

Interlink

The newsletter for Southdown intergroup

In This Issue

We talk to Nick about being an AA archivist

We learn about the new Intergroup committee

We shine a spotlight on summer picnic in the park

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Editor's Message

Greetings to all members of our Southdown fellowship!

Happy to report that this issue of Interlink is packed with great content. It's been a full and rewarding few months, from sizzling summer events to creating new committees to busy AA bees diligently doing service to help the still suffering among us.

We can't wait for you to dive into Dani's evocative description of our recent Southdown 'summer picnic in the park' and to read our lovely Liaison Officer reports. Not to mention hear from new Committee Chair and Electronic Communications Officer Andy on the brand new Intergroup Committee which will hopefully bring more support into the lives of our hardworking LOs.

Big thanks to our Archivist Nick who has taken part in our regular Q&A slot this quarter. He has written an impassioned three-parter on why we should all be thinking about taking up the baton as he looks to rotate out after almost 20 years of service. It's a truly inspiring read.

Finally Greg B will come to the end of his tenure as Telephone Liaison Officer role in February 2023. Don't miss his rundown of reasons this role is a cracking bit of service for someone looking to step up.

As always, I am in awe of those around me that give their time and energy so cheerfully in the pursuit of a sober day for all of us. I'm very grateful to be able to do my bit by helping to share it with the wider group.

Yours in fellowship,

Lucy S
Interlink Editor
Lucy S, Interlink Editor

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OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer and really starting to get used to being back to normal meetings face to face meetings, I can really feel the fellowship being put back into our fellowship.

As a consequence of Covid and other factors we are struggling to fill service positions, this seems to be a problem from group level right through to Intergroup and regionally.

I am going to keep my spiel short this time as Andy N, the Chair of our new Liason Officer committee, is going to introduce our new service committee which is designed to more effectively carry the message at Intergroup level than we have been able to recently.

I will leave you with one thought - who was there for you when you came in? Without service positions being filled we don't have an effective fellowship so please consider if you are doing your fair share.

Yours in Fellowship

Matt, **Chair Southdown Intergroup**

chair.southdown@aamail.org

Intergroup Vacancies

- **Telephone Liason Officer (starting February 2023)**



Q&A WITH NICK

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

I have been archivist for Southdown Intergroup since 2003. Before I was a GSR trying to control my home group and needed to hand over! The plan was to do some service at Intergroup, and I thought being an archivist would suit me well. Archivists have no part in the service structure and have no vote at Intergroup. So, I could just attend, listen, make notes and keep my mouth shut. That was my plan, but it did not quite work out that way. First of all, it became a requirement that the archivist post would be non-rotational. Then we started a group to publish the Southdown archives. I was however fortunate that Ruth and Joyce, the former archivists had kept a tidy and informative set of archives.

What is the highlight of doing this role?

Most definitely keeping in touch with fellow archivists and members.

An archivist needs to be proactive.

I had not a clue when I started in the role. Joyce finished her term in 1997, I came into the fellowship in 1998 and started the post in 2003. I had enormous support from members of the national archive network. Particularly from Kevin in Coventry. He remains an archivist today. From two boxes our archives have expanded over the years. Each year the archive network holds a two-day meeting at GSO in York.

It is an opportunity to meet old friends and new, whilst at the same time regenerating our spiritual archive batteries. A great highlight in this post has been the publication of the Southdown Legacy, which is an archive newsletter. There is in fact one being currently prepared.

We have a new liaison officer committee and LOC Chair Andrew tells us all about it...

What do Liaison Officers do? Bill W has this to say...

"To reach more alcoholics, understanding of AA and public goodwill toward AA must go on growing everywhere. We need to be on still better terms with medicine, religions, employers, government, courts, prisons, mental hospitals and all enterprises in the alcoholism field."

Put simply, an AA Liaison Officer (LO) has the role of carrying the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic, which is the primary purpose of AA. We do this by getting in touch with the relevant staff in any organisation who is in a position to pass on the knowledge of the existence of AA and what it can do for the still suffering alcoholic. Having knowledge of a sector means the Liaison Officer stands a better chance of being able to effectively carry the message to that sector (i.e traditionally LO roles have been split into Armed Forces, Health, Public Information, Young People and so on.)

For some 5 or 6 years, and those are as far back as easily accessible records go, Southdown Intergroup have had an ongoing issue with the recruitment of Liaison Officers. This has led to no-one carrying the message to sectors wherein there is a vacancy for LO. This leads to Southdown Intergroup failing in some areas of our Primary Purpose.

So it's time to try something new...

The Liaison Officer Committee (LOC) was voted into existence at the most recent meeting of Intergroup GSRs. It is hoped that as a result of having a pool of LO resources, rather than a dedicated or absent resource, will enable better delivery of our Primary Purpose.

The LOC will initially focus on project work into healthcare and clerical. This is due to some members of the LOC having had ideas about how to reach out into these sectors. The LOC welcome suggestions from any member of AA for outreach project ideas into any sector. The idea is that these projects can draw on the resources of a number of members of the LOC rather than being down to a single individual to deliver and therefore stand a higher chance of success.

The other founding principal of the LOC is to drive engagement and service from all members into all sectors. The vast majority of AA members have had experience in the professional world and this experience is invaluable in carrying the message. By moving to a project based methodology, it will allow members to suggest and work on outreach drives for the duration of that project rather than have to run for and be elected as an LO on a fixed term. Net result means more people in recovery!

Andrew, Electronic Communications Liaison Officer & LOC Chair

ecomm.southdown@aamail.org

Q&A WITH NICK (CONT.)

What impact do you think doing the role has had on your own recovery?

In short, it has helped me grow up a bit and gain sobriety. There are always things to do and people to speak to. Archivists are a friendly bunch. Displaying at conventions, including the Southern and Northern Conventions, has brought me in contact with people from all over the country. It is not surprising this includes folk from across the border, for they are passionate about archives in Scotland. The biggest impact on my recovery has been that this role has over the years, led me to other archive activities, like participating in the Magical History Tour and Darkness into Light projects. I have also been privileged to serve twice on the archive sub committee to the Board. However, since becoming SE Region archivist, it is now time to hand over the batten and let another enthusiast participate in this beautiful way of life, as local archivist. We are never far from help.

"it is now time to hand over the batten and let another enthusiast participate in this beautiful way of life, as local archivist. We are never far from help.."



South East Region

195th Assembly 2022

The assembly was held on Zoom and was opened by Patrick (Chair) at 10.30 am with the preamble. Sue (Vice Chair) gave instructions for the workshops.

Regional Reps Workshop

Adrian (Brighton) took the chair and invited topics: communications, WhatsApp, tradition 7 payments, conference questions, and sharing email addresses were suggested:

Communications: Sally P (H&R) set up a WhatsApp group for RRs, not liked by everyone, however good source of feedback

Email addresses: Confidential list gives everyone's email address; several RRs have had difficulty accessing the filestore. Advised one should make a request to York and receive back a pin to enable access. Ask admin@aamail.org Use <http://aa.files.org/login-aa.do> I (Jim Southdown IG) asked how we might obtain generic region rep email addresses, decided to take up with RECLO. Liz (E Sussex) suggested make up own RR email address using Google because of problems with AA system with passwords.

Tradition 7 monies: Several RRs said the £1 was given 20 years ago and that in many meeting this was still the usual contribution, with increases in prices the cost of a beer (£5) would seem appropriate. I (Jim Southdown) mentioned the use of phone based banking apps such as Revolut. Paul (WKent) makes a point of explaining to groups the true cost of running a group, however delicately! Stuart (NESurrey) Their meeting are hybrid with a pot and online payments using QR code or barcode, however meeting does need to be self-sufficient. EJ(ESussex) use PayPal and pot as both meetings and society become gradually cashless. Sally (H&R) do monthly payment and that we are able to contribute more at Zoom meetings as we are saving petrol etc. Liz (ESussex) Online bank account can have one person operating the account with secondary authorisation.

Note-taking at assemblies and sharing back to IGs: Suggested take notes and await minutes and treasurer's report.

Questions for conference: Marylyn (H&R) had a meeting with a conference delegate to explain the questions. Paul (WSussex) one question a week in the business section of the meeting. TomB (Northdown) liked the idea of a separate meeting just to discuss QFCs. Paul (WKent) had a workshop with a conference delegate to explain the QFC later meeting to feedback responses to delegate. Stephen (MidSurrey) had left the literature questions as nobody had read the relevant passages. MarkF (EKent) can send comments to the conference delegates directly until end of March.

195TH ASSEMBLY 2022

Main Assembly

Reports of the workshops:

Conference Delegates workshop: All 6 back. Need dates for the post-conference meetings. Groups to consider the main questions for conference, not the literature questions. Email confdel.se@aamail.org with conference questions. There is a leaflet on how to raise a conference question.

ECLO Workshop

3 people attended. Discussion of email migration problems. New system has teething problems. Access to confidential list on file store. Online meetings can remain franchised within structure.

Finance workshop

Sonia reported that only 3 treasurers attended out of 11 IG treasurers. Region moving from Barclays to Unity. Format for how reports are presented. Discussed gratitude week and how monies are passed up the chain. Intergroup Chair and Secretaries workshop: Patrick reported news that 2 members had sought restraining orders from one another, a sense of balance is needed. Comment on medication in a meeting. Some controlling behaviour by right wing people to newcomers in SE London.

PI/Employment/Health/Prisons/Probation workshop

Ellie discussed highlights, EKent adverts on buses and surgeries. NWSurrey bus campaign. Nick EKent described a presentation to students and medical school. WhatsApp group established.

Regional Reps workshop

Adrian chaired the workshop and presented the topics; Communication, WhatsApp groups, Tradition 7 pots. Suggestions the true costs of meetings should be emphasised. Cashless society and PayPal.

Telephones workshop

AlanT (RTLO) 3 different versions BT cloud systems. Mentioned nuisance calls. 12th step guidelines, old guard still going out on their own.

Main assembly

Chairman Patrick read concepts and pledge; Secretary (Jan) apologies from Maureen, Jane and Tyeacer (WSx) Minutes revised edition with additions. Vacancies, applicants need a nomination from the secretary or Chairman of their IG or from an officer of Region.

Election AlanM moving to Brighton prospective RECLO, was co-opted rather than elected as position not advertised twice.



South East Region

Regional Reports

EKent (John) Had presentation on neuro problems with an explanation of ADHD. Signatories revamped. Workshop in January QFC explained and pre conference meeting.

ESussex (Emma Jane) IG assembly in January, listed officers needed and those in position. Telephones have moved to cloud. Carrying message to psychiatric wards.

Hastings and Rother (Sally) DIL report for input from September. Shirley & Jan gave QFC workshop last week.

MidSurrey (Stephen) Assembly 07/12/21 Vacancies RR and Safeguarding LO (to backup safeguarding policy and be point of contact for issues. Hope to restart bus advertising after Covid.

Northdown (Adrian) Vacancies, sadly no takers. Convention 26/06/22. Darkness into Light (DIL) venue at Free Community Centre, Winchester. 1 meeting at Winchester prison. Need home for archive material.

NESurrey (Stuart) Assembly 25th October. Many IG vacancies.

Solent (StevieK) IG assembly 11/11/21. Discussion on Where to Find (WTF) pdf versions.

Southdown (James) Bullet points of the written report given

WKent (Helen) Sadly Fiona RR has died. Discussion of pdf v printed versions of WTFs

WSx (Paul) Need YPLO, Robin appointed Health LO. Mini convention 13/01/22. A meeting.

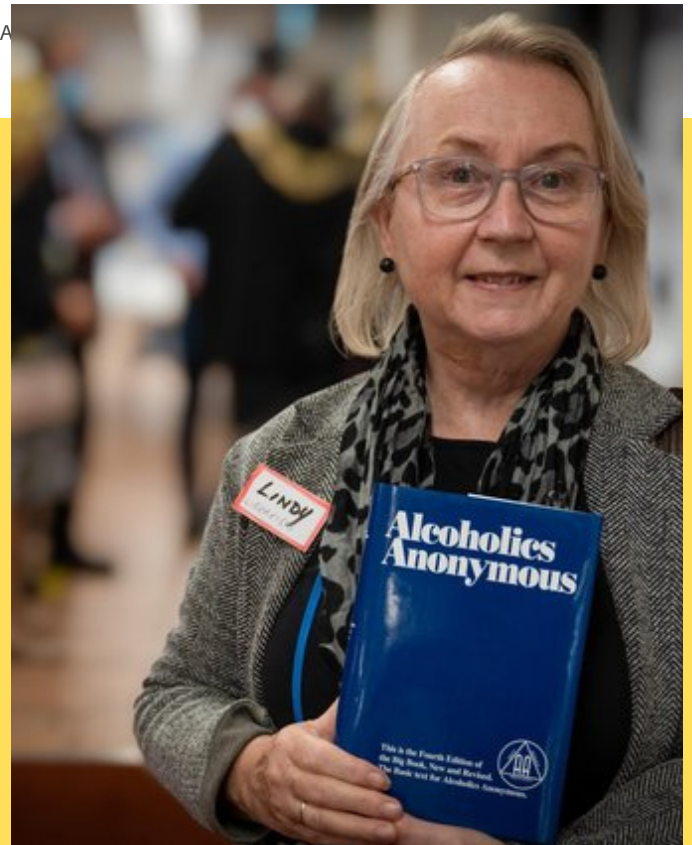
Darkness into Light

Darkness into Light continues its success across Sussex! For those that missed it, Darkness into Light is part of Alcoholics Anonymous 75th Anniversary celebrations in Great Britain and is a retrospective of our work in the community.

Open to all and free to attend, it's a fantastic opportunity to learn more about AA. The project website is currently displaying lots of useful information for the newcomer, sponsees, 12 steppers, existing members, professionals, the public and family members including:

- Six short AA videos
- Ten AA members recordings
- Al-Anon information
- Past events

Visit www.aadarknessintolight.org.uk to find out more



Liaison Officer's Reports

Archives

Pink Forms

Groups are asked to send in pink forms to the secretary and archivist at Southdown, together with GSO. GSO has now published the National Where to Find 2022. Does your group have two telephone contact numbers? This is very helpful for 12 steppers and visitors.

New role!

If you enjoy archiving, there are quite a few tasks to be done, and your help would be much appreciated. Southdown still needs an archivist. If you would like to know more, please feel free to contact me or alternatively come and join us at the archive workshop in Burgess Hill on Sunday 25th September 2022.

Thanks,

Nick, Archives Liaison Officer

archives.southdown@aamail.org



AA Convention
24-26 February 2023
Broadway Park Hotel, Sandown



Pathfinder
Group of
Alcoholics Anonymous

UPDATED

HAPPY DESTINY A Day of AA

Sunday, 11th Sept 2022
Long Ashton Community Centre,
Bristol, BS41 9DP

Speakers	Drumming
Lunch	Meditation
Fellowship	Buskers' Corner
Tai Chi	Raffle
Yoga	Evening Pizza Party
11th Step	Outdoor
Workshop	Meeting

Tickets £10
+£1 Booking Fee At
tinyurl.com/hapdes

Registration: 9:00am, Meetings: 10:00am - 6pm, then Party
info@pathfinderaa.group ~ 07965 193553



Liaison Officer's Reports

Telephones

·The past quarter has seen a steady volume of calls, although year on year as a team are handling approximately 100 less calls per month.

·Although we currently have a full complement of responders, we still continue to see a high degree of "churn" amongst responders which can stretch the service on occasion. This problem is further exaggerated as we enter the summer months and having to facilitate responder holiday cover. We are always keen to hear from anyone interested in supporting the Southdown telephone service on a reserve responder basis.

·In February 2023 I rotate out of my role as TLO (Telephone Liaison Officer) after 3 years service. It is now time in my last six months of service to identify my successor and start sponsoring them into the role. This will hopefully ensure a smooth transition. So, anybody interested feel free to contact me for an informal discussion in the first instance.

·We continue to block withheld telephone numbers from 18:00 to 07:00, this has greatly assisted the evening and overnight responders. This measure has significantly reduced the number of nuisance calls and allowed responders to focus on the genuine callers.

Greg B, Telephone Liaison Officer
telephones.southdown@aamail.org



12th Step

A quarterly email was sent out at the beginning of May to confirm if volunteers were still willing and also to update contact details if required. Many thanks to those that have responded.

I'm happy to report an increase in responders volunteers on the Isle of Wight thanks to several members coming forward. Many thanks to those involved!

As of 2nd July 2022 there are 173 12th Step Volunteers on the list. I've asked the telephone responders for feedback on how often they find it difficult to find a 12th Step Volunteer. The general consensus was that there was a lack of female responders volunteers in the northern areas (North of Petersfield). If there are any ladies in that area who would be interested in helping the still suffering alcoholic please do get in touch.

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

"There is a lack of female 12-step responders volunteers North of Petersfield."

WHY BE A TLO?

"Telephone service has been an important part of my recovery. It has allowed me to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic, whilst also acting as a constant reminder that I do not want to return to the madness. Lastly It allowed me to be part of a team of like minded people."

It seemed a natural progression after 18 months of telephone responding to put myself forward for the role of TLO for Southdown Intergroup. This helped to keep me busy and sober during lockdown as well as maintaining a much needed helpline during a very challenging period. It also provided an opportunity to continue doing a piece of service I enjoyed and develop my experience and skills further.

Since becoming TLO I have had the pleasure of getting to know many more fellowship members across the Intergroup and have also gained a better understanding of Intergroup and its activities and got to know other TLOs within the SouthEast region.

It's been an exciting transition period over the past few years with the introduction of new BT software, as well streamlining many of the other working practices. I am pleased to have been part of implementing these changes (there are already proposals from the Telephone National subcommittee for further improvements).

This will hopefully provide new opportunities and challenges for my successor and the team. All in all I have thoroughly enjoyed embracing responsibilities that the role and the service has offered me, thanks to my sobriety and the help of this Fellowship."

Greg B

interlink spotlight

DANI SHARES HER EXPERIENCE OF THE SUMMER PICNIC IN THE PARK

I've just come back from the summer picnic in the park and loved it. There were about 70 people and it took place in Staunton Country Park on Sunday 31st July. The organisers sorted free teas and soft drinks for everyone and various sweet snacks; plus people brought homemade cakes and their own picnics.

We all sat around on picnic blankets and camping chairs and it was really nice. The atmosphere was super chilled and relaxed. There was parents, partners, children and dogs including fellows so it felt very inclusive and welcoming - like a big, extended community.

For me, it was nice to see people I hadn't seen for a while as it brought together a lot of different meetings across the intergroup. A lot of fellows I know go to regular meetings, so to get people together that don't see each other every week was a lovely idea.

For someone like me in their first 18 months, fellowship time out of the rooms is so important so you know recovery is not just meetings and step work. That it's also about having those connections and making friendships, especially early on when you still feel so lonely a lot of the time.

In the Big Book it says "we are not a glum lot" and I think events like this show we absolutely insist on enjoying life. Everyone was laughing, smiling, catching up, checking in on each other, having a general chit chat and enjoying the sunshine. We did get a few drops of rain but it was a beautiful day and everyone seemed in good spirits. It was nice to meet family members - some people were playing football and games with kids and dogs were running around.

For me its just a great example of the support network of AA. The bit in the book which tells us that fellows are often people who would not normally mix in the outside world. That's what this was - young, old, male, female, people with different backgrounds all coming together because we're a community and we have this common thread. The fellowship brings so many people from different walks of life together and it's been awesome for me to get to know people, especially as I'd usually only hang out with people my age.

I would definitely do it again. It's a beautiful thing to have a place to socialise and be reminded we can all have this fun life without alcohol and share it outside of meetings.

Dani

