

# Board Reports

to

# Conference 2018

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

To remind us all of the criteria set by Conference:

### **Conference 2016, Committee 3, question 2**

***Would Conference consider the feasibility of holding a single celebratory convention in 2022 to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> year of AA in Great Britain? This could be along the lines of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration held in 1997. The 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary event involved the participation of all 16 Regions of Great Britain and Continental Europe and was held at a convenient location in order to maximise participation across the whole Fellowship.***

*This Committee unanimously agrees that it is feasible to hold a single celebratory convention in 2022 to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> year of AA in Great Britain.*

*Therefore we recommend that the Board (GSB) appoints a convention committee, formed from the Regions as soon as possible and pays special attention to the following:*

- 1. Finance ( aim to be self-supporting )*
- 2. Location*
- 3. Lessons learnt from the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations*

*All recommendations on Committee 3 were passed with a two-thirds majority.*

### **Progress so far:**

1. Finance      A complete costing of the event has been carried out to ensure, as far as possible, that the event will be self supporting.
2. Location      The event will be held at the Leeds Direct Arena. Several locations were considered taking into account geographical considerations (maximum accessibility for all across the whole of GB), transportation links (road, rail, air), venue capacity and costs.
3. Lessons learnt from the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. All records of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary have been reviewed in detail and lessons hopefully learnt.

### THE LOGO COMPETITION

Over 100 entries were received, all were considered and eventually one was decided upon which will be announced at Conference.

The Sub-Committee

Members of our Committee come from all over Great Britain: North East, Midlands, South East, Scotia, North West and South West and bring a lot of convention experience with them.

I would like to thank them for all the work they have undertaken and their enthusiasm.

I look forward to the next stages of this event to put in place and which will be reported to you next year.

Roger E

Trustee

7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention Committee

## AA Service News

AA Service News is the General Service Board's principle medium for the communication of Service events and developments throughout AA Great Britain.

It is distributed quarterly, and I am indebted to members for their contributions, and for the work of GSO staff in its production and distribution.

Articles within it give particular emphasis to matters affecting our primary purpose - to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Two editions concentrate on Conference Questions and their recommendations. The other two contain a variety of service topics, including Parliamentary events in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Westminster and service workshops and other events in all areas of the country.

Each edition mentions a specific Concept, a Calendar of AA events in Great Britain and overseas, In Memoriam donations and notices to fill vacancies on all the General Service Board sub-committees. A challenge is always to make AA Service News attractive and relevant to ensure the widest possible readership.

Three copies of AASN are posted to the mailing contacts for all Groups in the Great Britain Service Structure. It is also posted to all Intergroup and Regional Officers, and to the General Service Board. If you do not see AASN at your local Group, please check that your Group Registration details are up-to-date via the Pink Form at GSO. If in doubt, please phone GSO to check.

I'm also indebted to the many volunteers who give up their time on a Saturday morning to pack the envelopes to distribute AA Service News. This takes place four times a year at GSO, and each pack also contains flyers and other documents.

If you have news or experience of a service event, please tell AA Service News.

Jeff B  
Trustee  
AA Service News

## Archives

Re the Borthwick project, a cataloguing archivist has inspected the material and we await the appointment of an archivist to work between ourselves and the Borthwick. The Archives Sub Committee of the GSB has been working hard at organising the archives at GSO.

The Archivists Workshop in September '17 was very successful with 32 keen attendees from Intergroups and Regions were sharing experience on several archival issues. The one sad note was that John M from S E Region has decided to stand down, his work is published for all to see and leaves 'big shoes to fill'.

The highlight of the archival year was the opening on Friday 6th Oct 2017 of the display of Scottish AA Archives staged by the Scottish Archives Committee. 50 people attended including the daughter and granddaughter of Sir Phillip Dundas who brought AA to Scotland. His granddaughter (Henrietta) opened the exhibition and Andy C as assistant manager of Kelvingrove did a presentation to the press and TV accompanied by Jonathan Chick a former non-alcoholic trustee. The event was reported very positively in 11 newspapers and 2 BBC Scotland radio shows.

It has been a great success. Over 400,000 people have viewed this AA archives exhibition from 6/10/17 until 18/1/18.

Two signing in books have been filled with positive comments from the public, as well as some AA members. A DVD of the opening ceremony has been produced and is now in circulation. Parts of the display and the DVD will be shown at the Scottish National Convention at Stirling in May.

There was a World Museums Conference in Manchester recently at which the Scottish AA archives display was brought up as being a "positive link with the community".

There are many implications to be talked through by the Archives Committee as a successful result of this display, but one key factor is the possible linking of PI and Archives in carrying the AA message to the general public.

Congratulations to the Scottish Archives Committee, a job well done and let's hope it's just the start of similar projects to be staged in other museums around the country.

Joe H  
Trustee for Archives

## Armed Services

It is a great honour and privilege to serve as the Board Trustee with responsibility for Armed Services. I would like to give my vote of thanks to the Armed Services Sub-Committee (ASSC) for all the sterling work they carry out on behalf of the Armed Services both serving and veterans.

I would also like to give a huge thank you to all of the Groups, Intergroups and Regions who have been 'Carrying the Message of Alcoholics Anonymous' to the Armed Services and their families. No initiative goes unnoticed and my grateful thanks to all members concerned for their hard work and for making my role a great deal easier.

**Excerpt from Guideline 21:** AA and The Armed Services: 'Intergroups and Regions are responsible for the appointment of an Armed Services Liaison Officer [ASLO] to work in conjunction with other Intergroup and Regional officers. The role of the ASLO is to establish and maintain communication between Alcoholics Anonymous and The Royal Navy, The Army and The Royal Air Force and to report back at all areas within Intergroup or Region. It is also important to cultivate similar contact and communication with Community Welfare Officers and organisations such as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association (SSAFA) and Veterans-U.K. Familiarity with the local area and a thorough working knowledge of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2017 are vital before accepting the role of ASLO.

At the time of writing this update the Armed Services family at GSO is in a state of change as the incumbent Trustee will be rotating out of post and a new Trustee with responsibilities for Armed Services will be ratified at this year's Conference.

The ASSC has met twice this year where the Terms of Reference for the ASSC were updated and areas of responsibilities established.

It was agreed that an Armed Services 'News-Letter' would be produced and the 1<sup>st</sup> copy was issued in September.

An ongoing action is the effort to provide the Army Welfare Service (AWS) offices around the country with an AA connection. Areas covered so far: the north-west, the south-west, Edinburgh and Essex.

There are 34 Army HIVES' nationally who hold AA stories, pamphlet and flyers aimed at service personnel and veterans on Army HIVE blogs. This has gone live and is being rolled out on all Army HIVE blogs around the country, to which everyone in the Army has access. The materials will be permanently available on the blogs under 'health' or 'welfare' tabs. <http://www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/23438.aspx>

The ASSC undertook a request from the HIVES organisation to produce a poster highlighting the connection between PTSD and alcohol misuse.

This poster has been researched, edited and finalised and it will be presented to Conference 2018 for ratification before going to the HIVE organisation for use in their offices around the country

The AA website with relevance to the Armed Services was consolidated and updated with relevant current data and agreed methods of trying to expand the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to organisations with an interest in the welfare of the Armed Services and ex service personnel was agreed.

To this end we have continued to stay in contact with the organisations that are directly associated with the Services. For example:

- Director General, Army Medical Services.
- Services Medical Directorate.
- Service Base Medical Centres.
- SAAFA
- Royal British Legion.
- Combat Stress.
- Help the Hero's etc.

To further widen the carrying of the AA message ASSC members, RASLO's and ASLO's continue to make contact with Service Bases around the country to offer AA's services to their personnel. We continue to make progress in this area highlighted in Last Year's Report.

#### **Contacts continue to be made with**

- Local Councils (Armed Services Champion)
- Armed Services Covenant

Visits to ex service personnel residential units continue as highlighted in last years' update report GSO continues to place adverts in various service periodicals:

- Pathfinder (Resettlement Information Magazine)
- Soldier (Internal Army Magazine)
- The MoD intranet (Internal forces information website)

This list of contacts is not exhaustive but just examples of the good work being carried out all over the country by the dedicated team of RASLO's, ASLO's & GSO Staff.

The Armed Forces 12 step list continues to be maintained by a member of the ASSC, but more ex-service personal willing to be placed on this list to carry out this specific service would be welcomed.

New areas for expansion are being considered, a plan of action was formulated at the ASSC, RASLO's meeting which took place in York February 2018.

#### **Areas of interest:**

- Armed Services Health Fairs
- Royal Navy & Marine Reservists.
- Armed Services Day.
- Territorial Army.
- RAF Reservists.
- New Services Related Charities.
- Traumatic Stress Related Disorder Self Help groups

So, to summarise

If we hope to fulfil our commitment to Guideline 21 an increase in the Liaison Officers would be desirable. To date in the 15 Regions within the UK with 109 Intergroups and 4454 Groups registered at GSO. We have at present: 9 RASLO's and 31 ASLO's in place.

So as can be seen from these figures there are huge geographical gaps around the country where active coverage is unable to undertaken.

For us to fulfil this undertaking a full coverage of the UK mainland is desirable within the Armed Services discipline.

Therefore, this is an appeal for more ex-service personnel too step forward to assist in this vital area of recovery / service.

I offer this report for your consideration

Brian J  
Trustee for Armed Services

## Electronic Communications

AA's website, [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk), continues to attract a large number of users. Existing members of AA use the site to discover information about meeting-places and times; to be told about what is happening in our various branches of service; and to buy AA-related material, particularly literature, through our on-line shop.

Many newcomers first get in touch with AA through this site. Many of them who have further questions will use the email Helpline [help@aamail.org](mailto:help@aamail.org) where our Online Response Team will answer their queries.

In addition, there is a website based service called 'Chat Now', through which newcomers can be in direct contact with a member of the Fellowship.

James K  
Trustee for Electronic Communications

## Employment

As an Employment discipline it is our purpose to carry AA's message to employers. To this end 2017 has been a success.

There were several personnel changes during the year. In January Peter S. was appointed as Trustee for South West Region. In June we welcomed James C., Jim L. and Nick D. to the committee. Pat M. rotated out of the committee in June having served a four year term. Pat has since been appointed as Trustee for Glasgow Region. Maxine W. rotated out at our October meeting she too served four years on the committee. Maxine has now been appointed as Trustee for North East Region. At the November Board meeting it was announced that Clive K. has been appointed as Trustee for Eastern Region. We wish them all well in their new posts.

The year started with the first of four planned **Employment Sub Committee** meetings in January.

Work on our website continues throughout the year.

Annual Regional **Employment Liaison Officers** meeting took place at GSO in York on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> June. This meeting was preceded by a short Sub Committee meeting. Whilst the numbers attending the **Employment Liaison Officers** were low the content and quality of discussion was very positive. We received the reports from the Liaison Officers in attendance. Sub Committee members were impressed by the amount of work being carried out by the Liaison Officers throughout the country.

We have produced two HelloELO's newsletters during the year. The first was in July and the latest in December. The newsletters included articles from Sub Committee members and Liaison officers. At present it is intended that we continue to produce two newsletters per annum.

Our final Sub Committee meeting was held in October. We welcomed Denise H. Trustee for North West Region to the meeting. Denise will be taking over the role as Trustee for Employment when Sandy MacV rotates out as Trustee for Highland and Islands Region and present trustee for Employment at Conference 2018.

Throughout the year we have received reports from both Intergroup and Regional Employment Liaison Officers. They have been contacting a wide and varied number of employers from many different areas of business.

Liaison Officers have been in contact with:

**The Department of Works and Pensions, Legal Practices, Occupational Health, The Health Centre, Banks, Marks and Spencer's, John Lewis plus other mainline stores, Drug and Alcohol Partnerships Public Companies, Local Councils, Trade Unions and many others, passing on our message of Alcoholics Anonymous.**

Once again this has been a successful year for the Employment discipline. Thanks to the Sub Committee members and Liaison Officers for their hard work.

Sandy MacV  
Trustee for Employment

## **European Service Meeting**

The 19<sup>th</sup> European Service meeting held in York 2017 was a great success with 32 Countries represented by 50 delegates.

The atmosphere around the hotel and within the meeting rooms was electric with much happiness and goodwill directed to all participants.

This was coupled with a willingness to complete the tasks at hand with diligence great knowledge.

Old friendships were regenerated and new friendships forged during the weekend.

A massive vote of thanks to all GSO staff and Hotel personnel who worked tirelessly during the whole weekend to make the Convention a great success.

Theme of the Conference was:

### **PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES**

The Conference convened at 1700 and was opened with presentations from individual countries report highlights, this consisted of a 2-3 minute précis of the already posted reports from the 32 attending countries.

The Danish delegation failed to arrive due to mechanical problems with the plane, it was hoped they would appear the following day but that did not materialise.

The delegates had been assigned to committees prior to the start of the Conference. The committee themes were:

- Committee 1      Service
- Committee 2      Recovery
- Committee 3      Unity.

The discussions continued and a detailed dialogue preliminary reports on all three subjects were produced.

The Chairs and Alternates for all 3 Committees 2019 were selected and they are as follows:

- Committee 1 Chair      Yury T (Ukraine)
- Committee 1 Alternate      Pat D (Ireland)
- Committee 2 Chair      Lotus A (France)
- Committee 2 Alternate      Amanda S (Great Britain)
- Committee 3 Chair      Anastasia R (Switzerland {French})

- Committee 3 Alternate Ewa B (Sweden)

Again, the Conference delegates went to their pre-selected Workshops for discussions on the agenda topics of:

1. Preparing New People for Service
2. Sponsorship in AA.
3. Understanding of Principles before Personalities

The Chairs and Alternates for all 3 Workshops 2019 were selected and they are as follows:

- Workshop 1 Chair Walter Van den B (Belgium {Flemish})
- Workshop 1 Alternate Illiana T (Bulgaria)
- Workshop 2 Chair Porfirio (Portugal)
- Workshop 2 Alternate Aksels T (Latvia)
- Workshop 3 Chair Fatma Nur Ibaogiu Z (Turkey)
- Workshop 3 Alternate Marko A (Finland)

The Topics for ESM 2019 were selected and they are as follows:

Theme for 2019 is **An Unchanged Message in a Changing World**

The Workshop Topics for 2019 are as follows:

- Workshop 1 How can we benefit from the experience of rotated Trusted Servants
- Workshop 2 Back to Basics
- Workshop 3 Understanding and the Application of the 12 Concepts

The three reports were then presented in plenary session for general discussion by all of the delegates and the reports were finalised and voted upon.

A further Question & Answer / Open discussion session commenced. One of the questions asked was:

Why does the Russians send delegates from two different organisations?

The question proved difficult to answer as at the World Service meeting the Russians from only the organisation that holds the licencing franchise are invited. The question was finally answered to the satisfaction of the questioner and it is as follows:

Roger B General Secretary (AAGB) who stated:

There are currently 2 AA entities in Russia, one only with the publishing rights for literature. Previously only one was invited to The World Service Meeting. This year the organizing committee of the ESM made the decision to invite both. This was done, as efforts are ongoing to bring the 2 entities together, to assist with unity. It was the General Secretary's hope that this process will be successful and as a consequence in the future, the situation that occurred this year will not be repeated.

Conference reconvened for an AA sharing meeting with a theme of Anonymity in Service. Two delegates had been previously selected to share and this was followed by open floor sharing. This session continued until 2200 when the conference was concluded for the day.

Conference reconvened and the three workshops reports were presented in plenary session for general discussion by all of the delegates and the reports were finalised and voted upon.

This was the final phase of the 19<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting, where the 20<sup>th</sup> ESM Chair 2019 and World Service Meeting delegate 2018 were voted on:

The Chair for the 20<sup>th</sup> ESM 2019  
The Alternate Chair for the 20<sup>th</sup> ESM 2019  
The ESM Delegate for Next Year's World Service Meeting  
The Alternate ESM Delegate for Next Year's World Service Meeting

**Rita M (Italy)**  
**Lubomir B (Slovakia)**  
**Lotus A (France)**  
**Pat D (Ireland)**

The 19<sup>th</sup> ESM conference was closed by Michal S (Chair 2017) with a rendition of the Serenity Prayer given by all delegates in their native language and finally with the Serenity prayer by all in English.

I offer this report for your consideration.

Brian J  
Trustee and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year ESM Delegate

## Health

I'm pleased to say that the Health Subcommittee has recently recruited two new members. It now consists of Bob S, Gabriel S, Jan O, Phil H, Ranjan B, Robin H, and Stephen M, plus our non-alcoholic trustee Mani Mehdikhani and myself as chair.

Each member is allocated a number of Regions for which they will have an especial interest, encouraging and enabling the work of the Health Liaison Officers of that Region and the Intergroups that comprise it. Where there is no Liaison Officer the Subcommittee Member will do what they can to help enable any work to be carried out by other officers of the area to carry out that work, and if possible try to encourage recruitment of Health Liaison Officers.

This arrangement should assure that anyone who is interested in taking on the role of Health Liaison Officer, but is daunted by there being no one currently in place to provide help and guidance, can do so, confident that the Health Subcommittee will do all they can to help and support them, as I'm sure will the existing Health Liaison Officers from nearby areas.

The Subcommittee has also been busy this year working with the Literature Subcommittee to produce a new pamphlet "AA in Treatment Settings – How We Can Help" which is being presented to Conference for approval. It has also been involved in considering possible revisions to the existing Handbook to help keep it more focused on service work.

Thanks to the good work of the General Service Office in making arrangements, we have been able to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous has been well represented at a number of events aimed at professionals, sometimes these have been professionals working in general medicine, and others working in the more specialist areas of addiction and mental health. Among these events have been:

- NHS Expo
- Nursing in Practice (9 events)
- Primary Care & Public Health
- Pulse Live (2 events)
- RCGP Annual Primary Care
- RCGP Managing Drug & Alcohol Problems
- RCN Congress

In addition Continental European Region was able to ensure Alcoholics Anonymous was well represented at the European Conference on Mental Health, an English language convention that attracts professionals from across Europe, in 2017 was held in Berlin.

Within the Fellowship the work continues. In workshops, seminars and conventions those doing this service try and encourage others to get involved, and it is the ordinary members that do the work of holding meetings in hospitals and treatment centres, visiting patients in hospital, and talking locally to doctors and nurses. It is often the work of the Health Liaison Officer to coordinate these activities, and work towards ensuring that we

have the right permissions and, in these ever increasing security conscious days, coordinating with the hospitals, etc. to ensure we have the relevant security checks in place to allow us to access to these facilities.

Nigel P  
Trustee for Health

## Literature

It is a great honour and privilege to serve on the General Service Board as a Trustee that has responsibility for Literature. Before I present the report firstly I would like to give my thanks to the members of the sub-committee for all their outstanding efforts this year.

On behalf of the Literature Committee I have the pleasure in presenting to the Fellowship, several pieces of literature for consideration by Conference 2018. Background information has been provided to demonstrate how this literature came about.

Any member of the Fellowship who has comments, questions or suggestions about these pieces of literature should contact the Literature Committee before the 31st March 2017.

This will give us time to make a considered and appropriate response to ensure the best possible outcome for the Fellowship. The Literature Committee can be contacted through GSO.

The Literature is being distributed electronically. However, hard copies will be sent to those without email addresses, and to those Delegates who request printed versions.

### New Literature

#### ❖ Your AA Group – and its place in the AA Structure

The Literature Sub-Committee, as part of its review of available literature, agreed that it would be useful to produce an updated edition of 'The AA Group'. The 1965 US edition was revised in 2001 by AA GB, but since then several changes in AA literature (like the production of the Structure and Service Handbooks) needed to be reflected. After trying for some time to amend the original pamphlet it was agreed that it would be better to produce a new publication incorporating only some of the material. (Some sections, like advice on how to set up a new AA group have been removed and can be made into separate pamphlets.)

The new booklet, 'Your AA Group', has been written to help newcomers to understand groups and how they work. It shows how the group relates to the intergroup, region and central structures of AA Great Britain. Although it is aimed primarily at the new member, it has also been compiled to assist those who are considering or giving service at group level and beyond.

#### ❖ AA in Treatment Settings – *How We Can Help*

The idea of a new pamphlet was born at the annual Regional Health Liaison Officers meeting in 2015 regarding "the influx of new members from treatment centres". It was discussed that the AA USA/Canada website has a lot of information that could be of use to HLOs in our country. The HSC agreed to take this forward and after searching [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), it was agreed that of all of the health-related documents that are available, the 'AA in Treatment Settings' pamphlet would be the most relevant, and would require the least modification to adapt it to the situation in Great Britain.

The HSC agreed to undertake this work, which was passed to the Literature Subcommittee, where we worked together to get a final version ready for Conference. We believe this pamphlet is beneficial to our own members wishing to be involved and will help treatment facilities.

### Revisions to Existing Literature

## ❖ **The General Service Conference – The Conscience of AA GB**

This pamphlet is the consolidation of 3 documents; – 1) How to Submit a Question to Conference; 2) The Annual Process Map and 3) The Role and Function of Conference. After receiving a request from the fellowship to combine the three pamphlets into one, the Literature Committee felt it a good idea and would also save time and money on production and distribution.

### **New posters**

#### ❖ **New Armed services poster from the Armed Services Sub-Committee**

❖ **Four new National posters** - In 2017 Conference supported Committee 4's recommendation that all the Fellowship should be invited to generate designs for new posters. Daniel C and Mark P of East Lancs Intergroup, after looking at examples of AA posters here and internationally, have drawn up some very effective posters. They have submitted four designs to the PI and Literature Sub-Committees. As well as being clear and having a real impact, the posters include a QR code which can be read by a mobile phone and can then provide the enquirer with details of nearby AA meetings. The images used come from a commercial company, and the company has many such images which could be used by GSO and the Fellowship. The designs have been sent out to the Fellowship for comment. It is the recommendation that these posters be approved by Conference 2018 for national use. We should like to express sincere gratitude to Daniel and Mark for their work on behalf of the Fellowship.

### **Literature going to Committee (from Conference 2017)**

#### **To approve proposed revisions to:**

❖ **AA Service Handbook - Chapter Three:** AA and Electronic Communications – ‘Chat Now Service’

❖ **AA Service Handbook:** Chapter 4: AA members employed in the alcoholism field – The Literature Committee would recommend the removal of the whole Chapter but this is going to a Committee for a Conference recommendation.

This chapter is not about AA Service but advice to individuals employed in the posts in question, or considering such employment. This Chapter sought to give guidance on how people manage their working lives, while that might have been appropriate to the more general nature of the guidelines that the Service Handbook originated from, it was felt that for a handbook focused on how we do service within AA, this was an outside issue. However, the Committee felt that whilst this Chapter did not belong in the AA Service Handbook a separate leaflet maybe useful for those considering employment in this field. The Literature Committee propose to look at a potential new leaflet, using some of the existing information, for submission to a future Conference.

The Business and Group Conscience Meetings leaflet passed by Conference 2017 is now available from GSO.

Denise H  
Trustee for Literature

## **Prisons**

Since our last Conference the Sub-committee is now fully staffed. We had one member rotate out and four new members join. We held our first fully staffed Sub-committee meeting in November 2017, where tasks were allocated to individual members including the Prison Postal Service. We are currently liaising with GSO on how we can raise awareness to this vital service.

There are now 145 prisons in the UK, HMP Berwynn opened in the last year, and currently hold meetings in 104 of them.

The new Prison video has been updated and will be shown during Conference for the Fellowship's approval.

The Government have now amalgamated Prison and Probation Services to form Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) as reported last year. The GSB decided to hold Combined Prison/Probation meetings throughout the country, to form a Criminal Justice Partnership. We hold four per year in Cambridge, Swindon and Stirling in late summer/early autumn and Warrington in late spring. These meetings are proving to be a success. They are open to every AA Member who works or has an interest in working within these disciplines, and are geographically situated that no overnight stay would be required. So pop along to your local Intergroup/Region and declare an interest in attending.

Now the sad/good news I am rotating off the Board on Sunday at Conference. I take this opportunity to thank all current and past members of the Sub-committee for their hard work over my tenure and introduce the new GSB Trustee for Prisons, Pat McG, who I am sure will carry on the good work.

Charlie R  
Trustee for Prisons

## **Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services**

This service discipline is entering a new phase. This involves closer working between Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services (CJSWS) and AA colleagues in Prisons.

Members with considerable service experience are joining the Probation/CJSWS sub-committee. A priority is to attract people from Criminal Justice Social Work Services in Scotland, to reflect the different legal system compared to England and Wales.

Members of the two sub-committees – Probation/CJSWS and Prisons – agreed at a joint meeting at GSO in June last year to working more closely together under a Criminal Justice 'partnership'.

This is NOT a merger of the two disciplines, but closer liaison. The two distinct disciplines continue with their own, separate liaison officers, sub-committees and Board Trustees.

This closer working comes after the merger of the Prison and Probation Services – HMPPS - under the Ministry of Justice. It also reflects the preparation of prisoners for release back into the community, and the supervision of offenders within the community without reaching prison. There is considerable scope for carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous at a time when the criminal justice system is under great pressure.

The partnership has been put into practice with four regional meetings approved by the General Service Board. These were held in Stirling and Cambridge last September, Swindon in October and Warrington in March.

These meetings are open to every AA member who works - or has an interest in working - within either discipline. They are geographically located so that people may attend without an overnight stay.

By the start of Conference, the Prison Trustees and I will have attended five Criminal Justice Seminars in London and Manchester. These have included discussion of the health treatment of offenders. Many professionals are aware of the value of the work of AA, and I'm optimistic this will continue further.

Jeff B  
Trustee for Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services

## **Public Information**

Public Information (PI) operates through AA members, Groups, Intergroup, Regions and the PI Subcommittee and our Non Alcoholic Trustee (NAT). PI has a responsibility of Carrying the message to every area of the wider Community, to help the still suffering alcoholic find a way to sobriety. PI is often the first contact the public have with the fellowship.

## Media Events.

The PI Subcommittee are very conscious of all our Traditions which underpin all of our activity, especially when dealing with the media and external bodies. We are guided by the Public Information Section in the AA Service handbook.

The need for adherence to the Traditions continues to be carefully explained to Journalists, their Editors and the Producers of TV Programmes. We have where necessary editorial control of the filming and editing of AA content.

During the year we have released articles for the press; One on our Public information events at the Parliaments of Holyrood, Westminster and the Welsh Assembly in Seneedd.

A Press release in December entitled 'Dying for a Drink' published on the AA website in December has been picked up by three Regional Newspapers and the content published.

A short programme on Anonymity and Social Media was broadcasted in early January on Sky News and gave good coverage to AA's views and guidance on personal Anonymity on the internet. Our PI Service Committee Non Alcoholic Trustee (NAT) has also visited the BBC and Holyrood to support our PI Events. He plays a particularly unique role of being able to speak more openly of the principles of our fellowship. We are very grateful to Nick for all his hard work, enthusiasm and support.

## Advertising Campaigns

The Merseyside Intergroup have run two successful Poster Campaigns on the Merseyside Metro and also at Liverpool Airport. London Region North ran a large Poster Campaign on the London Underground in October. Newcastle Intergroup likewise ran a Poster Campaign on their Public Transport System in November.

## PI Sub Committee

We met four times during 2016. We continue to encourage Intergroup PI Initiatives by Public PI events for professionals and also working both their local press and Regional Television. We held a National AA Public Information Seminar in York on September 16th and this was well attended with over 70 delegates from the many of our Intergroup and Regions. This included attendees from Continental Europe.

A lot of Nationwide AA PI activity took place during the government Alcohol Awareness week in November.

## Regional P.I. Liaison Officers

An excellent meeting was held in York on September 15<sup>th</sup> prior to the PI Seminar the next day; with all 16 Regions represented. A lot of interesting and enthusiastic information was exchanged amongst all those attending.

It is clear many more Intergroups are now setting up a P.I. Service group within their Intergroup; the Public Information Officer (PILO) being the facilitator. This means much more Pi activity within all the areas of Great Britain. This is well recorded in the Monthly PI Service Newsletter. We continued to emphasise at the PI Seminar the importance of Intergroups running PI as a group committee; with its own budget and annual programme of activity and events. Page 21 of the 2017 Service Manual has some helpful advice on forming a PI service committee.

## PI Service News.

This publication is circulated throughout the Fellowship on the first day of each month. We have an excellent editor to whom we are most grateful for his tireless activity. The variety of content gives great credit to those really active Intergroups who are the engine room of PI activity.

We have a great appetite for even more PI contributions from the Fellowship. Keep them coming!

Peter F  
Trustee for Public Information

## Telephones

The National 0800 telephone service continues to carry out its primary purpose of providing a link to a local responder to carry the 12<sup>th</sup> step message to the suffering alcoholic.

During the past year the statistics provided to the subcommittee show that there is a significant growth in the number of calls to the helpline since we made it a free to call 0800 number. Calls from mobiles continue to increase whilst landline calls are in decline.

The subcommittee underwent major personnel changes during the past 12 months. Bob S, Davie D, Jonathon P, moved on and we thank them for their service. Judy F and Jim F Trustees also moved on. They all did great work bringing in the 0800 number. New subcommittee members are Allie F, Ann M, Denis G, Dave W, Bill B and Lisella W. An experienced team of past Intergroup and Region TLOs.

Sunderland Intergroup successfully introduced a new app based 12 stepping system. This is the same system that HERI are already using. Both Intergroups are happy with the system. The app based system cuts out the need for a responder to ring around endlessly looking for a 12<sup>th</sup> stepper as the app sends multiple texts to local 12 steppers and are answered quickly. HERI report more newcomers at meetings since implementing the app system.

The 0845 calls have decreased and will continue to do so if we all remember to replace old posters with the 0845 on, with new ones bearing the correct number 08009177650.

The Regional Telephone Liaison Officers meeting in August was very well attended with only 2 regions absent. We were delighted that Majiec from the UK based Polish telephone service was able to join us for the meetings. The Polish team have a desk tucked away in a corner of the London Telephone service office and do sterling work on behalf of their countrymen and women. 478 calls were fielded and 128 12 step calls were made by the Polish team up until August 2017.

Peter S  
Trustee for Telephones

## Young People

It has been a busy year on the Young People's Sub-committee and I'd like to thank our members Gemma, Dave, Andrew and Jack for their sterling work.

I was grateful at being able to shadow former trustee of this sub-committee Wullie I before fully taking my role following last year's Conference.

What became immediately apparent was as this is such a new discipline many Intergroup and Regional Young People's Liaison Officer's had little idea of what is expected of them and where they fit in within the service structure.

With this in mind we put together a two-sided card to help the YPLO's giving them tips for starting in the role – taken from the job description in the AA Service Handbook – one side was for IG YPLO's and the other for Regional YPLO's. This has now been distributed to the IG's and Regions and we hope that this is proving useful.

We have also organised our first seminar in March entitled The Way Forward for all IG and Regional YPLO's to come along and learn from each other and to help provide guidance in the role moving forward.

It is the aim of the Sub-committee over the next two years to support IG's and Regions to get in post as many YPLO's as possible and to have them working to help the other disciplines including PI, Prisons, Employment and Health. A share from a young person in AA to a school can be very powerful as they are able to identify with that person who may be closer in age to them. Many areas also now have Young People's 12 Step lists which is proving very useful.

We have been encouraged by the work going on already across AA as the YPLO's get into their role. Glasgow North West Intergroup held their first YP Convention in September with more than 100 attendees.

We hope that this discipline continues to grow within AA in the coming year.

Amanda S  
Young People's Trustee

## Roundabout

*Roundabout* is AA's magazine in Scotland. It is published monthly by a team of AA members who work mostly from home, but who meet three or four times a year in Glasgow. It contains articles from members concerning their experiences, strengths and hopes. In addition, there is an annual meeting to which all Intergroups and Regions are invited to send Liaison Officers.

*Roundabout* contains a pull-out section containing topical information about changes to Group Meetings in Scotland, together with announcements about certain Service Meetings. This section is for internal use only - it is removed when magazines are passed on to members of the public.

Conference 2017 made several recommendations in respect of our magazines, and these will be the subject of a separate report to Conference.

Meanwhile the *Roundabout* editorial team is looking to update the template which has been used for more than 10 years, and will take professional advice on this matter.

James K  
Trustee for Roundabout

## SHARE

It has been a very good year and the team works well together, under leadership of the Editor. One of our Readers has rotated into the Assistant Editor role and (in a few months) another will rotate off the team, after four years. This means that we are advertising for two new Readers. I would also like to thank the members of the GSO staff, particularly Julie Fox, who support SHARE.

The Sub Committee *produces* our "Meeting between Meetings" on time each and every month. This can only be done with the commitment of Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers, whose job is one of *promotion*. They encourage and garner submissions of articles, letters, etc.; raise awareness at every level; and work to increase subscriptions. Articles are *always* needed.

SHARE stands are available to the four National conventions and to Regions and Intergroups, for their local conventions. Just call GSO to make arrangements. Why not consider hosting a SHARE workshop at your next convention? A good starting point is the AA GB website. There are two areas which you could use: in the Fellowship Magazine section, there is a full description of work of the SHARE Sub Committee; in the Documents Library, there are many tools which are useful to Liaison Officers – or anyone else interested in SHARE.

There have been several new innovations within the pages of SHARE this year: *The Promises and Me*, *Speakers' Corner*, *Reflecting back...*, *Identification Parade – Is This You?* as well as the occasional dip into the Archives. On the Title page we have added a brief Production Statement, in order to assist members who

wish to submit articles. The order form has now been brought up-to-date, for members who wish to subscribe by bank transfer.

The 2018 Fellowship Calendars and Diaries have been a roaring success, with the Calendars selling out before December, 2017. This has been noted for next year. Very special thanks goes to the Production Editor who, like many AA servants, got thrown into the deep end – and swam beautifully.

We are very proud of the incredible skills of our ‘member photographers’ and are always looking for more and more fantastic photography for the Calendar (landscape), but also for SHARE magazine (portrait). Details for the criteria are in both SHARE sections on the website.

At the November Workshop, held at GSO, 13 Intergroup and five Regional Share Liaison Officers were present. The Chair of the GSB (Geoff H) and the Trustee for Roundabout (James K) also attended, as well as Julie Fox from GSO. Members of the SHARE team gave presentations highlighting the work of the SHARE team. We also heard about how Roundabout is carrying the message. All Liaison Officers gave reports on their progress for the past year and a very useful general discussion ensued. Many Groups are buying multiple January issues in order to give a copy to Newcomers. SHARE is regularly used as a vital Public Information tool.

My final year as SHARE Trustee has come to a close. I would like to thank members of the Sub Committee (past and present) for their inspiration and perspiration, Julie Fox, and all at GSO, for their support and companionship on this journey, my Board colleagues for their able example, Eastern Region for their trust in me and, by no means least, the supporters of and contributors to SHARE – the best AA journal in the world!

SHARE continues to carry the AA message of Experience, Strength and Hope in Recovery.

**SHARE is our Story – share yours.**

Helen S  
Trustee for SHARE

## **National Conventions**

### **Northern**

The Forty-third Northern National Convention took place on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool with a total of 921 people attending. There was a full programme over the entire weekend, which included an early birds meeting on Thursday evening which was very well attended, and marathon meetings until 1.00 am on the Friday and Saturday and meetings for Al-Anon and Alateen. The service seminar was well attended and very popular, as was the ‘Unity, Service, Recovery’ Open Meeting. Entertainment started on the Thursday evening with singalong sessions throughout the weekend and on Friday and Saturday evenings there was a DJ and dancing, providing our much loved programme of entertainment. A good choice of AA-related films were shown continuously during Friday and Saturday, with a quiet room, being available for those needing ‘time out’. With a ‘catch ball come and go’ meeting and a young people’s and old timers’ meetings, this full Convention programme ensured a good time for all with something for everyone.

The opening of the Convention began on a Friday evening with a large ‘Opening Convention Gathering’ which was designated as an open public one, shared with Al-Anon and was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Blackpool. Nick Holroyd, our Non-Alcoholic Trustee, was invited to share his own experience of what it was like serving in the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and how he was able to raise the awareness of our fellowship to other professionals. Charlie C, North West Region and Northern National Convention Archivist once again staged a most impressive archives display, which included a recreation of the first AA meeting at the Dorchester Hotel in 1947 which was themed in accordance with the convention timeline. The Road to Recovery wall had over 7000 years of sobriety from members who had put their sobriety dates on, which was an average of 10.9 years average sobriety.

Following the closed AA meeting on a Sunday morning the Final Gathering (spiritual meeting) had AA and Al-Anon speakers and the usual sobriety countdown took place, with the longest-sober member presenting a copy of the Big Book to the newest person in recovery. The decibel-rating of the audience singing 'One Day at a Time' was thunderous and the meeting ended with the entire audience holding hands in a circle around the hall whilst saying the Serenity Prayer. An overwhelming and emotional spiritual experience felt by all was a testimony to the wonderfully uplifting Convention that, once again had many of us feeling ever so grateful to be part of such a wonderful fellowship.

Raffle ticket sales were £1,975 and Literature sales were £1,202. The income over expenditure revealed a surplus of £2867, and the Tradition 7 'Pot' was £1,526.35, (which is accounted for separately) and was sent directly to GSO.

A fantastic addition to the National Northern Convention is the Survey, which is overseen, designed and administered by Michaela the NNC Secretary. A summary of the results is tabled below.

Table A4 Survey Results for 2017

QUESTION	%	%	%
	YES	NO	N/A
1. Is this your first visit to the Northern National Convention?	36	64	0
2. Would you come again?	97	3	4
3. Did you enjoy the entertainment (if not, please comment below).	66	7	27
4. If a separate room playing only dance music was provided on Saturday night, would you make use of this?	37	41	22
5. Did you enjoy the archive display?	70	0	30
6. Did you enjoy the Service Seminar?	44	1	55
7. Did you enjoy any of the films? If you have any suggestions for suitable films in future conventions, please add below.	40	5	55
8. Did you enjoy the marathon meeting? If you have any suggestions for suitable themes, please add below.	75	3	22
9. Did you enjoy the Quiet Room?	36	1	63
10. Please add your comments / suggestions here:	70		

Once again, these results show overwhelmingly that 97% of respondents, almost everyone who completed the questionnaire would attend the convention again. This is true fellowship in action – and as we say each time we leave a meeting – 'keep coming back' and this is testament to show that this happens time and time again.

Denise H  
Trustee for the National Northern Convention

## **Southern**

The Southern National Convention took place over the weekend of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2017 at Mill Rythe on Hayling Island.

There was an excellent programme over the three days which included Open meetings, separate meetings for AA and Al Anon and Al- Ateen There was a disco dance on the Saturday evening. On Sunday morning we

started with a Spiritual Meeting, complete with a home grown choir, followed by Old Timers and the finale was the Sobriety countdown. The attendance was 777 registered attendees both from AA and AI anon members; this is again an increase on the previous year. All the Resort's rooms were taken and we continue to get many members coming locally for the day or all the days!

The Event was self-supporting and a contribution of £2000 sent to GSO.

At the AGM in January this year each of the six supporting Regional Chairs attended with Treasurers. The accounts were accepted for 2016/2017 and the incoming Executive Committee for 2017 convention was ratified. The full complement of Executive members is in place for 2017.

Each of the six Regions nominate two representatives for the organising committee and there remains at present four members to fill from three of the Regions. We trust that shortly we will have a full complement as it is a very rewarding service opportunity.

The Convention for this year is from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of September with the theme "Progress not Perfection" Mill Rythe, Hayling Island. With the new booking system in place, Mill Rythe can be contacted directly quoting the AA Southern National Convention for a room reservation. There are also nearby hotels, B&B's etc. Do come along on September 1<sup>st</sup> for a Great Weekend.

Peter F  
Trustee for the Southern National Convention

## **Scottish**

The Scottish National Convention will take place in Stirling on 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2018 in Stirling, with the theme of "A New Beginning". It has been a new beginning for the Convention Committee after the trials and tribulations of 2017 which were reported last year.

The new Committee have worked together in the true spirit of the Fellowship and have some great ideas for the Convention. There will be some new meetings held over the Convention weekend, marathon meetings, service meetings and a section of the Kelvingrove Museum Exhibition will be on display. Some great stuff to look forward to.

I have had the privilege of being involved with seven of these Conventions, three as a delegate and four as the Board Trustee, and as I rotate off the Board at this Conference I take this opportunity to thank every delegate I worked with over the years.

On behalf of the Scottish National Convention Committee we look forward to extending you a hearty Scottish welcome to a New Beginning in Stirling.

Charles R  
Trustee for Scottish National Convention

## **Welsh**

The convention took place in the Metropole Hotel Llandrindod Wells on the weekend of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2017.

A full and varied programme was enjoyed by the approximately 180 attendees who attended either for the full weekend or just on a daily basis. The number of attendees has been improving for the last three years and this year was no exception with numbers well up on last year's total.

There had been some difficulties experienced by the organising committee with a number of late resignations from the committee. However, this did not distract from the convention with the remaining committee members standing up to the plate ably assisted by a few last-minute volunteers who manned the various

presentation tables. As a result of these actions the convention passed off without a hitch and was a glorious success.

A special mention must be given to the Regional Archivist (Charlie) from the North-West Region who on behalf of the Wales & Borders Regional Archivist who was ill over the weekend not only manned the Share stand but also produced an archive display for the convention complete with a sobriety tree and most impressively a replica of a door into the Dorchester room. Including a fireplace, complete with a facsimile of the picture and mantle clock etc.

Sharers were gathered from all parts of the UK with members from Scotland Ireland England and Wales participating.

The atmosphere at the convention was very happy, relaxed and peaceful, with AA members and their families enjoying themselves.

**So, a huge vote of thanks to all the Convention Committee Members who remained in post and volunteers who stepped in and completed the task to a very high standard.**

The date for next year's Convention is the weekend of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to be held at the Metropole Hotel Llandrindod Wells and I thoroughly recommend this convention to all members of the Fellowship.

The Conventions final committee meeting was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> June and a new convenor (Diana) was elected together with the fundamentals of a new committee with a couple of positions still to be filled. I offer this report for your consideration.

Brian J  
Trustee for the Welsh National Convention

## **Parliamentary Events**

### **Houses of Parliament Presentation**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Event this year took place on October 16<sup>th</sup>; we postponed it from our usual May Meeting due to the General Election in June. This year's event was another successful occasion and I would like to thank the members of the committee for all their hard work over the year. Members come from the Regions of London North, London South, South East Region and South Midlands. Monthly committee meetings were held from September 2016 through to the final wash-up meeting in November 2017.

The aim of the Event is to explain the effectiveness and work of Alcoholics Anonymous to Parliamentarians of all political parties and to members of professional groups which included Drug and Alcohol Agencies, Health Services, Police, Churches, Social Services, Housing Associations and the Criminal Justice Service.

This 2017 PI presentation was held in the Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, and Westminster and was sponsored by Fiona Bruce, M.P. Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Harm. Fiona Bruce opened by speaking eloquently, not only of the problems of Alcoholism but of her own high regard for AA. She stayed for our whole event and answered some questions herself at the end! Twelve MPs registered with four attending. As well as 40 other guests. Alan T chaired the event and there was an excellent Q&A session at the end.

Tony Mercer, Health and Well-Being Manager from Public Health England offered a strong endorsement of AA and quoted from recent research which confirms the effectiveness of AA in facilitating long term sobriety.

Our AA speakers Sue D and Trevor H who both have lengthy sobriety, gave moving stories of how AA had transformed their lives from the desperate situation they had found themselves in.

Preparations are well under way for the next presentation to be held in October 2018.

Peter F

Trustee for Public Information

## **Scottish Parliament Presentation**

The Scottish Parliament awareness event was held at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October.

There was a total of 25 persons in attendance. The numbers may have been low but the event itself was a great success.

The event was opened by the parliamentary host Maree Todd MSP. Maree took us on a very personal AA journey. This set the tone for a very positive meeting.

Following Maree's introductory comments the meeting was passed over to Sandy MacV Trustee for the Scottish Parliament event.

Sandy gave a PI PowerPoint presentation explaining what AA was and was not.

This was followed by a presentation from Nick Holroyd. Nick is a Non Alcoholic Trustee on the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous GB. Nick took us on his very personal journey in Alcoholics Anonymous. This was a very moving and heartfelt presentation.

Following Nick's presentation, Dr Ask Khan who until recently was also a Non Alcoholic Trustee on the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous G B. took to the podium. The topic for Ash's presentation was "WHY DOES AA WORK?" This was very informative and well received.

Wullie I. past Vice Chair on the Board of Trustees AA GB was due to be our guest AA speaker. Wullie unfortunately encountered technical difficulties on his way to the event and as a result he was unable to attend.

We were very fortunate that Anne-Marie S. from the Northern Service Office willingly stood in. Anne-Marie shared her "Experience, Strength and Hope". This too was a very well received presentation.

A question and answer session then followed.

It was now time to conclude the event.

Our event host Maree Todd MSP summed up with some very positive and encouraging comments.

Sandy MacV then thanked all those who made the event possible. The list included:

Maree Todd MSP, Nick Holroyd, Ash Khan and Anne-Marie, Helen at NSO, the Parliament and the events team for making the journey a smooth one, Michael T, Jaqui McK., Alex H and Anne- Marie for meeting, greeting and distribution of literature. Sandy also thanked his fellow Trustees for their attendance and support. Finally he thanked the guests for the attendance.

Overall this was a very positive and much enjoyed event.

The event was closed with Serenity Prayer.

Sandy MacV  
Trustee for Scottish Parliament Event

## **Welsh Assembly Presentation**

The presentation at the Pierhead took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017, with most of the people who had pre-registered attending.

Attendance of Assembly Members at the event was disrupted, due to the sad events which had occurred at the Senedd in the previous weeks. This required the members of the Welsh Assembly to attend a meeting of reflection in the Assembly Hall.

The Assembly Member, Rhun ap Iorwerth, who hosted the event welcomed all the attendees gave his opening address then leaving to attend the Assembly meeting.

There were 23 professional attendees together with the GSO staff and 7 members of the Fellowship. All presentations were well delivered and well received by the professionals in the audience.

The question and answer session after the presentations was quiet but the one to one sessions after the event was more encouraging with many queries being responded to by the presenter and the members of the Fellowship.

A major success from the presentation must be recorded and that was the interaction between the AA member who shared their experience strength and hope and a member of the Welsh Prison service. The discussions that followed the presentation may lead to ease of access for AA into the Welsh prison system.

I offer this report for your consideration.

Brian J  
Trustee for Welsh Assembly Event

## **Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting**

Just imagine if you lived in a country where, as an AA member, there were only four meetings you could attend in the whole of the country in order for you maintain your recovery. Just imagine if you lived in some remote village and you were desperate to have help for your drinking problem, and that help was not available because you lived so far away from those four meetings, which you probably had no awareness of anyway. Such is the situation in at least one of the African countries that we heard reports from at the Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSASM) in Johannesburg on 9, 10, 11 June 2017.

The SSASM began in 1998. Representatives from AA USA/Canada and AA GB had attended a meeting of the South African Board of AA. The purpose of their visit was to encourage the South African Board to form a service network embracing Sub-Saharan countries. The countries that do participate are those where English is widely spoken, although it is hoped that in the future other countries will join too e.g. Mozambique, which is French-speaking. The structure and format of the SSASM is very similar to the European Service Meeting, and consists of country presentations, thematic workshops and plenary discussion.

The theme of the meeting was 'Working with others' and was attended by two delegates each from a total of 12 countries. In addition to ourselves, also in attendance were Greg T, General Manager and Mary C of the International Desk, both based at GSO USA and Canada. The admin support was provided by Lizelle B and Angus McK from South Africa AA, and the meeting was chaired by Warren B, also from South Africa AA, who had been elected at the previous meeting.

We gave presentations, along with Warren, Greg and Mary, on the evening of the first day of the meeting, but the heart of the meeting was undoubtedly the reporting by the country delegates, which occupied the Saturday morning programme. The sheer enthusiasm of the delegates was both humbling and inspirational. Not only do some of the countries have very few meetings, attendance at meetings can be as low as just 2 or 3, but still they enthuse about reaching out to the professional community. The prevalence of HIV is a major associated issue in most of the countries that were represented. Structures vary from none, through embryonic intergroups, right up to South Africa's very well developed structure, not too dissimilar to our own. South Africa gives very good support to the other countries, especially in supplying their literature. Zimbabwe and Namibia, whilst independent countries, have become a formal part of the service structure of South Africa AA.

Two poignant memories linger from the country presentations: members from Kenya AA are selling t-shirts to help to fund their first convention; Zimbabwe has had its AA office, along with all of its literature, confiscated by the government.

Also of note, is the use of social media for both public awareness and membership communication in several of the countries.

There were two workshops which constituted the Saturday afternoon programme: Working with others; developing AA structures at grassroots.

Saturday also coincided with Founder's Day (June 10), and we celebrated AA's 82<sup>nd</sup> anniversary with a Founders' Day meal and AA meeting, which was also attended by AA members from the Soweto Group.

Sunday morning was taken up with business, during which the Chair for the 2019 meeting was elected, and this was Gitau from Kenya. The theme for the meeting will be "Our 12 Traditions – AA's future in the modern world", the dates being 7, 8, 9 June 2019. The meeting concluded by all delegates and observers in turn making their farewell comments.

Because of the times of our return flights, we stayed an extra night, giving us a free day on Monday. The icing on the cake for us was twofold. Mani, the proprietor of the conference centre that we were staying at, on the Saturday evening drove us around Johannesburg, where we saw, in particular, Soweto and the Nelson Mandela Bridge, beautifully illuminated. On the Monday, Helga, a trustee on the South African AA Board who is responsible for public information, spend the day with us, during which she took us to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, which proved to be another powerful experience.

We wish to thank the General Service Board for allowing us the privilege of being able to attend the SSASM. AA GB along with AA USA/Canada sponsor the meeting both financially and in person; hence our reasons for being there. There were more countries represented this time than last time, but the meeting is a long way away from being self-supporting. Our support, therefore, needs to continue.

Denise H and Geoff H  
Trustees / SSASM Delegates

## **Polish Conference 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>-Nov 2017**

We arrived at the venue for the Conference which was a catholic retreat in a forest in the middle of nowhere about 50Km from Warsaw. The atmosphere and ambience of the venue was peaceful and relaxing if a little basic in the accommodation areas. The welcome we received was second to none with all participant's that were already there speaking to us and shaking our hands. We may not have understood the words but the feelings and actions were unmistakable those of friendship and fellowship.

The atmosphere around the retreat and within the meeting rooms was electric with much happiness and good-will directed to all participants.

This was coupled with a willingness to complete the tasks at hand with diligence great knowledge.

There were 19 foreign delegates from 12 countries making the Conference a truly international gathering.

All foreign delegates gathered and were introduced to one another and we gave a short introduction of ourselves to the Board of Trustees and the Board of Foundation. We were then split into English and Russian speaking groups. These groups were then further split into two and allocated to one of the four committees in which we would participate. The English speakers were allocated to the Literature and Agenda committees and the Russian speakers were allocated Finance and Public Information committees.

The set-up of the Conference was very similar to the UK Conference. With questions coming from both the Polish Fellowship, coupled with a slight difference, that being the Board could also raise questions. All of the

questions raised are then scrutinised by a Conference Steering Committee and a manageable number were allocated to the 4 committees. With each committee answering either 3 or 4 questions. These were discussed and conclusions arrived at over the next two days, with the resulting answers discussed in a plenary session on the Sunday morning and either accepted or rejected. We were told the rejected questions would be re-submitted in 2018.

There were major problems with the translation equipment but this did not detract from the process as more translators were found and we had a translator shared between two international delegates

The Polish Board is split into two separate but interconnected entities.

- The Board of Trustees (BoT)
- The Board of Foundation (BoF)

To the best of my understanding following discussions I had with various English-speaking members is that the BoT is basically the same as the AA GB BoT. The BoF being the Polish version of the AA charity. Members can be elected to either one of the boards or to both boards. Both are autonomous but interconnected. Each having authority to pass motions regarding the Polish Fellowship. I was informed that by Polish law if a member elected to the BoT they have to undergo a CRB check. If this check is failed they are then barred from being a member of the BoT but this condition does not apply to the BoF. This has and does lead to conflict between the two boards.

The Polish Fellowship are undergoing an exercise in re-translating the text of their 'Big Book.' As the English translator for my group was the chair of the sub-committee carrying out this exercise. My committee were privileged to hear the first reading of the new amended text. A special moment for the committee and the international delegates present.

The last action of the Conference all the international delegates were invited to share with the Conference. This was a humbling and special moment for all who participated.

Brian J  
Trustee / Polish Conference Delegate

## **Working Groups 20171119 Response to Conference (2017) - Committee 5 Question 1 - Share & Roundabout**

2017 Conference Question 1, Committee 5  
Report to the General Service Board, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017  
Amended version to GSB 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**The working Party recommends that the following statement be printed in the Board Reports to Conference 2018.**

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2017 Conference Question 1, Committee 5  
Report to Conference 2018

The General Service Board notes that this question, together with the responses from Conference 2017, speaks to a **minority** of the Fellowship. Fewer than 20% of groups (Roundabout survey) subscribe to the magazines. The figures are similar for Share. AASN frequently lies on group tables, unread – and just as frequently, perhaps, never makes it to the table.

The question does, however, raise important points which are addressed in the detailed responses below.

**Would the Fellowship ask the General Service Board to conduct a strategic review of the future of its magazine publications, and make recommendations?**

This Committee recommends that a Strategic Review of the future of our Magazine publications is undertaken.

- The Trustees of AASN, SHARE, Roundabout and the General Secretary met on 13 July, 2017.
- A draft report was submitted to GSB on 22 September. This was amended and resubmitted on 17 November,

This Committee makes the following recommendations that the Review should:

- a. Examine the strengths, weaknesses and values of the three publications (Roundabout, Share and AA Service News)
  1. AASN is a distinct entity, serving different purposes from those of SHARE and Roundabout, thus ought to be a stand-alone publication. It is an important tool for (the 10% of) those members who get involved in service and it has just undergone significant changes.
  2. Roundabout, the senior journal, is respected as a particularly Scottish publication, with its own distinctive quality and 'audience'.
  3. Share is equally valued in England and Wales.
  4. Both Roundabout and Share are appreciated and read 'across the border', in CER, as well as outside AA GB.
  5. After the regular readership, the greatest value of these individual journals is as a Public Information (PI) tool. They are used in prisons, doctors/dentists waiting rooms, hospitals, treatment centres, rehabs, homeless hostels, libraries, etc. They are also used by loners, members in remote locations, blind / partially sighted members (using the CDs). This list is endless.
  6. Perhaps other GSB disciplines might be encouraged to invite a member of SHARE/Roundabout Editorial teams to attend their Sub Committee or LO meetings to explain how the magazines can assist with PI work.
  7. Circulation may continue to fall, bearing in mind the availability of recorded speakers and online meetings. Consideration should not be predicated either upon circulation figures or the tradition of being 'self-supporting'.
  8. While we should always be prudent with Fellowship funds, these publications form a part of our primary purpose – carrying the message to people within the Fellowship and to those yet to come. Because they are a *vital* PI tool, there is a strong case to consider them as 'loss leaders'.
  9. Each magazine has an annual Liaison Officers meeting. In recent years, the Trustees for Roundabout and Share have attended each others' meetings to encourage cooperation and exchange of ideas.
- b. Investigate a reported undertaking regarding the retention of Roundabout following the disbandment of the Scottish Service Committee.
  1. The Scottish Service Committee disbanded in 1998, and the minutes of the Closing Down Committee (16 Nov, 1998) do not show a commitment to retain Roundabout in perpetuity. However, from the point of view of (peace, harmony and) UNITY within the Fellowship this working group felt it would be an error of judgement to consider disbandment of this journal.
  2. Many people (even if they do not subscribe) have an emotional attachment to Roundabout or Share, coming from the part either journal has played in their recovery. When it comes to discussion of doing

away with one or the other, there would be a negative outcry from supporters and subscribers of each.

c. Consider making them more appealing to the readership

1. Any decline in readership raises the challenge of making our journals more appealing. The committee agreed that Roundabout and SHARE do not suffer from a lack of appeal, but from a *lack of awareness*.
2. The job of the (Regional/Intergroup/Group) Roundabout / Share Liaison Officer is to increase awareness of the journals, by: encouraging and garnering submission of articles, letters and other relevant material for inclusion; raising awareness of the journals; and increasing subscriptions to the journals. The Editorial teams *produce* the journals. The quality and quantity of articles received is entirely dependent upon members of the Fellowship.
3. Over the years (since 1951 and 1972, respectively), both journals have successfully reinvented themselves by: 1) looking back to what was done before and up-dating useful ideas; 2) encouraging team members to come up with new initiatives; and 3) taking on board suggestions made at annual Liaison Officers meeting.
4. Within the last three years there have been several new initiatives taken in order to make the journals more appealing, but the committee agreed **awareness** is the real issue.

d. Consider the feasibility of using professional assistance in the design and editing process.

1. SHARE uses professional assistance every month; the layout is put together by a designer.
2. Roundabout's Editorial team lays out the magazine each month, using a template produced by a past member of the team who was a professional print designer.
3. There is a good "brand image" for both journals.
4. It may be appropriate to appeal to the Fellowship to find such a professional who might advise the respective Editorial teams on aspects of the design which could be improved.

e. Investigate online and audio version through subscription.

1. Before we go down this line, we should take steps to increase Fellowship awareness of what is already online: 1) editorials and, at least, two articles per month; 2) previous twelve months' editorials / selected articles; and 3) spoken versions.
2. It is premature to put any of the publications completely online. There will be an appetite for the printed word for many years to come. We should be ever mindful that not everyone has an electronic device. There are readers in prisons, hospitals, ships, and even on the battlefield who rely upon printed publications.

Recognising that this may take some time, the Committee also recommends that there should be a reporting process from the Board to Conference. The Committee also recognises that the recommendations are not an exhaustive list.

### Conclusion

That GSB and Conference keep a watching brief on this issue, with the intention of carrying out a further review within five years.