

# open doors

isolation • society



BULGARIA

ENGLANDS ROSE OF ST GEORGE

IRELAND

POLAND

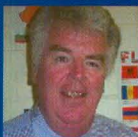
NORWAY

NORTHERN IRELAND



# MABEL

**MABEL IS A EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP PROJECT  
INVOLVING PRISONS FROM THE  
FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:**



## **LEAD PARTNER: N.IRELAND**

OVERALL PROJECT LEADER: JIM TURLEY  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, HMP MAGHABERRY, UPPER BALLINDERRY, LISBURN, N.IRELAND, BT 28 2PT  
T: 028 92 612 592 or 02892 614 794 E: turjimley@hotmail.com or sturley321@aol.com

---



## **BULGARIA**

TEAM LEADER: VENKO VOEV  
ZATVOR SCHOOL, STARA ZAGORA PRISON, 6000 STARA ZAGORA, BULGARIA  
T: + 359 42 312 53 F: +359 42 231 76 GSM: +359 42 887 397 96 E: vsptu\_pmk@abv.bg

---



## **NORWAY**

TEAM LEADER: GISLE GRAHL-JACOBSEN  
DRAMMEN FENGSEL AVD.SKOLE, ERIK BORRESENSGT, 20, 3015 DRAMMEN, NORWAY  
T: + 47 32 21 98 12 E: gisle.grahl-jacobsen@skole.bfk.no

---



## **ENGLAND**

TEAM LEADERS: DEBI TWIST  
EDUCATION DEPT, HMP LANCASTER CASTLE, CASTLE HILL, LANCASTER LA1 1YL  
T: 01524385100 x 5272 E: debi.twist@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk, spkeenan.freeserve.co.uk



DEBORAH SCAIFE  
EDUCATION DEPT, HMY LANCASTER FARMS, STONE ROW HEAD, OFF QUERNMORE ROAD, LANCS LA1 3QZ  
T: 01 524 563450 x 321 E: alicia.keeping@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk

---



## **SOUTHERN IRELAND**

TEAM LEADER: NUALA CONNOLLY:  
EDUCATION UNIT, CURRAGH PRISON, CO KILDARE, IRELAND  
T: 045 44 1473 E: edcurr@indigo.ie

---



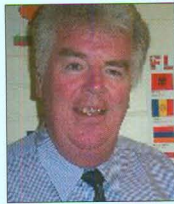
## **POLAND**

TEAM LEADER: MAREK POTĘPA  
UL.KRAKOWSKA 18 "D"/63, 35-111 RZESZOW, ZAKTAD KARNY, POLAND  
T: 48 17 8632289 E: marekpot@wp.pl

---

***'Isolation can also mean  
rediscovering oneself'***

# Foreword



## Welcome to the first Mabel magazine!

Students in each of the partner countries: N. Ireland, S. Ireland, England, Poland, Bulgaria and Norway, have contributed the material for this issue. The themes underlying the work are 'Isolation' and 'Society' A big thank you to all who submitted work.

Meeting with colleagues throughout Europe has given us an insight into the problems that we, as tutors, and you as students, face in prison. Yet the creative ability, enthusiasm, humour and resilience evident from these writings demonstrates how we all work together to overcome these difficulties.

We are indebted to our governors, and colleagues in HMP Maghaberry who have supported us in this venture and would mention in particular, Governor Pat Maguire, who provided financial and practical support and had the vision to see the potential in the project.

Thanks are due to Dawn Long and Luke Buffery in the British Council in London who dealt with endless queries in an informative and helpful manner. Bernie McAllister in the British Council in Belfast quickly clued us in at the outset of our Grundtvig project and her experience has been available to us from its inception. Bernie - your name may be on our next cover!

Finally - thanks to Sam McClean, who has spent countless hours typing up materials and inserting sympathetic images under the watchful eye of our Editor, Carmen O'Hagan.

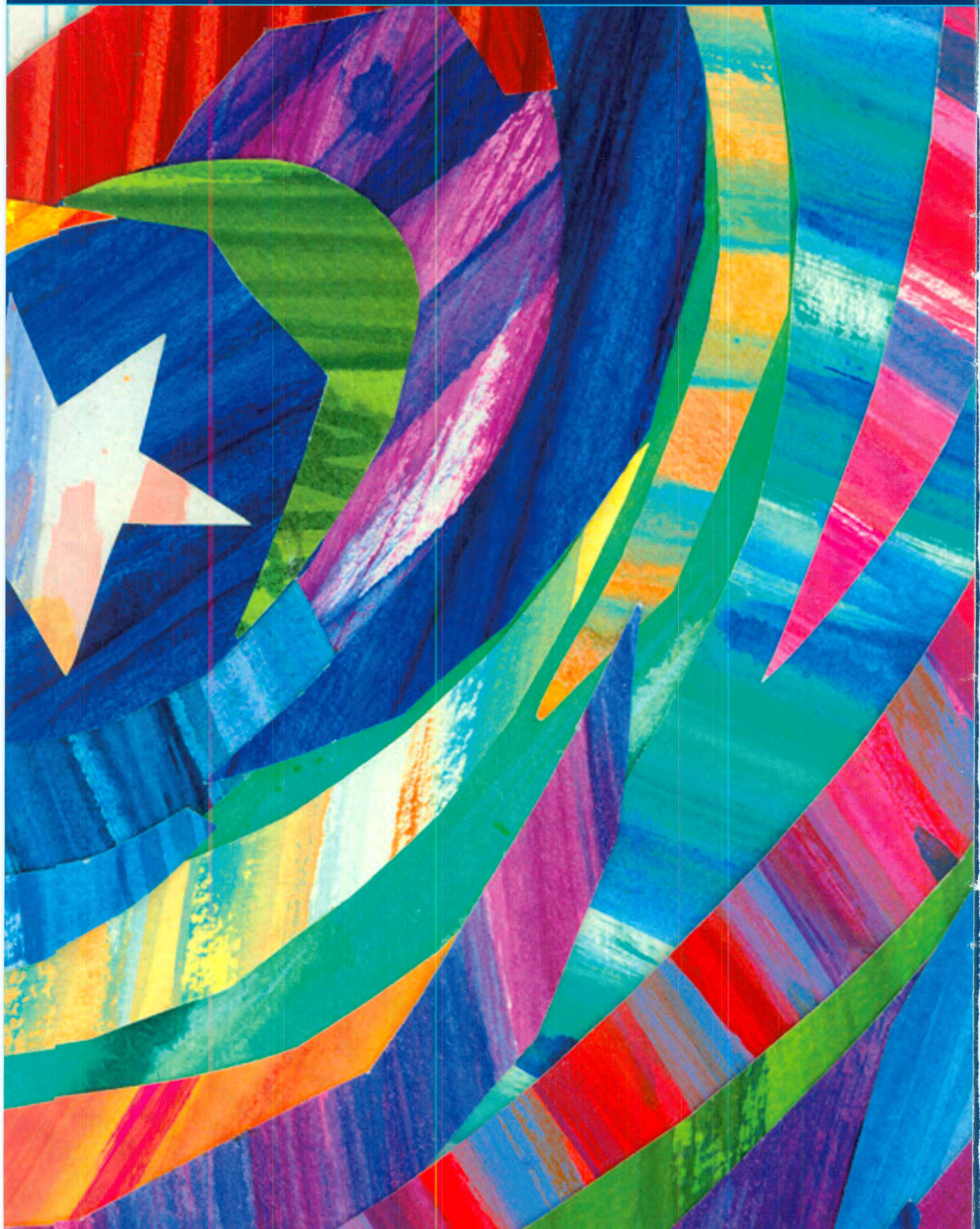
As leader of the project, I have seen our magazine slowly take shape and fully appreciate the co-operation required from everyone involved.

We hope you thoroughly enjoy reading the magazine - some of the content is informative, some humorous and some thought provoking. May you know that prison life is a shared experience both for us as tutors, and you as inmates.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Turley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jim Turley**  
PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

isolation • society





# prison profiles

## **Lancaster Farms (YOI)**

Lancaster Farms Prison is a Young Offenders' Institution with a population of five hundred. It houses both sentenced and remand prisoners who range in age from fifteen years to twenty one years and ten months.

Sentences can be from one month to life. Remission is available for good behaviour. A wide range of vocational training courses is available, including Catering and Plumbing. Education offers Basic Key Skills in English, Maths and IT, as well as Social and Life Skills and Cookery classes. Young Offenders are paid for attendance at class and there is also a bonus incentive at the end of the week.

## **Drammen Prison**

Drammen Prison is a small prison on an international scale as it holds only forty inmates. This prison is unusual in that it is located on top of a courthouse, so it is not possible to play games like football, basketball etc. at ground level! Each cell has a TV, radio and a fridge. The food is good but lacks variety so inmates order snacks as well as cigarettes etc. from a shop which delivers to the prison.

Drammen has its own school where students are offered the curriculum which would be available in mainstream education. There is also a library with a good selection of books and weekly magazines. As well as attending classes, inmates can work in the laundry, the kitchen, the workshops, or on prison cleaning duties.

## **Maghaberry Prison**

Maghaberry Prison is the largest prison in Northern Ireland. It holds about seven hundred prisoners, both sentenced and remand. There is a small unit for females. Sentences range from three months to life. A half remission scheme operates here (if you

receive a ten year sentence, you will automatically be released in five years). Inmates have TVs in their cells. They also have stereo systems, play stations and video recorders if they are on Enhanced Regime. The gym is well equipped and very popular. Education ranges from Basic Education Skills to degree level. All inmates are expected to work either in vocational training workshops or servicing the prison, in the laundry, kitchen etc.

## **Rzeszow Prison**

Rzeszow Prison is one of the biggest penal institutions in Poland with a maximum capacity of one thousand inmates. There are ten house blocks - of these one is for females and two for remand prisoners.

Primarily, this prison offers a closed regime for recidivists, although one block is dedicated to first time offenders. Inmates have work programmes, vocational training, educational and cultural classes. There is a programme of co-operation with the theatre in Rzeszow to give students the opportunity to develop skills in drama. Students are also encouraged to submit paintings, sculptures, poetry, handicrafts etc. to exhibitions and competitions outside the prison.

## **Lancaster Castle**

Lancaster Castle is an over twenty-one Category 'C' training jail that houses about two hundred and forty prisoners. Men are sent there from local dispersal prisons. It is a training jail so all inmates are required to work. The main areas of employment are education, a drug rehabilitation scheme, painting and decorating, industrial cleaning and welding. There are also courses in the gym such as Community Sports Leader and Weight Lifting.

The Education Department is situated at the top of the Norman Keep, up ninety steps. There are

courses available in Basic Skills (Literacy and Numeracy), Social and Life Skills, Art, I T, Open Learning, Business Studies, Criminology, Sociology, Creative Writing, Study Techniques and ECDL.

## **Curragh Prison**

The Curragh Prison houses one hundred prisoners with an age profile of thirty plus. Education is voluntary. Although there are only five classrooms, a wide curriculum is available to students: English, Maths, Languages, ICT. Home Economics, Sociology, Geography, Creative Writing, Drama, Art, Craft, Music and PE. Practical subjects are most popular. Some men work in the yards doing Horticulture for which no formal qualifications are required.

There is an eighty percent uptake in education and writers and artists are invited to work with students on a regular basis. The ICT department are currently working on a very interesting project indexing school rolls from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, and putting them on a database. Group programmes are also offered to address offending behaviour.

## **Stara Zagora Prison**

Stara Zagora Prison houses 1000 inmates; all are first time offenders who have been sentenced to more than six years.

The school here is the biggest in the prison system. Students are offered courses in literacy and numeracy that follow the Bulgarian National Curriculum. Classes take place from two until six p.m., Monday to Friday. Although not paid for attendance, students can have two days taken off their sentence for every three days they attend education. Staff are keen to develop support for work-based training. Vocational courses offered include woodwork, metalwork, light engineering, building, painting and decorating.

## Society and Isolation

Alone and lost and excluded,  
Different from those around me,  
Alone, lost and isolated,  
How I yearn to be free.  
Alone and lost and a stranger,  
I don't know what to do,  
Alone and lost in society,  
Lost and alone without you.

I've built up a barrier between us,  
To smother the pain that I feel,  
So I still feel so isolated,  
Even though the barrier's not real.  
I just wish it was different,  
If only I could be strong,  
I feel different from those around me,  
Even though I know it's wrong.

I can't change the way I feel,  
I just wish that I could  
Be like most other people,  
But I don't know if I should.  
Even though I know I'm different,  
I'm special in other ways,  
So even though I'm isolated,  
I should feel happy today.

Jason (Lancaster)

## Society and Isolation

(A 'rap' poem)

Look at the (crap) that I'm facing  
They got me locked down here in isolation  
Incarceration and segregation of a nation  
Drugs on my streets have got me dream chasing  
( Chorus )  
Society ignoring the cries of mothers mourning  
Gun culture is rife whilst politicians keep stalling  
Children are rejected, isolated from society  
Is your life so shallow das you can't see the reality?

Full of rage in the da, dark force, powerful my source  
Strategies on art of war impeccably I endorse  
Locked down in prison far away from family  
Uniforms and numbers put there to dehumanise me

They put us in cages, cooking pot for the rages  
That try taking over me, I swear I'll never let it be  
'Fraid to go to sleep, in my dreams all I do is weep  
In this struggle in da concrete bubble myself I keep

Anonymous (England)

## Isolation

Isolation to most people is terrifying  
but I don't mind being on my own.  
I can relax more, be peaceful and  
I can think when I'm on my own.  
When I am in a crowd I can't think.

The first night I went to prison I felt alone and  
lost but after about a week, I had got into a  
system. I realised that even though I was  
surrounded by crowds of people I felt lonely and  
isolated because I wasn't with the people I love.  
It is my ambition to have a nice place in the  
countryside in Ireland or Wales - just me, the wife  
and the kids. Then I wouldn't need anything or  
anybody else because I'd have all I need beside  
me.

Steven (Lancaster Castle)





## To my Wife

Gloomy day in the stuffy cell,  
I am sitting on the bed alone in expectation,  
My soul is hurt, it is in pain,  
I am lost in thought about you.

You don't care! Why don't you remember me  
The man who inspired in you  
The hope for love and tenderness,  
Who gazed at you with a gentle glance.

Please, think about me now that I have told you this.  
I am guilty!  
I have made mistakes.  
The prison wall looms between us,  
And my memory rests in your gentle glance.

Mincho (Bulgaria)

## Saturday

A day brimming with hope,

A day full of pain,

A day in which you are in my thoughts,

A day in which a solitary memory flickers.

Yes, that's what you are, Saturday.

Gunaidun (Bulgaria)

## Love!

Come to me  
You belong to me  
See, stars are dancing  
When we make love  
God is afraid that we will  
Create new history for lovers  
But in our hearts there is no fear  
Look! Angels are crying  
They have never experienced such love  
But in our hearts is true love.

Anon (Bulgaria)

TO MY WIFE, SATURDAY AND LOVE  
were translated from Bulgarian by Antoaneta Doncheva



## **SWEET DREAMS**

At seven a.m. the alarm will sound  
And echo around the prison ground  
Inmates awoken from their sleep  
The dreams of freedom they try to keep  
All I want is five minutes more  
Before the screw unlocks the door  
To try and remember my sweet dream  
And all the sights that I have seen  
But it doesn't happen, the doors unlock  
The prisoners mingle within the block  
Monday to Saturday, it's always the same  
The drawn faces, the hidden pain  
Some days you're up, some you're down  
No one cares if you smile or frown  
A screw won't ask if you are OK  
All he wants is his monthly pay  
Don't get me wrong, we all committed crime  
And for that we will serve our time  
The days, the weeks, the months, the years  
Will all go by with or without tears  
Some they live in a land of thought  
What would they be doing if they had  
not been caught?  
But my friends all I can say  
Is we were caught and we're here to stay.

Alan (Maghaberry)

## **TODAY**

Today I'll spend isolated alone in my cell  
I feel I want to scream, break down or yell  
Tell me when this nightmare will be over  
Let me dream and see the white cliffs of Dover  
Tomorrow it will start again  
Please take me out of the lion's den  
I lie on my bed with thoughts in my head  
It makes me feel angry it makes me see red  
I must survive and not end up dead  
Late at night the tears do come  
When I think about the things I have done  
It makes me sad I feel so glum  
In time I'll be strong and start to fly  
Just relax and let it go by  
So my message to you is, don't break the law  
Take it from me  
I know the score  
Don't let the parade pass you by  
Do something now  
Before you die.

## **Hello there, Son**

Hello there, Son, how are you today?  
Is your homework all done?  
Have you been out to play?  
No, not yet, Dad, we've just had our tea,  
I was hoping you'd ring,  
Just to talk to me.  
I can't talk for long, Son, there's a queue for the phone.  
Is your mother with you, or are you all alone?  
She's gone out again, Dad, with that Trevor from work,  
I hate to see them together,  
He's such a jerk.  
Don't be like that, Son, he's not that bad,  
They are happy together,  
I just made her sad.  
I know what you're saying, Dad, I know it's true,  
I can't help what I feel,  
I just want it to be you.  
I'm nearly in tears here and my card's almost done,  
I will call you tomorrow,  
I love you, my Son.

Alan (Maghaberry)







# Snow

It's snowing outside!

I imagine being with my child right now. We would fool around in the snow and have fun, making snowballs, snowmen, ski tracks and angels in the snow - laughing together.

It hurts to be in prison and not be able to do what you like with your child. But the thought of being together soon makes me stronger. I love my child more than anything else in the world, but drugs have taken her away from me and she lives with a foster family. I miss her so much that I cry in my cell. But I can only blame myself.

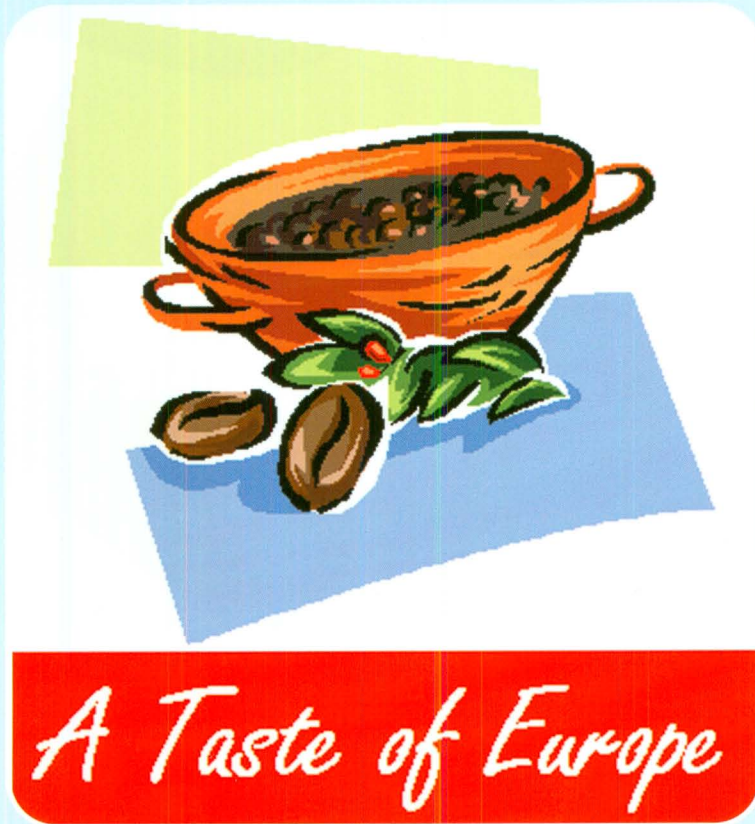
What worries me is what she is doing, who she is with and where she goes with her friends. She is twelve now - a lot can happen to her, like it did with me. For those of you who have children - start thinking about them and not just yourself. Care about your children!

I hope the snow will still be there when I get out of here. Then we can do all the things together that I am dreaming of.

Anita (37)

Anita was released in February 2003. She has got an apartment, she goes to our school for ex-prisoners every day and she is on medication for her drug addiction. Her daughter visits her every second weekend and we still have snow!

Anita ( Drammen Prison)



## *A Taste of Europe*



### **Soda Bread (Ireland)**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

8ozs (200g) plain flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons sugar  
fresh buttermilk

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Heat a griddle, pan or hot plate. Sieve together flour and baking soda. Make a well in the centre and gradually mix in the buttermilk until a consistency, neither too soft nor too firm, is achieved. Knead. Either divide into two and bake as round scones, or bake as four farls. Bread is cooked when a hollow sound is heard when you tap it with your fingers.





## Traditional Lancashire Hotpot (England)

This has acquired its name from the time when it was baked at home, then wrapped in blankets to keep hot and provide lunch for a day at the races.

### INGREDIENTS

4 lambs kidneys, cored, skinned and chopped  
2 lb best end and middle neck of lamb (900g)  
dripping  
1 pint hot water (570ml) mixed with 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
1 bay leaf  
2 sprigs fresh thyme (or 1/2 teaspoon dried)  
2 lb potatoes (900g), cut into 3/4 inch (1.5cm) slices  
3/4 lb onions, roughly chopped (350g)  
1 tablespoon flour  
a little butter  
salt and freshly milled black pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to gas mark 3 (325°F, 170°C)

1. Melt dripping in a frying pan and fry the pieces of meat and kidney until they are brown. Put into a casserole dish.
2. Add a little butter to the pan and fry the onions - about 10 minutes - until they are brown at the edges.
3. Now stir in the flour to soak up the pan juices. Gradually add the hot water and Worcestershire sauce, whisking until smoothly blended.
4. Add salt and pepper, bring to simmering point, then pour over the meat in the casserole.
5. Add bay leaf and thyme, then arrange the potato slices on top, overlapping them like slates on a roof.

Dot the potatoes with little pieces of butter.

Cover with a tight fitting lid and cook in oven for 1 1/2 hours.

Remove lid and cook for a further 50 minutes.



## Bigos (Poland)



This layered casserole from Poland is a good way to use leftover meats.

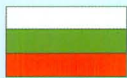
### INGREDIENTS

1/4 pound of mushrooms, sliced.  
2 cups cabbage, chopped.  
1 onion, diced.  
1 lb meat (cooked beef, chicken, pork, etc.), large diced.  
1/2 pound smoked sausage, sliced.  
1 cup sauerkraut, drained.  
1 teaspoon of garlic, minced.  
2 green apples, diced.  
1 cup tomatoes, diced.  
1/2 cup red wine.  
3/4 cup beef broth.  
Salt and pepper.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Lightly oil a large casserole. Layer in all of the ingredients. Pour the wine and broth over all. Pre - heat the oven to 325°F. Bake for 2 1/2 hours.

Serve warm (Serves 6 - 8).



## Shopska Salad (Bulgaria)

(Mixed vegetable salad in the Shopp Style)

### INGREDIENTS

300-350g red tomatoes.  
1 fresh cucumber (about 200g).  
1 small hot pepper.  
150g white cheese.  
2 onions.  
4-5 green peppers.  
10 -15 olives  
bunch of parsley.  
1/4 cupful of vegetable oil.  
salt.



### INSTRUCTIONS

Cut the onion in small pieces. Remove the stem and the seeds of the green peppers (raw or roasted and peeled). Cut them into strips and then to smaller pieces. Chop the hot pepper. Cut the cucumber in four lengthways and slice the pieces. (You may leave it unpeeled if ecologically safe). Mix everything and add salt. Form a pile of the mixed products in a salad dish or on individual salad plates. Sprinkle with the vegetable oil. Grate the cheese over the salad to form a "snow cap". Garnish with the olives and the parsley, to please your own taste. You may also sprinkle with vinegar. (Serves 4 -5 ).



## A Lefse Recipe (Norway)

### INGREDIENTS

3 cups of twice riced potatoes (boiled russets)  
3 tbs melted shortening  
3 tbs melted margarine  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon sugar

### INSTRUCTIONS

Mix well. Form into a loaf and set aside on a cookie sheet to cool. (Overnight in refrigerator is fine).  
Add 1 cup of flour.  
Mix well and make into patties of 1/2 cup each. Pat with hands until it doesn't crack at edges (knead). Roll out on pastry cloth with corrugated rolling pin into a 12 inch to 14 inch circle. Bake on a 500 degree dry griddle. There should be some definite brown spots. Remove lefse and set under towel to hold in some moisture.  
It is critical to use a lefse stick to lift the lefse on and off the griddle. You can make a lefse stick by sanding the edges off an 18 inch wooden yardstick like a giant table knife. You simply slide the stick under the lefse to remove it.



## Lamb and Cabbage Stew (Norway)

### INGREDIENTS

1 kg lamb  
1 kg cabbage  
salt  
black peppercorns  
30g wheat flour

### INSTRUCTIONS

Slice shoulder, breast, back or loin of lamb into portions and lay the pieces in a casserole alternately with layers of cabbage. Sprinkle salt and pepper between the meat and cabbage.

Add boiling water, bring to the boil and simmer until the meat is tender (about 30 minutes). Flavour with salt and pepper.  
Stir the flour into a little cold water and then add this carefully to the stock to thicken it. Bring it to the boil.  
Serve with boiled potatoes.



## Ulster Farm Broth (N. Ireland)

### INGREDIENTS

2 lbs beef  
3 quarts of water  
1 cup of barley  
1 cup split peas (steeped overnight)  
leeks, carrots, parsnips,  
turnip, celery and/ or cabbage  
salt  
pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

Put meat into a large pot, add the water and bring to the boil .Skim, add barley and cook slowly for half an hour. Wash and dice vegetables. Add vegetables to pot and boil gently for 3 hours until meat is cooked. Remove meat for slicing. Serve in a bowl with potatoes (boiled, peeled and bruised) and a slice of meat.



## Chocolate Rabbit

I got a chocolate rabbit  
For an Easter treat,  
A great big chocolate rabbit  
Good enough to eat.

So I ate his ears on Sunday,  
His nose I finished Monday.  
Tuesday I nibbled on his feet.  
I ate his tail on Wednesday  
Thursday I kept on,  
By Friday he was going,  
Saturday he was gone.

Oh, I loved my chocolate rabbit  
From the moment that he came,  
And if I get another one,  
I'll love him just the same.

(Lancaster Farms)

## Mind Blowing Riddles

Can you work them out?

Victoria, Alexandra, Makayla, Brandon, Brittany, John, and Danielle each coloured one Easter egg using their favourite colour of paint. Each person has a different favourite colour. Their favourite colours are red, purple, green, blue, yellow, violet, and pink.

Figure out which colour each person used to paint his or her egg.

1. The person who likes yellow is a girl.
2. The person who likes blue is a girl.
3. Danielle's favourite colour is either red or green, although she can only have one favourite colour.
4. Brittany and Brandon both do not like pink.
5. Brandon's favourite colour is either blue or violet, although he can only have one favourite colour.
6. Makayla and Brittany both do not like yellow.
7. Brandon and Danielle both do not like purple.
8. Alexandra likes pink, but it is not her favourite colour.
9. Brandon likes blue, but it is not his favourite colour.
10. Makayla and Alexandra both do not like purple.
11. Alexandra likes blue, but it is not her favourite colour.
12. Alexandra's favourite colour is either violet or red, although she can only have one favourite colour.
13. The person who likes green is a girl.
14. John's favourite colour is either green or purple, although he can only have one favourite colour.
15. Victoria likes green, but it is not her favourite colour.

(Lancaster Farms)

## eggs

Of all the symbols associated with Easter, the egg, the symbol of fertility and new life, is the most identifiable. The customs and traditions of using eggs have been associated with Easter for centuries.

Originally Easter eggs were painted with bright colours to represent the sunlight of spring and were used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts. After they were coloured and etched with various designs the eggs were exchanged by lovers and romantic admirers, much the same as Valentines. In medieval time eggs were traditionally given at Easter to the servants. In Germany eggs were given to the children along with other Easter gifts.

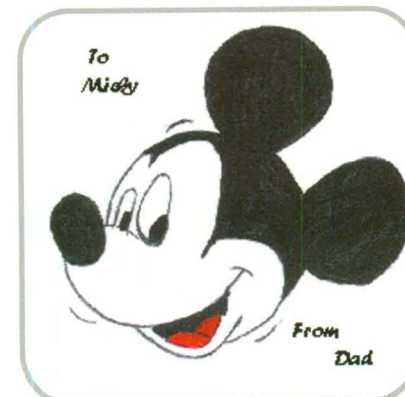
Different cultures have developed their own ways of decorating Easter eggs. Crimson eggs, to honour the blood of Christ, are exchanged in Greece. In parts of Germany and Austria green eggs are used on Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday). Slavic peoples decorate their eggs in special patterns of gold and silver.

Austrian artists design patterns by fastening ferns and tiny plants around the eggs, which are then removed, revealing a striking, white pattern. The Poles and Ukrainians decorate eggs with simple designs and colours. A number of eggs are made in the distinctive manner called pysanki (to design, to write).

Pysanki eggs are masterpieces of skill and workmanship. Melted beeswax is applied to the fresh white egg. It is then dipped in successive baths of dye. After each dip, wax is painted over the area where the preceding colour is to remain. Eventually a complex pattern of lines and colours emerges into a work of art.

In Germany and other countries eggs used for cooking were not broken, but the contents were removed by piercing the end of each egg with a needle and blowing the contents into a bowl. The hollow eggs were dyed and hung from shrubs and trees during Easter Week. The Armenians would decorate hollow eggs with pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary and other religious designs.

(Lancaster Farms)



## Hankie Hankering

For many, the long and well-established history of high quality handicrafts being produced in prison has always been a source of pride and accomplishment. It remains a testimony to endeavour and triumph over difficult working conditions, limited materials and financial resources. In recent years a new and innovative craft idea, using a very familiar old material, has been rapidly growing in popularity within the prison population, namely that of 'Designer Hankies'.

The common white handkerchief has now been adopted as an artist's material on which can be produced, by hand, a vast array of high quality designs and logos from illustrated cartoons to complicated football emblems, using only coloured inks, dyes, paint and a helping of patience. Why such a simple material is so popular is easy to understand.

Firstly, it is readily available and provides the artist with a blank white canvas to work on which is of uniform and manageable size. Secondly it offers an interestingly textured surface, unlike the rather bland white paper commonly used and, thirdly, the finished product has a raised appearance, not unlike embossing.

The quality and choice of the design will obviously depend on the standard and skills of the artist, but even the simplest work, when properly presented and framed, can be attractive enough to be prized and treasured by anyone lucky enough to receive one.

C.M. (Maghaberry)

.....'If I am not studying I will read one of my books, but if I don't feel like that, I will paint a few hankies for my family or friends. Some of them will be football crests, or, for younger people, cartoons. Either way, it helps pass the time and the night flies in. It can take anything from two hours to a couple of days just to finish one hankie, it depends on how intricate the design is.'

'When I am getting ready to paint a hankie, I first make sure that it has been ironed, as this makes it easier to work on. I draw the picture on with pencil, not pen, so that I can erase it if I make a mistake. The paints I use are acrylic, because they don't run into each other. I prefer brushes with fine bristles when painting, as they are the best to work with. After painting I give each section time to dry before I start the next one. When the picture is finished it can be framed and this makes it look well.'

B.H.(Maghaberry)

## My Mother

My mother who was called Annie was born on the fourth of April 1918 in Dunadry, Antrim. When she reached 18 years of age she saw a work advertisement in the local newspaper which said "Workers required for Gallagher's tobacco factory in York Street, Belfast." She applied and was told she got the job.

My mother was a very hard worker and when she was paid each week most of the money went to her own mother. She was not allowed to smoke in the factory but she was given free cigarettes by the company to take home. She made a lot of good friends and they would go out each week to dance halls in Belfast and Antrim.

One night at a dance in Belfast she met my father. His name was William, he lived in Upper Canning Street, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast. They started seeing each other as often as they could. Then, in 1937, they decided to get married. After they were married they moved to a house which was also in Duncairn Gardens, as it was best suited for their jobs.

My parents never had any arguments, they got on very well together. The first child they had was a girl who was called Rosemary. The second child born was a boy called Ken. A year later my mother found out she was expecting twins, and she was really happy about this. When the twins were born she named them Thomas and Norman, but tragedy struck when Norman, aged six months, died from a brain haemorrhage.

My mother found it very hard to cope with the loss of Norman, but she had to get on with life for the sake of the other children. The last child of all was a boy they named Ronnie, that was myself.

I was very ill when I was born, I couldn't keep any food in my stomach and the charge nurse told my mother that I had only a fifty/fifty chance of survival. My mother prayed to God that I would be alright and I believe her prayers were answered, because I am still around today.

Mother told us wonderful stories and played games with us. She was a very proud person, who didn't like any fuss and she had high standards. She thought that we should always keep ourselves and our clothes clean all the time. She also taught us never to break the law, I believe today that I broke her heart when I broke the law in 1981. Today I really miss my mother a lot because she really meant the world to me and as we all know, we only have one MOTHER.

R.G. (Maghaberry)



## THE RING OF LIFE

We have a gold ring in our family which has a lot of history attached to it. It dates back to the time of the famine when my great grandmother was a young girl. Her sweetheart gave it to her as an engagement ring when they set a date for their wedding. But disaster struck in the shape of the famine. My great grandmother had to leave this country with her family on one of the coffin ships for America. In the move she lost touch with her sweetheart. Her heart was broken at the thought that she would never see him again.

She lived a family life, only going to work and to the shop for her bits and pieces. She spent a lot of time all alone in her darkened room looking at the ring on her finger and wishing for her sweetheart.

Many years passed and one day a friend of my great grandmother's called to see her. They were talking about old times when the friend noticed the ring and said to my great grandmother that she had seen a photograph of it when she was over in Ireland. She said that she had enquired about it and was told that a man had paid to put a photograph of the ring in the paper every week. He had spent the last ten years looking for the person who had it.

My great grandmother sprang to life and said, 'That's my sweetheart! He's alive! All these years I thought he was dead'. She lost no time in getting the first ship back to Ireland. She was only one day back when she discovered her sweetheart and they were married within the week. They were blessed with two children and that is one of the reasons that I can tell you this.

The ring has been a very important part of our lives all through the years. In a way one could say that it is the spirit of my great grandmother living on through us in her ring.

W.G. (Curragh)







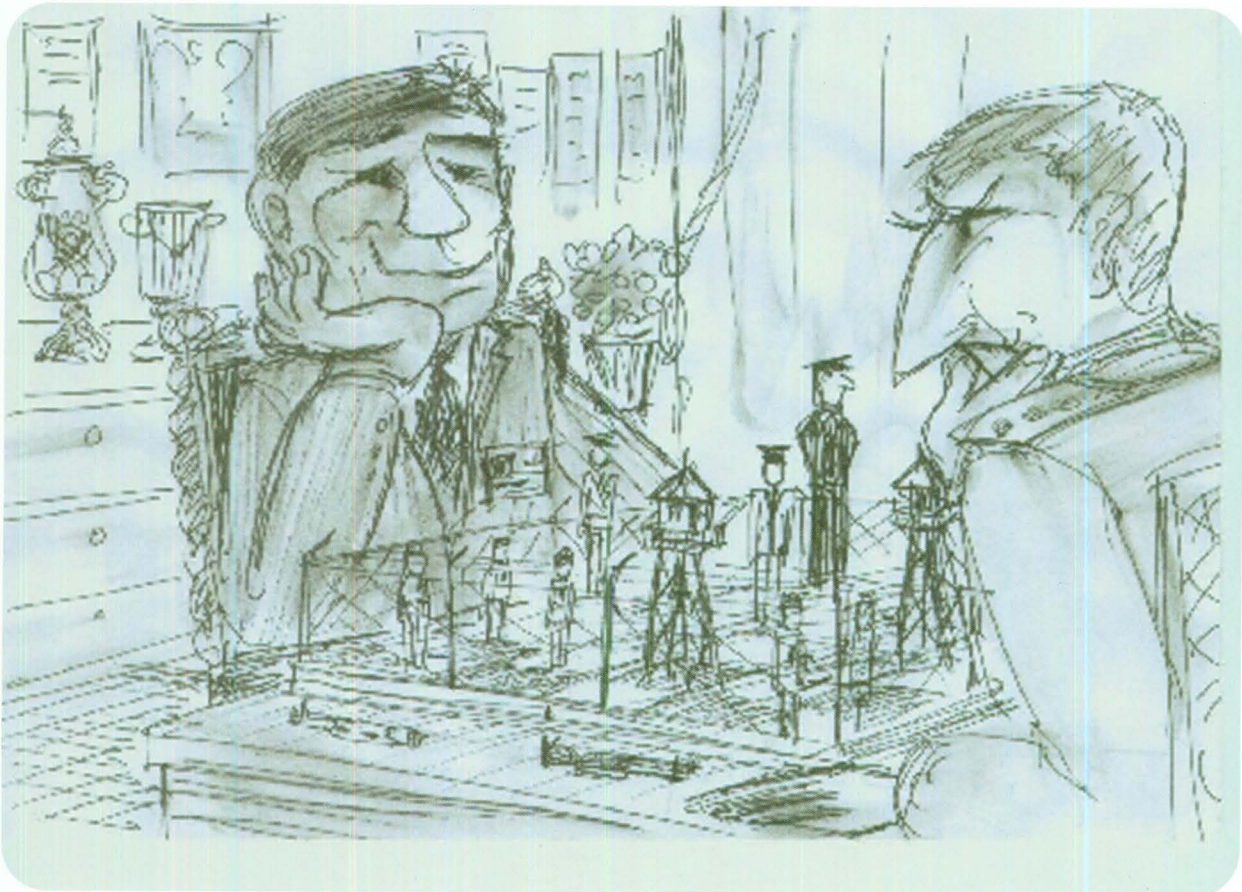
# Harvest Moon

---

A harvest moon from a far off hill,  
A magic sight one's heart to fill.  
Let nature have its finest hour,  
Displaying without blush,  
While saying to all, what is the rush?  
Now take the time to look at these,  
The animals, flowers, grass and trees.  
Without nature there would be none of these.  
A child sitting on grandfather's knee,  
Through window pane,  
A wondrous sight to see.  
He turns his head, in childish tone,  
Asks his granddad, 'Is the moon your own?  
Will you take it with you to the old - folks home?'  
From a child's own lips he learns his fate,  
From his own house he will get the gate.  
Off - spring that he spawned,  
Could not convey to him  
What they had wrought.  
Yet he grinned at the lad,  
'No, I'll leave it to you  
A gift from your old granddad'.

C. C. (Curragh)

**Different Countries - Same Moves!** (Poland)





## DUBLIN WASH HOUSES

The following piece is written by Robert, who grew up in the city of Dublin. Wash houses were where the housewives used to bring their clothes to launder them. They were only in the cities and not in the country areas.

The wash houses I remember were in Tara Street, and there was one at the back of the Ivy Market and another inside the gates of St Kevin's Hospital in James Street. The one that we mostly went to was the Ivy Market wash house and we used to go on a Wednesday or a Saturday. My mother used to pay 6d (old money) for a half-wash, which meant she was allocated a wash space for half an hour. The wash space was a cubicle which had a sink fixed to the wall with hot and cold water taps. She brought her own soap powder and washing board.



She then washed and rinsed the clothes and put them through the mangle and brought them home to dry on the line. A full wash took longer and, as well as being able to wash and rinse the clothes, it was possible to use a type of spinner. The spinner was like a cast-iron vat with a lid that was closed and bolted when the clothes were put into it. It was powered by a steam engine and when a lever was pulled the drum inside it turned and it made an awful racket for about fifteen minutes. The clothes would not be fully dry coming out of the spinner but the heavy wet was gone off them. Then the clothes were put into a giant hot-press.

To use this you pulled out a long set of hard wooden rails with a handle attached to the outside of the press. The clothes were spread along the rails and the whole lot was pushed back in for about an hour. There was intense heat in the hot press which came from the furnace which was used to heat the boiler supplying the hot water for washing. Getting the washing done could take a whole day if there were lots of people there, but it would always take at least a half day.

My sister and myself used to go with our mother and we would go across to the Tivoli picture house while we were waiting for the clothes to dry. Although it is no longer in use, this wash house can still be seen at the back of the Ivy market, and is now owned by the Eastern Health Board. It looks exactly the same on the outside.

Robert (Curragh)

## SMITHFIELD MARKET

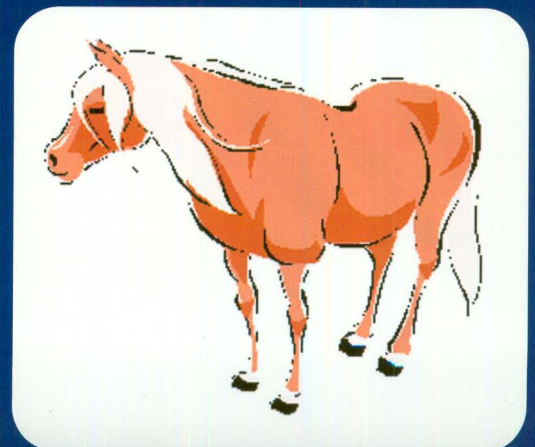
Smithfield Market  
Deals being made  
Spitting on hands  
The sound of money  
Changing hands

A life's long trading gone  
Forever  
Horses galloping through the throng

No more sparks flying from the cobble stones  
No more clip-clop or spitting on hands

Just so many yuppie type people  
'Diggin' the not so many local bands

Dermot (Curragh)



## Passing Time in Prison

When it comes to passing time in prison the Curragh Place of Detention in Ireland is similar to others. We all must find a way to spend the seven hours of the day when we are not locked up. For me I like to look on the positive side of life. With that in mind I feel lucky that I am doing my time in one of the better prisons in Ireland if I am to believe some of the stories coming from prisoners who have experienced living in other prisons. In the Curragh there is no problem in spending those seven hours in a way that will benefit and stimulate the mind. The one thing that strikes you when you first come in is how quiet the prison is and how friendly everyone is. The choice of activities and school subjects go a long way to help in passing the time. This is my story of how I choose to spend my time.

The morning starts at 9.30 with a ten minute walk in the yard. I am working on a number of computer-based subjects and also Spanish, cooking and crafts. These take up most mornings and afternoons with the craft class on a Tuesday evening. My sessions end with a hour's walk in the yard.

There are just a few periods in the week when I would not be in class. I use that time for home work and a game of snooker. My favourite subject has to be cooking on a Friday morning. Six of us set about cooking our dinner and making our favourite dish. My speciality is my currant tart and cheese cake. We all have our specialities so we get a wide range of dishes to sample. The other popular classes are music and drama which I have not tried. Two nights a week (Sat-Sun) I play bridge with the bridge players. Having learned the game two years ago I now look after the beginners on a Sunday morning after our Mass. There is bridge every night which has a membership of 20. This goes up and down as men come and go. Bridge is a game that once one has learned to play it one becomes addicted to it. It is a great way to spend the evening. On the Tuesday evening I enjoy going to the craft class which at this time is working with glass. I am very proud of the pieces I have made. I have tried other crafts but found no hidden talent. The other four nights I like to play table tennis. Like other prisons there is a game of football in the yard but I pass on this as age is against me. There is a fully equipped gymnasium open for the three periods of the day.

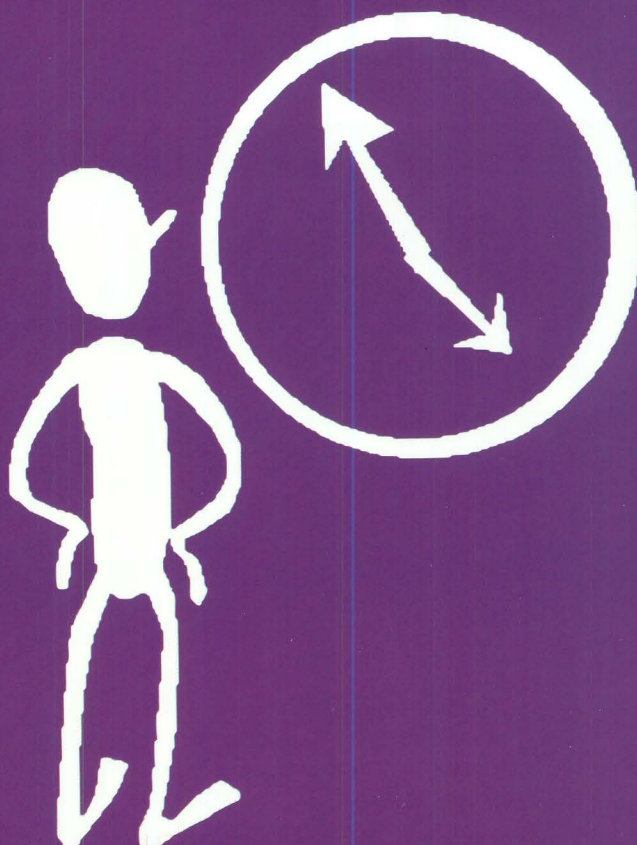
For those who don't want to take part in educational programs there are opportunities to pass the time in one of the many jobs within the prison.

For me education has been the most important part of prison life. As I have said at the beginning one can find the positive things in life if you look for them. The one thing you don't want to do is waste your time in detention.

Reading this one might get the feeling that I am very happy with life in detention. One could not be more wrong. Life in detention is about loss of freedom. There can be no greater punishment. Like all things in life we have to deal with the "now". When I was faced with the loss of freedom I chose to try and make the time count for something. Tomorrow is another day and, who knows, for any of us it may never come.

D.M. (Curragh)

**“For me education has been the most important part of prison life.”**



## Taking Part in the Group Skills and Thinking Skills Courses

**I started my adult education in September 1998 with a limited amount of education. After making consistent progress working with Catherine, I had gained the confidence I needed to apply for courses such as the Group Skills and then on to the Thinking Skills programme.**

### GROUP SKILLS

I found the Group Skills good for developing self-esteem. It enabled me to get up in a group and speak, and to debate with the rest of the lads. It helps participants to put into practice skills they possess which they do not always use. The Group Skills course will help participants to use these skills.

Take communicating, it is very important to all of us. Let it be communicating by speaking, by eye contact, by listening or in the way in which we present ourselves. The Group Skills course will help you in developing all these skills. Always remember you have your point of view but you must also consider the other person. They also have a right to their opinion too.

### THINKING SKILLS

Why not get involved in the Thinking Skills Course? I did and found it a great help to me in learning how to solve some of my problems. In a way, the programme has created an awareness of the consequences of my actions and it has helped me to see the sequences of the events in my life.

A problem could be anything from a problem in your personal life down to a problem regarding the buying of a car. The Thinking Skills course teaches us how to use the thinking skills step by step. It will help you make the right decision.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team leaders of each course for all their support throughout the course: Ellen, Miriam, Eamonn, Miss Madden, Mr Curran, Mr Dunne and a special thanks to Catherine who made it all possible for me.

Dermot (Curragh)



## Childhood Memories



When I was young we had a man working for us his name was Pat. He was a lovely old man and I loved to see him coming on a Saturday when I would get my holidays. I would be up in the morning waiting for Pat. I loved to see him coming up the drive.

Pat always walked with his hands behind his back and the jacket under his arm. When he would arrive he would fold the jacket and leave it down nice and tidy. Pat was about 70 at the time and he smoked a pipe. I loved to see him smoke his pipe. He would tell me to go and ask my uncle what it was that he wanted Pat to do. My uncle would say, "Pat knows what to do himself."

Pat was a very handy man with a shovel. I used to watch him work and he made it look so easy. I used to be waiting for him to stop and have a smoke and then I would get a chance to use the shovel. He would stand and look at me for a while and I would ask him if I was I doing it right. Then he would take the shovel off me and show me what I was doing wrong and when I would get it right he would say, "Ah, now you have it, Joe."

When Pat wasn't able to work anymore I used to go up to him and sit and listen to him tell stories about his working life. I learned from this that Pat worked hard.

When Pat died I missed him, and to this very day I still think of him every time I take up a shovel.

By Joe (Curragh)

## THE MASTER'S PIPE

A long time ago when I was at school, I had a very embarrassing experience. One day in the classroom while the Master was out, the rest of the class dared me to smoke his pipe. I was a bit apprehensive at the start, but I didn't want to let myself down in front of my peers. Well, I had to be a brave man. I walked up to the desk, lifted the pipe, went to the fireplace, took a piece of paper from the coal bucket and started to light the pipe. I puffed away, choking, as the tobacco was very strong. All of a sudden a voice said, 'Are you enjoying that Mr. McCoy?'

I didn't have to turn around to know who was behind me. I recognised the voice. My classmates had done the dog on me! When I turned around I saw all their smiling faces. I eventually came face to face with the Master. He had a smile on his face as well, or maybe it was a sneer. If I had known what he had in store for me, I would not have smiled back. He didn't say a lot but proceeded to put his chair on the desk. Then he told me to get up and sit on it. I wondered what was coming next..

I sat there in awful anticipation. Then I saw him take the tobacco pouch from his pocket and fill up his pipe. He came over and handed me the pipe and said, 'You like smoking, do you?'

I thought twice about answering him. I didn't fancy being hit by one of his big hands which were like shovels. I was very surprised when he said, 'Put the pipe in your mouth'. Then he lit a match, held it to the pipe and said, 'Start puffing'.

Eventually the pipe started to glow. It wasn't the only thing that was glowing, so was my face. I was very embarrassed and wished I could have floated up through the ceiling. As I sat there puffing away on the pipe I thought to myself - the quicker I get this smoked the sooner I will get down, but this wasn't to be.

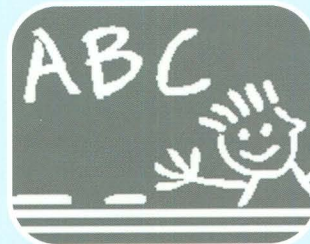
I kept on smoking away but it was getting harder as I couldn't spit. He kept saying, 'A good pipe smoker doesn't spit,' so I didn't have much choice. I kept on smoking and gagging until the pipe was empty - but I wasn't done yet.

He filled the pipe up again and made me light it. By this time my head was spinning and I had to make a dash for the door. I thought I was going to die I was so sick. Eventually I started to come round and looked up to see the Master standing over me. I thought to myself - now for the pain. I was quite relieved when he asked me if I was all right and if I had learned my lesson. I looked at him and said, 'I would rather take ten of the best than go through that again'.

I felt a lot better when he held his hand out and shook my hand. I told him I was very sorry, that I had done it for a dare, and it wouldn't happen again. He gave my head a rough pat and said, 'Come on, we'll head back to the class'.

I felt proud walking back to class with his hands on my shoulders, and didn't seem to mind the jeers and the jibes I got from the rest of my so-called friends. My opinion of Master Conaghan changed for the better after that. I have to thank him for a lesson well taught and not forgotten!

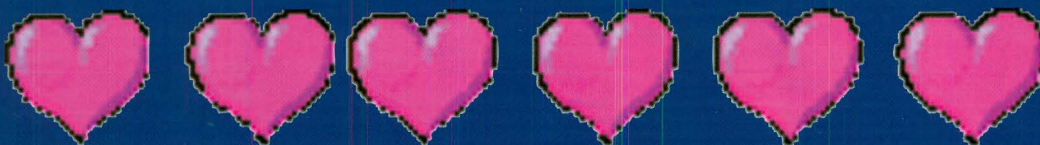
Willie (Maghaberry)



## Love

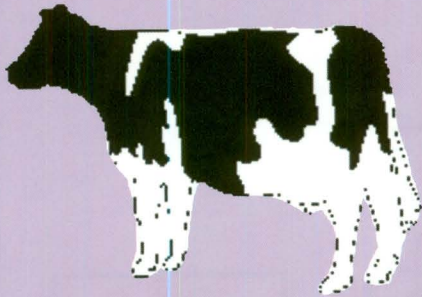
Innocent she is - like a drop of hot tear  
Tender she is - like Chinese silken colour  
Hot she is - like the red flame  
Dear she is (to me) - like the tears of Allah

Anon (Bulgaria)



## A LAUGH A MINUTE !

Two men were in prison, one of them for stealing a cow, the other one for stealing a watch.  
The former was trying to make fun of the latter.  
"What time is it?" he asked.  
"It is time to milk the cow," the second one retorted.



"How many years did you get?"  
"18"  
"Then you can have the bed next to the door as I got 20".



The new Prison Director said:  
*"I demand peace and quiet.  
If you break the rules,  
then you are straight out!"*



An old prisoner was saying to a younger inmate, soon to be released from the prison:

"Keep my advice! Share your secrets only with the best and most popular liars when you get out of prison."

"Why should I do that?" asked the young prisoner.

"Because if they decide to disclose anything, nobody will believe them," he said.

Translated by Antoaneta Doncheva



The guy who got the death sentence was asked if he had a last wish when he was in the electric chair:  
- "Will someone hold my hand?"

The father received a letter from the teacher complaining about his son's behaviour.

"You stupid child," screamed the father.

"Your teacher wrote that it was impossible to teach you."

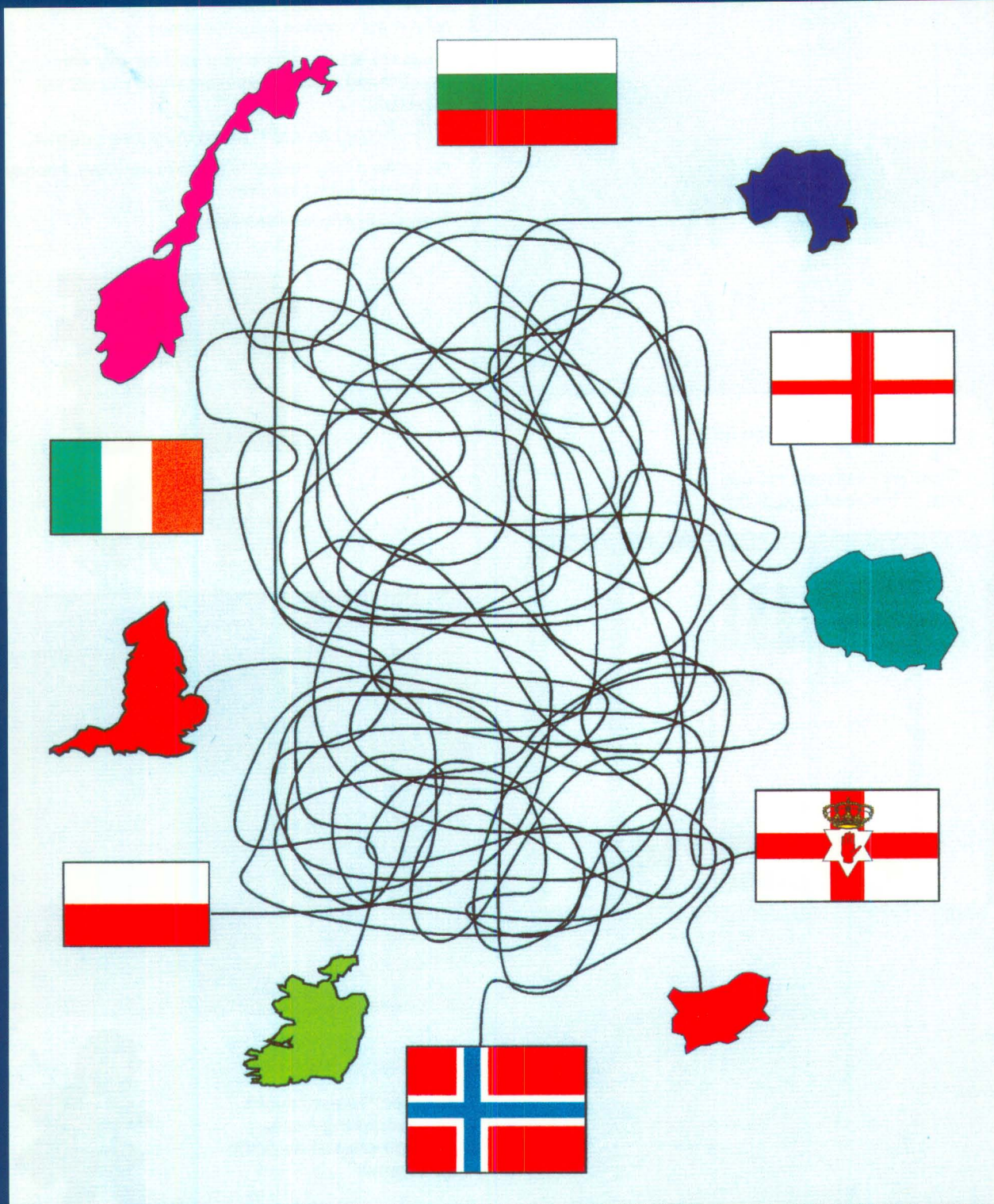
"There you are, Dad, I told you the teacher is useless!"

Teacher: "I have taught you everything I can, and you are still as dumb as a mute!"



## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

Match the country to its flag.







## Frozen

I wasn't sure what was going on, I was nearly blinded when I opened my eyes. I was in the shiniest white room I have ever seen, the light was harsh. Then I started to hear voices but was not sure what was being said. Then the voices got clearer, 'He's coming round, I think he's going to be OK.' I was very confused and felt fragile. I tried to move but found it almost impossible. Then I heard a soft voice saying to me, 'Take it easy, you're very weak.' It was a woman's voice, then she said, 'I'm a doctor and you're going to be OK.'

After a while my eyes could see a lot better. I was in a hospital and wasn't sure why. Then some doctor came over to me and told me my name. I wondered why. I asked them if I had been in an accident. 'No' they said. 'You had your body frozen and now we have revived you'.

Then I asked what year it was and they told me it was the year 3000. Well they almost had to revive me again because the shock nearly stopped my heart! After a few weeks of physiotherapy my muscles got stronger and I was able to get up and about.

Then the doctor came to me and said, 'Mr. James, it's time to show you the world you once knew.'

I went outside and the footpath was moving like stairs we used to have in supermarkets. There were no cars on the ground they all hovered above me. I kept ducking at first.

Mr Jones, who was called Peter, was my escort. I was taken to the bank where I put my hand in a machine and my face in another part of it and about a few seconds later I had a card with my I.D. on - Mr Edward James - and my address and my new bank code. This world was so clean, there was no more petrol or the things that pollute our planet.

The buildings were high and narrow and people were very friendly but still looked the same. The names of the shops and companies were the same. The best thing about this world was you could still buy beer! Every thing was like a film made in the future but the strange thing about this film I was in it. So maybe I'll live in this world and discover more about it before I'm frozen for another 1000 years.

Eddie (Maghaberry)



## Dreams

I lie in bed with thoughts so deep  
Awaiting the escape of sleep  
I toss, I turn, I curse and swear  
I am awake and you're not there  
I close my eyes and slowly sleep  
I slip away to the depths so deep  
I drift away, down sleep's dark hall  
I hear a whisper, I hear a call  
A door is opened, you are there  
Your gift to me - your love and care

Sam (Maghaberry)

## Searching for a Partner ?

See if you can find your own country and the partner countries in the word search below.

The countries involved in our project are:

Bulgaria, England, Norway, Poland and Ireland.

X	P	Y	Z	A	B	D	T	X	E	R
P	B	T	U	E	N	G	L	A	N	D
C	A	U	D	A	O	Q	P	N	V	M
Z	Y	X	L	W	R	R	D	S	F	L
E	Z	O	F	G	W	N	W	I	W	O
R	P	O	G	E	A	V	U	R	T	S
X	H	I	M	L	Y	R	Z	E	X	Y
N	J	O	E	L	D	C	I	L	B	E
K	P	R	M	Y	H	X	G	A	I	F
P	I	A	N	Z	N	K	J	N	V	R
N	O	S	O	D	S	T	P	D	C	Q

## Missing you

If you've ever had the pleasure,  
To have shared a love that's true,  
Then you'll understand the feeling,  
When your love is taken from you.

I try so hard to visualise,  
The sweet eyes in your face,  
Those locked away sweet memories,  
No love could take its place.

As I lie and gaze around my cell,  
There are neither sights nor sounds,  
My heart calls out sweet Helen,  
But you're nowhere to be found.

So I wrap my arms around my pillow,  
And whisper my love goodnight,  
Then drift off to join you in my dreams,  
Where you are never out of sight.

Billy (Maghaberry)

## When Saturday comes

Night time was the hardest for Damien. When the warden slammed the door closed at 8.30 p.m., he never felt as lonely in his whole life. With only a radio for company, Damien would lie on his bunk reading over old letters Claire had written to him. He knew them all by heart now, but reading them took his mind off prison and loneliness. This was his oblivion. This was also the time to stop putting on a brave face and acting tough. After 8.30 p.m. Damien would relax behind the closed door. This was the hardest part of his prison sentence. This was when he missed Claire the most. This was the time that Damien realised how much he had let Claire down. Sleepless nights were a regular thing.

Damien (Maghaberry)

## Missing You

Oh I really miss you dear  
Through each moment of the day  
Steel and bricks come between us  
Because in prison I must stay

I miss the way you hold me  
And I miss your tender touch  
I miss everything about you, darling  
Being away from you hurts so much

Do you remember those walks we had  
And the things we both did share  
The times that we walked hand in hand  
With so much love and care

I will never forget those moments we had  
They're forever in my heart  
They are very clear and they will never fade  
Even though we are apart

But one day, in time to come  
We will be together as one again  
Once more to share the passion  
No more to feel the pain.

Benny (Maghaberry)





## Isolation

Daddy has gone away now, to a place I do not know,  
Mummy never talks about him, so I just let it go,  
I often wake up to the sound of her crying in the night,  
I want to go and tell her things are going to be all right.

I've just turned ten now and I'm so lonely I could die,  
Others don't bother with me and I often ask her why.  
'You were born different, son,  
and they don't understand,  
What it's like to be a handicapped child  
or even touch his hand'.

So I sit in my bedroom like I've done so many times,  
I feel like a prisoner but I've committed no crime,  
I look out my window and watch the falling rain,  
Thinking why is it me that suffers such terrible pain.

No one will call for me like they do for other kids,  
So how can I miss the things that I never had,  
I live in the hope that one day this will all end,  
So I can be happy and call someone my friend.

Thomas (Maghaberry)

## Isolation

Isolation is a thing I have never really thought about until recently. Being in prison makes you think about what you miss very badly. It seems most of the time you are on your own even though you are not. It's just that people have not the same things in common with you, and it sometimes makes you feel alone. The only thing that makes you come out of that isolation a bit is to think of your family and think of what could have been.

Hughie (Maghaberry)

## Isolation

Being born into a large family I was surrounded by siblings. Even though family or friends were constantly around, there was always a feeling of isolation. This was probably because I was seen as the 'black sheep'. Maybe the very reason I ended up in prison!

Prison has never been hard for me. A pain in the butt that I personally feel is a waste of time and money, but it has never really bothered me. I've never 'heavy-wacked' or had to pop pills to stay on top of things. I don't need or take any form of drugs. I feel that it is a challenge for all prisoners to stay mentally strong in spite of the isolation one feels in prison. Many can't handle it without some form of help.

Steven (Maghaberry)

## Cell doors

I heard the cell doors slam shut  
I looked around  
All there was -  
Four walls  
A ceiling  
A window with bars -  
I couldn't believe that I had to spend the next six months here!

J.H. (Lancaster Castle)



'...Isolation can also mean rediscovering oneself, perhaps after years of living in the shadow of others'

Julie (Maghaberry)

## Away

Away from home,  
All alone.  
All this music,  
Is just not my tone.  
Feeling the vibe,  
In my cell.  
Next minute I'm hearing  
The bell.  
Keys at my lock,  
There's a lowlife stood at my door.

D.T. (Lancaster Castle).



## My Dream

Last night I had a dream  
Of the feeling of being free  
I was walking along the beach at night  
With the silence of the sea  
Feeling the sand on my feet  
Through each step that I took  
Feeling the breeze on my face  
But it won't be there when I wake  
So as I walked through the night  
With the sand the colour of gold  
Thinking about the future ahead  
With so much love to hold  
Morning light came again  
Birds singing in the trees  
Oh what beautiful music they sang  
That was carried with the breeze  
A day to think of my dream  
Of the things that came to me  
Because it was only last night  
In my dream that I felt so free

B.W. (Maghaberry)



### HUBAVA SI MOYA GORO

HUBAVA SI MOYA GORO  
MIRISHESH NA MLADOST  
NO VSELYAVASH V SURTZATA NI  
SAMO CKRUB I ZHALOST  
KOYTO VEDNUZH TE POGLEDNE  
VECHNO ZHALEE  
CHE NE MOZHE POD TVOITE  
SENKI DA IZTLEE.

### A Bulgarian song

Beautiful you are my forest  
You smell of youth  
But in our hearts you evoke  
Only sadness and grief.  
He who sets eyes on you  
He is doomed to grieve forever  
That he can not be laid down  
Under your shade  
(for his eternal slumber)



## 'Let us not lose our hope!'

In our present situation we have to think over several matters in order to completely not lose our hope. Let us think- what next? Each one of us has been sent here for some reason. But are we concerned about our past? Do we, in the bottom of our hearts, think of our future? We all know how we look to the rest of society, and what they say about us. And look who is talking? Apparently those who are better than we are, those who do not know how the world looks from behind bars.

To be frank, they are right. To change this thought and to feel better we have to change ourselves and make progress with our 'selves'. To change one's life one needs a reflection of oneself. Everyone can find an efficient way not to experience this gehennah once again. The simplest way is one's own decision based on private experiences from this place. We just pretend and say - 'It's ok.- I have home, wife, kids, etc.', let's not cheat ourselves, because we won't change the truth that way. No one says he is all right here - well, very few maybe - but even the homeless complain.

Let us have a good look at it. It gets harder and harder: orders; prohibitions; savings -turning off water, electricity; trying to get TV-set approval. But that's no matter, what's worse is it is more and more difficult to get a conditional release. All of this makes the necessity of thinking of our future a very important thing. Do we really want to come back here to this 'cosy place'? It is difficult to speak on everyone's behalf, because everyone has his own point of view, his own free will, and his own mind and will do what he wants. Personally I think it's not worth this. Now we have a lot of time here, so let's not waste it on bullshit..... I wanted to share my recollections with you, hoping that there is some better world waiting for us, not outside but inside us, and we can use it. If you want you may pray to the lord for support. When the day of your release comes you won't be afraid, thinking what next?

Anon. (Bulgaria)

Translated by Antoaneta Doncheva

## These increasingly isolated people!

Regime change the tune of the day,  
The B52 pilots are coming out to play,  
I hear a smashing sound,  
Bombs are dropping all around!

Blood and tears are flowing,  
Buildings and bridges are blowing,  
Broken and hungry people,  
In this Gulf War sequel!

Weapons of Mass Destruction,  
Can't be found under the rubble,  
These innocent murdered people,  
Didn't ask for all this trouble!

Majid (Lancaster Castle)

## "Quo Vadis America?"

As we all know, not long after the attack on the WTC and the Pentagon, President Bush declared the long and severe war against terrorism. I have to admit that I completely sympathised with Mr. President. Even today when I think of the WTC assault, it is of something vile. I also think that using terrorist actions in any goal, even the most sublime, will always be a terrible crime. In my opinion it will never gain any support or excuse.

But let us go back to our "little war" with terrorism. As far as I am concerned, I say three times, "Yes!" I think terrorism must be fought but at this point our paths are different, Mr. Bush. I am not a man who knows how to save the world. Instead I am a careful observer, who can think for himself.

I do not know what I would do if I were walking in your shoes, Mr Bush. But if I had supposed my actions in the war with terrorism would have succeeded, I would have given myself just a two per cent chance of success. Anyway, as regards you, Mr. President, I am absolutely pessimistic, because you are not defeating terrorism - you are creating a new one.

S.T. (Poland)



# New Year's Eve in Prison

The snow was crisp under my footsteps and the sound dispelled my bitter feeling of loneliness. The usual flow of vehicles and people had stopped. The liveliness of the New Year's Eve night was concentrated in the town centre.

So here am I, holding the bags full of "delicacies", in front of the citadel. The prison is to a certain extent built very much like a castle, not devoid of some bristling austere beauty as a silhouette and façade.

The prison officers, dressed in their neat grey and blue uniforms, robust, and merrier than they usually were. Obviously the commotion of the holiday in their own houses had managed to transfer to them the fever of celebration.



The officer on duty invited me in. His warm decisive voice calmed me down. A visiting day there would be and all was well. George would have the rare opportunity to be the only prisoner in the big hall and I the only visitor. The four people from the staff were in their places. Here he was, Georgi Krajchev. He was tall, dark, with the typical Romi ethnics traits, with big sparkling eyes - that day they were happy, with some quiet dignity and contentment.

He was a strange person. His outer appearance, all his gestures were impetuous and concentrated, his words weighed with wisdom and experience. Although he was only 32, he had a reputation among the older prisoners. Even the prison staff respected him and he was an undisputed leader among his colleagues. He had re-read the books in the prison library several times. His favourite books were the Bible and Shakespeare. He recited whole pages by heart, they sustained him and made him wiser.

I did not want to pry into his 13 years of pain and I did not ask him questions. I had heard that he had committed a murder in attempt to save his mother from a man with a knife pointed at her in a row over some property. Not much money, an official attorney, he acted as his own advocate, muffled laughter amongst the members of the jury ... They did not take into consideration his mental state at the murder of his mother .... 17 year sentence.

This time we did not talk about that. He was telling me of his experience, thoughts, ideas. It was quiet. We could hear each other. The prison officers were interested, time stopped. An account of contemplation during the years was streaming out of him in his need to confide to another human being. When the officer on duty signalled the end of the visit it was sudden and abrupt. Georgi rose with a sad smile. He had his usual self control and dignity, as always.

Later when I was having my New Year's Eve dinner with my relatives I was sort of absent minded. My thoughts were taking me to the deserted outskirts of the city with the heavy silhouette of a citadel with dimming lights, going to sleep.

**Happy New Year!**

Anon (Bulgaria)

Translated by Antoaneta Doncheva

## FIRST TIME INSIDE

The big gates shut behind me and I feel the sweat on my forehead. I am afraid of the things I do not know, the things I cannot see. I am taken from the van and brought to a door with a sign above it...

RECEPTION.... For a few seconds I am confused. I start thinking about what it means.  
"Pull the handle," says an officer.

I do as I am told and say nothing. I am put in a room no longer than three feet wide and nine foot high for what seems like hours, but in reality is ten minutes. Suddenly the door swings open so fast I feel my heart miss a beat.

"What's wrong?" says the officer.  
"You scared me, opening the door so quickly," I reply.

These are the first words I speak on my arrival in prison. Suddenly images start running through my head of what I've seen on TV and heard by word of mouth.

"Top half first", says the officer.  
"What do you mean, Mister?" I ask.  
"You have to be searched, son", he says.

Oh no, I think, it really does happen like I've seen on TV. I begin to sweat worse than before as I can feel droplets of water running down my arms and on to my sleeves. I feel myself tremble.  
"We just need to search your clothes," says the officer.

I start to make sense of things and do as I am asked. I put my T-shirt and jumper back on and after five minutes I put my jeans on. The door is closed again for a minute, then opened, and I am handed a towel and told to take a shower. Again my heart and mind begin to race but I do as I am asked and am then placed back in the same room.

The door swings open once more and I am on the move with an officer behind me whom I haven't seen before. I want to know where he is taking me but I dare not ask because of what he might say. I go through another door and step out into the cold night air. I see lots of buildings and they all look the same except for one. It is in the middle of a piece of land and I can see by the lights overhead that there are buildings of the same design behind it. "Turn right," says the officer.

I do as I am told and find myself outside a door. This door is different from the ones I know outside. It is stronger than any door I have ever seen. The officer comes up beside me and rings a buzzer to get us in. There is a click as he pushes the door open. He leaves me in the hands of others and makes his way back out.

"Name," I hear someone say.

"Duffy," I respond.

"Your number?" he says.

I have forgotten it and it takes a real effort to remember.

"B449," I recall.

I am taken past an electric grille by another officer and told to walk straight on. I do as asked and come to a T-junction.

"Turn right and go up the stairs," he says.

I go upstairs and find myself on a landing between doors and grilles. I quickly realise what is behind them but I'm more concerned about who is there. I give my name, number and sentence as asked and then I am brought down the corridor.

"Cell 5," he says.

For the first time I hear the voices of other prisoners. I reach Cell 5 and stop. On entering the cell I notice a row of beds and some furniture. One person is already in the cell and he says he's called James. I introduce myself. He talks as I make my bed but, hard as I try, I can't hear him. My mind is far beyond the prison walls.

The door is opened and I am taken to see the doctor where I am given the all clear, whatever that means. I lie on my bed thinking of home and in due course sleep comes my way. I wake, in what I assume is the early hours of the morning to the sound of someone screaming, only to fall back asleep. Daylight comes and I have got through the first night. I am still scared.

"Did you have a nightmare?" asks Jim.

"Why do you ask?" I say.

"Well, you were screaming in your sleep", he says.

I can't believe it. I thought it was someone else. We talk for a while until the door opens for breakfast. James says it will get easier if I play along with the system. It is then that I realise I want to walk out the way I came in.

The first night is over - now I have to do the rest.

T.D. (Maghaberry)



## **HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?....**

Walking down the steps outside the courthouse after being remanded in custody, I looked around at the crowd that had gathered. I recognised most of them, they were my family and friends. I could see their mouths move saying something but I could not hear the words. I suppose it was the shock of what was happening to me. The first noise I heard was the door of the police car closing after I got in.

Anon (Lancaster Castle)

My first night in prison was funny in a way, because three days before I came in here I was visiting a friend at Manchester Prison. I was joking with him about getting locked up before Christmas. Then on the Tuesday, I was in there with him on the same wing! So it was funny for him then, seeing me come into prison. So taking the 'mick' out of him backfired!

J G (Lancaster Castle)

Prison is not good for you. The reason why I say it is that you are away from your family and loved ones. At the end of the day they are all doing time as well as you!

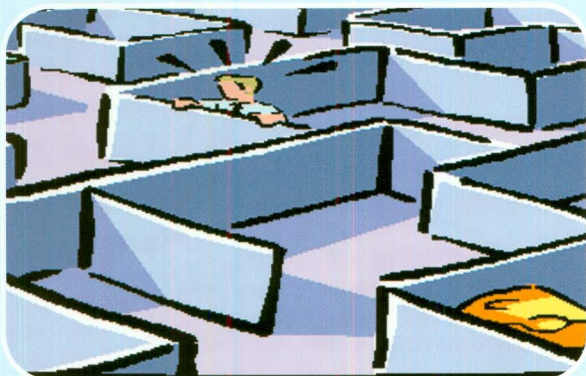
Anon (Lancaster Castle)

The first night I went into prison I felt alone and lost but after about a week, I had got into my routine. I realised that even though I was surrounded by crowds of people I felt lonely and isolated because I wasn't with the people I love.

Anon (Lancaster Castle)

When I was 15 years old, I started to get into trouble with the police. My mum said to me, "You are going to end up in jail if you carry on". A couple of months went by and I got caught by the police and put in the cells for a couple of hours, then they let me go. I had to go to court in about two weeks time. The judge sent me to a YOI for nine months.

PW (Lancaster Farms)



## **'NO-WIN ZONE'**

'No-win zone'- suspended development in life - caused by compulsion and unfortunately by forces within us as well. However difficult it is to confess that, when you realize it, it is horrible.

Certain boldness is necessary here, not staying idle and complaining that there is no way out of this 'no-win zone'.

I mentioned boldness. Most people think that to be bold means not to be afraid. The lack of fear is not boldness. Boldness is the ability to go on in spite of fear and pain.

If you succeed you find out that overcoming fear not only makes you stronger but it is also a great step forward to the road leading out of the 'no-win zone'. It is a road across a desert, with no way back. You can go through the desert of life, making your way through thorn bushes and sharp stones.

But you should not forget that there are other 'surprises'. Because while you walk through the desert you will find 'oases' as well. You will start to find some greenery here and there, streams of water under the sand.

Most people stop, find a place that looks secure to them, build walls around it in the sand contentedly, and stay there, instead of going on. If you accept that the truth is you will find yourself in the 'no-win zone' again. Then, who do you blame for that? You look for truth. You ask questions, cast the blame on people and, if you come upon a true answer, you get confused and angry. More often than not your wishes exclude finding the truth. Then who is to blame and who is innocent?

The most important aspect of it all is to awaken the sleeping remorse and to confess the guilt in you. To overcome fear from change. Change makes a man better, fairer, beaming with light. Otherwise there are those rare reminiscences of the fact that someday time will judge your deeds. Your own conscience you have forgotten and you will hate to be reminded of it.

The fastest way to overcome these obstacles is to accept the fact that whatever happens to you is aimed at your development in life. Otherwise, the 'surprises' life has for you confront you and startle you because everything beyond your expectations is in motion. While you pine away over dreams that did not come true, thousands of tokens around are being confirmed, aims achieved, good deeds accomplished. The world itself lives its unpredictable, variegated life every day and, from there, your everlasting expectations originate, stay on and thrive.

G.T.T. (Bulgaria)

Translated by Antoaneta Doncheva





## **JUSTICE OR REVENGE**

The sins of my youth I'll not forget  
Though slowly I seek forgiveness.  
Within my heart the hurt is greatest,  
My spirit so close to breaking.  
Block out the ugly facade and look what lies within,  
To find out what horrible poison  
Can make that person sin.

What's in a mind that commits the crime?  
What force drives the soul?  
What power fuels the engine of sin?  
How do we help society's foe?  
We use our magic carpet, from fairytales of yore  
To brush away society's dirt underneath the floor.

Lock the door and turn the key,  
Hide the problem away.  
We demand these outcasts must not among us stay.  
So the famous isle of saints and scholars,  
Those holier than thou,  
Forget their Christianity so they can have their way.

The pillars of our human race judge us from on high,  
Where there's right and wrong there is no doubt  
Just shut the problem out.

But look out my peers and judges all,  
You'll not have the final say,  
'Cos when I go into my grave  
Then the only judge will see  
What lies within my soul and heart, longing to be free.  
He is not elected by any stroke,  
Or pub-counter favours  
Nor holds no fear of losing face  
Or what they say in the papers.  
The circus will have ended, we'll all stand side by side  
And then we'll see who's done his will and those who  
Chose to hide.

John (Curragh)

When the twelve heads turned and looked at me and said, 'GUILTY', I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, so I cried, 'No!' like a baby and I am not afraid to admit it. I'm a big lad and I look as though I could take anything you threw at me. But no matter how big or how hard you think you are, once you hear that word, something inside you goes, just like that.

S.T. (Lancaster Castle)

Jail can help you a bit but deep down it's only you that can help yourself.

It won't be long till you are walking down that same tunnel as me and going home and believe me you will see the light!

S. T.

## **LIFER**

It was a winter morn,  
Cold frosty bleak and white,  
I awoke at the crack of dawn,  
After another lonely night,

A bird perched on my window sill,  
And sang his merry tune,  
He sang of joy, freedom and life,  
And summer in the month of June.

I heard the rattle of the keys,  
And felt the cold hard floor,  
I fell upon my aching knees,  
And cried as I have done before.

Another day of boring routine,  
Another day of pain,  
I'm sick and tired of this same old scene,  
I've nothing more to gain.

And still that bird keeps singing,  
But not a song of strife,  
If only that little bird knew,  
That I was here for life.

Anon (Maghaberry)

**Marty**  
**8 years**  
**No sweat!**



## **FARNESS**

**Far**  
**Is Far**  
**Farther than Far**  
**Is Far**

David (England)

## **ISOLATION**

When I lost my brother it was a shock and being isolated made my time in here harder, more depressing. I could not say my last goodbyes. It was a sad day for me and my family because when you're isolated you're not with them to grieve and you're not there to share the grief and mourn with them. I was angry when they refused me permission to go to the funeral and my family also were angry. But I was not in long enough to be released from isolation.

Anon (England)

## **KNOWING HOW TO SURVIVE**

'We can focus our consciousness on dark depths of revenge, brutality and vulgarity or we can also play with life even here - surprising ourselves by our new abilities and talents which have been hidden in our souls.'

Today I would like to think about all of the things that I have lost by being here. I have lost my freedom. Everyone manages to get by with it in some way- there are alternative ways of doing things of course, and for some of us this prison is a real favour and allows us to survive cold winters, which we would not survive behind the wall. But for most of us prison is not a favour and we would give away anything just to feel the taste of freedom.

The worst are those unsatisfied needs of my spirit. What do I lack the most? Have I lost my family? No, my family keeps calling me and helping me. Have I lost my beloved? No, she keeps writing to me. Have I lost my friends? Those real ones-no, as for those fake- did I need them? So the prison became some sort of test for my love, friendship and attachment. I have not lost all those people I love and I care for, and my eyes are open now so I know who I can count on.

I have learned caution, which will help me in my future life so I won't fall once again.

I have become more sensitive and I have seen what is most important in life. Not mates, not parties, not job but love and family. But let us back to the prisoner who tastes some new dish from the pack of his cellmate. Sometimes they learn about things they have had no idea of. What do I mean? A human being is different from other animals because he has a consciousness. Everything is in our mind and it depends on us if we survive this time here. We have an imagination, which allows us to realize our dreams. We can focus our consciousness on dark depths of revenge, brutality and vulgarity or we can also play with life even here, surprising ourselves by our new abilities and talents which have been hidden in our souls.

Anon (section vii) Rzeszow

### **'Satisfied Need'**

**Lack of space**

**Lack of wind on face**

**Lack of close touch**

**But if you love me I lack nothing.**

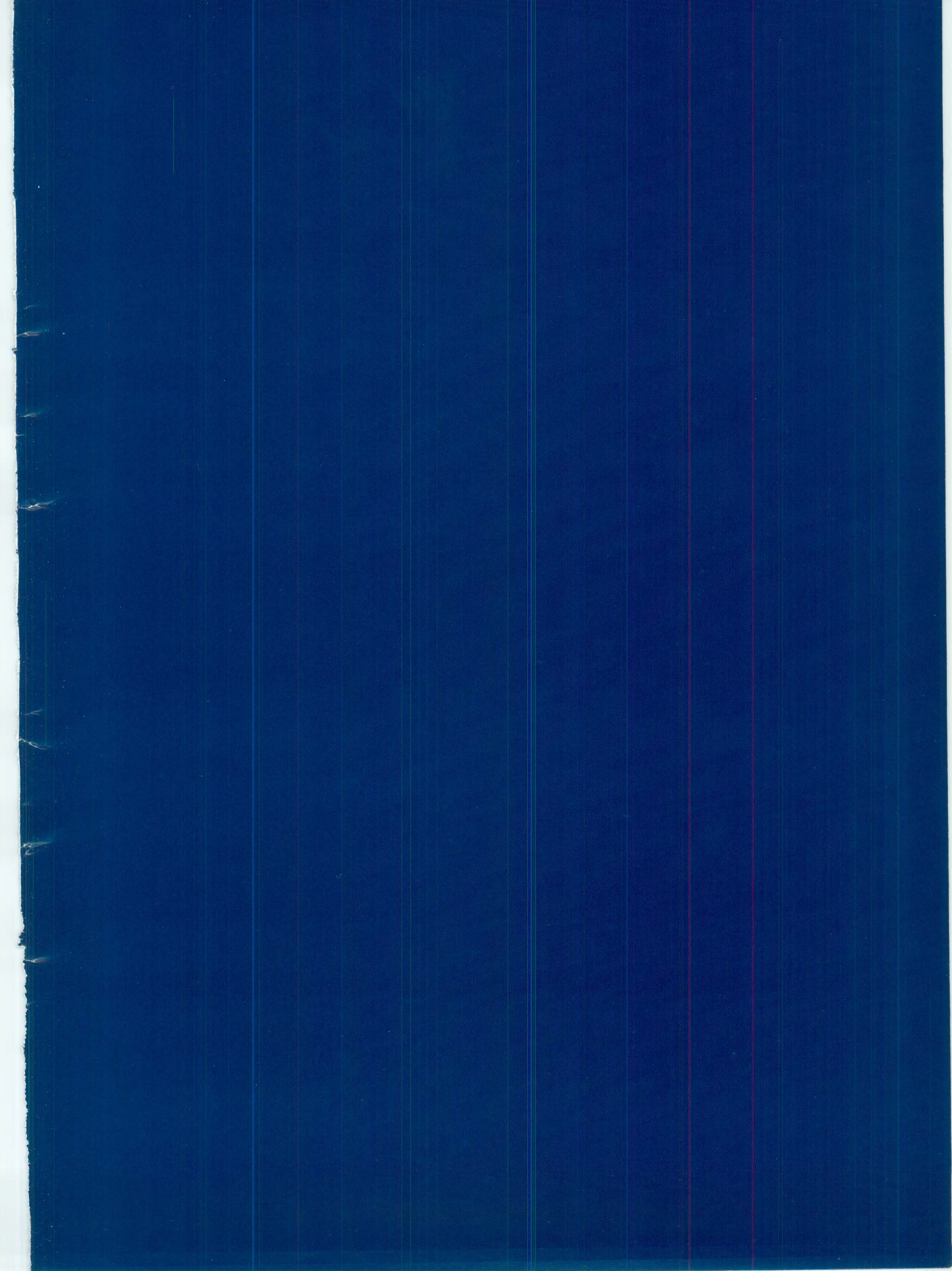
**We hope you have enjoyed reading the first magazine of the Mabel Project. Please forgive us if we have wrongly attributed any piece of writing - we will be more experienced next time!**

**Congratulations to Sam, who did most of the work on the magazine, for being first to suggest our title 'Open Doors'.**

**The cover design evolved from several of the colourful samples we received.**

**The theme for the next issue is 'Community'. We look forward to your contributions.**

**Editor**



Socrates

MABEL