

THE GRIFFINS
SOCIETY

Founded 24th March, 1965

NEWS LETTER

On October 27th 1964 John Cavanagh showed his collection of dresses to an audience of about 150, and a total of £2,600 was collected for the Holloway Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. The Lady Denning was the Chairman of the Appeal Committee, and Dame Barbara Brooke, now Baroness Brooke of Ystradfellte, was one of the members.

About the same date it was announced that many of the provisions of the report of the Advisory Council on the Treatment of Offenders were to be implemented, and that the Probation Service was to be responsible for the after-care of prisoners, both those who voluntarily asked for help, and those who were discharged on statutory licence. It was also made clear that the help of voluntary bodies would still be welcomed, and used, though the responsibility would lie with the Probation Service.

At the next meeting of the Holloway Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society it was agreed that work should continue, and if possible it was hoped to expand it; that this association of voluntary aid for women prisoners should be renamed. The Griffins was the name chosen, it being thought best to select a name with no obvious link with ex-prisoners.

The last Annual General Meeting of the Holloway Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society was held on March 24th at the Mansion House by the courtesy of the Lord Mayor of London, who has since agreed to act as President, and the Committee of the Griffins was approved and then took over. It was fortunate that Mrs. Dilys Jones, J.P., the Chairman of the Holloway Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society for nine years, agreed to become the first chairman of the Griffins. The Governors of Holloway and Hill Hall, or their delegates, and the Chaplain of Holloway were appointed ex officio. Since the Griffins is not an official body, it was decided that only members would be eligible for the Committee, and that ex officio representatives from the Visiting Committee, Board of Visitors, and Prison Visitors were no longer appropriate.

The first Committee of the Griffins was composed of the following members :—

Mrs. Dilys Jones, J.P., *Chairman*

Major M. Scott, Salvation Army, *Vice-Chairman*

T. W. Paterson, Esq., *Hon. Treasurer*

Miss J. Adams

Mrs. D. Thurtle, J.P.

Mrs. E. Chapman

Mrs. J. E. Kelley

The Hon. Mrs. McGowan, O.B.E., J.P.

Miss M. Patterson

Mrs. A. Noble, J.P.

The Rev. P. J. Wall

The Hon. Mrs. L. Price

Mr. E. G. Pratt

The Secretary of the Holloway Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, Mrs. Corlett, had elected to join the Probation and After-Care Service, which she was invited to do. Mrs. Levin, the case worker, agreed to remain with the new society and carry out secretarial and other duties until such time as new appointments and arrangements could be made. She has since joined the Probation and After-Care Service.

Mrs. Rice-Jones has been appointed to be Organising Secretary of the Griffins.

We are also fortunate in our Treasurer, Mr. T. W. Paterson, a solicitor, who has not only most skilfully conducted our finances but who also has agreed to help arrange for the provision of free legal advice.

The office of the Holloway Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society at Archway was given up, and temporary accommodation provided at Holloway.

The following programme has been planned and is being carried out :

A House has been purchased at 58 Crowndale Road, and is being converted and redecorated under the practical and able supervision of Mr. Antony Lewis, A.R.I.B.A. It is hoped that the house will be ready early in 1966.

A House Sub-Committee was appointed and consists of :—

Miss P. E. Wardle

Miss E. Gundry

Mrs. E. Chapman

Lady E. Carr

The City and Parochial Trust have made a generous grant to meet salaries for three years.

It is hoped to provide the following services :—

A snack canteen kitchen;
residential accommodation for women;
rooms for a psychotherapist where ex-prisoners can meet social workers, Prison Visitors, Associates and Prison Officers, and where free legal advice can be given on civil matters and classes in citizenship provided.

Also a flat for the resident Secretary and office accommodation.

We are indeed fortunate that Dr. James Pearce has agreed to take two sessions weekly.

Dr. Pearce takes three sessions weekly in Holloway, and finds the need in many cases of some continuation of treatment. He hopes to continue at Crowndale Road some of his group therapy work, and also to see individual cases.

Naturally expenses, though heavy, are being kept to a minimum, and there are various additions which would be most welcome if funds were available. For example, the kitchen could be tiled for £36 seats in the canteen could be provided for £30. A list of other necessary equipment is attached and contributions to meet their cost would be much appreciated.

It is hoped in this centre to meet some of the needs of ex-prisoners, and also to learn more about the nature of these needs : for example, girls may need help at times when other sources of advice are not available. They need somewhere where support, help and advice are certainly available until they can remake their lives.

We know that many of the women who come to prison learn to trust the staff, and are glad to seek their advice and support when they have left their care.

We know that often they like to keep in touch with Prison Visitors and Associates.

We know they often wish to continue group therapy or individual treatment. One of the problems of the prison psychotherapist is that if a woman has a long enough sentence to be able to undergo psychiatric

treatment she may be almost intractable. If she is co-operative and responsive, her sentence is often too short for the needs of the psychiatrist. At present, as he cannot continue her treatment after discharge, she has to be transferred to a National Health psychiatrist, yet it is often not desirable to change the doctor in the middle of the treatment.

We know that very often the women are muddled and ignorant of the law and of their rights in civil matters, such as maintenance, hire purchase agents, evictions and rent problems etc; and that they are in great need of skilled help.

We hope to assuage some of the loneliness of the recidivist outside prison and also to meet needs of which we are at present ignorant.

Membership of the Griffins is a minimum of 10/- a year. We would be most grateful for your support, both financial and personal.

List of Useful Contributions to 58 Crowndale Road

Electric appliances and 9 fan heaters at approximately £3 each.

3 Corvete water heaters—£8.10.0d. each.

16 fireside chairs at approximately £7 each.

6 coffee tables at approximately £2.10.0d. each.

20 lampshades, say 10/- each.

Cutlery, various.

Cups, saucers and plates—various.

Glasses, 24—£1

8 pint kettle, saucepans, egg-poacher, frying pan—£6.

12 unbreakable stain-proof wooden trays—£10.

12 towels—£3

3 pedal bins—£4

4 door mats, link type—£6

6 brooms and brushes—£2

Contributions towards linoleum and floor covering.

Also for use in offices—typewriters, 3 desks, 10 chairs, filing cabinet, 2 tables.

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