

Operation Deerness - special investigation Newsletter

Issue 3 - October 2024



Welcome to Issue 3 of the Operation Deerness newsletter.

We are sending you this newsletter because you received previous updates, because you took

the trouble to contact the Operation Deerness team in connection with the special investigation into Medomsley Detention Centre, or because you asked to be kept updated on our work.

Hello. I'm Steve Lusted. I am our team's Witness Liaison Co-ordinator. Thank you for your interest in Operation Deerness.

Since the last newsletter the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, Adrian Usher, has met Lord Timpson, recently appointed Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending. Adrian explained our investigation and aims, and Lord Timpson made clear his ongoing support for the work that we are doing. Lord Timpson and the Minister for Youth Justice, Sir Nic Dakin, have issued statements stressing their support for our investigation and asking anyone with relevant information to co-operate with us.

You may recall that in the last newsletter I said that we had issued a national Call for Evidence to authorities and organisations with links to Medomsley. We formally requested that relevant organisations, including local authorities, charities, government departments, and police services

provided us with any information about Medomsley that they hold.

38 authorities attended our initial Call for Evidence roundtable event in July. The information we received and the resultant work of our investigative team led to us identify further authorities we believed could assist us. A second Call for Evidence was issued in September to these organisations. We are now actively engaging with 47 organisations in total who are helping us by providing information and access to relevant records.

We have continued to contact witnesses and conduct interviews around the country. We have returned to the national archives to gather further stored information, some of it dating back to the early 1960s.

Head to page 2 to read about our drop-in event in Consett in October

Leading the investigation team:



Richard Tucker
Senior Investigator



Sarah Kirwan
Deputy Senior Investigator

Support agencies:

On 24 October the team will be holding a drop-in event in the Consett Heart Heritage and Arts Centre in Consett, inviting local people who might remember the detention centre to come and speak to us. Local people may have witnessed detainees undertaking work in the area as part of their sentences. They may have had friends or relatives who worked in the detention centre. They may have known detainees who spent time there. They may have socialised with staff. There is potentially a good deal of information and context in the local area and we are keen for people to talk to us. If you know anyone who lives in the area who might be able to give us some information, please pass on the time and date. We will be there from **2.00pm to 5.00pm on 24 October at Consett Heart Heritage and Arts Centre, The Old Ambulance Hall, John Street, Consett, County Durham DH8 5LA.**

Once again, thank you for your interest. Any information is valuable to us so if you remember any details, even if you have spoken to us before, please feel free to get in touch.

As always, there are a number of agencies you can contact if you feel that you would like some support. These are listed to the right.

Steve Lusted - Witness Liaison Coordinator
email: ppomedomsleyinvestigation@ppo.gov.uk
phone: 07511 165266

If you do not wish to receive further communications from us please let us know in response to this message and we will take you off the list.

The Meadows Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people aged 16 years and over in County Durham and Darlington that have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. The telephone line is open 24 hours a day every day of the year, or you can email.

0300 223 0099 www.sarcdurham.co.uk

Teesside Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people aged 16 years and over in Teesside that have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

0330 223 0099 www.sarcteesside.co.uk

The Angel Centre (Northumbria)

Free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to people aged 16 years or older in Northumbria who have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

0300 233 0099

www.sarcnorthumbria.co.uk

Sunderland Counselling Service

A charity who have supported the local community in Sunderland for more than 40 years.

0191 5147007

www.sunderlandcounselling.org.uk

National Association for People Abused in Childhood

For adult survivors of any form of childhood abuse.

0808 8010331 www.napac.org.uk

The Forgotten Boys

Support group for men across all regions of the North East who have experience of childhood correctional punishment in UK institutions.

01429 686499

www.theforgottenboys.co.uk/

Victim Care and Advice Service

Support for victims of crime in the Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Stockton or Hartlepool areas.

0303 0401099 www.vcas.uk