

FINAL REPORT

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GREAT BRITAIN

Forty-Ninth General Service Conference

11-13 April 2014
The Henley Suite
Park Inn Hotel, North Street, York

By Faith
&
By Works



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General Service Conference

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FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

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DIGEST OF AGENDA

Friday 11 April 2014

Registration and Reception

Opening Session

Committee Meetings Commence

Nominations - Conference Chair 2015

Presentation of
General Service Board Reports
(Session 1)

Saturday 12 April 2014

Committee Meetings Continue

Presentation of
General Service Board Reports
(Session 2)

Open Forum

Sunday 13 April 2014

Presentation of Committee Reports

Election of Chair for the Fiftieth General Service
Conference

Ratification of
Board Members Elect

Closing Address

FRIDAY 11 APRIL

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

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

The Conference comprised 95 delegates from sixteen Regions; 24 members of the General Service Board, Avi M - Conference Chair (London Region North), Roundabout representative, Share Editor, the General Secretary and 5 members of staff from the General Service Office. Also in attendance were 10 Observers from the following countries:

Austria – German Speaking	1
Belgium – Dutch Speaking	1
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	1
Poland	1
Portugal	2
Romania	1
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	1

Total in attendance 138.

Opening of Conference by Avi M (Conference Chair 2014)

My name is Avi and I am an Alcoholic.

I would like to welcome you to the 49th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain.

I would like to thank everyone who, through hard work and dedication over the last year, made this Conference possible – to those that organised this Conference, to those that prepared reports, to those that submitted questions, to those that took part in considering those questions and to all those that are here with us.

To those delegates, Board Members and staff who are returning - welcome back. I am sure this all feels as familiar and welcoming to you as it does to me.

To those here for the very first time I extend the warmest of welcomes. Your badges have a small red dot that reminds us to reach out and welcome you. I trust you will be shown by example the same love and gratitude as I was shown at my first Conference and which guided me through a wonderful experience of our miraculous Fellowship in action.

I would like also to thank the Conference Steering Committee (CSC); Carole, Dave, Liz, Nick, Nicki and John, the two Board members Geoff and Tom along with Sharon and Roger from GSO

for their patient and loving commitment to the task entrusted to them by the Fellowship. Thank you for teaching me.

Conference, could we please have a moments silence to remember why we are here and to remember the still suffering alcoholic?

I will now open the meeting in the normal manner by reading the preamble:

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety

I would like also to read the Declaration of Unity:

*This we owe to AA's future:
To place our common welfare first;
To keep our fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,
And the lives of those to come.*

Avi then invited the General Secretary, Roger B, to read the Twelve Traditions and continued with his **Keynote Address:**

By Faith & By Works

Conference, my name is Avi and I am an alcoholic. I am truly humbled to stand before you and share with you on the theme of this year's Conference; By Faith and By Works.

The theme came to me while I was reading though our First Tradition shortly after the end of last year's Conference. I was disquieted by the controversy around the election of this year's Chair and thought much about the importance of the unity of our Fellowship. As I read through the final paragraph of the Tradition in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions a sentence jumped out for me. The words, while simple, are deeply significant for me.

'By faith and by works we have been able to build upon the lessons of an incredible experience.'

As this is the essential truth of my own recovery I immediately knew that this would be the theme I would propose to the CSC.

I considered how I might best share on this and realised as I began to write that I could do nothing other than simply share of my experience, strength and hope.

On my journey through Conference I have said many times that while it might have appeared that I knew what I was supposed to do, the truth is that I did not. Instead, I was guided to each next action by the kind and loving people around me. In this, Conference has been no different from my road to recovery.

When I first came to Conference, I was, perhaps as some of you are, a little unsure of how I would contribute, of how I would manage to carry the conscience of my region while at the same time acting as a trusted servant – listening, participating and then deciding based on what I had heard. I wondered how I would manage socially in a forum in which I knew only a few people. I wondered if I would have the courage to speak from the floor as I knew delegates before me had done. Despite those concerns I came with a great Faith that I was here because I had been entrusted with Service by my region, because my Higher Power thought this was exactly where I should be and because I knew in my heart that others would guide me if I were willing to listen.

And I found wonderful guides amongst those that had been here before and amongst those who, like me, were new. Specifically, there was the man who reminded me that my Higher Power knows best and that I should offer myself for Service and leave it to Him to decide if I should be granted the privilege to serve. That man showed me the way to overcome my self-centred fear by demonstrating his Faith through his actions.

The Faith and guidance I have found at Conference are the same Faith and guidance that have taken me forward from my first faltering steps in this Fellowship. In those early days people suggested, with great kindness, that I keep coming back and told me that I need not drink anymore. Somewhere deep inside I believed them and Faith was born. I did as was suggested and came back one day after another and came to experience what they had promised me - that I need not drink again.

In those first days many wonderful people, through their works, helped me along the road of early recovery:

Jerry, the man who gave me my first Big Book and signed it with the words ‘Use this book well and it will treat you well. Keep coming back.’

Shez, the woman who patiently sat with me on a park bench and explained the meaning and importance of acceptance. I look back today and realise what a daunting task she had with me in explaining just that one word.

There was the night it took all my strength to get to the doors of the meeting. Each step was an effort and the bars and cafes seemingly screamed at me to come inside and have ‘a’ drink. I finally reached the doors of the meeting. People were saying their goodbyes as the meeting had ended. One man, Yigal, noticed me and reached out to me calling the fellows together for an impromptu meeting. Those 15 minutes of their time had a profound effect on me. I truly believe that had the hand of AA not been there that night, then I might well not have been standing here before you to share that experience.

Then there was David, the man who became my first sponsor and taught by actions not words, that the world did not revolve around me. A tough lesson for me, but one delivered by a man who never tired of sharing with me as countless thousands of others did before him.

I should also mention the wonderful American lady who came as a visitor to my home group and having heard my sharing about my fear of Step 4 helped me walk through that fear.

These people and many others, each in their own way showed me that in order to nurture my Faith I need to put in the work - and that the work is freely giving what had been given freely to me.

Over time, that Faith has grown and I have come to believe in the wonder that is in these rooms and in this Fellowship. I have experienced the simple truth of the power of one alcoholic talking

to another alcoholic – the unbroken connection with the first conversations from which our Fellowship was born.

Faith alone was not enough for me. At times I found myself puzzled and confused by the feelings and emotions that threatened to overwhelm me. So I started to do the things that were suggested – I moved into action. I found the strength and hope that come from working with others – initially by clearing away the ashtrays in my home group, then by offering a word or two to someone newer than me (it was explained to me that I could carry the message from the moment I came into these rooms). As I was sponsored I began to sponsor. As those around me got involved in Service I too became involved in Service. As Faith grew I began to live life with all the wonders, trials and surprises that life offers. I began to relate better to people.

Did I falter at times? Yes, I did. Many times I have stumbled and almost lost my way. Each time however, there have been people around me who have held out a hand to steady me and guide me back to my path of recovery. All I had to do was trust in my Higher Power, retain the Faith by asking for help and be willing to put in the work.

Today I have a home group, a place where I am known and welcome. Week on week I am awed by the miracle that happens in that meeting, the gathering of a number of Alcoholics working together for the good of the group. Through simple actions we ensure that every Sunday night there is a place to come for the still suffering alcoholic, for the newcomer and for those whose last drink was months or years ago.

I have been gifted a sponsor who has the courage to show me, by example, the way of 12 step living and who with great love and patience never balks at holding up a mirror to me that I might be shown where there are opportunities to grow.

The men I sponsor give me a marvellous gift. As we share together – joy, the mundane and sometimes great pain or difficulty - I see the profound change that happens in them and in me when we give ourselves without reserve to this programme.

The privilege of Service that has been entrusted to me has been a most inspiring experience. I have learned more in Service than anywhere else as women and men have enlightened me with acts of kindness, acts of resolve and words of great wisdom borne of a common experience of active alcoholism and a programme of recovery.

I have a Faith that secures me in recovery. That Faith is sustained through work. For me that work is both private and public. It is the work of honestly sharing with my Higher Power, with those that guide me in this Fellowship and with my friends. It is the work of giving time to others – bringing perhaps a little comfort or courage – exactly as is given to me by others. It is the work of accepting that my life is exactly the way it is supposed to be today. It is the work of Service – where I learn in order to grow.

As we join together for this Conference I am sustained by what I see in this room. I see a gathering of trusted servants that together will be asked to express the collective conscience of our Fellowship. I am struck with wonder at the miracle of the Faith has brought us together and I am filled with optimism at the prospect of the work that will be done here in Conference.

A great power brought me from a state of hopeless alcoholism and across the bridge to normal living. I have Faith that the same power will guide us with love and tolerance to do the work that has been entrusted to us.

Avi went on to introduce the Chairs of the six Committees and then asked John to give the Conference Steering Committee report.

Conference Steering Committee Report

John B (North East Region), Alternate Chair

Good afternoon Conference, my name is John, I am an alcoholic and on behalf of the Conference Steering Committee welcome to our 49th General Service Conference.

A special welcome to our 'red dotters', those of you that are first year delegates, we hope you find your time at Conference both stimulating and rewarding and we feel certain our more experienced delegates will strive to make it so.

From a personal standpoint I remain extremely grateful to all those who were so welcoming and supportive in my first year at Conference.

There isn't time to list all the things that were in my head on arriving here for the first time.

Through the warmth and kindness of others I came to appreciate even more the phrase "You are no longer alone".

As Alternate Chair for this year it falls to me to briefly advise you of the activities of the Steering Committee during the last twelve months.

The Conference Steering Committee (CSC) consists of the Conference Chair and the Chairs of the six Conference Committees who were elected at Conference 2013, together with two members of the General Service Board (GSB), the General Secretary and one member of staff from the General Service Office (GSO) who acts as Conference Co-ordinator.

The CSC met on four occasions, 10/11 May, 13/14 September, 11/12 October and one final meeting on 7/8 February 2014.

At the May meeting Avi M, our Chair, suggested the theme "**By Faith and Works**" for our 2014 Conference, which was unanimously accepted.

After electing Nicki W as our Secretary/minute taker and myself as Alternate Chair, we were given a briefing by Roger B the General Secretary on the history of the CSC, and taken through the various guidance's and briefing notes that were provided to us.

We reviewed our Terms of Reference, the Conference Charter and recommendations from Conference 2013.

Shortly after our May meeting questions for Conference 2014 began arriving at GSO from the Fellowship right up to the closing date of August 31st.

At our September meeting we began the process of carefully considering each question in the light of our Terms of Reference.

We received a total of 54 submissions plus we had one item that had been referred to the CSC by Conference 2013.

By the end of the meeting we had worked our way through over half of the questions and had decided to write to some of the questioners for either further background information or possible re-writing.

At our October meeting we completed the task of considering the remaining questions along with any response from our correspondence with some questioners as mentioned above.

After much careful deliberation we concluded to accept 12 of the 54 questions to be submitted to the Fellowship for consideration at Conference 2014.

In addition the Literature Sub Committee asked that Conference review a revised Chapter Three of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

Those who have sent in questions that were unfortunately not accepted, have been contacted by the CSC, thanked for their submissions and advised of the reasons their questions were not taken forward as per our CSC Terms of Reference.

Conference 2013 referred Committee 4, Question 2 back to the 2014 CSC for consideration due to its lack of background which left Conference unable to consider it.

The 2014 CSC has concluded not to put this forward, as questions that have been accepted for consideration at Conference 2014 contain the same subject in a more defined way.

Additionally one of the items we received was a very lengthy minority report asking to be put before Conference, however following our review it was felt that this was not in a form that could be presented at Conference. The sender was thanked for the submission and advised of our reason for it being unsuitable for Conference.

At our final meeting in February we went over the Conference itinerary and relevant briefing notes and reviewed our Third Legacy voting procedures, which our Chair will be advising you of shortly.

Before I finish, I'm sure the elected members of the Committee would wish to express their thanks and appreciation to Roger our General Secretary, Geoff and Tom from the GSB and Sharon our Conference Co-ordinator, for all their advise, support, guidance and encouragement.

In closing I would like to thank all those who contribute to our Fellowship to ensure that the hand of AA will always be there.

With Love and Gratitude

Roger B, General Secretary, was asked to read the orientation containing last-minute changes and safety information, and the National Convention dates which are:

Scottish Convention – 9th – 11th May 2014
Welsh Convention – 30th May – 1st June 2014
Southern Convention – 5th – 7th September 2014
Northern Convention – 27th – 29th March 2015

Avi went on to explain the voting procedure and how these votes would be counted to which Conference agreed and eight tellers were selected from 2nd year delegates to undertake this task for the whole weekend.

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

FRIDAY EVENING

Avi welcomed everyone back and opened the second full session of Conference at 7.45 pm with a moment's silence and the Preamble, asked for nominations for Conference Chair 2015 before handing over to Sheila D, Chair of the Board, to introduce the General Service Board Report.

NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIR 2015

The under mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chair of the Fiftieth General Service Conference 2015:

Jack B	-	Midlands Region
John B	-	North East Region
Nick B	-	South East Region
Nicki W	-	Eastern Region

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

General Service Board Report

(Sheila D – Chair GSB)

Good evening Conference, my name is Sheila and I am an alcoholic and it is my privilege as Chair of the Board of Trustees to present the General Service Board Report.

Firstly I would like to welcome the affectionately named 'Red Dotters', returning delegates and our observers, this year we have with us observers from nine countries

Thanks go to Avi and the Conference Steering Committee for their efforts over the past twelve months, also to the staff at the General Service Office who we could not function without, all year round, not just at Conference. Thanks also to the staff at the Northern and Southern Service Offices. We have recently found potential new premises for our Southern Service Office.

The Trustees who make up the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous meet in York five times a year, one of the meetings takes the form of a workshop. On appointment and following induction, each Trustee is allocated to a Sub Committee, you will have received their reports prior to Conference and so I will not report on them in detail.

Some Trustees are allocated to public information parliamentary event committees, these events are held annually at Westminster, Holyrood and the Welsh Parliament, this year has been no exception. Other Trustees are allocated to the four National Convention Committees. Trustees have also attended as observers at conferences in Belgium, Poland and Germany. Trustees as you know attend their Regional Assemblies.

AA Great Britain continues to support Poland with inviting Eastern European countries to their Conference. Trustees also attend the bi-ennial World Service Meeting, Sub Sahara South Africa Service Meeting and the European Service Meeting. The European Service Meeting is hosted by AA Great Britain and the next meeting will be held in York in 2015, whilst the World Service Meeting in 2014 will be held in Warsaw, Poland. This year we have been able, for a second year, to send £5000 to the International Literature Fund which helps with the translation of AA Literature into many different languages. This year saw our General Secretary, Roger Booth, and Vice Chair, Phil W attend the Sub Sahara South Africa Service Meeting in Johannesburg, this meeting is jointly funded with AA USA/Canada, funding coming from the Development Fund.

As you can see the life of a Trustee is not a quiet one, however it is interesting, sometimes challenging yet rewarding. Among the delegates here this weekend are some of our future Trustees, if I can you can.

Currently we have five Non Alcoholic Trustees, affectionately known as NATS. They too are allocated to sub committees and attend and present at many of the events previously mentioned, particularly the Parliamentary events. During the past twelve months they have worked with Twelve Step Facilitation programmes, spoken for us on local television and radio programmes and written material for an ongoing press pack. Non Alcoholic Trustees bring balance to the Board and are able to speak on our behalf. They give freely of their time, thank you.

We rely on AA members to forward names of suitable people for consideration for the role of non alcoholic trustee.

We have on behalf of the Fellowship a positive, hard working, united Board and Executive and I wish to thank them all for their ongoing help and support.

The Fellowship magazines AA Service News, *Share* and *Roundabout* continue to be produced, all three suffer a lack of incoming articles from the Fellowship at times.

For the last twelve months *Roundabout* has been without an editor, the magazine has been produced by the Northern Service Office and currently has very few articles to use for publication. If this situation does not resolve itself, within six months following this Conference, the future of *Roundabout* will need to be seriously considered.

The Archives Sub Committee continue to research and formulate a plan for a publication concerning the service history of AA Great Britain and will keep the Fellowship informed of its progress.

The new Structure and Service Handbooks approved at Conference 2013 were distributed to Groups along with the Treasurers Cash Book.

E books are covered by copyright and E versions of the *Big Book and Twelve and Twelve* are now available on the USA/Canada Web Site.

2013 saw the formation, I believe, of the first, Employment Sub Committee, and an Employment Seminar was held in York

March 2014 saw the inaugural meeting of Regional Secretaries.

There has been significant movement concerning Health, PI, Electronic Communications and the Young Peoples Project each of these will be addressed across the weekend. Work continues with prisons, probation, Armed services, Telephones, literature, and our little known Nominations Committee.

You will hear from the Honorary Treasurer shortly about our financial status and how it affects the Fellowship. You will see from this report that we have been able to continue to move forward with our Primary Purpose.

At present it is possible to hold three Regional Service Forums per year.

2013/14 has been a positive, busy year which culminates this weekend with the coming together of the Fellowship. It could be said that it is the pieces of the Conference jigsaw fitting and working together.

As always Trustees are available across the weekend to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

This is my last Conference Report as Chair and it has been an honour to serve.

Finance

(Penny A – Treasurer GSB)

Good evening Conference – my name is Penny and I am an alcoholic. It is a privilege to be here, to be Honorary Treasurer for the Fellowship and I report to you but the lady who does all the figures and hard work is Karen our Management Accountant. During my time on the Board I have grown and grown in respect and love for the members of the General Service Office and I have worked very closely with Karen and I have a great deal of respect and gratitude to her for her help and support.

Accounts are retrospective, looking back and our financial year ends in September so the following figures are for the unrestricted fund, the ordinary in and out funds of the Fellowship

	YEAR TO SEPTEMBER 2013	YEAR TO SEPTEMBER 2012
INCOME	£1,362,164	£1,390,832
EXPENDITURE	£1,212,251	£1,217,858
SURPLUS	£149,913	£172,974

The income for this year to September 2013 was slightly down on the income to September 2012. Expenditure was also down and our surplus was down but we are still in surplus. I would remind you that previous to 2010 we were running at a deficit, 2010 it turned round and 2011 we had the biggest surplus and it has been diminishing ever since.

This is the year end figure on the balance sheets and this shows everything that Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain had at that moment in time and please always remember that with these accounts it is that moment in time, which includes the investments we have, tangible and intangible assets and restricted funds which are the Development Fund and European Service Meeting Fund. The European Service Meeting is self supporting but it is managed from the General Service Office so it comes under our umbrella. The figure shown on the bottom of the balance sheet is £2,096,315 and last year it was just below 2 million.

The following figures show the money we actually have

Amount available to us:

Cash on Deposit £443,028

**Current Account
and in Hand £650,609**

**Investments at
Market Value £819,728**

**Less Creditors
(£60,057)**

£1,853,308

Moving on, and I find this bit quite fascinating, in the early 1950s the 7th Tradition Bill W wrote:

“Bare running expense plus a prudent reserve would henceforth be the Foundation’s financial policy”

A decade later, in the Concepts, Warranty Two:

“Sufficient operating funds plus an ample Reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.”

So a change from “bare” to “sufficient” and “prudent” to “ample”. That was the American experience after ten years.

I don’t know where it is in the literature but I have a picture of something I have read of Bill W standing in a very small office with just one part-time volunteer going, ‘all these letters how are we going to respond, how are we going to help’. It could have possibly been after the Jack Alexander Article or something and they learnt that you have to have money. It is OK we do have volunteers and people willing to do service but postage, paper, printing all cost and you do have to pay people to do it properly, you cannot just work with volunteers, that is the experience. We have moved into a situation where we require sufficient operating funds and an ample Reserve which is our prudent financial principle.

We have always had a Reserves Policy but what we have done is put it in a nice little wording:

Reserves Policy
Concept 12 - Warranty Two: Sufficient operating funds plus an ample reserve should be its prudent financial principle
Ample Reserve held by the charity should exceed 1 year's expenditure
Sufficient Operating funds are considered to be one quarter's expenditure
This gives a total Free Reserve of over 1.25 year's expenditure
A significant proportion of these reserves are held in stocks & bonds which can fluctuate significantly.

I just thought I would add that Conference 1983 suggested a two year prudent reserve when asked what was meant by prudent reserve. For the General Service Office, the Board and the charity it was recommended a two year prudent reserve to follow the USA model and a little note underneath that said ‘we have not reached that yet’, and we still have not. Working on our model which is 1.25 years we come to the figure of approximately £1,600,000 and that is our prudent reserve.

Moving on to Literature and this is something that I get asked a lot as to why there is such a big gap between the sales and the cost. This is because the cost of publications listed in our accounts is not the full cost. That is for external printing and the books we still buy in from America, the other items such as internal printing, postage, staff, associated premises, heating, lighting and all those other costs are listed separately and they are all in the unrestricted funds under those headings. The reason for that is Literature is part of our primary purpose and it is not a separate activity so it is all listed the same. So that is why it looks like we are making a surplus and we are not if you add all of these things on. Please remember the public information leaflets are sent out free of charge and literature is sent out free to groups and members.

We now have a section on the Website and it is under members-service-disciplines. With sub pages on Gratitude week / the Development Fund / Projects / Reserves Policy and Literature..... this will be updated and developed as time goes on.

Conference presentation and Annual Reports in the Document Library under Finance.

Our current position is STABLE. Contributions for the first six months of this year, as against the same period last year, are £41,700 down and the lowest they have been since 2002/3 but we have already had £37,000 up to now in April, so April looks like being up.

As you know the contributions coming in are up and down and up and down so that is why we have to have three months in advance to pay for things. We don't know, the Board and GSO, when the money is not coming in, why it is not coming in. We don't know if there is no money out there, rents have gone up and biscuits have gone up, we just don't know or are you doing PI work in groups, intergroups and regions so that is another thing for the Treasurers. It would be nice every now and then for a Region to phone in or send a note and say we are not sending in so much this time as we are having a PI event. It would be nice for us know.

Looking ahead we currently have the reserves to support projects to raise professional and public awareness of AA and carry our message of recovery. That is what it is about, and I emphasise always that every penny that comes in to us is spent on that. It might be in the back rooms from somebody answering a phone to somebody being bought a sandwich because they have spent all day stuffing envelopes with AA Service News. It might be that or it might be somebody out meeting people, one of the Board Members has come from a meeting on health straight to Conference. It might be his expenses, it might be somebody face to face with somebody – it is all primary purpose work whatever it is. The important thing is that we have money and we can do things but to bear in mind that our situation changes and to keep an eye on that and to keep abreast of that. Ask your Treasurers what is happening financially and can we afford this project, it's working together, it's unity, it's discussions, it's the communication in both directions so we all know what is happening.

I really feel very, very privileged to have talked to you tonight and this is my last Conference as Honorary Treasurer and I would like to thank you all for your contributions, for your service and supporting me. I thank all the staff and Board members for supporting me through my time as Honorary Treasurer.

Literature

(Willie MacD)

Good evening Conference, my name is Willie and I am an alcoholic. Tonight we have two items to vote on and one item going to Committee which we will vote on Sunday morning depending on the recommendation from that Committee.

The Literature Sub-Committee reviews all current literature, produce literature which is requested by Conference and produces literature requested by any of the service disciplines.

What was passed by Conference last year and produced this year is:

- Now that you have stopped: 15 Points
- The Group Treasurer's Cashbook
- Sponsorship: Your Questions Answered
- Growing into Service

These are all available now to buy and the '*crème de la crème*':

- The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain

It has taken seven years to get to this point and at times we were going to give up, we thought we could not get it through Conference, but through the perseverance of the members of the Literature Committee, past and present, and tonight I am in the presence of two former Chairs of the Literature Committee, Penny A (who I shadowed) and Sheila D before that, and many, many members. To my mind, we have the book and it is now into the ownership of the Fellowship, it is not finished this is just the beginning of this book. As soon as it was printed it was out of date, as normal, we knew that and over the years there will be changes to it but the bottom line as to why it was produced was to encourage members into service, to give them a chance to see what we do.

We sent out 2,127 Structure, Service and Treasurer's Handbooks free to all the groups. We sent out 3,618 letters to groups asking them if they wanted them to apply and there are still some that have not applied for their Handbooks and, hopefully, they will get the message somewhere along the line. We are still putting out dribs and drabs to those who are requesting them. By the middle of March we have sold 560 AA Service Handbooks and 481 Structure Handbooks.

We have two proposals both of which are posters and there should have been a third one, the Young Peoples poster, but due to circumstances it is not ready at this time:

1. Trapped? There is a way out

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

2. If drink is costing you more than money

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

I have been on the Literature Committee for four years, when I was first told I was going on to Literature I thought 'wow, what is that' and I was in GSO at the time and I went into the Literature Storeroom and I starting going through all the books, touching them and thinking they have put me on Literature and most of it I didn't even know existed, there is a lot of literature in there.

Usually when we come to Conference, we go into our Committees and we come up with ideas and say lets produce a piece of literature, half the time we have produced it already and it is lying there gathering dust which is my experience.

I have heard people say when being appointed to whatever discipline that they know nothing about it, and for me going onto Literature you could have written what I know about Literature on the back of a postage stamp, I was going to be a bit egotistic and say I know now the back and the front of a postage stamp, but I will just stick to I probably now know a bit about literature.

The people I have worked with have been (I will use their words) committed, thorough, pernickety and they try and do their best for the Fellowship. We take pieces of literature and we rip it apart and put it together and we do it as a bunch of drunks trying to do a professional job for Alcoholics Anonymous and we do it OK, we are not perfect, we make mistakes and as soon as we make a mistake and it is in print we are very, very quickly reminded of it.

It has been an absolute pleasure to do the job, every moment of the last four years under the guidance of Sheila first of all, then Penny and myself taking over as Chair and I would recommend it to anybody because if I didn't enjoy it I would not be here, I would be hiding away in my group saying I cannot do that, let somebody else do it. I enjoyed it and I love Conference.

Electronic Communications

(Wullie I and Tom S)

Good evening Conference, my name is Wullie, I am an alcoholic and Trustee with the responsibility for Electronic Communications along with Tom who will be giving a Power Point presentation shortly.

Last year at this time we showed you the brand new site and on the whole it has been very, very positive. As Willie said in his report, we make mistakes and we are quickly reminded of these mistakes as well. We are not perfect but we try our best.

Good evening Conference, my name is Tom and I am an alcoholic. What a year it has been, I remember standing up here with a degree of trepidation last year and we showed you our aspirations and then we had to deliver and we delivered within two weeks of Conference closing.

Web Site News. The operative word being ‘new’ because everything we have done this year is new. I am going to talk about the new sites and I am calling them sites because we haven’t just built a single website, we have built many websites. I am going to profile and show you how it has been received and the users, how much we have spent and what is for the future of the new outlook.

It’s hard to conceive that 40 years ago Bill W wrote these words:

“A vast communication net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches...”

How true is that today of Electronic Communications.

Firstly, the new sites, we are supporting a structure which entails nearly 4,500 groups, 144 Intergrups, 16 Regions, service disciplines, special projects all coming from our main site and all serviced by a Content Management System that is built into the new website.

We have the main site, the micro-sites and those micro-sites will serve all our Regions, our service disciplines, our projects, our Intergrups and I make that 185 websites potentially and, finally, our most important structure, our Groups. Why should our Groups be excluded?

At our meeting with the RECLOs last year this came up and we decided not to exclude our Groups but to include them. They will be able to create their own little websites as well so we have the full structure covered.

I have changed the words now and this is a quote from Tom:

“A vast communication network now covers Great Britain, even to its remotest reaches”.

How well has it been received? The first half of last year, which is essentially before we went live with the new site, for the quarters, 120,000 for the first quarter, 140,000 for the second quarter and the third and fourth quarters 480,000. So we have moved from a half yearly site visit total of 260,000 to the second half of the year to 480,000 which is almost double and that is how well the site was received upon launch, which is very encouraging that people are using it.

I have done a comparison and used Penny and Karen’s figures taken directly from the balance sheets for the year ending 2012 and 2013:

Year	Activity	Cost £
2012 (Sept)	<i>Old Site Hosting, Maintenance & Repair</i>	14,157
2013 (Sept)	Old Site Hosting & Decommissioning	2,121
	New Site Dev	12,447
	New Mobile Site (30%), Micro-sites & Supplier Consultancy for training	2,715
	New Web Site Costs	15,162
	Total Costs for 2013	17,283

You need to bear in mind that we delivered in 2013 and we spent no money on the new site in 2012 financial year. In 2012 with the old site the cost for the whole year was £14,157. Last year our aspiration for the new site was to spend £12,950, which was the budget that we told to the Fellowship that we would be spending on the new site. During the course of 2013 before we could commission and go live with the new site we had to release ourselves from the burdens associated with the contract of the old site so I called that the balance of the Old Site Hosting & Decommissioning. We also built a contingency site in case something untoward happened with the old site whilst we were preparing to go live with the new site because we had to give notice to the old supplier that our intention was to leave their service.

We spent on the new site development £12,447 which was about £500 under budget. On top of that we had an opportunity to introduce a mobile site and Conference actually asked for it the previous year and we talked to our supplier and for £3,000 we managed to procure a site that runs on mobiles. You can test this out for yourselves, just use your mobile and type in www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk and it will automatically recognise your phone. It will present you with a different site to the one that you see on your computers and it is geared towards getting you to meetings via GPS at the touch of a button. That was a real bonus for us.

We also paid some extra for micro-sites and we invited our supplier to attend GSO for a whole day to give specialist training to our staff at GSO. So the new website cost was £15,162. In addition the decommissioning of £2,000 the total spend was £17,283.

Now when I compare that to what we would have spent not introducing the new site, based on previous years, around the £14,000 it would seem that our endeavours in building this new site and delivering it has amounted to about £5,000 – a little bit a false accounting but a nice thought.

For the future we have wasted no time, we have already started a programme of improvements, technology does not stand still for long so in January this year we talked to our supplier and we invited the supplier to present to us new innovations and new ideas that we could do to the site. We also presented our own ideas of what we would like to do based on some of the early feedback that we received from the Fellowship.

One of things was to introduce measurable metrics which means if we look at who is looking at which pages, for example, how many are looking at newcomer pages, that would indicate the type of person, maybe newcomers, that are coming to the site. Are they first time entrants? We can look at that and see whether it is definitely a newcomer. We can build up a slight profile of how well these pages are being looked at and being used. How effective they are. We can then

focus on those that are less effective than others and we can effectively encourage people into using the site in ways that they otherwise probably would not.

We want to improve our presence on the internet and by that we mean if you were to look on Google for example ‘Am I an alcoholic?’, imagine a newcomer might just do that, we are not very prominent on the displays that come back in fact we are very poor. We have taken that to our supplier and we have said what can you do and we are working in conjunction with the supplier and we have started to improve that search engine optimisation facility. This is an ongoing programme and we will never be satisfied until we see us placed first on the returns whenever those type of questions are googled. If you want to have a look at the type of questions we are putting in that space then it is in there entitled ‘the big questions that people ask themselves’.

It’s been a tremendous year, we have delivered our aspirations and the site has been well received but we do not want to get complacent, we welcome the Fellowship’s feedback and we will continue to do site improvements. We don’t want to become tired looking and redundant, we want it to be vibrant and improved year on year and keep it fresh. We also want to use it as a communication tool to improve our primary purpose and we have a very good platform with which to do that.

Employment

(Winnie C)

Good evening Conference, my name is Winnie and I am an alcoholic. One of my responsibilities on the General Service Board over the past four years has been Employment. When I first came to the Board and was told that I was going to be Employment it was a bit of a shock due to very few Employment Liaison Officers in position, however, many years ago I served my Intergroup as an Industrial Liaison Officer so I had a little knowledge of how to go about the position.

Before I go any further I feel that I have to share that 48 hours ago I celebrated 32 years of continuous sobriety. I do not take the credit for that, I give the credit for that to the people in this room and like-minded friends throughout the country, because I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that service is the backbone to my sobriety and that is the reason I am standing here today.

Over the last four years there has been a couple of Employment Liaison Officers and when I first came to the Board I shadowed Penny who, at that time, helped me. Over the last twelve months David A has been shadowing me and he has been a great support to me. David has been working very, very closely with the newly formed Sub Committee. I asked for Board approval for this Sub Committee after sometime in the position and there was absolutely no hesitation from the Board so I thank the Board for that.

The Employment Sub Committee, at its first full meeting in September 2013, did some work on the Terms of Reference for the Sub Committee and for me that was a great achievement.

Since taking up the position you can see below the Employment Liaison Officers in position since 2010:

Employment Liaison Officers in position since 2010		
Intergroups		Regions
24	2010	5
25	2011	4
26	2012	4
25	2013	8
27	2014	10

We have double the amount at Region since 2010 and I have been getting some feedback from the Regions. In the Intergroups, I think it is important that we try to create interest and get members of the Fellowship involved in employment liaison.

At that first meeting held in September there was a lot of work for the Sub Committee. We identified three key areas:

1. Large Businesses
2. Small firms
3. Trade Unions (e.g. Trade Union Congress & Scottish Trade Union Congress)

There are many other agencies and firms being contacted.

The ELOs Newsletter that we had been discussing for a year and which we hoped it would be ready for this Conference, it is and I hope everyone picked up a copy from the table. One of the main purposes of that newsletter is to try and promote Employment Liaison Officers at Intergroup and Regional level.

Before I conclude I would like to introduce David A who has been shadowing me for the last 12 months and will be taking up the position of Employment Liaison when this Conference finishes. David is going to say a few words on some of the discussions that took place at a Seminar in 2013:

My name is David and I am an alcoholic. Firstly, I would like to give my thanks to Winnie who has made my shadowing on the newly created Employment Sub Committee a joy for the past year. This is the fifth Conference that I have attended and this is only the second Conference that I have heard an Employment report from the podium and that is quite an accomplishment in itself.

We do have the employment 'Hello ELOs' newsletter here at Conference. Exciting news that we are in Job Centres and Department of Work & Pensions throughout the UK will be signposting potential alcoholics to Alcoholics Anonymous and also contacts that were made through an Intergroup at Unilever.

The wonderful thing about employment, that has always struck me, is that we are in the Big Book, we have a whole chapter, I suppose after your wife knows that you might have a problem with drinking, then your family finds out, then your boss gets that you might be an alcoholic basically. In my own journey in sobriety I was lucky to work and got sober at a firm where my boss happened to be a member of Al-Anon and she certainly knew I was a drunk before I did. She was also there, and although a different fellowship, applying the same principles to the recovering alcoholic that is still trying to hold a job, it was a wonderful inspiration and something I always want to try and remember.

We spend time with our families but we spend a lot of time at work, and I remember when I was drinking I spent more time at work because I didn't want to be with my family and, certainly, my employers knew but maybe they just didn't know how to say it. There wasn't even a sign or poster to point their finger to and I think that it is up to us as a Fellowship, just like we do in the other disciplines, in Health our own best representative is us going to the GP and saying I am an alcoholic, the same thing with the Employers, if we are able to do that in our situations.

The more that we can get the word out and it is just a very simple word, here we are and this is what we do, it's a ten minute presentation, the more we can help these still suffering alcoholics. Thank you and back to Winnie.

As my term on the General Service Board comes to an end I would like to thank the staff at GSO and the staff at the Northern Service Office for the support I have been given over the last four

years. I would like to thank everyone in the Fellowship and everyone in this room for their continued support, dedication, fellowship and love. Thank you.

Non Alcoholic Trustees

(Jonathan Chick)

Good evening everybody and it is just wonderful to be given this opportunity to be at this Conference. Britain had a law of Charity Trustees going back to 1600 so I don't think that Bill W invented the idea at all but I think that it was about 1948 when he realised that some Trustees could be a good firm footing for some of the evolving groups and some of the difficulties which he so miraculously managed to encounter and deal with, as described in his wonderful Twelve Concepts.

The General Service Board of AA (Great Britain) Limited is a registered charity and it is a great privilege to be invited to be a Trustee on such a Board. When we meet with Trustees on other Boards it is humbling for me to realise how amazingly stable and skilfully evolving this Board, on which I have the honour to sit and with my fellow NATs to serve, when we compare the difficulties which many charity organisations run into. Of course, it is partially that the Traditions are so firmly written and followed and believed in, that you already have a huge start over many charities. This mission we have is very, very clear and has been from the start. There is no argument about what the mission is.

It is wonderful to see the way, and now I am coming into my fourth year, this Board works. Sheila has been the Chair during most of my time and as you know she has that wonderful firm but gentle manner and to me it embodies this amazing mix that we have in the Traditions of AA, of the leaders being servants, servants also being leaders. The shape of this triangle is a remarkable phenomenon for anyone who studies how organisations work and which organisations survive.

Eighty years of a mutual help body – how can that be? I know a little bit about how it manages to be. It is, and I would agree, a functioning Board and there are very few items which get left until next time. It is not always a peaceful interaction we see but the qualities that imbue the basic philosophies in AA which we see, as psychiatrists, like myself, Chris and Ash, we recognise we would want for our patients with anxiety and depressions and personality problems. We would want them to know these qualities of courtesy, humility, constancy, persistence, friendliness, love and sharing this is what we would want for our patients and one example of AA membership working, as Sheila says, is a functioning Board.

NATs do have special interests. The Board is very fortunate in having some highly qualified specialists amongst its members and hearing the presentation regarding the website, it is wonderful that we can have these individuals working in the Board of Trustees. Experts are brought in and paid, for the website there is a company that is paid to do that but on the Board there are specialists that are not paid and are giving of their time. The NATs we don't really necessarily follow our specialities, I was invited to the Health Committee and the Literature Committee and the work of the Literature Committee is huge and Willie MacD realised after a while that I was just not keeping up and he was most gracious when he said you are doing good work for the Health Committee, and that, of course, was where I was able to bring some speciality knowledge. Chris, NAT Elect at the moment, is very active in the English highly and rapidly evolving Substance Misuse Services and is going to be another very useful member of the Board.

We have in Paul someone with business experience and public information experience. Ash, as you know, has been Chair of the Nominations Committee and it is interesting that that Committee has evolved with a NAT as the Chair and whether that was deliberate or not I don't know. I'm sure that Ash stands back and watches a little bit of personality issues in the Fellowship and

makes his gentle judgements which I am sure you find helpful and of course he helps with the survey, another one of which is due to be run in a year or two.

We are expected to follow quite a 'book of rules' for being Trustees of a Charity. It is actually a very good read this book that new Trustees are presented with. The laws are very strict and we are indebted to the Office and Roger who, from time to time, check whether we are following Governance rules, taking us through the points which, as Trustees, we need to be attending to, with a checklist – are we doing this, is the Board doing this and I must say that I have learnt a tremendous amount from having had the privilege of serving in this way.

I look forward to meeting some more of you and continuing the work on my Committee, Committee No. 1, which I have been asked to serve on. We had a most informative meeting today and seeing the way this all works is wonderful to those, a little bit of an outsider, who look in and see how you do things and how you keep this amazing spirit alive. Thank you.

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

SATURDAY EVENING

Continuation of General Service Board Reports

Avi welcomed everyone back and hoped that everyone had had a productive day. He asked for a moment's silence to remember why we are here, think of the still suffering alcoholic and also gather our thoughts for the evening's session. Avi then invited Geoff H (GSB) to commence the continuation of General Service Board reports.

Health

(Geoff H)

Good evening Conference, I'm Geoff and I am an alcoholic. I'd like to spend the next 15 minutes or so just telling you a little bit about what is happening in the discipline of Health liaison.

I like to talk a little bit about the vacancies we have and that we are all concerned about, a little bit about where we operate, a brief mention of the Conferences that we display regularly at, a bit about the Health Sub Committee and finishing with co-operation with the professional community.

Vacancies. In the Conference pack I produced a table which shows where all the vacancies are in the Health Liaison Officer (HLO) posts throughout the country. I produced that first of all for my own benefit so that I could see if there were any patterns but because I also get obsessed about percentages and things like that from time to time, I thought that it would satisfy my insatiable curiosity for that sort of thing.

The table which appears in my report for the Conference pack says that 53% of HLO posts were filled at Intergroup now two years ago 60% of posts were filled indicating that the percentage has come down. However I constructed the table upon data that came out in December last and I am pleased to say that the last analysis at the end of March the percentage has now gone up to 64 so I am hoping that there is going to be a new upward trend. If anybody is interested in taking on Health liaison then you would be extremely welcome to do so.

Where we operate. The following is a list of areas where the main areas where Health liaison takes place:

- psychiatrists and GPs
- occupational health services
- in-patient facilities
- substance misuse services
- detoxification facilities
- forensic mental health services

Anything that has a health ethos really that is where Health Liaison Officers work and many of you will recognise a lot of those areas. In addition to those, meetings are starting up in Treatment facilities all of the time and probably the latest trend is the installation of screen savers in hospitals and medical practices in carrying the AA message.

I guess there is an overlap in some of those situations with Public Information liaison, I do realise that and indeed in some Intergroups very often the HLO and the Public Information Liaison Office (PILO) work together. Sometimes where there is no HLO in post then the PI Officer will take over the Health function. I do think that overlaps are very, very healthy especially in those areas where there are a lot of vacancies.

Conferences. A lot of Conferences take place throughout the country each year and below is a list of events at which we have display stands:

- Nursing in Practice x 7 in various locations
- Health & Wellbeing at Work
- Unison Health Conference
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- British Medical Association
- Primary Care & Public Health
- Tackling Drug and Alcohol Misuse

It really is an excellent way of carrying the AA message. I did one of these myself with an AA colleague in Manchester sometime ago and I was absolutely amazed at the amount of visitors that we had. It is amazing how much literature we got through. I compared the amount of visitors that we got with visitors to some of the other stands and ours really did exceed a lot of the other stands. I am saying that not to boast but because people are attracted to the AA message that they see in our posters and pamphlets so it is well worth doing.

Health Sub Committee. Our current membership is:

- Andre M, Jack B, Jonathan W
- Trustees: Jonathan Chick, Geoff H
- Three vacancies – applications pending

When we get a full contingency, perhaps six people on the Sub Committee, then we are thinking about each Sub Committee member being responsible for say, a couple of Regions each so that they can make themselves available to be a resource person, to be a link person to those Regions. Also to be in contact with those Regions so that they can bring back to the Sub Committee what is happening in those Regions so that the Sub Committee is aware all of the time of what is happening nationally.

A couple of weeks ago we had the Annual Meeting of Regional Health Liaison Officers and a lot of really good stuff and suggestions came out of that so I think that the Health Sub Committee has its work cut out for about the next year now, which is really good, so it would be good if we could attend to all of those issues that came up so that we have achieved all of those by the time of the next Annual meeting in March next year.

Co-operation with the Professional Community. I really love the following quotation of Bill W's and I have been reading it over and over just lately:

*Let's Be Friendly With
Our Friends:
Friends on the Alcoholism Front*

So let us work alongside all these
projects of promise to hasten the
recovery of those millions who have
not yet found their way out. These
varied labors do not need our special
endorsement; they need only a helping
hand when, as individuals, we
can possibly give it. *(Bill W, 1958)*

Bill W wrote this in 1958 and at that time a lot of national policies in America were coming into operation to be able to improve services for people with alcohol problems, so Bill was aware of

these initiatives and really was encouraging AA folks to work in co-operation with them because this was a way of carrying the message and it was a way to get people to our meetings.

So this is my starting point for the final bit of the presentation. There are three main policy documents in this country that deal with substance misuse and whenever governments think about alcoholism and drug addiction they tend to put them both under the generic label of substance abuse.

The first one to come out was Scotland: The Road to Recovery which sounds very appropriate. Wales: Substance Misuse Framework for Wales which came out in 2013 and the English version: Putting Full Recovery First which came out two years ago.

The implementation of these policies have meant quite different approaches. In Scotland and in Wales the implementation seems to have been much more devolved to local authorities whereas in England they seem to have developed a much more central approach and I will say something about that in a few moments and what that means for us and how we can co-operate with that and, indeed, how we are already co-operating with it.

When the Health Sub Committee reaches full strength and we have this regionalisation of the members, as I have talked about, I am going to liaise with the five Scottish Regions so that should enable me to understand more about the way this policy is being implemented in Scotland. In the case of Wales, I am going to a Conference in a couple of week's time in Chester and the Vice Chair of the Welsh group that has been set up to implement their policy is one of the speakers, so I hope to be able to understand the Welsh situation better than I do now. It is the English implementation that I am more familiar with because they have adopted a much more centralist approach.

What came out of Putting Full Recovery First was Public Health England (PHE) and you will have heard of the National Treatment Agency and everything they were doing before 2012 is now subsumed into Public Health England whose unofficial slogan is 'helping people to live healthier and longer', and I am sure that freedom from addiction will help that tremendously.

The initiative involving Public Health England is called 'Improving Mutual Aid Engagement'. It sounds very grandiose, we talk about our 12th Step Fellowship and of course there are other 12th Step Fellowships but they are calling these groups collectively Mutual Aid and that is because some recovery organisations don't follow the 12 Steps. I am sure that you know the names of other recovery organisations who do not have our philosophy and way of life, so as not to exclude them the term Mutual Aid is being used, because we help each other at our meetings.

They have set up the Mutual Aid Reference Group which meets in London on alternate months and I am representing AA on that. It is not a case of being in partnership with them, there are representatives of other 12th Step groups, Smart Recovery, Commissioners, Providers and people who work within Public Health England. My job there is not to influence policy in any way but to be able to represent AA accurately, to tell them how we work to safeguard the Traditions because, as we all know, our Traditions quite rightly prevent us from endorsing and facilitating external causes etc. That is the outside part of that particular aspect of my job. The other is to keep the Fellowship informed of what is happening and this is one opportunity for me to do that.

They have produced a Strategic Action Plan which is an entirely internal document, it has nothing to do with us at all, it does not empower us to do anything, it can't do because we follow our own recovery plan and we have our own structure for meetings and for carrying the message. The Strategic Action Plan is for Public Health England to be able to try to influence Commissioners and Providers, people who work with people who have alcohol problems, to talk about AA with their clients and to help them to access meetings. So really our job is to be aware of this and to help when we are asked to help.

They produce other documents as well, the main one being Facilitating Access to Mutual Aid which really is a document that enables treatment providers to be able to work with their clients in such a way that they would encourage them to access AA because, as I will say shortly, the actual rate of referrals to AA meetings by treatment providers is lamentably low at the moment. Public Health England want to change and improve that. Why do they want to do this? This is because they take note of the evidence base that is being built up which shows that recovery from alcoholism in terms of abstinence is far more likely when people attend AA meetings. We all know that because we are in AA but treatment providers don't always acknowledge that. PHE are trying to influence treatment providers so that they will acknowledge that.

So in the evidence that they quote in their Strategic Action Plan they quote the NICE Guidance 115 (2011):Alcohol Use Disorders page 236: *Setting the context for 12-Step facilitation and Alcoholics Anonymous...* 'Attendance has been associated with successful abstinence from alcohol in a number of studies (see Ferri and colleagues [2006] for a systematic review)'.

That is the first mention in the NICE Guidelines and the second is:

Page 246: *Twelve Step Facilitation...* 'TSF is based on the 12 Step or AA concept that alcohol misuse is a spiritual and medical disease. As well as a goal of abstinence, this intervention aims to encourage commitment to and participation in AA meetings'.

At least it is recognising that alcohol misuse is a spiritual and medical disease and we often talk about it being a spiritual malady and that, of course, is a quotation direct from the Big Book.

But instead of Harm Reduction they are advocating abstinence which we do one day at a time, so they are getting a little bit closer to us.

The main aim of the Plan that will affect our Fellowship is for PHE Centre teams, they are regionalised in the same way that we are but their regions are nothing like our regions, but they ask the staff to establish a relationship with representatives of local mutual aid programmes at the level of Intergroup.

So the work has already started, beginning in the London Boroughs of Islington, Croydon, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Wandsworth, Hayes, Westminster and Camden. What has happened is that workshops have been held in each of these Boroughs consisting of Commissioners and Providers and there has been AA speakers at all of those events in terms of sharing their personal recovery and also saying what AA does and what it does not do. It is a number of Health Liaison Officers that have participated in these events.

It has also begun outside of London in the West Midlands and more sites are being identified.

What does all this mean for AA:

- Increased numbers at meetings
- Increase in Twelfth Step calls
- Requests to give talks and presentations
- Requests to meet people prior to meetings
- Increased respectability and credibility for AA in the professional and wider community

Most of the staff that attended these workshops said that they hadn't considered talking about AA to their clients but they made pledges to do so in the future.

There are some challenges for our Fellowship:

- Unease with respect to:
 - Traditions (esp. 6 and 10 – affiliation/endorsement)
 - Perceptions about coercion

- Over-saturation at smaller meetings
- More dually-addicted people at meetings
- Vacant liaison officer posts

I really do believe that we can meet all of these challenges. Thank you.

Public Information

(Joe H)

Good evening Conference my names Joe, I'm an alcoholic and for past 12 months I have had the privilege of being responsible for Public Information on the General Service Board. I would like to report to you today on the work of the Public Information Sub Committee (PISC) in two respects. First of all, in respect of the PI requests made of the Sub Committee by last year's Conference and also in respect of additional work done by the PISC as well as the Non-Alcoholic Trustees.

Conference 2013, Committee 2, Question 1a. - *"...best practice be shared throughout the Service Structure via PI Service News and AA Service News"*.

If you are not aware of what PI Service News (PISN) is, just let me run through it. It's a monthly newsletter that is collated by a member of the PISC and it is distributed electronically by GSO. There is a list at GSO of all people who sign up to it who are interested at Group level, Intergroup and Region about Public Information.

We have also published articles in AA Service News and just recently created a PI CD which contains the whole available archive of PISN. That goes back many years and it is going to be in its own special file within the Document Library of our website. It also contains templates, presentations and other aspects of PI but, terms in of PISN, it is a very valuable asset and contains a lot of shared information. That is what PISN is about the sharing of information from around the country.

Conference 2013, Committee 2, Question 1c. - *"The Press Pack recently produced by the PI Sub Committee, to be circulated to PI officers throughout the Service Structure"*.

This was circulated in October just prior to Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness month in November and contained:

1. A 'Letter to the Editor' structured and signed by all Non Alcoholic Trustees (NATs)
2. Six individual articles by former and current Non Alcoholic Trustees
3. A generic press release explaining to local papers the nature of the above

From the feedback that we have been given that was taken up by quite a few local papers and regional papers so it has had a marked effect in some respects but getting feedback is not always necessarily easy.

Conference 2013, Committee 2, Question 1b. - *"To increase success, consideration be given to placing articles in magazines, professional journals and online press"*.

An advert was placed in the Guardian. It was published on 4th January this year and it covered London, South East, East Anglia and South Midlands. The impact of this was measured by our Electronics Communications people through Google Analytics and showed a definite spike on the day of publication. To be fair I cannot say that that showed a trend but nevertheless there was some effect. The advert, which cost £3,000, contained:

- A letter co-signed by all our current NATs
- Contact details

- ‘Winter’ Park Bench poster
- X2 shares under assumed names

We are looking at what we are, what we are about and how we can be contacted. The article itself was put together by ourselves with no production costs and one of the major aspects of it was the impact. The impact of it came through identification, for the professionals identification came through the NATs letter and for the suffering alcoholic the impact could be gained through the two shares at the bottom.

Conference 2013, Committee 3, Question 1.3.e. - *“Improve visibility at national level through media and technology”*.

The PI Sub Committee has created on the new website 5 new pages, in conjunction with the Electronic Communications Trustees, and perhaps just as important as that is that the Sub Committee has appointed a member specifically as a link between the PISC and the Electronic Communications Committee. This gentleman is populating all that the PISC agree needs to be put on the website and he is channelling it up to the Electronic Communication Committee.

There are lots of documents that you might expect to be in the Document Library at the moment but they have just not been filled in yet and that is what he is about, retrospectively filling in all of the blanks and sending them off to the Electronic Communication Committee to have them posted on the website. This is a long term strategy because of the importance of the website to public information.

Moving on to the work of our Non Alcoholic Trustees. I have been involved in Public Information for two years now, because I was shadowing on PI and the past twelve months I have been responsible for PI, and I have really come to fully understand the immense power and approach that NATs can have for the benefit of the Fellowship. They can relate to the media in way that we ought not to and I use the word ‘ought’ because sometimes it is not necessarily the case, they have:

- In TV – Live Interviews & Recorded Programmes
- Press – Q & A, Interviews & Letters to the Editor
- Radio – Live Interviews
- Given presentations at various Regions and Parliamentary events

We were fortunate enough, at the beginning of the year, to be given a budget by the General Service Board to run a PI Seminar. 62 people attended, it was buzzing and there was a massive amount of information shared. That information was all able to be put down in writing, it then got transferred by GSO staff onto a CD. That and all the presentations that were made by different people who came along and talked about approaches and issues involved in PI were put on the CD. This seminar took place the day after the Regional PI Liaison Officers meeting and the minutes of that meeting are also on the CD as well.

There was one interesting presentation at the Regional PI Liaison Officers meeting, it was a gentleman who came along and gave a demonstration of the use of Google Drive in managing the affairs of a PI group so it could automatically flag up things here and there – send out this, send out that. I’m afraid that I am a bit limited in that respect but I am sure that there are people here who attended that PI Regional meeting who would be able to tell you more about that, but it was a very, very educative presentation.

Moving on to the Parliamentary events and these are, in my opinion, very successful. I have had the privilege of attending all three and they all appear to fulfil that primary purpose for us. Carrying the message to the professional, the politician and the friends of AA. They all have their distinct styles, they all have little differences in format but nevertheless they all put across the primary purpose and it is marvellous to see how it is taken up. The atmospheres are great, the

surroundings are great and people, non-alcoholics, always give absolutely great feedback from them.

Carrying on to our plans for the future, in March just gone the PISC carried out a self-assessment, the whole meeting was about self-assessment and we looked at what we had done, what worked and what didn't work. Why didn't it work? Also we took in a presentation from a media company which showed us some of the 'dark arts' in the world of the media. That was an education in itself. From that meeting a strategy paper is to be put to the General Service Board at its May meeting because the media company looked at the costs, benefits and impacts of creating a digital advert for use on television, a digital advert for broadcasting on plasma screens and the use of the press. That is all I can tell you about that at the moment.

I would like to say thank you to the GSO staff as in some cases we have had an instant response from them from a phone call – we need that letter out by such and such a time to hit the news desk and bang, it's done. All the material that has been transferred onto CDs, sending things out to all the national daily newspapers – all done, just like that. Their response is absolutely marvellous and PI needs that support and it does get that support in spades.

I'd like to thank the PISC for the past twelve months, it's been absolutely buzzing, we have had knock backs but fair enough, we got knocked back, what do we do, try something else. The positive attitude of the Committee has been marvellous and I have had trouble keeping up with it at my age.

My last thank you is to PI Officers all around the country because they might think that the minutes get sent in but nobody reads them, but we do, because contained within those PI reports are potential PISN articles and once you get one of those minutes you think to yourself that there is an event there, and we will contact that person and get them to write an article about it. They are so important and the feedback is great so, please, go back and tell people to keep those minutes coming through, those PI reports, because they are so good and give us so much information. Thank you.

Young Peoples Project

(Phil W)

Good evening Conference, my name is Phil, I'm an alcoholic and also Vice Chair of the General Service Board and on account of that, a little over a year ago at the February Board meeting it was decided that we should re-launch the Young Peoples Project, and because the Vice Chair does not have a regular portfolio they all looked at me, and it fell into my lap.

It originally ran from 2003 for between 2 and 3 years, the idea being to see how we could better engage with our younger members and one of the upshots of that particular project was the pamphlet 'Younger People in AA' which has a number of shares of young people in it.

I think one of the reasons it was decided to kick start it again was that there was a Conference question last year, which Committee 2 looked at, which was written by some young people asking about young members interests. It is interesting to note actually that Committee 2 this year was looking at a question about implementation of Conference answers because the danger is we all come here to Conference, we are all very enthusiastic, we write up responses and then they just gather dust on the shelf and nothing much gets done. So, Committee 2, this is for you to try and show you what has happened since.

Where are we now? The 2010 Survey and there will be another soon, either next year or the year after:

AA Demographic by age: 2010 Survey

- 95% over age 30
- 77% over age 40
- 47% over age 50
- 22% over age 60

Only 5% of us are under 30 and think what it is like if you come in young, it's daunting enough if you come in when you are more mature, so if you are young and impressionable and you see all these old folks, that's an issue really.

So we decided to re-launch the project and we had to decide on our Terms of Reference and what better than to try and root it in our Legacies. So fundamentally to attract young people into recovery and then when we have got them, to engage them and make them aware of the unity of the Fellowship, then of course sponsorship and get them into the service structure. Those are our aspirations.

Conference 2013, Committee No. 2 recommendations:

- *Young people should be warmly welcomed into AA.*
- *Young People are encouraged through sponsorship to be active members of the Fellowship*
- *The Service Structure may seek to encourage and co-operate with Young People's Conventions*
- *The Electronic Communications Sub Committee (ECSC) looks at appropriate apps and social media as a possible means of attracting young people to AA*
- *Young people are encouraged, wherever possible, to carry the message at PI events in education, young offenders institutions etc.*
- *A young person (YP) status is highlighted on the 12th Step list*
- *The "Too Young" poster be updated with input from younger members.*
- *Intergrups and Regions may, where appropriate, appoint a Young Persons Liaison Officer.*

When we said that Intergrups and Regions may, where appropriate, appoint a Young Persons Liaison Officer (YPLO) we gave no guidance, we just said yes, let's have a YPLO.

So we formed a Young Peoples Project Team and we invited interested people via AA Service News, website and also a circular sent to the Regions. We have a team of interested people, we had interest from approximately 20 people, I would say. The first meeting we held at the Southern Service Office because as you might expect there is a kind of oasis of interest in London and the room was full to capacity. Since that time we have had on-line meetings and the numbers have dwindled a bit, I must be candid, but I don't think that it is because they are young particularly, I think service meetings are a bit like that. The general aim of the team was to facilitate and develop the agenda from what Committee No. 2 had come up with last year.

These are the threads of what we are doing:

- AA poster for young people
- Proposal for *A Message for Young People* animated video
- Monitoring Young People's Conventions
- Produced a discussion document for the Role of the YPLO
- Produced a report on Search Engine Optimisation which I took to the Board and is being implemented

- More of the YP community attending Intergroup and Region: more YPLOs coming into the service structure
- One YPP Team members is now an alternative Conference delegate!

There is no guidance so what we did was to ask one of the members of the team, one of the members of our team is from Continental European Region (CER) and CER have had a Young Peoples Officer since the original Young Peoples Project so they have had one in post for over 10 years, so they have the experience and there is a lot we can learn from them, to put together a draft of the Discussion Document. These are suggestions and what I hope through all this is that there will be communication because communication throughout the Fellowship is very difficult:

YPLO Role: Discussion Document

- Minimum two years continuous sobriety with a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions having come into AA at the age of thirty or younger.
- The YPLO is a conduit for young people with a desire to stop drinking. The YPLO receives and answers referred email and phone enquiries about AA from young people. This gives young people someone to talk with who has sober experience in Alcoholics Anonymous and can share experience, strength and hope about getting sober at a young age.
- A YPLO will be available to assist the Public Information Liaison Officer (PILO) with public information talks where the audience is anticipated to be of a younger age, such as schools, universities, young offenders' institutions and prisons. The YPLO could also be of assistance offering perspective to PILOs creating PI presentations.
- A YPLO should encourage younger members of AA to get involved in all aspects of service at Group, Intergroup, Region, and GSB Sub Committee levels. Younger AAs are needed in all areas of service eg. Literature, Electronic Communications and PI to ensure the perspective of young people in AA is included and to foster future generations of service.

The “*Too Young*” poster

This was a specific mandate from Conference last year and younger member designers have produced this and the approach really has been a ‘dog whistle’ approach, the idea that the illustration will appeal to them, rather than the 95% like us.

There are two, one is female and a male partner which are the proposals to come back:



They need a bit of finessing but that is the general pitch.

I mentioned the Animation Video and this is in development really, they have produced a Storyboard which was presented to the GSB so that is a work in progress presently.

This is what I would like you to take home with you:

- Please support the YP Project, encourage young members and raise awareness...
- **Attract** young people with alcohol problems into **recovery** in AA.
- **Engage** young people in the **unity** of the Fellowship.
- **Sponsor** young people into **service** via the service structure.

They are the future!

- Lend them a hand...
- Give them their head...
- Thank you

European Service Meeting

(Geoff H)

I'm Geoff, I'm an alcoholic and I would like to talk a bit about the European Service Meeting which took place in October of last year in Frankfurt, Germany and it was my privilege to represent AAGB along with Penny who was also there as a second term delegate. I was a first term delegate.

I have to say that it was a truly amazing experience and I hope to be able to impart a little bit of that this evening to you.

It is not a Conference or a Convention it is in fact a meeting and the beauty of it is that it brings together a lot of different countries who have AA meetings within the mainland continent of Europe plus Great Britain and Ireland and some Mediterranean and Atlantic islands as well, so that is the extent of it.

The theme was 'Carry our Message through Service' which is a lovely theme because really that is exactly what the meeting is about, AA service within our countries and how we can get inspiration from each other, and this is what happened as we went through the weekend.

A bonus for me, as I was very fortunate because I was met by David A, who is here tonight, who is also a resident of Frankfurt, and I got a free tour of Frankfurt which was really good because I am an avid photographer and I was able to go back at night and do some night time photography which is one of my favourite hobbies. That really is combining pleasure with business.

Twenty-four countries were represented by thirty-nine delegates and the Chair was Kristin L from Oslo and also in attendance were Phyllis H, General Manager of AA World Services and Rick W who works in the International Desk at AA World Services. Each of those gave a presentation, one on one evening and the other on the next evening, and it was truly enlightening to be able to have a more international perspective where there were issues to do with publishing and copyright, issues which were quite frankly beyond me. I tend not to understand the finer points of law so I always look to Roger, our General Secretary, when I want clarification on those issues, but it was good to hear it from an international perspective.

The heart of the work of the meeting was centred in Committees and Workshops but the opening meeting really consisted of the representatives from each country giving an overview on the AA structure in their own country and we were given two minutes which really, really focuses the mind. Apparently, of those twenty odd presentations only one person confined it to the two minutes.

The three Committees were:

1. Agenda / Policy / Admissions/ Finance
2. Literature Publishing/Media Communications
3. Working with Other Countries

I had the privilege of being on the Working with Other Countries Committee which was really enlightening. We had a series of questions to address and we worked our way round the table in the usual way, really sharing our experience on each of those questions. I know that one of the questions that I can remember was if you are beginning something new in your country, something that you have not tried before, do you consult the experience of other countries before you actually implement it. That was a really interesting question and we got quite a lot of mixed responses.

The three Workshops were:

1. Working With Young People
2. How to attract & retain young people in AA
3. Utilising the Service Structure a way to carry the message within AA

I was allocated to the How to attract & retain young people in AA Workshop which I thought was most timely, Phil has been keeping us up to speed over the last six months on the work of the York Peoples Project over here, so I was able to share some of that experience and Phil briefed me before I went. It was interesting what other people were saying and the two big issues were the use of the internet and electronic media and that came over load and clear and other countries are beginning to give consideration to that.

There was a lot of discussion as to what constitutes a young person and I am fascinated by our benchmark of thirty, somebody there suggested twenty so I don't know how we feel about that, but I guess our definition gives a lot more scope. There were some people at the ESM that were under thirty and they were very vocal and it was good to hear that.

This was the heart of the work the Committees and Workshops but what were the main themes? First of all I noticed that the AA structures developed in response to local factors. Very often the language is different and what we all have in common is that we have AA groups which is where our recovery is continued week in and week out, some of the names are different, we talk about Intergroups and Regions and in other countries there are Areas for instance. The constitution of the AA Service Boards vary tremendously as well as indeed are the delegates who go to the ESM. It is Trustees that represent AAGB at this meeting but that is not always the case from other countries, delegates are drawn from different parts of their service structures.

One thing I noticed was that in the way we have school visiting here and we have a long tradition of people going into talk to school children. In German speaking Switzerland for instance they always go in with a member of Al-Anon and the reason why they do that is because there is a better chance of the parents of those children having a drinking problem than the children themselves at that age. There is a certain logic in that for me and I must say that I am quite sold to that idea and of course it means we are working in co-operation which is perfectly OK with another Fellowship.

The number of meetings vary widely from country to country and I live in awe of some of them, it made me feel very humble, we have roughly 4,300 meetings in Great Britain and everywhere we go there are meetings and at various times of the day. In some of the countries where AA is just beginning they have less than 100 meetings and in some of those countries far less than 100. We have a well established service structure, we have a well established and efficient GSO and in one of those countries it does not have a General Service Office, they keep together by email, they respond to requests to carrying the message by email and telephone and they are working towards developing a General Service Office but the enthusiasm from these people was truly awe inspiring. I came away thinking to myself 'Geoff, don't take what we have for granted', we complain about the number of vacancies that we have and that is an ongoing saga, and I know it is, but the enthusiasm of the people in the emerging countries AA wise is truly spectacular.

Another thing that I thought was awe inspiring was the fact the lingua franca is English, the language spoken by all the delegates is English and I felt truly humble about that as well, obviously one of the qualifications, I guess, of being a delegate from a country where English is not the main language, is the ability to be able to speak English reasonably well so that you can express yourself and understand what other people are saying. It was the language of the heart and this is what we talk about in AA, it's not words, it's the language of the heart and I saw this at the Flemish speaking Conference that I went to in Belgium last year as well, where I didn't understand much of what was going on most of the time and relied heavily on my translator, but I could really see the language of the heart and this is what I felt at the ESM.

The ESM is held on alternate years, the last one was October last year so the next one will be 2015 and that will take place in York. It has been held in Frankfurt for quite a long time now, but the centre of gravity has now shifted within Europe because of the emergence of new countries coming into the structure, so a majority decision was made to hold future ones at York, which will be more economical as far as expenditure for the secretariat.

There is an Agenda Committee which meets in June this year and that consists of the Chairs of the three Committees and Workshops, secretarial staff and the Chair who was appointed for the next meeting. That, I am pleased to say was Penny, so she will be chairing at the next ESM in 2015. I was elected Chair of the Working with Other Countries Committee.

It could not have happened without the support of our General Office Staff, the organisation was faultless, if there were any hitches I did not see any, the whole thing ran really smoothly and to time, most of the time, as well. All of the preparations had obviously been made and the staff were highly visible as well, so we could rely upon them for support. So my thanks go to Roger, Angela, Sophie and Jenny who were assisted by Wieslaw L of Poland who did a grand job too. It

was a real privilege to attend and I know I shall feel exactly the same way when I go back next year. Thank you.

AA Service News Update

(David A)

Submissions for the AA Service News have continued to fluctuate over the past year. As the new editor for the publication, I am extremely thankful to the GSO Staff, Board Members, and Regional Liaison Officers that have been a tremendous support in getting each issue to press. As always, every one of our Fellowship who submits material and supports the AA Service News, has my deepest gratitude.

ARCHIVES Update

(Tom B)

The year to date has been a busy one for the Archives Sub Committee, members are engaged in research into the history of the Service Structure in Great Britain and Continental Europe. Presently the focus is on the very beginnings 1948 to 1966, from the very first Advisory Committee meeting, 1950 Pre Foundation Committee, importation and distribution of the big book, then 1957 to present the General Service Board, however the history of all disciplines will be fully researched and included.

The Annual Archivist's Network meeting took place in York in October, it was well attended with twenty two Archivists present from Region and Intergroups, so a big thank you to the Regions who funded these.

There were presentations from Roy, Alan and Brian, Regional Archivists, we also had a most informative presentation from Jenny Mitcham, Archivist at the Borthwich Institute, on the digital preservation of Archives.

The Sub Committee is presently made up of Tom B (Board Trustee), Stephen S (Fellowship Archivist), Rose (Sub-Committee), Brian (Sub-Committee), Harry (Sub-Committee), and Charlie (Sub-Committee), and we expect to be joined by two new members shortly. We meet twice annually at York, Spring and Fall, we also have the option of conference Skype calls in addition to the fore mentioned.

Still in my first year as Board Trustee for Archives, I am truly grateful to have a very enthusiastic and dedicated group of members to work with.

Finally please give some thought to the importance of preserving our life saving history, think about maybe getting involved, you like me might be surprised how interesting it can be, and please give Archives a mention at your home and local meetings.

Armed Services Update

(Robert M)

I would like to start my report as usual, 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 their hard work and 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 Armed Services Sub-Committee of the General Service Board follows a Terms of Reference which was reviewed and approved in September 2013 and subsequently published in AA Service News. At present there are 2 members of the Sub-Committee, but we would like more members involved.

The January 2013 workshop was very positive with 9 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. At present, there are 17 ASLO in post at Intergroup level and 6 Regional ASLO.

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 12th Step people in the Services who phone for help. The 12th Step list for AS was updated and now contains approximately 99 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 12th Steppers in the Region so that they can pass on this information to their telephone responders. To the Armed Forces 12th Stepper, it will be exactly the same as acting as a telephone service 12th Stepper.

The list will be updated twice a year by GSO from information provided by a member of the Armed Services Sub Committee. Recently updated, the list contains approximately 99 names.

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.

Events Attended

Many initiatives have taken place this year and some are highlighted below:

1. Live At Ease project run by NHS in North West held Armed Forces event on 5th March at Haydock. The purpose of the event was to update future commissioners on the status of the North West Armed Forces Programme pre-handover on 1st April 2013. Regional ASLO attended with literature and display stand.

As a result of this event contact was made with Andrea Goodall, Project Manager, Military Veterans, who is looking for services that support our Military Veterans, but also to find out what is available at a local level within Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale, Bury and Oldham areas. Further contact was made with National Project Manager, National Veterans Mental Health Network and South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

2. ASLO had a meeting with SSAFA in London and they are keen to involve Alcoholics Anonymous in attending the training days and annual general meetings of SSAFA in London.
3. Discussion with the Head of the Armed Forces and Veterans' Health Policy Team at the Department of Health, the Armed Forces Health Chair for NHS England and the Director of Partnerships at Combat Stress.

They're looking at how AA might be able to provide information to healthcare and mental health professionals and volunteers in the NHS and within the charity sector, in the form of existing or new written materials and volunteers to do presentations or talk directly to problem drinkers. It is highly likely that any rollout would involve lots of opportunities for ASLOs regionally and locally to become involved.

Contacts at the Department of Health and in NHS England are also looking at holding meetings with the top brass within the MOD and the three services responsible for addressing alcohol problems within the Armed Services. Again, the aim would be to look strategically at what AA can offer and then to roll out service provision locally.

A synopsis of what AA has to offer was sent to relevant contacts and Richard Swarbrick, Lead - Armed Forces and seek their view.

4. After liaising with NHS England for quite a few months, Alcoholics Anonymous is now listed on My Health London website which is run by NHS.
5. Contact made with Sara Hurley. She's the Colonel Medical for Support Command in Aldershot with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing within the Army and is very interested in AA. Basically, she has a national remit for the medical care of servicemen and women and by extension veterans. The Army is divided into ten regions, each of which is headed up by a Brigadier General; below the Brigadier Generals are the various garrisons and other sites. Whatever she agrees is then cascaded down to every single military facility in the country.

Sara wants to put in place a programme of education and information within the Army down the chain of command that informs commanding officers at each level of the existence and work of AA and how AA can be accessed. She's also looking to establish a network of links between the ten regions and the closest ASLOs to each of the headquarters of these regions as basic points of reference if AA is experiencing difficulties making contact at local levels.

What this could basically mean is that the chain of command will be establishing a culture of cooperation with AA.

Here are the key points from the above meeting:

Attendees:

Colonel Medical Sara Hurley (Support Command), Christine Ball (Army Welfare Service), Armed Services Liaison Officer, London Region (North), (Armed Services Liaison Officer, Southdown Intergroup)

- The social and health consequences of problem drinking are recognised and assistance is sought in addressing the support structures for individuals looking to change drinking habits. External expertise is required
- In terms of addressing causality and help seeking behaviours Support Command is looking to effect a change in the culture to enable people to ask for and access help
- It is recognised that the potential for solitary drinking has increased due to the increase in single room accommodation

Modes of communication:

- Off-the-peg AA literature
- Tailored AA written materials

- Personal presentations/visits/meetings etc.

Possible channels of communication:

- Integration of messages with Army Health promotion initiatives
- Garrison radio
- Payslips
- *Soldier* magazine
- Posters in gym facilities
- Cookhouses
- An information/education programme triggered by failed CDTs
- Soldier basic training
- Command and leadership Conferences and Course (Officers and Senior Ranks)
- Medical centres and DCMHs (Departments of Community Mental Health)
- Health fairs
- Transition fairs for leavers
- Veterans outreach support centres—veterans can be signposted discreetly to AAs in attendance
- Families focus through Army Welfare Services and HIVE information centres

Audiences for information provision:

- Educators
- Officers
- Support (medical officers, padres, etc.)
- General army population
- Families

Levels of information provision:

- General information for all soldiers
- Targeted information when a drink problem is suspected
- Targeted intervention when a drink problem is confirmed

Other options/avenues:

- Piloting the Colchester Garrison model for 'acclimatising' potential AA members to recovery before attendance of formal AA meetings by holding informal meetings on bases. (TM to follow up with Stuart Meyrick, ASLO, Essex Intergroup). Potential locations: NE and NW.
- Invite Al-Anon in at this stage (LR North to follow up with Al-Anon).
- A veterans 'app' (for iPhone etc.)—to be followed up with RBL (action: Support Command).

Other issues flagged:

- Potential nervousness amongst officers about encountering people of differing ranks at AA.
- Difficulty tracking leavers, although the provision of email addresses helps, and mobile numbers are more stable.

Next steps:

- LR North to finalise list of contacts for the 10 support command regions.
- SH to devise options for AA information provision/personal involvement.
- Others to be contacted as above.
- Contact was made with all ASLO's because of the scope of the work, asking if they would be happy to be the AA contact for the Army in the following regions:

- **Support Command base Region/Intergroup:**
 - Scotland – based in Stirling
 - Northern Ireland – based in Lisburn
 - North West – based in Preston
 - North East – based in York
 - Wales – based in Brecon
 - West Midlands – based in Shrewsbury
 - East Midlands – based in Chilwell
 - South West – based in Tidworth
 - South Central – based in Aldershot
 - South East – based in Shorncliffe
 - London – based in Whitehall London
6. Veterans Outreach Support Portsmouth provides a 'one stop shop' for veterans who, for one reason or another, have not been able to connect with organisations that are set up to give them support. Organisations who attended included the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust; Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's' Families Association; Royal British Legion; Combat Stress; Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA); SEAP (Veterans Advocacy); Portsmouth City Council representatives from Drug and Alcohol Intervention; City Mental Health Department; City Council NHS; Portsmouth Hospitals PCT Health Trust and Citizens Advice Bureau. VOS Portsmouth would like AA to provide a table at each event on the first Wednesday of every month.
7. **Colchester Garrison**
Currently has a meeting in place held within the wire where people who are candidates for AA are given an introduction to AA before they attend meetings.
8. **Fenland IG Convention.**
Armed Services Display stand set up.
9. **Glasgow**
AA attended Veterans' Agency Seminar in Glasgow.
- Other Contacts made in 2013:**
- RAF Honington; RAF Wattisham; Colchester Garrison; Soldiers' Charity; Combat Stress; SSAFA; Blind Veterans UK; Veterans Aid; National Head of Military Health and Veterans, NHS; Redford Barracks and Dreghorn Barracks
 - Officers' Association - AA information added to website.
 - Veterans UK; Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund; Live At Ease; RAF Association; Royal British Legion; Help for Heroes; Mind.

Armed Forces Day 2014

The 'HQ' chosen city for the Armed Forces Day 2014 event is Stirling. A bid has been submitted to the Co-ordinator of Stirling Council regarding this event held on the 28th June next year, regarding a display stand. Initiatives are being planned to coincide with events that week.

Armed Services Plans for 2014

- Maintain lasting links and raise awareness with organisations offering non-military support to service people e.g. - HIVES, Combat Stress, Royal British Legion, SSAFA, RAFA, and RNA.
- 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.

- 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.

My grateful thanks to everyone again. God Bless you.

House of Commons Event Update

(Tom B)

This year's House of Commons Event will take place in Portcullis House, early in May, the purpose of the event is to identify the profile of AA with Parliamentarians of all political parties, to invite professionals to attend an AA public event, and to hear from their fellow professionals how Alcoholics Anonymous has been beneficial to them in their various fields of dealing with suffering Alcoholics.

Last year the Sponsoring MP was Alan Lamb, our Professional speakers Dr Gerada and Rory O'Connor. There were 120 applications last year with 69 actually attending the event, we believe that travel disruption in London may have played a part in some people not making the venue. We placed feedback forms on every seat, 40 of which were filled in, the response from the Professionals when asked, How well did the presentation meet your purpose? The answer was overwhelmingly well, very well, excellent. Would you recommend AA to a fellow Professional? yes 36 no answer 4. Would you suggest AA to Alcoholic?, yes 34, no answer 6. Would you like to attend an open meeting? yes 23, no 15 no answer 2. Would you like to be added to email address for updates? yes 28, no 7 no answer 5.

This year's Host is MP Andy Burnham, Shadow Minister for Health, Professional Speakers are Jane Marshal, and Mark Gilman, Public Health England.

Northern National Convention Update

(Geoff H)

The 39th Northern National Conference duly took place on 22/23/24 March 2013 at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. A total of 761 people attended (771 in 2012 and 770 in 2011). However, the weather was particularly inclement, there having been heavy snowfalls, which may have accounted for the slight reduction in attendance. The post-convention financial analysis showed a surplus of £448.

As in the previous year, we had a Non-Alcoholic Trustee as a speaker at the Friday evening meeting: this year Jonathan Chick gave a talk entitled 'A psychiatrist's view of AA'. This was very much appreciated by the audience. We do hope to continue this practice in future years, subject to the availability of our Non-Alcoholic Trustees.

The usual full programme of meetings and workshops were provided, along with an entertainments programme for the Friday and Saturday evenings.

The Sunday morning Final Gathering was chaired by Willie Mac, Trustee for Literature, who reports that it was a most emotional event. Joe H, Trustee for Public Information, was also in attendance.

Preparations for the 40th Northern National Convention, which will take place on 21/22/23 March 2014, are in an advanced stage of planning. Because it will be the 40th, we are trying to make it an extra-special event. Some AA members who were present at the first Northern National have committed themselves to attending this one and sharing their memories of that first one. The Friday evening meeting will be a public meeting to which various people in the local community have been invited.

Both anecdotally, and as indicated by the attendance survey (compiled and analysed by Michaela L), taken at the last convention, the venue is much criticised, even though the attendance is consistent at around 770! The committee does accept that there are better venues, but none whose prices remotely approach those of Norbreck, nor of the ability to accommodate the number of cars that arrive for the weekend. However, the survey will be repeated next year and the issue will be kept under review.

Finally, I wish to give my thanks to the hard-working committee members. I think that it is truly amazing that a small number of people put on an event for some 700-800 people, with the minimum of practical hitches.

Prisons Update

(Del H & Wullie I)

This is my last report to you as Trustee in this discipline of service, and what a year it has been. I have been fortunate to have a shadow (Wullie) whose support has been much appreciated.

We started off the year with the annual meeting of Regional Officers in June. Once again, like the previous year 13 of the 15 Regions were represented. Much sharing of experience took place, questions were asked, and in the main got answered. As this was my last meeting with this bunch of very enthusiastic people, I thanked them for their continued hard work and commitment.

I once again chaired the annual meeting of Scottish Liaison Officers & Sponsors at Sterling University. Again a very good turnout, and the successes and challenges were discussed. The following day I received a phone call to say a document, that has been a year in writing and titled "Protocol for Prison Sponsors" had been accepted by the Scottish Prison System (SPS) which will allow us to take guests into all prisons in Scotland, and all that disclosure documentation will be paid by the prisons.

The Prison Sub-committee has gone under some change, as we said goodbye to the last 2 of the founding members (Willie D & Wyn B) who have been replaced by Derek T & Isobel G. Having Isobel on board has already born fruit, there was a situation at one of the prisons that was causing some concern, this was taken up with Tom Fox of the SPS, and was resolved in a very short time. One of the standing items on our agenda is the prison map, which shows us where we stand in prisons across the country. The latest figures we have are of the 149 (145 last year) prisons we have meetings in 109 (same as last year) no meetings in 36 (28 last year) and we do not know about 4 (8 last year).

The latest figures I have for Liaison Officers is: 14 Region (13 last year) and 72 Intergroup (68 last year). It is at Intergroup level where interest needs some focus and attention.

There has been a slight change in the number of people signed up to the Prison Postal Service. From figures supplied to me last we have in England & Wales 134. This is quite a drop from last year as I reported a figure of 185, but new members are coming on board fairly regularly. The situation in Scotland (which I did not report last year) is there are 30 people signed up.

I reported last year that the National Offender Services (NOMS), a department within the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), had formed a new work group. There were 4 meetings last year, of which I managed to attend 3. These meetings have been quite informative and useful for me as I am able to give information to Liaison Officers as and when they ask for it. It is hoped that these meetings will continue, but I am still waiting to hear from them for the next one.

My thanks goes to all those involved in this area of service, Liaison Officers, Sponsors and those signed up the Postal Service, without their hard work and commitment we would not be able to do what we do.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everybody who has supported me over these last 4 years, the Liaison Officers, the members of the Sub-committee (past and present) and especially my fellow Trustees, who have been a tremendous source of comfort for me, and have made my time not only enjoyable but a whole heap of fun.

Thank you all.

Probation\Criminal Justice Services Update

(Clive D)

I was privileged to be nominated by Midlands Region for a GSB vacancy and subsequently appointed as the Probation/CJS Trustee immediately on close of Conference 2013. I must acknowledge my thanks for the work and assistance of my predecessor Geoff H.

Probation is sometimes treated in isolation and not part of the general judicial systems. So liaison with Courts, Magistrates and Sheriff, Police and also prison resettlement staff is missed. Please remember to liaise with our colleagues in Prison and P.I. disciplines so that boundaries both geographical or service do not get in the way of carrying our message.

The important thing to note for us is that whatever changes to titles and/or services our message is not altered in anyway and that doors will still need to be knocked on and phone calls to be made.

We obviously cannot ignore the “reorganisation” of the Probation service and passing reference will be made below but as they are timetabled to occur after the date of this report, info will be given in due course.

During the continuing series of meetings with National Offender Management Service, commissioning staff at their HQ, along with trustees with responsibility for Prisons - Del H and Wullie I, we have been kept fully aware of the processes and an insight into the contract areas etc. The opportunity to fully explain our Traditions re affiliation etc. has been taken.

We were also given a view on the “Through the Prison Gate” trial with released prisoners from Lancaster/Preston area prisons being helped with choices on social issues along with contact with ourselves and other 12 Step fellowships. This is a trial but it is intended to implement this nationally along with the other changes in the Probation service. The contact was useful in a central memo to all England and Wales Probation Trusts to review their procedures for contact with the Fellowship.

At the Regional PLO meeting in June attendance of seven Regional (including alternates) along with members of the GSB Sub Committee

What came out of this and also Regional/Intergroup reports is that the CHIT system is alive and well throughout the country, from Plymouth Intergroup up to W Lanarkshire and points in between.

Slight changes include preparing CHITs that cannot be forged - North London Region putting group details inside sealed envelopes so that the Probation Service aren't scrambling around for lists. Plymouth Intergroup / E Cheshire Intergroup has an induction/training “scheme” for members coming into Probation Liaison. In many other Intergroups there has been a move to include magistrates and Police within the umbrella of probation. As this is a widespread action perhaps we could again look at a move to embrace these organisations within a Criminal Justice Liaison. We would need the Fellowship's advice perhaps nearer to Conference question “season”

Work on a handbook for members in this discipline both new in post and others is well in hand and will include a Scotland section.

Work on amendments to Guideline 13 are close to being submitted to Conference via the Literature Committee.

A Regional Liaison Officers is planned for 20 June evening and a seminar on 21 June, both in York.

Chris S, the Sub Committee secretary, rotated out of post (many, many thanks for the past service) and, unfortunately, due to illness his successor has not yet been able to fully take up his post.

Nigel C from North West Region was elected as a committee member which means that the Sub Committee is Nigel and myself. It's easy to organise conference calls!

In Scotland a lot of work is in tandem with Public Information and with carrying the message via rehab centres. In Glasgow co-operation with the 218 Project (referrals from judicial system to rehab etc.) is ongoing. The CHIT system is still in place in a few areas. Posters and literature are being maintained at some Sheriff courts.

There are many post vacancies in this discipline both Intergroup and Region so members are overlooking the chance for marvellous experiences – come and join us.

Roundabout Update

(Winnie C)

OUR MEETING IN PRINT

In the absence of an Editor since March 2013 the Sub Committee and the administrator of the Northern Service Office continue to produce the magazine and get it to the printer on time.

Region and Intergroup Liaison Officers continue to encourage groups and individual members to send in articles and subscribe to the magazine.

ARTICLES - There have been peaks and troughs throughout the year and at present we do not have many articles in the bank, however every time we appeal to the Fellowship there has always been just enough to fill the magazine each month.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - There has been an increase in circulation and sales figures, however it is an ongoing task encouraging groups and individuals to subscribe to the magazine. The magazine helps other services in Prisons, Courts, Hospitals and Health Centres (diary pages removed).

POP UP BANNERS - There are two pop up banners which are used for conventions and other service meetings, these are stored in the Northern Service Office and have proved to be very popular over the last twelve months.

The web page (www.aa.roundabout.org.uk) now has two audio shares usually one male and one female (where possible) for each production.

Due to rotation this will be my last report and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Intergroup/Region Liaison Officers, Roundabout Sub Committee, regular contributors and staff at the Northern Service Office for their continued support and dedication.

Scottish National Convention Update

(Wullie I)

The 2013 Scottish Convention was attended well, as last year's, and was financially self-supporting, contributing the 7th Tradition pot money to GSO.

Registrations were on par with last year.

The sale of AA literature was good.

The Convention Committee worked very hard to ensure that the Convention ran smoothly and thanks goes to the members who chaired and shared doing a great job of carrying the AA message.

Planning for the 58th Annual Scottish Convention 2014 is already at an advanced stage, dates are May 9th, 10th and 11th again in the Corran Halls in Oban.

I am sure everyone planning to attend will have a wonderful time here in a beautiful part of Scotland.

I would like to thank last year's committee for their hard work and also this year's committee for their dedication to make this year's Convention another success.

Scottish Parliament Event Update

(Robert M)

Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness event took place on 2nd October 2013 in Committee Room 3 at Holyrood. David Stewart, Labour MSP for Highlands and Islands hosted this year's event and Joe H, Trustee responsible for PI, chaired the evening proceedings as well as giving a presentation.

Speakers were Martin Weegman (NAT GSB) and Geoff H (GSB Health) who also gave presentations and Christine H from Scotia Region shared her experience, strength and hope.

There were approximately 35 attendees from various organisations, including amongst others, representatives from Scottish Families Affected by Drugs & Alcohol, Police Scotland Occupational Health Department, several JP from Scottish Court Service, Alcohol & Drugs Partnership – Borders, East Dumbarton Social Work Department and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

All speakers were well received which led to a successful Q and A session. My thanks to the staff at NSO and GSO for all their work in helping make this event such a success.

Share Update

(Phil W)

It was with great sadness when the Board learned that Tom T, our Trustee for SHARE magazine, had stepped down early last year due to ill health. We all greatly miss his contribution and mourn his recent passing.

Despite the loss of his steady hand the editorial team has continued to function with effectiveness and expediency. SHARE carries on providing an opportunity for members to exchange their experience, strength and hope with each other outside the rooms, as our "Meeting between Meetings."

We have an excellent rapport with our printers. Production targets are being met and apart from the January issue (when GSO is closed at the end of December) the magazine is going out on time. We are grateful to Chris at GSO for all her good work behind the scenes collating and arranging the mailings out.

Submitted articles for inclusion are still thin on the ground and the Editor continues to ‘flag up’ this vital need and all articles are very welcome. Experience on the Steps and Traditions are particularly needed. SHARE would like to further develop articles on the Concepts, but contributors are needed.

Sales have dropped around 9% over the past four years but have held fairly steady over the last two years.

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
45,293	42,425	41,675	41,351

We are proud of the standard of photographs in our publications and hope that members will continue to submit these for both SHARE and the Calendar. The criteria are printed each month in the magazine.

For 2012/13, Calendar and Fellowship Diary sales are very slightly down. For 2015 the Calendar will be reformatted from portrait to landscape. We believe this will be more user-friendly as well as featuring larger pictures.

Recently, members have been able to purchase subscriptions by bank transfer. As the word spreads across Continental Europe, we are quietly hopeful that subscriptions will grow.

Conference delegates are invited to 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.

A Hints and Tips leaflet is in preparation which aims to provide information for SHARE LOs to facilitate orders and sales. We hope that this will become available soon.

We aim to appoint a new Assistant Editor soon to shadow and then take over as Editor from Amanda who rotates out in November. At the time of writing we are also advertising for two Editorial Readers to fill rotated roles in 2014.

My own Board role in caretaking for SHARE since our loss of Tom T will end when one of our new Trustees, with years of experience on the SHARE subcommittee, takes up the reins after Conference. I am grateful to the whole team for all their hard work and help.

Southern National Convention Update

((Del H & Tom B))

There were a couple of changes at last year’s convention, the first was the weather, brollies and hoodies could be seen all over the place, not all week-end, but some of it. The second were the number of people; I think it is most recorded at this venue since we first turned up 4 years ago.

I have been very fortunate to have been shadowed by Tom B in this area of service, and handed over to him at the wash up meeting in October, and I wish him well.

With more people attending (700 plus) it was also our most successful financially too, more collected on registration, literature, Share, Tradition 7, and we sold all the raffle tickets (again, but no I Pad this time).

There will be 2 main changes to this year's convention. The first of these is there will be NO pre-registration. The reasons for this are many, but basically it is a lot of hard work for the registrar for so little return. Of the 700+ that registered for the convention, only about 140 pre-registered (and not all of those managed to make it) – historically pre-registration was needed to generate funds so that the committee could cover up front funds to cover any pre convention costs, this is not the case now. With more funds being generated by larger attendances an adequate prudent reserve is kept by the treasurer that covers those.

The other major change is that a member of the committee will not meet you at the gate, as last year this role felt more like being a parking attendant. A member of the camp staff will cover this role. You will now be met at the registration area by a 'greeter' who will guide you to where you need go.

This year's convention will once again be held in Hayling Island 5th to 7th September with the Three Legacies 'Recovery, Unity, Service' being the theme. Hope to see some of you there.

Continued thanks goes to all committee personnel who work so tirelessly all year, then increase their commitment 100% over the weekend itself.

Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting Update

(Phil W)

How it all started

In 1998 when the South African Board of Alcoholics Anonymous had their annual general meeting two representatives from GSO New York and one from GSO Great Britain attended. Their purpose was to talk to the SA Board about opening up Africa so that a Service Meetings structure could be created in like those in USA/Canada, South America, Europe, Australia/New Zealand and Far East areas.

In the era of Apartheid no other African nations had been willing to engage with South Africa. With the free elections held in 1998 the time seemed right to start making approaches to other African countries in order to find out whether and where AA might exist.

It was decided to begin just with the Sub Saharan countries in which English was likely to be spoken (formerly British colonies). And so began the task of finding telephone numbers and addresses for likely institutions and the major churches in the relevant countries.

Slowly but surely it became possible to put together a list of which countries had AA, which had heard of us but didn't have contacts and which had never heard of us but wanted AA. In some places there were expatriates – usually from the USA – who were running English speaking groups for other expats. The aim, however, was to put together groups of local people, speaking the indigenous languages as well as English who would be around all the time and help each other to build what could eventually become a coherent service structure.

Eventually in 2003 the first SSASM Meeting was held in Johannesburg. The delegates were mostly poor and came from areas where there was no AA money to help them. One man walked 21 kms to the airport to get his plane to Johannesburg. Another had borrowed a fine white suit to wear to the meeting as he had no decent clothes of his own.

The meeting was funded in its entirety by AA New York/Canada and AA Great Britain. In one session of the meeting self-support was discussed and the delegates were encouraged to teach the concept of self-support throughout their areas. Reports were later received of groups using church

halls and paying their rent by painting these halls twice a year and keeping the church gardens neat and flourishing.

The plan was to try to get at least one dedicated AA telephone number in each country and so that people in need of help could make contact. A great deal of literature was donated by the two sponsoring countries for the delegates to take back with them.

During the mid noughties Monica P. was sponsored into taking over the administration and much of the work she did was, by necessity, a continuation of that started by Jean G. always trying to penetrate new areas there had been a suggestion that an embryonic AA community existed.

Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting: June 2013

Since previous meetings the reach of SSASM had extended and by this meeting twelve countries, each with two delegates, were represented and observers representing two others. Angus McG had taken over as Service Meeting Administrator/Convenor. Unfortunately Zimbabwe was unable to send delegates on this occasion – having attended previously.

Mary Clare from the International Desk from USA/Canada, Roger and I were there representing the GSOs/Boards of the sponsoring countries, to observe and give encouragement.

We started to gather slowly at first from Thursday 6th June, 2013 as delegates began arriving constantly over the next two days. By 6pm on Friday everyone was accounted for and the Meeting started at 8pm and the session closed towards midnight. The evening was spent with introductions of first term delegates, hellos to those returning for the second time and acceptance of the minutes of the last Meeting. This was followed by the highlight of the evening - four very erudite addresses from this year's chairperson Deena Moodliar, introducing the theme "*Rotation: The heartbeat of AA*" and followed by the three representatives of the sponsoring countries

- *Keynote address:* Roger
- *Literature; translation and licences:* MaryClare Lynch. Presented by International Desk U.S.A - Canada,
- *Snapshots from the AA.GB General Service Conference:* Yours truly

Saturday began bright and early with many attending an AA 'early bird meeting' at 6am. Agenda sessions got underway at 8am after a hearty breakfast. The morning was taken up by with reports from each country as to progress made and set-backs since the last meeting followed by a workshop on the meeting theme. It was evident from many of the reports that AA is very much in its infancy in several of the Sub Saharan nations with few meetings and members. I could not help reflecting on how fortunate we are to have a mature Fellowship structure at home and also how committed our African friends were to sustain their recovery by going to any lengths against the odds.

Mandy from GSO RSA and Corrie the National AA Literature chair set up an impressive literature display during the lunch break and delegates had the opportunity of sampling and buying AA literature and arranging future purchases. Obtaining literature for most African countries is a tedious and costly process, where funds are often minimal or even non-existent.

The afternoon was spent in workshops and reports-back on topics submitted by the delegates themselves moving into discussion and question and answer sessions. Here lessons and experience was shared in extending the hand of AA where it has not yet reached. At 6pm the day's agenda was concluded and tired delegates and sponsors were allowed to relax at a braai (barbecue). Much enthusiasm was evident with many new concepts and ideas for inter-nation cooperation and projects being discussed and starting to be planned.

Sunday once again began with the 'early bird meeting' and sessions commenced at 8am. Although there was an awareness and sadness that the meeting was coming to a close, there was a stronger feeling of excitement and hope throughout the assembly. The business of electing the next chairperson and other necessary items were dealt with speedily and the balance of the morning given over to observations and comments from delegates. The whole spirit of this session was that **AA in Sub Saharan Africa had come of age** around the premise of extending the reach of the mature Service Structure in South Africa with its GSO and General Service Board (AA has been in existence here since the 1960s) to encompass all the other emerging AA African nations represented. There was a unanimous hope and determination that the project could and would be implemented.

For Roger, Mary Clare and me it was a real privilege and very moving to witness a milestone moment in the history of AA in Sub Saharan Africa.

Fellowship Hospitality in South Africa

Roger and I were shown extraordinary hospitality by our AA hosts in Johannesburg which made the whole experience all the more memorable. We arrived at the Conference Centre on Thursday morning and at midday were invited to join Frank (a member of the GSB) and his wife Sue (Al Anon) for lunch. They made us feel very welcome and were keen that we should see something of the local Fellowship as well as local sights during the spare time at our disposal.

That evening another Board, Rajan, member called for us and drove us to a local Steps meeting which was formatted in two workshop style groups each discussing a Step. The members were very friendly and made us feel at home.

The following day our new found hosts chauffeured us to Pretoria with two other delegates where we enjoyed some local sights including the impressive Freedom Park built as a memorial and celebration of the history of South Africa.

Sunday afternoon was clear after the close of the Service Meeting and before our return flights to the UK that evening so we were invited with other delegates and local Board members to the home of Frank and Sue for a Braai (South African Barbecue) and more inspirational Fellowship!

Telephones Update

(Brian L)

1. The National number

The total number of answered calls to our national number in the calendar year 2013 was 59,547 down from 66,890 in 2012. Of these calls, 22,061 came from mobile phones compared to 22,450 in 2012.

The total call minutes in 2013 were 288,167 down from 338,550 in 2012. At this rate of decline we would expect to come close to our commitment level of 200,000 minutes per year by the end of 2014. However, BT have suspended the commitment requirement and we no longer need to be concerned about this.

The cost of our entry on the *Health & Helplines* page in the front of all editions of *The Phone Book* was increased yet again on 1st January 2014 from 509.29 to 611.14 per month (plus VAT). The Regions are considering if it is worthwhile continuing with this placement given that the number is available on all the 118 directories and on the website at no cost to us.

2. BT Business Plan

We have signed a new business plan with BT which works a little differently from previous plans.

- a. Basic business line rental charges are reduced from £18.00 to £13.00 per month
- b. Call charges for calls to landlines are charged at 1.6 pence per minute with calls rounded to the nearest whole second. The set-up fee is 2p and calls are capped at 5p. This means that short calls below the cap will go up slightly. (A 1 minute call will cost 2+1.6 = 3.6p instead of 2+1.4 = 3.4p). The cap will come in at 2min 9 secs and applies to calls up to 1 hour. Above one hour the per minute rate applies to the excess time. (A call lasting 1hour 10mins will cost 5p+ 10 * 1.6= 21p).
- c. Calls to mobiles will cost 5.9ppm with calls rounded to the nearest second (previously 6.0ppm) . There is a 5.9p set up fee and calls are capped at 20p. The cap will come in at 2min 23secs. Thus calls to mobiles below the cap will be cheaper than previously. Calls to a few mobile networks may not be capped.

The plan applies to GSO, NSO, SSO and all Fellowship telephone services. It is forecast to save the Fellowship over £3,000 per year on our previous expenditure.

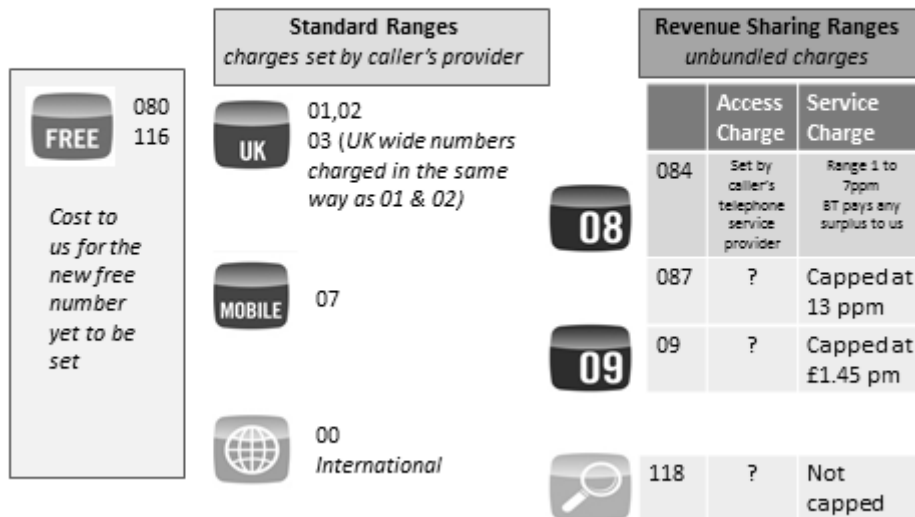
3. Ofcom changes

Ofcom have issued their final report on changes to be implemented on 26 June 2015.

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/simplifying-non-geo-no/final-statement>

The diagram below summarises the changes

Proposed Simplified Numbering



They plan to launch a new web site in March for users of non-geographic numbers which is intended to be a reliable source of information on the details of the new arrangements. At this stage we have to wait for the phone companies to publish their rates for the Access Charge to 084 numbers and for BT to provide details of their contract terms for 0845 and 0800 numbers. The 03 number range is not affected by the Ofcom changes.

The Ofcom timetable shows the phases in the implementation plan and is subject to change. Aspects that do not directly apply to us can affect the timetable if they are delayed

Ofcom Timetable		
Date	Description	Comment
26 January 2014	TCP notification of origination charges for free-to-caller	The wholesale price that will be paid to the caller's telecom (OCP) by the TCP (BT in our case). This can be challenged, in which case, an adjudication process takes place and this could cause a delay.
Early 2014	Ofcom content and resources available for communications	A working group of telecom marketing people will meet monthly to work out how best to communicate the changes to consumers
March 2014	NGCS website goes live	
11 th -13 th April 2014	Conference 2014	
June 2014	TCPs/SPs able to select SCs for existing services which reflect current levels of outpayments	Customers already receiving revenue share (0844, 087, 09, 0118) can move across smoothly
31 st August 2014	Questions for Conference 2015	
December 2014	OCP confirmation that billing systems will be ready for implementation	If problems remain then the implementation date will have to be postponed
Late 2014	Transition of non-geographic numbers to new number management system complete	The Number Management System is to do with allocating number blocks to telecoms
Six months before the implementation date	Launch of an Ofcom advertising campaign	If the implementation has to be delayed then the campaign will also be postponed.
April 2015	Conference 2015	
26 June 2015	Unbundled tariff and free-to-caller regime takes effect	
<p>Glossary: Free-to caller: A number that is reached at no charge to the caller and, if the call is made from a Payphone, without having to use coins or cards NGCS: A service that is provided through a non-geographic number OCP: Originating Communications Provider – the Communications Provider on whose network a call originates Price points: the set of prices that can be billed for the Service Charge (1 to 7ppm in 1p increments for the 084 range) SC: Service Charge – the charge levied by the Terminating Communications Provider for a non-geographic call under the unbundled tariff SP: Service Provider – a provider of voice or data services to third parties using non-geographic numbers TCP: Terminating Communications Provider – the Communications Provider on whose network a call terminates</p>		

The Telephone Sub-Committee will monitor throughout the implementation period and pass on information to the regions when it becomes available.

Welsh Assembly Presentation Update

(Judy F)

The theme of this year's event was 'Recovery for Life'. This was the fifth such presentation and the evening was, again, successful. There was an improvement in attendance on last year which was encouraging.

The Committee arrived an hour before the time we were due to begin in order to arrange the Literature, familiarise ourselves with the layout in the main atrium area of the Senedd building and prepare to welcome our guests. The literature was displayed attractively and caught much attention, possibly because it was placed strategically close to the buffet, which was well organised and appreciated by everyone.

John H. our Regional P.I. Officer welcomed everyone and introduced the evenings running order. The Minister, Mark Drakeford opened the event.

As the Trustee for Wales and Borders Region, I gave an overview of Alcoholics Anonymous. This was followed by our invited speakers.

Ashraf Kahn, non alcoholic Trustee, spoke from a clinician's perspective; a member, Jean McQ., shared her experience, strength and hope and Mark Gilman, Strategic recovery and lead for substance misuse in Public Health England, gave a presentation from a personal perspective of AA.

The evening was informative, entertaining and, most importantly, gave a balanced, yet glowing endorsement of the Fellowship. The presentations complimented each other.

Finally there was an open forum – time for questions and answers from our guests. Mike Hedges, Assembly Member and our host then closed the meeting.

Welsh National Convention Update

(Judy F)

The Welsh National Convention was once again held in June, 2013 at the Metrople Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, which is set in the beautiful 'heart of Wales'. The theme was 'A Vision for You'.

Although the numbers of people who attended was lower than last year for day visitors, more members had stayed for the weekend

There were some memorable speakers and the atmosphere was welcoming, and considered to be both lively and friendly. The 'feedback' from those who attended reflected this.

A power point presentation about the Telephone Service was given by myself during Saturday afternoon. I was supported by the Wales and Borders Regional Telephone Liaison Officer and two of our Responders, who shared their experiences within the Telephone Service in particular, in Wales. I was also able to provide a brief overview of the London Telephone Service. This was brief as the London service is office based. The presentation, however, provoked some interesting comments and questions.

Much effort was made to provide interesting raffle prizes and this effort proved very worthwhile.

Overall, it was felt that the weekend was successful.

We have some volunteers who are already taking an active part in helping to organise this event in 2014 and they will replace older committee members as they rotate from their positions.

Preparations for the Convention this year are underway. The format will be much the same as those held in previous years and, of course, will include a Welsh speaker platform; simultaneous translation will take place.

The Theme for 2014 is 'One Primary Purpose...'. Speakers have already been approached and entertainment arranged. Flyers have been distributed with the AA Service News and the

Committee undertook to post flyers to every Intergroup and Region within Great Britain. Some flyers have already been taken to Ireland too.

Northern Service Office Update

The Northern Service Office as a satellite office of GSO has continued this year in providing services for the Fellowship at Group, Intergroup and Regional level in making the best 12th Step work possible.

Our statistics show NSO handled 1813 calls over the last twelve month period and processed 1243 pieces of mail which included 250 group updates to the local database. Staff responded to enquiries from professionals in social work, health, education, media, criminal justice, police and alcohol services in the community, referring all relevant requests to the appropriate Group, Intergroup and Region Officers for follow up. Staff provided services to the Fellowship including updating Group, Intergroup and Regional records, monthly service updates for the relevant Board members and providing the most current meeting and event information to our members.

NSO assisted in the administration of the annual presentation at the Scottish Parliament. The event was well attended and received excellent feedback. Following the event there was requests received at NSO from the charity Shelter and regional Alcohol and Drug Partnerships asking to be signposted to the appropriate Intergroup and Region Officers in their local areas. This event has once again proved a useful way of getting the message across not only to members of Parliament but also to other professionals.

NSO continues with the administration and development of the Scottish Prison Postal Service (SPPS). This year has seen a slight increase in the number of inmate requests and letters processed. There has also been an increase in the number of volunteers from the Fellowship which has allowed every request received to have been met.

NSO provided administrative support for the annual Scottish Prison Liaison Officers Meeting and Workshop and the annual Roundabout Liaison Officers Workshop.

In absence of a Roundabout Editor, NSO with the support of the Roundabout Sub Committee has been responsible for the editing of the magazine.

NSO was again asked to be the first point of contact for media and professional enquiries during AA Awareness Month in November supporting our PI officers at local and regional level and passing on the requests received to the appropriate areas.

Regular communications with our General Service Office ensures consistency in our approach and delivery nationally. NSO remains committed to providing the required support and services to the Fellowship as effectively and efficiently as possible. Making the best 12th Step work possible is the focus of everything we do.

Southern Service Office Update

Oct-Dec 2013 :

Facilitating and supporting the week daytime London Telephone Service

- Total 12th Steps passed out 1482
- Maintaining daily statistics and producing a monthly printout and SSO Reports for the bi-monthly TLO Committee meeting
- Preparation and set up of all First Monday telephone service orientation sessions
- Setting up folders of information (again) for North West/Manchester telephone service
- New Health & Safety inclusions in all guidelines (Imogen)

- Mustering volunteers, answering queries, taking service related calls and media enquiries
- Providing two folders with lists of meetings ON/OFF from 21st Dec-3rd Jan.
- Meeting updates - temporary and permanent

Facilitating PI related work

- Assisted in finding a team of AA members to be interviewed by Dr. Elinor Hynes for a new guidebook for junior psychiatrists.
- Liaised with Phil P for the Young Persons Project meeting at SSO.
- Arranged for two appropriate AA members to speak to the staff of Duradiamond Healthcare and the Crossrail worksite force.
- Forwarded a request from Foundation 66 for AA to attend their open day on 18th December.
- Forwarded requests for various talks to East Intergroup PI and providing banner stands and appropriate literature (MIND, Tower Hamlets)
- Provided an appropriate statement and contact details to be included in Wandsworth Council's online information about alcohol and drug services over Christmas.
- Liaised with Judith W, ELO at LRN regarding AA information being included in information given out by case workers at Job Centres in London in February.
- Filmed as a staff member for Russian television.

Facilitating Service related work

- Attended by request the London Region North General Assembly to talk about what SSO offers.
- Liaised with all Intergroups to set up the AA / CRISIS at Christmas Briefing Meeting and supported the ten AA Intergroup Coordinators in the build up, liaising with CRISIS staff, preparing bags of Eastern European literature, signs, contact cards etc. for their stands in the centres (over 100 AA members involved)
- Kept calendar of SSO meeting space bookings for service related activities

Other

- Researched and interviewed a property company for our potential office move.
- Presenting ideas for an SSO webpage.

January 2014

Facilitating and supporting the week daytime London Telephone Service (see above for usual duties)

- 12th Steps passed out in January - 113
- Meeting updates - temporary and permanent
- Statistics
- Liaising with the Chair, Secretary and TLOs.

Facilitating PI related work

- Assisted and liaised with Joe H, (Board Member for PI) with AA's presence at the "Creating Recovery" event on 16th January 2013.
- Filmed as a staff member for an independent film team making an interactive documentary on binge drinking.
- Contacted Martyn Maggs of South East Wales Intergroup regarding a school talk enquiry from Sue Ball.
- Forwarded information and application form on Discover Recovery event in Islington to North West Intergroup Chairman.

Facilitating Service related work

- Set up and chaired AA / CRISIS De-Briefing meeting on 21st January.
- Assisting with a leaflet for the Intergroup AA Coordinator role for teams to go into CRISIS at Christmas Centres.

Other

- Maintained contact with Islington Council Planning Department throughout the Planning Appeal Inquiry (the Developers' appeal dismissed!)
- Gave guidance and information to members queries on Public Liability Insurance; the role of ECLO at Intergroup; Tradition 4 at Intergroup.
- Liaised with new LRN Officers and their Intergroup counterparts.

Open Forum

(Non Voting Session)

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

The evening ended at 10pm with Avi asking all to join him in saying the Serenity Prayer, following which the preliminary Committee Reports were distributed and the opportunity given for Regions to discuss these.

SUNDAY 13 APRIL

Avi welcomed everyone back to the final session of Conference, asked for a few moments silence to remember why we are here, to remember the still suffering alcoholic and gather thoughts before the morning session.

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

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

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

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

ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR CONFERENCE 2015

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and, after a vote, Nicki W (Eastern Region) was duly elected.

RATIFICATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

(Sheila D, Chair GSB)

My name is Sheila, I am an alcoholic and for the next ten minutes I remain Chair of the General Service Board.

We have some 'hellos' to make, we have some 'goodbyes' to make and I would just like to start by saying that this has been a fantastic Conference and thank you all for your hard work.

I would like to thank Avi very much indeed, what a journey, but you got there cool, calm and collected, efficient and firm – wonderful, thank you very much.

I was talking to a gentleman last night and he has been here – now I think this is my tenth Conference and we moved to the Park Inn a few years ago – at every one since and he sits in his cosy corner at the back and I don't think we have ever said thank you to you Keith so thank you very much for your hard work all weekend.

I would now like to introduce you to our new Trustees:

Helen S	Eastern Region who will be on the Share and Nominations Committees
James K	East of Scotland Region and he will be on Roundabout and shadowing Electronic Communications
Roger E	South West Region and he is going to be shadowing Prisons

We have a new Non-Alcoholic Trustee, who has had to leave early today:

Chris Daley who will be on the Employment Sub Committee

We have two new Trustees who are not with us, not because they are on holiday or didn't want to come, but because they have not been able to attend a Board meeting or been inducted as Trustees but they will be at the next Board meeting:

Charles R Glasgow Region

Sandy MacV Highlands & Islands Region

Jenie B of South Midlands Region has unfortunately been unable to take up her post due to personal reasons but we wish her well.

We now have to say goodbye to some people:

Winnie C Glasgow Region who is not with us this morning but she gave the Employment presentation yesterday. She has been on the Board for four years and, like everybody else, she has worked very hard and has become very enthusiastic about Employment so thank you, Winnie.

Del H Eastern Region. Del is a good friend and colleague and has worked hard with Prisons. Thank you.

Brian L South Midlands Region. Brian was involved in Telephones and has an awful lot of knowledge and I wish I had half the knowledge he has about Telephones and what is going on. Thank you.

Penny A Honorary Treasurer of the General Service Board. Penny came on to the Board at the same time as me and at present we are the longest serving members of the Board. She came in with Employment and then she followed me onto the Literature Committee and then, two years ago, she became Honorary Treasurer. We attended the Polish Conference together and we were walking one afternoon when she said to me, why don't you put your name down for Chair of the Board of Trustees and, when I looked behind me to see who she was speaking to, it was me! It went on from there and we have become very good friends, we work very well together and I do wish you well.

I would like to introduce you to your new Honorary Treasurer, Joe H, I know Joe well from North East Region and your money will be in very good hands I can assure you.

My last task is to introduce to you to the new Chair of the Board, Willie MacD. Willie started with the Conference Steering Committee, then Literature Committee and has been shadowing the Executive for the last twelve months. I know that the Board and General Service Office are in excellent hands.

I am sad to go and I will miss everybody but I am ready for a rest. I love this Fellowship and I always have and, as I said on Friday night, it has been an honour and privilege to serve and I wish you all the best for the future.

Close of Conference

(Avi M)

My name is Avi and I am an alcoholic. I opened Conference and shared a little in the Keynote and at the end of the Keynote I said:

“A great power brought me from a state of hopeless alcoholism and across the bridge to normal living. I have Faith that the same power will guide us with love and tolerance to do the work that has been entrusted to us”.

I thank that power that it did that for us over this weekend.

I am an incredibly grateful alcoholic. There are a huge amount of people to thank and I think we all know who they are, those in the room and those not in the room with us, those who are back home and those who have participated in this process in the groups and all the way through.

There are a few people I would like to thank specifically, the staff from the General Service Office have been awesome and I think it was two years ago that there was a presentation about the work that was done by GSO that was presented to Conference and it opened my eyes just to see how much hard work goes on there. To all of the staff that work with us in AA across all of the offices it is a truly heart-felt thanks and to all the support you have given me has been quite something else.

To last year’s Steering Committee, it was wonderful and I learnt more working with those people than I think that I have ever learnt and I was gifted by that.

To next year’s Steering Committee, thanks in advance for taking this on, there is a bit of fear but walk through it, this is going to be a wonderful experience for you and it is a great responsibility that has been entrusted to you by this Fellowship, to be Conference between Conference. I wish you well.

More than anything I would like to thank Conference, you have made this so, so easy for me and I want to thank you for that, as Sheila said there are a couple of tears on the edge, because I am going to miss Conference, but it is not tears of sadness, it is truly tears of gratitude, I have been taken on a journey, a wonderful journey, and that journey now needs to take me to some other things and I look forward to that. I will miss this because it has been absolutely inspiring and I thank you.

I believe we have concluded our business as Conference 2014 and we will now close Conference.

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

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE

The Fiftieth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the Park Inn, North Street, York on 17-19 April 2015.

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

COMMITTEE No. 1

CHAIR CAROLE P EASTERN REGION

SECRETARY JEROEN S CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION

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

1. Share experience and make recommendations on supplying certificates of attendance for professionals attending various AA presentations.

Although the Committee wished to respond positively to any request from professionals for certificates, we felt that this could contravene our Traditions. One Intergroup had direct experience of issuing certificates, with an apparent increase in attendance. Several other Intergroups and Regions had experience with acknowledging attendance by letter or e-mail, also with an apparent increase.

Our recommendation is to supply an unsigned e-mail or letter of acknowledgement of attendance on request, issued by the organising Intergroup or Region.

This recommendation was unanimous.

2. Can the Fellowship share experience and make recommendations on how we can respond positively to the recovery agenda and external initiatives in the professional community?

In order to respond positively to the recovery agenda and external initiatives, this committee shared experience and recommends that:

1. In our dealings with the professional community AA maintains its Traditions, integrity and autonomy
2. We continue to cooperate, but not affiliate, with the professional community, in order to carry our message to the still-suffering alcoholic
3. The General Service Board (GSB) Health Sub-Committee produces a set of slides for presentations to the professional community
4. GSB Health Sub-Committee ensures that existing literature and information is available to outside agencies about what AA does and does not do
5. GSB Health Sub-Committee ensures there is sufficient supporting literature for groups to respond to possible increases in the number of newcomers
6. At Region and Intergroup level PI, Health, Employment and other liaison officers work together to raise awareness of AA in the professional community
7. At group level consideration be given to inviting liaison officers to share their experience, strength and hope in relation to the service they do within AA.

The decision was unanimous.

3. Review revised Chapter Three (Electronic Communications), AA Service Handbook for Great Britain and page 114 (AA (GB) Website), AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain.

Accept both the revised texts with one change to paragraph 3.7 in chapter 3, namely that “program” should be spelled “programme”.

This decision was unanimous.

4. Elect Committee Chair for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Jeroen S of Continental European Region as Chair of Committee No. 1 for Conference 2015.

5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Stephen M of London Region South as Secretary of Committee No. 1 for Conference 2015.

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

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

COMMITTEE No. 2

CHAIR DAVE S EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION

SECRETARY CRAIG F LONDON REGION SOUTH

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

1. Inventory Question

Does the existing service structure ensure Conference answers are implemented effectively? Specifically:

- **Are delegates and Regions doing enough to raise awareness in Regions and encourage action at intergroup level?**
- **Is GSB implementing the recommendations from Conference?**
- **Whilst great attention and effort is given in the Conference structure and organization to bring forward questions each year, could equal or greater exertion be made to ensure that the experience of the Fellowship, as expressed in Conference Answers, is communicated to and can be implemented by its members at all levels?**

Whilst plenty is being done by delegates and regions already this Committee suggests that more can always be done to encourage action at Intergroup level.

- a. This Committee recommends the leaflet 'The Role and Function of Conference' be distributed with AA Service News. This Committee finds the inverted triangle of the service structure an ideal tool in explaining the roles of the Groups in the Conference process (page six of the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain).
- b. General Service Board implements all the recommendations from Conference in a reasonable time frame. This process is monitored by the Conference Steering Committee.
- c. This Committee accepts that those already dedicated to service make great effort to communicate the experience of the Fellowship as expressed in Conference answers, to members at all levels.

Conference questions and answers are available in AA Service News and on the AA website.

This Committee recommends:-

- i) That Regions and Intergroups have Conference questions and answers as a standard agenda item.
- ii) To support Group Service Representative and Region Representatives, Regions and Intergroups may wish to consider workshops with the assistance of Conference Delegates.

Vote: Unanimous

- 2. Would the Fellowship share experience and make recommendations on how to make AA more accessible to parents of small children? Specifically with regard to groups paying for childcare and/or crèche facilities at meetings, conventions and conferences either directly from Tradition 7 funds or otherwise.**

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

Bearing this in mind no group should take any action that could bring the name of AA into disrepute by failing to observe the laws and regulations regarding childcare.

People who have difficulty in attending meetings may find online meetings enable them to stay in touch with the Fellowship and the programme of recovery. AA literature is also available from the AA website.

This Committee does not recommend the use of AA funds for the provision of childcare or crèche facilities for meetings, conventions or conferences.

Vote: 17 yes
1 No

- 3. Elect Committee Chair for Conference 2015.**

The Committee elected Craig F of London Region South as Chair of Committee No. 2 for Conference 2015.

- 4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2015.**

The Committee elected Clive K of Eastern Region as Secretary of Committee No. 2 for Conference 2015.

All recommendations on Committee No. 2 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

COMMITTEE No. 3

CHAIR	LIZ W	NORTH EAST REGION
SECRETARY	DIANE F	NORTH WEST REGION

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

- 1. Would the Fellowship discuss if the needs of agnostic and atheist members are adequately provided for throughout AA's literature?**

This Committee agreed that, yes, the needs of agnostic and atheist members are adequately provided for throughout AA's literature.

However, the Committee recommends, based on the view from the Fellowship, that relevant existing Conference approved literature be summarised in a pamphlet.

Vote: Passed with majority (14 for, 3 against, 1 abstention)

Minority View Recorded: The first sentence is a sufficient response.

- 2. Would Conference consider and suggest how groups may become more involved in the Conference process as an on-going activity, and how delegates may become more involved with groups and Intergroups on a regular basis?**

This Committee felt that the structure and process already exist; the key is to instil motivation, enthusiasm and action at all levels of service.

This Committee suggests that AA members familiarise themselves with the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain, as this covers the roles and responsibilities of the Group, Intergroup, Region and delegate in the Conference process.

Vote: Unanimous.

- 3. Elect Committee Chair for Conference 2015.**

The Committee elected Jim G of London Region North as Chair of Committee No. 3 for Conference 2015.

- 4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2015.**

The Committee elected Amanda S of London Region South as Secretary of Committee No. 3 for Conference 2015.

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

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

COMMITTEE No. 4

CHAIR JOHN B NORTH EAST REGION

SECRETARY DAN F CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION

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

1. Would Conference consider ways in which the Fellowship could reduce costs and waste in mailing publications and information to Regions, Intergroups, Groups and Officers?

The Committee feels that all possible measures are being taken to keep costs to a minimum.

In order to avoid wastage and ensure that mail reaches Regions, Intergroups, Groups and Officers, the Fellowship is encouraged to use the Group Registration/Amendment Form (pink form) so that their details are updated with the General Service Office as changes occur.

The Committee recognises the ever-growing trend towards the use of electronic communications, but feels that at present this does not meet all our needs.

Voting: Unanimous

2. Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on the best way to carry the message to the homeless (rough sleeper) alcoholic?

The Committee shared experience of the work that is currently being done throughout the Fellowship with regards to the homeless/rough sleeper alcoholic.

In support of our primary purpose, the Committee feels that the Fellowship would benefit from cultivating and strengthening links with professional and voluntary organisations that are in direct contact with homeless/rough sleeper alcoholics.

Voting: Unanimous

3. Elect Committee Chair for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Terry A of London Region South as Chair of Committee No. 4 for Conference 2015.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Ross N of Scotia Region as Secretary of Committee No. 4 for Conference 2015.

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

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

COMMITTEE No. 5

CHAIR NICKI W EASTERN REGION

SECRETARY DAVID B SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

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

1. Would Conference share experience and consider the importance of employment liaison work in Alcoholics Anonymous, and whether a new approach is required?

Having shared experience and agreed on the importance of ongoing service work in Employment Liaison, Committee 5 considers that there is already a new approach in place following the convening of the first ever General Service Board Employment Sub-Committee in September 2013. The Primary functions and Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee were published in *AA Service News*, Winter 2013 edition (p 17).
<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Document-Library#>

We agreed that Employment Liaison service depends on active participation of the Fellowship at Group, Intergroup and Region.

Vote Unanimous

2. Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on how we attract new members to "Alcoholics Anonymous" with regard to Tradition 11, since a lack of promotion might suggest that we prefer the alternative title of "Alcoholics Invisible"?

This question was rejected by the Committee on the following grounds:

- i) The Question was not significantly different from Q1, answered by Committee 1 at Conference 2012.
- ii) The Question was ambiguous and the background information did not provide clarification.
- iii) This Question contains an opinion that appeared demeaning to the current service that is being carried out throughout the Fellowship.

This Committee is grateful to the Fellowship for the feedback received.

Vote: 15 For
3 Against
1 Abstention

Minority View Recorded: This Committee was remiss in the process it adopted to the question.

3. Elect Committee Chair for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Jim F of Scotia Region as Chair of Committee No. 5 for Conference 2015.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Jenny D of Wales & Borders Region as Secretary of Committee No. 5 for Conference 2015.

Question No. 1 on Committee No. 5 was passed with a two-thirds plus majority and Question No. 2 was not accepted by Conference by a majority vote.

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

COMMITTEE No. 6

CHAIR NICK B SOUTH EAST REGION

SECRETARY ANDREW H NORTH EAST REGION

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

- 1. Share experience and make recommendations on how AA's message can be carried effectively to the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) community. Could more be done to attract LGBTQ members?**

Although not part of the response to the original question we understand that the word "Queer" has caused controversy and offence within our Fellowship; however the term was in the original question. To avoid further controversy and offence we will not be using it in our submission, from here on referring only to LGBT.

Having shared experience on how we attract members, we are mindful of our Traditions especially:

Tradition 1 – Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity

Tradition 3 – The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking

Tradition 5 – Each group has but one Primary Purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers

We need to continue to be fully inclusive of all Special Interest Groups.

In particular when carrying the message to the LGBT community the feedback from the Fellowship suggested and this Committee recommends the following:

- Encourage more members from the LGBT community into service
- Ask the Literature Sub Committee to review the leaflet "A.A. and the Gay/ Lesbian Alcoholic" seeking advice from LGBT members within the Fellowship
- Public Information initiatives to continue to build links and to expand our co-operation with relevant bodies such as, but not limited to, Pride, Terrence Higgins Trust, Stonewall and 12th Step Facilitation organisations

Unanimous

- 2. Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on the question of how AA can best carry the message to alcoholics with psychological disorders both inside and outside of the Fellowship?**

Having shared experience on how we best carry the message to alcoholics with psychological disorders both inside and outside the Fellowship, members fed back the following to emphasise our singleness of purpose:

Tradition 1 – Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity

Tradition 3 – The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking

Tradition 5 – Each group has but one Primary Purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers

It was further acknowledged that our literature already addresses these issues e.g.

The Big Book “Alcoholics Anonymous” (Fourth Edition) states:

- a. Page 58 “There are those too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.”
- b. Page 133 “God has abundantly supplied this world with fine doctors, psychologists and practitioners of various kinds. Do not hesitate to take your health problems to such persons.”

The Committee recommends the following when carrying the message *inside* the Fellowship:

- a. We should bear in mind that alcoholics may suffer from more than one illness
- b. We are not doctors; we neither endorse nor oppose any course of treatment for those with psychological disorders, nor should we offer medical advice
- c. In order to protect the vulnerable, refer to The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain 2013 –The Group, Chapter 5 - Violence and Personal Conduct
- d. The General Service Board to increase awareness of the important work that the Non Alcoholic Trustees carry out in this field

Recognising that there is a need for the message to be carried to a broad cross section of society, the Committee recommends the following when doing so *outside* the Fellowship:

- a. There is a range of support agencies which provides help for people with psychological disorders
- b. Health Liaison work to be extended and expanded to the healthcare professionals dealing with patients with psychological disorders
- c. Reference should be made to Chapter 6 AA Service Handbook 2013 “AA and Healthcare in the Community.” This principle can be used for other disciplines throughout the service structure
- d. The Role of the Non Alcoholic Trustees specialising in this field to be encouraged in carrying the message to all professionals

Unanimous

3. Elect Committee Chair for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Andrew H of North East Region as Chair of Committee No. 6 for Conference 2015.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2015.

The Committee elected Rob D of South West Region as Secretary of Committee No. 6 for Conference 2015.

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

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2014

LIST OF DELEGATES

CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN: **AVI M** (London Region North)

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

			COMMITTEE NUMBER	TERM OF SERVICE
Sheila	D			
Penny	A		4	
David	A		4	
Tom	B		5	
Winnie	C		5	
Clive	D		1	
Roger	E	(Elect)	2	
Judy	F		2	
Del	H		4	
Joe	H		5	
Carol	H		3	
Geoff	H		1	
Wullie	I		3	
James	K	(Elect)	6	
Brian	L		6	
Willie	MacD		2	
Robert	M		5	
Helen	S	(Elect)	3	
Tom	S		6	
Phil	W		1	
Jonathan Chick			1	
Chris Daly		(Elect)	1	
Ash Kahn			6	
Paul Myles			3	

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Roger B General Secretary
Sharon Smyth
Chris North
Angela Varley
Karen Martin
Jenny Pryke

SHARE

Amanda	B	5	2
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ROUNDAABOUT

Flora	M	4	1
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		COMMITTEE NUMBER	TERM OF SERVICE
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EASTERN REGION

Carol	P	1	3
Clive	K	2	1
Charles	I	3	3
Gail	S	4	2
Nicki	W	5	3
Andy	D	6	1

LONDON REGION NORTH

Fred	C	1	1
Mike K	K	2	2
Jim	G	3	2
Mike	P	4	1
Judith	W	5	2
Gregory	M	6	3

LONDON REGION SOUTH

Stephen	M	1	1
Craig	F	2	2
Amanda	S	3	1
Terry	A	4	2
Ranjan	B	5	1
Brian	A	6	A

MIDLANDS REGION

Michael	G	1	2
Caroline	G	2	1
Paul	S	3	A
Jack	B	4	3
Barbara	O	5	2
Judi	H	6	1

NORTH EAST REGION

Graham	S	1	1
Carol	P	2	1
Liz	W	3	3
John	B	4	3
Darren	B	5	2
Andrew	H	6	2

**COMMITTEE
NUMBER**

**TERM OF
SERVICE**

NORTH WEST REGION

Mick	D	1	2
Mark	S	2	1
Diane	F	3	2
Douglas	F	4	2
Mark	B	5	1
Maxine	J	6	3

SOUTH EAST REGION

Carol	W	1	2
Eddie	C	2	1
Guy	D	3	1
Frank	L	4	1
Sue	M	5	3
Nick	B	6	3

SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

Mark	Mac	1	2
Peter	B	2	1
Tony	R	3	1
Tim	W	4	1
Dave	B	5	2
Lindsay	K	6	1

SOUTH WEST REGION

Lisa	D	1	1
Pauline	M	2	3
Gloria	P-B	3	2
Mike	S	4	1
Adam	D	5	3
Rob	D	6	1

WALES & BORDERS REGION

Hywel	P	1	A
Dee	L	2	2
Kelvyn	J	3	3
Keith	D	4	3
Jenny	D	5	A
Martyn	M	6	1

**COMMITTEE
NUMBER****TERM OF
SERVICE****EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION**

Colin	M	1	3
Dave	S	2	3
Ian	D	3	1
Tommy	M	4	3
John	McG	5	1
Helen	L	6	3

GLASGOW REGION

John	Mac	1	1
Franky	F	2	1
John	D	3	3
Sandra	A	4	2
Frank	B	5	1
Stevie	McC	6	A

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION

Marco	P	1	1
James	C	2	1
		3	
Russ	C	4	1
Donald	MacE	5	3
Val	McK	6	3

SCOTIA REGION

Davie	D	1	3
John	D	2	2
Margaret	R	3	3
Ross	N	4	1
Jim	F	5	2
Bruce	B	6	1

SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND REGION

Isobel	G	1	2
Tony	D	2	2
Alistair	D	3	1
Richard	G	4	1
Richard	L	5	3
Tom	H	6	2

**COMMITTEE
NUMBER**

**TERM OF
SERVICE**

CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION

Jeroen	S	1	2
Nigel	P	2	1
Rosalind	S-G	3	1
Dan	F	4	2
Patrick	L	5	2
Joe	F	6	A

OBSERVERS

Lotte	R	(Austria – German Speaking)	3	1
Tom	H	(Belgium – Dutch Speaking)	6	2
Lea	J	(Czech Republic)	2	1
Ole	K	(Denmark)	4	1
Wlodek	N	(Poland)	4	1
Paulo	A	(Portugal)	1	1
Tila	A	(Portugal)	3	1
Mircea	F	(Romania)	5	1
Martin	V	(Slovakia)	2	1
Jovanka	K	(Slovenia)	6	1

Glossary of Abbreviations used in this report

<i>AA</i>	-	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i>
<i>AAA</i>	-	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness</i>
<i>AASN</i>	-	<i>AA Service News</i>
<i>AAWS</i>	-	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous World Services</i>
<i>ASL</i>	-	<i>American Sign Language</i>
<i>ASLO</i>	-	<i>Armed Services Liaison Officer</i>
<i>BSL</i>	-	<i>British Sign Language</i>
<i>CER</i>	-	<i>Continental European Region</i>
<i>CMS</i>	-	<i>Content Management System</i>
<i>CSC</i>	-	<i>Conference Steering Committee</i>
<i>DAAT</i>	-	<i>Drug and Alcohol Teams</i>
<i>ECLO</i>	-	<i>Electronic Communication Liaison Officer</i>
<i>ECSC</i>	-	<i>Electronic Communication Sub Committee</i>
<i>ELO</i>	-	<i>Employment Liaison Officer</i>
<i>ESM</i>	-	<i>European Service Meeting</i>
<i>GSB</i>	-	<i>General Service Board</i>
<i>GSO</i>	-	<i>General Service Office</i>
<i>GSR</i>	-	<i>Group Service Representative</i>
<i>HLO</i>	-	<i>Health Liaison Officer</i>
<i>HSC</i>	-	<i>Health Sub Committee</i>
<i>MOJ</i>	-	<i>Ministry of Justice</i>
<i>NAT</i>	-	<i>Non-Alcoholic Trustee</i>
<i>NHS</i>	-	<i>National Health Service</i>
<i>NICE</i>	-	<i>National Institute for Clinical Excellence</i>
<i>NNC</i>	-	<i>Northern National Convention</i>
<i>NOMS</i>	-	<i>National Offender Management Service</i>
<i>NSO</i>	-	<i>Northern Service Office</i>
<i>NTA</i>	-	<i>National Treatment Agency</i>
<i>ORS</i>	-	<i>Online Response Service</i>
<i>PI</i>	-	<i>Public Information</i>
<i>PLO</i>	-	<i>Prison Liaison Officer</i>
<i>PPS</i>	-	<i>Prison Postal Service</i>
<i>PR</i>	-	<i>Public Relations</i>
<i>P/SS</i>	-	<i>Probation/Social Services</i>
<i>RECLLO</i>	-	<i>Regional Electronic Communication Liaison Officer</i>
<i>RELO</i>	-	<i>Regional Employment Liaison Officer</i>
<i>RTLO</i>	-	<i>Regional Telephone Liaison Officer</i>
<i>SPPS</i>	-	<i>Scottish Prison Postal Service</i>
<i>SPS</i>	-	<i>Scottish Prison Service</i>
<i>SSAFA</i>	-	<i>Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association</i>
<i>SSASM</i>	-	<i>Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting</i>
<i>SSO</i>	-	<i>Southern Service Office</i>
<i>TLO</i>	-	<i>Telephone Liaison Officer</i>
<i>TOR</i>	-	<i>Terms of Reference</i>
<i>YPLO</i>	-	<i>Young Peoples Liaison Officer</i>
<i>YPP</i>	-	<i>Young People Project</i>

The Twelve Traditions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

