

Interlink

The newsletter for Southdown intergroup

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**More news from
our Intergroup
Committee**

**We hear from
Natalie on
inclusivity**

**Moira takes the
Q&A hot seat**

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inbox every quarter!*

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Editor's Message

Greetings to the Southdown fellowship,

It was a last minute dash to put this edition together, so a big thank you to everyone who sprung into action and made it happen.

Thanks to Natalie for delivering a simple but heartfelt piece on what being "all-inclusive" means to her, and how each group can make a difference by ensuring all fellows feel welcome. I've included a quote from p.46 of the Big Book alongside, which I hope Natalie agrees helps to compliment the message.

Moira has stepped into the Q&A seat this month, to dish the dirt on being a busy member of the Liaison Committee. It's a great read for anyone interested in joining the committee, I know they are looking for extra support!

The Liaison Committee has been busy in the past few months. Read on to hear what the individual members have been up to - from HLO Nicky's ongoing success at QA to Paul's 12-step stats that show that we are successfully helping those still suffering to the efforts of Marianne and Ed, our joint Telephone Liaison Officers and Kelly in Armed Forces.

Finally, a gentle reminder that we have plenty of service positions either currently open or recruiting for fast approaching end of tenures - from Southdown Chair to Archives. So do read on and find out more so we can keep our beautiful fellowship running to the best of its ability!

Thank you all for keeping me sober today.

Yours in fellowship,

Lucy S, Interlink Editor

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OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

It is almost three years since I took on the Southdown Intergroup Chair service position and this is my penultimate Chair's report!

Since getting sober, time has definitely flown by, and my time in this service position is no exception for me!

I have found all my service in the fellowship extremely valuable, rewarding and vital to my recovery. I would definitely encourage members to serve on the committee and sincerely hope members of the fellowship will soon step forward to take over.

We hope to see a healthy attendance at this month's assembly, as there are some important discussions that will take place around online groups and the size of our intergroup as a whole.

I look forward to seeing you on the 16th!

Yours in Fellowship

Matt, Chair Southdown Intergroup

chair.southdown@aamail.org

"there are some important discussions that will take place around online groups and the size of our Intergroup as a whole"

Q&A WITH MOIRA

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

I am member of the Liaison Committee created last year to help keep unfilled service positions active. Since then, I have been involved with public information, probation and Share Magazine; as well as assisting with prisons and health.

What is the highlight of doing this roles?

Attending the seminar at General Service Office covering prisons, probation and Criminal Justice Services has been extremely interesting. So far I've learned a lot and I met great members of the fellowship who are also involved in service.

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

Service has impacted immensely on my recovery. Since my first month in sobriety, which was July 1994, I have been in service one way or another. First at my home group, then at Intergroup and also at SE Region. Recovery, Unity and Service appear on our logo. Service strengthens my recovery and helps me to support the unity of our wonderful fellowship.

Anything else to add?

I'm always happy to share my service experiences with anyone who maybe interested in supporting the local fellowship.



Liaison Officer's Reports

Health

The AA at QA Hospital in Portsmouth is running smoothly with a bank of volunteers running the sessions booked up until October. As a two-week commitment for service, it's an ideal role for those who struggle to find time regularly or need something more casual. I'd also like to thank those who have stepped up to be reserves - I have many in waiting when people can't make it last minute! I've spoken twice to the trainee nurses who work on the Fishbourne ward at St Richards in Chichester. They find it so interesting listening to an alcoholic in recovery because they have only worked with patients in active alcoholism.



Nicky, part of the Liaison Officer Committee

"They find it so interesting listening to an alcoholic in recovery because they have only worked with patients in active alcoholism"

"We are desperately seeking members to come forward"

Prisons

An update from the I.O.W prisons. There was a meeting held in Albany on July 25th with nine inmates taking part in the meeting and six Big Books, six steps and traditions; and six living sober books were taken in with the approval of our contact. We are desperately seeking members to come forward for the vetting process and hoping that the one that has been for a face to face interview will be able to participate in the August meeting to be held in Parkhurst.

I attended a seminar on Prison, Probation and Criminal Justice Systems which was very interesting and I learned a lot. Unfortunately the final report from GSO has been delayed and I will forward the complete report including videos to GSR's via our Intergroup Secretary in the next week or so.

Angie K & Moira S, LOC members



Liaison Officer's Reports

"We have taken 987 calls in quarter two with almost 20% 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 two we have taken on some new permanent responders and also some reserve responders which will come in very useful during the current holiday season. We have taken 987 calls in quarter two with almost 20% of those resulting in 12 step intervention. Over half 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. Thanks Ed



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

Electric Communications

Hi all,
Not much to report on the ECLO front, other than investigating possible usage of social media for attraction purposes and to close the widening gap between the online and physical meetings.

Andrew, Electric Communications Liaison Officer
ecom.southdown@aamail.org



"close the widening gap between the online and physical meetings"

Liaison Officer's Reports

Public Information

The Probation Chit System is a great service for groups. It works through each meetings' Group Conscience where they can choose to offer a Chit System to alcoholics who are probationers and may wish to confirm they are attending meetings as part of their probation. It is a simple way for groups to carry the message without anyone's anonymity being broken. The Chit is produced by Intergroup difficult to reproduce and stocks are available via Intergroup. Half a dozen meetings have signed up since last Assembly. If any other meetings are interested, please do get in touch with me.

Moira, Public Information

pi.southdown@aamail.org



12th Step

This quarters report is coming from an unexpected situation in Majorca! We were all set for a family holiday with my wife and two girls on Thursday, but whilst we got through the airport when we got to the gate the staff told my wife that she couldn't fly because of new rules on passports. That meant a very emotional wife and a snap decision to go on holiday on my own with the two girls!

Whilst I have been to Greece alone a few times in sobriety, I have always used the time to improve my serenity - going running or hiking or taking in the culture. We are now coming to the end of our stay but the daily handover, journalling and frequent contact with the fellowship have kept me grounded, despite two kids in tow near an all inclusive bar.

As for the 12th Step Report... Southdown Intergroup currently have 162 12th Step volunteers on the list. To try something new I have created an online form for registration or amending your details on the list. This should be easier than filling a printed form out and scanning it in. If you need to amend your details or want to register for helping others please give it a try.

www.tinyurl.com/southdown12steplist

Paul H, 12th Step Liaison Officer

12step.southdown@aamail.org



Armed Forces Liaison Officer's Report

Work continues to support still suffering alcoholics who have served or who still serve in His Majesty's Armed Forces. A regular commitment to the Veterans Outreach Services open afternoon at the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth has proven valuable in passing the message and the AFLO attended Health Fayres at both HMS Excellent and HMS Sultan.

It has become clear that the work of the liaison committee in this area is essential. However, with limited committee members and much to do the AFLO is appealing to the fellowship for volunteers.

Specifically, we would like to create a team of veteran or serving fellows with a minimum of 1 years sobriety to support the AFLO directly. Further, those who have not yet reached a year of sobriety are invited to support that team.

If you wish to volunteer, please contact the AFLO on aservices.southdown@aamail.org

Kelly, Armed Forces Liaison Officer

aservices.southdown@aamail.org



Liaison Officer's Reports

Archives

If you are interested in the history of the Fellowship, do come and visit the archives, there is lots to be done! Come and maintain the facts, so they do not drift into myths. Southdown needs archive team members and a leader, feel free to contact me.

Nick, Archives Liaison Officer

archives.southdown@aamail.org



Intergroup Archivist - Job Description

These are ideal guidelines and should be considered in the context of an informed group conscience. Enthusiasm in Archives work is a pre-requisite, historical AA knowledge is not. Nobody can be expected to have the understanding and skills for the job, right from the start. This is one reason why Archives is non-rotational, as it is a continuous learning exercise. Storage of materials should not be problematical; ways can be found of safely storing all materials if the issue is raised by the Intergroup Archivist, named in the AA Confidential Directory.

Initial requirements:

- Ideally, have completed one or more posts at Intergroup
- Be prepared to make a long-term commitment to the post.
 - Be prepared to learn archives skills and local AA history.
- Collect Intergroup minutes and other reports of Intergroup activity.
- Have working knowledge of AA Service Structure and Traditions
 - Become a named person in the Confidential Directory.
 - Use the Intergroup Archivist AA e-mail supplied by GSO.

After settled into the job:

- Encourage enthusiasts to document history of their group.
- Liaise and co-operate with Regional Archivist on regular basis.
- Regularly report to I/G on work done or planned. (or just tell them who you are and what you are trying to do).
 - Have working knowledge of the GB Archives Policy and Procedure document.
- Have working knowledge of the guide for Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain Intergroup and Regional archivist
 - Encourage others to keep memorabilia and paperwork.
 - Set up an inventory of who is keeping what.

When confidence begins to grow through acquired knowledge and understanding:

- Turn information collected into another form, e.g. write 1 page history of prison service work from Intergroup prison reports.
- Gather from archives enthusiasts, a group of 'like-minded' people, to work on bigger projects e.g. history of Intergroup.
 - Consider various forms of archival displays, and where could be used.

"The main purpose of archive activity is to keep the record straight so that myth does not predominate". - Bill W.

"We need to preserve the richness of our heritage to ensure the future"- Bill W.

"Whenever a society or civilisation perishes there is always one condition present: they forgot where they came from".

Archive Request

Does your Group or Intergroup Literature box look like this?

Are you holding on to literature and books which were last seen on the ARK?

Are you considering filing old correspondence in your wastepaper basket?

DON'T!



WE CAN HELP

Please look through all your old material and literature and give it to your archivist.

Especially welcome are your personal items, books, badges, sobriety chips, pamphlets, convention paraphernalia, etc

IF YOU DON'T NEED THEM.... Donate them

If in doubt, they can be sorted out.

**JUST REMEMBER THE ARCHIVES MOTTO:
DON'T THROW ME AWAY!
I BELONG TO AA**

All items may be donated at Southdown Assemblies Any queries please ask Nick H.
archives.southdown@aamail.org

interlink spotlight



NATALIE SHARES HER THOUGHTS ON AA BEING "ALL INCLUSIVE"

Hi, I'm Natalie. I've been in the rooms for four years and I've just collected my four year chip. When I first came into the rooms I was identifying as a non-binary person - not a man, not a woman, just a person.

I've always felt accepted by AA and always been welcomed exactly as I am but there was one piece of wording which stood out to me at the start of every meeting - "AA is a fellowship of men and women". I assumed this line wasn't written to exclude me but it didn't feel like it fully included me.

After a couple of years in the rooms I heard that there was an update coming "AA is a fellowship of people" and I was overjoyed. Groups were encouraged to discuss the update at conscience meetings to decide whether to use the new official wording or to use the old wording. I set out to communicate to those around me how much difference it made to some people. The groups I attend regularly made the change and use the new wording.

I'm no longer identifying as non-binary, now I'm just a plain old woman so does the new wording still feel right to me? Absolutely, as a woman I'm also a person.

Being around AA for the past four years I've learned more about the origins, I know that it started off targeting men and that later women started joining. I can see how the choice of words "fellowship of men and women" must have been intended to include everyone. As time has moved on the original words no longer sound as inclusive as they were intended to sound and I'm really pleased that it's been updated.

Travelling around different groups I mostly hear the "fellowship of people" version but occasionally I'm met with the older one. If you're in a group that still uses the older one I want to ask whether you'd consider moving over to the new wording. I know that at the time that the changeover was happening you will have had this conversation, maybe you had specific reasons at the time for keeping the wording the same or maybe you just didn't have a compelling enough reason to change.

I brought a nonbinary friend to AA and after the meeting one of the first things they commented on was the "men and women" comment - honestly, I'd rather be having the "why do they keep mentioning God?" conversation instead.

Yours in fellowship,
Natalie

“To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek.”

