

Annual Report 2011

By Peter Stanford

Director, Longford Trust

It was Lord Longford who gave Jon Snow his first job. The much admired broadcaster began his 2011 Longford Lecture by recalling how, in 1968, he had just been thrown out of Liverpool University in for student activism, and needed to find a job. Almost alone of potential employers, Frank Longford found the circumstances of his departure from undergraduate life a mark in his favour - "just right for the job" Jon remembered him remarking - and so took him on to run the New Horizon, the drop-in centre for homeless youngsters in central London. It was the start of a close friendship that lasted until Frank died in 2001. And which has continued in spirit since, with Jon chairing the annual Longford Lecture and sitting on the trustee board of the Longford Trust. But in 2011, the tenth anniversary of Frank's death, he agreed to take on a further challenge. He delivered the lecture on the theme of "Crime, Punishment and Media".

Church House was full to the rafters and Shami Chakrabati, director of Liberty, ably filled Jon's usual role as master of ceremonies. In a topical lecture, Jon's contention was that, at the heart of crime, lay "a systematic refusal to pay your dues in the society we live in". And that definition led him to question whether there were no other forms of criminality that were going unpunished in our society. Tax evasion, for instance. Or the behaviour of bankers and the City of London?

And he took in, too, the behaviour of his own profession, the media, at a time when its behaviour was under close scrutiny in the phone-hacking scandal. A full text of his lecture is available on our website

(www.longfordtrust.org). It deserves a careful reading.

Our annual get-together was, once again, made possible through the generosity of the Independent newspaper, which sponsored the lecture for the tenth year in a row, and of Thames River Capital. Catering at the post-lecture reception, open to all who attend the event, was sponsored by Kevin and Kate McGrath and provided by the Clink, the restaurant and catering service run by prisoners in HMP High Down. The model that it provides of effective rehabilitation was recognised by the judges of the annual Longford Prize who made the award for 2011 to the Clink.

There was a neat (though unplanned) symmetry when Al Crisci, the founder of the Clink, emerged from the kitchens of Church House to come up on stage to accept the prize.

The formal part of the evening ended with three current Longford Scholars talking from the platform about how the financial and mentoring support the trust has given them has enabled them to continue their rehabilitation on release from prison by studying for a degree. Simon Williams, Naomi Stewart and Peter Angliss are three of the 40 young people on the Longford Scholarships programme at any time and they provided moving testimony on how the trust's support had made a vital difference in their lives.

They also demonstrated that the Longford Trust is not just about one evening, and one prize, but works hard throughout the year to further the goals of prison reform that Frank Longford held so dear. In order to do that, the trust has to pay its way, and I am delighted to introduce these annual accounts for 2011 which show that we have just enjoyed our best ever year for fund-raising.

Encouraging too were the donations received on the night of the lecture - more than £10,000 was collected. We make no charge for tickets to this event, on the principle that it must be open to all, regardless of means, so as to reach the widest possible audience. Such a high level of donations reinforced the trustees' determination to continue with this open-door policy. And it felt like a broader endorsement of all aspects of the trust's work which are showcased on this one evening in November. There are individuals and trusts whose continuing and staunch support make possible all the work we undertake 12 months of the year. The Rank Foundation and the Monument Trust have for six and three years respectively helped us fund the scholarship programme, and a part-time administrator for it. We are hugely in their debt.

To the roll of honour of those who have supported the trust these past ten years, the following have added their names, or provided yet more generous encouragement, in the past 12 months: Iain Balmain, Stephen and Nuala Blaney, Bridgewater Associates, Lord Charles Cecil, Roger Clark, Dolly Costopoulos, the Hon Harriet Cullen, the Violet and Milo Cripps Charitable Trust, Damian Fraser, the Hawthorne Charitable Trust, the L Messel Trust, the Ofenheim Charitable Trust, the KW Charitable Trust, Thomas Pakenham, Sir James Spooner, the University of Westminster and Peter Wolton.

Vital to the success of the trust has been the encouragement and enthusiasm of its patrons and in 2011 we were saddened to hear of the deaths of Josephine Hart and Lord Windlesham, loyal supporters of our cause.

All trusts, of whatever size, succeed by the pooling of resources and I must end this report by paying particular tribute to my colleagues in the Longford Trust offices - the untiring Magdalen Evans and the formidably well-organised Jill Dale - for all they do to make this organisation thrive. And to our chairman, Kevin Pakenham, and his fellow trustees, always vigilant so that this ambitious charity grows and extends its reach and influence.

Peter Stanford

Director