

# Interlink

*The newsletter for Southdown intergroup*

## *In This Issue*

**We talk to Andy about his service roles**

**We chat health with Nicky**

**We shine a spotlight on the Portsmouth Convention**

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## Editor's Message

Greetings to all members of our Southdown fellowship,

It's been really lovely putting this issue together so I just want to say thank you to everyone who chipped in. As always, our Liaison Officers are working tirelessly behind the scenes to get the message out to the still suffering alcoholic and its a highlight of the quarter for me to meet with them and be wowed by how generously they spend their valuable time in service of others.

Andy has been kind enough to share his experience in dual roles this time round so do give that a read; and I've also grilled Greg to get the best bits of being a TLO to put together an advert for his role (which he is rotating out of soon), so please do print and share at meetings. Nick emailed over a double report, one for archives and one for Southdown's contribution to Darkness into Light. We've also got an inspiring health update from Nicky and a few dates for the 2023 convention diary.

Finally big thanks to Rachel and Matt for gamely sending me their thoughts of the Portsmouth Convention - especially as they had both worked all day at the event. I think you'll all agree it was time well spent, as what they had to say is a warming antidote to this very wet and windy November!

Yours in fellowship,

**Lucy S, Interlink Editor**

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# OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

As we draw into the winter months and the days get shorter I just wanted to reflect on how the fellowship connects us as alcoholics. I for one find this connection invaluable in my recovery and especially in my early days. After years of searching I had finally found a connection, I was no longer alone!

As the evenings get darker I find this fellowship even more invaluable in order to feel connected. A fantastic example of this fellowship is the Portsmouth Convention. I, unfortunately, couldn't attend but I have heard some fantastic things about the day and look forward to seeing the report in Interlink so read on! Thanks to Rachel and the team for working so hard to put the day on.

We also have the quiz coming up on the 3rd of December so please get your teams together and enter! Thanks to Clare, Una and the rest of the team for working so hard on this event.

I really feel the sense of a "beyond meeting fellowship" coming back and developing, so please get involved and make these events a success.

Yours in Fellowship

Matt, **Chair Southdown Intergroup**

chair.southdown@aamail.org

*"...by reaching out you increase your connection with others and as a result you gain confidence."*

## Q&A WITH ANDY

### **How long have you been in this role and how did you find out about it?**

I was at my home group meeting, Bishop's Waltham, a couple of years ago and the main share held a service position at Region and was highlighting the number of vacancies at Intergroup for Liaison Officers, one of which was for Electronic Communications Liaison Officer which was coming vacant as the existing ECLO was due to rotate out. As electronic comms is loosely aligned to my day job I thought it worth investigating, plus it sounded like the sort of role where speaking to people might be limited, which at the time seemed like a bonus! After a few chats with the outgoing ECLO I took the drivers seat in the middle of lockdown which was a busy time for website updates with meetings opening, closing, moving to hybrid or online and back again as the pandemic progressed. I ended up speaking to quite a few people in the end!

As the pandemic eased, Intergroup started to think about areas of service where we could make improvements, particularly to focus on our primary purpose. Liaison Officers provide a vital bridge between public and private sectors and AA. Sadly though Southdown had about half strength in the LO team. A suggestion was made that a LO Committee would be able to be more flexible in responding to inbound requests for information and support than the existing set up, a vote was taken and the Liaison Officer Committee was formed. It needed a Chair and as I'd largely overcome by reticence to speak to other people (amazing how service does this!), I put myself forward and was voted in.



# Darkness into Light

## Southdown Report

The Darkness into Light project is currently displaying in Maidstone, Kent and the final exhibition this year is to be held at The Beaney in Canterbury during from November to January 2023. To date Southdown has spent £286.90 from the £1000 budget and we've been fortunate to be able to hold two exhibitions. A trial one was held in 2021 at Portsmouth Library, which was funded by SE Region. The second exhibition was at Chichester Library in January 2022.

The South East Region have decided to retain the Darkness into Light website which will be online for the whole of 2023 and it seems to be popular for members of the fellowship and the public alike. It contains the main exhibition display banners, together with videos, recordings, and AA history, as shared by Bill W. Members have been surprised at the display content, discovering information they have not encountered before. Newcomers are able to appreciate the fellowship, to which they may choose to join, whilst professionals can communicate with local members.

Moving into the new year, South East Region is making the Darkness into Light display available to all Intergroups within the region so they can in turn hold additional exhibitions in 2023. This is being done on a first come first served basis. It would be nice to hold further exhibitions in the Southdown Intergroup area. If you are interested in putting something on in your local library, please email: [convener@aadarknessintolight.org.uk](mailto:convener@aadarknessintolight.org.uk)



## Q&A WITH ANDY

### **What is the highlight of doing these roles?**

The highlight has been seeing how many areas and sectors are very interested in information and support from AA. A focus for H2 2022 has been Health, particularly a push into GP surgeries to coincide with Alcohol Awareness week. The initial response has been very encouraging. The second highlight has been the opportunity to get grass roots support and ideas for Liason projects. I've been approached by several people who have great ideas and contacts for reaching out to various sectors and are happy to get involved on short term projects that didn't have the time to make a long term commitment to a Liaison Officer post. There's so much untapped potential out there!

### **What impact do you think doing the roles has had on your own recovery?**

Like all Service positions, initially they can seem like an ask for time and resources that may instigate feelings of resentment and I think many people shy away from Service for that reason, and that like anything that forces one out of a comfort zone, there is some fear of being found to be not good enough. However in every service position I've taken I have found the exact opposite to be true. Even something as simple as being asked to Chair a meeting, I used to swerve as I felt I didn't know enough people to fill a month of shares - but that's the whole point - having to find people means you have to reach out, by reaching out you increase your connection with others and as a result you gain confidence. The same effect is magnified exponentially with the commitment to service. After all, you have to put in to get out.

# Vacancies

MAIN ASSEMBLY (CONT.)

BECOME THE NEXT...

## TELEPHONE LIAISON OFFICER



**BUILD YOUR NETWORK**

Speak to fellow alcoholics across the Southdowns



**LEARN IT SKILLS**

Refresh your approach to organisation and data



**BE A TEAM COACH**

Motivate individuals and create team spirit

**FOR MORE INFO:**

[telephones.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:telephones.southdown@aamail.org)





**JOIN YOUR FELLOWSHIP FRIENDS FOR A SOCIAL THIS CHRISTMAS....**

# QUIZ NIGHT

WHY NOT FORM A  
HOME GROUP  
TEAM



TEAMS OF  
UP TO 8

**HOMEMADE CHILLI  
JACKET POTATOES  
TORTILLA CHIPS  
MINCE PIES  
REFRESHMENTS  
(HOT & COLD)**

**SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER | 1930 - 2230**

**HERNE FARM LEISURE CENTRE, CRUNDLES, PETERSFIELD, GU31 4PJ**

*This we owe to A.A'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*

# Liaison Officer's Reports

## Archives

The Southdown Legacy is an archive newsletter that was first produced in 2005. Issue 5 is currently being put together. If you would like to write an article about your personal experience of service for the Intergroup, please contact Lucia on: southdownlegacy@outlook.com

The archive network met in York on September 23rd and 24th. It is sad to report that James Neil is leaving his two days a week post at The Borthwick Institute, which is funded by AA to maintain our collection. On a positive note, Martin B. has taken up the post of Fellowship archivist. The archivists were encouraged to make boxed inventories of their collection, and send them to GSO.

Thanks,

**Nick, Archives Liaison Officer**

archives.southdown@aamail.org



Friday 28<sup>TH</sup>,  
Saturday 29<sup>TH</sup>  
& Sunday 30<sup>TH</sup>  
April 2023  
The Tower Hotel  
London E1W 1LD

**AA AT THE TOWER**  
londonaaconvention.com

A weekend of fellowship in the heart of London, overlooking the Thames, the Tower of London and Tower Bridge.

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**LONDON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**

**Pre-book Saturday evening Buffet Limited places**

SPONSORED BY THE LONDON REGIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GB





66th Scottish National Convention

"A New Beginning"  
28th - 30th April 2023  
Queens Hall, 9 Argyll St, DUNOON,  
PA23 7HH  
(Travel by road or ferry)

AA participation throughout the weekend

Registration £15  
Pre-Registration is necessary as last year was a sell out

To Register and find out more information about the Weekend Programme, Hotels & Ferries visit:  
[www.scottishnationalconvention.co.uk](http://www.scottishnationalconvention.co.uk)

Any questions, email:  
[convention.snc@aamail.org](mailto:convention.snc@aamail.org)

Sponsored by all 5 Scottish Regions  
Alcoholics Anonymous GB



# Liaison Officer's Reports

## Telephones

Once again there has been a significant drop in calls received this quarter, with the Southdown helpline now handling an average of 300 calls per month. This equates to 10 calls per day in comparison to 15 calls per day during 2021.

Unfortunately, we are still looking for my successor and we are now entering the final 3 months of my tenure as Telephone Liaison Officer (TLO). This is becoming a matter of urgency, to ensure a smooth transition and allow a full sponsorship into the role. Members are encouraged to share the vacancy with their home groups, sponsees and fellowship friends. Please also feel free to share my contact details and I will be happy to have an initial chat.

Telephone Service now comes under the umbrella of The National First Response Sub-Committee (NFRSC) which also encompasses Live Chat and e-mail services. The NFRSC have put forward suggested changes for the Telephone Service, in an attempt to offer a more unified service. Hopefully better meeting the needs of both the prospect and the responder. It is also hoped that these changes will facilitate a more even distribution of call volumes across the UK, allow for a comprehensive training and support for responders and TLOS. The changes will also attempt to overcome the difficulties of covering shifts, offering a less labour-intensive solution.

I hosted the South East region telephone service workshop where we discussed the proposed changes to the Telephone Service put forward by the NFRSC. Generally, the changes were seen to be positive, although we would benefit from more information, especially with regards to how the 12th Step process would be managed in the changes.

In the absence of a Regional Telephone Liaison Officer (RTLO) I will be representing the South East region at the Quarterly Regional meeting, as well as attending the TLO seminar both are in York this October. I will hopefully gain further information in relation to the proposed changes and will be able to update both Region and Intergroup on my return.

**Greg B, Telephone Liaison Officer**

telephones.southdown@aamail.org



## Health

Maria and I had a meeting with the senior nurse with the alcohol specialist team at QA, she desperately wants us in there. The plan is that an evening a week, for two or three hours, a couple of AA members go in to a room they already have for us and any current patients can come and talk about their alcoholism and we can answer any questions, give them newcomers packs and talk about our experience. Now at the moment we cannot go ahead as waiting for 'the powers that be' to grant permission despite the team being desperate for us to start this. Once this has been agreed then a rota of helpers can be set up, we already have a few volunteers to begin with. Also they have the flyers with useful numbers to give out where needed and left in areas for discretion.

I have also spoken to receptionists at St Mary's whilst I was attending an appointment myself and gave them some of the same flyers. Unfortunately they didn't have any clue what I was talking about and despite my careful explaining, they questioned whether we were a charity but they agreed to pass to their superiors but I feel they thought I was trying to sell them something. Next step is to email them and follow up!



**Nicky, part of the Liaison Officer Committee**

# Liaison Officer's Reports

## Public Information

It's the time of year when the Fellowship across the country hosts conventions that any member can attend and often has collaboration with Al-Anon. When I first came into AA in 1994 these events terrified me, didn't know what to expect, how to behave and worried about how you can dance sober!! I was persuaded to go along to the large one at Camber Sands and was amazed at the fellowship on offer, the meetings, the workshops, the social interaction and yes, the dancing on Saturday night. I was hooked, and for many years went regularly to as many as possible until my working life changed and I was unable to make very many.

I missed these events and when my life changed again, and I was in service as a Share Liaison Office I had the perfect excuse to skip my conventions again. Sorting through some papers at home the other day I found some words that I must have written down while waiting for the doors to open at a convention I was attending with the Share table and thought I would like to share them with you.

The Reception Desk is ready, the room is set, literature table - tick, archivists table - tick, share stand - tick, Al-Anon table - tick. The stage ready for speakers, the chairs for those attending set out neatly - tick, refreshments - tick. All is peaceful, waiting, waiting for the energy to arrive. The doors open and slowly fellowship starts to trickle in. Gradually members start to spot friends, big smiles light up faces, warm hugs are exchanged. The flow of fellowship increases until the room is full of energy, hope and love. The chairperson calls the room to order and after a few minutes the rustle of bags/coats/chairs stops and it's quiet. The Preamble is read out, everyone joins in the AA Pledge, the chairperson introduces the first speaker, and the room relaxes into the first meeting of the day.

What followed was great, thought provoking, sharing laughter, some tears and lots of love - conversations with old and new friends, music, dancing, before its time to close and leave the fabulous atmosphere, the fellowship that only our AA can give us, and the goodbyes, the hugs, some tears, many smiles and promises of meeting at the next convention. If you have never attended a convention please give it a try, I did and never regretted it once.

Combining Service with Conventions is especially rewarding. Supporting the Share Magazine gets you out and about to more local meetings, workshops, conventions and yes, even to the General Service Office at York to meet up with other 'Share People' from around the country. This is service which definitely supports my continued sobriety. Interested in possibly getting involved in this service? Please contact me

### **Moira, Public Information**

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# interlink spotlight

## RACHEL AND MATT SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING AT THE PORTSMOUTH CONVENTION

The convention was great, there was about 150 delegates which was a great atmosphere. I met loads of people I didn't know who go to different meetings from all round Hampshire. There was brilliant shares all day from a range of backgrounds with different sobriety times but all with a common theme. Some were really inspirational to me especially those with lots of days. I particularly enjoyed the ones from al anon, it was great having them there and see the effects that drinking and families has on our friends and seeing the great support for them. I'm really looking forward to next year!

### Rachel, Portsmouth Convention Team Member

This was only my second ever AA convention and I just find it one of the most powerful places to be. My head will tell me I'm alone with this illness and I don't think I could have felt less alone. It just reminds me how cunning this illness is but how when we come together, we can tackle it.

Its great hearing other peoples stories, its great to hear the winners. When I first came in I loved hearing similar stories to mine but what stuck out for me was people who had multiple years as I so desperately wanted what they had. With something like the sobriety countdown at the convention, seeing people with 40 years to 40 years to 20 years to 10 years, how do I ever question this programme works when there is that evidence in front of me.

I was moved by the stories, I loved the fact that Al Anon were there and I got to hear from them and what a wonderful fellowship that is. I think when I was drinking, I never imagined that I would laugh sober and enjoy the company of people sober especially a group of alcoholics; the laughter in that room was amazing.

I am so humbled to be part of it.

### Matt, Portsmouth Convention Team Member

