
Interlink



The Newsletter for Southdown Intergroup

February 2021

Editor: Sinclair M sinclair757@yahoo.co.uk

Editor's message:

Welcome to all our fellowship friends.

Online AA meetings have really come into their own since March 2020 when Lockdown first hit us, almost one year ago; it's hard to believe. There have been online meetings for some time, though most of us were probably not even aware of the facility. This modern communication tool certainly has saved many of us from despair during a time of global crisis. Southdown Intergroup has been functioning as normal, holding online workshops and committee meetings of various types, to keep our fellowship alert and vigorous as to staying sober and helping others to remain or achieve sobriety during these difficult times. This online tool shows how resourceful our members can be.

When AA was in its infancy, stumbling onto shaky legs like a newly born lamb, the telephone was the new communication tool, which brought the first struggling founders of this fellowship together. How our founding fathers would have been proud that the Internet with all its wizardry held us in its warm embrace to help keep us safe until the storm passes. That is not to say that physical meetings are a thing of the past, no! At the last count there were 27 meetings in Southdown Intergroup still open to the suffering alcoholic. "Our kind of people" still need the unity and encouragement, which only a physical room full of likeminded individuals can offer. A place where the newcomer can enter hesitantly and soon feel the warm embrace of AA. It is for this reason that physical meetings have continued to be held despite risk of infection; after all, the affliction of alcoholism never leaves us it has merely been arrested. The Book states, "It is easy to let up on the spiritual programme of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not



cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” Onward we move into 2021 and keep working it, it works if you work it.

Chairperson's Report

A very interesting time to begin my service as Chair!

I would firstly like to thank everyone who has supported myself and Colin E (new Intergroup Secretary) into our new roles, everyone has been very helpful and made the job of engaging in our challenging positions as easy as possible.

We continue to face challenging times as a fellowship though I think we are all doing our best to support our intergroup and we welcome any suggestions or recommendations for improvement. Everything is changing so quickly (times and dates of meetings, whether meetings are open or not etc.) so it is important that this and other information is communicated equally fast so we can continue to fulfil our primary purpose as best we can in these challenging times.

As you may have noticed, we have increased communication with GSR's by e-mail and hopefully this is filtering through to individuals at group level. It is important that all information that is being sent reaches individual group members so I urge groups to ensure that we have the correct details of every groups GSR or someone who can pass this information onto the group if a GSR is currently being sought. Colin E is doing a lot of work on cleaning up the circulation list so please send him updated information if needed and thank you Colin for your hard work! His email is secretary.southdown@aamail.org

In our Intergroup area some meetings have decided to remain open and others have decided to take place online with some running hybrids and others parallel.

In line with Tradition 4 each group is autonomous in their decision in this respect however it is important that we all ensure that we are strictly following and applying the government laws, rules and guidance at all times. We are very fortunate to be able to meet face to face currently under the current guidelines and if we do not follow the rules then it has the potential to reflect badly and have consequences for the rest of the fellowship, which we all need to avoid.

As the Covid situation develops we have been keeping abreast of announcements and rule changes, we have been circulating these by email but if anyone needs further clarification or feels they may have missed any key information please contact a member of the committee.



On a slightly different, positive note I attended my first Liaison Officers meeting this week. I was blown away by the collaboration and the enthusiasm that was evident from members of our fellowship in trying to fulfil our primary purpose as stated in tradition 5 in such difficult circumstances, well done all!

Again, a massive thank you to everyone for the warm welcome and I look forward to being part of this wonderful group of trusted servants.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Intergroup Assembly on the 17th February.

Matt P

chair.southdown@aamail.org

Liaison Officer reports:

A. Archives

SOUTHDOWN ARCHIVE REPORT

13th January 2021

COVID 19 As of 13.1.21 there are 34 online meetings and 27 physical meetings, some of which are run in parallel. The Intergroup is currently in lockdown, with Government dispensations for recovery meetings, no larger than 15 attendants, provided the meetings are not held at home.

THE SOUTHDOWN

LEGACY Lucia continues to receive written articles for Edition 5. If you would like to contribute, please email her at: southdownlegacy@outlook.com
Photos would be gratefully received, of anything relevant to recovery in Southdown (no people please).

ASSEMBLY

MINUTES The Southdown archive collection, amongst other things, contain the Intergroup minutes, going back to 1980, at the beginning of Regionalisation, and the formation of the Intergroup. Some minutes are in paper form, others in digital form, whilst others are missing. Work is now underway to update the minute's inventory.



GROUP HISTORY

75th ALBUM In 1997, Ruth, the then archivist made an album of all the groups in Southdown, as part of our 50th year celebrations of AA in GB. Maria has now started putting together a new album for our 75th anniversary, which is on 31st March 2022. Please could you give her all your support? She is planning on contacting GSRs to explain the project.

DARKNESS INTO

LIGHT This is A.A event that will see a public exhibition in every SE Region Intergroup during 2022, to celebrate our 75th anniversary in Great Britain. The project continues in its planning stage. You are encouraged to visit the password protected members website, to see what it is all about. The address is:

<https://fellowship.aadarknessintolight.org.uk>

The password is: s3renity

Ellie has rotated out, and Andy is the proposed new Southdown project leader. Please give him your full support. He can be contacted on: southdown@aadarknessintolight.org.uk,

Nick

archives.southdown@aamail.org

B. Telephones

The Telephone Service January 2021

Quarter 4 (October, November and December 2020) has seen an overall increase of Helpline telephone calls handled by the Southdown Inter-group telephone service with a total of 1380 calls. This is an additional 181 calls in comparison to quarter 3 with 1199 calls. Although there was a decline in calls across the quarter with October having the highest volume in excess of 500 calls and the lowest in December with 417 calls showing a reduction from October of nearly 100 calls per month. Early indications for January would suggest that the Helpline is going to be quieter again but it is too early to be definite. *(Please see table 1 below)*

The calls handled by team can be placed in to definite categories firstly those which require 12th step action within our own inter-group. Secondly those calls which require to be referred



for help and support from another region of the U.K. Thirdly calls from local members requiring meeting information and finally Other for example concerned relatives and friends.

(Please see table 2 below)

After a big recruitment drive following the last Assembly we have a full compliment of responders for each of the 28 shifts per week plus a solid reserve list.

As a team we are experiencing an increase in distressing suicidal calls and we have sought advice from the Samaritans with a view to gaining some support, increased awareness and training from them in 2021.

Table 1 – Call volume for 2020 by Month & Quarter 2020

Month	Calls	Averages
April	298	
May	279	
June	316	
TOTAL Q2	893	10 calls Per day 298 calls P.M
July	393	
August	389	
September	417	
TOTAL Q3	1199	13 calls Per day 399 calls P.M
TOTAL Q2 +Q3	2092	
October	524	
November	439	
December	417	
Total Q4	1380	15 calls Per day 460 calls P.M
TOTAL Q2 +Q3+Q4	3472	12 calls Per day 385 calls P.M



Table 2 - Call type by category 2020

CALL REASON	%
Required local 12th stepper	26
Other	15
Out Of Region	48
Local Meeting Details	11
Total	100

Greg B

telephones.southdown@aamail.org

C. 12th Step Co-ordinator

The Southdown 12th Step List Process

January 2021

- The electronic online 12th step list is live and working well. It is being used by the telephone helpline responders securely through Google Sheets.
- Telephone responders are now able to access up to date information such as when each 12 Stepper last accepted a referral and their current availability. This information is gained through call sheets that are sent back by the helpline responders. These allow immediate updates to the list on feedback from any 12th Steppers they contact.
- Growth within the telephone service team has meant a busy and rewarding time, meeting new telephone responders (via Zoom) and showing them how to use the secure online list.
- New 12th Steppers are being introduced to the role by their sponsor or GSR and we received 5 new registrations using the new form during the quarter.
- The first e-mail correspondence and newsletter were sent to the 12 Step list at the end of October 2020. The email requested that people reply to confirm their willingness to do 12th step service and to update us on their availability and contact details. Copies of the 12 Step Newsletter can be requested via email from: 12step.southdown@aamail.org



- The second quarterly email and newsletter will be sent out in early February 2021, please keep an eye out for it and reply appropriately.
- As of 11th January, there are 166 people on the 12 Step list.

Clare M

12step.southdown@aamail.org

D. Electronic communications

ECLO report

Activity

- As usual, a significant part of my time has been spent in maintaining the Southdown website both with the list of online meetings and adding a new list of meetings restarting. GSO has been kept updated of all meeting changes on a regular basis. Details of any significant changes – new meeting, venue change etc., have been sent to our Southdown Secretary and GSO via a pink form by the GSR.

As always, I aim to update the website within 24 hours after receiving a request. The website shortcut is the easiest way to access it: <http://www.aa-gb.org/southdown>. This shortcut saves having to go through all the various menus from the main site.

A major problem was identified with the way in which GSO updates meeting information based on our input, and they are still investigating. Consequently everyone is advised always to refer to the Southdown website pages entitled 'ONLINE MEETINGS' and 'PHYSICAL MEETINGS', which are always up to date.

- This will be my last report as Southdown ECLO after over three years' service. Andrew N is taking over the role and his appointment has been approved provisionally by the Steering Committee pending formal approval by Assembly on 17 February. We are conducting handover sessions by Zoom to familiarise Andrew with the responsibilities of the role, and this is nearly complete. I'm sure you will join me in wishing Andrew every success in the role.

Just a short note from me to say hello at this point. I've been working alongside Alan for the last month to learn the ropes and all is going well, looking forward to meeting the wider team as and when, Andrew.



I would just like to say how much I've enjoyed being Southdown ECLO and have been grateful for the opportunity to be of service to Southdown Intergroup. I'd also like to thank everyone I've worked with who has supported me in the role and helped make our Southdown website into an important reference tool.

Alan H

ECLO, Southdown Intergroup

ecomm.southdown@aamail.org

E. Health

HLO report January 2021

Due to current COVID situation, unfortunately all hospitals have clamped down on visitors and services so no physical presentations and/or meetings with hospital professionals have taken place.

QA Portsmouth – retains sufficient amount of newcomer's patient packs.

- Am currently working alongside a fellow who has contacts within QA. This will hopefully improve our present communications and open pathways to carry our message to the still suffering.

St Richards Chichester – Communications with the specialist Alcohol team are good.

The alcohol team understands the importance of it being the potential Alcoholic who makes initial contact when reaching out for help *i.e. phoning AA helpline/ 12 step responders*.

- Hospital retains sufficient amount of newcomer's patient packs and relevant AA flyers/posters etc.

AA meeting within the hospital grounds at St Richards.

Although COVID Safety, times/dates of venue and free parking has already been agreed in principle, we also agreed that while it's an important and so much needed time to do this, it's just not possible right now, so open ended discussions are on-going whilst we are dictated to by COVID.

IOW Hospital St Marys - Communication between GSR Anne E & hospital regarding 12 steppers is consistently open.



AA signage/flyers are replenished on the ward by Chaplain and hospital retains sufficient amount of newcomer's patient packs.

Portsmouth Chemists - Doctors surgeries and public toilets are continuously updated and stocked with appropriate AA information leaflets.

Lalys chemists have agreed (in principle) for a short video clip to be added as a rolling message onto their monitors.

AA packs for professionals

These are now complete and to be sent to Portsmouth QA, St Richards in Chichester and St Marys in IOW.

The pack contains various and relevant information alongside a 'Keep it simple A.B.C guide' card: **see below**. This can also be used by any of us in helping the newcomer; so if any GSRs would want any for distribution within your groups (or even to carry on your person), please do contact me, as I will be more than happy to send you some.

Alcoholics Anonymous A.B.C.

A - Local & National A.A. Helpline [023 9258 0776](tel:02392580776) - [08009177650](tel:08009177650)

B - Access to online & physical meetings can be found at <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Regional-&-Local-Websites/south-east-region/southdown-intergroup>: *scroll down to ONLINE and/or PHYSICAL meetings*

You will also find access to Newcomers packs and other relevant info online, which is free to read. The shortcut to this page is <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/About-AA/Newcomers/Starter-Pack>

C - Direct message to a recovering Alcoholic Anonymously - shortcut to this link is <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/About-AA/Newcomers/Get-help-now> **then click on the orange "Chat Box" which is found in the bottom right hand corner: - This service is not manned round-the-clock.**

Again, if anyone in our fellowship feels the above cards would be helpful to them, and/or your group has links/ideas in how we can reach the still suffering within health care centres, please do contact me by email or phone.

Danny S

Alcoholics Anonymous Health Liaison Officer

health.southdown@aamail.org



F. Young People

Young Persons Liaison Report Southdown Intergroup – January 2021

Can't believe it has been 12 months since my last update!

I mentioned at the last physical intergroup Assembly (back in Feb/March 2020) I needed to take a break due to personal commitments. Since then COVID19 has turned up in our lives, affecting all of us. Like many of my peers, I have not been able to do as much as I would have liked in terms of service for the majority of 2020.

Last November however, thanks to the 2nd lockdown, I had a bit more capacity and I did manage to get a chance to pick things up again.

I am currently in discussions again with the University of Portsmouth Student Union who recently responded to some feelers I put out before Christmas.

They indicated they're a little concerned about students isolating and drinking more. I have proposed we run a small online session where a couple of younger members will share their stories followed by a Q&A.

We are exploring running an Instagram Live session followed by a Zoom Session to raise awareness of AA over the coming months.

Thanks to zoom and technology I have decided to engage some fellows I know across the UK to get involved as I'm not aware of any young people locally who are interested and available to do service.

I would therefore like to make the following call to GSRs and Fellows, which I would appreciate being shared at meetings:

***“Dear fellows if you are aware of any younger members who are happy and interested in service, whether by sharing their stories or being willing to get ‘stuck-in’ in some way, could you please have them reach out to me.*”**

My 3-year commitment is also up in January 2021 but I have agreed to stay on for 6 more months mainly because little was done during 2020 due to the impact of COVID19

Pravin^{SEP}

YPLO Southdown Intergroup

youngpersons.southdown@aamail.org



G. Prisons and criminal justice

No activity to report due to Covid 19.

John.K

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Service and upcoming events.

Questions from Conference: Will be held on 3 March 2020. The conference will be held via Zoom at 19:30hrs and we would encourage all groups to discuss the questions which can be found in the Winter Service News.

Intergroup vacancies:

There are positions waiting to be filled so please put the word out and help sponsor members into these roles:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Vice Chair
- Share Magazine
- Armed Services Liaison Officer
- Interlink Editor
- Employment Liaison. (Possibly filled)
- Public Information Liaison Officer (Q4/20)
- Archivist



Portsmouth Convention

Portsmouth One-Day Convention 2021

“PompeyCon2021”

Following last year's cancellation our eyes looked to 2021 and the possibility of pooling our resources with Gosport's Convention Team. Our pre-Christmas virtual gathering suggested we investigate a couple of venues able to host our event. As we all know the national advice attached to the Coronavirus spread returned us all to limited opportunities for 'normal' meetings and temporarily prevented further research to find a suitable venue.

Sadly I have to report we will now be placing planning arrangements back in the stable while we watch for 'lockdown' changes, vaccination programmes and subsequently availability of suitable venues. PompeyCon2021 Committee will reconvene at the end of February to review all and any information. **If it can be done we will get it done in 2021.**

Arrangements for such an event will be much easier and require less member power to set up and strike down because we will be looking at established sites with proven capabilities directed towards convention and conference services.

The PompeyCon2021 Committee will keep a running brief with our Southdown Committee and communicate immediately we have an opportunity to plan. Information, tickets, directions and travel information will be sent out electronically.

This will be the last time I submit a report to Assembly as Convener of the Portsmouth Convention. In 2019, despite a number of difficulties, I believe we provided one of the most successful conventions Portsmouth has ever seen. The venue was full to capacity and there was a great buzz of happiness when we drew to a close. Experience, Strength and Hope was delivered. The success was entirely the responsibility of a cracking Committee and dedicated volunteers for Service helping organise the Raffle, wrangling speakers, decorations to lend a 'Village Fete' atmosphere, the side shows for fun, people who came and dug deep for the event and the faith given that 'it would be alright on the night!'

As soon as we can reconvene our core Committee and those who gave service in 2019 it will be my pleasure to propose Laura as a more than able successor who currently serves you as PompeyCon's Co-Convener.

Many thanks to all who have supported the Convention since 2019, patiently waited for 2020 and, hopefully, come along to our Convention in 2021 – we will be having one.

Yours as ever, in fellowship and gratitude.

Patrick.



Region

South East Region 189 Assembly – 22/11/2020 Trustee's Report

Purpose of the General Service Board Trustees– I am most grateful that you persuaded me to offer this service. I certainly didn't know what I was in for (as with most service positions!) It was suggested that I would learn a lot in my first year! I would like very briefly and simply to share what I've come to appreciate so far, to help affirm value of our board in serving the health and welfare of our fellowship.

The General Service Board supports the inverted pyramid of our fellowship, from the bottom. It is the active guardian of our Traditions and Concepts. It works on the developing the requirements of our fellowship today, producing suggested documents and visual aids for our fellowship to consider/amend/ approve at the annual Conference. It helps with and welcomes, often by direction to the appropriate section, enquiries from the whole fellowship. It is our 'recovery service tool' to be freely and confidently used.

After each full board trustee meeting, (currently the 13/14 November) the secretary provides a 'Regional Briefing'. The meeting consists of two sessions, of 5 and 3 hours. It includes formal AA business; reports from each discipline; projects and presentations; and matters arising for action. The Regional Briefing contains matters of fact for the information of the fellowship. It does not include current deliberations of workshops/ committees, which are being prepared for fellowship opinion and discussion at the annual Conference before approval or rejection. For legitimate transparency and the interest of our fellowship, I will report responsibly.

The **Honorary Treasurer**, *Brian J*, reports that our finances are looking healthy, and wishes to thank the Regions 'for the overall increase on last year's figures approx. £21K from 2019'

Nominations – One Trustee and 5 Sub-Committee members were successful. The 'Nominations Committee' works hard to evaluate candidates, putting their evidence and recommendations to the whole board for election, at the board meeting.

Conference Steering Committee - this consists of the 6 Conference Committee Chairs, the Conference Chairperson, 2 Board Members, the General Secretary and Conference co-ordinator. The committee will be having a meeting in January to determine if our Conference will be live or Zoom for 2021.

Communications & Electronic Communications Sub-Committee – the board approved the advertising of the position of Web-Manager. This will be a paid position and will be open to, but not limited to, members of the Fellowship. Web Manager could be home based though would have to accept that travel to York would be a regular requirement.



This position does not exclude the Electronic Communications Sub-Committee Web Master. It is to fulfil the constant updating requirement of the AA website; also to redesign the website to be simply user friendly for the fellowship, and particularly to be attractive and easy to use for the general public, respecting limitations of website navigation. The P.I. Sub-committee suggests a comprehensive resource library.

AA Survey – Mani M (N.A.T.) reports our survey is now live. Any of our Groups can take part – if your group has not received the survey please contact GSO as our target is total sampling. Deadline 30th November.

Westminster Parliamentary Presentation – the replenished committee, including 2 members of SE Region, meets on Zoom on 24th November to initiate preparations for the presentation planned for 11th May. The form of the event will be chosen early in 2021.

Safeguarding and Personal Conduct – the draft document is now prepared for Conference consideration. It will be circulated to all delegates well before Conference.

Charles R. (SER Board Trustee)

