

40 YEARS OF CHANGE

From the immaculately hand-written Minutes of the Executive Committee in 1971 to the emailed documents of today, what changes there have been!

The relationship of BACO with the Prison and Probation services has flourished over the years, and its reputation has been established and recognised.

This has not been an easy task for a small charitable organisation which has relied on a very small number of dedicated volunteers to further its aims.

Some of the landmarks:

- The Prisoner Support Service was set up
- Service Level Agreements were put in place with prisons
- A contract with Probation
- Huge levels of support and co-operation from HMP Grendon & Springhill staff
- A worker was employed for a short time for the Support Service
- Policies were introduced for an employee and for volunteers
- Insurance was taken out to cover Trustees and volunteers
- A PO Box was arranged to protect personal addresses
- A Website was created and later updated
- BACO joined the Criminal Justice Secure eMail system to ensure the secure transmission of information concerning serving prisoners and ex-offenders on probation
- Comprehensive Annual Reports were published and circulated to all members
- High profile Annual General Meetings took place in the Judges Lodgings
- Fundraising became more important and successful
- The Hardship Fund for employment and education needs and the TT Fund for AYOI and HMP Woodhill prisoners were established thanks to the support of the Triangle Trust 1949 Fund
- Receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Looking back over the changes there are some important things that stay the same. BACO remains a wholly voluntary charitable organisation.

There is still a very small Executive Committee, the Trustees, a small number of volunteers who staff the Support Service, a small number of volunteer drivers who take prisoners out from HMP Springhill, and a strongly supportive and generous membership.

What is important is they are all involved because they believe in what BACO aims to do - to restore a sense of self-worth to a serving prisoner, or ex-offender, help an ex-offender back into employment or education, hold an offender's family together at a moment of crisis, and, most importantly, help prevent re-offending, and reduce the number of victims.