

ANIMAL RIGHTS PRISONER SUPPORT

August 2009

Donation

www.arprisoners.org

Issue number 1



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WELCOME

2 Welcome to the first edition of the Animal Rights
3 Prisoner Support Newsletter. ARPS is a new group of
4 volunteers whose aim is to support those people who
5 end up in prison for trying to help animals who cannot
6 fight for themselves.

5 The newsletter will be published quarterly, and you will
6 also find updates of prisoners' news on our website
6 www.arprisoners.org

7 The aim of the group will be to support the prisoners in
7-8 various ways. Once in prison they are often isolated,
8 separated from family and friends and from other
8 campaigners. We will publicise their
9 addresses and encourage supporters from around the
9-10 world to write to them and let them know they are not
10 forgotten.

10-11 Through our website and newsletter we will also
11-12 publish letters and news directly from the prisoners,
12 providing the prisoners with a forum to share their
12 thoughts, views and feelings with the rest of the
12 compassionate community, and giving supporters an
13 invaluable insight into what life is like for animal rights
13 prisoners.

13-16 We will also support them in various practical ways
and look after their welfare in whatever way we can.

Animal rights prisoners are people with moral and ethical principles, imprisoned for altruistic actions, exposing what society does to animals, and promoting a vegan philosophy. They need to hear from us, receive our supportive letters and cards to let them know they have not been forgotten.

We hope you enjoy the letters and articles written by the prisoners, and that you keep a copy of this newsletter with you, and start writing to them: It need not be a long letter, just a card with a short note can make the world of difference. If you want to write more, you can tell them how you help animals; care for the ones you live with; adopt rescued ones; how you campaign for veganism; the demos you attend, how much you support them etc. They will be very glad to hear from you.

Please support us by subscribing to the newsletter and by making a donation if possible. The more we receive the more we can help the prisoners.

Please support the work of ARPS by subscribing to our quarterly newsletter, by making a donation or by taking out a standing order. Please send donations by cheque/postal orders made out to the address below.
ARPS (Animal Rights Prisoner Support) PO Box 2174, LEIGH-ON-SEA, ESSEX, SS9 0AZ
Email: info@arprisoners.org Website: www.arprisoners.org

UK PRISONERS



Jonny Ablewhite (TB4885) - Birthday: 27 Jan
NB: Jonny has just been moved. HMP Hewell, Hewell Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 6QS.
Jonny has been inside since September 2005 and is serving 12 years for conspiracy to blackmail the owners who ran Newchurch guinea pig farm, which has now closed down.

What you can send: SAEs; cheques or postal orders made out to 'HM Prisons'. Please write Jonny's name/number and sender details on reverse. Support Page: www.myspace.com/vegandia



Kerry Whitburn (TB4886) - Birthday: 18 April
HMP Lowdham Grange, Lowdham, Nottingham NG14 7DA
Kerry has been inside since September 2005 and is serving 12 years for conspiracy to blackmail the owners who ran Newchurch guinea pig farm, which has now closed down.

What you can send: Stamps. Cheques or postal orders made out to 'HMP Lowdham Grange'. Please write Kerry's name/number and sender details on reverse. Will not accept writing paper or packs of envelopes.

John Smith (A4228AC) - Birthday: 6 Mar
HMP Lindholme, Bawtry Road, Hatfield Woodhouse, Doncaster, DN7 6EE
John has been inside since September 2005 and is serving 12 years for conspiracy to blackmail the owners who ran Newchurch guinea pig farm, which has now closed down.
What you can send: SAEs; cheques or postal orders made out to 'The Governor'. Please write John's name/number and sender details on reverse.



Mel Broughton (TN9138) - Birthday: 5 Jul
HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham, County Durham DH1 5YD
Mel was remanded on 14th December 2007 and was sentenced on the 13th February 2009 to 10 years for alleged offences against Oxford University animal experiment lab.

What you can send: an SAE; a small, non ring-binded calendar; Postal Orders made out on front to 'HMPS'. Please write Mel's name/number and sender details on reverse.
Support Page: www.myspace.com/supportmel



Sean Kirtley (WC6977) - Birthday: 11 Dec
HMP Stafford, 54 Gaol Rd, Stafford ST16 3AW
Sean was sentenced to four and a half years in May 2008 for offences on the sec 145 of SOCPA 2005, just for organising demonstrations and doing a website against Sequani Ltd. in Ledbury.

What you can send: self-addressed envelopes (SAEs) and cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor'. Please write Sean's name/number and sender details on reverse.
Support Website: supportsean.wordpress.com



Gregg Avery (TA7450) - Birthday: 5 Dec
HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX
In January 2009 Gregg was sentenced to 9 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.

What you can send: stamps (12 in letter); SAEs, cheques/postal orders made out to 'HMP Headquarters'. Please write Gregg's name/number and sender details on reverse. Support Page: www.myspace.com/supportgregg



Gerrah Selby. In January 2009 Gerrah was sentenced to 4 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.
For various reasons she would prefer that her prison address not be distributed at the moment. Although if you want to leave comments of support they can be sent into her from her Support Page:

www.myspace.com/supportgerrah



Dan Amos (VN7818) - Birthday: 19 Nov
HMP Guys Marsh, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 0AH
In January 2009 Dan was sentenced to 4 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.
What you can send: Postal orders made out to 'HMPS'. Please write Dan's name/number and sender details on reverse, together with a return address.

Support Page: www.myspace.com/supportdan



Gavin Medd-Hall (WV9475) - Birthday: 20 March
HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX
In January 2009 Gavin was sentenced to 8 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.
What you can send: stamps (12 in letter); SAEs, cheques/postal orders made out to 'HMP Headquarters'.

Please write Gavin's name/number and sender details on reverse.
Support Page: www.myspace.com/supportgavin



Heather Nicholson (VM4859) - Birthday: 30 Jan
HMP Foston Hall, Foston, Derby, Derbyshire DE65 5DN
In January 2009 Heather was sentenced to 11 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor'. Please write Heather's name/number and sender details on reverse. Stamps & an SAE. Also stationery. Support Website: www.myspace.com/supportheather

Support Website: www.myspace.com/supportheather



Nicole Vosper (VM9385) - Birthday: 15 Feb
HMP Bronzefield, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 3JZ
Nicole pleaded guilty on 16th March 2009 to 4 charges in connection with the SHAC campaign and was remanded in custody.

What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor'. Books, stationery, stamps; an SAE. Please write Nicole's name/number and sender details on reverse.
Support Website: www.myspace.com/vegannicole



Sarah Whitehead (VM7684) - Birthday: 12 Feb
HMP Bronzefield, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx. TW15 3JZ
Sarah was sentenced on the 30th June 2008 to two years for removing a beagle from a garden where it was kept muzzled in a wooden cage and regularly beaten. She is also awaiting trial charged with offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.

What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor'. Books, stationery, stamps; an SAE. Please write Sarah's name/number and sender details on reverse.
Support Website: www.myspace.com/supportsarah



Natasha Avery (NR8987) - Birthday: 28 Dec
HMP Send, Ripley Road, Woking, Surrey GU23 7LJ.
In January 2009 Natasha was sentenced to 9 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor' or 'HMP Send'. Please write Natasha's name/number and sender details on reverse. Stamps and an SAE. Also stationery and blank cards, but no

birthday, Anniversary cards, etc. Support Page: www.myspace.com/supportnatasha



Dan Wadham (A5705AA) - Birthday: 3 Feb
HMP Camp Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5PB In January 2009
In January 2009 Dan was sentenced to 5 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.
What you can send: Cheques and postal orders made out to 'HMPS'. Please write Dan's name/number and

sender details on reverse.
Support Website: www.myspace.com/supportdanwadham



My dear vegan friends,

I was lately pondering the human condition, in an attempt to cheer up a friend from a bad bout of 'cosmic meaninglessness', and remembered a piece I recently wrote about 'altruism'. I decided to rewrite it to make it more accessible and thus to (possibly) cheer anybody else up who may be suffering from a similar attack of mental malaise.

The 'happy clappy' proselytising premise to this wonderful hypothesis is: **"Goodness is in our Genes!"**

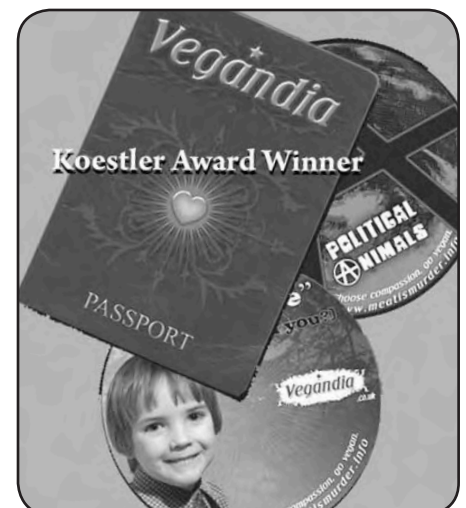
'Goodness', in evolutionary and biological terms, is generally referred to as '*altruism*' (could I be more patronising??) and, shock horror, *altruism* is embedded in our genes because it offers innumerable organisms many survival and reproductive advantages that lead to that organism's genetic longevity and therefore success. In evolutionary terms, I'm talking a species survival rate of hundreds of millions of years – not the measly hundred thousand years our species has been around! Anyhoo, two central categories of altruism have been identified: - '**Kin altruism**' (see W. D. Hamilton): This manifests in cooperation among the same species to increase a family

or groups' life chances at the potential survival expense of a care-giving individual. e.g. the tireless and sacrificial nurturing of a mother towards her young. You will often see mothers of herding animals jeopardising their own safety by leaving the protection of the herd to protect their struggling calfs. Outside of the direct family *kin altruism* also manifests in an individual's selfless behaviour to protect the survival of the group. e.g. a bird's alarm call can alert the entire flock to a predator's presence but by drawing attention to itself, it is potentially suicidal! However, this is such a well-tuned defence to predation that the bird rarely gets chomped anyway – so everybody's happy! There are countless other examples of such incredibly selfless behaviour in so many species that it defies belief! - '**Reciprocal altruism**' (see R.L. Trivers): This manifests in cooperative behaviour between completely different species and is based on an evolutionary understanding that 'You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours'; also known as '*symbiosis*'. There are also loads of examples of this type of inter-species cooperation. e.g. ox-pecker birds and cleaner fish. Cleaner fish are just the most daring of altruistic animals! A larger fish will open its gaping jaws and allow the cleaner fish to peck and feast off parasites, keeping his teeth sparkling and the cleaner fish's belly full! Many of these cleaners are the same size of its host's usual prey but altruism dictates that the larger fish do not chomp the cleaners! It's the perfect underwater anarchist carwash!

So *altruism* is everywhere! Goodness is omnipresent and mutual aid is endemic – an amazing evolutionary principle that works to promote family,

herd, flock and total inter-species cooperation!! You just can't get away from it whatever species you are – you just have to keep reminding yourself that it's there!! Obviously therefore *altruism* is embedded in our species too, as it is in all primate genes, because it's been genetically inherited through the complete **Tree of life**: from apes, primates, mammals, tetrapods, vertebrates etc etc. This spans through the evolutionary history of 4 billion years of life on earth, back to those first altruistic acts which offered archaic cells the earliest forms of survival advantage. So, all that the great human visionaries have done (e.g. Kropotkin, Chomsky, Torres, Marx, Gandhi, Bookchin, Buddha, Rousseau, Godwin, Proudhon, the glorious Emma Goldman – and all **Vegans** of course!) is to vocalise *altruism* in to an uplifting call for mutual aid and cooperation. *Altruism* is omniscient, indestructible and inevitable! It's such a successful and well-tried out evolutionary tool for sustaining biodiversity that it will always triumph – until a better method of survival evolves, which is clearly not going to happen – at least not for the *next* four thousand million years!
Brightest Vegan Blessings,

Jonny Ablewhite



JONNY ABLEWHITE'S LETTER 15.08.09

My Dear Vegan Friends,

Hello to you all! A brief note to remind you how lucky you are not to be here!! Life in Ranby trudges on - my time split between my life/mind-saving Masters Degree and... wait for it... sewing curtains!!! So I sew. And sew. And sew on and so on!

It's a perpetual war on my brain: the Masters enlivens my mind, the sewing destroys it - in this mental joust I'm not yet sure who's going to win?? At the very least, if I do make it out of here, I'll be an extremely over-qualified curtain stitcher! That's "Ranby Rehabilitation" for ya - filling the East Midlands with enthusiastic embroiderers! It's a right stitch up! (sorry)

I'm not one for unnecessary mewling, but the last two months have been extremely difficult; the worst since the horrors of being remanded in 2005! Yes -

that bad! A confluence of some serious family difficulties and, what I can only describe as 'prison harassment', did leave me in an extremely anxious state for weeks. Amongst other things, I've had more closed visits in 3 months than I had in 3 years at HMP Lowdham Grange! Compounding this is the expected institutional incapability that is endemic and inevitable in all over-sized and overcrowded jails - and Ranby is the biggest C Cat in Europe! Let's just say habeas corpus is not a concept they're familiar with! Anyhow, I'll leave it there to prevent me being whisked away to some dungeon in the dead of night!

Yet, despite the fact they confiscated my guitar, I'm still song writing and have to thank the Koestler Trust for being an inspiring beacon piercing through this Ranby gloom. I'll press on with my Masters - this year a

fascinating module in English and Indian Literature - and the full MA will be completed in September! Four years in the making! Eureka! I will continue to struggle for my Cat D but obviously Ranby are not going to do me any favours in that department! They'll have to let me go at some point -pleeease!- otherwise, it definitely is curtains for Jonny!!!

A final "I bloody well love you!" goes to all the letter writers and visitors who have kept me sane(ish) in these dark times. I can't wait to hug (and kiss and grope) you all!!!

Once again the SG and VPSG have been an indispensable force for good. I thank all the volunteers for their continued efforts in making prison life bearable. Brightest Vegan Blessings, Jonny

NB: Jonny has just been moved to HMP Hewell.

KERRY WHITBURN'S LETTER 16.08.09



Hello all.
I hope you are all well and content with life and all around you. I'm OK. Same as I am

everyday, really. Just cracking on with my time and keeping a positive attitude and outlook. Well, let's face it, I'm not going to be tortured, maimed or killed in here, am I? Not like other inhabitants of this earth who are born into prisons! I've been in this prison over three years now, so I know all of the staff and I get NO hassle or grief from the other prisoners. Yes, every now and again I get "questioned" about being "one of them grave robbers", or receive the odd insult from prisoners with nothing interesting to say as they've nothing interesting to think of. But as I say, that's every now and then and extremely rare. Three years ago it would've bothered me but now I truly DO NOT care. If I ever CAN

be bothered to answer the questions, I simply ask: "Do you believe EVERYTHING you see or hear, cos if so you must believe Tom and Jerry/Santa Clause/Democracy really exists?!" To the very rare "Grave Robber" insults I usually reply: "Can't you call me Lara Croft as it does sound much more original!" Anyway, I'll leave that issue there, I think. Nearly reached the four years served/two years left milestone - (September 30th) - so in comparison to each 'era' of my sentence, I'll be getting 'excited' soon. On that note I'll bid you all a fond farewell. Thank you to EVERYONE for the excellent support. BIG HUGS AND MUCH LOVE,
Kerry

SEAN KIRTLEY'S LETTER 09.08.09



Thanks for the great idea re the newsletter. My appeal in the full court will happen shortly after Sept 14th '09? I've been granted leave to appeal against both conviction and sentence, conviction will be dealt with first and what's been said by the lord justice seems very positive. I'm doing absolutely fine, on an enhanced wing here at Stafford -single cell- en suite shower, own key, job in the laundry...

The vegan food here is excellent, always has been since I arrived, the catering manager is very attentive and experimental. With greatest respect,
Sean



GREGG AVERY'S LETTER 16.08.09



and more determined. It also just brings myself and my beautiful wife Natasha ever closer. To this date I've written 1854 letters to her whilst we've been inside. I miss her so much, she is my strength and total inspiration.

The food here has gone from strength to strength. It's fresh and nutritious, and they have altered the menu sheets to include quite a few recipes out of the VPSG Prison Cookbook. I'm keeping super fit and this morning ran 3 miles in 19.52, and can run 5 miles in under 35 minutes now.

Thanks to everyone who's written, it makes such a difference. I apologise for my slowness in replying.

A short while ago one of my dogs, Laddie, died. Anyone who knew him will know why we nicknamed him Bear. Because he was a cuddly black bear who loved to playfight. When I was told on the phone, I came back up to my cell, kissed his photo on my wall, looked up to heaven and said 'goodnight Bear.' He was tormented as a puppy, then rescued and he never looked back. I think of the amazing life

he had since, he loved to swim and when he wasn't diving into rivers, he was disappearing under the waves in the sea. He will be greatly missed. I also think of all the animals who haven't had such a great life as Laddie. When all is said and done, when all the talking is over, that is the only thing that really matters. That's why I'm in prison and why we all are fighting against animal suffering so that one day all animals will live their lives like Laddie.

Thanks for all your support
Lots of love
Gregg xx

We've been at Coldingley over 6 months and now I'm over half way through and will shortly dip under 2 years left. The prison service have really dragged their feet over giving me and Natasha an inter-prison visit. Pretty disgusting when you think we've only seen each other 'socially' once in over 27 months. They initially refused and only backed down once we got a solicitor involved. Even then they've shamefully dragged their feet. We were meant to have one on the 10th August but it was cancelled on the day. It is now meant to happen late August. So fingers crossed. All of this just makes me stronger



INTERVIEW WITH GREGG AVERY

How did you get involved?

In my early teenage years I had a growing understanding of right and wrong through my family, and also programmes like 'The World at War', especially the episode on the holocaust. It was in the local newspaper when I was about 15 that Hunt Sabs had been out locally and I thought I'd like to join in. So through a friend of a friend I found out the local contact, and arranged to go out. It was the depths of winter and fox hunting was cancelled that day in the area. The contact told me and my friend though, that there was a protest at an ICI Lab called Alderley Park (which is where the smoking beagles had been). So we went along and one thing led to another as they say. Shortly after I saw an unedited version of 'The Animals Film'. I was dumbstruck and knew from then, even though I was still at school, that there was no going back.

What is your favourite animal?

Even though I'm mad about dogs, the animals I identify with most are cows. They are such gentle creatures, and I try not to think of the horrors inflicted on them. In purely animal terms, my only regret over the past twelve or so years, is concentrating on vivisection, and not having the time to fight for farm animals, especially cows.

What inspires you?

I'm inspired by many things. I'm inspired by Usain Bolt running 9.58. I'm inspired by mountain climbers and explorers. I'm inspired by people in the present and historically who fight for what's right, often against incredible odds. I'm inspired by anyone who goes above and beyond. What I hate is a can't do attitude, people famous for being famous, insipidness. It's better to try and fail than never to try at all, life's too short. Amazing music inspires me too.

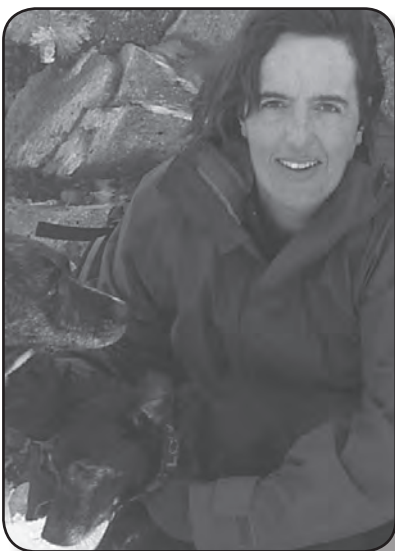
What's the best thing about jail?

It's a simple life, I can concentrate on my fitness, or my reading without any complications. I can just go to the gym and not think about anything else. Oh, and having my food made for me. It's such a luxury, and after two years the novelty still hasn't worn off. I never understand people who go out to dinner and leave half of it, not me! I have to stop myself licking the plate clean.

What do you miss the most?

I miss doing the simple things with my brilliant wife, Natasha, like shopping in the supermarket, or watching a dvd in bed, or walking the dogs. Nice and simple, as long as we're together, it's perfect. I also miss cross-country running with a passion.

NATASHA AVERY'S LETTER 09.08.09



Thanks so much for the brilliant support. The longer I'm in jail, the more mail I get, and it's so

wonderful to hear from you all. I've been at HMP Send for 4 months now and as jails go, it is great. I'm working in the gardens, which I love. I used to do gardening as a job before I started campaigning against animal cruelty and to have my hands covered in mud again is brilliant. I'm security cleared to go all over the prison planting, pruning, weeding and mowing. Mrs Green Fingers eh! All for £11 a week too!

This prison caters for vegans well thanks in no small part to an excellent Head of Diversity. I can order from Holland & Barrett every two months and Honesty Cosmetics every three months

where I get vegan toiletries and cleaning products. The weekly packs are excellent 14x250mls fortified soya milk, walnuts, dried fruit, Provamel yogurts and best of all vegan cheese which never last very long! The Vegan Prisoners Support Group continue to provide us all with excellent help, advice and support. I'm still doing lots of exercise, running, cycling and lots of circuits. Gregg is a constant inspiration as his times have got faster and faster since we were imprisoned in May 2007. I just had an interprison call with him and it was heaven and the highlight of my month by a million miles. He is such an incredible

human being and husband in so many ways and I constantly long to talk to him and be with him. I miss Heather as they have 'shipped her out' as they say in prison jargon to Foston Hall. Apparently we're not allowed to be in the same jail as we're co-defendants, even though every jail I've ever been in has had co-defendants galore in them. What they fail to realise is that by separating us all (Gregg and Gavin are only together because of Gavin's failing eyesight) and preventing Gregg and I from having an interprison visit - we have had one in 27 months of being apart even though the prison order states that they should be every 3 months- they just make people support us even more and rally the movement behind its prisoners, so what an own goal. I remember writing to prisoners when I first got involved in animal

rights. I wasn't really sure what to write about and wrote long and no doubt unbelievably boring letters about all the cats at the local CPL rescue I volunteered at! I just knew though that I wanted to get in touch with people who had given up their liberty fighting to save animals' lives and let them know that I supported them and was thinking of them. Never ever underestimate the difference that your letters and support make. They make our day and we love getting them, so keep them coming. We are all part of one movement and we all play the part we can. When 7 of us in the 1st SHAC trial were sentenced to a total of 50 years in prison, we launched the Sponsor A Year Appeal for Greek Animal Rescue and it has raised £3,200 so far. Thank you so much to everyone who has sponsored us. Vesna from Greek Animal Rescue sent me pictures

recently of the dogs GAR have rehomed, dogs that had been starved, beaten and abused are now rushing about playing or snoozing on sofas, well-fed, safe and loved, and those pictures express better than a million words ever could what we all long for with all our hearts for all animals. I know that as long as animals are tortured in labs, have the fur ripped from their bodies, are hunted, terrified, abused, murdered and butchered for man's profit and greed, we will all do all we can to save them.

'Good is never accomplished except at the cost of those who do it. Truth never breaks except through the sacrifice of those who spread it'.

Cardinal Newman

Lots of love,
Natasha xxx

DAN AMOS' LETTER 11.08.09



Hello everyone!

Some of you may already know that I have recently "progressed" to open conditions where I will be spending the remaining 353 days of my sentence. Now, I know what you're all thinking "how can they send such a dangerous man to

an open prison?" Well, contrary to popular belief I am not in fact an "urban-terrorist" like the Daily Mail would have you believe! I've been here 2 days now and so far it has been the usual boring induction progress where you learn about this particular prison's arcane rules and procedures. Though as this is a minimum security establishment they are fortunately somewhat less onerous than usual. I can even have things posted in, so any Smiths CDs are more than welcome! I know that Morrissey is a supporter of animal rights so maybe he could even do a San-Quentin style gig here. Anyway I am getting side-tracked by my love of all things Morrissey! Some of you may have read about Ford's reputation in the newspapers. In fact just the other day another inmate (coincidentally also called Amos)

was transferred out after jumping over the fence to go to the local Chinese takeaway. Fortunately such drastic measures won't be required on my part due to the VPSG's first-class work in contacting the prison before I arrived to ensure that all of my needs are met. Lunch today was a veggie-burger baguette, that may sound strange but it is in fact my ideal meal! I am looking forward to my weekend release in a months time and my 5 day home leave the month after that! Prison is in no way a hardship and isn't much of a punishment, the Daily Mail is right about that!

Dan



DAN AMOS' LETTER 13.08.09

Hello everyone!

The first time that I wrote this article I was at Ford open prison and asked the question, "how can a dangerous urban-terrorist" like me be allowed in an open prison?" Well I now have an answer to that question: I can't!

After less than 72 hours at Ford, I was taken back to Guys Marsh on the grounds that I had "not addressed [my] offending behaviour in relation to animal rights activism." I did wonder quite why I had been sent to Ford in the first place but the game was up when one of the guards

told me that wasn't the real reason. You don't say! Obviously the police had seen my change of address and decided to arrange my transfer back to HMP Guys Marsh a.k.a Butlins.

Of course this situation could have been avoided had I not had my address published and by not writing in magazines such as this. However, self-censorship is something that I have never considered, the moment we bow down to the state and refuse to speak we have been beaten.

The state knows that we have great power as a movement when

we decide to exercise it, but they underestimate the strength that we possess as individuals. We knew the consequences when we decided to act against animal abuse, so to think that we can be broken by such actions is not only crass, it is comical.

No one should be deterred from taking action because of the threat of prison. Prison is fantastically easy, and nothing more than an inconvenience.

Respect, Dan

GAVIN MEDD-HALL' LETTER 17.08.09

Dear All,

So how are things going I hear you ask? Remarkably well I would say! Of course I miss my beloved partner, Jan, whom I now get to see most weeks as I have been recently enhanced, which gives me 4 visiting orders a month, which is fab!

For those of you who don't know me, I am registered blind though I have usable sight. I read/write with the aid of magnifying glasses, so if you do fancy dropping me a line, print or type (large font, thanks!)

Most of my spare time at the moment is taken up with study for an English Lit. course (Victorian Lit.)

The book we are currently studying is Jane Eyre (if only I had watched any of those TV adaptations that always seemed to be on a Sunday eve! The Education Department have supplied me with a large print

version of the book. As it's in 16pt easy read font, it comes in 3 separate volumes of about 450 pages each! So reading all that (several times) and doing a 5000 word essay on why Rochester did/didn't do something or other, you can see I am kept busy!

If you would like to lose weight I can definitely recommend prison as the best way! I always used to go to the gym, but there was always a pub next door. Well I had to re-hydrate, didn't I?

I came into prison with 40-inch waist jeans. My new pair, kindly supplied by Jan via a property exchange, are a 36-inch waist and even they are loose. So when they say 'Prison works', they are referring to getting fit, absolutely nothing else!

It can be very sleepy down here in Surrey, so much so that a few weeks ago a couple of the lads decided to have a rooftop protest (no one knows what about). The roof was only about 10 ft high,

so not a proper one, but enough to stir it up! They were in such a rush to liven things up, they left their mobiles behind so no live Sky News interviews for them! The wimps only lasted 4 hours before they climbed down a ladder provided for them!

So we all had an extra afternoon locked up. Excellent. Cup of coffee, and listened to Test Match Special, what better, well, yes, England winning would be a start!



Time really does fly in here, cannot believe I'm in the 8th month already. I've found a charity that supplies audio books which is great, apart from when they send you a book you have already had!

When we first arrived the food was somewhat basic: frozen

veg and pasta mainly, but with the willingness of the catering manager to improve the quality of the food, and with the help of the VPSG, it has to be said that the food now is really excellent! Well, that is unless he goes on holiday and the kitchen returns to type. But on the whole it is now very yummy!

I miss Jan terribly, otherwise life in my temporary Surrey studio is good: free gym, excellent food (mostly) and some education too! Now all I need is for Spurs to win the league! (Hmm, more chance Jack Straw will pardon me!) Best wishes to all

Gavin

JUST ANOTHER DAY by GAVIN MEDD-HALL

Gregg and I were out on exercise the other day, pounding the tarmac and wondering what might be of interest to you lot. We thought of something that shows how prison works, or more often doesn't...

Back in my studio flat, (sounds so much better than cell), a note had been delivered. We were aware that a new computer booking

system was being introduced, and that in future we would have to list all visitors with their addresses and dates of birth. However, this form wanted all this information for all visits already booked for the next month under the old system, where you only gave one person's name and address. No big deal you might think, but it's 4pm on a Saturday. We will be locked up

at 5pm and the form has to be in tomorrow!

So naturally chaos ensues! All phoning trying to get the required info; wing staff being quizzed about it by those who cannot get the info in time; staff shaking of heads, looking frazzled. Just another day in the life of the Prison Service! Nice one Jack!

A FIRST EXPERIENCE OF PRISON by GAVIN MEDD-HALL



When entering the prison system it is best to forget anything you have seen on TV or in the movies. That said you do always half expect 'Fletch' to poke his head round the door and ask for a

cuppa!

You also need to have an abundance of patience, everything is pretty much done as slowly as it is humanly possible to do it. The team motto seems to be 'why do today what you can do tomorrow, next week, next year'. You get the picture.

I'll pick up the story after sentencing, having been remanded a couple of days earlier. I have to say the staff who managed the security in court and managed the cells below were always friendly, polite, and even supportive.

To go to court you are allowed to wear your own clothes, so returning as we all did to Winchester, it is therefore time for the usual strip-search and change back into the one size fits all prison garb, a very fetching shade of grey! This is when the resident reception comedian comes out with "was it all worth it? Ha ha." Bet he is a bundle of laughs down the pub!

I had come well prepared to court so all my numerous items of clothing all had to be bagged and logged as I would not be allowed them. They were all entered onto my 'prepcard'. I was allowed a few personal items. The money I had brought with me was all counted out and logged too, and credited to my account. When you first enter the system you are given a 'standard' rating. Misbehave and you go down to 'basic', don't misbehave and you will eventually be given 'enhanced' status. For me this means that however much I have in my account, only £15.50 a week will be transferred to my 'spend account' to buy phone credit and any other item from the 'canteen'. Naturally at first it is all very confusing, as you don't know where to go or what to do. Fortunately for me I was with some 'old lags' Gregg and the Dans! Back on the wing now,

Winchester is one of these 'as seen on TV' prisons, just as in Porridge!

After some negotiations I was able to share with Dan W which was excellent – not sure if Dan thinks the same though! Most cells there are doubles and you really would not want to share with many there. They live in darkness, never get up and have certainly never heard of cleaning! During this time it was 22 hour lock-up, let out to collect lunch and tea to be taken back to cell, 30 minute exercise in the morning and an hour in the day in which to use the phone and shower.

As Gregg and Dan A worked in the library, we were kept well supplied with newspapers.

Prison is really like starting a new job or school, everyone else seems to know what they are doing, or where they are going, except you! But as with a new job/school you soon get the hang of it and it is as though you have always been there!

The next day was time for us to be 'inducted'. This involved being talked at mercifully over half a day, sign your name here and there to show you have been told everything you need to know and back to cell none the wiser for the experience!

The Prison Service thrives on paper work. It must be a fantasy come true for administrators to work in. Meaningless reports after meaningless forms...

I have to admit I did for a while become a daytime TV addict. It wasn't my fault, it was the prison's! Hey, everyone else blames someone else, so why can't I? (But I know you will be glad to hear I'm much better now).

After about 10 days Dan W packed his plastic bags and was off to Butlins on the I o W. So I did have my own cell for a couple of days.

My new cell mate, Chris, turned out to be fine. He had come in after us as he recognized me.

I had taken the last cell in the prison. I of course knew nothing of this, so they had put him in with a junkie coming off heroin who was throwing up and coughing up blood all day and all night! He took this for 2 weeks before my cell became available. I'd have been straight on the phone to Jo-Ann 'Help!'

He was unbalanced on his feet as though he was drunk, but no, turns out it was a side effect of the powerful drugs he was on to fight the severe throat infection he had caught off the junkie. So much for the prison services 'duty of care' nonsense!

A couple of days later it was mine and Gregg's turn to have a slip of paper under the door to tell us we were off to Coldingley. So the first visit with Jan booked up for the weekend didn't happen, my canteen order no doubt went in someone else's pocket! Ah well, it is prison... Next time if you are really lucky it will be "Gavin's Great Coldingley Adventure!"

HEATHER NICHOLSON'S LETTER 16.08.09



Dear friends,
Hi everyone! I feel constantly overwhelmed, amazed and grateful for all the love and support I have had from you all over the last 2 years. The letters have never waned and you have

made all the difference to my time in prison so far.

It was a shock to be moved so abruptly to HMP Foston Hall but it is very nice here. I miss Natasha, Sarah and Nicole like crazy of course, but I'm fine. I get on with people no matter where I go. As always there is a lot of support and admiration from officers and prisoners alike. The food here is very good, tonight I had strawberries, raspberries and Alpro soya yogurt for dessert. It was delicious. They gave me vegan pizza this week too which was heavenly. Every weekend we can go outside and run - I don't mean down the A50! We run around the playing fields which is bliss for me! I get to run past the wildflower meadows which are swarming with butterflies. There is a brilliant animal sanctuary here too. The animals are all

rescued and very well looked after. I'm hoping to get a job there eventually. In the meantime I've been allocated a job in textiles (sewing etc). To start with I hated it but I'm starting to get into it now. I can do pleats, ruching, gathering, zips, piping etc. Shortly I will progress to making myself a cushion and then clothes. I'm a seamstress, I'm the new Coco Chanel!

The education department here is especially good and the staff there are very helpful. I have passed Unit 1 of my Animal Health Diploma with flying colours. As soon as I've finished it I shall start another one in Equine Psychology. I am also studying Art, Business Finance and IT. I try to treat prison as a cross between a retreat and a University. As usual VPSG has been outstanding and has sorted out

my vegan food, toiletries and cleaning products. Lots of people have been asking me about veganism and now they are checking the labels on everything and have said they don't want to buy anything tested on animals again after speaking to me. They always bring the subject up, ask me the questions, I answer them and they come to their own conclusions and make

their own minds up. It's very heartening to see that people do care when they know the truth. Well, I'm almost halfway through my time in prison and it's not been bad at all, quite an experience actually. I read a book by Alice Walker recently and, although I don't have it to quote her exactly, she said that it seems those on the front-line pushing for change

and speaking out forcefully and without fear always end up dead or in prison. Therefore I see myself as extremely fortunate! If I ever feel down or sorry for myself in the slightest all I have to do is think of just 3 seconds of footage from HLS and all those feelings evaporate to nothing. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for everything you do, lots and lots of love, Heather xxx

NICOLE VOSPER'S LETTER 13.08.09



Well, I've been in Bronzefield for five months now and it's absolutely flying by! A big thank you for everyone's lovely letters and support.

All of us will have read in the newspapers about the increasing number of animal experiments in the UK. Unlike journalists and officials, who so casually state the statistics, we know that behind these figures are real animals,

who are not numbers - who are intelligent, living, feeling beings.

We know there is a growing community of us who do not accept how abuse is naturalised or rationalised in our society. Yes, the numbers are staggering and heartbreaking but all we can do is keep working to eradicate all forms of domination until all are free.

In solidarity, Nicole xxx

SARAH WHITEHEAD'S LETTER 18.08.09



Hi everyone,
Everything is fine here at Bronzefield. I have finished my sentence for rescuing the dog Freddie (who is very well and happy) and am now on remand for the SHAC charge (conspiracy to blackmail). I have pleaded

guilty and get sentenced after the trial (probably March 2010). I'm loving the gym still and have become a weight training fanatic! Nicole and I are on the same wing and see each other all the time. She is busy transforming the prison gardens and getting lots of compliments.

To our great joy, we had a visiting fox for a few weeks and saw him day and night! It was so wonderful to see some animal life apart from birds and the occasional mouse. He's gone now, the food obviously bored him eventually! Prison life continues to be very easy. We get vegan toiletries and treats on the canteen, making life very good!

Thank you to every single one of you who writes to me. I really appreciate every letter. I

especially love photos and stories of your animals. My cell wall is covered with them and I feel very much at home!

I miss my own animals more than anything but knowing they are happy fills me with such joy. Thank you so much to my dear friends.

The first year has flown by and I know whatever sentence I get, time will go very quickly.

Best wishes to everyone!

Lots of love

Sarah x



INTERVIEW WITH EX-PRISONER

Brendan has been to prison several times over the years for animal rights actions. As well as continuing to campaign, he is active in supporting today's animal rights prisoners.

When did you first go to prison and what was it like?

In 1982, it was for 3 months for stealing rabbits from an animal testing company called SafePharm in Derbyshire. It was quite scary at first, it was a youth prison, Glen Parva in Leicester, and lots of the other lads were loud and out of control, and they were unsure about me. But within days I was getting literally dozens of letters and cards of support every day, and it transformed my life inside. Seeing all the support I got meant the other prisoners and prison officers started to respect me.

How was the vegan diet in prison then?

At first they refused to recognise a vegan diet, and offered only a standard vegetarian diet, which was mostly cheese and eggs. There were no other animal rights

or vegan prisoners at the time. After a short struggle, including a two day hunger strike, they came round and started making meals just for me, and even going to the local health shop for muesli and toiletries. Once again it was probably the amount of support I got from outside that was more effective than the hunger strike.

What was the longest time you spent in prison?

In 1987 I was sentenced to 4 years following a big conspiracy trial in Sheffield when 12 people were jailed. I was sent to a really isolated prison in Northumberland called Acklington, almost on the Scottish border. In winter they sometimes had to airlift in supplies because of the weather! But again the amount of support was incredible, visits and letters of support from the rest of the movement sustained me throughout the sentence. By this time the prison service had accepted a vegan diet, as long as you were a fully paid up member of the Vegan Society. I was really pleased to find there were a few other vegans there, but was soon disappointed to

realise they were all just playing the system; they'd learned that if you joined the Vegan Society you could get a weekly food parcel of Soya Milk, peanut butter, yeast extract, fruit, nuts etc. Of course my disappointment didn't stop me buying some of the stuff off them.

What do you think of the support for animal rights prisoners today?

I think it's a credit to our movement how much we have continued to support the prisoners over the past 3 decades. All the prisoners I speak to tell the same story, of fantastic support, how getting letters really helps them through their day. Some are really moving letters, others are really funny, but they all help to break the isolation which the prison system is designed to enforce. I think this new group will be an invaluable addition to that support network. It seems like for the foreseeable future people will continue to be sent to prison as part of the campaign for a more compassionate world, and while ever that is the case, groups like this will be very much needed.

INTERNATIONAL PRISONERS



Nathan Block, #36359-086
Birthday: 6th March
FCI Lompoc
3600 Guard Road
Lompoc, CA 93436
USA.
Sentenced 7 years and 8 months
Email support: solidarity-withsadieandexile@gmail.com



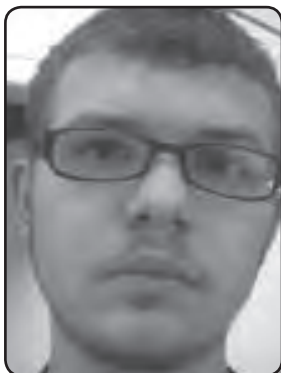
Jacob Conroy 93501-011
(Moved Dec '08)
Birthday: 3rd February
FCI Terminal Island
Federal Correctional
Institution PO Box 3007
San Pedro
CA 90731
USA
Sentenced 4 years
(One of the US SHAC 7)
www.supportJake.org



Lauren Gazzola 93497-011
 Birthday: 1st May
 FCI Danbury
 Route #37, 33 1/2
 Pembroke Road
 Danbury
 CT 06811
 USA.
 Sentenced 4 years, 4 months. (One of the US SHAC 7)
www.supportlauren.com



Kevin Kjonaas 93502-011
 Birthday: 31st October
 FCI Sandstone
 P.O. Box 1000
 Sandstone
 MN 55072
 USA.
 Sentenced 6 years. (One of the US SHAC 7)
<http://www.shac7.com/kevin/index.htm>



Jordan Halliday -
 Released on bail - 29-06-09
 On Friday, March 13th 2009, Utah animal rights activist Jordan Halliday was held in contempt of court for refusing to testify before a grand jury and remanded.
 Update: Jordan has now been federally indicted

with felony contempt of court. He was released on bail today. This charge carries no maximum penalty. If he is convicted at his trial, Jordan could be facing even more jail time, at the judge's discretion. More info at: <http://www.supportjordan.com/>



Joshua Harper - Released - 18-06-09
 Birthday: 31st January
 Josh Harper has been released to a half-way house in Seattle where he will spend two weeks before his final release back home. He wishes to thank everyone for the support he has received over his time in jail.
www.JoshHarper.org



Marie Jeanette Mason, #04672-061 - Moved 19th March
 FCI Waseca, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 1731, Waseca, MN 56093, USA.
 Marie was sentenced on 5th February 2009 to an outrageous 21 years and 10 months imprisonment for ELF/ALF actions.

<http://freemarie.org/> and <http://supportmariemason.org>



Eric McDavid X-2972521 7E128
 FCI Victorville, Medium II, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 5300, Adelanto, CA 92301, USA.
 Eric was sentenced to just under 20 years imprisonment for conspiring to think about actions! (Part of an FBI sting operation)
 Birthday: 7th October
www.supporteric.org



Daniel McGowan, #63794-053 (moved 3rd February 2009)
 USP Marion, U.S. Penitentiary, P.O. Box 1000, Marion, IL 62959, USA.
 Sentenced to seven years imprisonment for his part in two arsons and his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.
 Birthday: 7th October
www.supportdaniel.org



Jonathan Paul, #07167-085
 Birthday: 31st January
 FCI Phoenix
 Federal Correctional Institution 37910 N 45th Ave
 Phoenix
 AZ 85086
 USA.
 Sentenced to 51 months imprisonment for his part in two arsons and his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.
www.supportjonathan.org



Joyanna Zacher,
#1662550
Birthday: 25th January
Lane County Jail
101 West 5th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401
USA.
Sentenced 7 years and 8
months
Email support: solidarity-
withsadieandexile@gmail.
com



Briana Waters #36432-086
FCI Danbury
Federal Correctional
Institution Route 37
Danbury
CT 06811
USA
Briana is serving a six year
sentence for allegedly acting
as a look-out during an
ELF arson. There was no
evidence to support the case

against Briana other than the words of two police
informants who lied to the police to try and get a
lighter sentence. www.supportbriana.org/



New US prisoners, Linda
Greene & Kevin Olliff -
Update - 26-05-09
US activists Kevin Olliff
and Lindy Greene were
arrested Thursday, 16th
April. [www.myspace.com/
supportlaural](http://www.myspace.com/supportlaural)
Update: We are pleased
to inform everyone that
Lindy is now out on house
arrest. The conditions of

her release from jail have made her daily life on
the outside very limited, as she cannot associate
or have any contact (phone, letters, visits) with
active animal rights activists. Anyone who wants
to communicate with Lindy to first get in touch
with Dave Rutan. Dave will forward requests and
letters to Lindy's lawyer to possibly forward if
he deems them appropriate. You can message
Dave at www.myspace.com/davevegan with any
questions.

Kevin Olliff, #1300931, TTCF 161 D-Pod, 450
Bauchet Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, USA
Kevin is requesting pictures of the outside along
with letters, for not having a window has left him
with a complete lack of visual stimulation.

USA Prisoners (alleged mink liberation)
William "BJ" Viehl and Alex Hall were arrested
Thursday 5th March 2009 for a raid of a South
Jordan, UT mink farm in August 2008, and the
attempted raid of a second mink farm in October
2008. Both were being held in Salt Lake County Jail
on charges of Animal Enterprise Terrorism. They
were later bailed on 12th March 2009 until their trial.

21st July Update: About the beginning of July,
William "BJ" Viehl had his bail revoked and was
taken back into custody. Prosecutors allege BJ had
communicated with ALF/ELF prisoners, in violation
of his bail terms. He expects to remain in custody
until his trial. And about mid July, BJ's co-defendant
Alex Hall also had his bail revoked and was taken
into custody.



Alex Hall, #2009-06304
Davis County Jail, 800 West
State St., Farmington, UT
84025, USA
If you would like to send
donations or want more
information, please email
bjandalexsupport@gmail.com
and visit their support
page and Myspace page
Birthday: May 5th

If you are sending letters
please do not mention the case. All mail must have
your first and last name, be on clean white lined
paper, in blue or black ink, and must contain nothing
lewd. If you would like to send pictures please don't
send any that are larger than 5" X 7".



William James Viehl, #2009-
05735
Davis County Jail, 800 West
State St., Farmington, UT
84025, USA
If you would like to send
donations or want more
information, please email
bjandalexsupport@gmail.com
and visit their support
page and Myspace page
Birthday: May 19th

If you are sending letters please do not mention the
case. All mail must have your first and last name, be
on clean white lined paper, in blue or black ink, and
must contain nothing lewd. If you would like to send
pictures please don't send any that are larger than 5"
X 7".



Dutch Prisoners (alleged mink liberation) - Released on 30-06-09

Peter and Naomi were remanded into custody on suspicion of releasing mink from a fur farm in March 2009.

30th June, Update - Naomi van der Pol and Peter

Janssen has been released today, pending their trial later in the year for alleged mink liberations. For more info, please send emails to: info@animalrights.nl. They thank everyone for the support they received.



Swedish Prisoners, names unknown (March 2009)
Two, 18 year old Swedish men were held on remand accused of an alleged arson against a fur and leather store.

(April 7th Update): Both of the young men have been released on bail, pending sentencing after their trial.



Solidarity and defence funds needed for Mexican activists
On 5th February 2009, 13 activists were arrested during an anti-bullfighting protest in Mexico City. They need help with their legal costs. It appears that all those arrested have now been released on bail.

However bail costs varied and most of the arrestees had to organise loans, which now need to be paid back.

Many of the charges have since been dropped but there is the possibility that new charges may now be laid. Those arrested are still awaiting trial so also have legal fees to pay and possible fines if convicted.

We don't have an official contact email for this group of people but emails sent to: rechazo_autonomo@riseup.net should be passed on to the right people. Any emails to this address should ideally be in Spanish, however the person checking the mail does also speak some English.

Please support the work of ARPS by subscribing to our quarterly newsletter, by making a donation or by taking out a standing order. Please send donations by cheque/postal orders made out to the address below.

ARPS (Animal Rights Prisoner Support) PO Box 2174, LEIGH-ON-SEA, ESSEX, SS9 0AZ
Email: info@arprisoners.org Website: www.arprisoners.org

Once completed please return to ARPS not your Bank for processing
STANDING ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

To The Manager, Name of Bank _____

Branch _____

Address _____

Sort Code ____ - ____ - ____ Account Number _____

Please pay on the ____ 20 ____, and on the ____ day of every month until further notice.

The sum of £ ____ or the credit of ANIMAL RIGHTS PRISONER SUPPORT.

Signed _____ Date _____