

Wendy's Story

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Wendy Bridge's brother, Malcolm Benfold, was murdered on Blackpool sea front in January 2007. A young man, Marc, was sentenced to eighteen years in prison for the crime later that year.

In 2012, Wendy watched a Panorama documentary about Restorative Justice called 'Meet the burglars'. She realised that this was something she wanted to do as she still had questions on her mind about the circumstances that led up to the murder. She contacted the Restorative Justice provider, [Remedi](#) who – after several months of separate detailed preparation with Wendy and Marc – arranged for them to meet in the prison where Marc was serving his sentence.



Unanswered questions

"There was so much that had been unsaid. I knew some of the circumstances of Malcolm's death from the police and from the court proceedings but because Marc changed his plea from not guilty to guilty on the third day of his trial, a lot of the evidence was never heard.

"I wanted to talk to Marc to see if we could fill in the blanks – the questions I still had. I also wanted to see whether he was trying to turn his life around and I wanted to hear about what plans he had for his release. He will be in his forties at the end of his sentence so he still has time to lead a worthwhile life.

The meeting changed everything

"The actual meeting changed everything for me. He came into the room and was shaking, he was absolutely petrified. The last time I'd seen him was in the dock where he came over as aggressive and defiant.

We talked and the weight that I didn't really realise I'd been carrying came off me. He couldn't remember killing Malcolm as he'd been in a drunken black out, but he told me what he could.

Then he said he was really sorry for what he'd done and that every day he wished that there was still the death penalty as he would be dead too.

"That made me cross because I didn't want his life to be wasted too. I want him to turn his life around and I told him that. I asked him to take advantage of everything that's offered in prison and he said he'd been working on his anger and that he'd gone to literacy and numeracy classes. He was also learning sign language.

I spoke later to a couple of prison officers and they confirmed that he was making good progress. The meeting was so useful and worthwhile. I was very well prepared by the staff at Remedi. They are like friends, but they always remain professional."