

# Board Reports

to

# Conference 2013

## AA Service News

Submissions for AA Service News fluctuate from time to time in both quantity and quality but, thanks to the cooperation of all concerned, Board Members, Proof Readers, both Intergroup and Regional Liaison Officers and the office staff at GSO we have always published on time. The last edition which went to press in February was no exception. I would like to pass on my thanks to all contributors, staff and volunteers who help pack the AASN for the cooperation and support and wish Dave A, my successor, all the best in his endeavours.

*Tim W-M*

## Archives

It has been a productive year for the Archives Sub-committee. The annual Archivists' Network meeting was a success with several regional archivists describing the foundation and growth of AA in their areas. This was followed by a fruitful discussion of the problems of taking over as an archivist with enthusiasm that was rarely matched with experience. The entire meeting spent the Saturday morning at the Borthwick Institute being shown where and how our precious original documents are being preserved and kept in an ideal situation.

As a result of the comments made at the Network meeting, the Sub-committee decided to create an introductory 'How to' booklet which when completed, was approved by the Sub-committee and distributed electronically to archivists throughout the country, with hard copies being posted to those who do not have email addresses.

The group history project is now virtually complete and the information collected within it is now kept on a 'stand alone' computer in the Archives room at GSO, in the form of a data-base. At the last meeting it was also decided to create an Anonymity Card for display in the Archives room to remind all researchers of the need for caution when taking notes so as to protect the anonymity of all members past and present. I now rotate out of office and my 'shadow' Tom will take over.

*Tim W-M*

## Armed Services

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**

The AS Sub-committee met twice during the year in York, in January 2012 for our Workshop and in August 2012 for our full Sub-committee meeting.

The Armed Services Sub-committee of the General Service Board follows a Terms of Reference which was reviewed and approved in July 2012 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 ASLOs were discussed, along with other items. The meeting was very productive with a great deal of information exchanged.

At the time of writing this report we now have 6 Regional ASLO and 25 Intergroup ASLO in post.

The AS Sub-committee has compiled a Twelfth Step list of AA members who currently serve in the Armed Forces or who used to serve and 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. The 12<sup>th</sup> Step list for AS was updated and now contains approximately 110 contact names.

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**

AA was invited to speak at a Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA) meeting in Southampton at the Hampshire Division of SSAFA

AA visited 63 (SAS) Signals Squadron (V), Thorney Island

A new service called "Live At-Ease" has been available since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 which hopes to improve the range of services offered to the Armed Forces Community (veterans and service families) in the North West. The official launch was held on 27<sup>th</sup> June and the Regional ASLO and Regional HLO attended. Presentations and meetings are ongoing.

Alcoholics Anonymous were invited to attend Armed Forces Community Health Workshop to be held on November 6<sup>th</sup> at Penny Lane, Haydock, Merseyside.

Contact was made with the "Community Lead" person from Liverpool Veterans Programme and the Army County Transition Fair and Pennine Care and meeting dates are being planned. Visits to NHS HQ North West, Piccadilly, Manchester from where the scheme is being administered, and so far we are getting a very positive response.

Contact made with the RAF Medical Services with a view to establishing some liaison with RAF stations within South Midlands Region.

Invited to attend a Health Fair set up by the Army Primary Health Care Service in Andover.

Contact has also been made with and introduced AA service to the following organisations: Mary Church Army Welfare Service Folkestone: Army Territorial Centre Rochester: "Combat Stress" Leatherhead: Kent & London Auxiliary Trust (2 meetings): Royal School of Military Engineering and the Royal British Legion.

Armed Forces Day celebrations held on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June at Plymouth. Plymouth Intergroup arranged a stand in the Veterans Village.

Progress has been made at Brompton Barracks and with the Chief Training Officer of the Training Centre for Regular Army Barracks & Camps, based in Borough Green, who will be passing on AA information in his next newsletter.

ASLO gave a presentation to SSAFA caseworkers in Birmingham on 24<sup>th</sup> October and received a letter containing very positive feedback.

A notice was placed in the September edition of the magazine "Civvy Street".

### **AA Awareness Month**

NW Region has contacted the local newspaper to enquire about printing member's shares and have contacted GSO for advice and guidance which was given. This information was rolled out to all ASLOs for possible initiatives both for November 2012 and Armed Forces Day 2013.

### **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 2013**

- This year the National Armed Forces day main celebration is coming to Nottingham 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 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.
- 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.

My grateful thanks to everyone again. God Bless you.

*Robert M*

## **Electronic Communications**

It has been a very eventful year within the Electronic Communication space in the Fellowship.

Very sadly, we lost John S to cancer a couple of months ago and he will always be remembered for his dedication, diligence and energetic approach to his Board Trustee work with Electronic Communications over the previous 2 years.

This year, following a contract review, we have had to put some new management controls in place in order to move the development of the website forward.

A new Management System was introduced for Incident, Risk and Change Management processes and a new GSB Executive Focus Group was created to provide weekly input into the web site development. Both initiatives were created in order to record and to monitor problems, risks and changes that had been raised with the service provider in order to manage their progression better. Where fixes and changes had not been delivered, reminders were sent on a regular basis by a member of the General Service Office (GSO) staff. A Summary status on all faults was maintained and sent to the service provider each week. A Risk Register, detailing all potential risks to the site and the Fellowship, was formulated and as a result of this, a contingency plan was implemented.

Leading up to this, we had face to face meetings with the service provider where some small items of work would be forthcoming in the week or so prior to the meetings followed by long periods of inactivity. The new Management System demonstrated that the supplier's sole focus was on the fire fighting of hosting and server problems rather than delivering a finished product.

The last straw was reached when the service provider gave us firm assurance, just prior to the annual Regional Electronic Communications Officers (REClO) meeting in August, that the Micro-sites would be delivered in Sept. 2012. However, due to other ongoing server problems, coupled with little communication by the provider, led us to introduce an emergency site contingency plan as well as a strategic site replacement plan. A Feasibility Study was approved by the Board and undertaken by Tom S and presented to the General Service Board for implementation approval at the General Service Board meeting in November 2012.

Following the presentation and report to the Board by Tom S and myself, the Board unanimously decided to terminate our current agreement with the service provider (targeting end of March 2013) and to enter into contract negotiation with a more appropriate supplier that had been shortlisted during the Feasibility Study. We had looked at 3 options and interviewed two companies (one based in York recommended by a member of the Fellowship) looking for a company with a proven track record for delivery and one that could understand and meet our needs.

A new supplier has been appointed and work has started with the launch of the new site at the end of March and complete facilities coming online by the end of May.

The outlook for this year is very bright having started to remove the old and bring in the new.

The Online Response Team continue with their work dealing with the still suffering alcoholic seeking help, dealing with on average 22 enquires a day. This works out about 8000 enquires per year. Anyone who has the relevant sobriety and time to put into this service would be welcomed by Jim and his team. Full training will be given.

*Wullie I & Tom S*

## Employment

During the last twelve months there has been a visible increase in the numbers of Employment Liaison positions being filled at all levels of service. This has quite clearly given us the opportunity to open new doors for the purpose of carrying the message to professionals, employers and employees.

At the Regional Employment Liaison Officers Meeting in early July 2012 it was suggested that a Board Sub-committee, the reintroduction of an Employment Newsletter, (Hello ELOs) and an Employment Seminar could be helpful in carrying the message.

One of the most interested bodies is the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) where we have had some requests for posters, wallet cards and staff to attend open AA meetings, going to an open AA meeting is possibly the best way to find out how AA works.

Our aim is to provide information about Alcoholics Anonymous and present AA as a resource which employers can utilise in helping members of staff with alcohol problems.

In September 2012 the General Service Board approved the formation of a Board Sub-committee for Employment and approval of an Employment Seminar was also agreed, the seminar will take place in early July 2013.

It is hoped that the first edition of the Newsletter (Hello ELOs) will be published shortly after the first meeting of the Sub-committee.

Region and Intergroup liaison officers have been very busy over the last 12 months carrying the message to Employers and it is hoped that we will be able to continue to do so as more positions are being filled at all levels of service.

*Winnie C*

## Health

This will be my final report to Conference as I am coming to the end of my four year term. I took on the role of Trustee for Health mid-term, having previously served as editor of AA Service News.

It has been a great privilege to be a member of the General Service Board and being the Trustee for Health has brought me into contact with some highly committed and enthusiastic individuals both inside and outside of the Fellowship.

The role of Trustee for Health is fortunately not one that has had to be done alone as I have the ongoing support and input of the members of the Health Sub-committee. We have on our team professor Jonathan Chick, Consultant Psychiatrist, Edinburgh (non alcoholic Trustee) whose experience is invaluable, and Donnie V, Shadow Trustee for Health. We also currently have three dedicated and enthusiastic Fellowship members who have been nominated by their region/intergroup and appointed through the Nominations Committee of the GSB, including a former NHS consultant who now organises AA talks to medical students and medical professionals.

One of the more significant developments of the last 12 months has been the initiation and building of links with Mark Gilman, the Strategic Recovery lead for the National Treatment Agency (NTA). An introduction was made through two AA members from the South West Region and was followed up by series of Conference call meetings with members of the GSB. The main topic of these discussions being how we can link up more effectively with alcohol treatment services with the advent of Public

Health England. In the language of the professional, the key phrase is 'Twelfth Step Facilitation'. Since the inception of these talks I have developed and maintained an ongoing relationship with Mark and on more than one occasion contact has lead directly to some local 12<sup>th</sup> step work.

One of the key objectives of the Health Sub-committee (as stated in our terms of reference) is to stimulate interest in Health Liaison work and with this in mind we have organised a Health Seminar to be attended by intergroup and regional HLO's which is due to take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> March at the Park Inn. There will be a number of presentations. We have invited Mark Gilman (NTA) to give a talk on the introduction of Public Health England and its likely impact on alcohol treatment facilities. GSB Trustees and regional HLO's will also give presentations on different aspects of health liaison work. It is to be hoped that the seminar will encourage more members into active service and thus carry the message to a greater number of suffering alcoholics.

AA continues to be represented at a number of annual exhibitions/conferences. These included Nursing in Practice events in Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham, Bournemouth and Cardiff and we already have a number of bookings for this year at these and other venues.

The health liaison work that is undertaken at a local level in some areas has been outstanding. There has been significant development in the use of plasma screens in hospitals and GP's surgeries and several areas now have dedicated hospital 12<sup>th</sup> Step lists.

Recently I was in receipt of a question that was submitted to the Conference Steering Committee this year and subsequently rejected under its Terms of Reference no. 7 as it was felt that this subject would be better referred to the Trustee for Health and the Health Sub-committee. The question, which is on the subject of the training of medical students in the AA solution, is currently under consideration by the Health Sub-committee.

I would like to thank the Board and Conference for giving me this 'Once in a lifetime' opportunity to be of service to our Fellowship at this level and to wish Donnie V every success as he takes over this role.

*John A*

## **Literature**

The Literature Committee has pleasure in presenting to the Fellowship several pieces of literature for consideration by Conference 2013.

Any member of the Fellowship who has comments, questions or suggestions about these pieces of literature should contact the Literature Committee before the 31st March 2013. This will give us time to make a considered and appropriate response to ensure the best possible outcome for the Fellowship. The Literature Committee can be contacted through GSO.

Again this year the Literature has been distributed electronically. Hard copies were sent to those without email addresses, and to those Delegates who request printed versions.

### **Literature to be presented at Conference 2013**

**1.** Changes to: Alcoholics Anonymous A Message for Professionals, AA as a Resource for the Medical Profession, AA as a Resource for Employers (*please see 'sticky note' on each document for changes*).

Alcoholics Anonymous in full in the document titles (Conference 2012, Committee 1, Question 1).

## **2. Now you have stopped: 15 Points**

In a review of the starter pack the literature committee combined the "Now you've have stopped" and "15 Points" to produce one leaflet.

## **3. The Group Treasurer's Cashbook**

This suggested cashbook came from the Finance Committee, (past & present members).

## **4. Sponsoring Your Questions Answered and Growing into Service**

Requested to be reviewed by literature committee, Conference 2012, Committee No 6.

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.

*Willie Mac*

## **Prisons**

It has been a very active year in this area of service. All the meetings I have attended have been well supported.

At the annual meeting of Regional Officers held in June at the General Service Office 13 of the 15 Regions were represented. This led to a full and meaningful discussion of just what, and what is not, going on in the prisons up and down the country.

Meetings are being maintained in all the prisons in Scotland, although not without some problems. One or more of the prisons are due to be closing down some time in 2013, and in those places meetings are being held as and when they are requested. I wrote last year how the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) would be looking at Disclosure Scotland payments and 'guest speaker' procedures. These have, in the main, been addressed as the SPS has agreed to pay for all disclosures and have drawn up a document for us to sign which will allow our sponsors to take guest speakers into all of the prisons. This is not the case at the moment as some prisons already allow this but a few insist that 'guests' undergo a full disclosure process first.

The work of the Sub-committee continues. We said goodbye to 2 of the founder members of this committee in June (Jimmy D'A & Mike F) who did sterling work and their input was invaluable. Two members have taken their place, and we have the same situation this year as the last 2 members rotate out as their 4 year commitment comes to an end. I placed an advert in the winter edition of the AA Service News, which so far has not had any response, so I will place the advert again in the next edition hoping that this will generate some more interest.

Some facts and figures for you now as things are slowly changing. One area we are looking at is the map of prisons and how we are situated. This item is a permanent item on the agenda for the annual officers meeting and is updated shortly after that. There have been one or two updates since that time as two members of the Sub-committee have been contacting those Regions where we do not know the status of all the prisons in their area. This has bought some small headway in showing where we stand. The current situation is that of the 145 prisons, we have meetings in 109 (75%) no meetings in 28 (19%) and we do not know about 8 (6%). The number of prisons in the country has fallen from the 170 of the first survey we did three years ago. The situation has changed very slightly throughout the Fellowship of officers in post; currently 13 out of 15 Regions have the post filled (12 last year) and 69 out of 120 Intergroups, (73 last year).



There has been a greater improvement in the area of the Prison Postal Service, last year I wrote that 125 has registered at the time writing, but had increased to 170 by the time of Conference. This year things have improved again with 185 members registered, and 123 of those are actively using the service.

In July of last year we at last managed to make contact with the National Offender Management Services (NOMS), the department within the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), who we have dealt with in the past. My thanks to Geoff H (Trustee for Probation/Criminal Justice) for achieving this. We were told they were looking to set up a new work group, and we were invited to join, we were also told they hoped we would meet in the near future. We finally met with them on January 22<sup>nd</sup> (last week) – it is obvious to me why this took such a long time to arrange as this work group consists of 12-14 members. I thought the meeting was very constructive as ways forward were discussed, and I learnt more about the vetting procedures that are currently in place, and feel I have a more positive message to give all who are involved in this area of service. I have not quite got my head around the information I have been given so far, but will endeavour to bring something to the annual meeting in June.

My thanks, as always, go to all the of those involved in the prison service, sponsors, sponsees, liaison officers and those on the Prison Postal Service. Their dedication to service is commended.

*Del H*

## **Probation/Criminal Justice Services**

I assumed responsibility for Probation/Criminal Justice Services for the General Service Board after Conference 2012, taking over from Martin B. It has been my privilege to have worked with Martin on the Probation/Criminal Justice Services Sub-committee since its inception in 2009. It is also a privilege to have been able to continue working in this area of service as a Board Trustee.

A Seminar for Region and Intergroup Probation and Criminal Justice Services Liaison Officers was held on 16 June 2012. The total attendance of 41 compared favourably with the total attendance of 40 at the previous seminar that was held in 2008. The seminar was highly participative and a total of 35 recommendations were made. The Subcommittee considered each of these recommendations at its November 2012 meeting and proposed responses as to how to take the recommendation forward, the Seminar recommendations, along with the Sub-committee's responses follow:

### **1) Probation/Criminal Justice Services Information Handbook**

- a) Produce a Scottish version
- b) Update annually both in print and through the generic email system
- c) Clarify the differences between Probation Service in England/Wales and Criminal Justice Services Scotland, both in print and on the website
- d) Ensure a wider circulation than is currently the case

### **2) Maintenance and development of the Probation/Criminal Justice Services areas of the AA(GB) Website**

- a) Restructure the Probation/Criminal Justice Services menu in the Members' Area
- b) Produce a schematic plan and meet with the Trustees concerned to discuss this in detail

### **3) Structure and frequency of national meetings: Region PLOs; seminars**

- a) Consider a case for seminars to be held not less than three-yearly
- b) Annual meetings of Region Liaison Officers to take place in between seminar years, but when a seminar is held for that to take the place of the annual meeting of liaison officers for that year (which was the case in 2012).

**4) Support and liaison with Regional and other officers**

- a) Sub-committee members to offer talks and presentations to the Assemblies of their allocated Regions
- b) Sub-committee members to be in proactive and in regular contact with liaison officers in their allocated Regions to provide updates to them and to ascertain activity from them for Sub-committee meetings
- c) To ascertain at the next annual meeting of Region liaison officers in 2013 their needs in terms of support and liaison
- d) Produce a bullet points sheet at the end of each Sub-committee meeting for members to distribute to their allocated Regions

**5) Information flow within the Fellowship and between Service Disciplines**

- a) Consider how to improve links with other disciplines
- b) Consider using the monthly Public Information newsletter to disseminate information
- c) Produce an annual digest/newsletter of Probation/Criminal Justice Services activity and place on the website. This would also inform the Trustee's report to Conference, the annual meeting of Region Liaison Officers, and periodic seminars
- d) Continue to submit articles to AA Service News
- e) Review Guideline 13 (Probation/Criminal Justice Services)

**6) Gaining access to external organisations that are concerned with criminal justice and offender management**

- a) Trustee to attend regular meetings with the National Offender Management Service
- b) Seek dialogue with other organisations such as the Probation Association, National Association of Probation Officers and Probation Chiefs' Association

**7) Literature and publications for members and external organisations**

- a) Increase awareness of the recently Conference-approved A5 pamphlet
- b) Produce an information sheet for Probation/Criminal Justice Services Liaison Officers
- c) In conjunction with the Prison Liaison discipline review the pamphlet 'AA in Correctional Facilities' with a view to producing a Great Britain alternative

The above responses, some of which have already been acted upon, form an agenda for action, which will constitute the Sub-committee's work for 2013.

I would like to acknowledge the sterling service that has been given by Chris S and Richard H, both of whom have worked on the Sub-committee since its inception. Richard rotated out in November last, and Chris rotates out in June this year. Applications for replacements are currently being processed.

At local level, the good work continues in liaison between Intergroups and their corresponding offender management offices. The number of Region PLOs has increased from 4 last year to 6 this year, the number of Intergroup PLOs has increased from 51 last year to 57 this year, an increase of 12 per cent. But more Liaison Officers are required, especially in Scotland and Wales: whilst Scotland and Wales have 30% of all of the Intergroups nationally, of all of the Intergroup posts in this discipline that are filled nationally only 14% are in Scotland and Wales.

The message that was put out at Conference last year still applies: Probation/Criminal Justice Services Liaison needs YOU.

*Geoff H*

## Public Information

This Conference marks the end of my term as a Board Member. Having started out with responsibility for Health before being asked to move across to PI, at first shadowing my predecessor, Nick R, I took over the reins from him in April 2012.

Nick felt that earlier PI Sub-committees (PISC) had taken on too much responsibility at national level for the Fellowship's public information work and that the emphasis should shift towards PI work at Group and Intergroup levels. Whilst there were merits in both approaches I felt that it need not be 'either/or' and that we could manage both. Certain projects could be led from the centre with others devolved to local initiatives by Groups.

At our first Sub-committee meeting in the year we took inventory and set down our ideas:

### Where are we now?

- Three centrally funded 'set piece' annual events at Westminster, Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly which successfully raise the profile of AA at national level with politicians and invited professionals.
- A diverse range of activities carried out at local level by Groups and Intergroups. **This is the real substance of effective PI work.**
- PISC supports the membership with PI Service News (PISN) on a monthly basis, organizing seminars, responding to questions etc.

### Where do we want to be?

- To continue with the parliamentary events and to 'cross fertilise' best practice.
- **To encourage and support a wider effort at local level so that more Groups and Intergroups get active in PI work.**

### How do we get there?

**To communicate news of PI initiatives within the Fellowship** via PISN and more widely in AA Service News (AASN) in the hope that more members become interested and involved.

- **To maximize the input that our Non Alcoholic Trustees can bring to our PI work.**
- **To launch and publicise new projects in PISN and AASN** which members can engage with at both national and local level, e.g. *can we do attraction better? project, Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness Month, European Parliament project, Major cities initiative, The Listening Project (Radio 4).*

Committee 1 at Conference last year also gave a range of recommendations in response to the question on ... **'how to make AA more visible to the general public, ...'**

Central to the response was that *"the Fellowship needs to raise its public profile..."*, *"we are Alcoholics Anonymous not 'alcoholics invisible'..."* and that *"a national awareness campaign should be launched"*. It was this that provided the platform for November 2012 being designated **Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness Month**.

The proposition was that every Group, Intergroup, Region and every member of the General Service Board would contribute to the cause in accordance with Tradition 11 and its own group conscience. It was up to individual Groups, Intergroups and Regions to determine their own initiatives and what they believed would work locally.

Many Groups held open meetings and undertook poster campaigns in their area. There were several more ambitious projects too numerous to catalogue here. These included set piece public meetings with invited professionals, a well organized Roadshow project and local newspaper features with anonymised personal stories. Our Non Alcoholic Trustees contributed articles which were included in a Press Pack and circulated in the media. This concerted effort across the Fellowship must surely have raised the profile of the Fellowship and the message we carry.

Whilst all the Committee 1 suggestions have been followed up, involving a number of service disciplines, some have not delivered what we had hoped while others are still necessarily works in progress. We are hopeful that we can make real progress with communicating our message on digital platforms e.g. a smartphone App and a wider dissemination of our PI DVDs. Clearly there are Traditions issues which need to be weighed before committing but we should be mindful of Bill W's words in 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."*

The three parliamentary awareness events have gathered momentum over the years and are now very much part of the PI calendar. There can be no doubt about the value of these events which put us on a national stage and in regular contact with professionals and politicians who decide on how the country can best deal with the disease of alcoholism. Today AA has a voice in this because of the contacts we have forged.

There are clear indications that we now have committed friends and advocates within important sectors of the establishment e.g. health and criminal justice. We are getting referrals from the NHS in some areas through Twelfth Step Facilitation. (Our Non Alcoholic Trustees have been adopting this approach for many years).

We are presently at the feasibility stage of planning an English speaking awareness event at the European Parliament. The PI Sub-committee is represented on the committee of members from Continental Europe Region who are taking this forward.

We have established links with areas of the academic community and there are interesting areas of research being done which seem to validate our work e.g. Professor Keith Humphreys' body of work at Stanford University, USA and The Higher Power Project at Chester University.

The PI Sub-committee has grown in size and continues to help and encourage Groups and Intergroups to be more active and effective in PI work. Paul Myles, one of our Non Alcoholic Trustees, has joined us and brings a fresh perspective to the team. The monthly production of PI Service News and our distribution of the Professionals Newsletter also help to promote our cause.

It has been an enjoyable privilege to chair the PI Sub-committee. I am very grateful to all the members for their good work and ideas. I must also thank Angela and all the staff at GSO for their support and help during my time on the GSB. It remains to pass the baton into the safe hands of my trusty Trustee shadow, Joe H, and wish him every success going forward.

*Phil W*

## **Roundabout**

A meeting in print which you can have with you 24/7. It can help newcomers and long term members when they cannot get to an actual meeting.

Helps with service in Prisons, Hospitals and Courts (remember to remove Diary Pages).

Keeps the Fellowship informed of new AA meetings and AA meetings that have closed.

Helps AAs share experiences, a way to give something back to the Fellowship by writing articles to the magazine.

Webpage: ([www.aa-roundabout.org.uk](http://www.aa-roundabout.org.uk)) gives opportunity to email articles to the editor and the opportunity to subscribe to the magazine.

From month to month we do get a steady stream of articles but, recently, it has just been enough to get us through that month. We would like to get back to the days when we had a bank of articles and this could easily be done if some groups could get a different person to write an article every couple of months.

Roundabout is a good read thanks to all who have sent in articles.

There has been a slight increase in subscriptions over the last 12 months which have increased from 188 groups to 210 groups (1,315 magazines to 1,450 magazines).

We have 2 Roundabout Pop up Banners which can be used at Conventions or Service Meetings.

Roundabout Liaison Officers have in the last 12 months encouraged members to send in articles and visited groups encouraging them to subscribe to the magazine.

*Winnie C*

## **Share**

I was privileged to take up the position of Board Trustee for Share from John S who rotated off the Board at Conference 2012.

Share continues to be produced by an effective and enthusiastic team, who do a wonderful job and who have been very supportive to me as a 'new boy' and also during recent ill health and I am very grateful to them all. This year has seen a change of Editor with Jean Mc rotating out and Amanda B taking up the position. We have two new Editorial Readers in Helen S and Anne S and John N is now our Southern National Liaison Officer. Share maintains its quality, and production and distribution are handled in a timely manner.

The Share diary and calendar, produced very efficiently by Chris T, remain popular products.

Articles for Share are still needed and all members should be encouraged to submit articles to our 'meeting between meetings'. Photographs are also required for both the magazine and the calendar

Share was discussed at Conference 2012 and was overwhelmingly supported as a stand-alone publication. I was privy to the committee discussions and was interested and moved to hear from the committee delegates how much Share means to so many members. In particular, for newcomers and members unable to attend meetings it is a lifeline and a very important tool in their recovery.

Sales of Share continue to decline slightly year on year (see below), possibly as a result of the current economic climate, and groups should be encouraged to support Share by buying subscriptions for the Group if funds are available.

## Comparative figures for Magazine to August

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	% Drop over 4 years
44965	41678	38719	38527	14.31

Convention organisers also play a big part in promoting Share and Display Stands are available from GSO free of charge for use at these conventions.

Tom T

## Telephones

My name is Brian; I am an alcoholic and the Trustee responsible for Telephones.

The Terms of Reference for the Telephone Sub-committee are:

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

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

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

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

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

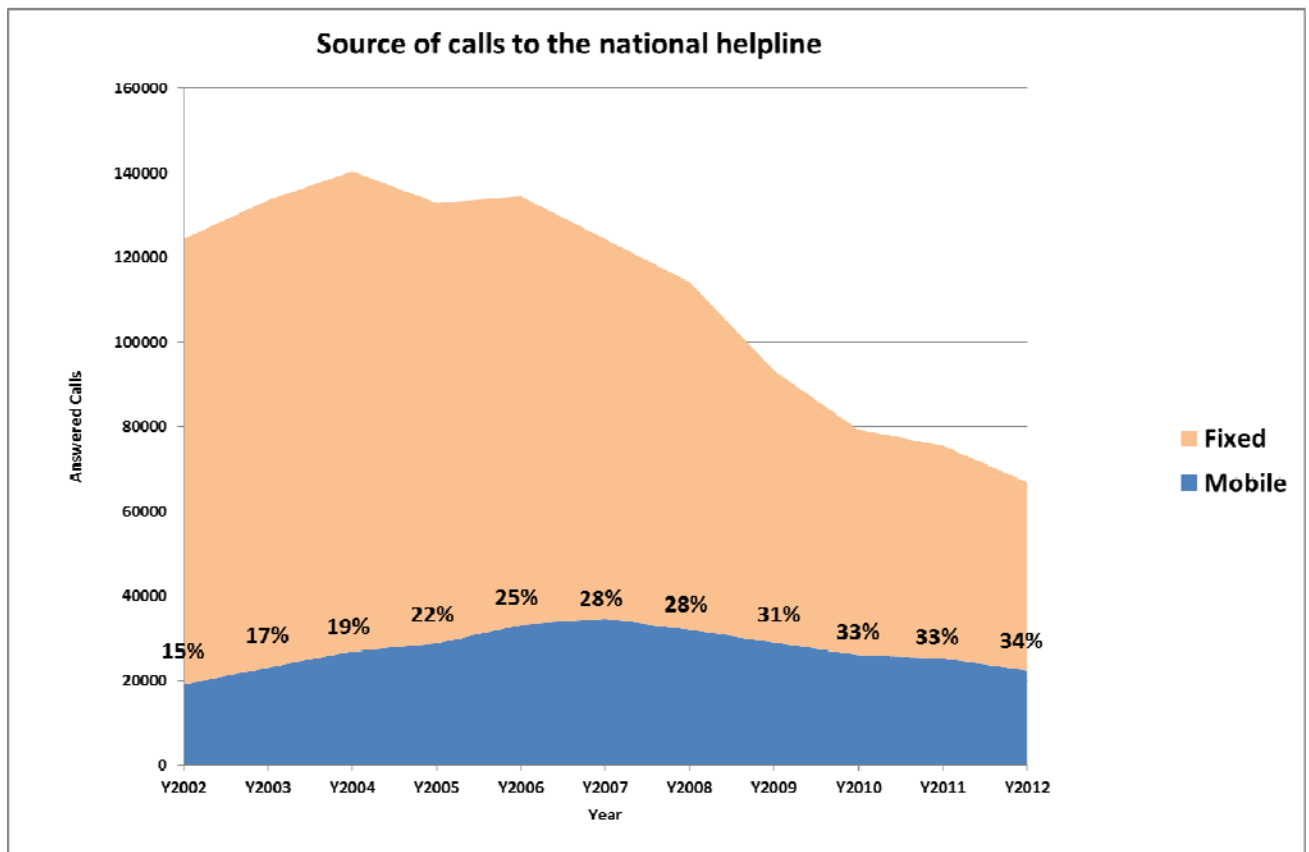
*The committee is a sub-committee of the Board and will be chaired by the Trustee with responsibility for the telephone service.*

*Membership will normally consist of three members drawn from participating Regions, who 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.*

## 2. Inbound Services Contract

The total number of calls to our 0845 national number in the calendar year 2012 was 66,890 down from 75,569 in 2011. As the following chart shows there was a decline in calls from both fixed and mobile phones but, because the calls from fixed lines fell more rapidly than calls from mobiles, the actual percentage of calls from mobiles increased slightly. The total call traffic was 338,550 call minutes. This is well above our commitment level of 200,000 minutes per year.



The cost of our entry on the *Health & Helplines* page in the front of all editions of *The Phone Book* was increased on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011 from £175.99 to £299.59. In April 2012 this cost was again increased to £379.59 and yet again in November 2012 to £436.53 per month. As a result we have had to increase the contribution from Regions to Inbound Services from £30 to £50 monthly.

## 2. BT Business Plan

The BT Business Plan which combines per second billing with call capping makes a substantial reduction to the local telephone bills paid by Intergroups and Regions for the cost of diverting incoming calls from local numbers to home responders. The current plan covers both Fellowship numbers and GSO office numbers. There is a financial advantage in having a single plan for the whole organisation and it is easier for BT to administer. The plan has been operating smoothly for one year and, in addition to the discounted bills, some discounts are paid annually. In the year ending September 2012 we received 582.65 line rental discount and a £500.00 reward payment. These payments were sent directly to GSO.

## 3. Ofcom Proposals

Ofcom are proposing changes to the telephone numbering system in the UK which could require us to change the type of number we use for our National Number.

We are expecting Ofcom to issue their final report on proposed changes by the end of February 2013. This is too late to be included in this report and in order to provide Conference 2013 with firm details of the changes it will be necessary to use a written hand-out to be distributed to delegates in York.

In their plan for the financial year commencing April 2013 Ofcom state that they will make it a priority to implement any reforms made during early 2013 affecting how consumers buy calls to non-geographic numbers.

The timing of the Ofcom announcement makes it difficult to present the information to the Fellowship but we will do best we can to provide sufficient time for discussion of the changes within the implementation period.

Brian L

## **World Service Meeting 21st/25th October 2012**

This report is very much from a personal perspective as a full official report will be available from GSO USA/Canada from February 2013

First term delegate Roger Booth (General Secretary) and myself as second term delegate attended the meeting which was held in the Rye Brooke Hilton Hotel, Rye Brooke, New York.

There were 62 delegates from 35 countries. There was a welcoming address given by the Chair of the USA/Canada Board, Ward Ewing and chaired by Phyllis, General Manager of GSO New York.

The meeting serves as a forum and, as any meeting, its aim is to facilitate our primary purpose worldwide, it included sharing country progress updates, given by each of the 1st term delegates, presentations, workshops and committees. Very valuable one to one sharing occurs during coffee and meal breaks. All the formal sessions involved simultaneous translation in English and Spanish. One of the criteria for country participation is a working knowledge of English or Spanish. There were, however, two delegates from Japan who read English, but had their own interpreter when sharing in committee and general sessions.

Each country is invited to provide some of its literature for display. Interest was shown in our DVDs on service, the Park Bench Poster and our *Hints and Suggestions for Internet Safety*. Much of the open sharing was on the topic of the Internet. The Working with Others Committee, of which I was a member, had as one of its topics, Social Networking Websites and Anonymity. Most countries seem to have, a 'progress with caution' approach.

Another topic was 'Working with Others in Law Enforcement'. AA New Zealand has an 'Adopt a Cop' approach, where an AA Group adopts a police station, providing it with AA Literature, and a literature stand. A proposal, backed by New Zealand General Service Board, was made to the Commissioner of police. The idea is currently being trialled in the Auckland Region.

The World Service Meeting 2014 will be held in Poland and as part of its agenda will include, women in AA. As one of only 8 female delegates and the only female 2nd term delegate, I shared that I was delighted that the topic was being repeated. This led to a general discussion about women in AA.

One other Committee discussed a letter from Phyllis, General Manager of GSO New York, stating that New York finance 70% of the meeting cost, which is about \$200,000 and suggesting that the meeting might be held every 3 or 4 years. The topic will continue to be discussed at the 2014 meeting.

After the final dinner we listened to two young people sharing their AA recovery. A young woman, who is now serving on one of the USA/ Canada committees, shared that at about the ages of 9 to 13, she would regularly steal alcohol from shops and supermarkets. Supermarkets had not been invented when I was that age! It made me wonder about our approach to young people in Great Britain. Are we (am I) doing enough, or for that matter able to identify with today's very young people?



I feel very privileged to have been given the opportunity to attend, as a delegate, the meetings in Mexico City 2010 and this year in New York. It has been hard work but rewarding. Thank you for allowing me to attend.

*Sheila D*

## **Conventions**

### **Northern National**

Last year, the (38<sup>th</sup>) Northern National Convention duly took place on 30 March to 1 April 2012 at Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. A total 771 people registered, compared with 770 in 2011.

The immediate post-convention financial analysis showed a surplus of £776.00.

Ash Khan, Non-Alcoholic Trustee, was a speaker at the Friday night big meeting. Ash's talk was extremely well received. People were heartened to learn of how he raises awareness of AA with the people with whom he works, and appreciated how he shared what his involvement in our Fellowship means to him.

Martin B and Penny A, both Board Trustees, were present with their literature road show. Peter R, Northern Share Rep, was onsite encouraging people to write articles for Share, as was Mick D, Armed Services Liaison Officer for North West Region highlighting this growing service discipline.

The usual full programme of meetings was provided. The final gathering (formerly the spiritual meeting), which included the sobriety countdown, was chaired by Jim T, the outgoing Fellowship Honorary Treasurer. The hall was alive with the sound of music and the buzz of happy sobriety!

This year's convention (the 39<sup>th</sup>) will take place on 22 to 24 March, and is in an advanced stage of planning. It will be reported on at Conference 2014.

*Geoff H*

### **Scottish National**

The 2012 Scottish Convention was very well attended and is deemed to have been very successful. The convention committee worked very hard to ensure that the Convention ran smoothly and the most important feature were the members who chaired and shared and did such a wonderful job of carrying the message.

There were 394 registrations, 54 more than last year.

In 2012, GSB approved the project of a Literature Roadshow and they requested a presence at the Scottish Convention. After the presentation, given by 2 Board members, the literature stand sold out of hard backed books.

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.

The work for the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Scottish Convention 2013 is already underway and the dates are May 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> again in the Corran Halls in Oban. Speakers, 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**

Once again we had a very successful convention at the Mill Rythe Holiday Village on Hayling Island on the first weekend in September last year. The weather was wonderful, which I'm sure helped everybody have a great time.

Financially there was an improvement on last year, with takings up in all areas, apart from literature, which I found quite strange as a Literature Road Show took place on Saturday afternoon. We also had a first for this convention, we actually sold all the raffle tickets (amazing what an iPad 2 can do to drum up interest!!)

The highlight for many was the Sunday morning where the Spiritual Meeting was followed by the Old Timers Meeting, the 'youngest' on stage was 36 years sober. The Sobriety Countdown followed this went from 48 years down to one day. This member was presented with a copy of the Big Book and a hug from all on stage.

Once again the representatives on this Committee from the 6 sponsoring Regions deserve a massive vote of thanks for all the hard they do, not only over the weekend itself but throughout the rest of the year as they work very hard to put this convention together.

*Del H*

## **Welsh National**

The theme of the 2012 Welsh National Convention was '*Pass it on*'. It was held at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells in the scenic heartland of mid-Wales. Early June gives the convention fine weather and a summer break ambience.

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 service workshop was about Public Information and there was the Literature Roadshow presented by Penny and Martin from the GSB. The disco 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 31<sup>st</sup> May-2nd June and the theme this time is '*A Vision for you*'. The format will be similar to previous years with come and go meetings, a service workshop 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**

This year has seen the Northern Service Office continue to develop and ensure the quality and effective organisation of the AA services provided internally and externally. Regular communications with our General Service Office continues and this facilitates consistency in our approach and delivery nationally.

NSO handled 2389 calls over the last twelve month period, calls from professionals in social work, health, education, media, criminal justice, police and alcohol services in the community amounted to

12% of these calls. Calls from the still suffering alcoholic amounted to 10% of the calls received and less than 4% of calls were from family and friends who were signposted to Al-Anon. The majority of the remainder of calls received were from within the Fellowship, members in service, members with general enquiries, members requesting meeting and event information, and the everyday business calls between the service offices.

There has been the annual presentation at the Scottish Parliament which again proved a useful way of getting the message across not only to members of Parliament but also to other professionals. This in turn has resulted in further contact and requests for our cooperation from the NHS, local government and the criminal justice service. These requests have been passed on and actioned by the appropriate Service Liaison Officers. Regional Service Officers supported the event on the night and their experience highlighted the importance of keeping professionals from within their areas included and informed of our future events.

NSO continue with the administration and development of the Scottish Prison Postal Service (SPPS). This year has seen the number of inmate requests and proposed sponsors increase with a recent increase in the number of inmates from the Young Offenders Institutions requesting postal sponsorship. NSO have also been able to support GSO with postal sponsorship requests and would hope this joined up working may facilitate the framework for a national database for prison sponsors in the future.

NSO have continued to support Roundabout, receiving and preparing articles for print, taking general enquiries where possible and signposting all other relevant enquiries to the Editor and Roundabout Sub-committee. NSO with the support of a Roundabout Sub-committee member will now be responsible for editing the magazine until a new Editor is in situ. NSO would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Editor for her tremendous hard work and commitment throughout her term in post.

NSO played an integral part in being the first point of contact for media and professional enquiries during AA Awareness Month in November working in cooperation with the Service Liaison Officers.

There has been a substantial drop in calls received in NSO, 34% over the previous 24 month period and also in items handled, the working patterns within the office have been reviewed and now reflect the current workflow. We will continue to monitor and report on this situation.

However, we remain committed to taking a proactive approach, and NSO will continue to do it's utmost in carrying the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic by working together in unity with all our Service Officers within the Fellowship.

## **Southern Service Office**

The Southern Service Office exists to aid members, groups, Intergroups and Regions in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Over the past year SSO has provided help



### **To the Fellowship**

- acting as a clearing house for the circulation and exchange of information
- supporting service meetings & workshops
- liaising and supporting Region and Intergroup Officers when asked
- keeping up to date lists of Intergroup and Region officers and the venue, day and time of their meetings, including Pre and Post Conference assemblies
- sending out Literature Order forms

- encouraging groups to liaise directly with GSO online or via the Pink form with permanent changes to their meetings, or if registering a new meeting,
- posting temporary changes to London meetings on SSO's notice board and updating the office Where to Find with permanent changes
- holding information on specialist meetings, such as: in other languages; with a crèche; special interest
- liaising and supporting AA members coordinating teams of volunteers carrying the message into eight CRISIS at Christmas shelters
- providing space for Region service meetings
- storing P.I. material and AA display stands
- researching and passing on potential P.I. leads
- Special Needs Services – SSO keeps the British Sign Language 12<sup>th</sup> Step list for the whole of the fellowship in the U.K. Our volunteers are aware of information on how to take a call using *typetalk* and that the 4<sup>th</sup> edition (abridged) of the Big Book is now available in BSL. There is one BSL interpreted meeting in London. Wheel chair accessible meetings and the BSL meeting in the Where to Find are marked with the appropriate icons.
- Board Sub-committee vacancies posted
- local AA Events – fliers are on display
- providing a complete inventory of all AA publications for perusal in the office.
- Up keeping and maintenance of SSO as a safe, pleasant and comfortable environment
- assisting in the administration of the annual Houses of Parliament P.I. event.

#### ➡ **To the London Telephone & 12<sup>th</sup> Stepping Service at SSO**

- Hosting and supporting the London AA helpline 0207 833 0022, 10am-10pm, 365 days a year, and the shifts of telephone volunteers in the office in their primary purpose of *carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers*.
- Keeping the latest editions of U.K., Ireland, Continental European Region and worldwide meeting directories.
- Taking or passing out 12<sup>th</sup> Steps from our neighbouring telephone service areas
- Maintaining lists of speakers of other languages willing to speak to a suffering alcoholic
- Supporting the London Telephone Liaison Officer's Committee and Committee meetings
- Supporting the First Monday Telephone Service training workshops
- Organising further volunteer training sessions
- Maintaining the Monday-Friday volunteer shifts (approx 40 volunteers)
- Liaising with the whole network of London's telephone volunteers – Responders, Responder Reps, 12 Steppers and 12th Step Reps, when necessary.
- Updating Intergroup and Region TLO Contacts List
- Keeping statistics – **Total Call Traffic for 2012** – 3289  
**Total 12<sup>th</sup> Steps passed out in 2012** – 1,476
- Producing minutes
- Hosting the Polish Intergroup telephone helpline.

#### ➡ **To outside agencies**

- sourcing appropriate AA members for media interviews
- updating our database of contacts for Councils, Agencies, Health Authorities
- responding courteously and professionally to requests for AA contact from professional agencies and passing such requests to the appropriate Intergroup officers
- Explaining courteously our policy of cooperation not affiliation, and what AA can and *cannot* do
- providing a consistent Monday-Friday, 9-5 presence
- keeping abreast of community and government policy and efforts in combating alcoholism and passing any useful results to Region officers

#### ➡ **Liaison with General Service Office**

GSO keeps SSO well informed with the Board Calendar for the year ahead, Trustee information and the Conference Report and Annual Report, including new items of literature and audio material. SSO stocks a certain amount of 12<sup>th</sup> step and professional literature which is for staff and volunteers to send out. GSO staff are always ready to help wherever possible and staff in both offices liaise regularly on the telephone on specific matters.