

Interlink

The newsletter for Southdown intergroup

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our Intergroup
Committee**

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on the convention**

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Editor's Message

Greetings to the Southdown fellowship,

It's been a busy quarter for many in the Southdowns fellowship - from those new members who have stepped up to become part of the LOC (Liaison Officers Committee) to those that joined the fun at the recent Portsmouth Convention "Happy, Joyous and Free".

Thanks to Matt, Convenor for this year's Convention, for sharing his experience of the day - and everything that went into making it happen - with us. For any would be event managers or enthusiastic planners, hear why this might be the perfect bit of service for you.

In the Q&A seat this month, we've decided to reprint Secretary Colin's Q&A from the May issue with a few additional insights, in the hope it might inspire someone into the role. I think we all agree Colin has done a fantastic job in his three years, but it is time for someone to step up and let him take a well-deserved break.

On that note, we hear from our outgoing Chair Matt for the last time and look forward to hearing from our new Chair, Ellie in the next issue of Interlink. A big thanks to Matt and Colin for their service!

The Liaison Committee has been busy in the past few months. Read on to hear what the individual members have been up to - from ongoing success in the health team to Angie's plea for more support on the Isle of Wight to Nick's gentle nudge for GSRs to start filling out those pink forms with more regularity.

Thank you all for keeping me sober today.

Yours in fellowship,

Lucy S, Interlink Editor
interlink.southdown@aamail.org



OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

So this is my final report as Chair. The time has flown by! Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who has supported me and the committee in the last three years, it is greatly appreciated. I have very much enjoyed this service position and, as with all roles at Intergroup level, it has been greatly rewarding and greatly contributed to my growth in that period.

We haven't always got everything right, however we have tried to operate in line with our wonderful fellowships traditions which are so important.

I would also like to wish Ellie my successor good luck in taking on the role. I am confident that the Intergroup is in safe hands as we transition. As we are still seeking a Secretary, I urge anyone who could take on this role to step forward as it is vital that we find someone very soon.

Lastly I attended the second half of the Portsmouth Convention and what a fantastic event it was! Thanks to Matt, Dani and the team for working so hard on the event - you did amazingly well!

I look forward to seeing you in November at the Intergroup assembly!

Yours in Fellowship

Matt, Chair Southdown Intergroup

chair.southdown@aamail.org

***"I am confident
that the
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is in safe hands as
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Q&A WITH COLIN

What is your role and how long have you been in it?

I am just about to rotate out of the Secretary for the Southdown Intergroup and have held the position since November 2020, although I took over a little earlier. I put my hand up at a previous assembly to cover as an interim and then ended up staying for the full three-year term. I am privileged to be a Trusted servant on the Intergroup Committee and one of the main points of contact for groups, GSRs and Liaison Officers in our area.

My role has many elements to it including preparing various meeting and Assembly agendas, making and publishing minutes from those meetings, communicating key matters with fellow members and assisting all members with any queries or signposting them to the right person in the fellowship. I am also responsible for keeping mailing lists up to date and engaging with GSO to maintain records accurately.

I will be rotating out of the position from the November 2023 Assembly which is the right thing to do for the intergroup so as to bring in new energy and different perspectives. It will also allow me to try something else in the wide range of AA service opportunities. Whilst there is currently no replacement for me, I know that there is someone in our fellowship that can and will step up and continue taking the intergroup forward in a good orderly direction. If someone is out there thinking about stepping up, don't delay and do what I did and put your hand up - you will learn so much and certainly grow in your sobriety. I'd like to think I have made a little difference in my time in this role.



MEETING ANNIVERSARIES

A member of our fellowship recently obtained the start date of her home group, which turned out to be June 1968. As Nick, our faithful Archives officer holds this information for most of the groups in Southdown, we'd like to introduce a new feature - highlighting Southdowns meeting anniversaries each Interlink!

Moria, part of the Liaison Committee is even going to encourage her homegroup to have a party to celebrate turning 55 and has created a few tips below to help fellows get inspired to start marking those big AA birthdays individual or group...

- 1. Celebrate sobriety anniversaries of your friends/sponsor/sponsee**
- 2. Celebrate meeting members birthdays with acknowledgments other than chips**
- 3. Celebrate your home group's anniversary (the date it held it's first ever meeting) with a post-meeting get together or party**

To share your meeting anniversary stories including the big birthday number and any specific party activities, from cake to sparklers, to interlink.southdown@aamail.org



Q&A WITH COLIN (cont.)

What are the highlights of doing this role?

The role is very rewarding for many different reasons. It's always rewarding to help others and play a small part in getting the message out there as wide as possible. There are many highlights for me, like hearing a GSR at a local meeting disseminating the messages and communications I have issued to new and old members to help them in their recovery.

It seems a long time ago now but when I took on the role, we were in the Covid pandemic and lockdowns, and I know at that time it was a challenge for all of us to keep meetings running and members connected. I look back now and I absolutely feel like I played a key role in keeping members connected during this difficult time in AA's history. I believe we were willing to go to any lengths to help one another and that shone through then. I certainly feel like I adapted and there was no greater

reward than being in the thick of it and assisting members to connect.

The reward was keeping the fellowship open with the steady stream of information and helping groups get back into the rooms, whether that being in person or online. If members have stayed sober because I got a message out at the right time, then there would be no greater highlight.

What impact do you feel this role has had on your recovery?

I've certainly grown in my recovery in the past three years in this role. I tend to be all in with almost everything I do, and I know I can be a little impatient, but this role has definitely taught me to 'accept the things I cannot change and the courage to change the things I can'.



Liaison Officer's Reports

Health

At St Mary's Isle Of Wight there is a meeting each week with up to five patients attend and sometimes staff. Our fellows in service have also visited the patients that haven't been able to attend the meeting.

I have continued to get volunteers for QA Hospital in Portsmouth and will be looking for volunteers from meetings I don't usually attend so that everyone in the Southdowns area can have a chance to do service if they wish to. Everyone in the meetings I regularly attend and others have done it, with reserves in place, so I'll move around!

Again, this is a good service for fellows who don't want a long-term service commitment, only two Thursdays in a row. We often don't get patients come down to talk, but it leaves the two members to have their own mini meeting. The nurses make sure all the patients have the opportunity to come and talk to us, they take them to the room if they aren't well enough or confident enough, but often it's a no show. These patients are often in the denial still and ashamed and can't wait to get out of QA, I am talking from experience myself as well. So I like to ensure members not to be disappointed if nobody shows, just put yourself in their position. You get to meet another member of the fellowship you may not have known.

Moira and I off to a couple of health networking meetings, where hopefully we'll get contacts and be able to pass our message on a wider scale.



Nicky, part of the Liaison Officer Committee

Prisons

The meetings in the prison are held once a month and alternate between Albany and Parkhurst. Since the first meeting in April of this year only two members have been keeping these going. Colin sent out an email urging members to come forward for this service, since then I have had two members from Portsmouth who I have put forward for clearance. If anyone is interested in doing this service and have clearance at any prison or hasn't got clearance but is willing to help, please do get in contact. Members should have at least two years sobriety and have a sponsor. Arrangements can be made to pick up members from Cowes or Ryde for transport to and from the prison.

The meetings are covered for October and November but 26th December may be cancelled as one member is away for the holidays and I will make enquiries to see if the prison want a different day for that month.

As part of the LOC I also accompanied Nicky on a Health Liaison Officer Zoom workshop. I found it very informative and picked up a few suggestions that I maybe able to implement here on the Isle of Wight.

Angie K, part of the Liaison Officer Committee



Liaison Officer's Reports

"We have taken 941 calls in quarter 3 with over 26% of those resulting in 12 step intervention"

Telephones

Marianne and I would like to thank each and every one of our Telephone Responders for their continued service. In quarter 3 we have taken on some new permanent responders and also some reserve responders. We have taken 941 calls in quarter 3 with over 26% of those resulting in 12 step intervention. 50% of the total calls are from out of our Intergroup area but as always these type of call are important to get the caller connected with someone in the fellowship who can potentially help. We are always looking for people to be added as reserve responders and if anyone is interested please contact Marianne or myself



Marianne + Ed, Telephone Liaison Officers
telephones.southdown@aamail.org

Q&A WITH COLIN (cont.)

The role has undoubtedly given me a wider perspective on 'how it works' and helped me to understand and embrace the mechanics of AA as a whole. I have certainly developed a much greater understanding of the traditions and aims and structures which in my view can only ever be a good thing to help me in my journey.

I have also met so many members that I may not have known had I not been in this service position. My network has grown significantly which I know all too well will help me in the future.

It's a little sad for me not being able to finish off everything we started together as an Intergroup Committee, but I have learned to accept that I am definitely not in charge.

Some fresh input is absolutely the right way forward for

our intergroup and its members and I would love to see a new motivated member take the role and reap the recovery rewards as I have.

To find out more about the role or to apply email:
secretary.southdown@aamail.org

Liaison Officer's Reports

Archives

A survey at the end of August 2023 highlighted that there were currently 4481 face to face groups in AA GB, excluding Continental Europe Region. The accuracy of Group Information held depends upon the Fellowships' ability of Groups to register and change their information with GSO. As of September this year 50% of all Groups had not sent a pink form to them during the past two years. To improve the situation, all Groups who have not sent in a pink form during the last 12 months, are asked to do so.

Pink Forms and their completion instructions can be found on the AA GB website at the following address [alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/aa-meetings/submit-your-meeting-information-\(pink-form\)](https://alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/aa-meetings/submit-your-meeting-information-(pink-form)) Please send a copy to the Southdown Intergroup Secretary. Having up to date information at GSO will improve communications and the Fellowships' ability to undertake it's primary purpose - to pass the message.

Nick, Archives Liaison Officer
archives.southdown@aamail.org



12th Step

The National Telephone Steering Committee are continuing the review of the structure of the Telephone Service (as requested by Conference in 2021).

The Regional SC has issued a draft document on 12 Steppers Safeguarding Guidelines. This includes updates on GDPR and DSAR.

While that is yet to be approved, please remember:

- 1) That if you call back a still suffering alcoholic while on telephone duty or as a 12 stepper, you withhold your own number from the caller.
- 2) That if you are going on a 12 Step call to a public place that there are two volunteers present.

The trial of Google Forms by Southdown Intergroup has been of interest to other Intergroups where there is training taking place with discussion on the benefit of using this new tool.

For registration or edit of details on the 12 Step Volunteer list please go to: www.tinyurl.com/southdown12steplist

Paul H, 12th Step Liaison Officer
12step.southdown@aamail.org



interlink spotlight



MATT SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE OF THE PORTSMOUTH CONVENTION

I loved doing the convention as Covena this and last year. It's such a great bit of service. Not only does it keep me connected to the fellowship, it also enabled me to go to different meetings out of town that I'd not been to before. I feel very safe in the regular meetings I go to so it was just so lovely to be taken outside of my comfort zone a little bit. I also enjoyed coordinating everything. I'm a little bit of a control freak so for me something like this is a dream!

I used to do telephone service for London a couple of years back when we were in and coming out of the pandemic. The way that the telephone service for London works is that on your shift, there might be four of you because obviously it's quite busy. So you would all sit on a Zoom call so you can chat to each other and support each other. Our team leader had 35+ years sobriety and we became really close even when I stopped doing the service. I ended up asking him to come and do one of the shares. As I'd never physically met him before, it was just so nice to get to see him in person and meet his wife.

One of the main highlights is the sobriety countdown. It's my favorite part of the convention. I love, I love being proven that this Program works. I love the fact that we had someone with 45 years sobriety and someone with 24 hours. I find that one of the most powerful things to see people stand up and be recognized for staying sober one day at a time. So really my favorite part of the convention is the part that keeps me sober. As well as the pressure of the convention probably helped keep me sober a little bit too!

We had 149 people, so it was a really good turnout. Everyone had a smile on their face. You would never have known we all had the sort of stories that we had. For anyone just walking past and hearing everyone laughing and just enjoying themselves, you would never guess that that was an AA convention. But people on the outside don't realise, that's what fellowship is all about.

Yours in fellowship,
Matt

“ I love the fact that we had someone with 45 years sobriety and someone with 24 hours ”

