, but not always to fully understand the news item.

I have got right through the 'Toe by Toe Red Book.' The one to one tutor was very good. I was embarrassed doing English in a class full of students.

The tutor and I worked hard. We learned and laughed. I always felt good when we turned a page over.

I felt proud when I received my certificate. A handshake from the Governor and photo was a very good feeling.

I have told my Mum and Dad and they are proud of me!

When I leave prison I will feel much more confident.

## **Thank you Woodhill**

from Craig, a Toe by Toe Learner



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