

PRISON?

A talk with Charlie Ryder

THURSDAY 24th NOVEMBER - 5.30pm-7pm (Drinks until 7.30pm)

Institute of Criminology at the
University of Cambridge - Seminar Room B3



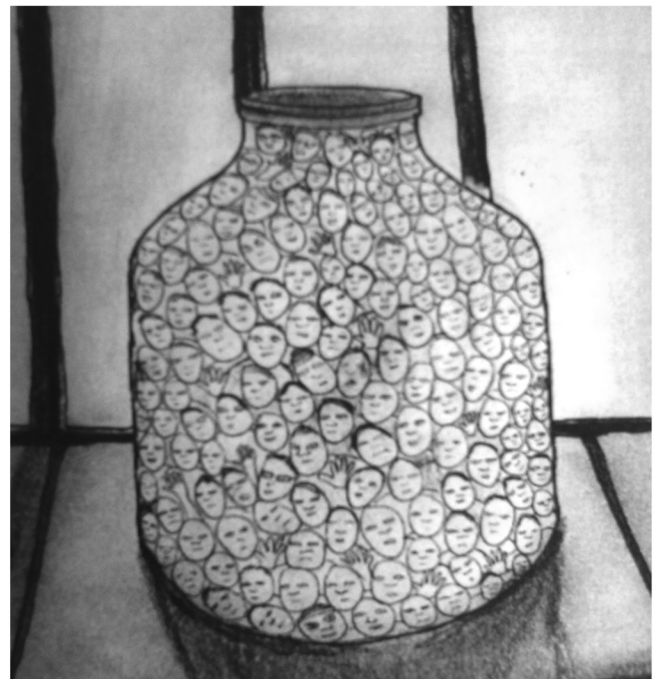
Charlie Ryder is a Volunteer, Performer, Writer, Dancer, Songwriter, Puppeteer, Artist and Outreach Worker at HMP Wormwood Scrubs Community Chaplaincy.

Charlie is also an Ex-political prisoner who served 8 months in prison in 1995 for his part in a violent protest against the BNP headquarters in Welling in 1993. While in prison Charlie received a

letter of support from a British Holocaust survivor Leon Greenman which he kept in a scrapbook with art and poetry to record his time inside.

In 2007 Charlie brought the scrapbook to life and turned his experience into a one man play using puppets, masks, physical theatre, dance and silence. The play's aim was to question people's perceptions of prison and prisoners.

Sally Stott reviewing the play at Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2007 wrote "What does going to prison really entail? Charlie Ryder knows first hand because he has been there. In this one-man show he gives a rare and honest insight into the prison system, putting a face to what is often the faceless idea of "the prisoner".



Charlie Ryder Biography

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As he relays his story of being inside for 8 months, after getting involved in violence while protesting against racism, he portrays what has obviously been a deeply traumatic time for him. In particular the dehumanising effects of well known procedures, such as being strip searched are clearly examined in his spotlight Charlie has a childlike vision of the world that works especially well when paired with the very adult realities of the British justice system. It is difficult to come away from this piece thinking that prison in its current manifestation is a good idea that is Charlie's aim to make you

question the system and it is something he definitely achieves". Charlie's last ever performance of the play will be screened for this event.

In June 2008 Charlie got a job with the Anne Peaker Centre which promoted and supported the use of arts in prisons in the UK. As part of his role he edited an arts magazine for prisoners and Ex-prisoners called the '*Aword*'. The magazine covered the themes of forgiveness, hope, happiness and learning. In Feb 2009 the magazine was runner-up for a Prison Action Net Award for excellence in work to strengthen positive identity and belonging in prisoners and Ex-prisoners. In April 2009 Charlie was interviewed live on Channel 4 news where he defended arts in prison, and shined a light on the art of forgiveness. This 4 minute interview will be screened as part of the seminar.

Charlie currently works Part Time as an Outreach Worker at HMP Wormwood Scrubs Community Chaplaincy providing mentors to support prisoners on their release from prison. Charlie has also developed his story into a film using puppets masks dance poetry and visual art. Which he will be screening a 2 minute trailer for the film as part of his presentation.