

From England

TRIBUTE TO UNA PADEL

On 29th August 2006 the Director of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Una Padel, passed away after a long battle against cancer. CCJS Council Chairman, Tony Pearson remembers her.

Una Padel demonstrated throughout her all too short adult life a wholehearted commitment to penal reform. Una's approach to this, a field that never attracts huge support, was essentially practical. But that practicality was founded on a clear appreciation of the issues matched by a deep feeling for the position of those without voice or influence in society.

Born in 1956, Una read psychology at Durham and followed this with postgraduate diplomas in social administration (York) and social work (Newcastle). She joined the probation service in Northumbria in 1980. Working in Newcastle's East End was a challenging introduction to working with offenders. Many of the lessons she learned then informed her approach throughout her life. It was during this time that Una saw at first hand the stark realities facing prisoners' families and prisoners on release. It was a field in which she made a major contribution and for which she was appointed OBE in 2003.

In 1985 Una left the Probation Service to become Deputy Director of the Prison Reform Trust under the leadership of Stephen Shaw. It was here that she gained invaluable experience in presenting difficult material, whether to the Home Affairs Select Committee, to the media or to a wider and often sceptical audience. Her reputation for honesty and even-handedness was firmly established and never subsequently questioned.

In 1989 Una became Assistant Director of the Standing Conference on DrugAbuse (now DrugScope), leading a team developing ways of providing HIV education to prisoners when hysteria about AIDS was at its height. Her work did much to civilise the way in which HIV questions were dealt with in prisons. Una's next move was to set up the London Prison Community Links, a project funded by the City Parochial Fund to improve visiting arrangements and facilities for visitors at all ten London

prisons. She knew from first hand experience what it was like to wait in the rain and cold to visit a prisoner and the offhand way in which visitors were then often treated. By the end of the project, visitors' centres had been set up at all the prisons. Una, with help from fellow trustees from LPCL, then formed CLINKS — a national organisation designed to facilitate involvement of the voluntary sector in delivering various services in prisons. She was CLINKS founding Director.

Her growing reputation was such that in 1999 she was appointed Director of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (formerly ISTD), a charity based at King's College, London, dedicated to educate and to generate informed debate about criminal justice matters. Her stewardship of CCJS coincided with enormous turbulence in the criminal justice arena. It was all the more important therefore to have an independent body able to bring together practitioners, academics, policy makers and politicians to consider soberly important questions. Una's professional standing enabled her to discharge this duty extraordinarily well. She also found time to give to Home Office working groups, to working with Adfam (concerned with helping the families of drug using prisoners) and to write (during her final illness she co-edited a collection of essays on the developing National Offender Management Service) and, since 2003, to chair the Penal Affairs Consortium. Never one to look for public recognition, Una had a clear sense of public duty.

At the height of her powers she was cruelly struck down by cancer. Surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy were endured with barely a complaint. Under her quiet, understated exterior there was a steely determination which showed itself in the battle she fought against dreadful illness. Her fortitude was remarkable and humbling to witness. She is survived by her daughter Morag, her parents, two sisters and countless people whose lives she touched in so many ways.

Una Padel, born 21 July 1956, died 29 August 2006.

A Memorial Service to celebrate the life of Una Padel was held in King's College Chapel, Strand, London WC2B 5RL, 10th November 2006.