

General
Service Board
Reports

To

Conference
2010

AA Service News

I have now completed a full year in the role of editor of *AA Service News*. In that time four issues of the magazine have been produced, those being spring, summer, autumn and winter 2009 and all of them have gone out to the Fellowship on time. They have included many interesting articles relating to service within the Fellowship from a range of different sources. If you have not yet had an opportunity to read them I would definitely recommend them as informative and stimulating reading.

Each year the Questions for Conference are contained within the winter issue and the recommendations from Conference within the summer issue

The response from the Fellowship in general to requests for material has been good but there is always room for more material so long as it relates to service. Articles can be sent either by post to GSO or direct to the *AA Service News* email address: aanews@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

There are now vacancies for an assistant editor and a proof reader on the *AA Service News* sub-committee. Details of requirements are on page two of the winter 2009 issue.

The spring 2010 issue will be published in early March. I look forward to another exciting year of production. Please do keep on providing material and do please give *AA Service News* a mention at your local groups.

John A

AA Service News Editor and Board Trustee

Archives

As I only came into post part way through the year, this report will necessarily be brief.

There was a meeting of Archives Liaison Officers at GSO at Toft Green, York held on 25th and 26th September 2009. The meeting was attended by Joe H, the Fellowship Archivist; Paul K a member of staff at GSO who is also the Intergroup Archivist for Durham and Cleveland; Stephen S., Rhine-Neckar Archivist and sub committee member; Nick H, Southdown Intergroup Archivist and sub committee member; Carol H, London South Regional Archivist and sub committee member; Bob S. Mid-Surrey Intergroup; Gareth L, West Wales Intergroup Archivist; Diane F, East Cheshire Intergroup Archivist; Jan P, Northdown Intergroup Archivist; Phyllis H, SW Region and Devon Central Intergroup Archivist; Dean M, Nottingham and Leicester Intergroup Archivist; John M, SE Region Archivist; Peter R, Northern Convention Archivist; Kevin M, Coventry and Warwick Intergroup Archivist; Dennis T, South Yorkshire and NE Derbyshire Intergroup Archivist; Noele R, Aberdeen and District Intergroup Archivist; James F, Aberdeen Intergroup; Donald Mc, Inverclyde Intergroup; John J, Inverclyde Intergroup; Michael C, SW Scotland Regional Archivist. As Board Member I took the chair.

As Chairman I introduced the subject of the motion passed at Conference 2009 from Committee 1: That priority be given to the production of a publication detailing the history of the development of the AA Service Structure in Great Britain including Continental European

Region. As recommended by Conference, the main body of this work will be based upon research done by the Archives Sub Committee under the supervision of the Chairman.

Stephen S outlined his progress on the Archives website development. He has been tasked with liaising with the Electronic Sub Committee on matters dealing with the website. He also gave a short power point presentation on GB/CER AA History and Archives.

Bob S from Mid-Surrey also had a power point presentation on the life of Bill W and Bill and Bob's early years in AA.

On the Saturday morning Nick H reported on his progress in creating the group history database which was followed by a general discussion on the matters archivists should include in such a study. Joe H then outlined how much accessible material there is for this study already catalogued and accessible at GSO. Sadly, he then announced his retirement on health grounds and informed the meeting that Paul K of the GSO staff would be the main point of contact at GSO in future. Joe was warmly thanked for all the work he has put in and I am happy to report that, thanks largely to his efforts, that main bulk of our archival history is now digitalised and readily accessible to all archivists within the Fellowship.

A brief meeting of the Archives Sub Committee followed the Friday Liaison Officers meeting where a provisional outline of the research needed to fulfil the task laid on us by Conference was given and it was felt that, though demanding, that this task would be completed by the timeline laid down. A proposal that Archives be granted a prominent position on the front page of the new GB AA website was passed unanimously. As a last gesture of goodwill, Joe gave each member present 7 CDs which contain the bulk of the digitalised records of the early history of AA GB.

Being the Board Member with responsibility for Archives could well prove to be a trifle daunting, especially with the task laid on us by Conference, but with the assistance of such dedicated members, it will, no doubt, be accomplished.

Tim W-M, Board Trustee Archives.

Armed Services

Intergroups and Regions are slowly filling positions of Armed Services Liaison Officers (ASLO). Some Intergroups and Regions have asked for a Guideline. The Armed Services Sub-Committee are looking at this and we will be discussing this at our January Meeting where all Regions are asked to send along a representative. PLEASE COULD INTERGROUP AND REGIONS INFORM GSO OF 'ASLO' APPOINTMENTS.

We have attended events at the following Establishments:

Merville Barracks Colchester - Alcohol Awareness Day
Somme Barracks Catterick - Health Fare
Game Cock Barracks Nuneaton - Health Fare
RAF Wattisham - Health Fare
The Queens Royal Lancers Catterick Garrison - Health Fare
RAF Community Services Shrivrenham- Presentations four times

'Army For Today' Presentation held in Glasgow

Letters have been sent to the Following:

The Families Officers of RAF Lossiemouth
The Royal Marine Commando in Arbroath
3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland in Inverness
HMS Gannet in Prestwick

Following earlier contact with RAF Leuchars in Fife, local PI were invited to speak to SSAFA Representatives from all over Scotland, at their AGM which was held at the Base.

Contact was made with the Army Welfare Service at Dreghorn Barracks in Edinburgh and with Welfare Officer of 2nd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland at Glencorse Barracks also in Edinburgh. Contact is also being maintained with 'Poppy Scotland'.

We have good communication going with the Army Welfare at Fulwood Barracks. It has also been reported that Royal Navy Air Squadron at Yeovil are in touch with local AA Meetings. Local AA Members remain in contact with Royal Navy at Portsmouth. We also followed up with the Mental Health Team based at Woolwich Barracks and from one of the events we attended, a follow up meeting was carried out by local AA Members with a Member of Parliament, who had been unable to attend the Barracks where the Event was taking place, and had expressed a wish to meet with Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Armed Services Sub-Committee are available to support Groups, Intergroups and Regions in carrying the message to the Armed Services. Throughout the past year we have regularly updated the Armed Services 'Twelve Steppers List', had stands at the Northern Convention and supplied a speaker to share at AA Service Meeting. We have attended a couple of Intergroup Assemblies to explain the role of an Armed Service Liaison Officer (as we see the role). We also supplied some Armed Services fliers to a convention for them to circulate. The idea was to raise awareness and to encourage members into Service.

The Armed Services Sub-Committee meet twice a year in York. The January Meeting we send out invites to Regions to send a Representative along. It is hoped this year that we will have a few newly appointed ASLO'S attending.

I would like to finish this report with a thank you to all those Members who are carrying the message to the Armed Services and to all the Regions that I have contacted when we have needed someone to help. I said to our General Secretary a while ago that sometime in the future a Region will ask for the Armed Services to attend a Regional Forum. Well! It will be happening in 2010!!!!

Dave D
Board Trustee

British Sign Language and AA Literature

Background

Committee 3, Question 3 at Conference 2008 provided a minority opinion which was discussed during the plenary session. Conference subsequently recommended that:

The General Service Board investigate the feasibility of

1 Producing a translation of the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions into British Sign Language (4 in favour 9 against)

2 Sign language be added to existing DVDs and videos (2 in favour, 1 abstention, 10 against)

This was the outcome of representations taken to Conference through the London Regions on behalf of the SW1 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Group set up in 2005. Key statements included: *“British Sign Language (BSL) is the first language of some current AAs and many more to come. Reading and writing ordinary printed English is either dreadfully difficult if not impossible for many who are born deaf.*

We need to publish the Big Book up to page 164 and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in British Sign Language on DVD as a matter of urgency.

The books are available in New York in American Sign Language (ASL) on video and DVD and AA World Services will be able to advise us with project management of such a job.

Please note that ASL is useless to BSL users as it is yet another foreign language to deaf people in the UK.”

Imogen C-W, an active member of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Group and a staff member at the Southern Service Office, was asked to carry out a feasibility study which was reported by the Vice Chairman to Conference 2009 (copy appended).

Its concluding sentence crystallizes the terms of reference for this report which the Health Sub Committee was asked undertake.

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

Need

Coming to the issue ‘cold’ with no insight into the difficulties faced by the profoundly deaf (generally those born that way), the first questions to arise were:

How many profoundly deaf people are there in Great Britain?

The RNID puts the number at 104,000 for those with severe or profound deafness. (approx. 0.17% of the population). The RNID estimates that 50,000 people use BSL (0.08% of the population).

A straightforward extrapolation on to the GB membership of AA (notionally 35,000) would translate to 28 AA members/BSL users. Imogen has identified four members in the SW1 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Group who rely entirely on BSL for communication.

Two other organizations for the deaf estimate the number of BSL users at 30,000 and 100,000 respectively so the estimates of AA members based on national norms would range between 17 and 56.

How many cannot sight read? How many cannot lip read?

These skills are only used by those born with hearing, having learnt to read and write in the normal way at home and at school and then by accident, illness or age have become 'hard of hearing'. These people do not generally need or use BSL.

Do profoundly deaf people have sight and lip reading abilities?

Imogen explains the situation as follows:

"BSL is a language in its own right, has its own grammar and uses hand shapes in defined space, facial expression and body language. Any skill at reading and writing in the profoundly deaf group would be rudimentary or nonexistent. Therefore our written literature is pretty meaningless...to better explain, some profoundly deaf people know enough to see what is on the front of a bus, to be able to buy their groceries or a train ticket, practical things that bring them into the 'hearing world'."

Costs

It is anticipated that the American master version of the Big Book and Twelve and Twelve would be used with a BSL signer and subtitles.

The following costings have been prepared by Remark! a specialist company in the field and one endorsed by the RNID. Moreover the SW1 group has used Remark!'s signer services extensively and they enjoy a good working relationship.

The rates quoted are:

£75 per 350 words (or part thereof) + VAT for translation/signing.

£40 per 350 words (or part thereof) + VAT for subtitles.

Big Book

A discount of 20% is offered for larger commissions so that the Big Book up to page 164 + Dr Bob's Nightmare (c. 49,872 words) would cost £8,580 + £4,576
£13,156 + VAT (full price £16,445 + VAT)

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

c. 54,600 words would cost £9,360 + £4,992

£14,352 + VAT (full price £17,940 + VAT)

Should funds make the costs unaffordable for one single commission, an incremental approach could be considered. For example the Big Book might be commissioned over two financial years followed by the Steps (from the Twelve and Twelve) and the Traditions in the fourth year. In a straitened financial climate we have to work within our means.

NB 1 The word counts on which the prices are based are subject to final confirmation but represent the best information available

2 Pricing of the incremental approach would be subject to negotiation with Remark! in order to get the best discounted rate.

3 Remark! would require the following from us prior to undertaking their work:

- a. Copyright issues to be agreed and finalized by AA World Services and GSO.
- b. Quality master copies (not purchasers copies) of the ASL DVDs to be supplied by us.
- c. Narrative of the books in electronic format for the studio autocue system to be supplied by us.

Summary

It is understood that BSL application to existing Fellowship DVDs will be considered when these come up for renewal. It is not viable to superimpose signing as a retrofit exercise.

Special mention and credit must go to Imogen for her help with this report. She is a committed and passionate advocate for those members who have always lived in silence and for whom the written and spoken word have no meaning.

It is suggested that further research is done, alternative suppliers are asked to quote for the work and that Conference recommends to the Steering Committee that this with all other background information is referred for Committee 3 to consider at Conference next year.

“When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help I want the hand of AA always to be there...”

*Phil W
Health Subcommittee*

Electronic Communications

The internet/electronics is the fastest growing communications network on the planet – and the Fellowship is rising to the challenge of making the best use of it. The number of members taking up Service positions in EComs has been steadily growing – at the beginning of the year at the rate of approx one per fortnight, it’s slowing down, mainly because so many positions are now filled. I find this most encouraging for the future.

In September 2009 the Regional Electronic Communications Liaison Officers met in York. The purpose of the meeting was to share experience of the Service around the Fellowship, to discuss various options for the new AA website, to review the proposed Draft of a replacement for Guideline 19 and to get together with the Telephone Liaison Officers (meeting in York the same weekend) to discuss ways in which the two communication services could, by working in harmony, better serve our Primary Purpose. A lot of input resulted from this meeting, in aspects of website provisions, amendments to Draft G.19 and to ideas for a more comprehensive working relationship between EComs and Telephones. As always, I am encouraged by the degree of dedication and enthusiasm shown by members in Service.

The Draft of the proposed replacement G.19 has been completed, passed to the Literature Committee, and is before this Conference for approval. A lot of consideration and consultation has taken place to try to ensure it is the best possible document we can produce at this time.... in the hope that it will service the Fellowship as a Guideline for development and use of electronic communications, both as a useful tool and as a Service in the future. I hope it meets with your approval.

However, the big undertaking this year is, of course, the development of the new AA website. This project has been ongoing continually and has dominated the waking hours of the members of the webteam involved. It was given impetus when the AA website went down and we had great trouble in restoring it – truth to tell, it almost didn’t work. In view of this the General Service Board took the decision to go ahead with placing the contract for the new website with our chosen potential supplier.

....so, where are we with the new website at the moment? In progress. The design, layout and general aspect of the new webpages is agreed. The content has been put together and webpages constructed ... they come back to the webteam for testing, then go back to the

supplier for amendment, and come back to the webteam for retesting and further amendment. At this moment in time we are in the initial alpha testing phase – which means that our Online Response Team was given access to play and to see if they could break it. They did not break it, but they did find a number of further amendment/corrections needed and this is being done at the moment of writing. The next phase is when it comes back to us – again – and we let more people loose on the site to play. This is the beta testing phase – the final testing before saying “that’s it, finished, let it go live”.

The initial estimate was for the website to go live in February. Its highly unlikely that this timescale will be achieved. It has proved to be a most complex operation – one that no-one could truly accurately predict until it got underway. We have always considered that it is better to get it right than to rush. The website must serve the Fellowship well into the future, and we need to ensure it is fit for the job. This we are doing. I hope to have the main part of the site ready to show you at Conference so as I said last year ... Watch This Space.

Mari F
Trustee for Electronic Communications

Employment

This has been my first year as Board Trustee for Employment. I shadowed Jerry C for a year and I thank him for all his guidance.

The Region Employment Liaison meeting was held over the weekend 31 July / 1 August. Seven regions were represented, 5 by RELOs, one by the Chairperson and one by the Treasurer. In addition an Intergoup ELO attended who may move on to take the post at his Region.

I was encouraged by the enthusiasm and the wealth of ideas on how to reach out to the suffering alcoholic through the workplace. This proved to be a valuable meeting with the sharing of experiences and best practice.

There was also discussion around how to encourage members into this area of service and once they are in position, how to help them fulfil their role. A list of suggestions and resources was put together and circulated to Regions and Intergroups.

There is a whole chapter in the Big Book dedicated to Employment and those already involved in this area of service are keen to encourage others to take on the Employment challenge.

During the year I was privileged to facilitate a workshop on Employment at the Kent Professional PI Seminar in Maidstone. Two members from the local Unison branch showed particular interest in passing on information to their members in the workplace.

The Fellowship participated at the following Conferences and Exhibitions 2009:

Health and Wellbeing at Work, Birmingham - 24-25 February
UNISON Annual Health, Harrogate - 20-22 April

TUC Congress, Liverpool - 14-17 September
CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Directors), Manchester - 17-19 November

The CIPD Conference was held in Manchester for the first time and was a great success with over 100 contacts being made.

So far for 2010 we have booked Health and Wellbeing at Work and CIPD.

Penny A
GSB Trustee for Employment

EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING REPORT **Of** ***RECOVERY HAS NO BORDERS*** **OCTOBER 2009**

The 15th European Service Meeting was held in Frankfurt on 23/ 25 October this year and had as its theme *Recovery Has No Borders*. On being accepted as a first year delegate to the ESM I considered that I had an understanding of the wording of this topic and what it might mean in its relationship with the growth of the Fellowship in Europe.

As with other involvement within our Service Structure I have again come to appreciate that although it is rewarding in itself to put some effort into having an understanding of the wording of a theme as well as reading relevant background information within committees and workshops, the gift for me is participation, discussion, open-mindedness and a willingness to gain knowledge to reach conclusions that may further help us all to carry our message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers. Whoever they may be and whatever language they may speak.

After introductions each delegate brings to the ESM the experience of AA in their own country over the past two years with the commitment to report back to the General Service Board, Conference, and the Fellowship in general the experience gained by attending the ESM. (The ESM is a biennial event).

The committee and workshop I was involved in were *Literature/Publishing and Media Communication* and *Service Rotation* respectively which revealed through answers to the questions given, the experience of eleven different countries represented within the ESM.

As the weekend progressed both in committee and during conversations with other delegates I became more and more aware of the efforts of others as they learn from the process of developing their own Service Structure. For example;

- ***Austria***, 157 Groups with an approximate membership of 1300
- ***Belarus***, first Conference held in Minsk in 2003
- ***Czech Republic***, celebrates twenty years of AA since 1989/90
- ***Estonia***, operating today in 17 towns, 23 Groups speaking three different languages with an approximate membership of 250/300.
- ***Greenland***, in the region of 900 members divided into 14 locations over a 2.2 million square kilometre area where most cities can only be visited by plane. First delegate to the ESM for this country.

- *Iceland*, for the past two years the National Service Office has been financed totally by Group contributions.
- *Latvia*, after twenty years of development had representation for the first time at the World Service Meeting last year.

SERVICE ROTATION/ PUBLISHING/ MEDIA

The workshop/committee discussing the above heading revealed that the countries represented agreed that rotation was vital within our structures with some of the focus being on the length of service period mentioned in various manuals. Some countries have a twelve month break between positions held, while others stretch the service time due to a lack of membership in service to choose from. All countries have benefited from having a balance between experienced older members and those beginning to come through their structure.

Some, having an immigrant population, have experienced some difficulty with their published literature with it being different from the original language of the members settling in their country. However, this may also refer to other problems of reading which is addressed by countries having cassettes/CDs of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. There is also literature in Braille for members with no, or partial sight. Regarding working with the media a wide-ranging experience was shared with particular attention given to Tradition 11.

Some countries still do not have Non-Alcoholic Trustees, NATs, but those who have find *Class A Trustees* to be of great benefit, particularly in passing our message of recovery to the public.

All countries have some form of telephone service with no special training given to responders although some kind of instruction and reference materials are provided.

I would say that in this report there lies a difference from others I have given in the past as I am attempting to describe an experience, my own, of witnessing the efforts of others as they progress in developing a growing service structure which will allow them the privilege of watching the growth of AA recovery in their country.

Jim T
ESM Representative

Health

This will be my last Conference and health report to you the Fellowship. I wish to thank you all for your support and cooperation over the last four wonderful years. I have met so many enthusiastic committed people in Health Liaison up and down Great Britain at various service forums and events; I always received a warm welcome and appreciated the hospitality that was shown to me as a GSB Trustee.

Nationally AA has maintained its profile with the Health Service and the general public in attendance at various events and conferences, such as:

- Nursing in practise: Glasgow, London, Manchester and Cardiff.
- Occupational Health: Cumbernauld

- Primary Care: Birmingham
- Health related conferences such as Holyrood events in Edinburgh.
- Public Health, Alcohol Concern, YMCA binge drinking in London.
- University Medical schools

The Health Sub Committee now has four members including the new GSB Trustee for Health, Phil W, who has brought a great deal of experience and enthusiasm to the committee, my thanks go to him and the members for their cooperation and patience through this transitional period. For economical reasons, the meetings in York have been reduced to two this year with the option for telephone conferences in-between.

The committee is currently looking into identifying new opportunities and avenues for cooperating with various areas of the ever changing Health Service at a National level.

Our thanks go to the Public Information committee who pass on any relevant information to the HSC, any new initiatives or projects are naturally sanctioned by the GSB before we proceed. Reports of any new health related activities and initiatives will continue to be published in the 6 monthly newsletters and the *AA Service News* that are circulated to all Regions and Intergroups. The Health Professional web pages have been updated and refreshed to reflect how AA can cooperate with Health Professionals, the updating will be an ongoing process as and when required with any costs taken into consideration. The HLO power point presentations and resource packs have been updated over the past 12 months and are available from GSO on request for those involved in health liaison. There is a possibility that these items of information may well become downloadable from the new website in the not too distant future.

69 Intergroups and 7 Regions currently have their HLO posts filled which is roughly the same picture as the last two years, more communication between the Intergroups and Regions would be of great benefit to our primary purpose, I feel.

Their reports show a steady commitment with liaison work locally and interestingly in some areas new methods of co-operation are being adopted such as, AA speakers attending patient forums at local health centres, also PCT,s in some areas have doctors one day training seminars that AA speakers have been invited to on a regular basis, the point of contact has been the PCT line manager responsible for training events.

Some Intergroups and Regions report that they arrange public information events that attract health professionals in addition to other professionals from the public sector.

Once again, I say thank you to all of you who have been involved in HLO work over the past four years, it was heart warming to meet some of you and witness first hand your commitment to our Fellowship's primary purpose.

Any updates to this report will be forthcoming

Vince O
Trustee Health

Literature Report and Proposals

It falls to me to sincerely thank the members of the Literature Committee for their unstinting support and hard work during the past twelve months. The Committee met four times in York where we welcomed two new members and two members rotated out. Next year due to further rotation we will be seeking new committee members, an advertisement will be published in the spring edition of *AA Service News*. Our first two telephone conferencing meetings are planned for 2010. Much of the work takes place via the internet between meetings and as you will see there have been many emails this year.

Conference 2009 approved two new “You don’t Have to Live Here” posters and these were used for the Public Information poster campaign in October 2009. The female prison and armed forces shares are now included as part of the appropriate services “starter packs”, and the wallet size cards have been produced. All the new literature is available from York. As always, taking the best interests of the Fellowship into consideration it has not been possible to produce the self adhesive postcard sized sticker due to legal issues concerning fly posting.

Conference 2010

All literature proposals for Conference were distributed to the Fellowship at the end of December 2009 to allow time for consideration and feedback. We had the pleasure of including the draft reconfiguration of the AA Handbook but because of the large volume of material involved it was decided to distribute it where appropriate by email. We were mindful not to disadvantage any members not having internet access or those who wished to receive hard copies by post. I believe that this is the first time Conference Literature has been disseminated in this way.

During the year the committee has endeavoured to keep the Fellowship informed using *AA Service News* and will continue to do so. The systematic review of our literature remains part of our remit along with the development of our Design Manual. Much of what we do comes as it should directly from you, the Fellowship. As always we welcome ideas and feedback. 2010 will possibly see the Committee looking with fresh eyes at our newcomer literature.

Proposals

- *Reconfiguration of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.*
- *AA pamphlet - Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.*
- *Prison induction leaflet.*
- *Addition of Armed Services to list of service functions to - Alcoholics Anonymous a message for professionals.*
- *The clarification of the definition of open and closed meetings.*

The Electronic Communication Guideline 19 will be reviewed in committee.

Sheila D, GSB Trustee

Public Information

As Public Information was not assigned any specific tasks by Conference 2009, I have had the required time to evaluate the work that PI is doing nationwide.

I feel we should very much hold in our hearts and minds our PI slogan “Anonymous but not Invisible” as we are hiding the talent we have for helping the still suffering alcoholic.

Our attendances at the Parliamentary events in Scotland, Westminster, Wales and the National Alcohol Conference in Blackpool highlight how we can be of benefit to organisations that are affected by alcoholism, and I believe this is of immense value to Alcoholics Anonymous and should be continued, mindful of the expense to the Fellowship.

Having experimented with ways of highlighting the presence of AA nationally, through the use of advertising on the television, newspapers, tube trains etc. it was felt this was expensive and not good value for money.

The suggestion of an Awareness Day or Week was seriously considered until our financial position made us shelve the proposal for the immediate future. However, we did highlight “alcohol awareness” at the same time as a national political campaign on alcohol and our activities came to a climax in October, when we launched a “Big Poster Push Campaign” in which the Fellowship managed to put up nearly 11,000 of our new ‘Park Bench’ posters.

Locally, many PI teams do an immense amount of PI work and I have been amazed by the versatility and imagination shown. However, what I have also discovered is a real lack of communication between the Groups, Intergroups and Regions and the PI sub committee is working hard to encourage more integration of ideas.

We are building links with as many of the local and regional Drug And Alcohol Teams (DAAT) as possible through our Region and Intergroup PILOs as this gives us a direct link into the NHS and Probation Services. This will hopefully make us very much more visible on a national basis and utilised as a primary provider of recovery from alcoholism.

Our sub committee meetings were drastically reduced this year to save expense and we experimented with our first Conference Call in November which was very successful, a major saving for the Fellowship.

This year, I would like to continue building communications with the groups via the Liaison Officers to encourage more people to be aware of our primary purpose “to help the still suffering alcoholic”, thereby persuading more members to become actively involved.

Furthering our contacts within the DAAT offices is essential to AA being seen as a body that can deal with alcoholism nationally.

I believe the time is right for AA to be seen: we can and must be “Anonymous but not Invisible”.

Nick R, Trustee PI

Prisons

The General Service Conference of 2010 will see me complete my period of service on the General Service Board. It has been my privilege to be a member of the GSB and an honour to serve for the past four years as Trustee for Prisons. It has also been a humbling experience working and serving with members of AA, many of whom were involved in prison service long before my appointment to the Board and will still be involved long after I've gone. It takes a great deal of commitment to travel to often extremely remote locations, fifty-two weeks of the year to help a Prison Meeting take place. My own sobriety has been strengthened by their friendship and example.

As the prison population grows and security requirements increase, so do the problems in gaining access to Prisons. In order to gain admittance to prisons in general, AA members are, along with other voluntary organisations being requested to fill in a new type of vetting form that seems to vary from prison to prison. The documentation requirements that go along with the process can be quite onerous but we have to be patient and comply with regulations. In general there is a great deal of goodwill towards AA from the prison authorities to help facilitate AA Prison Groups. However, what is becoming apparent is the increasing number of organisations being paid to counsel prisoners and these organisations can occasionally perceive AA as rivals working for free and they are sometimes making life difficult for our AA sponsors. Nevertheless, it is to AA's credit that PLO's and sponsors continue to invoke their patience, tolerance and courtesy in sometimes difficult and frustrating circumstances. It is unlikely that type of problem will diminish and to be realistic the level of background checks and disclosure accompanied by health and safety training will probably increase rather than diminish in the future.

It is now over 50 years since the first Prison Group was formed at Wakefield Prison in Yorkshire and 2010 will mark the 50th Anniversary of the first meeting held in Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow. Arrangements to mark these events are being made at present. Since these days, the number of prisons where AA Meetings are regularly held is around 71% in England and Wales whilst in Scotland all 17 prisons have an AA Group. It is one of the aims of the Prison Sub-committee to seek ways of increasing the number of prisons in England and Wales where AA meetings are held.

Some of the events that have taken place in the past 12 months:

- A Prison sub-committee was formed in 2009 to support those involved in Prison Groups and to encourage others to become part of this important area of AA service. The number of vacant Intergroup and Region PLO positions causes concern and makes communication difficult. If these posts are vacant it becomes a problem to know what is happening in individual prisons, the members of the sub-committee are active in trying to encourage others to help fill these posts.
- Highlighting the important part the Prison Postal Service can play in the recovery process for both inmates and AA members on the outside by corresponding with each other. Due to the hard work by staff at GSO and the NSO in promoting the PPS the numbers of prisoners and responders has grown over the past couple of years and is one of AA's success stories.

- Regular meetings take place at the Ministry of Justice with the National Offender Management Service Intervention team. These meetings are attended by members of the Probation Service and the AA trustees responsible for Prison and Probation/Social Services. The meetings provide an excellent opportunity to make contact and exchange ideas with the judiciary of how AA can best help those in Prison or are involved in the Probation process.
- Attendance by the Trustees of Prison and Probation/Social Services at various conferences organised by those involved in the Criminal Justice system and also attendance at the Westminster and Holyrood events.

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

Jim S, Prison Trustee

Probation/Social Services

Conference it gives me great pleasure to report that the work done in 2009 will go quite a way in helping to put Probation/Social Services on a sounder footing for the years to come.

Quite a bold statement some may add when only 50% of Intergroup posts are filled and only 8 of the 15 Regions have officers. (For the wordsmiths and the mathematicians actively taxing their mind at this juncture, CER doesn't have this remit).

That hopefully is about to change. The newly formed Probation/Social Services sub-committee is tasked with being on hand to support Regions and the Fellowship when asked to enable liaison officers to have more information and advice. Thus, helping new officers through the early stages of their tenure.

This advice will come in the shape of a revamped Liaison Officers Handbook which will provide extensive information including Hints and Suggestions, template letters and relevant contact details etc. Also there will be a Probation/Social Services page in all future editions of *AA Service News* where the committee will disseminate articles from the Fellowship on the successes and problems associated with this area of service. The web page for Probation/Social Services will include a forum for service officers as well as a library of good practice and ideas.

The initial article will be in the winter edition of *AA Service News* and I am sure you will have read this and understand the functions of the sub –committee.

My hope is by Conference 2011 all posts will be filled and all liaison officers will feel they have the information and support to do their service. That, of course, is up to the Fellowship but I have stopped looking at the one cloud and only see the bright blue sky.

Other equally important information is that I was privileged to attend the Eastern Forum and the London South Forum and present the work of Probation/Social Service to the assemblies.

Both received this in a very positive manner and it was so helpful to have so many people attending a credit to the organisers and growth for myself.

The Regional Liaison Officers meeting went very well in June with lots of opportunity to share the rewards and pressures felt in delivering the AA message in this area. We, again, had a very fruitful and productive meeting with our service friends from Prisons, this is good use of time to share our experiences.

Nationally I, along with the Prisons Trustee, continue to meet NOMS at the Ministry of Justice in London on a quarterly basis and it is positive news to have professionals having such a constructive view of AA at his level. The Prison Trustee and I attended a National launch of an Alcohol strategy in Manchester. AA was also asked to provide an Information Stall which was manned by members from Manchester area and which afforded an excellent opportunity to meet colleagues from Probation.

I attended a conference aimed at the Scottish Legal and Social structures at Peebles in November this again provided an opportunity to pass on the AA message of who we are.

That, Conference, is my report I hope you find it as encouraging to read as I do when I write it. It is indeed an honour to report on the very hard work being undertaken by members across the country to 'carry this message'

Martin B
GSB Trustee Probation/Social Service

Roundabout Magazine

Roundabout, your meeting in print with 1,943 Magazines sold on average each month and 157 articles published last year.

The Roundabout magazine is self supporting but it was agreed to increase the price of the magazine from £0.80 to £1.00, as there has not been an increase since 2003. This was done to compensate for various increases for paper and printing. Subscriptions for the magazine can be gained from the General Service Office.

Roundabout Diaries will be available in 2010.

There is 967 groups in Scotland the breakdown for the five Regions are:

East has 135 groups that amounts to 14%.

Glasgow has 322 groups which amounts to 33%

Highlands has 114 groups which amounts to 12%

Scotia has 226 groups which amounts to 23%

South west 170 groups which takes up 18%

The breakdown of subscriptions for each Region are as follows:

East - 135 groups with 26 group subscribing to the magazine.

Glasgow- 322 groups with 46 Groups subscribing

Highland - 114 groups with 42 groups subscribing

Scotia - 224 groups with 71 groups subscribing
South west - 170 groups with 35 groups subscribing

This represents 90% of sale for the Magazine, The other 10% are from individual subscriptions.

The average number of Roundabouts sold per month is 1,943 - 1,618 to groups and 325 to other individuals and this breaks down per Region:

East of Scotland - 26 groups had taken 148 magazines which relates to 9% sold
Glasgow of 46 groups 353 magazines taken which relates to 22% sold
Highlands of 42 groups 288 magazines taken which relates to 18% sold
Scotia of 71 groups 584 magazines taken which relates to 36% sold
South west of 35 groups 245 magazine were taken which relates to 15% sold

The number of articles printed in the Roundabout Magazine from October 2008 until September 2009:

East of Scotland 15 articles this equates to 10%
Glasgow 44 = 28%,
Highlands 7 = 4%
Scotia 48 = 31%,
South west 13 = 8%
which gave a total of 127 article received in Scotland.

Elsewhere, there were 29 articles which was 18% and 1 not known which gave us a grand total of 157

The Roundabout Web Hits

This shows the number of people who have looked at Roundabout on line daily:

Month	Daily average	Monthly hits
Sep-09	369	11909
Aug-09	396	12293
Jul -09	396	13613
Jun-09	426	12798
May-09	373	11583
April-09	390	11709
Mar-09	420	13028
Feb-09	429	12468
Jan-09	468	14517
Dec-08	399	11581
Nov-08	352	10583
Oct-08	351	10892

The Roundabout Magazine is a very important part of the Fellowship's way of carrying the message to the Fellowship. All articles and subscriptions are welcomed.

Regular features for 2010:

Views from the Inside (prison inmates encourage to send articles). The inmates articles should be sent to a PO Box office and not to personal addresses.
At Your Service and Young Members.

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

Geoff T
Roundabout Trustee

Share Magazine

Following the resignation of the previous Editor shortly after Conference 2009, the newly appointed Assistant Editor picked up the baton and immediately brought the production and delivery schedule back on target, and in certain circumstances, has been proactive in the preparation of the Magazine, to ensure that delivery is effected on time. The Assistant Editor subsequently was, via the nominations process, appointed Editor and consequently the Assistant Editors job is vacant.

Despite a shortage on submissions of articles, particularly in respect of monthly themes, it has been decided that Step and Tradition themed articles will, where possible, still be included according to the relevant months and that, where possible, a further theme is evident across a number of articles submitted within a particular month, these will be highlighted on the front cover as the main theme in that particular month's issue.

Notwithstanding these objectives, it is imperative that the Fellowship and its members positively support Share, not only by the purchase of the Magazine, Calendar and Diaries, but also by the submission of articles, photographs and cartoons for inclusion in these publications. These objectives could more easily be facilitated by groups appointing Share Liaison Officers at all levels, including that of Intergroup and Region, thereby raising the profile of Share Magazine by encouraging the submission of articles, emphasising the value to newcomers of being able to participate in sharing of experience outside the normal meeting venue.

Though the current economic climate has had some considerable adverse effect in many areas, including that of AA's other commitments, it is encouraging to note that Share has generally maintained a relatively consistent subscription level to that of the preceding two years period.

The preliminary development of the Share Web facility has been completed and is awaiting the launch of the new GSO web facility so that this can be posted.

Long term proposals suggested include: online subscriptions, article submissions, access to archived back copies and audio Share for those unable to read.

The Share Team is currently seeking two National Liaison Officers, Northern and Southern, whose principle objectives are to coordinate the efforts of Local Liaison Officers in the

commissioning of articles, promotion and organising of Share Stands, Workshops at Intergroup, Regional and National Conventions.

*John S.
Share Trustee*

Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting Johannesburg 2009

Background:

The Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSASM) meets every 2 years. Its **Statement of Purpose** reads as follows:

‘The primary purpose of the SSASM is the same as that of all AA activity - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he or she may be, whatever language he or she speaks. SSASM seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of the sub saharan Africa region. It can also represent an expression of the Group conscience throughout the region.

Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The SSASM encourages the planning of the sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries and the exploration of expanding AA’s to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and working in institutions.’

SSASM is jointly sponsored by AA Great Britain and USA. Our role, as sponsoring bodies, is to share our experience, strength and hope.

Johannesburg 2009

The 4th SSASM was held this year in Johannesburg on the 29th, 30th and 31st of May 2009. AA Great Britain was represented by the Chair and the General Secretary. USA were represented by Phyllis, the General Manager, GSO New York, Julio, the Staff member with responsibility for ‘International’ and Jo Anne, the Trustee at Large on GSB USA who holds responsibility for International liaison.

The following 12 African countries were represented:

South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Lesutho and Malawi.

The Key Note address on Recovery, Unity and Service was delivered and well received by Ann N.

A presentation was made by the USA on translations and the difficulties of translating into the enormous number of different languages and dialects that are in use in Africa (for instance.... besides English there are 11 other everyday languages in South Africa alone).

GB presented on the work of our Literature Committee and the importance of creating local literature that is relevant locally. We presented to each delegate a copy of the dvd 'Who Me', a starter pack, Message for Professionals, AA as a Resource to Employers and AA as a resource to the Medical Profession. These were very well received.

Reports were delivered from each Country. AA in some of these countries often consists of 1 or 2 groups. The work that they undertake in promoting AA is awe inspiring.

There followed a number of themed workshops which provided an opportunity for delegates to share their experience, strength and hope. The themes discussed were Strengthening the Home Group, establishing and developing AA Service Structures, Singleness of purpose and Co operation with Professionals.

A personal view:

This is the second SSASM that I have been privileged to attend. My lasting memory from the last occasion was one of inspiration. In difficult, often impossible situations, dedicated members, few in numbers went to enormous lengths, with few resources to ensure the message was carried.

On this occasion I was struck by progress. Countries that had one group now have more.... (Namibia for instance, hosted the 2007 SSASM and AA Namibia at that time consisted of 1 group of 12/13 people....that 1 group has now got 25 to 30 members and there are 4 additional groups reported outside of the capital). Structure, in many cases is in its infancy but the fundamentals are being put in place. The one thing that has not changed is the dedication of those pioneers, and the thirst for recovery information.

Bill W gifted AA GB with the royalties of our principal texts, charging us to use the proceeds to carry the message. My feeling is that he would be hugely proud, that his gesture of good will continues to bear fruit.

The Conference ended on Sunday. On Monday we had the opportunity of visiting GSO in Johannesburg. We spent the day sharing with what seemed to be an enormous amount of visitors that came to meet us. We flew back overnight Monday.

Dave C
Chair GSB

National Northern Convention

This years Convention entitled 'A New Beginning' will take place at the Norbreck Castle Hotel Blackpool on March 26th, 27th, 28th, and continues to be supported by the North West, North East and Midland Regions. The Convention Committee is made up of representatives from the three Regions, its members are committed to service, to holding a successful convention, and has worked to maintain a working relationship with the Hotel. The Terms of Reference have been reviewed and revised recently and are used to inform their meetings.

The Committee meets regularly in Blackpool and the Regional Chairs attended the Annual General Meeting. There was representation from Al-Anon who will be participating this year.

The programme includes:

Participation of Share Magazine
AA related films
Old timers meeting
Catch ball, come and go meeting
The ever popular 'Road to Recovery'

For those of you who have not experienced a Northern National Convention, I am sure you will find a warm welcome in Blackpool.

Sheila Davis
GSB trustee

Southern National Convention

When the Southern National Convention Committee arrived at Brean Sands on the Thursday none of us realised that this would be the last Convention to be held at Brean. Yes, there had been some 'whispers' circulating within the Fellowship, though these had been quashed by our Convention Committee keeping communication going with the Pontins staff that we deal with to put the Convention on.

Let me report that the 2009 Southern National Convention went very well and all of the Convention Committee received positive feedback from those that attended. All meetings at the Convention were well attended. The Southern National Convention again had 'Signers' at three of the meetings over the weekend. There was an AA Member from the Deaf Friendly Meeting in London, sharing their experience, strength and hope using sign language. This was a great historical experience for all who were present.

The dance floor on the Saturday evening was packed and the Band's Lead Singer gave an emotional thank you for the experience that the Band had of playing at an AA Convention.

The Treasurer reported that Registrations were down, raffle down and Tradition 7 was down. Literature sales were slightly up. The Southern National Convention also gave their full support in assisting the AA Share Team in setting up of Share Stand and making sure it was manned during the Convention. A special thanks to all who helped.

I would like to record my thanks to all of The Southern National Convention Committee for their hard work in putting on some excellent Conventions that have been held at Brean Sands. I would also like to thank the Six Sponsoring Regions of the Southern National Convention and for their support given so far to the Convention Committee who are now endeavouring to find a new venue for the 2010 Convention.

Near the end of January 2010 there will be the scheduled Convention Committee Meeting and AGM. With the six Sponsoring Regions present there will be lots of discussion on where we go from here. With all this experience and the help of our 'Higher Power' we will arrive at decision on the way forward. Note: An update will be given to you at Conference.

Dave D, Board Trustee

Welsh National Convention

The theme of the 2009 Welsh Convention was *'The best is yet to come'* which turned out to be something of a self fulfilling prophecy. The event, as ever, was held at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells in its beautiful mid-Wales setting and the sun shone down on that last weekend in May to make it a memorable and joyous Fellowship experience.

Numbers attending were up on previous years despite the recession with guests from all over the UK. The shares were strong and the dance floor was packed in the evenings with members celebrating their sobriety. The Metropole played its part with its high standard of food and friendly staff.

This year's convention will be held 4-6th June and the theme this time is *'Acceptance is the key'*. The format will be similar to last year with come and go meetings, service workshop, spiritual service and full AI Anon participation in addition to a full programme of main platform sessions.

The same hard working team with a few new recruits 'shadowing' is in place to ensure that Wales delivers another weekend to remember. Whilst it may be smaller than the other National Conventions, we believe that this gives it a unique intimacy and charm.

There'll be a welcome in the hillsides...

Phil W

GSB Trustee, Wales and Borders