
Interlink

The Newsletter for Southdown Intergroup

August 2021

Editor: Lucy S lucyself@hotmail.com

Editor's Message

Welcome to all our fellowship friends.

It's my second issue of Interlink as Editor and, having attended a few Liaison Officer meetings, I am blown away by the efforts of those who put in service behind the scenes for the South Down fellowship. I've been sober for a few years, but I honestly had no idea how much time and effort it takes by a handful of people to keep our "back of house" running smoothly.

From those carefully cultivating the archives to ensure that the rich experience of the AA members that have gone before us isn't lost, to those hardworking fellows finding new and creative ways to spread the message across prisons, armed forces and healthcare institutions – not to mention those manning our AA helpline and 12 Step list, maintaining the South Down website and members connecting our voices with the wider UK AA network; it is a privilege to see the work in action.

While our Liaison Officers are busy getting the word out to potential new members, we can all support them by ensuring that the quarterly updates of their hard work are noticed. Whether that's simply sharing a copy of Interlink in a physical meeting, posting the PDF in WhatsApp groups or sharing a few snippets with a fellow over coffee.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and do visit the Darkness into Light exhibition at Portsmouth Central Library in September (full update on the project below!)

Lucy S

Darkness into Light *UPDATE*

EXHIBITIONS

There are two exhibitions in the Southdown Intergroup geographical area in the next six months:

The first is a trial exhibition that is being hosted by SE Region at Portsmouth Central Library during September 2021. This is the forerunner for the Darkness into Light roadshow exhibition that is planned to celebrate 75 years of AA in Great Britain in 2022. Please see the enclosed Flyer for this event.



The second exhibition is being hosted by Southdown Intergroup at Chichester Library in January 2022.

PREPERATIONS

As an Intergroup we need to be prepared for these two primary purpose events. We can do this by making our members aware that the exhibitions are taking place. All members are very welcome, along with professionals and members of the public, to visit the exhibitions, which are free of charge.

TELEPHONE

The telephone service needs to be aware of what is happening, so that the responders have the information to hand, if queries are raised, about the exhibitions, 12th Stepping, open and closed meetings and who to refer to if professionals require external presentations.

WHERE TO FIND

Groups need to fill in the amended pink forms to highlight when their groups are open and closed. It is proposed to have paper where to finds available at both exhibitions, as well as digital information.

PUBLIC INFORMATION *CALL FOR SERVICE*

It would be excellent if a Southdown member could come forward and fill the vacant post of Public Information Officer, to help deal with enquiries for presentations that may arise as a result of these exhibitions.

HELP *CALL FOR SERVICE*

Ellie is coordinating a list of email addresses for personnel, charities, and professionals who it is planned to invite, with digital flyers to the Portsmouth event. If you have anyone who could be added to this list please email Ellie on: pi@aadarknessintolight.org.uk

Danny is organising the hand delivery of flyers to businesses in Portsmouth and surrounding districts. If you would like to help with this task, please contact him on: health.southdown@aamail.org

Patrick is organising a rota of members (two per day) to care take the exhibition for two hours every day at lunch time, Mondays to Saturdays, during the month of September 2021 at Portsmouth Central Library. If you could help with this, please, either contact Patrick direct or email: convener@darknessintolight.org.uk

WEBSITES

There are two websites for the event:

One is currently live and for members use with the aim of raising awareness of the project details. It can be found at: <https://fellowship.aadarknessintolight.org.uk>

The password is: s3enity

Please do pass this on to members, with the request to retain the password for members only. The public facing website is planned to go live in August 2021

www.aadarknessintolight.org.uk



FLYER

Attached with this report is the Flyer for the Portsmouth Central Library exhibition, which is being held in September 2021. Please feel free to pass it on.

MEETING

There was a zoom meeting on Wednesday 28th July at 19:30 at which members were able to receive information and learn how they may contribute.

Chairperson's Report

I am really starting to feel a positive vibe around the fellowship at the moment!
I am hearing encouraging discussions around of exciting events that are going to be happening fairly soon. Whether that be the updates in respect of the Darkness into Light event or the national convention in Leeds or our closer to home conventions in Portsmouth or the Isle of Wight.

I am really enjoying hearing that fellowship events are soon going to be taking place, which after the last 18 months is a real positive.

As you will be aware we are having the next Intergroup on Zoom and part of the meeting will be a discussion and vote on how we move forward in respect of future meetings. It is important that we all contribute to this discussion and put across our point of view as there are many different views on how soon face to face meeting like Intergroup should resume especially with the varied demographic that this meeting attracts. Regardless of the outcome I always look forward to seeing everyone from the fellowship whether that be in person on a computer screen.

In respect of in person meetings that have started up I am hearing positive reports of larger numbers attending meetings as confidence in attending returns along with groups being sensible about the way the rooms are set out so members feel more comfortable in the environment.

We are also seeing a steady flow of tradition 7 being forwarded and made to our Intergroup which again is comforting as our fellowship continues to recover strongly from the pandemic.

The Keep in Touch meetings that we have with GSR's continue to be positive events as they not only give the Intergroup committee a valuable line of communication to group level but also the GSR's and their groups the ability to voice their views so that the relevant issues are discussed when needed.

On a slightly less positive note which I really do not want to dwell on too much, as you are probably aware Colin communicated some information on the preamble recently which as it turns out we were misadvised on by GSO. The issue was that myself and Colin both experienced some awful behaviour from members of the fellowship who had a certain point of view on this subject. As with all the communications that we send from the committee we are only disseminating information, as in line with tradition 4 each group is autonomous and each group conscious can reach its own decision on fellowship matters. We fully appreciate that there are many different opinions in the fellowship on a wide range of issues however it



is important that these are expressed in loving way with respect in line with the way any trusted servant should be treated. Love and tolerance is our code after all.

I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Matt P

chair.southdown@aamail.org

Liaison Officer reports:

Archives

ARCHIVE WORKSHOP

Helen ran a zoom workshop on Sunday 25 July 2021 around the **Role of the Archivist**.

GROUP HISTORIES

Mary is working on the Group Histories in preparation for our 75th Anniversary in 2022. Please complete an amended Southdown Intergroup pink form. This way your home group will have up to date information in the archives.

DIGITAL ARCHIVES

All those in service at Southdown are asked to retain their digital workings and forward to the archives on a regular basis. It would be especially useful if when rotating out, you wrote a brief history of the work service that had been undertaken in the previous three years. This way it is retained as part of our history, but also make life easier for those who may take up the post in later years. Contact details of professionals, organisations, and charities that you have been working with are always helpful.

STEERING COMMITTEE

It is a suggestion that the incoming archivist maintains a place on the Steering Committee. The archivist post is outside of the service structure and non-rotational. Some are in post for many years. Their experience of attending Intergroup assemblies can be especially useful, to share details of past events and procedures. The archivist has no vote at assembly.

Nick

archives.southdown@aamail.org

Telephones

The helpline continues to receive a steady volume of calls with an average for the past three months of 380 calls per month.

We currently have a full complement of responders and a valuable bank of reserve responders who support the service to cover annual leave and sickness etc. Currently with the new freedoms and summer months we can have as many as five changes to the regular rota per week.



Responders have experienced difficulties recently in contacting 12th Step volunteers, with some of them making five to six calls before getting a 12th Stepper. On many occasions their calls are not being returned. It would be very helpful if 12th Step volunteers could keep eye on their phones and at a minimum acknowledge the call; even it is not convenient to help at that time.

CALL FOR SERVICE

I am always interested in hearing from people who would like to do telephone service. It carries a minimum of one year's sobriety requirement plus ideally the person should have a home group and a sponsor too. Full training is provided and unlimited support in those initial few weeks of service.

Greg B

telephones.southdown@aamail.org

12th Step Co-ordinator

The secure electronic online 12 Step list is being used by the telephone helpline responders to access up-to-date contact details and information such as when each 12 Stepper last accepted a referral and their current availability.

New 12th Steppers are being introduced to the role by their sponsor or GSR and we received four new registrations during the quarter.

The third e-mail correspondence and newsletter were sent to the 12 Step list in June 2021. The email requested that people reply to confirm their willingness to do 12 Step service and to update us on their availability and contact details.

As of 14th July, there were 169 people on the 12 Step list.

Copies of the 12 Step Newsletter and Newcomer Information Sheet can be requested via email from: 12step.southdown@aamail.org

Clare M

12step.southdown@aamail.org

ECLO

I was busy this quarter, mostly updating the website with the most up-to-date lists of online and physical meeting schedules. In the past month seven online meetings have closed down, with only one shifting to hybrid.

I've taken to sending the updated master meetings spreadsheet to GSO once a week on Fridays, normally by Tuesday the following week the changes have been made. I don't think it's fair to GSO to send updates more regularly than that but will take guidance on the



question. 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 six 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.

In order to try and keep the spreadsheet as a useful resource for everyone, including email and phone number details for GSRs, I prefer if Secretaries / Chairs can send the original email over from the GSR as this allows me to also go straight back to the GSR in question rather than hear of changes through the email updates to all the GSRs by being cc'd on that. If I'm only cc'd then I have to chase back through Chair / Secretary which takes up their time and mine.

Andrew
ECLO, Southdown Intergroup
ecomm.southdown@aamail.org

Health

Due to COVID restrictions being relaxed slightly, communication is beginning with hospitals re physical presentations and/or meetings with professionals taking place within the grounds.

St Richards Chichester: Trial meeting started on the 7th July within hospital grounds. Research done so as not to overlap other Chichester meetings.

- Munro Unit
- Wednesdays 6–7pm
- Service positions filled on temporary basis
- All relevant AA literature to run meeting (scrolls / preamble / Big Books etc.) were donated from fellowship and gratefully received.
- Conscience meetings held in aiming to keep with all AAs traditions.
- So far, attendance from patients and fellowship members has been high.

Thank you to all involved in starting up the meeting and to all in the fellowship for the support in making it happen.

AA Presentation for learning Health professionals booked for 11th August.

Alcohol specialist team at St Richards remain open, eager and willing to work alongside AA.

IOW Hospital St Marys – Hospital is easing restrictions and 12 steppers are in process of being COVID vetted to enable safe visits (12 Step) to the still suffering.

AA Packs for patients and professionals

These have been distributed to, and received by IOW St Marys and St Richards Chichester. Both packs contain various and relevant AA information alongside a 'Keep it simple A.B.C guide' card.



I am also looking for Step 1 share magazines to replenish more of the **Patient Packs** so if anyone has any they wish to donate please let me know as would like to send to QA Portsmouth and Bognor as soon as able

The **ABC Keep it simple card** can also be used by any of us in helping the newcomer, so if any GSRs are interested for distribution purposes within your Home groups (or even to carry on your person), please do contact me as I will be more than happy to give you some.

I attended an AA presentation workshop via TEAMS for Health professional in Brighton / Sussex on 25th June. Hosted by Robin H (Health subcommittee) and attended by various other fellowship members. A very powerful, valuable and humbling experience for all concerned and definitely helped with tradition 5.

CALL FOR SERVICE

I am looking for members who may be interested in doing service within health e.g. communicating with and delivering AA info to Health professionals / centres / chemists / Doctors surgery's and other health organisations in your local area so if you are interested, please contact me.

Danny S
Alcoholics Anonymous Health Liaison Officer
health.southdown@aamail.org phone 07429928992

Prisons and criminal justice

All meetings at Parkhurst and Albany prisons are still suspended due to coronavirus. At present there is no indication when these will recommence.

Isle of Wight Convention 2022:

Dates are confirmed as 25th to 27th February for the 2022 Isle of Wight Convention (higher power willing!). The venue for this will be the Ocean View Hotel in Shanklin.

John.K
yoda9957@yahoo.co.uk

Vacant Service Positions

Share
Public Information Liaison Officer
Young Persons Liaison Officer
Armed forces Liaison Officer
Employment Liaison Officer
Regional Officer



Region

South East Region Assembly 192:
POST CONFERENCE Sunday 27 June 2021

The Conference Delegates who attended Conference in April 2021 went through every Committee Question asked by the fellowship and reported back in great detail – the results have already been distributed to the fellowship by way of the Summer Edition of AA Service News a link to which is attached here for reference



The following specific comments came out of discussions, which might be relevant to Southdown Intergroups and our meetings.

Committee 1 Q1 A – Service Handbook Chapter 10, all views raised are with Telephone Service UK to take forward and recommend changes.



Question 3 – Committee and Conference felt the question was unclear and that we need to remember that Intergroups are autonomous.

Committee 3 Q1 – New Meeting Guidance

Recommends primary purpose per Tradition 5, plus looking at local area and possibly joining other close by intergroups

Committee 3 Q3 – One Member/One Vote

Each group is autonomous and needs to agree a statement on who can vote, just Home Group members or whoever is in the meeting during the Conscience Meeting. Literature committee to review see official report in AA Service News.

Committee 4 Q1 – Tradition 2, Tradition 12 and The AA Group Pamphlet explains rotation.

Committee 4 Q3 – Review Website and Service Handbook – unanimously agreed.

Committee 6 Q1 – Reaching out to ethnic minority communities, more primary purpose work required

Invite community leaders to Darkness into Light.

Committee 6 Q3 – Online service 14 different examples were mentioned and full list will be distributed at next Assembly

The main discussion regarding Conference was about the Safeguarding Policy which had been offered to the fellowship for discussion much too late for inclusion in our Questions for Conference meetings and it was nationally felt that for such an important matter this was not acceptable. GSO had had so many complaints prior to Conference that 60 amendments had been made to the original draft document.

It was proposed that the document be withdrawn, but it was finally agreed that as the Conference did not feel it had sufficient information or time to fully deal with this document it would be left as ‘live’ and that Regional Assemblies would hold a workshop where two board members would be in attendance, early Intergroup workshops need to be held to advise Region on what arises during their discussions and strongly recommended, as changes need to be approved in time for the publication of AA Service News Winter Edition 2021.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Officers: Chair

Liaison Officers: Armed Services, Health, Employment, Prisons, Young Persons’, (all immediate) Regional Treasurer. (November)

Alternate Delegates x 3 (immediate) Alternate Delegate (November) Conference Delegate (November)

Moir

Regional Rep Southdown



Upcoming Events

Portsmouth One-Day Convention

(TBC)

CELEBRATE SOBRIETY

Date: Sunday 3rd October 2021, doors open for registration at 9:30am

Location: Royal Maritime Club, Queen's Street, Portsmouth

I am happy to say, subject to acceptance at the next Intergroup Assembly, all our Core Committee posts will be filled. We would like to thank everyone for their patience while we have watched and waited for a break in the COVID clouds that have, for so long, prevented us from holding an event worthy of our Southdown Intergroup.

A provisional date for our diaries is Sunday 3rd October 2021. I must stress this is provisional subject to a number of factors. We placed our bid for a booking with the venue as soon as news broke that COVID restrictions were going to be relaxed making the Convention forecast reassuring but, as I write this at the last minute for publishing the venue have yet to respond which they will as soon as the dust has settled in their booking department. The joys of electronic communication make this much less of a problem than it would have been fifteen years ago!

Of course the concerns our country may yet return to tighter restrictions is a possibility we must all live with. This, again, can be easily disseminated with best use of our much-improved Intergroup communications.

There is nothing we can do to beat this monumental health threat so we have had to surrender to it. We had to believe there would be a return to some level of sanity when a power greater than our Assembly decided we were ready to begin again. Your Convention Committee have kept faith in this and it looks as though we have been rewarded. Watch this space, October event to be confirmed.

Patrick

Convenor Portsmouth

