

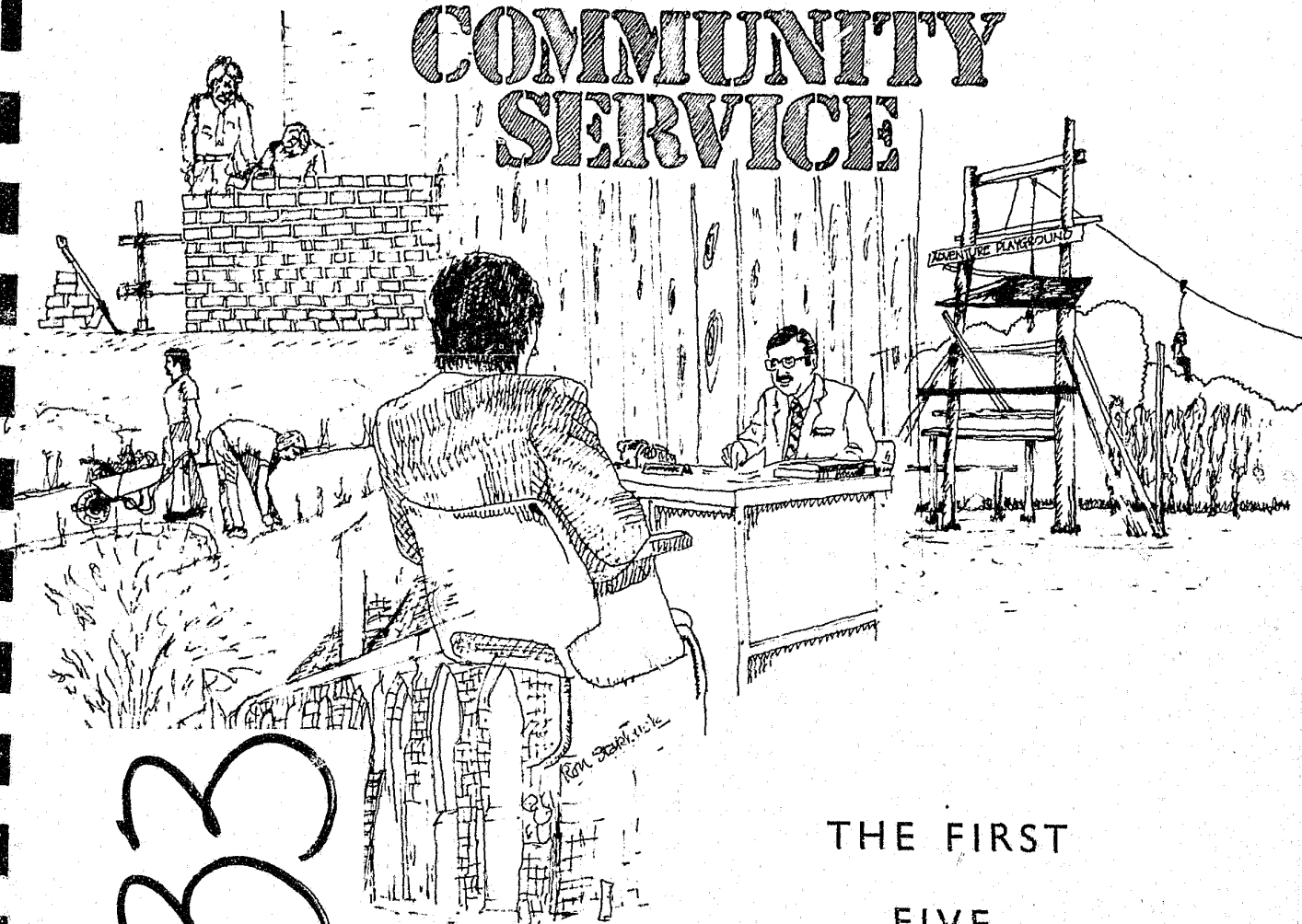
INNER-LONDON PROBATION AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE

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JUL 10 1978

ACQUISITIONS

COMMUNITY SERVICE



THE FIRST
FIVE
YEARS

5TH ANNUAL REPORT 1977

48333

The first five years in the developmental process, whether of a child or, as with community service, a new method of dealing with offenders, are crucial to eventual maturity and growth. It is timely therefore to reflect in this fifth Annual Report on the progress made since the scheme was introduced experimentally in Inner London in January 1973.

With the experience of the previous years, 1977 proved to be one of considerable expansion when our earlier achievements had to be tested against much larger numbers, a year when the limitations of the scheme might be exposed.

The results have been very encouraging with a slightly higher percentage of offenders completing their orders successfully. This gives us the confidence to develop further by integrating the scheme into the broader task of the service during 1978.

With nearly 1,200 people made subject to orders in 1977, it is not possible to do more in this report than highlight some of the issues and focus on a few of the offenders who have undergone the special experience provided by the introduction of community service.

INNER LONDON PROBATION AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE

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Chief Probation Officer:

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Deputy Chief Probation Officer

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COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTRE

480a Holloway Road,
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R.E. Gray

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Ms. P. Petchey

AREA TEAMS

(see page (i))

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Area teams at 31.1.78.

NORTH - covering the Boroughs of Hackney, Islington & Tower
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Area Organiser:	Address:
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Deputy:	01-263 4357
J.S. Abbott - Probation Officer	
Community Service Supervisors:	Secretarial:
Mrs. B.A. Abbott	Miss E. Curry
A.K.N. Bernhardt	Mrs. C.F. Cooper
S.J. Hadley	
Mrs. R. Montero	

NORTH - covering the Boroughs of Hammersmith, Kensington,
WEST Chelsea, Westminster & Camden.

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M.J. Phinn	Mrs. A.C. Paley
Miss D.T. Samuel	
R.F. Thomas	

SOUTH EAST - covering the Boroughs of Greenwich, Lewisham,
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Miss M.J. Hodges	Mrs. J.E. Skelton
S.J. Moore	
J.T. Newcomen	

SOUTH WEST - covering the Boroughs of Lambeth & Wandsworth

Area Organiser:	Address:
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Deputy:	01-735 0199 & 0190
J.A. Herendeen - Probation Officer	
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A.P. Brady	Mrs. S.A. Henton
Mrs. K. Groves	
J.P. Ward	

1. Introduction:

Much has been written about Community Service in the past five years. The rate and size of its growth makes it arguably the most important penal development in recent years. It also makes it imperative that we consider the implications of continued growth as it affects our institutions, the community, and most particularly the Probation & After-Care Service.

It has surely now been demonstrated that when used as an alternative to custody, there is no significant increase of risk to society from the offender during the period when he would otherwise have been in prison. Whilst it cannot yet be established one way or the other that Community Service affects the likelihood of recidivism, acceptance of that earlier fact should increasingly lead courts to use this alternative in place of the shorter custodial sentences. Only then will we begin to witness the reduction in prison population hoped for. Only then too will the economic advantages of Community Service begin to be fully realised and allow for a redeployment of existing resources.

The implications of this scheme for the community have not been fully recognised. It is a fact of life that in times of economic difficulty it is the disadvantaged who suffer most. There is less money given to charitable organisations; costs soar and such organisations cannot afford the upkeep of property or facilities. More than that, Community Service can provide the first real structured opportunity for bringing together offenders and other members of the community. This reciprocal involvement must lead to some measure of reconciliation and rehabilitation. It is not, however, something that can be precisely measured, and will not therefore show in the statistical analysis.

The implications for the Probation & After-Care Service also need to be recognised. Concentration of publicity on this new alternative has detracted attention from what continues to be the major work of the service. The supervising of persons on probation, and those released from institutions, has been our major task over the years, and the way the service has adapted in methods and techniques to meet the changing needs, has been as exciting as any new sentencing alternative. It is as important to officers working in Community Service as those outside that it is seen as an extension of our work, rather than as an alternative to it.

It is important therefore to understand what Community Service offers, and to understand its limitations. Many people over the years have come to accept the unreality of expectations of bringing about radical change in offenders, and more recently the focus has been on the equally unlikely prospect of radically changing society. The service has generally been more concerned with helping clients to adjust to the demands of society by exercising control in the context of a professional but friendly and supportive relationship. Community Service offers another way of approach but where, perhaps, the control element is more clearly defined. Confidence in the scheme has led to a dramatic increase in numbers in Inner London, and those offenders serving orders represent a figure approaching 10% of the

total workload of I.L.P.A.S. The future of the scheme, therefore, cannot be discussed in isolation from the future of the service.

One of the dangers for the staff of Community Service in a period of such growth is that they might be forced to compromise on the standards that were established during the experimental period. These were that the tasks undertaken should be meaningful to the individual, and beneficial to the community; that participation should aid the individual in his personal adjustment and development i.e., growing self awareness, and possibly the acquisition of new skills. The work should provide the individual with the incentive to continue the task even after the order expires, and hopefully make the individual more aware of the needs of others. For these aims to be realisable in every case requires not simply more manpower, but a significant element of professional social work expertise. The major part of the total task is now being undertaken by ancillary workers, under the supervision of probation officers. The continued use of a limited number of trained personnel is essential both to retain the respect of courts, and to ensure that the therapeutic element implicit in the scheme are achieved.

The Home Secretary in announcing his intention to make further funds available specifically for Community Service in April 1978, indicates the Government's confidence in the scheme. It needs to be recognised, however, that whilst this additional funding will be helpful, a much greater commitment is required in the future before the Community Service By Offenders Scheme will begin to realise its full potential.

The first five formative years of a child's life are crucial to its eventual development. So too with any penal measure if it is to have a lasting impact. Developmental milestones in Community Service in Inner London have been reached and passed, and it is timely to reflect on its growth. The statistical analysis contained in this report therefore re-traces those five years, shows how steadily progress has been achieved, and, in our view, suggests a healthy future.

2. Comparative Analysis:

It will be seen from Table 'A' that the number of persons made subject to orders in 1977 has increased by 63% on the previous year, and that about 100 new orders were made each month.

The number of offenders satisfactorily completing orders in 1977 represents 74.5% of the total of orders terminated; the balance includes 5% who were transferred or whose orders were varied or revoked by the courts for personal reasons, and 20.5% revoked through failure. Of this last category, about 60% were breached through failure to work and 40% had orders revoked following the commission of a further offence.

Looking over the whole of the five years, and excluding cases closed due to transfer, change of circumstances etc., 1,581 people (77%) satisfactorily completed their orders, whilst 470 (23%) failed. Since this 'success rate' has remained remarkably stable, there are grounds for believing it could be maintained even with a further expansion in the use of the scheme.

Many of those who fail to complete their orders have worked for a time and may have made a significant contribution. Taking the whole of the caseload, the average number of hours worked by an offender is 75, a figure that has not changed over the past four years.

One interesting point from the figures in Table 'A' is the similarity between the four separate geographical areas. This suggests the scheme is both accepted generally throughout Inner London, and that its strengths are more powerful influences than the personal variation in attitudes that may exist locally.

The acceptance of the scheme both by the courts and field probation officers is reflected in the number being referred for assessment as to suitability. Of the 2,203 referred during the year we have positively assessed 82%. Just about half of the referrals were at the request of Magistrates or Judges, the balance being on the initiative of the probation officer completing the social enquiry report.

A significant factor has been that 22% of the orders made in 1977 were in respect of offenders appearing at Crown Courts.

TABLE 'A'

	1977 Divisional Summary									
	North East	North West	South East	South West	1977	T O 1976	T A L 1975	1974	1973	Grand Total
New Cases	309	296	250	316	1,171	717	509	345	216	2,958
Average per month	26	25	21	26	98	59	42	29	18	-
% increase over previous year (i.e. growth)					63.3%	40.8%	47.5%	59.7%	-	
Satisfactory completions	181	179	134	162	656	413	280	173	59	1,581
Revocations thru' failure	53	35	48	44	180	117	87	53	33	470
Cases closed for other reason	11	11	11	12	45	25	13	7	8	98
End of year caseload	199	201	193	216	809	482	357	228	93	-
Hours worked	21,469	22,514	19,687	23,196	86,866	55,092	37,743	24,236	12,660	216,597

Offenders made subject to orders

-4-

Referrals for assessment:

	<u>North East</u>	<u>North West</u>	<u>South East</u>	<u>South West</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Considered suitable</u>	475	394	466	479	1,814
<u>Considered unsuitable</u>	147	101	70	71	389
					<u>2,203</u>

TABLE 'B'

Courts Making Orders

	Number of offenders made subject to orders				
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Court of Appeal	-	-	1	1	1
Central Criminal Ct.	16	14	18	15	27
Crown Courts	32	60	102	99	149
Crown Cts. (outside London)	-	-	18	45	77
City of London	2	-	4	7	3
Old Street	18	18	19	32	64
North London (Ct. closed)	14	19	23	-	-
Highbury Corner (new court)	-	-	14	52	83
Thames	9	13	12	15	33
Clerkenwell	10	19	26	46	73
Hampstead	3	4	3	8	11
Bow Street	10	6	15	13	27
Marlborough Street	4	3	8	8	25
Marylebone	4	14	31	34	80
Wells Street	2	4	2	5	10
West London	24	44	41	42	48
Horseferry Road (new court)	-	-	1	40	50
Greenwich	5	12	20	28	22
Tower Bridge	17	19	11	41	62
Woolwich	8	9	15	10	16
Camberwell Green	16	47	49	61	96
Lambeth	1	1	4	1	-
South Western	21	39	43	48	82
Magistrates Cts. (outside London)	-	-	29	66	132
	<u>216</u>	<u>345</u>	<u>509</u>	<u>717</u>	<u>1,171</u>

The use made of the scheme by individual courts is shown in Table 'B'. The biggest increases have been at Marlborough Street and Marylebone Magistrates Courts, but the figures show that the increase is general across most courts.

TABLE 'C'

Age of those made subject to orders

							Total	
<u>Age:</u>		<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
17-20	Male	95	196	184	387	583	1,545	
	Female	3	4	4	21	30		62
21-24	Male	64	76	108	126	236	610	
	Female	-	5	8	7	15		35
25-29	Male	32	25	52	66	139	314	
	Female	2	-	2	8	7		19
30 & over	Male	18	35	45	89	142	329	
	Female	2	4	6	13	19		44
Totals								
	Male	209	332	489	668	1,100	2,798	
	Female	7	13	20	49	71		160
		216	345	509	717	1,171	2,958	

In 1973 the under 21's represented 45% of the total made subject to community service orders, and women offenders some 3%. By 1975 young offenders had increased to 57% of the total, but women were still only accounting for 4%.

Over the past two years, the under 21's have decreased slightly to represent 52%, and the proportion of women has gone up to over 6% (see Table 'C').

TABLE 'D'

	<u>Length of Orders</u>					<u>Total</u>
	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	
15 hours	1	-	-	1	-	2
20 "	2	6	1	-	-	9
25 "	-	6	1	4	-	11
30 "	-	3	-	2	-	5
40 "	23	14	38	45	40	160
48 "	-	2	-	-	-	2
50 "	9	14	20	37	24	104
60 "	14	28	32	54	99	227
64 "	1	-	-	-	-	1
70 "	-	-	3	2	5	10
72 "	-	-	6	-	-	6
75 "	2	4	8	9	7	30
80 "	6	24	50	83	114	277
86 "	-	-	1	-	1	2
90 "	1	1	1	1	5	9
100 "	103	217	293	291	401	1,305
104 "	-	-	-	1	-	1
105 "	-	-	-	1	-	1
110 "	-	-	-	1	3	4
120 "	34	45	87	141	299	606
124 "	-	-	-	1	-	1
125 "	1	-	1	1	1	4
130 "	-	1	-	-	3	4
140 "	3	9	11	18	18	59
150 "	24	37	32	56	80	229
160 "	3	9	7	15	37	71
175 "	1	-	-	1	1	2
180 "	1	-	4	19	32	56
200 "	24	24	32	53	65	198
240 "	4	1	9	10	15	39
Total	256	445	637	847	1,250	3,435
Average length of order	127	104	104	107	114	

Courts have power to make a Community Service Order for a minimum of 40 hours and a maximum of 240 hours to be completed within a period of one year. Orders therefore of less than 40 hours shown in Table 'D' are those that form part of consecutive orders.

The average length of order has increased for the first time for four years. The major increase seems to be that relatively more 120 hour orders have been made, perhaps instead of 100 hours. Attention might be drawn to a fact not apparent from the above figures. Magistrates Courts outside Inner London are making significantly longer orders than those in Inner London, the average length of order from such courts being 135 hours.

TABLE 'E'

Previous Convictions

The following lists the number of previous convictions known to us of offenders made subject to orders.

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>Total</u>
Nil	15	32	56	75	151	329
1	28	44	55	84	153	374
2	19	62	72	106	172	431
3	18	60	76	109	166	429
4	33	34	55	66	109	297
5	22	25	45	51	91	234
6	21	29	33	54	55	192
7	13	8	21	14	38	94
8	11	14	17	34	33	109
9	10	7	15	14	18	64
10	8	12	13	18	18	69
11	7	4	6	5	14	36
12	2	5	3	11	16	37
13	-	-	1	4	12	17
14	1	-	5	9	11	26
15	-	2	3	8	9	22
16	3	1	7	5	4	20
17	-	-	-	2	3	5
18	1	3	2	-	3	9
19	1	1	1	3	3	9
20	1	-	3	-	20	24
21	-	-	-	1	-	1
22	1	1	1	1	3	7
24	-	-	-	1	4	5
30	-	1	-	-	3	4
Not known	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>114</u>
Total	<u>216</u>	<u>345</u>	<u>509</u>	<u>717</u>	<u>1,171</u>	<u>2,958</u>
Average	5.0	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.3	

Accepting that since we do not have all the information relating to previous convictions, these figures are less than completely accurate. Nevertheless they are useful in comparative terms.

The average number of previous convictions remains constant. Within the figures it is apparent that twice as many persons with no previous convictions were made subject to orders in 1977 over the preceding year. In the same period twice as many persons with more than 10 previous convictions were also made subject to orders. This suggests that whilst some magistrates are using the alternative for less seriously delinquent offenders, others are increasingly using it for persons with substantial criminal records.

TABLE 'F'

Type of Offences

The type of offence for which community service orders have been made are collated for the Home Office in groups, and this is the way they are now presented below. When sentenced for more than one offence, the most serious only is recorded.

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>Total</u>
Offences against the person	27	45	42	74	113	301
Drug Offences	10	5	8	16	26	65
Burglary, Robbery	29	24	65	71	159	348
Theft, fraud, handling stolen goods etc.	88	152	217	293	461	1,211
Motoring offences	50	103	140	217	318	818
Others	12	16	37	46	94	205
Total	<u>216</u>	<u>345</u>	<u>509</u>	<u>717</u>	<u>1,171</u>	<u>2,958</u>

The figures for 1977 show little variation from previous years though a slightly higher percentage of orders have been made for burglary or robbery offences.

Over the five years 40.9% of all orders have been for theft or related offences of dishonesty; 28% for motoring which are invariably taking and driving away of motor vehicles or driving whilst disqualified; 11.8% for burglary or robbery, and 10.2% for offences against the person.

3. Is Community Service a Soft Option?

When an offender is expecting a custodial sentence and gets a community service order instead, he is inevitably likely to see it as 'a soft option'. When he fully understands what giving up his leisure-time to perform unpaid work in the community means, he is less sure.

An organiser has to decide what sort of project can be arranged, bearing in mind the offender's aptitude, criminal background, and interests, whether the work is seen to be demanding, and must take into account the weekly commitment needed to carry out the court order.

It will be appreciated that the capacities of workers vary by reason of age, health, occupation, and intelligence. The range of work that can be provided is also dependent on the needs of the various agencies providing it. Some workers have to be employed initially, or throughout their order, in supervised group projects; it is within these and other constraints that we try to provide work experience that is both demanding and beneficial.

The nature of the task may be physically tough as in site clearing, skip filling, and demolition. Other work, usually in groups, may involve gardening, labouring or painting projects for the elderly, in hostels or community centres, which combines both practical and personal tasks. Offenders work in youth clubs, adventure playgrounds and with the physically and mentally handicapped, all of which can be emotionally very demanding.

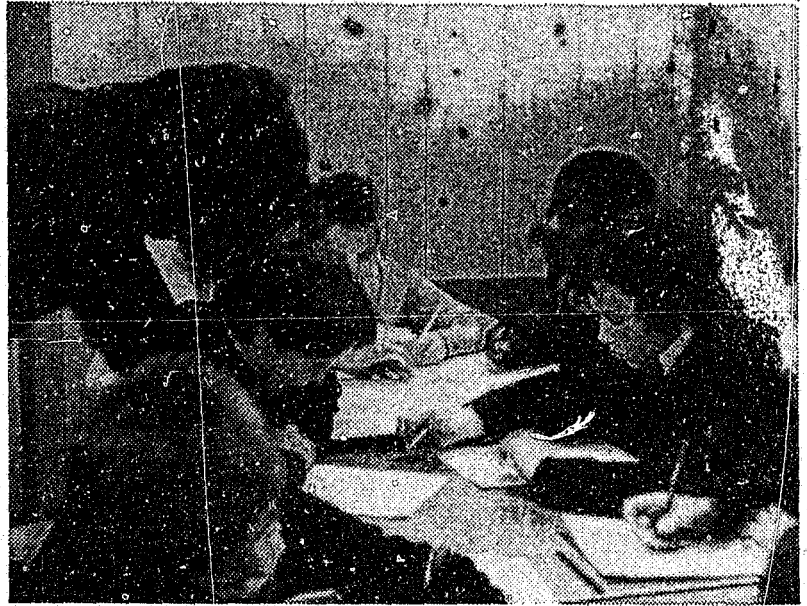
Offenders on community service must also keep up their full-time work commitment and need, on occasion, to cope with overtime as well as maintain family and social contacts. The hours of community work therefore persistently eat into their limited leisure time, and with the amount of travelling necessary, sometimes in bad weather, it can all become very irksome. There are some workers who have entered into community service with little enthusiasm, and who have not attempted to identify themselves with the project. These offenders find the continuous commitment expected of them far from a soft option.

Sustaining the commitments of a community service order over a period of many months can be seen therefore to be very exacting. Nevertheless, the success of the scheme indicates that the majority of offenders have demonstrated their willingness to contribute a useful and worthy work effort for the benefit of those in need. Letters are received from project leaders expressing appreciation of the solid hard work and cheerful service given in many situations. Elsewhere in this report an example is given of a worker who spent his Christmas helping an organisation concerned with the needs of lonely old people. A recent report from a day centre for the handicapped indicated that, but for the strenuous efforts of one of our workers at a time of severe

staff shortage through sickness, the unit would have had to close down for a week. It is as important that the work not only stretches the offenders, but that they can appreciate that their efforts are directly benefiting those in need.

Whilst some problems may inevitably occur in getting workers started, and in coping with subsequent difficulties thrown up by either sickness or full-time work commitments, those on community service who fail are in the main those who do not prove to be reliable and who subsequently become involved in further offences. If the offender fails to start his community service order, or does not turn up with sufficient regularity to meet his obligations to a project, then the organiser must report the breach of the order to the supervising court. It is then for the court to decide whether the order is to be brought to an end, or whether a fine of up to £50 may be imposed for the breach, and the order be allowed to continue. There are instances of course where failure to comply with the order has been dealt with by a court with an immediate custodial sentence for the original offence. In one instance last year a man refused work to test out whether the court would fine him on his original offence. To his surprise and dismay, and to his family's misfortune, he was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

Community Service Worker teaching on child literacy scheme.



Isle of Dogs Community Project. Dinner break after laying a new concrete floor.

Methodist Church Hall. Redecoration of rooms for community activities.

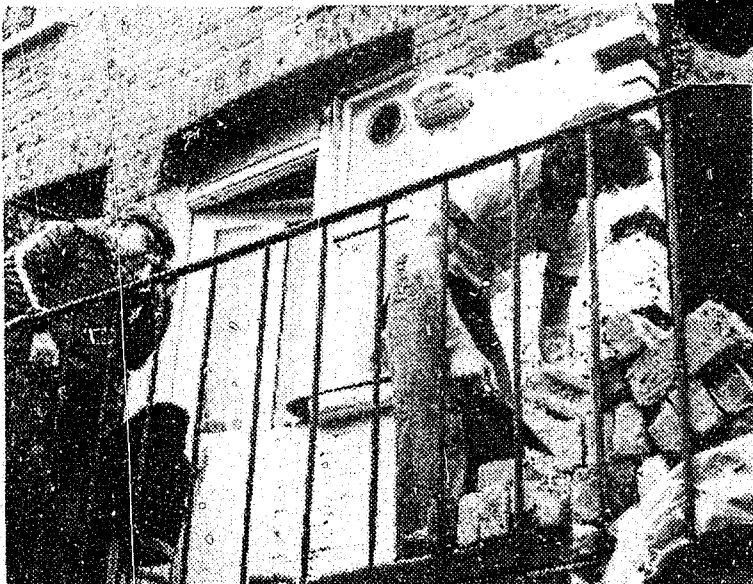




Church play area. After site clearance, wall being built for children's sand-pit.



Community Centre. Digging to discover fault in brick wall prior to repair.



Crisis Action. Home for battered wives. General house renovation.

5. Women Offenders:

The proportion of community service orders made concerning women, although increasing, remains very small, but as a group they present particular problems.

M.F. was an attractive Italian-born mother of three, in her early fifties. When referred she was living with her husband (semi-retired) in a council flat in a tower block where she felt extremely isolated. In recent months she had been treated for depression - a placement as a student book-keeper found for her by the hospital to widen her interests had ended abruptly after 4½ months due to economic cutbacks. Her community service order of 120 hours was for a second offence of shoplifting.

M.F. had a grandson who was autistic (his father was a schizophrenic) and she had a sensible, unemotional outlook towards those who were handicapped. She was subsequently referred to an adventure playground for the mentally and physically handicapped. She worked well with staff and children alike, and completed her order within four months. The playleader tried to persuade M.F. to continue working on a voluntary basis but she knew that financially this was not possible. With the playleader acting as her referee she applied for jobs and, after a good deal of effort on her part, secured a post in a home for the blind.

Many younger women referred to us have family problems to cope with in that they have small children or are pregnant or soon become pregnant. The person concerned, therefore, is in possession of a very good argument for not attending the project and lack of consistency has often led to us losing a good work situation. Women in this situation are also very demanding of our limited manpower resources requiring frequent visits by a staff member to their home.

Given the principle that community service is intended to deprive people of some of their leisure, mothers and in particular unsupported ones, usually have little of such time to give. When they do, it is often not at times convenient to the agencies providing work. We are reluctant to encourage mothers to arrange temporary fostering in order that they can carry out their community service, believing this can create more problems than it solves. Notwithstanding there are examples of young women who have received positive benefit through community service.

J.F. was twenty years old with several previous court appearances when she received a 200 hour order at Inner London Crown Court for shoplifting offences. Likeable, independent and showing signs of maturity she began at a children's playground destined to be used by the mentally and physically handicapped. She was prepared to do any type of work and, alongside the staff, polished wooden surfaces and painted constructions.

A month later we learned that J.F. was pregnant, her baby due six months later. About this time she lost her job as an upholsteress so was encouraged to work during the week assisting with the children, as the playground was then functioning. Even so, with various complications arising in her pregnancy, only half the order was completed by the time her son was born.

A six months extension to the order was granted by the court and with a one-day-per-week nursery placement available for the baby, J.F. recommenced her community service at the adventure playground, completing just within the time allowed.

A lot of effort was required to see this order through. J.F. matured considerably during the eighteen months and accepted responsibility for her son. The last we heard was that she was requesting a full-time nursery placement for the child so that she could return to her job as an upholsteress.

It is our experience with older women that we have to try them out in more than one situation before they find a niche which suits them. One who had several previous court appearances and had served a fairly long prison sentence before being released on parole, could not settle to work in an old peoples' home, but through a health visitor she was placed to give assistance to a lady with various disabilities whose life was spent in a wheelchair and she earned excellent reports.

Women offenders with hairdressing experience have been welcome in homes for the elderly, as indeed have those with some nursing experience, but others with no particular skills have been popular in the canteen of boys' clubs and have become recognised members of the team. Adventure playgrounds, nursery schools and charity shops have also provided many placings and in some cases our workers have assumed a great deal of responsibility.

E.W. was in her mid-thirties, a woman with an eleven year old son, separated from her husband, whose personality difficulties warranted sympathy and help. However, her response to others was said to be such that she seemed unable to accept the help which probation officers extended to her through statutory supervision.

On interview she expressed interest in working in a boys' club attended by her son and evidently felt no embarrassment in confiding her situation to the club leader whom she knew well.

With six months of regular attendance at the club sessions, working in the canteen and assisting generally, the 150 hour order imposed for an offence of burglary was completed. E.W.'s help had proved invaluable. With the various economic cutbacks and loss of staff she offered to continue working on a voluntary basis and a year later is continuing to do so.

Experience suggests the need for considerable care in selecting appropriate placements for women offenders. At the sentencing stage too it is apparent that even greater attention should be given to assess whether the particular needs of the woman will be met through a community service order and whether she has sufficient time, free from the pressures of children and a home, in which to carry out the work.

6. Case Histories:

Nearly sixteen hundred offenders have completed orders successfully in Inner London since the scheme started, and we are often asked how many of them continue to do voluntary work in the community, and how many get employment arising from their participation in community service. When the hours are completed, we no longer retain contact with an offender and therefore we cannot always answer this question. What we can give, however, are some examples of a few people who represent a significant number and who demonstrate the potential of community service in terms of personal development.

Kay, aged 18, the tenth of 16 children from a deprived and unstable family, had just completed borstal training when she was given a 50 hour community service order for theft.

Kay's initial attitude to community service reflected her unhappy and insecure lifestyle and was wholly negative. It took 3 weeks to get her to attend an initial interview at which her lack of motivation was painfully obvious. However, one small spark of hope was her obviously caring attitude towards her sister's mongol child. After some research a Toy Library, specialising in running playgroups with toys designed for mentally handicapped children, was approached on Kay's behalf and a weekly project set up.

It would be wrong to report that Kay's attendance record was as regular as might normally be expected, but bearing in mind her initial attitude, the numerous crises that she underwent including pregnancy and homelessness, and the fact that when she did attend she was well liked and helpful, then the change in her was remarkable. Moreover Kay, her order completed, has continued to help at the Toy Library.

Self respect is something which many offenders lack and is something which community service may give the opportunity to regain. This seems to have happened with Norman whom we talked to recently, knowing that he was still doing voluntary work more than a year after his order had been completed. He told us first about his childhood:

'I was brought up in an orphanage and then placed with foster parents, but it didn't work and when I was 14 I left them to find my own way in life. That was during the war, and I slept rough for eighteen months in an air-raid shelter. I remember spending a week on a bench in Green Park and having to go into hospital with scabies. I thought it was the end of me, but I pulled myself out and got a living-in job.'

Norman then told us how, aged only 17, he was sent to prison for 6 months on his first offence of receiving, and of the pattern of his life from then:

'When I left prison, with a brown envelope and half-a-crown, I had no place to live. I went after work but, because of the way I looked, always got turned down. All my associates were ex-prisoners, and I felt very much cut off from the rest of the community. I have been in prison sixteen or eighteen times, the best part of my early life. I once served a 5 year sentence in Dartmoor for stealing groceries.'

Norman was 52 when given 100 hours community service for shoplifting. At the time he says he was very depressed and 'could not have done another prison sentence.' He expressed an interest in working with elderly people and was placed with a suitable welfare association. He began visiting old people twice a week, and what impressed him was the fact that they treated him as a person:

'Everyone thanked me for my time and assistance. This gave me great courage to feel my life was not wasted yet - there was a place where I was needed. I found more friends working in the project than I had in all my life. I think my community service work ended 12 months ago but I still have three old people I see regularly.

These elderly people look forward to me, they treat me with respect and kindness, and I think what made my Christmas was, after I took a dinner to an elderly lady on Christmas Day, she said 'my husband had been dead for 2 years and I never thought there was a gentleman left.' If I stopped it, the elderly people living in back rooms, who didn't get out, who didn't see anyone, where would they be if I didn't go. I have got used to them, and they have got used to me.'

In that example, Norman's problems, though partly of his own making, could be traced back to his poor start in life. It is unrealistic to expect that community service will overcome his experiences of the past 50 years but the fact that he feels some sense of worth, gives grounds for hope that he may avoid further prison, and even if he doesn't there are many old people who have been glad of his contact.

There are many other offenders with problems of isolation, who have a great deal to give if only their strengths can be harnessed and used in a positive way.

Henry, a 36 year old single parent, was described by his probation officer as an 'adequate inadequate'. The definition is in fact apt because while Henry is a very adequate and caring father, he has perhaps

been less than adequate in the conduct of his own affairs remaining jobless, friendless, bored and lost for quite a few years.

Henry appeared before the court for driving a car without licence, tax or insurance at a time when a suspended sentence for defrauding the DHSS was still in force and he was in consequence given 60 hours community service.

It was immediately apparent that the fondness and experience of children that Henry clearly exhibited, ought to be tapped and he was found a project helping to run a creche at a local community centre. Not only was Henry's reliable and caring assistance greatly welcomed, but he personally exploded into excited and positive action on being placed in a responsive social work atmosphere. Under his own steam he set about finding out from trained social and community workers the ways and means of establishing a local single parent association which he felt from experience was badly needed.

Within a matter of weeks Henry, who still works at the creche, had with guidance and limited financial backing, organised and established a single parent association which meets on a weekly basis to offer baby-minding, pre and after school care, advice and just a change of environment for single parents. All this work is purely voluntary and his order nears completion. It is hoped that perhaps in the future he might find full or part-time employment in this very worthwhile field. While of course community service can in no way claim responsibility for Henry's verve, enthusiasm and obvious skill, it can at least claim to have helped him to realise his own potential by harnessing his energies to the service of the community.

Some offenders who do well on community service but who later re-offend, are referred back for a second order. Not all of them succeed:

When Frank was first referred to us he had been known to the Probation Service for nine years, since the age of 13. The lad had been through many forms of institutional treatment including approved school, detention centre, borstal training and recently as a young prisoner. He had thirteen previous convictions and was now charged with burglary and criminal damage.

Following reports which referred to his difficult domestic situation and background, but also to his positive response when on licence, he was given a 150 hour community service order.

Frank settled in and worked very hard at a club for elderly people, and within a period of ten months had completed the order.

For the next two years Frank stayed out of trouble, but was then before the court charged with the theft of £1,000 of office equipment. In the meantime he had married and his wife was expecting a child. This, and his earlier response, no doubt influenced the court toward the making of another community service order, this time for 180 hours.

Frank was placed in a different community project, but again concerned with helping the elderly by using his skills as a painter and decorator. He worked hard and soon completed 85 hours, but at this point was arrested on a conspiracy charge and is awaiting trial.

This is a young man with many strengths that he demonstrates towards his wife and whilst working for old people in community service. Though the charge against him has yet to be proved, it is at least likely that community service has failed to modify his delinquent outbursts. He went nearly 3 years after the making of the first order and perhaps the making of a second had too little impact upon him.

Finally in these examples we include a recent interview with another man who continues to work with the elderly long after his community service order has ended. It is included fully because it gives some insight into the needs both of the offender, Richard, and the old people he serves, and the way community service brings them together. It shows also his fairly typical attitude both to prison and to community service when he was made subject to an order.

P.O. You were given an order of 100 hours in June 1976, can you remember what you felt at the time?

Richard Relief at getting freedom, but a bit dubious about community service. I had been warned about prison at a previous hearing, so I said I would go along with community service just for the sake of getting off. I didn't like the idea of giving up my weekends, because I used to go away a lot.

P.O. What sort of reception did you get when we first sent you to the old peoples' agency?

Richard Very warm. Meals on wheels was the very first thing I did - rather liked it - I enjoyed dashing out of the van, knocking on the door - 'Morning! - Dinner! It was quite interesting, but then it developed to wheelchair walks, visiting one housebound woman - I think she was 90 and still going strong, and she wanted someone to visit her, and I visited her three evenings a week for a couple of hours. I also did a bit of gardening just to please her.

P.O. Sometimes they can be demanding.

Richard Very. Oh yes - you deliver their milk - 'Oh can you go and get my papers. Can you get this, get that', but one or two regulars, who you know cannot get out, then obviously you have the papers ready, you bring his milk up and his mail, which could have been down there three days.

I think there are more old people than even councils know about. If nobody lets anybody know, they can't do anything for them, but those we deliver to I'd say about 85% of them are lonely. In fact they have got nobody to pop in and say hello, and the meals on wheels is the only time they see anybody.

P.O. How many meals on wheels do you do?

Richard The minimum I have done is 46 in one journey, and some carry up to 80 meals. I have never done a regular round but whenever I've got somewhere they have said 'Oh you back again' - they know who you are - just one or two who are too old to remember anything and they don't even know they have got dinner coming, and they can't remember whether they have paid or not.

P.O. They appreciate what you do?

Richard Oh they appreciate it.

P.O. You finished your community service order about August 1976, but you have gone on doing this more or less every week?

Richard Oh yes, well not every week because as I say I do go away quite a lot, but I always give Mrs. W a ring at the beginning of the week and she asks me if I can do something and if I haven't got anything planned I'd say 'certainly' and confirm it on the Thursday to say I will be there, to save postage and invariably I turn up.

P.O. Are you then a fairly lonely person yourself?

Richard I think I have been and still am lonely to a degree. The old people have offered friendship definitely, especially at the day centre, 99% of them, when I don't go, want to know where I am. Why wasn't I at the Christmas Party in fact, and when I go in there they say 'what are you doing here' in a jovial sort of way.

P.O. Coming back Richard, you had your share of early difficulties.

Richard I was brought up by the London County Council. I left their care at the age of 18, and then went out on my own, sort of thing, to East London, and it was there that trouble started when I was 21. I lost the digs I had, couldn't afford others, so I went into Smithfield Market working at night and

up all day, ending up on a tube train, running round on the Circle. Got woken up and charged because I had no money, no ticket, no address, and from that first offence at Liverpool Street, I got a chip on my shoulder.

I was married two years - the wife had two kiddies, boy first and a little girl a year later. The first time she wanted to go out in the evening I didn't want to go with her so I telephoned a friend of mine who brought the car round. They were driving into a town in Essex and they had a car accident and that was the last - that ended that. Then, of course, things started going bad again. I just wandered up to London about 1967. I didn't go to work for some time. When I did go back I didn't have anywhere to live. I still worked all night and half the morning. Then it got to a point where, although I was still in Covent Garden Market, I used to go down every day to Brighton by van and getting a train back, invariably without a ticket. I didn't give up my work, well I used to wander off and then go back to work. I was classified as self-employed and to go to work for who I liked in the market. After nine years they were eventually going to move to Nine Elms and I wasn't going to go there. I took one look at the market - didn't like it so I didn't go. I went up to Derby, rented a shop and got into trouble up there, things did not work out. It took nine months for the shop to fail. It started well. There again I acquired an Access Credit Card and I used it - stupidly. Ended up by getting into the Magistrates Court in Derby.

P.O. Did things build up to the point, in fact, where you had a prison sentence?

Richard That was it, just the one term as far as I remember. I went to Leicester, and they moved me to Stafford.

P.O. What effect did this have on you?

Richard None whatsoever. I had food, I had a bed, I did a couple of hours work each day.

P.O. Was it a negative experience?

Richard Oh very much so.

P.O. Looking back again, what do you think has helped to stabilise your sort of affairs?

Richard Things are better now than for a very long time. When I came back from Derby, that was a couple of months after this prison term in 1973, I thought 'Oh all my friends work for the Post Office - I might as well work for the Post Office', so I applied for a job. I went for an interview. They told me I was good and gave me a date to start. I passed the training period with flying

colours. Stayed until February 1976. Whilst I was there I had several weeks off - 100 days in one year I was off sick. While I was off sick I made lots of 'phone calls with knowledge gained by me in the Post Office - the Post Office put two and two together and found it was me, and decided to prosecute.

P.O. That was when you were placed on community service. Has it helped you settle down?

Richard Oh yes, it helped a great deal, and helped me to gain a lot of friends. I mean if I feel at a loose end, I just 'phone Age Concern, and if they have got anything I will go and do it. Therefore I am not bored.

P.O. What about your job now?

Richard Oh this one I started in October. I am liked, and they have told me I am one of the most efficient telephonists they have ever had.

P.O. What about your future?

Richard It seems more stable, I don't think I have had an address for as long as I got one now. The longest I have ever had was for less than a year since leaving the L.C.C. This one has now been 2½ years. And the community service - I know three people now who have done it, and they all still do it, carry on doing it - it has helped them I think.

These examples, by chance, focus mainly on work with old people. A great deal of satisfying work is also being done with children and others. Not all offenders can be engaged on personalised tasks, however, and those doing hard labouring work on otherwise empty building sites, are not likely to want to expand their efforts beyond the order. Such work is valuable, however, not least because it enables the worker, through physical energy, to express any feelings of remorse that he may have resulting from his offence, which he may not freely articulate.

7. The Future:

It has been decided that the Inner London Probation & After-Care Service will be organisationally restructured during 1978, with four divisional areas responsible to the Chief Probation Officer and that the Community Service By Offenders Scheme will become an operational part of that structure by the end of 1978, rather than remain as a specialist activity.

Conveniently the proposed divisions of the service coincide with the geographical areas currently operating in community service, so the change-over should cause few if any problems.

The reasons for integrating community service with divisional responsibility come from a belief that local identity with courts, field probation and with the community are an essential part of the scheme's future development.

There are signs that the rate of growth, after five years of expansion, is beginning to level out, and we are anticipating a more modest increase during 1978. Nevertheless Inner London can look forward to about one hundred orders being made each month, and something like 100,000 hours of work being contributed by offenders during the year to some of those members of the community most in need of help.

Community Service can look forward also to a small increase in probation staff which will enable us to pay more attention to the quality of the experience for the participants. We intend also to introduce to each team a senior community service supervisor; these will be people experienced in other fields, but without social work qualifications. They will co-ordinate the work of ancillaries who will be called community service supervisors.

In our view it is too early for the use of community service to be extended to persons who fail to pay fines. We hope it will continue to be reserved for those who are able both to benefit from it and to make a contribution to society. Those with severe practical or emotional problems who need the help available through a probation order are not suitable for community service. Nor does the scheme meet the needs of those with long standing employment problems.

It is when seen as an alternative to custody that the real benefits of community service are most noticeable. The cost in respect of each offender is less than £200 annually as against £4,000 for each person sent to prison without the indirect costs of, for example, supporting his dependents. We regard the positive experience of community service as the

enhancing of personal esteem through service to others, rather than its undermining which is an inevitable effect of imprisonment. Further, there is the additional benefit that the community is enabled to recognise, accept and begin to understand its failures, rather than to continue to ignore them when they are on the other side of a prison wall.

The first five years of Community Service in Inner London has been a period of experimentation and discovery, with a great deal of hope and from time to time not a little anxiety. There is reason for confidence that the foundations are secure enough to be built upon in the next half decade.

END