

FINAL REPORT

# ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## GREAT BRITAIN

### Forty-Fourth General Service Conference

17-19 April 2009  
The Henley Suite  
Park Inn Hotel, North Street, York

*Anonymous  
but not Invisible*



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# FORTY-FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2009

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# DIGEST OF AGENDA

## Friday 17 April 2009

Registration and Reception

Opening Session

Committee Meetings Commence

Nominations - Conference Chair 2010

Presentation of  
General Service Board Reports  
(Session 1)

## Saturday 18 April 2009

Committee Meetings Continue

Presentation of  
General Service Board Reports  
(Session 2)

Open Forum

## Sunday 19 April 2009

Presentation of Committee Reports

Election of Chair for the Forty-Fifth General Service  
Conference

Ratification of  
Board Members Elect

Closing Address

# FRIDAY 17 APRIL

The Forty-Fourth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at the Park Inn Hotel, North Street, York – a venue situated in the heart of the City of York and only a few minutes walk from the Railway Station. All plenary sessions were held in the Henley Suite.

After lunch, registration and distribution of folders commenced at 1 pm and was followed by a reception which, as usual, provided an ideal opportunity for delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates and observers attending for the first time. After the opening session which started at 2.45pm, Committee proceedings commenced at 4.00pm including welcome and introduction to Committees.

The Conference comprised 95 delegates from sixteen Regions; one delegate each from ‘Share’ and ‘Roundabout’, 22 members of the General Service Board, Wynford O - Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and 6 members of staff. Also in attendance were 8 Observers from the following countries:

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	(1)
Croatia	(1)
Denmark	(1)
Latvia	(1)
Poland	(1)
Netherlands	(1)
Ukraine	(2)

Total in attendance 135.

## Opening of Conference by Wynford O (Conference Chair 2009)

The first full session, which commenced at 2.45 pm, was opened by the Conference Chair, Wynford O (Wales & Borders Region). He started the proceedings with the Preamble and asked for a moment’s silence to remember our Primary Purpose.

Wynford welcomed everyone and invited Ann N, the General Secretary, to read the Twelve Traditions and continued with the presentation of his **Keynote Address**:

Ladies and gentlemen welcome to this Forty-Fourth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is Wynford and I’m still an alcoholic.

I would like to welcome you - all you privileged Conference delegates and, in particular, this year’s first-year delegates (the red-dotters). I hope that you find your first year at Conference interesting and rewarding, and I’m sure that the more experienced delegates around you will endeavour to make it so. For those second and third-year delegates – welcome back. We have much to accomplish during the course of this weekend. It’s reassuring to know, however, that I can count on your wholehearted involvement, commitment and stick-to-itiveness, as Dr Bob puts it. The fact that you’ve put yourselves forward is proof positive of that, incidentally. Above



all, let us enjoy our experience of Conference – for that enjoyment will nourish us for many a long year to come. It’s OK, incidentally, to disagree over what works best for AA – but not to the extent that we show a lack of respect. We can disagree without being personally disagreeable. I also extend a warm welcome to members of the Board, as well as our visitors from overseas, and our hard-working staff who are here simply to assist us in the smooth running of Conference, their contribution also is invaluable – and deeply appreciated.

Escaping from the almost unbearable burden of aloneness that is alcoholism has enabled me, one day at a time, to cooperate not only with God – for that is the only way I grow spiritually – but also with my fellow man and woman; not least, the members of this year’s excellent Conference Steering Committee – Matt, Mark, Penny, Linda, Clark, Eamon, Martin and Paula. These “trusted servants” have worked tirelessly on your behalf since the close of Conference last year and I believe they deserve special thanks for that. Special thanks also goes to Ann N (General Secretary) and Sharon (Conference co-ordinator) – these two Conference stalwarts safeguard the continuity of Conference year on year, which is, of course, our precious “experience” – and they do it, let me remind you, not by engaging in the myriad debates of the Steering Committee, rather by keeping us focused on the task in hand, and by reminding us occasionally, and ever so subtly, that our only allegiance is to you, the Fellowship as a whole. In other words, as Step Twelve enjoins us, they were encouraging us to become “givers” instead of “takers”.

It’s a privilege standing here before you today as your Conference chair. This year has proved to me, without doubt, the priceless truth and value of the maxim ‘No gain without Pain’. And that’s ironic, because it was pain that brought me into Alcoholics Anonymous in the first place – that’s why I believe that suffering is potentially the greatest creative force in Nature – it was the only thing that got me to change my ways.

But why have I been experiencing pain this year, you might ask?

It’s because I’ve had to risk. The biggest, juiciest fruit are always to be found on the highest, most difficult branches to get to. In order to reach them we have to risk. And risking for me this year has meant being vulnerable; showing people who I am (that’s the biggest risk of all); that I don’t always know all the answers; sometimes, I don’t even know what the questions are; that I am scared; insecure and that, in order to survive, I’ve had to ask for help. You see, there’s been nowhere for me to hide as Conference Chair, there were no convenient masks I could utilise to hide my humanness. On the contrary, this year, thanks to you, I’ve been forced to confront, even more so than usual, the burden of being human. I don’t think you could have given me a more precious gift – because, I believe you see, confronting the burden of being human is the very essence of sober living. Thank you so much, therefore, for helping to clear new ground in my ongoing recovery from chronic alcoholism. That’s how much being Conference Chair has meant to me.

This year’s Conference theme is “Anonymous but not invisible” underscoring the spirit of AA Traditions suggesting that we speak as AA members, but only if our names or faces are not revealed at the public level. In essence, we are guided by Tradition Twelve: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.” Yes, I too remember skiving

into AA meetings, hiding my face as I scrambled across the road lest someone should see me – and see the guilt and shame of being a hopeless alcoholic etched on my face and on my soul. Anonymity meant more than life to me then. It still means more than life to me today – today, however, I hold my head up high, brimming with the healthy pride that Alcoholics Anonymous has restored to me through ‘a simple spiritual idea and a practical programme of action’.

But what of Invisibility – what on earth does that mean in the context of this year’s Conference theme? I would not presume to start answering that question – each to his own I say and to his or her own interpretation. I do know what being visible is all about, however. Thanks to countless self-less role-models inside and outside AA, I got to appreciate what was being modelled for me. Modelling that was to lead me to an interest in learning about love; learning about how to be happy? How to live? And how to taste the marvellous things that the mystics speak of? More importantly, they taught me that when there’s nothing one can do to avoid the inevitable, that that’s the time to start trusting God to do the impossible; and that the crisis I might be experiencing today could be a blessing in disguise; an opportunity to experience a greater degree of God’s power in my life. All that was modelled to me: and as a result I started on a quest that was to lead me to a life beyond my wildest dreams. And it’s only just begun, to echo that famous song by the Carpenters many a year ago.

A college lecturer filled a large glass tube with big stones, right up to the top. “Is it full now?” he asked the students.

“Yes” came the reply in unison.

“No it isn’t” he said. “Look.” And he poured little stones into the tube, in between the big stones – right up to the top. “Is it full now?” he asked.

“Yes” said the students again.

“No” said the lecturer. “Look again.” And he poured gravel into the tube, between the little stones and the big stones, right up to the top. “Is it full now?”

“Probably not” they said. Students like Alcoholics are unusually slow to learn!

“You’re right to say ‘probably not’” said the lecturer, “Look” and he poured fine sand into the tube – between the gravel, the small stones and the big stones, right up to the top. “Is it full now?”

Rather gingerly, the students said “no” again.

“You’re right” said the lecturer as he poured a gallon of water into the tube – right up to the top. “Is it full now?”

“It is” they all concluded confidently.

“Spot on” said the lecturer. “It is full. So what does that prove?”

Blank faces all ‘round.

“Well, what it proves is this” he said. “When we put the big stones first – when we put the important things in our lives first we have room for all the rest – the smaller stones, the gravel, the fine sand and water, etc. However, if I’d poured the water in first, or the fine sand... do you see what I’m telling you?” They all nodded intelligently.

Likewise, as recovering alcoholics, and as these role-models have shown us, we have to put sobriety first in our lives too – when we do that, we also have room for all the other less important things – family, job, career, forming relationships, sorting out finances, etc. Putting sobriety first in our lives, I put it to you, is one important way of being “visible”.

These people also modelled involvement in AA at every level – not by being on the peripheral, one foot in one foot out, but by being right at the very centre and fully involved in Service. For they knew, that by helping others, they were helping themselves. Indeed, they'd been set a precedent:

Remember William (Bill) Griffith Wilson who had a spiritual experience which 'transformed' his life and 'precipitated an epiphany' that was to change the lives of millions of 'still suffering alcoholics' throughout the world? The resulting insight he gleaned, that it took 'complete hopelessness and deflation at depth' to make such a spiritual experience possible, whether sudden or gradual, proved not enough, however, to keep him safe from drinking. On a failed business trip to Akron, Ohio five sober months later, he was tempted to drink again, and it was then that the 'second core idea' fell into place. Bill W suddenly became convinced that by helping another alcoholic, he could save himself. After a series of desperate telephone calls he was led to Dr. Robert Smith a 'sceptical drunk' whose family persuaded him to give Wilson 15 minutes of his time, and the concept of "one alcoholic talking to another" was born. The two men talked for hours, with Bill W realising that the non-drinking alcoholic needed the still-drinking alcoholic just as much in order to stay sober. This realisation later became the 'primary purpose of AA' in both the Twelfth Step of the AA programme and in the Fifth Tradition – which is "to carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer". Helping, therefore, as Bill modelled so effectively all those years ago, helped the helper – and is the surest way possible to being "visible".

These people also modelled positivity. I used to phone up my sponsor – some difficulty, some script or other not working out as it should – and he'd tell me, "The trouble with you, Wynford, is that you keep forgetting that you're a genius!"

And, yes, I'd laugh much as you are laughing now. But then, the next time I'd phone up to moan about something or other, he'd say it again. "Wynford, how many times do I have to tell you? The trouble with you is you keep forgetting that you're a genius."

And gradually, over the years, I came to accept what Bryn was saying. I am a genius! And this is the miracle, once I realised that I was a genius, I realised that everyone else are geniuses too. We're all different. We're all unique. And we all have a unique contribution to make to life's rich tapestry.

These people also taught me that no matter how bleak, how dark or hopeless a situation might seem – that there was always something positive lurking there somewhere underneath; and that if I looked long enough I'd always find that something positive. And once I'd found it, I'd no longer be living in the problem: I'd be living in the solution.

And these "old timers" always kept coming back. Their actions spoke louder than their words. Remember the three frogs floating on a piece of wood down the river? One made a decision to jump into the water. How many frogs were left on the piece of wood? Three, of course. The frog just made a decision to jump into the water – he didn't carry it through.

The practical programme (the 12-Steps), which are the foundation upon which AA operates, don't work, these people told me, without putting action into them. And that action involves: 1) Self examination, 2) Acknowledgment of faults, 3) Restitutions of

wrongs done, and above all, 4) Constant work with others – they needed to practice the kind of giving that has ‘no price tag on it’, the giving of themselves to somebody’. And to paraphrase Ebby’s parting message to Bill W - alcoholics need ‘to pray to whatever God they think there is for a power to carry out these simple precepts’ and that if they do not believe there is a God, they should start ‘the experiment of praying to whatever God there *might be*.’ That’s what I did, incidentally – I took a gamble on God – and it worked.

And what these people had attracted me. I wanted what they had. What was their secret, I wondered? Mention earlier of The Carpenters, got me thinking about what the greatest carpenter of all would have suggested? He would suggest that we become servants to all. “He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant...and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted”. Funnily enough, I saw that quality modelled only last week – in Pembrokeshire, of all places – not by alcoholics this time, incidentally, but by two sheep, would you believe?

During a coastal-walk in St Davids last week, I saw these two sheep come face to face on a narrow ledge of rock high above a deep dungeon. They couldn’t pass each other. What did they do, do you think? Start to fight and gore each other until both fell over the precipice to their deaths in the dungeon below? Not a bit of it. Do you know what they did? One sheep knelt on her forelegs and lay down flat on the floor, while the other sheep silently and carefully stepped over her to safety.

There a lesson in humility for you! And it was that kind of humility that attracted me to these people, the kind of humility that is ‘the foundation principle of each of AAs Twelve Steps’: for humility, you see, is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less. Humility is thinking more of others. Which is what these people so visibly did.

I asked Bryn my sponsor shortly before he died, what was different about life now that he’d been in recovery over 25 years? And he answered by telling me a story about the 3 women who’d won a competition run by the local supermarket to fill their trolleys with as many goods as they could in 5 minutes. The whistle went, and two of the women rushed around as if they were possessed – stacking the biggest and most expensive goods into their trolleys: computers, TV sets, Radios, Cassettes, DVSSs, mobile phones, sat nav’s, etc. The third woman, meanwhile, ambled quietly from aisle to aisle selecting a quarter of tea here, two pounds of sugar there. She noticed that one of the other women, in her mad selfish scramble to get the biggest and the best into her trolley, had accidentally dropped a digital radio set on the floor, so she rushed over and picked it up and placed it in the other woman’s already packed trolley.

The other woman didn’t even notice as the third woman returned to her own shopping and selected a packet of Shortbread biscuits, before heading off slowly for the cheese counter to select a nice cheddar for tea. Soon the five minutes were up, and the women returned to the till to tot up their “takings”. Two of the women’s trolleys were stacked as high as they could get - reaching the ceiling. They then noticed the third woman had only about ten items in her trolley – and they started to make fun of her. We do that, don’t we, when we see someone whose behaving differently to us? “What do you think you’re doing?” one of the two women asked her indignantly.

“What do you mean?” said the third woman.

“Well, don’t you understand the rules of the competition, woman?”

“What rules?” said the third woman.

“Well, we’re supposed to fill our trolleys with as many goods as possible, like we’ve done, you silly fool; look.” And she pointed to the mountain of goods stacked sky high on both their trolleys.

“But why should I do that?” said the third woman innocently.

“What do you mean ‘why should I do that?’”

“Well, why should I?” She said again. You see, my father owns the supermarket.”

By then you see, Bryn lived his life as if he were floating in the womb of the universe and being taken care of always at every moment. He knew full well that all his needs would be met. And I knew that he knew (that’s what’s important) – just by looking at him.

There, I’ve given you some examples of what I believe being “visible” is all about. I’m sure that you can think of countless other examples. However, the reason I chose the theme ‘Anonymous but not invisible’ for Conference this year is a personal one: You see, my mother died in ignorance from this invidious illness of dependence, and without accessing a Fellowship that could, conceivably, have helped her. Ever since, therefore, I’ve experienced a sense of sadness and regret that what was so freely given to me was denied (or at least not communicated) to her. That is why it is so important that no one else - mother, father, son or daughter, friend or neighbour - dies in ignorance from this illness like my mother did. It shouldn’t happen; it mustn’t happen; and it won’t happen – unless, of course, we become “invisible”. ‘Whenever, anyone reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that you, you, you and me – we’re all responsible’.

As I said earlier, we have much to achieve this weekend. Let’s go to it – let’s be anonymous, yes, by all means – but let’s make our anonymity as visible as the day. There’s a paradox for you! And only AAs know how to hold two opposites together in one hand at the same time – and make perfect sense of both. We wouldn’t be where we are today if we weren’t able to do that. And I wouldn’t have had my family restored to me if I didn’t, either – or had my eldest daughter give me a big hug one day and say “Dad, I’m so proud of you”.

‘Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid’ – neither should the pride I felt at having my daughter say that to me “Dad I’m so proud of you.” And we all of us, don’t we, have our own personal reasons for feeling very proud of ourselves. Don’t hide it under a bushel. ‘Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works – or rather *when* they see your good works – they too become attracted to Alcoholics Anonymous – to a treatment modality that is ‘unsurpassed in the treatment of alcoholism’; and to a programme of recovery that has been described as ‘God’s gift to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and beyond’, and who’s co-founder, Bill Wilson, was described by Aldous Huxley as ‘the greatest social architect of our century’.

We cannot but celebrate that, ladies and gentlemen.

We cannot but proclaim it from the rooftops.

Alcoholics Anonymous offers hope to a world whose peoples are becoming increasingly dependent on alcohol. And the hope that Alcoholics Anonymous offers is

this: that there is a way out of one of the most invidious illnesses known to mankind – the only illness that tells you there’s nothing wrong with you; that man is capable, with God’s help, of confronting the burden of being human; is able to stay sober one day at a time, and is able to live a life beyond his wildest dreams. We’re most of us here living examples of that ladies and gentlemen. What privileged people indeed we are. Don’t Invisibilize that privilege, that’s all I’m suggesting.

God bless you and thank you for listening to me.

With a view to allowing ‘red dotters’ in particular to get acquainted with who was to chair their various Committees, Wynford introduced each of the six Committee Chairs.

## **Conference Steering Committee Report**

**Marc M (Scotia Region), Alternate Chair**

Good afternoon Conference, my name is Marc and I am an alcoholic. I am your Alternate Chair for Conference 2009. Firstly, I would like to welcome everyone to the 44<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, especially first year delegates; I hope you enjoyed reading the Conference Steering Committee (CSC) report published in the winter edition of the AA Service News as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Please remember that although Conference involves a fair bit of paper shuffling and pen pushing, its core element is still one alcoholic in service, encouraging and nurturing another, in support of our primary purpose that of maintaining through the Twelve Traditions the service structure that’s such a vital part of carrying the message.

Just like the Twelve Step programme of recovery each step we take in service prepares us for the next, it’s through practical experience that more is revealed to us, we use words like honour and privilege to illustrate gratitude but no amount of superlatives could convey how I felt at the first CSC meeting held in the General Service Office board room on May the 9<sup>th</sup> 2008, when Ann N the General Secretary (in her role as a support and guide to the CSC) relayed a brief history of Conference. Ann showed great foresight to impress upon the elected Committee Chairs, that we, (the committee) *we’re* Conference, until Conference reconvened in April 2009, it doesn’t half focus the mind when decisions and actions we agreed could have significant bearing on the content and direction of Conference and it soon became apparent by how seriously we embraced the task.

The Committee met on three subsequent occasions, September and October in 2008 and finally in February 2009, under the more than capable chairmanship of Wynford O (Conference Chair, 2009). There were a total of 51 submissions (questions) to be reviewed, letters to respond to and much deliberation over acceptance/non acceptance of submissions dependant, of course, upon adherence to the strict criteria set out in the CSC Terms of Reference. Researching background information and drafting responses to questioners required a lot of hard work not to mention diplomacy. To this end, I feel this year’s CSC worked very well together in a real spirit of *Love and Tolerance*.

Again, as in most service structures, we owe a real debt of gratitude to those who have gone before, as barring the odd tweak, here and there (minor amendments to the Conference agenda) good procedural foundations have been laid. On behalf of my

fellow Committee Chairs I would like to thank Penny A and Martin B, General Service Board Members, who provided supportive guidance thus aiding continuity and a special thank you to Sharon Smyth our Conference Coordinator who's input was indispensable.

Finally, I must admit to having had quite a wrestling match with this year's theme of Conference "Anonymous but not invisible" Wynford in his wisdom has for me encapsulated the Fellowship's great need to be more pro-active, while, for me, still managing to retain enough warning for the need to put principles before personalities. It has been a great privilege to have been blessed with the opportunity to serve the wider Fellowship as a member of this year's CSC. The experience has been made so much more enjoyable because of the support, wisdom and sense of unity brought to the table by all the other members of this Committee.

Ann N was asked to read the orientation containing last-minute changes and safety information, and the National Convention dates which are:

Scottish Convention	-	8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
Welsh Convention	-	29 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2009
Southern Convention	-	11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2009
Northern Convention	-	26 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2010

Wynford went on to explain the voting procedure and how these votes would be counted to which Conference unanimously agreed.

The first full session of Conference ended at 3.45 pm with Wynford asking everyone to join him in saying the Serenity Prayer.

## FRIDAY EVENING

Wynford welcomed everyone and opened the second full session of Conference at 7.45 pm with a moment's silence and the Preamble, asked for nominations for Conference Chair 2010 before handing over to Ralph A, Chairman of the Board, to introduce the General Service Board Report.

### NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIR 2010

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chair of the Forty-Fifth General Service Conference 2010:

Clark S	-	Glasgow Region
Eamon D	-	London Region North
Marc M	-	Scotia Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve and each gave a brief summary of their AA service background. The formal election, by way of a modified Third Legacy procedure as recommended by Conference 1998, to take place at the final session of Conference.

### General Service Board Report

(Ralph A)

Good evening Conference, my name is Ralph and I'm an alcoholic and currently Chair of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I don't have much to add to the Introduction of the Annual Report but I would like to say that from Conference 2008 to this Conference, once again the Trustees on the General Service Board have been very, very busy. They have travelled back and forth, up and down the country, attending at the Scottish Parliament, House of Commons, Welsh Assembly, Regional Forums to name just a few. If anyone has any questions, we are here and very willing to try and answer them.

The Board has 15 presentations over this weekend starting this evening with the British Sign Language report and finishing on Sunday with the Archives report.

### British Sign Language

(Roger B)

*Response to the request by Conference 2008 via the General Secretary, GSO, to examine the feasibility of translating the Big Book and the 12x12 into British Sign Language (BSL). The research has been done by Imogen C-W, staff member.*

**Yes, it is feasible to translate the above literature into a sign language onto video or DVD. AA World Service has already done so into American Sign Language (ASL) and the items are available on video on their ordinary literature order form. They are planning to transfer this literature over to DVD format in the middle of 2009.**

**Question      Why don't we just buy direct from America?**



Answer American Sign Language is a foreign language and not understood by British Sign Language users.

**Question So what needs to be done?**

Answer First we have to obtain a license from the copyright holder. This is AA World Services. We already have the paperwork for a license; the formal application must come from or be signed by our GSB/GSO. We must then request a master copy of the America Sign Language DVD (when processed i.e. June 2009) from New York. This together with a transcript will then be passed to the specialist reputable company that undertakes the work of translation from America Sign Language to BSL.

**Question Why can't we translate direct from the printed literature?**

Answer We can partially translate from the printed word. The World Services DVD in ASL is composed of three elements. The sound track; the subtitles and the moving picture of the interpreter. We can use the original soundtrack (with permission and at a great financial saving) but will need new subtitles and moving picture.

**Question Have we taken advice and discussed this both in and out of the Fellowship as appropriate?**

Answer Yes, we circulated all members of the London AA Group with facilities for deaf and hard of hearing people; all those who helped in setting up the group, including AA members; professionals in the mental health world with the responsibility for profoundly deaf people; qualified BSL interpreters and other bilingual in BSL/English. We have on the technical side had very helpful advice from a trilingual interpreter in ASL/BSL/spoke English, who has worked in the USA and Canada in AA meetings and in the mental health/alcohol addiction-interpreting field, who now works for the BBC. We have of course consulted AA World Services.

**Question Have we talked this over with the specialist charitable company skilled in this work?**

Answer Yes. We have had extensive telephone, letter and email contact with this company and have visited their premises. We have shown them the written literature and a master DVD on an approved New Zealand Sign Language Chapter 5 of the Big Book as a visual model. We have also obtained the timings of the ASL literature from New York in minutes and seconds. Once we have a "word count" of the literature to be interpreted they will provide a financial breakdown of charges and any discount if the job is commissioned in one piece. The commissioned job would be to make master copies in DVD format for the UK GSB's literature section to reproduce as required.

**Question What is the estimate of the overall cost?**

Answer            We cannot give a detailed estimate at present, however the work will be costed at £75 for each 350 words, and a ball park figure would be £20,000 - £25,000.

We were further asked to examine the possibility of adding BSL to our existing PI videos. It has been suggested that since these videos were not designed to have a small rectangle overlaid within the picture frame to contain the interpreter as well as a subtitles box below, it will be better to wait until these videos are due for updating and at that point, commission the producers to add in sign language as part of a new and coherent design. The cost of such a project will also need to be carefully considered.

The GSB is to consider this project both in terms of need and cost, and will take this feasibility study forward.

## **Finance**

(Ann S – Treasurer GSB)

Good Evening Conference. Good Evening Mr Chairman. My name is Ann I am an alcoholic. It is a joy to be with you tonight to present the Financial Report, but tinged with a little sadness as it will be my last.

As anticipated the Fellowship's finances for the year 2007/2008 were affected by the downturn in the economy. Contributions decreased, the profit on literature sales fell and our Investment Portfolio suffered as the market value of shares tumbled. However we continued to carry out our primary purpose, providing essential services through our 3 service offices and publishing our literature that is so brilliantly displayed in the literature brochure sent to every group last year. We have been mindful to be extra vigilant on costs, plus strategically planning the future. Let us look at the results with this PowerPoint Presentation, which will be added to the Document Library of our Website next week.

They say when the going gets tough, the tough get going, and the figures for the first six months of the present financial year reveal a further downturn.

A pessimist would certainly see it as a gloomy prospect, and yes we are facing some difficulties to stabilize our financial affairs, but if each and every one of us who are in the position to do so put a little extra into The Pot to compensate for those many members who may have lost their jobs, their homes over the last year, plus if every group conscience takes a deeper and more honest look at what we do with AA money and what we should not do... and then write a cheque for any large amounts of money in their bank accounts we will weather the storm.

The optimist will see the opportunities in every difficulty, so whilst there is less money to spend, we stick to our primary purpose and take those action steps to optimize the value of every penny of AAs money. Just taking a look at what we have delivered over the last six months should fill us with optimism. Internally we have provided AA Service News, monthly editions of Share and Roundabout, plus Share Diaries and Calendars and new this year Roundabout Diaries. Forums held in the North East and Eastern Regions and later this year at Midland Region. Huge savings have been made by the Telephone Sub Committee that commenced in March 2009, plus the production of the Archive DVD that you will see this weekend.

Externally we have maintained our presence at Health Exhibitions, Prison and Criminal Justice Conferences, Probation and Social Services, Army Garrisons plus presentations at Westminster and the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies. With monies from the Development Fund we have sponsored a delegate from Trinidad and Tobago to attend the World Service Meeting last year. We have supported observers from Ukraine and Croatia to attend this Conference and in May we will provide 50% of the cost alongside the United States and Canada for the Sub Sahara biennial Meeting. Just wait until you hear the two inspirational presentations of the World Service Meeting and our involvement with Poland to help support Eastern European Countries, this is where money turns into people, recovery, service and unity.

Your General Service Board have implemented stringent controls on all expenditure but ensuring projects that must be completed will go ahead. Travel expenses have been lowered and a reduction in the number of meetings each Sub Committee hold have been implemented. We are not immune to spiralling publication costs, so the increase in literature prices last September were introduced to stabilize a very important part of our revenue. To add weight to the pie charts you have seen in the Annual Report, contributions and literature sales amounted to 92% of our total income in 2005/06, 93% in 2006/07 and 92% in 2007/08. These two sources of revenue underpin our financial security and sustain us as we strive to be self supporting through our own contributions, so, if through the service structure Region, Intergroup and upwards to our stakeholders the 4,300 plus groups registered at GSO are made aware to keep the money flowing each month and buy our literature, then I am confident that the Fellowship will turn difficult financial times into joy, as they achieve a job well done.

Our Legacy is in our hands, let us not, because financially the going is tough, stop doing the right thing. We must never forget that everything we do is to make that 12th Step possible for the alcoholic who cries out for help tonight.

My job is done, I hand over this honoured role to Jim T, your new Treasurer, a dedicated and spiritual man who will be most excellent in the days to come.

## **Literature**

(Sheila D/Dave C)

Good evening Conference, my name is Sheila and I am an alcoholic.

The Literature Committee continues to meet in York four times a year with work being carried out using the internet in the periods between, using our ever reviewed and developing design document. The document includes check lists on literature colour, cover images, text, logo and Conference approval, size, paper, and glossary of terms. We also continue a systematic review of AA literature, being mindful of a changing electronic world and the needs of a younger generation of alcoholics, who may seek information in different ways. Work has also continued on the proposed reconfiguration of the *AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*. I hasten to add that we abide at all times with AA Traditions.

We remain committed to taking the proactive approach of keeping our channels of communication open with the Fellowship through articles in *AA Service News*, and the publication of our Terms of Reference. The future may see us embracing the AA Web site in a more positive way. Of course we welcome questions or suggestions through the Service Structure or individually at any time of the year and especially not

forgetting at Conference. Currently we are advertising for members to join us on the Literature Committee due to rotation, and are here for members to ask questions about the commitment involved. 2009 may see us experimenting with telephone/internet meetings which could reduce the number of meetings in York. The tasks are serious, but there is fun in it too. I would at this point like to thank this years Committee for their hard work and support without them the volume of literature could not be produced.

### **Conference 2009**

We have as usual been busy this year and with the help of the appropriate Trustees we have for Conference approval through the committee process:

Guideline No. 13      Probation and Social Services.  
Guideline No. 8        Employment.  
Guideline No. 6        Telephones.

We present to Conference, *AA and the Armed Services* – six shares from members, who found recovery while serving in the Armed Forces, combined with *Who Me* and a *Message for Professionals*. These form the literature portfolio.

AA and Prisons – Two female prison shares to be added to the existing *Inside Stories* prison pack. The pack being used for both male and female prisons.

Posters – Two new “You don’t have to live here” posters.

Postcard size adhesive backed “Trapped” poster (For use on bottle banks etc with council permission)

A wallet card “Is alcohol costing you more than money.”

2009/10 will very much depend upon Conference wishes, but we will continue reviewing literature on the Fellowship’s behalf including a review of the newcomers pack. The Electronic Guideline is being progressed, as is a pamphlet for inclusion in prison induction packs. Once the design for Twelve Concepts pamphlet is completed it will be presented to Conference.

### **Proposals**

- **AA and the Armed Services**

*Conference approved the above proposal unanimously with the amendment to remove place names of bases.*

- **Two female prison shares for inclusion in the Prison Pack.**

*Conference approved the above proposal with a two-thirds plus majority vote.*

- **Two new posters “You don’t have to live here.”**

*Conference approved the above proposal with a two-thirds plus majority vote.*

- **Postcard size adhesive backed “Trapped” Poster.**

*Conference approved the above proposal with a two-thirds plus majority vote.*

- **Wallet Card “Is alcohol costing you more than money?”**

*Conference approved the above proposal with a two-thirds plus majority vote.*

- **The reconfiguration of The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.**

The Literature Committee strategy at the moment is to consider breaking the AA Service Handbook into two or three separate pieces. The first would be the structure of AA in Great Britain to possibly include in it would be everything that is non-changing about our structure. As a companion to that would be a Service Manual and this would be the external pieces that we use, public information, prisons, probation, social services etc. The third would be the Concepts and the essays on the Concepts.

The Literature Committee are undertaking to, between now and next year, include a breakdown in *AA Service News* of what we perceive we are going to put into one manual and what we perceive we are going to put into another. It is our hope that you will feed into the process so that the Literature Committee will be able to bring to you at least one of those manuals next year, for you to consider as a piece of new literature that reflects our structure or service.

## **Armed Services**

(Dave D)

Good evening Conference, my name is Dave, I am an alcoholic and very pleased to be here.

### **Background:**

Conference 1992 were asked to ‘Review our service work in relation to members of the Armed Forces with a problem with alcohol abuse and make recommendations’

Conference 1997 reported ‘In the experience of the Fellowship it appears little has changed since Conference considered its relationship with the Armed Forces in 1992’

### **Present:**

The last twelve months Alcoholics Anonymous has manned AA display stands and carried out AA Presentations to the following Establishments:

RAF Wyton

RAF Wattisham

MOD Chicksands Medical Centre

ARMY Garrison Catterick

SOMME Barracks

Withernsea Hospital Group

Joint Services Command Training College

Sellyoaks Hospital in Birmingham

Harrogate Training College

Beyond Combat Conference in Hull  
Army Mental Health Team in Catterick  
Royal Navy in Portsmouth  
Royal Navy in Plymouth  
Soldiers, Sailors, Air Force Association (SSAFA)  
Ministry of Defence London  
Barracks at Chepstow  
RAF Brecon  
Veterans Association  
Royal Engineer Training Units in Chatham  
Holybush House in Ayr

### **Plus**

We have sent letters with literature to:

RAF Lossiemouth  
RAF Leuchars  
Royal Marines in Arbroath  
Head Of Charitable Services (Poppy Scotland)

### **Plus There's More:**

We have AA meetings in Germany, namely Paderborn and Moenchengladbach and The Princess Royal Barracks.

We also have 'Is Drink Costing You More Than Money?' published in:

*Soldier Magazine*  
*The Navy News*  
*RAF News*  
Service Community Official Guides

What has been shown to you so far is some of the work that has been going on with 'Carrying the Message' to the Armed Services. We decided to raise the profile of the Armed Services by starting from within our Fellowship:

We Wrote Articles for *AA Service News*

We had Stands at Three National and Two One Day Conventions.

We had Armed Service Workshops at the Southern National Convention and a Welsh Intergroup

We took responsibility of the Armed Services Telephone Twelve Steppers List and now regularly update this every three months

We have drawn up a new Terms of Reference for the Armed Services Sub-Committee which will be published in *AA Service News*.

We have an Armed Services Literature Pack that we hope Conference will approve, this will replace the current booklet *AA and the Armed Services*.

### **The Future**

We have created lots of interest and enthusiasm for 'Carrying the Message to the Suffering Alcoholic' serving or having served in the Armed Services. The forecast for the next twelve months is that there will be even more work to be carried out.

WE NEED TO HAVE A STRONG STRUCTURE OF COMMUNICATION TO BE ABLE TO FULFIL OUR COMMITMENTS.

I therefore put to Conference 2009 the following proposal:

**THAT WHERE THERE IS A PRESENCE OF MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS OR FAMILIES OF SERVICE PERSONNEL INTERGROUPS AND REGIONS APPOINT AN ARMED SERVICE LIAISON OFFICER.**

*Conference approved the above proposal with a two-thirds plus majority vote.*

### Public Information

(Andy C/Nick R)

Good evening Conference, my name is Andy and I am an alcoholic.

### Key National Goals

The goals have not changed and are as follows:

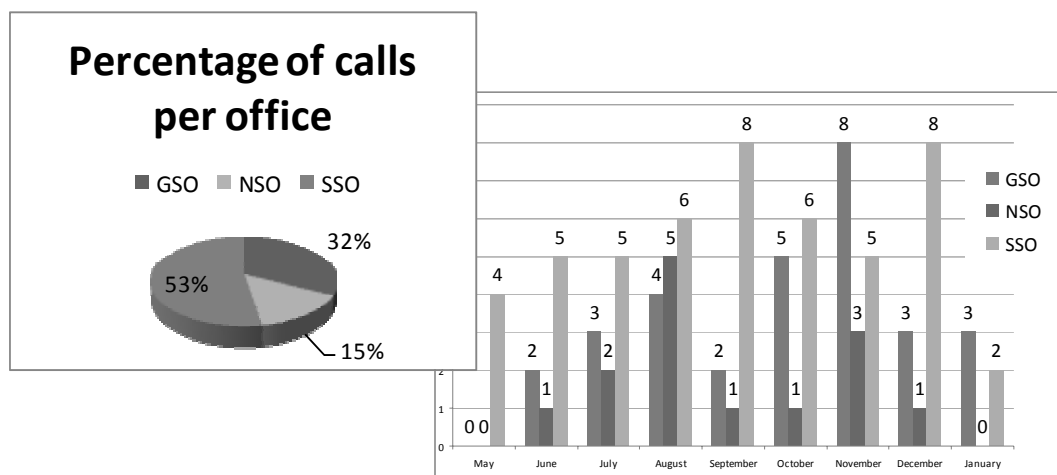
- Attract new members
- Raise public awareness of AA
- Update PI material and support local activity
- Improve co-operation with professionals
- Improve working relationships with the media

To go back to Conference 2006 and 2007 where I reported on the pilot campaigns for different forms of raising awareness and we have now completed radio and print. Radio took place in the Bristol area and the print trial took place in Wales and the results are as follows:

Responses for Pilot Campaigns 2006-08 (as at 15/09/2008)						
	Duration	Phone	Website	Total	Campaign	Cost per
	Weeks	Calls	Visits	Responses	Cost	Response
<b>Scottish Buses</b>	4	150	143	293	24922	85.06
<b>London Tube</b>	2	190	262	452	22000	48.67
<b>TV Pilot</b>	4	25	101	126	14197	112.67
<b>Internet</b>	1		300	300	50	0.17
<b>Radio</b>	2	72	n/a	72	14335	199.10
<b>Print Trial</b>	8	81	n/a	81	15306	188.96
<b>Totals</b>		<b>518</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>1171</b>	<b>90810</b>	<b>77.55</b>

## Key Activity 2008 Presentations at:

- The Welsh Assembly
- Westminster
- The Scottish Parliament
- Scottish Executive Forum who are revising and updating a new strategy on how to reduce alcohol harm and Alcoholics Anonymous will be mentioned in those documents.
- Regional Liaison Officers Meeting was held again in October and the volume of work that takes place up and down the country you would not believe. I could not come here and report everything that happens in Public Information because there is too much of it. You are doing so much within your own areas and Regions everywhere in the country.
- PI Sub-Committee meetings took place three times in the last year.
- Media Contact within the three offices is shown below between May 2008 and January 2009:



- Appointment of Nick R who has been shadowing me for the past year.
- PI Newsletter which is sent out electronically.
- Professional database has in the region of 500 professionals on that and we are planning to send them a newsletter. We can do that a couple of times a year just to touch base with them. The importance of relationships with those professionals at local levels is key and that is down to members of the Fellowship giving up their time and going to speak to them.

## Alcoholics Anonymous “Anonymous but not invisible”

It was suggested that this year we would put forward a proposal to try and have a week within the AA calendar when we specifically put our energies in PI direction at group, intergroup and regional level altogether within that one week to promote AA at a truly national level. Unfortunately this year, finances are in a situation where it probably would not be a good idea at this time because this sort of thing cannot be done for nothing. Perhaps we can have a look at it for next year instead if the finances are right. The Sub-Committee have already put a lot of work in this direction so we are just putting it on low key for 12 months.



## **AA Service News**

(John A)

Good evening Conference, my name is John, I'm an alcoholic and I'm your new Trustee for AA Service News.

### **What is AA Service News**

- *AA Service News* is the principle vehicle for the communication of service matters within the Fellowship of AA in Great Britain
- Articles within it should give particular emphasis to matters affecting our primary purpose – which is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety
- These articles should provide a shared experience of service at all levels within the Fellowship ranging from group through intergroup and region to GSB and Conference level
- *AA Service News* is published quarterly in spring, summer, autumn and winter and the next issue will have the recommendations from this Conference.

### **Purpose and Aim of AA Service News**

- Share service experience at all levels within the Fellowship
- Keep members informed of new developments and future events
- Encourage observance of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts
- Carry to members the questions being put to Conference.

### **Source of Articles for AA Service News**

- Convenors of GSB committees are encouraged to produce – whenever possible – quarterly reports for their area.
- Board members having service liaison responsibilities are similarly encouraged to submit accounts of activities within their areas and to hand these to the editor at Board meetings
- Delegates to European and World Service meetings are encouraged to provide GSO with accounts of the same
- Members of the Fellowship are warmly encouraged to submit articles – in so far as they relate to service matters – either directly or via their intergroup or region to the editor.

### **Sub Committee**

- The editor is assisted and supported by two proof readers, who are selected by nominations from regions to the nominations committee, and a GSO staff member providing systems support.

### **Distribution**

- A team of volunteers from the North East Region led by staff at GSO are tasked with the packaging of *AA Service News*
- A total of approximately five thousand envelopes go out every quarter
- Three copies are sent to every registered group in the Great Britain

- One copy goes to all regional and intergroup officers
- One copy to ex – Board members
- Miscellaneous

### **Some Recent Articles**

- Presentation at the Welsh National Assembly
- Parliamentary Reception at the House of Commons
- Conference 2009 steering committee report
- Various articles on Electronic communications
- Various pieces of Archive material
- Articles from members involved in carrying the message to the Armed Services
- Report of the Thirty Seventh Polish Conference
- A History of the Nominations Committee
- A History of Gratitude week

### **What you can always find in *AA Service News***

- Diary of Events
- Financial contributions to GSO from regions
- Donations in memory of
- Questions for Conference – winter edition
- Conference Recommendations – summer edition
- Vacancies on GSB Sub Committees

### **Deadline Dates**

Any items for inclusion in *AA Service News* need to be submitted by the deadline dates for each issue. These are printed on the front of every edition.

I invite everyone to submit articles relating to service matters within the Fellowship and also to read and encourage others to read each publication.

Wynford closed the Friday evening session at 10.15pm in the customary way by asking everyone to join him in the saying of the serenity prayer.

## **SATURDAY EVENING**

### **Continuation of General Service Board Reports**

Wynford welcomed everyone back and asked for a moment's silence to think about the still suffering alcoholic inside and outside the Fellowship and asked Martin B to commence the continuation of General Service Board reports.

### **20<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting 26-30 October 2008, New York**

(Martin B)

Firstly, and before beginning the report I wish to offer my thanks to my colleagues on the General Service Board for having the faith and trust in me when selecting me as a first term delegate to the World Service Meeting (WSM) in New York October 2008.

I hope this report, my report to the Board and the presentation at Conference will fulfil my obligation and go some way to reimburse such confidence shown in me.

To say it was privilege to undertake such service for the Fellowship would hardly describe such a wonderful experience.

The WSM since its inception in 1969 has followed its Statement of Purpose which is 'The primary purpose of the WSM is the same as that of all AA activity - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, wherever in the world they may be, what ever the language they speak'. The WSM serves as a forum for sharing of experience and ideas on ways to carry the AA message, it also helps foster Twelfth Step work across the globe.

This years Conference had the theme of 'Gratitude in Action' aptly displayed in the sharing of delegates from countries who have very little in AA structure or material and who often face very real pressures from organisations within their countries. Some of the struggles talked about made me reflect on how hard it must have been to get AA started in the beginning and the commitment and resilience of some of the delegates in achieving this against the odds is truly humbling.

Fifty nine delegates from forty countries attended the meeting. For information we as a Fellowship in Great Britain & English speaking Continental Europe (although, funnily enough, all the delegates from the other European countries represented spoke English) sponsored delegates from Venezuela and Trinidad & Tobago. Indeed Gonzalo P from Venezuela gave a keynote address very well received and my first experience of simultaneous translation which was available throughout the Conference in English and Spanish.

As 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> term delegates me and Ralph A (GSB Chair) then entered four days of committee work, workshops, presentations, discussions and reports. I had been forewarned this was intensive and exhausting work – it was. Ralph had to chair a committee and workshop along with a presentation; I had a workshop to chair.

The four standing committees of (Literature/Publishing, Policy/Admissions/Finance, Agenda and Working with Others) met to share their countries experiences and to discuss and make recommendations on the running of the WSM. Reports were presented on the zonal meetings around the world that happen in between WSM.

These presentations were from the European Service Meeting, the Meeting of the Americas, Sub Sahara Meeting, Asia-Oceania Service Meeting and from the First West Central Africa Service meeting. Believe me; I get goose bumps typing this. With the memory flooding back of how, when these reports were being presented, I finally realised just how 'global' was our AA lifeline.

Topics in workshops included the importance of sharing AA literature, ways of encouraging young people into AA, how to handle growth and change, service sponsorship and how to use the internet for public information and as a Twelfth Step tool.

The meeting closed with the recommendation that the next WSM meet in Mexico City in 2010 with the Theme 'Sponsorship Our Responsibility' and the recommendation regarding 'House bound Member' from our Conference of 2008 will be a workshop item. The meeting closed with the 'serenity prayer' repeated in all the languages of the delegates present (another lump in the throat occasion).

I would like to thank the organisers for making this event so memorable, I would also thank Ralph A who was there to guide me. I would want to close however by thanking each and every delegate, translator, and host committee, for their love and service. The Language of the Heart is really special.

*A full report of the World Service Meeting will be made available on our website.*

### **General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Ltd** (Ralph A, Chair GSB)

I have been a Trustee on the Board for six years and I would like to pay a tribute to those who went before us – the Trustees past and Trustees present who have done a great deal of work. I would like to give a bit of background of where we came from as a General Service Board.

An Advisory Committee of four members was formed in early 1948 (this is the embryo of Alcoholics Anonymous) and by 1949 the Advisory Committee of Group Leaders was deemed inappropriate and became the Group Representative Committee (GRC), so we had moved on a little bit.

Bill W came in 1950 and furthering his visit presented Great Britain with 1500 copies of the First Edition of the Big Book. To manage the distribution and income from sales a separate Free Foundation Committee was formed in 1952. Five early pioneers managed this gift and these men became the first fore-runners of the General Service Board. Later developments, the GRC became the Area and Group Representative Committee and acquired the name 'The Drunks Parliament'. By 1956 a wholly representative service structure had been developed and the General Service Board was incorporated as a legal entity on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1957. This is just a bit of a rough background to bring us up, near enough, to where we are today.

### **A.A.'S LEGACY OF SERVICE BY BILL W. (1951) (extract)**

'The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services Inc, the A.A. Grapevine Inc, and our board of trustees, known legally as the

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General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities’.

## **THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD**

The Board is the servant of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. The General Service Board serves the Fellowship by providing central services of various types and is a registered charity.

### **FUNCTIONS OF THE GSB**

- To ensure that the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are preserved intact
- To act as the chief service arm of Conference
- To plan and administrate overall policy and finance
- To act with probity and due prudence
- To report to Conference annually on matters of policy and finance
- To appoint an Executive Committee which is delegated to manage the day to day affairs on behalf of the GSB
- To maintain and develop communications internally within the Fellowship
- To maintain and develop communications externally with the public and professionals
- To appoint Committees or Sub Committees in support of the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous
- To have custodial oversight of executive services provided by the General Service Office

### **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee consist of:

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Honorary Treasurer
- Secretary

### **FUNCTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- To co-ordinate Board Meetings
- To plan and co-ordinate Board workshops
- To monitor and co-ordinate on-going Board projects
- To co-ordinate Board reports to Conference
- To monitor and make appropriate recommendations on the composition of the Board and its Committees in consultation with the General Secretary
- To co-ordinate the Annual Report of the company
- To act on behalf of the Board when matters arise and must be dealt with between meetings of the Board
- To advise the GSB on matters of policy
- To develop and implement good working practices
- To co-ordinate the recruitment and induction of non-alcoholic trustees
- To act as liaison between the Board and the General Service Office/Service Offices through the General Secretary

- To carry out specific delegated tasks set by the Board
- To appoint staff who are delegated to manage, administer and carry out the policies of the GSB
- To recruit, monitor and appraise the chief executive

## **CHAIRMAN**

The Chair takes a number of roles as the principal officer of the GSB, working closely with the Vice Chairman and Treasurer. The Chairman of the General Service Board also has a duty to protect staff from over-enthusiastic Board trustees who become too involved in detailed managerial issues.

## **FUNCTION OF THE CHAIRMAN**

- To chair the meetings of the GSB
- To work closely within the Executive Committee on matters of GSB policy
- To work closely with the chief executive to achieve the aims of the charity
- To authorise action to be taken between meetings of the full GSB
- To act as a channel of communication between the trustees and the staff
- To represent the charity at functions, meetings, with the press and media
- To monitor, with the Executive, and have oversight of the Committees and Sub Committees of the GSB

## **VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Vice-Chair acts for the Chair when the Chair is not available and undertakes assignments at the request of the Chair.

## **FUNCTION OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN**

- To act with full responsibility in the absence of the Chairman
- To produce and distribute minutes of all meetings of the Executive Committee
- To plan and co-ordinate Board workshops
- To work closely within the Executive Committee on matters of GSB policy

## **TREASURER**

The Treasurer takes the lead in overseeing the financial affairs of the Fellowship, ensuring its financial viability and the proper financial records and procedures are maintained.

## **FUNCTION OF THE TREASURER**

- To take an overview of AA's finance, ensuring that due prudence is exercised and that all financial reports comply with legislation. To assist trustees to perform their financial duties
- To advise the GSB on financial matters
- To present financial reports to the GSB and the Fellowship
- To keep the GSB aware of financial responsibilities

## **GENERAL SECRETARY**

The General Secretary is responsible to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited through the Executive Committee and to the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous for the efficient management and administration of the General Service Office, the Northern and Southern Service Offices, the European Information Centre and for the services of the Fellowship throughout Great Britain and English Speaking Continental Europe.

## **FUNCTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

- To ensure that the Board and Conference receive appropriate advice and information on all relevant matters
- To report on the progress of the Fellowship and on all matters relevant to the discharge of the Board's responsibilities
- To advise the Board and provide background information which can help the deliberations of the Board
- To report on the progress of the Fellowship and on all matters relevant to the discharge of the Board's responsibilities
- To manage the resources of the Fellowship in order that the General Service Office and Service Offices have the appropriate human, material and financial resources required to achieve their objectives
- To have final responsibility for the day to day management of GSO and the Service Offices
- To foster good communications throughout the Fellowship
- To act as the chief spokesman for the Fellowship in accordance with the instructions of the General Service Board
- To foster good relations with the media, government, statutory and voluntary organisations

## **GSB INVOLVEMENT:**

### **SUB COMMITTEES**

- AA Service News
- Archives
- Armed Services
- Electronic Communications
- Health
- Literature
- Nominations
- Public Information
- Roundabout
- Share
- Telephones

### **LIAISON AND REGIONAL OFFICERS' MEETINGS**

- Electronic Communications
- Employment
- Health
- Public Information

- Prisons
- Probation/Courts and Social Services
- Share
- Treasurers

#### ZONAL MEETINGS

- European Service Meeting
- World Service Meeting
- Sub Sahara Africa Service Meeting

#### CONVENTIONS

- Northern
- Scottish
- Southern
- Welsh

#### CONFERENCE

- Conference Steering Committee
- Conference

Within six months of coming into AA the meeting I attended, Tuesday night Charles Street in the Friends Meeting House, were having a conscience meeting, all new to me, and they decided that it would be good for me to make the tea and do the cigarette ashtrays. So I did and they had the cleanest cups and ashtrays in the world. I was always there on a Tuesday night with soap suds up to my elbows.

The realisation came, sometime after that, that I had been trusted with service, I had been trusted. I had now become a trusted servant.

Through the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous from the top, the group, I then worked in service in Intergroup, Region, Conference (all the delegates here at Conference are trusted servants), Trustee and then Chairman of the General Service Board. I never questioned it.

I have been trusted in service for 29 years – trusted in service – this is a service we want to trust you with. We think you are ready for it. Trusted in service came from my mother. My mother, she died two years ago aged 91, when she was a girl she was in service and I was chatting to her and I said about her being a servant, she said she was never a servant, she said, “Ralph, I was trusted in service”. That’s where it came from.

### **Electronic Communications**

(Mari F)

My name is Mari, I’m an alcoholic and it does not seem like a year since I was standing up here, it really doesn’t. I just do not know where the time has gone – they say that time goes quicker as you get older so I think I must be getting very old, very quickly because this year has just gone, but it also goes quickly when you are busy and we have been very, very busy.



2008 was an exciting year for Electronic Communications within the Fellowship. To start with, Conference effectively established it within the Fellowship Service structure by creating the post of Electronic Communications Liaison Officer (ECLO) at Intergroup level. I am pleased to say that the Fellowship at large reacted with positive enthusiasm to this and before I knew it ECLO posts were being filled across GB and applications for posts within the Webteam started to come in through the Service structure. At time of writing this (March), there are 13 Region ECLOs in post, together with 39 Intergroup ECLOs, and 72 local websites are currently hosted on the main AAGB website.

To maintain and administer the national site we have:

The AA Webmaster who has overall responsibility for the website, assisted by the Webteam, comprising 2 Web Assistants (technical), a Forum Administrator with 1 Moderator. The Online Response Team Co-ordinator has three dedicated Web Assistants and 13 Online Responders. However, there is room for more, and the Online Response Team in particular is always actively recruiting for more Responders.

Application forms and Job Descriptions are available from GSO, downloadable from the website (Documents Library, item 5) and, hopefully, from your Intergroup/Region ECLO.

What this means is that we have effectively been able to respond to each and every cry for help within hours, reopen the forums and start to catch up a bit on the backlog of work in the daily administration of the website.

However, there are still things we need to do to fulfil both the charges laid on us by Conference 2008 and by the growing needs of the Fellowship at large.

Firstly, you charged the Electronic Communications Sub Committee (ECSC) with both writing a Job Description for Intergroup ECLOs, and with updating Guideline 19 – Electronic Communications. You are probably wondering where these documents are ... well, they are in progress but not completed. To write an accurate Job Description, one has to know what the job actually entails, and, with a completely new position just created, there was no way we could know that until the ECLOs were in post and actually doing the job so they could tell us. We held a Seminar in September 2008 and invited each and every Intergroup and Region to send their ECLO/RECLo along – and where they did not have one, to send a Representative to take back an account to their area. The response was good, with over 50 attendees from throughout GB. One of the three Workshops at this Seminar was aimed at establishing the role of the Intergroup ECLO, and much very valuable information was gathered from those attending.

A Forum with exclusive access for ECLO/RECLos was put on the website so that members in these posts could share experience – and the ECSC could gather that experience together to enlarge the picture of the role as it emerged. Every ECLO was invited to join that Forum discussion as soon as official notification of their appointment was received at GSO and forwarded to the ECSC. A picture started to take shape. The ECSC decided that the best way forward for both projects – ECLO Job Description and rewriting Guideline 19 – was to combine the exercises and

produce one comprehensive document covering all aspects of Electronic Communications, and that the Fellowship generally should be invited to have their say, to put forward their thoughts and suggestions. To achieve this, an open Forum on the website was set up for a limited period. This forum has now closed and all replies and suggestions are in the process of evaluation by the ECSC to assist in the preparation of a new Guideline. This project we will be working on after Conference and hope to have a Draft Guideline 19 with the Literature Committee by August for presentation to Conference 2010. So, although as yet you cannot see the result of your Recommendations of 2008, that does not mean that nothing has been done – what it does mean is that to give you the best we can, we need to take our time to make sure its done to the best of our ability, so that it will serve the Fellowship for years to come. Haste can mean waste, of both time and resources, and we intend the new Guideline shall be fit for the purpose of guiding the Fellowship in the application of Electronic Communications at all levels throughout the Fellowship not just for a year but for the foreseeable future. Watch This Space!

The Seminar held in September 2008 also highlighted two other key areas – our Online Response Team’s cooperation and coordination with the Telephone Service, and the level and scope of the national AAGB website. Let’s just take a look at these two areas ...

#### Online Response Service (ORS):

Whether by email or by phone a cry for help is a cry for help – and whenever anyone calls out for help we want the hand of AA to always be there offering that help. We want our front-line troops – the Responders – to work together to make sure that help arrives. We want to establish best working practices to use our resources in the most effective, efficient way. I was invited to provide a workshop at the Telephone Seminar on the work of ORS and ways for our services to work together. Ann McD, GSB Trustee for Telephones, attended the EComs Seminar to present a joint workshop with the ORS Coordinator to extend that initial idea. Both workshops were very well received by those attending, and it is my opinion that they have opened up a new era of the two disciplines working together ... a really good example of how AA is much more effective when its different areas work in Unity.

To further this, it is our intention to hold the Electronic Communications Regional Liaison Officers meeting the same weekend the Telephone Liaison Officers are meeting – and hope to join the two parties together for one of the workshops to explore how we can further the cooperation between the two Services. It is established practice that the Online Responder’s main priority is to get the Newcomer to pick up the phone so that the Telephone Service can arrange for 12stepping to be carried out ... now Telephone Responders are suggesting to callers that they could be visiting the AA website while waiting for the 12stepper to call – keeping them busy and, hopefully, their minds off that next drink. Working together we are more effective at carrying the message.

#### National AAGB Website

The history of the website is one of a few dedicated members adding bits and pieces as the site grew organically, using whatever systems they had on their home computers and the result was that the AA website was like a patchwork quilt - and the stitching was starting to fray. Don’t get me wrong – this is not a criticism of those early

webmasters. Without them, their expertise and dedicated service, we would not have had a website at all. They did a wonderful job for us – but nothing changes as fast as the internet, and it doesn't get any simpler or less technical as years go by ... and our website is showing its age, both in presentation and technical configuration.

Last year you let us know that there were a lot of things about the website you wanted changed, and this was reinforced by the comments and suggestions put forward at our Seminar and on the website forums. Therefore, the General Service Board decided that the time was right for the site to be professionally supported. The plan is to have the site redesigned and hosted in GB, and also to provide access to outside technical support, if necessary, to supplement our own Service volunteers. In this way the website will be upgraded to a new, modern system, consistent across the whole site, which will both ensure stability and provide safeguards and security for the future. It will not in any way, shape or form, be 'taken over' by outsiders, and it will mean more service positions available on the webteams, not less. This is no small task – but as our Treasurer has already stated, provision is being made to finance this. Don't ask me how much it will cost – I don't know yet. We are in the investigation stage, evaluating the best way to go forward – we won't rush, but then we won't drag our heels either when we find the right solution for the Fellowship ...we are your Trusted Servants - trust us, and again, Watch This Space.

So there you have it ... exciting times. Although the internet changes more quickly and frequently than anything else on earth – AA doesn't. AA takes its time, uses prudence and due diligence to ensure that what we do, we do very well. Our decisions have to be made with our future generations in mind ... and so we seem to make haste slowly. Sometimes this can be frustrating to those of us who want to keep up with the changes in the world, but we owe it to those who will come after us to ensure we get them the best, now, while we have the chance to do this.... and this we are doing.

## **Development Fund**

(Roger B)

Good evening Conference, my name is Roger, I'm an alcoholic and I'm Vice Chair of the General Service Board.

I would like to take you through a journey which I have been privileged to travel during my time as Vice-Chair of the General Service Board. This experience has shown me that the structures and processes which we have in place can be very effective. It also makes me even more grateful for the strength of AA in Great Britain.

The journey begins in Frankfurt at the European Service Meeting (ESM) in where I was a delegate to the ESM.

As usual with AA the business started on time and the work continued throughout the weekend. There were Fellowships in their fledgling stage going through all the usual problems of personalities and sincere differences of opinion, there were others where the service structure itself was creating problems.

There was a familiar theme throughout of a lack of AA Members willing to serve, leading to vacant service positions. In others the age of the Fellowship meant that service positions were inevitably held by members with comparatively short term

sobriety. Above all there was an enormous feeling of unity in the desire to carry out our primary purpose.

Arising from the ESM was the possibility that AA Poland could assist emerging AA in Eastern European Countries at their Conference but to do so would need financial support.

This suggestion was followed up by a meeting in Warsaw 21 – 24 August 2007.

On arrival in Warsaw I was met by two General Secretaries – something of a novelty! But we were down to work very quickly.

We went into discussions concerning the best way for Polish Groups in Great Britain to be supported by the AA Structure. Then the following days were spent considering how the Eastern European countries AA Fellowships in their formative years and could be helped to develop sound structures and maybe avoid some of the pitfalls which have been experienced by other countries as the structure is developed. Agreement was easily achieved to support the Polish initiative from the Development Fund.

I was also heartened by the unashamed way that the Fellowship was signposted. The venue of the Region Meeting was an office rented by AA for one meeting a week and the rest of the time acts as a Regional hub and telephone service – outside was a large AA symbol to announce its function. There was a meeting just around the corner from the hotel and once again the AA symbol was in evidence as well as a contact poster. I was really very moved by the whole experience perhaps particularly as I celebrated 22 years continuous sobriety in Poland on the Friday!

I attended the 37<sup>th</sup> Polish Conference 2008 in Popovo near Warsaw as part of this project to assist the Fellowships in Eastern Europe to develop sound structures and finances to assist them in passing AA's message of recovery in their countries.

I set off from Manchester Airport on Friday 7 November with some misgivings. I met up with Angela Varley (GSO Office Manager) in Amsterdam to travel onwards to Warsaw. As on the previous visit to Poland, we were met with great hospitality which included transport to the Conference Centre in Popovo about an hour's drive from Warsaw. The venue was ideal with an ample meeting room for Conference itself and several breakout rooms for separate meetings.

The work began in earnest on Saturday Morning with the observer's briefing. We were ably assisted with simultaneous translation. The countries represented were Slovakia 3 people; Belarus 2 people, Russia 2 people; Estonia 2 people, Ukraine 1 person, Germany 1 person, and GB 2 people. The meeting began with the Preamble, a few moments silence and the Serenity Prayer. Witek (General Manager at the Polish GSO) spoke briefly to welcome everyone and to explain that we were hoping to share experience and ideas, helping those whose country's structures are still developing to advance and in the hope that each country would be able to attend the European Service Meeting (ESM) in the near future. He also gratefully acknowledged the part that Great Britain had played in enabling those present to attend. Each person was then asked to introduce themselves and say a little bit about why they were there and what they hoped to achieve.

Then the Conference began in earnest. There were about 100 people present, and the proceedings smoothly followed the agenda. An introduction was given by the Conference Chair, then election of secretary and returning committee. This was followed by a presentation on the purpose of Conference and a vote to approve the agenda. There was a very informative presentation from the GSB Chair and GSO Manager and general discussion of “The AA Fellowship in Poland – What is ahead of us”. Then dinner at 2 pm – all the meals were Polish style which I enjoyed.

We reconvened at 3pm with GSB presentation and recommendations including Conference Charter amendments which brought Polish AA even closer to the GB model. There was then a report on the progress to the 35 year anniversary Convention in Wroclaw. We had a short break while the GSB and committee meetings continued until supper at 6pm – but just like GB Conference we weren’t finished! There were presentations from the GSB, rotating out trustees, new delegates and a candidate to the Board (who had driven us from the airport to Popovo) who I am glad to say was subsequently elected.

On Sunday morning each of the foreign visitors were given the time to speak in the plenary session. Some of the country’s delegates spoke more than others - as you would expect. When it came to our turn, after the usual pleasantries, Angela went on to explain the recommendation made at the last ESM to assist developing countries to create sound structures and to be able to send a representative to the ESM. The Polish/GB AA project taking place at this Conference is part that endeavour. Angela also explained that GSO GB was the European Information Centre and that if anyone wanted to contact us with regard anything that we could offer in that capacity, they could contact Angela and she would try to get relevant information and help where possible.

On Sunday afternoon five workshops were held, and the international observers had their own on the theme of “Tradition Seven”. It was interesting to hear how each of the countries organise their finances. I described how Britain uses the “waterfall” method of cash flow in the Fellowship in Great Britain, starting with the groups and running through the structure to GSO. Everyone was very interested and some were amazed when they heard our turnover in excess of £1m p.a. They were surprised and a little amused to hear that a small proportion was invested in the Stock Market. All the participants were interested to hear about how much prudent reserve was held at each level of service, and this gave way to quite a bit of discussion. The Workshop ended on a high and everyone felt as though a lot had been learned from the session.

On Sunday evening the international guests gathered again separate from the Conference and Committee Meetings. Tadius F asked that everyone think and offer suggestions for the workshop and sessions that could take place next year. He explained that this had been our first year, and that we could be better prepared next time to deal with issues that each country would find relevant. However nothing concrete emerged, but, having heard what everyone had been saying, there was no shortage of issues facing any of the countries.

The Monday Morning brought once again the International discussion panel met to wind up our discussions and to make sure that all contact details had been given. Several serious issues arose which was hampering some of the developing AA structures – growing pains which we’ve all experienced in creating a loving united self

supporting Fellowship. Most of the problems came down to lack of unity and trust leading to financial difficulties and problems in establishing an effective group conscience. There is also the serious difficulty of countries other than Russia not being registered to publish the Big Book in Russian - even though several countries have Russian as their main language and it is the second language in most of the others. This leads to a loss in income from literature sales, and coupled with a limited contribution from AA Groups making a stable effective GSO difficult to establish. Witek (General Manager) offered the opportunity for the Ukrainian AA Office Manager to visit the GSO in Warsaw to see how administration and structural questions were handled. We invited two observers from the Ukraine to this 2009 Conference and as a result we are pleased to welcome Andrey and Oleg.

Angela and I thanked everyone for their kind welcome and attention during the Conference, and Angela said that the progress that had been made with our international friends was just what we had wanted to happen, and that it was the beginning of heightened communication and understanding. The part that AA Great Britain had played in helping financially to enable the attendance of those invited from other countries was gratefully acknowledged.

The return journey was somewhat fraught as the plane from Warsaw to Amsterdam was delayed which meant that we missed our connections and stayed in Amsterdam overnight at the airline's expense.

I found the whole Polish Conference to be a heart warming and inspiring event which I am very privileged to have been able to attend. I sincerely hope that this beginning that has been made will continue in assisting those in a less fortunate position than we are in Great Britain.

My sincere thanks to Angela whose dedication and commitment continues to be an inspiration to me and I am sure many others.

Please remember that buying hard back copies of the books Alcoholics Anonymous, As Bill Sees It and Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions from GSO GB enables you to contribute to the work to further AA and recovery from alcoholism in other countries.

And finally – thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve the Fellowship in this way it - has been a tremendously uplifting experience.

## **Non-Alcoholic Trustees**

(Louise Foxcroft)

I have been looking forward to doing this ever since I was volunteered for the job, in my absence I would like to say, and one of the reasons I have been looking forward to it is partially for showing-off, because everyone likes to do that, but also so I can tell the Fellowship exactly what I think of it. I think it is wonderful. I think it is an absolutely splendid organisation.

I am going to give you just a brief history of non-alcoholic Trustees (NATs) and there have been non-alcoholic Trustees with AA since the 1930s and, in fact, the first Board in Great Britain had five Trustees – two alcoholic and three non-alcoholic Trustees. They were initially engaged in organisational procedures, setting up the Trusteeships and setting up all the Foundation – it has always been a very practical role and they

come from all different professions for example clergy, media, academia, business, law, prison service, social work, you name it, over the years we have had people from all professions. They bring whatever expertise they can to the Board and they bring sometimes personal experience as well.

We need to know the workings of AA, we can be visible, we don't have to be anonymous obviously so we protect that very important tradition of anonymity, and we are supposed to bring balance to the Board. I have been a Trustee now for four years and it seems to balance quite well – sometimes it tips quite precariously to one side or the other – but it always retains and regains its balance. I think it works incredibly well. There is a great deal of passion and you know how passionate you all are about your Fellowship and this Conference is a constructive statement of that passion.

There are four NATs, there's myself, Ash, Nohaid who cannot be here due to family commitments and Carol, who many of you know and also cannot be here this weekend.

The history of how I became a NAT is that I was in a very, very long marriage for over 20 years to a drinker and I left, or rather escaped, and I was researching my PhD at the time in the history of medicine and it was on the creation of addiction as a medical condition. What I thought I would find out was what this addiction was, what alcoholism is and why somebody would choose drink over their family and their job. Why would they do that? I did all that research, I did three years research, I wrote a PhD and I wrote a book and I have no idea. I have more theory than you can imagine but I don't get it.

After I had gone through this process and ended up at square one, I met somebody who I used to know decades ago, but when I first met him he had been a drinker and 25 years later he'd been in AA and he is now 31 years sober. Talking to him and listening to him I realized that there was an answer and that I was asking the wrong questions. There was an answer. The answer is AA. He said to me after sometime of discussion that he had heard that the Board was looking for new non-alcoholic Trustees and why didn't I apply. I did and I was interviewed and very happily they took me on.

Since I have been on the Board I have worked on the Literature Committee which has been very, very busy and a huge amount of fun, and very, very satisfying. I have done some media training with Angela of GSO. We went and we were recorded – a sort of mock radio programme and mock TV programme and that is incredibly difficult because, when we are talking to each other we know what we are talking about, if you are being interviewed by somebody from the media who has a high level of ignorance about what you are doing, they will ask you some very difficult questions. It is quite hard to keep your cool and keep to the Traditions at the same time without being drawn off into some political issue or some other difficult area. We came back from that, we did a July workshop and we submitted the whole of the Board to this form of torture that they put us under, nobody got away with anything.

I have spoken at Conferences and I nearly got to Sweden but there was a bomb on the plane so I didn't get there. Last year I went to New York to the 58<sup>th</sup> US & Canadian Conference with Ann, General Secretary, and we stayed above a Sweet Shop, but we didn't move out of the hotel – it was eight in the morning until past midnight some nights. It was so intense but fantastic, so fantastic and my whole Board experience has

been like that. They have sent me to the Welsh Assembly and to Westminster to speak.

As far as the Board goes, there are quite a few members rotating off this weekend and I am going to miss them, I'm really going to miss them an awful lot. Things are going to change. This is my fourth Conference, my first Conference was a bit of a baptism of fire, it was very difficult, very intense but it gave me a real understanding of the conviction and the commitment, the passion and the enjoyment and the humanity of AA and that is followed right through. That sort of enjoyment and that humanity is love and service.

## **Archives**

(Polly M-P)

My name is Polly, I am an alcoholic and from the Welsh Borders a little city called Hereford and I am really pleased to be here. We are now going to show you 10 minutes of the 35 minute 'Journey of Discovery' DVD.

### *After the showing of the DVD Polly continued*

I would just like to say a couple of really sincere thank yous to you, the Fellowship, including the Board members for trusting me. I'd like to say thank you to the oldtimers who gave significant information to help write this script and I'd very much like to say thank you so much to the office staff at Toft Green, particularly to Paul K who is an absolute masterpiece with technology.

I'd also like to say thank you to the whole of Archivists Network who have fed this information into us over the years and to Joe H, the Fellowship Archivist. Joe and I have worked very closely together for a number of years and it's been a really amazing experience.

The DVD was distributed to all groups with your Spring copies of AA Service News and I did hear some people saying that their group had not had it so I would like to put in a plug for the 'pink' form. If you are not registered or your information is out of date and GSO does not have your information then that is possibly why you didn't get it.

Your Archivist, if you have an Archivist in Intergroup or Region, will have the DVD, a DVD of the still photographs in this moving DVD and they will also have a copy of the script so that your local Archivist can give an archives display at one of your service meetings or at a Convention.

## **National Conventions Update**

### **Scottish**

(Martin B)

In my capacity as GSB Trustee to the Scottish Convention I will begin this report with a loving invitation for members to attend the next 'Scottish' which this year has located in Oban 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> May 2009.



The report I submit is one which I hope will give a flavour of the hard work and difficult decisions undertaken by this year's Convention Committee. Firstly, however, thanks must be expressed to the members who rotated out after last year's convention. The event at Dundee was successful in every way except showing a financial loss. In the difficult situation they had found themselves in to stage this event, they truly made a magnificent effort.

To bring the convention back onto a sound financial basis this year's Committee decided there could no longer be any deposit given to hotels and that this year's event would be held in an independent hall. Thus the offer to stage the event in Oban which was suggested by members of the Highland Region was accepted after much discussion and review of alternatives.

Once agreed the planning was put into place to try to make the event a positive experience for all attendees. One addition to last year's event which will be repeated at Oban and that is to have a service speaker on every top table. The feed back on this from the previous event was mainly very positive (when would you get everybody agreeing).

The publicity for this event was available from Sept 2008 and bookings are giving great cause for optimism. Speakers have been contacted, bands booked, raffle organised. So in the words of that well known TV personality (Joe 90) "all systems are go".

So, all that remains, is to thank the trusted servants from the four Regions who make up the Committee for their dedication. Also, to ask you, once again, if you have free time in May come to our convention and experience the beauty of 'Bonnie Scotland'.

## **Welsh** (Polly M-P)

In common with all the National and local Conventions, the Welsh National Convention Committee are busy looking at every possible way to give excellent value for money to members attending the Convention at the Metropole Hotel in Landrindod Wells. The weekend dates are from May 29<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> and the cost for the weekend is £148, whilst Registration for whole or part of the weekend remains at £10.

The Committee has discussed all points raised by visitors in the past and as a result have addressed the programme for the whole of the Saturday, members will now find a complete day full of meetings, a service workshop and short breaks for lunch, coffee and tea.

The Spiritual Service on Sunday morning will now adopt a format which is non – religious, but dignified and focused on AA principles. The theme of this year's Convention is "The Best is yet to Come" and we trust will help lift our spirits during these times of stringency and remind us that we are not sentenced to a life that will be in any way dull or boring.

## **Southern**

(Dave D)

The Convention Committee worked hard to put this Convention on and their hard work paid off as most of the feedback that was received was positive.

There were three meetings held this year that 'Signers' were present. The 'Signers' were Non-Alcoholics and they said that they had thoroughly enjoyed the time they were with us and found the Spiritual Meeting very moving.

The Band that played at the dance on Saturday night shared that they had never seen so many people on the dance floor and the Band went onto say that it was the best night they had had.

There was an Armed Services Workshop held at this year's Convention and those involved with this found it most rewarding. A letter of thanks from the Chair of the Armed Services Workshop was sent to GSO and letter was read out to the Convention Committee.

Like last year I feel that the six sponsoring Regions of this Convention can be proud of their Convention Committee. I personally found the Convention Committee a real joy to work with and witnessed lots of encouragement to share and help one another.

The Southern National Convention Committee work within a Terms of Reference and throughout 2008 these have been fully respected.

Many thanks to the General Service Board for giving me this chance to do service with the Southern National Convention.

## **Northern**

(Jim T)

The Committee, formed from the three Sponsoring Bodies of, Midlands, North East and North West Regions have met periodically to ensure that as far as possible all that can be done has been done to both preserve good relations with the venue, The Norbreck Castle Hotel, and for members of the Fellowship to have an enjoyable and thought-provoking time over the weekend of the convention.

Distribution of Flyers for the 35<sup>th</sup> annual NNC has been wide spread to include:

- 12,000 to the General Service Office for mailing within the AA Service News
- 250 to our Northern and Southern Service offices
- 600 to the three Sponsoring Bodies
- 20 to each of the committee members

Although Al-Anon, Area 25, cannot participate this year the local Blackpool Al-Anon Groups rose to the challenge and wish to have some involvement throughout the weekend.

To highlight the work carried out and to possibly encourage involvement in our Third Legacy of Service, presentations shall take place, which will include Armed Services and one of our monthly magazines, *Share*.

## **Employment Update**

(Jerry C)

Employment has come a long way over the past 4 years. At my first Regional Employment Liaison Officers (RELOs) meeting we were only 2, this year there were 12 of us with representation from 9 Regions. Regions are becoming more aware of the work that can be done in Employment.

The RELOs have produced the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the newsletter 'Hello! ELOs!' This has been distributed to all Regions and Intergroups and has also been sent out electronically to members on the PI database. Those working in Employment in the Fellowship are keen to pass on their experience and encourage others to become involved.

The Guideline for Employment has been reviewed and will go to Conference in April 2009.

The RELOs have put forward suggestions as to how Employment can be represented on the website and will be working with Electronic Communications to make this happen.

In October 2008 the Scottish Parliament held an AA information evening. I was invited to give a short PowerPoint presentation on Employment which was very well received. I would like to thank the organisers for the opportunity to represent AA at this event.

The Fellowship participated at the following Conferences & Exhibitions 2008:

Health & Wellbeing at Work	March	Birmingham
NASUWT	March	Birmingham
Unison	June	Bournemouth
TUC	September	Brighton
CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Directors)	September	Harrogate

The CIPD Conference, previously manned by Yorkshire Region is to relocate from Harrogate to Manchester in 2009.

Conferences & Exhibitions booked so far for 2009:

Health & Wellbeing at Work	24-25 February	Birmingham
NASUWT Annual Conference	13-15 April	Bournemouth
CIPD	17-19 November	Manchester

I would like to thank the Fellowship for the hard work that has been done this year. I feel privileged to have represented Employment for the past 4 years and know that this area of service will continue to grow thanks to the enthusiasm of members of the Fellowship who are already involved.

## Health Update

(Vince O)

The past 12 months have been reasonably busy on the Health front, I have attended Regional Forums in Wales and North East England, on these occasions I had the opportunity to use the new PowerPoint presentation that has been produced by the Health Sub Committee for Health Liaison Officers (HLOs). Requests for copies have been received from a number of HLOs and the feed back we have received to date has been positive, this has also been the case with the new “AA as a resource for the medical profession”. In October last year I was privileged to attend an Alcohol and Violence Conference in Edinburgh where I made contact with youth workers who showed a particular interest in AA.

Approximately 55% of Intergroups have HLOs and 66% for Regions, which shows a steady rate of activity compared to last year, I am also aware that sterling work goes on behind the scenes that is not reported. At the annual RHLOs meeting some new points of interest were reported;

- Hospitals with radio stations are broadcasting AA Public Information cds,
- In some areas PCT (Primary Care Trust) internal mailing systems are being utilised for distributing particular AA literature, the value of this new method is Doctors receive the information personally.
- AA speakers have been attending University Medical Schools resulting in students requesting to attend AA open meetings.
- It has become apparent that some Hospitals are beginning to ask for ID from AA members when attending wards.
- Communication between Intergroups and Regions has proved more effective where a Regional Electronic Communications Officers post is operative.

All the NIP (Nursing in Practise) events and some others such as Primary Care, RCN, were attended this year by local Intergroups, and the reports show a consistent interest in AA and its activities. This year we have stands booked at the following Conferences:

Health and Wellbeing at Work	Birmingham
Nursing in Practice	Glasgow
Royal College of Nursing	Cumbernauld
Nursing in Practice	Manchester
Primary Care	Birmingham
Nursing in Practice	Cardiff
Nursing in Practice	London

The Health Sub Committee currently has vacancies for any interested members to apply, all Regions and Intergroups are notified and any information (application forms, criteria) is available from GSO.

Unfortunately due to the economic down turn the Health Awareness Seminar planned for this year has been postponed until further notice.

My sincere thanks go out to all who have been involved in carrying our message through Health liaison work this past year.

## **Prisons Update**

(Jim S)

In order to support, and improve communications with Prison Liaison Officers (PLOs) at both Intergroup and Regional levels, a Prison sub-committee has been formed and will soon be up and running. It is hoped that this will provide a more co-ordinated approach to prison work throughout Great Britain. Other goals that we will set out to achieve will be to appoint from within the committee, a moderator for the Prison website and find ways to make better use of this excellent facility. The committee will also help promote and encourage the appointment of Liaison Officers throughout the Regions. Another important task we will endeavor to achieve will be to identify prisons where no AA meetings are being held at present and to assist and encourage local Intergroups to support meetings in these establishments.

At the last count 71% of Prisons now hold meetings on a regular basis, which means AA has a presence in some 110 Prisons in Great Britain, a small increase in the last 12 months. This shows great credit to all involved in a prison group, as the ever growing prison population and increasing security requirements grow, so too can the problems in gaining access to attend the Prison Meetings. It is to AA's credit in the way that PLO's and sponsors continue to invoke their patience and tolerance and courtesy in sometimes difficult and frustrating circumstances. Staff at GSO recently distributed a Prison Liaison Resource pack to PLO's, using available literature and also containing copies of the Prison Guidelines and a copy of our Pro-forma Service Level Agreement. A further leaflet is being prepared by the Literature Committee and this will be included along with other information material given to prisoners on reception.

The Prison Postal Service continues to grow and thanks to the prompting of GSO we have at present a surfeit of volunteers willing to correspond with prisoners and for a change we need to raise the profile of this valuable service with inmates.

The meetings at the Ministry of Justice attended by Prison and Probation/Social Services Trustees and Non-Alcoholic Trustee Carol Titley, officials from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and a representative of the Probation Service continue on a quarterly basis. It is also hoped to widen the scope of this group by inviting along representatives of the Prison Chaplaincy and the Prison Service. In Scotland I have held meetings with the Scottish Prison Service on a range of issues with sometimes painfully slow progress, on the matters of the funding of disclosures and late cancellation of meetings etc.

On a more positive side when a new prison was opened recently in Scotland, HMP Addiewell, AA were approached by the prison authorities prior to its opening to request that a AA meeting be set up in the prison and this will be up and running shortly. I have recently had discussions with the Scottish Minister of Community Safety to try and achieve the level of co-operation in Scotland that we enjoy at present with Ministry of Justice in England and Wales. I have also met with HM Inspector of Scottish Prisons and he has helped put things in perspective, he has assured me that it

is also a difficult time for other organisations that operate in Scottish Prisons caused by the growth in the prison population. Voluntary groups in general are being affected with some educational classes and religious services being cancelled due to pressure on staff, caused by the high number of inmates in Scottish prisons. It is perhaps of little comfort to those involved, to be re-assured that AA is not being singled out for special treatment in this respect.

During the past year I have attended the following events:

- Scottish Association of Study of Offending Conference *Towards a Scottish Penal Consensus*.
- Criminal Justice 2008 Conference.

I am also grateful to Trustee John S by attending the NOMS *Prison and Beyond* Conference on my behalf.

I have also had the honour to give presentations at:

- North East Regional Forum
- Eastern Regional Forum

I would once again extend my gratitude and thanks to PLO's, sponsors, and postal correspondents who continue to give their unstinting support to this important service in penal establishments throughout the country.

It is my privilege to be a member of the GSB and an honour to serve as Trustee for Prisons.

## **Probation/Social Services Update**

(Martin B)

Before beginning the report it is appropriate to thank Charles W the previous Trustee for Probation/Social Services (P/SS). His dedicated work and commitment to take forward 'carrying the message' in this discipline was exemplary and well received at all levels of service.

The last year has been a mixture of change, consolidation and development for P/SS. Carol Titley the non-alcoholic Trustee has been extremely busy giving presentations on the 'Thames Valley Model' and how it helps carry the message to professionals at Westminster, 'The Scottish Parliament' and 'The Welsh Assembly'. She also did a workshop at a 'National Alcohol Awareness' seminar organised by the National Offender Management Strategy team at the Ministry of Justice. The feedback from all these venues on Carol's inputs was very positive.

Conference 2008 also requested that Guideline 13 on P/SS be reviewed, this has been completed by the P/SS Regional Liaison Officers meeting in June 2008 making recommendations for changes to bring the document into a more comprehensive and readable document. The Literature Committee then refined the Guideline and the draft will be presented to Conference 2009.

The Regional Liaison Officers also requested that a sub committee for P/SS be established. The GSB approved the setting up of the group which will have a maximum of four members and meet three times a year in York. The remit of the group will be to: support regional liaison officers, to develop and refine the Information Handbook, to create a News page for P/SS in *AA Service News* and to support the development of a web page on the national AA site.

The advert for sub-committee members had a closing date of 31<sup>st</sup> December and to date there has been three applications. So hopefully the sub-group will be meeting soon to take forward the objectives described.

P/SS along with Prisons will be giving a presentation at the Eastern Forum on ‘Valentines’ day 2009. A power point has been created to show to participants.

Quarterly meetings continued jointly with Prisons at the Ministry of Justice. There are continued efforts to role out the ‘Thames Valley Model’ and great help in this has come from Chris S South East Region.

The Terms of Reference for P/SS have also been approved by the GSB.

So it has been a busy time and I hope the work completed will enhance ‘carrying the message’ to the still suffering alcoholic.’

As of February 2009 there are 55 Intergroup and 8 Regional Liaison officers’ posts filled approximately 50% in each area. So there is still a lot of work to be done.

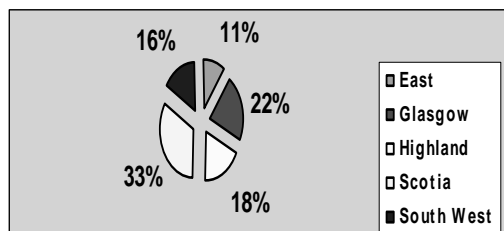
Lastly, my thanks to all the support I have been given in this post from members, liaison officers, fellow Trustees, GSO staff who are amazing in their help and from the God of my understanding.

## Roundabout Update

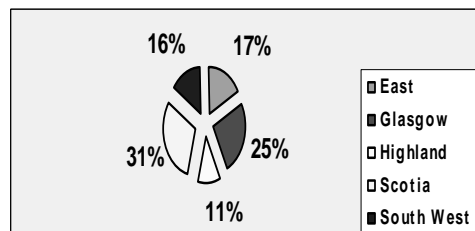
(Andy C)

This is your meeting in print and in the last year:

- 23,000 magazines were sold
- 175 articles published
- Is self supporting
- Roundabout Diaries are available
- Subscriptions are via GSO



**Sales by Region**



**Articles by Region**

Articles and subscriptions are always welcome and regular features for 2009 are:

- Views from Inside
- At your Service
- Young Members

Many thanks to all who have supported Roundabout over the last four years and especially to all those involved behind the scenes to ensure that each month the magazine is published, printed, produced and distributed.

## **Share Update**

(John S)

Having been in post now for the past twelve months, it is now perhaps relevant that I draw attention to the following facts:

The magazine has been vastly improved singularly under the direction of the Editor Ro, by the reintroduction of full page colour Cartoons, the inclusion of Sponsor Judo, reformatting of magazine layout, together with themes linked, via quality photographs on front covers, with that of subject content and removable perforated back pages.

It is acknowledged that there have been occasions in the last twelve months, when the magazine has been late, this issue has been addressed and will continue to be monitored.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the stalwart efforts on the part of the Northern and Southern National Liaison Officers, and a very small number of both Intergroup and Regional Share liaison officers, all of whom have given most generously of their time and effort, in promoting Share at Conventions and by other methods.

Our thanks are also extended to members of the Share team for their remarkable efforts in putting together Dairies, Calendars and bi monthly newsletters all of which are produced to a professional standard.

Share magazine circulation figures appear to be almost static and comparable with the previous year. However, this could be viewed as a positive, when viewed against more commercial publications, whose circulation figures are in obvious decline, in the current economic climate.

Calendar and Diary sales have by contrast been most encouraging.

The Jubilee Edition is still available from GSO, having both historical value in addition to containing excellent Share articles.

Share magazine and its other products provide an extremely important opportunity for Carrying the Message. However if the full benefit of Share is to be realised, it is necessary, for individual members at all levels, from Group, Intergroup, Region and the General Service Board, to commit to ensuring this product receives maximum support in every way possible if Share magazine is to sustain growth.



This can be achieved in a variety of ways.

By Groups appointing a Share /Literature Secretary, who can regularly order Share for Group members whereby these can be used as an aid to recovery.

- As gift to the newcomer, say after their 1<sup>st</sup> Month,.
- As an aid to specific steps, by sponsors who can pass them on when an appropriate Step is being approached by a sponsee.
- As Birthday present in the form of a 3/6/12 month subscription to group members.
- Groups/Members passing them on to Prison sponsors in their area.
- Groups/Members passing them on for use in Hospitals or Doctors Surgeries

There are many other ways in which Share can be used, why not explore possibilities with your Group, Intergroup or Region. It was generally felt Share is often the last consideration on agenda items. Discussion on the value of Share Magazine in recovery could be emphasised more.

Let's not underestimate the value and benefits of Share Service positions, this is an opportunity to be involved in helping to carry the message primarily, though not exclusively, within the Fellowship at all levels of the service structure.

There is an opportunity of raising awareness of the value of Share magazine and its associated products such as Calendars, Diaries and Jubilee edition:

- By use of the Share stand at National and local conventions.
- By hosting Share Workshops at National and local conventions
- By appointment of Intergroup and Regional Share liaison Officers
- By appointment to the Share team of a Web Page design/coordinator

Currently this latter position is vacant and is an exciting opportunity for some one to be involved in the design, development and launch of a new Share Web page facility. It is envisioned this could include back issue of Share Magazine with a long term possibility for audio access for those who are visually challenged or unable to read.

This is your opportunity to significantly increase awareness of the value of Share amongst your Region, Intergroup and Local Group, whilst at the same time increasing circulation and therefore financial contribution to Share and our primary purpose.

Personal experiences are generally the foundation by which we relate with each other and the Fellowship as a whole.

## Telephones Update

(Anne McD)

In line with our Terms of Reference, which states:

*To maintain the existing telephone system, to enable the suffering alcoholic access to a local contact through a single national telephone number, in a manner which is efficient, effective and economic.*

*To keep the use and cost of the system under constant review*

*To be responsible for all changes to the system and to liaise with the system providers following consultation with Regions*

*To investigate any new technology which may be beneficial to the Fellowship's telephone service?*

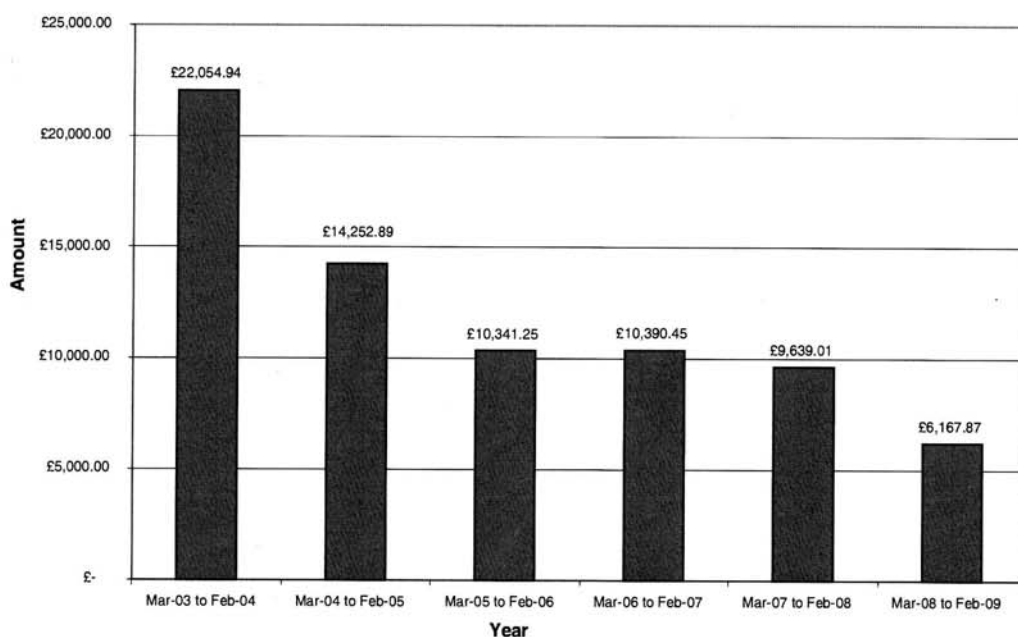
*To keep a constant review of the facilities offered by other service providers*

*The committee is a sub committee of the Board and will be chaired by the Trustee with responsibility for the telephone service. Membership will normally consist of three members drawn from participating Regions, who will have a suitable experience to participate in committee functions. Where possible this will recognise geographical spread.*

*Membership of the Committee will be for a period of four years, allowing one year for sponsorship, thus the committee will be increased during sponsorship periods.*

the National Telephone Sub-Committee (NTSC) has worked hard in continuing to reduce the cost of the National 0845 Helpline (referred to as Inbound Services). Five years ago at Conference 2004, the cost to the fellowship of Inbound Services (2003) was £22,054.94 this has been reduced by over 72% and the cost of Inbound Services (2008) was £6,167.87. The Regional contribution set in 2004 was £18,000, in 2009 this is now £4,550 a direct reduction of almost 75%. As always any overpayment by Regions and savings are passed as contributions to GSO.

INBOUND SERVICES YEARLY COSTS



## CONFERENCE 2008 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee 4, question 1: Our primary purpose is to carry the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic, but are we as a Fellowship best using modern communications and methods to carry the AA message? Discuss and make recommendations:

Committee 4 considered and discussed at length the way the Fellowship currently uses modern communications and methods to carry the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic. This Committee considers that while, in general, we make good use of the facilities available, there will always be room for improvement, and recommends:

5. *The Telephone Service Sub-Committee research the concept of contact by text messages.*

We have addressed this recommendation and can confirm the following:

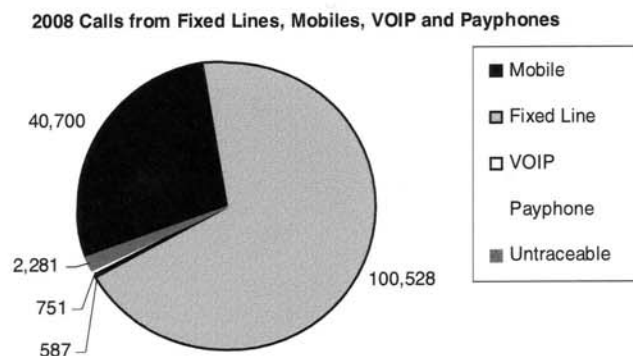
BT has verified that our current National 0845 system is incapable of receiving text messages, as are all non-geographical numbers. Anybody attempting to send a text message to our National 0845 number should receive an error message from their network provider.

The NTSC recommend that local services check their line with their provider to ensure that any text messaging service is turned off, as it is possible to send a text message to a local geographical number. This recommendation comes as the current system for sending text messages (SMS or MMS) to non-SMS ready phones is prone to mis-interpretation and would require the responder to call and attempt to interpret the text message which is converted to speech. Additionally this system does not provide the callers phone number, therefore whilst we may receive a message for help we would be unable to respond. BT has confirmed that no other organisation, especially helplines, would use this basic system to deal with and process text messages. To process text messages a central manned computerised system would be required which our current helpline system cannot cater for. By ensuring that any text message service is turned off on local helplines anybody sending a text message to these numbers should receive the same error message as if they had tried to text our National 0845 number, this ensures that any suffering alcoholic is not under the impression that they have successfully sent Alcoholics Anonymous a text message to which we are unable to respond.

Any future research of the concept of contact by text message should first address what, if any, benefit this would offer the suffering alcoholic, remembering that we provide a helpline for the suffering alcoholic and not an information service for recovering alcoholics.

## 2008 CALL VOLUMES

Total calls for 2008 are down by 7% on 2007 continuing a downward trend since 2004. Calls received from mobile phones continue to increase and now account for 28.1% of total calls.



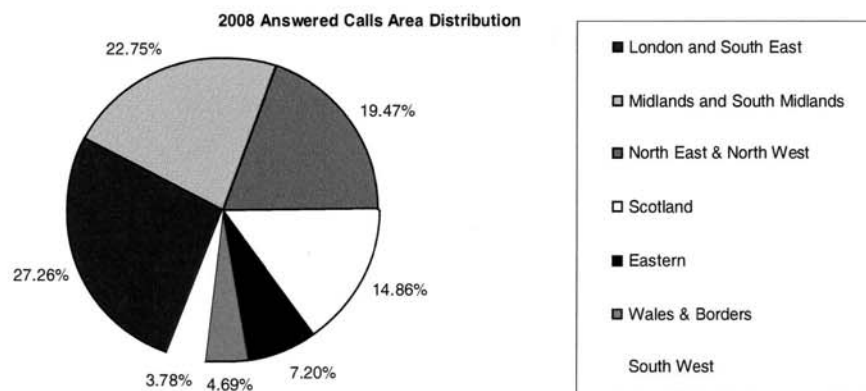
A comparison of the type of calls for 2008 against 2007 show that we have continued to see a reduction in the amount of calls received from Payphones, with a slight increase in the amount of callers' users Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), which confirms that the National 0845 Helpline is catering for the use of modern communications methods.

Line Type	2008		2007		Variation
	Call Count	Total Calls (%)	Call Count	Total Calls (%)	
Mobile	40,700	28.10	42,975	27.58	-2,275
Fixed Line	100,528	69.40	109,850	70.49	-9,322
VOIP	587	0.41	390	0.25	197
Payphone	751	0.52	1,027	0.66	-276
Untraceable	2,281	1.57	1,605	1.03	676
<b>Totals</b>	<b>144,847</b>		<b>155,847</b>		<b>-11,000</b>

We answered 114,169 national 0845 number calls in 2008. This accounts for 78.8% of calls made to our national 0845 numbers, down by 1% on the 2007 percentage of answered calls.

A total of 65,316 unique callers made the 144,847 calls in 2008. Of these 61% was successfully answered 1st time. 62,158 unique callers were answered, which accounts for 95.17% of unique callers. This re-enforces our perception that callers will call us back if they obtain an engaged tone – as BT confirm an engaged call is regarded as a successful call, as it means that the service is working and most callers will call back. The problematic area is where calls go unanswered thus falling into the category of Ring Tone No Reply (RTNR). 3,158 unique callers (4.83%) were lost and deemed ineffective. The percentage of unique lost callers is a more real statistic than the 21.18% of unsuccessful (ineffective) calls. The reason for this is that some callers can skew the percentage of lost calls. For example: 23 unique callers account for over 950 ineffective calls – almost 15% of all of our ineffective calls. In 2007 our percentage of lost callers was 4.59% and our percentage of successful calls answered first time was 61%, thus confirming 2008 caller statistics as comparable to 2007.

Average call times remain constant at 4.67 minutes per call. We had 533,391 call minutes in 2008 and saw a reduction of almost 25% on calls lasting over one hour, which were down from 228 calls in 2007 to 172 calls in 2008.



Our call figures are down below 2002 levels and only just above 2001 levels indicating that perhaps more PI is required in making the public aware of our National 0845 Helpline number.

## **Northern Service Office Update**

This report for the Northern Service Office is based on information taken from our annual statistics. The office records every incoming and outgoing item on a daily basis. The record of items takes in many different areas that the office deals with and also the various individuals to whom we provide assistance to and liaise with on a daily basis. We also keep a record of incoming and outgoing mail including faxes and calls that are left on our answering machine.

Since the last report the majority of our general calls are from AA members and other agencies looking for meeting information. We have provided lists of meetings without contacts to Professional Agencies; however a lot of agencies now have AA information and meeting lists on their databases and they call us to regularly update the details.

This year, as normal, our staff assisted members of the Fellowship who make frequent calls to the Northern Service Office with a selection of enquiries such as Conventions, Literature, guidelines on posts, various group requests, foreign meeting information, Roundabout enquiries and anything in general that they require assistance with.

Many Professional and Voluntary Agencies have also contacted the service office for various requests i.e. General information on AA, help for a client, requesting a Public Information presentation, invitations to events that AA can provide information and the list goes on. Each year we see a rise in these calls where professionals are directing problem drinkers to Alcoholics Anonymous. These calls are passed on to the appropriate local Regional and Intergroup Officers. The Northern Service Office has, as always, liaised with local Regional and Intergroups Officers on a regular basis.

There has been a substantial drop in Media calls this year to our office but we are still within the Media link to GSO and SSO log our calls with them each month or inform them if we have no calls. We are in regular contact also with staff at GSO and occasionally other service offices.

We still receive a lot of 12 Step calls which appear to be the result of Health Professionals and Social Services suggesting our Fellowship to clients. These calls are dealt with and passed to the helpline or local contact. This year especially there has been a vast amount of call from families and friends and again these calls are dealt with in the appropriate manner and usually directed to the Fellowship of Al Anon.

The office updates all the records for all groups in Scotland and this year has updated approximately 550 groups. We are also now involved in typing the articles for Roundabout and helping the team out wherever possible.

Again this year we have seen a rise in calls from employers seeking help for employees and AA information. We also have had our regular flow of visitors mainly serving officers, visitors from other areas requesting Meeting information and on occasion a general visit or 12 Step.

The Prison Postal Service is still running smoothly and we are able to provide this service to inmates who request sponsors to write to them. We have quite a stable list of sponsors now and although this service can be a bit unpredictable at times, it is consistent in the fact that it is always available and we always find sponsors

immediately to write to inmates. This year has seen a small rise in female inmates and we hope to continue this in the future through the encouragement of PLO's.

The Office is again very grateful to receive Regional and Intergroup minutes and Service reports. Copies of these are also sent to GSO and service reports for every service area sent to appropriate GSB member according to their service remit.

Our Administration assisted an awareness event at the Scottish Parliament. It was hosted by Bob Doris MSP. This event was attended by members of the Professional and Voluntary Community from many different agencies, MSP's, Serving Officers of AA and Staff. Attendance was reasonable but could be improved next year by sending our more invitations to the Professional and Voluntary Community.

The Northern Service will continue to provide support to the Fellowship services and continue to help make the 12<sup>th</sup> Step work possible.

### **Southern Service Office Update**

Telephone traffic tumbled as numbers using our website increased. It underlines our need to be ever-vigilant that when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, the hand of AA will not be restricted to the one on the anonymous keyboard, but will be passed on to a handshake... and the newcomer introduced to the language of the heart.

Calls fell for the fourth consecutive year, from 52,043 to 46,284, a drop of 11% across the range of suffering alcoholics, family/friends, AA members, professional workers, media, etc, as the world reaches more for the computer than the phone.

We remain a busy office. Apart from the hundreds of AA volunteers passing through to answer the phones, the three staff (two of them part-time) respond to, monitor and prompt a rich array of contacts that keep us friendly with our friends.

Southern Service Office (SSO), as always, dealt with nearly 1,000 calls from those whose jobs in health, education, crime, social work, counselling and other agencies brings them into contact with problem drinkers.

Most were again followed up by AA liaison officers and PI committees across the capital, but as the bulging databases testify, SSO itself can support the Fellowship in this field in a unique way.... a few years ago we discovered that many organisations stored online and hard-copy information about AA much of which was conflicting, out of date or just plain wrong (Camden Library's Alcohol Services listed AA as "helping to control your drinking").

We circulated everyone with approved information about Fellowship services, with a request to destroy old records. Many now automatically come back to us every year and those that don't are re-circulated, all ongoing work that improves efficiency, better enabling us to carry our message and, importantly, complying with the Data Protection Act.

SSO maintains a database of all the Greater London local authorities, together with contacts for their Alcohol Abuse Managers, files that could be extended to other regions within the remit of the Southern Service Office.

We also keep computer lists of a wide range of governmental, non-government agencies and charities, with paper binders of the services they offer – these have also been made available to the AAs in service on the annual House of Commons committee and are a valuable resource for all our Service Liaison Officers in and around the city.

A random selection of our list of 2008 non-alcoholic contacts in the community underlines the myriad nature and unending blessings of the work: Kingston Fire Brigade, Debtline, The Cyrenians, Womans Hour, Estonian Arts film crew, Church of England Archbishops Council, Deaf Ethnic Minority Association, Child Minders Association HQ, Black African Church, University of Westminster Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Study, Welsh Assembly-funded Mental Health Line, Broadreach treatment centre in Devon, City University School of Journalism, Commission of Equality & Human Rights, Lord Avebury, speakers for radio, mini-chairs for magazines and scores of hospitals, prisons, schools and more.

Projects in the pipeline include work on a major survey to translate AA literature into British Sign Language for the Deaf in line with Conference approval... hiving off a section of the 750-meeting London *Where To Find* to make the growing number of Foreign-Language groups easier to locate... and launching tentative efforts to secure AA meetings at The Olympics in 2012.

Co-operation with other major agencies occasionally extends beyond e-mails. A second annual invitation to address some 30-40 of The Samaritans at their round-the-clock HQ in Covent Garden was taken up and a lively question-and-answer session again ensued. Much valuable experience is exchanged here and we anticipate this being a regular fixture.

The new SSO Administrator, Miranda, attended the Samaritans session with Imogen and John, during their overlap period. John then retired at the end of November, ten years to the day after taking on the full-time job and overseeing the move of our premises across the city.

Now Cynthia Street is having to close too. The Board and staff have launched efforts to secure our next Southern Service Office location in central London. The local Telephone Reps Committee, who will see the service continue to be housed within SSO, are already cutting their cloth to fit... studying computerisation plans and the appropriate use and number of those still-vital phone lines.

## **Open Forum**

The final session of Saturday evening was given over to an ‘Open Forum’ with contributions from the floor ranging over a wide spectrum of AA’s service structure.

The evening ended at 10pm with Wynford asking all to join him in saying the Serenity Prayer.

## **SUNDAY 19 APRIL**

Wynford welcomed everyone to the final session of Conference, asked for a few moments silence and read the Preamble.

As agreed at Conference 1995 each recommendation will be voted on and whether or not it is a two-thirds majority will be recorded.

Wynford then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included in this report on the pages indicated below:

Committee No. 1	Pages	54-55
Committee No. 2	Pages	56-57
Committee No. 3	Pages	58-59
Committee No. 4	Pages	60-61
Committee No. 5	Pages	62-63
Committee No. 6	Pages	64-65

### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 2010**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and, after a vote, Marc M (Scotia Region) was duly elected.

### **RATIFICATION OF BOARD MEMBERS**

(Ralph A, Chair GSB)

I would like to ask for general approval and ratification of Trustees joining the General Service Board and we have three who are absent today and I will ask for their ratification, and they are:

Nohaid Ilyas	-	Non-Alcoholic Trustee
Tim W-M	-	Continental European Region
Phil W	-	Wales & Borders Region

Next, three Trustees who are here with us today:

John A	-	London Region South
Ashraf Kahn	-	Non-Alcoholic Trustee
Geoff T	-	East of Scotland Region

Now, the Trustees rotating out, this is a bit of a sad moment as I have worked closely with these Trustees:

Polly M-P	-	Wales & Borders Region
Ann S	-	Honorary Treasurer
Andy C	-	Glasgow Region
Roger B	-	Vice Chair



Lastly me, and I would like to do some 'thank you's', firstly and mostly, I'd like to thank the staff of the Southern Service Office who I have come to know, the Northern Service Office who I have come to know and our staff at the General Service Office who have come to know me. There were 62 meetings held at GSO, Toft Green last year and at every meeting a member of staff attended and for me this was particularly good because they would consistently say you are in the wrong room Ralph – you should be over there. Thank you to all of you.

Delegates, too numerous to mention, that I have come to know and enjoy their company and thank you for your fellowship. Thanks to all of you.

Thanks to the wonderful people on the General Service Board, past and present, who have put up with me and I have worked closely with. I know the tremendous work that they do and it amazes me. I passed a shop and in the window it said 'Do you want a career in travel?' and I thought I've got one! As Trustees of the General Service Board we are up and down the country, all over the place, for example Poland, Belgium we are everywhere carrying this message of Alcoholics Anonymous. I really appreciate what they have done, words cannot say enough and I thank you.

I'd like to thank you, Ann, I'd like to thank you for your friendship, your fellowship, your understanding and your advice. I have had four years of working alongside you and I can honestly say, from my experiences, that Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain is safe in the hands of our present General Secretary.

### **Close of Conference** (Wynford O)

Thank you, Ralph, for all you have done and for all you have given over the years and I know it will continue.

We have come to the end of Conference and I hope you will indulge me, I'm going to say one more story, I have told it before so I hope those people who have heard the story before will forgive me.

I have been thinking a lot about this story, you see over Easter I went up to North Wales, my wife, the heroine of the peace, who has stuck with me throughout came with me. Also, my eldest daughter, who is also in recovery, who saw her dad get well and said to herself "If dad can do it then I can do it" and my two grandchildren.

I went fishing on a Saturday and I didn't catch a single fish, I didn't even get a single bite but I was in heaven. I had Snowdon in front of me and the beautiful mountains and valleys of North Wales surrounding me. It was absolutely beautiful.

On my way back I killed a cat. I honestly felt like crying and I looked in the mirror and it was a mess on the road. I carried on and then I thought I'd better go back because if other cars come and go over the cat it will make a mess and be there for weeks. The least I could do is go back and take the cat and put it on the grass verge. So I went back and there were two cars coming at speed and I slowed them down and they passed the cat and I dragged the cat across the road, the cat was stiff, dead to all intents and purposes and I laid her gently on the grass verge.

As I was getting back in the car, I saw a shallow pulse underneath her belly. Just a shallow pulse. I thought, oh my God, she's in pain, she is suffering and I went back there and I started rubbing her head. "Puss, puss, puss, come on puss" I said and I kept talking to her like that. I said to God "if this cat is alive, come on help, help, help her". I did not know what to do and I phoned my wife and asked what do I do, that I thought I had killed this cat, should I report it to the police, or what?

The farm was about 200 yards in the distance and there was a long, narrow road leading down to the farm, there were lights on but I could not see anybody moving around. I was panicking a bit. Anyhow I was still rubbing this cat's head saying "Come on puss, come on" and suddenly, damn it all, the puss started to move her head ever so slowly and I was talking to her again, engaging with God, you know, "Come on you have to co-operate with me now God, you co-operated in my sobriety, come on help me save this cat". Gradually it lifted up its two fore legs and I started rubbing it again and talking to it when, all of a sudden, the cat jumped up and ran about 100 miles an hour down this narrow lane towards the farm. About half way down it stopped and looked back as if to say thanks, mate, see you again. I can't tell you, I felt a million dollars and I went home and told my wife how happy I felt.

I thought a lot about what happened, I'm sure you can make better sense of it than me, but the first thing that I noticed about it was that I went back. That I went back and that reminded me of people who came back and did not give up hope when they were trying to help me in the early days. They kept coming back and they talked to me, yes, I suppose, metaphorically, they rubbed my head as well. I prayed to God, I engaged God, I co-operated with God in this miracle that happened. I spent time with this cat, about three-quarters of an hour at least with this cat and as I said I felt a million dollars. Remember, helping helps the helper, do you remember that, but the most important thing that happened in that miracle was that the cat decided to live and I think that is at the heart of recovery. I think that alcoholics have to make that basic decision – do we want to live or do we want to die.

Please indulge me a little here, you know the abstentions, I believe as alcoholics we do not like making decisions. We would rather sit there with all our options open and wait for divine intervention to intervene with the answer on a plate fully formed, so we don't have to go through that uncomfortable feeling. I think that the decision the decide part is the same decide as there is in suicide. We hate to kill off half our options, so we leave the door wide open and then we wonder why things don't happen in my life, why doesn't my life move forward, it's because we have not made decisions, so that is my personal reason for not recording abstentions.

So that is the story of the cat and I am sure you can find many more meanings to it than I have been able to.

I would like to thank you for the honour you have given me this weekend, it has been a privilege, it's been a big, big mountain that has been coming up towards me all year, it is a huge responsibility you place on people, let me tell you that, a huge, huge responsibility and a great, great worry and I asked you to remember that and you have, I think, this weekend, you have shown love, consideration and there has been that sense of unity throughout. I thank you for that. Do you know what I see, smiling teeth, one or two of you I have commented to that you have lovely teeth. I have said that to people and when people are happy they show their teeth and it transforms

people so, from where I have been standing, I have seen lots of teeth. I thank you for showing them.

I wish you well on your return journeys, remember now that you are all geniuses, if you remember I told you that in my keynote address, remember I see you all as fragile pieces of porcelain, absolutely priceless and you have a responsibility of taking care of that. Quite often alcoholics do the biggest damage to themselves and we have to protect and look after ourselves, we are all priceless pieces of porcelain and, of course, it is taken as a given that you are geniuses.

God bless you all and I hope you have a safe journey home and a productive, risk full year.

Wynford closed Conference by asking everyone to join him in saying the Serenity Prayer.

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Forty-Fifth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the Park Inn, North Street, York on 16-18 April 2010.

## FORTY-FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2009

# COMMITTEE No. 1

CHAIRMAN      MARC M                      SCOTIA REGION

SECRETARY     MANDY E                      NORTH EAST REGION

The Chair opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

**1.      Discuss the General Service Board report on the history of the AA Service Structure in Great Britain.**

As a result of discussions about the report to this committee from the General Service Board, this committee recommends that priority be given to the production of a publication detailing the history and development of the AA Service Structure in Great Britain. This will be produced in the following way:-

- a.    The format will be a booklet, similar in form to *Share: The First Fifty Years*.
- b.    The information will be taken from the existing archives.
- c.    The publication will be produced by the members of the General Service Board Archives sub-committee chaired by the Trustee and co-ordinated by the Fellowship Archivist.
- d.    The Archives sub-committee will report to Conference from 2010 through the General Service Board in its Annual Reports, with a view to publication, if possible, to coincide with the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first meeting of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain.
- e.    The sub-committee will be charged with securing the best possible pricing.
- f.    The publication will be made available through the AA literature order form.

N.B. Great Britain is deemed to include Continental European Region.

This was carried unanimously

**2.      Would Conference please discuss whether the term Group Service Representative rather than General Service Representative fully defines the role of GSRs at every level of our service structure?**

This committee believes that the term Group Service Representative fully defines the role of GSRs within our service structure and should be retained. The committee also recommends that all relevant literature be updated to ensure that General be changed to Group as and when the literature is reviewed.

This was passed 17 to 2

A *minority view* was expressed that the name be changed to General Service Representative.

**3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Mandy E (North East Region) as Chair of Committee No. 1 for Conference 2010.

**4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Nicola K (Continental European Region) as Secretary of Committee No. 1 for Conference 2010.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 1 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

## COMMITTEE No. 2

CHAIRMAN      MATT MCC                      SCOTIA REGION

SECRETARY    MARJIE T                              SOUTH EAST REGION

The Chair opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

**1.      Should Conference take regular inventory of itself? Could the Committee discuss and make recommendations?**

Yes, this Committee agrees that Conference should take regular inventory of itself. This Committee recommends that the Conference Steering Committee follows the recommendations made at Conference 1999, Committee 4, Question 2, "By annually allocating at least one question for one committee specific to inventory".

This Committee recommends that this question be highlighted in all Conference material as the Annual Inventory Question.

Majority 12. Minority 7.

There was one *minority view* expressed, that a "simple multiple choice feedback evaluation" form be given to every third year delegate at the beginning of Conference to be completed before departure. The questionnaire to be computer compatible. The results to be published in *AA Service News* post Conference.

**2.      Would Conference consider the holding of an annual GB Primary Purpose week?**

This Committee was divided but made a proposal and agreed to abstain from answering this question.

This Committee agreed that Conference should be given an explanation regarding this decision.

1.      A conflict arises from the question and the inappropriate background material.
2.      There is a potential conflict with the present work being undertaken by PI.
3.      The question is not all inclusive with its reference to GB and appears not to include the Continental European Region.

Majority 13. Minority 5.

The *minority view* was that the question should have been answered.

**3. Review revised Guideline No. 8 'AA and Employment'**

The Committee recommends that Conference approves the revised Guideline No.8 Employment with the following amendments:

First page. Section A. Line 2. "Alcoholics Anonymous" in italics.  
Line 3. delete "as early as".

Under the heading "CO-OPERATION WITH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES",  
bullet point 2 delete "videos", insert "presentations".

Bullet point 3 delete entry entirely.

Second page. Bullet point 6 third line delete "and" at the end of the line.

Bullet point 7, third line. insert "them to" between the words help and achieve.

Last paragraph, second line, delete "sponsor" replace with "support" and fourth line,  
delete "in sponsorship" and insert "support".

Third page. Fourth paragraph "TO SUMMARISE", Point 2, delete "the" and also  
"programme of recovery".

Fourth page. Lines 3 & 4, delete "video" and replace with "presentation" (in both  
cases).

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected James A (South Midlands Region) as Chair of  
Committee No. 2 for Conference 2010.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Michael G (London Region South) as Secretary of  
Committee No. 2 for Conference 2010.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 2 were passed with a two-thirds plus  
majority with the exception of Question No. 2 as no vote was taken on this question.*

## FORTY-FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2009

# COMMITTEE No. 3

CHAIRMAN     LINDA S     HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION

SECRETARY     TOM S     SOUTH EAST REGION

The Chair opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

**1.     Share experience on personal responsibility and its place in AA at every level of service.**

The Committee felt it was the duty and privilege of every AA member to share their experience and take personal responsibility at every level of service. Our common welfare and AA's unity rely upon the guidance of a loving Higher Power as found in the Group conscience. Each individual member can grow into his or her role in this, supported by good sponsorship, Home Group involvement and observance of the 12 Traditions.

Some Regions expressed reservations about the relevance of this topic.

The Committee vote was unanimous.

**2.     Can Conference discuss how best to raise awareness of the use of AA money in carrying the message?**

The committee felt that communication is a key component in raising awareness of the use of all AA monies and how expenditures relate to our primary purpose. This can clear away misconceptions arising about AA finances at all levels.

Some suggestions are:

1. Encourage all AA members to take advantage of the information contained in the existing financial reports and literature for example the pamphlets *The Pot*, *The AA Group* page 10 and Guideline No 12.
2. Raise the awareness of the Development Fund and how it is financed through the sale of the hardback *Big Book*, the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *As Bill Sees It* and the part this plays in carrying the message in countries in which the AA structure is in the early stages of development.
3. Invite trusted servants at all levels to take advantage of the available opportunities to share how AA money is spent on carrying the message for example, forums, workshops, Regional assemblies and Intergroup meetings.

The Committee vote was unanimous.



**3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected John R (Continental European Region) as Chair of Committee No. 3 for Conference 2010.

**4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Jeremy H (North East Region) as Secretary of Committee No. 3 for Conference 2010.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 3 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

## FORTY-FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2009

# COMMITTEE No. 4

CHAIRMAN      CLARK S                      GLASGOW REGION  
SECRETARY      BARBARA K                      SOUTH EAST REGIO

The Chair opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

**1.      Would Conference share experience, strength and hope on 'closed' and 'open' meetings in support of AA's Primary Purpose?**

This Committee's shared experience regarding "Closed" and "Open" meetings showed there are benefits in both formats in support of AA's Primary Purpose.

Open meetings provide an opportunity for anyone with an interest in Alcoholics Anonymous to attend, in support of our Primary Purpose.

Closed meetings provide anonymity and confidentiality for anyone with a desire to stop drinking.

This Committee shared experience on the misconception of the word "Closed" (closed taken to mean shut or closed down). On that basis this committee recommends that the Literature sub-committee clarify the description of "open" and "closed" meetings in the AA literature and ensure consistency throughout as it is reviewed.

The Electronic Communications sub-committee be asked to display the description of "open" and "closed" meetings as clarified by the Literature sub-committee on the appropriate web pages.

The Committee draws the Fellowship's attention to the: Traditions, Guidelines, the pamphlet *The AA Group* and that the Conference 1996 decision that the *Primary Purpose Card* be read at all meetings.

Committee vote was unanimous.

**2.      Discuss how GSRs can best use existing literature to enhance their role within the service structure.**

This Committee concluded that reading AA literature enhances the understanding of the GSRs role and that they would have a fuller knowledge and be better informed in the role of the structure of AA.

This would facilitate more effective communication in their role as the vital link between the groups and AA as a whole.

In addition familiarisation with AA literature cements their position as a key resource to the group.

Committee vote 18 for with 1 abstention.

**3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Barbara K (South East Region) as Chair of Committee No. 4 for Conference 2010.

**4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Sue B (Midlands Region) as Secretary of Committee No. 4 for Conference 2010.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 4 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

## COMMITTEE No. 5

CHAIRMAN      EAMON D      LONDON REGION NORTH

SECRETARY     RACHEL E      SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

The Chair opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

**1.      Would Conference share experience, strength and hope on the role of leadership within AA?**

This committee considers that leadership is our personal responsibility and that the role and need for leadership is clearly defined in existing AA literature and is an integral part of our service structure.

The committee discussed how we could better communicate the importance, responsibility and need for humility that comes with leadership, which begins with sobriety.

The experience shared showed that although we have the structure to communicate, it could be used more effectively to enhance the awareness and understanding of leadership within our Fellowship.

Voting: Unanimous

**2.      Would uploading audio recordings of Conference plenary sessions stimulate wider interest among the Fellowship?**

The Committee felt that whilst uploading audio recordings of plenary sessions could stimulate wider interest among the Fellowship, it is already the Delegates' role to report back and that there were a number of practical problems and obstacles.

Those discussed included: -

1. Anonymity.
2. Right of Participation (would an individual's decision not to be recorded affect their right to stand as a Delegate?)
3. Data Protection.
4. Website capabilities.
5. Cost.

Therefore this committee does not recommend uploading audio recordings of plenary sessions at this time.

Voting: 18 for, 1 against

A *minority view* was recorded that there is no benefit in uploading audio recordings of plenary sessions.

**3. Review revised Guideline No. 13 'Probation\Social Services'**

The committee recommends that the Guideline be adopted.

Voting: 18 for, 1 against

A *minority view* was recorded that substantial changes needed to be made.

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Carol McI (Glasgow Region) as Chair of Committee No. 5 for Conference 2010.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Sebastian Z (Highlands & Islands Region) as Secretary of Committee No. 5 for Conference 2010.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 5 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

## COMMITTEE No. 6

CHAIRMAN      PAULA B      NORTH EAST REGION

SECRETARY     JOHN F      WALES & BORDERS REG

The Chair opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the preamble.

**1.      Could Conference discuss whether a fuller understanding of our principle of personal anonymity would improve our ability to fulfil our primary purpose?**

Yes, this committee agrees that a fuller understanding of our principle of personal anonymity would improve our ability to fulfil our primary purpose. We recommend this be achieved by discussion at group level of the principle of personal anonymity.

- a)      With reference to the literature e.g. *Understanding Anonymity, The AA Group pamphlet, AA Tradition How it Developed, Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers.*
- b)      To raise awareness of *Anonymity Card*.
- c)      Share our own personal experiences.

This committee further recommends:

- a)      Encourage the relevant literature to be displayed and read.
- b)      Add *Anonymity Card* to starter pack.
- c)      Encourage articles to be written on personal anonymity in 'Share' and 'Roundabout'.
- d)      Discussion, through sponsorship, of our Steps and Traditions.

Unanimous decision.

**2.      Would Conference consider the benefits of allowing voting rights for GSO staff at the plenary stage?**

On discussion notwithstanding the vast experience and conscientiousness of GSO staff, the committee agree that there were no clear benefits in allowing GSO staff voting rights at the plenary stage in the current service structure of Great Britain.

16 for, 2 against.

Recorded *minority view*: in keeping with Concept 4 in the AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, paid staff should have voting rights.

**3.      Review revised Guideline No. 6 'AA Telephone Services'**

The committee recommend Conference approves the revised Guideline No.6 *AA Telephone Services* with the following alterations:

Page 1 – date 2009 not 2008

Paragraph 3 last line, last letter delete M.

Page 2 – paragraph 3 line 4 insert after ‘due to the’ – ‘possibility of poor reception’.

Paragraph 5, last line fourth word in, delete ‘time’ and insert ‘the telephone’.

Unanimous.

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Martin H (Eastern Region) as Chair of Committee No. 6 for Conference 2010.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2010.**

The Committee elected Jim F (North West Region) as Secretary of Committee No. 6 for Conference 2010.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 6 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

## FORTY-FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2009

### LIST OF DELEGATES

**CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN:** **Wynford O** (Wales & Borders Region)

#### GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

		<b>COMMITTEE NUMBER</b>	<b>TERM OF SERVICE</b>
Ralph	A		
John	A (Elect)	1	
Penny	A	2	
Martin	B	5	
Roger	B	5	
David	C	4	
Jerry	C	2	
Andy	C	2	
Dave	D	5	
Sheila	D	4	
Mari	F	3	
Ann	McD	6	
Polly	M-P	1	
Vince	O	1	
Nick	R	2	
Ann	S	3	
Jim	S	6	
John	S	4	
Geoffrey	T (Elect)	5	
Jim	T	3	
Louise Foxcroft		1	
Ashraf Kahn	(Elect)	6	

#### GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Ann N General Secretary  
Sharon Smyth  
Chris North  
Elaine Pickering  
Angela Varley  
Helen Lambeth  
Jenny Pryke

#### SHARE

Ro	N	2	2
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#### ROUNABOUT

Peter	S	6	1
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**COMMITTEE  
NUMBER**

**TERM OF  
SERVICE**

**EASTERN REGION**

Anita	D	1	1
Pam	R	2	2
Alison	F	3	1
Jim	F	4	A
Eddie	D	5	1
Martin	H	6	2

**LONDON REGION NORTH**

Robert	De W	1	3
Tom	B	2	3
Danny	L	3	3
Billy	D	4	2
Eamon	D	5	3
Lorraine	E	6	1

**LONDON REGION SOUTH**

Anthony	R	1	2
Michael	G	2	2
Nick	F	3	2
Jim	H	4	3
Bob	N	5	A
Simon	H	6	A

**MIDLANDS REGION**

Jeff	B	1	1
Rebecca	R	2	2
Prag	S	3	3
Sue	B	4	1
Anita	S	5	A
Philip	H	6	2

**NORTH EAST REGION**

Mandy	E	1	2
Maxine	W	2	2
Jeremy	H	3	1
Angela	S	4	A
John	W	5	1
Paula	B	6	3

		<b>COMMITTEE NUMBER</b>	<b>TERM OF SERVICE</b>
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**NORTH WEST REGION**

John	H	1	1
Marie	T	2	2
Vivienne	M	3	A
Tom	P	4	3
Charlie	McL	5	2
Jim	F	6	1

**SOUTH EAST REGION**

David	O	1	3
Marjorie	T	2	2
Tom	S	3	3
Barbara	K	4	2
Jemma	A	5	1
Edward	S	6	1

**SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION**

Paul	W	1	2
James	A	2	2
Moira	S	3	2
Brian	L	4	2
Rachel	E	5	2
Jenie	B	6	2

**SOUTH WEST REGION**

Graeme	H	1	2
David	W	2	1
Jennie	K	3	3
Rose	M	4	1
Geoff	C	5	3
Chris	C	6	1

**WALES & BORDERS REGION**

Chris	S	1	1
Lynne	W	2	3
Alun	D	3	1
Neil	T	4	2
Shaun	O'B	5	A
John	F	6	3

**COMMITTEE  
NUMBER**

**TERM OF  
SERVICE**

**EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION**

Jim	C	1	1
Alexandra	C	2	2
Gus	H	3	3
Donnie	V	4	1
Robbie	B	5	1
Gina	D	6	2

**GLASGOW REGION**

Jeanette	McG	1	2
Brian	S	2	2
Derek	F	3	2
Clark	S	4	3
Carol	McI	5	2
Susan	C	6	3

**HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION**

Ali	MacL	1	A
		2	
Linda	S	3	3
Paul	B	4	2
Sebastian	Z	5	1
Neill	McG	6	1

**SCOTIA REGION**

Marc	M	1	3
Matt	M	2	3
Robert	M	3	1
John	H	4	1
Kay	D	5	3
Brian	M	6	1

**SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND REGION**

Iain	B	1	A
Joan	P	2	A
Roberta	B	3	2
Helen	C	4	1
John	McT	5	1
Kate	H	6	3

**COMMITTEE  
NUMBER**

**TERM OF  
SERVICE**

**CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION**

Nicola	K	1	1
Michelle	H	2	2
John	R	3	2
Mary Kay	F	4	1
Tessa	N	5	1
Richard	M	6	1

**OBSERVERS**

Marcel	H	(Belgium – Flemish Speaking)	2	1
Mark	G	(Croatia)	3	1
Helle	V	(Denmark)	6	2
Dace	D	(Latvia)	5	1
Tomek	Ł	(Poland)	1	1
Cees	M	(Netherlands)	4	1
Andrey	P	(Ukraine)	3	1
Oleg	L	(Ukraine)	4	1

## Glossary of Abbreviations used in this report

<i>AA</i>	-	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i>
<i>AASN</i>	-	<i>AA Service News</i>
<i>AAWS</i>	-	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous World Services</i>
<i>CSC</i>	-	<i>Conference Steering Committee</i>
<i>ECLO</i>	-	<i>Electronic Communication Liaison Officer</i>
<i>ECSC</i>	-	<i>Electronic Communication Sub Committee</i>
<i>ELO</i>	-	<i>Employment Liaison Officer</i>
<i>ESM</i>	-	<i>European Service Meeting</i>
<i>GSB</i>	-	<i>General Service Board</i>
<i>GSO</i>	-	<i>General Service Office</i>
<i>GSR</i>	-	<i>Group Service Representative</i>
<i>HLO</i>	-	<i>Health Liaison Officer</i>
<i>LRS</i>	-	<i>London Region South</i>
<i>NAT</i>	-	<i>Non-Alcoholic Trustee</i>
<i>NHS</i>	-	<i>National Health Service</i>
<i>NNC</i>	-	<i>Northern National Convention</i>
<i>NOMS</i>	-	<i>National Offender Management Service</i>
<i>NSO</i>	-	<i>Northern Service Office</i>
<i>ORS</i>	-	<i>Online Response Service</i>
<i>PI</i>	-	<i>Public Information</i>
<i>PLO</i>	-	<i>Prison Liaison Officer</i>
<i>PR</i>	-	<i>Public Relations</i>
<i>P/SS</i>	-	<i>Probation/Social Services</i>
<i>RECLLO</i>	-	<i>Regional Electronic Communication Liaison Officer</i>
<i>RELO</i>	-	<i>Regional Employment Liaison Officer</i>
<i>RTLO</i>	-	<i>Regional Telephone Liaison Officer</i>
<i>SSO</i>	-	<i>Southern Service Office</i>
<i>TLO</i>	-	<i>Telephone Liaison Officer</i>
<i>TOR</i>	-	<i>Terms of Reference</i>



# The Twelve Traditions

**1** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

**2** For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

**3** The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

**4** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

**5** Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

**6** An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

**7** Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

**8** Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.

**9** A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

**10** Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name never be drawn into public controversy.

**11** Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

**12** Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

