

**Board Reports  
to  
Conference  
2012**

## **Chair's Overview of Board Reports to Conference 2012**

My name is Sheila and I am an alcoholic and it is my privilege to present the Board Report to Conference.

Welcome to those of you who are here for the first time I hope you find it a valuable and rewarding experience.

In 1964, 18% of AA members in Great Britain were women. At the first AA Conference in 1964, the General Service Board was made up of all men. By the following year change was taking place and I read that a woman, though not a Trustee was invited to join one of the Committees. Last year the AA survey showed % 40% of AA members were women whilst the Board of Trustees was made up of 25% women (although due to rotation the number shows fewer women trustees in 2011/12) and for the first time AA Great Britain has a female Chair. Chairing the first Board Meeting in May 2011 together we made a small piece of AA history. It was the 200th Board meeting with a female chair and female General Secretary. What does that mean? My name is Sheila and I am an alcoholic who happens to be a woman!

I would like to thank all the Trustees for their hard work and support. Currently we have four non alcoholic Trustees whose hard work and dedication is amazing, we are truly fortunate to have them, they are not treated differently to alcoholic Trustees, we work them very hard and surprisingly they seem to stay.

I would like to thank also our hard working, dedicated staff at the General Service Office. They have been led for the past six years or so by Ann N who will be retiring following Conference. She has worked with and supported many new Trustees, fielded enquiries from many sources, all communications have been answered with a calm and considered manner and always with her signature 'Love and best wishes Ann'. Thank you Ann.

The relationship between General Secretary and Chair of the Trustees is an important one, it is symbiotic, and pivotal to the success of fulfilling our primary purpose. Like any service position you can't fully understand it all until you do it.

In January we welcomed our newly appointed General Secretary Roger Booth. Roger has served as a Trustee and was Vice Chair for four years, rotating in 2009.

Due to rotation we will be saying goodbye to some trustees and welcoming others

Karen Martin joined GSO as Accounts Management

Lorraine Mullholand joined the Northern Service Office as Office administrator, in place of Caroline Dixon who left in December.

Ian Blunt joined the Southern Service office as assistant administrator.

The Board continues to meet four times annually, plus a workshop every July. Each Board member carries responsibility for their allocated service discipline, plus other duties as required, such as projects, seminars, parliamentary events, Regional Forums and attendance at Regional Assemblies.

The Board continues to work hard on behalf of the Fellowship in its efforts to fulfill AAs primary purpose, during the past twelve months we have seen continuing work on the British Sign Language DVD which hopefully will be with you for Conference.

Work is continuing on the AA Website.

A PI seminar was held in York in September and 2011. Tim W, Archives and Jim T, Finance presented to the Highland and Islands Service Forum in Inverness.

Trustees attended conferences as observers in countries such as Poland, Ireland, and in March 2012 Russia. AA Great Britain continues to sponsor delegates from Eastern Europe to the Polish Conference.

From the Development Fund we also continue to fund jointly, with AA USA/Canada, delegates attending the Sub Sahara South African Service Meeting, which is biennial, took place in Johannesburg in June 2011. Ann N and myself attended from AA GB.

The European Service Meeting hosted by GSO York was held in Frankfurt in October 2011. Jim T and Penny A attended as our first and second year delegates.

More detailed reports of the above will be available to Conference and the Fellowship.

At Conference 2012 Board members will be available to answer any questions you may have regarding their individual disciplines.

At Conference 2011 we were privileged to have the Chair of Trustees and the General Manager of AA USA/Canada as observers. In May 2011 Martin B our Vice Chair and myself were invited to attend their Conference as observers. Both Conferences have similarities and differences, yet both adhere to the Traditions/Concepts of AA.

As you can see a busy and productive year. We can be pretty sure that work on our primary purpose will continue apace following Conference 2012.

Sheila D.

### **AA Service News**

I took over the responsibility as editor of AASN a little over six months ago. While the flow of articles submitted is a little erratic, as is much else in AA, so far I have received enough material to produce two editions without any major problems. Furthermore, thanks to co-operation from the Fellowship, the content of the articles so far received covers nearly all disciplines in a reasonable and fair manner. Please keep the articles and reports coming as AASN is one of the main vehicles for communication within the Fellowship.

Tim W-M

### **Archives 2011**

The year has been one of quiet and steady progress. Our Archivist, Stephen S. has continued with the long, tedious but necessary process of cataloguing and digitalizing our records during his several prolonged stays at York. Once digitalized, the original documents are then stored under ideal conditions at the Borthwick Institute attached to the University for permanent safe-keeping.

The group histories project is progressing well and now all the information gathered for it, is housed on its own dedicated computer in the Archives department at GSO. This computer is not on-line and has an extra hard disc to increase its storage capacity. Thus it is totally secure to protect anonymity. It can be consulted by any interested member who wishes to do so.

In keeping with the financial climate one of our two sub-committee meetings was held by conference call to save costs.

The annual archives network meeting was greatly appreciated and well attended. We heard presentations about AA history in the Channel Isles and in English speaking Europe, Central European Region. Further progress will be reported after our next sub-committee meeting in early March.

Tim W-M

### **Armed Services Report for Conference 2012**

I would like to start my report with a huge thank you to all of the Groups, Intergroups and Regions who have been 'Carrying the Message of Alcoholics Anonymous' to the Armed Services and their families. No initiative goes unnoticed and my grateful thanks to all members concerned for making my role a great deal easier.

#### **Excerpt From Guideline 21 - AA And The Armed Services:**

'Intergroups and Regions are responsible for the appointment of an Armed Services Liaison Officer [ASLO] to work in conjunction with other Intergroup and Regional officers. The role of the ASLO is to establish and maintain communication between Alcoholics Anonymous and The Royal Navy, The Army and The Royal Air Force and to report back at all levels within Intergroup or Region.

It is also important to cultivate similar contact and communication with Community Welfare Officers and organisations such as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) and Veterans-U.K. Familiarity with the local area and a thorough working knowledge of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain are vital before accepting the role of Armed Services Liaison Officer'.

#### **Update**

In 2012, our AS Sub Committee lost a few valuable members but one new member has recently been appointed bringing our Committee to three. The Committee met twice during the year in York, once in July 2011 for our full Sub Committee meeting and once in January 2012 for our Workshop. The Armed Services Sub-Committee of the General Service Board follows a Terms of Reference which was reviewed and approved in July 2011 and subsequently published in AA Service News.

The January 2012 Workshop was very positive with 8 Regions sending representatives. Topics such as Armed Services Twelfth Step List, Armed Forces Day, Template Letter, Armed Services Pack CD and how best to improve communication and knowledge between ASLO's were discussed, along with other items. The meeting was very productive with a great deal of information exchanged.

I can also report that we now have 5 Regional Armed Service Liaison Officers and 16 Intergroup Armed Services Liaison Officers in place.

AS Sub Committee has compiled a Twelfth Step list of AA members who are currently serving in the Armed Forces or who used to serve. Members who can talk to the Service person in familiar language *and* with an understanding of their environment. This list will be used to provide telephone responders with names and phone numbers of members of the fellowship in their local area who can best talk with and 12<sup>th</sup> Step people in the Services who phone for help.

This confidential database will be maintained at General Service Office in York, and the complete list will be given to Regional Telephone Liaison Officers. They will provide Intergroup Telephone Liaison Officers with the names and phone numbers of Armed Forces 12<sup>th</sup> Steppers in the Region so that they can pass on this information to their telephone responders. To the Armed Forces 12<sup>th</sup> Stepper, it will be exactly the same as acting as a telephone service 12<sup>th</sup> Stepper.

The list will be updated twice a year by GSO from update information provided by a member of the

Armed Services Sub Committee.

### **Events Attended**

1. Display stand at a Health Fair at the Imjin Barracks (ex RAF Innsworth) near Gloucester.
2. Provided a display at Health Fair being organised by 1st Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles, based in Folkestone, Kent. Garrison is home to approximately 1000 soldiers.
3. On 25th June there was a large Armed Forces day event at Plymouth on the Hoe. This was held as part of National Armed Forces Day UK. Three members of AA manned display stand and provided lots of information and literature. AA participation at other locations in UK during Armed Forces Week UK.
4. Meeting held with the Welfare Officer at 40 Marine Commando, Fitzwilliam, Somerset. Discussion very positive regards AA giving presentations on what we have to offer.
5. ASLO reports a positive response from Combat Stress HQ in Leatherhead.
6. ASLO received a positive response from SSAFA in Southampton who has asked for an AA speaker at one of their local Caseworker meetings.
7. A presentation given and literature available for a Soldier, Sailor, Airforce Family Association (SSAFA) training day at Harrow & District Masonic Branch, Northwick Circle Kenton HA3 OEL.
8. Contact has been made with St Dunstons, a charity that deals with blind ex service personnel.
9. Drug and Alcohol awareness morning given by the Master-At-Arms of HMS Diamond to the Ship's Company. AA was invited to give presentation aboard HMS Nelson where some 65-70 members of the Ship's Company could be accommodated.
10. Following this successful presentation, AA received a request from the Medical Department, HMS Diamond, requesting another talk in January 2012. The ship organised a morning 'health fair' event as an extension of the Fit for Life, Fit to Fight campaign that has been working for the last couple of years.  
HMS Diamond is a front line RN Unit, albeit alongside in Her Majesty's Naval Base but this means we are now quite able to honestly say AA has attended, by request, a warship in commission to offer information in support of the professional body and spread the message to those who may be concerned about their drinking. So, responses to any contacts our Fellowship may receive from other ships in HMNBs – Plymouth, Rosyth or shore establishments can be improved on with this experience.
11. Presentations have taken place this year and are ongoing at Joint Services Command College in Shrivenham. Currently 3 - 4 presentations per year with a further request to give a presentation in February 2012.

### **AA Website**

The Sub-Committee are always looking at ways to improve the Website with regards to Armed Services and are exploring ways of best using this facility. We have good communication with the Electronics Team and welcome any suggestions that you would like to see on Armed Services Web pages.

## Armed Services Plans for 2012

- This year the National Armed Forces day is coming to Plymouth and it is hoped AA Armed Services will have a substantial part to play in raising awareness which will coincide with the times of their events. We hope to contact many of the Tri Services establishments/events throughout the UK regarding this event and look forward to providing presentations, literature and information where and when required.
- Maintain lasting links and raise awareness with organisations offering non-military support to service people e.g. - HIVES, Royal British Legion, SSAFA, RAFA, RNA.
- Presentations are expected to continue at Community Support Course in Shrivenham.
- Continue to raise the profile of Armed Services Liaison Officers within the fellowship. We are at present a comparatively small band of dedicated members, but with your help, we can perhaps pass on what was so freely given to you.
- To continue carrying out our primary purpose of carrying the AA message to UK Armed Forces personnel past and present and their families who may have a problem with alcohol.

Robert M.

### British Sign Language Project

Committee 3 at Conference 2011 was asked to: *'consider options on how to proceed with the translation of the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions into British Sign Language for the profoundly deaf alcoholic.'* It made the following recommendations.

*'The Committee carefully considered the options on how to proceed with the translation of the Big Book and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions into British Sign Language. A substantial majority of the Committee agreed that we should proceed with this project as promptly as possible within current financial constraints facing the Fellowship, on the following basis:*

*'To proceed first with the Big Book and thereafter with the Twelve and Twelve in BSL based on the American Sign Language model which incorporates a sound track (voice over) and subtitles.'* We supported the choice of the preferred bidder on the grounds of cost, quality of translation and production.

*The Committee recommends that the General Service Board proceeds with all matters of due diligence, copyright and licensing to take this project forward.*

*Voting 19 for, 1 against. A minority view was recorded.'*

Accordingly a meeting was arranged at GSO with the preferred bidder company whose sample had been assessed as the best in terms of translation by a professional BSL practitioner who is also a long standing member of the Fellowship. It was also judged to have the best production quality and came in at a lower cost than the other companies quoting for the project.

Much detailed and necessary communication followed between the company and GSO to clarify precise requirements for the production. Our 'in Fellowship' practitioner visited the company's studios to meet their team and to discuss the nuances of the Big Book's language before and during the production stage.

Filming was completed in December 2011 and, at the time of writing, the final editing and subtitle work is at an advanced stage. A proof copy is due to reach GSO in mid February to be checked over and modified as necessary before final approval.

Delivery of the approved masters is set for early March 2012. The DVD boxed sets will be produced/copied at GSO from the masters and will be available for sale to the Fellowship.

Phil W

### **Electronic Communications**

Whilst front facing web pages are almost complete and convey a strong professional impact, there is still need for update of the actual content in relation to all Disciplines. This, ideally, should come from the respective disciplines themselves, or via their sub committees. Thus addressing some of the questions arising in the current Conference Questions. The reasons for this should be obvious to most members with experience of the AA service structure.

Whilst acknowledging recent experiences in the "Meeting search facility" have been to some extent disappointing, these are being addressed with the provider.

The introduction of new Regional and Intergroup Microsites together with File-Store facilities have been delayed due to technical problems with the new server.

It should be noted that whilst previously Conference was eager to retain the full range of forums facilities, there has been little support from within the Fellowship to administer the various forum disciplines.

The majority of the correspondence / postings on the Conference Forum in respect of Conference Questions appear to have come from a very small minority. That would suggest the majority of the Fellowship are not that interested in discussion of Conference Questions on the forums. One Question has no comments whatsoever.

Perhaps it is time that the Fellowship and Conference reconsider the value of forums on the basis of the lack of support for them throughout the whole service structure.

Number of posts:	<b>46</b>	Posts per day:	<b>0.59</b> since launch
Number of topics:	<b>11</b>	Topics per day:	<b>0.09</b>
Number of users	<b>1268</b>	Users per day:	<b>2.84</b>

**This number is suspect due to the number of non bona-fide registrations.**

Moderator 3 has possibly removed as many as those currently shown as a result of erroneous registrations.

On a more positive note, the Online Responder Services are showing upward trends in contacts from potential new members. (See attached report. ORS\_Report\_Jan1)

My time as Trustee for Electronics Communication has been a great experience and one I am most grateful for. It has on occasion been quite frenetic and on others a steep learning curves both technically and in terms of application of the Traditions in respect of this burgeoning media resource. Certainly there is much more to be considered in terms of media web application and our inter-action with the Public and the Fellowship.

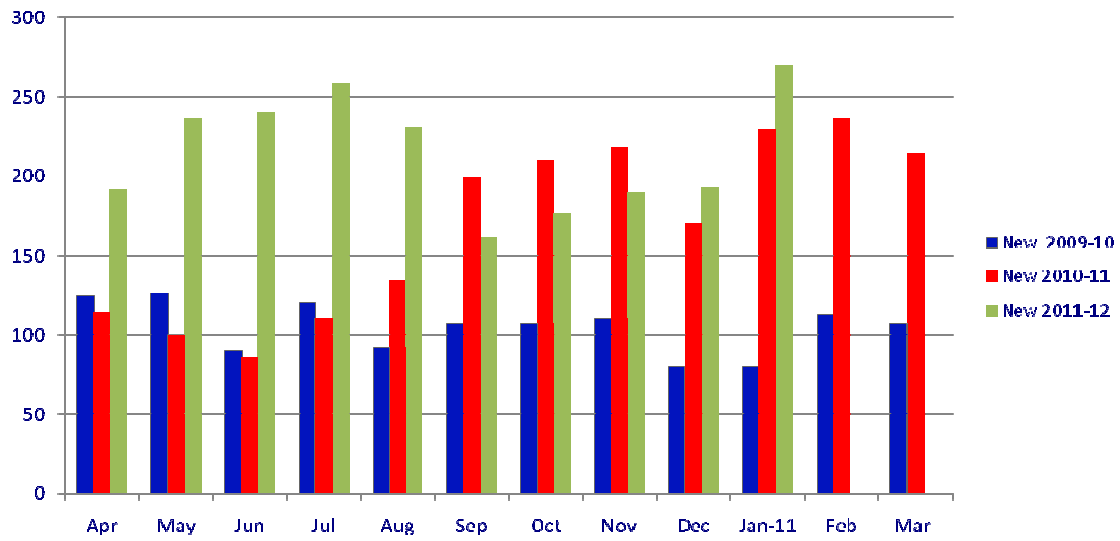
I trust Conference and the Fellowship will support future developments and the New Trustee, Wullie I, together with the duly appointed Electronics Communications Subcommittee to take these forward in fulfilment of our primary purpose, in the best interests of the Fellowship as a whole, and for the sake of those who are yet to come.

John S

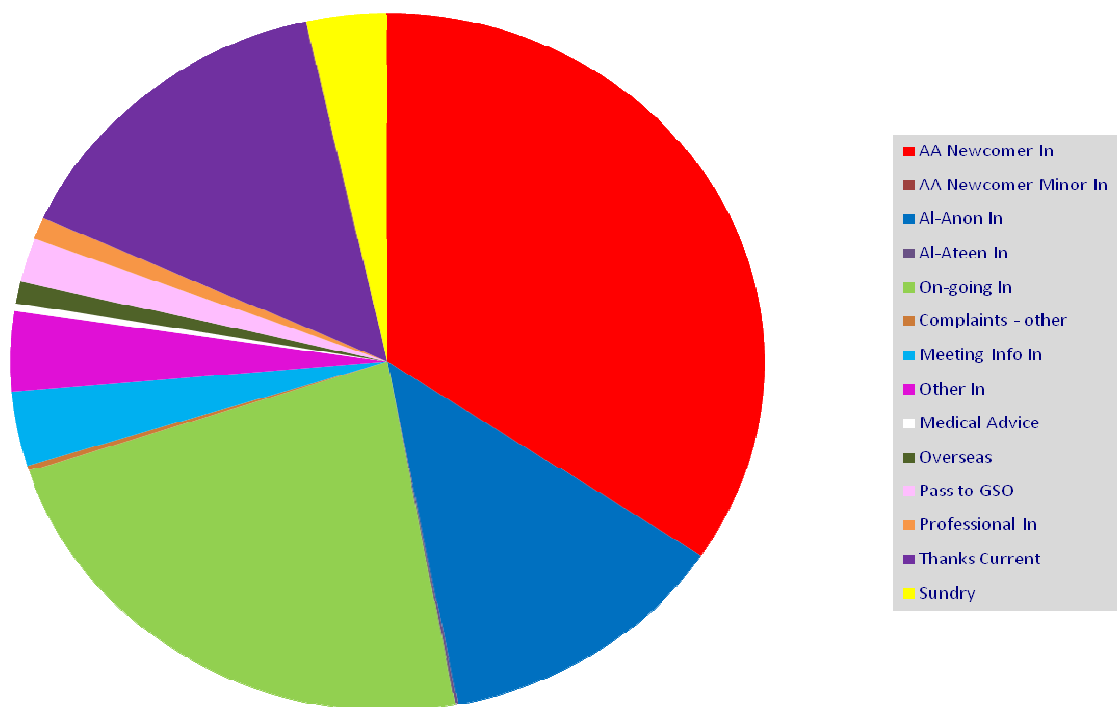
# From the Problem Drinker Seeking Help

NB: AA New Website launched August 2010

Annual Comparison - AA Newcomers



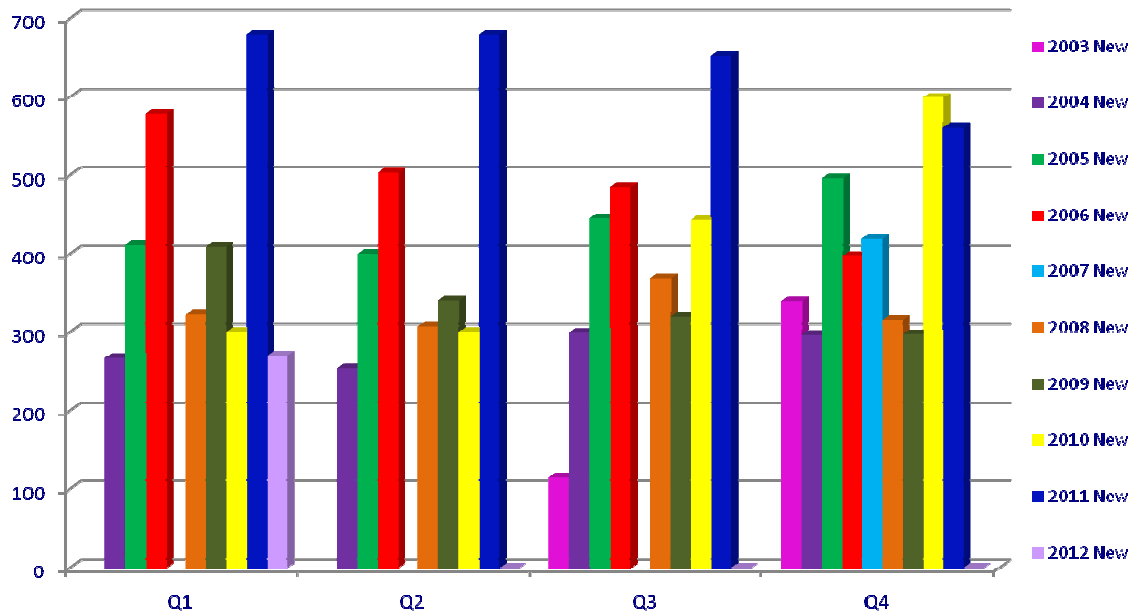
## Breakdown of E-Mails Received in January 2012





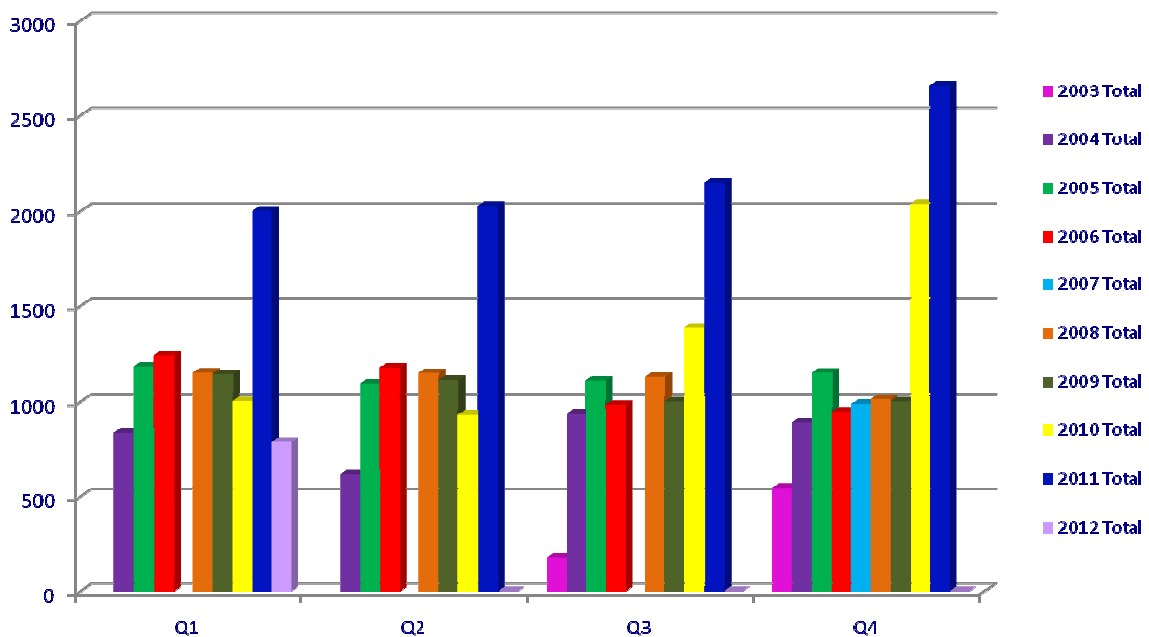
# Comparison of AA Newcomer Calls since 2003

ORS AA New Quarterly Comparisons 2003-2012



# Comparison of Total Calls since 2003

ORS Total Quarterly Comparisons 2003-2012



# ORS Monthly Statistics Jan 2011 – Jan 2012

## ORS Monthly Statistics April 2010-March 2012

	New 2009-10	New 2010-11	New 2011-12	Returnee	Minor	Al-Anon	Al-Ateen	Complaints ORS	Complaints Other	Meeting Info	On-going	Other	Overseas	To GSO	Professional	Thanks	Totals 2009-10	Totals 2010-11	Totals 2011-12
<b>Jan-11</b>	80	229		14	2	87	1	0	0	23	139	31	6	20	3	84	327	644	
<b>Feb</b>	113	236		13	0	54	1	0	0	35	170	33	3	17	7	74	359	672	
<b>Mar</b>	107	214		15	1	68	1	0	1	37	156	48	4	30	6	81	316	686	
<b>Apr</b>		114	203	11	1	52	0	0	1	23	184	6	5	14	3	72		341	582
<b>May</b>		100	236	15	3	100	2	0	3	31	179	11	4	12	20	101		276	745
<b>Jun</b>		86	240	7	5	81	0	0	3	38	160	22	3	18	11	99		317	701
<b>Jul</b>		110	259	13	0	81	0	0	4	36	231	33	6	14	16	135		381	838
<b>Aug</b>		134	231	9	1	85	0	0	1	32	226	34	3	13	10	105		470	757
<b>Sep</b>		199	162	12	0	78	1	0	0	42	128	9	6	16	12	86		535	555
<b>Oct</b>		210	177	4	1	51	0	2	1	74	285	12	8	17	12	72		629	738
<b>Nov</b>		218	190	9	2	71	1	0	2	25	534	25	5	22	4	83		829	984
<b>Dec</b>		171	193	8	0	65	4	1	4	31	469	23	2	23	8	85		580	939
<b>Jan-12</b>		229	270	10	0	99	1	0	2	27	179	14	8	16	8	116		644	785

## **EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING**

### **OCTOBER 2011**

The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting (ESM) is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. Although it is not a voting forum, it can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout Europe.

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

The European Information Centre at York issued invitations to General Service Offices across Europe. Delegates from 27 European countries gathered together at the Hotel National in Frankfurt, Germany on the 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2011, to take part in the 16<sup>th</sup> ESM.

I was privileged to attend as a first year delegate from AAGB. Jim T, our Honorary Treasurer, attended as outgoing second year delegate.

The European Service meeting is organised and supported by the General Service Office in York. Ann N, Angela, Sophie and Jenny were there from GSO York and I am very grateful to them and proud as an AAGB delegate to witness the warmth and efficiency with which they run the meeting. Phyllis Halliday, the General Manager from GSO New York and Mary Clare Lynch from the International Desk were also there.

The ESM is run along similar lines to our Conference. Registration and reception is on Friday afternoon and the meeting closed at lunch time Sunday. The Chair, Jacek Chmielewski from Poland had been elected in 2009. Committee and Workshop Chairs had also been elected in 2009 and met with the Chair and GSO staff in York during August 2010 to set the agenda for the meeting. The theme was ‘Unity is our Safeguard’.

Following introductions and the Chair’s opening address, one delegate from each of AA’s national structures was invited to share highlights of activities which had taken place in their country since the last ESM in 2009. This set the scene for exchanges of information that range from more formal discussions in committees to brief but valuable snippets over coffee.

Some of the countries represented are in their infancy as regards structure. For example:

**ESTONIA** - Today in Estonia there are 21 AA groups, the oldest of them has been in action for 20 years. In the beginning of 2011 there were 251 members in Estonian AA. But our serving structure is only 2 years old.

**SLOVAKIA** - The Beginning of AA in Slovakia comes back to the year 1990 ..... In the present time 35 AA groups operate in Slovakia. They are spread all over the country. The estimated number of AA members in Slovakia is about 450 – 500 members. ....On April 10, 2010 the first Annual Conference of AA in Slovakia was held.....

(extracts taken from submitted reports)

Other countries have a well established structure. As always in AA, the sharing benefits us all and I myself came away inspired by the enthusiasm and love for the Fellowship that was expressed in so many different ways.

The meeting splits into three committees and later three workshops that look at various questions about structure and service. Topics discussed included website links, non AA literature at conventions, format of meetings, the Seventh Tradition, the Concepts, insurance and much more. The Chairpersons report back to the full meeting and recommendations are voted on.

During an open question session delegates are given the opportunity to ask about how to deal with particular issues and other delegates respond with the experience from their country. The value of the presence of countries with more mature structures and experience was evident when Jim T, our Honorary Treasurer, reported back on a workshop topic about finance.

Phyllis Halliday gave a moving closing address:

..... In 1943 Bill W wrote to an AA member and shared that “the grim fact is that we alcoholics, as people, who are slowly dying of a fatal malady must learn to work together or perish. Honesty with ourselves and others got us dry but it is tolerance that keeps us that way.” Today with our estimated worldwide membership in excess of 2 million we still must continue to work together or perish. It takes more than one alcoholic to keep the flame of hope burning, it takes all of us. Unity did not appear in a flash of light. None of our legacies, including the Steps, were achieved without trouble or difficulty; they were brought about through struggle and conflict. Time and again since the beginning of our fellowship the importance of and need for AA unity has been demonstrated.

The European Service Meeting is a powerful example of unity in action.....

Penny A  
1<sup>st</sup> term ESM delegate

## **Health**

I took over as trustee with responsibility for health in October 2011, having had a couple of months of shadowing Phil W, the outgoing trustee for health. I would like to acknowledge the work that Phil has done and to thank him for his continued support in moving into this role.

I am also fortunate to have the support and enthusiasm of the Health Subcommittee. Our meetings, which are now mostly conducted over the telephone by conference call, have been very effective in focussing on our objectives which as laid out in our terms of reference are to stimulate interest and encourage service in health liaison throughout the Fellowship and to monitor national policies on alcohol and to identify opportunities for AA as a resource within the health sector. Rotation is a principle which runs through our service structure and the Health Subcommittee is no exception and as a result of this, at the end of our last conference call meeting, we had to say our farewells to Johnny J, from Plymouth who has served his four year term. Donny V. who has already served as a member of the subcommittee for a period of time will continue on though now as Shadow Trustee for Health (subject to his ratification at Conference). For this reason the subcommittee has two vacancies which will be advertised in AASN.

From the 2011/2012 directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers it can be seen that at the time of printing, twelve out of the sixteen Regions had Health Liaison Officers (75%) and of the 125 Intergroups, 74 had Health Liaison Officers (Approx 60%). I was encouraged by these figures as I am aware that even though a Region or Intergroup may not have an individual HLO in place, the service area is usually still being covered by another serving officer from that Region/Intergroup.

Since taking on this role, I have been struck by the amount of work that is being done nationwide by Intergroup officers/members in so many varied ways to carry the message in care/treatment facilities/hospitals that are in direct contact with the suffering alcoholic. I have received reports from around the country of tireless hospital ward rounds, slide shows in GP's surgeries and developing

links with many different agencies that are working with suffering alcoholics. Talks to medical schools are on the increase. It is all very encouraging news.

AA continues to be represented at various conferences around the country. For instance in June in Manchester there was a Management in Practice Conference at which AA had a stand where much interest was shown and literature given out.

Already booked for this year are stands at Nursing in Practice events in Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham, Bournemouth and Cardiff and in Birmingham we have a stand at the Health and Well Being at Work Conference at the NEC and later in the year a Primary Care event.

We are very fortunate to have Dr Jonathan Chick, an eminent psychiatrist, who joined the GSB last year and who has already been very busy presenting at the Scottish Parliament event and the Welsh Assembly and is due to give a presentation at the Westminster event in May of this year. He also plays an active role within the Health Subcommittee making a valuable contribution from his professional perspective. He has drawn our attention once again to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines in which AA is recommended as a resource for problem drinkers.

The Annual Regional Health Liaison Officers Meeting is on the 10/11<sup>th</sup> February. On the Saturday morning, Dr Chick will be giving a presentation on evidence based results of treatments for alcoholism comparing results where patients have been introduced to AA and where patients have not been introduced to AA.

John A.

## **Literature**

First of all I would like to thank the Literature Committee for all their hard work during the past year. Several members of the Literature Committee rotated out of service together at the beginning of this year which was something of a challenge. However, during the year four new enthusiastic members joined us and I am grateful to all the committee for putting together the pieces of literature that are to be presented to Conference 2012.

The committee's work comes from Conference recommendations and requests from individual members of the Fellowship, sub-committees and liaison officers to review pieces of literature. There is also an ongoing systematic review of all literature.

The Literature Committee works to the deadline of completing pieces of literature to go out to the Fellowship in December for consideration and discussion before Conference.

We normally hold three committee meetings a year in York where we meet face to face, we hold one telephone conference and the rest of the work is done by email and telephone.

Two members of the committee work together on a given piece of literature which is then presented to the whole committee and a consensus arrived at.

Literature to be presented at Conference 2012:

### **1. Social networking guidance pamphlet**

Committee 2 Conference 2011 recommended that a 'hints and suggestions' pamphlet on internet safety for AA members be produced for presentation at Conference 2012.

### **2. Probation pamphlet**

The request for this pamphlet came from discussions at the first Probation/Criminal Justice seminar and subsequently from the annual Liaison Officer meeting. The Probation Sub Committee produced the content with the assistance of the Literature Committee.

### **3. Wall Chart**

Requested by Committee 3 Conference 2010

‘That a wall chart designed as a visual cue for use in AA rooms showing the AA service structure, and the position and role of Conference within it, would be helpful’

The Literature Committee proposes that the chart be A1 landscape laminated and appear in the literature catalogue.

### **4. Definition of Open and Closed meetings**

Conference 2010 requested that the Literature Committee revise the definition of ‘Open and Closed’ Meetings, presented at Conference 2010. The proposal put to Conference 2011 was not accepted.

The current AA Service Handbook for Great Britain and the proposed Structure Handbook being reviewed in Committee will reflect the decision of Conference.

Revised definitions:

#### **The Closed Meeting:**

is intended for alcoholics and for those with an alcohol problem who have a desire to stop drinking.

#### **The Open Meeting:**

is intended for alcoholics and non alcoholics e.g. family, friends and anyone interested in AA.

### **5. The Structure Handbook of Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain**

The Structure Handbook was not accepted by Conference 2011 and the Literature Committee was asked to look at it again. This piece of literature will go through committee.

It is with regret that the Literature Committee report that the illustrations for the proposed new pamphlet ‘Twelve Concepts Illustrated’ have not been completed due to unforeseen circumstances. The Literature Committee apologise for the delay.

Penny A

## **Northern National Convention**

Developments throughout the year beginning 29 May 2011 have included such matters as:

- The Al-Anon committee, formed by local groups, have rotated out of office and have made way for two new delegates to take over responsibilities for the awareness and running of Al-Anon meetings during the various weekends over their term of office. There is a continued, healthy relationship, between both Fellowships which has revealed itself by the comments by those attending the convention from both AA and Al-Anon.
- The sponsoring bodies of the convention, North West Region, North East Region and Midlands Region have decided that the position of NNC Archivist should be one that is rotated between the three Regions beginning this year with Midlands Region.
- In regards to positions needing to be filled due to rotation or resignation, the committee has decided that whenever possible a lengthy sponsorship into these positions should take place.

- The committee has decided to introduce a Non-Alcoholic Trustee to share his experience on the opening night of the convention in March 2012.
- The Chairperson for the committee, through health reasons, had to resign from office and, although her in-put has been missed, the committee have pulled together to try to ensure that all information pertaining to the convention has been distributed throughout the Fellowship.
- At present, due to rotation, 2 delegates are needed from North West Region, 1 from North East, and 3 from Midlands Region. The *new* committee forming in May 2012 will have the benefit of 5 members remaining for continuity. The vacancies that will occur through rotation will be filled by the full committee in May when nominations and elections take place.
- At present, February 2012, there has been 63 pre-registrations for the convention which, when compared with last year at this time, is approximately 50% less.
- Due to the continued financial situation the possibility of a conference calling process was investigated and could be set up to include one of the four committee meetings. This will be presented to, and decided by, the newly formed committee in May of 2012. With the same concept in mind, the committee have saw fit to reduce expenditure by altering some procedures which over a period of time can only be of financial benefit to the Fellowship as a whole.
- The Treasurer produced a simple income and expenditure sheet on the 19 February 2012 which showed that the balance at that time was £4,665 which is inclusive of printing and raffle prizes costs already being paid.

Jim T

### **Prisons**

It seems only a short while ago that I first nervously put my fingers to the keyboard and wrote my first report to you last year, so how it is that the time has gone so quickly? I think in some small part is the number on meetings I have been privileged to attend and the amount of discussion we have had in maintaining our presence in our Prisons.

Things are going well in Scotland at the moment with meetings still being maintained in all Prisons. Last year I reported that I was able to attend a meeting with Tom Fox from the Scottish Prison Service (SPS,) and at that meeting it was decided that we would try to have at least two meetings a year with them. The second meeting last year took place in September, and the first of this year in February, unfortunately I was not able to attend either, but Willie D from the Sub-committee attended on our behalf. At the September meeting it was decided that the SPS would seriously address the areas of Disclosure Scotland payments and 'guest speaker' procedures. At the time of writing (Feb 6<sup>th</sup>) I am not sure if this has been done.

Due to a change in personnel within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) I have lost contact with them, and not met with the new Intervention Manager. We last met in September 2010, when Roy Dawson, our previous contact, told us that he had been given a new role, but I am hoping that we get these meetings with them back on the agenda. At this last meeting a member from NOMS said they recognised that the vetting procedure probably needs looking at again, and perhaps it could be streamlined in some way or other, but as we have not met with them since I do not know if this is still the case.

On a more positive note I am happy to report that the situation of the Prison Postal Service (PPS) has improved. Last year I reported that the data base held in GSO was a little on the small size (approx 40 people registered) at the annual meeting of Regional Prison Liaison Officers, and in all my conversations (mail and verbal) the request was made to try to highlight this important area of service. The requests made have been answered in a very positive way as Jenny has informed me that now there are 125 people registered. In the area of Prison Liaison Officers (PLO) there is little change from last year with 12 Regional Officers (13 last year) and 73 at Intergroup level (74 last year). This still shows a great level of commitment of maintaining our presence in our prisons.

Another area of change and improvement is the Prison Sub-committee. In response to an advert in AA Service News we welcomed a new member to the committee in November as the Web Co-ordinator to enable us to update and add any new documentation into the library. This is being done at the moment and hopefully new updates will be completed shortly.

The first rotation of this committee happens in June of this year as the 2 of the founder members come to the end of their commitment. We will be welcoming the first of their replacements at our meeting in February.

Once again my thanks go to all who are involved in this area of service, sponsors, sponsees, PLOs and those on the PPS who are doing such an amazing job in what, for some at least, has been a bit of difficult time for them.

Del H

### **Probation/Criminal Justice Service Report to Conference 2012**

Friends in what will be my last report as Trustee for this discipline may I first thank the sub-committee of Geoff, Richard and Chris for their total commitment in working for and producing such good and helpful material that if used and passed on will only benefit growth of understanding and good practice in engaging with Fellowship and professional in Probation/Criminal Justice.

As a sub-committee we have achieved a considerable amount in completing the Handbook for liaison officers, copies of which were sent to each Region and Intergroup. Hopefully, these will not be gathering dust in some case or bookshelf but that the same effort that was put into producing this gift is being replicated in 'carrying the message'. Our pamphlet introducing Probation/Criminal Justice is before Conference this year for approval, I trust that will be forthcoming. Our presence on the website is there for all to see and I hope you have visited the area and have found it useful. Any constructive comments on how it could be bettered would be welcome.

We continue to feed articles to AA Service News on a quarterly basis and again any articles of good or poor outcomes experienced by liaison officers or individuals in 'carrying the message' in these disciplines would be appreciated for future inclusion. I believe it is important that Fellowship work is the most important part of AA and while we can provide what we believe are helpful resources, the 'buck' stops at the top of the tree, the group, so may they always be successful in helping 'those to come.'

More good news is that there will be a Probation/Criminal Services Intergroup and Regional Liaison Officers Seminar on 16<sup>th</sup> June in York. Invitations have already been sent out, and I would seriously encourage attendance at the event, the last seminar held a few years ago was warmly received by Intergroup and Region Officers and a whole host of ideas were put forward for action. The above Handbook, pamphlet, website, AA Service News and forming a Sub-committee were all discussed and have now been implemented resulting from discussion at that seminar.

Finally, Martin Weegmann has joined Probation/Criminal Justice as a non-alcoholic trustee and he is warmly welcomed as is our new trustee Geoff H. I am sure they will provide a great deal of support and enthusiasm in taking forward Probation, Criminal Justice and I personally thank them for the support they have been to me. So in the 'spirit of rotation' it's out with the old and in with the new. Thank you all for giving me the opportunity of doing service in this area, I learned so much, I met so many people and I, as always, never have ceased to be amazed at the gratitude and commitment shown in helping those that reach out.

The end the beginning

Martin B



## Public Information

I have come to the end of my time in service as a Board Member. The question I really want to ask is this: "Have I done what the Fellowship has required of me?" Only you can answer that question.

When I took over from Andy 4 years ago he had brought in the catch phrase, "Anonymous but not Invisible". I really liked what that phrase was saying and encouraged its use within the Fellowship. I truly believe we have been "hiding under a bush" and it is time we stood up and took our place in pointing the way to recovery from alcoholism.

To do that, we have to be seen. During my time as Board member for Public Information (PI), I have tried to encourage this work to be carried out at Group level not; as I saw previously, mainly by the tremendous work that the PI sub committee was doing at a national level.

I can only judge how things have changed or improved by reading your reports which, certainly in PI and I think most of the disciplines, are not exactly numerous or rapidly forthcoming. However, even that area has improved and I get the impression that a lot more work is being done by an increased number of PI committees working at Group and Intergroup level. Our PI News abounds with different projects and ideas of how to pass the message and is an ideal way of encouraging new members to have a go at something they have not yet tried.

I was given the opportunity by the Board to hold a seminar this year for PI as I felt the services that deal with alcoholism in this country were at a place of change. Governmental attitude, the NHS and all the supporting industries are at a point of change encouraged by the government's new holistic approach to dealing with addiction and the recent restraints on finance which, as a service provider that has no cost implications, act in our favour.

The attendance at that seminar, the interest and enthusiasm for new ideas, and the willingness to share with each other showed me there was a new wave of PI work emerging. Every Region was represented at that seminar which in itself is more than encouraging.

I believe that seminar answered my question. Alcohol Awareness week this year was evident in more areas than I have ever known. Several PI committees tried new events: stands in hospitals, shopping malls, libraries, railway stations – you name it – we seemed to think of it. But most importantly of all, we were willing to get out there and do it!

One Intergroup, in close contact with me and GSO to prevent any traditions being broken, provided a television company with a story which was supported during the following week, with a daily radio interview through Alcohol Awareness Week. Congratulations to that Intergroup.

Several members of the Fellowship contacted me asking how and why we were doing this sort of thing. "We shouldn't be doing this" and "We are breaking anonymity etc. etc. etc."

Let me quote from Bill's Third legacy:

"We need the increasing goodwill of editors, writers, television and radio channels. These publicity outlets need to be opened ever wider."

And of course there's the well known piece from one of his letters:

"Nothing matters more to AA's future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination."

Anonymous BUT NOT invisible.

Our PI sub committee continues to help and encourage Groups & Intergroups to be more effective in

PI work. The production of the PI News and our regular distribution of news to the professional community are ongoing. Their work and support has been invaluable.

The three parliamentary events have gained status over the last 3 years and are now very much part of the political calendar. I have absolutely no doubt as to the value of the input of our Fellowship at these events. It puts us regularly into contact with the very top professionals and politicians who have to make decisions on how the country can best protect itself from the disease of alcoholism. Today AA has the privilege of having a say in those matters because of our contact with those professionals.

Much of the work done with professionals on a day to day basis is done from GSO and it would be very remiss of me if I did not thank Angela and all the staff at GSO for all the work they have done for this Fellowship and the help and support they have given me during the time I have been in service.

I can now only pass the baton to Phil W and hope he has the continued support that I have had during my time with the Board.

Nick R

## **Roundabout**

### **What is the Roundabout Magazine?**

Roundabout is Scotland's monthly AA magazine. It helps newcomers as well as people who use it as their 'meeting between meetings'. It also helps with Service for those working in Prisons, Hospitals and the Courts (make sure we remove the Diary Pages first). The Diary Pages keeps the Fellowship informed with regards to new AA meetings and AA meetings that have closed down and it also keeps group contacts updated, gives dates of Region and Intergroup meetings and details of Conventions. The production of the magazine involves a lot of work each month by the Roundabout Sub Committee, without whom the magazine would not be what it is today. They are a committed and responsible team and as a result of their hard work all production dates are being met.

In May last year the magazine was added to the official AA Website and can be accessed by clicking on the 'Roundabout' link on the left side of the page at: <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/> Each month two articles from that month's magazine (one from a male and one from a female) are uploaded in audio and another two articles are uploaded for reading. We are delighted that we have had some very positive feedback from this.

Our Annual Liaison Officers' Workshop was held in November and this was well attended by both Region and Intergroup Roundabout Liaison Officers (RLO) from all over Scotland. Our RLOs have the task of raising the awareness of Roundabout by having the Flyer read out at meetings and encouraging new subscriptions. They are also very pro-active in getting members to write articles and as a result of this we have had a steady stream of articles throughout the year.

At the Workshop in November our circulation figures for the whole of 2011 averaged 1741 per month, which was slightly down on the previous year, but figures at the end of December show an increase of 52 copies per month sold. In view of the current climate this is good news and we hope to build on this further.

### **Roundabout Objectives for 2012**

- ❖ We are always looking for ideas and suggestions for new features for the magazine and will continue to do this in the coming year.
- ❖ With the help of our Sub Committee and Liaison Officers, we will strive to further raise the

awareness of Roundabout and increase subscriptions.

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

Winnie C

### **Share**

There has been slight fall off in subscriptions over the last 12 month period, though not entirely unexpected in the light of the current economic climate, whilst slightly disappointing this should be viewed as a positive, when compared to other commercial magazine production.

Share continues to be both an opportunity for members to share their “Experience Strength and Hope” and as a “Meeting between Meetings.”

There is still much need for articles to be submitted by members for inclusion in the monthly magazine productions. Articles sharing experience on the Twelve Steps and Traditions would be much appreciated, bearing in mind that the magazine commences to be put together at least 6 weeks before the month in which it is circulated, usually the first week of the months.

Calendar and Diary sales appear to be on par with previous years.

There is also need for photographs to be submitted in both portrait and landscape for inclusion in both the Magazine and the Calendar. Usually anything taken on a relatively modern digital camera will suffice.

Would delegates please inform their respective Regions and Intergroups that the “Share Display Stands” are available free of charge for delivery and return from GSO, for use at local Conventions.

It would be helpful if delegates also informed their Intergroup and Regions that the post of Editor and/or assistant Editor will become vacant immediately on closure of this Annual Conference.

A vote of thanks to Jean Mc for her stalwart efforts in picking up at short notice the role of editor and bringing the magazine back on track, in terms of regular deliveries.

I have enjoyed my time as Trustee for Share Magazine and have been privileged to have worked with people on the team with such dedication, despite on occasion meeting with unexpected obstacles.

The experience has been both educational and rewarding reinforcing my belief that the ultimate authority resides in the properly informed group conscience.

John S

### **Scottish National Convention**

The 2011 Scottish Convention was very well attended and is deemed to have been successful. The convention committee worked very hard to ensure that the Convention ran smoothly and the most important feature was the members who shared and chaired and did such a wonderful job of carrying the message.

The work for the 2012 Convention is already underway and the dates are May 18th, 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> again in the Corran Halls in Oban.

Meetings format are: Scotia Region, Friday night: Glasgow Region, Saturday morning: South

West Scotland Region, Saturday night and Highlands and Islands, Sunday morning.

This year, GSB approved the project of a Literature Roadshow and they requested a presence at the Scottish Convention.

The Roadshow will be an opportunity to inform Fellowship members of the importance of literature in continuing to develop AA in Great Britain and in other countries where AA is less developed. They also hope to raise awareness of the range of books available.

There has been a decline in sales of literature in recent years which adversely affects the ability of the Fellowship to support the still suffering alcoholic both in Great Britain and other parts of the world where AA is in its infancy. The General Service Board has agreed that a pro-active attempt be made to reverse this decline and one of the ways is to create this Roadshow.

I would like to record my thanks to all members of the Scottish National Convention Committee for their hard work in organising this year's Convention.

Fliers, raffles, entertainment, programmes etc, have been organised or are ongoing and all bodes well for another successful and enjoyable weekend in Bonnie Scotland.

Robert M

### **Southern National Convention**

Last years convention was held on 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> September at the Mill Rythe Holiday Camp on Hayling Island for the second year. From comments made to me and other members of the committee it was said to be one of the best that some have ever attended.

I attended the AGM of this committee in January this year, and all six of the sponsoring Regions were represented by their Chairs. The importance of two representatives from each of the Regions was reiterated. This is not case at the moment, but is being looked into, and hopefully will be rectified during the coming year.

Although the numbers were slightly down on last year the money raised through registration, raffle, literature, and the pot, was roughly the same as last year, making the convention fully self supporting.

The workshop on the Saturday afternoon was on 'Sponsorship' – personally I did not know how well this would be received, but the room was packed with standing room only by the start of the meeting. This meeting was so well received that I heard people talking about on the Sunday afternoon as they were preparing to go home.

This year's convention will take place at the same venue on 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September with the theme 'Gratitude in Action' and we are hoping to host a Literature Road Show on the Saturday afternoon.

I think the representatives from the sponsoring Regions deserve a big pat on the back for the tremendous amount of work they do each year on organising such a wonderful event.

Del H

## 5th Sub-Saharan Africa Meeting

The meeting was held in Johannesburg 3rd, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5th June 2011, first and second year delegates from each of the following twelve Sub-Saharan countries participated.

Botswana.	South Africa
Ghana.	Swaziland
Kenya.	Tanzania
Lesotho.	Uganda
Namibia.	Zambia
Malawi.	Zimbabwe

Also present as joint sponsors of the meeting were Phyllis Halliday (General Manager ( USA/Canada) Warren Stafford (International desk USA/Canada) Ann Napier (General Secretary GB) and Sheila Davis (Chair GB). Members of the secretariat were also present.

The first meeting was held in 2003 where the 17 Delegates were given literature to take away with them to use as an attempt to establish an AA Structure in their respective countries, from these building blocks the AA message in Sub-Saharan Africa began to grow.

The statement of purpose was read by the Chairperson Charles McNab. The welcome address was also given by Charles. The keynote address was given by Phyllis Halliday, Warren Stafford spoke about literature, and Sheila Davis shared 'From Home Group to Conference'.

All the delegates reported on AA in their own countries and although this was my first attendance at the meeting it became clear as the weekend progressed that AA in many Sub-Saharan places is working towards putting structure in place, such as Literature and Public information committees and although in some countries growth is from a small base (sometimes three or four groups per country) the wish to become self supporting when and where possible is growing. Considering factors such as poverty, political difficulties and sometimes lack of transport these are not small achievements. Sharing of individual and country experience is invaluable here and the work enthusiastically undertaken in the workshops was shared with the whole meeting.

There is a growing feeling that increased sponsorship between the Sub-Saharan Countries is now possible, with the largest Fellowship, South Africa, offering help to neighbouring countries.

June of course is the middle of the African winter and although the days were sunny the temperature plummeted in the evening. Delegates wore jackets and coats at dinner but the warm atmosphere of Fellowship continued despite the cold.

Following the meeting Ann N and myself were invited to GSO South Africa, where the office has one employee, all other service requirements are covered by Fellowship members. We also attended an AA meeting and over all generously welcomed and looked after.

The Fellowship in Sub-Saharan Africa seems to be at the beginning of an exciting journey. It was a privilege to be part of the meeting and as always sharing experience is a two way process.

Sheila D

## **Telephones**

### **Proposal to Conference 2012 :**

#### **To change the National Helpline Number from a 0845 number to a 030 number**

*It has become increasingly evident that callers are reluctant to use 0845 numbers due to the high cost to mobiles and some non BT Landlines. In light of this, Ofcom has assigned 030 numbers to not-for-profit and government organisations with charges regulated to rates for calling 01 & 02 numbers and to be included in mobile pay monthly minutes.*

#### **Background**

When Conference 1992 approved a feasibility study for a Fellowship national number, the BT monopoly was still in place and the number 0345 697 555 was adopted because the caller was charged at the BT local rate in all parts of the country. (At the time very few mobile phones were in use.)

By 1998 when Conference approved adoption of the 0345 number nationally, the BT monopoly was in the process of being dismantled and Oftel (since replaced by Ofcom) gathered together several different number ranges into the 08xx block. Our number was converted to 0845 769 7555 (the extra 7 denoting a former BT number). We had no choice in this change as the 03xx number range became dormant. The guarantee that the caller would only pay the "local" rate was only true if they used a BT line and callers with other landline providers had to pay a higher rate while mobile phone users were charged a much higher 'Mobile to Fixed' rate set by their service provider.

In December 2010 Ofcom concluded that people are confused about how much calls cost to non-geographical numbers. As a result, they lack confidence and trust in these services. Consequently, consumers make fewer calls and sometimes go to great lengths to contact organisations in other ways, possibly at higher cost or inconvenience.

Ofcom is proposing that the charges for 0845 numbers should be unbundled so that callers pay an 'access charge' set by their own telephone service provider plus a 'service charge' which goes to the number provider. To continue to use a number type where revenue sharing is the norm would conflict with our traditions even if we chose not to accept any revenue ourselves.

Ofcom has reserved the 030x number range for government departments and not-for-profit organisations. Revenue sharing is not allowed for these numbers. The caller pays the same amount for these calls as they would for calling a geographic number (01 or 02) on whatever package they have. Mobile users pay the 'mobile-to-fixed' rate and calls must be included in any inclusive minutes or free call packages.

We will have to pay a call charge of 1.5 pence per minute because there is no revenue to BT from the caller's service provider. The estimated annual cost is £5,642 based on our call traffic over the last 12 months.

Calls to the new number will be routed to local numbers in exactly the same way as calls to the 0845 number are currently handled. The 0845 number can remain active for as long as we require. This would allow time for literature to be updated as it is normally reprinted without incurring additional expense. Callers using the old number would be charged at the prevailing 0845 rate.

We will receive stats for both numbers and will be able to monitor the usage of each.

Changing to a 030x number gives a financial advantage to our callers and is firmly in line with our Tradition not to accept outside contributions.

Brian L

#### **Telephone Report**

The Terms of Reference for the Telephone Sub-Committee state:

*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 subcommittee 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 are suitably experienced 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.*

### **1. BT Business Plan**

In September 2010 we signed a new Business Plan which combines per second billing with call capping and is forecast to save an additional £4,125 per year on local telephone bills. This is a combined plan covering Fellowship numbers and GSO numbers. In the past we have had separate plans because GSO numbers are paid for from charity funds whilst Fellowship numbers are paid for by the Regions. There is a financial advantage in combining the plans and is easier for BT to administer if there is only one plan for the whole organisation. We will monitor the plan closely over its two year life and if any difficulties arise we will go back to separate plans

### **2. Inbound Services Contract**

We experienced a substantial drop in call traffic to our 0845 national Number in 2009. Since then call volumes on a month by month basis have been volatile but the underlying trend in 2010 and 2011 was to remain level at about 385,000 call minutes per year. This is comfortably above our contract commitment level of 200,000 minutes. The cost of the directory entry on the helpline page at the front of every telephone directory was increased in August but the increase has been absorbed within the current £30 monthly contributions from Regions to Inbound Services.

### **3. Proposed change to the National Number**

The cost of phoning a 0845 number is often high especially for mobile phone users. The Telephone Sub-Committee has been studying this situation and recommends that we change to a 030 number as detailed in the proposal to Conference.

Brian L

## **Welsh Assembly Presentation**

The event at the Senedd (Welsh Assembly) on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011 was the third to be held there and was the best yet. Numbers of guests attending from the professional community were up (48) and ranged across many disciplines including health practitioners, managers, clergy, NOMS and treatment agencies.

We were given the main atrium area for the presentation with views out over Cardiff Bay so it was an impressive setting for the session. The committee had worked hard on the preparations and it was

gratifying to see the attention to detail coming to fruition on the night.

Andrew RT Davies, leader of the Welsh Conservatives, was our host and introduced proceedings. Kelvyn, Region PILO, chaired the panel with presentations from Phil W, Dr Jonathan Chick and 'shares' from Jenny (Cardiff) and Andy (Swansea). Jonathan's session about the efficacy of AA from the clinical perspective added special value in carrying our message to the professional community.

The pacing and range of the presentations were well received and produced an enthusiastic interest during the Q&A session and networking at the end. The Assembly's caterers provided good quality buffet fare which provided the icing on a very filling (and enjoyable) cake.

Phil W

### **Welsh National Convention**

The theme of the 2010 Welsh Convention was '*Keep it simple*' and was held at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells in the scenic heartland of mid-Wales. The first weekend in June generally gives the convention fine weather and a summer break ambience.

Numbers of residents at the hotel were slightly down but this was more than offset by a much increased number of day visitors. Many guests had travelled long distances to attend. Good shares, full AI Anon participation and a Sunday morning spiritual gathering which attracted a lot of positive feedback, all made for a great weekend of fellowship. The music and dancing in the evenings was enjoyed by many and the Metropole Hotel played its part with its high standard of food and friendly staff.

This year's convention will be held 8-10<sup>h</sup> June and the theme this time is '*Pass it on*'. The format will be similar to previous years with come and go meetings, service workshop (Public Information), Literature Roadshow and spiritual service in addition to a full programme of main platform sessions. One of these will include Welsh speaking shares with simultaneous translation into English.

The organizing committee is working hard to ensure that the Convention is a success and a weekend to remember. Whilst it may be smaller than the other national conventions, it is exactly this which provides its character and charm. As ever, *There'll be a welcome in the hillsides...*

Phil W

### **Northern Service Office**

The Northern Service Office has had another productive and rewarding year, our function being to carry out administrative duties involving the update of Northern groups and many various tasks involving service. We also provide an information service to the general public and professional community and the office has seen another year of being a channel between callers and fellowship services. We have passed on all relevant enquiries to the appropriate liaison officers in order to make AA's 12<sup>th</sup> step work possible.

Our regular items include Media Link between NSO, GSO and SSO, Prison Postal Service, Electronic Communications, General Communication with the Fellowship and Roundabout Magazine. We also have many incoming and outgoing mail, calls and faxes. We distribute various lists of meetings to the professional and voluntary community and basically to anyone who wishes general information regarding AA or members enquiring daily about AA meetings. The office receives a great deal of



student requests regarding aspects of our Fellowship, alcoholism or attending 'open' AA meetings. On occasion we have foreign visitors paying us a visit and other visits from serving officers or other general enquiries such as literature. The office has a display stand of all the literature that can be purchased and members are given an order form to order this. The office also provides details of events and Conventions. There are also many 12step calls and friends and family calls; these are passed on to the helpline, appropriate contact or Al Anon.

We are in regular contact with the General Secretary and the General Service Office and communicate items to them such as Regional and Intergroup minutes, reports and updates. We exchange Health and Safety procedures and any general information required. Our reports comprise of regular updates for GSB meetings, our Annual Conference report and Service reports for each discipline for the GSB.

Our staff help out with administration work for events such as the Scottish Parliament, The Annual Scottish Prison Liaison Meeting, The Annual Roundabout Meeting and anything else required.

The Northern Service Office will continue to offer support to the fellowship services, encourage service at all levels and continue to help make the 12 step work possible.

The Northern Service Office has seen a change in Administrator this year. We would like to take this opportunity to pass our thanks and sincere best wishes to Caroline D (our outgoing Administrator) for her much appreciated commitment, hard work and enthusiasm over the past ten years.

The new Administrator, Lorraine M, took up post in December 2011 and is very much looking forward to supporting our Fellowship at Group, Intergroup and Regional level and being part of our ongoing endeavour to provide the best 12th step experience possible.

### **Southern Service Office**

Over the past year the staff at SSO have ensured that the office has served our primary purpose to “*make Twelfth Step work possible*” (Trad.8, p 172, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

#### ***An overview...***

SSO as a satellite of GSO exists to aid groups in the London and Southern area in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Communication is key to the effectiveness of SSO as a clearing house for the circulation and exchange of information. The office holds up to date lists of Intergroup and Region assemblies and officers supplied to us from GSO who receive the information direct. Whilst A.A. groups maintain their own separate contacts with G.S.O. regarding meeting changes, the two offices cooperate with updating the website and publishing the London Where to Find.

SSO provides space for the London Telephone Service. The helpline (020 7833 0022) operates 365 days a year 10am-10pm and in 2011 passed out 1,876 12<sup>th</sup> step calls to the responder and 12<sup>th</sup> stepping network. We are on friendly cooperative terms with other AA helpline services around the country should the need arise to pass on or receive a 12<sup>th</sup> step.

SSO is an ideal contact point for London based professionals in the alcoholism field seeking information or closer cooperation with A.A. SSO volunteers and staff responded to over five hundred such calls in 2011 with immediate answers or by passing the request on through the service structure to the appropriate intergroup officer.

#### ***A closer look...***

- Christmas and New Year: telephone volunteers and SSO Staff work hard to keep up to date with what meetings are on or off at this busy time. Hundreds of calls are made to the London helpline by members of the fellowship over the holiday and happily volunteers gladly give up their time to come in and answer the phone.
- The London Where to Find (WTF) – Elaine at GSO, (amongst other things) and Ian at SSO are responsible for updating the London AA meetings database (now 800+ a week). This keeps the website and the telephone service desk folders current. The WTF directory is published two or three times a year.
- The AA Presentation at the House of Commons –the SSO administrator will be liaising with GSO regarding label printing and assisting at the reception desk on the day along with members of the AA HoC Committee.
- Hospital Appointment Cards As a result of being contacted by Calco, the printers of many London hospital appointment cards (South Middlesex Intergroup was first with this and put Calco on to SSO) the SSO administration advised the London Intergroup Health Liaison Officers of this potential PI opportunity. A few of the Intergroups have now co-operated with Calco independently to have AA contact details on the back of the hospital appointment cards in their catchment area.
- Public Information requests from outside agencies: Requests from hostels or drug and alcohol centres range from wanting a one-off visit from an AA member with literature to a proper presentation or setting up a regular meeting. SSO staff and/or experienced volunteers pass the information on to the relevant Intergroup PI officer
- Adding professionals to the SSO/GSO database: Telephone calls from professionals in the alcohol field are mostly dealt with by staff. Callers are asked for their details and whether they would be interested in attending public information events held by AA. These are fed to GSO to be added to the list of invitees to the AA presentation at the Houses of Parliament.
- AA & CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS Every Christmas CRISIS, the national charity for single homeless people sets up centres in London to provide shelter over the six days of the holiday. Over the past few years AA members have volunteered to “carry the message” into the centres. The coordination begins in the early Autumn with an AA / CRISIS at Christmas briefing meeting at SSO. Thereafter SSO acts as a communications centre between the AA coordinators and the CRISIS hub. This Christmas a hundred or so AAs carried the message into eight CRISIS Centres spread throughout London.

#### **RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FROM WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP ON AA MATTERS.**

- SSO staff have decades of sobriety and service experience between them. We are occasionally asked to listen to a member’s problem at her/his group or intergroup, encourage enthusiastic members with ideas to contact their intergroup etc.

#### **PROVIDING SPACE FOR QUARTERLY SERVICE MEETINGS.**

- The office meeting area can be booked by service officers of both London regions for their quarterly service meetings. One advantage is the SSO reference library and up to date guidelines should they need to be consulted. Health, Prisons, Share, Public Information, Employment, Electronic Communications, TLOs all take place here and all their dates are in the calendar for 2012.

## **SUPPORTING THE LONDON TELEPHONE SERVICE**

- Holding regular First Monday of the month Telephone Service orientations at the office, where AAs over a year sober learn about the basics and what the two further training sessions comprise. Last year 118 AAs attended the orientation and went on to complete their training. Many went on to become regular telephone service volunteers.
- Hosting the bi-monthly Telephone Liaison Officers' Committee meeting. Business covers how the teams are doing in the office as well as those responsible for the wider network of telephone service volunteers – the Home Responders and 12<sup>th</sup> steppers. Communication, rotation, training and sponsoring into service are constant topics on the agenda. It is estimated that a thousand volunteers are involved in the London telephone service.
- Posting temporary London meeting changes on the notice board and updating as appropriate.

### *Coming up...*

- **27<sup>th</sup> July Olympics ... and Paralympics** It is expected that telephone traffic will increase in the run up to and during the Olympic Games with AA members from abroad needing directions to meetings. It is also possible there will be unexpected meeting changes or closures. The 2012 sub-committee of East London Intergroup have hired a venue very close to the Olympic park for the duration of the games where there will be a schedule of daily meetings. Telephone volunteers will be given a map and written directions so they can direct visitors accurately. New A-Zs will be provided and there will be full teams from July onwards.