

the **Howard League** for **Penal Reform**



Chained to the prison gates

A comparative analysis of two modern penal
reform campaigners

Cover image shows Pauline Campbell
protesting at Styal prison, 18 May 2006.

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A report for the Howard League for Penal Reform by
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Introduction



Pauline Campbell



Violet Van der Elst

‘Where there is injustice there will be protest’. This was the powerful slogan coined by the late penal reformer Pauline Campbell. It not only captures the driving force behind her campaigning, but is also an idea which resonates with anyone who believes in democracy and fairness – particularly in the current climate of resurging direct action and public protest. Seventy years earlier the same ideal led Violet Van der Elst to conduct a similar campaign of direct action against capital punishment. Both women, divided by decades, demonstrated ceaselessly outside prisons, though this led to criminal proceedings, illness, misery and financial ruin. They remained unalterably committed to their respective causes – for Van der Elst, the abolition of the death penalty; for Campbell, better care of female prisoners.

Violet Van der Elst, a self-made millionaire from Surrey who developed and manufactured face creams and the first brushless shaving cream, began campaigning for the abolition of the death penalty in 1935 and demonstrated tirelessly during the 1930s, 40s and 50s when an execution took place. She had opposed capital punishment since learning about it as a child, and its reform had by then been underway for over a century; in the nineteenth century public executions had stopped and capital offences were reduced, while in the early 1930s the minimum age was raised to 18 and pregnant women were exempted.

Pauline Campbell, a retired health lecturer from Cheshire, began campaigning for better conditions in women’s prisons after the death of her daughter Sarah in Styal prison in 2003. Sarah, then 18, had been convicted of manslaughter after she and a fellow heroin addict hassled a 72-year-old man for money in the street, causing him to suffer a heart attack and die. Sarah had a history of depression and severe self-harm and took an overdose of anti-depressants within 24 hours of arriving at Styal – a ‘blatant cry for help’, according to her mother – but although Sarah immediately informed a prison officer, medical

treatment was delayed and she later died in hospital. Campbell blamed the Prison Service for Sarah's death, and an inquest subsequently found a series of errors had occurred and ruled the prison's 'failure of duty of care' had indeed contributed to her death. Sarah's death also reflected a wider problem, as she was the fourth of six women to die from self-inflicted injuries in Styal prison within twelve months, and nationally suicides in women's prisons in England had soared, up to six in 2001, nine in 2002 and a record high of 14 in 2003.

Research aims

By exploring the campaigns of Violet Van der Elst and Pauline Campbell, this report illuminates not only who they were and how they campaigned, but develops an understanding of the impact they had and the reasons for their effectiveness or failure. This includes the wider political context in which their activities occurred as well as their own circumstances and techniques and their campaign aims. Four key research questions were addressed:

- i) Why and how did they campaign?
- ii) Why did they use direct action?
- iii) What were their aims?
- iv) How were their campaigns received?

Addressing these questions enabled a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the two campaigners, and helped develop an appreciation of the limitations and successes of direct action in penal reform campaigning. The research also led to greater understanding of the personal and contextual variables which contributed to both women's campaigns and penal reform more widely.

In examining the place of direct action within penal reform, this research responds to public criminology's call for greater engagement with activists and critical voices. For Loader and Sparks, 'public criminology' is an umbrella under which it is possible to examine predicaments that puzzle criminologists: 'Foremost among these issues are questions of how to reconcile autonomy with engagement and knowledge production with social relevance as well as how and where to make intelligible contributions to public conversations about crime' (Loader and Sparks, 2010). In examining direct action and public awareness campaigns in criminology this research helps answer such questions.

This report also provides better awareness of the work of two of the most dedicated and vociferous penal reformers of modern times.

Methodology

Study design

Both primary and secondary research was conducted in order to produce adequate data to build a comprehensive picture of the two penal reformers and their campaigning.

The primary research consisted of interviewing a purposive sample of six individuals who held relevant, first-hand information: Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform; David Wilson, criminologist and friend of Pauline Campbell; Paul Goggins, MP and former Prisons Minister (2003–05); Joan Meredith, fellow campaigner and friend of Pauline Campbell; Maria Eagle, MP and former Prisons Minister and under-secretary in the Ministry of Justice (2007–10); and

Baroness Corston, who authored the Corston report (2007). An interview was also requested with Deborah Coles, co-director of the charity Inquest, which helped and supported Pauline Campbell. Conducting primary research on Violet Van der Elst was problematic as most people who knew her work well are now deceased. Several British academics were consulted, notably Peter Hodgkinson, Director of the Centre for Capital Punishment Studies.

Secondary research analysed a wide range of documentary sources available on both campaigners. For Violet Van der Elst this comprised a book she wrote about her campaign (*On the Gallows*, 1937), her biography (Gatley, 1972) and documents in the National Archives – notably files from the Metropolitan Police (MEPO 2/3058; MEPO 3/2554), Home Office and Special Branch (HO 144/21831), which tracked and recorded her campaign.

For Pauline Campbell, archival research used primary sources including her own written accounts of events as well as her email correspondence. All available newspaper and magazine articles published about both women, from an array of different electronic and physical archives, were accessed and analysed, their content treated critically.

Data analysis

The documentary data and interview transcripts were used firstly on face value to build a picture of both women, their campaigning and its reception, and secondly for deeper analysis to better understand both women's work and impact. This involved content analysis – the systematic counting and analysis of phenomena in texts (Mawby, 2011) – generating both qualitative and quantitative data, grounded theories – those derived from the data and its coding, as developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), semiotic analysis – the study of signs or moreover 'everything that can be taken as a sign' (Eco, 1976: 7) in the documents and data, and manual coding. The validity and reliability of the research was ensured by consulting a large range of sources allowing the cross-referencing of information and triangulation of data.

Ethical issues

The ethics of this research were changed but not diminished by both women being deceased. Indeed, there is a particular responsibility for systematic and thorough research when investigating people unable to speak for themselves in order to fully understand and properly represent their aims and actions. Furthermore, particularly regarding Campbell who died only five years ago, their legacies remain emotionally charged and had to be represented sensitively.

1 Background

Pauline Campbell

During her campaign, Pauline Campbell was well known and her actions widely covered in the media, but no research has so far examined her campaigning. When Campbell is mentioned in academic work, which happens rarely, she is mostly presented as a case study – something she promoted herself – to detail the death of her daughter in prison (e.g. Stout et al., 2008). This presentation focuses on her as a victim of the criminal justice system rather than a campaigner for its reform. That is not to say that Pauline Campbell's work has not been recognised. She has been hailed as a 'modern-day suffragette' (Wilson, 2006) and a 'one-woman protest movement' (Stern, 2006). Wilson (2005) captured the spirit of her campaign with his short account of her frequent arrests for blocking prison vans from entering prisons. While her success is occasionally alluded to – for example Deborah Coles' claim that she 'influenced the government in setting up the Corston review' (Coles, 2010) – her campaigning and its impact have yet to be properly investigated.

Women in prison

Pauline Campbell's role in recent developments in women's imprisonment has also been ignored. Over the last two decades a huge body of literature has documented the poor care and conditions female prisoners experience (e.g. Carlen, 1998; Lowthian, 2002) against the backdrop of a rising, record level women's prison population and various reports from both prison inspectors and pressure groups calling for urgent reform (Lowthian, 2002). An array of research has shown that those women who offend commit fewer crimes than men, have histories of being sexually and physically abused, have higher rates of mental illness in custody and have already experienced a web of deprivation in their background and upbringing (e.g. De Cou, 2002; Carlen and Worrall, 2006; Corston, 2007); the typical woman prisoner is 'isolated, deprived, damaged and often with dependent children' (Wilson, 2005).

Reform of women's prisons

The proliferating research on the problems facing women prisoners operates around an academic and campaigning consensus that radical change is needed. Therefore little weight is given to any minor achievements in improving the system. Baroness Stern (2009) wrote a short review of women's prison reform, comparing the UK's lack of major policy change with Canada and Australia where similar events (avoidable suicides and major reviews) have led to new prison arrangements. Stern attributes this to Canada and Australia's equality legislation and activities of associated bodies, arguing that:

it may be these principles – first that to be treated equally is a basic human right and secondly that treating equally may mean treating differently – that cause such difficulties within the [UK's] criminal justice system.
(Stern, 2009)

This broad, international (and pessimistic) perspective neglects the changes which have been made in the UK (for example, new suicide prevention programmes) and the reasons behind them.

Carol Hedderman (2010) has also examined the progress made in dealing with women prisoners during three terms of Labour government (1997 to 2010). She accepts that New Labour did achieve some positive developments, including the Women's Offending Reduction Programme and Women's Policy Team, but argues these were limited and lacked force, and that the female prison population continued to soar, increasing by 68 per cent between 1997 and 2008 (compared to a 35 per cent rise for men). She observed:

[that it] took the deaths of six women in HMP Styal in little more than a year to revive government interest in the record number of women entering prison and the negative effects this had on them and their families.
(Hedderman, 2010)

She also argues that these deaths led the government to commission Baroness Corston's influential review on women prisoners – but she does not address how the deaths of these women (one of whom was Pauline Campbell's daughter, whose case her campaign sought to highlight) were brought to government attention.

Violet Van der Elst

Violet Van der Elst was similarly well known during her campaigning and was covered frequently in the press, but is rarely mentioned in academic literature. She was the subject of a modern radio play (*The Invincible Violet* broadcast on Radio 4 in 2002) and a commercial book (*The Incredible Mrs Van Der Elst* by Charles Neilson Gattey in 1972) but both these productions were biographical, populist approaches for mainstream audiences. She is detailed, albeit briefly, in Harry Potter's (1993) study of the abolition of the death penalty in England during his analysis of the 1930s. While Potter points to Clement Attlee's claim that Violet Van der Elst did 'more than anyone else to secure the abolition of capital punishment in Britain' (in Gattey, 1972) and 'kept public attention focused on what was going on in our name behind prison walls' (Potter, 1993), such claims are not backed up by demonstrable evidence or interrogation.

In some of the most comprehensive examinations of abolition, her absence is particularly glaring. *Hanging in the Balance* (Block and Hostettler, 1997) provides an impressively detailed history of the policy change in Britain yet fails to name Violet Van der Elst or credit her campaign, despite documenting several of her demonstrations, therefore presumably considering them significant. This history of abolition, like others, is largely limited to the confines of parliamentary debate and while editorials and letters in *The Times* are cited to portray public opinion (though such narrow representation is of questionable validity) no great attention is paid to activities in the public sphere or explanations for the changing public mood.

Abolition of the death penalty

Gaining public support for abolition was necessary, if not instrumental, to changing the law. One argument against abolishing the death penalty was that public opinion required its retention (Hibbert, 2003). While that shifted dramatically between the 1930s and 50s (by which time several newspaper polls were coming out in favour of abolition), public anxiety was 'based almost entirely on reasons rejected in the House [of Commons] as being invalid and irrelevant' (Hibbert, 2003); public dissent was usually concerned with executions perceived as unfair or unjust while political dissent was concerned with the ethics of capital punishment and whether it really acted as a deterrent. Indeed, people were far more influenced by media coverage of individual trials and executions (Hibbert, 2003;

Potter, 1993). This means that changing public opinion (and the reasons behind such change) was fundamental to the abolition debate, and to illuminating the role of Violet Van der Elst within the process.

The right to a role in history

It is important to raise the question of why Violet Van der Elst and Pauline Campbell have been sidelined in academic and criminological literature. This could relate to gender: both women used emotion in their campaigning and this sat uneasily with the historically male policy communities. This conflict was evident in the National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty's (NCADP) disapproval of Violet Van der Elst on the basis that the abolition movement should not 'become associated with hysterical emotionalism' as it was best placed 'on a sound basis of statistical fact and rational argument' ('Current Comment', The Penal Reformer, 1935). Using emotion was apparently so abhorrent to the NCADP that Van der Elst could not even be named and was referred to only by description in their article.

Pauline Campbell and Violet Van der Elst were critical voices who challenged the government and social order. By using direct action, they shunned traditional policy avenues of academia, government and policy networks in favour of the public sphere, where criminology has 'become increasingly marginal' (Currie, 2007). As such, this research highlights the importance of, and fits within, 'public' criminology, which 'takes as part of its defining mission a more vigorous, systematic and effective intervention in the world of social policy and social action' (Currie, 2007). This research also responds to 'growing concerns about the policy relevance of criminology' (Matthews, 2009) and the recent call from criminological scholars 'for criminology to become more 'public' and to harness the power in activist movements or 'voices from below' (Walters, 2009).

Direct action

Direct action remains largely undefined in relevant academic literature, which probably stems from the difficulties involved in delineating direct action – it cannot be defined solely by methods used because it also depends on political context and wider mood (Carter, 1973). Some researchers ignore the question (e.g. Barry, 1999; Grant, 2001; Humphrey, 2006) or attempt definition by way of a series of examples (e.g. Benewick, 1972; Carter, 1973). This report found Drewry's to be the most convincing and relevant definition since it incorporates both methods and context, defining direct action as:

various forms of activity, violent or nonviolent, which signify a rejection of established political methods and institutions.
(Drewry, 1972)

The components of the term itself offer the best essence of direct action, where 'action' is defined as 'the process of doing something to achieve an aim' and 'direct' as 'without intervening factors or intermediaries (as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary). This definition captures the fact that direct action always involves doing something and doing it directly. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term direct action as 'the use of strikes, demonstrations or other public forms of protest rather than negotiation to achieve one's demands', which highlights other important elements which are overlooked by most definitions; that direct action is usually public, rejects negotiation and seeks to actively achieve certain demands.

2 Pauline Campbell

Desire for direct action

In the wake of her daughter's death, Pauline Campbell immediately demanded an independent inquiry as prison deaths were then investigated internally, usually by the governor of another prison. She pursued this by giving media interviews, writing to politicians and making contact with Inquest, a charity which supports those bereaved by a death in custody, and the Howard League for Penal Reform, of which she was later made a trustee. A public inquiry was not forthcoming and she became deeply frustrated by the lack of progress. "Her anguish was overwhelming," said Joan Meredith, a neighbour and peace activist who Pauline Campbell was introduced to in September 2003. "She felt that all she was doing was banging her head against a brick wall. Nobody was listening". Pauline Campbell was inspired by Joan Meredith's own direct action (such as blocking bases where nuclear warheads were fitted) and in October she took part in a demonstration for the first time, a march to Downing Street organised by United Families and Friends, calling for no more deaths in custody. She addressed the crowd in Trafalgar Square and "really experienced the power of talking to a group of people" (interview with Joan Meredith).

Six months later Campbell resolved to take direct action herself:

Following Sarah's death, I spent twelve months making phone calls, attending meetings, writing to the press...meanwhile the deaths continued...In April [2004] out of a sense of despair at government's inability or unwillingness to tackle the risks in women's prisons, I took the decision to stage a demonstration outside prisons whenever a woman inmate died. (Pauline Campbell interviewed in The Howard League Magazine, December 2004)

Campaign aims

Pauline Campbell's main aim was 'raising public awareness about the shocking death toll in prisons' (Pauline Campbell interviewed in The Howard, December 2004). She believed there was 'a great need to educate the public about what is happening in prisons, as most ordinary people seem unaware of the conditions in jails and the number of men, women and children dying whilst in the 'care' of Her Majesty's Prison Service'. She wanted to call for better conditions and support for prisoners at the start of their sentences (Birmingham Mail, 13 April 2004). She also hoped to 'achieve an acceptance, by both politicians and the general public, that prison should be reserved for those who pose a threat to society' (interview in The Howard League Magazine, December 2004).

The campaign: Timeline and tactics

Pauline Campbell's vigil outside Styal prison in January 2004 to mark the first anniversary of Sarah's death was well covered by the media and cemented the plan she had conceived. When a woman prisoner died in England she would demonstrate outside the prison and block vans bringing in prisoners to make the point that it was not a safe place for women. The first protest came

on 13 April 2004, after a death at Brockhill prison, near Redditch. At this protest (and every one thereafter) Campbell carried large placards reading, 'Shame on the Home Office' and 'Who is Responsible?'; laid flowers for the woman who had died and told any passing staff, visitors or pedestrians about the issues surrounding her campaign. When a van arrived bringing women from court, she stood in front of it and asked the driver to take the women 'to a place of safety' instead (Pauline Campbell's emails).

As part of every demonstration Pauline Campbell wrote to the prison governor asking to speak with him or her and also invited the local MP to attend, but was typically met with no response from either communication. She was usually accompanied by several other people (friends, supporters or family of the woman who had died) and demonstrations usually lasted three to four hours, with vans blocked for up to an hour before police arrived and forcibly removed Campbell. She was often arrested, usually for breaching the peace or blocking traffic. Other demonstrators helping her block the van walked away when police arrived:

Pauline wanted to be the one arrested as it was her campaign. And she wanted to be arrested to raise awareness. If you got into court you could put your case across and have it reported, which would raise publicity for the campaign. (interview with Joan Meredith)

Campbell certainly did this, restating her arguments at court appearances, such as when giving her plea. Although the Crown Prosecution Service dropped every case except one (when she was found not guilty of blocking the highway) they always delayed this until just before the trial which meant Campbell made many preliminary court appearances.

The rate of self-inflicted deaths in women's prisons in 2004 was so high Pauline Campbell made six protests in the first six weeks alone. She had carried out eleven by Christmas, travelling around the country to London, Wakefield, Durham, Rochdale, Lancashire and Surrey. Journalists and TV crews always attended demonstrations, encouraged to do so by the 'Advance Notice' sent out via post and email to media and supporters. This demonstrated an aptitude for generating press coverage: "she [Pauline Campbell] was looking all the time for support from the press for her campaign. She quickly sorted out and remembered the names of journalists" (interview with Joan Meredith). After a demonstration a further release was sent out, detailing what had occurred.

Campbell also produced the 'Advance Notice' release on coloured A5 paper and distributed these as leaflets during demonstrations. She disseminated her message by constantly speaking to people and leafleting wherever she went – on trains, in cafes, in car parks (interviews with Joan Meredith and Frances Crook). She also gave numerous talks, for example at the Community Care conference and the Women Liberal Democrats fringe conference meeting.

Campbell continued to demonstrate after every self-inflicted death of a woman prisoner until her own suicide in May 2008. By then she had held 28 protests as well as a vigil outside Styal prison every January to mark the anniversary of her daughter's death. She had been arrested 15 times and charged on five occasions but never convicted. The campaign came at the cost of her own

wellbeing; she barely slept, stopped eating properly, abandoned housework, had no money and “letters and bills [piled] up because she said she had no time to open them” (interview with Joan Meredith).

Campbell also pursued the Home Office to accept liability for Sarah’s death (which they did in September in 2005, paying out a five figure compensation sum) and staged an extra protest at Styal prison in 2005 to coincide with an official visit by the Prisons Minister Paul Goggins. When he arrived by car four protestors blocked his entry to the prison, he ‘was obliged to drive away, parked his car in a lay-by and returned to the prison on foot’ (Pauline Campbell’s mail out). For Goggins this remains a “vivid memory”, the personal confrontation being a “tricky moment” and “not something you forget” (interview with Paul Goggins).

Campaign press coverage

Pauline Campbell’s protests were covered frequently by the media, as she had intended. Newspapers would report that the protest was due to take place, cover the day’s events, then also report on any resulting charges or court proceedings, meaning she received ‘three for the price of one’ coverage at each demonstration, if arrested. As an example of the press interest, her protest outside New Hall prison on 10 February 2005 was attended by BBC TV Wales, Sky TV, Yorkshire TV, *The Yorkshire Post*, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, *Wakefield Express* and local radio. In the same week her trial at Rochdale Magistrates’ Court was dropped and this, publicised by Campbell’s usual mail out, was covered in each of the *Chester*, *Wrexham* and *Flintshire Evening Leaders* (16 February 2005).

Crucially, such coverage always included details of her campaign, what had happened to Sarah and the high suicide rates in women’s prisons. Often her message was completely reconveyed. For example, during her court case in September 2007, the *Western Daily Press* reported the court being shown footage of Pauline Campbell ‘shouting that Eastwood Park was not safe’ (27 September 2007) and the *Liverpool Daily Post* reported she’d claimed ‘the jail was not a “safe” place for women to be held’ (26 September 2007).

As Pauline Campbell’s profile grew she was able to create news stories simply by announcing a new development, and her views were often quoted in related news articles, both locally and nationally (e.g. in *The Mirror*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Observer*) which gave her further opportunity to promote her campaign. In 2004 this totalled 104 articles in the local press (many constituting large features and front page lead stories) and 12 in the national press (again many of these features). In 2005 she was covered 72 times locally and in 14 national press articles, as well as magazines such as *Community Care*, *Young People Now* and the *WI Magazine*. Sarah’s inquest that year received extensive coverage locally and nationally; of all the Styal deaths, Sarah’s drew ‘most attention because her mother, Pauline, has bravely campaigned to call the Prison Service to account for failing her daughter’ (*Independent* leader, 11 January 2005). In 2006 Campbell was covered in 29 local press articles and four national articles. In 2007 she was covered by 26 local press articles in 2007 and two national articles (large features in *The Sun* and *The Guardian*).

While this research has not analysed her broadcast exposure, it is worth noting that she appeared on many TV and radio programmes, including BBC2's *Newsnight*, *Week In Week Out* on BBC Wales, *Woman's Hour* on Radio 4, a BBC1 documentary about Styal, BBC Radio in Manchester, Merseyside, the Southern Counties and Leeds, Xfm Radio, Anglia Television, ITV News, Granada Reports, Channel M TV (Manchester), BBC News and Sky TV.

Pauline Campbell was an avid letter writer and had many letters published in the press. These usually picked up on a news story then highlighted problems with prison care, referring to Sarah's death. They appeared across a vast range of publications – from Britain's biggest sellers to obscure local newspapers with tiny circulations as Campbell "continued to put more newspapers and magazines on her list to contact" (interview with Joan Meredith). Many of these were prominent under favourable headlines, and some appeared in publications with opposing politics, such as the right-wing *Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph*. From 2004 to the end of 2007 she had 118 letters printed in local newspapers and 56 in national publications, including all the broadsheets, *The New Statesman* (twice as letter of the week), *Private Eye* and *Real* magazine.

Impact

The interviews with former prisons ministers Paul Goggins and Maria Eagle imply Campbell had a significant impact. Eagle said she provided a "policy impetus on the government to have a closer look at why women were killing themselves" and that "Campbell was central to Jean's [Corston] report being done at all really; I really think that" (interview with Maria Eagle).

Indeed, for Goggins, Campbell "kept the whole issue in the public mind and the public domain by the things that she did. Whilst that's not always a very comfortable thing if you're a government minister or senior official, making this a matter of public importance was important and she played a real role in that, so it gave significance to this area of work" (interview with Paul Goggins).

Jean Corston herself confirmed that Campbell was a driving force behind her report:

*Me being asked to do the report owed quite a lot to Pauline... I honestly think if she hadn't done that [campaign] nobody would have said 'Let's ask Jean to do a practical piece of work'.
(interview with Jean Corston)*

Without Campbell's campaign, Corston says, simply appointing an independent ombudsman to investigate deaths in prison would have been seen as a sufficient response to the issue of women prisoner deaths:

*her campaign was so successful I think the then home secretary Charles Clark knew he had to do more, and I think that's one of the reasons why the women ministers around Charles Clarke were able to persuade him that more work needed to be done – not just the academic research that had been done in the past on women in prison but a practical piece of work... I think Pauline was much more seminal in that than she realised and it wasn't until I looked back on it that I realised how seminal she had been.
(interview with Jean Corston)*

Corston's ground-breaking review "completely changed the way in which the government and prison service saw women in prison" according to Maria Eagle; before then women prisoners were seen as "men light" and the National Offender Management Service was "gender blind, they didn't understand the distinction between men and women and that the way of dealing with them might be different" (interview with Maria Eagle). As well as shining a spotlight on women prisoners, the report brought various reforms. For Corston, the most important of these was abolishing the "terrible humiliation" of routine strip searching in women's prisons from April 2008. Other improvements she cited were: developing a greater understanding of the first night in women's prisons which has now become a "different regime"; the Women Awareness Staff Programme (WASP) training programme for prison staff; and the National Service Framework for women who offend (interview with Jean Corston).

Since Campbell's campaign the number of self-inflicted deaths in women's prisons has fallen dramatically, numbering one in 2008, three in 2009, one in 2010, two in 2011, and one in 2012. More generally, strong consensus about Campbell's achievements emerged from the interview data: raising awareness of the issue with the public and government; generating interest in and publicity for the issues; effecting government action; practical changes in prisons; and changing public opinion and discourses by presenting the problem of women prison deaths differently.

Public reaction was largely sympathetic to Pauline Campbell (evident from her close relationships with journalists, favourable press coverage and political responsiveness) but strong feeling also existed against her campaign, as demonstrated by occasional letters to local papers; one reader was 'sick and tired of hearing this lady plead that her daughter was a victim' (letter to the *Whitchurch Herald*, 3 February 2005) while another was 'weary of Pauline Campbell's constant blaming of the prison system for the death of her daughter, without a mention of her own responsibility' (*Chester Chronicle*, 4 February 2005).

Bereavement and individual traits

One dominant theme which emerged from the interview coding was Pauline Campbell's campaign being entwined with her bereavement and driven by grief. It was often suggested that this "terrific burden of grief" (interview with Joan Meredith) fed the campaign, and vice versa.

This was one of various individual traits considered important to her campaigning, since as Paul Goggins notes, "nobody could have done it like she did it". These traits included personal characteristics (e.g. "fearless", "intelligent", "organised", "strong"); her "obsessive" and "rabid" commitment to the campaign, which never diminished and took all her time and energy; and the fact she was connected by personal experience (Sarah's death) which gave her greater authority and made her statements hard to argue with (interviews with Frances Crook, Paul Goggins and Jean Corston).

As Corston says:

The combination of her determination, her sheer force of personality, and her personal experience as a grieving mother, it was the three things together that made a powerful combination.

Linked to these traits is the conception of her as a lone, individual campaigner; she “was not a mass movement organiser, she was one person...she did individual direct action” (interview with Frances Crook). This perhaps belies her confidence; “she knew that she could do it” (interview with Joan Meredith). A sense of speed also arises from the repeated references to her doing things “so quickly”, “immediately” and “straight away”.

Effectiveness

Other factors emerged from interview data as contributing to the campaign’s effectiveness. It created awkwardness through “the embarrassment factor” for prison staff and government (interview with Frances Crook) and the publicity proved “uncomfortable” for ministers (interview with Paul Goggins). As Corston explains:

Being a secretary of state...is an utterly unrelenting job and what you don’t want is terrible headlines – what you want is to get it off the front page and you could look at it cynically and say they were desperate to get her off the front page.

Campbell’s use of emotion was also considered important – “she wore her pain very upfront” (interview with Frances Crook), she had a “highly charged and emotional formula” (interview with David Wilson). This betrays another significant factor, her gender, which, as Wilson points out, meant “she was able to use emotions about morality that men wouldn’t”.

Another powerful aspect was that people identified with Pauline Campbell. Jean Corston related to the tragic loss of a child, while Frances Crook said one reason the Howard League became involved with Pauline Campbell was because Crook also had a daughter called Sarah, was also a single parent, former teacher and middle-aged. Identification worked on a less specific level too. Goggins was touched because “as a human being you imagine your own child going into prison at 18 years of age and the horror and trauma of that and then to get the message that they have taken their life...” On a wider level, as Wilson points out, “she was middle England personified so she had a resonance with that audience” (interview with David Wilson). This suggests the effectiveness of Campbell’s constant presentation of herself as a ‘bereaved mother’. Corston notes that “the huge importance for her in the media was as a grieving mother – that is such a powerful symbol and she knew that, she was a highly intelligent woman and she knew the effect she could have and she played it very well” (interview with Jean Corston).

Government responsibility

In both speech and writing, Campbell re-used certain phrases to reiterate her arguments. Particularly prominent was that the government should feel ‘shame’ – her main demonstration placard read ‘Shame on the Home Office’

and most letters refer to 'this shameful state of affairs' (e.g. *Birmingham Post*, 11 August 2006; *Birmingham Mail*, 8 June 2006). She always signed off as a 'bereaved mother' whose daughter had died 'in the "care" of Styal prison' (e.g. Demonstration notice, 23 January 2007) or 'in the so-called care of HMP Styal' (e.g. *Evening Leader*, 13 November 2003) which highlights the prison's responsibility and failure, especially in contrast to her oft-repeated 'concern about the lack of accountability following deaths in custody' (e.g. *Birmingham Post*, 11 August 2006).

Repositioning the problem

Campbell humanised prisoners by detailing the women who had died and any children who survived them, as well as disseminating facts such as: 'nine out of ten women prisoners are convicted of non-violent offences. They do not pose a threat to society... Two-thirds of women prisoners are mothers. Most women in prison are mentally ill' (e.g. Post-demonstration email, 23 January 2007). She presented prisoners as 'vulnerable women' or 'vulnerable youngsters' (e.g. letter to *The Times*, 12 January 2006). She emphasised the dichotomy between 'civilised society' and the 'barbaric', 'brutal' and 'medieval' prisons (e.g. letter to *The Sun*, 22 September 2007; *Birmingham Post*, 5 August 2006).

3 Violet van der Elst

Desire for direct action

Direct action appealed to Violet Van der Elst as political debate and quiet campaigning had not brought about the abolition of the death penalty. A bill proposing abolition in 1928 had been promptly thrown out, a select committee's recommended suspension was ignored and the NCADP, set up in 1925, had already been campaigning for ten years. She believed direct action would bring progress. As her campaign organising secretary, JLC Colling, explained:

Mrs Van der Elst feels it is time, and high time, that something is done to draw the public attention to the apathy and lethargy which government circles display. (Letter in The Daily Mirror, 5 April 1935)

Van der Elst also wanted to get through to the government: 'I have a right to tell the government my views. If they will not listen to me in one way, I will make them listen in another' (*Sunday Express*, 17 March 1935). She was encouraged to take direct action because of the example of the suffragettes, whom she knew attained women's suffrage only through militancy (Gatley, 1972). However, she also attempted to become involved with politics, to take the cause to the House of Commons, and stood several times to become an MP, albeit unsuccessfully.

Campaign aims

Violet Van der Elst's aim was to abolish capital punishment by turning public opinion against it. She believed that, 'some day the crowds will be so great and so stirred up against capital punishment that the authorities won't dare go ahead with an execution' (*Time* magazine, 25 May 1936). As such, the aim of her campaign was 'to attract public attention' (Van der Elst, 1937) and 'draw attention to the barbarity of capital punishment' (*Sunday Express*, 17 March 1935). Publicity was central to this; she considered a demonstration successful if she 'gained the publicity I wanted' (Van der Elst, 1937); as long as her message 'was heard' she was 'quite content' (*Ibid.*).

The campaign: Tactics and timeline

Her first demonstration was on 13 March 1935 outside Pentonville prison on the morning of the execution of murderer Charles Malcolm Lake (commonly known as George Harvey as he refused to reveal his real identity; see Appendix 1). She employed 60 sandwich board men with placards reading 'Stop capital punishment' and 'Mercy is not weakness' to march past the prison, plus a 25-strong brass band to play hymns, including 'Abide With Me', a hymn often sung at funerals, and a dead march – though police prevented that (MEPO 2/3058). She sent a press release in advance to newspapers across Britain so the event was well covered by the press both before and afterwards (e.g. *Daily Express*, 14 March 1945). Van der Elst, in her white Rolls Royce, used a microphone to proclaim repeatedly "abolish capital punishment", which boomed out of a van with loudspeakers. On that occasion the sandwich board men, band and six cars with anti-death penalty posters processed slowly through the centre of London obstructing traffic, but at future demonstrations

they remained outside the prison, where she obstructed the gates and road with her car and used a loudspeaker to play hymns rather than employ a band.

One of Violet Van der Elst's major tactics was hiring aeroplanes to fly over prisons, trailing banners and dropping leaflets. This was first used on 2 April 1935 at the execution of Petty Officer Brigstock (see Appendix 1) when three planes flew over Wandsworth prison with 100-yard long streamers attached to their tails reading 'Abolish Capital Punishment' and 'Stop the Execution' (*Daily Mirror*, 1 April 1935; MEPO 2/3058). This was in addition to her demonstration on the ground, which that day (and typically) consisted of cars with placards, sandwich board men (usually 35–60), two loud speaker vans playing 'Abide With Me' (MEPO 2/3058), large-scale leafleting and Van der Elst herself personally addressing the crowd.

Violet Van der Elst protested outside prisons whenever an execution occurred inside, demonstrating five times in London in the first year of her campaign as well as around England, in places such as Manchester, Durham and Bedford. Before demonstrations she organised meetings locally, used a lorry with loudspeakers to give speeches on street corners, distributed pamphlets and put up advance notices in shop windows (MEPO 3/2554). Leaflets were often copies of a letter to the Home Secretary setting out her defence of the convicted man as insane and afflicted by poverty (MEPO 3/2554).

Violet Van der Elst was frequently arrested and charged with obstruction or breach of the peace as protesting outside the prison gates during an execution was forbidden by the police. Barricades surrounded the area but she would drive through these then refuse to move her car. She often attempted to drive into the prison, once even hijacking a parked lorry to get through. She was indifferent to being arrested, considering it a necessary part of her campaign. She had received 25 police court prosecutions by 1950 (*Daily Mirror*, 6 July 1950). The police clampdown was fierce and effective, with the Metropolitan Police using intelligence to prevent her demonstrations and intervening to ground her planes (MEPO 2/3058). The authorities considered her activities seriously; the Special Branch monitored her and declassified files show they tailed her, frequently telegrammed her movements and used informants (MEPO 2/3058). Criminal charges were usually settled with a fine or dismissed by magistrates.

As well as protesting, Violet Van der Elst sought a reprieve for all those sentenced to death by organising a public petition and challenging the verdict. Her chief method, according to Special Branch, was to have someone make allegations to the police or Home Office that they had proof of insanity in the prisoner's family (HO 144/21831). Her first petition, for Leonard Brigstock in March 1935, garnered 86,112 signatories; her second (for the same man) topped 100,000 and was presented to the Home Secretary by Clement Atlee on her behalf. Signatories were gathered by appealing through loudspeakers from her car, holding meetings and distributing leaflets.

Violet Van der Elst also sought to disseminate her arguments through publishing a book, *On the Gallows*, and a weekly journal, *Humanity*, containing 'Interesting articles on capital punishment, by Mrs Van der Elst' (*Express and Mirror*, 6

December 1935) and articles by MP George Lansbury, Sylvia Pankhurst, Professor A. M. Low and others (*Daily Mirror*, 3 March 1936).

Her demonstrations appear to have been scaled back during the Second World War, when her house was used by the 1st Airborne Division and petrol rations would have precluded her usual tactics. At Pentonville prison on foot in March 1945 she told police, 'It's the petrol, if I had my own car I would soon show you people how I would drive in there' (MEPO 2/3058). She continued protesting throughout most of her life, with demonstrations still occurring two decades later, such as at Pentonville prison in October 1946, Strangeways in January 1949 and the execution of Ruth Ellis (see Appendix 1) in 1955. She also shouted criticism at the Archbishop of Canterbury during his evidence to the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment in February 1950 (*Daily Express*, 4 February 1950). She retired from campaigning in the late 1950s, by then in her late seventies, due to illness and old age. She had spent most of her fortune on the campaign.

Reaction and impact

Violet Van der Elst divided opinion, with both her cause and tactics proving controversial. She admitted that at demonstrations 'many of the women are against me and many are for me' (Van der Elst, 1937) and that she met 'a great deal of opposition' and 'a considerable amount of heckling' (Van der Elst, 1937). She claimed to have received a lot of supportive letters and visiting journalists all reported her phone ringing constantly, but unfortunately her tendency for exaggeration – part of her campaigning work – makes her figures unreliable.

The execution crowd is variously reported as 'sympathetic' (*Time* magazine, 25 May 1936), 'apathetic' and providing a 'very mixed reception' (MEPO 3/2554). For criminals who were abhorred, such as Buck Ruxton (see Appendix 1), the crowd was more hostile; outside Strangeways (where a year earlier the crowd had been friendly) more than 5,000 people surrounded her car, shouting and even smashing a window (*Daily Mirror*, 13 May 1936), yet her appeal against capital punishment on the grounds of 'humanity' was still met with 'a mixture of cheers and derision' (*The Times*, 13 May 1936). At other executions the crowd were certainly more sympathetic and would even join in with hymns; for example, at the execution of Dorothea Waddingham (see Appendix 1) there was a crowd of 5,000 whose hymns could be heard within the prison and at Derek Bentley's execution in 1953 (see Appendix 1) the crowd sang 'Abide With Me' and recited a Psalm (Block and Hostettler, 1997).

Plenty of people disagreed with her campaign; she received death threats and was sometimes removed from protests by police for her own protection. At the same time she received support from some members of the public and government, such as MP George Lansbury and newspaper readers who wrote in (e.g. *Daily Mirror*, 5 April 1935). Her actions were frowned upon by pressure groups, such as the NCADP who disapproved of her methods.

The NCADP also admitted her campaign received 'a great deal of publicity' and that her 'methods may shock certain people into a consideration, for the first time, of what is involved in the death penalty' (*The Penal Reformer*, 1935)

which is exactly what she wanted to do. Opinion polls remained in favour of hanging but there is a sense that she nurtured an outpouring of public feeling against executions when possible. For example, at the unpopular executions of Waddingham and Bentley, the crowd sang 'Abide With Me' and at the execution of Ruth Ellis the crowd joined her chant of 'Evans – Bentley – Ellis' (Potter, 1993). This chant named three convicted murderers whose hanging elicited public disapproval due to questions over their guilt or responsibility (see Appendix 1). Politicians were definitely aware of her campaign, with many wanting it terminated and the Home Office employing Special Branch to prevent her demonstrations (MEPO 3/2554). Former Prime Minister Clement Atlee later said that 'her suffragette-like militancy and sensational methods, though frowned upon by some, did have the merit of focusing public opinion on an unpopular subject, and that she had a strong claim to be regarded as the woman who did more than anyone else to secure the abolition of capital punishment in Britain' (Gatley, 1972).

Press coverage

Violet Van der Elst's demonstrations and related charges were covered in at least 51 articles in *The Express* and *Daily Mirror* and 17 in *The Times*. The limitations of searching electronic newspaper archives mean these figures could be an underestimate. Figures also exclude coverage about her unrelated to the campaign, though the frequency of such articles reflects her high profile as an abolition campaigner; she became famous enough to be covered in columns and quizzes (e.g. *Daily Mirror*, 18 July 1936). Her demonstrations were also reported in other newspapers, including locals such as the *Evening Standard* and the *Evening News*, Manchester. Violet Van der Elst and her campaign were also known in America and Australia and reported around the world. Foreign newspapers which featured her included: the *Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* in Singapore; *Evening Post* in New Zealand; *New York Times*, *Picture Post*, *New York Herald Tribune* and *Time* magazine in America; the *Irish Times* in Ireland; and *The Mercury* in Australia. Press coverage ensured her abolitionist arguments were frequently conveyed, and her quotes featured heavily for example: 'Hanging does not prevent murder. It is a crime against civilisation' (*Sunday Express*, 17 March 1935). Reports covered the activity at demonstrations in great detail.

Bereavement

In 1934, eight months before beginning her campaign, Violet Van der Elst was widowed for the second time when her husband, Jean Van der Elst, a Belgian painter, died aged 42. They had been married just six years and she was devastated: 'The solitude and despair that followed I cannot speak about' (Van der Elst, 1937). She thought of suicide and her unalterable grief is evident by the fact that she used mediums to contact him and kept his body in her basement for a year before cremating it (*Daily Mirror*, 3 August 1935). It was his death that led her to dedicate her life to abolishing capital punishment, as it was something he had passionately believed in (Van der Elst, 1937). The couple had both considered it unjust because they believed poor defendants had little chance of justice, juries were ill-qualified, men were insane when they committed murder and 'no one has the right to take a life' (Van der Elst, 1937).

Personal characteristics

Various personal characteristics appear important to Violet Van der Elst's actions. She was absolutely committed to the demonstrations and remained so throughout her life. She was dedicated, determined and ignored personal disadvantage in pursuit of the campaign; in the forward to her book (Van der Elst, 1937) Philip Wellby said she 'knows no fear' and is 'indifferent to personal inconvenience or suffering.' She slept little, spent all her money on campaigning and was arrested numerous times. The campaign was entwined with her identity and vice versa – it was called 'the Violet Van der Elst campaign' (*Sunday Express*, 17 March 1935). Like Pauline Campbell, she alone led the campaign, as an individual: 'My life would have been well worth living if...I had been the means of abolishing capital punishment' (Van der Elst, 1937). Tied to this was her great self-belief; she believed she would abolish capital punishment within six months.

It should also be noted that while some of Violet Van der Elst's views simply appear more alien now than they would have done in the 1930s, she was certainly eccentric and prone to exaggeration. For example, she gambled, used mediums, wrote of her belief in evil vibrations and included in her election literature stories she had written, including *The Soul of the Magician* and *The Tragedy at the Chateau de Borgla* (*Daily Mirror*, 28 February 1940). She lied about her age (even in court and on her passport, usually taking off 12 years) and also exaggerated, for example claiming to employ 1,000 people when it was nearer 100 (Gathey, 1972). However, her eccentric presentation in the press must be read cautiously. Some journalists treated her favourably, including the esteemed Dennis Bardens, founder of *Panorama*, who noted that her house was 'almost haunted', reflecting that mysticism was more accepted in the 1930s (*Daily Express*, 10 April 1935).

Furthermore, any eccentricity should not be seen as legitimising allegations that she was mad, allegations which arguably reflected dominant contemporary discourses about women and madness. As Violet Van der Elst herself pointed out, when police suggested she was 'demented' they 'adopted a method they had practised on the suffragettes in the old days' (Van der Elst, 1937). Police also used this as sufficient reason to detain and discredit her, with one chief constable arguing in court that 'a remand is necessary because I think the woman is mental' (*Daily Mirror*, 16 July 1936) and another superintendent suggesting she be examined by the prison doctor (*Evening News*, 12 May 1936).

Repositioning the problem

Van der Elst sought to portray capital punishment as murder. For example, her placards and speeches would often proclaim 'hanging is murder' (MEPO 3/2554) and she had a man read out that 'Judgement of death was this day executed' then interrupted 'You have made a mistake – you mean murdered. That is what it is – legalised killing' (*Evening Standard*, 2 April 1935). She also tried to invert its representation, so that the punishment became a crime in itself, calling hanging a 'terrible crime' (*Daily Mirror*, 17 April 1935).

Like Pauline Campbell, she tried to humanise those who offend and highlight

that it was real people who were dying, drawing attention to them being parents and children. Examples of this include her telling crowds to ‘imagine it was your son in there’ and having sandwich board men’s placards reading ‘Stop this terrible crime of hanging a mother of five children’ (for Waddingham’s execution (The *Times*, 17 April 1936)). She asked people:

Does it not sound awful to hear someone say ‘Why that girl’s father was hanged’ or ‘That woman’s son was hanged’?
(Van der Elst, 1937)

She used her book to sympathetically describe those executed. For example, Walter Worthington (see Appendix A) ‘looked like a village schoolmaster... was the father of twelve children...and had the saddest face I had ever seen’ (Van der Elst, 1937). She also highlighted their suffering from mental illness, such as boxer Del Fontaine (see Appendix 1), who would rock backwards and forwards saying ‘I feel as if someone is forcing screws into my head’ (Van der Elst, 1937).

Violet Van der Elst used similar language to Pauline Campbell and often the same binary oppositions, frequently referring to capital punishment as ‘barbaric’ and contrasting that with ‘civilised’ society (for example, Ibid., 1937).

4 How effective were Pauline Campbell and Violet Van der Elst?

Central to this research is investigating the impact of Van der Elst and Campbell – not only to better appreciate their campaigns but in order to better understand possible reasons for the success and failure of penal reform campaigning. Two frameworks are used here to analyse their campaigns’ effectiveness – relevant public policy theory and direct action.

Public policy theory helps to illuminate the campaigners’ possible roles in the development of public policy, which is broadly and most easily defined as ‘Anything a government chooses to do or not to do’ (Dye, 1972; cited in Howlett and Ramesh, 2003). In policy studies the wide subject matter is divided by policy typologies and different stages of the policy process. The latter distinction is useful here as the initial stage is usually considered ‘agenda setting’ – that is ‘the recognition of a problem on the part of the government’ (Howlett and Ramesh 2003: 121) – and it is arguably this which Van der Elst and Campbell sought to achieve.

One enduring and influential approach to the agenda setting process is Cobb and Elder’s model of policy formation. According to this an issue is expanded from the public/systemic agenda, that is issues existing in society, onto the formal/institutional agenda, which is items ‘explicitly up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision-makers’ (1972: 86). Cobb and Elder’s work appears particularly relevant as progression begins with a trigger event taken up by an initiator – a group or individual with a grievance who define the issue, develop associated demands and increase awareness.

Another highly influential approach is John Kingdon’s explanation of policy change occurring when independent streams – problems, policies and politics – in the policy system align and open windows, providing ‘opportunities for action on given initiatives’ (Kingdon, 1984: 174). This highlights the importance of understanding context, particularly the political climate. These two models are used here to understand the impact of the two penal reform campaigns.

Influencing policy

As emerged in the findings, both women sought to influence policy through raising awareness of an issue. Cobb and Elder’s model of agenda-building focuses on ‘the ways in which groups articulate grievances and transform them into viable issues that require decision makers to provide some type of ameliorative response’ (Cobb and Elder, 1972) which is what Van der Elst and Campbell were attempting to do. Both acted as what Cobb and Elder term ‘initiators’ – groups or individuals who generate and expand an issue. Often initiators take up a problem created or highlighted by a ‘triggering device’ (an event or major change, such as natural disasters, murders or technological advancements) and convert it into an issue. This idea highlights a significant difference between the two campaigns. For Campbell, the trigger event was the death of six women prisoners in Styal prison within twelve months (one of whom

was her daughter) and more broadly a dramatic rise in the number of self-inflicted deaths in women's prisons in England, from one in 1993 to a record high of 14 in 2003. For Van der Elst, however, while there had been recent reforms of capital punishment (e.g. raising the minimum age to 18) it is difficult to identify a trigger event related to the actual issue – her campaign was instead prompted by the death of her husband.

According to Cobb and Elder, to reach policymakers issues should first enter the systemic agenda – that is items 'commonly perceived by members of the political community as meriting public attention and as involving matters within the legitimate jurisdiction of existing governmental authority' (Ibid.) – and then the governmental or formal agenda: items 'explicitly up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision-makers' (Ibid.). This mirrors both women's plan to impact on government policy (reach the formal agenda) by popularising their arguments with the public (reach the systemic agenda).

Entering the policy agenda

Cobb and Elder identify three pre-requisites for an issue to enter the systemic agenda: widespread attention or awareness, shared concern that action is needed and shared perception that the issue falls within governmental authority. These highlight the difficult task faced by both Violet Van der Elst and Pauline Campbell. The press coverage both women cultivated and received shows their issues received widespread attention, meeting the first criterion, and as their issues fall under the umbrella of criminal justice one can assume they were perceived as under governmental authority, meeting the second criterion. Indeed, Campbell deliberately identified prisoner deaths as the responsibility of the Home Office – for example, through her refrain of 'Shame on the Home Office' – rather than a non-governmental department such as the courts or prison staff. Cobb and Elder suggest this element is crucial as 'the fate of an issue in gaining systemic agenda status will hinge on whether or not it can be defined as being within the purview of legitimate governmental action' (1972: 86).

However, despite Campbell's efforts – and prisons' duty of care to prisoners – the issue of prisoner suicides is not something the public would easily recognise as under government authority, not least because the deaths were self-inflicted. But the prerequisite most problematic for both women is that there must exist a 'shared concern that action is needed' – shared here referring to a 'major portion of the polity' (Ibid.). During the 1930s the majority supported capital punishment and would thus not share Van der Elst's concern that action was needed. Similarly, the majority would not naturally feel action was needed to stop prisoner suicides – although Campbell's campaign arguably altered this, as demonstrated by the support she received, such as from newspaper leaders and interest groups.

Despite these problems, both issues did achieve formal agenda status. However, for abolition, this largely reflected the fact it was already being backed and discussed by some MPs and had been the subject of a select committee before Van der Elst's campaign commenced (although her petitions would also have highlighted it was an issue receiving public attention). This reflects not only

that ‘it is possible for an issue to get onto the formal agenda without having been a part of the systemic agenda’ but also the problems this poses for an issue since ‘it is unlikely that any issue involving substantial social consequences will gain standing on a governmental agenda unless it has first attained systemic agenda status’ (Ibid.). This perhaps explains why for decades abolition never received serious consideration by political leaders – who dismissed the select committee recommendations – and underlines the importance of what Van der Elst was seeking to achieve; had she managed to invoke a shared public desire for action she would have elevated the issue to the systemic agenda, which would have elevated its standing on the governmental agenda.

The issue of deaths in women’s prisons clearly achieved formal agenda status as the government commissioned Jean Corston to review the issue of women prisoners. This status came after Campbell’s campaigning – indeed, all interviewees reported that Campbell raised awareness of the issue, building it on the systemic agenda; Paul Goggins’ account that she “kept the issue in the public mind...in the public domain” shows she turned the issue into one “perceived by members of the political community as meriting public attention” (Ibid.), as systemic agenda status is defined. Its expansion onto the formal agenda is demonstrated by Maria Eagle attributing the Corston review to Campbell’s campaign.

Constraints of the issue

To understand where Campbell and Van der Elst succeeded and failed it is necessary to examine the issues at the heart of their campaigns. Cobb and Elder identify five fundamental dimensions that affect an issue’s expansion onto the formal agenda: specificity (how specifically defined it is), social significance (how relevant it is to the public), temporal relevance (the time frame of the issue), complexity (how easily it is understood) and categorical precedence (how unique the issue is). Applying these characteristics to the abolition of capital punishment suggests the issue was helped by being concretely defined, easily understood and carrying long-term implications. However, the issue was undermined by having little social significance (since it affected few people) and by having great precedent, as abolition was already under discussion. The issue of female prisoner deaths had the advantages of being well-defined, easily understood and not having been addressed previously, but the disadvantages of limited temporal relevance and social significance, since it was a small and specific problem. These characteristics perhaps explain the greater success of Campbell’s campaign – the issue of women prisoner deaths invoked interest and a sense of urgency as it had not been dealt with before. The issue lacked social significance, but Campbell overcame this by presenting the problem as one not only affecting prisoners and their families, but a problem for vulnerable women, mothers and daughters, turning it into something that could affect anyone.

Issue identification

Campbell made the issue more relevant to the public through her presentation, thereby helping it to expand through the different groups of public identified by Cobb and Elder:

- the basic 'identification group' – those with a strong interest in the issue – here made up of prisoners, their families and relevant reform groups, all of whom she connected and communicated with
- the 'attention group' – those informed about certain issues corresponding to the sphere of concern – here including women's rights and human rights groups, shown by the backing Campbell received from Women Liberal Democrats and the Fawcett Society
- the 'attentive public' – consisting of well-informed, interested or well-educated people – here including readers of *The Guardian* and local newspapers where Campbell was frequently sympathetically covered.

Whether Campbell fully reached the fourth group that Cobb and Elder identify – the general public – is doubtful. Although the campaign was covered in local and national media it never led the news, nor was it given prominence in the UK's bestselling papers, the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun*; this probably both reflects and accounts for the fact that it did not become an issue that provoked widespread public reaction.

Looking at Van der Elst's campaign, it is possible it did not expand past the identification group of convicts and their families (many of whom would ask for her). While all the different sections of the public defined above were certainly aware of the issue given her wide press coverage, touring and leafleting, they were arguably not 'involved' in the conflict. Cobb and Elder purport that an issue is expanded to a public 'when people within that public are aware that the issue is contested and are positively or negatively attracted to it', but that attraction or repulsion determines their involvement. This was shown in Van der Elst's campaign, when the NCADP's disapproval meant they distanced themselves, in contrast to Campbell's issue, which as it reached the three different segments of the public inspired positive responses – Women Liberal Democrats invited her to speak at their conference fringe event and the director of the Fawcett Society nominated her for *The Guardian's* 'woman of the year' award.

Speed of issue development

Another relevant element determining expansion is how rapidly an issue develops. The issue of abolishing capital punishment had been developing for a century before Van der Elst took up the cause and 'conflicts that develop slowly over time...hardly ever will they get the attention of a larger audience' (Cobb and Elder, 1972). In contrast, as emerged from the interview coding, Campbell moved very quickly to expand the issue and 'the quicker an issue can be converted into an emotional issue, the greater the likelihood that it will gain visibility' (Ibid). The traction gained from using emotion is also important here given that it was central to Pauline Campbell's campaigning.

Language and symbols

A key factor for issue expansion is the type of language and symbols employed by initiators. Campbell connected her campaign to the highly emotive symbols of 'mother' and 'daughter', which have positive associations for most people, such as love, family, nurturer and bond. This is an example of 'the association of issue-specific symbols with other symbols salient to the

community' (Cobb and Elder, 1972). Furthermore, symbols are reinforced by the background, veracity and position of the person using them and Pauline Campbell embodied the symbols she used: she was a bereaved mother who had lost her daughter. The language she used invoked sympathy, portraying women prisoners as 'vulnerable' and in need of 'care', appealing to people's belief in protecting the weak. She also constantly highlighted women prisoners as being different to men (e.g. victims, non-violent) and in a climate where male-dominated environments were being reformed this symbolically aligned the issue with the fight for equality.

However, Campbell's referential use of 'human rights' may have been counterproductive as it has been heavily over-used, which Cobb and Elder claim can cause a negative reaction, plus prisoners' claims to human rights are unpopular with much of the public and usually portrayed negatively in the right-wing press. In that context 'human rights' would carry inflammatory connotations. Campbell's actions were also heavily symbolic; when she stopped prisoners from entering prisons she subverted the norm of prisoners being stopped from leaving. Doing so questioned the very nature of prisons and punishment. It also inverted the society-criminal prioritisation; instead of prisoners being kept inside for the protection of society, they must not be allowed in for the protection of themselves. All of this provided a compelling and uncomfortable statement.

For Cobb and Elder a symbol's success depends on whether it is being used appropriately for the situation and the audience; 'symbol weight' (potency) is influenced by the people using it and by the situation, the latter depending on the 'nature of the combatants and the nature of the audience' (1972: 131). Van der Elst's frequent assertion that hanging was 'murder' could therefore have been unwise in this situation; by using 'murder' as a strong negative symbol she was simultaneously attempting to reduce the public's reaction to actual murder (by claiming execution was an unnecessary penalty) and using it to portray the death penalty negatively (by claiming it equated to murder and was therefore wrong). Reinforcing the negative emotive connotations of murder could have enhanced desire for the death penalty, in opposition to her aim, and at the very least created conflict and confusion. Van der Elst did make a very powerful and innovative use of visual and aural symbols at demonstrations, however, by playing funeral hymns, having men remove their hats and a woman fall to her knees and pray. Each of these has an associated meaning of mourning, recasting the execution as a cause for grief and sadness rather than celebration. This served to underline the reality of what was occurring – that someone was dying inside the prison.

Entering the policy stream

Having concentrated on the factors that accounted for the success and failure of both campaigns in agenda setting, it is now useful to consider Kingdon's model, which takes a broader view and brings in contextual variables. For Kingdon, agenda setting is the process through which all potential topics are narrowed down to those on a government agenda, 'a list of subjects to which officials are paying some serious attention at any given time' (Kingdon, 1984). Subjects rise on this agenda as a result of three independent streams or processes: problem recognition, policy proposals and political events. Problems influence the agenda by pressing on the system, signalled by a crisis, event or indicator. Policy contributes through an accumulation of knowledge and idea generation. Politics affects the agenda

through occurrences such as elections, public opinion swings, and staff or government changes. Each process 'can serve as an impetus or as a constraint', either promoting an item to higher agenda prominence or preventing it from rising (Ibid.). At critical times streams come together and policy windows open, providing an opportunity for action. This window is usually opened 'either by the appearance of compelling problems or happenings in the political stream' (Ibid.).

It is clear that ideas about both abolishing capital punishment and improving care for women prisoners existed in the policy stream and had done for many years before the women's campaigning began. According to Kingdon ideas are floated and amended by specialists and advocated by 'policy entrepreneurs', who invest their resources (e.g. time and money) pursuing a proposal and during a 'softening up' process push their ideas in different forums to build acceptance and awareness (Ibid.). In terms of abolition, this is demonstrated, for example, by bills being introduced, proposals being drafted and select committees reporting. Vocal and long-term abolitionist campaigner MP Sydney Silverman could therefore be considered the issue's 'policy entrepreneur'. Similarly, proposals for better dealing with women prisoners and providing them with an appropriate regime had been forwarded for decades by academics, pressure groups (one, Women in Prison, was specially established in 1983 to campaign for reforms) and government officials, such as the HM Prisons Inspectorate in their 1997 thematic review *Women in Prison*. The policy process in both cases was clearly therefore providing an impetus.

Policy context

In the problem stream – where particular problems in society or social conditions are highlighted or signalled and become influential – there was no impetus for abolition. Indeed, the three mechanisms through which Kingdon proposes problems capture government attention were all absent. There was no focusing event or crisis, monitoring indicators did not suggest a problem and feedback was largely positive as the general public backed capital punishment. For Pauline Campbell, in contrast, all three of Kingdon's mechanisms occurred. Firstly, system indicators showed a quantifiable increase in the deaths of women prisoners, particularly important as 'the countable problem sometimes acquires a power of its own that is unmatched by problems that are less countable' (Kingdon, 1984) and this was interpreted by Campbell from a statement of conditions to a statement of problems. Secondly, there was a focusing event as six women had died within a year in one prison alone, suggesting a crisis in care and reinforcing the idea of a problem. Thirdly, feedback to government officials, coming from press coverage, pressure groups and bereaved families, indicated that prisons were producing negative unintended consequences.

Government impetus

In the political stream, again abolition lacked impetus. While certain events had shown the ground shifting slightly, such as the Select Committee on capital punishment and previous controversy around the execution of Edith Thompson in 1923 for inciting murder, in the arena of public opinion there had been no real change when Van der Elst campaigned. People in government 'sense a national mood...and believe that they know when the mood shifts'

(Kingdon, 1984) but at the time public opinion remained largely unchanged on the issue of capital punishment. This restrained it from rising on the agenda since policymakers' perception of the national mood 'also serves as a constraint, pushing other items into relative obscurity' (Ibid.). As Van der Elst's demonstrations did not incite thousands of people to join her crusade this could have reinforced politicians' belief that the public was unsympathetic. In terms of organised political forces, the NCADP had been established in 1925 but it was not aligned with Van der Elst's campaign. A Conservative government had won the 1935 election and there were no further elections until 1945 meaning little governmental change. However, in 1945 a Labour government took power and a House of Commons majority adopted a bill which suspended capital punishment for five years – demonstrating the opening of a window in the political stream through government action. That it was defeated in the House of Lords and abandoned due to a lack of popular support can be seen as connected to the absence of impetus in the problem stream, as discussed above.

In contrast, a policy window opened in the political stream for Pauline Campbell's campaign almost immediately. While not necessarily invoking a major swing in public opinion she did arouse sympathy and was consistently sympathetically portrayed in the media, from which public opinion is often deciphered (Ibid.). Furthermore, patterns of support or opposition within extra-governmental structures, such as pressure groups, play an important role. Campbell had the vocal backing of an array of different organisations and 'if important people look around and find that all of the interest groups and other organised interests point them in the same direction, the entire environment provides them with a powerful impetus to move in that direction' (Ibid.). There was also governmental change in the appointment of new prisons ministers who were sympathetic to Campbell. As Maria Eagle noted, part of the impetus for action was "having women ministers in the Home Office who saw it as a gender issue and wanted to do something about it" (interview with Maria Eagle).

This analysis therefore suggests that the reason action was taken to deal with the issue of women prisoners was because all three streams came together as the problem was recognised, solutions had been developed and political change had occurred. But for abolishing capital punishment, although the policy ideas existed, when the political stream opened a window in the 1940s this did not bring the action Kingdon's model suggests was possible, arguably because the problem stream impetus was absent. When the death penalty was eventually abolished in 1965 (via initial suspension), it was by then considered a problem according to all three mechanisms (focusing event, indicators and feedback on unintended negative consequences), as apparently innocent men such as Timothy Evans had been hanged. It was only when another political window opened, when an abolitionist Labour government took office in 1964, that all three streams finally aligned and action occurred.

Campaigner characteristics

Violet Van der Elst and Pauline Campbell could be considered as 'policy entrepreneurs' even though neither operated within politics. Kingdon identifies three qualities which contribute to a policy entrepreneur's success: i) the person has some claim to a hearing, ii) has political connections or negotiating skill, iii) is persistent. Both women clearly possessed the attribute of persistence, associated with a willingness to invest large quantities of one's resources. In both cases this can be attributed to their recent bereavement. Deep grief, along with having no living children, partner or parents, increased persistence and resource commitment in several ways: they wanted a new focus or purpose, had no ties or commitments to distract them or demand their resources, felt they had 'nothing (else) to lose' which made them fearless, and lacked concern for themselves or enjoyment of life. These factors made them unnaturally persistent and encouraged them to take on direct action requiring heavy personal resources. As Campbell said 'I'll do whatever necessary. I'm on my own now and don't have to worry about who I might embarrass' (*WI magazine*, December 2005) and Van der Elst: 'I have nothing to live for but to pursue this cause' (*Sunday Express*, 17 March 1935).

While 'sheer tenacity pays off' it works only when combined with the other qualities (Kingdon, 1984). Therefore while Pauline Campbell could be considered a successful policy entrepreneur as she had relevant personal experience and expertise connected to the cause (in addition to political skill, which Van der Elst also demonstrated) Van der Elst lacked the necessary claim to authority. However, it is important to note that the women inhabited different historical contexts; when Van der Elst campaigned women's citizenship was more limited, restricting her opportunities and impacting upon her political connections and negotiating success.

The problem of penal reform

While the agenda-setting models of Kingdon and Cobb and Elder clearly prove helpful in understanding the two campaigns, the analysis above suggests these models are not a perfect fit for penal policy, which is a particularly difficult arena and one different to other policy spheres. As Pettit argues:

Of all the features of social organization, criminal justice has proved the most resistant to the effect of reasoned deliberation and discussion about the nature of the good society and the good polity.
(Pettit, 2001)

While both models emphasise the importance of wide public backing in order for an issue to receive action, this is unlikely to occur in penal reform for several reasons. Firstly, penal policy is highly emotive and invokes a strong response in most people (unlike, for example, transport or agricultural policy). This emotive response will naturally go against the person who has offended, 'for there is a powerful and praiseworthy instinct in all of us to feel indignation and anger at anyone who is seen to do harm to an innocent victim' (Ibid.). Secondly, only a minority (criminals and their families) will naturally identify with issues affecting prisoners or be on the direct receiving end of penal policy; the majority, law-abiding citizens and victims, will not only not relate to

the aims of penal reform but will likely consider the potential impact on victims and law and order over those who offend. As Soley argues: 'Penal reform is rarely, if ever, popular' since people 'by and large, want harsher penalties and they don't want explanations about crime or why an individual has particular problems which may have led them to offend' (Soley, 1983).

Thirdly, penal reform goes against prevalent anti-prisoner discourses and media representations which usually portray criminals as 'bad' and requiring severe punishment. The field is 'already structured by particular ways of seeing, and thinking about, punishment' and it is now 'taken for granted that all crime should so far as possible be met with punishment...[and] assumed that punishment has to be in some way painful if it is to count' (Faulkner, 2007). Even when the rehabilitative ideal was at its peak in the 1960s the public felt the main purpose of the penal system was punishment (Ryan, 1983).

The way forward for penal reform

All this means that inspiring sympathy or enthusiasm in the general public for a penal reform issue is a hard, if not impossible task. As Paul Goggins said:

*People sense public opinion as being a real wave of public opinion and you really have to do something about that as it will knock you over if you do nothing – but you're never going to have that about prisoners and with the issue of prisoners' welfare, because the vast majority of people are at best indifferent.
(Interview with Paul Goggins)*

Yet penal reform does occur, without public backing and even when the public is opposed to it. For example, when capital punishment was finally abolished opinion polls still showed 80 per cent of people were in favour of its retention (Potter, 1993). Penal reform 'often happens through quietly changing governmental or judicial practices in ways that bypass public discourse and justification' (Loader, 2010).

That is certainly not to say that changing public opinion is not of vital importance; there is no doubt that an absence of public support makes penal reform issues less likely to receive government attention or action, as both models highlight. Viable attempts to change penal culture must involve seeking to unsettle and recast dominant sensibilities towards punishment (Ibid.), and both Violet Van der Elst and Pauline Campbell were extraordinarily clear-sighted in their ambition to alter public opinion. Indeed, both issues did expand to what Cobb and Elder called the 'attentive public' and it was then that they reached the governmental agenda; ministers were aware of Campbell's press coverage and the sympathy felt for her while by the mid 1950s there had been a 'large movement in informed public opinion' towards abolitionism (Potter, 1993).

Another related possible adaptation of these models is that penal reform issues may require a greater number of constructive elements for effective agenda setting than other policy items. So while Kingdon says that problems or politics can alone open a policy window and provide opportunity for action, in both these cases of penal reform it took the alignment of all three streams. Both issues only received real government action (the Corston review, the suspension of hanging) when an impetus existed in the policy, problem and political streams.

Direct Action: The benefits and pitfalls

The campaigns of Van der Elst and Campbell are set apart from general agenda-setting by their use of direct action. For both women this proved successful in raising awareness of the issue, as demonstrated by the heavy press coverage their campaigns received (which directly resulted from the dramatic and innovative methods they employed to rouse attention and their ensuing arrests and court appearances). Direct action also enabled both women to use symbolism through actions rather than just words, examples included funeral hymns, prayers, blocking vans and laying flowers. The symbolism dramatically conveyed their respective messages and also meant they retained their essence when demonstration reports were relayed, either person to person or via the media. Therefore their direct action shaped as well as raised awareness. However, as their protests continued the press coverage they received became less frequent and less prominent, reflecting the fact that as direct action becomes less novel it is less interesting to media editors (Doherty et al., 2003).

While demonstrating the impact direct action can have, both stories also illustrate its problems; both campaigns consumed huge personal resources (time, money and energy) and incurred great personal cost, including poor health, arrests and a criminal record. Direct action's ability to damage relationships with the public, politicians or pressure groups (Grant, 2001) was evident through some groups and individuals distancing themselves from Van der Elst's techniques. Direct action also does not guarantee success; publicity will not necessarily produce political impact (Carter, 1973) and both issues took years to receive governmental action. It can also leave activists looking ridiculous (Carter, 1973). Van der Elst went from being known as a respected wealthy woman in high society to being considered an eccentric. It was incomprehensible to people that somebody would plunder their fortune on campaigning in such a spectacular manner, and willingly be arrested – particularly to help murderers, a very unpopular cause. Indeed, the confusion this caused was evident when MPs and policemen who did not know Van der Elst sometimes suggested she was 'mental', on drugs or requiring medical attention (such ideas were certainly untrue and are notably absent in lengthy Special Branch files on her).

Justification

How much justification Campbell and Van der Elst were seen to have for their actions also influenced how they were viewed. The use of direct action is considered justified if practices or institutions do not meet democratic ideals (Parekh, 1972; Carter, 1973) which could account for Campbell's warmer reception from police and politicians. Prisoner deaths suggested the justice system was failing and the government was not responding, while capital punishment had significant public support and the abolition debate was already being aired in parliament. This research certainly suggests that people considered Campbell's direct action to be justified because of what had happened, that is, she had suffered at the hands of the state and so had the right to protest. Frances Crook said her personal story meant she was "treated differently, with more care" and it gave her "much more legitimacy and much more power" (interview with Frances Crook). Paul Goggins said:

[he would not] criticise Pauline or what she did as she is a mother who has lost her daughter, so she should keep within the law but she should express that grief and that demand for something better for other people the way she sees fit.

(interview with Paul Goggins)

The issue itself can also provide justification for direct action; both campaigns were concerned to prevent prisoner deaths which fits Humphrey's (2006) idea that if an issue lacks reversibility then direct action is democratically justified as there is only one chance to act.

Conclusion: the lessons for penal reform

The three determinants of campaign success

Theoretical analysis has identified three major variables as determining the impact of campaigning: the issue, the campaigner and the context. The power of an issue can be seen as depending partly on its roots. Pauline Campbell's campaign was empowered firstly by being based on a tangible event and secondly by there being a concrete indication of a problem. In contrast, Van der Elst's campaign was arguably weakened by the absence of recent change on which to build her case and there being no suggestion of a problem with capital punishment policy. Campbell could move quickly to capitalise on the event, building a sense of urgency, while Van der Elst was unable to create a case for urgent change.

Two other important issue dimensions also emerged: i) whether the issue is original and ii) how many people it affects. Abolishing capital punishment had already been discussed, making it less fresh for the public, politicians and press, while the issue of women prisoners had not been properly addressed previously, adding power to demands it should be. While the case against hanging was weakened by only being considered a problem for murderers and their families, the issue of women prisoner deaths was successfully presented as affecting women, mothers and daughters, which made it easier for people to identify with, brought on board different interest groups and increased the breadth and depth of sympathetic reaction.

Related to this is the way in which an issue is presented. Both women employed symbolism to subvert established norms. Violet Van der Elst recast executions as being associated with grief and sadness rather than celebration, while Pauline Campbell stopped prisoners getting into prisons rather than out of them. Both women attempted to disrupt dominant discourses by humanising those who offend and portraying them as victims. Campbell's symbolism was heightened because she embodied the symbols she wanted to emphasise. This connects to the variable of the campaigner, which is strengthened by personal connection to the cause and level of persistence and resource commitment.

The third variable, context, also determined the effect of both campaigns. Violet Van der Elst was hampered by being at odds with the national mood and the ambitions of the Conservative government, while Campbell was helped by her campaign coinciding with a period when women's rights were considered important and sympathetic Labour ministers had taken office.

The power of direct action

This research also highlights the power of direct action to produce huge press coverage and raise an issue on the agenda. The benefits of techniques which actually enact the campaigner's argument (such as Pauline Campbell stopping women prisoners entering prisons and Violet Van der Elst playing funeral

hymns) are particularly effective, because these become the facts of the story, they cannot be changed, and the message is effectively conveyed. Through this norms and discourses can be directly challenged.

This report has demonstrated the value of investigating people and histories that have previously been ignored, and the enhanced understanding of difficult and important developments in penal reform such investigation can provide. It is hoped that future criminological research will examine those aspects that this research left unexplored due to space restrictions, such as gender, and will further engage with criminal justice activists in the public sphere.

Public Criminology

In directly engaging with the public sphere, Van der Elst and Campbell's actions can be interpreted as a form of public criminology. They disseminated information about crime and the penal system, sought to engage with and alter public opinion, and acted to change the criminal justice system on a real, practical level. It is ultimately this behaviour that makes their work so important. They demonstrate not just the power of direct action but direct action's relevance to public criminology. Their campaigns offer important lessons for penal reformers and criminologists hoping to engage with the public to bring about change.

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Appendix 1:

List of executions targeted by Violet Van der Elst's campaign mentioned in this report

Walter Worthington

Charles Lake – better known as George Harvey

Petty Officer Leonard Albert Brigstock

Petty Officer Brigstock was executed on 3 April 1935. He was sentenced to death for the murder of Chief Petty Officer Hubert Sidney Deggan by cutting his throat with a razor on board H.M.S. Marshal Soult in Chatham Dockyard on January 6 1935. Violet Van der Elst sought a reprieve for him on the grounds of insanity, but this was rejected by the court.

Del Fontaine

Del Fontaine was executed on 29 October 1935. He was a Canadian boxer who was sentenced to death for the murder of his mistress Charlotte Meeks. At his trial Fontaine's defence contended that the boxer was suffering from acute depression and was probably 'punch drunk'.

Dorothea Waddingham

Dorothea Waddingham was executed on 16 April 1936. She was sentenced to death for the murder of two of her patients, 89-year-old Louisa Baguley and her disabled daughter, Ada. Waddingham was a mother of five and was still breastfeeding her 3-month-old baby at the time of her execution

Buck Ruxton

Buck Ruxton was executed on 12 May 1936. He was sentenced to death for the murder of his wife Isabella and her maid Mary Rogerson. The case was one of the most publicised murder cases of the 1930s and remembered for the innovative forensic techniques employed in solving it.

Derek Bentley

Derek Bentley was executed on 28 January 1953. He was sentenced to death for the murder of a police officer, committed in the course of a burglary attempt, although the fatal shot was actually fired by his accomplice. There was a public sense of unease about the execution due to Derek's low mental age, ambiguities in the evidence and the fact that he did not fire the fatal shot. His conviction was posthumously quashed on 30 July 1998.

Ruth Ellis

Ruth Ellis was executed on 13 July 1955. She was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey for shooting her lover, 25-year-old racing driver David Blakely, outside the Magdala public house in north London on Easter Sunday. At her trial, the jury was never told that David Blakely treated Ellis violently and caused

her to miscarry by punching her in the stomach, that she had been raped by her father as a child, and was addicted to anti-depressants. She was the last woman in England to be executed.

'Evans–Bentley–Ellis'

This chant refers to Bentley and Ellis as discussed above, and also to the case of Timothy Evans, who was wrongly hanged for the murder of his wife and baby daughter. He was executed on 9 March 1950. He had accused his neighbour, John Christie, of being responsible for the murders. Three years after Evans's trial, Christie was found to have murdered a number of women. Evans was subsequently granted a posthumous pardon.

Appendix 2:

List of women who have committed suicide in prison since 2004

Tina Bromley	04/01/04	Edmunds Hill
April Sherman	13/01/04	Edmunds Hill
Sheena Kotecha	03/04/04	Brockhill
Julie Angela Hope	17/04/04	Holloway
Louise Davis	18/04/04	New Hall
Victoria Tapp	18/03/04	Send
Sharon Miller	08/05/04	Durham
Heather Waite	08/05/04	Holloway
Rebecca Smith	01/06/04	Buckley Hall
Rebecca Turner	28/07/04	Low Newton
Marie Lucy Walsh	29/07/04	New Hall
Mandy Pearson	12/10/04	New Hall
Katherine Jones	15/10/04	Brockhill
Victoria Robinson	02/02/05	New Hall
Justine Rees	02/06/05	Eastwood Park
Louise Giles	21/08/05	Durham
Karen Fletcher	28/10/05	Holloway
Kelly Hutchinson	01/05/06	New Hall
Valerie Hayes	10/05/06	Styal
Caroline Powell	05/01/07	Eastwood Park
Lucy Wood	15/01/07	Peterborough
Kerry Devereux	18/04/07	Foston Hall
Emma Kelly	19/04/07	Send
Helen Cole	03/06/07	Styal
Marie Cox	30/06/07	Holloway
Lisa Doe	11/09/07	Send
Jaime Pearce	10/12/07	Holloway
Lisa Marley	23/01/08	Styal
Alison Colk	08/01/09	Styal
Samantha Dainty	30/01/09	Foston Hall
Julie Hooper	04/07/09	Send
Melanie Beswick	21/08/10	Send
Amy Friar	30/03/11	Downview
Mary Rosser	17/04/11	New Hall
Trudie Wragg	10/12/12	Foston Hall
Cherylin Norrell-Goldsmith	27/07/13	Downview

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About the author

Laura Topham holds a Master's in Criminology from Birmingham City University. She has previously worked as a journalist and has always had an interest in prison reform. Laura's work was supported by one of the Howard League for Penal Reform's student bursaries.

About the Howard League for Penal Reform

The Howard League for Penal Reform is a national charity working for less crime, safer communities and fewer people in prison. It is the oldest penal reform charity in the UK. It was established in 1866 and is named after John Howard, one of the first prison reformers.

We work with parliament and the media, with criminal justice professionals, students and members of the public, influencing debate and forcing through meaningful change to create safer communities. We campaign on a wide range of issues including short term prison sentences, real work in prison, community sentences and youth justice.

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