



Manchester Statistical Society Update – Autumn 2019

Meetings to be held in autumn, 2019

October

Our first meeting¹ of the new session takes place on Tuesday, 8 October 2019 when we will welcome the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, Ian Hopkins. Mr Hopkins was awarded the Queen's Police Medal (QPM) in the 2016 Birthday Honours and his topic is 'Policing Greater Manchester: now and in the future'.

The overall level of crime in England and Wales had been decreasing over recent decades until recent years when it has become stable. The statistical evidence on the level of crime comes mainly from the long-running Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime. These show that, underlying the overall level, the picture becomes complex because of changes in the amount of particular crimes and so, as the statistician responsible for the statistics² has noted, the level of violence has been steady but violent crime involving knives and sharp instruments has increased. Such lower-volume but higher-harm crimes of violence are concentrated in metropolitan areas such as Greater Manchester.

Greater Manchester is one of the most intensely policed urban areas of England and Wales after Merseyside and the City of London and Metropolitan Police area. In March³, Greater Manchester had over 6,400 officers (including long-term absentees) policing a population of 2.8 million, which equates to almost 230 officers per hundred thousand of the population. The average for England and Wales was 208 officers per hundred thousand of whom 30 per cent were women and seven per cent said they belonged to an ethnic minority. The latter percentage has been slowly yet steadily increasing but it is half that in the general population.

Among the most shocking headline stories of recent years have been reports about the trafficking of vulnerable children by 'county line' gangs from urban areas in order to supply drugs to other areas of the country. The gangs can easily intimidate and control children and they do so because children traffickers are thought to be less likely to be detected by the police. Our meeting will give members the opportunity to ask about the police response to this problem in anticipation of the topic of our December meeting (see below).

November

At our meeting on Tuesday, 12 November, we will hear Heidi Dawson, the Managing Editor of BBC Radio 5 Live, talk to us about the future of audio. As members will know, BBC Radio 5 Live, or '5 Live', is the main national radio station for sports broadcasting, providing news, interviews, discussions and phone-ins.

According to the regular RAJAR survey⁴, nine in ten of the adult population listen to the radio, on average listening to over twenty hours a week of live radio. Two-thirds of the adult population listen via a digitally enabled platform (DAB, DTV, online or mobile phone app). Radio received in cars, vans or trucks reaches almost two-thirds of the population and represents almost a quarter of the share of radio listening.

However, Heidi Dawson has not entitled her talk 'the future of radio' but instead, 'the future of audio'. Today's audio spectrum not only includes live broadcasts but also podcasts on-demand, such as the BBC's own podcast 'app' called BBC Sounds. Such apps currently can collect and use our personal information and thereby change the nature of audio from a shared experience, broadcast across the nation, to one that is tuned to the preferences and opinions

¹ Meetings are scheduled to be held at Alliance Française, 125 Portland Street, Manchester M1 4QD and start at 5.30pm, but always check the website (www.manstatsoc.org) beforehand to confirm.

² Office for National Statistics Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019

³ House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No. 00634, 31 July 2019

⁴ RAJAR Data Release Q2, 2019

of like-minded people. It will be interesting to hear an expert on broadcasting look toward the future of her industry and no doubt members will have plenty of questions about her predictions.

December

On Tuesday, 10 December 2019 Professor Sir Bernard Silverman will talk to us about modern slavery. Members will recall that he has been President of the Royal Statistical Society as well as having a long list of published papers and books on mathematical statistics. The pernicious practice of modern slavery traps victims in exploitative situations, controlling them by coercion, deception, threats and violence. The Rights Lab at Nottingham University is a leading centre of international research into modern slavery and Sir Bernard holds the Chair in Modern Slavery Statistics there.

Members may also be interested in a little background to the recent legislation. In 2015 Parliament passed the Modern Slavery Act, to address comprehensively the offences of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. The Act increased existing penalties. It introduced civil preventative orders to prevent potential offences or further offences of slavery or human trafficking and it also provided maritime enforcement powers. There are now measures to support victims, including a statutory defence for victims of slavery and trafficking and special measures for witnesses in criminal trials. There is a requirement for large businesses to show that they have procedures in place to eliminate slavery and trafficking from their own business and their supply chains. The Act established the office of an Independent Antislavery Commissioner (IASC), to which Dame Sara Thornton (the former Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police) has been appointed. As a final note, the IASC and the Rights Lab at Nottingham University have produced an on-line toolkit to help local organisations and agencies coordinate their efforts to tackle modern slavery.

Parliament has clearly shown that it abhors the exploitation of migrant workers and yet government policy has encouraged a hostile attitude toward foreigners. As we approach Christmas and the Season of Goodwill, there should be an opportunity at our December meeting to discuss the 'hostile environment' and its effect on the situation of those who are vulnerable because of their visa status.

Future speakers

Our Society's Council is scheduled to meet on 27 November and it will draw up the list of speakers to be approached for the 2020-2021 session. A list of suggested speakers is whittled down to a shortlist of those who will be invited. Members can suggest speakers for Council to consider by email to our Hon. Secretary, Dr. Baron Isherwood. Suggested speakers are more likely to be short-listed if there is a brief statement from the proposer explaining why they should be invited. It is hoped that the person who has suggested a speaker will offer to edit the transcript of that speaker's talk in readiness for publication in the *Transactions of Manchester Statistical Society*.

Strategic Review

Thank you to all members who responded to the informal opinion survey that was conducted in response to a call for a strategic review of the Society by our Young Persons Committee. Papers on the opinion survey have now been circulated and Dr. Baron Isherwood, Hon. Secretary, has asked for comments. If you wish to contribute to the discussion please do so by the end of this month so that comments can be collated and discussed. Comments on the conclusions from the survey and a future vision for the Society are welcome from all members.

FPW

September 2019

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOCIETY IS AT: WWW.MANSTATSOC.ORG

MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES: MEMBERSHIP@MANSTATSOC.ORG

MEETINGS REGISTRATION: MEETINGS.SECRETARY@MANSTATSOC.ORG

Registered Charity No. 1069363 Registered office: The Gaddum Centre, Gaddum House, 6 Great Jackson St, Manchester M15 4AX