

INNER-LONDON PROBATION AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE

Community

Service

by Offenders

36985

3RD ANNUAL REPORT: 1975

Community Service has grown considerably in 1975 and there is reason to expect further growth in 1976. The encouraging evidence of this report is that despite the greater number of offenders involved, the high rate of successful completions has been maintained.

The report looks at the effects of decentralisation and to the extent and way in which further expansion might be considered.

The increasing variety of projects on which Community Service offenders are engaged are shown in the reports from the three separate units. Much of the work is physically very demanding, some requires the emotional involvement of the offender and all is designed to meet the several aims of the scheme - to provide the opportunity for offenders to contribute to the community instead of being a drain on its resources in an institution; to provide help to persons in need, and to create an environment where the possibility of personal growth of the offender himself is stimulated by being able to recognise the strengths that he has.

The report attempts to demonstrate how the scheme operates, the size and nature of its effects on sentencing and the attitude of the judiciary, its contribution to the community and to improving relationships between the community and its deviants and the social implications for offenders themselves. Much of this is difficult to show but while at the very least Community Service can be seen to be preferable to the accepted ill-effects of time spent in an institution, for many it is more than that - it is a positive and challenging alternative.

1. INTRODUCTION.

In a year that has seen considerable expansion of Community Service to other areas, Inner London, as one of the initial pilot schemes has been able to consolidate the progress made in the first two years. That is not to say we have stood still, as this report will show, or that we yet claim to have answers to all the questions. What has become clear however, and can be stated with confidence, is that Community Service is a viable alternative to imprisonment in a number of cases. It is viable because judges and magistrates have increasingly demonstrated their willingness to make orders and their judgement, in terms of the risk to society of further offences, has been vindicated by the statistics so far obtained. It is viable because statutory and voluntary organisations in every borough of Inner London have shown not only that there is a considerable potential of necessary and worthwhile projects to provide employment for offenders on Community Service, but also that these offenders bring to the projects more than just a cheap labour force and that the risks involved, with adequate supervision, are minimal. Not least, it is viable because of the therapeutic benefits to the offender of beginning to identify himself as someone able to give something of himself to others. Such benefits are impossible to show statistically, but they appear very real to the staff involved and provide their considerable satisfaction in the work.

Inner London continues to hold firmly to the view that a Community Service order is an alternative to a custodial sentence. The men and women concerned are not undertaking community work instead of paying a small fine, nor are they generally people who need and are able to respond to the help afforded by a probation order. They are normally those for whom other sentences have been tried and for whom the damaging reality of prison or borstal has become a distinct possibility.

2. DEVELOPMENT IN INNER LONDON.

The beginning of 1975 saw an expansion of the scheme by decentralisation into three separate units, each responsible for four Inner London boroughs. They each had a staff of an organiser, a senior probation officer and his assistant, a probation officer, together with an ancillary worker and clerical help. In September, as a result of increasing work loads, an additional ancillary worker was appointed to each unit.

One lesson that may be learned from decentralisation is that more local representation of Community Service has led to a marked increase in the number of orders made by courts in those areas and a greater awareness of the scheme shown by referring probation officers and by local voluntary organisations.

An executive officer working to the director continues to be responsible for maintenance, co-ordination and collation of statistical information from the three area offices on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

On October 1st, Mr Charles Crockford, assistant chief probation officer who had been director of the scheme since its very early days and who played a major part in its development, moved to pioneer another new project being developed by the Inner London Probation and After-Care Service - Bulldog Manpower Services, a supported work scheme. Otherwise the staff has remained constant.

3. THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE - AN ANALYSIS OF THE STATISTICS.

The Community Service scheme in Inner London has moved from a pilot project in 1973, through gradual expansion in 1974, to being an established alternative sentence of a size really to influence the

penal scene. This is demonstrated first by the simple figures with which we closed 1975:

<u>Total of Orders Made</u>	<u>No of Offenders</u>	<u>Total of Hours Worked</u>
1,338	1,070	74,639

That over a thousand offenders have avoided a prison or borstal sentence due to this alternative has considerable economic significance. There are also important social implications for the offenders themselves in preventing the de-personalisation and social stigma of institutions and for their families in terms of retaining some stability.

This can only be held to be true if a reasonable percentage complete their orders successfully. In this context the scheme is dependant on the selection process being able to identify appropriate persons since it is to nobody's advantage to make orders on offenders clearly unable to meet the demand of Community Service.

Table A shows a fairly even distribution of work between the units and an expansion since last year of almost 50%. With an average of 42 new orders every month and a current caseload of 357, staff are considerably stretched and further expansion is clearly going to be dependent on additional resources being made available.

It will be seen that of the 1,070 offenders so far given Community Service orders, almost half have completed them satisfactorily, 357 are still on the caseload and 201 are deemed unsatisfactory.

The community has benefited in ways described in this report, by an impressive total of 74,639 hours of work.

It may be seen from Table B that of the 201 failures, 28 were for reasons unconnected with the scheme; 104 committed further offences and 69 did

TABLE A.

OFFENDERS MADE SUBJECT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDERS

	<u>AREA SUMMARY</u>			<u>TOTAL - ALL AREAS</u>			<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>S. East</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1973</u>	
New Cases	153	167	189	509	345	216	1,070
(Average per month)				42	29	18)	
Satisfactory Completions	74	96	106	276	176	60	512
Unsatisfactory Completions	38	32	29	99*	61	41	201
'Caseload' at 31st December 1975				357
<u>Hours Worked</u>				37,743	24,236	12,660	74,639
Average per week				726	466	243	

*Note: only 22 in respect of orders made in 1975

TABLE B.

CLASSIFIED SUMMARY: 1973-1975

	<u>OFFENDERS</u>	<u>ORDERS</u>
<u>SATISFACTORY COMPLETIONS .</u>	512	652
<u>REVOCATIONS.</u>		
1. Did not attend initial interview	10	
2. Failure to report for work	59	
3. Committed further offence	104	
4. Physical/personal reasons	7	
5. Left area	10	
6. Varied on appeal	2	
7. Case lapsed with Court's consent	9	266
<u>NON-EFFECTIVE.</u>		
Custody/address not known awaiting revocation	32	46
<u>SUMMONS/WARRANTS.</u>		
1. Did not attend initial interview	13	
2. Fail to work/to notify change of address	46	59
<u>AVAILABLE FOR WORK</u>	<u>266</u>	<u>302</u>
	<u>1,070</u>	<u>1,338</u>

not respond. To these figures must be added those from the present caseload who are non-effective or for whom breach proceedings are in hand. Analysis of the 104 who committed further offences show that only 22 were by persons made subject to orders in 1975 and of those, 4 were sentenced for offences occurring before the making of the Community Service order.

A comparative study of the satisfactory and unsatisfactory completions, leaving aside those still available for work at the end of 1975, shows a percentage of 72.7 success. Although the percentage of failures is therefore relatively small, it is a matter of concern to the Community Service staff. A large number of the offenders for whom warrants have been issued, failed in 1973 during the early months of the scheme. It is possible that some of the orders made in the early stages were inappropriate due to lack of proper initial assessment and other causes. With more experience within the courts on the part of referring probation officers, and the Community Service staff, this will be reduced but inevitably there will continue to be failures, as with any other provision. Indeed the absence of failures could indicate that appropriate risks were not being taken.

In Table C - 'Courts making Orders', it can be seen that almost as many orders were made in 1975 as in the preceding two years. Some of these emanate from courts outside London beginning to use the alternative, also from a generally increased use by Inner London courts and by the ability of the Community Service staff to provide more work opportunities.

The most significant increase however is in the number of persons made subject to orders by the Crown Courts. Crown Court judges have more than doubled their use of the sentence making orders for 138 persons in 1975 against previous figures of 75 and 47 persons in 1974 and 1973 respectively.

TABLE C.

<u>COURTS MAKING ORDERS</u>	<u>OFFENDERS</u>		<u>ORDERS</u>	
	<u>1975</u>	<u>1973/74</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1973/74</u>
Court of Appeal	1	-	1	-
Central Criminal Court	18	30	19	31
Crown Court	102	92	100	103
Crown Courts (Outside London)	18	-	24	-
City of London	4	2	4	2
Clerkenwell	26	29	36	41
Hampstead	3	7	4	9
North London	23	33	34	51
Old Street	19	36	19	42
Highbury Corner (New Court)	14	-	17	-
Bow Street	15	16	16	18
Marlborough Street	8	7	8	7
Marylebone	31	18	34	20
South Western	43	60	62	77
Wells Street	2	6	3	9
West London	41	68	44	90
Horseferry Road (New Court)	1	-	3	-
Camberwell Green	49	63	78	74
Greenwich	20	17	28	24
Lambeth	4	2	4	2
Thames	12	22	14	32
Tower Bridge	11	36	14	41
Woolwich	15	17	28	28
Magistrates' Courts (Outside London)	29	-	43	-
	509	561	637	701
TOTALS	1,070		1,338	

There are a number of factors that contribute to this increase. Experience has enabled Community Service organisers to respond more quickly, often to telephone requests, when judgement is respited for this purpose; probation officers have more often discussed the alternative with offenders before the Court appearances and judges have said that recommendations have become more realistic. The presentation of Community Service at a Judicial Seminar in September 1975 is also significant since the increase has been particularly noticeable in recent months (21 offenders from Crown Courts in December against 34 from Magistrates' Courts - more than twice the monthly average).

The encouraging aspect of this is in recognising that Crown Courts are generally dealing with more serious offences and more often with the recidivist offender and therefore it may demonstrate the extent to which Community Service in Inner London is really accepted by the judges as an alternative to imprisonment.

The implication for the staff is that they are increasingly dealing with more seriously delinquent persons with consequent need for closer supervision and support.

Table D shows the ages of offenders made subject to order in the three years since the scheme started. If comparison is made between the 17-25 and over 25 age ranges, the number of persons made subject to orders made in 1975, with total figures for 1973/1974 in brackets, are as follows:-

	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>
17-25	404(448)	12(13)
Over 25	85(93)	8(7)
	<u>489(541)</u>	<u>20(20)</u>

This shows that about 82% of all orders made in 1975 were for the younger age group which is only very slightly less than in previous years. Though this may reflect the age range of those appearing before courts, there is the danger of Community Service becoming considered as primarily appropriate for younger offenders. The view of the staff in Inner London is that older clients have shown themselves at least as successful in completing their orders and, since more often they have family responsibilities, there are more social problems created for them by imprisonment.

Also shown in Table D are the length of orders made in 1975 compared with the previous years. It is apparent there has been a reduction in the number of very short orders (as part of consecutive orders), and a drop in the number of orders of over 120 hours from 20% of the total, to 15%. This is a welcome development because, as the Annual Report for 1974 indicated, it has often proved difficult even for conscientious persons to complete very long hours within the twelve months period allowed.

A review of the unsatisfactory completions, warrants and summonses and non-effective cases in terms of hours ordered, shows that most of the failures are those with orders of over 150 hours. Though it is accepted that these persons will have committed more serious offences, many of them have completed 50% or more of their orders before breakdown, and their failure might in part be due to their inability to "see" the end of the order.

The average length of orders has remained fairly constant, being 104 hours in 1975, compared with 105.8 in 1973/1974.

AGE OF OFFENDERS & LENGTH OF ORDERS

TABLE D.

<u>AGES</u>	<u>OFFENDERS</u>		<u>HOURS</u>	<u>LENGTH OF ORDERS</u>	
	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>		<u>1975</u>	<u>TOTAL 73/74</u>
17	149	2	15	0	1
18	161	4	20	1	8
19	148	4	25	1	6
20	117	1	30	0	3
21	76	4	40	38	37
22	84	7	48	0	2
23	46	1	50	20	23
24	42	1	60	32	42
25	29	1	64	0	1
26	28	2	70	3	0
27	21	-	72	6	0
28	18	-	75	8	6
29	13	1	80	50	30
30	17	1	86	1	0
31	2	-	90	1	2
32	3	1	100	293	320
33	6	-	120	87	79
34	8	3	125	1	1
35	8	-	130	0	1
36	4	-	140	11	12
37	8	3	150	32	61
38	9	-	160	7	12
39	9	-	180	4	1
40	4	1	200	32	48
41	2	-	240	9	5
42	3	-			
43	2	-			
44	1	-			
45	-	1			
46	1	-			
47	2	-			
48	2	-			
49	2	-			
50	1	1			
51	-	1			
53	1	-			
59	1	-			
60	1	-			
67	1	-			
				637	701
					1,338
	1,037	40			

The type of offence for which offenders were made subject to an order (Table E), after allowing for the general increased use of the sentence shows little change in the pattern. The exceptions seem to be for assault and offensive weapon charges, when the number of orders actually made show a marked reduction. The indications are that gradually the courts are prepared to consider using Community Service orders for more serious offences but conclusions are difficult to draw from the simple evidence we have.

The figures shown in Table F indicate little variation between 1975 and previous years. There is evidence that the Community Service Centre is not always given the full number of previous convictions when an order is made and often only the last three. Even so, it can be said that 37% of persons involved in the scheme have at least 5 previous convictions.

Conclusions therefore that may be drawn from analysis of the statistics are that whilst expanding by about 50%, much has remained constant suggesting that increases have been spread across the range of offences, age-groups, level of delinquency of those sentenced, and perhaps most important, without adversely affecting the percentage of successful completions.

TABLE E.

TYPE OF OFFENCE (Most serious in each case)

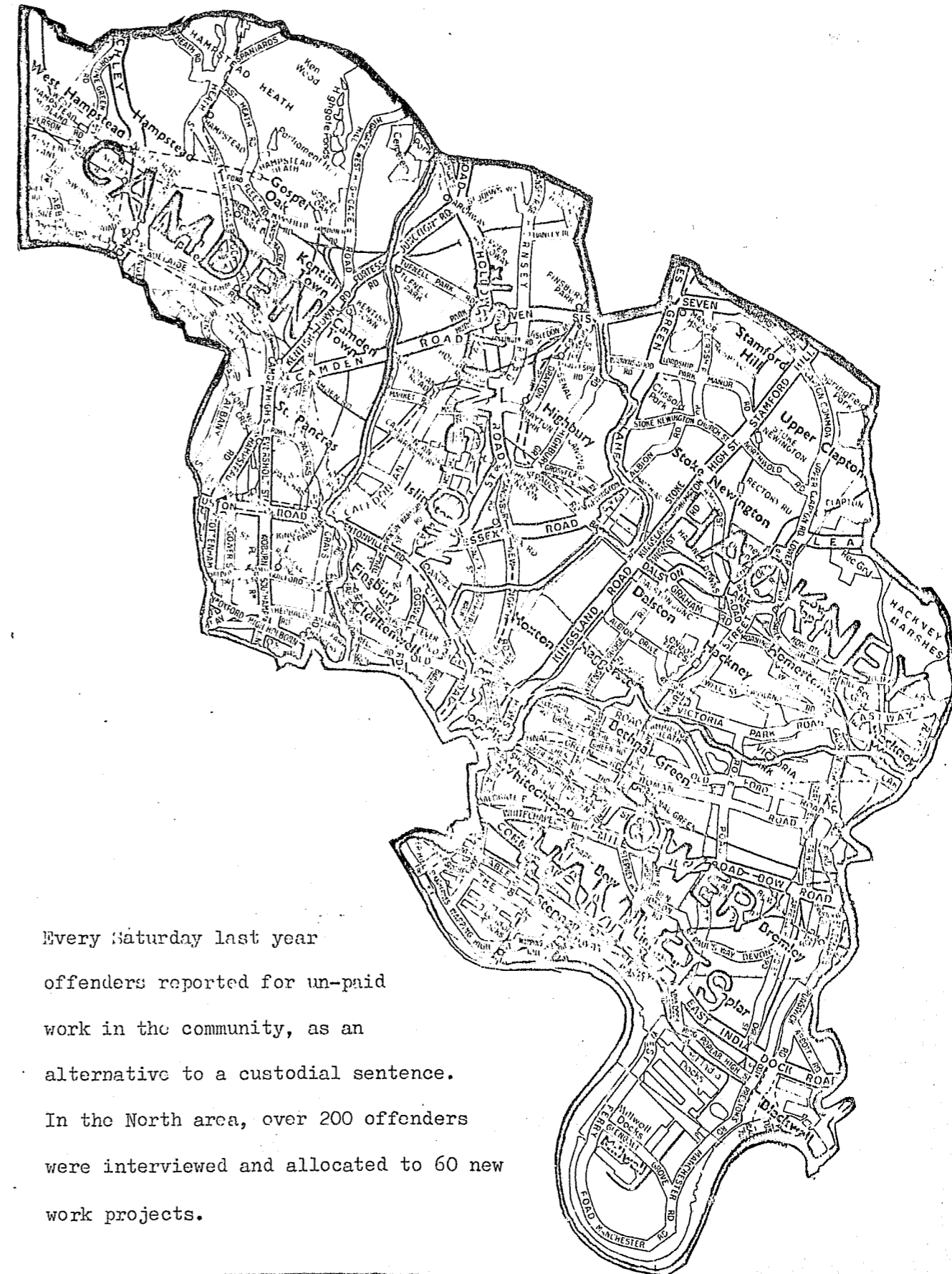
	<u>TOTAL</u> <u>1973/74</u>	<u>1975</u>
Theft	194	174
Dishonest handling	29	21
Burglary	48	58
Robbery	5	7
Forgery	2	6
Deception	14	13
Suspected person	12	15
Possession of forged notes	1	1
Blackmail		1
Conspiracy		1
Fraud		1
	<u>305</u>	<u>298</u>
Assault	51	21
Offensive weapon	15	4
Criminal damage	12	10
Arson	1	1
Possession of firearms	1	2
Threatening behaviour	4	3
Attempted bodily harm		4
Greivous bodily Harm		2
Found on enclosed premises		2
Affray		3
Unlawful wounding		1
Malicious wounding		4
	<u>84</u>	<u>57</u>
Take and drive away	71	62
Driving while disqualified	25	34
No Insurance	48	20
Allow to be carried	5	14
Dangerous driving	3	5
Excess alcohol	1	5
	<u>153</u>	<u>140</u>
Malicious telephone call (bomb threat)	1	-
Soliciting	1	3
Keeping a brothel		1
Possession of drugs	15	8
Breach of C.S.O.	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>19</u>	<u>13</u>

TABLE F.

<u>Previous convictions</u>	<u>1973-1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
<u>CONVICTIONS</u>	<u>PERSONS</u>	<u>PERSONS</u>
Not yet known	1	19
None	47	56
1	72	55
2	81	72
3	78	76
4	67	55
5	47	45
6	50	33
7	21	21
8	25	17
9	17	15
10	20	13
11	11	6
12	7	3
13		1
14	1	5
15	2	3
16	4	7
18	4	2
19	2	1
20	1	3
22	2	1
30	1	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	561	509

NORTH UNIT,
 480A Holloway Road, N.7.
 Tel: 272-5462

Organiser: J.P. Worrall
 Senior Probation Officer.
 Assistant: R. Jarvin
 Probation Officer.
 Ancillary: Miss K.A. Hollins
 Ancillary: P.H. Kennett
 Secretary: Miss E. Curry



Every Saturday last year
 offenders reported for un-paid
 work in the community, as an
 alternative to a custodial sentence.
 In the North area, over 200 offenders
 were interviewed and allocated to 60 new
 work projects.

He or she comes to the centre with an order from the court to do between 40 and 240 hours of unpaid work as instructed by the relevant officer, usually at the rate of 6-8 hours per week. He has possibly never had the chance before in his life to give to anyone. He is probably self-centred, and motivated only by the thought that he prefers not to go to prison.

After interview, he learns about people in the community, often much worse off than himself. These are often people living in isolation, deprived or handicapped, be it physically, mentally or socially. The offender will be selected to work individually or in a group.

THE SUPERVISOR.

If the offender works in a group, then we provide a supervisor who will act as liaison between him and the work providing agency. The supervisor is responsible for returning the record of the hours worked, and seeing that the work is satisfactorily completed. There are several kinds of supervisor. The ancillary worker in his semi-professional position; the "volunteer" supervisor who comes to us by recommendation, perhaps as an accredited voluntary associate, who feels he could communicate better as leader of a team, or as an interested member of the public with a need to extend his capabilities, and the student social worker who requires this extra experience. It is fair to say that without these supervisors, Community Service could not have expanded to the same extent or been so successful.

The supervisors are visited at their projects by staff from the centre, and on-going support is afforded to assist the formation of easy relationships with kind but firm control. In addition, regular meetings are held, when experiences and ideas are exchanged.

PROJECTS

Among the projects and beneficiaries:

Autistic children attending a day hospital were helped to run their club activities.

Handicapped children at an adventure playground had constructed for them special climbing frames and housing for their pet animals.

Ex-mental patients in a group home had their rooms re-papered and painted.

Hospital patients had their existing social club completely re-decorated and a further dormitory was renovated to be opened on the 5th January 1976 as a club for 200 elderly Jewish patients.

Garden fete stalls were erected and manned.

An old public house is now in use as a hostel for young people who arrive in London with nowhere to go.

Battered wives were given the shell of a house. A group of offenders disposed of the rubble and rats, re-decorated in bright colours, bringing some comfort to children and their mothers who, through no fault of their own, had become deprived of love and affection.

A much appreciated mobile gardening group operates every weekend. Many elderly and handicapped lonely people have enjoyed the company of the Community Service workers, who have renovated, maintained and in some cases, even landscaped gardens anew.

Many centres for the deprived section of the community have sought our help, and asked for continued support.

In addition, offenders have given up whole weekends to work away from home on conservation work, clearing ponds or refencing areas for environmental improvement.

Many adventure playgrounds have taken individuals as assistant play-leaders and one in particular has now engaged a worker, on completion of his hours, as a paid deputy playleader.

Several hostels for the homeless have sprung into being as a direct result of the labour we provided.

Many youth clubs are supported daily by our clients. One youth club has accepted eight helpers, all of whom have completed their court orders, but continue to support the club.

CONCLUSION.

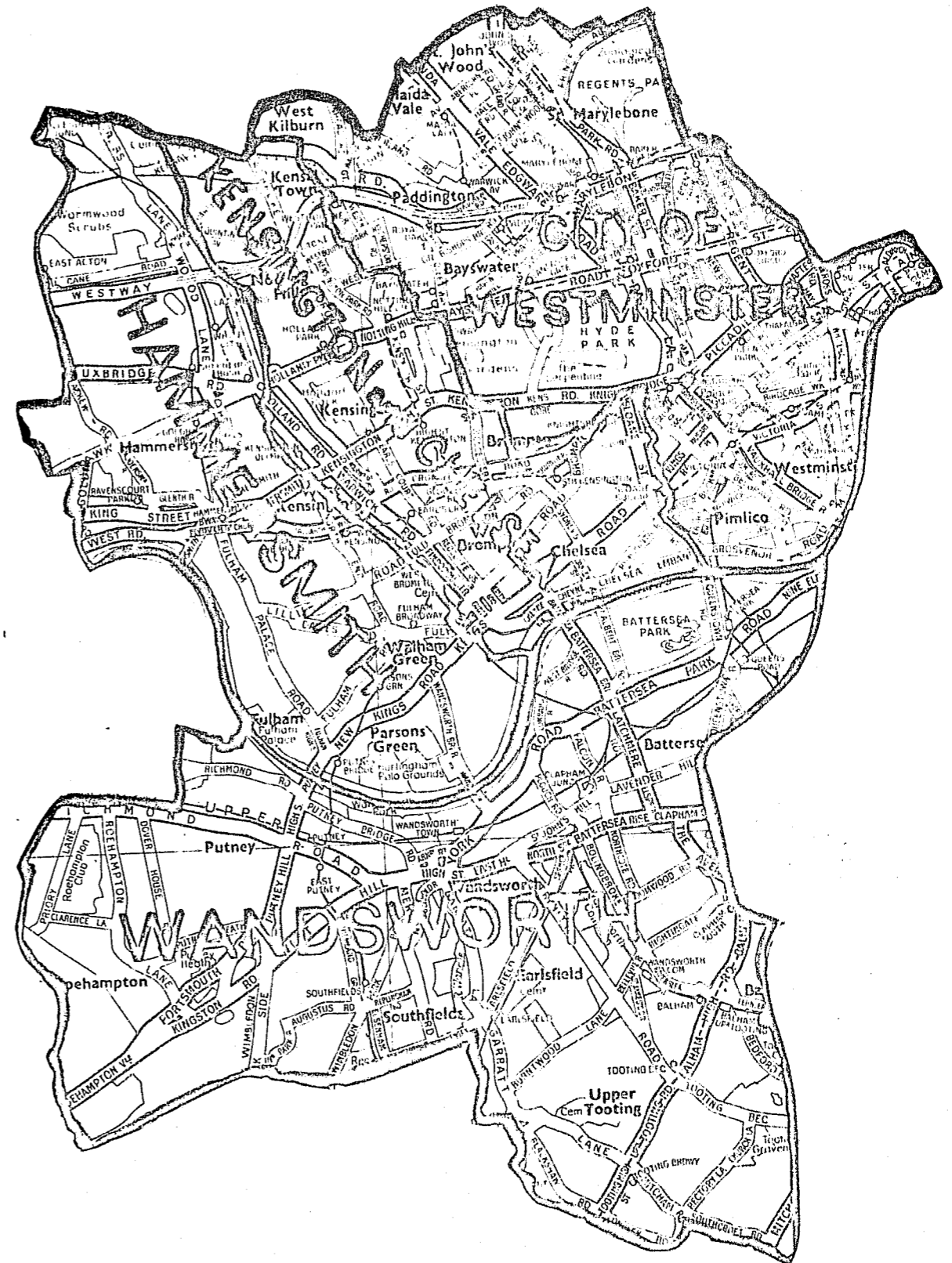
A year ago we said the North region was confident it could provide work for 200 offenders. In fact, we had some 211 people to place in 60 new projects. 76 of these completed satisfactorily, 97 continue their work in 1976 and some 33 were lost on the way, although only 15 of these were taken back to court as direct failures of the scheme.

In September, clients, supervisors, probation officers and beneficiaries attended a conference for judges and, following a short film, answered questions from an enthusiastic audience. Many probation officers and magistrates were given the opportunity to see our home-made films, and contribute to the healthy discussions which followed. Numerous visitors from abroad have spent a day visiting clients at work, and our staff are always available for further calls on their time.

We hope that what has been said above reflects our confidence in the schemes' future in 1976.

WEST UNIT
210 Chiswick High Road
W.4.
Tel: 995-4458

Organiser: J. ... Probation Officer
Assist. ... Child Officer
Ancillary: J. Stevenson
Ancillary: I. Sparling
Secretary: Mrs F.J. Vignall.



WEST AREA OFFICE

The unit continues to operate from the Community Service centre at Chiswick High Road which is reasonably accessible to the area it covers. It is hoped however, that we will be able to move into the area in the coming year.

The size of the region covered, and the siting of the unit within that, are important when one considers that offenders have to attend for interview and that members of staff are constantly visiting the work sites and calling at offender's homes in the event of their non-attendance at the project.

The unit has received 167 new persons into the scheme during the year. 96 orders were successfully completed and each week we have some sixty offenders available for work in the community.

The extent to which local organisations have accepted and valued the contributions of Community Service is demonstrated by the number of telephone calls we receive from previously satisfied 'customers', asking for further help. Perhaps more important, offenders are in touch with increasingly large numbers of people in the community, many of whom had little previous experience or knowledge of those who have been before the courts or served custodial sentences. Our men and women have proved acceptable and adaptable, and it is because on the whole they have worked well and hard that we have been asked back.

Our most interesting experiment during the year was to staff a meeting place for elderly people on Saturdays, providing a sandwich luncheon and biscuits and tea later. Games and competitions were organised by the young men involved. One of the developments envisaged was that this could provide the opportunity to discover

and meet the individual needs of the senior citizens (e.g. they might want some shopping done, or a room painted and this would be picked up and followed through). Unfortunately this project has run into accommodation difficulties but alternatives are being pursued.

Adventure playgrounds, boys' clubs and various hostels have regularly supplied us with work situations and a surprising number of our clients have shown enthusiasm and initiative to proposing community work situations themselves. Though these always need to be checked by the staff before approval, it is a development to be encouraged.

One of the groups were involved in extensive re-decoration of the basement of a former city merchants house which is now being used as a women's hostel. The building itself is of considerable historical and architectural significance and the group themselves became interested in the restoration of an old bakery housed in the basement. They are now involved in working to restore the bakery to its original state, adding to the considerable interest in the building, shown by visitors from many parts of the world. It should perhaps be added that the conditions of the room when the work started, in terms of years of encrusted dirt, was such as to deter anyone without imagination or a degree of dedication to the task. It has been surprising what some offenders have been willing to turn their hand to.

A lady who had heard a radio programme about Community Service phoned the office to enquire about extra help for herself as she wanted assistance over and above that given by her home help. Eventually we provided a lady who helped by working for about four hours a week and this proved very satisfactory.

This case emphasised the need for older people whom we visit to have regular contacts and visits as some of them have revealed how lonely they are and how much they need someone to talk to. In one area, the social services department are starting a campaign to recruit volunteers to supply this need and it is hoped that some of the Community Service clients could be involved in the scheme.

We have already in the past used older and reliable men to redecorate small rooms for elderly people. This has worked out very well and could be developed by offering help in other ways such as window cleaning and gardening. Although organisational problems will be considerable, our experience of it is that any work we can do with the elderly and infirm is both worthwhile and rewarding.

As our clients are often not accustomed to regular work, their commitment to the scheme is surprising and they sometimes do rather more than is expected of them. One matron whispered to us that her helper worked so hard he completed tasks in twenty minutes which usually took over an hour and she couldn't always find an answer when he came up asking what he should do next!

The important factor in successful completion within a group or establishment, appears to be the enthusiasm of those providing the work and leadership. If the people in charge convey their feeling that what is being done is worthwhile, it is usually followed through with enthusiasm.

Our clients come to us from all walks of life some of them with several court appearances. Home visits often reveal problems that we would like to take up and help with and it is frustrating that present staff resources do not allow for this.

Marital problems and addiction to alcohol or drugs are probably the main areas of concern and reveal themselves during the course of the order. It is difficult indeed for people with an addiction to sustain their efforts over a long period and sometimes they disappear from their addresses before the orders have ended. Indeed the clients changes of address constitute one of our major problems, and most of the warrants we have outstanding had to be issued for this reason. We find such disappearances disappointing as there is nothing we can do about it.

In general however, it has been a very satisfying year and we are looking in 1976 for ways of improving on the progress made to date.

Organiser: C.H. Brewster
 Senior Probation Officer

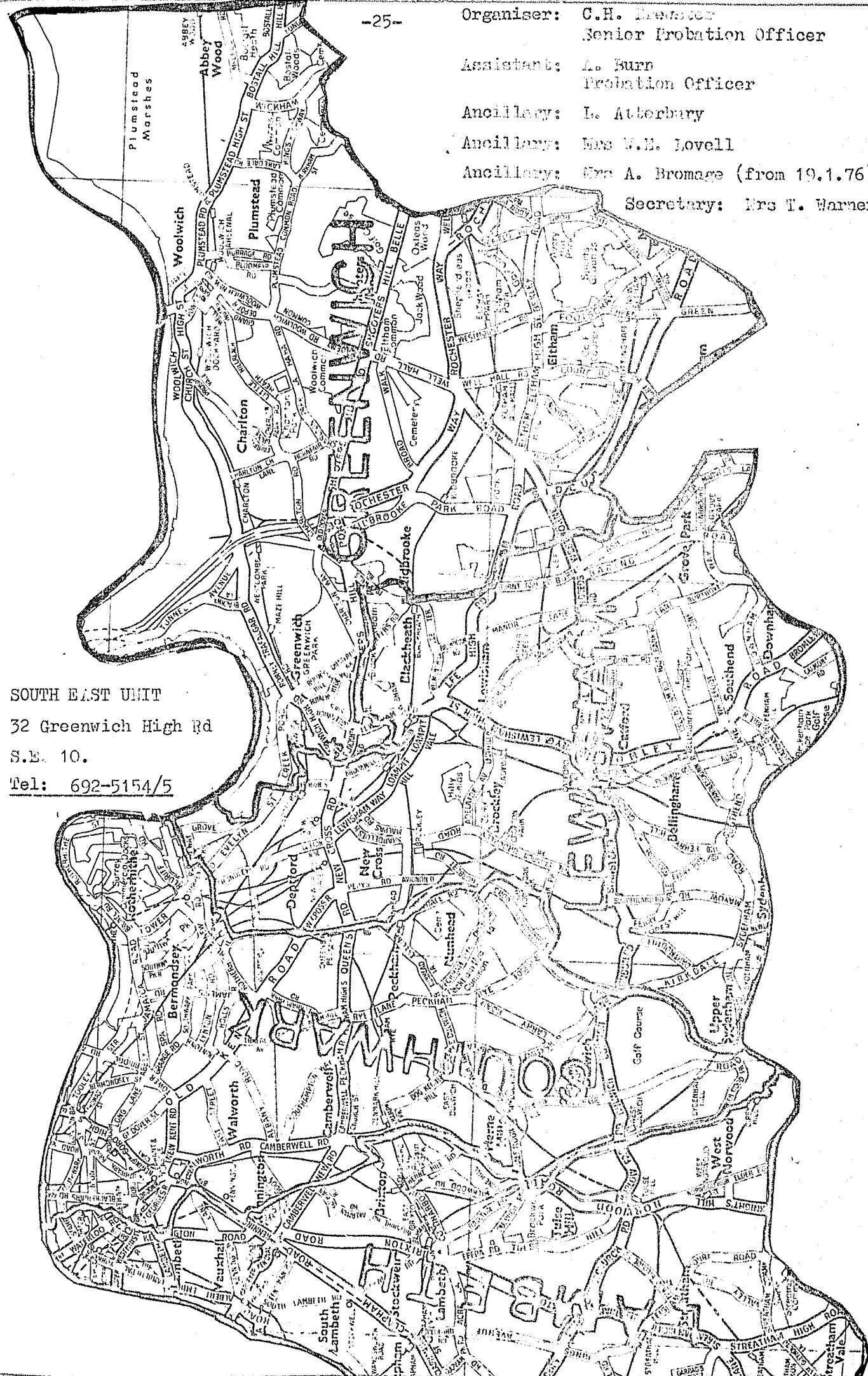
Assistant: A. Burr
 Probation Officer

Ancillary: L. Atterbury

Ancillary: Mrs W.M. Lovell

Ancillary: Mrs A. Bromage (from 19.1.76)

Secretary: Mrs T. Warner



SOUTH EAST UNIT
 32 Greenwich High Rd
 S.E. 10.
 Tel: 692-5154/5

SOUTH EAST OFFICE

The office covering the four south east boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich opened at 32 Greenwich High Road, S.E.10, on 10th February 1975. It was an opportune time to be actually based within the area and to be more available to the courts and the probation service for the expansion of the scheme.

In spite of premises alterations, decorations and the initial absence of heating or telephone, it was an achievement that the weekly work programme continued uninterrupted. The office being close to the Greenwich magistrates' court, and with easier access to the Camberwell and Woolwich courts, there has been a very significant increase in the number of referrals of offenders and the making of Community Service orders.

The past year has seen a steady overall development - the actual number of offenders placed on Community Service orders exceeding 1974 by 50%.

There was also a doubling up of completions - 55 in 1974 and 109 in 1975.

The number of projects and the variety of work during 1975 has developed most encouragingly. No less than 70 organisations have offered work which has directly or indirectly benefited the community. Much of this has been to assist the elderly in homes/clubs (12) and for the young in the form of youth clubs/adventure playgrounds (16). Typically an offender subject to a Community Service order would be in a home assisting in the kitchen, serving coffees, helping to move those who are frail or handicapped or assisting the maintenance handyman or tidying the garden/grounds etc. In a youth club, an offender would be setting out equipment and assisting the leader by supervising youngsters and taking football sessions or games, perhaps cleaning and painting where needed.

Approximately half of the effective case load of some 90 clients would be involved in individual projects, and would be specially referred to the agencies concerned for interview.

In addition to the individual placements where clients are considered more mature, organised and reliable, there have been nine groups operating during 1975 throughout the four south east boroughs made up largely of younger men, unskilled or immature, who need a close and more organised work situation involving a supervisor. These groups have had a variety of work but mainly gardening for the elderly - some 200 gardens, and decorating. On occasions groups have helped community centres and youth clubs assisting with printing and cleaning.

For several months, a group of men has worked with a supervisor at the old Bermondsey slipper baths helping to convert the premises into a Resource centre where, through the arrangements of the Inner London Probation and After-Care Service, young clients involved in car offences might have the opportunity of being assisted towards more responsible attitudes and behaviour and gain a better knowledge of vehicles.

At Hither Green Hospital, a supervised group of young men has worked through the year clearing ground of undergrowth and refuse.

The group support and control given by the supervisors as well as their personal involvement and interest in drawing out the best from the clients has made a considerable contribution to the success of the scheme.

Letters from individuals and organisations expressing their appreciation of the work achieved by offenders have been numerous.

A senior citizen writes:

"I am writing to thank you for the assistance given today with the gardens at No 27 and No 29... Road. The ground was in a very bad state owing to the long spell of very dry weather, and owing to chronic illness, had been neglected for years. They are very large gardens, too large for two sick pensioners

to manage and although help had been promised at times, nobody ever came back. Your team worked very hard indeed, and made no mess, and we are both very grateful and appreciate the hard work the young men did for us. Our thanks to all concerned."

In another instance relating to a group also with a supervisor who decorated the Citizens Advice Bureau at Woolwich, the organiser writes:

"I felt I must write to you immediately to ask you to convey our thanks to Dave and the boys for their splendid job. The rooms here now look quite attractive and it is so much more pleasant for the staff and for our clients to have these brighter surroundings."

The matron of a Lewisham nursing home sent her thanks for the placement of an older man who completed his Community Service order most satisfactorily:

"I would like to express my gratitude to your organisation for providing us with such an excellent gardener as Mr G. He has left our garden in excellent condition and he was also such a pleasant personality. We shall miss him. I would indeed be grateful if you could find us a replacement. Could you please forward the enclosed letter to Mr G."

Offenders themselves express their feelings variously concerning the scheme and the work they perform. Some clients give regular and enthusiastic service and usually form good, warm relationships with those in charge of the projects where they work. Some have to be 'chivied' and perhaps taken to task before a worthwhile response is forthcoming. Of course some projects may lack interest and challenge. If there has to be the rule on occasions of 'the rough with the smooth', it can be said that every effort is made to find useful and worthwhile projects where the client can understand what his contribution means. It can be claimed that the past year has seen better matching processes and wider searching for suitable projects.

In cases where breach of Community Service order proceedings have been taken at court for failure to work, if it is revealed that the client

has some reasonable excuse, the court may afford the opportunity of a long remand for the client to improve his performance.

Efforts have been made during the past year to visit probation offices in the south east to keep probation officers abreast with the progress of the scheme and of the ideas being developed. It is significant that the number of referrals from the courts on the initiative of probation officers, has been steadily increasing. Efforts are being made to interview more clients where doubt exists as to their suitability for Community Service orders.

In 1975, 189 offenders were made subject to orders in the south east area, against 126 in 1974. As at 1 January 1976, 106 orders were still effective and the clients were engaged in projects. These were the carry over of the orders made in the latter months of 1975. It may be understood that the investigation of the circumstances of this number of clients, plus the additional small number of non-effective cases, on a week by week basis is no mean task. The arrangement of the weekly work programme is a routine matter but with all the changes relating to clients, e.g. sickness, full time work commitments, domestic situations and the changes relating to projects, indisposition of supervisors, holidays and of course the weather, things can be somewhat complicated.

With increased referrals and interviewing of clients, accountability for work completed, and the search for new projects as well as maintaining good relationships with existing beneficiaries, something about the pressures within a small unit covering a large territory can be understood.

Community Service is not without its humour, its oddities, its drama. A visit was made around noon one Saturday to a group expected to be

gardening at an elderly ladies' home in Lewisham. The supervisor was puzzled on arrival at the house, by the absence of clients and the quietness. As he knocked at the door, a neighbour came rushing down the path, obviously anxious and rather shame-faced, "I'm sorry sir", she said, "I asked the boys to stop mowing as my prize racing pigeons were just returning - so they took an early lunch break!"



*Some of our successes
have been quite devastating*

5. THE WAY AHEAD

The report refers to a judicial seminar in September when the Inner London Probation and After-Care Service presented various aspects of its work, including Community Service, to a large number of judges. This proved most rewarding for all concerned and we hope and understand it is to be repeated.

A similar opportunity to communicate the scheme in a more personal way to stipendiary and lay magistrates would, we feel, be very helpful. Many lectures and talks have been given about Community Service, both in this country and in America, and the press, radio and television have continued to show interest. Throughout the year all three units have received many visitors from America, Japan, Denmark, Canada and from other parts of the world, in addition to representatives of the judiciary and probation services in this country. The part we have played in presenting our experiences of the scheme has been interesting to us and we hope valuable to those concerned.

The general enthusiasm that surrounds Community Service has been well earned by those concerned with its development. These include the Inner London Community Service Committee; the Joint Liaison Committee representing the trade Union interests; the representatives of organisations providing work projects; the sessional supervisors as well as headquarters and staff of the project itself, and not least, the offenders.

In looking at the future however, it is important to recognise that Community Service is just one alternative and that it is appropriate only for some of those currently facing custodial sentences.

Further expansion must be contained within the competence of the scheme to maintain at least the same standards as currently apply. If Community Service is to retain the respect it has achieved then we must strive to pay even greater attention to an individual's needs, recognising already our inability always to respond directly to a clients' problems. We must try to improve communications with the sentencers and referring probation officers: we must be aware of the need to give more support and guidance to the supervisors who are an essential part of the project and we must seek to provide in the community, more varied work opportunities.

Having said that, it will be clear from this report that the scheme in Inner London has yet to reach its potential in terms of the use made by the courts of the Community Service orders. The organisers feel that the way to expand is by the provision of a fourth unit rather than by increasing the staff in each of the present teams. We are actively considering the recruitment of our own team of voluntary associates whom we could put in touch on an individual basis with some of the offenders who would like more personal support than we are able to provide.

We confidently expect that during next year the work load will increase by 25%. In times of inflation the relative cost of prison against Community Service is even greater, so increasing our resources to cope with larger numbers of offenders who might receive custodial sentences seems to make good economic sense.

When the law relating to this scheme is reviewed, we hope consideration will be given to the problem for an offender and the Community Service staff which arises in the event of further offences being committed before completion of an order. As the further offence does not in itself constitute a breach of the Community Service order, courts do

not have power to sentence for the original offence; they are, perhaps understandably, reluctant to revoke the order. When the further offence leads to a period of imprisonment, it invariably means that the twelve months period has expired before the offender's date of release (Community Service orders must be completed within one year unless the court orders an extension). We would suggest therefore that, as with probation orders, on commission of a further offence, the court has power to consider sentencing the offender for the original offence.

In conclusion, we would draw attention to eight of our clients. The criteria for success in any penal measure are difficult to establish. The basis for "satisfactory completions", in this report is that the number of hours ordered have been completed satisfactorily in the time allowed. How much the individual has gained from the experience is harder to gauge. We are currently looking at ways of assessing, using simple research, the factors which help offenders to complete Community Service orders. This would include an attempt at some measurement through interviews and questionnaires, of what offenders themselves feel they gained from their involvement in terms of personal growth and satisfaction. Clearly some are more successful than others and whilst we do not suggest that the following examples are typical, they represent a significant proportion of our caseload:-

Derek was made the subject of an Order for 100 hours at the Inner London Crown Court on 30th July 1975 on charges of burglary.

A Londoner, aged 28 and married for six years, he had several previous convictions, mainly for theft and burglary, although one was for common assault. In July 1972 he had received a two year prison sentence for burglary and at the time of his appearance at the

Crown Court he was already under the sanction of a suspended sentence of two years, imposed twelve months before. For Derek the possibility of avoiding a further lengthy custodial sentence was particularly significant and he expressed complete willingness to co-operate in the scheme.

Tall, pleasant in manner although described as "quick tempered and inarticulate" - he regarded himself as a capable "handyman", and this proved to be so. Initially he worked with a group gardening for old age pensioners, where his enthusiasm was immediately evident. However, it was felt that he could respond to the responsibility of working more on his own initiative and he therefore became a helper at a community centre and theatre project being developed in a disused and derelict warehouse on the waterfront. Here, whether working alone or with the skilled tradesman, he applied his various talents very effectively, both in the rebuilding of the premises and in setting up theatre productions.

All this he accomplished with commendable regularity and persistence against a background of a difficult situation in his marriage, which both he and his wife were working to retrieve with the support and guidance of a social worker.

At the end of four months, Derek's hours had been completed. He continues to help out occasionally and recently was more than willing to speak to a national newspaper of the very positive benefits he found in the scheme.

Arthur was made subject to an order of 140 hours for taking and driving away a motor vehicle.

He completed the order, working for a local community centre, both in the centre itself, and an attached junior club and also at various scouting functions.

This man proved to be extremely helpful and co-operative both to the recipients and to the Community Service staff. He continues to work at the junior club long after the order has been completed.

Mark a young Guyanian, was given 100 hours of Community Service for the theft of some musical instruments.

At the time he was at college studying business management, and was available during the summer holiday, when a helper was required by an intermediate treatment social worker in a London borough.

He accompanied the worker to two summer camps for deprived children, and proved to be very useful, giving "outstanding assistance" in the supervision of children.

By the time he had ended his second camp he had worked a total of 190 hours!

Carol, a 26 year old, who was already subject to a suspended sentence, went on a shop lifting 'spree' around the multiple stores in Oxford Street. She was given a Community Service order for 100 hours.

Initially Carol was given work in an adventure playground, but after her first visit she felt she would not be able to contribute sufficiently. She contacted the voluntary help organiser at a local hospital and, upon explaining her position, was given work on the children's ward.

Throughout she was helpful but, as she progressed through the order, it was apparent that she also began to lose her angry and aggressive manner.

Carol lived with her parents and as she held a responsible position at work she was able to contribute substantially to the family income. It was clear she had no need of the articles she stole and it is probable that her offences were the result of emotional frustration.

There is no doubt that Carol's experience in working with children was of considerable help to her.

Ivy, married, smart and sophisticated with four daughters aged between 11 and 18 years, had a well kept, well furnished home in Walworth; one of her daughters had also been before the court. The magistrates decided to make an order for 80 hours of Community Service as a deterrent and to allow Ivy to make some reparation for being involved with her neighbour, in stealing a cheque and attempting to obtain goods fraudulently. This was her fourth conviction of this nature.

In the pleasant square where she lived there was a youth club in need of someone to help with its activities. Ivy was just the person to take basic cooking classes with the youngsters and to serve at the club canteen. Two, and sometimes three nights a week for eleven weeks, Ivy competently and reliably contributed her talents and personality to the club. The overworked youth leader was more than pleased with this help - and long after the order had been completed, he persuaded Ivy to extend her help by establishing a dressmaking class for the young members.

The eighty hours of effort were well spent; they were certainly beneficial to the immediate community and, it would seem, to Ivy herself.

Raymond, a single 30 years old, with many previous offences. Since serving a borstal sentence most of his offences had been concerned with driving whilst under the influence of alcohol. On this occasion he was given 150 hours of

Community Service with a 5 year driving disqualification for being drunk whilst driving a motorcar.

Work was found at an old people's home, where Raymond contributed to the well being of the residents. The Matron held him in high esteem and was pleased that he continued to come to the home even after his order ended.

As imprisonment would have meant losing his home and his job, where he was making rapid progress, Raymond was most grateful for being allowed to keep his freedom. Perhaps because of this he carried out his tasks with energy and enthusiasm.

Peter was given 150 hours Community Service for dangerous driving

He was placed in a supervised group of five, painting and decorating a three storey house occupied by ex-mental patients. Peter fitted into the group well, and soon became one of the most reliable members of it, showing a good degree of skill both as a wallpaperer and in helping to maintain good relationships.

After completing 105 hours, Peter was withdrawn from the group as the task had been completed. He was placed in an adventure playground, where his work was considered to be of an excellent standard and where, at the completion of his order, he was offered and accepted, a full-time post as deputy play leader.

Stanley was made subject to a Community Service order for 200 hours for driving a car "knowing it to have been taken without the consent of the owner or other lawful authority". Aged 19 and the second eldest child of a family originally of Balkan parentage, with a father who had served during the war in the Polish Army, Stanley had been before the courts on three occasions between 1970 and 1974, twice for theft and once for causing damage to property while drunk. His father was a heavy drinker and this had created strain in the home situation though it was only Stanley who apparently reacted to it in a disturbed manner - unsettled at various schools, poor work, truancy. His parents made private arrangements for Stanley to have psychiatric treatment and subsequently at the age of 16, following alleged sexual assaults when he was drifting around the West End he was referred for psychotherapy at an adolescent psychiatric unit. The court in this latest instance made the order without the usual reference to the Community Service office and the disturbed background was not known - it emerged later there was also an involvement with drugs.

A tall, nervous, pale young man, articulate and intelligent, with only a very sketchy background of employment, Stanley hoped to take a government training course in bricklaying.

Over a period of seven months, as a member of a supervised group, he struggled through just less than 100 hours of work, helping to decorate the homes or cultivate the gardens of elderly persons. His general manner and approach were pleasant and he was hardworking but the various other pressures in his unsettled life style mitigated against his being able to maintain any consistent effort. It became necessary to refer the situation back to the court so that he could be dealt with for the original offence.

This failure may have been the result of an insufficiently considered decision at the time of sentence - but there are some pensioners in south-east London who may be grateful for Stanley's efforts on their behalf.

Finally, the views of one of the sessional supervisors:-

To be a supervisor of those subject to Community Service orders is a job, like any other, which has its rewards and frustrations. The supervisor works alongside the group and tries to get the best out of its members by example and patient support.

It is rewarding for many reasons. One feels personal pleasure when clients attend regularly and get through their orders without committing further offences. It is pleasing to note the gratitude of those for whom work is undertaken. However, the supervisor's role is not always easy - there are times when it requires an extraordinary amount of patience. Sometimes there are problems in maintaining the interest of the group and in holding them together so that they function as a team. There are times when agencies do not supply the materials or the work in sufficient quantities to keep everyone occupied - they seem to underestimate the capacity of the offender for good, solid, hard work.

Involvement in the scheme is exciting for the supervisor because Community Service is a new concept in the treatment of offenders.

END

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