

Contents:

NEWS

- Metropolitan Police publishes report into the killing of Blair Peach after three decades of silence
- Reform under threat – will the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 be implemented?
- New government
- INQUEST concerned about move of YJB to Ministry of Justice
- Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee inquiry into the work of the Independent Police Complaints Commission
- First Inquiries Act 2005 inquiry as substitute for inquest into death in custody announced
- Independent Advisory Panel - deaths in custody Family Listening Event
- Independent panel to oversee Hillsborough disclosure
- Changes at the IPCC, Prisons Inspectorate and PPO

ABOUT INQUEST

- INQUEST wins the Longford Prize 2009
- Inquests and casework
- Caseload
- Deaths in custody 2010
- Policy work
- In brief
- People
- Latest publications from INQUEST

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NEWS

- Metropolitan Police publishes report into the killing of Blair Peach after three decades of silence

The Cass Report – the police investigation into the killing of Blair Peach in 1979 - was finally placed into the public domain in April 2010. Its publication was a tribute to the determined campaigning of his partner Celia Stubbs (a founding member of INQUEST) and the Friends of Blair Peach.

The report makes clear that the whole investigation was clearly designed as an exercise in managing the fallout from the events of that iconic day in Southall, to exonerate police violence in the face of legitimate public protest. The echoes of that exercise sound across the decades to the events of the G20 protest and the death of Ian Tomlinson in 2009. Despite this bias the report is unequivocal in finding that a Metropolitan Police officer was responsible for the fatal

truncheon blow that killed him and INQUEST will continue to work to ensure that this is publicly acknowledged by the Metropolitan commissioner.

- ▶ INQUEST press release: Publication of Cass Report over thirty years after the death of Blair Peach
- Giles Peach writes in *The Times*: "We just want the truth about my uncle, Blair Peach" – (<http://bit.ly/931ZKA>)
- ▶ Letters to *The Guardian* "Justice denied for Blair Peach" (<http://bit.ly/bQUbuB>)
- ▶ *The Times* - "Quiet dignity of the woman who waited for truth about Blair Peach" (<http://bit.ly/9UyYAn>)
- ▶ *The Guardian* - "Blair Peach killed by police at 1979 protest, Met report finds" (<http://bit.ly/9uqsZM>)
- ▶ "Blair Peach: After 31 years Met police say 'sorry' for their role in his killing" - *The Guardian* (<http://bit.ly/b2hgR9>)
- ▶ BBC News - "Police publish report into death of Blair Peach in 1979" (<http://bit.ly/9ghn7y>)
- ▶ *The Daily Telegraph* "Celia Stubbs wins Blair Peach campaign after three decades" (<http://bit.ly/cgZiLO>)
- ▶ Roger Smith, member of INQUEST's Board and director of JUSTICE, writes on the deaths of Blair Peach and Baha Mousa in *The Guardian* (<http://bit.ly/b1Xh8h>)
- ▶ Letter co-signed by INQUEST in *The Guardian*: "A year on, we still wait for answers about Ian Tomlinson's death" (<http://bit.ly/9NfYx1>)
- ▶ BBC News - 'Delay' in Ian Tomlinson G20 death probe criticised" (<http://bit.ly/cQ5ZMB>)

- **Reform under threat – will the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 be implemented?**

The Coroners and Justice Act 2009 received Royal Assent on 12 November, signalling significant changes to the investigation of contentious deaths. INQUEST had worked hard to improve the legislation and the Act creates a framework that could address many of the current problems. The reforms were expected to be introduced in April 2012. The Ministry of Justice has invited individuals and organisations to comment on how a reformed coroners' system will work to inform secondary legislation, and INQUEST has responded to this.

- ▶ Ministry of Justice webpage for comments on a reformed coroners' system will work in practice (<http://bit.ly/cSjGQp>)
- ▶ INQUEST's submission to the consultation on the reformed system (<http://bit.ly/cArYUI>)

However, the new Justice Secretary, Kenneth Clarke QC MP, asked civil servants to review the scope and timing of plans for implementation. Since 2003 six separate parliamentary reports, inquiries and reviews have called for an overhaul of the system to tackle unacceptable delays, inconsistent standards of service delivery and a lack of accountability. Taken collectively, these reports demonstrate that there is universal acknowledgement from those who work in the inquest system and those who use it that it is no longer fit for purpose.

Add your voice to our concern that the reform must not be shelved.

- Write to the Justice Secretary at secofstate@justice.gsi.gov.uk
- Raise your concerns with your MP - www.writetothem.com

▶ [INQUEST's press release calling for reform of the inquest system to go ahead \(http://bit.ly/9DH11o\)](http://bit.ly/9DH11o)

- **New government**

Over the next few months INQUEST will be working to inform new government ministers about its work. The Ministry of Justice now comprises: Kenneth Clarke QC MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice; Lord McNally, minister of state and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords; Crispin Blunt MP, parliamentary under secretary of state responsible for prisons; Jonathan Djanogly MP, parliamentary under secretary of state; and Nick Herbert MP, minister of state (jointly with the Home Office).

Home Office ministers are: Teresa May MP, Secretary of State (and minister for women and equality); Baroness Neville-Jones, minister of state responsible for security and counter-terrorism; Nick Herbert MP, minister of state responsible for policing and criminal justice; Damian Green MP, minister of state responsible for immigration; Lynne Featherstone MP, parliamentary under secretary of state responsible for equalities and criminal information; James Brokenshire MP, parliamentary under secretary of state responsible for crime prevention.

- **INQUEST concerned about move of YJB to Ministry of Justice**

One of the first measures announced by the new government was moving the Youth Justice Board to the Ministry of Justice. Whilst INQUEST has been highly critical of the YJB about the treatment of children in secure training centres, any move to break up a cross-departmental and potentially more holistic approach to children and young people in trouble with the law is a retrograde step.

▶ [Read more on the *Children & Young People Now* website](#)

- **Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee inquiry into the work of the Independent Police Complaints Commission**

On 24 February 2010, INQUEST gave evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) Inquiry into the IPCC alongside the sister of Sean Rigg who died in police custody in August 2008. The report of the inquiry was published on 23 March. It was highly critical of a number of aspects of the IPCC's work, concluding:

It is clear to us that the IPCC requires reform of some kind. If the IPCC continues to fail to put complainants at the heart of the process we do not consider it can achieve its statutory duty of increasing public confidence in the police complaints system in England and Wales.

We will be working to ensure that the HASC continues to monitor the IPCC in the new parliament.

- ▶ Evidence from INQUEST's co-director Deborah Coles and the Rigg family to the Home Affairs Committee quoted extensively in report on work of the IPCC (<http://bit.ly/bmeRrt>)
- ▶ BBC News – "Police watchdog IPCC attacked by MPs" (<http://bit.ly/9MkoaX>)

- **First Inquiries Act 2005 inquiry as substitute for inquest into death in custody announced**

On 30 March the then Justice Secretary Jack Straw announced an inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 to investigate the death of Azelle Rodney, shot dead by Metropolitan Police officers on 30 April 2005.

This inquiry is the first held under the Inquiries Act 2005 as a substitute for an inquest. An inquest could not proceed because of problems with the admissibility of intelligence evidence. Major concerns remain about whether this will be fully article 2-compliant and allow proper participation of Azelle Rodney's mother. She is very concerned that a significant part of the inquiry could be held in secret, with her being excluded from the hearings when the intelligence evidence is examined and discussed with witnesses.

On 10 June, the Justice Secretary Ken Clarke MP made a further statement to Parliament announcing that Sir Christopher Holland, a retired High Court judge, had agreed to chair the Inquiry. The terms of reference for the Inquiry were also announced:

To ascertain by inquiring how, where and in what circumstances Azelle Rodney came by his death on 30 April 2005 and then to make any such recommendations as may seem appropriate.

INQUEST will be monitoring the process closely to ensure it examines the circumstances of Azelle Rodney's death fully, and does not set any dangerous precedents in closing down public scrutiny and accountability following a death involving state agents.

- ▶ Inquiry official website (<http://azellerodneyinquiry.independent.gov.uk/>)
- ▶ Ken Clarke sets up secret inquiry into police shooting of Azelle Rodney death (<http://bit.ly/duk1m>)
- ▶ Letter from the Co-Directors of INQUEST on Bloody Sunday and the Azelle Rodney inquiry published in The Guardian (<http://bit.ly/9Sdmlx>)

- **Independent Advisory Panel - deaths in custody Family Listening Event**

INQUEST hosted a Family Listening Event on behalf of the IAP on 30 March 2010. The event, commissioned and organised at short notice, offered a number of bereaved families a chance to share their personal experiences directly with Lord Harris, Chair of the IAP, several Panel members and the

Secretariat team who support their work. It also allowed families to air their views on where the IAP's focus could be most effective. The discussions and outcomes from these events will feed into the development of the IAP's longer-term work programme.

A report of the event has been circulated to all members of the Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody and will be available on the IAP website.

► [Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody \(http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk\)](http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk)

- **Independent panel to oversee Hillsborough disclosure**

In December 2009 the then Home Secretary announced an independent panel to supervise the release of documents related to the April 1989 Hillsborough football disaster in which ninety-six people died and hundreds were injured. The panel will ensure the maximum possible disclosure of governmental and other agency information on the events and their aftermath, will produce a report on the process and advise on options for establishing a Hillsborough document archive. This move follows 20 years' campaigning by the families. The panel members include INQUEST Lawyers Group member Raju Bhatt and INQUEST's Advisory Group member Professor Phil Scraton.

► [Raju Bhatt of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors & a founding member of the INQUEST Lawyers Group is appointed to the Hillsborough Independent Panel \(http://bit.ly/aH1sjm\)](http://bit.ly/aH1sjm)

- **Changes at the IPCC, Prisons Inspectorate and PPO**

Nick Hardwick, Chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, has been appointed successor to Anne Owers as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons from July. Stephen Shaw, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, has moved on too. Jane Webb, previously head of fatal investigations, is now Acting PPO.

ABOUT INQUEST

- **Inquests and casework**

There have been a number of significant inquests into deaths in custody since January raising criticisms about the treatment and care of those who died. Many of these inquests raise particular issues about the treatment of people with particular vulnerabilities and illustrate INQUEST's key thematic concerns. INQUEST will be raising these issues at a policy and parliamentary level with the new government. In the Autumn we will be launching a six-monthly Case Digest aimed at non-lawyers setting out key themes and issues emerging from recent inquests and investigations.

INQUEST press releases this year include:

- ▶ Highly critical jury verdict condemns police neglect as contributing to death of Paul Davies
- ▶ Critical verdict at inquest into the death of Darfuri asylum seeker Joker Idris in HMP Chelmsford
- ▶ Five years since police shooting, mother of Azelle Rodney still waiting for inquiry into her son's death
- ▶ Inquest jury condemns the care and treatment of Paul Coker in Metropolitan Police custody
- ▶ Inquest verdict finds critical failings contributed to the death of vulnerable woman Lisa Marley in HMP Styal

Press releases are available on our [website](#), archived from 1996 onwards.

Press reports on cases in brief

- ▶ Black Mental Health UK: "Inquest into vulnerable teenage asylum seeker highlights serious failings" (<http://bit.ly/a3j5Po>)
- ▶ Darfuri teenager killed himself after being told – wrongly – of deportation (<http://bit.ly/bjVnlc>)
- ▶ BBC News on the Nadeem Khan inquest - "Lancashire Police failed custody death man" (<http://bit.ly/9VavBP>)
- ▶ The Daily Telegraph writes: "Our prisons are in crisis, but there is a get-out-of-jail-free card" (<http://bit.ly/5Q27dq>)
- ▶ Press Association coverage of Jason McPherson inquest: "Police criticised over cocaine custody death" (<http://bit.ly/5DeyO8>)

Remembering Mikey Powell

4WardEver UK organised an event in May 2010 in Leicester attended by many families and campaigners. Deborah Coles, Co-Director of INQUEST, spoke at event, which marked what would have been Mikey Powell's 45th birthday, and showcased other families that have suffered the loss of a loved one in police, prison or psychiatric custody. It also paid respects to the stalwart campaigner Pauline Campbell on the second anniversary of her death in 2008. Steve Roberts, our Fundraising & Development Manager, also attended the event and we were able to distribute information about the organisation.

- ▶ Mikey Powell's cousin and INQUEST patron Benjamin Zephaniah interviewed by Dan Glazebrook on the Sons of Malcolm website (<http://bit.ly/bYlth9>)
- ▶ Families speak out - IRR reports on the event to pay tribute to people who have died in custody. (<http://bit.ly/cShTyP>)
- ▶ Visit the 4WardEver website: <http://www.4wardeveruk.org/>
- ▶ Mikey Powell's family make their own rule 43 recommendations following the inquest verdict (<http://bit.ly/8dRgq5>)
- ▶ "Inquests fail to restrain the police" - Simon Hattenstone writes about narrative verdicts and the Mikey Powell inquest (<http://bit.ly/8PLCw5>)
- ▶ "How the police killed Mikey Powell" - article in Tribune magazine (<http://bit.ly/c5vum1>)

Women’s deaths in prison - *Probation Journal* article

An article ‘Protecting the human rights of vulnerable women: A spotlight on deaths of women in prison’ by Deborah Coles was published in the March 2010 edition of *Probation Journal*.

- **Caseload**

INQUEST has taken on 106 new cases in the first half of this year. Our complex casework and policy work on the deaths of people in state detention has continued and 39 of the new cases are custodial deaths. INQUEST’s current open caseload as of mid-June – including those from previous years - is 226, including 19 non-custody cases.

- **Deaths in custody in England & Wales 2010**

Deaths in prison		Deaths in police custody	
<i>Classification</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>2010</i>
Self Inflicted	32	Custody deaths	5
Non-Self Inflicted	55	Pursuits	4
Control & Restraint	1	Road Traffic Incidents	3
Other non-natural causes	1	Shootings	0
Awaiting Classification	6		

Source: INQUEST casework and monitoring to 30 June 2010
 Further statistical information can be found [on our website](#).

- **INQUEST wins the Longford Prize 2009**

INQUEST received the Longford Prize 2009 at the Church House in December 2009. The commendation reads:

We award the 2009 Longford Prize to INQUEST for its remarkable perseverance, personal commitment and courage in an area too often under-investigated by the public authorities, and especially for its support of the families of those who have taken their own lives while in the care of the state.

The Prize recognises the contribution of an individual, group or organisation working in the area of penal or social reform which has shown “outstanding qualities of humanity, courage, persistence and originality” and was established in memory of the late prison reformer Lord Longford.

- ▶ [INQUEST’s press release on winning the Longford Prize](#)
- ▶ [More about the Longford Trust \(http://www.longfordtrust.org\)](http://www.longfordtrust.org)

- **Policy work 2010**

February

- Deborah Coles, Co-Director, gave a presentation on mental health issues arising from prison deaths at Charlie Waller institute conference.

March

- Deborah Coles attended a meeting of the Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody.
- Helen Shaw, Co-Director, presented a paper on INQUEST's views on the new Coroners and Justice Act at a Butterworths/LexisNexis conference on inquest law.

April

- Helen Shaw attended the Ministry of Justice Coroner Service Stakeholder Forum.

May

- Deborah Coles presented a paper on deaths of women in prison at Women, Community Sanctions and Human Rights conference at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Glasgow.

- **In brief**

As well as work on individual cases team members frequently attend relevant events, meetings and conferences.

Workers Memorial Day 2010

Wednesday 28 April 2010 marked the international Remembrance Day for those killed at work. The events held around the country were particularly symbolic, as it was the first year a government recognised Workers Memorial Day officially.

INQUEST caseworker Maninder Jalaf joined the rally in London supporting hundreds of trade unionists, groups of building workers from the Olympics site and bereaved families. A wreath was laid at the statue of the unknown worker at Tower Hill, hundreds of red balloons were released to remember those killed at work in the last year and the rally then marched from the entrance to the Olympics site to the Westfield Stratford City construction site.

Last year there were 53 reported fatalities in the construction industry alone, of which 11 were in London. A Health & Safety Executive union representative highlighted the lack of resources available to the HSE to carry out adequate investigations and real threats of a further cut to an already tight budget. Alarming, as a result, around 90% of reported incidents in London are not investigated.

News in brief

- ▶ "Deaths in Custody - a perspective from INQUEST and a bereaved family member": see pp23-28 of the Prison Reform Trust's report to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Penal Affairs, *Too Many Prisoners* (PDF) <http://bit.ly/9bFGjz>
- ▶ Co-Director Helen Shaw spoke at the inquest law conference organised by Butterworths/LexisNexis (<http://bit.ly/aTy4xQ>)
- ▶ INQUEST was involved with the launch of campaigning film *The Fear Factory*: "A place where ... politicians are afraid to use anything but the toughest of rhetoric..." (<http://bit.ly/cBEo2b>)
- ▶ New Philanthropy Capital's guide for charities & funders refers to INQUEST - "Trial & error Children and young people in trouble with the law" (<http://bit.ly/b3YRJh>)

- **People**

INQUEST welcomes Anna Edmundson who took up her post as Research and Policy Officer in May, having previously been a pupil barrister at Doughty Street Chambers and Deputy Director of the British Institute of Human Rights; and Victoria McNally joined the Casework Team from June 2010 from the highly-regarded Brent Law Centre in north-west London.

- **Latest publications from INQUEST**



The latest edition of *Inquest Law* was published in June, with articles on the key *Lewis* judgment; on anonymity at inquests, a report on the Bernard 'Sonny' Lodge Inquiry; on being counsel to the inquest; plus the usual extensive casenotes on contentious deaths section and book reviews. Issue 20 is due in September 2010.

Inquest Law is available as part of membership of the INQUEST Lawyers Group, or by stand-alone subscription from [the INQUEST website](#). We also welcome advertising in the journal.

SPECIAL OFFER – new subscriptions received in July 2010 will receive a free back issue of *Inquest Law* no. 18.

Other publications are available to download and order from INQUEST's [website](#).

- **Social networking**

Many of the links to news stories, events and other information of interest above are posted by INQUEST to our Facebook page and Twitter feed as well as on the website. Please join us there for up to the minute information.



Join INQUEST on Facebook



Follow INQUEST on Twitter

- **Hands up for INQUEST**

In a first for INQUEST, a fundraising dinner and auction in February at The Tabernacle in west London raised £41,000, a vital boost to the organisation's finances. The evening celebrated INQUEST's work with an all-star cast of entertainment and was hosted by Channel 4 News anchor Jon Snow. Plans are already being made for a number of future events targeting a wider audience.

▶ [Read more about *Hands Up for INQUEST*](#)

ILG member to run 10km for INQUEST

INQUEST Lawyers Group member Gemma Vine of Farleys Solicitors and her colleagues in Blackburn will be running the Pennine Lancashire 10K Run for All 2010 on 11 July, and half of the sponsorship she receives will be donated to INQUEST.

▶ [More about the Pennine Lancashire 10K Run for All 2010](#)
▶ [Visit the JustGiving fundraising page for Gemma Vine's run](#)

- **INQUEST still needs your support**



A very big thank you to all who supported INQUEST in 2009 and we look forward to your continued support in 2010/2011.

If you are in a position to support us in any way, now is the time to do so by setting up a supporter membership or standing order, making a one-off donation, joining our INQUEST Lawyers Group, purchasing our publications or encouraging someone who you think can help us to do so. You can do all that safely online or by cheque, and if you are a tax payer and you Gift Aid your donation the government will give us 28p for every pound you donate – at no extra cost to you.

▶ [Make a donation to support INQUEST](#)

Fundraising ideas

If you are unable to donate but have ideas for raising funds on our behalf, then we would like to hear from you if you have any ideas on how you can help us to raise the funds we need. INQUEST has a JustGiving account, so you can set up your own page to raise funds for us too.

[Create a fundraising page](#)  **JustGiving**

For further information about any of the issues contained in this newsletter
please contact inquest@inquest.org.uk

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