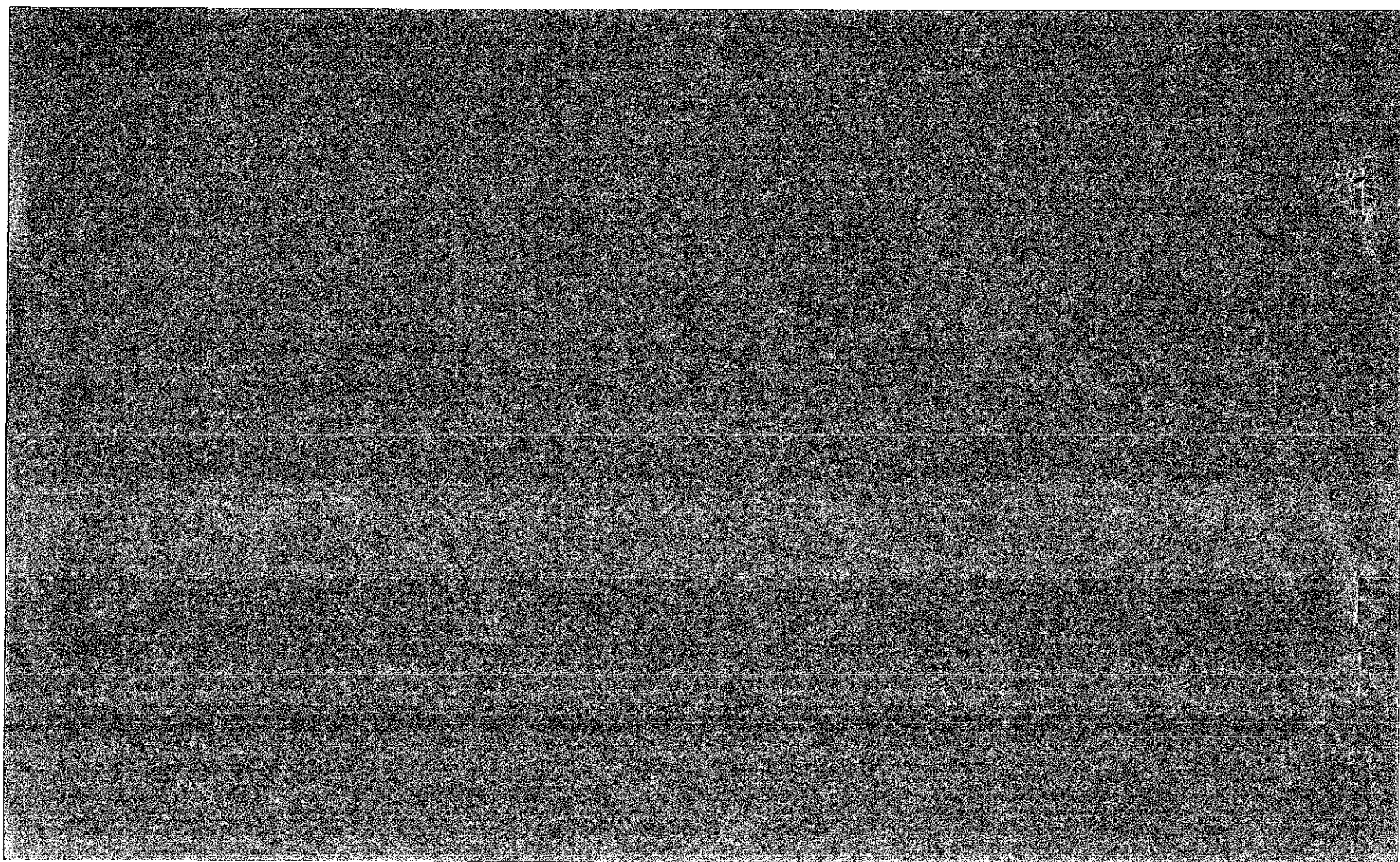


statistical report

5

drunks who go to gaol

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The Bureau also wishes to thank the men and women who took part in the study. We appreciated their frankness and willingness to participate in a study from which they derived no direct benefit.

The photographs on pages 20 and 26 appear by courtesy of Australian Consolidated Press.

Final Publication in this series

A study of treatment and care facilities available to the alcoholic. This report will consider some alternatives to current practices. To be published around December, 1972.

Background Note

The first report in this series (City Drunks - Central Court of Petty Sessions - February 1972) examined the age and frequency of arrest of men and women charged with drunkenness in the Sydney Metropolitan area. The report also considered the criminal histories of drunks as well as the frequency with which members of a state-wide sample were arrested during a three months period.

The evidence gathered in the first report pointed to the existence of a hard core of multiple offenders. Although this group represented only six to seven per cent of all those arrested for drunkenness, it accounted for a high proportion - about 20% - of the total number of drunkenness offences committed throughout the state.

Attention was drawn to the fact that drunks represent approximately one third of arrests made in New South Wales and about the same proportion of admissions to the State's prisons.

In the preface to the first report, attention was drawn to the fact that society's methods of handling the problem of drunkenness, have remained substantially unaltered since the mid-nineteenth century. The present investigations are intended to help policy makers reappraise the extent to which current practices measure up to the economic and human values of a modern state.

PRESENT INVESTIGATION

Before describing the sample on which the present investigation was based, it is necessary to point out that comparatively few of those arrested for drunkenness actually run the risk of being

sent to prison. An analysis of over ten thousand cases occurring throughout New South Wales during the first quarter of this year revealed that three cases out of four terminate with the forfeiture of recognizance:

- Recognizance ('bail money') forfeited 76%
- Admonished and discharged 6%
- Fine, in default detention until rising of the Court 1.5%
- Fine and recognizance 2%
- Remand for action under the Inebriates Act 0.5%

- 14% { - Fine, in default 24 hours imprisonment 12%
- Fine, in default 48 hours imprisonment 2%

Almost all of the 182 men and 14 women included in the present study were serving prison sentences because of their inability (or occasional unwillingness) to pay fines imposed for drunkenness.* The sample represented a complete coverage of male drunks sentenced at Central Court of Petty Sessions during February 1972 and detained at the Central Industrial Prison, Malabar. All but one of 15 female drunks sentenced at the Central Court of Petty Sessions during February were interviewed at the Mulawa Training and Detention Centre.

The interviews were conducted in relative privacy, usually on the morning of the prisoner's release. A semi-structured approach was used and the Bureau's investigators reported a high degree of cooperation from the men and women interviewed. Discussion was necessarily brief but, as will be seen in the sections of this report dealing with post-release intentions, the prisoners were generally quite candid in expressing their opinions. (An outline of the topics discussed in the interviews appears in Appendix A).

The gaol'd drunks had a history of frequent offences. In the first report in this series, it was shown that two-thirds of the men listed for appearance at the Court of Petty Sessions had not been arrested for drunkenness during the previous six months. However, the sample of gaol'd drunks had quite a different history: only seven per cent had not been arrested during the previous six months and as many as 50 per cent had been arrested five or more times (see the accompanying table):

*Following their arrest for drunkenness, 33 men were charged with vagrancy. They were admonished and discharged on the drunkenness charge but were given gaol sentences for being vagrant.

NUMBER OF PREVIOUS ARRESTS
OVER SIX MONTHS PERIOD

Previous arrests	Prisoners		General sample of drunks	
	No.	%	No.	%
No previous arrests	13	7.1	720	67.4
One	16	8.8	108	10.1
Two	16	8.8	58	5.4
Three	29	16.0	48	4.5
Four	16	8.8	36	3.4
Five to nine	60	33.0	66	6.2
Ten or more	32	17.6	32	3.0
	182	100.0	1068	100.0

Drunks in prison were also more likely to have a criminal record. For example, one respect in which the imprisoned drunks compared unfavourably with the general sample of city drunks was the higher proportion of men with a record of property offences and offences against the person. Whereas 8.8% of the total sample of city drunks had a history of offences against the person, twice as many (17.6%) of the male prisoners had committed such offences ($P < 1\%$). The prison sample also contained a significantly larger proportion (36.3%) of men with a history of property offences than was the case with the general Court of Petty Sessions sample (22%). This latter difference was significant at the 1% level.

Part I of this report presents a general summary of the information gathered on the background and future plans of the women interviewed at the Training and Detention Centre. A more detailed analysis of the information gathered from the 182 male prisoners appears in Part II.

PART 1

Women gaoled for Drunkenness

During the month of February 1972, 14 women were sent to prison for drunkenness in the Sydney Metropolitan area. All were over 30 years of age:

30 - 40 years	2
40 - 50 years	6
50 - 60 years	2
60 years +	4
	<hr/>
	14

Few of the women were involved in stable conjugal relationships. Two planned to return to their de-facto husbands and a third woman who said she was married, did not know whether her husband was alive or dead: "I think I'll look him up after I get out and see if he's still alive". Eight of the fourteen women were either permanently separated or divorced, two were widows and one was single.

The majority of the prisoners were poorly educated; eight had not progressed beyond the primary level and one had never attended school. The remainder had received at least some secondary education, one 52 year old woman having gained her leaving certificate.

The occupational background of the women was generally

unskilled. Three were seasonal farm workers; the same number described themselves as 'domestic'. The group also included two nurses, a barmaid, waitress, side-show worker, and one woman who said she was 'permanently unemployed'. Two women were in receipt of invalid pensions and another was on sickness benefits.

Of the 11 women who claimed to follow an occupation, seven had been unemployed during the previous year, one had not worked for six months and another had been employed for four of the previous twelve months. Apart from emotional and other health problems, a factor which contributed to this history of unemployment was the fact that in at least five cases, the women had been in inebriate hospitals and other institutions for a substantial part of the year.

More than half (9/14) of the group usually lived within the inner city area, although six of them had had three or more addresses during the past year. Three lived alone in a hotel room, one resided more or less permanently at charitable organisations, and one said she spent most of the time living in the open. In passing, it might be noted that this woman planned to spend her first night out of gaol sleeping under the harbour bridge. When the interviewer asked about possible alternative arrangements the prisoner replied:

"Don't worry mister, I'll be alright - just as long as no one knocks off my coat like they did last time".

Although 11 of the women had little hesitation in indicating that they maintained close contact with at least one other person, on closer examination these relationships often appeared to be quite shallow. For example, one prisoner who had indicated that she had "no worries on the social front",

proceeded to tell the interviewer that her group of close friends consisted of members of an Alcoholics Anonymous group which she attended about once a month: "I even know where they live".

Of the 11 women who claimed to have close acquaintances, six said they were in touch with the other person or group about once a month. Four were in daily contact and one communicated with her friend every week. Three women could not think of a close acquaintance. One 41 year old prisoner who complained that she spent most of her time in institutions said she had difficulty in making friends ("Unless I meet a good sort of chap who'll buy me a few beers and take me to the pictures").

A son or daughter was mentioned as next of kin in six cases, a sister or brother in four, a cousin or uncle in two and husband in one case. One 56 year old divorcee, a qualified nurse who arrived in Australia in 1954, could not name anyone ("I don't really make friends"). Four of the 13 prisoners who could identify a close kin had not seen the person in question for more than a year. Three others had made contact during the year but only six had been in touch during the past month.

Nine women thought drink was 'a serious problem in their life'; one considered it a 'cause for mild concern' and four thought it was 'no particular problem'. Half the group said they planned to 'do something' about their drinking after their release. However, as will be seen in the discussion of the comments made by the male prisoners, the women were unsure about what they could do. Two simply said they would 'give drink away'; one said "I don't know what I can do". Another two women declared they would seek admission to a hospital for inebriates. Finally, another two said they would join-up with Alcoholics Anonymous.

When asked about organisations which might be able to help the problem drinker, ten women mentioned Alcoholics Anonymous. Two, specified hospitals and two said that no organisation could be helpful.

RELEASE AND AFTER

Almost half of the group (6/14) thought they would be able to return to their former lodgings. Three women had no definite plans for their accommodation but were confident of being able to resolve this problem. The remaining five, however, had no plans, nor did they have any prospects of arranging accommodation immediately after their release. The outlook for this group was not brightened by their lack of funds. In fact, apart from the cost of their transport home, twelve of the fourteen women were penniless on discharge from prison.*

*The bus fare and rail warrant were issued by the prison authorities.

PART II

Male Prisoners

Social Background

"The lowest of the low - their living casually, women of the town, many of them may be weak and debilitated, and who barrrowmen and men with no fixed abodes or get drunk with one or a couple of glasses of spirits." habitations, who get

Description of city drunks presented by a police magistrate, Select Committee of the Legislative Council of New South Wales on Intemperance, 1854.

The purpose of this section of the report on male prisoners is to sketch briefly some of the general background characteristics of the sample. Among the factors considered are the following: age, nationality, marital status, area of residence, usual accommodation, employment and drinking pattern. In later sections of the report, attention will be focused on more personal and immediate features of the men's situation.

The sample of gaoled drunks consisted mainly of men between 40 and 60 years of age. Three quarters of the sample were within this age bracket. Thus the age distribution of the prisoners resembled that of the total group arrested for drunkenness (see the first report in this series).

The comparatively small number of men over 60 years of age ran counter to the general tendency for older offenders to be over-represented in the sample. In the absence of individual case histories, it is only possible to speculate about the reasons for there being so few elderly offenders in our sample of prisoners. In the circumstances, we can do no better than

present the observations of two Stipendiary Magistrates of the Central Court of Petty Sessions:

"It is our experience that they disappear from the scene mostly by death, severe physical disability occasioning admission to a geriatric hospital or dementia occasioning admission to a mental hospital"*.

*W.J. Lewer, M.F. Farqhar, in L.G. Kiloh, D.S. Bell (eds.) 29TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE (Sydney: Butterworths, 1971) PP. 345-353.

AGE OF MALE PRISONERS

Years	Number	Percentage
Less than 30	8	4
30 - 34	5	3
35 - 39	10	6
40 - 44	23	13
45 - 49	39	21
50 - 54	43	24
55 - 59	29	16
60 - 64	15	8
65 - 69	8	4
70+	2	1

EMPLOYMENT

Poor health, poor motivation, personal disorganisation and reduced opportunities were associated with unstable work histories in many of the cases studied. In fact 1 in 3 of the drunks were in receipt of a social service benefit (war, invalid or aged pension). When the 'usual' occupations of the remainder were classified according to their status or prestige, there was a complete absence of professional and managerial positions. Approximately 1 in 5 of the prisoners were tradesmen or skilled workers and almost half were unskilled workers (see the accompanying table).

The classification of occupations ranged from A (high) to D (low) and was based on 'occupational prestige' - the relative social standing which the Australian public accords different occupations.

EMPLOYMENT/PENSION STATUS

Occupation/Pension	Number	Percentage
Professional/Managerial (A/B)		
Tradesmen/Skilled Workers (C)	34	18.7
Unskilled Workers (D)	86	47.2
War, invalid, aged pension	59	32.4
Sickness benefit	3	1.7
	<u>182</u>	<u>100.0</u>

NATIONALITY

Men born in Australia accounted for 70% of the sample. A further 25% of the group were naturalised citizens. Although the sample was too small to permit a detailed analysis in terms of specific national groups, it should be noted that a high proportion of those who were born overseas came to Australia within a particular 5 year period. Of the 54 drunks born outside Australia, 44 had arrived since the second world war. Twenty seven (61%) of these men came to Australia during the years 1947-51. On the basis of immigration figures, we would have expected only about 20% of the group to have arrived during these years. Yet, as can be seen in the accompanying table, men who arrived 20-24 years ago were considerably over-represented in the sample of convicted drunks. Further investigation of the individual and social factors associated with this anomaly, appears warranted.

NUMBER OF YEARS RESIDENT IN AUSTRALIA

<i>Years resident in Australia</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Less than 5	3	2
5 - 9	4	2
10 - 14	6	3
15 - 19	4	2
20 - 24	27	14
25 - 29	1	1
30+	9	5
Born in Australia	108	70

MARITAL STATUS

The extent of the drunks' involvement with the rest of the community is the subject of a later section of this report. It will suffice to make brief mention here of the fact that 58% of the sample were single, and 30% were permanently separated or divorced. Approximately 9% were widowed. There were only six cases in which the drunks stated that they were still married or living with a de facto. (See the accompanying table).

Whether the large number of broken marriages is the result of heavy drinking or whether those concerned turned to drink following a breakdown in marriage, is not clear from the present evidence. The problem obviously warrants further investigation.

MARITAL STATUS

	Number	Percentage
Permanently separated	26	14.3
Divorced	29	15.9
Widowed	16	8.8
Single	105	57.7
De facto	2	1.1
Married	4	2.2
	<hr/> 182	<hr/> 100.0

AREA OF RESIDENCE

The majority (71%) of the drunks interviewed, gave the inner city as their usual place of residence. Almost all (97%) said they usually lived within the Sydney Metropolitan area. Two men resided in other regions of New South Wales; 3 had no fixed place of abode, and one said that he lived outside the state.

Having in mind the impecunious condition of many of the convicted drunks, it was to be expected that their housing arrangements would be fairly transitory. Two out of every three of the prisoners had made one or more changes of address in the twelve months preceding the survey. One in five had moved five times or more (see the accompanying table).

Men in receipt of an aged, invalid or war pension tended to be more stable in their housing arrangements. However one in three of the pensioner group lived in the same voluntary organisation shelters on which the non-pensioner drunks were dependent for accommodation. Another third of the pensioners lived alone in a hotel room or flat.

NUMBER OF RESIDENCES IN PAST TWELVE MONTHS

Residences	Number	Percentage
1	63	35.0
2	60	33.0
3	24	13.0
4	10	5.0
5	3	2.0
6+	22	12.0

DRINKING PATTERN

Apart from beer, which almost all had drunk in the past year, nine out of every ten of the prisoners had also consumed wine (see the accompanying table). Two out of every three had used spiritous liquors and slightly fewer than half (46%) methylated spirits. There was no apparent variation in the drink preferences of different age groups with the exception of those who used methylated spirits; there was a marked decrease in the number of such drinkers after 60 years of age ($P < 0.05$). In the absence of case studies, it is difficult to know whether this difference was due to a change in drink preferences with advancing age or was the result of debility or death among methylated spirits drinkers:

	Under 60 years		60 years+	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Used methylated spirits during year	77	49.0	6	24.0
Did not use methylated spirits during year	80	51.0	19	76.0
	157	100.0	25	100.0

LIQUOR CONSUMED DURING PAST YEAR

	Number	Percentage*
Beer	177	97.3
Wine	165	90.7
Spiritous liquors	121	66.5
Methylated spirits	83	45.6
Other	1	0.5

*Because of multiple answers, percentages do not add to 100.0

SERIOUSNESS OF DRINK PROBLEM

Although intended primarily as a basis for analysing other items in the study, a question concerning the 'seriousness' of the individual's drink problem met with a frank response from the majority of those interviewed:

"For many people in our community drink is a problem.

- Would you say drink is:
- 1 a serious problem in your life,
 - 2 a cause for mild concern,
 - 3 no particular problem"

Almost three-quarters (73%) of the men acknowledged that their drinking was a matter of at least some concern (see the accompanying table). While there were no significant differences in the opinions of the different age and occupation/pension groups, there was a marked difference in the extent to which people with 'higher' and 'lower' educational backgrounds considered that drink was "no particular problem".

When, for example, the attitudes of men with a School Certificate/Intermediate or higher academic qualification were compared with those who had not attained this level of education, it was found that the less educated prisoners were more inclined to consider they did not have a serious problem (P<5%).

SELF RATING OF DRINK PROBLEM

	Number	Percentage
1 a serious problem	105	57.7
2 a cause for mild concern	27	14.8
3 no particular problem	50	27.5

	Intermediate/ School Cert. or higher qualification		Less than Intermediate/ School Cert.	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Drink at least a matter for concern	29	85.3	103	69.5
Drink no particular problem	5	14.7	45	30.5
	34	100.0	148	100.0

SOCIAL AGENCIES WHICH OFFER HELP

In view of the frequency of their arrest for drunkenness, it was important to establish whether the men had come into contact with social agencies designed to help the problem drinker.

Although readiness to make use of treatment may be more important than receiving the offer of help, there is little doubt that the overwhelming majority of the men had encountered a variety of governmental and private organisations which claim to assist the problem drinker. Only five men (3%) were unable to recall any past contact with helping agencies (see the table which appears on the next page).

Two out of every three men had attended meetings conducted by Alcoholics Anonymous. This contact took place not only in the community but also in various institutional settings (for example, psychiatric hospitals, specialised treatment centres, and the night refuge shelters run by voluntary organisations).

An equally large proportion (68%) had been in contact with church or private welfare agencies, especially the emergency shelters which cater for destitute men in the inner-city area.

The long-standing nature of their problem was reflected in the fact that slightly more than half the men had, at one time or another, been patients in the state's inebriate hospitals. Although two out of every five said that they had been in a psychiatric hospital, very few in fact had been specifically committed to such an institution. The majority were simply en route to the more specialised addiction treatment hospitals.

References to contact with government welfare agencies almost invariably concerned some form of transaction involving pension and social service payments. The question of treatment of the underlying problem appears to have been rarely considered.

In practically all cases where the help of a general practitioner was mentioned, this assistance was coincidental to receiving medical treatment for some other physical condition.

What kind of impact had these potential sources of help made on the habitual drunks? A reasonable test of their perceived relevance and helpfulness is the extent to which the prisoners would be inclined to seek assistance from them in the future. Perhaps the most striking feature of responses to the question "From which source would you be most inclined to seek help?" was the fact that just under a third (30%) of the group said 'none'. A further 20 men (11%) simply said 'myself'.

Although two thirds of the group reported having participated in groups run by Alcoholics Anonymous, just under a third considered this organisation or its programme a potential source of help.

SOCIAL AGENCIES WHICH HAVE OFFERED HELP

	Number	Percentage*
Alcoholics Anonymous	123	67.6
General practitioner	72	39.6
Specialised hospital or clinic for alcoholics	101	55.5
Psychiatric hospital	74	40.7
Government welfare agency	73	40.1
Private Welfare Agency (including 'shelter')	119	65.4
Other	4	2.2
None	5	2.8

*Because of multiple answers, percentages do not add to 100.0.

Community ties

A series of questions were designed to gauge the nature and extent of the drunks' ties with others in the community. In tracing responses to these questions it soon becomes apparent that the prisoners' own evaluations of their social circumstances need to be tested against the facts concerning particular relationships. The standards they employ in assessing 'closeness' in inter-personal relations appear to be anything but stringent.

When asked the question:

"Is there a person or group with whom you maintain close contact?"

59 of the 182 men (53%) answered in the negative. The unskilled 'D' status occupation group were more inclined than the other occupational or prisoner groups to report the absence of ties with others: 30/86 or 65% did not maintain 'close contact' with another person or group. ("There's no one - unless you count the police. They keep in close contact with me" said a 42 year old labourer who migrated from Scotland in 1950. "Loneliness is the problem...I've no one to fall back on" was the comment of a 62 year old builder's labourer. A 43 year old man who was suffering broken ribs and in receipt of a sickness benefit at the time of the study commented: "My life is a lonely type of existence and I find I just turn to drink...you know".)

Of the 84 men who said they did maintain a personal or group contact, one in eight indicated upon further questioning that the person with whom they were in close contact was a friend. One in five nominated a relative other than a spouse. Ten men said they maintained close contact with other habitual drinkers but only three mentioned a wife or consort.

PERSONS WITH WHOM THEY HAD CLOSE CONTACT

	Frequency	Percentage
Brother/sister	16	9.9
Parent	12	6.6
Son/Daughter	5	2.7
Spouse/consort	3	1.7
Other kin	4	2.2
Friend	22	12.1
Another habitual drinker	10	5.5
Welfare/professional person	4	2.2
Not specified/other	6	3.3
No contacts	59	53.8
	<u>182</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Taken at face value, the information contained in the table just presented suggests that approximately half of the prisoners maintained close ties with at least one other person. However, upon closer examination it appeared that many of the men were more socially isolated than their remarks had indicated.

When asked how often they saw the person nominated as a close contact, only 69 prisoners (38% of the total) reported seeing the individual concerned monthly or more frequently. In ten cases, contact occurred a "couple of times a year". Three men could not remember when they were last in touch. Two others simply said "every few years" (see the accompanying table).

Thus, if contact on at least a monthly basis is adopted as the standard, only one in three of the drunks enjoyed what might be considered a close current relationship with another person.

FREQUENCY OF CONTACT

<i>Frequency of contact</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Daily	37	20.3
Weekly	24	13.2
Monthly	8	4.4
Couple times a year	10	5.5
Every few years	2	1.2
Can't remember	3	1.6
Not applicable	98	53.8
	<hr/> 182	<hr/> 100.0

Fortunately it was possible to test this inference in another way. The social isolation of the drunks was further underlined when their contact with relatives was considered. As a sequel to the more general question on inter-personal relations, the following questions were asked:

- 1 "Without necessarily mentioning the name of the person, who would you think of as your next of kin? (You needn't restrict yourself just to relatives).
- 2 When did you last see or communicate with this person?
- 3 Where?"

The accompanying table shows that immediate relatives accounted for most of the positive answers to the foregoing questions. (Note that 33 men (21%) were unable to nominate anyone). However, the picture becomes a little clearer when the information concerning recency of contact is taken into account. One in three of the prisoners had not been in touch with their next of kin for more than a year. (In some cases the period since the last contact was as long as 15 years). For another one in five the contact had last occurred during the past twelve months. On the other hand the interval since the last contact was less than a week for one in seven; the same number had last contacted their kinsman during the past month.

To summarise thus far: if monthly contact is again taken as the standard, 53 men (29%) could be considered to be maintaining close contact with their next of kin.

NEAREST KIN

	Frequency	Percentage
Spouse/Consort	8	4.4
Brother/Sister	80	43.9
Parent	39	21.4
Friend	3	1.7
Son/Daughter	14	7.7
Not applicable	33	20.9

TIME SINCE LAST CONTACT WITH NEAREST KIN

	Frequency	Percentage
Not past year	60	33.0
Past year	38	20.9
Past month	25	13.7
Past week	28	15.4
Not applicable	31	17.0



Perhaps not surprisingly, the most common form of contact was a visit to a relative's home. In 12 cases, the last means of communication had been a letter or telephone conversation. For a further 13 men, the last contact with their nearest kin had taken place outside Australia. This latter finding prompted an analysis of the data on place of birth and degree of contact with a relative or friend. The migrant group was found to be slightly more isolated than those born in Australia but the difference was not statistically significant.

"Irish" with trousers half down in a stupor from drinking 'metho' sitting in a chair exactly 60 second before he died.

TO SUMMARISE: As a group, the drunks appeared to maintain comparatively few close ties. Over half had no close contact with a friend or relative. While frequency of contact is only one way of assessing the quality of a relationship, the evidence on this factor put in some doubt the claims of the 47% who said they enjoyed 'close contact' with a friend or relative. Again, although 82% were able to nominate a 'close kin', only one in every two had contacted this person within the preceding year. Slightly more than one in four had been in touch during the preceding month.

Release and after

The fact that interviews literally took place on the threshold of release from prison, provided a unique but brief opportunity for sharing each man's perception of what lay ahead. Attention was directed to three questions of obvious practical relevance to the prisoner's future welfare:

- (i) plans for dealing with his drink problem,
- (ii) the prospects of obtaining accommodation,
- (iii) the availability of sufficient funds to meet immediate needs.

Obviously our questions could only gauge the prisoners' intentions. Our inability to test the realism of their expectations is a limitation of the present study. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the candour with which the men and women interviewed were prepared to discuss all aspects of their life situation, was a notable feature of the whole study.

Drink problem

The frankness of our respondents was apparent in their responses to a question about plans to curb their drinking:

"Do you plan to do anything about your drinking after you leave here?"

Approximately one in three (32%) gave an unequivocal 'No' to this question. The results suggest that, with increasing age (and possibly the experience of repeated failure) the vagrant alcoholic becomes fatalistic about his drinking problem. A higher proportion (19/23 or 83%) of the under

forty group expressed the intention of 'doing something' about their drinking than was the case with men over forty (105/159 or 66%). If nothing else, these figures appear to reflect a difference in potential response to social rehabilitation programmes.

Apart from the effects of aging, it is necessary to consider whether a man's resolve to curb his drinking is related to other factors including his awareness of potential sources of help, his drinking pattern, contacts with other members of the community, or perhaps, simply the seriousness with which he views his problem.

A small negative correlation was found to exist between awareness of sources of help and the prisoner's intention to do something about his drinking. Men whose recent drinking pattern had included the use of methylated spirits were no less inclined than other drinkers to contemplate some kind of remedial action. However, those who earlier had indicated that they maintained close contact with another person or group, were more likely than the socially isolated to propose some form of action. This difference was not statistically significant.

	Maintained personal/ group contact		Not maintain personal/ group contact	
	No.	%	No.	%
Propose remedial action	67	72.0	54	60.7
Not propose remedial action	26	28.0	35	39.3
	93	100.0	89	100.0

A certain consistency of attitude was apparent when answers to an earlier question regarding the 'seriousness' of the drink problem were cross-tabulated with the information concerning future drinking intentions. Prisoners who stated that they had a 'serious problem' were much more likely to claim that they intended doing something about their drink problem (P<5%):

	Drink acknowledged as serious problem		Drink not a serious problem	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Propose remedial action	80	75.4	44	57.9
Not propose remedial action	26	24.6	32	42.1
	106	100.0	76	100.0

SOME PROPOSALS BY THOSE WHO SAID THEY INTENDED TO 'TRY'

Proposed remedies

Although two-thirds of the sample said they intended to try and curb their excessive drinking, some of the proposed remedies were of an extremely general character. Twenty-one of the men had in mind approaching some form of social agency to obtain counselling help. For a further 23 men, however, the solution was to 'get a job'. Another 21 contemplated 'moving somewhere else'. By far the largest number (43) of those intent on doing something, had simply resolved to overcome their problem by exerting their own 'will power'.

It was difficult to avoid the impression that the prisoners generally were floundering in their attempts to devise potentially constructive lines of action. This impression was reinforced by the remarks of a further 21 men who simply said they had no idea of what practical steps they might take.

The human and social implications of this situation will be taken up in the next report.

- "Get a permanent job, permanent place to live - but I've been saying that for quite a while" (55 year old bootmaker who had no fixed place of abode).
- "Stop drinking - the only cure" (62 year old labourer).
- "Try!" (49 year old circus attendant).
- "The problem is, why not pick up another drink? You are temporarily insane and live in a technological world. I'll have to exercise my willpower, keep my thoughts positive and not let them stray along negative lines" (47 year old invalid pensioner).
- "Try and break it off completely if possible. Get a decent room and good food and then I'll have no money left" (55 year old invalid pensioner).
- "Stop!" (41 year old shearer).
- "Get a job and a room. That's all I can do" (53 year old crane driver).
- "Give it a miss, otherwise I'll be in trouble all of the bloody well time" (47 year old process winder).
- "Try and get off it. I don't think I will be successful indefinitely" (52 year old door to door salesman).
- "Go to Alcoholics Anonymous for a while and see if it works" (52 year old fitter).
- "I will have to do something" (59 year old journalist).
- "Just discipline" (43 year old invalid pensioner).
- "Just not think of it" (49 year old fitter's labourer).
- "I'll try, but the trouble is I finish up putting a bottle to my mouth just like a little baby" (56 year old storeman packer).
- "If I go out broke what can I do?" (43 year old labourer).

ACCOMMODATION ON RELEASE

Taken at face value, the men's responses to the question "How are you fixed for accommodation?" revealed a generally high degree of optimism regarding the availability of post release accommodation.

As a check on the accuracy of the interviewers' interpretations, prisoners were invited to indicate which of three statements best described their housing situation:

- 1 No plans, but confident will be able to arrange accommodation,
- 2 Return to home or lodgings,
- 3 No plans and no prospects.

One in four belonged to category 1; they were confident of being able to arrange some kind of housing on release. Only one in six (16%) took the pessimistic view that they would be unable to organise their accommodation. (There were no apparent differences between the age or occupation/pension groups in this respect). More than half (58%) were confident of returning to the home or lodging they had before their imprisonment.

In view of the fact that five out of every six men expressed little concern about their future housing needs, it was appropriate that a further question should have been asked about the type of accommodation they hoped to obtain. The responses to this question placed in better perspective the optimism of the majority of the men. When the 30 prisoners without 'plans or prospects' were excluded from the analysis, it became apparent that the majority (53%) of the 'optimists' in fact were assuming that charitable organisations would be prepared to offer them help. (see the accompanying table).

In certain cases this was a valid assumption. However, many of these organisations require the payment of a nominal fee and there are occasions when they are unable to accommodate all those who require help. (The next report in this series will examine the care and treatment facilities which offer help to the inebriate).

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION SOUGHT - 'OPTIMISTS' ONLY (SEE TEXT)

Accommodation	Number	Percentage (total=152)
Private house	24	15.8
boarding house	2	1.3
hotel, room or flat (alone)	32	21.1
hotel, room or flat (with others)	10	6.6
church/voluntary organisation shelter	83	54.6
outdoors		
other	1	0.6
	<u>152</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Comparatively few men (37%) appeared to have the option of returning to private accommodation. One in five (21%) expressed the intention of living alone in a room or flat. No one mentioned the prospect of living outdoors. Presumably, this was more likely to be the lot of those men who declared they had neither plans nor prospects of obtaining accommodation.

Some differences could be discerned in the plans of the pensioner and non-pensioner groups. Those receiving social service benefits (war, invalid and age pensions, sickness benefit) were more inclined to seek 'non-institutional' accommodation than members of the non-pensioner group:

	Pensioners		Non-pensioners	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Non institutional*	35	63.6	33	34.3
Institutional**	20	36.4	63	65.7
	55	100.0	96	100.0

*essentially private home, boarding house, hotel or flat
 **church/voluntary organisation shelter.



FINANCIAL SITUATION

Since the majority of the men interviewed were in prison because of their inability to pay a fine, it was to be expected that their finances would be meagre. Essentially, they were in one of two sets of circumstances. They were either dependent on what they left the prison with or were assured of obtaining additional money shortly after release. The sample divided equally into these two categories (see the accompanying table).

There were, of course, marked differences in the prospects of the pensioner and non-pensioner groups. Four out of every five (81%) pensioners reported they were assured of additional money in the near future. (The remainder of this group anticipated difficulties in claiming their pension payment). The non-pensioners were less optimistic about their prospects; approximately one in three (33%) entertained hopes of obtaining more money.

	Pensioners		Non-pensioners	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Dependent on money held on discharge	12	19.1	78	65.5
Assured of additional money	51	80.9	41	34.5
	<u>63</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>100.0</u>

FINANCIAL SITUATION ON RELEASE

	Number	Percentage
Dependent on money held on discharge	90	49.5
Assured of additional money	92	50.5
	<u>182</u>	<u>100.0</u>

As previously noted, half of the sample declared themselves financially dependent on the money they had returned to them on discharge. It was important, therefore, to ascertain how much in fact they received. The information presented in the accompanying table was extracted from records maintained at the Central Industrial Prison. Excluded from the table are the 40 cases in which men were serving relatively long sentences for offences in addition to drunkenness, or were awaiting action under the Inebriates Act. (The required information was not available in the latter cases).

Eighty five men, (60% of those for whom information was available), had no money at the time of their release; 80% had 49 cents or less.

The picture of the prisoners' finances is incomplete without some consideration of their varying dependence on the amount of money held on discharge. Perhaps those with little money had better prospects of obtaining additional cash? Unfortunately, it appears the reverse was the case. If the prisoners' own expectations are accepted as a reasonable guide, the group with least prospect of obtaining more money contained the highest proportion of those with little or no cash (see the accompanying table). Two out of every three men (68%) in the 'dependent' group were penniless on discharge; 85% had 49 cents or less. The policy implications of this finding will be discussed in the next report in this series.

AMOUNT ON DISCHARGE

	Number	Percentage
No cash	85	59.9
Less than 10 cents	6	4.2
10 - 19 cents	6	4.2
20 - 29 cents	9	6.3
30 - 39 cents	3	2.1
40 - 49 cents	5	3.5
50 cents less than \$1	6	4.2
\$1 - \$5	6	4.2
\$6+	16	11.4

DEPENDENCE ON MONEY OBTAINED ON DISCHARGE

	Dependent		Not-dependent	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
No cash	49	68.1	36	52.2
Less than 10 cents	3	4.2	3	4.3
10 - 19 cents	2	2.8	4	5.8
20 - 29 cents	4	5.6	5	7.3
30 - 39 cents			3	4.4
40 - 49 cents	3	4.2	2	2.9
50 cents less than \$1	4	5.6	1	1.4
\$1 - \$5	1	1.2	5	7.2
\$6+	6	8.3	10	14.5
	72	100.0	69	100.0

APPENDIX A

CENTRAL PETTY SESSIONS STUDY

SOCIAL

- Q. 1. Date of arrest
- Q. 2. Name (Surname) (Given names)
- Q. 3. Date of birth (or stated age)
- Q. 4. Marital status: Single 1, Married 2, Widowed 3, Divorced 4, Permanently separated 5, De facto 6.
- Q. 5. Sex: Male 1, female 2.
- Q. 6. Highest level of schooling (code).
1. Graduate University/College Advanced Education
 2. Gained Higher School Certificate, Leaving or Matriculation.
 3. Gained School Certificate or Intermediate.
 4. Attended secondary.
 5. Attended primary.
 6. Never attended school.
- Q. 7A. Year of arrival in Australia (if born in Australia simply write "N.A.").
- Q. 7B. If born overseas:
- (a) Country of birth
 - (b) Nationality or citizenship.
- Q. 8. Usual occupation (State as fully as possible).
- Q. 9. Number of weeks unemployed in past 12 months.
- Q. 10. How many addresses have you had in past year (note period and place of institutionalisation).
- Q. 11A. Area of residence (code)
- Q. 11B. Usual type of accommodation
1. Private home
 2. Boarding house
 3. Hotel, Room or flat (a) alone.
 4. Hotel, Room or flat (b) with other(s)
 5. Church/Voluntary Organisation Shelter
 6. Outdoors
 7. Other.
- Q. 11A. Is there a person or group with whom you maintain close contact? Yes 1, No 2.
- Q. 11B. Specify.
- Q. 12. About how frequently would you see this person or group -
1. daily,
 2. weekly
 3. monthly,
 4. couple of times a year,
 5. every four years.
- Q. 13. Without necessarily mentioning the name of the persons, who would you think of as being your next of kin? (Prompt; you needn't restrict yourself just to relatives)
- Q. 13A. When did you last see or communicate with this person?
1. within past week,
 2. within past month,
 3. within past year,
 4. not within past year.
- Q. 13B. Where?
- Q. 13C. About how frequently would you normally see this person -
1. daily,
 2. weekly,

- 3. monthly
- 4. couple of times a year
- 5. every few years.

DRINKING

- Q.14 "For many people in our community drinking is a problem".
Would you say drinking is: *(1) a serious problem in your life,
*(2) a cause for mild concern,
*(3) no particular concern.
- Q.15 (Regardless of answer to Q.13).
To which organisations or individuals can a person with a drinking problem turn for help? (Prompt - any others).
- Q.15A. If you decided to seek help from one of these sources, which one would you be most inclined to use?
- Q.15B. IF AN ORGANISATION NOT MENTIONED IN ANSWER TO 15 ASK:
Which organisation would you be inclined to use?
- Q.16. Which of the following people or groups have you either tried to get help from or had the offer of help from:
- *(1) Alcoholics Anonymous
 - *(2) Doctor
 - *(3) Special hospital or clinic for alcoholics
 - *(4) Psychiatric hospital
 - *(5) Government welfare agency
 - *(6) Private welfare agency
 - *(7) Other sources (specify)
 - *(8) None
- Q.17. Over the past twelve months which of the following drinks have you tried.
- *(1) Wine
 - *(2) Spiritous liquors
 - *(3) Methylated Spirits
 - *(4) Beer

*(5) Other.

PLANS

- Q.18. Do you plan to do anything about your drinking after you leave here?
- Q.18A IF YES
What?
- Q.19. How are you fixed for accommodation?
- (1) no plans but confident will be able to arrange accommodation.
 - (2) Return to home or lodgings.
 - (3) No plans and no prospects.
- Q.19B. IN RESPECT OF ANSWER (1) AND (2):
What type of accommodation:
- (1) Private home
 - (2) Boarding House (commoral)
 - (3) Hotel Room or flat (a) alone
 - (4) " " " (b) with other(s)
 - (5) Church Voluntary Organisation Shelter
 - (6) Outdoors
 - (7) Other
- Q.20. How are you fixed for money?
- (1) Dependent on what he leaves with
 - (2) Assured of additional money
- Q.20B. How much in fact will the person have on discharge?

RECORDS

- Q.21. Principal offence.
- Q.22. Action taken in respect of principal offence (use code)
- Q.23. Was offence committed in company? Yes 1, No 2.
- Q.24. Plea entered in respect of principal offence: Guilty 1, Not guilty 2.

- Q. 25. Was defendant legally represented: Yes 1, No 2.
Q. 26. Number of previous convictions (drunkenness)
Q. 27. Number of previous convictions (excluding drunkenness)
- Q. 28. APPEAL
 *(a) Appeal lodged: No 1; Yes by offender 2;
 Yes by Crown 3;
 If Yes to (a)
 *(b) Outcome: Allowed 1; New trial 2; Sentence
 varied 3; Dismissed with variation 4;
 Dismissed without variation 5;
 (c) If sentence varied, new sentence
- Q. 29. Juvenile convictions
Q. 30. Any physical 'handicap' (defined).

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