



Sari Stacey Story

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Sari, a former maths teacher and magistrate, returned home on Sunday evening after a weekend away to find her home had been burgled. The burglary took place on the night of Halloween in 2008.

Life on hold

“Initially I felt shock and disbelief and this moved on to a worry about leaving the house.

“I felt safe in my home, but vulnerable if I went out – feeling worried that I may meet up, unknowingly, with some who would recognise me from pictures seen at the time of the burglary.”

A year on

“A year later in November 2009 I had a phone call from the police to say that a prolific offender who was in custody for a burglary had confessed to having burgled my home, along with 61 other cases which he wished to have taken into consideration when he appeared in court.

“The case came to trial, entering the public gallery of the court room I saw the defendant in the dock and realised he was one of my former pupils. He was found guilty of a burglary, asked for 62 others to be ‘Taken into Consideration,’ and received a custodial sentence.

“I was not able to make a Victim Impact Statement, so, I had requested Restorative Justice. It took over 6 months for my request to be heard and answered, but when passed to Probation they interviewed me and the burglar and set up a restorative Justice meeting in prison.”

The meeting

“It was just under twelve months from the start of the process through the preparation and the meeting taking place in September 2010.

“The preparation process ahead of the meeting was absolutely fantastic – I was supported and helped to understand all it would entail and how the meeting would be facilitated. What I didn’t have any idea of was what he would say or how I would feel.

“The meeting took place in prison and the prison and probation staff, were extremely supportive and professional.

“Sitting in the room with him I saw a lost soul someone who had grown up in chaotic surroundings and become dependent on drugs. As we spoke and he heard the impact of his actions he seemed shaken and truly upset for me. I saw a young man who was frightened of the future and wanted to change his life style.

“I did not want his life to be wasted on drugs and spent behind bars. At the end of the meeting he said he was sorry and that he was so glad we had had the chance to talk. I felt he had seen the burglary and its aftermath through my eyes and that he had shown compassion for me.”

Reflections

“It was a very emotional experience. I felt a sense of relief and also hope that, as it had been a positive experience for me, it had been for him too.

“As a young man he has a future ahead of him and I sincerely hope he will have a future of value.”

Sari is continues to volunteer as Victim Ambassador for Thames Valley Partnership, promoting Restorative Justice to local partners and Victim Services throughout the Thames Valley Area