

Welcome to the autumn edition of the INQUEST e-newsletter.

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NEWS

- INQUEST campaign victory: 'secret inquests' dropped

In a highly significant climb-down after sustained campaigning by INQUEST for almost ten months, the government has dropped its plans for 'secret' inquests from the Counter Terrorism Bill 2008. The victory is an important one for INQUEST and we remain determined to fight any attempt to re-introduce similar legislation in the forthcoming Coroners Bill.

In the last week it has emerged that in another case (the shooting of Terry Nicholas by Metropolitan Police officers in 2007) the coroner has said the inquest cannot proceed because of problems of how to deal with sensitive information. INQUEST is working with parliamentarians and

lawyers representing families of Azelle Rodney and Terry Nicholas to try and find some resolution to the issue of how to deal with sensitive police information at inquests so that Azelle's inquest can proceed.

- **Police officers' practice of conferring on notes criticised in the High Court**

A High Court Judge has called for reform of the practice which allows police officers to confer notes after a fatal police shooting. This followed a judicial review, for which INQUEST made a statement, brought on behalf of the families of Mark Saunders and Dayniel Tucker who were both shot by the police. In giving his judgment, Mr Justice Underhill mentioned the points raised by INQUEST and expressed concern that the practice might be unlawful and there was a danger that the opportunity for collusion could become institutionalised. As this edition of the e-Newsletter went to press, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) announced that they would end the practice and redraft their manual for firearms officers.

- **Child restraint techniques abolished but government continues to stall on Restraint Review**

In another significant victory for INQUEST and other child rights campaigners, the Court of Appeal abolished the government's restraint rules which allowed children in custody to be restrained for reasons of "good order and discipline" on the grounds it was unlawful.

However INQUEST has learned that the government have yet again delayed publication of the review of restraint in juvenile secure settings which will not now be published until December. INQUEST, the NSPCC and the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) wrote urging the government to publish the report of the review to allow concerned organisations and the mothers of Adam Rickwood and Gareth Myatt the opportunity for consultation - the very things criticised by the Court of Appeal judgement. This request has been refused.

INQUEST's concerns about child deaths continue to be taken up at senior political levels with most recently the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe highlighting the issue, and also the United Nations Committee for the Rights of the Child in their UK report.

INQUESTS

- **Jean Charles de Menezes inquest opens**

INQUEST is monitoring the inquest into the death of Jean Charles de Menezes, which opened in September and is expected to last three months. The inquest has revealed new evidence about the actions of the police which led to the fatal shooting in July 2005 and is the first time the shoot to kill policy Operation Kratos is being examined publicly. A website has been established for the inquest at www.stockwellinquest.org.uk with daily transcripts of proceedings and evidence. The Jean Charles de Menezes Family Campaign has also produced a blog for the inquest with regular updates and comment on proceedings: inquest.justice4jean.org.

- **Critical verdict at inquest into vulnerable prisoner Stephen Brown**

In another case which raises serious concerns about the medical treatment and care of prisoners, an inquest jury sitting at Doncaster Magistrates Court exposed a litany of serious failings at the privately-run Doncaster prison regarding the care of 23 year old Stephen Brown. Stephen died as a result of streptococcal septicaemia at Doncaster Royal Infirmary in March 2003, less than a week after arriving at the prison. A summary of the verdict and main issues in his case can be found [here](#).

POLICY & EVENTS

- **United Friends and Families Campaign procession on Saturday 25 October**



The United Friends and Families Campaign (UFFC) is a coalition of campaigns by the friends and the families of people who have died in police custody, prisons and psychiatric hospitals. This Saturday will be the tenth UFFC procession to remember those who have died in custody. The

procession will set off at 1pm from Trafalgar Square and moving to Parliament Square. All welcome – please dress in black. For further information please contact 0845 330 7927

- **Evaluating the Independent Police Complaints Commission**

INQUEST's submission to the Independent Police Complaints Commission's Stock Take consultation can be downloaded [here](#). The

consultation asked for comments on how far the IPCC was succeeding against its original aims and on its new proposals for improving the way local police forces deal with the majority of complaints, excluding deaths and serious injuries.

INQUEST's submission raised our ongoing concerns about the treatment of families by the IPCC and on the quality of the decision making in their reports. We also contributed to a seminar attended by the then-Policing Minister Tony McNulty and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Iain Blair, among others, where we raised concerns that a review of how deaths and serious injuries are investigated was needed. This is now receiving serious consideration from the IPCC.

- **INQUEST at events**

- **ICOPA Conference**

- INQUEST gave a presentation on women's deaths in prison at the twelfth annual ICOPA Conference on prison abolition which took place in London in July.

- **INQUEST Lawyers Group meet Prisons Ombudsman**

- We facilitated a meeting between members of our Lawyers Group and staff from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman. Key issues raised included the quality of investigations, delay and independence of clinical reviews.

- **INQUEST at NAPO AGM**

- INQUEST spoke at a fringe meeting on Deaths in Custody with the mothers of Joseph Scholes and Adam Rickwood at the trade union NAPO's AGM.

- **Remembering Pauline Campbell**

- INQUEST spoke at two memorial events for the prisons and deaths in custody campaigner Pauline Campbell: the Justice for Women memorial in September; and the Pauline Campbell Memorial Lecture with Erwin James at the Liverpool Literature Festival in October.



STATISTICS

- **Deaths in custody in England & Wales so far this year as of 24 October**

Deaths in prison		Deaths in police custody	
<i>Classification</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Self Inflicted	48	Custody deaths	19
Non-Self Inflicted	74	Pursuits	19
Homicide	3	Road Traffic Accidents	5
Awaiting Classification	5	Shootings	1

Source: INQUEST casework and monitoring
Further statistical information can be found [on our website](#).

Since the last e-Newsletter in July, INQUEST has taken on 74 new cases, 22 of which involving a death in custody. Our current open caseload is 368 including 77 non-custody cases.

ABOUT INQUEST

- ***Inquests: A practitioner's guide* : book launched**



A new fully-revised and updated edition of *Inquests: a practitioner's guide* has been launched. Written by three highly-experienced members of the INQUEST Lawyers Group, the book is a guide to current inquest law, practice and procedure, and also lends a powerful voice to the debate for a more just, fair and effective inquest system.

It contains historical detail and a comprehensive analysis of future developments which INQUEST contributed to and is invaluable to all those who share the view that the coronial system is in need of fundamental reform. Copies can be ordered from the Legal Action Group website.

- **Gilly Mundy photographic exhibition in central London**



Lust For Life, an exhibition of photographs by INQUEST's late Senior Caseworker, Gilly Mundy, opened on 30 September at Garden Court barristers chambers in London. Speakers at the launch included Gilly's father Mota Singh and Deborah Coles, Co-Director of INQUEST and a trustee of the Buwan Kothi International Trust (BKIT). We were very pleased that our local MP Jeremy

Corbyn attended, and he spoke movingly about Gilly and his work at INQUEST.



L-R: Deborah Coles, Mota Singh, Debbie Mundy, Jeremy Corbyn MP

BKIT's achievements include the construction of the Gilly Mundy Memorial Institute in his family village in Haryana, India. Proceeds from sales of photographs go directly to fund the running of the school, and a catalogue can be [downloaded](#) from the BKIT website, where framed prints can also be [ordered](#).

- **Staff Changes**

We welcome Scarlet Granville on her return from maternity leave to rejoin INQUEST's casework team.

- **Funding Appeal**



INQUEST's financial concerns remain - your subscription renewals and donations continue to ease our immediate problems, but we still have a way to go yet - so if you have not yet responded [please go ahead and help us](#) maintain our vital service.

Without INQUEST's active and sustained campaigning, controversial proposals like those for 'secret' inquests would have crept into law – and as we note above, are still likely to be included as part of the forthcoming Coroners Bill.

Every donation, no matter how small, each [book purchase](#), every subscription to *Inquest Law* magazine or membership of the [INQUEST Lawyers Group](#) will make a significant difference to our work.

