

Interlink

The newsletter for Southdown intergroup

In This Issue

More on Darkness into Light

We hear about international conventions

Colin shares on being Secretary

Get interlink in your inbox every quarter!

Email interlink.southdown@aamail.org to subscribe

Editor's Message

Greetings to the Southdown fellowship,

It's been a pleasure working on this spring edition of Interlink, hearing from the Liaison Officers on what they've been up to for the past few months.

Thanks to Mick for delivering a brilliant account of his experience of international conventions, having just returned from the Cyprus convention. He joined a group from the Southdowns fellowship, proof for any newcomers that sober holidays are not only possible, but can be joyous and free!

Colin has stepped into the Q&A seat this month to dish the dirt on being our Southdown Secretary. It's a good read and a useful one for anyone interested in replacing the role in November when his tenure comes to an end.

It's been encouraging to hear that the Liaison Committee has celebrated its first birthday and will ask the assembly to vote on continuing their service. Read on to hear what the individual members have been up to - from HLO Nicky's success at QA to Paul's 12-step stats that show that we are successfully helping those still suffering. Also a big welcome to Marianne and Ed, our new joint Telephone Liaison Officers!

Finally, well done to Angie K in the Isle of Wight fellowship who stepped forward to offer a report on how the Darkness into Light exhibition went in Newport. It's a good opportunity for me to remind you all, that we love to hear suggestions and contribution ideas for Interlink - so keep them coming.

Thank you all for keeping me sober today.

Yours in fellowship,

Lucy S, Interlink Editor

interlink.southdown@aamail.org



OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

As we head towards the summer months with lighter evenings I hope you will agree that there is positive feeling around at the moment, more light and better weather certainly gives me a more positive outlook!

As an Intergroup Committee, we have been slightly concerned about the lack of engagement and understanding of the role by some GSR's. We are therefore starting to send out new GSR packs which we would urge all GSR's to read and understand these packs so they understand what is required in their roles. We feel this lack of engagement and knowledge in some cases is down to poor/lack of sponsorship, so we urge anyone who sponsors a GSR to make sure you assist them to do the role or if you don't have that experience to find out. The Intergroup is suffering as a result of this and no one should be embarrassed asking for help. Please approach me or any of the committee or wider steer co if you need any support or guidance.

Would you believe it has been a year since we trialed the Liason Officers Committee! The feedback we have received is that this has been a positive trial. The vote as to whether to keep this permanent will take place at the assembly on the 31st, where GSRs will have the opportunity to express their opinion and decide whether to continue. I wanted to thank and show our appreciation to Andy N, our ECLO, whose time leading this trial is coming to an end. I would also like to thank everyone else who has worked tirelessly on carrying the message - your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Just one last thing before i wrap it up, the transition to our new bank account is finished and the old HSBC account is now closed. Any monies you try to pay into the old account will not go through, so all Treasurers need to make sure you are using the new Unity Trust Bank account available from Clare - treasurer.southdown@aamail.org

See you on the 31st at Moggs Mead!

Yours in Fellowship

Matt, Chair Southdown Intergroup

chair.southdown@aamail.org

Q&A WITH COLIN

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

I am the Secretary for the Southdown Intergroup and have formally held the position since November 2020 although I took over a little earlier as an interim. 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.

What is the highlight of doing this roles?

The role is very rewarding for many different factors. It's rewarding to help others and play a small part in getting the message out there as wide as possible. A highlight for me is when I hear 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. Whether that's a notification for a convention, a request to fill service positions or a reminder for gratitude week.

When I took on the role, we were in the Covid pandemic and lockdowns. I was encouraged to be proactive and like to think that I, along with the support of Intergroup and Steering Committee, helped many fellow members with the steady stream of information,



Liaison Officer's Reports

Archives

Southdown Intergroup are still looking for an archivist. If you are interested, please contact Nick H for more information.

Thanks,

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



"I honestly believe that this service has made me a better person"

Q&A WITH COLIN

particularly in communicating changes to meetings and how to stay connected. 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?

It's an honest programme so it's only fair to say there have been times when the burden to juggle home, work and service life have been tough. However, I truly believe that there are so many more positives that I have gained from undertaking the role. I honestly believe that this service has made me a better person. It has undoubtedly given me a wider perspective on 'how it works' and helped me to understand 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 met 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.

I highly recommend getting involved with Intergroup service. I rotate out in November 2023 and would love to see a new motivated member take the role and reap the recovery rewards as I have.



Darkness into Light

Newport Library, Isle of Wight Exhibition

On what seems like an age ago, back in February, I had the pleasure of picking up the Darkness into Light display from Nick the convenor.

It had been a long weekend attending the Isle of Wight Convention on the Friday evening, picking up the display on Saturday and Convention again on the Sunday. The display was put up in the library on 27th February with the help of volunteer members. On our arrival we were informed that the library would close the last week in March for roof repairs. Unfortunate, but these things happen! So we had to take it all down a week early.

Unfortunately, on the 28th February I was taken poorly and immediately set about phoning other members to help tidy, refill leaflets and man the display for a time. The Newport Saturday morning meeting members stepped up to the service and to those members I wish to express my gratitude. Thank you so much.

The display was taken down 18th March and returned to Nick on 8th April. Comments were left on how informative it was for alcoholics and for the families and friends of an active alcoholic. The senior librarian informed me that there had been a lot of interest in the exhibition and they would like us back again. This experience for myself has been one of learning and gratitude of how our fellowship supports one another when help is needed.

Thanks,
Angie K



Liaison Officer's Reports

Telephones

Firstly I would like to thank Greg for all of his hard work in the role of Telephone Liaison Officer. Myself and Marianne would like to introduce ourselves as the new joint Telephone Liaison Officers. We have worked very closely with Greg to ensure that the handing over process is as smooth as possible. Marianne has vast experience and knowledge as a Telephone Responder and also many other service positions. I've been a Telephone Responder too and also covered almost all of the service positions in my time in the Fellowship. We currently have a strong team of Telephone Responders and also several people on the reserve list to enable us to cover any holidays etc. We are both grateful that we have been given the opportunity to be of service in this role and want to thank the Intergroup committee especially. All we would like to thank the GSR's for their continued support and hope that this continues.

We've had a few minor hiccups towards the end of Q1 and moving forward we will look to iron these out as we get more settled into the role. We thank you all for your patience during this transition period.

In Q1 we had 978 calls in total through the helpline and of the total number of call sheets returned 24% of those resulted in 12 Step calls/action.

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



"Myself and Marianne would like to introduce ourselves as the new joint Telephone Liaison Officers"

Health

We have a steady flow of volunteers to do service at QA Hospital, with a rota going until July. As it's not a long term commitment, just two consecutive weeks, fellows across the Southdowns seem very keen - especially if they are busy with other service commitments. I also have a couple of reserve members for anybody who has to drop out. Each week one or two patients are coming in and we've had patients who have left popping back on a Thursday night. I also talked to the junior doctors in April and have two dates in the diary now for June and July to go back to St Richards to talk to the nurses.



Nicky, part of the Liaison Officer Committee

Liaison Officer's Reports

Public Information

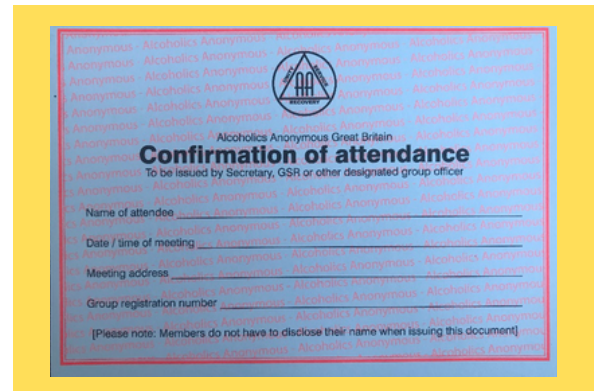
Some meetings in Southdown Intergroup have, through their Group Conscience, started to offer the Chit System to alcoholics who are probationers and may wish to be able to confirm that they are attending AA meetings as part of their recovery. This a very simple way for your group/meeting to carry the AA message. No one's anonymity is broken, you will see from the sample picture that the information is very simple, and half of this could be completed, ready for completion when required.

The Chit is a card which is produced by our General Service Office and can be completed by the AA member responsible within the group, and the card can then be given to the probationer at the end of the meeting. The card is printed on card which is difficult to reproduce and stocks are available initially from Southdown Intergroup and then from GSO.

The only other admin required is to update your Pink Form, ticking the box to confirm your group is now operating the Chit System, send it to Intergroup Secretary, who will send information onto GSO and websites will then show which groups across the country can issue Chits.

If your group would like to participate, or get more information please get in touch with me and I will be happy to discuss with you. Thanks for your time. I hope you and your meeting will wish to join in this simple service and reach out to other alcoholics.

Moira, Public Information
pi.southdown@aamail.org



12th Step

Our Southdown Telephone Helpline took 978 calls in the first quarter of 2023 and of the call sheets we received 24% resulted in 12 step action by our group of willing volunteers. Thank you all for your help and support so far this year!

The 12 Step List quarterly review was sent out on 10th April. So far we have received 68 responses out of 169. Anyone who has yet to respond to confirm their willingness (or let us know of any changes) is encouraged to do so via email.

We are advising West Sussex/Brighton AA who are looking to set up their own 12 Step List.

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



"24% resulted in 12 step action by our group of willing volunteers"

interlink spotlight



MICK C SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL AA CONVENTIONS

On my return from the recent 2023 Cyprus AA convention, I was asked to share my experience, strength and hope with the readers.

When drinking, I was a pub drinker, and loved the social aspect of drinking, until loss of control ruined everything. When entering AA, fellowship was one of the attractions. I started off on the one day conventions, enjoying the company of other alcoholics celebrating their sobriety. I was eventually invited to do service, selling raffle tickets and even a few short shares.

The big breakthrough came when I was asked to share at the Southern National Convention at Camber Sands in 2001. I had to overcome fear, self-doubt, lack of self confidence, but I had help from my HP (as I often share the story!) and it went well.

This led to me being asked to attend a Convention in Spain around 2004, as a friend's dad was the convener. This started convention holidays for me and I haven't looked back.

In conventions around the world, I have made friends with many AA's of varying nationalities, shared at conventions around Europe, and even the Australian National Convention (where I went scuba diving in the Great Barrier Reef and tried skydiving for the first time aged 64!)

From my first in Spain to this spring's wonderful convention in Cyprus, these experiences have done wonders for my mental wellbeing and self esteem. I love travel, and through AA, I've been able to do it safely, and build my confidence slowly with support and fun.

I know the loneliness, demoralisation, fear, and despair of active alcoholism. The AA road to recovery is filled with JOY.

LIF

Mick C

