



# TURNING LIVES AROUND

**Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund**

**HELPING LONDON'S PRISON LEAVERS  
INTO WORK AND A NEW LIFE  
SINCE 1808**



Top Left: The inscription above the entrance to the Old Bailey. Photo Alamy

Top Right: Sir Richard Phillips, co-founder of the Sheriffs' Fund Society. The National Portrait Gallery, artist James Saxon

Above: The gallows in the Old Bailey. Photo Alamy



#### TURNING LIVES AROUND

© Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund 2022 and 2025

Researcher: Christine Smith

Editor: Penrose Halson

Designer: Louise Burston

Secretary and Picture Researcher: Claire Ivey

Printer: Activ8 Creative

Website: [www.sr-fund.org](http://www.sr-fund.org)

Go direct or tap your smartphone on this QR code

# Contents

page

<b>Significant dates</b>	The Fund's 200+ years . . . . .	<b>2</b>
<b>First words</b>	HHJ Mark Lucraft KC, Recorder & Fund Vice President 2020- . . . . .	<b>3</b>
<b>Two appalled Sheriffs</b>	Founders of the Fund. . . . .	<b>4-5</b>
<b>The Sheriffs' Fund Society is born</b>	To help Newgate's prisoners. . .	<b>6-7</b>
<b>The Fund takes off and blossoms</b>	With support from the City. . . .	<b>8-9</b>
<b>The Fund goes forward</b>	But remains true to its purpose. . . . .	<b>10-11</b>
<b>Future-proofing by fund-raising</b>	Lady Davies, Chair 2007-15. . . . .	<b>12</b>
<b>Extending the work of the Fund</b>	Lady Brewer OBE, Chair 2015-22. .	<b>13</b>
<b>Thank you kindly</b>	Individual beneficiaries. . . . .	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Does the Fund really do good?</b>	External evaluations. . . . .	<b>16-17</b>
<b>Wonderful occasions</b>	Fund-raising with fun. . . . .	<b>18-19</b>
<b>From the coalface</b>	Christine Smith, Paul Lecoutre & Claire Ivey . .	<b>20-21</b>
<b>Back-up from the Old Bailey</b>	Home and supporter of the Fund . . . .	<b>22</b>
<b>Thanks to the Livery Companies</b>	The Fund's oldest backers. . . . .	<b>23</b>
<b>How the Fund survives and thrives</b>	Vital support for the Fund .	<b>24-25</b>
<b>Join in!</b>	Ways to aid and abet the Fund. . . . .	<b>26</b>
<b>Make contact</b>	The Fund and associated organisations . . . . .	<b>27</b>
<b>The last word</b>	Lady Russell, Chair 2022. . . . .	<b>28</b>
<b>Thanks and credits</b>	To all supporters. . . . .	<b>29</b>
<b>How to donate</b>	Choose the best method for you. . . . .	<b>30</b>
<b>Donation form</b>	Make a donation . . . . .	<b>31</b>
<b>200 Club mandate</b>	A most welcome method of donating . . . . .	<b>33</b>
<b>The Fund has many facets</b>	A photographic miscellany . . . . .	<b>34-37</b>

# Significant dates

1808 Sheriffs' Fund Society founded

1813 Elizabeth Fry began to improve conditions for women prisoners in Newgate

1834 Central Criminal Court established by the Central Criminal Court Act

1845 Fund-raising dinner for Sheriffs' Fund Society at Mansion House

1846 First Sheriffs' Fund Society Annual Report issued

1846 First donation by a City Livery Company (Cutlers)

1907 "New" Old Bailey opened by King Edward VII

1930 Ladies admitted as Life Governors of the Fund

1931 Sheriffs' Fund Society merged with Recorder's Fund

1946 Mrs Beatrice Harthan appointed Secretary and Almoner

1947 First woman appointed to the Fund's Committee

1970 Office in Old Bailey given to Fund by Corporation of the City of London

1989 Lady Bowater, Chairman since 1969, succeeded by Mrs Alison Saunders

2007 Mrs Saunders retired, Lady Davies appointed Chair

2008 Bicentenary of Fund: dinner at Bank of England; 200 Club formed

2015 Lady Brewer OBE succeeded Lady Davies as Chair

2017 Fund celebrated bicentenary of Elizabeth Fry's Association for the Improvement of Female Prisoners

2022 Lady Russell succeeded Lady Brewer as Chair



## First words HHJ Mark Lucraft KC

The Central Criminal Court, or the Old Bailey as it is better known, is a building known around the world. The figure of justice that tops the dome is often used by the media to illustrate news reports connected to the criminal law or legal process. The current building is an amalgam of courts opened in 1907 and others opened in 1972. The fourteen largest courtrooms are the stages on which the real dramas of crimes committed in Greater London and further afield play out to judges and juries each day. Evidence from CCTV, mobile phones, the latest in DNA and other scientific analyses as well as eye witnesses is presented and juries reach their conclusions, and if there are convictions, the judges pass sentence.

In 2025 there are 15 permanent judges at the Old Bailey. There are 8 women and 7 men in those posts. Compared to the position 10 years ago, a rather broader and more diverse group of individuals reflecting the society in which we all live.

The courtrooms have staged many of the most serious and significant criminal trials and inquests of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Alongside the trials, we continue to arrange events for young people thought to be at risk of becoming involved in knife crime. My predecessor as Recorder of London, Sir Nicholas Hilliard, started these events and it is my privilege to see them continue and flourish. I am grateful to the City of London for its continuing support of this initiative. Those who take part in these events include parents who have lost sons or daughters to knife crime, and are some of the most impressive people, doing all they can to prevent others from meeting the same fate.

The Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund does fantastic work supporting prisoners and their families. Often the grants made are of relatively modest amounts but they can be truly life-transforming.

I am very fortunate to work alongside Hilary Russell, Chair of the Trustees of the Fund. As a past Lady Mayoress, she understands the importance of the Old Bailey and the civic City working together for the benefit of others. Working on the firm foundations set by her predecessors as Chair, some new fund-raising opportunities have come along and have been enthusiastically backed so that the Fund can appeal to a wider City audience, and to ensure the Fund continues as a central and distinctive part of what the Old Bailey is all about.

## Two appalled Sheriffs

The twin pulls of Humanity and Duty compelled Richard Phillips and Christopher Smith, City of London Sheriffs in 1807-08, to set up the Sheriffs' Fund Society.

Richard Phillips, born in London in 1767, was a teacher, stationer, bookseller, and vendor of patent medicines. His profoundly republican views led him to be imprisoned for selling Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. He established himself in Paternoster Row as a publisher of magazines, textbooks, children's books and works of radical ideas, such as vegetarianism: in 1814 he wrote and published *Sir Richard Phillips's Reasons for Not Eating Animal Food, Or Any Thing that Has Enjoyed Sensitive Life*.

Sir Richard was known for his great energy, irascible temper and outrageous beliefs. In 1792 he founded *The Leicester Herald*. Fire destroyed the office, so with the insurance money he started a magazine carrying his own trenchant anti-government articles signed *Common Sense*. His belief that the theory of gravity had no foundation irritated the scientifically-minded as well as those politicians whom he roundly criticised. But he attracted many, and made an enormous fortune, so that by 1807 he was of sufficient standing to be elected as a Sheriff of the City of London, and to be knighted.

A duty of the Sheriffs was to inspect the City's prisons. With his fellow Sheriff, Alderman Christopher Smith, Sir Richard visited Newgate, and was appalled by the sight, sound and stench of desperate, dirty, hungry, raggedly-clothed prisoners huddled in dark, dank, cramped cells. Soon after, the Quaker philanthropist and reformer Elizabeth Fry found Newgate's Female Quarter full of half-naked mothers and children, often waiting for transport to the Colonies in prison ships. Many were drunk on cheap gin, some were clearly deranged. They were kept in leg irons unless they could pay the Keeper of Newgate for "easement".

Sir Richard wrote to the Livery: *Hence arose a question in my own breast between the feelings of humanity and the obligation of duty. Newgate could not be speedily enlarged yet it was repugnant to every principle of justice to permit the continuance of commitment before trial to any prison, all the regulations of which had a view only to the punishment of its prisoners and by which also they were denied the intercourse of their friends.* Fiercely criticising the prison's overcrowding, fees charged to prisoners, the use of irons, and transportation for short periods, he badgered the government and individuals to support prison reform.

Christopher Smith might have succeeded his father, running a small farm in Berkshire, had it not been for fear of smallpox. Sent to London to be inoculated against the dreaded disease, he was 'adopted' by the manager of the smallpox hospital, a wine broker who employed him in his business at 21 Queen Street, Cheapside, and left it to him at his death.

Smith developed a great interest in politics, becoming *a frequent attendant at the Westminster forum, and other debating societies*. In common with Richard Phillips, he was a strenuous advocate for Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. He joined the Whig Club, and served as an MP in both 1812-1818 and 1820-1830. At the same time he was advancing in City of London society, becoming a Freeman of the City, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Drapers, and a Common Councilman for Cordwainers Ward. Reformers in Common Council described him as a renegade, yet he went on to be elected an Alderman, then Sheriff, and finally Lord Mayor.

Little is known of Smith's personal life beyond an impression that he was a devoted husband and father. However, in Parliament he spoke frequently, on subjects as diverse as Catholic relief, the Corn Laws, the character of King Ferdinand of Spain, governmental regulation of bread prices, relief for the suffering in Germany (1814), legislation against machine-breakers. He spoke often on prisons and prisoners, his views assorting strangely with his role as co-founder of the Sheriffs' Fund Society. Between 1813 and 1815 he was reported as considering that *While he had sympathy for the debtors in the Fleet prison, he opposed inquiries into conditions in other London gaols; the depravity of the prisoners at Newgate, he thought, made amelioration difficult and, as a magistrate, he was satisfied that the London gaols offered the best conditions in the kingdom . . . he raised a laugh by saying that 'the prisoners always had their proper allowance, sometimes more and sometimes less'*. In 1817 he defended the delay in the execution of condemned prisoners, saying that *'the prisoners in Newgate, where he had been that day, did not complain of the law's delay'*.

It seems that a decade after the founding of the Sheriffs' Fund Society Smith was still interested in prisons, though perhaps not so determinedly on the side of prisoners as his fellow Sheriff. Though sharing Sir Richard's reforming zeal, he seems to have been more sedate and conventional. Had he been drawn into the Fund by Sir Richard's forcefulness and enthusiasm? Or had he had, and retained, a more cynical view of imprisonment? Whatever the truth the Fund, shortly complemented by Elizabeth Fry's work, was in the vanguard of a powerful movement for reform.

# The Sheriffs' Fund Society is born

In 1808, the objectives of the Sheriffs' Fund Society were:

- 1 The temporary relief of the distressed families and dependents of persons in confinement**
- 2 A temporary provision for persons who, on being discharged from confinement, have no means of present subsistence or habitation**
- 3 The purchase of such tools, implements and materials as may be conducive to habits of industry in debtors and criminals**
- 4 The pecuniary aid of other objects of distress who come under the official cognizance of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex**

Christopher Smith and Richard Phillips lobbied energetically on behalf of prisoners, pestering politicians to end the drastic sentence of transportation. Their own way of helping inmates in Newgate was to arrange for Poor Boxes to be placed in several prisons. In the first year of the Fund's life offerings collected in these Boxes, added to money donated by fifty individuals and organisations, amounted to just over £376 (c £33,238 today). The donors included:

**The Foreman and members of a Grand Jury of Middlesex: £4**

**Another Middlesex Jury: 15s 6d**

**The Bishop of Durham; the Lord Mayor; the two Sheriffs (Christopher Smith and Mr – at the time; soon to be knighted – Richard Phillips); a Wine Broker: ten guineas each**

**Mrs Smith; Mrs Phillips (both Sheriffs' wives); Mr Griffiths of the Horn Tavern: two guineas each**

**A Nobleman: £50**

**Miss Bayley of Ramsbury Manor: £5**

**A French émigré; an Irishman: 7s each**

The Fund gave everyday necessities – food, clothing, candles, coal, soap – to prisoners’ wives and children, struggling without a husband’s wages. Breast-feeding mothers received porter to restore their strength. Prisoners, many in mental and/or physical torment, all confined in horrific conditions, received basics which gave them some protection from illness, near-starvation and despair.

The Fund helped debtors such as sailors arrested by crimps on sham charges, and others falsely incarcerated with no hope of a fair trial. By continuing to give grants after release it assisted ex-prisoners to return to society, and enabled Prison Chaplains to give fundamental subsistence, or to prove innocence. Up to March 1808, the Fund disbursed nearly £300:

*To 65 persons, for temporary subsistence on their being discharged from confinement, some of whom were sent back to their native places: £34 17s 6d*

*Immediate relief to distressed wives and children of numerous prisoners: £32 15s*

*Seven tons of potatoes, distributed at the rate of one pound or half pound per day among the prisoners, according to their necessities: £58 10s*

*Oatmeal, onions, leeks and a daily supply of porridge to female convicts: £7 15s 9d*

*Coals and candles for a moderate supply to all poor wards: £13 14s 6d*

*Soap and other articles calculated to promote cleanliness: £6 10s*

*Legal assistance, with which 29 debtors were liberated from Newgate after long imprisonment, the number of whose wives and children exceeded 120 souls: £23 10s*

*Advice, assistance and proceedings in regard to numerous other debtors: £10 10s*

*Sundry articles of clothing, as shoes, stockings, shirts, jackets and petticoats etc: £46 12s*

*Porter allowed to mothers who have fed children by the breast, and for prisoners threatened with low fevers for want of adequate sustenance: £6 14s*

*Sundry disbursements as rewards for cleanliness etc: £8 10s*

Volunteers and donors gave all the goods, time and skill expended, including advertising and for the expenses of printing: £44 18s 6d.

These eminently practical and efficacious beginnings planted the roots of the Sheriffs’ Fund Society, which blossomed and flourished.



# The Fund takes off and blossoms

Quaker philanthropist and reformer Elizabeth Fry persuaded the Corporation of London to improve the dire conditions of female prisoners in Newgate. The Lord Mayor at the time (1817) was Alderman Christopher Smith, co-founder of the Sheriffs' Fund Society. By 1827 the Fund had won such public approval that friends and supporters established it as a "regular institution", with a Treasurer, Trustees, and Rules & Regulations.

Annuities, subscriptions and donations poured in, making the idea of an Asylum for women a realistic possibility. The Committee observed that *As soon as a young female enters the walls of a prison, her doom is too often sealed – her character is blasted. She is deprived of that which alone can enable her to earn an honest livelihood: spurned by her friends, or perhaps ashamed to let them know of her disgrace, where can she turn? And it is well known to many that there are characters of the worst description sitting in the galleries of the court, or constantly prowling about the walls of the prison, awaiting the discharge of hapless girls so circumstanced only to entice them to the commission of fresh crime, or to allure them to a life of degradation and misery by offering them that shelter and pretended sympathy which is denied them by the rest of the world.*

A spell in an Asylum, thought the Committee, would give a penitent female a second chance. However, the Fund had many more immediate calls on its assistance. In 1846 it gave relief to 562 poor prisoners and their families. It enabled ex-prisoners to buy (or redeem from the pawnshop) clothes and tools of their trade. It supplied baskets of fish or fruit, to help them to earn a living *without being driven to acts of dishonesty by the pressure of want.*

Prisons in the 18th and early 19th century were privately owned by Dukes, Bishops, and the Dean & Chapter of Westminster. The Sheriffs enlisted HRH the Duke of Cambridge to preside at a grand public dinner in the Mansion House on June 17th 1845. The diners contributed over £1,300 (c £166,400 today), destined by the Fund for the building of an Asylum; but the Committee were checked by the City Solicitor's report that the reformation of juvenile offenders would need both State funding and great changes in the law. In addition, admirers of the late Mrs Elizabeth Fry were proposing as her memorial an Asylum for the 3,000+ women released annually from Metropolitan Prisons. The "Elizabeth Fry Refuge" was so similar to the Fund's project that the Committee abandoned their own idea and gave £500 towards the Refuge.

The Fund reported in 1866 that The Society . . . . . *helps the families of prisoners to maintain themselves by their own exertions and industry during the incarceration of that member who has usually mainly, or entirely, contributed to their support. The Society not only considers this important, as securing the innocent from suffering with the guilty, but because it is most desirable, if possible, to prevent a prisoner's home from being broken up; as then, upon his discharge, he finds a place to go to, and is given time to find employment.*

In 1867-77, the Fund assisted 24 male and 60 female prisoners, providing: *Pecuniary assistance; Clothing; Sent abroad with outfit; Sent to Sea with outfit; Sent to Refuge & Reformatory (Home of Hope, Fry Refuge, Good Shepherd) and furnished with clothing; Obtained situations or employment, and partly furnished with clothing; Supplied with tools or stock (the sewing machines and mangles are lent).* The Fund's Minute Books recorded cases:

*E . . . H . . . Age 20. Duly endeavouring to conceal the birth of her infant. Single. £3 after acceptance to HOME OF HOPE*

*Lewis . . . lost his arm. Grant to purchase hook*

*T . . . Shearne. AGE 43. Stabbing a publican. £3 5s od fare to Canada to see his children. His wife left them here in England and some benevolent people sent them out to Canada. "The paternal feeling is a good one." Request from Archimandrake of the Greek Church*

*Annie R . . . Age 78. £3 to help while her son is in prison*

*Charles H . . . Age 21. Cruelly treated at sea. Chained to the mast for 50 days in such a manner that the chains cut his flesh. His crime "feloniously wounding". Acquitted. The captain of the vessel has since absconded. Proceedings have been commenced against him. £6 granted to refit the applicant for sea*

*Case of B. . . Ex police constable. He was ruined. The Recorder was very interested in the case*

*Caroline S . . . Age 46. 3 children. Husband forged Post Office Order and presented it for payment. 5 years penal servitude*

The Fund's Secretary, always a prison chaplain working from his prison, and all others concerned, were unpaid until 1869, when the Assistant Secretary was awarded £10 per annum until 1882. From 1886 the Honorary Secretary was paid £21 per annum for expenses in investigating cases. It was not until 1913 that he received a modest salary – one of the many changes brought by the new century.

# The Fund goes forward

The first major impact on the Fund in the 20th century was made by World War 1. In 1913-14 the number of grants given leapt by 81%, to 168. However, as the War escalated demand fell. The *Annual Report* of 1917 noted: *The prison population has decreased, mainly attributable to the war, such as enlistment, drinking restrictions, and the great demand for Labour in various forms.* New jobs sprang up for prisoners' dependents: wives toiled in munitions factories.

After the War cases again rose dramatically, to 755 in 1919, and 952 in 1920, due to a burgeoning prison population, the disappearance of wartime jobs for women, and the high price of raw materials. The Fund helped people to set up on their own, providing tools of trade such as sewing machines. The *Annual Report* of 1919 noted: *Those women who have had sewing machines lent to them have been visited four times within the last 12 months, and all have been found to be doing well.*

In 1930 Ladies were admitted as Life Governors – annual subscribers of at least one guinea (£75 in 1981). In 1931 the Sheriffs' Fund Society absorbed the Recorder's Fund, administered by the Central Criminal Court's Probation Officers, under the Recorder, to assist cases on probation. The resultant Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund's first female Chairman, The Honourable Lady Bowater, was elected in 1969.

In World War 11 the Fund helped prisoners' dependents whose homes were damaged or destroyed, whose children were evacuated, who lost everything. Rationing was tight, so the Fund ferreted out second-hand clothes and bedding, stored them in a basement cell in the Old Bailey, on a rail provided by the Deputy Chairman, and in the Fund's office; and invited prisoners' wives to pick out items.

In 1942, despite high taxation and war problems, donations increased; but more was needed when evacuees and long-absent servicemen returned after the War, to scarcities and money difficulties. The 1946 *Annual Report* noted: *A certain number of cases suffering from Neurasthenia and similar disorders due to the war require specially generous treatment in the process of permanent rehabilitation.*

So the Fund appointed a Secretary & Almoner, Mrs Beatrice Harthan, who had done welfare work in the Women's Royal Air Force. She devoted forty years to the Fund, and was awarded an MBE. She worked from home until 1965, then in a room over the vestry of St Botolph's Without Aldersgate. In 1983 her salary was £5,500. Aged 90, she began to research the history of the Fund.

The Fund insisted on very careful examination of cases before making any grant, so the Secretary visited men in prison and the families in their homes. In 1962 the first voluntary helper was enlisted. The Fund gave more and more grants, and became well known. By 2008, its bicentenary, it was firmly established as the City's quintessential charity, true to its original objectives, though robberies and attacks had grown more violent, cars led to new kinds of crime, and greed had often replaced the poverty which in the 19th century commonly led to imprisonment. Mrs Harthan observed: *In almost 200 years since the Sheriffs' Fund Society was founded there have inevitably been changes in the types of crimes committed, the sentences passed and the help required by prisoners and their families, but one thing has remained constant throughout the years and that is the compassion shown by the two founders, which has been continued by the Committee.*

Another constant characteristic of the Fund is its readiness to innovate. Mrs Saunders set up vital regular fund-raising, Lady Davies commissioned the first independent survey of the Fund and hugely added to the quantity and quality of fund-raising events, Lady Brewer extended the Fund's remit of individual grants to include prison-based schemes which teach and mentor prisoners so that they are equipped for a job on release (see pages 12 and 13).

With new projects added by Lady Russell, prison-based rehabilitation is a large part of the Fund's activity. *Making for Change*, at HMP Downview plus a purpose-built design and manufacturing hub, trains women in fashion production skills, with industry-recognised qualifications. At HMP Isis, the Fund supports the charity Give a Book's literacy project, of which a young prisoner wrote: "Before I never used to read, only texts and stuff, but now I read every day. I feel smarter already." At HMP Brixton the Prison Radio Association is backed by the Fund, as too is Women in Prison's "All Hub", a safe space providing workshops, support and clinics. The Fund supports the Prison Advice & Care Trust's Operation Elf, which at Christmas gives imprisoned parents gift cards to send to their children. PACT's Fundraising Officer writes: "It's a way of expressing care and responsibility when they have few resources and outlets to do so from behind their cell door. For the child, it cannot be overstated how important this 'slice of normality' can be."

Since its foundation in 1808, the Fund has grown in strength and effectiveness through its combination of practical and immediate help with deep concern for prisoners, their families and society. In 2024 Bean Research concluded: *Positive feedback from partners highlights the Fund's role in providing **hope, stability and a sense of being cared for.***

## Future-proofing by fund-raising Lady Davies

In 2007, when I had the great honour of succeeding Alison Saunders, the Fund gave nearly 620 individual grants, and the number was increasing annually. The bicentenary of the Fund's philanthropy towards people traditionally ignored and disparaged – ex-prisoners – merited a celebration and a kick-start to the next 200 years. To give this campaign a solid basis of modern evidence, an independent survey of the grants' effectiveness was carried out, which showed that the Fund was greatly appreciated by its beneficiaries and their Probation Officers.

The Governor of the Bank of England offered the Bank's magnificent Courtroom, free of charge, for a 200th anniversary dinner; an Opera Evening was held in Guildhall; renowned author PD James gave the third in a series of lectures based around crime and punishment to an enthusiastic crowd in No. 1 Court of the Old Bailey; Lord Falconer addressed the AGM; and a Prisons' Debate series at St. Mary-le-Bow was inaugurated, hosted by the Rev. George Bush and chaired by broadcaster Jon Snow. The then Sheriffs, Presidents of the Fund, Aldermen John Stuttard and Kevin Kearney with his wife Mary, started a now annual tradition of producing a Shrieval fund-raising event. Distinguished Patrons, including the then Bishop of London, the Senior Law Lord, Lord Phillips, Baroness Helena Kennedy and Sir John Parker, were recruited to lend lustre to the Fund and a 200 Club of new supporters was set up. The extra £200,000 raised helped the Fund to reach out to the wider world, while still grounded in the Livery's generosity.

Since the 200th anniversary, the Old Bailey and its judges have played an even larger part. The Recorder, His Honour Judge Peter Beaumont, whose support was vital and active, held special breakfasts in the Judges' Dining Room in aid of the Fund, inviting guests to hear the personal story of one of the Fund's beneficiaries, over coffee and croissants. The Secondary, Charles Henty, held ever-increasing numbers of tours of the building, bringing in over £100,000 during his tenure. A troupe of thespian judges, led by His Honour Judge Peter Rook, and assorted lawyers introduced an annual theatrical event in Court No. 1, bringing not only funds but also Fun to the core business of helping people to rebuild their lives.

By 2015, when I handed over to Tessa Brewer, the number of grants had risen to 1,433, costing just under £220,000 – an increase of 50% over the previous five years. This was achieved by the philanthropy of the City and new supporters, the commitment of the Advisory Council, and the unstinting hard work of the Fund's two part-time (!) members of staff, Christine Smith and Paul Lecoutre.



## Extending the work of the Fund Lady Brewer

Having first become involved with the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund in the early 1990s at the invitation of the remarkable Alison Saunders, who like her predecessor brought innovation to the Fund's procedures, I became Chair in 2015. It was fascinating to witness the change in attitudes and understanding of prisons. What had been regarded with little interest was now front page news with many charities operating in the sector and making a notable difference. I succeeded Prue Keely Davies who had set her own mark on the Fund as you will see in her contribution. Prue was creative in so many ways and we owe her the first proper Evaluation of the Fund's work as well as the expansion of its activities.

Thanks to a number of generous legacies from some Old Bailey Judges, the Fund was able to extend its work from just the grant-giving sector, important though that is. Together with the then Recorder of London, Nicholas Hilliard, we embarked on a programme called *Out for Good* to help prisoners on release with jobs and mentoring. We asked *Bounce Back* to be our delivery partner and we saw fantastic results. We must mention the amazing fund-raising efforts of past Sheriffs and their partners, most particularly the cycle rides London to Paris and London to Waterloo, organised by Neil and Emma Redcliffe, which raised staggering sums for this expensive programme.

Alongside this we supported a number of initiatives including PACT to help with more volunteers at the Witness Service to sit and help the families of both victims and the accused. This is such an important part of the work at the Old Bailey.

The Fund's new major project was *Untold*. It delivers training by the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in the technical side of the creative industries, based at HMP ISIS (both a YOI and an HMP). We were involved from the start and it is exciting that the training theatre opened by the Sheriffs at the prison is *The Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund Theatre*. The funds for this were greatly helped by the imaginative fund-raising of Sheriffs Hayward and Mainelli, one with a slimming challenge and one a sponsored Horse Ride round the City.

At my first AGM as Chair, the Inspector of Prisons said that the ray of light in the sector was the charities working within it. Had the City of London Livery Companies not stood by the Fund since 1808 it would certainly have ceased to exist. It is something which I feel the City should be very proud of. I certainly am and feel lucky to have been involved with it for so many years.

# Thank you kindly

In 1870 the Fund helped a prisoner's family to go to America. His wife wrote:

*Dear Sir, I go to work at half past seven in the morning until six at night. I am getting on very nicely. I get nine dollars a week at the same business that I was in London. I have been placed in a position to help myself; if I had stayed in London my work would have fell off, what then could I have done because I could not expect always to be helped by friends. No! I faced a storm, lost my boy (he died on the voyage) but saved my own soul from destruction.*

In the 20th century, ex-prisoners whom the Fund had helped often wrote to thank:

*Dear Sir or Maddame Want to thank you for the £200 pounds you awarded me its life changing I've now got a flat where my daughter Anne she five this year . . . I swear when I get on my feet and earn money I will make a donotion Thank you so much you made a Big Diffrence in my life.*

Some ex-prisoners asked their Probation Officer to write for them:

*Mr J very sensibly elected to spend all his money in a charity shop (Cancer Research UK) where he got incredible value for money and was able to buy the most items I have ever seen anyone do with a £100 grant (21 items). He made the volunteers at the shop very happy. Thank you again for your continued support.*

*Thank you for helping G who is coping well with looking after the five children on his own, although he still struggles financially. If you recall his wife died and then his mother-in-law died leaving him with his own children and his wife's younger siblings to care for with Social Service assistance. G was very grateful for your cheque and his smile was a pleasure to see.*

The Fund supports *Untold*, a programme which helps young men in prison to gain the experience and qualifications employers want. Jake, a prisoner at HMP/YOI Isis and member of the *Untold Experts by Experience Steering Group*, wrote:

*Untold seems to reach out that bit higher than anything else. I can see it being one of those courses you hear talked about on the wing, where people ask all the time how they sign up. I see it as a project that doesn't just give prisoners good skills but changes their entire attitude to personal growth.*

A former drug addict wrote:

*I went to jail twice, both times for burglary, the worst kind in my view looking back now. When I came out I was lost and didn't know what to do. I knew my record would be a problem but I thought it was a tiny hill. What a mountain it turned out to be. I sent off applications for jobs by e-mail and by hand, to people personally. I got a few interviews and all went well until they asked if I had a criminal record. Then the mood changed, and their tone and body language. They were just going through the formality of it all to get me out of the way.*

*I joined an agency where they don't check on you and they put me to work in a bakery. I put my head down and worked hard and for a year they were happy until I asked about a full-time job with holiday pay and sick pay. Their mood changed and I had to find a more secure job. By complete chance and timing I met Peter, who runs a small Charity in the City of London. It puts ex-offenders and young homeless people into flats. I was lucky enough not to have been homeless. Peter told me about Pret's scheme and sent me along.*

*Pret took me on for the three-month scheme. I got on really well so they offered me a full-time job and I jumped at it. I have now been at Pret for 15 months and moved up to become a Hot Chef. I rent and pay for my flat and most of my bills. On Wednesday evening and at weekends I volunteer as a coach for a local under-18s football team. From Monday to Friday I work 6.30 – 2.30. On Monday nights I play for a 5-a-side football team which I am giving up to spend a bit more time at home with my 6-month-old little girl who I live for, and my girlfriend.*

*Ever since I got out of jail I always wanted to be a locksmith which is funny because I went to jail for picking locks. It was a long shot but worth a go. We found a good course and I did it with help from the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund and St Mary le Bow Charity, and passed. I have no intention of leaving Pret but locksmithing will be a part-time thing as the course only showed me how to do it, it didn't make me any good at it. I need practice and the right tools. I wouldn't consider using my new skills for anything other than legal and paid work, as I am proud to say that since jail over 3 years ago I have never been stopped, arrested, done anything illegal or been wanted by the police. As statistics go, I fall into a small group that hasn't re-offended even though, as many do, I had my doubters. So I went from not knowing where I was going to being in charge and steering my life, guided by my new-found friends.*

# Does the Fund really do good?

**\*\*In the year from September 30th 1867 the Fund helped 465 male and 155 female prisoners discharged from the City of London Prison, Holloway. The grants supplied specific needs: for clothing, tools, stock, finding work, starting afresh in a new country, and living safely either with friends or in an institution aimed at rehabilitation. The Governor of Holloway wrote: **The Governor is happy to record that several of the above stated prisoners are earning an honest livelihood, doing well, and feel deeply grateful for the means afforded them.****

**\*\*In 1933 Sir Ernest Wild, Recorder of London 1922-34, wrote: **The terribly responsible work of having to sentence men and women at this great Court, day by day, would be intolerable were it not for the beneficent activities of the Sheriffs' Fund, with which my Fund is incorporated. The Society enables a chance to be given to the young offenders, and sometimes to old "lags"; while the innocent families of convicted persons are helped from the same source. The Fund is administered by our splendid Probation Officers, by the Chaplains of the four Prisons in London for men, and by the Secretary after personal visitation of cases, all grants being approved by the Committee. It has saved many a soul.****

**\*\*In 2007 an External Evaluation carried out by M and E Consulting concluded**

- The Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund provides an extremely valuable service which meets the most urgent needs of offenders seeking to rebuild their lives.**
- It provides its service in an efficient, sensitive and timely manner.**
- It is highly valued by offenders and probation officers.**
- It clearly makes a real difference.**

**\*\*In 2008 the crime writer P.D. James said: **This is indeed a charity where even a little practical help at the right time can make the difference between failure and success, and alter the direction of a life.****

**\*\*In 2011 an Employment, Training and Education Advisor working with London Probation Trust wrote: **I have requested money from Sheriffs & Recorders for numerous offenders and I am able to see the positive changes that the grants make to their lives.****

**\*\*In 2013, the Fenix Foundation's Impact Analysis of the Fund found:  
The Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund was regarded as a highly valuable resource by the practitioners interviewed by Fenix. The value lies in its ease of access, the responsiveness and professionalism of the secretariat, its non-judgemental nature and its wide applicability.**

**\*\*In 2022 Emily Thomas, Governor of HMP/YOI Isis, wrote of *Untold*:  
Thanks to the generous donation from the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund last year, we were able to deliver 6 8-sessions courses with Guildhall in scene construction and painting, sound, lighting, stage management and video projection.**

**Despite the pandemic, and Isis in outbreak, 25 young men took part and feedback was really positive. Scenic construction participants were so enthusiastic that they stayed on for the next course to paint their scenery, not letting a new group take over! One tutor commented that our young men were more enthusiastic and willing to engage than his students at the school.**

**\*\*In 2024 the independent evaluator Bean Research researched the impacts of the Fund's individual grants. Bean noted the highly challenging context:**

- 50% of those released between 2022 and 2023 had no settled accommodation**
- 83% are unemployed six weeks after release**
- Reoffending is almost twice as likely if unemployed; and 26% more likely after one year without any training**
- the Discharge Grant of £82.39 barely covers basic needs**

Bean's Insights & Impact Summary found that the principal benefits of the Fund's grants included that they:

- improve recipients' daily lives in their accommodation: 87%**
- help build self-confidence and/or self-belief: 84 %**
- contribute to improved physical/mental health: 87%**
- improve attitudes, life skills and behaviours: 77%**
- reduce likelihood of reoffending: 71%**
- enable access to education & training: 67%**
- improve likelihood of employment: 67%**

Bean concluded that the grants are essential for prison leavers' well being and successful rehabilitation.



## Wonderful occasions



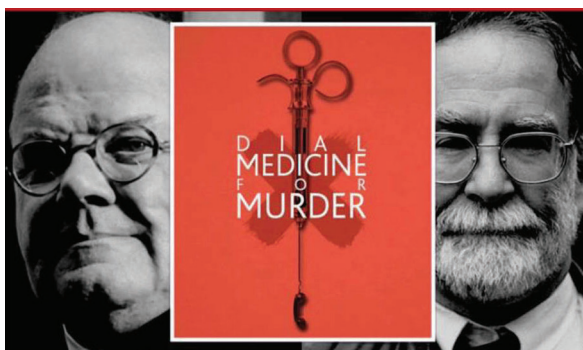
Above: Fiona Adler and Martin Stephens performing in *Forever Trial & Error* in the Old Bailey's Court No.1. Photo Mike Williams

Right: Old Bailey Chief Telephonist Pearl Sandford, Lady Brewer and the Duchess of Gloucester at a sponsored fund-raising reception in Rothschild's spectacular building



The Old Bailey choir's magnificent Christmas carol service

***Tours & lunches at Old Bailey \* Sponsored runs & marathons  
\* Dramatic shows in Court No. 1 \* Fashion show \* Concerts in  
Old Bailey and Barbican \* Bridge night \* Dinners in  
Mansion House & Bank of England \* Reception in Rothschild's  
\* Operas: Rigoletto & Lucia di Lammermoor \* Debates in St  
Mary le Bow \* Lunches in HMP Brixton \* Coffee morning***



**The Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund  
& Pimlico Opera Rising Stars**

present

# Rigoletto

**Tuesday October 20th**

**7.30 pm**  
Cadogan Hall, Sloane Terrace  
London SW1

In Verdi's tuneful masterpiece Rigoletto, deformed court jester of the womanising and corrupt Duke of Mantua, sees his own daughter ensnared by the Duke. In the tragedy which inevitably follows Rigoletto's attempt at revenge, the audience is carried on a roller-coaster ride of elation, love, misery and despair.

All proceeds shared between **The Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund**, for ex-offenders and their families in Greater London, and **Pimlico Opera's** pioneering work with prisoners.

**Tickets: £39 & £22**  
10% discount on 4 or more booked together  
Box Office: 020 7730 4500  
Cadogan Hall, Sloane Terrace, London SW1X 9DQ  
Online: [www.cadoganhall.com](http://www.cadoganhall.com)

Top: The highly acclaimed *Dial Medicine for Murder* Consultation presented in the Old Bailey raised money for the Fund

Above: Sheriffs Charles Bowman and Christine Rigden about to ride around the Livery halls

Right: The Dancing Barrister, designed by Mark Major for the perennially popular *Trial & Error* performances devised by HH Judge Peter Rook



Image designed by Mark Major

**\* Thames rowing race \* Old Bailey tours \* Wine tasting \*  
Thanksgiving service in Tower of London \* Bring & Buy sale  
\* Book launches \* Tandem, bicycle & horseback rides round  
Livery halls \* Sheep drives \* Breakfasts with the Recorder \*  
Children's party \* Films \* Bell-ringing \* Carol services  
\* City of London & Old Bailey choir performances**

## From the coalface Christine Smith, Secretary 1993-2019

In 1993 I was a part-time secretary to the Science Tutor at Birkbeck College – an easy job, but I wanted to do more, so I answered an *Evening Standard* advertisement for someone with secretarial skills for an unnamed organisation. I was interviewed in a small office in the Old Bailey by a charming and elegant lady, Mrs Alison Saunders. She asked me if I had any objection to working for a prisoners' charity. I said no I didn't, though of course I'd never even thought of such a job. After a pleasant chat Mrs Saunders said I was "exactly the sort of person we want" which boosted my ego, and I accepted on the spot!

The Administrator, David Elias, an old-school London Probation Officer, and the Treasurer, John Sowerby, a retired accountant, were very welcoming. I enjoyed my job from the start. Much of it was routine, but interesting and eye-opening. I soon learned what a huge difference small grants can make to ex-prisoners who lack the most basic items, eg a bed, cooking facilities, warm clothes, etc.

Applications were much fewer in those days, so David often investigated them in detail on the telephone. His conversations with Probation Officers and his tales of the Probation Service were revealing and fascinating. Occasional irate and concerned telephone calls came from ex-prisoners who did not realise that only their Probation Officer, not they themselves, could apply for a grant. These calls had to be handled with diplomacy and empathy.

Computers and systems brought more applications. To raise the Fund's standing Alison held the AGM in Court No.1, with a reception in the Judges' Dining Room. She initiated regular fund-raising events: I remember with pleasure a trip to the Royal Docks, a glamorous reception in Rothschild's new building, the Royal Parks half-marathon when my daughter, her colleagues, and a client of Cranstoun Drug Centre, raised money for the Fund.

The Central Criminal Court fascinated me. I relished the tours conducted by the Secondary, Charles Henty, who gave all proceeds to the Fund. He told enthralling stories of Court No.1 and Deadman's Walk, along which prisoners staggered to the gallows or to the cart for transportation. Filing and records were stored in the 'museum', a padlocked room down two basement levels, where reputedly a ghost roams. Some staff refused to go there. I was not fazed, but disliked the darkness and having to unpadlock doors. When I left the Fund I was treated to a farewell lunch at – appropriately! – HMP Brixton. A very happy end to an unusual and happy job.

*Paul Lecoutre, Administrator/Treasurer 2005 –*

Most of my career was spent working in countries from Japan to Jamaica for Shell International. Responding to an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* in 2005 for a part-time administrator, I was so impressed by the interview with the Chairlady, Alison Saunders, that I signed on immediately.

My job is to respond to applications for grants. These arrive from Probation Officers, Social Workers, charities and the like, applying for help with a prison leaver's immediate needs, from a fridge to an HGV training course. Some applications I have to refuse, e.g. for non-essentials such as a passport; or if the prison leaver lives outside Greater London. Some of the cheques I send out are returned, as the intended beneficiary is in prison again. But it is heartening to receive many letters thanking the Fund for prompt help at a time of great need.

Since 2005 the number of grant applications to the Fund has more than doubled as prison populations, and therefore prisoner releases, have continued to grow. Successive Chairs – Lady Davies, Lady Brewer and now, Lady Russell – have developed the Fund to meet the ever-increasing need. Covid put a temporary damper on applications; but now I am busier than ever.

*Claire Ivey, Secretary 2019 –*

I was overjoyed to get the job. From the warm welcome I received and a tour of the Old Bailey's Grand Hall, "too good to be true" entered my mind.

The first year was a baptism of fire, as I navigated the office duties and a host of meetings and events, but I enjoyed the opportunities and happily threw myself into charity life. When covid compelled home working I drove to and from London to collect the grant applications until we organised mail redirection. Zoom helped, until we became zoomed out. Now we're back to normal services, reviving my first, happy thought: "too good to be true!"

Now, it seems incredible that I am beginning my seventh year in office as the Fund's Secretary – time certainly does fly. From my happy beginnings to becoming more experienced in the Fund's work, I have been delighted that some prison leavers use the grant monies to 'turn their lives around', opting for education and training which will help them into employment. Long may this continue, and here's to further years being a cog in the Fund's wheel.



## Back-up from the Old Bailey

In 1970, the City Corporation granted the Fund the great asset of an office in the Old Bailey. The Recorder – the Senior Circuit Judge at the Old Bailey and Vice President of the Fund – works in the building. Both Sheriffs – the Fund's Presidents – have flats there. With the excellent cooperation of the Old Bailey staff, fund-raising events are held there, such as the enduringly popular *Trial & Error*, a dramatic miscellany illuminating 400 years of Newgate and the Old Bailey. The Fund's Trustees and Advisory Council meet there, with Court No. 1 as the splendid setting for the AGM, at which a beneficiary of the Fund summons up the courage to speak of his/her experience.

Invited to speak, a beneficiary wrote:

*I would be honoured to attend your fund-raising events and speak as a beneficiary of your awards. Without the help and support of the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund I would not have been able to pay my deposit and accept a place on my course and accomplish my achievements to date. I am forever grateful for the assistance your organisation has provided. You have helped to change my life in a positive direction for ever. I would be honoured to share this testimony with others.*

Sir Nicholas Hilliard, Recorder 2015 – 2019, wrote of his time at the Old Bailey: *Many people know that in 1955, Ruth Ellis was the last woman to be hanged in the United Kingdom. Her son Andrew was 10 years old. It is less well known that the trial judge sent money for his upkeep, and that when Andrew later took his own life, prosecuting counsel at the trial paid for the funeral. More recently, some of the most impressive and eloquent people I met at the Old Bailey were the parents of young people who had been murdered. Mark Prince, father of Kiyan, and George Kinsella, father of Ben, came regularly at my invitation to speak to young people thought to be at risk of involvement in gang and knife crime. In their different ways, all these individuals assumed some extra responsibility for the wide variety of people who come within the Old Bailey's orbit.*

*The same spirit lies behind the Old Bailey's very own prison charity, the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund. It is sometimes tempting to ask why a charity should be needed to support prisoners and their families, and to suppose that this work should be the responsibility of government. In fact, the work of charities in this sector has served to underline that prisoners and their families are a shared responsibility for all of us. And anything we can do to prevent further offending is one way we can do right by victims of crime and their families.*



# Thanks to the Livery Companies

In 1846 the Fund's Vice Presidents, listed in the 1846 *Annual Report*, included: His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, The Most Noble the Marquis of Lansdowne, The Rt. Hon. Lord Kenyon, The Rt. Hon. Lord Bexley, the Rt. Hon. Lord Monteagle, The Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart, and the Lord Mayor. A City charity, the Fund owed much of its successful growth to noble City gentlemen, many of them members of City Livery Companies. The Fund's Treasurers and Trustees have often been Aldermen, Common Councilmen and Liverymen.

Following the Fund's founder Sheriffs, the two Sheriffs elected every year by their fellow Liverymen continue to play a vital part in the Fund. As well as being supportive individually, they often encourage their Livery Company to donate to the Fund. The Cutlers' Company was the first to make a donation, in 1846. The Armourers' & Brasiers' Company has faithfully contributed since 1876.

Only a few Livery Companies donated before 1893, after which donations started to increase, prompting the Committee to consider a regular appeal. The Minutes of a meeting in 1900 recorded: *Your Committee, whilst thankful for the liberal support at present received from several City Companies, . . . believe that a well considered scheme for periodical assistance – to even a very modest amount – from all the great Guilds . . . would meet with a ready response.*

In 1901 the Fund appealed to four of the Great Twelve Companies and four of the minor ones. Regular appeals followed: in 1914 the Sheriffs applied to the Goldsmiths on behalf of a *Society closely connected with the City (whose) income is administered by a Committee composed of City men with practical experience.* Disingenuously, they added that no appeal had been made to the general public in the belief that adequate support would be provided by the Companies.

The links between the Fund and the City's Livery Companies have developed through the creation of Life Governors, the 200 Club, and the exceptionally original – and blessedly profitable – events organised by the Sheriffs. All current Masters and their Clerks are invited to the AGM, held in No. 1 Court of the Old Bailey, followed by a convivial reception. The Fund is now supported by virtually all the Livery Companies. Their backing has enabled the Fund to develop larger, more ambitious projects, while still helping individuals with appropriate grants at a time of great need. The Fund delights in the connection with the Livery Companies, relies on them, and is deeply grateful to them.

# How the Fund survives and thrives

The Fund is a self-supporting registered charity (no. 221927) run by volunteers and a part-time Secretary and Administrator. Bar these two salaries, all monies the Fund receives are spent on grants to individuals, charities, and training & mentoring schemes. It relies on donations, legacies, and fund-raising events.

Throughout the 19th century the Fund's only fund-raiser was the Mansion House dinner in 1845 which raised the equivalent of £134,000. It depended on the generosity of a few supporters such as Sir Moses Montefiore who, turning 99 in 1883, donated £99. Another gift stemmed from an agreement between King Henry V111 and the Corporation of London for the re-foundation of St Bartholomew's Hospital: an annual payment, in perpetuity, of £10, for a *prieste which shall be called the Visitor of Newgate, who shall attend to visit the prisoners of Newgate as necessity shall require and to be always resident there for that purpose*. The Fund still receives £10 annually. In 1632 Lady Catherine Barnardistone gave £5 to release poor prisoners whose debt was under £50, and £100 for the preaching of three sermons to the condemned prisoners in Newgate.

By the 20th century grant applications had multiplied. The Fund appealed to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, City Companies, Trusts and Foundations. From 1932 to 1965 the London County Council organised contributions from Sunday cinema shows: in World War II cinemas such as the Shepherds Bush Gaumont donated; and in 1940, actors: Charles Chaplin, Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh and Basil Rathbone. Using the new medium of wireless, in 1934 the Recorder, Sir Ernest Wild, raised £190 18s 3d. via the BBC's *Week's Good Cause*. In 1950 a broadcast appeal by the Recorder, Sir Gerald Dobson, brought in £589 12s 7d.

In 1952 Mrs Helen Norris established the John Nelly Norris Trust after reading a letter from an "old lag" who reformed (see page 36). This trust included some founder shares in Arsenal Football Club, and represents the Fund's Permanent Endowment of £57,000. An extract from Mrs Norris' will is always read out at the AGM.

In 1962 *Woman's Own* included a tribute to the Fund's redoubtable Secretary and Almoner, Mrs Harthan. Publicity attracted support: in 1935 Ingoldsby Dramatic Club gave £120 14s 8d. In 1958, the Fund's 150th anniversary, a Coffee Morning and Bring & Buy Sale produced £343 5s 10d. F.E. Cleary gave the royalties from his 1969 book *The Flowering City*. In 1970 a Bring & Buy Sale raised £1,508; in 1975 Anthony Hart sold his Shrieval regalia in aid of the Fund.

Applications to the Fund kept increasing through the 1970s and 1980s and “at an alarming rate” as reported in 1991, when grant expenditure increased by 50%. Needing to increase its reserves, the Fund embarked on a new era of fund-raising, much of it sponsored by successive Sheriffs and Recorders. The first events were performances, held in The Mansion House, of *Lucia di Lamamoor* by the Pavilion Opera in 1991, which raised over £37,000, and a Piano Recital in 1994, raising £20,000. Being based at The Old Bailey, the Fund has the allure of an iconic location, the grandeur of the Grand Hall and the history of No. One Court, with access afforded by the Recorder and the Secondary, in which to hold fund-raising events. Over £1 million has been raised over the last 30 years from a wide variety of events, including to date over £150,000 from the annual productions of HH Judge Peter Rook’s *Trial & Error* in No. One Court.

Through the 1990s and 2000s, grant expenditure continued to exceed donated income and, despite multi-year grants from the Corporation of London and Bridge House Estates, in 1997 the Fund had to reduce temporarily its grant-giving and to appeal to its Life Governors and to the ever-helpful City Livery.

In 2008, the Fund’s Bicentenary year, the newly-appointed Patrons plus eye-catching promotional campaigns in the *Financial Times* and the *Evening Standard* significantly increased the Fund’s reserves, and introduced a new source of recurring income. The Bicentenary Appeal and other events raised £265,000. Lady Davies, the Fund Chair, established the 200 Club, whose members each contribute £200 (or more) a year, the approximate cost of an individual grant. The 200 Club is still a vital source of income: now over £24,000 annually. Since 2000, the Fund’s Expendable Endowment has increased through the amalgamation of the Middlesex Victoria Fund, the Middlesex Area Charitable Association, the Norton Trust and the Barbara Sweatt Charitable Trust. All had been regular supporters, but could no longer operate independently.

The Fund has benefitted from some very generous legacies: Her Honour Judge Ann Goddard QC, a judge at The Old Bailey and a member of the Fund’s Advisory Council, bequeathed a substantial sum, which the Fund used to support charities focused on children; and in 2016 a very welcome legacy came from Ms Georgina Stafford, a former probation officer in the London Probation Service.

In the last 30 years the prison population has more than doubled to nearly 90,000, while the Fund’s average expenditure on grants has increased more than ten-fold, to an all-time high of £235,000 in 2024. This is thanks to the generosity of donors and the Corporation, and the knowledge and efficiency of the Trustees.

## Join in!

The goodwill of people who support the aims and activities of the Fund has prompted many generous acts: creators have given their books and cards to be sold for the Fund. Benefactors have sponsored fund-raising events and given prizes for the “lucky programme” winners at performances of Trial & Error. Individuals have panted through sponsored bicycle rides, runs, swims and rowing challenges – even a very successful weight-loss programme! Designers have produced silk scarves, pocket squares, cuff links and tote bags for sale in aid of the Fund.

The Sheriffs regularly dream up an amazing variety of events, from horseback or tandem rides round the City Livery Halls, regardless of the riders’ experience (i.e. lack of) of horses or tandems, to performances and talks by consummate professionals such as Damian Lewis, the late, great Helen McCrory, Jim Broadbent, P.D. James and Cherie Blair.

Many people of goodwill contribute to helping offenders who want to make a positive new start, and turn their lives around. Prison leavers who never return to prison, but succeed in establishing themselves in work and home, benefit themselves, their family and society. The Fund is indebted to each and every supporter, individuals and organisations.

- \*\* Come to Fund events** Priority booking for donors. See [www.sr-fund.org](http://www.sr-fund.org)
- \*\* Become a donor** via the forms on pages 31 & 33, or [www.sr-fund.org](http://www.sr-fund.org)
- \*\* Arrange a tour of the Old Bailey** Apply to the Fund’s Secretary (page 27)
- \*\* Listen** to the Old Bailey choir’s glorious concerts [www.oldbaileychoir.com](http://www.oldbaileychoir.com)
- \*\* Have lunch** at the Clink restaurant, HMP Brixton, delicious food cooked and served by prisoners in training for a new start [www.theclinkcharity.org](http://www.theclinkcharity.org)
- \*\* Decorate** your home or office using trained prison leavers employed by Bounce Back [www.bouncebackproject.com](http://www.bouncebackproject.com)
- \*\* Sponsor** a fund-raiser (*Rigoletto*, sponsor Lawrence Graham LLP & World Traders’ Company; Rothschilds reception: Master Needlemaker Martyn Chase)
- \*\* Employ** prison leavers as do companies e.g. Timpsons, Pret, Land Securities
- \*\* Learn** about prisons & prisoners: read the Prison Reform Trust’s factfile *Bromley Briefings* [www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk)
- \*\* Give a prize** for a fund-raising raffle or “lucky ticket”
- \*\* Buy** playing cards and note cards, books, scarves, pocket squares, cuff links, tote bags **either** from the Secretary (page 27) **or** at Fund events, **or** online at [www.sr-fund.org](http://www.sr-fund.org)

# Make contact

**The Secretary  
Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund  
Central Criminal Court  
Old Bailey  
London EC4M 7EH**

## **Office hours:**

**Wednesday 11.15 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.**

**Telephone 020 7192 2734**

**Email [claire.ivey@sr-fund.org](mailto:claire.ivey@sr-fund.org)**



*Claire Ivey, Secretary,  
Picture Researcher and  
source of information  
about the Fund*

## **Website [www.sr-fund.org](http://www.sr-fund.org)**

The website contains detailed information about the history and development of the Fund, including *Annual Reports*, Mrs Harthan's history of the Fund, the Fenix Foundation's 2013 Evaluation, Bean Research's 2024 Impact Evaluation Report, case studies, ways of donating online, advance notice of events.

**Registered Charity No. 221927**

## ***Useful links***

\* **St Giles Trust.** Supports vulnerable people with a diverse range of needs.

**[www.stgilestrust.org.uk](http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk)**

\* **Hardman Trust.** Lists prisoner-funding charities. **[www.hardmantrust.org.uk](http://www.hardmantrust.org.uk)**

\* **Prison Advice & Care Trust.** The Fund works in collaboration with PACT and with the Witness Service at the Old Bailey. **[www.prisonadvice.org.uk](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk)**

\* **Prison Reform Trust.** Campaigns for a just, humane and effective penal system via research, events, publications. **[www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk)**

## ***Applications to the Fund***

To apply to the Fund for assistance for a client:

\* Probation Officers should download an application form via their Intranet

\* Social Services case workers, Social Welfare agencies and other professionals should apply to the Secretary of the Fund: **[srfundsec@yahoo.com](mailto:srfundsec@yahoo.com)**

## The last word Lady Russell

I first heard about the S & R Fund from my husband's grandmother, Lady Bowater, who chaired the Fund for twenty years, steering and growing it to help London's prison leavers as they embark on the complex journey of integrating back into society. My early conversations with Lady Bowater lit a little spark which eventually led me to taking over the Chair of the Fund in 2022.

The past three years have been extremely challenging for the criminal justice system and supporting charities. Covid followed by the cost of living crisis created huge pressure, culminating in the summer of 2024 in a broken prison system: prisons chronically overcrowded and with impoverished regimes, Probation chronically understaffed and performing poorly. Add Courts dealing with an unprecedented backlog of cases and you have a perfect storm.

However, the new Government is keen to make big improvements. The inspirational appointment of Lord Timpson as Prisons Minister has injected much-needed energy, and there is a palpable feeling that this is a moment for change. In September 2024 the Government implemented a medium-term policy of releasing lower-risk prisoners at the 40% mark of their sentence, rather than halfway. A Sentencing Review has been commissioned, and a Women's Justice Board set up. At the Fund we have created a new website, commissioned an up-to-date Impact Evaluation Report (page 17), and digitised our application system. So we are now more agile, and can support prison leavers very quickly on their release.

When I took over as Chair I was driven by the same passion and determination as had fuelled Lady Bowater. I knew the Fund was changing lives, but since working closely with the Fund I have seen just what a difference our grants make. We receive regular feedback from Probation Officers thanking us for life-changing grants which we can deliver in quick time due to the agility of the Fund.

I am fortunate to be greatly helped by the Recorder, Sheriffs, Trustees, Advisory Council, Secretary and Treasurer/Administrator. My thanks to them, and to all our supporters, the faithful Livery Companies in particular.

The Fund's enduring success testifies to the power of compassion, dedication and generosity. From Lady Bowater's pioneering efforts to my own tenure as Chair, we have remained steadfastly committed to empowering individuals to turn their lives around. The spark ignited in me years ago burns as brightly as ever.

# Thanks and credits

In its 200+ years, the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund has survived incomprehension, World Wars, Covid 19 and lockdowns. Today it is not only flourishing but is also expanding its vital work: a tribute to the zeal, generosity and skills of its trusty supporters. A few are already named. The complete list includes generations of:

**\*\*Chairmen, Trustees, Presidents (Sheriffs), Vice Presidents (Recorders), Advisory Council members, Treasurers, Solicitors, Auditors, Patrons, Secretaries, Almoners, Administrators, Liverymen, Consorts**

**\*\*All Old Bailey staff including the Secondaries, the staff responsible for security, the staff of the Recorder and of the Keeper, the telephonists, who give much out-of-hours assistance**

**\*\*Also at the Old Bailey: the Witness Service, the Old Bailey Choir, which holds fund-raising events in aid of the Fund, and the Probation Service, which is the conduit for many grant applications**

**\*\*Donors including many individuals, Life Governors, 200 Club members, Livery Companies, Ward Clubs, Charitable Trusts, Foundations, businesses, legal Chambers, City churches, sponsors of wonderful events**

**\*\*Givers of advice, time and skills: Probation Officers, Prison Chaplains, Social Workers, speakers (including courageous beneficiaries), voluntary helpers who help events to run smoothly, financial and IT specialists, musicians, actors, singers, ticketing organisers, programme sellers, marathon runners and many more**

**\*\*Givers of practical help to goals supported by the Fund: Prison Governors and officers, voluntary services, employers who train and employ ex-prisoners**

Finally, the Fund is greatly indebted to the Corporation of the City of London for providing the huge blessing of an office in the Central Criminal Court.

**We hope that *TURNING LIVES AROUND* has given you  
a glimpse of the Fund's work, and that you may feel moved to**

**Support the Fund**



# How to donate

All donations to the Fund, whether of money, time, skills or contacts, are most welcome. Since 1808 the Fund has given small grants for specific needs to prisoners on release and to their families living in the City of London or in the Metropolitan Police District. Increasingly, it now also gives large grants to incubate and implement programmes which provide training and mentoring for people while they are in prison and after their release. Such schemes significantly reduce re-offending; but inevitably they are expensive to set up.

The Fund is grateful for donations which can be made in any of the following ways:

## *Donating by cheque, bank transfer or standing order mandate*

- \* **Donation** using the form on page 31. Donors are invited to the AGM & reception, and are given priority booking for events
- \* **200 Club mandate** using the form on page 33. Members of the 200 Club make an annual donation of £200 or more. They are invited to the AGM & following reception in the Judges’ Dining Room, and are entered in a draw for a prize, for example a lunch with the Old Bailey judges, or a tour of the Old Bailey
- \* **Legacy** in your will, or using this suggested codicil:

**I give the sum of £.....  
..... (words and figures) to The Sheriffs’ & Recorder’s Fund  
(Registered Charity no. 221927) of Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey,  
London EC4M 7EH for its general charitable purposes. And I declare  
that the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer of such charity  
shall be a complete discharge to my Executors.**

The Fund recommends that you consult your solicitors or other professional advisers in making such a gift by will or codicil (particularly if you wish to leave any share or part of the residue to your estate). Should you wish to discuss any aspect of a proposed gift in advance, please contact an officer of the Fund.



## *Donating online*

Visit the Fund’s website **www.sr-fund.org** selecting the *Support us* page. Or tap your smartphone on this QR code which will take you direct to *Support us*.

# Donation form

## Sheriffs’ & Recorder’s Fund

Please make your donation by **cheque** or by **BACS**, using this photocopied form.  
If applicable, please sign the **Gift Aid declaration**. Send the form to:

**The Secretary, Sheriffs’ & Recorder’s Fund,  
Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, London EC4M 7EH**

If you prefer, you can access the form from the *Support us* page of the Fund’s website: **www.sr-fund.org** The page can be accessed by tapping your smartphone on the QR code on page 30.

## CHEQUE

I enclose my cheque, payable to the Sheriffs’ & Recorder’s Fund, to the value  
of £.....(..... pounds)  
Forename(s), surname & title (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....  
.....  
Home address .....  
.....  
Post code..... Email address.....

## BACS

I have instructed my bank to pay the sum of £.....  
(.....pounds) to the account of the Sheriffs’ & Recorder’s Fund, a/c no.  
10842508, sort code 20-10-53, Barclays Bank PLC, Bloomsbury & Tottenham Court  
Road Branch, PO Box 113345, London W12 8GG. The reference for this instruction  
is my surname/company/organisation:  
.....

## Gift Aid declaration

I should like the Sheriffs’ & Recorder’s Fund (Charity Commission reference  
221927) to reclaim the tax I have paid on this donation, and on all future donations.  
I am a UK taxpayer, and note that I must have paid at least as much income tax  
or CGT as will be reclaimed. Please treat this and all future payments as Gift Aid  
donations.

Date ..... Signature.....



L to R: Staff member, Hilary Russell, staff member, Ina De (High Sheriff of London 2023), staff member, at XO Bikes, which trains prison leavers to become professional bike mechanics



Far left: In the prize draw at *Advocacy, Trial & Error* Lucy Beacon won a day's training in the craft of turning. Turner Carlyn Lindsay taught her to turn an ornamental pencil holder  
Photo Carlyn Lindsay

Left: Chair Alison Saunders at a Summer Scheme of activities, including water sports, organised by the Metropolitan Police of Barking and Dagenham

# 200 Club mandate

## Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund

Please make your donation by completing this photocopied mandate. If applicable, please sign the **Gift Aid declaration**. Send the mandate to:

**The Secretary, Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund, Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, London EC4M 7EH**, who will forward it to your bank.

If you prefer, you can access the mandate from the *Support us* page of the Fund's website: **www.sr-fund.org** The page can be accessed by tapping your smartphone on the QR code on page 30.

Name and branch address of your bank.....

.....  
Please pay to the account of the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund,  
a/c no. 10842508, Sort code 20-10-53, Barclays Bank PLC, Bloomsbury &  
Tottenham Court Road Branch, PO Box 113345, London W12 8GG,  
the sum of..... (suggested minimum £200 -  
two hundred pounds) starting annually on.....  
.....until further notice.

Forename(s), surname & title (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Home address .....

Post code..... Email address.....

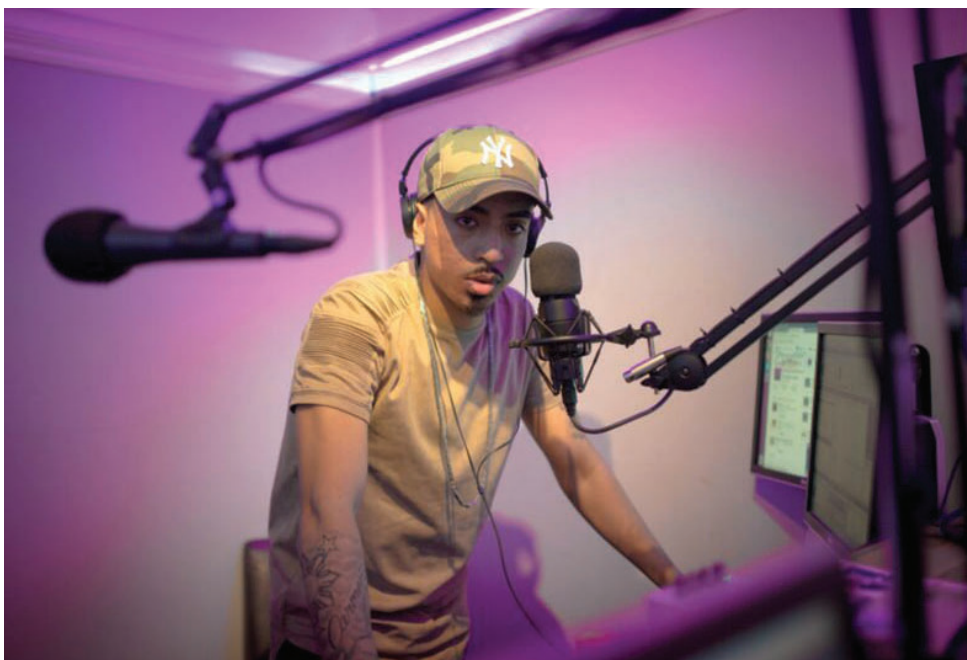
Bank account no ..... Sort code.....

Signature..... Date.....

## Gift Aid declaration

I should like the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund (Charity Commission reference 221927) to reclaim the tax I have paid on this donation, and on all future donations. I am a UK taxpayer, and note that I must have paid at least as much income tax or CGT as will be reclaimed. Please treat this and all future payments as Gift Aid donations.

Date ..... Signature.....



The Prison Radio Association, supported by the Fund, creates life-changing radio with talented prisoners at HMP Brixton



Left: HRH The Countess of Wessex at HMP Downview in connection with the London College of Fashion's *Making for Change* project, part-sponsored by the Fund



Right: Sir Ian Bowater at the foundation of the Central Criminal Court's new wing, in which the City of London Corporation gave the Fund an office



Left: Sheriff Neil Redcliffe and his wife Emma rejoicing at their arrival by bicycle in Paris. Through sponsorship, they and their co-riders raised unprecedented sums for the Fund.

Right: The Old Bailey's Trial and Error shows' playing cards, for sale in aid of the Fund



Below L to R: Former Trustee James Harman, former Chair Lady Davies, Advisory Council member Nikki Meinertzhagen, former Chair Lady Brewer, former secretary Christine Smith, Advisory Council member and compiler of *Turning Lives Around*, which fascinates her, Penrose Halson, Advisory Council member The Lady Clarke, former Advisory Council member Danny Bell, Chair Lady Russell, after a farewell lunch for Christine.

Below right, HHJ Mark Lucraft KC, the Recorder of London





Above left: Painting by a beneficiary who presented it to the Fund with thanks for help given when he was in great need. Photo Christine Smith



Above right: Operation Elf provides gifts for parents in prison to give to their children at Christmas

Right: A Collecting Box given to the Fund, reminiscent of the Poor Boxes installed by the founding Sheriffs in 1808. Photo Christine Smith



Below: From a City newspaper, 1952

### ***Old lag made her alter will***

**M**AJOR GUY F. RICHARDSON, C.C., City Sheriff 1948-49, has succeeded Alderman Sir Frederick Tidbury Beer as chairman and hon. treasurer of the Sheriffs' and Recorders' Fund Society.

This society's work began in 1808 through the efforts of two City Sheriffs, Alderman Christopher Smith and Sir Richard Phillips. The Fund has helped prisoners and their families. "It has been a shelter from which many a man has been able to start on his way to find employment and to bring back to himself the lost name of good repute."

Last year, Mrs. Helen Charlotte Norris bequeathed to the Fund the income from a trust formed from the sale of all her property. Mrs. Norris altered her will in favour of the Fund after reading the published letter of an "old lag" who reformed late in life and went straight through the influence of a City probation officer.

A wonderful worker for the Fund is Mrs. B. E. Hartham, Secretary and Almoner. Sue saves the Fund vast sums of money by obtaining for prisoners' families and ex-prisoners, clothing and other necessities at incredibly low prices.





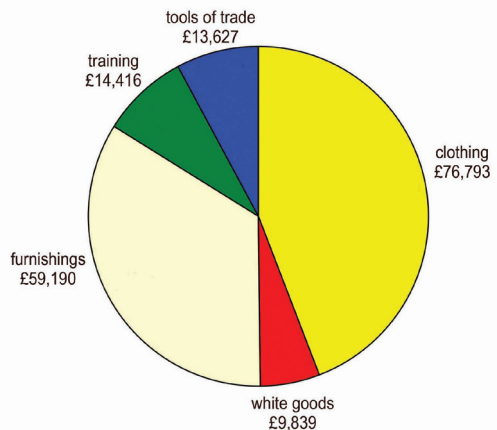
Top left: Stalwarts of the Fund Christine Smith, Secretary for 26 years, and Paul Lecoutre, Administrator/ Treasurer



Left: The Old Bailey's Matron, Catherine Waters, flanked by Sheriffs Andrew Parmley and Fiona Adler at the start of their tandem ride round the Livery halls in aid of the Fund. Photo Mike Williams

Top right: David Barrett, Ticket Supremo and a member of the Fund's Advisory Council

Casework April 2024 - Dec 2024. Diagram designed by Paul Lecoutre clearly showing the allocation of casework grants



# TURNING LIVES AROUND



Hilary Russell, Chair of the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund, flanked by Officer Commanding Light Cavalry HAC Alan Willis, and Alderman & Sheriff Professor Michael Mainelli

Website: [www.sr-fund.org](http://www.sr-fund.org)  
Go direct or tap your smartphone on the QR code