

**TOWARDS  
RECOVERY - UNITY - SERVICE**

**PROGRAMME**

**The First General Service Conference of  
Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain**

**to be held at**

**THE MIDLAND HOTEL  
MANCHESTER**

**on**

**FRIDAY 28th to SUNDAY 30th  
OCTOBER 1966**

All meetings will be held in the Residents' Lounge  
All meals will be served in the Grill Room  
Coffee and Tea will be served in the Residents' Lounge

### **FRIDAY**

7.30 pm DINNER  
9.00 pm OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE  
Speakers: Maurice E C Rena ) General  
Bill H ) Service  
Dr James Valentine ) Board

### **SATURDAY**

9.30 am REPORTS from:  
General Service Board (including Publishing  
Company and the Board's financial position)  
Chairman: Maurice E C Rena  
Introduced by Alan B

Coffee:

11-11.30 am Scotland  
Northern Ireland  
England and Wales  
Prison Groups  
Ireland

1.00 pm LUNCH

2.30 pm "TO GROW IN AA"  
Chairman: Gordon Fowler (GSB)  
1. "SPONSORSHIP"  
Introduced by: Delegate from Scotland  
2. "AA IN INDUSTRY"  
Introduced by: Bob, Northern Ireland  
Ronald (GSB)

4.00 pm TEA

4.30 pm 3. "LETTING PEOPLE KNOW"  
Introduced by: Alan B (GSB)  
Scottish Delegate

6.15 pm Close of Session

7.30 pm DINNER

9.00 pm INFORMAL GET-TOGETHER

### **SUNDAY**

9.30 am "OUR CONFERENCE AND ITS FUTURE"  
Chairman: John H, Bradford

11.15 am COFFEE

11.30 am AA MEETING  
Chairman: Bill H (GSB)

12.15 pm CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

12.30 pm LUNCH

DEPARTURE

God grant me the serenity to accept  
the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference

## WHO'S WHO ON THE BOARD

### NON-ALCOHOLIC TRUSTEES

#### **Maurice E C Rena**

Of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law. Travelled extensively, speaks German, French, Italian fluently. Worked at Cassells for several years as a reader and editor. Serves in various capacities with the YMCA, in both this country and at Geneva. Vice-Chairman British Italian Society. Member of the General Service Board of Trustees of Alcoholics Anonymous.

#### **Captain Sir Richard Pilkington, KBE, MC, MP**

MP for Poole since 1951. On leaving Oxford in 1928, worked for two years on a farm in Canada until joining the Coldstream Guards in 1930. Resigned commission in 1935; MP for Widnes 1935-1945; Parliamentary Private Secretary to President Board of Trade 1939. Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1942-45. Served war 1939-45, awarded MC, has travelled in Europe, Russia, the Middle East and North and East Africa, America.

#### **Gordon Fowler**

Joined the Royal Armoured Corps through Sandhurst. Invalided from the Army as a result of a tank accident. Civil Servant. Known to a number of members in various parts of England.

### ALCOHOLIC MEMBERS

#### **Alan B**

Joined AA on 28 October 1947. Member of the Pre-Foundation Committee, partner in Alanon Publications, Member of the Central Committee - member of the First Manchester Group. Claims that in the early days all 12 Step work 'North of Golders Green' was sent to him.

#### **Bill H**

Joined AA on 13 February 1948. Member of the original London and Romford Groups - Member of the Pre-Foundation Committee, partner in Alanon Publications, member of and Chairman of the Central Committee (England and Wales). First Chairman original Group Representatives Committee.

#### **John N**

Joined AA 26 September 1950, Chairman of Scottish Inter-Group Committee 1959, Founder Member Ayr Group, Antiquary, Lay Reader Church of Scotland.

#### **John B**

Joined AA 15 February 1954, Secretary Perth Group 1959-1966. Member of Scottish Inter-Group 1957-1959.

#### **Ronald L**

Joined AA 24 January 1960, Secretary of the Saturday Group, London, London Inter-Group (Founder Committee Member), Area and Group Representative Committee, Development Committee (Founder Member and later Chairman), Joint Sub-Committee GSB/A & GRC.

#### **Wick**

Joined AA in Bronxville, New York on 27 February 1951. Returned to UK and joined 1st London Group April 1952. Committee 1st London Group 1952-1953. Hon Treasurer AA (England & Wales) 1952-1960. Member Central Committee.

Friday Evening. (28th October, 1966)

Maurice Rena, Chairman of the General Service Board, said that he welcomed the delegates with very great pleasure. He met them with respect and some trepidation for they were, in case they did not know it, the chosen few - the salt of the earth thrown up by the Fellowship. Let them face it at once that they wanted the Conference to be a great success but they must not forget that it was the very first and it was inconceivable that, in consequence, it should not give some signs of growing pains. It must be a consciously experimental conference - an exploratory one. One could not expect miracles but let them hope that they could really swap ideas and that they would feel stimulated by the exchange. Let them, he hoped, feel that they had confirmed their Recovery, affirmed their Unity and tried to serve.

They might not get a conference to work really smoothly until they had had two or three goes at it and they must not lose heart if they have to listen to a certain amount of waffle. They would all doubtless need patience and goodwill. Let them take things calmly and if they had to criticise then let it be constructive.

It was not for him to pie-jaw, they all had their morality in the 12 Steps - who was he to talk! While mentioning the 12 Steps it reminded him that any new boy on the Board was asked to say that he would work within the framework of the 12 Traditions. They would, he was sure, work in that spirit during this weekend.

As they knew, an Exploratory Meeting in connection with that Conference had taken place there in October of last year. Representatives from England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and from the General Service Board had been present. They had arrived at a formal conclusion which, for the benefit of those who had not been at the Convention, he would read. It set out very clearly the basic aims of that Conference about which he had been talking.

“It was the opinion of the meeting that the time had come when the responsibility for safeguarding the continuance and growth of A.A. within the 12 Traditions should be spread more broadly. To this end it was agreed that a General Service Conference representative of A.A. throughout the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland should be set up. This would bring together the General Service Board and the Inter-groups and Groups throughout England, Ireland Scotland and Wales and provide a means of sharing experience and ideas.

In this way, the Conference would hope to further the aims and ideals, namely Recovery, Unity and Service and ensure the healthy growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering closer ties and greater co-operation throughout the Isles.”

The Chairman then spoke of a very kind message of goodwill which had been sent to them by John L. Norris, Chairman of the American General Service Board, and showed that they were all well in the minds of their American friends:-

‘Dear Bob,

It is good to know that you are planning a General Service Conference for the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. I am sure you will find that this will bring considerable new life and vitality into A.A. and provide stability to the general character of

A.A. throughout the area which the conference serves; certainly this has been our experience. I suspect that it may, in addition, increase the amount of work that your General Service Office has to do in providing services which the groups will use. So, congratulations and best wishes.

Cordially yours,

(Sgd) John L. Norris, M.D.

Speaking for himself, if he might, and for the non-alcoholics on the General Service Board, might he say what a pleasure it was to serve on that Board. As one who had been the Board since its inception he could tell them how very smoothly it had functioned over the years. In fact, though arguments at times had been very brief, they had never yet had to take a vote on any issue.

He repeated that it was a pleasure and a privilege to work with them. The Board loved it because they knew that this was a wonderful and enormously important Fellowship and it was an honour to work with people who after having been terribly ill, had come through to health of mind and body.

It was eminently satisfactory, too, to see the Steps and Traditions actively and concretely at work. And might he say, speaking selfishly, that it did him an enormous amount of good. Of course, one met on the Board alcoholics with many years sobriety to their credit but he had now rubbed shoulders with all sorts and conditions of members and it was splendid to see so much hope and confidence on all sides.

In a moment they would be hearing Bill H. of the General Service Board, that dynamic man who had been first chairman of the original Group Representatives Committee, among so many things. He would be followed by Dr. James Valentine, who was Physician Superintendent of Scalebor Park Hospital and a very greatly respected non-alcoholic member of the Board.

The next morning at 9.30 Alan B. would first address them. He had been a member of A.A. since 1947 and amongst many other things had been a member of the Pre-Foundation Committee. Then would come Bob L., the Board's indispensable and indefatigable secretary who would tell them about their Publishing Company. Wick would follow. He had joined them in 1951 and had been chairman of the Central Committee from 1958 to 1960. He would deal with the Board's finances for which he was admirably well qualified.

After a coffee break they would go on hearing reports. First from John B of Scotland. He had very recently joined the Board. Then Jim S. would talk for Northern Ireland - he was secretary of the Belfast Intergroup. The report on England and Wales would come from the Chairman of the A. & G.R.C., John M. Falkland Peter and Ronnie H. would report on Prison Groups. They were respectively Secretary and Chairman of the Prison Intergroup of England and Wales.

After lunch they would consider "Growth in A.A. They would see from their programme that that session would be chaired by Gordon Fowler, a non-alcoholic member of the Board. He was sure that they would be interested and delighted to know that Gordon, who was the

Governor of H.M. Borstal, Rochester, had been very recently named Governor-designate of Wormwood Scrubs. Harry B. from Perth would introduce the topic of Sponsorship and Bob G. from Northern Ireland would talk about A.A. in industry. Bob had been with them last year when he had attended the Exploratory Meeting. Ronald L. would follow on the same subject. He, as they knew, was an alcoholic member of the General Service Board. Ronald has been asked to serve in many capacities in the Fellowship and his views were always listened to with great interest by his colleagues on the Board.

After tea, Alan B. would introduce Pat H. from Scotland whose topic would be "Letting People Know". On the face of it this was quite a heavy schedule but they must not forget that lots of questions were expected.

At 11.30 on the Sunday morning they were scheduled to have a meeting chaired by Bill H., but beforehand at 9.30 John H. of Bradford, an ex-Chairman of the A.& G.R.C., would take a session entitled "Our Conference and its Future". John had circulated a searching list of questions and the session should prove extremely interesting.

Well, there they were, making A.A. history; he hoped they would prove worthy, of the occasion.

(In the event, the 11.30 meeting was cancelled so that the whole morning could be given to consideration of the "Conference and its Future").

## **Bill H**

In 1948 there had been 1 very small group and a few loners in different parts of the country. There had been no problem about accommodation or money because meetings had been held in members' houses and a whip-round had produced what money had been needed. Sobriety had been an elusive quality and an address not connected with any member had become a necessity. That had brought about the birth of BM/AAL which was still in existence. Jobs had been done by those willing to do them and the secretary had been the person willing to do that work. The secretary and two other members had been elected to handle the business of A.A. and had been called the Advisory Committee. As A.A. had grown and the one group had become six, there had been problems about electing the Advisory Committee. All members had been eligible to vote and they had wanted to know how the three members of the Advisory Committee had acquired their authority to advise the Fellowship. At that time sobriety had become more constant but serenity had been conspicuous by its absence.

An idea had come into being that if each group were to choose one of its oldest and most trusted members to meet the other elected members they would be able to elect annually an Executive Committee to handle the business of A.A. Thus had been born the Group Representative Committee. The Fellowship had still been without an office. The Advisory Committee had its name changed to the Central Committee which it had kept until 1963, when it had become the General Purposes Sub-Committee - this was its present name.

The Group Representative Committee had met regularly and had worked reasonably well. Its first real step forward had been the instruction to the Central Committee to hire 11 Redcliffe Gardens and the promise of financial support. Perhaps the next most important step had been



the scrapping, after months of work, of a set of rules of procedure. A memorandum had been drawn up which had left the group conscience as the governing factor in all circumstances.

In 1956 there had been 60 groups in England and Wales and it had been suggested that the Group Representative Committee would be more effective and better attended if the groups in an area were to meet at regular intervals and to elect their representatives to attend a meeting on a national basis.

Bill said that he must now retrace his steps to 1948. In that year the first pamphlet "Introduction to A.A." had been printed. The cost had been about £4 and had been paid for by a whip-round among the members. With a few members it had been possible to pass the message by word of mouth but as the membership grew the need for literature had become more and more apparent.

In 1950 Bill W., one of the co-founders, had visited Great Britain and had seen the need for books. He had suggested that the members here should elect a committee to handle the sale of the Big Books which he was going to suggest to the American Board should be sent by America to this country as a free gift. The money from the sale of the books could be used to capitalise the publishing of the Big Book over here. The books had arrived and the committee suggested by Bill W. had been set up and had been called the Pre-Foundation Committee to keep in step with America whose Board in those days had been called the Foundation. As time passed it had been thought that a Company should be formed and the Publishing Company, Alanon Publications, had come into being and had been registered as a company. The first printing, 1,000 copies, of the Big Book had been done in 1954. In January of the same year Bill W. had written about Alanon Publications and in his letter had said "would it be practical to form something you might call 'The General Service Board of A.A. for England, Scotland and Ireland'". The directors of Alanon would be named by such a Trusteeship or corporation and be accountable to it. Such a General Service Board would name its successors subject to nominations from the principal A.A. areas. This larger Board could take Jurisdictions of any problem; it would not be limited to publishing. It would correspond to the Alcoholic Foundation here whose name will, by the way, be soon changed to 'The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous - (North American Section).'"

On 20th October, 1956, a meeting in London had been attended by representatives from Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, Central Service Office and Alanon Publications. That meeting had decided that a Board of Trustees should be elected, the final number to be 15 of which 8 should be non-alcoholics, and that the name of the Board should be the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain & Ireland) Ltd. It had then been arranged that the Board would take over Alanon Publications which would have its name changed to The Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing Company of Great Britain and Ireland. A small sub-committee had been set up to deal with day to day matters and the publishing of literature. That sub-committee met still about once a month and the full Board three times a year.

The Board had first met on 29th June, 1957, after nomination by representatives from Scotland, Ireland, England and Wales. It had consisted of 3 non-alcoholics and 6 alcoholics. Since that date there had been 3 resignations and 4 appointments among the non-alcoholic members. 6 other people had been approached but for one reason or another had been unable or unwilling to join the Board. Only 2 of the original alcoholic members still remained on the

Board. There had been 8 vacancies caused by death, sickness and resignation but new members had been appointed and the number now stood at 6. It was the intention of the Board to have 15 members.

In America the first Board had consisted of 3 non-alcoholic 2 alcoholics and the Co-Founders. That had been in 1938. Two years later the Board had been increased by 2 non-alcoholics and 3 alcoholics. This year the number had been increased from 19 to 21 members and for the first time there were more alcoholic members than non-alcoholic.

Bill finished by saying that no nomination received from within the Fellowship had been refused by the Board, whether for an alcoholic or a non-alcoholic; and that in all their deliberations the Board had never had to vote on any matter.

### **Dr. James Valentine**

There was no doubt that alcoholism and A.A. were becoming more widely known and that there was a greater knowledge about them. It had been pressure by A.A. and psychiatrists on the Ministry of Health which had led, in June 1962, to the issue of a memorandum by the Ministry advising hospital authorities on the development of hospital facilities for the treatment of alcoholism. It had then been stated that the number of patients admitted to psychiatric hospitals for alcoholism and alcoholic psychosis had increased from 775 in 1953 to 2,044 in 1959, although few psychiatric hospitals had provision specifically for alcoholism. It had been recommended that Hospital Boards should set up specialised units, situated at psychiatric hospitals or psychiatric units in general hospitals for the treatment of alcoholics, preferably in small groups. Stress had been laid upon the need for out-patients clinics and for co-operation in aftercare with Alcoholics Anonymous "who have a very important contribution to make".

Since that date the alcoholic units had been established, varying in size from 11 beds at Scalebor Park to 56 beds at St. Bernard's Hospital, with a grand total of 271. If the average turnover were one patient per bed every eight weeks, this offered treatment for 1,626 patients a year, a small number when it was recalled that in 1952 the World Health Organisation had estimated that there were 350,000 alcoholics in Britain. In 1959 Dr. Glatt had followed up the history of Warlingham Park patients who had been discharged two years before. One third had had no relapse, another third were much improved and the rest were failures or could not be traced. Most relapses had occurred within six months of discharge from hospital. There had been a higher improvement rate among men than women, among older than younger men, among the higher social classes than the lower, and in particular among non-psychopaths than among psychopaths.

The high proportion of the patients from the higher social class and intelligence groups had been most obvious among the A.A. referrals.

The regular occurrence of premonitory signs fairly early in the alcoholic's drinking was a challenge to offer earlier treatment (e.g. surreptitious drinking, drinking before parties and amnesias).

In 1964 Dr. Rathod had made a two year follow-up of male alcoholics discharged from Warlingham Park between January 1960 and October 1961 - 111 patients. Of 84 patients

who had completed a full three months course and had been followed up fully, 50% had remained abstinent, 50% had relapsed.

Patients between 20 and 30 and those whose period of addiction was short had done badly, as did those who had been rated insincere and unconstructive and had drunk while in hospital. Patients who had had a history of recurrent truancy in childhood, criminal behaviour before addictive drinking and recurrent homosexual practice had tended to relapse. Sexual promiscuity before marriage, infidelity and broken marriages had indicated a poor prognosis.

Certain occupational groups, e.g. actors, journalists and salesmen had responded badly.

A family history of heavy drinking, social class, intelligence, and unhappy or happy childhood had not affected the outcome.

5 out of 14 patients who had discharged themselves prematurely had remained abstinent.

Older patients had done better and so perhaps had bout drinkers. Willingness to attend A.A. or keep in touch with the Unit or to continue to take Antabuse were good signs.

A very important investigation by Dr. Griffiths Edwards and others of the Maudsley Hospital had been reported in the Lancet on 13th August 1966. During a week in 1964, 40 out of 45 A.A. Groups in London had co-operated by asking all members attending meetings to complete a questionnaire. This had shown that of the 306 members who had filled in the questionnaire, 81% had been men and 19% women. The mean age had been 45.7 for men and 45.6 for women. The mean age when drink had become a problem had been 28.5 for men and 33.9 for women. 60% of both men and women had received in-patient treatment for alcoholism. The mean duration of sobriety had been 2 years and 5 months but 42% of the members had abstained for only 6 months or less. 57% of members had slipped at least once and 18% had done so five or more times.

The general picture obtained of A.A. in London had shown the following features:-

- a) The Fellowship drew its greatest strength from those who were middle aged and the social class of its members was predominantly Class III or above. A.A. showed a smaller proportion of Class I than of hospital series, but both A.A. and hospitals were alike in having a very small representation of Classes IV and V.
- b) The mean duration of A.A. membership was over 4 years and the picture which emerged was of an organisation with a large proportion of faithful hard-core members, with a smaller number of 'transients', most of whom dropped out after about 6 months. It might be that the 'transients' were not only alcoholics who were lost to A.A. because of relapse or insincerity but also might be those who found it impossible to identify with the A.A. image.
- c) The number of times members had 'slipped' since joining A.A. seemed to emphasise that A.A. was as much a society of alcoholics who were having difficulty in remaining sober as it was one in which they were staying off drink. A.A. was of course in fact a treatment organisation achieving "cure" or "arrest" and it was those therapeutic successes which had given it prestige. That emphasis had inevitably led to the neglect of a less dramatic but perhaps more important achievement - A.A. had created a supportive organisation which accepted and

continued to accept the relapsing alcoholic who had little ability to maintain long-term sobriety.

- d) Despite A.A.'s declared policy of having no bar to membership, there were inevitably covert and dynamic selection processes at work. The task of selection was somehow carried out by the Group itself. Selection here was not effected by showing the non-conforming member the door but by A.A. establishing what the good A.A. member was to be; if the newcomer deviated too far from this pattern he would find identification very difficult and then was unlikely to be at many meetings. Identification was the essence of the affiliation process. The role played by the sponsor might be important but could be exaggerated; identification was not with any one established member so much as with fragments of a whole series of life histories which were synthesised into identification with the Group ideal. It was not criticism of the A.A. to say that the image which had proved so valuable an identification object for those who had been able to affiliate but also had the covert effect of exclusion. A group must exclude to achieve homogeneity needed for its survival and A.A. in London had excluded those pathological drinkers whose behaviour did not conform to one of the "out of control" syndromes, and had largely excluded young alcoholics and alcoholic addicts in the lower social classes. A.A. identification of the alcoholic with the alcohol addict might turn attention from the very real needs of the non-addicted drinker.

The astonishing skill with which A A. has in the process of its growth sensed out and sensitively exploited the dynamics of the leaderless group offers lessons of great importance."

A.A. was to some extent an autonomous treatment facility which produced maintained sobriety, but a greater emphasis was needed in its possibly larger and unique role as a supportive follow-up for relapsing alcoholics, and as an organisation supplementing, rather than alternative to, hospital care.

In an organisation which had a leader, each member would to some extent identify with that leader and that would give the group its strength. A.A. had no leader and erected in its place an "image" of the "ideal" member - it was with this strongly cut image that the potential new member had to identify if he were to affiliate. A self-help group such a A.A. was also self selecting and the person who could not identify with the image was self excluded.

Perhaps some of the thoughts he had expressed would give food for discussion during the Conference.

## **SATURDAY MORNING (29<sup>th</sup> October 1966)**

### **Chairman. Maurice Rena:-**

They were going to have reports from as many angles as possible. Alan B. would tell them about some of the work of the General Service Board and no-one was better qualified to do so, having been on the Board since its inception.

### **Alan B:-**

Said that he was down to give a report about the work of the Board. With their permission, he would like to preface this with a few words, not only about the Board, but about the Fellowship and the Conference - the first Conference - and many of its services. One of the things that had impressed him most during the years he had had in A.A. was due to Dr. Bob, crystallised in his last message to the General Service Board in America. Dr. Bob had said "A.A. is founded on love and service", and that was, to his mind, the great truth which they should never lose sight of, and today, it was chiefly the "service" part of it they wanted to talk about. All their services in England had come into operation at a much later date than those in America and in a slightly different form and in much smaller ways - each one of those services had at the beginning to try and find its own way. In the earlier days, even before the pre-foundation committee, they had had a certain amount of help from America. Very often they did not want to lay down hard and fast rules - did not get strict guidance about paths to follow - had to sort out their own salvation. The Board had come into being to fulfil a need for such a body and it had had to try and find its own paths and work to do. Since the formation of the Board, the position of the American Board had been clarified very greatly in the book "Twelve Concepts for World Service" which everyone should have read from cover to cover before they had come there. There were one or two things that they should all bear in mind during the Conference. Probably the first thing they should never forget was that all those services did not in any way govern the Fellowship. In the book written by Bill W. there was a simple sentence, "The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship".

All this was leading up to the Board here, as against what had been done in America. The Board was the servant of the Fellowship and this Conference was the servant of the Fellowship. Anything our own Board had done or had tried to do had been with that in mind - that it was the servant of the Fellowship.

The report of the Board was printed, but it only showed a brief statement of the activities of the Board. It could not show the amount of thought given to each operation or the amount of work entailed to carry it out. In some cases the time given before a final approach to an organisation was made might extend over several years. One of the most important instances of this resulted in the Ministry of Health Memorandum referred to the night before by Dr. James. The Board had not been alone in bringing this about - the whole Fellowship, individual members, groups and Intergroups, the General Purposes Sub-Committee etc. - all had plugged away in different directions which had resulted in the M.O.H. memorandum.

Another example of what went on was the distribution of literature and maybe Bob would tell them in full about this later on. X copies of the Big Book were sent out but this order never came in one order, but many, providing packing and someone to do it, stamps, postage etc., which all took time and labour. After the parcels had been sent out the Board waited quite a long time for its money - several weeks from Australia.

He hoped they would bear in mind, as he had said, that A.A. was founded on love and service and that they would remember that during the Conference.

#### **Maurice Rena:-**

Love and service were two most important points of this splendid Fellowship. He would now call on Bob, who for the last nine years had been the Board's splendid Secretary - he had

umpteen years of sobriety and when they heard him they were listening to a really experienced man.

**Bob L:-**

Spoke on behalf of the Publishing Company which was owned by the Board and controlled by a sub-committee of the Board. Each year it published in the Board's Annual Report a table of literature which had been supplied to Service Offices, Inter-Groups and Groups. They did this not out of any criticism but to show the comparative popularity of the various items. Australia and South Africa were going to start their own publishing companies so they would not have to supply books to those countries.

In America and, to a lesser extent, in countries in the sterling area, many groups printed and published pamphlets of their own, some good and some not so good. He had come across a lot of literature produced by local groups. America had a plan of selecting and printing literature which had been vetted and passed by their General Service Conference. He would like delegates to consider whether or not at a Conference such as this one they should form a sub-committee so that in this country they could have "conference passed" literature.

This Conference might be the place to consider what pamphlets the Fellowship wanted. Suggestions for new pamphlets would be welcome. In this country they had selected pamphlets from the American list and the number had risen from twelve to thirty-two in the last ten years. When demand had warranted it, printing had been done and the price was slightly less than buying from New York.

Regarding books, they all knew that three were stocked - the Big Book, '12 Steps and 12 Traditions' and 'A.A. Comes of Age.' America had given permission for the first two to be printed here for the sterling area but they could not be sold under the U.S.A. price and a royalty of 15% had to be paid on each book. The demand for 'A.A. Comes of Age' did not warrant printing it over here and it was obtained from America.

An attempt was being made to rewrite the pamphlet "A.A. and the Medical Profession" with the help of our own medical profession rather than having authors from across the Atlantic. Suggestions about possible authors for the pamphlet would be welcomed as would ideas on the pamphlets which were now stocked and possible new ones.

The Chairman then asked Wick to give a report on the Board's financial position.

**WICK:-**

The history of the Board's finance followed very closely the development of the Board itself, which had been described to them the night before. It started with the realisation of a gift of Big Books from New York. He recalled very clearly being given the job in 1952 of reconciling the books with the funds in hand prior to turning over to the Pre-Foundation Committee the money which was then segregated into a separate account - about £800.

Today they had moved a long way from that point but still in fact they derived the bulk of their income from the sale of books and literature by the Publishing Company. The only other source of income was gifts and covenants. The Board published annually with their Report a financial statement so he would not weary them with the details of the last statement but he would try to bring them up to date and show what they were doing with the money.

In the Bank they had about £1,900, split between the Deposit and Current Accounts in the name of the Publishing Company and of that amount about £1,000 was likely to be spent by the end of the year on a reprint of the Big Book and literature from America. In the name of the Board they had about £770 which included £500 earmarked for equipping the office with new furniture. This money would be spent as required. In addition they had a small investment of about £520 in Bristol Corporation Stock.

Then there was the Royalties Account of about £800. This money came from royalties on the sale of the Big Book to which Bill W. waived his right but stipulated that the money should be segregated and used at the discretion of the Board for the special purpose of the development of A.A. This money had been used to finance the exploratory meeting held the year before to discuss the possible holding of a General Service Conference and to finance Bob's attendance at the Toronto Convention. The joint cost was about £800 and about £500-£600 would be required for the Board's contribution to the present Conference.

In general then, expenditure was the running of the office, which had recently required additional clerical help, their annual attendance at the Royal Society of Health's exhibition, and they had now assumed full legal responsibility for the lease of Redcliffe Gardens - an unknown financial responsibility.

So far their income had been adequate to meet their expenses but the latter had risen sharply during the last year or two as they had branched out in further directions. They were working on a tight budget and had been meeting new expenditure out of reserves rather than current income. That method could continue for only so long and then they would have to look for further reserves. It was not his intention to turn his report into an appeal but he would like to stress the fact that at the moment outgoings were rising faster than income.

A suggestion was put forward that income might be made by the use of films. Wick said that the Board had a library of films and tapes which were hired out but brought in no significant income. If they could get more films they might be able to make a small addition to their income.

Bill H. was asked to elaborate on his statement the evening before that when the Board was founded they decided that they would want £500 for seven years. He said that for the first two to three years covenants amounted to about £300, in the last two to three years this had increased but some of the money was given for a definite purpose. In 1965 there was £400's worth of covenants with a gross value of £710 of which £245 was designated for Central Service Office.

On the matter of the 15% royalties on the books, Bill H. said that this money was not sent to America. When the gift of books was made currency restrictions were in force and Bill W., as Wick had said, waived his right to the royalties but asked for them to be used for special purposes and not for ordinary expenditure. Bill W. hoped that they would be able to send someone over to the American Conference. The Board discussed this and thought that greater good for a greater number would be achieved if they invited someone from the New York office to come over here. Hank, Manager of the New York office, came over and his expenses were met from the royalties account. They would remember that Hank unfortunately died from a heart attack whilst travelling in Ireland.

Lack of communication between the Board, the A. & G.R.C. and the members was then discussed and it was thought that the criticisms about Hank's visit being a waste of money would not have been made if the facts about the royalties fund had been known. Members had complained that appeals for money were being made and then the money had been spent on Hank's visit when the Fellowship was hard up. Some groups thought that they got all literature from America. It was agreed that communication must be improved and various suggestions were made - the Fellowship and the Board should work together more closely, the Board's report, the A. & G.R.C. Minutes and Agenda should be printed in the News Letter, and A. & G.R.C. member should sit in at the Board's meetings and a Board member should attend Intergroup meetings with expenses paid by the Intergroup.

The members of the Board should, as far as was practicable, be from different parts of the country and there should be a lady member. Wick was the first member from an A. & G.R.C. nomination but nominations from the A & G R.C. were slow to arrive. A pamphlet had been presented by a Board member at an A. & G.R.C. meeting which gave an outline of all organisation in the Fellowship but the pamphlet seemed to have disappeared.

The Fellowship existed to help the sick alcoholic, this was the spiritual side, but there was the business side also and this was the job of the Board. It was not easy to interest members in the business side and this should be the functions of the Intergroups. Increased knowledge about the workings of the business side would help the finances. Members would be more willing to give for a reason they understood. Covenants could be entered into for weekly subscriptions. Perhaps one central fund for money from A.A. Groups would simplify matters for the member uninterested in the business side.

A group in Scotland still sent money to America, the older members insisted on that. It was difficult to get them to subscribe to Scottish organisations and impossible to get them to send money to England. It was agreed that each Group was autonomous but perhaps that Group might be persuaded to extend the range of its gifts.

The Conference agreed that if they could do no more than go back and let people know more about the actual working of A.A. they would have achieved a great deal.

It was reported that sales of the Big Book were decreasing. This was a serious matter for the Board especially since Australia and South Africa were to start their own publishing companies. During the last two years sales had gone down from 245 to 215 - one book for each Group in England and Wales. Some of those books had gone to Public Libraries. New York was having the same trouble. In the early days most members bought a Big Book but now members tended to rely more on other members. Group Secretaries were best placed to be salesmen by interesting the new member in the Big Book, giving a copy as a Group Present or arranging occasional auctions with 1/- tickets.

The next matter to be discussed was the lease of 11 Redcliffe Gardens. Were the Board satisfied with their efforts to negotiate a satisfactory lease on behalf of the Fellowship and would the Board issue a statement to reassure the Fellowship about the security of tenure of their Headquarters in London? Wick replied that it was news to him that the Board had been negotiating on behalf of A.A. The negotiation had been, as he understood it, a joint measure from the body of the Fellowship, as expressed through the A. & G.R.C., and the Board's part



was to assume legal responsibility for the execution of the lease if it were clearly indicated by the Fellowship, through the A & G.R.C, that such was the wish of the majority of members. The Board had repeatedly expressed its willingness to assume the legal responsibility but it had to be stated that the Board was not the prime mover but merely the legal entity which would assume responsibility for the terms of the lease once they had been agreed, and in that respect they were ready to move at any time that the situation was sufficiently clear. The Board had agreed already to make £1,000 payment to the Church as a gesture of good faith pending the clarification of certain points in the lease which were being negotiated. The rent of £1,000 a year was dependent upon a cash payment of £2,000 upon which the Church Wardens were relying to meet certain outgoings.

**The Chairman, Maurice Rena:-**

then asked the Chairman of the A & G.R.C. to speak.

**John M:-**

The lease figured high on the Agenda for the next A. & G.R.C. meeting to be held in Birmingham on 19th November. Since Whitsun many hours had been spent on the subject and at times they thought that a solution had been reached but always they had come back to the vexed question of the Alanon House Money. The position as he knew it was that Leslie L. and Tom J were supposed to be having a further meeting with the solicitors in a few days. He had gone into the whole history of the Alanon House Fund and made a precis of everything that had been said from 1959 until 1964. One reference to the fund made at Chester in December 1959 was a memorandum which set out clearly the aims of the fund and in para.5 the A. & G.R.C. was empowered to disband the Alanon House Finance Committee at any time and direct what money the committee held to the use of A.A. by way of the General Service Board. That memorandum had been passed by the A. & G.R.C. He did not want to give the impression that he was speaking for himself only, he was sure that he spoke for the Fellowship when he said that they were tired of useless negotiations and wanted the matter finally resolved.

Wick then read a letter which had been sent by the Chairman of the General Service Board to the Chairman of the A. & G.R.C.

“Dear .....

At our Board meeting on the 20th November, we considered a letter from our lawyers which asked our consent to enter into an Agreement for Lease in respect of 11, Redcliffe Gardens pending the granting of the 21 year lease which will probably be delayed for some months yet. Subject to certain safeguards with which I will not bother you in this letter, the Board gave their consent.

It seems, therefore, appropriate at this point to clarify the Board’s position and responsibilities as well as those of the A. & G.R.C. as representing the body of the Fellowship of A.A.

You will recall, initially, that the Board, in response to the clearly expressed wish of the majority of the Groups and members of the Fellowship conveyed to them by the A. & G.R.C., readily consented to enter into a 21 year lease of 11, Redcliffe Gardens, thereby assuming the full legal responsibility for the observance of its terms. It is, of course, no part of the Board’s functions or wishes to concern themselves with the day to day carrying out of those terms nor with the many other responsibilities arising from them.

These are the concern of the Fellowship but because they are so varied and important and failure in any respect could have serious consequences for all of us, we feel it wise, perhaps even essential that we have some confirmation from the A. & G.R.C. that the situation is fully understood and accepted.

These responsibilities seem to us to fall under two main headings:-

1. Financial Administration
2. General Management.

Under the first of these fall:-

- a) The creation of a sinking fund to replace the Trust Funds used to buy the lease and carry out certain alterations and improvements.
- b) Payment of rent under the lease.
- c) Payment of rates
- d) Provision for cost of maintenance, cleaning, light, heat, regular decoration internal and external as may be required under the lease
- e) Collection of Tenants' rents of rooms let for other purposes etc. etc.

while under the second fall:-

- a) Letting of flats on upper floors including the provision of leases and supervision of their observance
- b) Maintenance and cleaning arrangements, repairs, tenants' requirements and complaints etc.
- c) Insurance of usual fire risks etc.

These are only the main items which occur readily to us but which already constitute a formidable responsibility and it is with this in mind that we should welcome some confirmation from you that both our and your responsibilities are clearly understood.

Yours very sincerely,

Once they had negotiated the lease they were stuck with its terms. What was holding up things was the release of the funds by the Alanon House Finance Committee. The Board's gesture of £1 000 was made from its own funds as no move to release money had been made by the Fellowship.

**Maurice Rena:-**

Said that he was satisfied that the lease was a proper one but that there were some technical points which were being negotiated. Regarding the reassurance to the Fellowship about the security of tenure at 11 Redcliffe Gardens, the Fellowship had the security.

**Saturday Morning – (After coffee time)**

**John M. Chairman of the A. & G.R.C.:-**

Report on A.A. in England & Wales. When A.A started in Great Britain, London, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool were the first places. The number of Groups in England and Wales now was in the region of 200 and these Groups were represented by individual delegates or area delegates from locally defined areas on a committee called the Area and Group Representative Committee. During the past few years the system of representation had been condensed by the formation of Inter-Groups.

The first Inter-Group to be formed was the Merseyside and North Wales in 1956. The London Inter-Group was formed in 1962 and for the last two years had employed paid staff. Its activities were controlled through the Chairman and Secretary and various sub-committees, and its main responsibilities were manning the telephone and bringing help to suffering alcoholics in the Greater London Area.

There were many Inter-Groups throughout the country with London the largest by reason of its geographical position and was comprised of the following Groups:-

Acton	Tottenham
Camberwell	Toynbee
Caxton	Wednesday Group
Chelsea	Wimbledon
City	Woolwich
Clapham	Young People's Group
Croydon	
Epsom	
Friday Afternoon	
Friern Barnet	
Golders Green	
Greenwich	
Hammersmith	
Islington	
Kennington	
Kingston-on-Thames	
Lambeth Walk	
1 <sup>st</sup> London	
London Central	
Mayfair	
Mile End	
Muswell Hill	
Oval Saturday	
Richmond	
Ruislip	
St. Martin-in-the-Field	
Saturday Group	
South Lambeth	
South Norwood	
Streatham	
Sunday Oval	
Swiss Cottage	
Thames Valley Sunday Afternoon	

The other Inter-Groups were:

**Merseyside and North Wales:-**

Birkenhead  
Chester  
Liverpool  
North Wales  
Rhyl  
Southport  
Wigan

**Manchester and. North Lancs:-**

Blackburn  
Blackpool  
Burnley  
Bury  
Fleetwood  
Knutsford  
1<sup>st</sup> Manchester  
Manchester (Deansgate)  
Manchester (Saturday)  
Manchester Welcome  
Oldham  
Preston  
Sale  
Salford

**York:-**

Bradford  
Goole  
Huddersfield  
Hull  
Leeds  
Otley  
Scalebor Park  
York

**South Western:-**

Bath  
Bournemouth & Poole  
Bristol Tuesday  
Bristol (Thursday)  
Calne  
Dorchester  
Exeter  
New Forest  
Newton Abbot

Par  
Plymouth  
Torquay  
Weston-super-Mare  
Western Locking  
Wales Mendip  
Wales St. Cuthberts

**South Midland:-**

Banbury  
Bampton  
Cheltenham  
Evesham  
Oxford  
Oxford (Ashurst Clinic)  
Worcester  
Powick

**Birmingham:-**

1<sup>st</sup> Birmingham  
Birmingham (Arden)  
Birmingham (Arden Saturday)  
Birmingham (Arden Sunday)  
1st Birmingham (Erdington)  
Birmingham (Shirley)  
Stourbridge  
Wolverhampton

**Southern:-**

Basingstoke  
Brighton & Hove  
Brookwood Hospital  
Channel Islands (Guernsey)  
Channel Islands (Jersey)  
Chichester  
Guildford  
Hastings & St. Leonards  
Hartley Witney (Orchard Cottage)  
Horsham  
Portsmouth  
Reading  
Southampton  
Staines  
Woking & West Byfleet  
Worthing  
Warlingham Park Hospital

**South East:-**

Beckenham  
Bromley  
East Kent  
Gateway Study  
Isle of Thanet  
Maidstone  
Medway  
North Kent  
Tunbridge Wells

**East Anglia:-**

Bishops Stortford  
Bury St. Edmunds  
Cambridge  
Colchester  
Harlow  
Ilford & Romford  
Luton  
Norwich  
Peterborough  
St. Albans  
Shenfield  
Southend

An office was formed originally to serve all Groups in England and Wales and was situated in London with a paid secretary. As A.A. expanded the name was changed to the Central Service Office and the number of Staff has been increased according to need.

The purpose of the Central Service Office, apart from dealing with Groups and Inter-Groups, was to deal with the enquiries not dealt with by Inter-groups, the distribution of literature and to act as a link between the A.& G.R.C. and all Groups and Intergroups and any Sub-Committees of the A.& G.R.C.

The Area and Group Representative Committee had grown considerably over the last two years and now holds three meetings a year, in March, June and November. Extraordinary Meetings were held when decided upon by delegates.

The A.& G.R.C. was under the chairmanship of a member of not less than 3 years sobriety who was appointed for a 2 year period of office. A vice-chairman was also appointed and a secretary. It had been suggested that in the future the appointment of the secretary should over-run that of the Chairman by six months so that the incoming Chairman might be put more fully into the picture than had been the case.

Delegates to the A.& G.R.C. mostly represented Intergroups and could carry block votes depending upon the number of Groups in their Intergroup. A wide range of subjects, some controversial, were discussed and the A.& G.R.C. was possibly the most effective body within the Fellowship in England and Wales as decisions taken at the meetings usually represented the feelings of the Fellowship.

The A.& G.R.C. was served by the General Purposes Sub-Committee with a separate Chairman. Members were elected by the A.& G.R.C. and were asked to serve for a period not exceeding 3 years. The Sub-Committee was divided into two - one part dealt with the House Management of 11, Redcliffe Gardens and the other with the Development of A.A.

The Convention appeared to have become established at Butlins, who had been most co-operative, and the price was within the reach of most members. It has been suggested that the Convention might be held at Barry instead of Clacton at some time in the future.

John M. said that he was very glad he had been able to go to the Blue Bonnets gathering and hoped that more members from England would be able to go. Conventions were an important feature of A.A. and nothing but good could come from them.

**John B.** Member of the General Service Board. Report on A.A in Scotland. He would like to emphasise that he was no authority on A.A. in Scotland and what he had to say came from information given to him by older members. A.A. had come first to Scotland when Philip D., who had met A.A. in America, had returned to Scotland in 1948 Philip had tried hard to get something started and had actually paid a man, Forbes C. to go around and spread the A.A. message. Several small informal meetings had taken place around this time with interested parties, including doctors and ministers, and in August 1948 - a report had appeared in the Sunday Mail intimating that the first A.A. meeting had taken place in a church hall in Perth:-

#### **“Alcoholics Anonymous Come to Scotland**

Six men who met in a church vestry in Perth this weekend made Scottish history when they formed the first Scots branch of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Nothing much had come of this meeting and it was not until May 1949 that a group was finally established in Edinburgh. Glasgow had followed shortly afterwards, then Dundee, Dumfries and Ayr.

He had purposely avoided mentioning the names of the early members because it might leave some out. He would leave that to those more qualified to tell of the early history in Scotland. He believed that such a history was being written. He could go on to say that A.A. had received a shot in the arm from the visit of Bill W. and his wife, Lois, to Scotland in July 1950. They had visited Glasgow; Perth, Dumfries and Edinburgh, where a special dinner party had been held for them. From that time A.A. had spread steadily to all parts of Scotland.

Now there were about 48 groups, including 10 hospital groups and 4 prison groups, stretching from Stornaway in the North West to Galashiels in the South, with a total membership of 900 to 1,000. Their weakness in the density of group location appeared to be in the southern area, from the South to the Borders

Glasgow had the greatest number of groups. It had its own A.A. rooms in West Nile Street and also at Dundas House. The rooms were used nightly by certain groups whilst others had their own individual meeting places. Edinburgh and Dundee also held meeting each night of the

week. Most meetings were closed ones but the groups held Open Meetings which varied in frequency from weekly to bi-yearly.

They held an annual convention at Dunblane. This was started by Robert of Dunfermline in 1956. Another popular annual event was the Blue Bonnets gathering at Dumfries each October. Numbers at both these annual meetings had risen steeply each year and it was worth mentioning that at Dumfries this year the County Council had given them the use of the County Buildings and the official car park and had supplied a running buffet during the weekend gathering. This showed, as one member said on entering the building "A.A. has arrived".

From a small beginning 13 years before, when 20 had attended the first Dumfries gathering, they had risen this year to over 250. He thought they would agree that that was quite an achievement and credit must go to the late Sam (Dumfries), Tom T. (Birmingham) and Tom G. (Manchester).

John then spoke about the Toronto Convention last July. The Perth Group had arranged the trip, the idea for which had started three years before. He had collected names with the help of a member who was a Director of a travel agency. Enough names were collected to fill two 'planes but people withdrew and a month before the departure date only 70 had confirmed their bookings. A last minute appeal had raised the number to 80. To meet the cost of the 'plane the Agency had to have a minimum of 115 passengers. The economic course for the Agency was to cancel the trip but a Co-director, who had nothing to do with A.A. decided to go ahead with the trip rather than disappoint the 80 who had booked. As a result the Agency was about £800 out of pocket. All who made the trip were deeply indebted to the Agency, Grampian Travel Ltd.' of Perth. Should other trips be arranged, perhaps to Miami in 1970, it would be well to remember the generosity of Grampian Travel.

All groups in Scotland were served by an Intergroup Committee, Lil was the Secretary, which met 4 times a year in Perth. Glasgow had its own Intergroup Committee but still worked with the main Intergroup. Members served for 3 years and were elected by the individual Groups.

This year they had started holding Group Secretaries' meetings - twice a year - and they had been most useful.

They had a good relationship with prisons and hospitals although in the latter, with the change over of doctors, it was sometimes difficult to maintain the level of cooperation. The Intergroup had taken up the matter.

Money was a common problem, as elsewhere, and at the last Intergroup meeting they had decided to ask each Group to try to contribute a certain sum each month and as much more as possible. They tried to explain at Meetings what the money was wanted for and to give all the information they could about the Fellowship and in this way they were helped by the attendance at each Intergroup Meeting of the 2 members of the General Service Board.

They were pleased with the progress but were not complacent - that was bad for any Group and any member. They welcomed the Conference and were certain that it would strengthen the Fellowship.

**Jim. Northern Ireland.**



A.A. had come to Northern Ireland in 1948. The first meeting had been held in a small office in Donegal Street, Belfast, with six people there. In 1950 they had moved to Dublin Road and had been able to get a small number of alcoholics from the shipyards. Progress had gone on and in 1956 they had been able to establish a headquarters at 75, Lisburne Road, with a meeting once a week. There were now meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. By the end of 1956 two Groups had been started in Londonderry.

A.A. had started to spread and there was one great asset in North Ireland. Alcoholics might not be acceptable but they were easily discernable! There had been cooperation from the Churches and by this year there were 25 groups. Lisburne Road was administered by a steering committee, not really an Intergroup but people associated with each Group contributed experiences.

They had found that some people had been excluded by social circumstances and thought that wherever possible Groups should represent all social levels.

A Prison Group had been formed but had taken three year to get going. There were now 2 Prison Groups. There was one alcoholic Unit with one A.A. on the Board which held meetings each Wednesday attended by about 45 patients and ex-patients.

The growth of A.A. today was more rapid and the Fellowship was accepted more easily. There were about 400 members.

### **Ronnie H. Prison Groups (England & Wales)**

The Prison Intergroup had come into being at the 1965 Convention. An attempt had been made at the 1964 Convention to bring about some sort of liaison between the various individual members who had been tackling Prison A.A. on their own, but it had come to nothing. In 1965, however, because the same point of view had been expressed by so many in various ways, the Prison Intergroups had become fact. David H., who had been closely concerned with the formation of the first English Prison Group at Wakefield nine years before, had acted as Chairman for the first few months. The group's secretary was Falkland Peter, who in a few minutes would give facts and figures of the first full year's activities.

The first year had been an eventful one - in fact a member at this year's Convention professed himself to be "flabbergasted" at the forward steps that had been taken since the prison sponsors joined together with a unity of purpose.

One of the most significant happenings had been the growing sense of responsibility towards the needs of people seeking A.A help in the prisons. Gradually the responsibility was being shifted from individual members to groups and this was a healthy development, one which presented a true picture' of A.A. as a fellowship to which prisoners and free men belonged equally, as opposed to a lecture presided over by some sort of father figure. If one might look into the future, he could envisage prison A.A. becoming a responsibility at Intergroup level, each intergroup having its own group of prison sponsors, the co-ordination of the whole being a matter for Prison Intergroup. That roughly followed the pattern current in the United States, where he recently had been privileged to attend not only prison meetings but also a planning discussion between the Warden of a Skid Row flophouse and two members of New York's very strong Institutional Committee which, by the way, concerned itself with A.A. not only in prisons but also in hospitals.

Volunteers wishing to participate in Prison A.A. were coming forward in an encouraging way. Those of them who had acted as prison sponsors and had attended prison meetings over a number of years could vouch that they had taken out as much as they had put in to those meetings, and their own sobriety had been strengthened and stimulated.

They were often asked, both by prisoners and outside members, if the meetings held inside the prisons differed from those in the free world. On the whole there was little difference. The procedure was the same and the discussions were as unpredictable as they were anywhere. The main difference of course was that the majority of inmates at meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous in prison were considering for the very first time a world in which alcohol played no part. For them the concept was largely hypothetical, as much part of a fantasy world as many other dreams they dreamed up whilst in confinement. They should not be disheartened if results were not immediate. They were not selling a product anyway, to be judged by its success or its failure. In his experience for every man leaving prison who stayed close to A.A. and attended meetings and achieved a reasonably contented sobriety which must have an effect on all aspects of his life, there were dozens who did not follow it up, returned to drinking and usually, sooner or later, to prison. It seemed that the men (and women) who met A.A. in prisons had to take a drink as a “convincer” and it might be years before they recognised the fact that they were indeed powerless over alcohol and that it might after all be worth trying to follow the examples of those “nut cases who came inside and handed round cigarettes”.

There was one way in particular in which prison A.A. differed from the outside variety. They were told that there were no musts in A.A. but there were, of course, musts in penal institutions. Therefore, it was up to them to acquaint themselves with the rules of the establishments they visited and, having done so, to fall in with them. They needed to be diplomats rather than agitators.

He would ask Falkland Peter to give them some rather more specific details of the Prison Intergroup’s year, but in closing might he say that in carrying the message of A.A. through the gates of the prisons, if they sowed the seed for some future ripening, they were practising the Twelfth Step to the best of their ability.

#### **Falkland Peter:-**

At the present time (October 1966) there were 24 A.A. groups in institutions and, members were in touch with 8 others. Since the Prison Intergroup’s formation, three meetings had been held in London, to the last of which representatives from the Prison, Welfare, Probation and Rehabilitation Services had been invited; the resultant discussions were extremely beneficial and rewarding.

What has been achieved to date by Prison Intergroup and its members:-

- 1) Increased the number of prison groups regularly holding meetings by 6.
- 2) Obtained individual contacts for alcoholics in two other prisons.
- 3) Increased the number of Sponsors/Speakers to participate in this work.
- 4) Enabled contact to be made between prisoners and their local groups/Intergroups prior to and following release.

- 5) Helped to improve the means of communication between A.A. and prison authorities
- 6) Had been able to establish a more intimate contact with the Home Office, whereby an alcoholic who was sent to a prison without an A.A. Group might be transferred to one where an A.A. Group was active.
- 7) Prompted C.S.O.'s arrangement with the Home Office whereby any prison with an established A.A. Group might indent for up to £10 worth of literature per annum, application being made through individual prison authorities, direct to A.A. Publishing Company

**Aims of Prison Intergroup:-**

- 1) To carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into yet more, penal institutions
- 2) To arouse interest in prison A.A. on a wider scale, and to make known the need for more sponsors who would maintain increase prison groups in response to enquiries for fresh Groups
- 3) To try to promote local Group/Intergroup sponsorship for prisoners on release
- 4) To encourage spontaneous communication between local Groups and Intergroups and prisons where a group had not yet been established, by direct approach either to the Governor or Welfare Officer
- 5) To increase contacts with Women's Prisons and Borstals (co-operation of younger members was especially sought in the case of Borstals)
- 6) To establish where necessary a working liaison with Al-Anon
- 7) To encourage the setting up of more groups where the meeting was autonomous within the Prison Groups that conduct their meetings regardless of outside sponsorship. At present this was not practicable in the majority of Prisons.

Prisoners tended to divide all with whom they came into contact into categories of "Us" and "Them". A.A. members had managed so far to fall into the category of US. They had also managed to avoid identifying themselves in the minds of prisoners with Do-Gooders, Welfare Workers or purveyors of some particular brand of religion.

Continuity of meetings in the prison was of prime importance. To ensure this, panel or Group sponsorship, as opposed to individual sponsorship, had been found to be the best procedure. It also, besides spreading the load of sponsorship, increased and enlarged the field of presented A.A. The procedure they had evolved was for a panel or local Group made up of several members to select one member to act as co-ordinator with the prison authorities (who usually wanted to know at least 24 hours in advance who was attending) and also within the panel or group so that the members knew when it was their turn to attend, as sponsor, the prison meeting.

The members took it in turn to go to the meetings so that with a panel of four sponsoring a prison group with weekly meetings each member should attend only once a month. The visiting member selected his own speaker to accompany him.

The best contacts within the prisons were usually the Assistant Governors, Welfare Officers or Chaplains.

**Conclusions:-** Up to a year or so ago there had been serious lack of understanding of alcoholism as a disease among prison staffs on all levels. At the same time, it must be understood that

while many men were in prison as a result of crimes committed through drink, that did not mean that they were automatically alcoholics.

In the last year or eighteen months a break-through had been achieved. Authorities now regarded A.A. in an entirely new light. Requests for new groups tended to come from prison authorities or men in prison, rather than from members offering to carry the message.

As a result of A.A. in prisons, chronic alcoholics over a period of years were now enjoying a full life with A.A. outside. Prison authorities had noticed that in many cases the personality changes which had taken place prior to release could be attributed rightly or wrongly to exposure to the A.A. programme.

Many people engaged in this form of Twelfth Step work bore witness to the fact that this sponsorship had in fact strengthened their own sobriety.

Peter quoted from an article 'Drinking before Detention' which had appeared in the July issue of the Prison Service Journal and had been written by a Prison Medical Officer and a lay therapist:- "These Pilot Surveys suggest that Alcoholism is a major problem within the Prison Service to the extent of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent of inmates".

### **Ivor. Observer from Eire**

The Dublin Group had been founded by Connor, an Irish American who had returned to Ireland in 1946 on his first sober visit for 25 years. He had been sober for 3 years and his wife suggested that he should do something for his sobriety and start a Group out of gratitude. Connor had asked doctors, clergy and professional people but had been told that no A.A. group was needed because there were no alcoholics in Eire. Fortunately he had met one doctor who had told him that if Connor could do anything with a patient he had, he would believe in A.A. - the patient was Richard P.

When he had first joined there were 3 meetings a week Mondays open, and closed meetings on Wednesday and Fridays. Now there were meetings each evening with something like 7 or 8 groups, with one Under-35 Group which had started 2 years before. On Sundays there were before lunch, afternoon and evening sessions and a late night meeting starting at 10 p.m.

There were difficulties with the formation of Prison Groups because many of the prisoners were on short term. A.A. members visited the prison and some of the prisoners on release joined one or other of the Dublin Groups. They had done as much as they could or should in prison work.

They went once a week to St. Patrick's Hospital, not for a group but for an instruction. The doctor had decided that he did not want the meeting called a Group because of the possible reaction from the patients. He described the meeting as an instructional lecture which was part of the recovery and treatment. He tried to ensure that all patients who would benefit attended the meeting. Many patients who should have attended did not and many who should not, did.

A private hospital had an alcoholic unit and members went there for informal talks and there was an instructional meeting on Fridays.

They had established two hospital groups and each Sunday evening old and new patients and their friends attended a meeting.

The first Convention had been held 9 years before and had had good press publicity. The Convention was now held in different parts of the Country. Wherever you were you were never more than 40 miles from a meeting.

In reply to questions, it was reported that London Intergroup manned the telephone from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through a paid member and from 6 until 10 each evening, Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday by volunteers. They liked to have two volunteers on duty at a time. They received about 600-700 calls a month of which about 200 were initial ones.

Leeds Group stated that it had an arrangement at St. Georges' Crypt where there were telephone facilities for 24 hours a day. There was at the Crypt a list of 8 or 9 A.A. members who could be called upon.

Merseyside, and North West Intergroup had a list of names under Alcoholics Anonymous in the telephone directory.

### **Saturday Afternoon.**

#### **Chairman, Gordon Fowler (GSB)**

He confessed to a feeling of inadequacy to take the Chair, being a new boy and very much on the periphery. Anything he said was most presumptuous and having been to a number of conferences his feeling of inadequacy was heightened by reference to the "faceless ones". He was fortified by one of the Traditions "Principles more important than personalities". At this stage in a Conference there was always reappraisal of defects of organisation and resolutions on how the article might be marketed. On reflection he felt having had a look at A.A. and having tried to understand its organisation that it was both anonymous and amoebiform - it had the capacity to change and reproduce itself. As he saw it, the strength of A.A. lay in its diversity of source, acknowledgement of its own frailty, no attempt at organisation and the provision of opportunity for service to an abstract concept. They had heard from Dr James of the possibility of examining the image of A.A. Identification was the essence of affiliation and identification was most important for examining the image. One must also examine what was behind the image.

Perhaps they could all profit by examining some more modern methods. They should never be too frightened of the challenge of new ideas. If they got nothing else from the Conference, they had got the impression of identification being the essence of affiliation. Though there might be differences in the degree of interpretation, the hand of fellowship would ensure growth. In every growth factor one is confronted by the challenge of new ideas, the need for better communications, the need for some form of evaluation and the need for some form of research. Some, perhaps all of these might come from the Conference discussions.

#### **Harold (Ayr). Sponsorship.**

A subject that deserves more thought than people gave it. He defined sponsorship as the opportunity for the older member to meet the newcomer, take him to meetings and introduce him to a life of sobriety. The word sponsor he would define as a person who should be of high integrity, thoroughly honest with himself and, above all else, sober. He should be someone who

had been through the mill and tempered in the fire if he was to have the understanding and sympathy necessary to gain the confidence of the newcomer. A sponsor should be confident in his knowledge because he has been through the hell of his drinking days. To obtain the confidence of the newcomer was the crux of the matter because the new member could then know that he had one friend though the whole world was against him.

12th Step work could be the parting of the ways for the new comer if when he came to the fork in the road he forsook the old road and took the new one which led to sobriety. If they could contact people at that point they would find them more malleable, full of remorse and sorry for themselves - this was a good time to make contact.

He had been called out at all times of the day and night. Some cases had been genuine, some had not. He had sat with one man until 3 a.m. but the man had wanted someone to talk to, he was lonely.

Another thing the sponsor should have was an ability to assess human nature and the ability came to members who have been on the programme for some time. The ability to decide whether or not to persevere, to decide on the best course to take. After contacting the newcomer, the sponsor took on a great responsibility. He had to bring him into the Fellowship, about which the newcomer knew nothing, and convince him that he was an alcoholic by showing that he, the Sponsor, and the other members of the Group knew what they were talking about. It was easy to persuade someone to believe in something they wanted to believe in but not so easy if they did not want to believe. The newcomer might have difficulty with the word "alcoholic" which still carried a Victorian stigma around with it.

When he had come to A A. he had to admit that he was either insane or an alcoholic. It was not sufficient just to admit, one had to be convinced about it. The only thing a sponsor could do was to bring the newcomer to a meeting and if he was unable to make real contact with the newcomer, he should find someone else in the Group who was better able to help the new man.

It often fell to the lot of the sponsor to decide if hospital treatment was necessary but could he do this? He was layman and it would be better to leave the decision to a doctor. At the last moment the newcomer might decide not to go to hospital but there would be more hope of his going if his doctor had told him that he should go.

It was a great thing to see groups being formed in hospitals and sponsorship must be carried to these groups. The sponsor had something to offer in place of alcohol, something which would help the newcomer so that he would not be without help when he came out of hospital.

There were the three C's of sponsorship – Confidence, Conviction and Continuance. How the last was done was a matter for the sponsor to decide afresh in each individual case. He might give his own life story, or the 12 steps, or the Today Card, or just stick at keeping off the first drink and then leave the newcomer to it; or he might try a mixture of some of these. He might mollycoddle the newcomer but Harold thought that more members were lost to A.A. through this way than through any other.

The sponsor was entitled to pick up a man from the gutter but he should not try to carry him on his back all the time. The main thing was to inspire the new member to start on the programme

for himself. The Sponsor might want the newcomer to succeed but he could not force success and should have patience. Not all newcomers made the grade straight-away and when slips happened the sponsor should ask himself if he was entirely blameless. He should take a moral inventory to find out if he had fallen down on the job.

Sponsorship could be carried into the home of the alcoholic. The family could be told about alcoholism and encouraged to come to open meetings.

Should a sponsor give financial help was a question which was often asked. That was something which was entirely for the sponsor to answer. A.A. gave members insight and if they put themselves into the hands of the Higher Power they would learn what to do.

A sponsor should never let himself become despondent and he should realise that any success he might have was due to the working of the Higher Power.

The sponsor should not try to impose his own ideas on the newcomer but introduce him to the idea that he can make his own decisions.

Sponsorship was too vast a subject to be dealt with in a short time. Briefly in conclusion they were sponsoring a new idea and the Conference reminded him of the words of Sir Winston Churchill "We few, we happy few". They were the few gathered sponsor a new idea of sponsorship on a bigger basis than before and nothing but good could come from such an idea. Might God grant success to their efforts.

Several points came from the discussion which followed Harold's talk, all of which could be discussed by the delegates with their Intergroups and Groups when they had returned home. Was Sponsorship becoming rather impersonal? There was a danger that the Sponsor might be made into an idol and then discovered to have clay feet but despite the danger it was thought that the personal approach was the right one. Perhaps the Fellowship was not stressing sufficiently the new way of life which was possible for the alcoholic who had stopped drinking. Were they presenting to the new member only half the picture and thereby losing members who wanted more than half? They had, of course, to beware of climbing on to an evangelistic band wagon but should not forget the great importance of the spiritual content of A.A. Perhaps this side of the programme was not sufficiently to the fore in members' minds.

There should be a more realistic approach to the person with a minor drinking problem instead of trying to help only those people who had reached the end of the road.

Members could try and get priests and doctors interested in A.A, could try to get them to Open Meetings, and then the Fellowship might get to hear of people with minor drinking problems.

Sponsors should be honest with the newcomers. It was no help to the suffering alcoholic to tell him that recovery was easy and then for him to discover that it was not. That was how confidence was lost. A sponsor neatly dressed could show, without words, that self-respect could be regained.

There could be no doubt about the value of the 12 Steps but they were rich meat and perhaps not easily digested by the newcomer. Perhaps the approach should be Step 1 and the Today Card.

There was a suggestion that Groups should ask their members for details of sponsorship experience and that the section "Working with Others" in the Big Book should be printed in pamphlet form. British reticence might be one of the causes of the slow development of A.A. in this country. It should be remembered that many members came to A.A. with what was called sometimes the wrong motive. One view was that such people never could succeed. That was wrong.

### **Bob. Northern Ireland. A.A. in Industry**

During the past few weeks he had had a letter from Bob D. saying that he had volunteered to give a talk on A.A. in Industry (he was an army volunteer) when they had last met in Manchester. Had he known as much then as he did now he would have kept very quiet and left this plum for someone else as he had found that in Northern Ireland when one tried to talk to Management on the question of Alcoholism in their works they usually laughed and said they had never come across it but had no doubt that it existed.

He believed that if they were to get anywhere A.A. must cooperate with any industry with a programme that they wished to set up for the alcoholic and that they should only allow themselves to give advice and the 12th Step when they were asked to do so.

Firstly, Management in this country needed to be educated and the point brought home to them that Alcoholism was both wide spread and costly (absenteeism, accidents, loss of efficiency) and that A.A. could be a very helpful ally of management.

From his experience he had found the best approach was through the Personnel Manager or Welfare Officer or both, and it was necessary to get the sympathy and understanding of these people, as they were the ones most closely connected to the staff and workshop floor and usually knew which employees had a drinking problem. The Personnel Manager and the Welfare Officer he believed should be circulated with pamphlets giving as much information as possible about the disease of Alcoholism, what facilities existed for the treatment of Alcoholics. He did not believe that Alcoholics Anonymous should undertake this service, but that it should be done through local government or such Health Organisations, etc., and that they, as members of A.A. should only co-operate with industry as and when asked to do so.

In Northern Ireland in the near future Information Offices were being set up to try to educate the general public in the subject of Alcoholism. These offices would, in the first place, be run by the Hospital Authorities with trained staff (not A.A. members), who would be able to give advice to relatives and friends of Alcoholics, and he felt that it was through this channel that the break through should be made.

They knew from experience that Alcoholism in industry was both wide spread and costly, and if the point could be got across to Management that alcoholism occurred at all levels, management, staff and manual workers, and that there could be as many as 4% of their works force at all levels suffering from the disease of alcoholism costing them a considerable amount of money each year, he believed they might sit up and take notice. What usually happened now as they quite well knew was the alcoholic lost his job because it was considered that nothing could be done to help him, but he sincerely believed that it was the Government's responsibility to do everything in their power to educate the rulers of Industry and to let them know that the cost of alcoholism to



business and industry ran into millions of pounds annually. This was gauged on research carried out in America. From information available it was known that alcoholics were absent from work on the average two and a half times as often as other workers. Those who were members of A.A. knew how true this was; they also received up to three times as much sickness payments as other workers.

Alcoholics were more accident prone than other workers, thus reducing the efficiency of fellow employees.

He did not know of any company in this country with an alcoholic programme. They did know that in the United States there were a number and from information available they had been successful.

It would be necessary for all cases of alcoholism within a firm to be treated strictly confidential, and when any employee was considered to have an alcoholic problem, he believed that should be dealt with by one person only who could advise the employee where he or she could obtain assistance through hospital or A.A. He thought that the person should either be the Factory Doctor or the Personnel Manager.

It would seem to him that a good approach would be if an employee was suspected of being an Alcoholic that his Personnel Manager and, if there was not a Personnel Manager, a responsible member of Management should interview him or her, try to get the person to admit that they had an alcoholic problem and, if they had, to advise them where treatment or help could be obtained. It would be very simple for local A.A. groups to inform companies in their areas that members of A.A. would be willing to co-operate and endeavour to help when ever possible. Again he would stress that A.A., in his opinion, should not take over management responsibilities in that field, but that management must have confidence in A.A. and know that they were willing to assist whenever possible.

It was known that in America there were A.A. groups within a company made up entirely for employees of that company. It was useful because Alcoholics who had recovered by their new way of living became an example to others who were still living with their alcoholic problem, and often the question was posed "How did you do it?", giving a great opportunity to assist.

Detecting the alcoholic employee was most difficult. They knew from experience that the alcoholic could go along for many years without being detected. The alcoholic tended to be ingenious in concealing his drinking problem from top management. They knew that supervisors and fellow workers often covered up for him or her. He knew also that in top management a good loyal secretary and subordinates often covered the person at higher management level. In large concerns the nurse in charge of first aid was usually the first to detect the problem drinker.

He did not think there was any use in saying to an alcoholic employee that unless he tried treatment or joined A.A. he would lose his job. We who were members of A.A. knew that this was not the approach. They must work and get the person to admit that they had a drinking problem. He must say that they all of them know that a small percentage of successful A.A. members originally came to the fellowship against their will and stayed long enough to get sobriety, but these cases were the exception.

One executive, who had used the A.A. programme to effect the rehabilitation of more than 1,200 alcoholic employees, wrote.

“We make the man face himself; make him understand that he must take the consequences of his continued drinking which is not a threat. We merely point out this to him in the same way you would warn a jaywalker that, if he keeps crossing the street in the middle of the block, he is going to be struck by a car.

When the man has been made to understand the exact nature of his situation, we offer him a way out. We still point out that it is his own decision and that we can't make him (accept A.A.) If he says “No”, we don't pursue it further at the time. Nor do we adopt any punitive measures because he refuses. We simply let nature take its course. And sooner or later we get him again when he is more receptive ... and without employment”.

### **DO COMPANY ALCOHOLISM PROGRAMMES FOLLOW A SINGLE PATTERN?**

Information available to A.A.'s General Service Office indicated that there were at least five basic approaches to the problem in industry today :-

- 1) The informal approach, in which members of management called upon friends in A.A. for help in specific situations involving alcoholic employees.
- 2) The so-called “A A. - orientated” plan, featuring the use of recovered alcoholics as counsellors. These counsellors placed primary reliance on the A.A. recovery programme (supplemented by hospitalisation as required) to effect rehabilitation of alcoholics referred to them by supervisory personnel.
- 3) The medically - orientated plan, directly under the supervision of the company medical director, also with heavy emphasis on the use of A.A. techniques.
- 4) The community - orientated plan, under the supervision of the company medical director. In this type of plan, the company actively supported a country-wide approach to the problem of alcoholism, working closely with medical societies, hospitals, social agencies, law enforcement agencies, educational groups and community clinics as well as A.A.
- 5) The team work approach involving personnel counsellor, the doctor, industrial nurse, welfare worker, A.A. groups, credit union, Psychologist and recreation supervisor, all working, together under the industrial and community relations department.

Their Fellowship did not want to take over from Management. A.A. should remain in the side lines. Honesty for an alcoholic was essential and he believed that when applying for a job, a member should tell his prospective employer that he was an alcoholic, a member of A.A. and was doing something about his problem. This was a better way than the employer finding out at a later date.

### **Ronald L.**

Ronald said; in opening, that as the previous speaker Bob (of Northern Ireland I had covered the subject in considerable detail, he would confine himself briefly to one or two points additional to those covered by Bob and perhaps from a rather different angle, - namely the development of direct and more formal links between leading companies in Industry as contrasted with the very important personal links of which Bob had spoken.

In approaching the subject from this viewpoint Ronald referred to some of the facts and figures quoted by Ross Van Wiegand, Industrial Consultant to the National Council on Alcoholism in the U.S. during a recent visit to this country. Of the 6.5 million alcoholics in the U.S. it was

estimated that 2 million were employed in industry. Of these 97% were between the ages of 30 and 50 years and the cost to industry in the way of absenteeism and direct wastage had been put at £720,000,000 per annum.

Only 3% of the U.S. alcoholics were in the category of “Bowery Bums”.

Ronald gave these figures as quoted estimates, qualified by, the impossibility of getting fully accurate statistics on the subject of alcoholism or alcoholics. Nevertheless they provided impressive reason why industrial companies should concern themselves with the problem and looked towards A.A. not merely on humanitarian grounds but because commercially they had a tremendous amount to gain by developing an official link which would stem the losses through sickness and actual damage on the factory floor and the less measurable but probable even more expensive toll of faulty judgment and wrong decisions at executive and board levels, followed too frequently by the loss of able top-level men, trained and developed over a long period of years a representing a substantial investment.

Of the top one hundred companies in the U.S. only four had had programmes for alcoholism twenty years ago. Today thirty three had programmes.

In this country approaches had been made to a number of large companies; to management and professional associations; to some national leaders of trade unions and to medical officers. There was a growing interest in each of these quarters in the problem and in A.A. as a means of dealing with it and helping alcoholics in industry towards recovery.

A member of the General Service Board had given a talk last year to the Society of Industrial Medical Officers at their annual conference at the Royal College of Surgeons which had been received with considerable interest. The Society numbered 1,100 members of whom 600 were full-time salaried employees and 500 part-time.

Discussion had taken place at Board level with a number of industrial companies and in some cases great interest had been shown. The “Helping Hand” organisation had chosen a factory with 2,000 employees in which it could carry out an investigation into alcoholism among its employees over a 12-month period and an exploratory talk had been held with the British Institute of Management.

All these developments helped towards two objectives: first a realisation in industry of the existence of a major problem and second effective action to establish a framework which would result in alcoholic employees being referred by their employers to A.A. This presupposed close contact at both national and local level.

The growing interest in the problem in recent years and the increasing awareness on the part which A.A. could play indicated that the cumulative efforts that had been made were bearing fruit, even though slowly, and that if they were sustained we could look for practical implementation in the years to come.

There was a searching discussion about whether or not a member should tell his employer or prospective employer that he was an alcoholic. It was a way of carrying the A.A. message. Honesty for an alcoholic was imperative but if a member told his employer all his failures might

be put down to his alcoholism. Members had to think of their families and the possibility that they might lose their jobs if their alcoholism were known.

Instances were given of jobs not being obtained because the member had spoken up about his alcoholism, and of other cases where the member's advice had been sought when the management had wanted help with drinking employees. It was agreed that each member had to decide for himself whether or not to break his anonymity - it was a personal matter.

The distribution of literature to Industry was mentioned. This was not the job of A.A. and it was already being done by the National Council on Alcoholism.

### **Harry C.S.O.**

Said that he had spoken, at the request of a Welfare Office in a large firm to about 40 people - assistant personnel officers, nurses from the firm's clinic, probation officers, clergymen and theological students. The questions after the talk had in the main been directed to the detection of alcoholism in its early stages. The personnel officer had said that they had no problem because it was a security factory and employees were well vetted before being engaged. They did have some absenteeism but putting the employees on the carpet usually settled that.

### **After Tea**

Bob L., General Service Board Secretary, reported that that day was the 32nd birthday of Bill W. and he had sent him a cable of good wishes from the Conference.

**Alan B** in introducing the next speaker, Pat of Edinburgh, said they had heard much about the lack of communications between the various bodies of A.A. and hoped the Conference would be able to improve matters. In communications with the public, the Fellowship had been more successful apparently. A member had told him that the country was saturated with knowledge put out by newspapers, magazines, radio and television. A.A. had gone so far that there were other anonymous societies. The Fellowship had been guyed on T.W.3, which showed that they were to the fore in people's minds. One newspaper had gone so far as to say "Alcoholics Anonymous is rather a misnomer; individual members of the Society may be but the Society itself contrives to be anything but." What the Conference should do was to decide whether or not anything further ought to be done and at what level - Group Intergroup or the Board.

### **Pat. (Edinburgh) "Letting People Know"**

A.A. had vast experience upon which they could draw. The major mistakes had been made and there was no need for them to be repeated. At the same time there was no excuse for them to neglect what A.A. suggested they should do. Bill W. said at Toronto "As many as 600,000 alcoholics have approached A.A. during its history and NOT stuck with it. How much and how often did we fail all these?" and again "The first concern of A.A. members should be with the problem drinkers the movement is still unable to reach." J.P. Miller, author of "Days of Wine and Roses" has said "How long are big drinkers going to have to keep depending on luck to learn about alcoholism?"

What were they doing about it? That was the question each of them must ask and answer. Unless they themselves were prepared to carry out some or all of the methods A.A. suggested they should adopt to reach the still suffering alcoholic then that Conference had no right to

suggest to others that they should do so. Everything began and ended at Group level and each of them belonged to a Group What was their Group doing and what were they doing in that Group.

Let them all remember the words in the Preamble “Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety”; the 5th Tradition “Each Group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers”; the 12th Step “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practise these principles in all our affairs”.

There were three questions they might ask themselves:-

- a) How was the message carried to them
  - b) Could it have been carried to them successfully any earlier,
  - c) What picture, if any, did they have, before they came to A.A. of the Fellowship and what picture of A.A. did the general public have.
- 
- a) Individual sobriety, and only that, was the attraction of A.A. Perhaps that should be stressed more than it was. When someone said to them that they could never repay AA should not the reply be “Oh yes you can - stay sober.” It was quite untrue to say that if a member drank again he hurt himself only. He might deny another his sobriety. The question of anonymity was a vexed one. Bill W. has said “I went to England and met a number of very anonymous gentlemen”. A.A. was no secret society and if they wished to remove the stigma they believed, perhaps wrongly, was attached to their illness, then they themselves must be prepared to do something about it. Only at the level of Press, Radio and T.V. did A.A. warn them to stay anonymous. They could not speak in public and carry the message without being recognised by someone.
  - b) When did their Group hold a meeting to discuss only how it was carrying the message. Has it a Group Inventory as suggested in “The A.G. Group” pamphlet?

Where did that Group meet - hotels, Y.M.C.A.’s were very nice and comfortable but were they the right places? He would not have been admitted to either nor would he have dared to go in. Groups grew when they had permanent meeting places and A.A. became known in the neighbourhood. In Edinburgh they had 4 rooms at an all-in rent of £400 a year. During this winter they had been asked to supply speakers for 50 outside meetings. They should remember the need for anonymity if organising a meeting in a new place. Niddrie has a new housing estate and a meeting had been arranged in the Community Centre. No one had come because people feared that if they did they would be thought to be alcoholics.

- c) Only the alcoholic had not heard of A.A. To many people they were something akin to the telephone Samaritans and the fault was theirs. Were they right in using the Preamble and the 12 Steps in the way the speaker to outside meetings often did? Would not the Today Card be better? They might not have been at Manchester had it not been for Jack Alexander’s article. He had pulled no punches about their pasts and they should beware of the danger of becoming too respectable. A member from a Group in San Francisco had said “We are dealing with life and death. We are not a fraternal organisation, nor a benevolent organisation nor a club. We operate in the field of public health, trying to help sick people to recover from and to arrest a deadly disease.”

Mass media did not give them a good press but local papers might. Groups should ask local editors to their meetings. In Stornaway everyone knew everyone else. There was a group - the postman was a member - which held an open meeting and the local press had given full coverage. To whom had they been talking recently about A.A. ?

Nothing of what they had been discussing was of any use unless the alcoholic continued to attend meetings. The way a group welcomed and handled a newcomer was as important as the 12th Step. Thousands of people were "passing through" the Fellowship and there the Group Secretary was vitally important. Too often they used the expression "They're not ready". Anyone who approached A.A. had some kind of problem. They were a long way from 1945 and should behave as responsible people. Haphazard methods of running meetings and groups could drive away an alcoholic. Jessel(?) and Walton in their book "Alcoholism" and Dr. Bloch of the American Medical Association and past President of their committee on alcoholism had written and spoken on this point.

An alcoholic often came to a meeting with his partner. What had their group done about Al-Anon, which was a tremendous help in carrying the message in any community. The Big Book "Our design for living is not a one-way street. It is as good for the wife as it is for the husband" Al-Anon could get press coverage and its members were asked to talk to public meetings.

There were questions which they could ask themselves. What literature did they carry with them in case it was needed - when had they last talked to an outside organisation about A.A. - when had their Group last been asked to talk to a Youth Fellowship, a Church society etc. - did their doctor really know that they were alcoholic or did they just suppose he did - were they afraid of being known as members of A.A. - how much did they know about the Fellowship.

He had been given his sobriety by staying away from the first drink. A.A. had told him that in order to continue in sobriety he had to give it away. Unless A.A. continued to grow it would die and its life was in his hands. He was Responsible - today and every day of his life.

### **Sunday Morning (30th October 1966)**

#### **OUR CONFERENCE AND ITS FUTURE**

Chairman: - John H., Bradford (ex Chairman, A. & G.R.C.)

John said that this was an historic occasion for A.A. in these islands. He had been associated with the idea of a conference ever since the General Service Board had put forward the suggestion and invited the Fellowship to elect representatives and send them to an exploratory meeting to be held in Manchester at the end of October 1965.

The exploratory meeting had elected a committee to make arrangements for holding the conference which they were now attending. He found it difficult to remember the purpose of the conference and sympathised with those who wanted to know where they were going. John said that he would try to explain what the General Service Conference and General Service Board were.

It was important to remember that, though they were taking an enormous step forward, they were not passing the laws of the Medes and Persians. At times the Fellowship took itself too seriously

and matters got out of perspective. They were not making final decisions about anything. It would take a long time before the General Service Conference - should it continue - came to something like a fixed pattern and even then it would not be a fixed pattern because A.A. was a programme of growth. If they stopped growing they would die. The exploratory meeting had wanted to put something in writing to be sent to all member of the Fellowship and he read out the note which had been drawn up at the conclusion of that meeting:-

“It was the opinion of the meeting that the time had now come when the responsibility for safeguarding the continuance and growth of A.A. within the 12 Traditions should be spread more broadly. To this end it was agreed that a General Service Conference representative of A.A. throughout the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland should be set up. This would bring together the General Service Board and the Intergroups and Groups throughout England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and provide a means of sharing experience and ideas. In this way the Conference would hope to further the aims and ideals, namely Recovery, Unity and Service and ensure the healthy growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering closer ties and greater co-operation throughout the Isles.”

John then read from the Third Legacy Manual an extract dealing with the setting up of the first General Service Conference in the U.S.A.:-

“Until 1951 our Headquarters was constantly overhung with an even greater threat to its existence. While this danger still loomed, and if the problem it posed wasn’t solved, our whole World Service structure might someday have wound up in complete collapse.

The danger was this: During our infancy and adolescence, the Board of Trustees, all friends of Dr Bob and mine, had been entirely responsible for the conduct of A.A.’s services, services which had accounted for at least half the size of Alcoholics Anonymous and for much of its unity. As early as 1945, some of us felt that our virtually unknown Board of Trustees had to be securely linked to A.A. None but a trifling fraction of our membership even knew who their Trustees were. The main linkage of Headquarters to the movement was through Dr Bob and me, and we were perishable. The Board of Trustees had become an isolated island in the middle of a Fellowship sprawled through fifty-two countries.

Hence we began to debate the desirability of some sort of an advisory board of A.A.’s; or, maybe we needed Conference of larger numbers elected by A.A. itself; people who would inspect Headquarters yearly, a body to whom the Trustees could become responsible, a guiding conscience of our whole world effort.

But the objections to this were persistent and nothing happened for several years. Such a venture, it was said, would be expensive. And worse still, it might plunge A.A. into disruptive political activity when Conference Delegates were elected. These objections had considerable merit. Therefore the whole project hung fire until about 1948. But by this time, group contributions nowhere near supported the growing A.A. office. In a portion of this period the Grapevine was losing 1,000 dollars a month and voluntary contributions for office expenses were sometimes in the frightening arrears of 2,000 dollars a month.

Then Dr Bob fell ill, mortally ill. Finally, in 1950, spurred on by the relentless logic of the situation, the Trustees authorised Dr Bob and me to devise the plan with which this booklet

deals. It was the plan for a General Service Conference of A.A., a plan by which our society could assume full and permanent responsibility for the conduct of its most vital affairs.”

In everything they had done they had been twelve to fifteen years behind America, as with the start of A.A. The Conference was an exploratory one. The Board had felt that the time had arrived for the Fellowship to take over responsibility for the conduct of its affairs. The Board had preserved an unbiased position in the midst of internal politics and had taken the Fellowship a long way; their overseas work must not be forgotten nor the way they had forwarded the work of A.A. in this country, especially with the medical profession.

They must remember that members of the Board had to have qualities not found in everyone and had to be able to give of their time. In America there was a 4 year rotation but would A.A. over here be able to find sufficient people of the right quality every 4 years. A plea was made that ladies should be considered for nomination to the Board. The Conference would do well not to enter into commitments without serious thought. They should not try to run before they could walk.

The functions of the General Service Board were:

- 1) To serve the Fellowship
- 2) To administer the Publishing Company
- 3) To deal with the problems of the Commonwealth for the Central Service Office
- 4) To provide any other service which is wanted, within the limits of their resources.

The General Service Conference was the voice of A.A. and the conscience.

In the U.S.A. the General Service Conference - which should not be confused with the big Convention - met annually and had about 116 delegates. It met just before the Annual General Meeting of the General Service Board. It was an advisory body which dealt with policy, outside relations, finance, nominations for trusteeship (originally dealt with by the General Service Board), literature, agenda for future conferences, Grapevine Committee. The final decisions were given to the General Service Board in an advisory capacity. The Board had never refused to implement a Conference decision but both Board and Conference had on occasion delayed action.

They were trying to do the same thing but they should remember that their conditions were different from those in the U.S.A. A.A. existed to serve the individual and to provide better service and communications than before.

Eire had sent a member as an observer and John hoped that the Conference had shown sufficient vision for the member to persuade Eire to join them. Eire had much to contribute for the good of A.A.

The General Service Conference would not replace any regional body. It was a coming together of as near sober mature responsible representatives as they had in these islands to pool their resources and to return to their areas to disseminate ideas - new and old John hoped that they would be able to go back from this meeting full of enthusiasm and be able to communicate their enthusiasm to the individual members. They must not take themselves too seriously and yet there was a sense of history present with them. The meeting was the outcome of about 20 years



of steady growth and yet they were not at the end of the pitch but were taking a rest before going on to the next pitch.

John asked them to bear in mind a Sanskrit proverb:-

“Look to this day,  
For it is life,  
The very life of life.  
In its brief course lies all  
The realities and verities of existence,  
The bliss of growth,  
The splendour of action,  
The glory of power -  
For yesterday is but a dream  
And tomorrow is only a vision.  
But today, well lived,  
Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness  
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.”

The Conference then turned to the question of whether or not there should be future conferences and, if so, what form they should take. It was stressed from the floor that of the Three Legacies, Recovery, Unity and Service, Unity was the most important and if there had been any doubt about their Unity, there was none now.

The Conference agreed that this first meeting had been worthwhile and that others should be held. It agreed also that the Conference should be held annually. A suggestion was made to hold the next Conference in 6 months time so that interest in it would not have time to wane but it was thought that there would be insufficient time to make the necessary arrangements and the question of finance had to be considered also. An interval of 18 months before the next Conference was thought to be too long.

The date of the next Conference was fixed for 27th-29<sup>th</sup> October 1967, which would not clash with any of the Conventions and hotels were less busy in Winter and it was agreed that Manchester was the most convenient centre.

It was thought necessary to have a committee to arrange the next Conference, the name to be the 1967 Conference Committee. The committee would decide with what the Conference should deal, who should attend, how the delegates should be chosen, what length of sober membership should be expected in a delegate, how long should a delegate serve, how could continuity in conference be obtained, who should pay the expenses of the delegates, and should members of local groups be able to sit in as observers.

The committee would be responsible also for deciding on the most satisfactory place in Manchester for holding the Conference bearing in mind the facilities required and the need for economy. They would also distribute to Groups from time to time progress reports so that interest in the Conference could be maintained.

After some discussion the composition of the Committee was agreed as:-

John H. Bradford (Chairman)

Bill S. Manchester.

Chairman of the A. & G.R.C.

Non-alcoholic member of the Board

Alcoholic member of the Board

Member from Scotland

Joan B Woking & West Byfleet

Harry T. C.S.O. (Secretary)

Joan B. was elected not as Secretary of the A. & G.R.C. but because it was thought that there should be a lady on the committee. Harry T. would have no voting rights. It was left to Scotland to decide who should be their representative and it was agreed to send copies of the committee minutes to Northern Ireland and Eire. Northern Ireland supported the formation of the committee but had refused a seat on it owing to the long journey. The question of reserves was mentioned but no decision was reached.

The Conference then discussed the payment of the Committee's expenses. It was agreed that all expenses, including those of the Board members, should be the responsibility of the A. & G.R.C. and a like body in Scotland. The Board said that they would make a contribution towards the committee's expenses.

With regard to Conference expenses, it was thought that salaried people and members attending ex-officio should have their expenses paid by Central Service Office but Intergroups should be responsible for the expenses of their delegates. It was stressed most strongly that no one should be debarred from being a delegate through lack of money. An individual could return his expenses if he or she so wished.

The Conference closed at 12.15 p m. after deciding that the following message should be sent to all Group Secretaries and put in the News Letter:

“TO YOU, THE MEMBER

The first General Service Conference in these islands sends sincere greetings to every individual, Group and Intergroup in gratitude for their having made possible this further advance towards the realisation of our primary aims of Recovery, Unity and Service.

Only with the spirit of goodwill and willingness to discuss problems with an open mind, which has prevailed throughout, could this great measure of unity of purpose have been achieved”.

CONFERENCE 1967

**R E P O R T**

**- on -**

**THE SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

**held at the**

**MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER**

**on the 10th, 11th and 12th November 1967**

**000**

**issued by**

**The General Service Board (Gt. Britain & Ireland) Ltd**

**REPORT ON THE SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**  
**10<sup>th</sup>, 11th and 12th November 1967**

**Friday evening November 10th:**

Maurice Rena, Chairman of the General Service Board, opened the Conference and spoke on the Theme – “Moving ahead .....Our Responsibility for Progress”

A.A. on this side of the Atlantic had progressed satisfactorily, relying often on the experience and guidance of the United States. The lessons learned from that experience must not be forgotten but it should not be forgotten either that A.A. in Great Britain and Eire had gained their own experience too, and the purpose of the Conference was to discover what had been learned and how that knowledge could be used to the best advantage to help alcoholics. Nothing could remain static and live, and it might be that the movement had lost something of its original momentum. If that were so the Conference had to discover how to regain the sense of urgency with which the movement had started, so that the Fellowship would keep moving ahead. That was their responsibility.

The first guest speaker, Dr. Beresford Davies, Consultant Psychiatrist at Cambridge University, was then introduced and spoke on “A doctor looks at A.A.”

Dr. Device said that how a doctor looked at A.A. was determined very largely by the work which he did in association with A.A., and he had to confess that many general practitioners did not look at A.A. at all - and the more the pity because he was sure that if they did they would find that they would be able to help a good many of their patients very much more than they did at the moment. They still lived in a rather strange world as far as problems due to alcoholism were concerned. It was certainly far better than it had been when he had been at college; a number of teachers of undergraduates at the clinical stage of their training to be doctors were taking the subject of alcoholism seriously and were trying to teach something about it, but it took a long time for any information to filter through to the kind of place where it was of value. He could remember that as a student they had had six lectures devoted to the whole field of mental disorder, and he remembered particularly that the psychiatrist in charge of them had been so hard up for time that he had had to lock together subjects which would have been better kept apart. One lecture had been on paranoia and alcoholism.

In addition to many famous names there were a number of psychiatrists who had become interested for two very good reasons. The first was that the only patients who suffered from an alcoholic problem either had suffered from some psychiatric problem or were suffering from one because of alcohol; and the second reason was that whenever treatment was needed it took place as a rule in psychiatric institutions of various kinds. The psychiatrist had become more interested in the problem than any other kind of doctor. Dr. Davies said that he had begun first to worry about the problem about twenty years before because he had found that in a perfectly straightforward psychiatric clinic numbers of patients had been turning up with addiction problems and that, although these patients had come to a psychiatric department for the reasons he had mentioned, they had not really felt at home and one had been able to see two groups forming, the patients with psychiatric disorders and the patients with disorders of addiction of one kind or another.

About that time he had been fortunate enough to be invited to a colloquium in Copenhagen presided over by the late Professor Jellinek, who as they knew had devoted his life to the study of

alcoholism. Dr. Davies remembered that in order that his own expenses should be paid by the World Health Organisation he had had to be recommended and he had had to get somebody to sign a piece of paper to that effect. He had rung up the Ministry of Health and they had said, "Oh well, doctor, if you really want to go, of course you can but we hardly think that the problem of alcoholism merits the time of a psychiatrist in a hospital". That had been the official view in 1952. However, he had gone, and had learned a great deal about the problem.

He had started a clinic in 1952/53 with a rather grand title. He believed it had been "Clinic for the Investigation and Treatment of Disorders due to Alcohol", and it had had to be something like that because one had had to interest medical colleagues in the problem and not let them think that a psychiatrist was trying to do a bit more than was in his power. In that clinic, which he thought had been one of the first if not the first to be set up under the National Health Service in a General Hospital, he and his colleagues between 1953 and 1960 had seen just over 250 new patients, all of whom had been suffering from alcoholism. In 1960 they had had to close the clinic because they had not been able to interest anyone in giving any money or other promise or, most important of all, any additional facilities, whereby they could have followed up their first interviews or treated the patients on their own. He was giving, this brief history because he wanted to use it as a framework for later remarks about the work of A.A. as he saw it. Of course they had not refused to see any more patients, and did see them, but they had been unable any longer to provide anything special in the way of facilities. The last follow-up had been in 1962, and of the 250 patients they had been able to trace just under half, and of that half 50% had been totally abstinent and they believed, though they were not sure that many others had been the better for having been to the clinic, although they had not been able to claim complete abstinence.

Dr. Davies then spoke about a survey which they had carried out in the City of Cambridge, the Isle of Ely and the Rural District of Chesterton. They had thought that it might be most valuable to find out how many people in a given area were addicted to alcohol. The first job was to go through the population. This could be done on a sample basis or by scrutinising the whole population. They had chosen the latter method and had decided to spend three years on the study. He did not think that anybody knew how to define alcoholism but they had taken certain operational criteria. They had said that a man or woman suffered from alcoholism if he or she had come to a doctor with that very complaint and had shown some of the symptoms; if someone had had more than three convictions for being drunk in charge of something, even if it had been only a wheelbarrow which was an offence in his fair town; if someone had lost his job and could not get another; or if someone had become very ill and had had to be admitted to hospital with a disorder clearly due to drinking. As his listeners would see, the criteria had been pretty severe. They had not included anyone who was a heavy drinker or anyone who tended to go on a binge once in a while. They had dealt with the ordinary inhabitants and not undergraduates because the latter were a moving population.

Their results, which were to be published shortly, were as follows. They had found that 0.62% of all males were alcoholics according to their definition and 0.14% of all females, and this gave them enough patients to fill a whole psychiatric hospital of just over 550 beds. So much, they had thought, for the Ministry of Health's belief that the problem was not large enough to justify a fortnight of the time of a consulting psychiatrist. They knew that their findings could be on the low side - possibly on the very low side - because of the strictness of their criteria. They knew also that those findings could not possibly be used directly to show the extent of the problem in other areas. One could not possibly take those figures and compare them, say with figures from Birmingham where they knew the problem was very different in its nature and extent. But it had been an interesting piece of work because it was in fact the first time it had ever

been done, he thought in the whole world - the examination of a whole population. They were hoping that one of the main results of that survey would be its impact on public opinion,

One of the A.A. members had said to him that there seemed to be some difficulty in keeping the impetus of A.A. going. He did not know whether or not that was a general thought, but if it were then he believed that the fault did not lie so much with A.A., although no doubt they could have criticised themselves and no doubt did. They would not be meeting then if they did not criticise themselves, but he could see with no difficulty a clear fault in the public attitude. He did not believe that men and women were going to feel any great urge to look into their drinking habits and try to do something about them until there, was a more educated public opinion

Let them turn back from there for a moment to his clinical work which was what had brought him into contact with A.A. They had decided from the start that they would bring A.A. into the clinical picture in discussion with their patients as soon as it seemed possible to do so. They had done that in every case and they knew how many of their patients had got in touch with A.A. and what had happened to them. Their figures had shown that nearly two-thirds of the patients had got in touch with A.A., and half of those had found it of lasting value. He had to say that in those days they had not known the best way to work with A.A. They had not known what the attitude of A.A. would be to their medical approach to the problem and perhaps there might be some areas still where that continued to be a difficulty. He would give example. He had a patient who came to see him once a fortnight accompanied by his wife. He was, and knew that he was, an alcoholic and he went to A.A. regularly, two meetings each week. The patient was a man who was highly strung, had had a great problem in establishing himself, and who found it very difficult to deal with authority because he tended either to be obsequious or to have a row; and with all that he tended to become depressed. It was clear that he had what psychiatrists would call a disorder of temperament, and he (the doctor) thought it right to give him a certain amount of treatment in the form of medication. The patient had said that some of his A.A. friends disapproved and had told him that he had got a splint and that he should throw it away because his limbs had become sound. He also took disulphiram, and that led to one of those problems where his wife said over the breakfast table "Dear, did you remember your tablets this morning?" Husband: "Oh yes, I did". Wife: "Have you swallowed it?" Husband: "Not yet. It's here". And so that little game went on, but always, the doctor was glad to say the patient had swallowed it before he got on the train and that without a doubt gave him a sense of security. He told the doctor often, "I've had my tablets. I can't possibly take a drink today, and probably not tomorrow", and at that stage that medication was probably a help. But again when he went to A.A. there were some purists who told him that he should not have tablets. That it was wrong and that if he really embraced the principles of A.A. he would not need to have them whether disulphiram or the kind given him as medication. He was told that he was taking drugs, and that was most interesting. What was the difference between a drug and a medicine? A drug was something taken by all those wicked people over there, and a medicine was something prescribed for the people over here. That was the difference, and the fact that they were exactly the same substance did not matter.

It would be most interesting to know what the audience's views were on that problem, because it was a serious one from the medical point of view and one which occurred often. Obviously it was bad to let people be in a position where they had divided loyalties and got contradictory advice, and of course human nature being what it is, such a position placed temptation in the path of certain patients who were kicking over the traces to play off one side against the other. That was most unfortunate because in the end it was the patient who suffered.

The doctor then spoke about the use made of contacts with A.A. They had a system of asking for particular patients to be looked after. Those patients tended to get out of sight although the doctors did like to see them from time to time, even if everything was going well. This system worked well for outpatients, but a number of patients had to be admitted to hospital for a variety of reasons, and that was a different story. They were lucky to have a good psychiatric hospital within three miles of their general hospital. They did not have a special clinic nor special wards and they admitted the patients with addictive problems to the general ward in the psychiatric hospital. He excluded certain addictions from the general ward for technical reasons, for example people who took heroin and drugs of that kind were not admitted. But for people with alcoholic problems they tried to keep an A.A. group in being in the hospital.

It was not strictly an A.A. group because; with the consent of the patients they encouraged doctors and members of the nursing staff to attend. The patients also attended their regular groups outside the hospital. On the whole that plan worked well, but there was difficulty sometimes with the purists in A.A. who thought that one should get out of hospital as quickly as possible, lead a normal social life, and deal with one's drinking problem on a philosophical and moral basis, and not a medical one. As doctors they were delighted if that worked, but they did have a problem with the patients who came back. It was not easy to deal with the patient who on his return was demoralised not only because he had started to drink again and was in trouble, but also because he did not know which way to go. He was in hospital again. He could not help that, but he felt that he was in the wrong place.

There was room for more understanding and co-operation between A.A. and the doctors. Perhaps the latter needed more explanation and understanding about A.A. than they were getting.

The study made in Cambridge had a bearing on the work of A.A. because in making the study they had tried to sort out the factors which led to the development of an alcoholic state. They had divided those factors into intrinsic and extrinsic ones. By the former they meant those which were in the constitution and make-up of the individual, and by the latter those variable things which affected the life of the individual from the outside. After reading all the available literature they had expected to find that the intrinsic factors would predominate and that there would be a constitutional cause. They had been much surprised to find that, generally speaking the extrinsic factors had been the important ones. If that could be proved to be true several of their pet theories about alcoholism would have to take a hard knock. For examples the idea that alcoholism was a kind of allergy did not stand up to evidence of that kind.

They had discovered that the availability of alcohol, and the reasons for drinking it were of paramount importance. He remembered a fascinating piece of research done about the 1800's to find out how many alcoholic grocer's assistants there were. In 1861 grocers for the first time had been permitted to sell heavily fortified wines, and there was therefore the availability of alcohol. They could hardly suppose that by a peculiar chance allergic people became grocer's assistants. The reasons for entering the trade were mainly economic, or because Dad had told them to do so rather than some intricate inborn error of metabolism. After ten years, damage to the liver had been found to be twenty-seven times more common in grocer's assistants than in blast foundry men. (Why blast foundry men he did not know.)

If it were true that it was the availability of alcohol and having a reason for drinking it rather than some inherent defect that resulted in alcoholism that was most important. It was going to remove an alibi perhaps for some alcoholics but that would be a small price to pay for being able to show the general public just what it was doing when it made alcohol available in the way it did, with no teaching about its effect. Alcohol was easy to get, and the problem was really like that of smoking. Society knew that certain kinds of smoking were going to predispose

those who smoked to cancer of the lung and it had taken a very long time to do anything about that fact which had been known for about twenty-five years. There was an enormous time lag in such matters. Alcohol was a peculiar drug, and there had been honest misunderstanding and honest differences of opinion about it, but however benevolently they might look upon the occasional drink as a social lubricant, that must not allow them to misinform the public about the long-term effects of alcohol.

He was very glad to note that at last public opinion was changing. The change seemed to have happened during the last six months and it had come about, he feared not from any moral zeal but from sheer anxiety. The habit of drug taking had done one good thing. It had taught people who did not want to know about such things to start looking at them. The Law was sitting up and taking notice, and so were parents. Public opinion was starting to form. A.A. was going to be helped because members of the public, who previously would not have bothered a bit about their drinking, were going to bother quite a lot, and if they did not bother they were going to be nagged by their family.

Dr. Davies then spoke about some of the family problems of alcoholics. Those problems were well known to A.A., but he wondered if they knew just how much unseen morbidity there was in the families of alcoholics. Did A.A. realise that on occasions the abstinence of the previously alcoholic person created a family problem and actually caused illness in other members of the family. He had four patients father, mother, son and daughter. The mother had become an alcoholic quite early on - had gone through many of the well-known phases and eventually had met a very good doctor (not him, he hastened to add) who had put her on the right path. She had gone to A.A., was abstinent and had become an extremely efficient woman who earned about twice as much as her husband. He took that in good part, but the son regarded it as a sad case of disproportion and there had been a good deal of feuding. Most unhappily, and by a curious process of rationalisation which only he himself could understand, the boy had begun to take heroin, and that had brought in the last patient, the girl, who became ill through the quarrels between abstinent mother and heroin-taking son.

“Why can’t you do like I did?” says mother.

“Because I’m going to have a run for my money first, like you did”, says son.

“You won’t live long enough to enjoy it”, says mother.

“No, but it will be good while it lasts”, says son.

He was sure that they had heard all those arguments. The story might have a happy ending because the boy had nearly stopped taking heroin and had gone to India to sit at the feet of a famous sage who said “You can’t sit at my feet if you don’t stop taking heroin”. Under the humour of that situation they could see that there was a real problem.

Finally, what could the doctors do in association with A.A. which might help A.A. and be cooperative with them? There were certain technical things which he thought the doctors might be able to do and, although he hesitated to say so, might be able to do as well as or even a little better than A.A. When it came to rebuilding a patient’s morale the doctor could play a most important part in the technical field. The rebuilding was not just a question of encouragement, support, coherence with a group and so on, vital though those things were. There were other things which helped to re-establish the personality. One could not go into that in a short time but he would put it this way. Anyone who had succumbed to any kind of drug suffered a most severe diminution of personality. Their contacts with the outside world got more and more tenuous, more and more insecure, and they began to misinterpret those contacts. There were technical ways in which that process could be reversed and he believed that in straightforward psychotherapy, with a good deal of teaching, there was a period of time when the doctor was going to be



effective. That period of time was variable in that you could not say always when it was going to happen. A man or woman came to A.A. from a doctor. He might have had first-aid, drying out, some immediate help, and was in much better physical shape than he had been. A.A. started him off. He was enthusiastic, he understood their principles; but after a little while, suddenly came a difficult period when the person realised what a lot of ground he had lost and what an enormous amount he had got to start to win back. That was the point when the doctor might be able to help, and so, the speaker said, he was going to finish by making the same plea which he had made before. He wished that the doctors who were interested in the problem of alcoholism could learn more about what A.A. thought of the doctors, rather than what the doctors thought of A.A.

Maurice Rena thanked the speaker for a most instructive and illuminating address, and asked for questions. In his replies Dr. Davies made the following points.

He thought that it was in 1961 that the Minister of Health had indicated his wish that special alcoholic units should be set up but had refrained from supplying any money for them. The difficulties were very great because a psychiatrist could not be trained quickly. It took at least twelve years to get the most junior consultant trained to the proper level and the Ministry was doing nothing about it. That was where public opinion came in. If only the Government (he did not mind what complexion it had) could be forced to start making provision now, then they could hope for better things in about twelve or fifteen years.

An alcoholic unit should be a place where there was the opportunity for further care. It did not matter how many times a person had failed.

In teaching hospitals, instruction about alcoholism was being given so that newly qualified doctors would know something about the subject.

It was true that it was difficult to get doctors to public meetings. They had to be enticed. He usually showed them a funny film first. There were films which were interesting to doctors which A.A. could show. Doctors did not come to ordinary A.A. meetings because they were frightened to do so. They did not understand, and so they kept away. If members could get them in with something that entertained or amused them, or to hear a well-known speaker, then a start would have been made.

He did know of some honest medical criticism of A.A. He had already mentioned the point about some members thinking that the doctor was not giving the right advice. That was a great pity because it served to confuse the doctor's patient. He was certain that criticism of A.A. was not the reason why doctors did not interest themselves. Doctors, generally, did not believe that alcoholism was a disease. They considered it a matter best left alone. Let a chap drink what he wanted to. That was the safest way. Doctors were just not educated. That had been shown quite clearly by Parr's researches. The average doctor did not think that a man was an alcoholic unless he got paralytic drunk on spirits every night. That was their definition. It was a matter of education rather than what A.A. might be doing wrong.

Maurice Rena thanked Dr. Davies and then introduced the next speaker, Gordon Fowler, a member of the General Service Board.

Gordon Fowler said that he had learned from his experience at last year's Conference how tolerant the A.A. delegates were to people who really did not understand fully the problems which confronted them and how they could in fact laugh at themselves. That was one of the greatest characteristics people could have. The main purpose in his consenting to stand up after Dr. Davies was perhaps, so far as the Conference was concerned, to try to point a way and to marshal one or two facts about organisation and management.

Every organisation had, of course, the problem of growth and that was to a large extent mirrored in society in general. It was perfectly possible to become out-of-date within eighteen

months, and a fundamental problem of any organisation which dealt with people was that anything that savoured of middle age was rather fuddy-duddy. They were all enjoined to be "with it" - whatever "it" might be. He remembered an article in the Press which concerned himself and in which were used the twin expressions "middle-aged" and "conventional", and those were the two things which horrified him. Social change affecting society was very often mirrored in social legislation. It was significant, for instance, that with the introduction of the Street Offences Act the number of drunks increased and the number of prostitutes fell.

Any of them who had been sent on a management course, and it was the correct thing to be sent on especially if it were an American one (and the more money one paid the more highly qualified one became) would know that the pundits had come up with the four "clevers" of management. It was interesting to apply some of these to A.A. in organisational terms. The organisation of A.A. fascinated him utterly because it defied all the tenets of good administration and organisation and yet it was in fact remarkably successful and he wanted to know how that was done. The time might come during the Conference to examine why it did work and why, in some cases, it did not. The four "clevers", according to the Harvard school, were first the declared aims and objects, namely those in the glossy brochure; secondly there were the believed goals and aims - that was what people said they were - thirdly what the people were actually doing; and fourthly what they believed they should be doing. If a discrepancy between one, two and three were too great, then the organisation was inefficient and needed examination and, more fundamentally, required a re-examination of its aims and objects.

Organisations which served people were expected to provide certain services, and it might help if one were to measure the efficiency of Alcoholics Anonymous against those services: -

1. Development of public awareness of and interest in the field of endeavour through speaking at public meetings etc.,
2. Co-ordination of projects and links with the statutory services at national and local levels.
3. Improvement of effectiveness of existing projects developed in new areas, and experiments in new methods.
4. Advice on recruitment and preparation of volunteers.
5. Liaison with specialised staff.
6. Provision of facilities for voluntary management to increase effectiveness.
7. Provision of information centres in which interested people can obtain details of existing projects and other information.
8. Regional organization in order to co-ordinate local efforts with national plans for the purpose of better integration of work.
9. Planned system of research.

So far as dealing with people was concerned he thought that there were certain fundamentals there, and it might be no bad thing to assess the effectiveness of A.A. against each of those services.

Taking the last point, of course he might be talking out of the back of his neck because they might have a planned system of research. He would have thought that one of the great dangers was there might be too big a gulf growing between what was popularly called the fuddy-duddy and the youngster who was starting to develop problems which might not be confined to alcohol - there might be a combination of drugs etc. Certainly in the field of delinquency the gulf did exist and it might well be that the possible solution was to encourage people whose experience had been more recently relevant to the problem to take a more prominent place in affairs. They all went through life with the dichotomy of "Us" and "Them", especially when

young, and they suddenly found that from being an “Us” figure they had become a “Them” figure, and it might be in their organisation that there were too many “Them” figures. He merely put that up, and put it up with some diffidence.

He hoped that there would not be a sense of anticlimax about the Conference, and he was perfectly certain there would not be. The previous year he had felt something of an outsider looking in. He had been tremendously impressed with the Conference then, and he had to confess that he had been unable to ascertain precisely what it was that made their organisation go. What it was that this Fellowship, which was along amoebic lines with the capacity to reproduce itself and no clear organisation as such, had that made it grow and expand and have a certain solidity about it which one did not find in groups of anonymity. In that respect he would say that Alcoholics Anonymous, rather more than some of the other anonymous groups, had achieved a certain respectability with the statutory agencies. Not that the word “respectability” was necessarily a desirable one, but he thought it was important if one was trying to work with statutory agencies that one should be recognised as a positive and contributing force - and that in fact they had succeeded in being.

He wanted in conclusion to join forces with Dr. Davies when he talked about the education of the public. As a public servant he was very conscious of the fact that he served a very fickle master. The public tended to vacillate, certainly so far as the offender was concerned, and he thought, so far as certain citizens were concerned, tended to vacillate through attitudes of condemnation, sympathy, and ostracism; and never at any one time could anyone be sure what the attitude of society was going to be. He thought that it was only by educating the public, by enlisting their willing cooperation and their understanding, and by mobilising all the resources of goodwill, that this fellowship of A.A. - which as he had said, defied all the tenets of organisation and yet succeeded, was going to, as they say in the brochure, “move ahead”; and he hoped that one or two of the remarks which he had made would underline their responsibility for progress.

The Chairman thanked Gordon Fowler for a thoughtful and stimulating talk.

Saturday Morning, November 11:

Joey A. (London Intergroup) took the Chair and, after reminding the delegates that the theme of the Conference was Progress, called for reports to show what progress the Fellowship had made since the last Conference.

Wick-General Service Board:

Bill H. had usually given the report on the Board and nobody had the background which Bill had been able to bring into his reports, but there came a time when they must allow Bill, if he so wished, to become perhaps a little less active than he had been. Wick said that he was going to give no facts or statistics about the activities of the Board because those were in the Board's ninth annual report together with notes on the First General Service Conference. He would, however, like to say a few words about Bill. His first dealings with him had been in 1952 when they had been settling up the money raised from the gift of books given by Bill W. to A.A. in England. They had wanted a fund which would ultimately bring about some Organisation such as the General Service Board and, since that time Bill's efforts had been devoted to turning the responsibility for the growth of A.A. away from a selected number of individuals to the movement itself, where the responsibility properly belonged. The fund from the books had been turned over to one or two people who could have absconded with the lot, but that was how A.A. had been at that time. Since then, the efforts of people like Bill and Alan had been turned to bringing about some form of organisation - some form of set-up which would enable A.A. to grow as it should, with the responsibility on the Fellowship itself.

This Conference, the second of its kind, had been the brainchild of Bill and that had been the way in which he had always worked. If this General Service Conference achieved what it had set out to achieve, then Bill could know that his work had been well done.

Things had not always been easy. There had been misunderstandings and at times much unpleasantness which had been based usually on partial ignorance. That ignorance they were breaking down and that was a part of their progress, and he thought it right to place on record that much of the inspiration for the forward movement had come from Bill. They would miss his experience, but if they were to grow they should have new blood, as Gordon had said the previous evening - perhaps younger blood - he did not know and he was not going to enter the controversial field of who was and who was not suitable. They must all work so that the movement would carry on under its own momentum and not because of the efforts of one person or of a few small selected bodies of individuals who had grown time-honoured in A.A.

Wick then spoke of the death of their dear old friend Bob L. He was sorely missed by the Board and sorely missed by all who had had anything to do with him.

The delegates stood for a moment in silence, in memory of a good friend, a good mentor and a hard worker.

After the silence Wick said that the Board for various reasons, one of which was Bob's death, had been through a somewhat static period during the past month or two. They had been re-organising the office set-up after discussion with the other services which were housed at Redcliffe Gardens, with a view to a closer integration of the work of all the services of A.A. The Board had two new members, one alcoholic and one non-alcoholic - Margaret of Chester and Sandy Trotter from Scotland. Unfortunately neither had been able to be with them. Financially they were just about on an even keel. The Fellowship had been very stretched for some months for reasons well known to all of them, but they were looking forward to moving ahead again in every respect.

In answer to a question, Wick said that the Board were aware of the need for rotation of members but they were reluctant to lose members like Bill and Alan because there was a void between them and the members who had been on the Board from one to three years.

Bill O'B. - Republic of Ireland:

He had been a member for twelve years and when he had joined A.A. they had had three groups in Ireland - one in Dublin, one in Cork and one in Belfast. Today he was pleased to report that in the Republic they had seventy groups and there had been a great increase in numbers during the past two years. As an example of that growth he remembered a little group in Tullamore town (population 5,000) which he had visited a year ago. Then it had had a membership of five. He had been to their annual dinner a fortnight before the Conference and there was a membership of twenty-seven. How had that come about? They were most fortunate in being asked to speak to Church bodies, youth clubs, secondary schools for boys and girls (about which he would speak later), university social clubs and seminaries for priests.

There was a great temperance movement in Ireland called the Pioneers' Association. The Association had spiritual directors and a membership of roughly 300,000 total abstainers but naturally among the members there was the problem abstainer. The spiritual directors had approached them and had asked them to speak at their rallies. Members had spoken and had had audiences of 1,500 and 3,000. They were most fortunate in being able to speak to such masses of people. The directors in various parts of the country sought out the problem drinkers and sent them to A.A.

They had groups in mental hospitals all over the country, and alcoholic units had been established in most of the hospitals - self-contained alcoholic units.

The growth was fast, and the accent was on youth. When he had come to A.A. he had been considered a father, but today he would be thought of as an old man. They had been most fortunate, as he had said, in being able to speak to the final year boys and girls in the secondary schools. Those were the important people. At one school a boy of 17 had told him that he would take a survey of the boys in his class who took drinks. The boy had done so and 90% of the boys drank. A girl in a convent school had approached him and said that she drank and that she felt great afterwards. He must emphasise one thing about speaking at schools. The speakers did not at any time set themselves up as educationalists or professionals because they remembered all the time that if they were professionals in dealing with the disease of alcoholism, then they would have to be doctors also. They were not specialists in alcoholism nor spiritualism. They just tried to carry the message.

They were having more intergroup liaison and that had been sadly lacking in the past. Each group had been autonomous, thinking its own way and doing what it liked, but now the groups were getting together.

They were getting support from doctors and ministers who organised meetings and then asked A.A. to run them. They had many such meetings planned and they were going to run them with the intention of forming groups in the area where they were held.

Last but not least they were getting great support from press, radio and television. One of their members had spoken at a social workers' conference, and his talk had been reported fully in the daily papers with a big heading "A.A. can help the Alcoholic". Everyone in the country had read that article and that had given them great support. Similarly with radio and television they were to have an hour's programme on alcoholism at the end of the month. That was their great break-through in 1967.

He did not know why or how they had made their progress but it was probably due to the great influx of young members who were able to work harder and travel farther and organise meetings with more enthusiasm. Groups were being formed for the under thirty-fives, and that attracted the young people. Those groups usually asked one or two older members to be present at the meetings.

They had one advantage in that their population was not large and it was easier for them to get to the doctor and the minister. Their first doctor had been Dr. Moore, one of the eight best psychiatrists in Europe, and the younger psychiatrists had been trained by him. They had two members on the National Council on Alcoholism, and the Executive Director was also a member.

Jim B. - Chairman of Scottish Intergroup:

The first meeting of A.A. in Scotland had been held in Gilgall Hospital, Perth, in 1949 and that had been followed by a group meeting in the St. Enoch Hotel, Glasgow, and one in Edinburgh also in 1949. There were now 58 registered groups and he believed that there were several more groups which were not registered. (They liked groups to be active for at least three months before registration). He understood that there was a group away in the Orkney Islands. According to the figures he had been able to get there were about 1,700 active members in Scotland.

Besides the 58 registered groups there were 10 hospital meetings and two new ones in hospitals in Melrose and Huntley. These were not registered because he understood that they could not have a registered group in a hospital. There were also 4 Alanon meetings in Scotland - in Dunoon, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Paisley. They had a prison Intergroup of which the secretary was John N. and the chairman George B. There were 3 young people's groups in

Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stornoway. Also they had A.A. rooms in Aberdeen. Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Scottish Intergroup met twice yearly in Perth and an Intergroup Committee met four times a year. They also met group secretaries twice a year and had an exchange of ideas and tried to advise on any problems which might be brought up at the meetings. Glasgow had the West of Scotland Intergroup.

The twelfth Annual Scottish Convention was to be held in Dunblane Hydro on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May 1968.

They had their own monthly magazine "THE ROUNDABOUT", the articles for which were provided by a different group each month. They had found that that worked well. They also printed their own A.A. diaries with the Steps Traditions, Prayer and Preamble in them. Lil had sent one to the New York Office and they had been delighted with it. For 1967 they had their own Christmas cards with the Serenity Prayer, and that was an excellent idea. Lil had told him that she had sold about £560 worth of literature during the past year and that was a sure indication of the interest in A.A. in Scotland.

Questioned about the rotation of members in the Scottish Intergroup Jim said that there was rotation. Committee members sat for three years and the Chairman for one year.

Jim S. - Northern Ireland:

In Northern Ireland during the past year they had followed very closely in the footsteps of their Dublin friends, and they had achieved possibly the closest co-operation with an alcoholic unit of which he had heard. They had in that unit a Wednesday night information meeting at which older members of A.A. gave an introductory talk to patients who had just been admitted - that was to patients who were probably in their first week of drying out. They had also in the hospital two closed meetings for alcoholics, open to patients and ex-patients. The number of referrals had more than trebled since the start of the information and closed meetings.

They, like Bill had had a fair degree of success in being asked to take part in some of the meetings of other organisations which dealt with various social problems. In Belfast they had a very strong Pioneer movement but that could be either a good advertisement or a bad one. He thought that it had been about 1965 when a Minister for Health in Dublin had denied a high incidence of alcoholism in Ireland, and he had pointed to the number of Pioneers. Everyone had realised afterwards that the large number of Pioneers possibly pointed to a greater problem than anyone had wanted to admit.

They had 37 groups, which was 8 more than the year before, and they had also two groups in the prison in Crumlin Road.

In reply to questions Jim said that he thought that the problems of the younger members were much the same as his own, but they had the ability to pursue them more vigorously than he could. He had not been involved to a great extent with young people but felt that the real answer to the problem was to get involved with youth organisations and the secondary schools in order to make them aware of the potential dangers of the use of alcohol. Regarding the formation of separate groups for young people he thought that it would be better if such groups formed themselves. They should probably do so from within an established group of older and more experienced members. The number of young members was growing but there were no separate groups for them.

John M. - Chairman. Area and Group Representative Committee:

He was speaking for the last time as Chairman of the A. & G.R.C. It would be wrong to say that his time as Chairman had been an easy one. They had had their problems and he had

made his mistakes, but if one benefited from these mistakes then all was not lost. He was very honoured indeed to have been able to serve as Chairman and he had had a great deal of help from many friends. It would be idle for him to name people, but he must mention Joan, who as secretary had been a great help, C.S.O., and members of the General Service Board. The people who had come to the A. & G.R.C. meetings had been, to put it mildly, most tolerant and long-suffering. They now had a home at Redcliffe Gardens for another 20 years. It had been redecorated and looked a much better place than it had done in the past.

One point he wished to mention was a paper about a Scientific Subscription Service at Thornton Heath in Surrey. These people published a variety of books and the paper dealt principally with books about alcoholism. That indeed was a good thing but the firm were putting out for sale certain publications which could be supplied direct from C.S.O., and as members know, quite a proportion of the revenue of the Board and the Fellowship generally came from the sale of literature. If members bought books through the Scientific Subscription Service they were depriving the Fellowship of much needed cash, so if they wanted to buy something which could be obtained from either source it would benefit the Fellowship if they bought it from C.S.O.

The next point he wanted to mention was the coming into being of the one-day conventions. Those had been without doubt a complete success. He was not going to name the people who had given their homes etc., for holding these conventions, but their gesture had been much appreciated. Leading on from that there had been a marked increase in the activity and the realisation of the work done by inter-groups, which throughout the country were becoming more and more active. He would also like to congratulate those concerned with the new look of the "News Letter" which was a vast improvement on the old and he hoped they would go from success to success.

Last year he had got into serious trouble because he had quoted statistics and they had been wrong. The facts which he was about to give were given in good faith. The World Directory said that their numbers in England and Wales (that was, numbers of recovered alcoholics) amounted to 2,430. One of the things that he did know was that at the Central Service Office in London they received each day of a five-day working week about nine requests for help by letter, telephone call or personal visit. Many of these people just disappeared, and if they were getting an average of 45 contacts a week - and there were many more contacts throughout the country, either people getting in touch with A.A. locally or through doctors etc., - then they had got to make even greater efforts to bring these people into the Fellowship and save them years and years of misery.

1968 was going to see the Convention going to the North-West, and he was sure that the North-West, traditionally very fine hosts, would do a magnificent job, and they all looked forward to meeting in that Mecca of all Meccas - Blackpool.

In conclusion he would like to say one or two things which he thought had importance. The word "sobriety" did not mean just stopping drinking, full stop. It meant being sober in thought, word and deed. Their guide in A.A. (and with the exception of the non-alcoholic guests there, they were all ex-drunks) was the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions; and anything in A.A. that was far removed from either of these was not A.A. and would probably come unstuck as a result. The most important thing in A.A. was the new member. He was the only V.I.P. The strength of A.A. was in them, the members, and in the groups they represented. Many of the problems that they came up against were ones of their own making, and as such were really not all that important when they considered the amount of heartache, misery and wretchedness that they had all experienced in the later days of their drinking. They had come to the Fellowship for sobriety, and thanks to A.A. they had been able to achieve that day by day.

Falkland Peter - Secretary Prison Intergroup

Since the last Conference four new groups had been formed at Chelmsford, Dartmoor, Shepton Mallet and Swansea, and that brought the total number of groups in prisons in England and Wales to 30. Two more groups were being formed and it was possible that two of the existing ones would be dividing owing to the increase in their numbers. A particular point he would like to make was that the increase in the number of groups had not resulted in an increase in the number of sponsors. The same members were sponsoring more groups.

The groups were becoming much more concerned with their own autonomy and were taking it as a matter of course that they should produce their own periodicals. Both Veme and Shepton Mallet prisons were producing monthly magazines and one of the groups, in close co-operation with Prison Intergroup, was taking steps to produce a special publication which perhaps would be more pertinent to the prisoner who found himself faced with an alcoholic problem. The publication would deal with drinking before and after sentence, and with A.A., and should be of great value to those in prison and perhaps to others who might join the Fellowship some time after leaving prison.

There had been open meetings in almost every prison in England and Wales, and during one weekend three open meetings had been held in Lewes, Leicester and Styal, Manchester, and the message had been carried to 600 or 700 people.

They had had contact with Alanon, not to a very great extent but greater than before because Prison Welfare Officers who worked with Alanon were now getting in touch with A.A. They had been requested by prisoners, usually through the prison sponsors, for information about their home groups, very often weeks or months before discharge. Some groups were most helpful and co-operative - others were not.

Closer cooperation with the Home Office had been sought, and to a limited extent had been successful. Prison authorities on the whole had been more helpful, and the movement of officials within the prison service from one prison to another could transform completely not only the attitude of the prison but also the attitude of the A.A. members in the local groups. Unfortunately there were still prisons which did not want to know anything about A.A.

The Prison Officers' Association in every prison which had an A.A. contact had been offered the services of the Prison Intergroup. In many prisons the initiative had come from the Association. If that venture proved successful-they would be offering their assistance to every prison in England and Wales. At the beginning of 1967 they had had at Leicester a Prison Intergroup meeting which had been split into two halves. The first half was closed and the second was open. To the latter they had invited local welfare and probation officers, members of social agencies and the prison authorities. The meeting had proved most successful and they would be repeating the same pattern at Oxford.

They had been very pleased that George G. from Scotland had been able to attend one of their meetings. It was a cheering thought that Scotland had got together to subscribe for someone to come all the way to London.

They had new officers in the Intergroup. Ronnie H., when he became a member of the General Purposes Sub-Committee, had retired from being chairman and Alex R. had taken his place. He was in the process of handing over as secretary to Jack of Leicester. They had staggered the changeovers to provide continuity of service.

There were four main points which he wished to emphasise. Prisons never had enough literature. It did not matter how much was supplied, more was wanted. 70,000 people were in prison during the course of a year, and a conservative estimate would put twelve to fifteen thousand of them as alcoholics. Those figures showed the amount of literature which was



required. Secondly he would like to suggest to Conference that prison groups should be allowed the use of tapes and films free. The groups had little, if any, money and payment had to be made by a member of a local group. Thirdly, money was required if Prison Intergroup was to make progress. The Area & Group Representative Committee had guaranteed a certain sum if it became necessary, and that had meant that the Intergroup could relax a little.

Peter's last point was sponsorship. More group and individual sponsors were required. He felt that there could have been more prison groups formed during the last year if more members of A.A. had done something about it. He was meeting (as were others) in London and other places more and more ex-prisoners whom he had met first in prison when he had been visiting as a member of A.A. Two people who spoke at the Prison Intergroup meeting at the Convention were ex-prisoners. They had had an excellent talk from the Assistant Governor of Camp Hill prison, Mr. Richardson, and a great deal of what he had said was of value to A.A. on the question of sponsorship it was bad for the same people to have to go on having to sponsor increased numbers of prison groups. There was a limit to human endurance and there was a limit to the efficiency of a person who was having to carry on under a heavy load. They were all in the Fellowship together and he thought that they should all share not only in sobriety but also in the day-to-day work, and in sponsorship. It seemed to him that the same people were doing prison, hospital and other twelfth step work throughout the country.

In reply to questions, Peter said that if a Governor or Assistant Governor said that he was not interested in A.A. then one just had to go on knocking at the door until he became interested.

Some Governors did allow members who were ex-prisoners to visit in their prisons - others did not.

He would like every prison group to have copies of the "News Letter" and the "Grapevine", and a great deal of the general literature of A.A. Money would be wanted for that. More important still was the fact that frequently one had to travel several hundred miles. A particular member might be extremely good at speaking at a prison group but he might not have the time nor the money for travelling. Identification was most important in the initial stages of A.A., and frequently members were paying privately to take other members to speak at meetings which could be 50 or 60 miles away. Those speakers might feel slightly inferior because they could not pay their way and he would like to see funds available whereby it could be made possible for Charlie from so-and-so, or Bill X. to take a day off work or to leave work two hours early so that he could go the necessary miles to speak at a meeting. An ordinary A.A. group would pay for an invited speaker and because a prison group could not do so, funds should be made available.

Harry T. - Secretary, Central Service Office:

There was not a great deal to say about C.S.O. He was surprised that the office had been able to function throughout the past year because of the shortage of staff. He had been Secretary for three years and, when he had started the Central Service Office, had served the groups in England and Wales. They now had with them, and he was very glad of the arrangement the London Service Office which was the office of London Intergroup; and owing to the sad death of Bob L., there was work for the Board to be done. The number of staff was less instead of more. They could just manage but they were stretched as tight as they could be, and if there were illness and during holidays they were stretched tighter than they should be. It was just a matter of finance.

They had been able to carry on because they had had a great deal of help from a great many people. They had had help also from criticism. That might sound an extraordinary thing to say but they knew that they could not be right always. They appreciated criticism, but with it there came the problem of communication. Harry then asked that people with criticisms to make

should come to C.S.O. and explain the nature of the criticism. If they could not come he asked them to write, because telephone conversations were not a satisfactory method of examining whatever might be wrong. As he had said, C.S.O. welcomed criticism but they liked it to come direct and not through underground channels from which it could rise into a huge atomic cloud from something that was really quite small and which could probably have been settled in a few minutes.

John M. had quoted some figures. During 1967 groups had been very good about sending in returns for the World Directory, and from a look at the returns it seemed that the total membership figure for 1968 would be much greater than 2,450. Whatever figure was accepted he thought that 2,400 members were doing all the work for the Fellowship in England and Wales, and that was quite a strain because there were about 214 groups.

Harry then spoke about money. It was vital that there should be a greater annual income because they could not go on indefinitely stretched to the limit, as they were. Taking a membership figure of 2,400, each member was paying an average of £3 a year. That probably was not bad, but he was certain that the actual membership figure was much greater.

In reply to a question, Harry said that if Intergroups felt they could help in the distribution of literature or in any other way, C.S.O. would be delighted to accept such help.

For the second half of the morning and for the afternoon the delegates divided into four committees.

Saturday Evening - Frustration Corner: Chairman: Jim S. (Belfast)

Jim said that they were going to begin with a report from Frank of Colne on the meetings of A.A. in Europe, and after that there would be an opportunity for everyone to ask questions; to answer these he had the support of Harry of the Central Service Office and delegates from Eire, Scotland, England and Wales.

Frank said that about seven years before he had had an invitation to attend a round up in Wiesbaden. His wife and he had gone and had discovered that the American Forces in Europe used to get together once a year for a Convention. The big meetings had been held in the local American school at the Base and they had found themselves the only English people there. They had attended every meeting since that first one.

The American Forces had been very largely withdrawn from Germany and the year before last they had discovered that Wiesbaden was really being run by Germans. There was a sort of European Committee, which had puzzled him a good deal. Last August he had been able to attend that committee, which had been held on a boat on the Rhine. It had not been a great success because of the crowd, and they had decided to hold the next meeting on shore at 8:00 o'clock the next morning. There had been sixteen nations from Western Europe who had wanted to get together and be together. They all spoke different languages and there had been a strong desire to have a small co-ordinating committee which could sort out things. The committee had been formed and he had been asked to represent England and Wales. He did not know if he could do this because he did not know if members wanted him to represent them. There was a suggestion that four people should represent the British Isles and Eire, and if anyone were interested there was something in Europe which was well worth having a look at. Frank said that he was available to give any information which might be required.

During the discussion which followed Frank's report many subjects were touched upon.

Anonymity. In the U.S.A. there was less emphasis placed on anonymity, probably because alcoholism was better understood in that country. When this country had more

knowledge there might be less desire for anonymity, but it would still be a matter for each individual member, who would have to consider his or her particular circumstances.

Report on the Conference: Final distribution plans had not yet been made but the Conference would be reported in full and each group throughout the British Isles would have a copy of the Report.

Hospitals and Alcoholic Units. If possible, the usual method of entry through a G.P. should be used. In an emergency the County Medical Officer Of Health could be asked to help.

The reason why doctors in charge of Units liked to see patients before admitting them was the shortage of beds, and doctors liked to make the best use of the beds which they had.

Films: It was thought that a technical film was not the best medium for educating the public. Fiction films like "THE LOST WEEK-END" and "DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES" were more effective.

The film of Bill W's life, shown at the Clacton Convention had been interesting only for A.A. members, but it was no good for publicity purposes.

Documentary films on television tended to portray the alcoholic as a bombsite meths drinker. That sort of picture might be used to show the end of the road for the alcoholic who did not stop drinking, but if it conveyed the idea that all alcoholics were meths drinkers, it was most misleading. After the showing of such a film it might be useful if members were to write to their local papers to give the true picture.

Publicity, Open Meetings etc., Doctors would not usually go to ordinary meetings of A.A. but they might be persuaded to attend open meetings if they knew that there would be the chance for useful discussion with priests, school teachers etc.

Letters to the Press, national and local, could be useful, and doubt was expressed that the Fellowship used the various media of communication to the best advantage.

A member had been told by a doctor that alcoholics had not got a sensational disease which easily caught the public fancy. The way to educate the public and to get publicity was by twelfth step work, however hard it might be. By that method the result of A.A.'s work would become known.

Sunday Morning - November 12th:

John H. of Bradford took the Chair and asked the Chairmen of the four committees for their reports.

**Committee No. 1. A NEW LOOK AT GROUP WORK AND SPONSORSHIP**  
**Chairman – Clifford H**

**1 How to appeal to a broader social structure.**

That could be achieved best by A.A.'s cooperating with other agencies. (See also under No. 8). As membership increased through greater group activity, provided an intelligent choice of sponsors was made, A.A. would automatically be brought into contact with, and would have a direct impact on, an over-broadening social range. (See also under No. 2).

**2 Were they failing in sponsorship?**

**3 Sponsorship of members of hospital and prison groups.**

**4 Should the individual sponsor play a larger part in helping a new member to settle into a group?**

The first concern of groups and individual members should be to greet newcomers and to include them in and make them feel wholly accepted by the group. A personal sponsor should be found to look after each newcomer for as long as he or she needed it.

To what extent any individual sponsor carried his care for the newcomer must always be a matter for the sponsor to decide. Neither they in that study group nor the sponsor's own group were able to advise or direct. The sponsor must let his conscience be the ultimate guide, with the benefit of knowledge which came from making himself familiar with basic A.A. literature. The sponsor must bear in mind always the need to give support without nursing, to encourage the newcomer to stand on his own feet, and the need to be readily available without intruding. A sponsor should remember always that possessiveness had no part in sponsorship.

The committee thought that A.A. was not failing in sponsorship but that there was need to take a good look at themselves and their groups. There was great scope for growth and improvement in that field.

Reliable sponsors, rather than speakers, were required for prison groups. The continued sight of a familiar sober face helped to bridge for the prisoner the gap between "us and "them".

So far as hospitals were concerned there seemed to be a great readiness to accept all opportunities of sponsoring individuals and groups. Sometimes great perseverance and patience had to be exercised before the opening came along.

**5 It was said that they had lost some of their impetus and zeal. If that were so, what could they do about it?**

They thought that this was not so. Some of the zest and impetus of the older members had transferred itself to newer ones. That was natural and right so long as the older members did not then cease to participate actively in group affairs. There was always plenty of work to do, and their personal sobriety however long they had been in A.A., continued to depend on their involvement in A.A. The principal means of ensuring continued active interest by older members, and at the same time stimulating and benefiting from the zeal of newer members so that impetus was not lost but increased all the time was by arranging a rotation of office holders in the group.

**6 Changing patterns in A.A.?**

As individuals they changed as they grew, but the basic principles of sharing their experience, strength and hope were unaffected. The attitude of the medical profession and of the public towards A.A. had changed for the better, and the Fellowship was adapting itself to meet that change. In their reaction to those and other bodies and in their desire and ability to co-

operate with them in helping the sick alcoholic, the A.A. pattern had changed and was changing, and it was hoped would continue to do so as new challenges had to be met and new methods of achieving their aims were devised. But behind those changes the basic principles of A.A. must remain unchanged.

**7 Were they using the book “ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS” enough?**

The Big Book should always be available to the new member and should also serve as a reference book and a reminder of first principles. Some of the committee felt that discretion was required about the appropriate time to introduce a newcomer to the Big Book, and that some of the lighter literature was more digestible to someone in the early stages of recovery.

**8 How to adapt to the new pattern of referrals from outside bodies, e.g. discharged prisoners and hospital patients.**

It was most important that A.A. members should work closely with professional and other non-A.A. social workers in the case of ex-prisoners and ex-hospital patients. Contact should be made and maintained with halfway houses and clubs run for such people. But those activities should involve A.A. financially in no circumstances. More and more referrals were coming to them indirectly instead of, as at one time, directly from the alcoholic who was still suffering. That did not alter the traditional A.A. attitude, nor did it lessen their responsibilities. It meant their being ready to adapt themselves to meet the new circumstances and, above all, to remember that co-operation did not mean affiliation.

Finally the bulk of conclusions drawn by this Committee were already to be found in the Big Book and other A.A. literature. They should now take their conclusions back to their groups so that they all might refresh their knowledge of A.A. principles and experience and turn their thoughts and discussions into actions infused by a new and greater sense of responsibility and enthusiasm.

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NOTE: The Report on Committee 2 is not to hand at the time of going to press, but will be circulated as an addendum as soon as possible.

**PUBLICITY AND PUBLISHING**  
**Chairman HUGH McK**

**1 What were the most useful publications? Which should cease, and which required revision for this side of the Atlantic?**

The committee had studied the list of sales as shown in the General Service Board Report and recommended that all the publications shown there should continue. It was felt that A.A. & THE MEDICAL PROFESSION was somewhat out-of-date and should be rewritten in the light of current medical knowledge and developments.

It was strongly recommended that the editors of the NEWS LETTER and other A.A. journals should be asked to make regular monthly references to all available literature and to draw attention especially to some of the lesser-known pamphlets, possibly in the form of capsule reviews. The Jack Alexander Story was mentioned specifically.

**2 How much was 24 HOURS A DAY used?**

The book appeared to be in very general use but it was not among the Conference approved literature in the United States. Nevertheless, it was recommended that the book should be made available at Central Service Office.

**3 Should they publish their own literature? Who should write it?**

Not yet. The retention of the basic philosophies even in the American idiom was preferable to starting all over again, and there was danger of intellectual deviation from essential simplicity. Also, though there must be good writers in A.A. (U.K.) there would be difficulty in achieving uniformity of styles and standards, and indeed in setting up an Editorial Board.

**4 How to sell more Big Books.**

The committee strongly recommended that it was up to Intergroups and groups to make a greater effort to sell both the Big Book and "TWELVE STEPS & TWELVE TRADITIONS". It was well worthwhile setting aside a minute or two at any meeting for the specific purpose of putting over some sales talk in that direction.

**5 Making themselves known through (a) stickers b) local press advertisements, and (c) notices in doctors' surgeries, Citizens Advice Bureaux etc.**

(a) was not recommended. (b) Was largely a matter for local initiative, but it was prohibited mainly by reason of costs. (c) It was recommended that a standard display card stating the address and telephone number of the Central Service Office, together with a space for details of local groups, be produced by C.S.O. for general distribution. That method had already been used with success in Southern Inter-group who would supply C.S.O. with examples of the cards.

**6 Mass Media - Was A. A. over-cautious?**

Personal anonymity as laid down in Tradition Eleven was endorsed strongly, particularly with regard to television. T.V. programmes which dealt more objectively with the subjects of alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous, however, would be acceptable, and they would encourage any efforts along those lines. Inter-groups were recommended to nominate two or three members who would be prepared to act as liaison members with the television companies should they wish to mount a programme in their area always provided the principle of personal

anonymity was maintained. Anything of that kind should be carried out in close consultation with Central Service Office. The committee were strongly of the opinion that sound radio was the most suitable medium for passing the message, and that every avenue should be explored persistently in that respect.

#### **7 Local Radio Stations**

The new broadcasting stations were only just starting up and it was felt that contact should be established immediately with a view to obtaining regular “spots” on the air. This would be the concern of local Intergroups.

#### **8 Liaison with the National and County Councils on Alcoholism**

Every effort should be made by A.A. to establish good relations with these bodies and to help in any way possible. It was recommended that the giving of talks to sixth-formers in schools should continue to be developed and that the Board might initiate action within the Universities; but an undergraduate son or daughter through the Students’ Union would probably produce the best results.

#### **9 Should a local pamphlet, designed by the General Service Board and Central Service Office advising people on how to get help from G.P.’s, hospitals, addiction units, A.A., etc.?**

Two pamphlets were recommended:

(i) The first to be available for doctors to pass on to patients at what was felt to be the crucial moment, advising them on how to get in touch with A.A., the object being to “soften up” the suffering alcoholic to the point when he might consider A.A. as an answer to his problem. It was suggested that the G.S.B. should approve and distribute the pamphlet, possibly with the assistance of the Rowntree Trust or some such body who circularised the medical profession extensively.

(ii) A pamphlet of practical advice to the newcomer which would help him to avoid situations in the early days that might endanger his sobriety and tempt him to take a drink, e.g. “Don’t tell your friends you’ve stopped”. “Avoid having time to spare”. “Drink plenty of hot, sweet, non-alcoholic liquid”. “Build up your strength with vitamins” etc., etc.,

The pamphlets should be written by the experts on the Development sub-committee.

**RELATIONS WITH OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

**Chairman-- Maurice S.**

To strengthen at local level the relationship already established by the General Service Board with those bodies listed in the Board's Report.

It was the unanimous feeling of the committee that the fundamental factor in relation to outside organisations should be the individual contact by and effort of each member of A.A.

**1 The Medical profession – doctors, units, etc.**

In general the best method of getting a person into hospital or a unit was through his own G.P., and that channel should be developed at group level. If a person was destitute or had no G.P. they suggested trying to gain entry to the hospital and leaving the formalities until later on.

A long-term view would be to let graduates, G.P.'S, and nursing staffs know about A.A. services through local groups and inter-groups.

**2 Industry**

The cost of alcoholism in industry among all grades of staff and shop-floor personnel was being acknowledged more and more in the U.S.A. but not so much in this country. Approaches might be made to American company directors, the Association of Personnel Officers, the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs and Trades Unions. At local level all contacts with employees in industry who needed help could only help to spread the knowledge of A.A. to management.

**3. The Church.**

The Church of Scotland appeared interested in the over-all problem although perhaps unable to understand its real scope. In general terms the committee considered the spiritual approach was not rewarding initially, and one could not expect the Church to rehabilitate the alcoholic. Relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church appeared to be very good, but the Anglicans seemed to be somewhat apathetic. In that context they would underline the desirability of a specific approach to individual members of the Church.

**4 Proposed and existing Hostels:**

The attitude of A.A. should be that of co-operation and not affiliation, in case the Fellowship was drawn into responsibilities which it could not discharge.

**5 Home Office and Prisons:**

Recent progress had been most satisfactory, and there was little to add to the report given by the secretary of the Prison Intergroup.

**6. Police:**

A telephone number should be given to the local police so that they could contact A.A. Information should be disseminated through Inter-groups and where possible talks should be given to Police recruits as was happening already in Scotland. It had to be born in mind that to A.A. members Alcoholics Anonymous was their life, and that was not so to members of the police.



## **7 Citizens Advice Bureaux and Marriage Guidance Councils.**

The C.A.B. was the focal point for many queries referred to A.A., and the understanding of the C.A.B. staff was significant in that they knew many local members of the Fellowship. Members should make themselves known to their local C.A.B. Alanon groups should be told about cases affecting the Marriage Guidance Council.

## **8 National and County Councils on Alcoholism**

County Councils should include an A.A. member for the purpose of closer understanding, but not as a representative of A.A. The main practical contribution of councils lay in the information centre with which at local levels A.A. should maintain close contact.

## **9 Local Medical Officers of Health and Mental Health Welfare**

The local Medical Officer of Health and the Mental Health Welfare should be approached separately as individuals and not in their functional capacities. It was important to differentiate between the Medical Officer of Health, the Mental Health Welfare and the General Practitioner.

## **10 Radio and Television**

In view of the great influence of television, A.A. could not neglect it, despite the dilemma of possible breach of anonymity on the one hand and the perpetuation of the "man in the shadows" on the other. The dangers of over-dramatization were acknowledged but the committee thought that television should be used to get to the public, the cult of personality "Mr. A.A." being avoided at all costs.

## **11 Should there be an advisory pamphlet from the General Service Board and the Central Service Office for groups wishing to further this work?**

A full report of the Conference would be going out to each group, and it was better for the opinions of the committee to be read in the report than in pamphlet form.

John thanked the Chairmen for their reports and said that before talking about the Conference as a whole he would like quickly to mention this attempt to run a pilot Scheme for speaking to school leavers, referred to by the Second Committee. In connection with both training colleges and universities it had been suggested by Committee No. 2 that they ask the help of Alanon in the work, because quite obviously members of Alanon had seen the other side of the coin and could speak with authority on the effect of alcoholism in the home. Moreover, A.A. was short of people who had the necessary qualifications and the necessary time, since much of the work was going to need attention during school hours.

They came now to what he personally thought of as the annual gallop and the preparation for the next step. From all the four working parties, from what he had heard from the open meetings and Frustration Corner the night before, and from speaking to people outside and so on, it seemed that members had come by various paths to the same conclusion, and that was that the future of A.A. was a personal responsibility. To the member who stood up on the floor and asked, "wasn't so-and-so done?" the correct answer would be "Because he or she hadn't done it". They could not shift responsibility either by passing it to an Inter-group or to some other member. They had to face the fact squarely that they were privileged to be members of A.A. and that they were extremely fortunate and the recipients of grace to be sitting there alive and sober. They owed a moral debt for their sobriety, and that involved their offering the road of escape to alcoholics who were still in drink.

John said that he would welcome any comments on the Conference and he would like those who had experienced the first Conference too to think about that one along with the second. They had known when they had started the first Conference that it was going to take a while for the Conference to find its way. They were groping to some extent. They had to feel their way forward - and gradually the pattern had begun to emerge. He himself quite frankly had been astonished by the speed with which the pattern had emerged. What he, in his pessimism, had allowed seven years for, he had seen happen almost to fulfilment in two years.

John asked the delegates to remember that he was still speaking personally and that nobody endorsed what he was saying, but he thought it was a possibility that before too long had passed they would find their Conference following the pattern of the American one and becoming the legislative body for A.A. on this side of the Atlantic. He knew he was jumping ahead but he thought that ultimately that would become inevitable. On Friday they had been told by an outsider, Dr. Beresford Davies, that they must progress or die. That was a law of life. It was not just a law for A.A. If they stagnated their efforts would run away to sand and they would simply die the death. They had got to go forward, and he thought that they were going forward. They were hitting snags; they were floundering at times, but over all they were moving forward in a changing society, and he believed quite strongly that at the moment they were in a very strong position as regards advancing in the work which they had undertaken. Society at the moment was extremely drug-conscious. They had their "flower people", and the national papers were constantly occupied with addictions. It was fortunate that the Conference had been held just at that time. It had been purely fortuitous but the fact that they had met that week-end, at a time when the nation was ready to listen to people who were offering help on addictions, showed that they needed to strike now, and that the iron was hot at the moment.

He was very glad indeed that they had met that week-end and that the working-parties had come up with so much concrete suggestion to go forward, and had asked that their local areas should be brought in. They needed to think - did they want a Conference every year? That question had been put to them last year and they had said, "Yes" - but John thought that in all fairness the opportunity for re-assessment should be given. There had been suggestions that they have one every two years, because it was expensive and they wanted to cut down on expense; but that would mean a longer Conference, probably a four-day one. Against that they had to take it that in all probability a four-day Conference would cut out a large body of representatives who could not get there on a Wednesday evening for a Thursday start. Otherwise it meant putting it into a national holiday, and those were all over the place at the moment, - so that this would not be easy. Whether they had a biennial four-day Conference or stuck to an annual three-day Conference, from the experience they had had already they knew they needed to become more and more organised. They would have to ask Gordon Fowler for his analysis for bringing themselves into line with modern commerce and so on, because every minute needed to be filled and that meant that the Conference had to be prepared minutely beforehand so that the gun went off as they signed at the reception desk. Then straight into their first committee with their noses down: then into the next committee and so on and eventually they would arrive panting on the Sunday morning for the final presentation of all those committees had done. That he was certain would have to be done. They had limited themselves this year to four committees. They had been forced into using the committee procedure because last year, when the Conference was exploratory, they had been able to take a more leisurely progress to find out what they were trying to do and where they were going. But as soon as the Conference Committee had had to start the arrangements for this year they had known they must be practical, and when they had started to look at the problem and to examine it they had found that it was indeed a very big programme. The only way in which it could possibly be tackled was by breaking, it down into

smaller pieces, and by using individual members, by their choice, to consider the problems with which they were most suited to deal. Fortunately the members' own first choices had sorted them out pretty equally for numbers, and the Committee had been able to let each person go on the committee he had chosen. The delegates who had not stated any preference had been used to fill up the gaps, and he hoped they had enjoyed their work on the allotted committees.

John then asked the delegates how often they thought a Conference should be held. The discussion which followed brought out the strong feeling that there should be an annual Conference. A.A. must go forward, and much of what had to be done could be done properly only at a Conference. It was decided, therefore to hold one each year.

It was also decided that the best time was early November. National and one-day Conventions would have been held, and a later date might mean difficulties in travelling, with the dangers of fog and ice.

John warned against the dangers of thinking too parochially when making arrangements for the next Conference. They were dealing with the future, preparing to go ahead, and they must not stick at the parish council level. If a group had something fixed for the dates chosen for the Conference, the group must alter its arrangements. They must not start thinking of the Conference as being the instrument for any specific locality. It was there to serve the whole of A.A. on this side of the Atlantic, and they must be constantly aware of that.

The delegates then discussed where the 1968 Conference should be held. John took this opportunity of thanking Bill S. on behalf of everyone for the excellent arrangements he had made for this year's Conference, and remarked on the co-operation they had had from the hotel authorities. That had been due to Bill's way of handling matters. It was decided to hold the next Conference at the same place, the Midland Hotel, Manchester, on the 8th, 9th and 10<sup>th</sup> November 1968.

The delegates then considered the question of a Steering Committee for the Conference. John said that it had become obvious from the first meeting of this year's Committee that everything had to be thought out in detail because of the amount that had to be done to justify the enormous expense of the Conference. No one should be in doubt about the great expense and they must show results for the money which had been laid out by the Inter groups and so on, and that meant hard concentrated work over the week-end. There were two things which should be remembered. One was that continuity on that Committee was essential, as on any other committee. There must be some who had sat on it before, so that it could get off the ground quickly. The other thing was that from that Committee they needed a Chairman for the last meeting of the Conference before the open meeting. This must be someone who had been in on the Conference from the beginning; who knew what the members of the Steering Committee had in mind when they first put the programme down, who had been able to see the thing either working out or failing to work out during the period of the Conference itself, and who could therefore summarise at the end whether the Conference had succeeded or failed in what had been sought. Last year the composition of the Committee had been: two members from the General Service Board (one alcoholic and one non-alcoholic), a member from Scotland, one from the Republic of Ireland, one from Northern Ireland, the Chairman of the A. & G.R.C., Joan B. of Woking (who had been chosen, not as secretary of the A. & G.R.C., but because it was thought that there should be a lady on the Committee), the secretary of the Central Service Office (who acted as Secretary for the Steering Committee), Bill S. of Manchester and himself.

After some discussion it was agreed that the same Committee should serve for the 1968 Conference (always bearing in mind that the bodies sending these representatives might wish to make a change), and that they should be asked to work out a system whereby the rotation of members could be ensured.

The meeting then stood for two minutes' silence in memory of the fallen in two world wars.

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Engagements for 1968 were announced as follows: -

March 8th/9 <sup>th</sup>	Highland Gathering.
March 30/31 <sup>st</sup>	Anniversary Dinner and Dance Commemoration Service - London.
April 19th/21 <sup>st</sup>	Irish Convention - Wexford.
April 26th/28 <sup>th</sup>	General Service Conference Steering Committee.
May 3rd/5 <sup>th</sup>	Scottish Convention - Dumfries.
October 4th/6 <sup>th</sup>	Bluebonnets Gathering.
October 18th/20 <sup>th</sup>	English Convention - Black-pool
November 8th/10 <sup>th</sup>	General Service Conference - Manchester.

John then closed the Conference and left the delegates with these thoughts: -

The great thing about A.A. is that we can never sit back and say that the work is finished; and no frills or mystique can ever be a substitute for the hard work we must permanently do. Always we need to think at a personal level, and not just accept the clichés without the responsibility.

Many of the answers to the questions that this Conference has asked are to be found in the existing literature, and all of them will be found to lead to a personal responsibility. We have to go out willing to do the work, recognising that times change and that we must change with them. It has been said that we must progress or die. If we accept our responsibility we shall not die.

Public knowledge about alcoholism has changed greatly in the last ten years, and we now see that help can be, there for any alcoholic of any age. It is our responsibility to see that it is. We have now realised that rock bottom is not necessarily the gutter. It is a spiritual rock bottom. We cannot measure pain and we cannot decide another person's rock bottom. We are at rock bottom when we can no longer live with ourselves. When we have reached the point where we cannot live without alcohol, and yet cannot live with it. And it is the privilege of A.A. to be there to help when any person reaches his own private hell.

Why we have been chosen to do this work we cannot know. If one watches the making of a Persian carpet from the position of the little boy behind the loom, passing the threads back through to the master the whole seems to be a mass of unrelated ends. It is only when one walks round to the other side and sees the product from the master's viewpoint that the pattern becomes gloriously clear. We in A.A. are like the little assistant. We must go on, willingly serving in each little operation and trusting that the future will reveal the product of our labours. If we try to live by the prayer of St. Francis, then each of us and A.A. as a fellowship will continue always to grow:

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

**OPEN MEETING**  
**HUGH Mc.                      Chairman**

He would like to make one or two personal remarks before introducing a speaker who required no introduction. He felt most honoured and gratified that he had been asked to the Conference as a guest. Otherwise he might never have got to one, and such conferences were very stirring experiences. He was grateful also to the people who had asked him to Chair that committee, or join another one, or do this or that for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Sackville, when he had been lunching with him during the summer, had said that someone who was on the Steering Committee had asked him to speak on “inspiration”. In true Sackville style came the remark “No one can speak on inspiration. Hugh said that he was hoping that the talk would be on this subject, because if anyone could speak on it, Sackville could.

He would like to say that he himself had been inspired by three things since, he had been in A.A. The miracle of the real-friendship he had received which had taken away his desire to drink. The inspiration gained from the sheer goodness of people in their selfless help to other people, which made him hope that he would be able to follow that lead. And finally he would mention his wife, and the inspiration he gained from her. After the years of drinking and broken promises she had behaved, after he had joined A.A., as if she had been quite sure that that was all over. He was certain that she had not been sure, but she had behaved as if she were, and that had been a great help.

There was no need for him to introduce Sackville because those who knew him would be wanting to hear him, and for those who did not know him, it was high time they did.

Sackville – Republic of Ireland:

It was very nice to have a Chairman who overlooked his weaknesses and good morning to them all. He was an alcoholic. He belonged to A.A. Dublin. His Christian name was Sackville. By the grace of God, and through that grace and the continuing help of Alcoholics Anonymous he had had his last drink of alcohol ( so far anyway) at the end of April 1947. He was glad that his two fellow-members from Ireland (from Belfast and from Dublin) had already given their most sincere good wishes to the Conference for happiness and success, then and always. He himself wanted to add a word of thanks for the honour done him in being asked to talk to them that morning. Three months before he had reached the advanced age of 70, and he would be a fool were he not to take into consideration the fact that any talk he gave from then onward could be his last. If the talk he was going to give were to be his swansong to A.A., he could not hope to sing it in better company.

He wanted to apologise right at the start for not having been able to attend the whole Conference. It had not been altogether his fault, but it did carry with it the drawback that without wishing to give offence to anybody he might go over some of the ground which had been covered already in their committees. If that were so, he apologised again. As Hugh had said, he had been asked as long ago as last March, and that had not given them a sporting chance of his being able to say that he could not come.

Hugh had said that it had been suggested that he should talk on “inspiration”. He would be most ungrateful if he did not at once acknowledge the inspiration he had received from meeting them, all and from being able to attend part of the Conference. It would take a much braver man than he to talk on inspiration to a body of people like themselves who were so

obviously inspired already and dedicated. So he hoped that they would forgive him if he spoke in a more personal and a more old-fashioned way.

Alcoholics Anonymous after all was a society with old-fashioned ideas. Old-fashioned ideas about the value of old-fashioned virtues like honesty and charity; and when he used the word "virtue" he was using it in its proper sense - the conduct befitting a man. He supposed that he should give the traditional warning that anything he might say was his own view, as of that day, and for the rest the Twelve Steps were the bedside and prayer-book of their way of living. Nothing he was going to say would be directed against anybody in that room.

It was not really necessary to give a warning like that because A.A. talks were not spates of mutual criticism nor periods of presumptuous instruction. They were just carpets of thought. Two generations had grown up since Alcoholics Anonymous had been first created, and in the thirty-two or thirty-three years of its life, naturally the face of it had changed in two or three ways. He understood that the Conference had been devoted largely to the future of their society in these islands. That was both wise and provident. But it could at the same time be unwise and improvident if they directed all their attention away from the past history because the past had given them the three essential principles of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous unless A.A. changed its character completely, principles would remain and unalterable for any future that was foreseeable. Those three essential principles, and their own experience of practising them, were essentially what they had to hand down to the future; and when he said "they" he meant each individual member in A.A. because although Alcoholics Anonymous was a fellowship and a very marvellous fellowship every member of it was a distinct, separate personality. In the future members of A.A. would probably, as many of them had done in the past, make their first and often their lasting assessment of A.A. on what they found, on what they felt and on what they sensed in the first member or members they met. In that respect each member was accountable to A.A. for someone else, and each member was a founder member of A.A. to someone else. How they themselves practised the programme and how they presented it to the newcomer was important, not only for themselves but also for future members. The results in others were the indirect effects of their own lives, echoes wandering deep down the valleys of the lives of others like the chime of distant bells - silently, quietly, impartially, implacably reaching out for the furthest, the most secluded hamlets of men. From experience it seemed that the newcomer to A.A. did not at first hear very much of what members said, but he felt what the members felt. Sackville hoped that they would excuse a very short reminder about those three principles. They were, first the principle of deflation. Medical science had passed a verdict of premature death or permanent insanity on the alcoholic who refused to stop drinking, and the alcoholic who wanted to recover had got to start cutting himself down to size and be willing to accept the laws of alcoholism and the laws of life. The second principle was that of self-identification with recovered members. A great many of their recoveries had started by working on that principle, and most certainly his own had done so. The third principles inscribed in their book of A.A., was that a spiritual life was not just a theory. It had to be lived. It had been his own experience that a member who had made a permanent recovery and had got peace, satisfaction and contentment out of sobriety had always had to be willing to effect a change in his spiritual living - not necessarily a strictly formal and religious change - but a real revolution in the way he thought and in the way he behaved. Those principles being substantially what they had to pass down to the future, he thought they might bear with him if he talked on the points of practice and the presentation of sponsorship. The sponsorship he meant was that of a programme of recovery, not the first message of hope that they delivered. He thought that they might look at themselves, the sponsors, and might like to think over what sort of an image of A.A. they were projecting to a newcomer.

A year or so after he had joined A.A. he had read a short article which had made a lasting impression on him. It had been written by the Reverend Dr. Sangster of the London City Temple, who had begun by recalling that Charles Lamb, the essayist, had always believed that there was a lake at the bottom of his garden. Lamb had never been down to see whether it was there or not, just in case it wasn't, because he had wanted to preserve the wonder in his life. Dr. Sangster had then gone on to remember the first day he had seen his first child - the day the War had been over - or perhaps the day the doctor came and said that it was not cancer. Oh the wonder! The breathless bewildering wonder of it all: But people got used to things until there was no wonder left, and very little gratitude. All of them in that room that morning, just by their very presence showed that they realised the importance of continuing active gratitude for their recoveries, and he knew that gratitude for his recovery was one of the strongest links in the chain that bound him to Alcoholics Anonymous. What of the wonder - the breathless bewildering wonder, for that wonderful recovery that had come seemingly out of the blue, when everything had seemed so despairingly and finally lost - how about that?

For those of them with five, ten, fifteen or more years of sobriety behind them, did they still face each morning and their problem each morning with the same sense of its urgency that they had done in their earlier days? Did those of them who, like himself, prayed to God for His help for the day in the morning - did they still pray for that help with the same conviction of its urgent importance to them for that day, or over the years had that prayer developed into just a daily routine - something which had to be got through almost unthinkingly whilst they dressed or shaved? If a Twelfth Step call came nowadays and interfered with their plans, did it get the winning, unquestioned priority it always had done in the earlier days? Those longest in A.A. were only arrested alcoholics, granted a daily reprieve from actual alcoholism, and it was a sombre thought for a member that anyone in A.A. who might relapse today, might have fully intended yesterday to remain sober today. Because he had been dry for a long time that was no sure guarantee that he could maintain his sobriety today unless he worked for it. The loss of that sense of urgency about their recovery could be a dangerous sentiment, and a dangerous trend towards complacency, towards over-confidence, and - God forbid - towards a relapse. The newcomer to A.A. felt what the members felt, and Sackville said that he would not like anyone to take away from him the impression that he could consider himself perfectly safe after his time in the Fellowship, and that he had no longer any real, urgent need to use all the help he could possibly find to retain his sobriety. He would not care to be a member who, through carelessness in his own living and in his own approach to the programme, had encouraged a newcomer to think that he too, after a stint of sobriety, could afford to water down the actual practice of the A.A. programme into a mere conventional usage.

Thomas Merton had written a book called "No Man is an Island", and in it had put "tradition is active and living, but convention is passive and dead". Tradition did not force them automatically. Those who were observant had to work. Convention was attractive passively, as a matter of routine. One went through an act without time to understand the meaning of it all, merely because everyone else did the same. Sackville thought it was true to say that convention did rule part of the lives of a great number of them -that was inevitable in any ordered society - but slavishly to follow convention could lead to lazy thinking, and lazy thinking could be a very dangerous defect if it were applied to their programme of recovery.

He had never yet found one word in the Twelve Steps which had been placed there without a purpose. In the Twelfth Step their earliest members had told them that having had a spiritual awakening as a result of the steps, they had tried to practice those principles in all their affairs. If their earliest members had meant to suggest that all that was necessary was to practice the Steps like a set of automatons they would not have bothered to make the change from "steps" to



“principles”, but as they had done so it seemed to him that they were telling the present-day members that it was not enough just to practise the Steps, just to be working with the rest of their group, but that they must try to understand the principle underlying each Step so as to get the maximum help. That required thought about the Steps, and it required study of them. After all, it was not much good having their lives back if they did not know how to use them. If he were trying to sponsor a newcomer usefully he should at least be able to explain what the Steps meant to him and what help he got from the principle underlying each one of them. Otherwise the newcomer might turn round and ask why he was practising any given Step. All he would be able to say be that he was practising it because it was one of the Twelve Steps and his group had told that he must practise them all. Were such the case, would he be a useful sponsor?

It was said in A.A. that they must be prepared to go to all lengths to secure victory over alcohol. To his way of thinking, all lengths included study of the Steps, study of the Traditions, and study of the experience of those who had gone before them in the Fellowship. He supposed they had all met the member who said, almost boastfully, that he never bothered his head thinking about the Steps or reading about them because, if he did so, it would only complicate his central approach to recovery. In effect what he was saying was that his central approach to recovery would be complicated if he had the faintest idea what he was doing. There was another type of member who came with tears in his eyes and was longing to read everything that had ever been written by A.A., but somehow - somehow or other - he never seemed to find the time to pick up a book. And after a chat with him he will be found to be well up-to-date on racing form and other matters of vital concern to him. Sackville was certain that they must not only be convinced that recovery from alcoholism was vital - a matter literally of life or death but they must make that conviction show for the newcomer through their study of and their approach to their programme of recovery. What sort of impression of sincerity or honesty could possibly be given to a newcomer if a member started off by saying that recovery from alcoholism was the most important thing in his life, and the newcomer then discovers that he had not bothered to educate himself about the most vital problem in his life, that he had not been interested enough to spare the time to find out why he was doing what he was doing?

These were the two points he had wanted to mention in their company. They seemed to him to be important ones, not only for their own practice, and his own practice in particular, but for their sponsorship of future members and his own sponsorship in particular.

Alcoholics came to A.A. for different reasons and under different pressures but he believed that they stayed actively with A.A. because the way of life had lit in them a desire to make a dream come true. A dream born nearly two thousand years ago. A dream of loving, honouring and serving the good. A dream of loving and serving their fellow men of free grace, without expecting any material reward. St. John wrote “When the evening of this life comes, you will be judged on love”. Not, they would see, on the amount of knowledge they had acquired. Not on any position in life they might have managed to carve out for themselves. Not on the words they had just written, but on how they had really loved their fellow men. He believed their greatest gift to the future would always be their love rather than the emphasis with which they passed on their merciful programme of recovery to those who might be thinking of joining A.A.. Nothing would ever take the place of that love. Indeed, nothing ever could. He knew that in that room amongst them all, there was a bottomless treasury of love, and he knew of their willingness to pour it out on all those who from a present emptiness of love needed theirs so badly.

Sackville said that he felt very proud to be with them, and he heartily prayed to God, as he understood Him, that He would bless that love of theirs and cause it to be ever increasing. And he prayed God from the bottom of his heart that He would shower down all His good on them and theirs.



CONFERENCE 1968

FULL REPORT

of the

THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

held at

MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER.

NOVEMBER 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>,  
1968.

THEME

A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY.

Complete with index

REPORT of the THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE of  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS in Great Britain and the  
Republic of Ireland held at the Midland Hotel,  
Manchester, from Friday, 8th November to Sunday, 10th November, 1968.

Theme.. "A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY"

Friday evening, 9<sup>th</sup> November:

Review of 1967 Conference recommendations. Chairman. John H. (Bradford)

- 1) How far have the recommendations to Specific bodies been implemented?
- 2) How far have the general suggestions affected the Groups and the individual in A.A?

John H.

This evening's meeting, as you will see from your programme, is to try to create continuity between the Second General Service Conference and the Third. This is a point I think that Committee No. 3 will have to bear in mind in their deliberations tomorrow, the question of continuity, and with a view to this we have asked the four Chairmen, where possible, to report back on the findings and recommendations of last year's four committees. Now here, straight away, the Conference is liable to come up against a snag which must be allowed for in any future machinery - that of the four Committee Chairmen of last year, only two of the four are present now. Others are being substituted for - (a shocking piece of English!). Reasons, personal obviously, are bound to come into it, but also the fact that you may not have the people as representatives the following year, and therefore you have got to try to prepare for such an eventuality beforehand, and, if possible obviate it altogether. This may seem small at the moment, but later on I am coming on to a lot of this stuff which will have to be thought about tomorrow, and I thought this first snag worth pointing out now before I call on the first speaker.

I should like now to call on Travers, who is standing in at very short notice indeed to him, to report on the work of the first Committee what it was about and what it recommended, and what has eventuated as a result of these recommendations during the past year. I think it is essential that any conference that is held show a step forward. Otherwise it is not justified as a conference, and with this point in mind I call now on Travers to report on the first Committee, which was concerned with "A New Look at Group Work and Sponsorship".

Travers C.

This is from my point of view, as John said, at extremely short notice. I suppose there has been a breakdown in communication - which makes me feel at home because I realise I am at an A.A. meeting! We are always talking about communications, but we are many of us in this room English, and we are not easy people to communicate one with another. But fortunately we have all been able to communicate to a degree tonight otherwise we would not have reached this room. I think perhaps it is peculiar to the English that we have this blockage about communication and if I may, before I present the report I have got, which won't take a couple of minutes, I would like to tell you a story which always illustrates to me the difficulty in communication with the Englishman. I remember once during the War I used to share my leave with an officer in the Free French Forces. We used to meet up in London and spend our 14 or 7 days or whatever it was together - living it up - and on one of these leaves I arrived at King's Cross to meet him. He had been travelling down from Scotland overnight, and I greeted him

with the words, "Did you have a good journey?" He looked at me and said, "When in Rome I do as the Romans do, and in English trains I usually try to give the impression of having died in my seat". I think it is this lack of communication that sometimes makes us pretty slow off the ground in A.A.

Well now, to the first Committee of last year. Its theme was "A New Look at Group Work and Sponsorship", and before I can make any personal observations on the progress within the year I think I ought to read you the last paragraph of the report that was presented by Clifford H. The last paragraph of the report said, "Finally, the bulk of the conclusions drawn by this Committee were already to be found in the Big Book and other A.A. literature. They should now take their conclusions back to their Groups so that they all might refresh their knowledge of A.A. principles and experience, and turn their thoughts and discussions into action infused by a new and greater sense of responsibility and enthusiasm". Now, as to whether or not that has been done I can only give you my own personal views. There is nothing concrete that anybody, even Clifford H., could report on factually about this Committee in the course of a year, but I have made a few notes within the last hour, of my own personal observation. The thing that we had to consider was how to appeal to a broader social structure. Were they - the Groups - failing in sponsorship - sponsorship of hospitals and prison groups? Should the individual sponsor play a larger part in helping a new member to settle into a Group? Now I believe that even after this year there is still a great need for a better understanding of the word "sponsorship". I believe that sponsorship is not talked about enough. I think we don't begin to tell some of the newer members what sponsorship means, and very few of some of the members who have been in for some time have had the satisfaction of enjoying the full benefits of being a sponsor. To me a sponsor in a Group is not a person who answers a Twelfth Step call - who goes out, takes the man the Big Book and brings him to his first meeting. To me this is a contact man, nothing more, nothing less - and I believe that it is perhaps after some weeks or even months in the Group that the new member will find his sponsorship. He will find one individual who please God, will stay with him throughout the rest of his natural life for his sobriety. They will come close together. They will be in constant communion with each other. The sponsor in turn will benefit from the closeness of this relationship. It is a relationship which I was indeed afforded when I came into the Fellowship. I was given enormous help, and I am still given great help today, by my original sponsors on this programme. But I think there is still a great need to establish what sponsorship truly means. Dealing with specialist forms of sponsors there is still a great need for prison sponsors. This is not because there are not enough to continue the work. It is because the prison groups are growing and growing and growing; and once again I hope we shall always need this kind of sponsor.

Now, something else we were asked to consider in this Committee last year. (This is the actual phrasing of it). It was said of the Groups that they had lost some of their impetus and zeal. If that were so, what could they do about it? If this was true (and we didn't altogether believe it was), I believe that this loss of impetus and zeal was because some Groups had attempted to water down the programme as it was presented by the first members to us, and it had become slightly anaemic. I believe we have tightened ourselves, our consciences, a lot on this, and many efforts have been made by individual members and Groups to get back to the Book. and I believe (I have heard it said more than once during this year) that after 21 years we are at last getting back to the crossroads of A.A. The effect on those Groups which do make the effort to stick to the Book is sometimes quite remarkable. Many members have a kind of reawakening, sometimes after a period of years of sobriety, and they find that they have only been living half the programme, and therefore they have only been receiving half the benefits.

Now there was another remark concerning that about the impetus and zeal, and that was rotation. Rotation particularly at Group level. I have seen some changes and an awareness of the

need for rotation at Group level - the usual Group chores - Secretary, Treasurer, Literature Secretary - but there is still among some members a feeling that they should still try and hang on to their jobs, and I don't believe they are all completely honest about it when they say, "You see, you can't get anybody else to do it" - because I believe that if there is not anybody else to do it, the Group must have gone sour somewhere because if anything happens to the Secretary - if he isn't around - and there is not going to be anyone else to do it, I don't somehow think they could quite have got hold of the programme.

Were there changing patterns in A.A? (Another thing we were asked to consider). Well of course there are always, and always will be, changing patterns in A.A., because we grow up, the world around us changes, and we have to change with it. One thing (a personal feeling again) I did feel somehow that our relationship with the medical profession is changing very, very much. I still attend public meetings up and down the country, and I still see doctors being trotted out, and they seem to still say the same old things and they still seem to have little awareness of really what is going on about the recovery of alcoholics in our Fellowship. I believe there is a very good reason for it. (This is only my personal view again). I believe that perhaps, like the Church, the medical profession has a certain amount of pride, and you can only take pride in a job really if you have done it yourself. I do know that at a very large public meeting held outside of Dublin not very long ago a member of the Dublin Groups was in attendance and also a medical man - an eminent psychiatrist. Before the meeting started he turned to the member and said, "If you want to get yourself into Dublin after the meeting I shall be going back and would love to give you a lift back in". The member was delighted. The meeting started. The meeting was over. Both the member from Dublin had spoken, and so had the doctor. The doctor came up to the member and kind of glowered at him and said, "You ready?" And he said, "Yes, yes, of course". They got into the doctor's car and drove hell for leather back to Dublin. Not a word was spoken between the two, and the poor member was saying to himself, "What the hell can I have said that has upset him?" Eventually he turned to the medical man and said, "Quite a good meeting, wasn't it?" and the medical man said, "Humph! You got more applause than I did". I'm sorry to say I do believe this feeling still remains for many of the medical profession. But we must never forget those in the medical profession who have done a great service to us. There are names like Glatt and Stewart Patterson, and people like that, but just on my own assessment I would say the quality of their work has come from the fact that they have a great love of the alcoholics and not because of any medical knowledge.

Another thing we were asked to deal with was the referral from outside bodies, and I think strides have been made in this. We are getting a number of men referred to us from prison. We are getting men out on the Hospital Scheme who are allowed to attend meetings outside. We had the remarkable experience of a man attending the Blackpool Convention this year who is still serving a sentence. We are having men who are not on the Hospital Scheme coming to outside meetings. There is a growth of other kinds of things. The Sunday Clubs are growing in this country, and I think generally our relationships, as I have seen, with outside bodies have been particularly good within the last year.

Well, I have just tried to run over some of the points. As I say, there is nothing concrete I can put my finger on at all because it wasn't the kind of committee that was asked to do any specific thing. There was a great deal of talk in this Committee last year of the Big Book, and I have found it very noticeable that during the year not only has the Big Book been used but also many other bits of our literature which seem to have lain away on our shelves for some considerable time. Groups are actually picking up "PARTNERS IN A.A." - that little blue pamphlet - and finding out how to conduct Group meetings, and I am sure that there may, like myself, be a few people who were brought to reading "TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD

SERVICE” and the “THIRD LEGACY MANUAL” solely by virtue of the fact that we were asked to attend this Conference, think that is all I have to offer, Mr. Chairman.

John H.

Thank you very much Travers. Were time on our side, I should like the opportunity here for people to express their own individual experiences in their own different parts of the country, for obviously these experiences will differ from area to area. I myself for instance, listening to Travers, quite agree with his last remark about the Big Book. I spent my holiday this year in Scotland. It was a delightful eye-opener to me to find how much the Big Book figures in so many of the meetings. The number of meetings which began with the reading of Chapter Five, or part of Chapter Five, of the Big Book was considerable. On the other hand, from my experience in my own part of the country with the medical profession, I should disagree quite strongly with Travers. I had occasion myself this week to take one of those cards to display in doctors' surgeries or clinics saying “If you are attending with a drinking problem or have someone close to you who has trouble with a drinking problem, the address and telephone number of your own local A.A. is.....” And as I was leaving I just pulled this out of an envelope and said “I wonder if you could.....”, and he just saw “Alcoholics Anonymous” and snatched it from me and said, “Oh yes, please”. So I said, “Thank you very much”, and he said “Don't thank me. I ought to thank you for providing the service”. Now this is an enormous change from, say, five years ago, and I believe that gentle growth, steady growth like this is the worthwhile growth. But as I say, obviously if there were time and everyone could talk we should be back at Committee 1 again as we had it last year, and you would have different experiences from different localities - but we must press on because we started this meeting pretty late and we are tired from travelling, and there is still a lot to do and so I would like to call now on Dr. Valentine to report on his own Committee of last year, “Special problems in A.A. with particular regard to Young People”.

Dr. James Valentine..

Mr. Chairman and friends, I should like to begin by saying to Travers that it must have been a very foolish doctor ever to imagine he could compete for applause with an A.A. speaker!

The subject of the Committee in which I participated last year was involved in the discussion of young people in A.A., and the question that was posed was whether young people in A.A. were presented with special problems different from those that their older friends and comrades were faced with, and if this was so should we be thinking of new ways to help them meet these problems. Now it did seem that they had a special problem to face because in other parts - in America for example - young people had found that it was profitable to them to form their own Young People's Groups, and indeed in these islands, in Scotland, there already was a Young People's Group. In the course of the discussion, which was a very interesting one, the Committee came to the conclusion that there were special problems - problems of identification in the first place, and problems of communication, that made participation in the work of A.A. rather more difficult for young people; and at the end of our discussions we suggested to the Fellowship a number of recommendations that we felt might be helpful. The first of these was that Groups and Intergroups should be urged to set up Young People's Groups wherever possible, and to maintain a register of Group membership specifically for contact and communication between young people. Now there has in the year that has passed since our last meeting been a certain amount of progress in this field. The Group in Edinburgh, which was perhaps the original Young People's Group in these islands, has continued its work, and at least one other Young People's Group has been formed - that in London - the St. Martin's Group,

about which one of our speakers at the meeting this week-end, Kathy, made reference on the occasion of the 21st Anniversary Dinner. I don't know of any other Young People's Group that has been formed, and in my own discussions with members in my own part of the country I find a great deal of difference of opinion existing as to whether it is a wise thing that the young people should separate themselves off in this way. Some young people feel a need for this, but others find that they can participate in ordinary group meetings with no disadvantage at all to themselves.

There have been other developments in the field of the younger member in this country and in America. The introduction of the teenage family member of the alcoholic family into group discussions in America has resulted in the formation of a new form of Group - the Alateen Group - and I understand that (in Northern Ireland I think it is) an Alateen Group of this kind has been formed. This is an interesting development, and what it will lead to of course we don't know. At Bristol there has been another extension in the formation of Family Groups, where the non-alcoholic members or a family will meet together with alcoholic members in group discussions. This is a field that is now being developed in psychiatry too, where the individual patient tends to be regarded not just as a sick person in himself, but as a sick member sometimes of a sick family. At any rate, it is recognised that in the treatment of a sick person the family ought to be brought in to play its part.

The suggestion of the formation of a register of young people to facilitate communication where perhaps there were not enough young people to form a group in a certain area, but where the young people in one area could be put in touch with others perhaps in rather more distant parts has not, I think, come to anything at all. There was a certain amount of doubt about the wisdom of setting up such a register expressed at our last Conference, and those who felt that anonymity was of great value in the Fellowship were particularly little disposed to this kind of development, so I don't think anything will happen here.

The second of the recommendations of the Committee was this: that Groups and Intergroups should be asked to approach the Heads of local schools and the Principals of Training Colleges with the offer of talks on alcoholism and A.A. to school-leavers, VIth Formers and students. There have been quite a number of developments in this field in different parts of the country. Dorothy of Alanon has done a lot of work in the past year with school-leavers and VIth Formers. In York, an approach has been made by the A.A. Group there to the Training Colleges with the offer of meetings at which the dangers of alcohol and the need for information being channelled to young people would be discussed. The offer has been made of meetings of this kind. In Bradford a number of members there have had meetings with young people's groups, Young Wives, Parent/Teacher Associations, Youth Clubs and Young Conservatives and Liberals, and these have been very well received so that if similar work (and I have no doubt that similar work is being done throughout the country) takes place everywhere, then the educational value of this approach should eventually lead to helpful results.

The third of the recommendations was that a working party should be set up to decide upon a pilot scheme to offer a similar service to selected Education Authorities, Training Colleges and Universities. This working party did meet and, when the need to restrict the scope of the initial schemes which was perhaps a little grandiose, had been accepted, it was agreed that Riou in the South West should be asked to liaise with the Education Authority in his own area to carry out such a pilot scheme. No doubt we will hear from him the results of that.

The last of our recommendations was that a working party on young people should be asked to prepare special literature for the young, and a questionnaire circulated to ascertain their needs. Falkland Peter has done most of the work in regard to this. Somebody at table this evening referred to him as "the indefatigable Peter", and the experience that I have had the pleasure of sharing with him has resulted in the drawing-up of a questionnaire which is going to



be circulated to young members of A.A. in order to ascertain a number of needs - attitudes to alcohol - to A.A. - the need for special groups, and so forth - which we hope will be better ascertained than at the present time. Also Peter has, in association with James of Edinburgh and other members, drawn up a skeleton of a new pamphlet which it is intended should be prepared and submitted to the General Service Board as a presentation of A.A. to young members.

I think one can say, Mr. Chairman, that the seed has been sown in regard to this. The fruits are still to come, but the plants are beginning to push through the ground I think, and there are prospects that in this field we may be developing.

John H.

Thank you, Dr. Valentine. I sometimes wonder what we should do in A.A. without metaphor! I would, although time is getting short, like to ask Riou to say a word if he wouldn't mind, please, on the South West Pilot Scheme in the schools.

Riou.

Mr. Chairman, Friends, I went to see the Chairman of the Education Committee and got his permission to see the Chief Education Officer to discuss the whole problem. The Chairman of the Education Committee was rather horrified. He was a very strait-laced Quaker, and the whole thing seemed rather strange to him. He did agree I should go and talk to the Chief Education Officer, which I duly did. This gentleman was interested, and over the last year he has done a number of things. He has been in close touch with the Royal Society of Health Education (I think, it is called) who know quite a bit about those things, and are already very interested themselves in it. He has discussed it with the sort of trade union, or whatever they have, of Chief Education Officers who get together once a year, and he talked about it to them. He has talked about it to a number of headmasters, and in particular he talked to the Chief Education Officer at Croydon, where already they have jumped the gun and are ahead of us. They have been doing this for a year or more, and teaching about alcoholism in their schools. The outcome of it all was that there were plenty of ways in which Alcoholics Anonymous would be able to help, once things got off the ground. They do feel the need for education, and feel that this will best come from the schoolteachers themselves. So the first thing is to find out and help the schoolteachers and see the headmasters, to see they know something about the subject of alcoholism, because they feel the subject would come much better into such things as current affairs and tutorials. I don't know whether these are becoming more common in secondary education, but there are a tremendous number of tutorials where a senior master or a headmaster gets the boys and girls together, and they discuss the thing informally, probably after school sometimes, but anyhow sometime, and it is in these sorts of ways that I think the educationalists feel that most can be done. But of course the headmasters and people have got to know something about it. There is in fact going to be a conference of headmasters of secondary schools and Further Education Colleges sometime in January when quite a large amount of time is going to be devoted to this, and at which I am expecting to be asked to chat for a bit.

Anyhow, what it all amounts to is that things are moving slowly, and probably in about six months or a year's time, some form of health education about alcoholism will be introduced to the schools in Somerset, done as I say by the staff, although headmasters are going to be encouraged, and their staff too, to do everything they can to make themselves acquainted with the subject. They will all be given the names of various A.A. people and Groups and so on. Indeed I think they are going to be encouraged to find out just through casual chat and exchanges at meetings as much as they possibly can about alcoholism and A.A. from the local Groups.

I think there will be a year before this plan gets off the ground. It really is being thought about, but these things work much more slowly in these rather high places than they do in our small groups where we can get on and do just what we want when we like. But there really is a movement forward.

John H.

Thank you very much indeed Riou. I saw from the nodding heads when Riou referred to the preference of the educational world for this to be done in the schools in tutorials and so on that there was agreement from other parts of the country which have also approached the authorities with the same object in view.

Now, for the third Committee which was on "Publicity & Publishing", I should like to ask Ronnie (who is standing in) if he would give us a report on that.

Ronnie H.

I am standing in for Hugh of Guildford, who was Chairman of this Committee last year. We did together prepare this report on how the recommendations of this Committee were being implemented.

Starting with publications. Four of the books and pamphlets have been written up in the "Newsletter". This was recommended last year, and we have several more to follow. I understand from C.S.O. that the appearance of this article has produced some response, though nothing very spectacular, in the way of increased sales.

It was recommended there should be a revision of the pamphlet "A.A. & THE MEDICAL PROFESSION", and this has not yet been carried out, but as an attempt is being made to bring together some doctor members of the Fellowship with a view to seeking out the most effective way of approaching their own profession, we may expect, I think, that the revised pamphlet will be tackled at an early date.

The little black book - "24 HOURS A DAY" - was stopped by C.S.O. on the recommendation of last year's Conference, and sales of this book amounted to £125 until its supply was discontinued following the decision of the April A. & G.R.C. meeting on the grounds of its not being American Conference-approved literature. The General Service Board in New York confirms that this book is also very popular in the United States, and they tell us that some offices and groups sell it there. They therefore suggest that it might be easier for C.S.O. to stock the book in quantity rather than putting individual groups to the difficulty involved in purchasing just a few copies. A similar case might be made for "TARGETS FOR THOUGHT" which was published in Dublin since the last Conference and in which there is considerable interest over here, too. London Intergroup, Belfast and Scottish Intergroup report increased sales of the Big Book and "TWELVE STEPS & TWELVE TRADITIONS", but otherwise there was no important change. C.S.O. tell us that the total book sales from January to September of this year amount to £630, as compared with £620 for the whole of 1967. Allowing for the fact that £125 of this is accounted for by sales of "24 HOURS A DAY" - although my mathematics are very suspect - sales I think can be said to have improved, though only slightly.

South Midland Intergroup and East Anglian Intergroup mention that they have a raffle system in operation in their areas.

The cards for display in doctors' surgeries and elsewhere became available during the summer, and these were modelled on similar cards which were originated by Southern Intergroup. Two Intergroups said they felt the size of the card was too conspicuous and London

Intergroup was critical of some of the wording. The cards have not really been available long enough for it to be possible to assess how effective they have been.

Mass Media There was a 40-minute broadcast in March which aroused quite a bit of interest, and quite recently a member of the Fellowship appeared on the David Frost programme together with a member of Alanon: and A.A. will be seen in the "Man Alive" programme on BBC2 on the 27th November. In each of these television programmes members appear full-face and not in shadow, and this is in accordance with the decision taken by the A. & G.R.C. in 1965. Discussions have begun regarding a television documentary using professional actors, but which would be prepared in close consultation with A.A. This is something which I can only relate to the very fine documentary "Cathy Come Home". Local sound radio was recommended last year as a promising medium, and to date the only area in which anything concrete seems to have happened is the area of York Intergroup, who tell us that negotiations are in progress between the Leeds Group and Radio Leeds to include A.A. meetings in its announcements of forthcoming events. Belfast reported two 30-minute sound broadcasts, but these do not come strictly under the heading of the new BBC local stations. There was a bit of overlap in some of the Committees, and our Committee No. 3 obviously overlapped with Committee No. 2 on the matter of schools and universities. It has, anyway, been very thoroughly covered by the last speaker, except that I did have a chat with Harry at C.S.O. who tells me that in practically all schools nowadays final year pupils are doing a thesis on Social Services, and a great many of these students choose alcoholism as their subject, and a great many enquiries have been received.

Two new pamphlets were recommended. One was to be available for doctors to pass on to patients at what they felt to be the crucial moment, and this has been discussed by the Development Section of the General Purposes Sub-Committee and some co-opted members. We have not got very far with this as yet, and help from members who are also medical men would be very greatly appreciated in it. There is a scheme being considered in Southern Intergroup to try out a dummy run for a concentrated approach by mail to doctors in that Intergroup, although this might well be affected by any concerted consideration and recommendations from doctors within the Fellowship. The second pamphlet on "Practical Advice to the Newcomers" is in hand, and we hope will appear very shortly.

John H.

Thank you very much indeed, Ronnie. What I am going to say after the final report - some of it is already coming up here. The little black book, for instance, that the A. & G.R.C. vetoed - I think possibly here we have got to start thinking about again at this Conference - tomorrow in the Committees. The question of TV appearances. The American Conference this year came out quite categorically against full-face appearances on TV and film. On the other hand I have had several people say to me quite gratuitously and without solicitation whatsoever how moved they were by the appearance of Joey full-face on TV and by the David Frost programme. Maurice, who is going to speak next, and whom no one could accuse of enthusiasm, rang me up immediately the programme was over absolutely full of the excitement that he had felt. Not that he had seen someone he knew on TV, but by the sincerity and the effectiveness of John M., who was Chairman of the A. & G.R.C., and Ann of Alanon on that programme. That they shone through as of absolutely sterling worth. And I think this Conference must think very seriously indeed - no matter what America has done - it must think for itself on what approach it is going to take to problems like this. And this is what you have got to get down to tomorrow. But I won't go on with that. I will ask Maurice if he will speak on the fourth Committee, of which he was Chairman last year, which dealt with "Relations with Outside Bodies".

Maurice S.

I'm not a very good reader, and I've lost my glasses - but we'll have a go! You may recollect that Committee No. 4 was concerned with relations with outside organisations, and its terms of reference were: "To strengthen at local level the relationship already existing, established by the General Service Board, with those bodies listed in the Board's Report".

Several of the points the Committee discussed seemed to overlap with those of other committees. Therefore rather than repeat what has already been said, I am sure I will please you by keeping the report short and to the point. In order to obtain the widest possible coverage, all Intergroups were asked to send me any information they had about how these recommendations were received and implemented. I received five replies to my request, among them a letter from Scotland gently reminding me that the delegate from Scottish Intergroup would be speaking on the Saturday. Therefore my report excludes the areas covered by our Scottish friends. Of the remaining four letters, two answered in detail, so it is from the information in those letters, plus my own observation, that this report is made.

First of all we discussed the medical profession, doctors, units etc., and the Committee suggested that the best method of getting a person into hospital or a unit was through his own G.P., and that channel should be developed at Group level. If a person were destitute or had no G.P., they suggested trying to gain entry into hospital and leaving the formalities until later. A longer-term view would be to let graduates, G.P.s and nursing staff know about A.A. services through local Groups and Intergroups. Several Groups reported on having broken through and established new contacts with local hospitals and members of the medical profession. Some Groups are experiencing difficulties, but by and large, considerable progress has been made. In general, local Alcoholic Units have been very co-operative, and when a person's own G.P. was not available, the Mental Health Officer has been called in successfully.

On the question of education, areas have gone about this in different ways. The most popular seems to have been through holding public meetings and inviting the entire medical profession in the area in the hope that some of them would attend. Another area has a visiting card showing where its members can be contacted and where its Group meetings are held. The card was left with G.P.s, the Police, Hospital Receptions etc., One Intergroup has an annual invitation for one of its members to talk about the work of the Fellowship to doctors taking a diploma in psychological medicine.

We did discuss alcoholism in industry and made recommendations, but there have been no reports at all about any success in getting through to those who may be able to do something about alcoholism in industry. I did read an article in the "Daily Express" where Bill K. was speaking for the Merseyside Council on Alcoholism. This was followed by comments from several big companies who had been interviewed by the "Express", and it was obvious from these that the public would be given the general impression that there was no serious problem apart from the odd case of heavy drinking and subsequent day off.

The Church: Individual members of the Church are sincerely interested and work hard to help in the problem. In essence, the specific approach to individual members of the Church is paying off, and the situation is steadily improving.

Concerning hostels, there is a report of a local Council on Alcoholism which runs its own Hostel, and A.A. plays its part in this and gives help on request, and can arrange accommodation for those who need it. Other areas are still working on this with their local Alcoholic Councils.

We discussed the Home Office and Prisons, and a lot can be said about progress in this field. However, the most competent reporter will be the Secretary of the Prison Intergroup, and, as he is speaking tomorrow, there is no need for me to say anything more about that.

We covered the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the Marriage Guidance Council, the local Medical Officer of Health, Mental Health Officers, etc., and in essence all I need to report is that we have established a connection with these people. It is also clear that a pattern of continued co-operation with the Samaritans is emerging.

Finally, some of the questions we asked ourselves in this Committee. Should there be an advisory pamphlet from the General Service Board and Central Service Office for Groups wishing to further this work? The Committee said a full report would be available to all Groups, and this was not therefore necessary. I would like to quote Ivan, the Secretary of the East Anglia Intergroup, who said when he wrote, "I personally think that even a very inexpensive single-sheet leaflet containing these suggestions and recommendations might perhaps prove a great deal more effective in highlighting the work and purpose of the General Service Conference and in making its members and the member Groups more conscious of the part they play in all this. It is virtually impossible to get this Report read by even a small proportion of the Fellowship". Incidentally, I am, a Leeds Group member, and the only other member of the Leeds Group who has read the Report is the Secretary, so I wholeheartedly endorse this, and would like the Conference seriously to consider what he has said.

That is the end of my report, but I would like to add a few personal notes. First, owing to a lack of communication, and again here Ivan's comments may be valid, and the brief nature of the replies I have received, information is necessarily sketchy, but nevertheless it is abundantly clear that there have been consistently expanding links between A.A. members and local Social Welfare Officers and staffs of Alcoholic Units, and perhaps most success has been achieved here. This can be a compensation for the fact that G.P. reaction is uninterested, as it sometimes is. We must remember that when many doctors received their training, alcoholism was not considered a disease. In the medical school at Leeds, doctors who are doing their diploma for psychological medicine have three lectures on alcoholism. Two are given by psychiatrists specialising in this field, and for the last four years a member of A.A. was invited to give the third to explain how the disease affected him and how A.A. played a part in his recovery. I have no idea if this is general in any other medical schools, but it seems to me a very good way of communication with the medical profession on the inside.

The biggest single failure is in industry, where no progress has been reported.

John H.

Thank you, Maurice. Well, ladies and gentlemen, my job tonight is to try to prepare you for tomorrow. I trust that you are already prepared through reading the retort, sent out by C.S.O., and by close study of the two Manuals. I want to say, first of all, that I am, here tonight against medical advice and under strict instructions not to become emotional. I'm afraid that I find this impossible. The reason I have come this weekend is because I feel a moral obligation to do so. Through no fault of my own, except as an alcoholic, I am in the unique position of having been in on this General Service Conference since the first exploratory meeting four years ago, and I see the Conference tonight standing, at a crossroads in a state of acute crisis. This weekend to me seems to be a vital one for A.A. in these islands. Where we go from here depends to a very large extent, I think, on you. It is not fashionable these days to quote Tennyson, but the words of the dying Arthur to Bedivere, I think, obtain in A.A. here at this moment:

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world”.

We have gone on now for years, talking clichés, mutually congratulating each other - and I think the time has come to stop. Last year the Conference met to deal with “Moving Ahead: Our Responsibility for Progress”. This Third General Service Conference has met to take a strict personal moral inventory of itself as individuals and as a Fellowship. This is the reason that we are here this weekend. I think tomorrow we have got to go into those three Committees as far as we possibly can with clear minds - not empty minds, not vacant minds - but open minds, and prepared to think afresh and to consider new ideas. If we don't, this Conference is now at the point where it becomes either a self-perpetuating super-Convention of the elite of the Group Areas and Intergroups, along with the Board of course, or it becomes an absolute dead-letter - a completely wasted week-end - or it becomes a really effective organ of the Fellowship. Now tomorrow, when you meet in your three Committees, you have to decide objectively as far as possible which of these three is the right answer. It may look on paper as though Committee No. 1, which is dealing with the Third Step, is just talk. This is not what your Conference Committee intended it to be at all. Possibly in many ways it is the most important committee of the three, because it is to deal with basic assumptions in A.A. Why do we exist at all? What is our purpose? Are we really in our personal affairs, Group affairs, and in the Fellowship as a whole, applying the Serenity Prayer which we say so glibly at the end of every meeting? Do we “accept the things we cannot, change”? I am, of course, here speaking personally, but I am as far as possible, too, trying to give you the feelings of the Conference Committee, and it has become more and more apparent to me in the last twelve months that we have been far too ambitious. I have, reading between the lines in the four reports you have heard tonight, realised that last year's Conference bit off far more than it could chew. We have to recognise our limitations. We have to set ourselves a target which is going to stretch us, but one that is achievable if we are prepared to make the effort.

Every Conference must show a step forward if it is going to indicate progress, and I personally do not feel easy in my conscience that last year's Conference showed a step forward as far as the actual outcome of the recommendations of the Committees was concerned. I think it was a step forward, because I think that the Conference is taking its baby steps, and last year I think our failures showed us something very necessary to learn.

Now, with Committee No. 1 tomorrow I think it has to question what I was saying in the last few months has become more and more apparent to me. As I said earlier, I spent my holiday in Scotland in the summer. I was down at Oxford at the Convention there. I met the problem two or three times nearer home - next to my own doorstep in Leeds and at Scalebor Hospital - the problem for instance of the meths drinker. I think we have got to think quite seriously whether this really is our problem at all. We have been accused of being “middle-class”. Do we have to accept that this is one of the things we cannot change? Are we middle-class? God knows there are plenty of middle-class alcoholics who are not here tonight and are not in any of our Groups tonight. We are trying to widen our field. At times I think we are tending to dissipate our energies; and the most serious of all to me is that we substitute paper for compassion. There is a vain desire (and unfortunately it is not always vain but comes to fruition) to proliferate committees here, there and everywhere. We have an Intergroup Committee. We have an Inter-Intergroup Committee - and so we go on, with big fleas on the lesser fleas' backs, and so on ad infinitum! I think that Committee No. 1 has to look at this. It has to look at this question of anonymity. At the Convention at Blackpool, Gordon Fowler was showing me an article in the “Daily Telegraph” saying “Must A.A. be so aggressively non-aggressive?” If you think about it, we talk about our programme being one of attraction and not of promotion. We are very smug

about this. We have got to see if we can start attracting at all. Anonymity, carried to extremes, is going to mean that we don't even go to the Group, I suppose, if we carry the thing to a logical conclusion. To remain so anonymous we would remain in our own drinking. This is the sort of thing we have to look at tomorrow.

And in the other two Committees we have to look at how we can streamline. Obviously there must be some central organisation to hold the various pieces of A.A. together, but let us have a minimum of organisation, and in each of these committees dealing with the various sections of A.A., you will see that your Conference Committee has tried to break it down into the terms of reference for the Committee. Why does the committee exist at all? Is there any need for it? If it does, what should it do, and how most effectively can it do it? Not committees for the sake of committees - and in Committees Nos. 2 and 3 tomorrow we have to clear our minds of this very effective excuse that we have practised for a long time to avoid decisions and avoid the burden of Twelfth Step work (if people are looking at it as a burden) by knocking the General Service Board.

So often we have had this fancy presented to us - that if only we got rotation on the General Service Board - kicked off the old fuddy-duddies and so on - the millennium would be here. It wouldn't. All we have got to give is our compassion and our love. We have nothing else at all. We have nothing in common, a large number of us except our illness, and all we can offer is a road out of that illness.

I appeal very strongly to you that tomorrow you will try to go into those committees so that when you come out tomorrow evening and your Chairmen come back and present their reports, you will have formed as far as lies humanly within you blue-prints that will enable the Fellowship to seek its way forward for the future. We waste money definitely - and goodness knows we haven't enough to waste - if, for instance, you are going to continue the General Service Conference (and there is about £2,000 in this room tonight) without taking each time a step forward.

Speaking for my own country, for England and Wales, you have got to think seriously as to whether there is any need for an A. & G.R.C. if you are having an annual General Service Conference. Scotland has to think seriously as to whether there is any need for its Intergroup, which is the equivalent of the A. & G.R.C., if you are having an annual Conference. Because, take the A. & G.R.C., for instance. It is held possibly four times a year. That, too, is costing the Fellowship, in its various areas, getting on for £2,000 a year - travelling for each representative to this area meeting. All this is money that is not going possibly where it is going to be of most benefit. This has to be faced and thought about. We have burked the issue long enough. Here this weekend we face the crisis in A.A. Either we go forward, or we go backward. We cannot stand still. What we have heard in these four reports tonight to me represents nothing but the ordinary growth that would have been had there been no second General Service Conference. I doubt whether much at all that has happened since that Conference would not have happened had it never taken place. Now you must face this squarely, and if the answer is that the Conference is useless to the Fellowship, then the Conference must go. If your answer is that the Conference is necessary, then I think you have got to face the fact that from this Conference onwards, like the American Conference, it must become the motor of A.A. The General Service Board will act as your brakes, but you must have a driving force. If you want to change the picture, you must give the Conference teeth. What it says and recommends must be sober, studied, advised - not lightly to be disregarded by the Intergroups and the Groups. You will need probably to formulate a blueprint for separate sub-committees in future Conferences to deal with the four different countries involved, because the four different countries obviously are going to have different local conditions and different local problems. But you must watch, too, that you don't let this become a local affair. It is a very big temptation. We almost fell into this trap at the Conference

Committee last April. Where local affairs are affecting the Fellowship as a whole, then they are material to the Conference, and for instance (I will be quite specific here) the question of the location of an Intergroup like London Intergroup in a Central Service Office - a General Service Office, whichever you like to call it - this is the sort of thing which must be examined as to whether it is right or whether it is affecting adversely the Fellowship as a whole; because, don't forget, you here tonight are here as representatives for the sterling area, not just for your own area. What you decide affects A.A. in countries other than this - and presently is going to affect A.A. in Europe. Bill W. has always had the idea that the British Isles should be the outpost in the Old World for Alcoholics Anonymous. Europe has called on us already. Whether we are in a condition to answer that call or not remains to be seen.

Now I don't want to keep you here indefinitely. There are so many things in connection with these three committees that could stand individual examination, but what I do ask finally is again that you try to come into these committees with open minds, looking at the problems as outsiders - examining the whole set-up clinically. I don't agree for instance with Gordon Fowler of the Board that we can do a Time & Motion Study - a work-study exercise - on Alcoholics Anonymous. - It is made up of individuals, and often very eccentric individuals and you can only do a work-study on something that works logically - and nothing in A.A. is logical. You are dealing with people. But do try to look at the organisational part of A.A. as work-studyishly as you possibly can, because, as I said at the start or as James Russell Lowell said:

“New occasions teach new duties;  
Time makes ancient good uncouth;  
They must upward still end onward  
Who would keep abreast of truth”.

The meeting ended with the saying of the Serenity Prayer.

Saturday morning, 9th November - 9.15 am.

To receive Reports from:-

General Service Board.	Scotland.
England and Wales.	Inter-Prison Group.
Northern Ireland.	Central Service Office.
Republic of Ireland.	

Chairman. Jim (Belfast)

Jim:

It is my privilege this morning to be among the people I like best. These are my friends in Alcoholics Anonymous. We haven't got a great deal of time in which to present these Reports so I would like, if, I may, to call for the Report from the General Service Board.

Ladies and gentlemen, I only have a short report to read. We haven't been idle this year, we chaps on the General Service Board, but a lot of what we have done cannot be set out very simply as if it were a prospectus form. In fact if you look at the Tenth Annual Report we seem to have done little but take a Stand at the Royal Society of Health's Exhibition at Eastbourne. In



order to look at the Board's activities a little closer I had recourse recently to the Agenda and Minutes of the Meetings of the Board for the last year. One sees at once, ladies and gentlemen, how much time was taken up in dealing with what I will call the financial side of the new lease of 11 Redcliffe Gardens, London. The difficulties in this respect are, I think, well known to all of us. It is now happily past history - thank Heaven for that! - so I won't report further. I must however publicly thank Ronald L. in particular for all the time and trouble he has taken in dealing with certain aspects of this problem. He has been an absolute tower of strength, and so have one or two other people on our Board.

Another important matter which occupied a lot of our time was the World Service Conference question, which is to be held in New York next year. The question was who could be sent as a delegate or delegates. It so happens that Wick and Sandy Trotter (unfortunately Sandy is not here - one of the non-alcoholic members of the Board) will be in America at the time, and it would seem that they are likely to attend. In my opinion, in the circumstances this is excellent news and I do submit that it would be impossible to find two better delegates. However very properly indeed, as you can see from your programme, the whole question is to be discussed by Committee No. 3.

Another topic with which we have had to deal is the question of membership of the Board which has worried us a great deal over the last year. Both the matter of recruitment and the question of what length of service. Actually Wick has written an extremely valuable paper on the length of service aspect. I won't go further into this question now, as again this is one of the topics which is to be dealt with by Committee No. 3.

These are reports, just random examples I have taken, of what the Board has to do. It is a fact though, ladies and gentlemen, that the Board has had a very difficult year indeed. The death of our very dear Secretary, Bob L., in June of last year was not only a very great personal bereavement but also a great loss to the Board. Harry T. filled the gap manfully after Bob's death until our very excellent Secretary, Basil, was engaged. Naturally Basil has had to be shown the ropes, and it is only now that the situation is becoming normal once more. The Publishing Sub-Committee, which is an industrious one in my submission, has been fully occupied and has met very frequently. You will see that on page 4 of the Board's report, over 2,000 books were sold in 1967. Only last Tuesday we had a meeting and gave a substantial order for printing in this country. This sub-committee also acts in many ways as the Board's executive, and this has resulted in very full agendas.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Board exists to serve you. When Bill W. suggested that A.A. should have a General Service Board in this country in the same way as in the States, he said we would have many problems other than publications. This has proved only too true, but we can digest these difficulties, and we ask for more. We are not power-hungry pseudo-wiseacres, but a band of devoted people anxious to be of use. We are the Fellowship's legal agency - the lessee of Redcliffe Gardens, for example. We do our best indeed to stand firm, even if the seas around us are sometimes a little troubled. I recommend you to look at our Memorandum of Association which sets out our objects in full. We try to live up to them as best we can, but don't forget that your suggestions are always helpful and ones that we want to hear.

Just two more points before I close this short report. Wick here will be only too pleased, he tells me, to deal with any questions relating to the accounts, and with regard to the Redcliffe Gardens lease I thought you would just like to know that a Sinking Fund in connection with No. 11 has been duly opened with the Charity Commission, and the first premium of this Sinking Fund has now been despatched. Thank you very much.

Jim.

Thank you very much for that very enlightening report. Being Irish of course it was difficult to follow but..... Are there any questions? I do hope that no one wants to know what "returning to normal" is, because I really don't know!

#### QUESTIONS ARISING:

John H. This paper would suggest that nothing has been done except at Eastbourne. In fact I didn't read this until I got into bed this morning, and I found it very hard to sleep after it. Getting on to the question of the trip to Eastbourne I see from the balance sheet it says that the cost of this Exhibition was £205.11.5. I don't know whether any of you have seen this Exhibition or have been present at one of these things. Like so many of these get-togethers of various bodies, it is a sort of annual mutual gathering of the Old Boys' team - and a mutual admiration society. The Board itself, I think, agrees that it is probably an awful waste of time, and I think it is about time we stopped just going along automatically because we have gone before, and gave some serious thought to whether money should be spent in this fashion. It is no good whatever looking back nostalgically to the glories of twenty years ago. We are in 1968 now and we are already established as a Fellowship. People know us in the country - and I doubt very much whether this serves any useful purpose whatsoever.

Jim: On this question John has raised - Harry would like to come in on that.

Harry T. (C.S.O.): I would like to say I attended the Eastbourne Health, Exhibition last time. I must frankly admit I went down prejudiced. I went down rather with the idea that it was a complete waste of time and money. When I got there I found it was one of the best exercises in public relations that I have come across. We met a whole lot of people. We met quite a lot of people in industry - in the Coal Board, in I.C.I. - who came up for a chat to discuss the problem of alcoholism in industry, although in point of fact all of them said that while it was a problem it was not a serious problem - not anything like wild-cat strikes or anything of that kind. They don't really treat it as a serious problem, but they recognised that there was a problem there. We had quite a number of charge nurses and sisters from mental hospitals who again had had very little contact with A.A. They took away literature. They had long conversations there - and as purely an exercise in public relations my own opinion is that it was well worthwhile.

Joey A: I gather the Stands are only used for the Exhibition at Eastbourne, and I am wondering if there is somewhere in Eastbourne where they could be left instead of incurring the cost annually of running them back and forth from C.S.O.

Travers C. Concerning this excellent piece of public relations, as Harry has said, £200 seems an extortionate amount of money. I would like to raise a question on the balance sheet, too. A payment of £307. 7. 0. to C.S.O. How was this made up?

Unidentifiable voice: That arose under payments under Covenant which should have gone to the Board but instead went direct to Central Service Office. As that had happened we decided to leave it there. In other words, when we discovered that £300 had gone to the Office which should have gone to the Board, we took no action and left it where it was.

Travers C: In fact actually, if the proper procedure had been carried out, then the Board would have shown an extra income over expenditure, and I think it is important to remember

that. One more question I would like to ask, and it is important. This is a point of procedure. I understood the normal thing in the nomination for members of the Board was that if a member was nominated from the Fellowship through the A. &-, G.R.C. that member should receive consideration. I further understood that the General Service Board, before appointing an alcoholic member to their Board, would always let the Fellowship know what was going on. Now this does not seem to have been followed at all. I understand the A. & G.R.C. did nominate sometime ago a member of the Fellowship as being in the Fellowship's view a suitable person to go on the Board - and this has just been completely ignored by the Board, and somebody else direct from the Fellowship has been appointed.

Ronald L. (G.S.B): This question of appointments by the Board is the subject of a report which has been prepared by Wick following the deliberations of a subcommittee appointed for this purpose, and will come up for consideration by Committee No. 3 when discussing the whole question of the composition of the Board; and the appointment of new members will be discussed.

Travers: I was aware it was coming on to Committee No. 3, but I thought it was a good time to clear the air a little and get a direct answer to this question. We understood in the Fellowship there was a certain procedure to be followed, and as far as I can see it has not been followed.

Ronald L: I am sorry - I am unaware of any proposal which has been ignored. It is quite new to me if it is so, and I find it terribly hard to credit that it is so. But I do think it would be wrong for us here to try to anticipate the Committee which is to consider this matter and what they may say in their report tomorrow morning.

Travers: I confess I may be completely up the wall about this but I thought the nomination went forward some considerable time ago. I think it was putting forward John H. of Bradford at the A&G.R.C. meeting. I may be wrong about this, but I don't think I am.

Wick (G.S.B.) We have had no such recommendation on the Board at all, and I would like to make a correction. There is no hard and fast procedure. This will become apparent in the discussions this afternoon. We have recruited members to the Board and members have been recruited to the Board by various Groups, including nominations from the A. & G.R.C. I myself joined the Board as the first nominee of the A. & G.R.C., but this is only one of three or four methods that have been used in the recruitment of alcoholic members of the Board.

Bill K: I was present at the particular meeting of the A. & G.R.C. when John H. of Bradford was nominated, and I find it not only disquieting but very disturbing that here we are this morning, and members of the General Service Board tell us that the nomination of the A.&G.R.C which is recorded in the Minutes has not reached them. Is this another breakdown in communication?

Travers: May I ask whether the Minutes of the A. & G.R.C. are in fact circulated and read by the members of the Board?

Wick (G.S.B.) Generally speaking yes. As a matter of regularity'-'no.

Travers. Mr. Chairman, I think that this discloses a grave lack of communication - because the Board, who are our trusted servants, are failing utterly and completely in their duty by not paying any attention to what the Fellowship has expressed in its conscience at an A. & G.R.C. meeting as to the way in which the Fellowship should be run, or the way in which they would like it to be run. If the same procedure is going to be adopted in the General Service Conference, then I think John H. is quite right and we are wasting our time here.

Ronald (G.S.B.): May I just come in? If a nomination was made by the A. & G.R.C. of a proposed member, I don't think it is quite fair of Travers to suggest that the Board are remiss in not having picked it up. The right procedure surely would have been for the Secretary of the A. & G.R.C. to have written to the Board - and that was not done.

Doris (L.I.G.): Actually Ronald has answered a part of the question I was going to ask - but is that the normal procedure? Surely nominations should be submitted in writing. I would not expect to have to comb through Minutes to find out such a thing particularly a nomination of this importance. Who is responsible for doing that, and was it done or not done?

Joan B: It must have been my fault I'm afraid that communications broke down, because I was Secretary then, and I know that I didn't write to the General Service Board.

John H.. Mr. Chairman, I must stand up because I am concerned in this and it is putting me in a rather invidious position - but put that on one side, please. What does disturb me very deeply indeed is not just this lack of communication - I'm sick of this expression but the fact that the General Service Board, which is supposed to be the trusted servant of the Fellowship, does not keep itself au fait with procedures - with what is going on at the grass roots - in the Republic, in Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. If they don't get the Minutes they should go seeking for them. I defy any member of the Board to prove me wrong on this. C.S.O. certainly should send them to them, but if they don't get them, they should ask why.

Travers.. Another point there I would like to make. The Executive Committee of the Fellowship responsible for running everyday affairs has recently sought to have a closer link with the Board, and that its Chairman (that is the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee) might be invited to join as an observer at meetings of the Board. This has been declined by the Board as not being considered necessary. Once again, it would appear that they are not willing to receive communications from us. I would like to know if there is any particular reason why. The Executive Committee has a very trying and very hard job, and communication is always very difficult with the Board, as I have found myself personally, because when something does come along that requires action (this is during my term of office as Chairman of the General Purposes Committee) I would say to Harry "Well, can't you get hold of the Board?" "I can't. They're away. They're abroad. They aren't available". Now I consider that our true and trusted servants should always have a degree of availability when they consider taking on the job of going on to the Board. There was a glaring example very recently when the General Purposes Committee put forward what we thought was a reasonable suggestion to open up lines of communication and maintain a closer contact, and I would like to know if the Board would like to give a reason why they did not find this necessary.

Wick (G.S.B.)- For some years now the Chairman of the A. & G.R.C. has regularly been an ex-officio attendant at all Board and at all Publishing Co., meetings and this, I would have thought, created an adequate channel of communication; and it would seem that if once you go

beyond that and invite sub-committees of the A. & G.R.C. where do we stop? If the Chairman, sitting in at our meetings cannot be an accepted channel of communication, I think it is a pity.

Chairman Thank you very much. Well - time does move on. It would appear that there is something that the General Service Board may like to look into. I don't know whether or not there has been a case for a Civil Rights March! In the meantime, we can perhaps leave it like this because time is going on, and perhaps we could take the report from England and Wales next, please.

Report from England and Wales:

Chairman of the A. & G.R.C. - Gordon W.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen. I wasn't what I would call fully relaxed when I came into this room, knowing full well that I had to give this report - the Report of the A. & G.R.C. Now I am shattered, I feel as though I want to run out, particularly if I am going to be showered with so many questions which I don't think I shall be capable of answering.

I would like to say at the outset that I don't think (and I am speaking personally now) that this is the place where we should knock because knocking won't get us anywhere. We are here for the benefit of the Fellowship and the growth of the Fellowship, and we have all got to work together. Indeed we are here at this particular session to find out, to determine, what is the best organisation in order to meet that objective.

I didn't intend that as my introduction. As a matter of fact it was twelve months ago in this very room that I was quizzed as to whether I would become the Chairman of the A. & G.R.C. I felt terribly inadequate and it took me quite a long time before I could make a decision. I had served on the A. & G.R.C. under the Chairmanship of John H. followed by the Chairmanship of John M. It was quite obvious to me that they were excellent leaders - men of excellent foresight men who had kept the Groups together and the Intergroups. I only hope that I can follow in their footsteps and do as well as they did.

I am asked this morning really to make a report on some of the things that have happened in the A. & G.R.C. over the last year. Part of the time, of course, it was under the Chairmanship of John M., so I can claim no credit, nor do we want to claim credit.

There are four highlights in things that have happened during the year, and the first, of course, was the 21st Anniversary celebrations in London. I think all of us that were there declared these a huge success. Unfortunately, some people will say, there were only 400 there. Not a very good representation of the Fellowship in this country. Nevertheless, it was a very, very successful gathering which will go down in history, and in my thinking the finale was the most inspiring of it all - the Service at St. Martin's in the Fields, and for those who were there it inspired us, stimulated us to go forth to bring about this co-operation throughout the whole of the Fellowship.

The next item that I have as a highlight has already been mentioned, and that was the completion of the finalisation of settlement of the Alanon House Finance Committee. It went on for an awful long time, and it dragged an awful long time, but I am pleased to say that at last it has been finalised, thanks, I think, (and I would like to endorse what Maurice said) to Ronald, to John M., and many more. This has enabled us to have our headquarters at 11 Redcliffe Gardens redecorated and given a new look. Maurice mentioned that we have got through the Charity Commission to have a Sinking Fund. He mentioned the amount; that in 21 years' time will produce a certain amount - I don't know - about £2,700 or something like that. But with the growth we are having at the present time, and looking to the future, we have got to ask ourselves is that adequate. For God's sake don't be complacent about that. We have got to think of these

things. We have got to know, and we have got to be properly established, if we want to go places.

The next item I think which is worth of mention is the "News Letter". I think the "News Letter" has taken a very fine new look, and I think that particularly the introduction of 'Intercom' will be very well worthwhile; and wherever you go now, wherever I go, there is always a press for the "News Letter". The Groups are looking forward now to the beginning of the month to get the "News Letter". There is a grab when they go on the table. I think that we should pass words of thanks and appreciation to those who have set about producing the "News Letter", giving it a new look and making it a real stimulant.

Finally I would like to mention the Convention at Blackpool which I think was a great success. I think the 400 or 500 people who attended will endorse that. It was this year in the North West, and as John M. said last year, the North West is noted for its hospitality. Although I live in the North West myself, I don't take any credit for that, but I do know this: they didn't fail in their hospitality.

That, I think, ladies and gentlemen, concludes what I might call the highlights that have occurred during the year.

So much then for the past. What of the future? At last year's General Service Conference we examined the problems of growth ahead - our responsibility for progress - and examined the problems of moving ahead. We know the theme of this Conference, which is that we have to take a moral inventory. Whether we are in fact organised as individuals, as a Fellowship, to ensure that this progress can be made effective since each Group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Or the theme, as it were, of the 1965 World Convention, "When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, we want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that we are responsible".

Now - in a short time - I have asked Harry to produce a few figures for me, and if you will bear with me I will roll them on to a graph, which I don't think you will be able to see but I will be able to explain to you because I think it has a bearing on what we have got to do on the organisation itself, and to what we have to look at. I have taken it from 1956 - 1968. This black line shows the number of Groups. The number of Groups in 1956 was 60. It has crept up as you will see, and at the present time it is 202, whereas last year it was somewhere in the order of 195. There is a considerable growth rate there, but there are indications that it is falling off. So far as Group contributions are concerned, these are shown in red, from £2,300 to £6,000, starting something like £1,500 in 1956, and it crept up to what we are now - something in advance of £6,000. But I thought it might be a good idea if I translated that into the value of the debasement, taking the £ as it was in 1956, and that is the dotted line, which to me is rather shattering. The most shattering thing of all is that we can see the growth rate, we can see the fall-off in the value of the Group contributions; but that during that period, 1956/68, the Staff at Central Service Office was four then, and now I think it is five and a bit. It seems to me that if we are going to get this growth and to establish what our requirements are, we have got to look at the organisation at C.S.O., and at the present time, under Joey of the General Purposes Committee and Bill from South Midlands Intergroup, a little Work Study into the organisation of Central Service Office is being done.

The green line is the value of books sold, which is a terrific increase, and I think Ronnie mentioned that when he was talking last night of the continuation of the sale of books and of the "News Letter". It is very, very difficult to decide really whether that is the real measure of growth - whether it is that, or whether we have got to do that.

These were just a few points which I thought would be valuable in our deliberations today and tomorrow, but also you may remember at last year's Conference, and again at the

Convention, Gordon Fowler, in his usual light-hearted way, pointed this thing out about organisation, and I think he was trying to pass us a message. I turn back to what he said last year. "If we are going to organise, we have got to have the sights clear", and I think he pointed out some of the points and some of the matters that we have really got to take a hard look at. Organisations which serve people - that are expected to provide certain services - it might help if one were to measure the efficiency of Alcoholics Anonymous against those services. The development of public awareness of and interest in the field of endeavour through speaking at public meetings; co-ordination of projects with the statutory services at national and local level; the improvement of effectiveness of existing projects developed in new areas, and experiments in new methods; advice and recruitment liaison with specialist services; provision of facilities for voluntary management to increase effectiveness; provision of information centres in which interested people can obtain details of existing projects and other information; regional organisations in order to co-ordinate local effort, but national plans for the purpose of better integration of work; a planned system of research. These points I think we must bear in mind when we are considering these matters today.

Finally I have read recently something written by Bill W. on leadership and it struck me - and you will bear with me I hope while I read it, because I think it does give us some direction and some thoughts of today, and the subject (or the object) of our exercises:-

"As individuals and as a Fellowship we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow on to a kind Providence. God has endowed us human beings with considerable capabilities for foresight, and he evidently expects us to use them. Therefore we must needs distinguish between wishful dreaming for a happy tomorrow, and today's use of our powers of thoughtful estimate - estimate of the kind which we trust will bring future progress rather than unforeseen woe. Vision is therefore the very essence of prudence, a sound virtue if ever there was one. Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but even so this will be far better than to refuse to think at all."

"The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means. From this we derive a tentative idea of policy; looking first at the nearby future, we ask how our idea or policy might work. Following this estimate, we ask how our policies and ideas might work under several differing conditions that could arise in the longer future. If an idea looks like a good bet, we try it on, always experimentally when this is possible. Somewhat later we review the situation and ask whether our estimate is, or will soon be, working out. At about this stage we may have to take a critical decision. Maybe we have a policy or plan that still looks fine and is apparently doing well. Nevertheless we ought to ponder very carefully what its long-term effect will be. Will today's nearby advantages boomerang into large liabilities for tomorrow? The temptation will almost always be to seize the nearby benefits and quite forget the harmful precedents or consequences that we may be setting in motion."

"These are no fancy theories. We have found that we must use these principles of estimates constantly, especially at World Service levels, where the stakes are high. In public relations, for example, we must estimate the reaction of both A.A. Groups and the general public, both short-term and long-term. The same thing goes for our literature. Finances have to be estimated and budgeted. We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, Group capability and willingness to consider it. Of many such problems we must very often try to think many months and even years ahead."

"As a matter of fact, all of the A.A. Twelve Traditions were first questions of estimate, and vision for the future. Years ago we slowly evolved an idea about A.A. being self-supporting. There had been trouble here and there about outside gifts. Then still more trouble developed. Consequently we began to devise a policy of no outside gifts. We began to suspect that these large sums of this kind would tend to make us irresponsible and could divert us from our primary

aim. Finally we saw that for the long pull, outside money could really ruin us. At this point, what had been just an idea or general policy hardened down into the A.A. tradition. We saw that we must sacrifice the quick, nearby advantages for long-term safety in the future. We went through this same process on anonymity. A few public breaks had looked good. Then the vision came that many such breaks could finally raise havoc among us, and so it went. First the gleam in the eye. Then an experimental policy. Then a firm policy, and finally a deep conviction - a vision for tomorrow.

Such is our process of estimating the future, and responsible world leadership must be proficient in this vital activity. This is an ability much to be desired, especially amongst our Trustees, and I think most of them should be chosen on the basis that they have already proved their aptness for foresight in their own business or professional careers.”

That, I think Mr. Chairman, if I may say so, to me anyway, is our directive, and the way that we should set about this exercise and objective we have today. I only hope when we hear the reports tomorrow, from my point of view anyway, there is some directive that will help me over the next two years as Chairman of the A. & G.R.C.

#### QUESTIONS ARISING:

Alec F: I would like to congratulate the Chairman of the A. & G.R.C. on that most explicit graph. We are always struggling to get information to the Groups, to make them understand what is happening, and I am quite certain it would be very valuable if we could have a Photostat copy of that graph for distribution at Group level. I am sure this will help in explaining the situation.

Bill C: This is a most interesting graph, and I am speaking now at Group level and thinking of that Tradition, “No fees and no dues”, and of that red herring which is so often drawn across the question when it is produced at Group level..... “The poor alcoholic cannot afford because he is full of debt after stopping drinking”..... and so often in the box or whatever receptacle is out on the table at a Group meeting I have seen one solitary penny put in by an individual. I think we have got to rethink that Tradition “No fees: no dues”. Bill K. will back me up when I say this. Many years ago, as Treasurer of my own Group, I said that something ought to be done to say “This is not a club. This is a place that has saved your life. It is worth paying for”, and I feel that this should be given a good deal of thought in-the particular committee that is going to-deal with this question today.

Report of the Republic of Ireland:  
Donald O’C.

I am here as a representative of my Group. We have no Intergroup as far as I know in Southern Ireland. Bill is here as representing his Group, and the two Groups are within 20 miles of each others so naturally we represent a very, very small A.A. opinion of the Republic. However. I am a very interested observer. We have seen what you are trying to do, and what you have succeeded in going. In actual fact we benefit quite a lot by your General Service Board. For instance we are getting the literature from London with very little of it published in Dublin.

As regards some of the things which occurred at home last year. Our relationship with outside bodies is probably on an easier level than yours, because we are a very sparsely populated area. Travers said last night that Englishmen find it hard to communicate. We have not that difficulty! We have found, though, that greater liaison with Alanon in all relationships with outside bodies has been a tremendous help. Sometimes I have almost doubted that the public really accepts that we have a disease, and when you see Alanon accepting that disease, it seems



to break down that mental barrier that there is in the public mind as regards alcoholism. This is purely my own personal opinion. We are about setting up an Intergroup. There is a question of establishing a separate General Service Office. Whether that will work out, I don't know, but we are very grateful to be here. We will take part in the discussions, and we will probably go back very much wiser, and will hope to avoid some of the pitfalls that you have.

The last speaker mentioned that red herring about contributions. It is a bit of a laugh at a meeting to say "We have no dues, no fees, but there is a hat going to go round". I think those chairs you are sitting on today are the most expensive chairs in Manchester. It cost every one of you thousands of pounds to sit on them, and I really must agree with the last member. I don't see why we should soft-pedal on this question of dues and fees. There is always a last-minute rush when there is a big demand for literature or such as that. You actually have to go round to members of a small Group such as ours and ask them for £1 or £2, whereas if we had a regular subscription, a regular club membership fee if you like, I can't see it would do all that harm.

Report from Scotland:

Angus McP.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the fifteen minutes I have to report on events in Scotland since last year, I think the simplest way to proceed might be to take the report of it considered by the working party at last year's Conference, and tell you of the Scottish developments under each of these heads.

Committee No. 1 dealt with the Group work and sponsorship and declared that A.A. should appeal to a broader social structure by cooperating closely with other agencies. The principal agency in Scotland which is concerned with alcoholism is the National Council on Alcoholism, and our relationships with the one Scottish committee, that in Glasgow, is satisfactory. The Glasgow Committee hold A.A. meetings in their offices, and several active members of A.A. in Scotland were first introduced to the Fellowship through these meetings. We don't feel that the composition of our Fellowship in Scotland is based on too narrow a social scale, and while I accept that there is always room for improvement we don't believe that we are seriously failing in matters of sponsorship or in our zeal. Our numbers are growing steadily. In the past year at least 11 new Groups have come into being, two of these new Groups being the most northerly and southerly in the country. We are continuing to maintain good relations with outside organisations who are actively concerned with alcoholism, and I shall refer to these under the points raised by Committee No. 4.

Committee No. 2 made several recommendations about alcoholism and young people. The first was that we should set up young people's Groups and encourage communication between these Groups. During the past year I regret that three Young Scottish Groups are disbanded, leaving us with only two, widely separated by distance - in Edinburgh and Stornoway.

Committee No. 2 further recommended that we should approach the education authorities with the offer of talks to older pupils on alcoholism. This is a matter to which the Committee and Scottish Intergroup attach much importance, but we felt it would be wise to tackle it with some caution. As a first step we obtained the permission of the Scottish Educational Committee (the equivalent of your Ministry of Education) to write to local education authorities with the offer of talks to schools. We have since written to a selected number of such authorities in the first place, and one of these has given unqualified approval to the scheme. The other said it would wait and see. We have already been in touch with the Headmasters of two senior secondary schools in the area where we have permission to proceed, and the Scottish Intergroup await with interest the report of how the first talks have gone. We take the view that the success of the venture depends to a great extent on careful preparation; and we have drawn up a paper for the guidance of A.A. members who are to give such talks. We should be happy to pass it on for

information, and indeed we feel that the Conference should give its authority to the preparation of such a document for such Groups as are interested in this work.

The third recommendation of the Committee No. 2 related to talks to young people in colleges and universities. Though members of A.A. have given talks to medical students and nurses as part of their formal training, we have not yet attempted to widen the scope of these talks until the talks to schools have got under way and also shown some results.

Finally Committee No. 2 suggested that a working party of young people in A.A. should prepare special literature for young alcoholics. I'm afraid that contributions to this work have not been so great as we could have wished, largely because of the small number of young people's Groups in Scotland.

Committee No. 3 was concerned with publicity and publishing. This Committee was urged to give specific answers to definite questions, rather than to make recommendations for action by Groups. I do, however, have one or two developments to report from Scotland. The past year has been the best ever for the sale of literature of every description, including the Big Book. A.A.'s Journal "The Roundabout", has had its highest escalation. Quite a number of these are sold in England, I believe. So far as advertising ourselves in the Press is concerned, we have not on the whole favoured this in Scotland. We are most interested to hear that special notices have been printed for doctors' surgeries, and we would like to take samples of these back with us. Our relations with Press, radio and TV have continued to be good. Shortly after last year's Conference we approached TV companies to ask if they would bear in mind that any members of A.A. appearing on TV as members of the Fellowship should be photographed in such a way that they could not be identified. We explained why anonymity was of such importance to us, and the replies to our letters were in all cases most cooperative. So far there are no local radio stations in Scotland.

Finally Committee No. 4 reported last year on relations with outside bodies. Taking the items in their report from the beginning I can see that our relations with such bodies were excellent in the great majority of cases. Medical, nursing and other staff have usually been most helpful, and have shown appreciation of what we are able to do to help the alcoholic patient. On the other hand, there is a lack of interest and probably of understanding of alcoholism on the part of the general practitioners. The talks that A.A. members have given to medical students, as part of their formal training, will in time influence attitudes in the medical profession, and we are glad that opportunities exist for us to give such talks. Formal contacts with industry in Scotland are non-existent, although individual firms who happen to have a problem of alcoholism thrust upon them are generally sympathetic and helpful to the alcoholic who is doing something about it. Much the same can be said about the Church. In general, the Churches (with the possible exception of the Roman Catholic Church) show no particular interest in the alcoholic, though particular individuals do have an obvious concern for the problem.

The most encouraging development over the past year has been the very real interest in A.A. shown by the Scottish Prison Authority. The Director of the Scottish Prisons and Borstals recently invited our Scottish Prison Group representatives to meet him for a discussion on alcoholism in prison, and in particular on the increasing number of young alcoholics in Borstals and Young Offenders' institutions. The Scottish Prison Authorities are keen to have A.A. meetings set up in a lot of establishments, but there may be some difficulty in finding suitable members to run such Groups, since these would need to be mature enough to be trusted by the Authorities in matters of prison security, but young enough to win the confidence of the inmates. The Authorities have also begun to supply Big Books for both long and short-term prisoners. This progress has greatly encouraged us, though we realise that the new challenge will mean more work. The telephone Samaritans, and the Marriage Guidance Council, continue to send us individuals who in their view have problems which stem from alcoholism, and we continue to

have friendly, though sporadic, contacts with these two organisations. I have already referred to the National Council for Alcoholism in Scotland, and I have mentioned our relations with radio and Press.

That Mr. Chairman, concludes my report on Scotland.

### **Report of Prison Intergroup**

Alex R:

Ladies and gentlemen, the report I want to give you will be a very brief one indeed, but first of all I would like to say how much I was impressed by what John H. said last night when he was talking about this question of committees for committees' sakes, and I was rather wondering whether our Prison Intergroup might come in that category. The judgment on that will have to be with you.

We have only been in existence for four years and we have found that individuals going to prisons were lacking in information, wanted help from other people, and it was found that to get together between themselves it was possible to go ahead on the lines that we wanted to do, for at that time there were very, very few prison groups indeed. Since the last Conference the increase in the number of Groups is almost 25% - in other words we have gone up to 39 - 40 Groups. I say 39 - 40 because it may well be that one Group has opened this last week. Other Groups are in the process of being opened, and I think the increase is being shown by the interest from the Prison Authorities themselves in asking us to come and open Groups, instead of as in the old days when we were knocking at the door and begging to be allowed in.

Unfortunately, although the increase in sponsorship is good, it is not commensurate with the growth, and in some cases (particularly in the London area, this applies, and I know in other areas, too) we have been compelled to have some of the sponsors doing two prisons, in some cases three in a week - which does make the task very difficult, and we are extremely anxious to get further help in regard to sponsorship.

There is far more communication going on between the prisons themselves - each prison writing to other prisons. This has been introduced in the main by Shepton Mallet, and it is being very, very well carried on. We find that we get communications from the prisons with regard to something they have heard from their opposite numbers in other prisons. This is extremely good, and very helpful.

More correspondence is now passing between Prison Intergroup and the prisoners, and quite a number of prisoners are being put in touch with the area in which they are going to live to enable them to have contacts before they come out of prison, by correspondence, and eventually when they get to the area to have the sponsorship there.

To pick out any particular prisons would be wrong. On the other hand there are some where such work has been going on which is of interest to all others, and I will briefly mention Blundeston Prison, where an Open A.A. Meeting was held with an attendance of over 200 at the Open Meeting. Firstly I would like to say that of this 200, 150 of the people there were non-AA members. There were quite a number of prisoners there of course, but there were also a terrific number of outside people who were interested in the subject, and quite a lot of interesting questions were asked. Furthermore, in this instance, the Home Office were kind enough to grant permission for this to be televised, and the whole of this meeting was shown, in a short resume of course, on TV in the area.

At Shepton Mallet they have gone ahead again there by starting a Group. A Group has been started by ex-prisoners coming out of Shepton Mallet for other prisoners, and at the moment it is called the "Recidivist Group". I don't like the word personally - probably because - I can't pronounce it too well - but I am sure they will find another name for it. It is a Group formed by

ex-prisoners to enable them to help ex-prisoners. Now I know that the feeling is that we should not have groups for shoemakers or groups for solicitors or groups of individuals. On the other hand is no doubt that so far as prison work is concerned the man who can help the suffering alcoholic in prison most is the man who has been in prison himself and can give him a good idea of what life is like when he comes outside. On that I would like to mention that at the Prison Intergroup meeting we had at Blackpool, we had no less than nine people who came up and asked if they could speak. Only time prevented us from doing this. In this case all those people were people who had found their A.A. in prisons.

Mention was made last year of the "News Letter", and I am pleased to say that, thanks to an anonymous donor who spoke to me after this Conference last year, every Prison Group receives a copy of the "News Letter".

At Pentonville Prison, just to mention another instance, a meeting took place there - an ordinary A.A. normal meeting on a Thursday evening - at which 15 prisoners attended, and there was a queue of forty who were unable to get into the Meeting because of lack of accommodation. Arrangements are now being made and it is within the bounds of possibility - we are working very closely, the sponsor of that particular Group, with the Prison Governor - to enable us to have four or five meetings a week held in that prison.

At Camp Hill on the Isle of Wight we had a Group in existence, and since then the other two prisons on the Island, Parkhurst and Albany, have both asked for meetings to take place there, and, thanks to the help of Ronnie H, a tape has been made and sent down to the Southampton and local areas appealing for sponsors. So far I must say the result has been extraordinarily good. We had five from the Southampton area alone to enable us to carry out the work for the three prisons on Isle of Wight.

Lastly (or lastly but one) I would like to talk about our arrangements with the Home Office. We are indeed on very, very good terms. As Chairman of Prison Intergroup I was invited to come along to a committee which is sitting on drunken offenders to give evidence as to what is going to be done for these people when they no longer sentence them to prison for just being drunk - the 7 to 14 days business - but unfortunately of course the answer is what are they going to do with them? The necessity here comes in for the outside agencies to help with regard to rehabilitation places and drying-out. That is a matter I cannot deal with at the moment obviously - but these are the lines on which the Home Office are thinking, and I must say they were very helpful indeed, and were really appreciative of the opinion we were able to give them.

We receive very good co-operation from the Home Office, and now the Prison Officers are having talks from A.A. members to know what we are doing in prisons, because in quite a number of cases, of course, it is extremely difficult to convince the Prison Officers that the member who goes in to speak to the prisoners is going to be of any benefit to them. Where they are having training courses for Officers, in one particular prison, it is already introduced into the curriculum that A.A. members go and talk to them about the work that is being done by A.A. in prisons.

Finally with regard to outside agencies. We again have very close co-operation with outside agencies that are helping ex-prisoners, and in London we have a club which we find very useful for the prisoner when he comes out and wants somewhere to go to spend some time - and also an agency for obtaining jobs for ex-prisoners. We were recently able through the help of one of these outside agencies to obtain a job for one of our ex-prisoners which is very much more in keeping with his standards than he would have been able to get without this help.

Report from Central Service Office:  
Harry T:

Central Service Office has managed to function over the last year. If it has not functioned as well as we would like it to do, I am quite sure it has not functioned as well as you would have liked it. But probably you do not appreciate the extraordinary amount of extra work which has accumulated over a comparatively short number of years.

For instance, there is an increase in Groups. We get every day 10 new enquiries, either by telephone or by letter, or by people calling at the office. We get two letters from students every day. We get one alteration to a Group every day. That means that it has to go into "Where to Find", into the Secretary's Book. It has to go on to the cards - and probably has to go into one other place to be recorded. There has been the addition of the Development Section. There has been the Management Section. There has been the General Service Conference, which means a great deal of work indeed. We get Convention enquiries. Although the Convention had a committee and they did a splendid job somehow or other, I suppose about a quarter of the people still communicate with Central Service Office first about the Convention. The correspondence each time that there is a broadcast, each time there is a TV show, increases enormously. People write in and say, "My wife has been an alcoholic for twenty years. I didn't think I could do anything about it, but probably I can. Can you advise?" Letters of that kind, all of which have got to be answered. The students' letters you can't deal with by just sending them a few pamphlets. Many of them ask really intelligent questions. We are getting post-graduate courses for social workers who write in with the same thing. The work is increasing.

Now Gordon said that the staff from 1956 had increased to 5½. What he did not say, and which I think is important, is that one of these is entirely occupied in sponsorship work - nothing else - which we didn't have in 1956. So the staff has increased only really by half.

There is a question which we always have to bring up - money. Now we pride ourselves that we take money from no outside sources. We even return two guineas or two pounds sent by school children out of the kindness of their hearts to help the alcoholic, because we cannot accept it from outside sources - but not one member of the staff is self-supporting by A.A. Every single member of the staff is supported in some way or another - by pensions or something of that kind - from outside, which to my mind is outside money. Now we have never had anybody on the staff, I think, who has not done their best - but in this position they can say at any time, "Well, I'm afraid it doesn't suit me", or "I've got something else to do", or "I'm moving," - and they just move out. There is nothing to hold them. There is nothing you can do to stop them, and that means that whoever is left - and that is usually the Secretary - has got to scout round again to find somebody else suitable, and then to train them - because this is not now purely an amateur's job. It does require a certain amount of training.

As I see it, Central Service Office's chief duty is to serve the Groups and to maintain communications. That is the first essential. We have reached the stage now where we have to give priorities. We cannot do what is intended in the one day in that day. We have to put something aside for the next day or the day after - because we cannot manage everything; and that is a dangerous state of affairs, and it is not a satisfactory state of affairs when communications are the first essential. As we have noticed today, communications in some directions have broken down, and I know perfectly well that they do break down. If we are going to maintain proper communications, we must have a staff - and I think it is an increase of staff. We don't want a vast staff, but we must have time, some of us, to do a little thinking, to do a little reading. To get around and make the first investigation into things like hostels and clinics, new societies. It is up to the Groups to follow it up. It is up to the Groups to take it on from there. But I feel we should make the initial approach to see for ourselves first of all what it is, so that we have an understanding and can answer questions intelligently, and secondly to say whether in our opinion it is worthwhile carrying on with. But we can't do it at this stage, where we have to give priorities to certain things. We just cannot get out of the office.

I do want people to think. The theme of this Conference is "A Searching Moral Inventory". Now we have all taken a searching moral inventory of ourselves once. We have taken a searching moral inventory of ourselves more than once - but what we must do now at this Conference, I think, is to take a searching moral inventory of our various organisations our various committees, to see whether all of them are really necessary, whether they can be reduced, and whether some of this terrific amount of paper work which is done by Central Service Office at the moment cannot be reduced.

When Gordon mentioned the staff he did not again mention the question of the typist. Now our typist is still employed only four hours a day. 4½ hours, with half an hour for lunch. That is 12 o'clock to 4.30. That is the only actual regular help we have. Fortunately we have a volunteer who comes in nobly and does a tremendous amount of work twice a week, but we cannot forever depend on that. But if we didn't have that, I don't really seriously think that we could manage at all.

Now these are things to think about, and I think one of the first things to consider is whether we are not genuinely holding committees for the sake of holding committees, and sending out minutes for the sake of sending out minutes. We want to give you the best service we can. We are desperately trying to do so, and we fully realise that communications are absolutely the first essential. But communications can never be good when we reach a stage when we have to put things aside to wait until another day.

The question of sponsorship again is very worrying. Everybody tries, I know, very hard. We have a lot of old stalwarts who will always turn up if called upon at the last minute, but it is becoming more difficult. We are getting more and more publicity. Each time a broadcast comes on, as I said, enquiries pour in, and I fear that we may reach a stage where we cannot - we shall not be able - to handle everything that comes in to us - and that again is something that we must at all costs avoid.

#### QUESTIONS..

Joey A: One thing I would like to bring up, and that is the question of the enormous Report which results from this Conference. The interim report comes out. I have found no member who has read the whole big, fat copy which eventually comes out. This means a terrific amount of work. Last year I had to give a hand in sorting out the pages. Surely we can just have a few copies of the big Report in the Office, where they could be kept for anyone who wants to read them, and send a very much reduced Report which would save a lot of paper and typing, round to the Groups. I agree about the mass of paper. I liked what John H. said yesterday. I am myself allergic to all this paper which I constantly get which is supposed to be so necessary. I am sure we could get it down not only in this direction but in quite a lot of others. I think an awful lot more could be done by a personal word with someone rather than typing a possibly rather pompous letter which only serves to rouse resentment most of the time.

Travers C: I would like to endorse what Joey has just said. Personally my feeling would be to dispose of the Conference Report as it has gone out in the past two years, and perhaps have half the "News Letter" devoted to this Conference....that in the "News Letter" a tightly edited Conference Report be made available not only to Group Secretaries, but to the actual members - to all members of the Fellowship, and in that way we might be doing a valuable Twelfth Step job in increasing interest in this Conference. Arising from what has been said about Central Service Office, I feel that we should always remember that that Office is a service office, and one of its services is for the channelling of Twelfth Step work. I have never yet seen it as a duty of Central Service Office to do the Twelfth Step work or the sponsorship itself, and I think this has been the bogging down in recent times of the Staff of Central Service Office. They have not been able to

go out on their jobs because they have actually had to do Twelfth Step work, sponsorship work, themselves. It must be remembered that this is the responsibility of the Groups, and unless the Groups take on these affairs themselves, they will not grow.

I think it is also very important to tie up something in Harry's report with what Alex R. gave us in his report. Harry is complaining justifiably of an overworked, understaffed office, and perhaps they are doing work they should not be doing at Central Service Office. Now let us take Prison Intergroup. Here is an Intergroup that to my certain knowledge is efficiently run. It is run without paid workers. It is run with a Chairman, a Secretary, and a very small Steering Committee - and yet on the figures which I believe to be true, one-fifth of the entire Fellowship in England is serviced by this Intergroup, think that is a pretty shattering thing. I don't think we are depending very much on Central Service Office. I think we get on with our own chores in Prison Intergroup. (I am speaking as a member of the Steering Committee now). And I think it is also interesting to note the quality of the sponsorship in prisons, which has been managed so far successfully without finance. The A. & G.R.C. did offer us a sum of money each year if we required it, and I think it is only fair to our Chairman, Alex R., to say that we have managed to do this work - we have managed to build up one-fifth of the Fellowship in the country without finance and without paid workers. I am not suggesting that this is something that should be with us always. I think we shall eventually have to have someone in Central Service Office who will take on the responsibility of looking after institutions and groups. But I think it shows the effort that is being made by people who are giving thought today, and when you come to look at one-fifth of the membership in this country, how it is serviced, I think that might well be born in mind by committees today.

Bill K:           What in fact Travers is saying, you know, is not really true, or what he is implying. He has got one-fifth of the captive membership of the Fellowship in prison. I wonder how many of these captive members of the Fellowship in fact stay with the Fellowship when they come out.

I am appalled, Mr. Chairman, to go back to Harry's remark, that the Staff is supported by outside money. Now it seems to me, in the British Isles (and I include the followers of Ian Paisley and the brothers from across the Border in this respect) that if you work for a charitable organisation, no matter how much you work, you get half of what you are worth. And it seems to me if you work for Alcoholics Anonymous, you get about a quarter of what you are worth. Let's have the courage of our convictions! I see here, perhaps, a plea from Harry - that when the time comes for him to retire, the Fellowship has got to think to the future. We have got to have foresight - the words of Bill W. Is it not time we thought in terms of a General Secretary of the Fellowship for the future who is a trained man for his job, and paid him the salary that he deserves, and gather together a Central Service Office that is competent to do all the things it should be doing? And is it not also a fact that the responsibility for raising this money comes down to Group level? Now it is not very often that I agree with Bill C., and rarely that I agree with an Irishman, but surely the time has come when we must rethink the whole of our policy with regard to finance. If we are going to have a Central Service Office run efficiently, serving the Groups, serving the community, and communicating with outside bodies, it starts with the amount of money that we have got available to pay these people. It starts with the quality of the people that are doing the job, and whether John likes it or not, this word "communication" is here to stay with us.

I would like to see the day not too far distant when the General Secretary is not some remote old chap in London who does a job on sufferance, ill-paid, and without the time to do it - but a man that goes around the country, to Ireland and to Scotland, and is seen at Group level, and talks to people at Group level, about what is going on, so that members don't look upon this

as some queer organisation in London for Southerners only, but does in fact get down to the grass roots of the Fellowship; and in this way we will communicate, and in this way you will persuade the Fellowship that at Group level it has got a duty to do.

Joey A: I'm sorry - I should have told you that we have engaged, as from the 1<sup>st</sup> December (Peggy has just got married) someone who may possibly in several years' time be able to take over Harry's job.

### **Report from Northern Ireland,.**

Jim S:

I now walk round my Chair and present the Report from Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland this year has remained, I would say, fairly static in regard to the number of Groups. There has been, I think, a forward movement, and some of the comments that were made by John H. last evening apply with regard especially to Alateen Groups of which there are now two meeting, and also this Family Group meeting which takes place once per week. Unfortunately we have not made much progress with Prison groups. We have experienced great difficulty here, particularly because the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Craig, is not particularly congenial at the moment! (We can't reproach him). Otherwise we have, I think, managed a greater degree of communication than what would appear to exist at the moment amongst other Groups. I do remember at one time in a pub I was in, there was an alcoholic complaining bitterly about the standard of service, because they wouldn't give him any more drink, and he was saying that in Glasgow in the pubs that he knew, even when he fell down, and when he was lying on the floor and he nodded his head and pointed to his pocket, and the barman could get the money out, he still got served. But I think there was a very good level of communication probably in Glasgow.

That is the very brief Report of Northern Ireland.

As you have heard from Donald, we are meeting in Dublin on the 24th November and there will be 16 delegates from all over Ireland who will meet. What they are going to do yet, no one is quite sure, but I am certain that once we get there we shall probably find out. However, this may lead to the setting up, as Donald has said, of an All-Ireland possible intergroup, or it could even (a more frightening thought!) lead to a Service Office in Northern Ireland. However, we will have to await the outcome of this, and I shall endeavour to keep you informed of whatever happens. Bearing in mind of course that it will be one man, one vote!

Briefly, to recap on what has gone on this mornings and this very enlightening report from General Service Board, we do note that all these Boards and Committees are of course the object of criticism at all times, and will probably continue to be.

I don't know why, but we don't appear to be getting the "News Letter" in Northern Ireland. I haven't seen it up to now. But the thing that did emerge from all this was that somebody is doing something - and I think that no matter what C.S.O. and the General Board can do, A.A. will probably still go on!

One of the things I did note was that the very attractive and delightful Secretary of the A. & G.R.C. did admit to this mistake in communication. I would prefer that she made a mistake through me!

To our Scottish friends, who are very near to us of course, it is a pity to note that one of these Young People's Groups has probably folded up, but anyhow they have at least achieved 11 new Groups.

The Prison Groups I find are probably the most encouraging. These show a very marked increase, and I do like this business of the talks which were mentioned by Alex to the Prison Officers, because we find that in Belfast it is impossible to hold a Prison meeting because an



Officer will not give up his time to superintend the meeting. This is one of the stumbling blocks that there has been there. Although we have had no success with clubs for ex-prisoners, or anything of this nature, we probably may not have been ambitious enough in this direction; but we have not had any success yet.

There is, of course, always the danger that in our own Groups when we come back to the question which was discussed of money and of people putting money on the plate, often when a plate comes round in Lisburn Road, and we have a look at it coming back, the Secretary says, "I wonder how the hell any of you fellows ever got to be alcoholics!" So it does certainly take some money. I was of course very relieved to hear Harry say "his searching moral inventory". I was a bit worried because I got a bit mixed up with a searching immoral inventory.

I think the rest of the matters that were discussed probably would be best answered, and the time of the committees best used, in deliberating all these points.

I don't know who this chap "Tennyson" was, or what Group he belonged to, that John quoted last night. We haven't had a Tennyson for a long time.

I think all that remains now for me to do is to apologise for being ten minutes longer than I should be, and to thank everybody for these Reports and the time given up to them, and to thank all the people here for being such a very good and attentive audience.

The evening meeting on Saturday, when Professor Ferguson Rodger of Glasgow and Kathy H were the speakers, is not reported here, nor the discussion which took place after Professor Rodger's talk.

**Sunday morning, 10<sup>th</sup> November. Report of Committee No. 1.**  
To receive Committee Reports. Chairman: John H. (Bradford)

Report of Committee No. 1. Joan B.  
Joan B.

There was a great deal of discussion by Committee No. 1, but because of shortage of time its findings will be presented as briefly as possible.

Our terms of reference were based on Tradition 5, namely "Each Group has but one primary purpose - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers" and we were asked "Where are we as individuals and as Groups failing in our responsibility?"

The Committee began its proceedings with a general discussion on its specific terms of reference, and in particular "Where are we as individuals and as Groups failing in our responsibility?" This seemed to imply that there was a certain degree of failure, and it was felt that possibly a more constructive approach would be "How can we help more? Consideration was given to where we are failing, or indeed whether we are failing, and there was a body of opinion in the Committee which felt that people coming into Groups where they were not known, particularly in large Groups, were not always made to feel at home, and sometimes indeed were completely ignored. A suggestion was made that one member of the Group should be appointed as "Host" or "Hostess" for the evening, whose job it would be to spot any newcomer, find out who they were, and make them welcome. The feeling of the Committee was that A.A. had to some extent become too far removed from assimilation of the Big Book, and the Committee

referred all members very strongly to this book, and in particular to the chapters devoted to sponsorship in general. Stress was laid on the importance of visiting people who have attended a few meetings and then strayed away, in order to find out if there was anything wrong and why they had strayed away. Mention was made of the phrase “This is a selfish programme”. It was important to point out that whatever the connotation of the word “selfish” may be in the American language in the British Isles it was generally interpreted on the lines of “I’m all right, Jack”, and this led some members to sit back and do nothing, whereas the A.A. programme was “selfish” in that we can only help ourselves by helping others. “Easy does it” or “Take it easy” was another phrase which could be made an excuse for lack of action. “Come to meetings, stick around and listen, and something will rub off” could also be made an excuse for apathy and failure on the part of members to carry and explain the message to the still suffering alcoholic. In general it was felt that we have failed in our sponsorship through lack of a lively enough conscience on the part of all concerned, which has led to a failure on our part to attract people to sobriety. We must by our personal example impress the newcomer with what sobriety can mean in the way of happiness, rather than try to bulldoze him into a state of dryness.

As our terms of reference were so very wide, this committee was given various headings for discussion by the Chairman of the Conference. The first of these was **“Whether or not we should reverse the decision that C.S.O. should cease to stock the “Twenty-four Hours a Day” book and also “Targets for Thought”**. It was agreed that the groups themselves should go to the publishers direct for the “Twenty-four Hours a Day” book, and for “Targets for Thought”, and that these publications should not be available from C.S.O., as they were not conference-approved literature. It was further agreed that some method should be found to make the names and addresses of the publishers known to the Groups, as the “Twenty-four Hours a Day” book in particular was in considerable demand from members.

The second heading was the vexed question of **“Whether we should reverse the decision to appear full-face, full-view on television**. The Chairman stated that according to the A&GRC, members of AA may, according to conscience, appear full-face on TV in England and Wales, but this was contrary to the American General Service Conference opinion of last year. The situation in Scotland is different in that they adhere strictly to Tradition Eleven. The question was also raised as to what happens to broadcasting remunerations received. The Committee recommended unanimously that since it could not reach agreement, an enquiry group should be formed to study the subject of anonymity with special reference to public media and television in particular and to the fees received from the same. As it is clearly stated in the Charter of the General Service Conference of A.A. (North American Section) that no change in A.A. Tradition may be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of the A.A. Groups, their enquiries should be directed to Intergroup Secretaries throughout England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Eire, who could ascertain the opinion of the Groups in their areas. Concern was felt, particularly by Scotland, that at the moment there was no unity of opinion and action on the subject of Tradition Eleven in the British Isles.

The third heading was **“Alcoholic Units. Those who have a great deal to do with them feel there is a very spineless attitude on the part of patients going in. They present themselves with a ‘Here I am, cure me’ outlook, and do nothing for themselves. Have Alcoholic Units any real value?”** It was felt that it was not within the competence of the Committee to discuss this subject.

The fourth heading was **“Clubs and Hostels. There were, for example Daytime Clubs, not run by AA, in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Halifax. What should our attitude to these clubs be? And to Halfway Houses and Hostels? Should we help to provide those alcoholic derelicts who have nothing to return to, and possibly never had? What help should we give?”** It was agreed that an offer of co-operation should be made to Halfway Houses, Daytime

Clubs, Hostels etc., once they are set up, but the Committee did not think A.A. should play any part in the formation of such places. It was also thought that the General Service Board would welcome the suggestion that they might send a representative to the newly created Department of Health and Social Security in order to advise the Department of the availability of A.A. and its desire to co-operate in the hostels they were proposing to set up.

The fifth heading was **“No dues No fees”**. Group treasurers should be asked once more to ginger up their members to give a little more freely to central funds.

The sixth heading was **“Is it true that we are mainly a middle-class fellowship? Do we want it this way, or should we attempt to have wider spread?”** We accept that we are predominantly middle-class, but at this discussion we have come to the conclusion this should not limit a wider appeal provided love, compassion and understanding of each individual newcomer is shown.

The seventh heading was **“Are we capable of dealing with meths drinkers, or are we just wasting our time and energy in trying to help them?”** It was felt that there were two classes of meths drinkers: (a) those who suffer from grave mental disorders and have opted out of life altogether and finished on the equivalent of Skid Row, and (b) the meths drinker who is an alcoholic and is only drinking meths for economic reasons. It was agreed that no useful purpose could be served in going to Skid Row to find the former, but if any meths drinker should come to A.A. for help, it should be given to him in the same way as to any newcomer.

The eighth heading was **“Just how anonymous in all fields are we going to be?”** After a second discussion on anonymity the Committee felt that this question was fully covered by their motion on heading No. 2.

The Question was raised as to what extent a Group and its members should go when a person is literally drinking himself to death. Should they attempt to stop him, even against his will? It was felt that there was a common law duty on every citizen to prevent another human from killing himself if possible. In a case of this kind, when it was felt that a person was very seriously at risk, and there was nothing further one could do as a member of A.A., the Mental Welfare Officer should be contacted. It is then out of the members' hands and no longer a matter for A.A. He will decide with the general practitioner whether it is possible to stop this individual from killing himself in this way. It was also felt that A.A. members should realise their limitations, and no Group or member in a case of this kind should feel any guilt at all.

Finally the Committee found that the findings still held good of Committee No. 2 of the 1967 General Service Conference, whose subject was “Special Problems - Young People in A.A.”.

John H.

Thank you very much indeed, Joan. I must say I think from the remarks of you yourself and Committee No. 1 members who talked to me last night, that you are practising humility to the n<sup>th</sup> degree when you say you have not succeeded very well with the stuff you had been given. I think you have succeeded admirably. As a matter of fact, in that Report I think there is an enormous amount for every Group in these Islands to go back and think very seriously about, and for them to start to practise.

I will now ask John C. for Committee No. 2's Report, which dealt with Groups and Intergroups and I would ask you to pay as careful attention as you possibly can (I know you are doing this. This is not an insult) to it, because when you hear Committee No. 3's Report (this is bound to happen) you will find a divergence of opinion, and these two you will have to pit against each other. And this Meeting must decide one way or the other. I myself have already decided, simply on the lines. I think, of common sense.

## Report of Committee No. 2

John C.

The basic heading was “Communication and Co-operation among Groups in the service of the Fellowship. Local, Regional and National coordination of services”.

As Committee No. 2, we were both numerically and in the chain of communication between Committees 1 and 3, and we therefore had to make one basic assumption to start with, and before we did that we discussed briefly the role of Committee No. 1 purely from the point of view of giving ourselves the background of what we were trying to decide, the object which Committee 1 was setting out to do, which is to carry the message. Therefore we started off:-

1. We came to the conclusion that the General Service Conference will assume responsibility for the direction of, and laying down of policy for, the affairs of the Fellowship in the British Isles. This being the case, we considered the organisation required below the level of the General Service Conference on the assumption that the latter would meet annually, and be representative of all countries in the British Isles”.

2. It was agreed that such directives and decisions issued by the General Service Conference would be accepted by, and acted upon, by all Committees, Intergroups and Groups in the territory.

We then came to the question of what happened below that:

3. It is necessary for these to be an effective link to ensure that decisions are put into effect, and for dealing with the co-ordination of services, finance and so on.

This led us to the consideration of what committees should exist between Intergroup level and the General Service Conference. We bore in mind the comments that had been made about committees and the numbers thereof. We didn't want to make too many. We didn't want to suggest anything too big. I was reminded of the statesman who was told that Lindbergh had flown the Atlantic all by himself, and was unimpressed. He said, “Man by himself can do anything. Let me know when a committee flies the Atlantic!” With that in mind, we suggested that:

There should be three Committees and that they should be formed as follows:-

- a) **Finance:** It is envisaged that this will cover the raising of revenue and the approval of expenditure throughout the territory.
- b) **Publications and Public Relations:** This will include TV., Radio and Development.
- c) **Service and Sponsorship:** This includes liaison with outside bodies, Twelfth Step work, and the efficient operation of Central Service Offices, which should be located in Scotland and Ireland in addition to the existing one covering England and Wales.

4. The above Committees should comprise six members. Each member would serve for three years, and two would be elected annually at the General Service Conference from members attending thereat for the first time. In this manner, and on the assumption that a delegate's service on the General Service Conference is also three years, we ensure that at all times Committee members are drawn entirely from current General Service Conference delegates. It is possible that for the moment Scotland and Ireland may not be in a position to participate, in the work of the Finance Committee for example, and in this case the membership of such committee would be restricted to four, two retiring every third year.

We then realised that this would not come about all in a second, and so there would be an interregnum period for which we should probably legislate, and we therefore had a look at what exists now and how that could be phased out or adapted if this new type of set-up should come to pass. In England and Wales this is covered, it seemed to me, by the much-maligned A. & G.R.C. We discussed its activities and purpose and what it achieved at considerable length, and I know certainly, coming to the A. & G.R.C. as a fairly new member, my first impression was that its

activities or its meetings made the Tower of Babel by comparison something like a fireside chat! Nevertheless it exists, and if it is not functioning, then clearly the responsibility lies right inside this room over the years. However, we didn't want to feel that we were throwing the baby out of the window with the bath water, and that therefore something must exist until another form of organisation comes along, and so we said that pending the setting-up of these committees, and their becoming operative, existing national committees would continue to function in order to maintain necessary communication and co-operation between Intergroups or groups and to administer essential services. In so far as England and Wales are concerned, this Committee is the A&GRC. This Committee must at once be streamlined so that it will consist of only one delegate from each Intergroup and the General Secretary of Central Service Office. No other Intergroup or individual member will be permitted to attend. It would at the same time organise itself on the lines, and with the responsibilities, outlined for the three Committees detailed above. In this interim period, each delegate would be entitled to one vote regardless of the size of the Intergroup he represents. We took note in this connection that there are fairly ready-made subdivisions of the A. & G.R.C. to deal with these three functions as they stand.

The next stage down is the Intergroup. We came to the conclusion that these are the essential forum for the work of the Fellowship throughout the territory, and we decided that Intergroups must, and should, be formed, and that the ideal number for membership of an Intergroup should be 15 or thereabouts, and that they should be of course organised geographically. We laid some stress on the role of the Intergroups, and we said that Intergroups give an opportunity for the exchange of ideas, the sharing of experience in ways and means of spreading the work of A.A. more widely and co-ordinating certain aspects of such work in the area covered by individual Intergroups.

Specifically it must be borne in mind that Intergroups are not forums for complaints, nor are they attended by delegates as part of their personal sobriety programme. They are strictly meeting to conduct the business of the Fellowship, and to ensure that the true concept of service is faithfully carried into effect. Intergroups therefore can most usefully deal with matters such as:

Contacts with outside bodies, namely:

Hospitals	Police
Prisons	Social Workers
Doctors	Mental Welfare Officers
M.O.H's	Citizens' Advice Bureaux
Samaritans	National Council for Alcoholism

Provision of Speakers where required.

Organisation of social gatherings or Area Conventions.

Provision of delegates to the General Service Conference.

Intergroups should consist of approximately 15 Groups, and where this number is exceeded they should be split. It should be borne in mind, too, that Intergroups, by the sharing of their experience, can guide individual Groups in regard to pitfalls they may otherwise fall into as a result of understandable, but nevertheless at times, misguided enthusiasm for some particular project they have in mind.

Nothing in this is to be construed as meaning that the Intergroup itself deals with the functions detailed in the whole of its area. Activities will be delegated to individual Groups wherever possible, and they will be encouraged to make and maintain their own contact with the

bodies mentioned, but doing the job with Intergroup to advise and coordinate, and to detail delegates to act for the Intergroup where it is felt that a certain matter can be best dealt with at Intergroup level.

Each Group will be represented at the Intergroup by a delegate who should be appointed for two years for preference, but certainly not longer than three years. He must make a point of attending all meetings, or find a deputy if unavoidably present (Sorry! absent - that mightn't be a bad thing either!) (This is undoubtedly the effect of Manchester's weather it's symbolic that when I got five miles from the Midlands last night, the fog cleared!)

It is important that delegates report back to their next Group meeting, and points of interest, or those requiring action be discussed. If it is not possible to do this, then, if need be, a separate business meeting should be held. The same principle applies to the reporting to Intergroups by their delegate to the General Service Conference, and for the time being to the A&GRC..

We feel in this Connection that delegates go to meetings, and then come back, and at the next Group meeting Joe Soak, half-whistled, comes in - and the meeting just spends all its time talking about Joe Soak's problems, and whatever has transpired at the Intergroup and so forth never gets discussed, and never gets down to the members of a Group who, as John was saying, go on the basis of "I'm all right, Jack. I couldn't care what happens at the Intergroup" - and I feel it important to press this particular point, that if communication is going to go on, then delegates must assume responsibility having attended a meeting to see that the communication takes place.

Lastly, London Intergroup. This was considered as a special case, as at this time it is the only one in England and Wales which seriously exceeds the suggested number to form an effective Intergroup.

It is considered that London Intergroup must be removed from Central Service Office and split into smaller entities. Each must be responsible for its own secretarial work and, generally speaking, operate as does any other Intergroup, making its own arrangements for the receipt of telephone calls, if need be through some answering service, such as the Samaritans, who would be provided with an adequate number of names they can pass messages to, while possibly the proposed Ansaphone can cover for the moment any periods where such service cannot be arranged. It is left to London Intergroup to reorganise itself so that it both relieves Central Service Office of its current work load on behalf of London Intergroup, especially in the matter of incoming calls for help, and at the same time sets up an organisation to receive and service such calls, and assist and encourage Groups in establishing outside contacts and so on to widen the scope of the work of the Fellowship in each separate London Intergroup area.

John H.

Thank you very much, John. I should like to pay tribute here as a matter of fact to my "briefer" of last night. I had not seen this report, but I was given a very clear picture of that second committee conclusion last night, and I trust that I have an equally clear picture of Committee No. 3. The part, as far as I can make out, of the Report of Committee No. 3 which will clash with what you have just heard from the second committee is this formation which Committee No. 2 has suggested of three small committees of six members from the different countries to deal with Finance, Publications and Public Relations and Sponsorship in general, plus the interregnum period. You will find that when Ronald gives us his report, Committee No. 3 has a quite different suggestion and these are the two which must be weighed. Time is against us, but we must try to come up with a decision by 11 o'clock this morning.

Report of Committee No 3. Ronald L.

Ronald L.

This is the Report of Committee No. 3 on "Shared Services". The terms of reference of the Committee were:

To consider and report upon matters under three principal heads:

- a) The purpose and function of the General Service Conference.
- b) The purpose and function of the General Service Board, and/
- c) The World Service Meeting to be held in New York in 1969.

It was felt that before going to the more detailed sub-heads of the terms of reference, a broad review of the General Service Conference and the General Service Board would help to clarify the existing structure and its suitability in giving effect to the aims and wishes of the Fellowship, and consideration of the structure and inter-relationship of these two bodies inevitably brought under review the A. & G.R.C.

In order to concentrate the discussion upon principles, the definition of the function of the Conference, as given by the exploratory meeting three years ago, was examined. This, you will remember, was:

"It was agreed that a General Service Conference, representative of A.A. throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland should be set up.

This would bring together the General Service Board and the Intergroups and Groups throughout England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and provide the means of sharing experience and ideas.

In this way the Conference would hope to further the aims and ideals of A.A., namely Recovery, Unity and Service, and ensure the healthy growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering closer ties and greater co-operation throughout these Islands".

Those were the original stated aims and objects of this Conference.

It was also noted that the primary purpose of the General Service Board is to safeguard the Twelve Traditions, to assume such legal responsibilities as are required for the good of A.A., and to provide a thread of continuity and stability in the affairs of A.A. by nature of its constitution and by the inclusion in its membership of non-alcoholic members.

There was a consensus of opinion, after very thorough discussion, that there is an overlapping of functions between these three bodies, and a lack of clarity in their respective responsibilities, which together build up frustrations so serious that they quite frequently nullify the efforts of one body or the other.

The Committee was satisfied - and there were no exceptions - that in the short period of its life the Conference had emerged as the proper body to represent the Intergroups through the members elected by them. So far, however, the Conference was without a vehicle through which its wishes and ideas could be put into effect, and that this vehicle could be provided effectively only by the General Service Board.

It was also felt that the Intergroups did not find through the medium of the A. & G.R. C. an adequate channel for reaching decisions nor for putting them into effect, and had great difficulty in obtaining guidance on problems which arise from time to time.

In the functioning of the Central Service Office and the subcommittee structure of the General Purposes Committee, the "News Letter" and Development Committee, there was a general untidiness which resulted in waste of effort and discouragement, which directly affected the help which we can give to the suffering alcoholic.

To meet these problems it was agreed that a fundamental change in the structure of the bodies in question is necessary, and after consideration of the Third Legacy Manual and the Twelve Concepts, the Committee puts forward the following recommendations:

- 1) The A. & G.R.C. and all its sub-committees to be dissolved as Intergroups are properly represented on the Conference.
- 2) The General Service Board to become the vehicle through which the proposals of the Conference are implemented and to assume responsibility for the General Service Office, the "News Letter" and Development. For this purpose a Committee to be appointed by the General Service Board in consultation with the Conference, to be known as the Services Committee, with regional representation.
- 3) The offices of the General Service Board and the Central Service Office to be merged. This should produce greater efficiency at a saving in cost.
- 4) A majority decision of the Conference would be taken as a suggestion to the Board; a two-thirds majority decision of the Conference to be taken as binding.
- 5) Scotland and Northern Ireland to continue to be represented on the Conference, but to remain for the time being, at all events, autonomous in the conduct of their own affairs,
- 6) Rotation and election of Board members to follow the recommendations in the memorandum circulated by the Board. (That is Wick's memorandum which was referred to on Friday evening).
- 7) The officers and composition of the Conference to be elected and rotated as already agreed, but with this proviso, that the present members remain for a further period of a year, and the rotation provisions to be deferred by that period. This is in order to bridge the transitional stage which there would be if these recommendations are adopted.
- 8) Two further alcoholic members of the Board to be considered for appointment during the next few months.
- 9) A Committee of the Conference consisting of five members, plus the Chairman of the A. & G.R.C. and the General Service Secretary, to meet the Board in order to discuss these matters in detail if approved here on Saturday, 4th January 1969 at 2.30 pm. This committee, if these proposals are agreed, will, I think, be elected today.
- 10) A one-day meeting of this Conference to be held in Manchester in the Spring of 1969 to initiate the new structure. Thereafter the Conference to be held annually in the spring of each year.

This I should say is a tremendous compression of what took four and a half hours of discussion. Time is short, and I have done what I can to summarize the thinking behind the proposals, and to set out the proposals themselves. They are far-reaching. On every item there were no dissentients. The meeting began, I think, with quite a considerable divergence of opinion, but in the course of discussion we all came together. It was never necessary to take a vote, and the principle was reached as we went along without a single dissentient voice.

Coming to the third of our terms of reference, the World Service Meeting. It is recommended that the proposal of the Board that Wick and Sandy Trotter should represent us at the World Service Meeting in New York in October, 1969, be adopted. This will relieve the Fellowship of substantial travelling and hotel expenses, as these two members will be in New York at that time in any case, and it was felt that the money which would otherwise be spent could better be spent in this country.

John H.



Thank you very much indeed, Ronald. Well - I am suffering from mental indigestion as much as you are, but once again my early morning (or midnight-watch) reporter has not let me down, I'm pleased to say.

You will have realised and I do trust that representatives from areas other than England and Wales have been substituting automatically in their own minds their equivalent body every time the A. & G.R.C. was mentioned, which is to a certain extent used simply as an abbreviation for all the other titles - you will have realised there is a complete difference between the findings of Committee No. 3 and the findings of Committee No. 2., and the implementation really of making the Conference representative as a legislative body for the Fellowship in the British Isles. In intent I don't think they disagree at all. It would have been miraculous without liaison to have found two bodies of twenty people sitting down in different rooms who came up with exactly the same answer working on different terms of reference. It is quite understandable that both have looked at them from their own terms of reference, and have come to the conclusions they have come to.

Now, we are a democracy, and whatever happens we must not give the impression of being rushed into a decision - or conned into a decision. As I said on Friday night, I feel here an obligation. I was one of the members sent from the A. & G.R.C. four years ago to the exploratory meeting, and then sent as Chairman for the First, the Second and now the Third General Service Conference. At times I wish out. It began to feel as though this were my dread - and these last ten months it has been difficult. As a matter of fact I must here (and this is not a side issue) - I must here say that the job this last year has been much harder than before; and I think that this is symptomatic of what I told you on Friday night - that the Conference was at a cross roads, in that nominations were coming in as late as Friday evening from Intergroups and so on, and this meant that Bill was working on those committee lists making alterations to alterations into the early hours of Friday morning. Now this is wrong, of course, and I am not standing here in a critical attitude. What I am saying is that I think this reflected the lack of confidence in what the Conference was doing, and this lack of confidence I see as coming from the lack of legislative power that the Conference has had up to last year.

I cannot begin to express the tremendous relief and happiness that this Third Conference has brought me because I think that now we have got something really to go forward on. You have really worked fantastically this weekend. I'm not just stroking your backs now in preparation for getting my own way: but quite honestly I was absolutely astonished yesterday evening to find committees had got through the works because I was dreading it - but I could see Committee No. 3 sitting there through the evening and late on, trying to come through its onerous programme. But get through they did, and with a quite surprising unanimity of belief and opinion.

Before I throw this open for twenty minutes or so of discussion, I would like to point out something that I found I had to point out once to the A. & G.R.C. - that we don't need to be afraid. We are not inscribing on clay tablets the Laws of the Medes and Persians. What we effect this morning, if it should turn out to be unworkable can be changed. We must not be afraid of making decisions and going forward. We, as alcoholics, see an alcoholic behind every fence, or round every paling of that fence. We are so close to the problem, and you as alcoholics are here very largely because you are more closely concerned with it than the other members in your Group, which means it concerns you more. I know one person who would say "Here sit fifty A.A. fanatics". Thank God for it! But we must keep the thing in proportion and try to be objective about this, and approach the problem without fear, and in faith.

Now Committee No. 2 suggested that the A. & G.R.C. and other local bodies remain for an interregnum to keep the Fellowship ticking over until the time came when the three committees could be formed from the General Service Conference covering Finance,

Publications and Public Relations and over-all Sponsorship and Service, and that presumably this would not be able to come into effect until the Fourth General Service Conference. (Correct me, John, if I'm wrong there).

Chairman of Committee No 2: No it rather depended on what Committee No. 3 were coming up with in regard to a Constitution and we thought that if some of these recommendations required further debate; and others required approval by obviously Scotland and Ireland and so on, or required confirmation by the Board. If this came about between now and the next Conference, which we sincerely trusted it would, then the interregnum period would only be until such time; it could be weeks, it could be months. On the other hand, we could equally visualise if the whole thing was decided this morning, the interregnum period would last between now and five minutes hence. We set no time limit. The emphasis was on the shortest time possible.

Chairman: Thank you, John. Now, the proposal from Committee No. 2 was for three committees of six members representing the different countries. Should Ireland and Scotland, for instance find it financially impossible to participate immediately, then their positions on these committees would be left vacant until such time as they felt themselves able to join.

The Third Committee have proposed that the General Service Conference go forward, representing the Intergroups, and that it be given a vehicle to put its ideas into effect. This is the vehicle to be provided by the General Service Board.

Now the General Service Board in the past has been a brake, as I said on Friday evening, an over-all custodian really of the Traditions in A.A. At times people have thought and said (I'm going to misquote our non-member Tennyson again, Jim) that the General Service Board's motto should have been "Here we lie, like gods together, careless of mankind". For seven years in my experience members have been calling in no uncertain fashion for closer co-operation between the General Service Board and the grass roots. (I never quite know what the "grass roots" are). This is what we are wanting between individual members, between the Groups, and later on the Intergroups, and of course the over-all bodies in the different countries. Here there is quite a radically astonishing proposal from Committee No. 3; that the General Service Board itself become involved in the actual day-to-day working of A.A. through its involvement in these committees. That the A. & G.R.C. and similar bodies (again allowing a plan for the different countries where necessary) should be disbanded as sub-committees and that the General Service Board become responsible for implementing the proposals of the Conference, for Central Service Office, for the dissemination of news, and for development. The Officers of the General Service Board and the Central Service Office will be elected at a General Service Conference, and any decision that the General Service Conference makes will be carefully examined by the Board, a two-thirds decision by the General Service Conference being accepted as binding on the Board to carry out that proposal. They did **not** have to take a vote - on the 4th January the Board are meeting in the morning, but in the afternoon a committee formed here this morning for the Fourth Conference meet with them, and then sometime in the early spring a one-day conference, the Fourth General Service Conference, now the legislative body for A.A. in the British Isles, and at its deliberations providing the executive body and also the Committee, to arrange the following year's Conference during the time that it meets.

Ronald - if you would like to correct anything I have said.....

Chairman of Committee 3 John - it's not really a question of correction. There are one or two points I would like to clarify because they are really fundamental. If these proposals are adopted, the General Service Board will of course continue as the guardian of the Traditions of A.A. and

as the only legal entity within A.A., with its full responsibilities under the Companies Act and at law, and there is therefore the remote contingency of its being asked by the Conference to do something which would be contrary to its obligations under law. Obviously it would not do that. I don't think that will arise, because I think the guarantee against it is that every member of the General Service Board is a member of this Conference.

One very important thing which I think the Conference is helping along with is the bringing together of the Board and of the other members of the Fellowship. There is one Fellowship of which the Board is a part. I cannot consider the Board as being a thing on one side, with the Fellowship and everybody else on the other side. We are one Fellowship. In years past there was a feeling that there was a cleavage, and we fell into this definition which I won't attempt to repeat that John gave us from William Shakespeare or Tennyson. This is no longer so. The Board is here. It is among us (I am speaking as Chairman of this Committee at the moment) and if any request or idea emerged from this Conference which legally the Board could not carry into effect, obviously the Board would say so; and I am sure the Conference would go along with this. So that the responsibility - and it is a heavy responsibility which the Board would undertake if these proposals are agreed by all parties concerned - would be additional to what they are doing now. The Services Committee which it is proposed should be directly responsible to the Board would, I think, have (and this is what the Committee felt yesterday) have to be appointed by the Board because of the close liaison between the two, and the fact that for streamlining purposes this Committee would come back to the Board for discussions; but obviously the material for this Committee must be enlisted from this Conference because the Board is just not in a position to select a Committee of this type itself.

Two other points I would make are these, and they are of very, very great importance. I don't think it was for Committee No. 3; I don't think it is for this Conference; I don't think it lies within their powers, and if it did it would be very undesirable, to preside over the liquidation of the A. & G.R.C. This I think must be done and can be done only with the consent of the A. & G.R.C. Similarly, before the Board itself can be committed to these proposals, the Board must decide whether it can see its way and whether it feels it is desirable to accept them. So that if this Conference decides that the proposals are to be accepted we then have certain things to do:

- 1) To get the agreement of the A. & G.R.C.
- 2) To get the agreement of the Board.

The idea is that these matters can be considered thoroughly, maturely, and that the meeting on the 4th January, following the General Service Board's morning meeting, will be the time when both the Board and the A. & G.R.C. say their say, and if they are with whatever the recommendation of this Conference is, to think and to go ahead. This I think must be the order of things.

The time is relatively short. It is a little less than two months. There was a strong feeling, however, yesterday that if this is the right thing to do, then the need for an effective vehicle is so great and so pressing that we ought not to delay, and that if this is right in principle, to delay would mean to lose impetus, to take the sting out of it - and six, eight, nine months later a lot of the present feeling, and we felt yesterday we had reached a very clear view, might have been dissipated.

Chairman: Thank you Ronald. There are just two things I would ask you to clarify my mind on. (I may be obtuse at the moment on it). What is the composition of this Services Committee and how it should be elected. And the other is the composition of the Conference Officers,

which I assume you need to elect at this meeting this morning. Would you clarify that before we start.

Chairman of Committee 3 On the latter point, the Conference Officers - we suggested deferring any changes at all in the composition of the Conference as regards both its Officers, Chairman, Secretary, etc., and its membership so far as ever possible for a period of a year, so that the people who have been here for the last three years and have seen this grow and are up to date with the conception which we now have in mind will be the same people to carry it through, and that after twelve months, then the rotation provisions provisionally agreed should be applied. In other words, we have a standstill for a year as a bridging operation.

As regards the composition of the Services Committee, this is yet to be decided. It would be the committee which carries into effect the Central Service Office operation, the editorial functions of the "News Letter", and the Development Committee. Whether they will be merged in one, perhaps that would remain to be seen, but the office at 11 Redcliffe Gardens would be one office. There would not be a General Service Board Office and a Central Service Office. It would be one office, and this Services Committee would be responsible to the General Service Board whose subcommittee meets once a month in London. It would be a committee with regional representation and for practical purposes we felt it must have considerable strength from London perhaps, or at all events from members who are easily accessible to attend meetings in London. Are there any other points there, John?

Chairman Some would be Board members?

Chairman of Committee 3 No, I think they would be all non-Board members.

Chairman Thank you very much indeed. Well now - for twenty minutes or so, if you have any thoughts you would like clarifying that would be of benefit to other people to held them to clear their minds, I should be grateful to have them.

Riou I will start off, if I may, by proposing that the findings of Committee No. 3 be accepted as the recommendation that goes from this Conference to the Fellowship.

Questioner unidentified Does this Services Committee represent the whole of Great Britain, and if so is it going to have membership from Ireland and Scotland and the other parts apart from London, or is it going to be purely a London committee?

Chairman I will ask Ronald to reply to this. It is to be regional of course.

Chairman of Committee 3 It will be elected regionally from England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland will continue to be represented at this Conference, but will remain autonomous in their own affairs just as they are now at this stage. This is the wish of the representatives from Scotland and Ireland at this committee yesterday. So functionally the Services Committee will provide services for England and Wales. The Scottish and Irish representatives will continue as members of this Conference but, at this stage at all events, they will continue to be autonomous for their own services.

Questioner unidentified: On the previous committee the decision was that the three committees they had proposed were going to reserve places for Ireland and Scotland, and if this Conference is to be representative of the whole of Great Britain and is to carry weight in the whole of Great Britain, I think you must make it clear that the voice of Scotland and the voice of

Ireland is going to have some influence and some effect, and you will achieve this, I believe, by having places for them on the Committee, whether it is the three committees proposed by Committee No. 2 or the one Committee proposed by your Committee.

Chairman. I can't see any reason whatever why this shouldn't have the same clause in it that Committee No. 2 recommended of vacancies on this Committee for Irish and Scottish representatives if they can provide them, but in the meantime, whilst they wish to remain autonomous (and some of this is because of financial considerations) then their private desires must be recognised. Is there any reason whatsoever?

Chairman of Committee 3 I see no reason at all. We did discuss this yesterday, and it was very warmly felt that Scotland and Ireland must of course desirably remain members of this Conference. The degree in which they come into the 11 Redcliffe Gardens service we felt was a matter for them, and it was their expression of opinion that they preferred to remain autonomous in their own affairs. I see no reason why they should not have a representative on this Committee. I feel it would be a good thing, and this is one of the points I think which we would regard as following the general structure. I think this falls into the category of a natural union. We talked about "natural union" yesterday, and we decided that in most cases they did come off in spite of the experience of the Pandas!

Bill K: Can I perhaps be Devil's Advocate, Mr. Chairman, and start off by saying that I am, going to try to be constructively critical? I have many friends on the General Service Board whose friendship I value and whose advice has perhaps helped me to be the Devil's Advocate this morning - and two things worry me.

I cannot for the life of me see that the General Service Board has to date provided the thread of continuity and stability that it could well have done. And, do you realise ladies and gentlemen, that you are going to vest in the Board the authority of an executive body of this General Service Conference? (This is to quote Ronald's own words). And that the Services Sub-Committee appointed by this General Service Conference will be responsible to the Board. Now I see nothing terribly bad in that, but I think there is an inherent danger that the responsibility for this General Service Conference and the future of A.A. on an international basis in the British Isles is perhaps going to rest in one body which perhaps in the first instance would not be truly representative, and would be contrary to the way things developed in America. Now, I am somewhat radical when it comes to following the lead of America, but I do suggest that there is a compromise here between the recommendations of the two Committees.

A great deal of hot air was expelled yesterday and many people became hoarse on Committee 2, and I think it is true to say that unanimously in the end there was seen to be the need for three separate committees dealing with the specific fields that John outlined, particularly that of finance. My colleague from, Scotland who was on the same committee has already raised the voice in opposition. I don't think that Committee 3's recommendations do much to provide for the international framework that this Conference is all about. I believe that Scotland, Northern and Southern Ireland, England and Wales should come together, truly representative at this point in time.

May I perhaps suggest constructively that rather than have one central committee responsible to the Conference through the Board, there should be perhaps three committees responsible through the Board to the General Service Conference, and in this way you will ensure that all those things which have gone wrong in the past because of one central committee control, and not enough people applying their talents to particular problems, don't arise in the future.

Chairman. I think you have a valid point here. Your mind works in a very similar way to mine I think, and this is what I thought about in bed last night; but we have got to remember that the danger you envisage is a danger from the past, and one that is scotched by the recommendations of Committee 3 in the sense that the recommendations of the Conference, if passed by a two-thirds majority, shall be binding on the Board. The Board will accept this as being binding for them - that they must observe it - and I don't think that we are in this, whatever we do this morning, committing ourselves irretrievably.

I don't like the mass-production of committees. On the other hand I think that Committee No. 2 had a point here. Sometimes I have found in other fields that if the Finance Committee is separate from the others, it is often more salutary and has a braking effect on sometimes madcap schemes of other committees. I think that there is a valid point here, but at the same time I don't think that there is any grave danger, and I don't see personally any difference so far as representation of the British Isles is concerned in your proposal and the proposal of the Third Committee.

Let us bear in mind that although Scotland and Ireland are remaining autonomous (and we must not forget, for instance, that Eire is only just going to hold in the near future its first sort of intergroup meeting) that they nevertheless will be sending representatives to this Conference from which the whole thing emanates that you need not fear that if the Irish delegates have something to say they won't say it - that they will sit like shy flowers in the background. I think that we have got to respect their desire to stay autonomous until..... I think they are very humble about this. I tend to think of Scotland as being a sort of Shangri-la and Ireland even more, in A.A. Actually I think you will find that they are very humble indeed, and feel their own inadequacies, and it is from a sense of this very largely that they wish at the moment to remain autonomous.

If I am mistaking something here, I hope that both Ireland and Scotland will correct me very quickly. But I don't see this as a danger. It is one that I myself have considered overnight. Have you anything to add there, Ronald?

Chairman of Committee 3 I think it would be good to hear the voices of both Ireland and Scotland. I would just like to comment on one point in what Bill K. said which I thought was very constructive. This change, this utilization of the General Service Board as the executive body responsible for the services, is passing the authority not to the Board but to **this Conference**, and this was the point of my reading out initially the aims and objects of this Conference as enunciated three years ago. What this means is that this Conference, at which we are here present, is increasing in its authority, and it is utilizing the vehicle of the Board to carry its wishes into effect. Now this is not to increase the power of the Board. It is something which does precisely the reverse. The Conference becomes the policymaking body, and it asks the Board to carry its ideas into effect. This, I think is a reversal of all previous practice here, but not of all previous objects.

Joey A. I agree very much with what Bill said. I am a bit worried about the working of this Services Committee and the Board. I was on Committee 2, but after hearing the findings of Committee 3 I find this is certainly more attractive because, as you say, the machinery is there. But the only thing that worries me is with regard to the Services Committee. I agree with Bill, I don't think you can load all these things on to one committee. I think you would have to think of splitting it off into sections.

The other thing that worries me a bit is when Ronald says that no member of the Board will sit on that Committee. Now these chores are done mainly by the Committee of which I am the present Chairman. It is a difficult enough job, but I think we would find it even more

difficult if any decision we came to had then to be reported to the Board, sat on by the Board, explained to the Board, who had not been present at any of the discussions, and perhaps thrown out, and especially if the Board had the same difficulty in convening their meetings as they have had in the past. It would put everything off. You would have to have, I think, the Board and that Committee meeting together, and perhaps more frequent Board meetings than they have ever had before if they are really going to be an executive body and not just people like the Russians, saying yes or no without reason.

Chairman, Obviously, and I think this is the major snag, whatever we decide this morning has to go to the Board for ratification. I tried in arranging committees to put a fair representation of the Board on to Committee 3, of course. This was a sensible thing to do, but it was not the Board. It was only representatives there as individual members of Committee No. 3. And obviously whatever this Conference decides this morning must go to them for this meeting they are having on the 4th January in two months' time. But is it possible that we could put forward what Joey has just said because obviously it is a perfectly valid point and obviously it has come out from several members in the room this morning that there should be an actual member of the General Service Board who sits on this Committee when the Committee is eventually formed?

Chairman of Committee 3 I think this is a very, very good suggestion. I can't at this stage..... I am merely the Chairman of yesterday's Committee reporting what the Committee has decided.... and I can't get the opinion of twenty members of the Committee now. What I would suggest is that if these proposals are adopted in principle this, and probably many other points, be noted and discussed as additional items to be included and to be settled on the 4th January meeting. If we have the framework set up, these other matters can be talked into it.

Chairman I wonder if Lil would feel qualified to speak for Scotland on the previous point of this autonomy?

Lil A.. I would rather leave it to Angus.

Angus McP. May I thank you for the kind remarks from a Yorkshireman about humility. Actually I think this is a slip. I think perhaps we are not quite as humble as you think we are! We should like to remind the Conference that Scotland has only one-tenth of the population of England, and yet I think you have roughly speaking only three times the number of Groups we have in Scotland, so in fact proportionately we have a far greater number of Groups than you have in England and Wales.

We have been having a very brief discussion just now and talking about this, and I feel very strongly that we should be in on this General Services Committee despite what was said by our members yesterday. We haven't a clue who should be on it, or what part we should play in it, but we would very much like to be in on it, and we want very much to be part of this as a United Kingdom or Great Britain movement of Alcoholics Anonymous; and I hope that you will keep a place for us, and we will try to produce somebody for this meeting, either John, who is already a member of the General Service Board, or somebody else. (Considerable applause here).

Chairman Thank you very much indeed. I think John wishes to say something.

Chairman of Committee 2 I will try - as humbly as possible! I think the first point I would like to make is that obviously the Scotsmen on our Committee were a bit more with this idea of

coming in at this stage than might have been the case with Committee 3. I don't know - but Angus has put the point perfectly clearly as he put it to us yesterday, and I would think that probably the members of Committee 2 would agree with me when I say that our feeling is really that whether or not they remain autonomous in any particular field doesn't matter. If they feel able to take part in the deliberations of any committee then obviously their contributions are going to be extremely valuable. We cannot fail to get benefit from them.

And a second point occurs to me, too, even if they may not at this stage be actively integrated in everything, nevertheless by taking part in this Committee or these Committees, whichever it may be, they are obviously going to hasten the day when that integration does take place, simply by taking part and seeing how it is done within the Fellowship in England and Wales.

The other point is in regard to this committee. We felt very strongly that one committee would inevitably get bogged down with too many things to handle. It was at first discussed as five committees and we telescoped it into three. It was considered whether finance should be a separate function and there were advocates strongly in favour 'of a separate committee dealing with it, and it was unanimously agreed in the end that this should be so. The only other danger I feel with one big committee is that it will cover a wide range. Would it be able to do its job? The thought occurred to me a moment ago, "Is one in fact creating an A. & G.R.C. under a different name?" That I think is a big danger. You could well do just that. Our brief was "Co-ordination and Communication". There is a question of what is going to be the communication between Board level and the Intergroup and down to the grass roots. (I am a grass root. O.K. Probably grown in a hop yard!) Nevertheless this is a point I think we have got to decide. Is this one committee simply an A. & G.R.C. under a different name, and are we giving it too much to do?

Chairman. Could the Irish delegates please tell us in the way the Scots have done what they would wish. Jim from Northern Ireland, please.

Jim S. In the deliberations of Committee 3 yesterday the intention I believe at that time was that the Services Committee would possibly appoint a sub-committee, and that the Services Committee would be to all intents and purposes actively engaged in the direction of affairs of the Central Service Office. At this stage in Ireland we are in the process of integrating the entire country in A.A., and we are not too sure what we are trying to do as yet. We would perhaps I feel be very happy to continue to be members of this Conference and we would also be very pleased to continue as observers. At this stage I would feel that we are not qualified to take part in the direction of your internal affairs, but in no way would we become separatist. In no way would we wish to remain a race apart. We would at all times be happy and indeed more than happy to become part of A.A. in the British Isles, but at the moment I feel that in all our interests it would be better if we remained at this stage as members of the Conference but autonomous in our own affairs.

Chairman May I take it that that applies to Eire as well?  
An Irish voice (Signified assent - but quite inaudible).

Chairman of Committee 3: I was going to suggest that as regards Scotland and Ireland we take a certain course. Jim has clarified very precisely the situation with Ireland and the possibility of Northern Ireland and Eire acting as one, and there is nothing at all of course we can add to that. As regards Scotland, what I was going to suggest was that if the Scottish representatives could consult with their friends in Scotland and advise the Chairman of this Conference of their views



on representation, so that we have these in good time before the 4th January meeting, then of course I, and I am sure the whole of the England and Wales section of this Conference, would gladly fall in with whatever they want to do. The suggestion that they might remain autonomous came from one of the representatives at the meeting yesterday, and this was only for the purpose of services. In other words, he felt that they would prefer to carry on their existing services in Scotland rather than become involved in No. 11 Redcliffe Gardens, and this I think is a matter entirely for Scotland to decide, and we would go with whatever they wanted.

Chairman: Thank you. I think there is only time now for two more speeches from the Floor, then it will be 11 o'clock, and then we shall have to come to our decision.

Alec F: (Quite inaudible. Something to do with sub-division of the Services Committee, and the A.A. Publishing Co.,)

Travers C: As regards the balance on the Committee, Ronald did mention London, but it was made quite clear yesterday that it was availability to attend meetings in London. There was no restriction on members of this Committee, but it was just availability to attend meetings regularly and obtaining continuity. Ronald also mentioned that the decision of the Committee was that a two-thirds majority of the Conference would be binding on the Board, except where the Board was bound by law to certain other commitments, and I would like to make it quite clear to this Conference that this also obtained in America according to the Third Legacy Manual, and they have a special reference to the Board in the State of New York, so there is nothing unusual in that.

John made the remark earlier that the Third Committee's proposals were radical and astonishing proposals. Personally they are not in my own view, because very closely in our Committee yesterday and without dissension we followed the Third Legacy Manual, and by sticking to the book we were able to do our job very simply, and I hope quite competently, in a very short time. Every point that was covered yesterday came from the Third Legacy Manual. It was nothing fresh. It was just our interpretation of how we might adapt it to this country.

We discussed the Board, rotation, accenting for our Committee the irreversible letter of resignation, that short rotation was a good thing. It all came from the Third Legacy Manual, and that was why we came so close together because we stuck by the book.

Female voice Asking if there were enough committee members on the Services Committee to do all the work required.

Chairman of Committee 3 This is of prime importance of course, the composition of this Committee will to a very large extent determine how efficiently it works. We will assume they are part timers and are earning their living during the day. Their selection must be done very, very carefully. They must be people who are either in London or easily accessible to London as regards those who are carrying out the job. We felt in addition there should be full regional representation for periodic meetings so that their voice is heard in London. You are entirely right. This Committee will be of tremendous importance. They will have to be appointed when these proposals are adopted, and this is something that would have to be done between the 4th January and the Spring meeting of this Conference. Their selection is of tremendous importance.

A Male voice Asking if there would be provision for co-option in the event of a matter of direct interest or particular interest.

Chairman of Committee 3 I should say so. This is one of the things we should have to work on.

(Interval for Two Minutes Silence - Remembrance Sunday)

Chairman We have a proposer to the proposition and a seconder to that proposition but I know that it has been the boast of the Board that never have their had to take a vote, and quite sincerely I think this morning that we don't need to take a vote either on the acceptance of the findings of Committee 3. If by any chance I am not versed in the beliefs of any member present, then I hope that member will tell me so now. Otherwise I shall assume that we are of one accord in accepting the recommendations of Committee No. 3. If anyone would like to object, please do so, and don't be shy about it.

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NO TAPED RECORD OF THE REST OF THIS MEETING AND SO THE REMAINDER OF THE REPORT HAS BEEN COMIPILED BY THE CHAIRMAN FROM HIS MEMORY AND THE NOTES HE MADE.

After a little further discussion, the Conference approved the adoption of Committee 3's Report, and elected the following members of the Conference to meet the G.S.B. and the A. & G.R.C. representatives on 4th January 1969 at 2.30 pm. at 11 Redcliffe Gardens:

Bill K. of Merseyside	John H. Chairman of the Conference
Ronnie H., General Purposes Committee	Travers C. South West.
Angus of Scotland	John C. Secretary of A.&G.R.C. and Chairman of Committee 2.

This makes six representatives, not five, as suggested by the report of Committee 3, but Ronald L. said that it had been understood that the Chairman of Conference would, more or less ex officio, sit with the meeting.

The Inquiry Group proposed by Committee 1 to study the question of Anonymity, comprised the following:

Joan B., Conference Committee	Bill H. General Service Board
Alec F., Southern Intergroup	Wick
Peter W., Prison Intergroup	Eddie, Glasgow Intergroup

The Chairman then summed up the proceedings, stressing the great step forward that the Conference had taken this weekend. Members naturally were always afraid of oligarchy, but he could not see that there was any danger of that in this case, since built-in safeguards were provided by the voice of the Annual Conference.

We must avoid the pit that Amos warned his contemporaries of, the clanger of substituting ritual for right living. A.A. was not a question of organisation, but of the help we could give to our follow men. There must, however, be some minimum organisation, if we were to serve in the most productive way; Committee 3's proposals sought to provide that organisation.

He hoped that this weekend had routed the enemy of complacency. At least, it had seen the child conference weaned and beginning to walk. Nothing worth having, and sobriety is what we seek, is easy of achievement. Mistakes would be made, but we must go forward in faith and trust, humble enough to recognise our own limitations and our potentialities. Our principles

remain the same, but there may be need to change our approach to organisation. If we can keep our faith and trust, then we shall win through, and the words of Arthur Hugh Clough will be ours:

“Say not, the struggle naught availeth,  
The labour and the wounds are vain,  
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
And as things have been, they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;  
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,  
Your comrades chase e’en now the fliers,  
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in the main.

And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light;  
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look, the land is bright”.

The Conference then closed with a non-business meeting, at which Gordon W. took the Chair, and Kathy H. was the speaker.

Central Service Office  
11 Redcliffe Gardens  
London SW10

**FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**  
**9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> May 1969**

The FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE was held in Manchester this last weekend, and it was felt essential that all members of the Fellowship should know its outline, as soon as possible, exactly what it did.

1 It resolved, with only one abstention, to adopt the report prepared by the General Service Board as the outline plan for building for the future, bearing in mind the recommendations of Committee 2 at the 3<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference where appropriate.

Accordingly, the services of AA including CSO, the "News Letter", and the Development Committee, will fall under the responsibility of the General Service Board, who will report annually to the Conference.

2 It approved the report on anonymity submitted by the Inquiry Group set up by the 3<sup>rd</sup> GSC in 1968 by 34 votes to 8. (The GSB took note of this, so that they could approach the authorities of the public media concerned.)

3 It examined the question of attendance at the next General Service Conference, since several of the present representatives are approaching the end of their term of office. The Conference felt it essential that strong continuity be maintained at the 5<sup>th</sup> GSC to observe the working out of the adoption of the report mentioned in item 1.

It was agreed, therefore, that where an area or Intergroup had sent only one representative this year, it would be advisable for that same representative to attend the Fifth General Service Conference. However, where an area or Intergroup had more than one representative attending this year, then one new representative should replace a retiring member next year, and in the same manner the desired rotation would get under way, at the same time maintaining the desired continuity.

4 The Conference Committee was increased by one, making nine members, plus the Secretary of CSO. (This will allow three members to retire each year, and thus assure steady rotation.) John H. retired as Chairman, and the Committee now comprises the following:-

Lil A	Scotland
Nel	Southern Intergroup
Gordon W	Chairman, A & GRC
John C	Secretary, A & GRC
One Alcoholic Member of the GSB	
One Non-Alcoholic Member of the GSB	
Bill S	Manchester
Maurice	York Intergroup
Ronnie H	Inter Prison Intergroup

This Committee elected Gordon W., as their Chairman.

5 The Fifth General Service Conference will be held at the Midland Hotel, Manchester on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1970.

It was resolved by the Fourth General Service Conference meeting in Manchester on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1969, with only one abstention, to adopt the report as prepared by the General Service Board as the outline plan for building for the future, bearing in mind the recommendations of Committee 2 where appropriate.

Accordingly, the services of AA, including CSO, the "News Letter", and the Development Committee, will fall under the responsibility of the General Service Board, who will report annually to the Conference.

### **REPORT MADE TO THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE AT MANCHESTER ON MAY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 1969 BY THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD**

1 Before going on to more detailed considerations of what the Board proposes to do with the concurrence and support of the General Service Conference it might be well to consider something written by Bill W. which may be said to be applicable.

"Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be heresy against 'one day at a time'. But that valuable principle really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow on to a fatuous idea of providence. God's real providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capacity for foresight, and he evidently expects us to use it. Of course, we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think about it at all".

2 In taking action to carry out the wishes of the fellowship as outlined in the reports of Committees No. 3 and No. 2 at the 1968 General Service Conference the Board will expect complete freedom to act as it thinks best at any time, any miscalculations being fully discussed at the next General Service Conference. In this case if found necessary a majority vote of the Conference (all present voting) will be binding on the Board provided the action is lawful. "Of course, it cannot be too often said that while the Conference can issue orders to the GSB, it can never mandate or govern the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves. The Conference represents us, but cannot rule us".

3 The Nominating Committee of the Board will draft, and cause to be sent out, a letter to all Intergroups calling for names for consideration by the Board for various services. Letters will be sent out on May 22<sup>nd</sup> calling for names to be in by June 29<sup>th</sup>. All Intergroups will be asked to produce at least one name for each appointment.

4 Names called for will be two alcoholic members for the Board, six members for the Services Committee, and three members for the News Letter Committee. Since there are many experienced members serving on numerous committees and sub-committees and the work of the change over must go forward as smoothly as possible, it is suggested that all serving members of committees and sub-committees are available (if willing) to be put up by their respective Intergroups for possible selection by the Board.

5 The Nominating Committee will consider the names, taking regional representation into account, and put forward their suggestions to the Board in July.

6 The Board will approve and co-opt, from those recommended, alcoholic members who may be nominated to be full members of the Board after the General Service Conference in 1970, to serve for six years.

7 The Board will approve and appoint the members of the Services Committee and the Newsletter Committee, who will start to function on a date in September to be arranged mutually between the Board and the Chairman of the A&GRC and the General Purposes Committee.

8 The Services Committee may well be confined to members from England and Wales if the other recipients of the letter mentioned in Para 3 consider distance too great a barrier to allow participation. The duties of the Services Committee will include responsibility for the running of the General Service Office in close co-operation with the relevant standing committees of the Board. The Services Committee, with the agreement of the relevant standing Committee of the Board, will also be free to co-opt as many members for special functions as it may consider necessary, but the voting strength in committee will be the six members nominated by the Board. The Services Committee will elect their own Chairman.

9 Prior to the agreed date in September the A&GRC will arrange to close down with all and any of its sub-committees. The Board will offer every possible help to London Intergroup to make a success of their new office, and their spiritual work in helping the still suffering alcoholic in the London area.

10 It will be seen from the foregoing that the Board will be assuming the responsibility placed upon it by the Conference from the agreed date in September mentioned in Para 7. The successful carrying out of these important changes in the structure of AA in the UK will be finally reviewed at the General Service Conference in 1970 when any alterations or amendments can be made in the light of six months operations.

11 Since the real responsibility for AA in the UK lies with the Groups, through their Intergroups and their delegates to the Annual General Service Conference; it follows that groups must take their financial responsibilities very seriously. It is hoped that all delegates will impress upon their Intergroups and Group GSRs the great importance of insuring that there is no possibility of a financial breakdown in these vital services of the fellowship to the still suffering Alcoholic in these islands.

**REPORT OF THE INQUIRY SET UP BY THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE  
1968 TO LOOK INTO THE SUBJECT OF ANONYMITY WITH PARTICULAR  
REFERENCE TO PUBLIC MEDIA, INCLUDING TELEVISION**

The Inquiry Group met, discussed and unanimously agreed to the following:

- 1 That television as a medium is not considered suitable for portrayal of members of Alcoholics Anonymous, either full face, profile, silhouette or in the shadows.
- 2 Recommends that the General Service Board be requested to notify all Television Authorities of this decision, giving them an adequate explanation based on Alcoholics Anonymous Traditions and requesting their co-operation in observing their viewpoint. We should, however, offer our co-operation in the production of professional plays or films which may deal with Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 3 Also recommends that the BBC in respect of sound broadcasting, and the National Press Council, in respect of press reporting, should again be reminded of our Tradition of Anonymity.
- 4 That any article or sound programme which warrants any professional fee shall not be entertained by Alcoholics Anonymous. No member, acting as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, who co-operates in the production of an article in the Press, on BBC or on Television shall personally benefit from any fee.

13<sup>th</sup> December, 1968

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CONFERENCE 1970

**REPORT ON  
FIFTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE  
HELD AT MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER  
9th 10th, 11th, APRIL 1970.**

SYNOPSIS OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE MAIN SESSIONS.

Friday 10th April 1970.

1. The Conference Chairman, Gordon W. opened the Conference at 9:20 a.m. by welcoming the Delegates to the Fifth General Service Conference. He gave apologies for Gordon Fowler and Bill H. of the General Service Board who were unable to attend. Apropos Bill H's absence, Gordon had hoped Bill would have chaired the Friday night session, which would have given the Conference the two retiring members - Bill and Alan D - together on their last official function. Gordon also announced Alan G. (Cymraeg I.G.) and John G. (Scotland) as additional delegates and that Harry T. would not be present.

Gordon then read out a telegram from Hugh McK. of the Guildford Group giving best wishes for the Conference deliberations.

The list of delegates has been given on Page 2 of this Report.

2. Alan B of the General Service Board then related his experiences in attending the First World Service Meeting. He pointed out that reports on this Meeting had already appeared in the January editions of the Newsletter and The Roundabout and in the December 1969 issue of Box 4-5-9 (the G.S.O. New York News Pamphlet).

He considered that the meeting was most worthwhile and read out to the assembly the advisory actions resulting from this Conference. These are stated in full in appendix 'A' to this report.

One of the suggestions from the World Service Meeting was for Group Secretaries to tell their Members that besides having to pay for rent and refreshments regular contributions to Intergroups and General Service Office were required and such contributions should be regarded as a regular commitment in the same category as rent etc. when considering Group expenses.

He thought that the statement by Andries K. a Delegate from South Africa was particularly worthy of mention who said he had come to honour a man "who heard a voice, and also heard a call, and who went and talked to another man, and then went on until finally another man spoke to me, and tonight I stand before you sober, and for that I am extremely grateful".

The Dinner given by A.A. for Bill W's 35th Anniversary was a most moving experience, particularly the candlelight ceremony.

Wick, who also attended this meeting augmented Alan B's report with particular reference to the visit made to the General Service Office at 305, East 45th Street, New York where delegates were given a complete tour around this facility. He was most impressed with the organisation and the enthusiasm of the Staff employed who totalled some fifty-five.

3. Gordon W. then gave the general background and build up of the General Service Conference activities in the United Kingdom, commencing with the lead in into the 1st exploratory Conference in 1966 and the main events concerning the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, Conferences held on 1967/8/9.



Appendix 'B' covers the foregoing in detail, the highlights being:-

The First Conference held at the end of October 1966 was exploratory, aimed at, establishing the Conference and thus furthering the aims and ideas of the Fellowship in Recovery - Unity - Service. The Second Conference followed in November 1967, but while these two Conferences were of great value, they failed to the extent that they had no authority (nor was it clear who ultimately had such authority) to implement the recommendations emanating from them.

This was remedied by the Third Conference, held in November 1968. Which accepted upon itself the responsibility involved against the background that the General Service Board would be responsible to the Conference for actual implementation. Other features of the Third Conference were recommendations that the A. & G.R.C. and all its sub-committees be dissolved, with the General Service Board assuming, through a Services Committee to be appointed by it, responsibility for the General Service Office, the News Letter and Development.

The Fourth Conference, held in May 1969 accepted the Board's proposals for implementing the foregoing; and this Fifth Conference will receive reports from the Board and the Services Committee on progress since made in giving affect to these proposals.

Evening Session finished at 10.30 p.m.

Saturday 11th April 1970.

4. Gordon W. Chairman, opened the Saturday morning session at 9.7 a.m. by giving further apologies for the absence of Dr. James Valentine and Ronald L. of the General Service Board. He regretted his omission in not giving those apologies at the opening session on the previous day.

5. The report of the General Service Board to the Conference was then given by Wick. The full report is attached at Appendix 'C'.

Bill K. Merseyside stated he thought it was wrong that a person such as himself who was professionally engaged in work with Alcoholics should be disallowed from selection for the Services Committee or the General Service Board.

Wick of General Service Board gave clear reasons for their decision which was based essentially on the traditions of the Fellowship and on past adverse experiences. Bill K. appreciated Wick's very frank answers and Gordon W. said this subject would be raised as an additional item for deliberation by Committee No. 2. Peter K. (Southern I.G.) stated that the Intergroups did not necessarily represent the majority feeling of groups within an Intergroup and the Conference did not, in his opinion, give adequate means of expressing individual Group wishes.

Gordon W. replied that this matter would be considered in Committee No. 2 and as Peter himself was sitting on that Committee he should raise the matter again during their discussions.

After further discussions including some comments on the lack of representation on the Services Committee by anyone from the Merseyside area and the urgent requirement for further non-alcoholic members of the Board, Patrick F. of London Intergroup proposed the report as read be accepted. - This was seconded by John C. of Manchester and agreed unanimously.

6. Gordon W. read a letter from James Valentine of the General Service Board proposing that Bill H. and Alan B. on their retirement from active service on the Board be made "Honorary Life Trustees" in order that their valuable experience not be lost completely to the Fellowship. It was clear from the ensuing discussion that this proposal did not meet with general approval. Alan B. then said he appreciated the good intent in this proposal but he would have to decline in any case. He thought in saying this he would also be reflecting the wishes of Bill H. He would

always regard himself as being on “Stand By” should his assistance or counsel be required. It was then generally agreed to let the matter rest in this way.

7. Douglas B. then presented the Services Committee report which had been in the hands of the Delegates for some week or ten days prior to the Conference In doing so he gave some background in connection with the activities of this Committee and in particular the proposed organisational changes considered necessary, and the importance of improving ‘Communications’.

## **COMMITTEE NO.2.**

### **“STRUCTURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP” GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

With a view to the preparation of a Code of Guidance the Committee is asked to consider the following relevant questions.

1. What should be the composition of the Conference?
  - 1 Inter Groups.
  - 2 Other bodies within the British Isles?
  - 3 Observers from abroad.
2. Rotation of representatives?
3. How should the representatives prepare themselves?
4. Representative’s qualifications
5. What are the functions of the Conference?
6. How should the returning representatives report back to their respective bodies?
7. Should we rotate the location of the Conference?
- 8 Means of implementation of Conference recommendations?
- 9 Conference Committee
- 10 Service of A.A. Committees by “Professionals
11. Conference Finances.

## **COMMITTEE NO. 3.**

### **“FINANCE AND FUND RAISING”**

The Committee will receive, consider, and if thought fit recommend that Conference approve the Accounts for 1969, and itemised budgets for the current year of the General Service Board and the Service Office.

Consider the estimated cost of operating:-

- 1 A Group
- 2 An Inter Group.

The Committee is asked to recommend ways and means of raising the necessary funds to meet the finances of the various services of the Fellowship.

## COMMITTEE NO 4

### “COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE FELLOWSHIP”

1. Within the Fellowship
  1. What should be the chain of communications?
  2. The preparation of a Structural Chart?
  3. Detail main duties and responsibilities of the various bodies shown on the Structural Chart, bringing out the means of communication.
  4. How is the voice of the Group Member heard?
  5. What greater use could be made of ‘Intercom’ as a means of passing information and stimulating interest to and from all bodies?
2. Outside the Fellowship
  1. What should be done to improve and extend the contact and co-operation with outside bodies at General Service Board, Intergroup and Group level?
  2. What means could be developed for passing of A.A. information to the general public?

11. John M. of the General Service Board was Chairman of the Saturday evening session and received reports from:

Scotland See Appendix ‘E’

Prison I.G See Appendix ‘F’

News Letter See Appendix ‘G’

and discussed other matters raised by Intergroups.

Unfortunately Douglas B. who was acting as Secretary to the Conference was not able to be present at this session due to the deliberation of Committee No. 3. on which he was sitting, continuing late into the night. However, it is understood it was clearly the wish of the Delegates that a similar session be included in future Conferences as it was found most instructive and useful.

There were certain criticisms levelled at the News Letter mainly dealing with their treatment on articles concerning the ‘Higher Power’. Both News Letter and Prison I.G. delegates reporting expressed the wish that consideration be given in the Office Service Organisation for administrative assistance to them. Apparently this had been promised two years ago but not fulfilled. A request was made could a member of the Services Committee have special responsibility for Prisons.

12 Gordon W. Conference Chairman opened the Sunday morning session at 9:25 am. asking the Chairman of the four working Committees to present their reports. (These reports are given in full in Appendix ‘H’).

13 Maurice S. (York I.G.) Chairman of Committee No. 1. then read his report. Maurice stated that the Committee’s report was put forward for adoption in its entirety as the subject matter under discussion by his Committee did not, in their opinion, lead to firm resolutions. The

subsequent discussion of this report centred mostly around the first paragraph in which they suggested the ideal size for a group was fifteen members and that more than this might tend to defeat the group purpose and the logical development would be for another group to be formed. Maurice S. stressed that the Committees statement purely suggested that fifteen members **might** tend to defeat the group purpose. He agreed that in some cases particularly in the large cities and towns bigger groups are to be expected. He further agreed that people attended larger groups because they liked going there and in some cases ‘splinter’ groups failed. It was then proposed by George G. of Scotland that this report be adopted. This was seconded by Alan C (Cymraeg) and carried unanimously.

14 John H. (G.S.B) Chairman of Committee No. 2 then gave his report. In the ensuing discussion Peter S. (S.I.G.) expressed his concern at the apparent defranchising of group opinion. Bill (S.W.I.G) was concerned that the re-election annually of Intergroup delegates could result in the lack of continuity.

Wick, General Service Board expressed his concern with regard to the recommendations regarding the Conference Committee. This would be an additional task on the Board which is already heavily committed in implementing the structural re-organisation which had come about from the charge placed on them by the previous Conference. However, with the proviso that the Board had the prerogative to report back saying that certain charges placed on them were not possible for good reasons he was prepared to accept the resolution.

Douglas B. thought that the additional workload placed on the General Service Office in connection with the implementing and recommendations for handling the next Conference should not present an impossible task. He pointed out that the Services Committee had the power of co-option of additional members for specific functions. He thought the preparation for the next Conference might be handled in this way.

Bill K (Merseyside) whilst not agreeing personally with the recommendation regarding the Service of A.A. Committees by ‘Professionals’ nevertheless proposed that the resolutions put forward in Committee No. 2. report be adopted. This was seconded by Bill (S.W.I.G.) and carried unanimously.

15. John C (Conference Committee) Chairman of Committee No. 3 then gave his report saying that he had found the task difficult mainly due to the lack of information regarding G.S.B. income from the operation of A.A. Publishing Company. Because of this the actual budgeting deficit for 1970 could not be determined with any accuracy. Nevertheless the requirement to raise more funds was quite clear and he strongly recommended urgent action with regard to Paragraph 7 of his Committee’s report. After a brief discussion of certain financial details John H. (G.S.B.) proposed the report and recommendations be accepted and this was seconded by George G. (Scotland). This was carried by 38 votes for to 5 against. (Three delegates abstaining).

16. Ronnie H. (Conference Committee) Chairman of Committee No. 4. then gave his report and he asked that the resolution regarding ‘Communications’ “Outside the Fellowship” be considered first.

Some discussion took place in the light of the suggestion that the Fellowship should examine the possibility of using Television as a means of drawing attention to the benefit of Membership. Bill K. (Merseyside) considered that programmes similar to that which was successfully carried out recently in Los Angeles should be examined and possibly repeated in a similar form in this country. However, it was clearly understood that James C., William D and Colin M. all from

Scotland who served on this Committee were noted in the report as dissenting with the resolution.

John C. proposed that the resolution of the Committee headed "Outside the Fellowship" be adopted. Dorothy W. (Manchester) seconded this proposal which was carried. No delegates present voting against but two delegates abstained. (It should be noted that the Scottish delegates had departed from the Conference at this point in order to catch their train to return home).

After a brief discussion during which the requirement to include Intergroup details in the pamphlet "Where to Find AA" was agreed, Patrick L. (L.I.G) proposed the resolution concerning communications "Within The Fellowship" be adopted. This was seconded by Alan (Cymraeg) and carried unanimously.

17. Gordon W. Conference Chairman then called for nominations for the next Conference Chairman resulting from the adoption of the resolutions of Committee No. 2. It was proposed by Patrick L. that Patrick F. of London Intergroup be the next Conference Chairman, this was seconded by Wick and carried unanimously.

18. Gordon W. stated that "it was regrettable that time had not been on our side, consequently some of the proceedings of the morning had had to be rushed and perhaps full justice had not been done to the reports presented and the discussions following thereon. Conference time was up so he did not propose to sum up the Conference proceedings but a full report would be issued within the next few weeks. He wished to thank all Chairmen of Committees, their Secretaries, and indeed all delegates for their excellent work, co-operation and contributions which he was sure would go a long way in meeting the objective of the Conference "Consolidation for a Better Service" following the recommendations of the General Services Conference in 1968 and implementations made by the G.S.B. and Services Committee.

Wick mentioned the absence through ill health of Maurice Rena. All members of the Conference regretted this and wished him a speedy return to health. Gordon W. agreed that he would write to Maurice Rena conveying the good wishes of the Conference.

John H. of G.S.B. expressed the appreciation of the work by Gordon W. as Chairman of the Conference and his Committee which had helped greatly in making the Conference a success. Those feelings were unanimously endorsed by the assembly.

19. It was agreed that the next Conference should be held in Manchester on 16/17/18 April 1971. (Secretarial Note:- In view of the charge given to the GSO in Appendix H at Para G on page 5 and Para 1(e) on page 6 this date must be regarded as being only tentative. A subsequent check with the Midland Hotel has shown these dates to be impossible as far as that Hotel is concerned, but the following weekend 23/24/25 April is available and a provisional booking for this has been made verbally. All concerned will be notified of the firm date and place of the next Conference as soon as the necessary investigations have been completed.)

The Conference closed at approximately 12:55 pm.

APP A.

### **ADVISORY ACTIONS**

Delegates at the final session of the World Service Meeting considered six points regarding the future of the World Service Meeting. At this time, however, it was noted that the delegates could only voice their opinions on these matters. Final approval must come from the General Service Boards and Offices to which they are responsible.

1 It was unanimously agreed that the first World Service Meeting was worthwhile, and delegates approved the idea of holding future meetings.

2. A large majority of delegates approved having the next meeting in three years although some were in favour of two or four years.

3 Delegates were in substantial agreement that expenses of the next meeting should be shared on a more equitable basis, if possible.

4. New York was the unanimous choice for the site of the World Service Meeting, although it was agreed that future proceedings should be held in other areas of the world when it becomes feasible.

5. The principle of rotation regarding the election of delegates to future meetings was accepted. However, it was noted that each country will determine the method of election or appointment of its own delegates. It was suggested that new delegates might be elected on a staggered rotation basis.

6 Delegates agreed to the formation of four committees to conduct the business of the World Service Meeting until the next gathering. These were: Policy, Finance, Agenda-Admissions and Literature-Publishing. Delegates agreed that members for these committees would be chosen by lottery

NOTE: (a) These advisory actions were agreed by GSB of AA New York at their meeting on 12th October 1969

(b) At a meeting of the GSB of A.A. (Great Britain & Ireland) Ltd. on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1970 these advisory actions were also approved and it was further agreed we should be represented at the next World Service Meeting in 1972.

## **BACKGROUND AND BUILD UP OF GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

The very first Conference was held in this hotel at the end of October 1966 and was opened by Maurice Rena Chairman of the General Service Board, who unfortunately because of ill-health cannot be with us but sends to all colleagues and delegates his very best wishes for a successful Conference. In his opening remarks at the first Conference he outlined the purpose of the get-together. It was to be recognised as an exploratory experiment.

It was hoped to establish the Conference and so further the aims and ideals of the Fellowship -in Recovery -Unity -Service, and to ensure the healthy growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering close ties and greater co-operation throughout the British Isles. A blessing was received in a message of goodwill from Dr John L. Norris, Chairman of the American General Service.

It is good to know that you are planning a General Service Conference in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. I am sure you will find that this will bring considerable new life and vitality in AA and provide stability and the general character of AA throughout the area which the Conference serves, certainly this has been our experience. I suspect that it may in addition ease the amount of work that your General Service Office has to do in providing services which the Groups will use - So congratulations and best wishes.

Cordially yours    John L Norris MD

How right both Maurice Rena and John L Norris were in their objectives and predictions. We have gone some way since then.

The pattern of the first Conference was much the same as those that have followed. – Reports from GSB, Scotland, Northern Ireland, England & Wales, and Prisons – Discussion and Growth in AA, AA. in Industry & Letting People Know and concluded with a full discussion on Our Conference & Its Future - Chaired by John H. On this the General Service Conference has been built and we owe an awful lot to John H. for his inspiration, thought and guidance in the Conference Build up. -Really I think the Conference has been John H's Brain Child.

The Second Conference followed in November 1967 and the theme was 'MOVING AHEAD – OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRESS'.

These two Conferences proved to be of great value but they failed in their objectives because they could merely recommend and had no authority to implement the recommendation, nor was it clear who ultimately had this responsibility.

The Third Conference held in November 1968 set about determining the responsibility, the theme was 'A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY'. In this there were three items for consideration:

- (a) The Responsibility of the Individual and the Group.
- (b) Communication and co-operation among Groups in the Service of the Fellowship.
- (c) Shared Services.

The findings of the three constituted Committees of the Conference were accepted unanimously.

A Special Committee was set-up to implement the proposals of Committee 1 on Anonymity and following the reports of Committees 2 & 3 the Conference finally accepted the responsibility upon itself, following that pattern described in the Third Legacy Manual and adopted in America; and the Report on Shared Services along with certain items of Committee 2 were taken as the basis on which to build for the future.

Report of Committee 3, because it was from this that the build up has developed. The relevant passage was:

“It was agreed, that a General Service Conference, representative of AA throughout the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland should be set up. This would bring together the G.S.B. and the Intergroups and Groups throughout England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales and provide the means of sharing experience and ideas.

In this way the Conference would hope to further the aims and ideals of AA, namely Recovery, Unity and Service, and ensure the healthy growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering closer ties and greater co-operation throughout these islands”

“It was also noted that the primary purpose of the G.S.B. is to safeguard the twelve traditions to assume such legal responsibilities as are required for the good of AA and to provide a thread of continuity and stability in the affairs of AA by nature of its constitution and by the inclusion in its membership of non-alcoholic members.

There was a consensus of opinion, after very thorough discussion, that there is an overlapping of functions between the three bodies, G.S.B., GSO and A & GRC and a lack of clarity in their responsibilities, which together build up frustrations so serious that they quite frequently nullify the efforts of one body or the other.

The Committee was satisfied -and there were no exceptions -that in the short period of its life the Conference had emerged as the proper body to represent the Intergroups through the members elected by them. So far, however, the Conference was without a vehicle through which its wishes and ideas could be put into effect and that this vehicle could be provided only by the GSB.

It was also felt that the Intergroups did not find through the medium of A & GRC an adequate channel for reaching decisions nor for putting them into effect and had great difficulty in obtaining guidance on problems which arise from time to time.

In the functioning of the C.S.O. and the sub-committee structure of the G.P. Committee, the News Letter and Development there was a general untidiness which resulted in waste of effort and discouragement which directly affected the help which we can give to the suffering alcoholic.

To meet these problems it was agreed that a fundamental change in the structure of the bodies in question is necessary, and after consideration of the Third Legacy Manual and the Twelve Concepts the Committee puts forward the following recommendations:



- 1) The A & G.R.C. and all its sub-committees to be dissolved.
- 2) The G.S.B. to become the vehicle through which the proposals of the Conference are implemented and to assume responsibility for the General Service Office, the News Letter and development  
For this purpose a Committee to be appointed by the G.S.B., in consultation with the Conference, to be known as the Services Committee, with regional representation. (The Services Committee would have appropriate sub-committees to deal with Office, News Letter and Development).
- 3) The offices of the G.S.B. and the CSO to be merged. This should produce greater efficiency at a saving in cost.
- 4) A majority decision of the Conference would be taken as a suggestion to the Board, a two-thirds majority decision to be binding, unless it contravened their obligations under Company Law.
- 5) Scotland and N. Ireland to continue to be represented on the Conference, and although at this stage it is their wish to remain autonomous in the conduct of their own affairs full integration to be open to them at such time as they so desire.
- 6) Rotation and election of Board members to follow the recommendations in the memorandum circulated by the Board (Wick' s).
- 7) The officers and composition of the Conference to be elected and rotated as already agreed but the present members to remain for a further year and the rotation provisions to be deferred by this period
- 8) Two further members (alcoholic) of the Board to be considered for appointment during the next few months.
- 9) A committee of the Conference consisting of five members plus the Chairman and Secretary of the A & GRC, the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and the General Service Secretary to meet the Board on Saturday the 4th January 1969 at 2-30 pm. to discuss the implementation of these proposals
- 10) A one-day meeting of the Conference to be held in Manchester in Spring 1969 to initiate the new structure. Thereafter the Conference to be held annually in the Spring.

(It was, of course, to be clearly understood that if these proposals are accepted by the Conference, it will still be necessary for them to be agreed by the General Service Board and by the A & GRC) “

These proposals were accepted and it was then up to the Committee from the Conference to discuss the means for implementing the proposals.

The GSB and A & GRC examined the contents of the reports and duly reported as under their findings at the meeting on 4th January 1969, which was chaired by Ronald L. of the G.S.B. who had been Chairman of Committee 3 at the Third Conference

“Gordon of the A & GRC reported that his Committee was in favour of the adoption of the proposals, but that there were points from Committee 2 that the A & G.R.C. would like to see incorporated in the Programme. Ronald said that the Board, whilst agreeing to accept the responsibility, thought that a take-over period of twelve months was needed, so that Board members could attend meetings of the A & GRC and of the General Purposes Committee, so that they could become completely aware of the present machinery before taking over the running of it. The General Service Board required time in which to find out what was required for the efficient running of the affairs of the Fellowship. The special relationship which existed between London Intergroup and Central Service Office would need special consideration.

To be able to perform all these extra duties, the Board would need to increase its membership with two associate members, John M ex-Chairman of the A & GRC and Hugh McK of Guildford who were available in London and able to give the necessary time. In the next few months, in pursuit of regional representation, the Board would need 3,4 or 5 additional proposals from the different areas of the country.

Until the Board felt itself ready to take over the organisation of the services, the present organisation should continue to function.

Scotland asked to be included fully in the new proposals and asked to have a representative on the new Service Committee.

Ronald said that he proposed to have a full programme for the take-over period to present to the next Conference in Spring.”

This brought us to the Conference hold in May last year at which the G.S.B. presented their proposals for the implementation of the Conference requirement. This was as follows:

### **REPORT TO BE MADE TO THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE AT MANCHESTER ON MAY 10<sup>th</sup> 1969**

1. Before going on to more detailed considerations of what the Board proposes to do with the concurrence and support of the General Service Conference it might be well to consider something written by Bill W which may be said to be applicable.

“Vision is, I think the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be heresy against ‘one day at a time’. But that valuable principle really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow on to a fatuous idea of providence. God’s real providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capacity for foresight, and he evidently expects us to use it. Of course, we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part but that is better than to refuse to think at all.”

2. In taking action to carry out the wishes of the fellowship as outlined in the reports of Committees No. 3 and No. 2 at the 1968 General Service Conference the Board will expect complete freedom to act as it thinks best at the time, any miscalculations being fully discussed at the next General Service Conference. In this case if found necessary a majority vote of the Conference (all present voting) will be a recommendation to the Board, and a two thirds majority will be binding on the Board provided the action proposed is lawful. “Of course, it cannot be too often said that while the Conference can issue orders to the GSB it can never mandate or govern the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves. The Conference represents us but cannot rule us”.

3 The Nominating Committee of the Board will draft, and cause to be sent out, a letter to all Intergroups calling for names for consideration by the Board for various services. Letters will be

sent out on May 22<sup>nd</sup> calling for names to be in by June 29<sup>th</sup>. All Intergroups will be asked to produce at least one name for each appointment.

4 Names called for will be two alcoholic members for the Board, six members for the Services Committee, and three members for the Newsletter Committee. Since there are many experienced members serving on numerous committees and subcommittees and the work of the change over must go forward as smoothly as possible, it is suggested that all serving members of committees and subcommittees are available (if willing) to be put up by their respective Intergroups for possible selection by the Board

5 The Nominating Committee will consider the names, taking regional representation into account, and put forward their suggestions to the Board in July.

6 The Board will approve and co-opt, from those recommended, alcoholic members who may be nominated to be full members of the Board after the General Service Conference in 1970, to serve for six years.

7 The Board will approve and appoint the members of the Services Committee and the Newsletter Committee, who will start to function on a date in September to be arranged mutually between the Board and the Chairman of the A & GRC and the General Purposes Committee.

8 The Services Committee may well be confined to members from England and Wales if the other recipients of the letter mentioned in Para 3 consider distance too great a barrier to allow participation. The duties of the Services Committee will include responsibility for the running of the General Service Office in close co-operation with the relevant standing Committee of the Board. The Services Committee, with the agreement of the relevant standing Committee of the Board, will also be free to co-opt as many Members for special functions as it may consider necessary, but the voting strength in committee will be the six members nominated by the Board. The Services Committee will elect their own Chairman.

9 Prior to the agreed date in September the A & GRC will arrange to close down with all and any of its subcommittees. The Board will offer every possible help to London Intergroup to make a success of their new office, and their spiritual work in helping the still suffering alcoholic in the London area.

10 It will be seen from the foregoing that the Board will be assuming the responsibility placed upon it by the Conference from the agreed date in September mentioned in Para 7. The successful carrying out of these important changes in the structure of AA in the U.K. will be finally reviewed at the General Service Conference in 1970 when any alterations or amendments can be made in the light of six months operations.

11 Since the real responsibility for AA in the U.K. lies with the Groups, through their Intergroups and their delegates to the Annual General Service Conference; it follows that groups must take their financial responsibilities very seriously. It is hoped that all delegates will impress upon their Intergroups and Group GSRs the great importance of insuring that there is no possibility of a financial breakdown in these vital services of the fellowship to the still suffering; alcoholic in these islands.

At the conclusion the Conference resolved:

“With only one abstention, to adopt the report prepared by the General Service Board as the outline plan for building for the future, bearing in mind the recommendations of Committee 2 at the 3rd General Service Conference where appropriate.

Accordingly, the services of AA including CSO, the News Letter and the Development Committee, will fall under the responsibility of the General Service Board, who will report annually to the Conference.

It approved the report on anonymity submitted by the Inquiry Group set up by the 3rd GSC in 1968 by 34 votes to 8. (The GSB took note of this, so that they could approach the authorities of the public media concerned.)

This brings us to this Conference. The GSB and Services Committee will be reporting on progress made in the implementation of the reports accepted at the Conference last May.

The theme of the Conference, as you know, is ‘CONSOLIDATION FOR A BETTER SERVICE’ and it must be appropriate following the requirements from the previous Conferences and what has been done by the GSB and Services Committee since they became operative

As regards the change of Programme for the Conference, I take it as my own responsibility. It was my decision following the strong representations made by both the Board and the Service Committee. It was appreciated that there was much substance in the requests and they could not be dismissed lightly. I consulted John C. and Bill S. and we did contemplate contacting the whole of the Conference Committee for their consideration and ruling. As things turned out such was not made because of shortage of time and also because the more I thought about the matter the clearer I saw the position.

The Conference must be made well aware of the progress made on the decisions taken at the last Conference and the joint meetings that have followed thereon. It was for this reason that I felt it of vital importance that a full understanding is achieved of what has been done and what is being done and that the delegates to the Conference should have a full opportunity of appreciating it, of raising questions on it, and suggesting amendments. The work undertaken by the GSB and the Services Committee must be fully appreciated and understood, and agreed by all that it has been in line with decisions of the last Conference.

The reports from the Board and the Service Committee and the discussions thereon should provide greater objectivity to the subject matter to be studied by the Committees and so help them in their deliberations and formulating resolutions.

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written on the heart of every delegate present. It is NOT just a get together. It is the annual event for reaching important decisions as a result of free discussions and a properly taken vote so that those who don’t have the chance to speak (and not everyone can) do at least have an opportunity to express their views by voting.

If the GSC is to be the policy making body of the Fellowship then we must regularise the procedure to what is correct. -Formulated resolutions and voting made. If we don’t we will leave ourselves wide open to the charge when the decisions made are unpopular with certain people that the decisions are invalid because they have not been properly dealt with procedurally.

Go therefore to your deliberations in Committee - and Good Luck.

## Appendix C

### REPORT OF THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD TO THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE    APRIL 1970

At the 1968 Conference the GSB were asked to take over and run all the AA Services administered from London and at a special 1 day Conference in May, 1969, the Board's plan of action was overwhelmingly approved with no dissent and only one abstention

The present report deals mainly with the steps taken by the Board to carry out the plan and the progress made to date.

We have endeavoured to keep the Fellowship fully informed, step by step, as decisions have been taken and changes made and you will all be aware that four nominations for membership of the Board were unanimously approved by the Board and now await ratification by this Conference.

The new members are:

John H	proposed by	York I.G.
Gordon W	proposed by	Manchester & North Lancs. I.G.
Alec F	proposed by	Southern I.G.
John M	proposed by	London I.G.

In welcoming these new Board members, we nonetheless regret the retirement of our old and valued friends.

Alan B  
& Bill H

These two who have been active in the services of AA for the last 20 years and who were among that small group of five or six people to whom Bill W entrusted the formation of some kind of service structure in those early days, have worked unstintingly to bring about the Service Conference and Service Board that we have today. This has been a long and patient task which lesser men might have much earlier given up under the weight of misunderstanding, criticism and even violent hostility which have so often been their lot.

We believe the full value of their work is now beginning to be realised and as they retire from the active scene, it is our hope that they carry with them the grateful thanks of all of us here.

Before leaving this subject, we would also pay our tribute to the invaluable service given at a time of great need by Hugh McK who agreed to be co-opted to the Board for a year. He was adamant on this point and resigned at the end of last year.

To refresh your memories, I would at this point mention the six members of the Services Committee who were selected at the same time as the new members of the Board:

Douglas B	proposed by	York I.G.
Angus M	proposed by	Scottish I.G.
Bill S	proposed by	Manchester & Nth. Lancs. I.G.
Frank G	proposed by	East Anglia I.G.
James D	proposed by	Manchester & Nth. Lancs. I.G.
Jim H	proposed by	London I.G.

and also the three members of the News Letter committee:

Alex R	proposed by	London I.G.
Stanley J	proposed by	London I.G.

In all these cases, G.S.B. Services Committee and Newsletter Committee, we endeavoured to select and believe we have succeeded in obtaining the most representative, effective and constructive additions available to our Service structure. In making these selections, we tried to combine suitability and availability with the maximum degree of geographic representation.

We may be criticised in some quarters for not having chosen particular nominees but we ask you to believe that our only concern was to put together committees that could work effectively and meet sufficiently regularly without undue hardship or cost and without conflict with other existing commitments. We hope that time will prove we have chosen wisely.

The Services Committee has met many times since it was formed last July and has already made an outstanding contribution to the improvement of services. The work of this committee is already well known to you from their first two reports and the third one prepared for this Conference has already been in your hands for some days and needs no elaboration in this report. We are fortunate in the quality of work we have seen and the manner in which the Committee has tackled an arduous and responsible job and restored financial order out of chaos deserves the highest praise.

There is however one important matter of which you should know and this concerns the appointment of a General Manager for AA Sterling Area Services administered from London to give it its full and correct title. Applications were invited by the Services Committee for this position at the time its second progress report was circulated in January. Among the replies received were some from members of the Committee itself. At that point, very properly, the Committee debarred itself from consideration of the applications, temporarily suspended its own activity and turned the matter over to the Standing Committee of the Board. The latter, after careful consideration of all the applications, a number of which were of very high quality, selected Douglas B. up to that point Chairman of the Services Committee and he formally took up his office yesterday.

Douglas is well known to many of you from his former activities at Group A. & GRC and General Purposes Committee level where he has always impressed by his quiet efficiency and thoroughness in tackling any matter in hand. He relinquishes a very successful business career to take up his duties as General Manager of Services and we are fortunate indeed that he has preferred the satisfaction of service in a cause to which he is dedicated to the greater rewards of service elsewhere. We welcome him most warmly and believe confidently that our Services are in good hands.

Of the News Letter Committee, we would say only that the greatly improved quality of presentation of the News Letter itself in recent times was the best reason for not altering the composition of that small body, headed by Alex R that continues to give such good service. Finally, you will probably be fully aware that the G.S.B. is still short of non-alcoholic members and ill health is likely to deplete our members still further. Our well beloved Chairman, Maurice Rena who has served us so well since the Board was founded in 1957, has suffered increasingly poor health in recent months and may well not be able to continue the service he has given us for so long. Also Sir Richard Pilkington has been in indifferent health for some time now as the result of a serious accident some years ago and has been unable to attend meetings, Sandy Trotter too has been prevented from attending all but one meeting for the past two years.

We, therefore, need any help we can get to fill our deficiencies and would welcome any serious suggestions which any of you may be able to make from your areas.

We hope, when new members are under consideration, that they can bring with them not only a real interest in our problem but some area of society in which they have some special interest or influence. As an example, we have for years unsuccessfully sought somebody from Trade Union circles who would be interested and willing to serve. We have received very little encouragement from that quarter but we still try. To illustrate the point further, our non alcoholic members over the years have drawn from, among others, medicine, psychiatry, the law, public servants, the prison service, public relations, the press and a charitable trust.

We need the help of the non-alcoholic in our Board affairs and are poorer for their absence.

In presenting this report, we are encouraged to think that the last year has seen real, solid progress in our affairs and that we now have a new and solid basis on which to build further. We believe that the new services organisation will truly represent a turning point and prepare the way for the next big step forward in our service to the still suffering alcoholic. We are grateful for the opportunity we have had of participating in the working out of these changes.

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Appendix E

## **REPORT OF AA PROGRESS IN SCOTLAND 1969-1970 TO THE FIFTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

### **1 GENERAL**

We would like to mention that last year was the Twenty First Anniversary of AA in Scotland. It was as in previous years held in Dunblane Hydro, and needless to say there was not a corner left in this large hotel. We would also add it was most gratifying to see so many friends, both old and new members from over the border and across the sea.

There was also two other Conventions held -The Blue Bonnets in Dumfries and the Highland gathering in Inverness, and as always both were a great success, and the speakers were all wonderful. The Fellowship grows in Scotland more and more every day. There are now over eighty registered groups. The country is very well covered from Dumfries to the Orkneys embracing Stornoway and also Skye.

Our prison groups are in the very capable hands of George B. who gives unfailing work to all prisoners, and the most important time when they are freed.

We in Scotland are very fortunate in having Lil, our very capable and trusted Secretary. Sometimes we feel Lil is a little overworked, but she takes it all in her stride, and also very much to her credit she has sold £1,256 worth of literature in the last year. It takes a lot of work to bring in that much money. Keep going Lil.

We would also like to mention our wonderful magazine, the Roundabout, and it its very able editor Angus. The Roundabout has grown from strength to strength since Angus has taken it over. We in Scotland are so very fortunate to have people of this calibre in the Fellowship.

We in Scotland are very happy with the growth of AA in Scotland and hope to see many friends this year from across the border on holiday.

We hope this conference is a great success and helps to strengthen the unity and growth of AA in the UK.

## 2. THE SCOTTISH PRISON GROUP.

This was formed some four years ago and since then steady progress has been made. We have had two meetings with the Scottish Health and Welfare Department of the Scottish Office. These meetings were with the Department which deals with the Scottish Prisons. Both these meetings were at the request of the Department of Health and not at our request.

Many of our problems were discussed. Such as supply of the Big Book. That Book is now in Prisons bought by the Department. We also offered among other things to attend and give a talk on "Our Aims and Objects" to the Prison Officials and this is being considered. We are hopeful that something will come of these discussions.

The Department are well aware of the problem of what happens to an Inmate on release and they too are considering how this problem can be solved and we are waiting further comment from them.

The Church of Scotland in Glasgow have now opened a rehabilitation centre in memory of the late Rev. Tom Allan and the Committee have agreed, in principle, to allow us to nominate two men, about to be released, as possible inmates of the Hostel, subject to their approval, so in the comparative short time we feel that something has been really achieved.

## **Appendix F**

### **PRISON INTERGROUP REPORT TO THE FIFTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1970**

#### 1 MEETINGS

Five meetings were held during 1969 - -three in London - one in Southampton and one at the National Convention at Blackpool. The Southampton meeting, was very successful - it was well attended and talks were given by an Assistant Governor, and ex-inmate and a member of Al-Anon.

#### 2 STRENGTH

For reasons which will be mentioned later it is difficult to give an exact figure for the number of prison groups. Our best information is that it lies between 45 and 50 with a probable membership of 4/500. To give an idea of the work still to be done - there are 97 prisons and borstals in England and Wales with an average population (1968) of about 32,000. One survey puts the number of alcoholics at between 25% and 50% of this population (for example, a very recent survey puts the number of alcoholics among those in prison for motoring offences at 45%) From these figures we can see that there is a need for two things -an increase in the number of prison' groups (mainly in our hands) and an increase in the numbers in each group -(mainly in the hands of the prison authorities).



### 3 HOME OFFICE & PRISON STAFF

To anyone who follows the daily press it is obvious that there has been a considerable tightening of security in prisons over the last few years. That this has not been just a fuss about nothing is shown by the fact that escapes have fallen from an average of over 60 a year in the mid 1960's to 10 in 1968. This, naturally, has had its effect on the work of AA in prisons -particularly on the question of having ex-inmates as speakers. However, we have found that where good relationships are established with the prison staff most difficulties can be overcome. We must particularly avoid any suggestion that AA has any special rights or privileges and adhere strictly to the regulations laid down. Carrying out these principles we usually find co-operation and in some cases enthusiasm among the prison staff for the work we do.

### 4. AA BEHIND BARS

In order to assist the work of all concerned in the work of AA in prisons - Intergroups - Groups - sponsors and the authorities, to say nothing of the prisoners themselves -we intend to arrange the publication by the end of this year of a booklet to be called "AA Behind Bars" (not to be confused with Alcoholics in front of bars which we all know about). This is intended to be in addition to 'Memo to an Inmate' and "AA In Prisons" because we feel that we in this country require something more suitable to local conditions which are somewhat different to those in the U.S. After all the first prison meeting in the U.S. was held five years before AA started in this country. The booklet will give experiences of ex-inmates, will have an article by two members of the prison service with great experience of AA and will give suggestions as to how to start and run a prison group.

### 5 FINANCE

In 1967, A & GRC approved a sum of £75 per annum to be used by Prison Intergroup as required. This money has never been used by us. Instead for the past three years we have held a social evening in London just before Christmas. Our last one was most successful. It was attended by about 170 persons including AA Members and their friends (some 40 of whom first found AA in prison), a Regional Director of prisons from the Home Office, prison governors and other prison staff, prison welfare officers and hostel wardens.

We made a profit of about £130 - some of which we have used in providing a copy-"AA Comes of Age" to each prison group.

We would like to thank all members of AA throughout the country for their generous support for this function and hope that it will continue in coming years.

### 6 PAID HELP

About two years ago we were led to believe by the then CSO that some paid help might be made available to prison intergroup - one suggestion was that one person might assist with both the Newsletter and prison intergroup. In the hopes of this aid materialising we have struggled on but the volume of secretarial work is rapidly becoming impossible for our Chairman and Secretary to handle. If some help cannot be found, any further expansion will mean that we will either have to leave some of the work undone or call on some outside help such as NACRO (The National

Aftercare and Rehabilitation of Offenders). We would be most reluctant to be forced to this latter alternative. The work consists mainly of three items:

- 1) Normal group secretarial work – minutes, arranging meetings etc.
- 2) Arranging for people to answer prisoner's letters. Since prisoners have plenty of time on their hands their letters are usually very long and take quite a time to read never mind to answer.
- 3) Keeping track of groups. At present we have the greatest difficulty in knowing what new groups open up and what existing groups close down - 80 questions sent out - 18 returned. This latter is the most important as the failure of a group creates a bad impression (to say the least) both among the prison staff and the inside group members. We feel it is most important that every effort should be made to try and prevent this and if close contact could be maintained with groups, we could try to prevent failures.

We discussed this problem of paid help with Douglas B, who attended our last Committee Meeting. He was most understanding and explained that he had not realised the seriousness of the situation. He pointed out to us the present financial difficulties at GSO and the fact that it was being re-organised. He promised to examine the possibility of arranging for a member of the Staff at GSO to spend 2/3 days a week on prison intergroup work.

## 7 HOSPITALS

At an earlier conference the question was mentioned of organising Hospital work on a national basis similar to prisons. It has also been suggested that hospital and prison work might be amalgamated as an institutional intergroup as there is a close affinity between the two types of work. This is the common practice in the U.S. Further since both are national in scope a member of the Services Committee might be given special responsibility for this work. We in prison intergroup would welcome these developments provided the assistance we require is forthcoming.

I now come to the most important point in the report.

## 8 DIFFICULTY IN GETTING SPONSORS

For many reasons it is important that prison work should be a group responsibility rather than a matter for individual sponsors. The most important of these is that it insures to a great extent against failure. We feel therefore that groups **and intergroups** could take more interest in the prisons in their areas. A shining example of what can be done is given by Southampton who service the three prisons on the Isle of Wight although, because of transport difficulties, it takes practically the whole of each Sunday. Southern Intergroup have recently appointed a member with special interest in prisons. This we hope will improve the number of sponsors.

The other side of the picture is given by Eastchurch who have been asking us for the last year for a group to be started. Our efforts to interest the local groups has proved unavailing. We would therefore suggest that each Intergroup have one member of its committee responsible for work in the prisons in its area. He should try, by visits to groups to encourage interest in prisons and we feel he could benefit by occasional attendance at Prison Intergroup.

We know that there is a feeling among many members of the Fellowship that prison work is unrewarding. There are two ways of looking at this - ones own sobriety and the sobriety of the ex-inmate. On the first point I can speak only for myself although I think the same is true for many prison sponsors I find the work most rewarding and a great help to my sobriety. On the other point, many sponsors in country areas do not see the results of their work as the prisoners after release do not reside in the group's area, but in London the results are to be seen not alone from the London prisons but from others throughout the country, and as I mentioned earlier it was most heartening to see 40 sober ex-inmates at our Christmas social. We feel, therefore, that if only a little more effort is made by all who feel themselves responsible for the suffering alcoholic, whether he be drinking outside or forcibly dry in prison, we will see a rapidly continuing growth of membership from our prisons.

## Appendix G

### NEWSLETTER REPORT TO CONFERENCE 1970

#### CIRCULATION

The circulation of the News Letter has for the past few months remained constant at about 1750 per month. It would seem that the increase coming from orders from New Groups has been counteracted by the depletion arising from the tightening of credit on outstandings recently introduced.

#### FINANCE

We were informed by Wick who attended the World Service Conference that, of the 28 countries represented there, only 2 of the magazines published in each of the countries were above the break-even point and did not have to be subsidised.

These were the Grapevine and our own Newsletter. With regard to the News Letter as mentioned earlier during the discussion of the accounts, the figure shown in the Income over Expenditure Account states an Income over Expenditure of £844 whilst the figures furnished to us by Bob at General Service office shows a surplus of £927. A very satisfactory state of affairs which I must admit came as a pleasant surprise even to me.

#### CONTENTS

The request for contributions - preferably short articles - is still valid. Whilst the more recent introduction of Letters to the Editor form an important part of the Newsletter, and as most of those are comments upon articles contained in previous issues it indicates in our opinion the greater interest shown. Once again I would like to stress the importance of brevity, as we have received some letters of 1,000 1,500 words, which would mean that the letters to the Editor would take up some 8 10 pages.

#### NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

Unfortunately a not so satisfactory position has arisen with regard to the help promised by G.S.O. This was first raised over twelve months ago with the old Central Service Office, but no help has yet been forthcoming.

The situation is one which needs urgent attention to ensure the future functioning of the Editorial Board.

(Secretarial Note: This will be investigated as a matter of urgency by The General Manager, A.A. Sterling Area Services and the Services Committee.)

REPORT OF THE WORKING COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE NO 1

STRUCTURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP  
GROUPS, INTERGROUPS & REGIONS

In all its deliberations our Committee was guided by Article 12 of the A.A. Conference Charter of North America, in which it is stated that though the Conference may act for the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform ANY Acts of Government and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

1 GROUPS

The main purpose of the Group is to introduce new Members into a Group atmosphere where sobriety could be achieved and maintained. As the Committee considered that these ends are best achieved by each Member participating in Group Discussion it was decided that any more than 15 Members might tend to defeat this purpose. The logical development would be for another Group to be formed.

On the subject of servants of the Group, we decided that the minimum required was a Secretary, who should have had, it was recommended, a period of at least 12 months sobriety, and who should serve for 2 years ideally, but not more than 3 years. Obviously the Group will choose its servants with full regard to the Groups' requirements and the ability of its nominees to fulfil them.

Apart from the normal secretarial duties i.e., obtaining and distributing literature and general correspondence, it is strongly recommended that the Secretary ensures a warm welcome to any newcomers, arranges Speakers and ensures responsibility for the finances of the Group. Groups may of course appoint additional servants to fulfil some of these duties.

Each Group should appoint a Representative to the Intergroup, who should have ideally not less than 2 years sobriety, and who should serve in this capacity for not less than 2 years, and not more than 3 years.

He should ensure that any Group resolutions are in the hands of the Intergroup Secretary in ample time for them to be included in the Agenda for the next Meeting. He is responsible for keeping his Group fully informed of any decisions reached at Intergroup and ensuring the implementation of any matters requiring action.

The Committee recognises that discussions of a business nature, though necessary, are not always welcome. Therefore, discretion should be exercised so that these discussions do not clash with the normal purpose of Group Meetings.

2 INTERGROUPS

The Committee felt that it should not recommend a specific number of Groups to comprise an Intergroup, because this figure would almost certainly be arbitrary for a number of reasons. However we felt that each Intergroup should examine the following points and decide whether or not it would be in its own interests to split into smaller units.

A Intergroups covering a wide geographical area are unwieldy in as much as communications are problematical and attendance at them of the distant Groups, is often very difficult.

B A smaller Intergroup could meet more locally, and more frequently would get things done more quickly.

C Better attendance and participation would be attained at such Intergroup meetings.

D There would be greater incentive to form more local Groups, and the growth of the smaller Intergroup would follow.

An Intergroup should be serviced by, ideally, a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. These servants should have had, ideally, not less than 2 years sober service in the Fellowship, and should serve for a period of not less than 2 years and for not more than 3 years. In addition to these Offices an Intergroup Delegate or Delegates to the General Service Conference is required

The Chairman's functions are to call the Meeting, approve the Agenda, preside at the Meeting, and approve the Minutes of the Meeting prior to their publication. The Vice Chairman will substitute for the Chairman in the latter's absence.

The Secretary will prepare and distribute the Agenda in ample time for Group discussion prior to the Meeting. He will record and distribute the Minutes of the Meeting, and will deal with all correspondence.

The Treasurer will give a true Account of the Intergroups finances, ensuring that funds are available to meet the Intergroups requirements.

The Committee recommends that Intergroups should meet not less than quarterly, but more frequently when necessary

The Committee felt that the recommendations on Intergroups, of Committee 2 of the GSC November 1968, were being successfully implemented wherever possible, and concluded that those recommendations were valid, and should serve as guide lines for the functions of Intergroups at the present time.

The Committee concluded that it was time for Intergroups to organise themselves in such a way that purchases of News Letters and Literature could become their responsibility rather than that of individual Groups. This would, in effect, reduce the workload on GSO and a saving would be made.

The Committee discussed the formation of Regional Committees and felt that these would be desirable when large Intergroups had split into smaller units. This Meeting would enable Intergroups, within an area to maintain contact and to continue the sharing of experiences.

Committee 1 moves that this report, if approved by the Conference, may be used as part of the basis for an AA Service Manual for the UK.

Appendix H  
Committee No. 2

#### “STRUCTURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP” RESOLUTIONS FOR PRESENTATION TO THE CONFERENCE.

Having agreed with the conclusion of the 4th General Service Conference (April 1969) that the purpose of the Conference should be to act as the sole legislative body of the Fellowship of AA in Great Britain, Committee No. 2 resolved;

##### A 1 COMPOSITION

(a) That each Intergroup throughout the country should be represented by at least two delegates; and that where there are more than 40 Groups in any Intergroup, an additional delegate, up to a maximum of 4, should be allowed for each additional 20 Groups, or part of.

(b) That there should be approximately 3 delegate members attending for each trustee member of the General Service Board present;

(c) That it shall be for Intergroups to select their own delegates to the Conference, bearing in mind such considerations as the need to ensure continuity of representation from year to year and the desirability of ensuring that one of the officers of the Intergroup be given the opportunity to attend, if possible;

(d) That the scale of representation from Scotland be continued as at present but that in the event of developments in Scotland, leading to the establishment of separate Intergroups there, the same level of representation be allowed to these Intergroups as to Intergroups, in other parts of Great Britain.

## 2. OTHER BODIES.

(a) That Prison Intergroup be represented by at least two delegates, and that in the event of the number of Prison Groups exceeding 40 additional delegates be allowed to attend, up to a maximum of 4 for each additional 20 Groups or part of 20.

(b) That Hospital Groups be represented, initially by 2 delegates, and, if experience shows this to be required, by further delegates, up to a maximum of 4 on the same scale as for prisons;

(c) That Young People's Groups be represented by one delegate from England and one from Scotland, to be chosen respectively by Young People's Groups from these two countries from among themselves.

(d) That the General Service Board and the Services Committee be ex-officio full members of the Conference;

(e) That the "Newsletter Committee be represented by one delegate;

(f) That the General Manager of A.A. Sterling Area Services be a full member of the Conference.

## 3. OBSERVERS FROM ABROAD.

That a warm invitation be extended to all countries in which AA is established to send observers from their respective Fellowships to attend the Conference at their own expense; and that invitations to this effect be addressed, as the case may be, to the Chairman or Manager of each National Service organisation by the General Service Office in London. (These invitations should be sent out as soon as the dates for the Conference are decided).

## B. ROTATION OF REPRESENTATIVES

(a) That delegates be appointed by Intergroups to serve for a maximum period of 3 years continuously

(b) That delegates should not be appointed to serve for less than two years

(c) That delegates should be elected annually by their Intergroups whether or not they have already served part of their term.

### C. HOW SHOULD THEY PREPARE THEMSELVES

That each delegate should conscientiously prepare himself for his responsibilities by;

- (a) Becoming thoroughly familiar with such basic A.A. literature as the Big Book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", "AA Comes of Age", and the Third Legacy Manual, if necessary by reading them again.
- (b) Studying the proposed Agenda, for the Conference in the light of his understanding of AA principles, and making sure that he thoroughly understands what the Agenda is all about;
- (c) Discussing the Agenda in his group, his Intergroup and among his individual AA friends so that he comes to the Conference prepared to represent the views of the fellowship as a whole, as well as his own personal views on the matters that will be discussed;
- (d) Getting to know how the Conference works and who the other members are, if necessary by discussing these matters with another delegate who is familiar with Conference matters;
- (e) Going to the Conference with a real conviction that he will be there for the primary purpose of making it easier to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic, and to help the sober alcoholic to retain his sobriety.

### D. REPRESENTATIVES' QUALIFICATIONS

That delegates to the Conference should have a reasonable period of sobriety - at least 3 years is suggested - as active members of the Fellowship of AA; the final decision about the suitability of any delegate should rest with the group conscience as expressed through the Intergroup.

### E. FUNCTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.

That the function of the Conference is to act as the sole legislative body for the Fellowship of A.A in Great Britain for the purpose of determining policy on matters affecting the Fellowship at a national level and of carrying the wishes of the Fellowship on such matters into effect, through the General Service Board and the Services Committee.

### F. REPORTING BACK.

- (a) That delegates should on their return, report the conclusions of the Conference to their Intergroup;
- (b) That delegates should also take steps to make verbal reports to as many of the groups in their Intergroup area as they can conveniently reach on the main conclusions of the Conference;
- (c) That delegates ensure that written reports are delivered to all groups in their Intergroup area who cannot be readily reached at an early date after the Conference;
- (d) That delegates remain active in pursuing the aims of the Conference they have attended during the periods between Conferences.

### G. ROTATION OF THE LOCATION OF THE CONFERENCE.

That the Conference continue to be held at Manchester and that the possibility of holding the Conference in some suitable hotel other than the Midland Hotel, be considered.

### H. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the General Manager, in consultation with the General Service Board as necessary, be responsible for initiating any action that may be required arising from the Resolutions approved by the Conference; and that a report on such action be presented to the General Service Conference the following year;



(b) That the Fellowship be informed of such action as may have been taken, possibly by means of Progress Reports published by the Services Committee.

In addition to those listed items on which the Committee was asked to resolve, they make the following Resolutions at the request of the Conference;

## 1 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

(a) That the Agenda for the Conference be drawn up by the General Service Board, with the assistance of the Services Committee, on the basis of items submitted to the Board from individuals, Groups and Intergroups, during the year preceding the Conference; and that special consideration be given by the Board in drawing up the Agenda to any matters of major policy importance that have remained unresolved from a previous Conference, or have been referred for further deliberation by a Conference;

(b) That a provisional Agenda be circulated by the Board to all Intergroups and Groups at least 3 months before the Conference, and that any additions to, or observations on, the Agenda be submitted to the Board within one month thereafter;

(c) That any further Resolutions from individuals, Groups or Intergroups be submitted to the Board at least two months before the Conference for possible inclusion in the final Agenda;

(d) That each Annual Conference should elect from among its delegate members a Chairman to take the chair at the following year's Conference; and that the Chairman be closely associated from the beginning with the drawing up of the Agenda;

(e) That there is no need for a separate Conference Committee, but that the arrangements with the hotel for the Conference be handled by the General Service Office and by a Conference Convenor resident in the Manchester area.

## 2 SERVICE ON AA COMMITTEES BY "PROFESSIONALS"

That the Conference endorse the action of the General Service Board, as being entirely consistent with the Traditions of the Fellowship, in not appointing to either the Board or to the Services Committee members of the Fellowship who are professionally engaged in work with alcoholics.

## 3 CONFERENCE FINANCES

That in view of RESOLUTION 1 in these three Resolutions (that there is no further need for a Conference Committee) the expenses arising from the Conference additional to hotel and travelling expenses of delegates should not be sufficiently high to justify any special measures to meet these by means of a levy; but that any such expenses be charged in the normal way to GSO funds.

## **"FINANCE AND FUND RAISING"**

1. The Committee were firstly required, to receive, consider and, if thought fit, recommend that Conference approve the accounts for 1969 of the GSB and Service Office. It is noted, however, that these had already been approved in that the Receipts and Payments Account of the GSO for the year ended 31st. December 1969 and the GSO and GSB Balance Sheets as at that date were incorporated in the Service Committee Report adopted at the morning session of the Conference.

2. No budget had in fact been produced in respect of the General Service Board and consequently in the absence also of any statement of current GSB income or expenditure, the

committee were able only to make some assessment of expenditure. They found it impossible to form any assessment as to GSB income particularly in relation to the profit margin arising from the operation of the AA Publishing Company.

3. The GSO budget contained in the Service Committee report was considered and certain adjustments made in respect of various items of expenditure, which do not make any material alteration in the total shown, with the exception of Rent and Rates, where it is considered proper to include the gross amounts under the heading of expenditure and to show Rents Receivable, under Income.

4. These adjustments resulted in the Budget being amended thus:-

GSO Expenditure	12300
GSB do.	-1500
	13800

#### REVENUE

Groups Contributions etc.	8600	
Newsletter	2250	
Less Costs	1550	700
Books, Literature	3000	
Less Costs	2000	1000
Rents Receivable	800	11100
DEFICIT.		2700

It will be noted that the above includes GSB expenditure, but as already stated we were unable to assess the GSB revenue. It is understood, however, that the GSB Revenue is at least equal to their expenditure of £1500, thus leaving a deficit of £1200. It is further stated that the Revenue will in fact exceed this sum of £1500 and the extent of such excess will naturally correspondingly reduce the deficit.

5. The Committee also have in mind that certain items of expenditure will undoubtedly increase in 1971, partly due to obvious increases in costs and partly due to staff changes. It is envisaged that Budgeted costs for 1971 will therefore be of the order of £700 in excess of the figures given above.

6. The Committee consequently considered that its task was of a two-fold nature:

(a) To ensure that adequate funds are raised to meet the above working deficit. Any additional revenue on GSB account mentioned above would be regarded as a contribution to reserves.

(b) To provide the GSB/GSO with adequate Reserve Funds and working capital.

7. The Committee recommended that the Board give urgent attention to the raising of Funds and offer the following suggestions:

(a) An initial appeal in the form of personal contributions for the purpose of raising working capital.

- (b) The activating of Group Treasurers and Secretaries in their critical role of maintaining regular contributions to the G.S.O.
- (c) Revive covenants.
- (d) Setting of clear G.S.O. contribution targets for Groups and Intergroups. The Intergroup Treasurer, playing an important coordinating role in achieving these targets.
- (e) Stimulation of sales of books and literature, both within and outside the Fellowship.

8 It is not considered possible to produce definite budgets for either Groups or Intergroups as the size and circumstances of each vary considerably. Nevertheless, Group and Intergroup Treasurer's (or Secretaries) be encouraged to draw up their own budgets, bearing in mind the need to provide for maximum possible contributions to the GSO. It was noted that London Intergroup have established their own Service Office on the ground floor of 11, Redcliffe Gardens. All London Groups have been requested to send their contributions to LIG. The latter pays all its own operating expenses out of these monies, and remits any surplus to the GSO.

#### COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE FELLOWSHIP

The Committee considered communications under two main headings.

- 1 1 Within the Fellowship.
- 2 2 Outside the Fellowship.

#### WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP

(a) The chain of communications should ensure that the substance of all major resolutions and decisions reach the group member by the most direct, means, and in a form which is easily understandable. Equally so, the chain should allow the group member to communicate upwards with the same facility. We consider, therefore, that, taking the General Service Conference as the starting point, and where the General Service Board is responsible for implementing policy and resolutions, that the most direct form of communications is to Intergroups, down to Groups and on to members. The individual member must also be able to communicate upwards by the same route. The degree of responsibility at each level should be reasonably clearly defined with the respective bodies being left free to act within the span of their responsibility.

(b) The Committee formed the following RESOLUTION:

Structural charts should be prepared as a series, in booklet form. They should show the relationship between the General Service Conference and group members, and the normal channel through which communications will pass, i.e. Group Member - Group - Intergroup - General Manager -General Service Board (and/or its Committees) and the General Service Conference.\*\*

(The Committee obviously did not have sufficient time to prepare this series of draft charts, but undertakes to provide the Services Committee with a number of suitable suggestions if the Resolution is accepted).

(c) Main duties and responsibilities of the various bodies within the Fellowship should be shown by means of functional charts which, in addition, show the flow of communications.

(d) It is the responsibility of Group Secretaries to keep their members informed concerning policy matters and it is equally their responsibility to ensure that the opinions, ideas and reactions concerning those matters are sent through the appropriate channels. In the case of individual

members or groups which are not part of an Intergroup, they should have the facility to communicate directly with the General Manager, General Service Board or the General Service Conference.

(e) The question of using 'Intercom' as a means of passing information was discussed. It may be remembered that 'Intercom' itself lapsed due to insufficient cooperation and support from Groups and Intergroups. The Committee therefore RESOLVED that:

\*\*Intergroups should, for a trial period, publish broadsheets or bulletins containing items of interest and up to date news for distribution to their member groups, in addition providing a copy for the Secretary of each other Intergroup. Where possible the preparation of this newsheet should be in the hands of a suitable and competent person, preferably with experience of journalism or public relations. Whilst we recognise a Group or Intergroups right to autonomy, at the same time, such a sharing of experience could only benefit all parties concerned.\*\*

#### OUTSIDE THE FELLOWSHIP

(a) RESOLUTION:

\*\* The Fellowship should strive for maximum co-operation with the principal organisations concerned with the problems of alcoholism. In protection of our traditions, and to ensure that the benefits of membership are truly represented, the channels of communications and choice of contacts and speakers should be subject to control by the General Service Board, Intergroups and Groups, according to the level at which the contact is made. In the light of Report 16 of AA Public Information Bulletin from G.S.O, New York, dated January/February 1970 the Fellowship should examine the possibility of using television as a means of drawing attention to the benefits of membership and, also to ensure that the true image its successfully conveyed to the public, more especially those who need advice or are in need of help. In connection with this it is strongly recommended that the Fellowship seeks professional advice, which in turn would need to be guided by the experience which can only come from within the Fellowship itself.\*\*

It should be noted that James C., William D., and Colin N., all from Scotland, dissented.

(b) Finally, it was RESOLVED that

\*\* all efforts should be made to open lines of communication between the General Service Conference and its Continental counterpart.\*\*

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CONFERENCE 1971

**REPORT  
SIXTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.**

**MIDLAND HOTEL**

**23<sup>rd</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1971.**

**THEME**

**UNITY IN SERVICE TO THE NEW MEMBER**

## SECTION TWO OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

The Conference assembled on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>. April 1971 at the Midland Hotel, Manchester at 9:00 pm under the Chairmanship of Patrick F.

Maurice Rena opened the Conference by asking all present to stand in silence for a short period in memory of our beloved co-Founder Bill W. who died on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1971.

The General Service Board Report was then presented by Ronald L. and a brief discussion on it took place before the Conference adjourned at about 10.30 p.m.

The last business before adjournment was nomination for the next Conference Chairman. Several proposals were made but only one Nominee - Derrick A East Anglia Intergroup -was prepared to accept the duty.

On Saturday there was a detailed discussion on the General Service Board Report from 9.00 a.m. until 10.30 a.m. when the Report was accepted. This discussion is fully recorded in Section Three of this Report.

At 10.45 a.m. the four separate Teams commenced their discussions on various aspect of Service to the New Member and continued until 4.15 p.m. Their Reports were presented to the Conference at 9.00 p.m. discussed until adjournment at 10.30 p.m. and again on Sunday between 9.15 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. when they were accepted. Sections Four, Five and Six of this Report give full details of this very important activity.

The Question and Answer Session took place from 4.30 p.m. until 6.00 p.m. on Saturday. This Session dealt with Questions referred to the Conference by Groups and Intergroups which might not be dealt with adequately in other discussions. The details are recorded in Section Seven.

Section Eight covers the Election of the next Conference Chairman and the arrangements for 1972.

Angus M. delivered a most inspiring address during the closing stages of the Conference, the text of which is given in Section Nine of this Report.

Section Ten "Who's Who on the Board" - gives brief details of Board Members and is included for the information of the Fellowship.

The Election of the following new members of the Board had been ratified earlier by the Conference.

Leslie K        official nomination by London Intergroup as a replacement for Wick.

Tom H         official nomination by the Scottish Intergroup as a replacement for John N.  
There was a special tribute to Wick for his long and valuable service.

The Conference had completed all business by mid-day Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 1971 and adjourned.

SECTION THREE  
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION OF GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

(NOTE: Report has already been issued generally to all Groups, Intergroups, General Service Board members and Committee Members etc.)

COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman of this sub-committee in response to a request by delegates enlarged upon the General Service Board report on this subject. First the objectives of this committee were given viz:

- a) To achieve the widest dissemination of accurate information about the Fellowship so that those who need its help know what it has to offer and where to find it.

The Committee consider that irrespective of the communications medium used, that an accurate picture of Alcoholics Anonymous in terms of its stated objectives, make up of its membership and its recovery programme is created in the public mind; further that it is designed to remove false impressions of alcoholism and alcoholics already created as a result of bad or misguided publicity.

- b) by means of careful briefing, to provide guidance for selected members of the Fellowship in each region as to how best to achieve stated objectives in the use of communications media, especially mass media.
- c) to publish a guide, which will assist the General Service Office, Intergroups, Groups and Members in their relationships with each other and indicate channels through which information should flow, both internally and externally.

Most of the committees work had been concentrated upon public information and public relations i.e., communications outside the Fellowship. The committee had written to every Intergroup to ask whether they have any members with specialised knowledge of writing, printing etc., who would be prepared to offer their skill free gratis. As a result of this two articles emerged of exceptionally high quality. One of such a calibre that it will possibly be used for the pictorial section of the Daily Telegraph magazine. Interviews have been conducted at the General Service Office attended by such members as were, available at the time, and the Chairman personally had attended a Questions and Answers session on a topic raised in the House of Commons "Whether a drunk should be jailed".

Internal communications had largely been left with the General Manager for the time being and in this connection the issue of the directory of Intergroup Chairman and Secretaries had been a valuable step forward. Internal Communications were, of course, effected by the re-organisation of the services structure which as you know is still in hand. Some exchange of Intergroup minutes of meetings had started though this was rather a 'half-hearted' effort at this stage.

It had been decided that "Structural Charts" would have no impact on the new member and whilst no direct action had been taken in improving Continental communications it was noted that this year's convention at Bristol was called "European" and a good number of overseas visitors were expected.

In subsequent discussion the Conference Chairman said that on a recent visit to the U.S.A. he had investigated the use of television as a medium of communication for AA. He found that whilst some breaches of anonymity do occur they usually hold closely to the established traditions, i.e. appearing in silhouette or faceless form. Some VIP's (e.g. film stars) experienced difficulty in hiding identity and openness only occurred when it was beneficial to AA.

A delegate from Scotland wished it to be noted that the report of Committee No. 4 of the previous Conference regarding Television needed amendment viz:

“It should be noted that James C., William D., and Colin N all from Scotland dissented.....ADD on members appearing on Television.”

It was noted that the Communications sub-committee had the assistance of a top grade professional P.R. man as a co-opted member. He is not an alcoholic. However, his expertise has proved to be of invaluable help and guidance in their discussions and actions.

## PRISON INTERGROUPS

It was agreed that the members of the General Service Board, Services Committee or the General Service Office who may be appointed to work with the Prison Intergroups should be members who have a special interest in Prison activities.

## BOARD MEMBERSHIP

In response to questions from delegates they were informed that Board membership could be increased to a maximum of 25. However, the constitution requires there should be a greater number of non-alcoholic members than alcoholic members. When considering regionalisation it must be regarded in relation to the work the Board is required to do. It has been found essential to operate a Standing Committee composed of London based Board Members who meet at least monthly. Immediate availability of such members is also necessary on a day-to-day basis to handle urgent policy and financial matters that occur from time to time. If regional representation is increased then more non-alcoholics members would also be required and we should avoid following such a “Whitehall Pattern”. Nevertheless, South West Intergroup recorded their concern of “localisation” of Board membership without adequate regional representation.

## SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

It was suggested by Cymraeg Intergroup that appointments to this Committee be approved in advance by Conference and not after the event. Half the country was not represented on this committee, a particular gap being in the South West.

It was pointed out by Board and Services Committee members that the Board were responsible to Conference for the services of AA and for appointments to the Services Committee. It was important to have the right people to carry out these duties and this together with the committee being limited to six full members makes complete regional representation impossible. In any case the two members who would retire from this Committee in September this year had yet to



be decided amongst themselves so the effect on the existing regional cover was not known at this stage.

## FINANCE

The Finance sub-committee took the occasion to emphasise most strongly the seriousness of the financial position. We had a deficit in 1969 and again in 1970. A further deficit of £326 for the first quarter of 1971 was announced. THIS WAS THE WORST POSITION THAT COULD BE RECALLED IN THE HISTORY OF AA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

We cannot continue to eat into our reserves built up by the Publishing Operation - WHAT IS WRONG? HAVE WE A COMMUNICATION PROBLEM?

Whilst we can and do control expenditure with respect to an established budget the main cause of our troubles is less contributions from groups and intergroups despite an increase in membership.

A drive on Covenants is in hand. A simple explanation of this way of donating will shortly appear in the Newsletter and a more detailed description will be made in the first issue of "BOX 514". The financial advantage to the Fellowship of this form of donation is most significant - a £1 donation from a member in covenant form earns a profit of 63% (with Income Tax at the current rate) i.e. the General Service Office Funds ultimately receive £1.63.

The increase in sales of literature and hence revenue from this source continues, but does not compensate for the appalling drop in contributions. The sales drive by General Service Office is yielding good results but intergroup representatives, group secretaries and individual members could do a lot more in this respect.

It was explained that total actual salaries paid to General Service Office Staff in 1970 were now less than in 1969. So we are getting a better service at less cost. The reason why the apparent figure in the accounts was £1000 greater was due to severance pay to staff who departed our service in 1970 due to the re-organisation. It should also be noted that the General Manager now combined the two previously separate appointments of Secretary of the old Central Service Office and Secretary to the Board and Publishing Company.

In response to specific questions the Conference was informed that in at least two cases groups forwarded their contributions to their Intergroup. In other cases Intergroups raised a levy on their Groups, whilst leaving the groups free to forward other contributions to General Service Office. Only some 50% of the groups in England and Wales contributed to General Service Office and it was reported that some groups and intergroups were "sitting on funds".

It was generally agreed that the situation was alarming and if allowed to continue it would have an adverse effect on the services of AA. We would therefore be failing in our primary function. It was the responsibility of all delegates to go back and ensure that group and individual responsibility was understood.

Fund raising including a literature sales drive should be a priority task for all of us and each Intergroup should consider appointing an individual specifically responsible for immediate and sustained effort in Fund Raising.

Adoption of General Service Board Report

It was proposed by Ronald L. that the General Service Board Report be adopted and approval given to the appointment of Leslie K. and Tom H. to the Board. This was seconded by Neil H. (S.I.G) and passed unanimously.

#### **SECTION FOUR PREAMBLE TO TEAM REPORTS**

In accordance with the Conference theme “UNITY IN SERVICE TO THE NEW MEMBER” on Saturday 24 April 1971 from 10:45 am until 4:15 pm (with a break for lunch) the delegates divided into four teams to discuss separately the following aspects of sponsorship of the new members:-

TEAM 1	The New Member	Group Arrangements for Sponsorship
TEAM 2	The New Member	Individual Responsibilities for Sponsorship
TEAM 3	The New Member	His Protection (e.g. Anonymity etc.)
TEAM 4	The New Member	Maintaining Sobriety

The teams were also given the following guide-lines:-

THE UNIFICATION OF ALL THAT IS BEST IN THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SPONSORSHIP COULD LEAD ON TO AN IMPROVED QUALITY OF SOBRIETY GOING HAND IN HAND WITH DEVOTION TO SERVICE AND ENSURE THAT A GROWING FELLOWSHIP RESTS SECURE ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF RECOVERY.

The reports by the four Teams as amended in minor detail by subsequent discussion at the Saturday evening and Sunday morning sessions are given in Section Five. The Team leaders in giving their reports mentioned that some overlap in their reports had inevitably occurred due to the closely related stages of recovery and sponsorship considered by the teams. This overlap was understood and accepted.

It was recommended that the substance of the Team Reports be used as the basis of a new pamphlet which would become a standard item of literature and available to all. However, it was recognised that the production and approval of such a pamphlet would take time, and it was more important that the existing Team Reports as they stand be put out as part of the Conference Report as soon as possible.

In adopting the Team Reports it was agreed that all present should take back the message of the importance of sponsorship and the recommendations of the Team Reports to ensure appropriate action is taken and thus increase the growth of the Fellowship.

The Team rosters are given in Section Six of this Report.

## SECTION FIVE TEAM REPORTS

### REPORT FROM TEAM NO. 1

LEADER: George G.

Group sponsorship consists in each member endeavouring to show quite clearly that he or she accepts and cares about anyone who has a drinking problem and comes along to the Fellowship.

#### A GROUP ARRANGEMENTS FOR BRINGING IN THE NEW MEMBER

a) Members should remember that Twelfth-Stepping and Sponsorship are not one and the same thing. When a Group member has visited an enquirer on a twelfth-stepping call, he should endeavour as soon as possible to introduce the enquirer to a group meeting, not necessarily the members own.

b) At the meeting, the responsibility then rests on every individual member present. It is most important that from the start the newcomer be made to feel wanted and welcome. Members should introduce themselves to the newcomer in such a way as not to overwhelm or embarrass him; a handshake, a smile, a cup of tea, and a short chat, are important.

#### B THE FORM OF THE MEETING

Service given to the new member will often vary according to the size of the Group concerned. However, a few guidelines may be of help, and different groups will accept from them what can be applied in each case.

a) To serve the newcomer, a group often endeavours to put a speaker in the chair who is good at introducing the basic programme. This special provision for the beginner usually means that some of the elder members will have to tolerate repetition, since the Group is seeking to help a newcomer, the life-blood of AA. The problem of how to cater for both the newcomer and the established member is a difficult one, especially in groups where new faces appear on most evenings. Several ways of coping with it have been tried, since it is obviously important that the old hand, as well as the newcomer should be given service at a meeting. Probably some part of every meeting should be aimed at the older member.

b) Many groups have beginners meetings to overcome the above difficulties. For the older attenders in the Fellowship they run discussion groups to give them more meat for their growth in AA sometimes on a different evening.

c) Some groups have their own agreed arrangements for adjusting to a newcomer who arrives halfway through a talk aimed at people with some experience of the AA programme.

d) Where newcomers unexpectedly arrive to attend a meeting pre-arranged for established members, usually the speaker is told that there are new people present, so that he may adapt his talk to some extent.

(In general older members tire of continual drunkenlogues, and it is questionable whether this is the best introduction for the newcomer, too.)

e) Many groups appoint someone responsible at each meeting for looking after newcomers for that evening. The talk from the chair is a general one, and then, at the end the responsible person buttonholes a few people that he thinks may be of help to the newcomer; these people tell

the newcomer privately what they can do to help (Newcomers are not embarrassed by this, but are pleased to be given attention.)

It may help at this stage to mention the activities of Al-Anon, especially if the newcomer is accompanied by a relative.

#### C AT THE END OF THE MEETING

a) At the end of the meeting, and over a cup of tea, a means of two-way contact should be established with the newcomer, if he wishes it. He should be given some telephone contact, and one member of the group should take on the responsibilities of getting him to further meetings for a brief period.

In certain areas, this may mean providing transport for a time.

(It is well to leave him to stand on his own feet as soon as possible - we carry the message, not the alcoholic).

If he can be introduced to different groups, this will give him the opportunity of possibly finding a group which suits him better than that he first attended. It is likely, then, if he continues to attend and shop around, that he will eventually meet some member who suits him and his own particular needs and he will then have chosen his own long-term sponsor.

(The original twelfth-stepper and the group-appointed sponsor will in all probability not be the long-term sponsor, who almost always will be chosen by the member himself, and may well change as the years go by.)

b) Before he leaves the meeting the new member should be given a couple of pamphlets such as "Who Me?" - "Just for Today" - "Introduction to AA" and so on, along with a list of the groups available in the area, and possibly at the foot of this an emergency telephone number to ring in case of urgent need. A copy of the "Newsletter" and "The Roundabout" may well help.

c) The involvement of the new member in AA affairs should not be too rapid, but his desire to be involved needs to be encouraged with involvement as the eventual aim is his contented sobriety. It is wise for established members to act as a brake on the understandable enthusiasm of newcomers in their initial period since this at times can lead them into indiscretions not good for AA as a whole. This does not, of course, preclude such jobs as the making of the tea, the setting of chairs and so on - jobs which involve them and make them feel part of the working of the group.

#### D PRISONS AND HOSPITALS

Group Sponsorship in institutions is not dealt with here, as these establishments already have responsible bodies in AA, the Prison Intergroup and the hospital Liaison Committee, from whom help and advice for groups in servicing these institutions may be obtained. (Experience has shown that sponsorship for institutions should be at group and intergroup level, not vested on individuals).

E Members are reminded that AA Sponsorship offers only sobriety; there are other agencies to meet other needs.

## REPORT ON TEAM NO.2.

### “THE NEW MEMBER - INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SPONSORSHIP”

Leader: Bill D.

We appreciate that most of what we are going to say has already been written down, the fact that we have been asked to discuss the matter means that there appears to be a necessity to highlight certain aspects.

The Committee feel that sponsorship is divided into three phases.

The first phase is the actual 12th Stepping.

The second phase is Sponsorship taken over by Groups as a whole.

This can be divided into sub-headings:

1. Regular attendance of group members to set an example to the newcomer.
2. An effort made by individual group members to make the newcomer feel welcome and at home.
3. The third phase is individual sponsorship, which comes about when the newcomer has made an effort to find the group member with whom he or she feels an affinity - this may not necessarily be the person who did the 12<sup>th</sup> Stepping. In this context it is worth pointing out that the newcomer should be made aware of advisability of having a sponsor, and the Group Secretaries make it their responsibility that whenever possible suitable sponsors are available.

The responsibility of the sponsor we see to be as follows:

1. A real and continuing interest in the new member.
2. An ability to be present, either in person or by phone at all times when help is needed even if the new member may not realise that he or she needs help.
3. The ability to carry the message of the fellowship, partly by example in the sponsors own way of life, and partly by explaining the programme as set out in the Literature.
4. The ability to strike up an affinity with the new member even although in some cases it may be resented in the early stages of association, and to be prepared to hand over to some other Member if that affinity does not develop.
5. To become concerned in the new member's circumstances (including family background) in so far as this will help towards sobriety, within the bounds of AA Fellowship and Way of Life.
6. That the sponsor should try as soon as possible to involve the newcomers in Group activities with a view to strengthening their ties with the Group, and thereby increasing their chances of remaining sober.

From our discussions it would appear that entry into AA is becoming more and more influenced by contact with the Medical Profession, Hospital Groups or Prison Groups and Sponsors who have particular interests in these fields should be encouraged to concentrate their efforts there.

## REPORT FROM TEAM No. 3

### “THE NEW MEMBER - HIS PROTECTION (e.g. ANONYMITY ETC.)

LEADER: John U.

The team considered the whole question of anonymity as affecting the new Member, both as regards protection for himself, from himself and from others with whom he may come in contact both within and without the Fellowship.

The writings of our Founder - Bill W. - (e.g. "Why Alcoholics Anonymous is Anonymous") - were under review as were the individual experiences of the members of the Team. It was realised that times had changed and are still changing and the image of the Fellowship might well need sharpening to appeal to present day potential Members, many of whom are of a younger age group than hereto. Nevertheless, anonymity remains the cornerstone of the Fellowship, and as such is a guarantee of unbiased and disinterested help to the newcomer, who may feel he has a drinking problem, although not decided on his final identification as an alcoholic, and is frequently in a state of great apprehension as to his future should the nature of his illness and the steps he is taking to cope with it, become public property.

#### THE TEAM RESOLVED:

1. That anonymity being of vital importance to the new member by reason of:
  1. Fear of the opinion of his friends, and perhaps family.
  2. Fear of prejudice to his job.
  3. Fear of meeting someone in AA who knows him.
  4. Fear of being branded, in the eyes of the World, as an alcoholic.
  5. Threat to his confidence if a member known outside the Fellowship as a Member, lapses to drink.
  6. Indecision at the moment of impact of AA as to his acceptance of the fact that he is an alcoholic.

It is the responsibility of the sponsor to help him to understand the reason for this anonymity, on which he may rely without qualification, in every direction for as long as he so desires.

2. That it is anonymity that establishes unity between classes, professions, religions, races etc. and this strengthens the common bond between members of the Fellowship, old and new.
3. That it is of value, in many cases, for older Members partners to be introduced to Al-Anon in order that they also may be made aware of the reasons for and importance of anonymity.

#### REPRT FROM TEAM No. 4

#### "THE NEW MEMBER – MAINTAINING SOBRIETY"

Leader Derrick A

The aim of this Committee was to examine the needs of the new member of some 3/7 months sobriety in maintaining his/her sobriety and to suggest the best methods for retaining his interest and active participation within the Fellowship, bearing in mind that each Group is autonomous.

It is felt that it is the responsibility of the Group as a whole to examine its conscience, with particular reference to the sponsor, as to whether or not it is failing in its duty to help the new Member maintain sobriety.

## REQUIREMENT

To encourage within the group's activity the principles of Attraction, Interest and Variety, with the object of sustaining maximum participation and responsibility.

## METHOD

To maintain the attraction of the New Member, he should be encouraged to understand and practice the AA Way of Life, through the medium of The Big Book -12 Steps and 12 Traditions and other AA material. To maintain the attraction of the new Member and maintain his interest, he should be encouraged to participate in Group activities at an early date..... this would take the form of speaking at meetings, 12<sup>th</sup> Step work (with guidance where necessary) visiting other Groups etc. To add variety to the new Member's interest in meetings the committee felt that it was worthwhile recording the following suggestions based on the experience of members of the Committee.

- 1 If the Chairmanship of the Group were run on a monthly basis the comparatively new Member could be offered the opportunity to take his turn in the Chair allowing him the chance to select his own Speakers. (Such participation creates a sense of new found responsibility.)
2. An opportunity to visit other Groups to widen his experience and maintain his interest.
- 3 Visits to Conventions and Mini-conventions should be strongly encouraged, as this, without doubt, broadens the outlook of the new Member.

The understanding of the problem of alcoholism by the close relatives of the member's family is considered of vital importance in maintaining sobriety and every effort should be made to encourage relatives' attendance at Open Meetings and by the assistance of Al-Anon.

In conclusion the Committee feels that the adoption of the above suggestions should lead to a reduction in the loss of Members at an early stage in their sobriety.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The Question and Answer Session was designed to deal with the items referred to the Conference Committee which would not normally be covered in other discussions. The replies are published here for the information of and as a guide to the Fellowship generally.

## FINANCE

- Q1 That the Conference should ask all Groups whether they would consider setting themselves a financial target in some form – graph - temperature chart or score column and further that they would inform General Service Office the amount, to facilitate forward Budgeting?
- A1 Southern Intergroup and South West Intergroup reported that financial target schemes had been introduced in some groups and found to be a successful method of obtaining increased contributions. The General Service Office Budget for 1971 shows a DEFICIT of £1,700 and this will be incurred unless a significant increase in Group Contributions and Personal Donations was achieved. If the deficit is to be met by increased Group Contributions alone it requires an increase of nearly 30% in revenue from this source. The fact that Group Contributions for 1970 were less than those in 1969 was deplorable. It was agreed that all delegates should take this urgent message regarding finance and contributions back for positive action as we cannot continue to live upon our reserves.
- Q2 Full Financial Accounts be published well in advance of the Sixth General Service Conference, and in a form which can be easily checked.
- A2 This was achieved by issue of the Financial Data section of the Conference information and the publication of the same data in the March Newsletter.
- Q3 To discuss the position of Groups collecting funds in the name of the Fellowship who do not contribute towards those supporting services of the Fellowship when able to do so.
- A3 The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous is the incorporated company under the 1948 Companies Act and is registered as a Charity. As such it is ultimately responsible for all legal and financial matters concerning the Fellowship in the United Kingdom. Therefore, it is simply a legal matter that where money is collected in our name then those members are ‘accountable’ to us, i.e., to the Conference and the Board. This does not mean that groups have to produce account books the operative word is ‘accountable’. It was noted with concern that a high percentage of groups do not make any contributions to General Funds and it was a fact that some groups are indeed retaining and accumulating money. Whilst it is recognised that each group is autonomous in its own right it was considered unwise to ‘sit’ on funds. Some groups had been reported as collecting money in the name of AA and giving it to outside bodies, such as Churches. Such action was not in order and could be regarded as illegal.

## NEWSLETTER

- Q4 That consideration be given to what extent the General Service Board should report on its membership and activities in the Newsletter.
- A4 It was generally agreed that this information should be communicated to the Fellowship in the projected “BOX 514”, and this publication be issued quarterly.
- Q5 Newsletter - Future format and editorship.
- A5 This question was answered adequately in the General Service Board report to Conference.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Q6 T.V. Programme - That it be discussed again, or to be pointed out once more to Delegates that the decision taken previously by a special committee set up to deal with this matter still stands. They decided T.V. was completely out.



- A6 It was considered this question had been covered by the discussion of the General Service Board Report on Communications.
- Q7 That additional AA literature be produced which deals with practical problems which may arise in the early stages of recovery.
- A7 Any recommendations for such literature would come from the Team Reports which considered various sponsorship activities concerning the New Member.
- Q8 That the Conference should be invited to consider that AA could contribute towards Communications both to the Public and within Industry with reference to the report of the BMA Council of 100 on Alcoholism July 29<sup>th</sup> 1970.
- A8 The correct title of the report concerned is "Report by the Medical Council on Alcoholism of 29<sup>th</sup> July 1970". In a synopsis of this report the Chairman of the Communications Committee observed that only one reference was made to AA as a useful agency in recovery along with hostels etc. It also stated that the AA Programme of Recovery was not suitable for some people. Clearly there was virtually no co-operation between this body and AA and we should get closer to this Medical Council if we wish to enlighten the medical profession, particularly GP's. Nevertheless the report admitted that more information about the alcoholic was available from the Fellowship than from the National Council on Alcoholism. The General Manager reported that contact had recently been established with the executive director of the Medical Council (Rear Admiral Sir Richard Caldwell) and this will be developed further with the aim of achieving effective co-operation.
- It was noted that at the 1971 Convention at Bristol later this year it was the intention to provide a suitable speaker from the Industrial Field. Co-operation with outside agencies was obviously a major task in Communications and the General Service Board should ensure that it is approached in the correct way.

#### GENERAL

- Q9 AA's attitude to Al-Anon and Al-Ateen.
- A9 It was generally agreed that we should co-operate as far as our traditions permit with Al-Anon and Al-Ateen. For the help and co-operation we receive from these bodies we should be grateful. However, care must be taken to ensure that affiliation does not occur.
- Q10 Discussion of regionalisation in accordance with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Legacy Manual.
- A10 As this is currently being reviewed by the General Service Board it was agreed to leave this question open for possible review at next year's Conference.
- Q11 Intergroups should be given a full report on action taken subsequent to 1970 Conference on matters arising from that Conference in time to study the report and brief their delegates accordingly.
- A11 It was agreed that this item had been covered by the General Conference and subsequent discussion.
- Q12 Sponsorship - General discussion on all aspects.
- A12 This subject would be reviewed in depth by the four teams examining various aspects of New member and his sponsorship.

Q13 Should Intergroups collect data to show where the largest indraft lies and which aids to recovery are inadequate.

A13 The results of a "Census of 94" were outlined by a Southern Intergroup delegate. It was recommended that the pro-forma used be issued to other Intergroups so that they may conduct similar surveys. The results of such surveys should then be given to the General Service Office who could collate the data and include it in "BOX 514"

## SECTION NINE

### CLOSING ADDRESS

By ANGUS M

I should like to begin what I have to say, ladies and gentlemen, by asking you to accord a warm vote of thanks to the Chairman of this Conference, Patrick F. who has given up so much time and has done such a great deal to make this a successful gathering of delegates from all over Britain. One of the things Patrick did as Chairman of the Conference was to invite me to speak to you this morning, and I am very conscious of the honour of being asked to do so: though I may say that the anticipation of this moment has somewhat overshadowed the pleasure of being here with so many friends. As Wick said with such obvious feeling a few moments ago, A.A. gives us everything that makes life worthwhile, and what a joy it is to be here together this weekend sharing our experience, strength and hope with one another as members of this great Fellowship. How grateful I am that I was guided into AA at the right moment!

I must make it clear that anything I say is an expression only of my own opinion. I am in no sense speaking on behalf of the Services Committee, of which I am privileged to be a member, and they must be absolved from any responsibility for my utterances. And if it sounds as though I am directing my remarks pointedly at anyone, you are to understand that I include myself as a member of the audience in this respect. In other words, I address any critical remarks to myself as well as to others.

I decided at first to say nothing about the business of this Conference on the grounds that as the Conference has concluded its deliberations nothing useful could be added; but as I reflected this morning on the matters we have discussed, I came to the conclusion that there were a number of general principles which ought to be reaffirmed about the purpose of our meeting together here in Manchester each year. There is nothing particularly original about these principles, but I believe that they should be underlined on this occasion so that we may take away with us from this Sixth General Service Conference some thoughts on which we might find time to reflect before we next meet together.

The Annual Conference should be a generating house for ideas, ideas that should come forward to us from the Fellowship so that they may be put to the test here. One of our functions should be to sift the views of the Fellowship on a whole range of matters that affect our welfare, to separate the sound from the unsound, the good from the bad, so that we may come to decisions as to how the Fellowship should go forward and continue to grow. Without new ideas we are in danger of standing still. I am convinced, from my own experience as a member of AA, that the ideas are there if we can but encourage our fellow members to send them forward. And yet; look at the agenda for the Conference - only a handful of topics have been submitted to the Conference Committee for consideration, and of these half are about subjects on which action

has already been taken. I do not think that this is a sign of health. Whose is the responsibility? I believe it is ours, all of us here in this room. It is we who have the duty of going back to our respective groups and intergroups to inspire a sense of dedication in our fellow members to this Fellowship whose well being is so dear to us. If we can do this, then the Conference will indeed become a generating house, we can begin to produce at peak capacity and the main current can be switched on at full surge.

We have not yet begun to use the opportunity which the Conference gives us each year of surveying our stewardship on behalf of the Fellowship; and let me here say that I earnestly hope we can get away from the commonly held idea that there are two parts to AA—"us" and "them" the "rank and file" and the "powers that be". This attitude is in evidence even in Manchester from time to time. I wonder how many of us come to the Conference with the intention of gingering up the establishment? The fact of the matter is that no such thing as the establishment exists. We are all in this together as equals. If some of us have jobs to do, committees to serve on, that makes us no better than any other member of AA. We are merely trusted servants, given some responsibility for a little time. There are very many better members of AA who have never come near the Conference who do far more work for AA, more faithfully than a lot of us here today. We are responsible to those members, whether we be delegates, Board members, committee members or officials of the Fellowship, and let us not forget it.

It seems to me that there are three essential parts to a General Service Conference if it is to take the form it should. First, there should be a comprehensive report on the previous year's activities, dealing particularly with the major policy decisions that were taken by the previous year's Conference. If our decisions are to have any effect, it is essential that they be acted upon promptly and efficiently, and the Conference has a right to know what action has resulted from the decisions taken the previous year. The principle of accountability is of great importance to AA, and I consider that a third of the time of each Conference should be given over to the explanation and discussion of the previous year's activities. Some of the information can be circulated beforehand as a printed report, and the Board have of course done this each year; but from the detailed questions that have been asked this year it is quite obvious that delegates are keen to follow up topics that were discussed last year; and a printed report cannot give information in sufficient detail.

The second part of each year's Conference should be devoted to the consideration of a major subject of topical importance affecting the Fellowship in the widest possible way. It was natural that the first five Conferences tended to be occupied with matters relating to organisation and the administrative framework within which the Conference can do its work; but organisation is in the last analysis a dead subject, only the means to an end, and the time has come to deal with the live issues that really matter to us. The Conference Committee is to be congratulated on choosing as this year's theme the question of sponsorship which is so fundamental to the growth of our Fellowship. When we choose such a subject to study, let us bear in mind that we should not be looking at it from an abstract, theoretical point of view, but as a matter of vital importance affecting our primary purpose to stay sober ourselves and carry the message of sobriety to the still-suffering alcoholic. And if the subject has no direct bearing on this, we should not be wasting time with it.

The Conference should, in conclusion draw together the decisions it has reached in the form of precise, intelligible directions to the servants of the Fellowship so that they may be entirely clear

about the action they have to take over the ensuing year. If we do not give accurate instructions and then see that they are carried out, we have only ourselves to blame if things go wrong.

If we run our Conference in this way, making it plain to the Fellowship that we are accountable to them, we shall succeed in arousing the interest of our fellow members. Nothing, however, kills interest so quickly as the feeling that the affairs of this Conference are the exclusive concern of the delegates to Manchester. But if we can open our affairs and our deliberations to the Fellowship, if we can persuade them that they are every bit as responsible for the well-being of AA, nationally as we are, then we shall succeed in sweeping away many of the misunderstandings that have led to difficulties in the past. The principle of openness is of crucial importance in AA, both for the individual and for the Fellowship as a whole. We should therefore make use of every means at our disposal to tell the Fellowship of our affairs by having articles published in the 'Newsletter', in the "Roundabout" and in the news-sheet soon to be issued from Redcliffe Gardens.

When the Fellowship come to be interested in this way, they will soon share our concern about things that are worrying us, and they will help us to deal with them. Finance, for example we have heard this weekend about our financial standing; we have had accurate figures for the first time, thanks to the hard work of Ronnie G. We know precisely where we are and we can feel just where the shoe is pinching. I know it is necessary to have the money right because unless it is, than any plans we may devise for development are not going to get off the drawing-board. But frankly, money should be a matter of secondary importance in AA. I don't honestly believe that our finances are the problem to us that we sometimes think they are - and I say this in the full knowledge that we are running into a deficit. The money is there if the Fellowship is convinced that it is needed for the primary purpose for which we exist. When a member of AA, is convinced that something has to be done for this end, he is not reluctant to part with his money. We are not going to cut back on any service provided for the Fellowship from Redcliffe Gardens; and I believe that the money will be there to meet our needs if we can carry back to our groups something of the sense of urgency that has inspired our discussions this weekend.

It must be made clear to the Fellowship that AA, in Great Britain is, for practical purposes, on its own, responsible for running its own affairs. We have started to take initiatives of our own in Britain and we must continue to do so. Those long apron strings that stretch across the Atlantic must be untied. We shall continue to benefit by the experience and wisdom of our friends in America, but we have to learn to stand on our own feet even though we may be conscious that we are standing on the shoulders of those who went before us.

As I have sat through the different sessions at this Conference my mind has occasionally gone back to my own Group and I have found myself asking "What would so-and-so say about all this? How would this member react? How, could that other member be persuaded?" As we all know there are no sanctions in AA. We cannot force members to behave in certain ways, even though we may feel that it might be for the common good of AA if they did so. There are no dues or fees, -no membership cards, no union rules in AA. What is it then that gives such strength and purpose to this Fellowship of ours? What is the discipline that unites us together for our common welfare? It stems from one compelling power.

Bill W., our co-founder, died in January. He was the author and inspiration of practically everything that matters in AA -a great man in every sense of that word: in his vision, his energy,

his compassion. I hope we may carry back from this Conference some of these qualities. This is how Bill described the compelling power of which I speak:

“We of AA obey spiritual principles, at first because we must, then because we ought to, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are AA’s disciplinarians; we need no others.”

(Twelve and Twelve - P.178)

When I came first to AA what attracted me immediately was the sympathy in suffering that reached out to me from my fellow-members; and indeed it is this that still attracts me more than anything else except the love that I find in AA. Our common experience of suffering brings us closer than anything else except indeed for love. We are, it seems, fused together like molten metal by the recollection of the experiences we have endured. I do not wish to sound fanciful or poetical, but there are times I look around an AA meeting and see some of my fellow-members still marked by their suffering, and somehow in the demeanour with which the suffering is accepted it becomes beautiful. How strange that suffering should appear to be beautiful; but as this healing programme works its way upon the alcoholic, even the ugliness of suffering is refined and changed into a radiance that is inexpressibly attractive. Many of us have heard stories of almost incredible suffering from fellow-alcoholics who have come through all their experiences to a confident, joyous conviction that all is well at last, now that they have surrendered. You know that lavender has to be crushed before it can yield its sweetest smell. So with the alcoholic.

But do we continue to apply the discipline of suffering to ourselves? As the years go by, do we forget it, put it behind us? Have we lost the capacity to face suffering, our own and that of others, and to apply the lessons that it teaches us? I still fancy, from time to time, when a new member comes to our group, frightened, shaking, puzzled, worried, and I look into his face, that his face becomes a mirror, and those terrified, haunted eyes are my own. But there are other times when suffering becomes remote, when we shrink back from it, when we find it difficult to face. We must beware lest our senses become dull to the significance of suffering. Are there moments when we turn away from suffering in another alcoholic as if we can not bear to listen and to be reminded of what we were, and are, ourselves? I believe that, in part, this is the cause of the wastage in members which we have been thinking about during this Conference. No matter how long we have been sober: five, ten, fifteen or twenty years, we should make a regular practice of reminding ourselves of the suffering that brought us to AA, and which we can have back again only too easily, if we forget.

Great suffering and great love. What a difficult word “love” is to understand! How about the following definition?

“Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient.”

I think this is a perfect description, in beautifully simple language, of what the AA programme is largely about, and especially what sponsorship is about. Is this the spirit in which we receive the new member? What the New Member is told about the programme on his first visit is of far less

interest to him than what he sees in those who greet him. Unless he sees love in us, anything we may tell him about the programme is likely to go over his head. Unless he can feel something of the intensity of our desire to help him, to give him our own experience, strength and hope, then he may never be encouraged to go on with us into the life of sobriety and beyond.

Naturally, what he sees in us will be something that we have ourselves cultivated and brought to life; and if we ourselves have not practised the programme, are shall not be able to demonstrate our love as we ought to. If we lose our vision of suffering, our understanding of its profound meaning for our lives, we shall also lose our capacity to love deeply, and with that will vanish the willingness to give ourselves instantly and readily to the newcomer. And if we lose this willingness, we shall of course lose the newcomer too.

This is then the discipline that controls our behaviour as members of AA and governs the conduct of our affairs - a self-discipline far more effective than the rules of a written constitution. Although there are no sanctions in AA, we each know that there is an ultimate penalty to be paid by us as individuals if we neglect to conform to the self-discipline imposed by suffering and love. We should also remember that the same sanction applies to the Fellowship. This too is judged by the same stringent standard; and if the Fellowship falls short, if collectively we fail to learn the lessons of suffering and love, then there will be a judgement upon us because we shall have neglected our suffering brothers and sisters, and something else may have to take our place. Let me close by reminding you of the solemn parable of the fig tree.

“A man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; he came in search of fruit on it, but he found none. So he said to the vinedresser, ‘Here, have I come for three years in search of fruit on this fig-tree without finding any; cut it down, why should it take up space?’ But the man replied, ‘Leave it for this year, sir, till I dig round about it and put in manure. Then it may bear fruit next year. If not, you can have it cut down.’”

CONFERENCE 1972

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Seventh annual Meeting  
of General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in the United Kingdom.  
Midland Hotel, Manchester  
21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> April 1972

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“PROGRESS: A REAPPRAISAL FOR THE FUTURE” - Conference Theme.

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## SYNOPSIS OF MAIN SESSIONS

The Chairman in opening the Conference gave a special welcome to Maurice from Geneva, Switzerland who was attending as an overseas observer.

The General Service Board Report was presented by Ronald L, the Chairman of the General Service Board. This Report had been circulated some three weeks in advance of the Conference itself so delegates should have had an opportunity to consider its various aspects before coming to this assembly.

The appointment of Nel H. of Southern Intergroup to the General Service Board to which she was warmly welcomed was confirmed unanimously.

In answer to a question regarding nominations for Board membership it was explained that these were first considered by the Policy Committee of the General Service Board who passed their recommendations to the main Board who appointed members. Conference was then asked to confirm such appointments.

The Board proposal that they should have representation upon Convention Committees to ensure the guardianship of the Traditions and finances was agreed unanimously.

The appointment of Ronald L. as Chairman of the Board and his extension of service for three years was approved. After agreeing the specific items mentioned above the Board Report was then given general approval.

Conference then approved the following resolution raised by Prison Intergroup:-

“That as from today (8/4/72) Prison Intergroup as presently constituted be disbanded and its future policy and co-ordination of efforts in respect of the prison sponsorship be vested in the General Service Board through a committee that they shall bring into being on our behalf: that all liabilities be discharged immediately and the surplus monies held by Prison Intergroup be passed to the Fellowship.”

The resolution concerning members of Alcoholics Anonymous holding office in the Fellowship whilst working for outside agencies connected “with Alcoholism was referred to Committee No. 3.

The Reports of Committees Nos. 1, 2 and 3 are attached.

The Report of Committee No. 1. was approved. Reference paragraph 12 of this Report it was agreed a calendar of major events should be published in Box 514 and the Newsletter would continue to publish such information as it does at present under the heading ‘Coming Events.’

The Report of Committee No. 2. was accepted unanimously without discussion.

The Report of Committee No. 3. was adopted with the exception of Resolution 2 in Para. 2(b) on Page 2 of their Report (which had also been discussed by Committee No. 2). Following discussion upon the problems which can arise when a member who is an officer in AA is also an employee of an outside organisation engaged in Alcoholism or the alcoholic it was agreed that Resolution No. 2. be left on the table and re-examined at the 1973 General Service Conference.

The final words used by Ronald L. in the closing address to the Conference were:

“If all the words and reports of the Conference have the result of making the doors one inch wider to the suffering alcoholic, we will not have failed”.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO. 1  
INTER-RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP.

This Committee was given the task of examining the recommended communication chain given in the Committee No. 4 Report to the 1970 Conference.

The problems approached were:

First, those directly concerned with communications among Groups and Intergroups:

Secondly, those concerned with National and Regional gatherings:

Thirdly, certain particular queries and suggestions made by various Intergroups throughout the country.

The decision arrived at by the Committee was to recommend the following:

a) GROUPS AND INTERGROUPS

1. That General Service Office immediately inform all Intergroups about any change of Officers within any Intergroups. This means that every Intergroup should immediately inform the General Service Office if they make any change in their Officers.
2. That proxy delegates at Intergroup assemblies are a matter for the individual Intergroup to decide, though probably it is best not to have them (see page 68 of "The AA Service Manual")
3. That the Intergroup assemblies meet at least quarterly, in accordance with the recommendations of Committee No. 1 of the 5<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference.
4. That the minutes of Intergroup assemblies be circulated to neighbouring Intergroups for information.
5. That Intergroup Broadsheets or Newsletters are a valuable means of communication. (It was noted that 300 copies a two-sided quarto sheet of 800 words could be printed for £4.00.) One alternative would be to buy a duplicator at £24.00, initially more expensive, but eventually saving its own cost.
6. That all members be reminded that any member of the Fellowship can approach the Conference Chairman, the Chairman of the Board, or the General Manager with any problem that arises.
7. That the Editors of the 'NEWSLETTER' ensure that the various European Central Offices receive a copy of the publication each month.
8. That it would be a big help to the Editors of the 'NEWSLETTER' if they could have a representative to help collect material in each Intergroup.

B NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GATHERINGS

9. That the General Service Board investigate the relationship between Alcoholics Anonymous in these Islands and Europe looking particularly towards future European development.
10. That Intergroup One Day Mini-Conventions be held wherever suitable.
11. That the General Service Board investigate possible accommodation for future conventions in England, Scotland and Wales seeking premises to hold 1,000 people under one roof, and also making enquiries for centres to hold 500 in case of the eventuality should arise in England of holding one Convention in the North and one in the South.
12. That General Service Office compile a calendar of major events, to avoid, if possible, clashes between English, Scottish and Irish gatherings.
13. That conventions be held yearly.

- 14 That wherever possible the organisation for a Convention should rest with local intergroups.
- C) SUGGESTIONS MADE BY INTERGROUPS.
15. That a digest of significant discussions, reports and actions of General Service Conferences be sent out by the General Service Office to all groups direct in England, Scotland, Wales and to Northern Ireland Central Service Office within fourteen days of the closing of each Conference. Further copies should be directed to any European observers who have attended the Conference.
  16. That to assist regional representation on the Board Intergroups continue to send to the General Service Board names of suggestion regional representatives where they can find suitable candidates.
  17. That the newly published Box 514 should do much to improve communications within the Fellowship.
  18. That Intergroups invite representatives from neighbouring intergroups to attend their assemblies as observers.

COMMITTEE NO. 2 REPORT  
RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH ALCOHOLISM.

Remembering that our primary purpose is to help the alcoholic who is still suffering, this committee attempts to relate how our Fellowship should co-operate with other Agencies concerned with Alcoholism.

The Committee consider that relationships with outside organisations at all levels in the Fellowship. i.e. Board, Intergroup and individual members should receive the maximum co-operation wherever this can be achieved.

They consider that the present arrangements whereby the Members of the General Service Board are nominated to attend the meetings of outside organisations for top level discussions to be satisfactory, and that these arrangements should continue.

At Intergroup level, however, they consider that there could be an expansion of present activities especially where the Medical Profession is concerned and could encompass the following:-

- 1 Liaison with the local executive Medical Council, the College of General Practitioners and any local branch of the BMA.
- 2 Where Medical Schools exist in Intergroup areas contacts could be made with the Professor of Psychiatry with the offer of talks to Medical Students passing through the College.

At group level the best contacts are to be made with General Practitioners and it is worthy of mention that the Medical Council on Alcoholism of their own initiative are trying to reach down to General Practitioners with the information about Alcoholism and Alcoholics and how they should be treated. In this connection the first means of referral is ideally Alcoholics Anonymous.

It is the experience of the members of this committee that by far the most satisfactory approach is on a personal basis to General Practitioners.

It is recommended that Intergroups/Groups contact the Directors of Social Services which came into being as the result of the 1970 Social Welfare Act and which would enable them to get in touch with the many social workers involved in their areas.

Where non-medical organisations are concerned, experience has been varied which in turn has dictated the quality of co-operation; on the other hand where maximum co-operation has been achieved the results have been most beneficial to suffering alcoholics. It is the committee's view however that co-operation must always be seen to be in existence, that is to say, that where co-operation has been offered and refused that it should remain in existence until such time it is needed, or asked for, or accepted.

The Committee consider that the prime objective is to reach the still suffering alcoholic when he or she comes to our notice through an outside organisation, then the co-operation of the Fellowship should be seen to exist.

The Committee having considered the question of Prison and Probation Services recommend that the approach at top level should be to the Home Office and Scottish Office and it should be made by the General Service Board or the appointed member of the Board.

While new arrangements for dealing with prison activities may emerge as a result the decisions taken at this Conference the prime objective is to reach the prisoner within the prison by the closest liaison with the Services existing in Prisons.

As a result of the recent disbandment of the national Prison Intergroup it was felt that it may be worthwhile for Intergroups to consider forming small Prison/Institutions committees to share this experience at a local level and act as a channel for passing information or queries on Prison matters to the Board Member responsible or to individual AA Prison Sponsors.

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Committee having studied the extract from the recommendation of Committee No 4 of the 1970 Conference are of the opinion that the principles contained therein are still relevant and important to Public Information and communications generally.

Reference was made to the General Service Board Report outlining the Policy Committee's responsibilities for external communications. The Committee fully endorsed the Board's decision to deal with mass media centrally in order to avoid fragmentation of opinion or misinterpretation.

The Committee also agreed with the intention that the larger Intergroups should appoint suitable members as Public Information specialists who would deal with local media particularly in view of the increased number of local radio stations. The Committee recommends that the appointment of these specialists should take place without further delay.

The Committee recommend that the holding of Press Conferences with leading newspapers should be handled by the Board and that copies of the press releases should be sent to specialists in Intergroup areas well in advance of the release date, allowing time for verification of data and so that the Fellowship is seen to be speaking nationally with one voice on the same set of facts.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.3.

“FUTURE OF THE CONFERENCE AND FUND RAISING”

1 REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.2. of FIFTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1970.

i) The Committee considered the Report of Committee No. 2. of the Fifth General Service Conference 1970 which was adopted by that Conference, and has since then regulated the composition of the Conference. In general, the Committee are of the opinion that the recommendations in this Report are still sound, and that there should be no major alteration in the arrangements set out therein.

ii) The following matters were discussed:

a) Composition (paragraph A1(a) of Report.) A proposal was put forward that the number of delegates from each Intergroup should be limited to two, until such time as a regional organisation came into existence over the whole country. It was agreed however, that no change should be introduced in this paragraph of the Report at present, and that the maximum permitted number of delegates for each Intergroup should be four.

b) Prisons, Intergroups and Hospital Intergroups. Paragraphs A 2(a) and (b) should be deleted since the interests of Prisons and Hospitals Intergroups were now represented by the ordinary Intergroups, and moreover, a General Service Board Member was now formally associated with the work of Prison Groups.

c) General Manager. Paragraph A 2(f) should be deleted. The General Manager, as the servant of the Fellowship had an important part to play in the work of the Conference, but now that the General Service Board had taken full responsibility for the services of the Fellowship, it was not necessary for the General Manager to be a full member of the Conference.

d) Rotation. (Paragraph B (a)) The importance of the word ‘continuity’ in this paragraph should be stressed. It was highly desirable that delegates should serve for their full period of three years continuously.

iii) Drafting amendments. A number of drafting amendments were necessary to take account of developments. These were:

(a) Paragraph A.2 (d) Delete “and the Services Committee”

(b) Paragraph A.2 (e) Delete “one delegate” and substitute “the Editor”

(c) Paragraph C (a) Line three delete “Third Legacy Manual” and substitute “Service Manual”

(d) Paragraph E last line delete “and the Services Committee”

(e) Paragraph H (a) Line 1 delete “General Manager in consultation with the” Line 2 delete “as necessary”.

(f) Paragraph H (b) Line 2 delete “possibly by means of Progress Reports published by the Services Committee” and substitute “should be published in Box 514”.

2 THREE RESOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY COMMITTEE NO. 2 IN 1970

The Committee also considered the three further resolutions proposed by Committee No 2 in 1970 and adopted by the Fifth General Service Conference

- (a) Resolution 1 They had no changes to propose in this resolution, either than to suggest two amendments:
  - i) The Heading should be altered to read “CONFERENCE AGENDA”
  - ii) Line 2 -delete –”With the assistance of the Services Committee”.
- (b) Resolution 2 The Committee resolved that, the wording of this resolution should be amended to read “That the Conference endorse the action of the General Service Board as being entirely consistent with the Traditions of the Fellowship, in not appointing to the Board or to any other office members of the Fellowship who are professionally engaged in work with alcoholics”.

The Committee where of the opinion that a decision whether a member of AA holding any other office in the Fellowship should continue to hold such office after taking up work for an outside organisation, dealing with alcoholics must be left to the conscience of the individual, the Group and the Intergroup concerned. They considered that such questions should be weighed with great care in the light of the guidelines laid down by Bill W on pages 114 - 117 of “AA Comes of Age”, and in the AA pamphlet “Co-operation, not Affiliation.”

NOTE (IT WAS AGREED THAT THIS RESOLUTION BE LEFT ON THE TABLE AND RE-EXAMINED AT THE 1973 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE)

- (c) Resolution 3 Last line delete “to G. S.O. Funds” and substitute “The General Service Board”.

### 3 BUILDING UP OF FUNDS FOR THE FUTURE

- (a) The Committee agreed that the Fellowship, and in particular the General Service Board as servants of that Fellowship, had a responsibility to build up the funds of AA for future development, within the terms of Warranty Two of the Twelfth Concept for World Service, that “Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, should be its prudent financial principle”.
- (b) Personal responsibility for the financing of the activities of AA should be brought home to every member of the Fellowship, though emotionally - based appeals produce no long-term effect.
- (c) There should be a persistent drive to encourage members to donate to the Fellowship by means of covenanted subscriptions which entitled AA to reclaim any tax paid at the standard rate. Simple; accurate information on covenants was needed for publication in Box 514.
- (d) A satisfactory response in the form of financial donations depended largely on effective communication to each individual member so that everyone would be aware of the needs of the Fellowship, and so that there would be no uncertainty as to why money was required. It should be stressed at Group level that if a Group wants a meeting to take place, this will cost money, not just for services provided in the meeting room (heating, lighting, coffee etc..) but for the literature and the wider AA services being used.
- (e) The example of the Leeds Thursday Group was referred to. Each member agreed to give 25p each week, in addition to money put in the pot, to the funds of the General Service

Board, and this money was paid direct to Redcliffe Gardens. The result was that the Group's annual contribution to Central Funds rose from £60 to £180.

- (f) The long-term needs of the Fellowship should be kept in mind. Sooner or later, and in any case no later than February 1987, when the lease of 11 Redcliffe Gardens expired, premises for the General Service Office would have to be found. The General Service Board had a firm responsibility to plan for this contingency and to build up a surplus of funds which would make it possible for suitable new premises to be found in due time.
- (g) The financial surplus available each year should be invested to achieve maximum growth consistent with safety.
- (h) From time to time details should be published in Box 514, showing, the upper limit permitted in respect of bequests and gifts to AA by members.
- (i) Contributions to Central Funds by Groups under each Intergroup should be published in Box 514 at six monthly intervals (including NIL contributions). The special financial arrangements in London Intergroup, which supported its own office, would need to be referred to when these lists were published.

## SEVENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1972. MISCELLANEOUS

### 1 THE FACT FINDING SURVEY

Leslie K explained the purpose of the questionnaire which delegates were asked to have completed by AA Group members.

The aim was to provide AA with statistical information about itself, in particular the channels through which the AA message reached potential members, the time people had been in AA the average age of members, and so on. As public interest in the problems of alcoholism increased, so the Public Media tended to turn to AA as the most successful agency working in the field of alcoholism for facts and figures about the Fellowship. We had on previous occasions been put in the embarrassing position of being unable to supply the facts, and this survey aimed to fill the gap. It was emphasised that the questionnaire would supply statistics not individual records, in fact members were specifically asked not to put their names on the questionnaires. Delegates were asked to distribute the questionnaires to members in as random a way as possible, to return them to the General Manager as soon as possible, and to say which Intergroup they came from when returning them, as there would be some interest in seeing if there were regional variations.

### 2 ELECTION OF 1973 CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

Bill S who had been proposed and seconded for this office felt obliged, with great reluctance, to decline, for personal and domestic reasons.

There was strong support for a suggestion that the 1973 Chairman should be from Scotland. Accordingly it was proposed by Jack G and seconded by John H that Angus McP should be asked to stand. Angus agreed and was elected unanimously.



### 3 DATE AND PLACE OF 1973 CONFERENCE

It was agreed that the 1973 Conference should again be held at The Midland Hotel, Manchester on April 13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 1973

#### GENERAL NOTE

The Report of Committee No. 2 of the Fifth General Service Conference in 1970 as amended by the agreed changes introduced by Committee No. 3 of this the Seventh General Service Conference will be issued separately at a later date as the operative document concerning the composition of Conference.

FRIDAY 13th APRIL

The Eighth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held on the 13th to 15th April 1973, and after the preliminary registration of delegates was opened at 9pm. by Angus M the Chairman of the Conference with the Customary silence, and he asked that during this period all present should give thought to the purpose of the meetings and to remember with gratitude the unselfish service of many departed friends, and in particular Leslie K. and John H. Trustees who had died since the Seventh Conference.

Angus then opened the first session with the Preamble and expressed his pleasure at the privilege granted to him to be Chairman and welcomed all the delegates in particular the three observers - Inga-Britt of Sweden, Finn of France and Julius of Ulster.

He then gave his keynote address: -

“I believe that we should bring to our task at this Conference a sense of three enduring values. The first of these is vision. Our Fellowship owes its existence to Bill’s vision of the possibility that countless numbers of still-suffering alcoholics could find release from their compulsion by using our programme of recovery. Throughout this weekend, we should seek inspiration for the decisions we shall be making by remembering that our primary purpose is still to carry the message of sobriety to the alcoholic who suffers. It is the suffering alcoholic who will give us the vision to enable us to plan wisely and well. We must not forget him.

Secondly, we should have a sense of faith. We should have faith in our programme of recovery. It has worked miracles for hundreds of thousands; and we can each show how it has worked miracles for ourselves as we look back and remember what we once were like. We should have faith in our wonderful Fellowship of A.A. and in its ability to go on working miracles for the many alcoholics who have still to reach us. We should have faith in our group conscience to reach sound decisions for our welfare as a Fellowship; and finally, we should have faith that all will be well with us and with A.A. so long as we try to practice the principles of our Twelve Steps in all our affairs.

Vision and faith are abstract qualities, and we need to put them into practice. This makes it necessary to have a sense of service. We must apply our ideals by doing the spadework ourselves. As delegates to this important Conference, we have carefully prepared ourselves for our work by studying the Conference papers and by consulting our Groups and Intergroups on the matters to be discussed so that the Conference will represent the group conscience of Great Britain in the widest sense. We must be ready to work hard during the Conference, and we must be prepared to carry on with the work once the Conference is over. A delegate’s job does not begin when he books into the Midland Hotel, nor does it end when he packs his bag and departs on the Sunday afternoon. Above all, this year, we must be ready to put into practice the theme of the Conference -”Working with others”.

As a Fellowship we have a long tradition of co-operating with other agencies in the field of alcoholism, reaching right back to 1935 when Bill and Dr. Bob went to look for the third member of A.A., in Akron City Hospital. The first prison group started in San Quentin in 1942; and we

have been involved in social work with alcoholics since 1939 when the Los Angeles Probation Department, encouraged by two non-alcoholics, began to get some of their drinking clients on to the A.A. programme. Since these early days, our co-operation with outside agencies has increased on every side. Of course there are still problems. Our own traditions of anonymity, non-involvement and attraction rather than promotion are sometimes misunderstood by our outside friends, who may be inclined to think that we are not keen to co-operate with them. On the other hand, many outside agencies dealing with alcoholics simply do not know of our existence, and have no conception of the degree of success our programme has been able to achieve.

It is our task this weekend to see how we can help to improve this state of affairs in order that the message of sobriety can reach more and more alcoholics and be the means of bringing them back to life “.

Ronald L. Chairman of the General Service Board in presenting the Board’s Report to Conference (Appendix A) asked that in view of the fact that this Report was circulated it be taken as read. This was agreed.

From the text of the report the following resolutions were unanimously accepted.

#### FUTURE CONVENTIONS

A sub-Committee of the Policy Committee, as directed by the 1972 Conference studied the question of future conventions, and submit to Conference the following resolution for approval: -

It is recommended that after the 1974 National Convention, arrangements for gatherings be left to those Intergroups within the general areas of the North of England, and the South of England and Wales. The question of holding future National Conventions after 1974 should be reviewed annually at the General Service Conference.

#### ELECTION OF NEW TRUSTEES

- |     |                       |   |         |  |
|-----|-----------------------|---|---------|--|
| (a) | Non-Alcoholic Trustee | Dr. John P.W. Hughes MRCS, LRCP, MB, BS. MD, DPH. |         |  |
| (b) | Alcoholic Trustees    | Guy L   | Glasgow |  |
|     |                       | Derrick A   | Norwich |  |
|     |                       | Alan D  | Swansea |  |

Ronald L. formally asked that the General Service Board Report be adopted.

The adoption was carried unanimously.

Arising from the report discussion took place on the possibility of setting up a special building fund for the renewal of the lease of 11 Redcliffe Gardens London SW10 and many points were put forward. Finally it was agreed this matter be referred to Committee 4 for their detailed consideration, and report back.



‘Detoxification Centres’  
‘Alcoholism -A G.P.’s Problem’

followed by a general discussion on the subjects and the contents of the films.

It was felt that whereas no detoxification centres have been established in this country as yet, the Canadian experience illustrated in the first film could be of benefit to us, should such a programme be introduced here.

The portrayals, by professional actors, of alcoholics in the film, ‘Alcoholism -A G.P.’s Problem’ was effective, nevertheless, the presentation met with a mixed reaction, although it created much discussion.

SUNDAY 15th APRIL

Consideration was given to the Resolution referred from the Friday evening meeting, and it was unanimously agreed that:

‘That this Conference endorses the action of the General Service Board as being entirely consistent with the Traditions of the Fellowship in not appointing to the Board of Trustees, or to any other office under its control, members of Alcoholics Anonymous who are paid employees of agencies mainly engaged in work with alcoholics or alcoholism.

The Conference suggests that members of Alcoholics Anonymous who are paid employees of such agencies do not hold any group, intergroup or other office within A.A.

The Conference further suggests that members of Alcoholics Anonymous who undertake voluntary unpaid work for such agencies should hold office in the Fellowship only if the individual and group conscience has so decided in the light of the guidance given by Bill W. on pages 114 -117 of ‘A.A. Comes of Age’ and in the A.A. pamphlet Co-operation not Affiliation.’

The recommendations of the four committees were presented by the respective Chairmen, and after discussion and amendment where necessary, the reports were adopted. These are attached as:

Appendix	C	Committee	No. 1. ‘A.A. and the Medical Profession’
Appendix	D	Committee	No. 2. ‘A.A in Prisons’
Appendix	E	Committee	No. 3. ‘A.A in the Community’
Appendix	F	Committee	No. 4. ‘A Reappraisal of our own Structure’

Before moving to the election of the Chairman of the Ninth General Service Conference 1974, the Chairman informed the meeting that a further nomination had been received since the nominations had closed on the Friday evening.

Before placing this additional nomination Angus considered that a clear expression of the Conferences wishes should be made as to whether this was acceptable in principle, and that guidance for future Conferences should be given.

After discussion, during which it was agreed that on this occasion only the late nomination be accepted it was resolved that: - Nominations for the succeeding Chairman of Conference be lodged at the Friday evening (or first) session and the list then closed.

The election of the Chairman be taken at the Sunday morning (or final) session'.

The Chairman then placed before the Conference the nominations of:

Maurice S. (West Riding and North East Intergroup)

Doris Y. (London Intergroup)

and Maurice S. was elected.

## SHARE

Ronnie H. in reporting the activities of the editorial team said they were pleased to have received many expressions of appreciation of the improved quality of the magazine as a whole. 'Share' as the successor of 'Newsletter' has been published for 21 years, and not 25 years as stated in the General Service Board Report.

The present circulation is 2,500 per month and is continuing to increase.

He stressed that to continue to provide an interesting and acceptable magazine, a constant supply of contributions were required, and urged all the delegates to encourage members to contribute. There is no need to fear that contributions might be below standard since there is a willing team of sub-editors who would help if required.

The first Intergroup issue had been most successful, a second issue is in the course of preparation, and it is planned to have a third early next year, and he asked all Intergroups to consider the possibility of contributing 8 to 10 pages for an issue of this kind, remembering that such issues take approximately six months to prepare.

## BOX 514

Nel H. the Trustee responsible for this newsheet reminded everyone that this publication was a medium of 2-way communication and Nel appealed to all delegates for more news from Intergroups, and suggested that the Intergroup Information Officers keep her advised of forthcoming events, and supply reports of happenings in their areas.

In his closing address Ronald L. Chairman of the Trustees, Conference of last years meeting, and the general theme of 'Growing into our Responsibilities'. The 1972 Conference had been mainly concerned with our Structure and organisation, and at that time the second phase of the re-organisation was starting, and this last year had shown that this structure had operated well.

He believed that we now have a firm foundation on which to build and that growth at all levels had taken place throughout the Fellowship. He considered that we are now able to move beyond structure, and turn our efforts more towards the A.A. Programme and Traditions, carrying the message more and more widely.

That we were able to do this was reflected in this year's Conference at which only one out of the four committees had been concerned with structure; the others had considered how best we could reach out into the community and give our service to the still suffering alcoholic wherever he or

she might be.

He spoke of the growling awareness and interest in alcoholism, and the increasing number of other agencies concerned with treatment. He warned of the dangers as time went on of other people producing theories about treatment which might conflict with AA. principles; we should not be misguided into believing that we could compromise. He hoped that he would never be beguiled into believing that he could one day drink again. He was an alcoholic, and he knew that this meant that he could never safely drink again. So long as he remembered that, so long as he allowed no compromise with the AA programme and Traditions, then he knew he could continue to lead a normal, happy and useful life.

Ronald in referring to our improving communications thanked the Editor and the team for their invaluable work in producing to such a high standard the magazine 'Share' and also Nel for her excellent work on 'Box 514' an important and much needed link in the chain of 2-way communication.

Ronald asked that all the delegates remind themselves of our responsibility to the Fellowship for its integrity and simplicity and for carrying the A.A. message of hope to the suffering alcoholic, and that this responsibility can only be properly discharged if we keep to the basic principles of our Fellowship.

Finally, Ronald thanked Angus for his excellent Chairmanship, both prior to and during the Conference; and this had been obviously reflected in the atmosphere of the Conference and the spirit of the discussions.

Angus in closing the Conference expressed his appreciation for the kindness shown to him during the weekend and was very conscious of the privilege and the opportunity to serve that have been given to him.

The Conference closed with the Serenity Prayer.

#### EUROPEAN MEETING.

Several delegates who had an opportunity to stay over, met with the European observers at 2.30 p.m. Sunday 15th.

The meeting did not adopt any formal agenda, but by consensus of opinion held an informal exchange of views and a sharing of experience.

Inga-Britt (Sweden) Finn (France) and Julius (Ireland) felt that the Conference had been most informative in addition to being a memorable occasion, and appreciated the opportunity it had afforded to share.

Inga-Britt informed the meeting that hospital co-operation in Sweden was very similar to our own, although there was an inclination under their system of Community Social Welfare for the alcoholic to be treated almost too well.

Regarding 'A.A. in Prisons' Finn said that in France a committee of groups working in prisons

had been formed and discussions with the Director of National Prisons were taking place. The Swedish experience in this field was small and so far not very good. Julius reported that in Northern Ireland one prison allowed prisoners to attend outside meetings under supervision, but A.A. had no facilities for visiting political prisons.

The general conclusion was that as a Fellowship it is important that contact is kept with the highest level in the prison service, and equally if not more important we should always make very clear the A.A. message.

Detoxification Centres are well advanced in Sweden, and the alcoholics treated art) transferred eventually to a hospital. An opinion was expressed that European meetings would promote unity within the participating countries as well as within the continent, and one possible way of having more representative meetings would be to combine a European Convention and Conference on a regular and rotating basis.

Finn suggested that possibly British Groups may consider the idea of twinning with a French Group, to share experience, promote greater unity and further our primary purpose.

The question raised by Julius on Friday evening, expressed an interest in Ireland and N. Ireland resuming membership of Conference as in earlier years, and this was warmly endorsed.

The Second World Service Meeting took place in New York 5th -7th October last year and as you are aware Bill S, and I attended representing Great Britain. A brief report of the meeting had already been made in the November issue of Box 514, in the General Service Board Report to this Conference and a full report has been issued to all attending this Conference. I will therefore be brief this evening in making my report.

The First World Service Meeting took place in New York in 1969 when Alan B. and Wick were our representatives. This meeting was such an outstanding success that it was decided to continue with such meetings at about 2 to 3 year intervals provided the finances could stand it.

It was in 1967 that Bill W. recognised that with the development and growth of the Fellowship throughout the World problems of public relations, of anonymity, of financial support, of relations with medicine and religion, the printing and distribution of literature would arise and these could best be resolved by an exchange of experiences. Thus the World Service Meeting. As an aside I would say that these problems are not peculiar as to between nations but also within a nation.

All these were the topics on which we shared during the proceedings which lasted three days from nine o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night.

There were 29 delegates attending representing Australia, Belgium, Central America (Southern Zone) Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand; Norway, South Africa, South America, Sweden, U.S. and Canada and ourselves -15 countries 5 continents. Ireland and Sweden were attending for the first time. Holland although participating in the first meeting were not represented. Of the 29 attending only three had attended the first meeting one each from Australia, Belgium and South America. It is of interest that the last two were non-alcoholic members of their respective Boards and there was one other non-alcoholic member - one of the delegates from Germany.



We assembled for a reception to all the delegates on the evening before the meeting proper. This was a wonderful gathering where we got to know each other and the members of the General Service Office Staff. Lois was present also with Dr. Jack Norris, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Bob Hitchens General Manager. .

We got away to a fine start in these two hours of sharing together we got to know who was who ready for the proceedings the following morning.

We started off with a tour of the General service and Grapevine Offices meeting all those responsible for the various services duties and responsibilities after which we settled down to the main business sessions at the Hotel Roosevelt.

An inspiring welcome was given to us by Dr. Jack Norris who as I have said is Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He stressed the changes taking place in the World and the increasing speed of change. We must be constantly aware of these changes as they may influence our Fellowship unless we get together and share experiences throughout the World our adaptation to the forces and changes in our countries may strain our understanding of each other and our international unity. Unless we share honestly and completely our experiences, our concern, our strength and our hopes with completely open minds barriers and misunderstandings could develop which distance between us will aggravate. He remarked that although the meeting was being held in New York it was their wish to be no more than equal partners with the rest and that someday the meeting will take place in some other city of the World. This matter was considered by all present. Bids had been received from Mexico, Finland and ourselves. The selection Committee announced Great Britain as first choice with Mexico second and Finland third. It was obvious that London as the place for the Third World Service Meeting was the wish of the great majority present. This we recognise as a great honour and we must give of our very best.

The theme of the whole meeting was 'Our Primary Purpose' to carry the message of hope to the still suffering alcoholic wherever he or she may be. The language we speak to them as well as among ourselves is the language of the heart.

These were the words spoken by Niles Peebles in his address which is reported in full in the report of the World Service Meeting which has been issued to you all with the Conference papers. I commend it to you all as an inspiration to be followed. in resolving our problems here at home which are no different to the problems encountered in other parts of the World - Remember our Primary Purpose and always keep it well to the fore.

Many of the problems we face today have been met in the past, none has been permanently solved and there is no doubt they will continue to trouble us. We have them with us today. We must continually remind ourselves of our first Tradition 'Our Common Welfare Should Come First'. Personal recovery depends on A.A. unity. When unity is not there the consequences are obvious. Some spend their time arguing, others spend their time trying to smooth things over, consequently hardly anyone spends time carrying the message which is what our primary purpose is all about.

Veikko of Finland put it simply - There is only one A.A. not a Finnish A.A. or American A.A. It may differ in every country in the same way that every member has his own approach to the programme but the programme and the Traditions should always be the same. There should be

only one A.A. in the World although there may be many ways of following the A.A. life.

The subject matter for discussions was divided into sections

- 1 Board Structure, Services, Finance, and Publishing situation in each of the countries present.
2. Committee meetings covering Finance, Agenda/Admissions, Literature and Publishing and Policy..
3. Workshops on Anonymity, Inside and Outside the Fellowship Publishing and Literature.
- 4 Presentations by the Staff members responsible for Worldwide Publishing and Literature. Professional Relations and Grapevine.

The proceedings Findings and Actions of all these are contained in the Report issued to you so I will not dwell on any of these matters.

On the Saturday evening following the closure of the meeting all delegates were invited to attend the Banquet given by New York Intergroup at the New York Hilton. Some 2,500 A.A. Members, families and friends attended. Never in my life have I been present at such a large gathering. I doubt whether such a number could be catered for anywhere in this country.

Lois was present and read Bill's last message which was followed by the Traditional Candlelight Ceremony. Four of the delegates of which I was one and Inga-Britt from Sweden who is here with us was another shared briefly their A.A. stories.

It was a very impressive evening, the seemingly endless vista of friendly faces along with the glowing spirit of Fellowship which surrounded us all.

On the Sunday morning we all gathered for 'brunch' with the Trustees of the U.S. and Canada General Service Board. It was a most impressive and inspiring get-together in which there was a great deal of sharing. They were all keenly interested in the Fellowship in the other parts of the World. They were obviously very dedicated men.

We presented our 25th Anniversary Pennant to Dr. Jack Norris on our arrival at this gathering - it was very much appreciated and congratulations were passed on reaching our Jubilee.

In the afternoon we were all taken by coach to Stepping Stones Bill's home in the country - Bedford Hills a 1 1/2 hour drive through beautiful country. We were welcomed by Lois and spent the two hours there amidst A.A. history, the early writings, the early pictures, souvenirs of their World travels and Bill's association with Dr. Bob. Before we departed all joined hands for the Serenity Prayer led by Lois. .

In accordance with item 9 of Committee No. 1. Report of last year's Conference 'That the General Service Board investigate the relationship between Alcoholics Anonymous in these Islands and Europe looking particularly towards further European developments arrangements were made by Bill S. for the delegates from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway and Sweden to have lunch together on Saturday 7th October and the possibility and feasibility of

increased co-operation amongst us all was frankly and freely discussed. Such was enthusiastically received. There was little doubt that there was ample scope for sharing within Europe and we could assist in their development by giving of our experiences.

We invited each country to send representatives as observer to this Conference and we are very pleased that Inga-Britt of Sweden, Finn of France have come along to share with us.

In conclusion, I would say that both Bill S. and I are deeply indebted to the Board for giving us the opportunity of attending the meeting. It was a fine experience and a wonderful inspiration which will remain with us to our dying day. We both wish to express our deep gratitude for the wonderful opportunity afforded to us.

## APPENDIX C. Page 1

### Committee No. 1 'A. A. and the Medical Profession'

The Committee felt that the reasons given by Alcoholics to G.P.'s to disguise the real nature of the problem were mostly vague and dishonest. Ranging from stomach disorders to backache. It was suggested their alcoholism showed more in social disorder and family breakdown.

It is realised G.P.'s are becoming more enlightened to the problems of alcoholism.

Intergroups and groups have called meetings and sent literature to G.P's but it was felt that the problem was better put to doctors by personal contact and sober example. The Committee also felt this far out weighs both letters and literature, although literature should be taken on personal contact.

Regarding the encouragement to G.P's to refer alcoholics to A.A. Again the committee was of opinion personal contact by sober members who showed by example that the programme worked for them was by far again successful in its method. It would also be desirable if Intergroups could have post Graduate Deans to discuss A.A. and alcoholism at G.P's post graduate studies.

Alcoholics referred by G.P's should have sponsorship arranged by the groups they attend as it is our responsibility to carry this message at all times to the suffering alcoholic.

The setting up of A.A. groups in alcoholic units needs the goodwill of staff at all levels and from A.A. members at all times. Members provide only an after care programme and are not there to treat the patients. Getting members to become sponsors is a job for Intergroups and the Committee feels that liaison officers should be appointed much the same as for prisons i.e. Hospital Liaison Officers. They would also be responsible for drawing up a panel of speakers, which would be available on request.

The establishing of contacts in general and mental hospitals can be done through social workers, doctors staff and enquiries at intergroup level to the Consultant Psychiatrist who is the Chairman of Psychiatric Division. Again goodwill and patience on both sides, especially that of A.A. members is considered of prime importance.

The encouragement of local groups to sponsor patients can really only be done by direct contact. The committee felt it was hopeless to expect volunteers. The sponsor should provide literature

and if possible the 'Big Book' on loan.

Again hospitals themselves are now buying the approved literature and was emphasised that the Big Book should be readily available at all hospitals, dealing with alcoholics.

With the patients permission the group secretary should contact the nearest A.A. Group to the patient for sponsorship and if possible have the patient contacted and taken to the nearest group meeting on discharge from hospital.

It was requested that speakers visiting hospital meetings or meetings attended by hospital patients should place more emphasis on the recovery part of their story than their drinking experience and if possible try and explain the spiritual principles of our programme and what is meant by them.

It is suggested that where possible arrangements are made to visit patients with an alcoholic problem in all hospitals where no Addiction Unit is established.

#### APPENDIX D .

Page 1.

#### COMMITTEE NO.2 'A.A .in Prisons'

Our Fellowship has long recognised our responsibility for carrying the message of A.A. to the suffering alcoholic in penal establishments in the British Isles. A Home Office Working Committee has recommended that A.A. groups should be established in all prisons and we feel that this must reflect on the success of A.A. in helping the alcoholic prisoner over a number of years.

Our service to alcoholics in prisons has been discussed in detail by Committee No.2. who submit the following recommendations:

1. a) Sponsors should be chosen and appointed according to Group/Intergroup conscience, having due regard to an acceptable period of sobriety. Wherever possible a panel of agreed A.A. sponsors should be maintained subject to individual prison governors approval.
- b) The appointed sponsor for the prison AA. group should maintain regular and continuous contact, calling on the agreed panel of sponsors for assistance to provide the service necessary and desirable to give as varied an A.A. experience to prison groups as is possible.
- c) The prison sponsor should take steps to encourage 'Sponsorship by correspondence' between the 'Home' Group and the prison member well in advance of his discharge. It is recommended that the sponsors should make suitable arrangements with the 'Home' group prior to putting the prison member in contact with them or vice versa.
- d) Prison group members should wherever possible be encouraged in accordance with A.A. Traditions to take an active part in their group and whenever possible the outside sponsor should adopt only a supporting role.

2. Where no A.A. Group exists in a prison it is recommended that direct personal contact with the Governor be established by the individual sponsor or the Intergroup concerned.

If difficulties should arise they should always be referred to the General Service Board member for Prisons for his consideration and advice.

3. The sponsor should maintain contact with the person appointed by the Governor to deal with the problems of the alcoholic in the prison. Contact should be maintained with all interested members of the prison staff, i.e. Welfare Officers, Chaplains, P.O's etc. and it is further recommended that the sponsor should wherever possible offer the services of A.A. speakers to address staff training courses and open prison A.A. meetings.

4. Every effort should be taken to ensure that sufficient literature is available to prison A.A. members; it is felt that this could be best achieved by taking full advantage of the Home Office Grant available for this purpose. (Home Office Circular ESG/66 415/2/1).

“Additional A.A. publications e.g. Share, Grapevine etc. are provided by the local Intergroup/Group until such time as arrangements can be made for supply under the Home Office Grant. This question is being investigated by the Trustee responsible for prison services.

5. Should the prison member so desire every effort should be made to maintain continuous contact and Sponsorship on his discharge and the sponsor should in the light of the individual circumstances take such steps to ensure immediate local 'Home' contact in order to introduce him to his local meeting and other A.A. members.

6. Wherever possible the A.A. sponsor should liaise with the Prison Welfare Officer and/or other staff to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the reception of the A.A. prison member back into the community.

7. Prison co-ordination within Intergroups now appears to be working on a sound footing; it is, therefore, recommended that all Intergroups should where appropriate operate their prison sponsorship on a locally coordinated basis, ever remembering that the services and advice of the Board member for Prisons and General Service Office is always available if required.

## APPENDIX E. Page 1

### Committee No.3 A.A. in the Community”

The Committee is mindful that its subject “A.A. In the Community” has appeared on the Agenda of several previous Conferences in one guise or another, however, the subject is as relevant now as ever it was for how else could A.A. reach the still suffering alcoholic but through the Community. If this report is in places repetitive it is by design rather than by accident.

The Committee recognises that geographically A.A. and its services have certainly spread rapidly over the previous years, and the enthusiasm that has been generated by more efficient Intergroups in trying to implement the Conferences' recommendations should continue.

The committee feels that external communications both nationally and locally in bringing A.A. and its services before the public should continue both by the Board and by an accredited member of the Intergroup. However, the emphasis should be ever on quality. With this in mind the Committee recommends that the General Service Board, with professional assistance if

necessary, should be asked to produce a pamphlet setting out guide lines for this purpose.

The Committee further recommends that the appointed Intergroup Officer should contact his local Press, Radio, T.V. etc. , and establish .that ideally matters concerning the Fellowship should be discussed with him, and where possible the General Service Office be informed.

Most Intergroups have already established contact with local voluntary and statutory organisations, such as The Samaritans, Citizens Advice Bureau, Simon Community's, Churches etc. The questions arises are We getting a meaningful result?

We feel that results are best obtained by:

- 1) Re-establishing existing contacts.
- 2) By inviting them to Open Meetings.
- 3) By offering to address them as a gathering.
- 4) By making A.A. Literature available to them.
- 5) By providing a comprehensive list of A.A. contacts, times and places of meetings.
- 6) By personal discussion with members and wherever possible a personal relationship.
- 7) By showing that by our attitude and example that the alcoholic can recover through A.A.

Committee No.2 of the 1972 Conference recommended that Intergroups and Groups should contact the Director of Social Services and through him would enable them to get in touch with the many social workers in .the area.

This Committee endorses that view and where contact has not been established this should be clone without further delay.

Hostels for the rehabilitation of alcoholics are in existence and many Intergroup members do visit on a personal basis. Other Intergroups have established A.A. groups within the hostels, where this has not been done the committee recommends that the needs should be examined and ““here necessary our services provided.

The Committee has examined the recommendations of the Fifth General Service Conference 1970 that the size of a group should be about 15 regular members and concludes that where practicable this has been done. The growth in the number of groups since this was recommended would seem to substantiate this. When establishing new groups in an area the committee suggests it is desirable that the facilities that the Intergroup has to offer should be used.

The Committee conclude that if its report were adopted and then implemented with success it could involve many of the newer members to a much greater degree and would enable them to follow the example of some other Intergroups in establishing a local Service Office whether these are on a part time or full time basis, voluntary or paid would depend on the needs of the area as established by the Intergroup.

## APPENDIX F.

### COMMITTEE No.4. "Reappraisal of our own Structure"

The Committee offer the following answers to the questions posed:

1. The Office Bearers regarded as essential for an Intergroup are the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer. A Deputy or Vice Chairman is also considered desirable. It is regarded as undesirable for more than one of those Officers should be combined as one person.
2. The Office Bearers should be elected by ballot by Group Service Representatives from within their own body, for three years if circumstances permit. Rotation of officers should be staggered to ensure continuity .
3. It is recommended by the Committee that all appointments made by Groups and Intergroups be reported immediately to the General Service Office.
4. The Committee considered the situation arising from the changing circumstances of today so far as the setting up of a regional organisation is concerned, and felt that times had not yet changed enough to necessitate so far reaching change in present arrangements.

So far as the running of regional conventions is concerned this will take place in accordance with the arrangement proposed by the sub committee of the General Service Board entrusted with the examination of the problem and already accepted by Conference. The holding of Mini Conventions in Intergroup areas should continue under present local arrangements.

It is recommended that the whole question of the setting up of a regional organisation of the Fellowship in the United Kingdom be placed on the Agenda for the 1975 Conference.

- 5 The Committee having studied the financial statement by the General Service Board in its Annual Report, wish to remind all Groups and Intergroups that money in their possession having been donated by members of the Fellowship is the property of the Fellowship, and should be used accordingly. Groups should retain a balance only sufficient for their requirements plus a prudent reserve and should pass the balance on, in the case of a Group to their Intergroup (if this be their normal practice) and in the case of Intergroup to General Service Office.

Group and Intergroup Treasurers should report on the financial situation and on the amounts remitted to General Service Office at regular intervals.

- 6 Conference Agenda.

The Committee recommend no change be made in the existing arrangements for the submission of resolutions to be placed on the Agenda for Conference, and is not in favour of the circulation of resolutions not accepted for the Agenda.

- 7 Presentation of Reserves in Accounts .

Conference on April 13th 1973 having remitted to the Committee the question of examination of the circumstances which could arise on the expiration of the present lease of the General Service

Office premises at 11 Redcliffe Gardens, the Committee decided that no change be made in the present handling of the financial reserves of the Fellowship, and that the invested funds be not earmarked to any specific purpose as this could complicate the future handling of the affairs of the Fellowship under circumstances at present unknown.

#### 8 Rotation of Delegates at Conference .

“Delegates should be appointed by Intergroups to serve for a maximum period of three years consecutively. If a delegate is unable to attend any Conference during his period of appointment, his place may be taken by an eligible alternative delegate appointed for that purpose. The eligibility of an alternative delegate to attend a Conference subsequently as a full delegate will not be affected by his attendance as a substitute.

Any attendances by an alternate delegate will count as part of the three year term of the delegate whose place he takes and will not have the effect of extending the term of that delegate.

When a delegate has completed his three year term, he should not at any future time be elected for a further term as a delegate or alternate delegate, either for the Intergroup which elected him or for any other Intergroup. He may however attend the Conference in some other capacity e.g. , as Chairman or as a member of the General Service Board if so elected”.

The Committee recommends that the Secretary of the Scottish Committee should attend Conference ex-officio.

#### 9. A.A. Service Manual.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the U.K. Service Manual is now in draft form and after submission to a sub committee of the General Service Board it was hoped that a final draft will be presented to Conference delegates in 1974.

This new publication will accept fully Bill W’s principles as laid down in Tradition 1, 2 and 12.

### APPENDIX G.

#### A.A. AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

I want to talk about something we have been doing in Manchester for 2 years, that is to try to provide a Community Service for alcoholics.

Although I am a psychiatrist and interested in the medical aspects of the illness, I believe in fact that only a minority of patients need hospitalisation. Of course, being in hospital can only be a brief interruption of any alcoholics life, it is not difficult to stay sober in hospital, but it is difficult staying sober outside.

Clearly hospital services can only be one factor in the development of a service for alcoholics, and I want to layout fairly simply as I see it, how one should go about developing such a service.

The first thing to do is to find out if there is a problem, and then more specifically what the size of the problem is. There are two ways of ascertaining this - the indirect method, and the direct method.

An indirect method would be to go to a city and ask a group of people like doctors, social workers, priests etc., how many alcoholics they know. Then find out the total population, and by a mathematical calculation you can get an estimate of the known alcoholics. This is in fact the commonest method used in this country, and is not going to be very accurate, for as you widen



the number of sources you get more alcoholics.

When this was done in the 1950's with G.P's a rate of 1 per 1000 was obtained, but when it was done in Cambridgeshire in the 1960's using 13 sources they found a rate of 7 per 1000.

The Jellinek formula gives an estimate of the prevalence of alcoholism from the relation of alcoholism to cirrhosis of the liver. This may seem very crude but it is not a bad estimate, and it is this estimate that the Government use to quote that there are 400,000 alcoholics in this country - this gives a rate of 11 per thousand, ten times the amount of those early studies.

The simplest direct method is to knock on every third house in every street and subject them to questions about their drinking habits. This is not always easy, since people may be reluctant to answer. When it has been carried out, it has given a high rate.

A second direct method was carried out here in Manchester, by screening down 6,000 patients in a group practice. A list of 20 factors which make people more likely to be alcoholics - things like homeless, divorced, trouble with the law, having lost jobs, and then they went through 6000 N.H.S. cards and marked them. When the patient returned during the next year for any reason he was given a questionnaire which asked certain disguised questions. They were asking about his leisure habits and, of course, his drinking habits. This study gave a rate here in Manchester of 18 per 1000. Remember the early surveys were 1 in 1000 and the Jellinek and Government formula 11 per 1000 - so this was nearly double the official figure and nearly twenty times higher than the earlier surveys.

If we accept this for Manchester and in fact very few cities have as good a data as that, it means for our city of 400,000 we have about 7,000 alcoholics, of the adult population.

You have first to find out the size of the problem before you can plan the services - second point suppose you have got a lot of alcoholics then you have got to find out their needs. Are they mainly down and outs, do they need hospital facilities, do they need counselling. At the recent Conference in Liverpool there was some criticism of services being set up without first establishing the need. So clearly you need to first know what facilities are available for example some cities have good hostels, some good hospitals facilities etc. but may be totally inadequate in any counselling services. In fact if we take again Manchester which I know, there is a fairly comprehensive service available but there are some gaps - apart from A.A. the middle classes largely are not in our system of treatment - they do not come to our Regional alcoholism unit, and apart from going to private hospitals this group of people are not being dealt with by our agencies, apart from A.A. In other communities this class of people are being dealt with, but no one is taking care of the shelter needs. Apart from knowing the total services needed, you must know how to break them down.

In most areas you never, have enough services. In Manchester we have worked out roughly how many people are in contact with the treatment agencies in one year, and a crude estimate is about one quarter of the alcoholic population. Dr. Griffith Edwards team in Camberwell estimate that between a quarter and a ninth of the number of alcoholics were known as attending treatment centres.

It is interesting particularly to you that the largest contribution in Manchester quantitatively to looking after alcoholics comes from A.A. There is, of course, a special case here, in that A.A. as well as having groups have a Service Office. Apart from A.A. the Alcoholic Unit is the next

main source; roughly the figures work out at 1200 to A.A. about 700 to the Alcoholic Unit in a year. 150 other hospitals and private, 150 in hostels although they are not specifically alcoholic hostels. In fact we know that a quarter of the load is being dealt with, and one group largely the middle class are not being dealt with and this type of information needs to be known in every large city otherwise you cannot plan your services.

I think you want to know who does what and why. Why do you need a hospital, why do you need A.A.? A hospital is needed for detoxification - shelter in an alcohol free environment and special facilities such as alcoholic units with group therapy, aversion treatments etc. To me these are the only three reasons why people should go into hospital – not for a bed, not for comfort, but for these three specific reasons. A.A. of course provides a means by which the alcoholic can be helped to stay sober in the community, which is, of course, much more relevant really than staying sober in hospital and it seems to me that A.A. works in two ways, it provides a vehicle for changing attitudes, it has a common identification and a common aim; it has an element of removal of denial, confessional element where people admit what they have done and share their experiences, this may produce emotional change which is important for attitude change, that there is a clearly defined road back to health which you will, of course, know about. In addition A.A. through its sponsorship system offers a unique means of support that no professional or statutory agency can offer in the same way that you can. So I see the place of A.A. particularly as keeping the man sober, while he is in the community.

I do not want to talk about hostels, but they are a fairly recent development -they are run as therapeutic communities where the men are made to feel responsible for their behaviour in the house, as yet we do not really know the full effect of this sort of thing.

They raise some fundamental questions which may be interesting for you to think about - is it a success if a man stays sober and never works again? Is that good? Is it good if a man stays sober for the next ten years but always living in a hostel - for both of these may happen. So the hostel is another agency trying to keep the man sober in the community. The hospital is, as I say, a way of changing attitudes and breaking a drinking bout as well as detoxification. Social Services in only a few cities reluctantly are involved. Information Centres, something we lack here, but we feel that this is a very important way of picking up alcoholics - centres established in cities seem to pick up about 500 alcoholics per year.

All these services I have mentioned will fail unless they are acting together, they will in fact split asunder, and you will get people taking a very entrenched position saying there is only one way to stay sober.

What we have done in Manchester over the last two years is for all the services - probation, social services, A.A. etc., to get together, and in fact we have been meeting every three or four weeks where we can hammer out our differences, co-ordinate our activity and when new services are introduced they can be developed within the greater whole.

I feel that unless you do something like this you will never get a fully integrated service, with the acceptance that there are many ways to sobriety not just one.

APPENDIX H.

## THE ALCOHOLIC IN PRISON.

Miss M Allen, Assistant Governor. Holloway Prison, London

It has been said many times before and on many occasions that there are as many kinds of alcoholics as there are people and this is true of the alcoholic in prison, but in considering this question, two main groups are in evidence amongst those in custody. There are those who are convicted of being drunk and disorderly or under various sections of the Vagrancy Acts, and those convicted of the entire range of other offences against the law, from shoplifting to murder and who are nevertheless alcoholics or who have severe drink problems. It is important to distinguish these two groups from the outset if only because of the length of sentence each will attract and the implications that this will have on their treatment and management during their stay in prison, and subsequently their after-care needs. The first group were the subject of a Home Office Working Party report under the General classification of habitual drunken offenders and reflects the size and extent of the demands made on the prison service by this group, as much as it reflects the human problems of the men and women who find themselves in this predicament. They have been variously described as a stage-army of people endlessly appearing and re-appearing on the prison scene and as virtually serving a life sentence on the instalment plan. Undoubtedly they form part of the hard core of the recidivist population of any local prison. The late Lord Stonham, former Minister of State at the Home Office, is on record as saying that imprisonment for the offence of being drunk and disorderly is a "clumsy, wasteful and largely ineffectual procedure". Legislation to remove the penalty of imprisonment for such offences exists in Section 91 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 but awaits implementation until the Secretary of State is satisfied that sufficient suitable accommodation is available for the care and treatment of the offenders.

The Home Office Working Party (already referred to) considered that their terms of reference should include forms of treatment which are capable of providing not merely an alternative to imprisonment but in appropriate cases an alternative to prosecution itself. At the present time the detoxification centres, hostels of an experimental nature and properly coordinated facilities recommended by the Working Party are however still in the planning stages.

Generally speaking inmates in this category serve between seven and fourteen days and usually for non-payment of a fine. It follows therefore that treatment and after-care has to be of a limited kind although the opportunity of detoxification and general medical care has a significant effect on the health of these inmates.

The second group by the nature of their offences serve longer, sentences ranging from six months to life sentences depending on the nature and gravity of their offences so that treatment and management may be seen in terms of a wider range of possibilities with more optimistic long term goals in view.

Those inmates convicted of being drunk and disorderly and related offences can readily be identified on admission to the prison as urgently requiring immediate treatment and are admitted to the prison hospital for detoxification, general medical care and nourishment. When sufficiently fit and well they are then transferred to the prison location. During this time, whether in hospital or not, they will have the opportunity of attending Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings.

The identification of alcoholism and related problems of abnormal drinking amongst the second group may not come to light in quite the same way unless the inmate has spent some time in

custody previously on remand. Social inquiry reports prepared by the Probation Service for the Courts to consider before sentence is passed, are a vital source of information as to the incidence of alcoholism or of heavy drinking in the offenders background and past history and will alert the prison staff to take action in this area. On admission following sentence, each inmate is given a reception interview by an Assistant Governor, Chaplain and Welfare Officer and these interviews may also reveal such problems and will provide the basis of further action needed once the co-operation and confidence of the inmate has been established.

There is sometimes an assumption in the minds of the general public that once a person finds themselves in prison the coercive nature of the institution will ensure that people will readily, avail themselves of treatment facilities whereas in fact in the last analysis it is quite impossible to force people to accept. treatment they do not want or cannot see the need for. This is particularly true of the alcoholic in an attempt to deny that .the problem exists, and presents a major challenge to the staff to gain the. co-operation of the inmate in acceptance of the problem and of subsequent treatment. It will be obvious that the services of Alcoholics Anonymous can be a decisive factor at this point but since attendance at meetings is always voluntary it is very. often a fellow inmate who finally persuades the individual to attend the first meeting.

Treatment varies according to individual needs and to the resources available in any institution but can be summarized as follows.

Diagnosis and assessment of the nature and extent of the problem and the stage of development within the individual.

Detoxification and appropriate medical care.

Individual psychotherapy.

Group therapy.

Alcoholics Anonymous.

Rehabilitation and after-care.

which may include referral to Alcoholic rehabilitation centres, accommodation and employment needs. AA will endeavour to link the inmate with local groups on release and provide the directory with local contacts.

For those remanded in custody before the case is dealt with, and particularly those remanded for medical reports, there is the possibility of recommendation to the Courts that referral to an Alcohol Addiction Unit such as St. Bernards Hospital, Southall would have a more beneficial effect than a term of imprisonment. Although the period of remand is relatively short the opportunity of an introduction to AA need not be lost and a separate group may be formed to introduce the AA programme and to suggest that if a prison sentence is not the outcome of remand, the individual is made aware of the fellowship of AA and its network of meetings in the community. If however at the end of the remand period a sentence of imprisonment is imposed by the Court there is the immediate possibility of joining the regular AA group within the institution.

At the present time there are 60 AA groups within the prison and borstal system in the United Kingdom. AA contacts are established in a further 13 establishments. The contribution, of AA to the treatment and understanding of the alcoholic in prison cannot be underestimated. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine any therapeutic venture undertaken for the benefit of alcoholics and those with drinking problems without the co-operation of AA. It is surprising that to date we have not, as far as I am aware, also involved Al Anon but perhaps plans for the future should include them for obvious reasons. The formation of an AA group inside a penal institution calls for considerable co-operation and mutual understanding between the authorities and the members of AA from outside who want to offer their services. It is helpful for Assistant Governors responsible for coordinating some areas of treatment, and prison Welfare Officers to meet with the local committee of visiting AA members in order that discussion of mutual problems, adequate supplies of literature and future plans can be formulated. This meeting is a regular feature of AA commitment at the institution in which I serve. It is also important to involve wherever possible, the inmates themselves. For example, the appointment of a long term prisoner as "Inside Secretary" to encourage membership in regular attendance by the inmates, to distribute literature, and to prepare the room used for meetings. Some institutions foster involvement by encouraging inmates to produce their own magazines, notably Sheppton Mallet, Wakefield, Bristol. and Manchester. Such magazines are designed to reflect the views, opinions and needs of the alcoholic in prison. In order that meetings should not be perceived by the inmates as being too prison orientated, where possible, and appropriate, inmates should attend meetings outside the institution but this of course is always at the discretion of the Governor and would not be possible in certain situations. However, it is possible to arrange for open meetings within institutions even if attendance is limited to guest speakers, fellow inmates, and members of staff at all levels. Such meetings provide staff with valuable insights into the problems of the alcoholic inmate and the evidence of the possibility of ultimate recovery, particularly where ex-inmates can be accepted as speakers. All members of the prison service receive their training at Wakefield. Members of the Governor grade receive their training at the Staff College and such training will include the treatment and management of inmates with drinking problems and lectures are given. by Dr. Smith Moorhouse who is responsible for the Alcoholic Treatment Unit at Wakefield Prison.

Officers are trained at the Officer Training School in Wakefield and their basic course includes instruction on the subject of alcoholism, either from members of staff of the Treatment Unit of from Dr. Smith Moorhouse himself. In addition, when joining an establishment following basic training, within the service there is an on-going inservice training programme. At Holloway we are particularly fortunate that we have the services of the eminent Dr. Max Glatt who lectures frequently to the staff on this subject. In this way, staff at all levels should have at least a basic understanding of the problems of an alcoholic in their charge.

In another sense it is you of course who are the experts in this field; the men and women who make up the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous and who know your subject only too well. We can never know the alcoholic in the way that you know him, whatever the measure of our compassion for his situation and however much we want to help to change it. For the A.A. member visiting the prison brings the living proof that change is possible, that recovery is a reality, and that above all there is a fellowship of men and women that will share the problems and difficulties that have to be faced on the long road back to sobriety. health and happiness. The alcoholic in prison stands in the greatest need of the third legacy of AA, that of service to others. As members of this fellowship I can only ask of you that you never forget it.

MR. N. SMETHURST, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, MANCHESTER.

I'm a Social Worker, specialising in alcoholism. I'm not going to produce any factual figures.

I was appointed nearly 2 years ago in this city and only due to pressure from outside and a little bit from inside that the Director finally agreed that we should have a look at the problem in this city, and I was given the job. I had one huge stroke of luck in that Dr. Hore arrived at about the same time. This really was one of the best things that happened as far as I was concerned that we now had a consultant psychiatrist who had a special interest in the problem, and he got together with us before we could approach him. This has been a great help to me.

In many ways he provided me with the opportunity to go into the Unit to learn. I had been involved with alcoholics for many years in all sorts of situations and never quite knew what to do with them. This is the situation that social workers find themselves in all the time, nobody wants an alcoholic, particularly if he is drunk. And let's face it as Dr. Hore said the middle class alcoholics very rarely come my way. The ones who come to the likes of myself and other Social Workers in Manchester are alcoholics who not only have reached the bottom of the ladder, but they have probably dropped off it as well.

They are not vagrants or tramps in the true sense of the word. They have reached the situation they are in because of alcohol. Many of them have seen very much better days, but when they reach us, this is how they present themselves. We pick them up in hostels, reception centres and sometimes on the streets and in police stations.

It was suggested to me that I should count heads, I very quickly abandoned this idea, but I have collected information on several hundred alcoholics in this city, but I cannot approach them because they don't wish me to approach them, but I know they are there.

What was apparent fairly quickly was that in one field there was an urgent need and this was for the man who had reached the bottom of the ladder. I found that often they had been to someone for help not to A.A., and they received the usual reply to the alcoholic on the doorstep "if you want to stop drinking - why don't you stop? - there is nothing I can do for you". We have found it very difficult to persuade some men at this stage that someone is prepared to listen and help. This has been one of the great problems. I go to the Reception Centre and they just do not believe that I am interested in them or their problems, or their desire to get out of it. They say that they have been asking for help for years and no one wants to know. It is hard work, but with perseverance we may have a small measure of success, enough to convince us that it is worthwhile going on with.

Our big problem that we immediately saw was that we had these men, and we came to the conclusion quite rapidly that unless we could hold them somewhere, mainly as a group we would be wasting our time.

It is no use putting an alcoholic into most of the voluntary hostels in this city, one in particular houses about 50, including crude spirit drinkers. It is no good placing in that situation an alcoholic who wants to get sober. As Dr. Hore mentioned an alcohol free environment and this is what I needed, and needed quickly. It wasn't very long before I was able to suggest to the

department that this is what we must do quickly, I must emphasise this - this was only the start.

We found two houses and prepared a scheme and were then able to set up on a very limited budget two houses with beds for 12 alcoholics. We are only taking males at the moment, because we have a lot of problems as you can imagine and taking a man into a group situation - a life completely alien to him, expecting him to make a rapid adaption to group work is expecting a lot. So we are confining the scheme at the moment to males, but we have a completely open mind as to whether to mix it as we become established.

We are now in our ninth week of being operational and we have had problems. They are not problems that I didn't expect, I knew that we would have them but I am pleased to say that 3 out of 4 who came in eight weeks ago are still with us. They are 3 men whom we had at the Reception Centre for many months, and they have stayed sober. I am quite happy about this position, but we have had others with us since - but we are low in numbers again now.

We regard the whole thing as an experiment. I have been criticised in many quarters for doing this, many people have said you can't do this sort of thing, with this sort of man. They may be right, but when I have proved they are right then I will admit it, but until we have tried it and either it is a success or a failure, then we are going to continue, and I am not prepared to say that we are either right or wrong until we have been in action for 2 years.

I will tell you now that we are not going to fail, there is no doubt at all about that. You may be interested to know that we have on our staff and this was a triumph to me, an alcoholic, I doubted if the department would accept this. A personal triumph for me since if I can say that we employ alcoholics they ought to do so too - this is always one of the problems.

I am sorry to say that no member of Manchester AA has yet been to visit us - but if anyone wishes to visit over the week-end I will be very happy to go with you. It is not the Midland Hotel, of course, but very simple and very homely, but not extravagant. I think the most interesting point is that we see this residential accommodation as being the focal point for the services in this field in the city. This means that instead of me seeing alcoholics and their wives in an Office, which is cold and clinical, up six flights of stairs, and telling the enquiry desk the purpose of the visit, we can operate the service in a more pleasant atmosphere

We are throwing our doors wide open, we will see, talk, advise, counsel alcoholics wives, friends, anyone who wants to walk in. Quite an informal anonymous atmosphere - there is nothing on the house which says what it is all about, just number 52 on the door, nothing to identify it, but we are not going to hide it for ever.

We did not really know what to call this, without cribbing titles that other people use. We have played with words and tried to find a suitable abbreviation, so we are broadly speaking residential accommodation for alcoholics and a service that will counsel, advise and refer on - without thinking that we are going to solve everybody's problems, we may solve a few, but we hope that we can help many.

A member of our staff who is an alcoholic, has a wife who is well involved with Alanon, and in consequence we have contact with all these services. The Manchester Service Office know me very well and I am very grateful to them for the opportunity they gave me when I first started this service.

My first contact was a member of the Sale group. I went anywhere there were alcoholics, A.A. meetings, the crofts, the shelters - it is an interesting experience, and you cannot help but learn.

I accept the A.A. principles wholly and in full, we do not compel our clients to come to the Service Office at Hewitt Street but I know full well that some of them are coming, some were coming before we started. We preach A.A., I preach A.A., wherever I go, because I agree with Dr. Hore that A.A. is the best agency certainly in the country at the moment for alcoholics. I am not whitewashing you, I honestly believe this, and I am sure you believe it too, but too many alcoholics will not or cannot accept what you have to offer. The difference, probably, between you and me then is that if an alcoholic walks past your door and doesn't want you that is really the end. The local authority Social Worker has some secondary responsibility to refer. If there is an alcoholic within the bounds of this city, someone somewhere has a responsibility. He may have a wife in trouble, children neglected, children in care, debts, water cut off, electricity cut off, we still have some responsibility there. We probably accept an alcoholic who goes back to drinking more readily than most people do.

Someone has to make a determined effort to sort the family out and see if we can get them together again. Beside myself this city is full of social workers, but we all have alcoholics amongst our case load. Purely and simply because this is a family problem. When the other social workers find an alcoholic they tell me, and our service is available to anyone, if they wish it, and we always try to be of help. We are in the early stages, I am happy to say that I have got rid of the title of the City Alcoholics Officer. This was given me within two months of taking the position, and pictured myself going around with a big net and a van.

One of my difficulties is that apart from people like yourselves and a few others, generally people are not sympathetic at all.

The most difficult task is convincing them that you can do something for an alcoholic.

What we need is an emergency service, an alcohol free environment. We cannot take a drunken alcoholic from you at 10 pm. on a Saturday night. We have not got the facilities. I will try to help with cases elsewhere, but the Centre closes down at 5:30 pm.

Many people think we have a comprehensive service and can tackle everything. I have been working on this problem for two years, so if we have a comprehensive service before I retire I will be very much surprised and pleased. Maybe we are laying the foundation stones, I am sure Dr. Hore would agree with me that this is probably true.

We are, of course, restricted by finance, and already I have been asked to produce estimates for 1974/5. I would have liked a little more time - to see how the experiment goes. Dr. Hore and I are sure that we could spend £250,000 in this city and it would not be sufficient. We are likely to get £10,000 the same as this year. So you can see our service is very simple. We don't mind how hard we work, because we have to prove something. What we want next is another matter, perhaps if I have the opportunity of sitting with the committee 'A.A. in the Community' I can enlarge upon this subject.

As Dr. Hore will confirm that although I am normally reticent to speak, once I start on a subject you will have to stop me. Dr. Hore may not agree with all I say, nevertheless we get on very well



together.

We also have facilities for social activities where there is no alcohol available - this, of course, is obviously only available for those who wish to remain sober. We consider these activities essential. I have recently heard that Edinburgh are starting a similar scheme and will be visiting our centre. It would appear that more and more authorities are giving serious consideration to the problem.

I hope that I will have an opportunity of discussing the subject in greater detail with you during the remainder of the day.

## CONFERENCE 1974

### FRIDAY 5 APRIL 1974 OPENING OF CONFERENCE

The Ninth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held on the 5th, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7th April 1974, and after the registration commencing at 5:30 p.m. the first full session was opened at 9 p.m. by the Conference Chairman, Maurice S. of the West Riding and North East Intergroup.

The Chairman's opening address was as follows:

"It was suggested to me recently that this Annual Conference of ours is, in a sense, our 'annual moral inventory' as a fellowship. Perhaps this year, more than ever, this is true, because whereas many of our recent conferences have been concerned with our ability to communicate with, and make ourselves known to, outside agencies who are concerned with the illness of alcoholism, it is, I think, true to say that at this time A.A. is so developed and grown nationally, that wherever alcoholics are in need of help - whether in the towns, or in the country, whether in hospitals, or in prisons - it is likely that because of you people here today, and the fellow members of your groups, that someone in A.A. would be available and willing to offer the help, and the hope for the future, that is needed.

All of us here, however, know that our problem was more involved than giving up drinking. Why or how we became compulsive drinkers we may never know - what we do recognise, however, is that to become sober - that is, simply to stop drinking, does nothing to fill the void that years of obsession with alcohol has left us with. But the A.A. programme of recovery, which draws on spiritual truths and philosophy, can fill these gaps in our lives and help us to live more fully. All of us here today can testify to that. So WE know that the A.A. programme really does work, just as it stands.

Bill W. wrote, "The joy of living is the theme of A.A's 12 Step, and action is its keyword". Our theme for the Conference is taken from this step - "To Carry This Message" - so that by our action we may bring to others the hope, for themselves, of this joy. I am sure that we have given a lot of thought to the agenda, and we come representative of our group consciences, and I hope you will agree that the committees and the questions posed will stimulate an exciting and fruitful weekend. If when we depart on Sunday, we take in our hearts and minds to be passed back to our fellow members a report from this conference, that the way to get through to the thousands of alcoholics who are yet to reach A.A. is to improve our own attractiveness, without diluting our principles, then we will have succeeded".

### GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT.

Introducing the General Service Board Report to Conference of its activities during 1973, the Chairman of the Board Ronald L. commented:

"The purpose of the Report is to give an informative outline of all the Board's activities during

the year. This year the Board felt the Report lacked something - how this year fits into previous years. The message from the General Service Board at the beginning of the Report was designed to fill this gap.

There are two main aims: Firstly to deal with Services. Secondly, to look at the structure of the Fellowship, and fit this into the picture of continued growth. It is for Conference to decide on the success of the Board's activities, and to decide on other courses of action in the future.

This year's report is slightly fuller than in previous years. Conference might prefer it to be more abridged in future. Its views would be welcomed by the Board.

Ronald drew attention to the question of future Conventions, and the 1974 Convention at Selsey, the last National Convention. This was arranged to dovetail with the World Service Meeting and it was hoped delegates would be able to come directly to Selsey from London. The General Service Board had moved ahead of Conference in this instance, and hopes for Conference approval".

He also asked that in view of the fact that this report had previously been circulated. it be taken as read. This was agreed.

## BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Ronald L. formally asked for confirmation of the appointment of Ronnie H. (London) as a member of the General Service Board. This was carried unanimously.

During the subsequent discussion points were raised on the report by Dr. John Hughes on Naval dismissals and the Driving Licence and a suggestion made that actions taken could possibly be in contravention of Tradition 10.

Ronald L. pointed out that these actions had been taken by the Medical Council on Alcoholism. The Board felt that there was a demand for information from A.A. members and were pleased when Dr. Hughes had pursued the point as part of his work within the Medical Council on Alcoholism. The report was for information and it was felt without qualification that this information was important.

In referring to the issue of A.A. becoming involved in outside controversy Ronald believed that to make representations to non A.A. bodies was not a breach of Traditions. In many instances, such as prisons and hospitals, it was the duty of A.A. to open doors and to carry the A.A. message.

## FINANCE

Alex A (Treasurer) in presenting the accounts asked "Who pays for the outstretched hand" and commented:-

"Financially, 1973 was not a bad year for the Fellowship, although economic factors made themselves felt during the closing months, and the cherished ideal of paying for our Services 100% by direct contributions was not realised, 90%, being the best we could do. This year things have not been so bright. Both January and February saw a deficit on contribution account, and

although this was covered by Book and Literature profit in January - in February it was not, so you will see that the days when we could look to the Publishing side to balance our budget seem to be passing. Despite exchange and rising cost problems, sales of Books and Literature abroad have been largely retained; but how long is this likely to last? Should we look to profits from Conventions to plug the gap?

It is our heartfelt desire that whenever the hand of a still suffering alcoholic is stretched out for help, then the hand of AA be there to grasp it. The provision for the backing services for this ever-ready loving hand is the duty of the Fellowship, and for this, money is required. Should not the Board be able to look to the Fellowship to provide this cover by their direct contributions, thus leaving other fortuitous sources of income to look after other essentials, such as maintenance and, maybe, one day, replacement of our Headquarters?

If we want the hand of AA to be ever there, and for that we individually proudly say "I am responsible", what are we going to do about it?

Let us look at the number of viable groups around. Let's say there are 600 of them. On average surely there are ten members at each meeting, and most groups must meet fifty times a year. Six hundred by ten by fifty equals three hundred thousand. That is the number of extra pennies we should get if each member put ONE EXTRA NEW PENNY " into the pot, plate, cup, hat or old envelope, at each meeting he or she attended. If TWO NEW PENNIES were put in each time, we should have, during the year, another:

SIX THOUSAND POUNDS

The sum we receive direct from Groups and through Intergroups at present are obviously sent in to General Service Office after necessary expenses have been covered, so the extra 2p. would be a little bit of extra fuel for the General Service Office fires, or, if you like it better, a little bit of extra strength for the outstretched hand. Will you think it over and try it? Just two extra pennies per member per meeting - All to come to General Service Office. Something special - not to help Group and Intergroup reserves, but something for the outstretched hand, so that we may continue to see that it is always there".

The General Service Board Report was formally adopted, as it appears in Appendix A.

THIRD WORLD SERVICE MEETING

Gordon W. a Board Member and World Service Meeting delegate reported:-  
"There is really little to add to what has been stated in the Board Report.

The Agenda has been completed and approved by New York. It is a full one. Three days flat out from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. with little time for fun and frolic - similar to our Conference this weekend.

As you will have noted the theme for the World Service Meeting is SHARING and some of the subjects discussed will be very similar to what we will be talking about this weekend.

When we first started drawing up the agenda for the meeting ,we were far too optimistic. We committed an error far too prominent. I suppose these days we took far too much for granted.

We failed to appreciate that many of the countries represented are nowhere near as developed in service as we are, so we have a lot to GIVE. An example, in the Communications Workshop we will be able to share our experiences in producing and distributing our magazine SHARE and BOX 514. Then for a subject close to my heart we will be able to help in advising in the introduction and establishing Groups in Prisons. I do know France for example is anxious to learn about our service to Prisons. From the discussions we had at the last World Service Meeting it was obvious that over most of France the Fellowship had to operate rather like a wartime underground movement.

A matter which will create a great deal of discussion in the Policy Committee Meetings will be the application of French Speaking Belgium for Admission. At present France (French Speaking) is represented and Belgium (Flemish Speaking) is also represented both by two delegates.

It was the consensus of opinion of one of the Workshops at the last World Service Meeting that Boards, Literature and Printing centres should be encouraged to organise on a language rather than National basis. Such unity, it was thought would provide more efficient operation through the merger of activities. Taking parts of Europe as example we would have France with French speaking Belgium and French speaking Switzerland, Germany and German speaking Switzerland, Norway and Sweden, Holland and Flemish speaking Belgium, Great Britain and Ireland. Under these conditions Ireland would lose membership in their own right. It has been thought by some that this divorce was a mistake in principle. After all the whole of the United States and all Canada with a combined number of groups of approximately 16000 out of a World total of approximately 22000 have only two delegates to the World Service Meeting and both from the United States.

When this Conference is over we will be able to get down to the detailed planning and staff manning etc for the meeting in October.

There is no doubt you will be kept fully informed of all progress and detail.

As you are aware at the conclusion of the World Service Meeting all delegates are invited to the Convention at Selsey. This will be a wonderful opportunity for us all to extend our experiences and Sharing the World over”.

## RESOLUTIONS.

Three resolutions had been submitted and were presented.

It was suggested by the Conference Chairman and unanimously agreed, that considering the items referred to matters to be discussed later by Committee Number 4 that these resolutions be remitted to that Committee for consideration and to report back at the final session.

## NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

The under mentioned were proposed as the Chairman of the Tenth General Service Conference 1975.

Bill D. South West Intergroup

Jim H. Manchester Intergroup.

The election was to take place at the final session. The session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

SATURDAY 6 APRIL 1974

Maurice opened the morning proceedings and referred to his acceptance on the previous evening of the nomination of Bill D. of South West Intergroup - and the eligibility of this nominee, considering that he was not currently a delegate to Conference. Previous decisions of Conference on this matter were not precise, and he suggested that this point be considered by Committee Number 4 for clarification.

This was agreed.

He then introduced Dr. J.P.W. Hughes, T.D.,M.D.,D.P.H., who addressed the meeting on the subject "A non-alcoholic member of the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous looks at the Problem"

"I would like to review my thinking on the whole question of problem drinking going back almost as it were, to my first introduction to drink. I have divided my Life into stages; Stage I is the introduction to alcohol and Stage II my awareness of the difficulties some experience in dealing with it

As a medical student I was well aware that there were three types of male students: (1) those who never drank and never contributed anything to the extra-mural activities of College life, we called these brown-baggers, they took all from University and gave nothing back: (2) those who gave a great deal but for one reason or another - especially the Jewish fraternity - did not drink or drank with almost reluctance and (3) those who did everything to excess (except work unless it was near exam time), who enjoyed life to the full, played games, drank until they had no money left and contributed to the University in all affairs except academic distinction. These tended to be the John Bull types and many of them subsequently made excellent surgeons. I was reminded in all three of G.K. Chesterton, at one time a very heavy drinker, who described these types of men in his various works as the teetotallers, the men who took a little dry champagne and those, like the Patagonian, who wore the national colours and who had these red and yellow colours of burgundy and advocaat even in his inside.

There were tragedies of course, but I did not link these directly with alcohol any more than I linked a case of 'childhood' cancer in a dental student with it, nor a case of leukaemia in a medical student. One died by his own hand, another like Dylan Thomas who inhaled his own vomit - but this was disclosed much later. In all this our teachers sympathetic to the young and their own fraternity had no understanding at all of the adult alcoholic patient.

Came the second world war and the usual party drinking, I had to deal with the occasional case and even be instrumental in invaliding two officers home. It was the duty of commanding officers to examine their officers' mess bills. I now know that this is, as much as anything, to ensure early detection of problem drinking. At the time this appeared to me to be for the protection of the Wife and family at home from self-indulgent young men. Mostly I thought that a sharp reprimand from a C.O. was all that was needed. I was convinced, as I was as a student, that these people were the workshy and layabouts, the good time people undisciplined in wine, women and song. A certain jealousy was doubtless near to the surface - but of understanding none.

Picking up the threads in the post-war years, sitting for higher degrees and, indeed, making up for the years which the locusts had eaten, and relative poverty so occupied me that there was no occasion to give any serious thought to the whole question of the use and abuse of alcohol.

My first visit to America when I was resident for a year on a fellowship gave me two surprises. The first was that staggering drunkenness and begging in daytime were evident and these had totally disappeared from the English scene. I related one to the other as further evidence that these were men who preferred others to work for them whilst they enjoyed themselves. The other surprise was even more novel to me. When I was in digs I had breakfast in a restaurant with a bar. I breakfasted at 7 a.m. because my professor was in his wards by 8 o'clock. Standing at the bar, silent and without any sign of drunkenness or hangover were men steadily drinking.

They were no bother to anyone and they were there before I came in for "ham 'n' eggs and coffee" and were still there after I left. I had no understanding at all and yet I was supposed to be a "proper doctor" and was, by then, in my middle thirties.

As I was living a strict academic life there was little to add to my knowledge from friends or personal experience. Although I was at Yale much of the time I was in the U.S. I had never heard of the Summer School or the origins of A.A.

Passing now to Stage II, which is now 20 Years ago, the Annual Provincial Meeting of the Society of Occupation Medicine was in Dublin. I have no recollection at all of the remainder of the programme but there was one session which is as clear as crystal to me to this day, It was a session where a psychiatrist, a physiologist and a middle-aged recovered alcoholic (later to become President of A.A. in Eire) spoke. The alcoholic described his desperate history of alcoholism - in and out of police courts and minor sentences for being drunk and disorderly. It was a revelation I suddenly realised that this was no dregs of humanity too idle to get out of the gutter, or to wash or to work, but a man, and still a whole man, who was at least as sensitive as I and with ten times the courage. A middle-aged woman doctor said to me afterwards holding her hand over her heart, "I felt it all here". So did I. I am humble to say that, however firm I may have been, I have never knowingly hurt an alcoholic since.

At least I now had an understanding and a great pity as one would for anyone with an incurable disease. But I felt this was not enough. I was instrumental in getting our own Chairman to talk to us at a major meeting of the Society of Occupational Medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons. By good chance I was responsible for his and his wife's entertainment and am not ashamed to say that I almost plagued him with question after question because he increased my insight overwhelmingly. So there was an answer and an answer without drugs or hospitalisation.

I represented the Society of Occupational Medicine on the National Council on Alcoholism afterwards but the National Council on Alcoholism was not a very happy body at that stage, and apart from getting interesting speakers for public lectures there was not a great deal to be learnt from them.

It is noteworthy how dramatically things have now changed for the better. Now the other bodies, including our own Fellowship, concerned with the problem have happy relationships with the National Council on Alcoholism.

In 1967 the Medical Council on Alcoholism was formed. I was a founder member and elected Chairman of the Occupational Health Committee. It is a pleasure to record that the medical profession, after dragging its feet for so long, warmly welcomed the formation of the Council and furthermore gave to it the cream of the profession to lead it. The first President was Sir Clement Price-Thomas, the Surgeon who operated on the late king and on his early death he was succeeded by Lord Porritt, another great surgeon who was, until recently, Governor-General of New Zealand. The Chairmen have been Francis Camps, the Home Office Pathologist who retired and was succeeded by Lord Rosenheim, President of the Royal College of Physicians. Most unfortunately Lord Rosenheim died at the age of 62 and the present Chairman is yet another surgeon of international repute, Sir Thomas Holmes Sellors. Some of these names will mean nothing to you but I mention them and their offices to show our earnest endeavour to make up for lost ground and neglect of the problem in the past.

When I was elected to the General Service Board of the Fellowship and so could act as liaison officer, Lord Rosenheim was delighted and at the meeting turned to me and bowed. It was a very proud moment.

The London Group of the Society of Occupational Medicine, earlier this year invited two members of A.A. to speak and cemented a friendship formed so much earlier by our Chairman. The great appreciation of these doctors was evident in their queuing up to congratulate the speakers and ask them questions at the buffet supper afterwards.

On business trips to the U.S. I established contact with their National Council on Alcoholism (Dr. Seixas) the School of Alcohol Studies, founded at Yale but now at Rutgers University, and studied alcoholism programmes in several industries. Of particular interest was a visit to Consolidated Edison in New York because this Company was the leader in the field. Nearly 30 years ago the then President of the Company insisted that the Company doctors introduced an alcoholism programme. He had seen too many good men fall by the wayside and he was determined to help his own employees.

Again it was the doctors who were dragging their feet. The success has been very great. Over 60% of the alcoholics accepted advice and help and are back working happily and well. Not all of them are teetotal but over half have accepted that they should not drink again.

My very limited experience is far less happy and I find that my alcoholic will usually retire voluntarily before he is 'officially' found out. But there have been sackings in cases where 'treatment' was refused.

I include A.A. under the term 'treatment' and, from the purely practical point of view, the close resemblance of the modern medical treatment of alcoholism to the established methods of A.A. is no coincidence. I appreciate that there is a much deeper significance in the Fellowship on which I am not yet qualified to speak.

Turning to practical detail I have said little about what is supposed to be my special field 'occupational aspects' of alcoholism: this is because I have little to say. I do not want to bore you with statistics which you will have forgotten before you have left the room but one or two may interest you enough to remain alive in your memory. One is often asked 'what occupations are particularly prone to alcoholism?' The answer is only those who make the alcohol, those who transport it, those who retail it and those who serve it.



But the work of Moss and Beresford Davies in Cambridgeshire is interesting. They showed that the professional classes had a fairly high incidence, managerial slightly higher, relatively very low in the skilled artisan, rising again rapidly in the semi-skilled (e.g. the plumber's mate) and highest in labouring classes. The many reasons given for this are, in the first two classes, as these men get older they have not the supervision of when they were younger and they have more money. The skilled men are still under supervision and have the satisfaction of having concrete evidence of their skill (or occasionally the lack of it) at the end of the day - constant job satisfaction without the worries of the professional man where the fruits of his labour may not be evident for long periods. The semi-skilled and the labourer have some anonymity and the latter is often peripatetic and earns large sums of money. The pub is the natural second home accepted as socially respectable. (I also accept the English pub as a desirable place). There may be other reasons but these are probably right.

One other reason for large intake of fluids (beer, and often strong) is in those industries where sweating is profuse.

In conclusion I think it is worthy to note that the public attitude to many previously unmentionable things like homosexuality, abortion, as well as alcoholism, has so changed to a human and understanding point of view. Perhaps we should say, like Oscar Wilde: "We are all in the gutter but some of us are looking at the stars". This might well be a motto for the Fellowship.

The Chairman of the General Service Board, Ronald L. followed by saying:

"We have just heard a very fascinating talk from Dr. John and a talk which could not be nearer or more appropriate to the theme of this Conference, which is "To Carry This Message". My contribution will be of an entirely different order and in the nature of things it must repeat a very great deal that all of us who are members of A.A. - Alcoholics - must have heard before, because really the story never changes. A.A. began 38 years ago in America, and it came to England 27 years ago and began as we all know by one ex drunk Bill W. talking to a drunk Dr. Bob and that was the first A.A. Meeting. A meeting of two human beings who shared a common problem, and who found by sharing their problem, an answer and a way of life which they both had felt was lost for ever.

We meet each year in Manchester at this Conference. This is the Ninth Conference. The first took place about eight years ago, and in that period of eight years which isn't very long I believe we have attained a very considerable degree of maturity. I suppose that there aren't very many people in the room - but there are some who can remember the early days when everything as regards the future of the Conference was in doubt - there was doubt about whether the Fellowship in this country was ready for a Conference, there was doubt about what the Conference was to be about. There was a preliminary meeting to discuss what the functions of the Conference would be, and for quite along time we went along with our Annual Conferences talking almost entirely about procedures. Three years ago we began to emerge from that early search for a way into a Conference which would give very much more consideration to our ultimate objectives: what we were really meeting here for: than to the mechanics, the procedures and the structure, and I remember saying at the end of the closing meeting on the Sunday morning two years ago that if looking back at what had happened over the last forty-eight hours I were asked to give a keynote phrase for the Conference I would have said "Growing into Our

Responsibilities” . There is behind all of the activity here, and all the activity in the Intergroups and behind all the activity in the Groups, and the General Service Board, and in its Committees and the General Service Office I feel a very, very great and a very rapidly growing responsibility, and I say that for this reason, that when Alcoholics Anonymous started in America thirty-eight years ago it started naturally as a very small body of people who were seeking .to help themselves and to help each other. That is still fundamentally true and that is the basis of the Fellowship, but over and beyond that there is throughout the whole of this country, and it is this country the United Kingdom that we are concerned with at this Conference, such a growing awareness of the problem of alcoholism that evidenced through the various forms of encouragement given by government; through the growing awareness through press publicity of the problem of alcoholism; but more than that there is a very rapidly growing awareness of the existence of Alcoholics Anonymous as a means of recovery. I would think it is very doubtful whether a single drinking man or woman in this country today has never heard of Alcoholics Anonymous, and this is a tremendous thing. The awareness is there, the awareness that if ordinary drinking should develop into problem drinking there is a body, a Fellowship which in some way not known to the outside World can give help and can offer a certain means of recovery to anybody who us prepared to follow the A.A. Programme.

That is where the responsibility lies. We can't live entirely unto ourselves when we know that our fellows who are suffering look to us day by day and week by week, more than they ever have before for a helping hand and therefore I think that it is a wonderful thing that at this our Ninth Conference, three out of four committees are to examine various aspects of the fundamental responsibility of A.A. members to carry the message, and that the number of committees concerned with matters of structure has been reduced to one - that is to one quarter of the total time .

The theme of this Conference and the theme of our lives in A.A. is embodied in Tradition Number 5 which reads: “Each Group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers”. These things are known to all members of A.A. they are particularly known to all members of A.A. who are present, because we send to Conference delegates who have perhaps spent more time and given more thought, reading and studying to the A.A. philosophy and way of life, perhaps than other members have done. But I make no apology for repeating this because more and more as I begin to grow up in A.A. myself I become aware of the fact that this is what we are really doing.

The ultimate power in A.A. resides in the Group - not here, not in the General Service Board, not in the General Service Office, not in the Intergroup. The Groups share their experiences at their Intergroup meetings and when things work ideally what happens at Intergroup meetings becomes known to the members of the groups, when their representatives go back to them after their periodic assemblies. The Intergroups elect their delegates to Conference and Conference is not just a thing that happens once a year -it is a thing that is really going on the whole time. As soon as this Conference is over the reports from the committees, the emphasis upon different aspects of the subject matters of the committees are recorded in the report which is circulated to the Intergroups and the discussion on the last Conference commences immediately and in the ideal will continue throughout the year.

Simultaneously the preparations are in hand almost immediately after each Conference for the next Conference so we have not forty eight hours at Manchester once a year, but we have three hundred and sixty five days, the whole of the year, during which thought is given to the next

Conference, and consideration is given to the ideas which evolved from the last Conference, and by doing this we have a sharing which takes away, I hope, any idea that any of the bodies I have mentioned such as Intergroups, Conference, General Service Board etc. are in the nature of debating societies which get together and discuss interesting points and put them down on paper and then close the book.

None of these things has any significance in itself - the Board may meet on Saturday morning three or four times a year and run into Saturday Afternoon a fairly long meeting, the Policy or Executive Committee meets once a month for several hours, but these things in isolation mean nothing. What they really are in my view is something very very simple -they are methods of trying to open the doors, methods of trying to remove barriers, so that at group level, the group itself and the individual members of that group, are better able to devote their time and their efforts to what we call Twelfth Step work helping the still suffering alcoholic.

If in the deliberations of today the committees which are concerned with the different aspects of carrying the message can produce between them one guideline which enables one member of one group to make a quicker, to make a more effective and to make a kinder approach to a suffering alcoholic, then this Conference will have succeeded. If on the other hand we produce intellectual argument and we arrive at impressive conclusions which do not bring about that result then in my view we will not have succeeded: we will have missed a great opportunity. But the three Committees to which this is entrusted will I know succeed because we are a responsible body.

The fourth Committee is concerned with Structure and its principal task is to consider the draft Manual in accordance with the decision of Conference last year.

This draft is designed to compress into one booklet all the decisions taken by previous Conferences on structural matters. Thus it represents a consensus and acceptance of the best way, found by experience of conducting our affairs by sifting past experience, of determining the best way to get together on any given subject without wasting too much time on it and this is why this structure - procedures for election of delegates, agreements as to how many delegates should come, agreements as to how resolutions should be submitted, and the simpler these are -the better, the more clearly they are understood -the better and the simpler and clearer they are, the more quickly any given subject can be dealt with by Conference or by Intergroup or by the General Service Board or whoever it may be, so the minimum of time is spent on discussing technicalities and the maximum time is spent on getting down to the bed rock of what is really the problem and what is really needed.

Again as a sign of maturity, a milestone in our history, was in my view the decision to codify all the resolutions relative to structure which had been passed by Conference since its inception, and this again so that each delegate, each person present, would know without needing to delve back through numerous Conference reports what had been agreed on this matter, that matter and the other matter so that again time is available to get on with the things that really matter - and to help this swing which we have achieved this year of three Committees dealing with the heart and soul of A.A. and only one Committee dealing with, what we might call the technicalities of A.A.

Quite rightly for many years past the word communications and the word communication has troubled us from time to time at Conference, and I think that every get-together of any sort of Committee in A.A. we could say we didn't know this, what has happened to the communication, if only we had known so and so, we could have helped here or there. I believe we have a long

way to go, but that we are making very considerable progress in this direction.

Doors are open to us, not only within the Fellowship, but throughout the whole social structure, which only a very short time ago were not open to us. I was fascinated by what Dr. John had to say, and I was very very glad that he did agree to speak to us this morning, because I am sure that a great deal of what he said would be a revelation to many of you. Now this has come over a period of years, it was an example of, I think, seeds sown on both sides at a meeting perhaps eight years ago and by mutual understanding by finding that there was a common purpose we have for the first time in this country secured a lead into industry -how many years it will take for it to develop I do not know, but I think we are on the way. The Medical Council on Alcoholism itself held an International Conference in 1973 for the first time, at which Alcoholics Anonymous was invited to send an observer -another close link.

We have through other non alcoholic members of the Board been into the other activities which have among their objects worked among alcoholics. We have within our Fellowship a very rapidly growing membership as you will see from the figures published in the Secretary's section of the General Service Board Report. As compared with a year ago we have impressively more of the country covered by Intergroups, there are still one or two pockets or areas where there are no Intergroups, and where the representation at this Conference is something of a problem but we are making very good progress there.

Last year it was agreed that we should try, I think in two years time, to move towards regionalisation, that is grouping Intergroups together, so that they send a representative for a group of Intergroups instead of each Intergroup - this partly to avoid a growth in numbers here which might become unmanageable, and we are on the way there.

There is a lot to be done, and I am clearing it in my thoughts only, in the way of developing new Intergroups where they do not exist, possibly in reducing the size of some Intergroups where they do exist, and possibly in re-grouping so as to get a more uniform and homogeneous type of Intergroup. This is also on the way but a very great deal has to be done. But from this we have from within our own Fellowship a much greater degree of communication than we have had before, and the closer the communication the more rapidly we can respond to a cry for help. Not only the rapidly, the more each of us understands and appreciates what A.A. really is, the more each of us is able to carry out a Twelfth Step call of a higher quality, and I believe there is a variation in quality among Twelfth Step calls.

The more deeply aware we are that this is our Primary Purpose -the more impossible it would become for any stranger to appear at any group throughout the United Kingdom seeking help, but too nervous and shattered to ask for it, and to go away from that meeting without being spoken to. This may happen only rarely, but I don't think we can say it never happens. It is a thing, I think, that will evolve from a refinement of each of our own consciences. This is what we are here for. We have found our Own recovery, I have found my Own recovery - is there a man or a woman here who hasn't? and I believe that this increase, improvement and quality, this development of loving kindness towards a fellow human being who is today suffering as I used to suffer, is a growth in refined feeling which can always manage to bring a more immediate and more heartfelt response and therefore offer to the still suffering alcoholic a greater prospect of recovery, and a greater and quicker relaxation in knowing he is among people of his own kind who will not reject him as he has been rejected for so long.

Similarly, and again if I may I will continue a little with this question of closeness and communications. Physically and geographically, communications are getting shorter all the time. London was a long long way from New York before the war when A.A. first started in America. It is a few hours journey now, and partly fortuitously some of us are in New York from time to time and we call at the Central Service Office and we are getting to know the members of the Staff. Some of the members of the Board and Bill S. have made trips over there in connection with the World Service Meeting. I happen to be there three or four times a year, and I keep in touch. We learn quite a lot from them, and I think I can say quite honestly they learn quite a lot from us, because whilst A.A. has the same roots, while it springs from the same founders, while it deals with the same problems and offers the same answers, there are differences in approach between America and this country in some ways, and these evidence themselves. We do learn from each other and once this close relationship is built up, and it is building up very very well now. it does mean that letters written between Redcliffe Gardens and Park Avenue South, New York are more readily understood.

Correspondence between people who know each other is always warmer and more intimate and with the World Service Meeting this year to be held in London, and an influx into London of people from approximately seventeen countries again our links are strengthening.

We have a responsibility, and a very very high one to account for ourselves well, because whilst we always look to America as being the fountain from which A.A. sprang and upon which our own Fellowship was established, equally a great many other countries look to us, and it has been rather a surprise to all of us that we do occupy a strong position in World A.A. to a degree that we hadn't conceived possible before.

And so, when we come to Conference, we may well come, and we do come, with different ideas on different matters. The agendas have been published in advance, and in many cases have been - as they should be - discussed at Intergroup beforehand. We bring together people, all with one objective: that is to come out of the committees with a report that is constructive - a report that when it passes down through Intergroups to the Groups will be of practical help and guidance and make more effective the Twelfth Step work that we do. We come with different ideas and discuss those ideas openly and frankly, but purely with the object of arriving at the best course. We have an excellent chance of arriving at the best course, which is a very different thing of course, as many of us will remember from years ago before Conference got going, from meeting with the idea not of open mindedly arriving at the best course, but of winning a point. Maturity means that we have passed beyond this - and I am sure that in that sense we are mature, we come with open minds, with our own ideas to contribute, but ready to see the merit in the ideas of other people and to come out at the end of the day with the feeling that we have made progress and that the decisions we have made are right".

This session of the full Conference adjourned and the delegates joined their various committees, which were asked to study the following subjects:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Committee No.1. | “What Message?”                                 |
| Committee No.2. | “How do we carry this Message?”                 |
| Committee No.3. | “When do we carry this Message?”                |
| Committee No.4. | “Structure - including draft Service Manual “ . |

The Committees completed their discussions at 5.30 p.m. and their draft reports were prepared

for later distribution.

The evening session commenced with the showing of the film - "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions", unfortunately the second film "Bill's Own Story" was not available.

The ensuing discussion confirmed that this film would be ideal for large A.A. gatherings such as Intergroup functions, Mini-Conventions etc.

Details of the films, conditions of hire and method of ordering were distributed to the delegates. Further copies of this information being available from the General Service Office.

SUNDAY 7 APRIL 1974.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chairmen of the four committees presented their respective reports, which after discussion and amendment were agreed, the reports were adopted. The Agenda and reports are attached as:

Appendix B Committee No.1.

Appendix C Committee No.2

Appendix D Committee No.3.

Appendix E Committee No.4.

#### CONVENTIONS

The delegates were fully aware of the necessity for the planning of future Conventions in the North and South of England and Wales, and that it was insufficient to call for volunteer Intergroups only one year in advance. Unfortunately on this occasion the 1975 Conventions would have to proceed on this basis, and the Merseyside and North Wales Intergroup and the London Intergroup delegates offered to convene and organise the Conventions in their respective Northern and Southern areas.

For the 1976 Conventions the delegates from Southern, South Eastern and South London Intergroups agreed to be responsible for the Southern gathering, and the West Riding and North East Intergroup for the Northern one.

#### CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN .

Maurice S. before proceeding with the election of the Chairman for the 1975 Conference specifically drew the attention of the delegates to Item No. 8. of the appendix to the report of Committee No. 4. and which indicated that the nomination of Bill D. of the South West Intergroup could not be accepted. However, in consideration of the fact that he had accepted the nomination at the Friday evening meeting at which time the point had not been clarified, he suggested that this nomination be allowed to stand.

He then placed before Conference the nominations of:

Bill D (South West Intergroup)

Jim H (Manchester Intergroup)

and Jim H. was elected.

#### CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Maurice introduced Dr. Oscar Olsen a non alcoholic member of the Service Board of the Fellowship in Norway who was attending as an observer, who then addressed the Conference:

“I apologise for not speaking good English, but if you can’t understand all that I am going to say, I hope you will understand the language of the heart, which I held on during my brief twenty-five years of close connection and association with A.A. I am a medical doctor, I met A.A. in 1949 in my home town, I had heard of A.A. a couple of years before when I was in the Parliament in Oslo. A friend of mine a psychiatrist was the first doctor in Norway who met A.A. in the early days. He had a patient who had an alcoholic problem -he could not solve it, even my very clever psychiatrist could not do anything. He found the solution in the first real A.A. book in Oslo -he went to his doctor and told what had happened. My friend, the psychiatrist, was the first doctor in Norway to work together with A.A. He was the first non alcoholic member of our Board of Trustees.

I have been on the Board for the last six years, well, I am not going to talk about myself, but I am just going to say a few words, my impressions from the wonderful Conference .

I am very grateful that I have had the opportunity of participation in this Conference, and from the first moment when I came to London, and dropped in on your very busy Office, I was afraid to drop in there because I knew they had a lot to do before the Conference, but I met the open hearted friendliness and friendship that is characteristic of A.A. I met some friendship on the train, the nice company of A.A. friends, and during this Conference I have experienced the same friendliness, the same heart warmth that has impressed me very much.

I was very impressed by your well arranged Conference, I may say that we in Norway are not such good Conference planners, although the mountainous country does not allow us to arrange it as you have done, but I think I have got some ideas of how this had to be planned to take back to our Board. We are going to have a meeting in the middle of April, and I have a lot of ideas to give them, when I make my report from this Conference.

I am very much impressed by your discussions in the committees, and the deliberations in the full meetings here You are an example of what I will call - high level discussion. An example of the noble art not of defence, but of discussion.

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to make new friends, and I hope I will be able to come back. I am also very grateful to have met colleagues who are working in association with A.A. We are not so many in Norway, we are a few, but I hope that A.A. will be able to open channels to our medical field, I hope the co-operation and all you have discussed here will bear fruit in the society.

But I feel before closing that when I try to make a resume of what I have heard, and my impressions, I cannot find better words than I found in a back copy of Grapevine, where we have the last big talk from Dr. Bob, we often quote Bill the founder, but not often Dr. Bob, but I assume that what he did in the early days of A.A. has inspired much of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. I think nobody can express as he has done in the last sentence of his speech - I quote:

“Will A.A. increase from here on, well that will depend on every member of A.A. it is possible

for us to grow or not to grow as we elect. If we fight shy of entangling alliances, if we avoid getting messed up with controversial issues, if we maintain unity through our Central Offices, if we preserve the simplicity of our programmes, if we remember that our job is to get sober, and to stay sober, and to help our less fortunate brother to do the same thing, then we shall continue to grow, and thrive, and prosper”.

Thank you very much.

Maurice S. then invited Bill M. Chairman of the Scottish Committee to address the Conference.

“My name is Bill, and I am a member of the Scottish Committee, and in case there is any confusion about the situation I am a Scot.

Maurice approached me only this morning, as he told you, I am glad to say after breakfast, and asked me to make this closing address. Normally at that time any other Sunday morning I’m playing golf, and the only similarity between this morning and any other Sunday morning I can assure you is the language, and for that I am grateful to Maurice.

I’m not a professional speaker, nor am I a political person, I’m not politically minded in any shape or form, I am just a member of A.A. I can only speak as such.

I am now fortunate that I am in my 21st. year, I am grateful and indebted to A.A. for these twenty one years of sobriety and serenity. My heart and soul are in this programme this philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This theme of this Conference has basically been concerned for me personally, in carrying this message. It has comprised our four committees the reports of which have been thoroughly debated and finally accepted. These resolutions will do a great deal and go a long long way towards strengthening the basic foundations of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The first three of these committees were those, speaking personally, that concerned me, because they go back to the grass roots - they go back to the fact where the sick alcoholic comes to A.A. for help. What message do we have for this person, and how best and when can we help? We all have to some extent our individual interpretations, but they all basically concern the main issue - that something has to be done to the best of our ability to the recovery of the sick alcoholic. This is where we all started, and this is our purpose.

We had a film show last night, which to me meant everything; - Bill reading and discussing the Twelve Traditions - he carried the message, he carried conviction, he carried hope, and he inspired faith both in himself and in this programme. I know for me, and for most of us who saw this film, a great deal of what he said rubbed off on us.

At this Conference this weekend we have present at this. time some seventy delegates, who in turn represent some seventy thousand recovering alcoholics. This is one of our small Scottish traits we don’t call ourselves recovered alcoholics we talk about recovering alcoholics - because we are still and always will be recovering.

It is our duty as delegates to go back to our Intergroups and individual groups, and convey to our fellow members not only the contents and findings of this weekend, but something of the



sincerity and something of the spiritual values and the spiritual atmosphere that has existed here.

I feel that we have reached a point in the progression of the years, when A.A. virtually covers two generations, but speaking frankly and personally this came to me slowly over a period - I always looked upon A.A. as the people I knew in A.A. The younger members kept arriving at the meeting, and it took some little time to dawn on me that the numbers of these younger people are growing steadily and surely, and I feel that we have reached a point almost now, and in the few years that lie ahead, where as Bill so aptly pointed out in the film, it is our duty to pass the legacy of A.A. on to those who are following us.

I feel that this Conference has been a tremendous success, we have covered a lot of ground, we have done a lot towards strengthening A.A. to further examining the principles of A.A. to further examining our response to the suggestions that were put forward in the original build up of this Fellowship .

I could have put this all into one sentence really and truly -I am a single minded person, I like to have a simple programme for me.

Thank God for A.A. but let us never forget that we are dealing with incoming sick alcoholics, let us therefore with all due respect to the involvements that have taken place here this weekend, let us always try to keep it simple, and in thankfulness fulfil our duty in carrying this message.

I would like also before I close to pay tribute to our Chairman Maurice, for the very able and friendly manner in which he has conducted this Conference.

Will you please join me in a vote of thanks to Bill S. our General Secretary and to all the Committee members for their work in making the arrangements for this weekend, for our comfort and pleasure.

I would like to thank all of you, all the members of A.A. and that includes our Chairman and our Secretary for being here, but with all due respect they are in spite of their position they are still just like us all, members of A.A.

Maurice S. in closing the Conference thanked the speakers, and felt that he could add nothing to their remarks, and expressed his thanks to the General Service Office Staff for their work, not only at Conference, but throughout the year. He added, "When I was appointed Chairman last year, and accepted it's responsibilities it meant that I had to get involved with A.A. at the core, so to speak. I had to go down to London, three or four times, and have worked with members of the Board until late evening, doing their work, and have worked Saturday mornings and afternoons with them and I would like this Conference to place on records our thanks and gratitude to our Trustees for the way they have carried forward our proposals and suggestions so ably throughout the past year. I would like to thank you for your tolerance and overlooking my shortcomings during this weekend.

I would remind you that there is a meeting at 2.30 p.m. this afternoon to discuss the co-ordination of Conventions, Mini - Conventions and other functions, and to find if possible ways and means of avoiding clashes. The meeting will, I understand not be a long one, and is open to all who can attend.

## DATE OF TENTH CONFERENCE 1975

It was agreed that the Conference next year should be held on 11th to 13th April 1975, if these dates could be arranged. The Secretary was given the duty of finalising the date and advising all delegates in due course.

Maurice closed the Conference by asking all present to join in the Serenity Prayer.

## NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1974 COMMITTEE No. 1.

“WHAT MESSAGE?”

### Appendix B

CHAIRMAN: RONNIE H. General Service Board.

The Committee were asked the following questions;

1. Is there a move away from the primary spiritual aims of A.A. and if so, what action should be taken?
2. When a group concentrates solely on the spiritual principles can this lead to an affiliation with a particular religious denomination?
3. How can the group conscience keep well informed to avoid A.A. being identified with a specific religion?
4. Do groups exist that ignore the purity; and simplicity of the programme of recovery?
5. If so, what message do they carry, and what purpose do they serve?
6. In view of the increasing interest in the field of alcoholism is action necessary to avoid the dilution and distortion of the A.A. message?

### REPORT

The response to the question contained in this Committee's title, “What Message?” was immediate and positive: “The message of the programme of recovery as presented in the Twelve Steps, The Twelve Traditions, the Big Book and the Preamble” .Mention was made of the Just for Today Card as being one means of preparing the soil in which the seed of the message will be planted to help the still-suffering alcoholic.

It was apparent from our discussion on the first agenda questions: “Is there a move away from the primary spiritual aims of A.A. and if so, what action should be taken?” that each delegate in the Committee attends a number of different meetings weekly, and from their experience all reported that with a very small number of exceptions, there is not a move away from our spiritual aims. Several delegates were concerned about the amount of time sometimes taken up by speakers to relate detailed accounts of drinking experiences at the expense of the part of the message which deals with recovery. We reminded ourselves of the words from Chapter Five of the Big Book: “Our Stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened and what we are like now”. It was generally felt that a good A.A. meeting was one where there is maximum

participation, also that an important responsibility of a Chairman is always to keep the programme of recovery in the fore-front of the meeting.

Items 2: “When a group concentrates solely on the spiritual principles, can this lead to an affiliation with a particular religious denomination?” and 3: “How can the group conscience keep well informed to avoid A.A. being identified with a specific religion?” were bracketed as being interdependent. A.A. it was agreed, does not have a spiritual ‘side’; it is a spiritual programme. References were made to the confusion that often exists in the minds of members between A.A.’s spirituality and organised religion. The first handshake to a newcomer was quoted as a graphic example of A.A. spirituality in its simpler forms. Attention was drawn to the sentence in the Preamble - “...not allied with any sect, denomination” etc. and it was considered that this should be emphasised whenever possible. The value of a careful reading aloud of the Preamble and of Chapter Five was stressed by a majority of committee members. It was definitely felt that there was no evidence of affiliation with any religious body.

Questions 4: “Do groups exist that ignore the purity and simplicity of the programme of recovery?” and 5: “If so, what message do they carry” and what purpose, do they serve?” were also taken in conjunction.

Such groups, although comparatively rare, do exist. The message they appear to carry, is “Stick around” and “Stay away from that first drink one day at a time”. These groups provide something in the nature of a social club for many lonely people, and certainly help many alcoholics to stay dry. At the other end of the scale is the type of group which over-emphasises its own particular brand of “ritual”, which some felt might have the reverse effect from that which was originally intended.

The final question was: “In view of the increasing interest in the field of alcoholism, is action necessary to avoid the dilution and distortion of the A.A. message?” The unanimous consensus of opinion was that no action is required beyond our members continuing to adhere diligently to the Programme. Attention was drawn to the pamphlet: “Co-operation and not Affiliation”. We recognised that we are not experts beyond our own experience as recovering alcoholics.

To end this committee’s sessions, the question “What Message?” was put individually to each member. Without hesitation the reply again came. The message of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions..

NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1974 Appendix C  
COMMITTEE NO.2. ‘HOW DO WE CARRY THIS MESSAGE’..

CHAIRMAN: CYRIL H - Merseyside and North Wales Intergroup

The Committee were asked the following questions:

1. Do we ensure that the member who tries to carry this message has made some progress on his own recovery programme?.
2. How can we best share our experience with the younger member who seeks involvement in ‘Twelfth Step’ work?

3. Are there pitfalls to be avoided in providing suitable members to answer calls for help?
4. Are we always aware of the dual responsibility of carrying this message?
5. When sharing our experience with the still suffering alcoholic what approach should we take?
6. Should we clearly differentiate between the technique or mechanics of staying abstinent and the A.A. philosophy of maintaining sobriety?
7. Do we use fully the tools A.A. has provided?
8. Do we remember that we are dealing with a sick person?
9. Do we offer from our experience the A.A. message of hope to counteract the hopelessness of alcoholism?

#### REPORT

This Committee has considered the Agenda in the light of an inventory and have formulated the following opinions:

The initial impact of the Agenda was from the point of view of the individual member being involved in 'Twelfth Step' work. However, as the discussion developed it became apparent that this Agenda had certain implications concerning the Fellowship and other agencies (Industry, Public Health, Medical Authorities etc).

From the point of view of the individual members the questions posed in Items 1,2 and 3 were linked together and it was agreed that some form of guidance allied with responsibility was desirable in an effort to meet these objectives.

Further to the question of pitfalls in Question 3 it was acknowledged that enthusiasm although a sign of progress, could in itself be insufficient. The Committee felt that the interpretation of the dual responsibility of carrying this message and sharing our experience with the still suffering alcoholic, related directly to our primary purpose 'To stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety'.

On approaching the sick alcoholic the attitude desirable is one of hope and understanding giving due consideration to the effects of the illness.

To clarify the difference between abstinence and the A.A. philosophy of sobriety, the Recovery Programme fills the vacuum with the practical physical mental and spiritual rehabilitation provided the alcoholic follows the suggestions of the Twelve Steps.

The Committee are mindful of the importance of the opportunities now being presented to the Fellowship where doors are opening for this message to be carried on a scale perhaps beyond previous experience.

For this it was felt that policies should be formulated and we refer this to General Service Board for their consideration.

The Committee recognised in connection with the theme 'How do we carry this message?' the

need for a simple pamphlet, illustrating the insidiousness of 'Two Stepping' as portrayed in 'Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions' pages 116-117.

We recommend that the General Service Board consider such a Publication.

## Appendix D

### COMMITTEE NO.3. "WHEN DO WE CARRY THIS MESSAGE?"

CHAIRMAN:JOHN N.-Avon Intergroup.

The Committee were asked the following questions :

- 1 The only requirement for membership is 'a desire to stop drinking' How flexible should we be?
2. What arrangements exist locally and what improvements can be made to receive calls for help?
3. When calls are received what chain of communication should exist to ensure prompt action?
4. What part does Unity play at local level to make our service more effective?
5. Are we prepared to go to any lengths to carry this message or are we too selective?
6. What message and image should we give when speaking at non-A.A. meetings?
7. Do we keep an open mind and remember that other agencies can play an important part in the alcoholic's recovery?
8. Are there dangers to be avoided in this kind of co-operation?
9. In what way can Al-Anon assist us indirectly to help the still suffering alcoholic?
10. How can we encourage the sale of literature and books to help the individual and the Group?
11. Do meetings such as 'Newcomers ' or 'Beginners , serve their intended purpose?
12. Do we accept that restricted or specifically named types of groups have their particular part to play in the growth of A.A.?
13. How important is it for the new member to be able to participate in the Group? Can a group be too large for this to happen?

## REPORT

The Committee felt that we should be extremely flexible in the A.A. requirement of 'the desire to stop drinking' as membership can only be determined by the individual. The only reason for exclusion from a meeting that is justified is a case of severe disruption. It is the experience of the

Committee that when someone attends an A.A. meeting for any purpose other than sobriety he or she tends to drift away sooner rather than later.

Existing local arrangements for receiving calls seem to be good. The principle improvement that can be made is an increase in the numbers of members participating. The main means of communication would appear to be through the telephone. A short, strong, reliable chain of communication should exist to ensure prompt action.

Unity at all levels is essential to make our service more effective and this stems from each individual member's growing sense of responsibility and willingness for involvement, and reference should be made to the established guidelines of A.A.

Whilst we are prepared to go to any lengths to carry this message perhaps we are too selective in some instances, in particular the use of A.A.'s in 'Twelfth Step' work. We should always work within the confines of A.A. Traditions.

When speaking at non-A.A. meetings we should use the guidelines adequately set out in the leaflet 'Speaking at non-A.A. meetings' and emphasise the nature of our anonymity in passing on our message of hope and recovery.

We do keep an open mind in relation to co-operating with other agencies and would welcome continuous help from General Service Office in relation to national co-operation with specific agencies. Dangers are many and varied and experience has shown that where A.A. has become even remotely affiliated with other agencies all manner of problems have arisen. These can be largely avoided by sharing of experiences in using the A.A. guidelines such as:

'A.A. co-operation with Alcoholism Agencies and Facilities'

"For members employed in the Alcoholism Field"

and

'Co-operation not Affiliation'

Al-Anon can, and is, assisting us greatly by offering the services of Al-Anon Family Groups and contacts to the families of suffering alcoholics and should receive every encouragement and co-operation.

Literature should be displayed and available in all groups. To get full advantage from it the Committee suggested that all members should make a point of frequently and openly acknowledging where and in what publication they have obtained specific information and guidance. This might encourage others particularly new members, to use this valuable source of information and help more often.

It should always be made possible for a new member to acquire a copy of the Big Book at the earliest time. A.A. meetings often are specifically geared to the newcomers in the room but where there are frequent new members it was felt that 'Newcomers Meetings' can help, although these should be attached to an established A.A. Group.

The Committee did not feel that restricted (specifically named such as Professions etc) groups have any part to play in the growth of A.A. Young Peoples Groups and other ‘Specifically Named’ Groups where not restricted in their membership are useful, particularly in areas where there are numerous groups.

It is very important to involve new members at an early stage in the meetings and activities of the group, where groups are too large for this to happen a natural growth by division often occurs.

NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1974.

## Appendix E

COMMITTEE NO.4. “STRUCTURE -INCLUDING DRAFT SERVICE MANUAL”  
CHAIRMAN: RONALD L. General Service Board.

The Committee was asked to make recommendations on the following items:

### 1. Service Manual

- a) Does the draft Manual convey the decisions taken at previous Conferences?
- b) Have any decisions of Conferences on matters of structure been omitted?
- c) Consideration of proposals (marked in red) for inclusion of new provisions i.e. not previously put before Conference.
- d) Consideration of procedure for future alterations or additions to the Manual.

### 2. FUTURE CONVENTIONS

“The Eighth General Service Conference 1973 recommended that after the 1974 England and Wales National Convention arrangements for gatherings be left to those Intergroups within the general areas of the North of England, and the South of England and Wales. The question of holding future National Conventions after 1974 should be reviewed annually at the General Service Conference”.

- a) Consider what positive action should be taken to implement this recommendation for the 1975 Conventions.
- b) Should the two Conventions be held simultaneously or otherwise.

### 3. Resolutions remitted from Friday evening session:

- a) “That no Conference approval of the proposed Service Manual for Great Britain be given at this Conference as Groups have not been allowed sufficient time to study it in detail”
- b) “The maximum term of service of delegates at the General Service Conference should be extended from 3 years to 5 years to allow for better continuity” .
- c) “Regions should be finally drawn up by or at 1975 Manchester General Service

Conference and thereafter General Service Conferences should be held only in odd numbered years thus saving the Fellowship some £2,000 every second year” .

## 1 SERVICE MANUAL

i) Firstly, by a majority decision, the Committee resolved to recommend to Conference that, the Draft Manual being not simply an anglicised version of the A.A. Service Manual for North America, it be re-titled:

“Record of Structural Resolutions for A.A. in Great Britain”

(Hereinafter referred to as the Draft Record)

In full meeting of the Conference it was decided that the Manual be titled:

“The A.A. Service Handbook for Great Britain”

ii) In reply to Question (a) on the Agenda, the Committee felt that the draft Record does indeed convey the decisions taken at previous Conference.

iii) The Committee does not consider any decision of Conference on matters of structure have been omitted.

iv) The Proposals (marked in Red) for inclusion of new provisions i.e. not previously put before Conference, were considered and it is recommended they be confirmed by Conference and included in the draft Record.

v) The Committee recommended that future alterations or additions to the Draft Record should be included only after being passed by 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority of Conference.

For amendments see attached sheet.

## 2. FUTURE CONVENTIONS

The Committee recommend that the recommendation of the Eighth General Service Conference 1973 be implemented in 1975 with separate Conventions being held North and South of a line drawn eastward across England and Wales from the Wash. Birmingham should be regarded as being in the Northern area.

It was decided to recommend that the two Conventions should preferably be not held simultaneously.

## 3. RESOLUTIONS.

The Committee considered three Resolutions referred to it by Conference April 5 1974, and now report:

### RESOLUTION No.1



It was decided to recommend no action, as it was felt that Intergroups had had adequate time to consider the Draft Record, although some inconvenience may have been caused by lack of time to circulate Groups in some cases.

#### RESOLUTION NO.2.

It is recommended no action be taken to change the term of service of Delegates to the Conference. It is felt that any difficulties which may at present be caused to certain remote Intergroups by existing conditions will be eased with the introduction of regionalisation.

#### RESOLUTION NO.3.

The Committee recommend to Conference that the first part of Resolution No.3. be accepted. They further recommend that Intergroups be asked to consider immediately with neighbouring Intergroups the question of proposing acceptably viable Regional arrangements. The results of this would, it is hoped, be available to the General Service Office by 30 September, 1974 for the preparation of the blue print for submission to Conference 1975, for immediate implementation.

So far as the second part of the Resolution is concerned the Committee felt that in view of the savings which would result from regionalisation no action is required at the moment.

Amendments to the Draft A.A. Service Manual for Great Britain herein after referred to as the Record of Structural Resolutions for A.A. in Great Britain.

1. For easy reference number pages commencing 'contents' 1 through to 35.

2. page 4 - Para 3 - penultimate sentence to read:

'A.A. in Great Britain continues to adhere firmly to the principles that underlie that Manual, The Twelve Concepts for World Service, the Twelve steps and Twelve Traditions, and to the Big Book, 'Alcoholics Anonymous'.

3. Page 14 - Section 1(a) 1<sup>st</sup> Line - delete the word 'country' and substitute 'Great Britain'.

4. Page 14 - Section 1(d) - delete the complete sub section.

5. Page 14 - Alter sub section (e) (f) and(g) to read (d) (e)and (f) respectively.

6. Page 15 - Section 3(c) - the final sentence to read 'He may however attend Conference as a member of the Service Board if so elected'.

7. Page 15 -Section 4.(a) -the red underlined wording was accepted.

8. Page 17 - Section 9(a) to read: 'Each Annual Conference shall elect from among its delegate members a Chairman to preside over the following year's Conference. A delegate attending his third, and therefore final conference, as a delegate, may be elected as Chairman of the following year's Conference.

The Conference Chairman shall be closely associated from the beginning with the drawing up of

the Agenda.

9. Page 18 - After Section 11 Conference Finances first paragraph insert '12 CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES'
10. Page 23 - Section 8 Line 4, delete 'collaborate' and insert 'co-operate'.
11. Page 24 and whenever appearing subsequently Policy (Executive) Committee to read Executive Committee.
12. Page 27 - Para 5 outlined in red - approved.
13. Page 28 " " "

## CONVENTIONS

### Appendix F

Many delegates remained after Conference for this meeting, which elected John M. (General Service Board) to be Chairman.

John briefly explained the purpose of the meeting, which he hoped would result in the closer co-ordination of A.A. events in Great Britain, and avoid the clashing of dates of functions in areas of close proximity.

It was agreed that the advent of mini or one day conventions were contributing greatly to the growth of A.A. and to the spirit and unity within the Fellowship.

Within a growing Fellowship it was essential that our lines of communication be maintained and if possible improved, and ways should be found to build up a diary of events that would be a reference point that could be consulted by Intergroups and Groups when planning an event.

It was recommended that any 'body' within the Fellowship should inform the General Service Office immediately their plans had been made. A diary would be compiled in the Office, to which anyone could refer for open dates when planning.

It was felt that the discussions had been useful and that a similar meeting be held next year to review progress and share the experience gained during the year.

The lists of the 1973 and 1974 events are attached for information.

FRIDAY 11 APRIL 1975

Page 1.

The Delegates assembled from 5.30p.m. onwards and after completing the formalities of registration etc. took the opportunity to welcome each other, whether it was their first or last year of attendance. Unfortunately the staggered times of arrival allowed only a brief and informal gathering before the Conference opened in full session at 8.45 p.m.

#### OPENING OF CONFERENCE.

Jim H. of the Manchester Intergroup - the Conference

Chairman, welcomed the Delegates and expressed pleasure that observers from France, Ireland, Germany and Norway were present and were willing to share their experience with our Conference.

Jim further remarked "In opening the Conference I will be speaking to you mainly about the Conference Theme: "The Group - The Source of our Strength".

"When we read about the early history of AA and look back over our own AA experience I think that many of us would recognise a number of parallels between our own personal recoveries and the development of AA Groups from their early beginnings to later maturity.

"We begin, possibly uncertainly, with little experience of our own to draw on. We learn that with the aid of AA principles and a power greater than ourselves that we can survive the traumas of our early immature days. We find that as we develop so our capacity to utilise and appreciate the AA programme of recovery develops. With growth our situation changes, generally for the better, and we find a growing confidence to face new problems and challenges as they occur.

"This is a faith that we can chart for the individual as far as groups of individuals who follow the AA path of recovery. The parallels that I have drawn between the recovery of the individual and the development of the AA group are not surprising because in order to survive we have the same basic principles of recovery and unity on which we must depend.

"One of these principles is honest self-examination. We are advised to take and to continue to take a fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Maurice, our Chairman last year went to the heart of a great deal of our purpose here, when he said that Conference was in many ways the holding of a moral inventory.

"As we individually continue to take a personal moral inventory so the delegates here will in the course of our deliberations have to examine the strengths and weaknesses, the successes and failings, those things which unite us and those on which we disagree - they will in fact be carrying out a moral inventory for our fellowship in the United Kingdom and you will have seen from the Conference Theme and from the Conference Programme that a great deal of this inventory is directed at the quality and effectiveness of our sharing in the group life of AA.

“I think that all of you here will have experience the sense of the uplifting of the spirit which comes from the sharing of experience, strength and hope which takes place at an AA Group Meeting.

“When this does happen the second step of our programme becomes for many not so much a venture of belief as a physical experience of the truth. Such moments of inspiration can come in many varied ways, but in our Fellowship we are given the sharing of experience in the group as a continuing reservoir of strength in which to draw.

“It seems to me that as we turned to the AA Group for sobriety when we first came to the Fellowship, that we as sober recovering alcoholics bring our sobriety back to the group to share with others. We can share the AA message in any number of ways and in any number of situations, but we have our AA groups to which we bring our strength not only to share with others but to continuously renew and replenish in ourselves.

“One of the predominate impressions that has been made on me over the last twelve months is the tremendous growth in our Fellowship and the large number of new members negotiating their first few months of sobriety in AA. It is a tremendously exhilarating experience to witness the change in people as they recover. Their expression and bearing reflect reconciliation and fullness of life entering into their lives which have been so much distorted by fear and despair.

“It is a wonderful transformation but few of us here will be unconscious of the vulnerability of the newly recovering alcoholic as he or she negotiates the early dangerous obstacles in their way to a new life.

“Whilst there is nothing more exciting than to see someone recover in AA there is nothing more heartbreaking than to see someone who has had sobriety lose it and return to the agonies of destructive drinking.

“I am conscious that when I was at my most uncertain and vulnerable I had not only the continual support and re-assurance of individual members of AA - but of strong AA Groups. I can remember the immense feeling of security coming over me as I walked out of a seemingly cold and hostile world into the warmth of a group meeting.

“Our own continued strength and inspiration, the strength that we can share with others to fulfil our primary purpose and the progress of the very many new members of our fellowship will be influenced by the quality and integrity of our group life.

“I believe that AA is inspired and has been inspired from its inception by a power greater than ourselves. We have been shown that there is a reservoir of strength which we can secure for ourselves by participating in the AA Group, not only in the group meetings but in sponsorship and in the many other responsibilities incumbent on groups to preserve our legacies of recovery, unity and service.

“If the sharing of experience and self examination that will take place at this Conference can be used to improve the quality and strength of our group life, then there will be a dividend. The dividend will be shown in recovery, in unity, and in service. It will be shown in the effectiveness in which we carry out our primary purpose. The dividend will be paid in the security of our own

lives and in the transformation of the lives of those who at this moment are still suffering.

“This weekend is an important one for our fellowship in the United Kingdom. It will be an arduous one for you. The duties of a conference delegate are such that when this Conference closes, your work will begin in earnest. You have been entrusted with an important and onerous AA service. I would like to give you my best wishes for the task which lies ahead of you”.

## GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

Ronald L. Chairman of the General Service Board presented the Report of the Board to Conference and requested that in view of the fact that the Report had previously been circulated it be taken as read. This was agreed.

Ronald commented that his foreword to the Report could only briefly indicate in general terms the numerous activities of the Board during 1974; the individual reports elaborated in greater detail the many aspects of service. The General Service Board are always conscious of being the servants of the whole Fellowship in the United Kingdom, and in all its deliberations and actions were guided by the Twelve Traditions, and recommendations of Conference.

Ronald remarked that with each succeeding year the duties placed upon members of Conference the amount of discussions increased and suggested that thought should be given to extending the duration of the Conference in order that sound and unhurried consideration could be granted to all the points requiring attention and recommendation.

## BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Ronald L. formally asked for confirmation of the appointment of Alex A (London) and Maurice S (Leeds) as members of the General Service Board.

This was approved unanimously.

Ronald introduced Mr. Eric Crowther, a newly appointed non-alcoholic member of the Board, and welcomed him on behalf of all members to his first Conference.

## FINANCE

Alex A. (Treasurer) in presenting the Financial Statement commented:

“The accounts which have been placed before you in the Board’s Report will show that the Fellowship has weathered the financial storms of 1974 fairly well, and despite the heavy impact of the repairs to the dry rot at 11 Redcliffe Gardens and consequent redecoration work, and of inflation, we find ourselves as mentioned by the Chairman of the Board in the body of the report, as being in a position where we can pay our outgoings, and have a prudent reserve for eventualities.

“Nevertheless a simple examination of the accounts shows that taking the cost of repairs as roughly £4000, and our surplus on the year’s working as £3000, a total of £7000, we are in approximately the same position as at the end of 1973, when we had a surplus of £7000 on that year’s working. In other words, despite all the efforts of the Fellowship during 1975, we have, by running furiously, just managed to stand still. Last year it was suggested that an extra one

penny in the pot by each member at each meeting, would produce £3000, provided it all got through to General Service Office, and, in fact, if we hadn't received this extra penny, we should hardly have had a surplus at all.

“Do please remember the boast often heard “When AA really needs the money, it will be forthcoming”. This should be changed a little - the money will be forthcoming if we ask for it. I am doing that now, asking everyone to help beat inflation so far as the Fellowship is concerned. I am asking you, and I ask that you, in your turn go away and ask your Intergroups, for them to ask the Groups, so that ultimately the Members may hear, and provide that extra precious penny or two in the pot each time it comes round. Do please. Thank you so much”.

The General Service Board Report (Appendix A) was formally accepted.

### THIRD WORLD SERVICE MEETING.

Gordon W. a Board Member and World Service Meeting delegate reported:-

“You have all had a copy of the Report on the Third World Service Meeting held in London on 15-18 October 1974 produced by Ronnie H. and myself so this evening I will only try to present to you a précis of some of the highlights of the proceedings.

“There were 33 delegates attending from 17 countries, four more and two countries more than attended the meeting in New York in 1972 - Argentina and Central America Northern Zone.

“Sharing was the overall theme of the meeting and much sharing took place throughout the three days and continued at the Convention at Selsey which immediately followed the meeting.

“The meeting opened on the evening prior to the start of the meeting with a reception to all delegates, members of the General Service Board, General Service Office Staff together with their wives. It was a wonderful get together where everyone got to know each other in readiness for the start of the proceedings the following day.

“The meeting proper opened with an inspiring address by our Chairman Ronald L. in which he said, “Our theme sharing is I think right because we can never move far or effectively in AA with out sharing. AA began when Bill W. shared his experience with Dr. Bob and they discovered they had a common problem which they could overcome together. They discovered also that their continued recovery meant going on to share with other alcoholics who in turn would themselves share their experience and carry the message”.

“The Keynote address entitled “Sharing is more than a word” was presented by Inga-Britt from Sweden who I believe some of you will remember as she has attended one or two of our General Service Conferences as an observer. No doubt you are all very familiar with the contents of the address as it has been published in Box 514 and in the World Service Meeting Report issued to you as part of the papers for this Conference. There are certain passages in the address which I feel appropriate to us here at this Conference this weekend so I will draw your attention to them.

“Sharing is truly more than a Word. It reminds us that in AA we communicate with more than words, that we carry our message best when we communicate with deeds and love and the language of the heart. AA is rich in such language. You have spoken and thought in that language, not only personally, but in seeking to serve the Fellowship locally, regionally,

nationally and now internationally. In AA, sharing is indeed a unique responsibility which we cannot enforce with rules or regulations. We cannot discharge it through money alone and no one else can relieve us of the responsibility. Only we, guided by our individual and collective conscience can voluntarily accept the responsibility and transform it into a life sustaining gift to ourselves and other alcoholics. Is it not true that what we are really offering is a total life based on Sharing. Sharing is the keynote to sobriety not its consequence. We can rarely hope to help the alcoholic who does not elect to share his or her life with us. In a sense it may be said that our primary purpose is to help alcoholics live a life of sharing in which the most important by-product for all of us, old-timers and new-comers is sobriety”.

“All these facets related by Inga-Britt seem to me to be appropriate and applicable and particularly relevant to us as we set about the undertaking of this year’s Conference with the theme -The Group -The Source of our Strength”.

“The real meat of the meeting was contained in the proceedings of the four Committees: Agenda, Finance, Literature/Publishing and Policy along with the Workshops covering Communications, Internal and External. Here are a few relevant recommendations that emerged:-

1. Annual Conventions are a good way for General Service Offices to raise additional funds to provide services in their countries.
2. Local Service Centres and Intergroups should not retain funds in excess of two months - prudent requirements. Any balance to be remitted to the appropriate General Service Office.
3. Suggested a Workshop question for the 1976 World Service Meeting on Special AA Groups (for Doctors, Priests, Lawyers, Policemen etc) where there are requirements for membership or admission.
4. That West Germany and Finland research and report on any progress that might have been made in contacts in Russia and other Eastern European countries.
5. Recommended that the Service Manual and the pamphlet The AA Group be included in the free literature passed to new Groups.
6. Perhaps the most important of all was the adoption of the Statement of Purpose of the World Service Meeting as the Primary Purpose of the World Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity - To carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers wherever in the World he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The World Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of Delegates who come together every two years from all corners of the World. It can also represent an ‘expression of the group conscience on a World-wide basis.’”

Experience teaches us that organising ourselves into a sound structure enables us to develop and deliver our services more effectively. The World Service Meeting encourages the planning of sound service structures, suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries, and the exploration of expanding AA services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, literature distribution, Sponsorship, public information, Community relations and Institutions work.

The content of this statement to me and I feel sure you will agree is relevant to the Committee work we are about to embark upon this weekend. I commend it to you.

“In External Communications Workshops efforts on Public Information was emphasised. It was stated “We must continually reach out, inform and develop our P.I. work so that we become the responsible people we are supposed to be in order that those outside our ranks can feel we really do have the answer to the problem of alcoholism. Above all let each of us be seen as responsible people in our community so that our sobriety be reflected in all our affairs”.

“Speaking about the Industrial Field, Dr. John Norris - Chairman of the America/Canada General Service Board - stated that few employers and supervisors understand alcoholism or know how to cope with it, so constructive action is often postponed until everyone’s patience is exhausted. However, there is something AA can do about it. Live the programme of AA and establish a reputation among fellow workers for honesty, dependability, good workmanship and constructive interpersonal relationships.

“The meeting which had lasted for three days closed with an address by Ronald in which he stated “The object of all is to share, to find more effective means in every country of the World to reach the still suffering alcoholic. All the subjects we have discussed, all the words which have been used and all the effort which has been put in has been directed towards one end and if as a result the doors of AA will be opened just a little wider to the still suffering alcoholic in each of our countries we will not have failed”, and he referred to the statement of purpose which I have already stated and emphasised. Then he said our concern is people - Men and Women alcoholics. Alcoholism as such is not our subject. We have been working this week against a background of growing awareness throughout the World not only of the seriousness of the problem of alcoholism, but also the existence of AA as a Fellowship with a unique record of recovery whose doors are open to all alcoholics who have a desire to stop drinking.

“So ended the Third World Service Meeting - the first to be held outside New York. I am not exaggerating when I claim it was a great success. All present voted it as such. For this our appreciation must be extended to our Chairman for his leadership and constant encouragement throughout from the early planning stages, to Bill S. and all the staff at General Service Office who did a magnificent job from start to finish, and to all the members of the General Service Board who acted as Staff Members in the capacity of Secretaries to the Committees and Moderators to the Workshops.

“It was clearly demonstrated that we have much to offer to other countries in the experience we have gained in our development to what we are today, and this is being called for not only from our friends in the European Community, some of which are here with us as observers to the Conference, but also from countries in the Far East and even America and Canada.

“In conclusion I would like to say that both Ronnie and I are deeply indebted to the Board for giving us the opportunity to represent the United Kingdom at the Meeting. It was a wonderful experience and inspiration which will certainly remain with us for many a long day. It certainly gave strength to our resolution to fulfil our pledge of responsibility when anyone anywhere reaches out for help. The occasion was a splendid demonstration of AA Unity and Service made possible by Recovery at Work. We would both wish to express our deep gratitude for the wonderful experience afforded to us”.



## RESOLUTIONS

Two resolutions had been submitted for consideration and these were presented by the Conference Chairman:

### Resolution Number 1.

“That in the light of the experience of the Fellowship worldwide the Conference be requested to re-examine means of disseminating factual information concerning the Fellowship through the public media with special reference to television”.

It was agreed after preliminary discussion that this resolution should be studied in depth and that it should be remitted to Committee Number 4 for consideration, and their recommendations be part of their report to the final session of Conference.

### Resolution Number 2.

“That the total cost of attendance (inclusive of transportation) of all Intergroup delegates to the General Service Conference be ascertained; that this total be then divided by the number of delegates, to produce ‘the basic figure’ per delegate. Where the ‘basic figure’ exceeds actual cost, the Intergroups concerned will send the difference to General Service Office for redistribution between the Intergroups where actual cost exceeds ‘the basic figure’.

After careful consideration, it was unanimously agreed that no useful purpose would be served by instituting this procedure.

## NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1976

The undermentioned were proposed as Chairman for the Eleventh General Service Conference 1976:

Grenville W.                South East Intergroup.

Jack G.                      Scottish Committee

The election was to take place at the final session.

The session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## SATURDAY 12 APRIL

The Delegates met in Committee at 9 a.m. and continued their discussions, with appropriate breaks until 4 p.m. and shared their experience on the following subjects:

No.1. “The Individual Member and the Group”

No.2. “The Group and the Intergroup”

No.3. “The Intergroup and the Region’.

#### No.4. "Intergroup and Regions -Aims and Structure"

For an hour from 4.15 p.m. onwards the full Conference met in "Open Forum" when several spontaneous questions were discussed and a consensus of opinion expressed. A report of this session appears in Appendix F on Page 33.

During this period the Chairman and Secretary of each of the four Committees had prepared their reports and at 5.15 p.m. the Committees reconvened to finally approve the Reports for submission to the full session of Conference on Sunday morning.

After dinner on Saturday evening the delegates gathered into informal groups to discuss points of mutual interest, and to share experiences. Obviously no record could be made of the various discussions, but it was felt that a very useful purpose had been served by this session and that many personal contacts had been made which would lead to the strengthening of our Unity and communications.

#### SUNDAY 13 APRIL

At 9.15 a.m. the Conference met in full session and the Chairmen of the four Committees presented their respective reports. After discussion and agreed amendments, the Reports were adopted.

The questions asked of the Committees and their Reports are attached:

- Appendix B Committee No. 1. (Pages 21 - 23)
- Appendix C Committee No. 2. (Pages 24 - 26)
- Appendix D Committee No. 3. (Pages 27 28)
- Appendix E Committee No. 4. (Pages 29 31)

#### CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN .

Jim H. Chairman placed before Conference the nominations received at the Friday evening assembly, and Jack G. of the Scottish Committee was elected the Chairman of the Eleventh General Service Conference to be held in 1976.

#### DATE OF THE ELEVENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1976

It was agreed that the Conference next year should be held on 9 -11 April 1976 at the Midland Hotel, Manchester.

#### CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

The Conference Chairman invited the Chairman of the General Service Board to present his closing address to Conference.

Ronald said:

"Three years ago at the 1972 Conference the closing address included a phrase as summing up the spirit of that Conference, and that phrase was "Growing into our Responsibilities", and I think that Conference perhaps marked the turning of the ways and a significant move forward in the progress of AA in this country because Conference has developed in my view as a

remarkably responsible and objective body which speaks for AA throughout Great Britain which speaks with moderation, which approaches in each of its committees the problems and the questions set before it in a positive way with the desire only to find the answers which best represent the guidelines which the Fellowship should follow in seeking out better ways of helping the still suffering alcoholic and proving our own arrangements.

“I was fascinated yesterday - I spent some time with each of the committees and had it been possible I would have like to have been with all four committees in all their deliberations. Never once did I hear a single remark, never once did I hear a single consideration put forward which was put forward other than for the reason of finding an objective, practical and good solution to the problems which the Committee in question had under consideration.

“I think that the standard of the reporting was excellent and the standard of discussion on those reports this morning was excellent and this is not just said now for the purpose of saying these things are good it is for the purpose of saying that they are of vital importance in our affairs, because the growth which we have spoken of for many years is not now a thing which is projected hopefully into the future. It is something which is happening. This last twelve months have I think without doubt seen a greater growth in the number of groups, a greater growth in the number of members than AA in Great Britain has ever experienced since it was established.

“Many of us looking back over the years used to wonder why the growth of AA here was not what it might be. We looked quite vainly for an explosion of the type that in America followed the Jack Alexander article, and that explosion has never come, and I believe that perhaps it will never come in that way, but it is coming in other ways. It is coming now and it is with us now, in a strong steady and sustained month by month increase in the number of alcoholics who come to AA Group Meetings, and who are our responsibility -they are our charges and each one of us is on trust to see that every newcomer is given the sort of reception that I myself received. when I first came to AA, quite some time ago now and without which I would probably not be here today.

“We all know what this means, and I don't need to repeat it - we have talked about it at this Conference we have talked about the arrangements which must be made which are most important for giving every battered alcoholic who reaches AA not only an open door but a feeling of support, a feeling of love, a feeling that he has come somewhere where people understand him and where he or she feels that they can identify and that they can move forward with us.

“Now, my job takes me abroad quite frequently and this gives me a very, very privileged position to keep in touch with AA in other countries, principally America, Australia and from time to time countries in the Pacific which fall on my route. I have recently completed a tour of these countries, and I think that you might be interested to hear some of the things which I encountered during that tour. I spent quite a long time in the General Service Office in New York and this was my second visit there since the World Service Meeting, but during my first visit they had not yet received the report of the World Service Meeting. This last time in March they had received that Report and they felt that this was something of a landmark in the history of AA worldwide. They referred to passages from Bill W's addresses from time to time, in which he had looked forward to the day when other countries would relieve America of some of the burden of carrying the message throughout the World and he had indicated as one of the indications that this. was happening would be when a World Service Meeting was held in a country other than America, as

of course it was last Autumn. The American delegates and the American Staff members who came over here had carried back with them very very glowing reports of the arrangements made by our General Service Office, and they thought that this was splendid. But they also went on to say that the Service Handbook which as you know, we produced last year, which represented the accumulated work over a period of eight or nine years of this Conference and which codified all the principal decisions taken in respect of structure - they felt that this was really a wonderful achievement and this again carried out one of the expressed desires of Bill W. that every country in which AA existed should produce a Handbook or Manual of Guidelines which could be based upon the same principles as had been tried and tested in America for so long, but which would apply those principles with such adaptations in procedure as was suitable for the country in question. They asked if we as The General Service Board in Britain would be willing for this Handbook to be used as a prototype to send to other countries who are at present considering setting up Conferences and to whom they feel the United States Manual is not really applicable, feeling ours was more suitable, and of course, I gave them our very very ready consent to using the Handbook wherever they felt it might be of help.

“I went on from New York to Los Angeles, where I also visited their Regional Service Office and just in passing it is quite interesting to experience -to come into contact with – the fact that although the principles are identical the West Coast of America by no means always agrees with the East Coast of America - they have their differences of opinion in just about the same degree, no more and no less (and I think not terribly important) as exists between the North of the Border and South of the Border in this country. So that we do not tend all to follow the same pattern.

“I was also impressed with the fact (and I mention this as a steadying thought as we look at our own growth here) to get things a little bit in proportion. In Los Angeles there are over six hundred groups of AA serviced by one Service Office with a very small staff indeed and a selection of literally dozens of meetings every night in the week. There are lunchtime meetings, there are breakfast time meetings, and the intensity of AA there is really impressive and is really enormous.

“From Los Angeles I went on to Sydney where I spent two afternoons at the Service Office, Australia has not yet got a General Service Board. They have a pilot committee with a Chairman, and that pilot committee will probably be converted into a General Service Board, next month - May. They have not got a regular Conference as such. They have, of course, extremely great difficulty with a relatively small population of thirteen million spread over six states with a distance of about two thousand five hundred miles between Western Australia, (Perth) and Eastern Australia (Sydney). So they have got geographical problems which we do not have.

“I had a preliminary meeting with one or two of them including their Service Office Staff and later a meeting with some members of their committee. On a previous visit I had left with them copies of our Service Handbook, and they asked for a further twenty copies which they wished to circulate around the States in anticipation of a General Service Conference and also in anticipation of the setting up of their General Service Board. They also asked for drafts of the Agenda of our Conference, details of how we set up the delegation at Conference, and copies of the Reports from Conferences, all of which were very gladly given.

“It is also interesting that as you all know certain of the printings of AA Literature, the Big Book notably are carried out in Great Britain under an old royalty arrangement with New York, and

when there was such a thing as a Sterling Area until a few years ago, the distribution of this literature to the Sterling Area rested in our hands. We still carry on supplies of literature to a great many countries, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and a number of others even though the Sterling Area has largely disbanded, but the interesting thing is that we are today shipping Big Books to Australia at the rate of one thousand two hundred copies a year. This is most interesting from two points of view, one that we are able to carry out this service, but secondly a country with a population of thirteen million and an AA membership very much less than ours does have a requirement of one thousand two hundred copies of the Big Book - and I think we might think about that a little among ourselves.

“Now following this as I think you will all know, Dr. Jack Norris who is the Chairman of AA in North America - U.S.A. and Canada, a non-alcoholic, who has been over twenty years a member of the General Service Board and some thirteen years Chairman, carried out a World Tour, and in Australia he happened to be about four days ahead of me and he paid a short visit to London for two days on his return, by which time I was home again. We did arrange a programme for him, which I think he found interesting, but in Bombay where he had spent I think thirty-six hours, he attended a group meeting and he had talks with the Chairman and Secretary and a most interesting situation emerged. In Bombay, the one city there are forty AA Groups, consisting of Indians of high caste and low caste, Indians who are highly educated and Indians who have difficulty in reading. They are desperately short of funds, they have between them five Big Books and they have a need, they say, of fifty and would like our help. I have written to their Chairman asking for some sort of idea of their problems and what we can do to help. I am sure you would all agree that if it is a matter of making them a gift of fifty Big Books that would be acceptable to you? (Confirmed by acclamation).

“Yes, but yet how many of them can read English? I am told that obviously the high caste Indians can, and I am told that nearly all of them can read English to some degree and would certainly like a Big Book to try to read English, and I can imagine that even though they are not at all fluent they will get a tremendous amount out of it. I have also asked what their conditions are generally, what else we can do to help.

“What this beginning to build up to is this. We were talking three years ago of growth in relation only to Great Britain. We now have this problem of building all our facilities, all our services up to a level which puts our ability to cater for all demands put upon us beyond doubt, not only in our own country but also overseas, and all our experience I think shows that once a door is opened into a new area - and it is clear that doors have been opened into new areas abroad - the flood can come very very quickly. It takes a long time too for the thing to start, but once it has started it can move very very quickly and we therefore have probably a growing responsibility which is by no means confined to these shores.

“To me this appears as a responsibility, as a duty, as a high trust and also as an enormous privilege and I am sure that we all feel this same way. As a member of AA I do find it possible to apply nearly all the things which apply to AA as a whole to myself, and I look back to the day when I walked through the doors of AA for the first time (and I don't mean that I have ever walked out of them, because I have been fortunate and never had a slip) - I walked through them battered, I walked through them utterly and completely defeated, I could at that time when I allowed myself to and until I realised it was a dangerous practice, look back over my shoulder at all the things that I had thrown away, and all the things that appeared to be lost for ever, but all the experience I have had personally is that my AA life has been a recurring realisation of things

which at one time seemed impossible. And far over and above recovering things which I have lost (and I have been fortunate enough to recover a great many of them) over and above them I have found so many many things which are wonderful things, which are good things, which are things which help me to realise myself, the existence of which I was quite unaware of until I came into AA.

“And so with AA as a whole, the Fellowship of AA as a whole, in this country and in every country in the World, as the Fellowship itself grows we find new areas of activity, new areas to explore new areas to think of individually and personally, to meditate over and new areas for discussion by our committees here who may very well before very long be discussing not only matters which are of immediate domestic interest to us within this country, but also problems which are very very far reaching throughout the World and to which I am sure we all dedicate ourselves.

“We have had, I think, a most interesting, a most intensive and a most concentrated Conference. Time is relatively brief from Friday evening until now Sunday Lunch-time. A tremendous amount of work has been put into this short time and it naturally is exacting for each of us -the more we put in to things of ourselves the more personal reward we have and satisfaction, but it does take a tiring toll for that reason I do not think you would want me to take up more of your time than I have done.

“I will just close by saying that I as always have been highly privileged to be here. I thank you all for the support which you give to the Board and to myself. God bless you”.

In closing the Conference Jim H. said: “Before I close the Conference I think that you would wish me to speak on your behalf to several people.

“I think you would like me to thank Bill and his Staff for the work they have done for us. Bill was one of my very early contacts in AA in Manchester when I joined the Fellowship and it has been natural for me to turn to him for help and advice over the past year. The work that he has done for us has been impeccable and I would like you Bill to convey our thanks to your Staff for their hard work behind the scenes.

“I would like Conference to know that over the last twelve months I have been given every kindness and encouragement by the members of the General Service Board.

“I think that it would be appropriate for us at this time to express our affection for them and our appreciation for their work on behalf of the Fellowship. In particular we should thank them for the work done in preparation for, and doing the Conference.

“Finally, I would like to turn to you the Tenth General Service Conference. I have sensed a great spirit of purpose and unity throughout this Conference. Not once during this weekend have I encountered the slightest resemblance of acrimony and disunity. I am not going to thank you for this but I am going to congratulate you. Also I am going to ask one thing of you, this is that you take this spirit of purpose and unity back to your intergroups and groups and communicate to them not only the material that has been produced at this Conference but the spirit in which the deliberations here have been held.

“Unity and fellowship are catching and I think that it would be useful if you would take the spirit

which we have experienced here back with you when you report back to your intergroups and groups.

“You have done well, congratulations - I will now close the Conference and ask you to join me in the Serenity Prayer.

## AFTER CONFERENCE

SUNDAY 13 APRIL - AFTERNOON

## CONVENTIONS

As recommended during the afternoon session after the close of the 1974 Conference, many delegates remained for discussions on the subject of Conventions etc.

John M. (General Service Board) chaired the meeting. It was evident that with the increasing activity at Group and Intergroup level, many more Mini Conventions and Social functions were being held.

It was agreed that close co-ordination was required to avoid events in near localities coinciding. The suggestion of referral by a Group or Intergroup to the General Service Office (who keep a Diary of Events) before finalising dates was again stressed. The Delegates appreciated that it would sometimes be difficult to completely avoid the clashing of dates of Mini Conventions, but providing there was sufficient distance between locations no members would be denied the opportunity to avail themselves of the benefits to be gained from these AA Get Togethers.

It was recommended that local events should not be held at the same time as the National Conventions or Conference.

A further extension of this co-ordination should be developed in respect of the major European Conventions and it was recommended that the Service Offices of all countries should try to advise all other European Offices in ample time for notice to be given to members via the medium of their National magazines and bulletins.

## EUROPEAN MEETING

Gordon W. (General Service Board) chaired this session and commented that this type of meeting had been first held at the Second World Service Meeting in New York during October 1972. Although this hastily arranged meeting had taken place over the luncheon table, nevertheless all present had considered it worthwhile.

At the Third World Service Meeting in London, October 1974, a meeting of all European Delegates, in addition to two other separate groupings had been an established part of the programme, and their consensus of opinion contained in the final World Service Meeting Report.

At our own Conference in 1974 a similar session had been held and Gordon conveyed the pleasure of the British Delegates on this occasion that four other European Conference areas had sent eight observers.

An informative and useful discussion took place on how we can best inform the public, doctors etc of AA, how it works, and where vie may be found. Several suggestions such as the use of

contact cards, Doctors Surgery Cards, advertisements and articles in newspapers, leaflets to doctors, social workers. etc. notices of Public Meetings and the offer of help to alcoholic patients in hospitals were mentioned.

It was agreed, however, that personal example and willingness to be involved were of prime importance.

It was also stressed that application and patience were required in this field.

The Norwegian delegates reported that they hoped to have a Conference in the near future, and are in the process of establishing a new structure.

Finally the meeting concluded that “Sharing” is at the heart of AA.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## APPENDIX F TENTH GENERALSERVICE CONFERENCE 1975

### OPEN FORUM SESSION -SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Q. Is there a “Newcomers Kit of Pamphlets” available?

A. There is possibly a U.S. publication and the General Secretary will make enquiries regarding its availability.

Q. Could guidance be given on the appearance of speakers from other agencies on an AA platform?

A. The consensus of opinion was that the guidelines laid down in the pamphlets “The AA Group” answered this question namely:

“Open Meeting” - AA Speakers only

“Public Meeting” AA Chairman, AA Speakers and invited guest speakers from other bodies.

When guest speakers are to be present, the meeting should be advised as a “Public” meeting whether it be at Group Intergroup, Mini-Convention level.

Q. Could the Conference open with an informal gathering to enable new delegates to be introduced and create a relaxed atmosphere?

A. This was agreed to be a good suggestion and was recommended to the Conference Committee for consideration.



Q. Is it thought necessary to extend the length of Conference?

A. It was recommended that if thought necessary the more convenient time would be to continue with Conference business after lunch on Sunday.

## TENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1975

### APPENDIX B

#### COMMITTEE NO. 1."THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBER AND THE GROUP"

CHAIRMAN:NOEL F. Scottish Committee

It is recognised that not only is the individual's recovery greatly assisted by his involvement in group affairs, but that the group depends for its effectiveness on the willingness of its members to accept their share of the responsibilities involved.

1. Q. Is there any significant tendency for members 'to attend 'meetings' rather than to be involved with a group?

2. Q. How can individual members be encouraged to identify with a 'home' group whilst still attending other group meetings?

A. It was generally agreed that there is a tendency for attendance rather than involvement. Members do 'float' from group to group. The meeting felt that identification with a 'home' group is desirable. It improves the quality of the groups, increases the feeling of belonging. The individual member should feel this sense of involvement, stemming from himself or herself but with encouragement from older members. Contented sobriety in the Fellowship is coupled with involvement in one's own group. Each member knows and understands the other - knows the whole person and how that member is feeling at a particular time. Many members have an initial fear of responsibility. The word itself is frightening to some. Chores must be done and encouragement along the lines of "we need you in this group" should be given. For the individual member the message, it is suggested should be "I need the group".

3. Q. To what extent should group activity exist outside of its regular meetings?

A. "Carrying the Message" as suggested in Step 12 is all important. Contact with Doctors, Social Workers, Prisons and organised bodies of all kinds was stressed. Any kind of informal socialising apart from the formal approach, would help to "carry the message". This should all be co-ordinated at Intergroup level. One pilot scheme in South London involved the printing of a card with the wording "Have you a drinking problem - Phone No: .....Can we help you?" Of the original few thousand printed, 20,000 had now been requested. Representation from Groups to Intergroups and delegates reporting back to Groups was considered essential.

4. Q. Should a Group take a regular inventory, and if so what questions should be asked?

A. The simple answer to this was "yes" using Steps 4 and 10 to improve the quality of sobriety at Group level. One suggestion was the use of a Steering Committee for this purpose, The words

“love’ and feeling of belonging were freely used with reference to Group Inventory. With the larger group inventory is more difficult but should not be avoided. We ‘get’ from our groups but we must ‘give’. It is a reciprocal arrangement. The Group Pamphlet is a guideline when dealing with the inventory question.

5. Q. Are the group arrangements such that all strangers. are immediately made welcome on arrival?

6. Q. How effective is our Sponsorship and can it be improved?

7. Q. Do new members stay with us, or does the turnover seem excessive?

8. Q. If it is considered excessive, can any explanation be given, and what action can the group take?

A. “Stretching out the welcoming hand” to all strangers was considered very necessary. People should be delegated to welcome new members, particularly in larger groups. A ‘continuing’ sponsorship as opposed to 12th Stepping was stressed. Sponsorship improves with the experience of the sponsor. The difficulty of attracting and retaining lady members was expressed with regard to certain areas. It was felt that while blame might be laid at the feet of Society, the stigma of the woman alcoholic was gradually becoming less evident. Alcoholism is increasingly prevalent among women. Groups can expect more women members in the future and it follows that special thought to this and consequent sponsorship should be given. It was generally felt that independent womens’ groups were perhaps not a good thing. We are all alcoholics.

9. Q. Are groups attracting only people from a certain social section only, or are we getting a good cross section of the community?

A. On the whole groups are getting a good cross section of the community, although different areas and localities receive varying social sections. There ought to be no social barriers. Irrespective of artificially created barriers such as class, ours is a spiritual programme incorporating anyone in need. The Fellowship is open to anyone. No one should be excluded. If any Group is not getting a good cross section of its community it should give thought to causes and remedies.

10. Q. Is adequate opportunity given to all members to speak at meetings, and participate in group activities?

A. Generally this happens. It depends to some extent on the Group conscience and members must be encouraged to participate.

11. Q. How can we encourage the individual member to carry the AA. message through his

example to his doctor, clergyman and others where it may be useful?

A. The individual can carry the message by 'staying sober'. It is an individual concern how far anonymity is broken. Some members had been able to extend the message to others through confiding with the Doctor or Clergyman. Others felt that individual anonymity could be broken when he or she felt that the time was ripe.

12. Q. Is the rotation of group officers carried out, and what is the term of service?

A. Varying periods for rotation were suggested. Rotation should be encouraged according to our traditions. The meeting wished to emphasise the necessity in accordance with tradition of the rotation of officers and in principle nobody should hold office for longer than the period set out on the guidelines. New experience should be encouraged.

13. Q. We are self supporting by our own contributions, is fully understood in its relation to support for the General Services!

14. Q. Do groups pass on to the General Service Office all monies in excess of their normal immediate requirements?

A. It is understood in some areas but not in others. There should be a full understanding of the word self-supporting which incorporates AA as a whole. Intergroup could act as a liaison for a better understanding at group level. Individuals should be told. To avoid any embarrassment at the individual level, it was suggested that a breakdown of finances could be included in our magazine e.g. Roundabout, Share.

#### APPENDIX C

TENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1975 COMMITTEE NO.2.  
"THE GROUP AND INTERGROUP"

CHAIRMAN:JOYCE C. East Anglia

The preamble to this Committee's' agenda was as follows:

"In the same way that individuals find strength and responsibility at group level so groups joining together in Unity at Intergroup level can serve more effectively in our Primary Purpose."

It was with this theme in mind that the Committee reported:-

"The keynote of this Committee has been simplicity and the need for sharing. In joining together we have shared in unity and strength, so that we might serve effectively our primary purpose".

"We wish to emphasis that the Intergroup is only a group of groups and exists to collect and communicate the shared findings and experiences of the Groups involved.

1. Q. Are groups encouraged to appoint a G.S.R. to Intergroup meetings, from the members not

holding a group office?

2. Q. When there is a lack of interest what can be done to encourage all groups to actively participate?

3. Q. Do G.S.R's report back to their groups to encourage interest in local service activities?

A. The Committee feels that General Service Representatives are usually appointed by groups and preferably from those not holding group office. In reporting back to their groups GSR's should, as far as possible, give an account of Intergroup affairs as a stimulating experience and an opportunity for sharing with other groups, rather than as a dry report of business activities. Where there is a lack of interest, the responsibility lies with those already involved. Members should be encouraged to see AA at all levels as a whole, and Intergroup activities as a natural part of AA life, not something separate from the groups.

By rotating days, times and venues of Intergroup meetings, there could be more participation and involvement by groups, also all group members, irrespective of holding any Office, should be encouraged to attend Intergroup meetings as visitors.

4. Q. What activities are currently undertaken by Intergroups?

A. A wide range of activities including servicing hospitals, Prisons, Telephone Enquiries, Social functions and Mini-Conventions are covered by Intergroups.

5. Q. What additional activities can be suggested?

A. Additionally, the Committee was impressed by one delegates report that his Intergroup's literature 'travelling salesman' had sold £365 worth of literature in the past year, It was felt that a similar technique could also be applied to the Box 514, Share and Roundabout operations. We felt it was desirable to appoint a member to be responsible for stimulating interest, collecting material and helping to boost sales.

6. Q. Is the rotation of Intergroup Officers carried out and what is the recommended term of service?

A, Rotation of Intergroup Officers appears to be generally observed, and the need for overlap was stressed in order to preserve continuity. We felt that the Group conscience and good judgement should be the guideline regarding a desirable length of service.

7. Q. Has contact with all other agencies been established and are they useful in bringing new members to us?

8. Q. Are efforts made to keep these contacts alive and how best can this be done?

A. Contact with other agencies is constantly under review at Intergroup level and the lines of communication are kept open always. True and devoted non-alcoholic friends of AA will always emerge, and to them we are enormously grateful but nevertheless continuous efforts must be made to keep all contacts alive. The Committee reminds Conference that the findings of the 1973 Conference Committee 3 "AA in Your Community". covered the subject in some detail.

9. Q. What action can be taken to promote Unity between groups and can effective influence be exercised in a situation where disharmony exists?

A. We felt that disharmony between groups usually stems from clashes of personalities which can be smoothed over by encouraging round table discussions and tactful employment of the Traditions. Unity between groups is achieved when the relationship is that of good neighbours rather than rivals.

10. Q. What assistance and guidance can be given to new groups and is it considered helpful that the Intergroup should be consulted in advance of the formation of a new Group?

11. Q. Should Intergroups encourage the formation of groups in areas where no groups exist and what action is recommended ?

A. The Intergroups play a strong supportive role in assisting new Groups with visits from older members, interchange of speakers and any practical means of encouragement. It is to the advantage of the Fellowship that current information about the formation, activities or even closure of groups be passed to Intergroups. Ideally we should encourage the starting of new groups, especially in areas where no groups exist providing sufficient consistent support can be assured.

12. Q. What action should be taken when the breaking of Traditions occurs?

A. If breaking of Traditions occurs the Committee feels the best course of action is to point the way back.

13. Q. What role should Intergroups play in Fund Raising activities in support of the General Services?

A. Whilst Intergroups have a large part to play in fund raising activities, this should not take precedence over sharing and caring, which is at the heart of all AA activities.

## APPENDIX D

TENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1975  
COMMITTEE No. 3. "THE INTERGROUP AND THE REGION"  
CHAIRMAN:TOM K. Humberside

Committee No. 4 at the Ninth General Service Conference 1974 recommended that all Intergroups should consider the question of Regionalisation, and that in consultations with their neighbours submit proposals for viable Regional arrangements to this Conference for consideration.

1. Q. Is it desirable to have a Regional Structure?
2. Q. Are we ready to implement a Regional Structure?
3. Q. If so, what recommendations can be made?
4. Q. If not, should those areas than can implement the suggestion proceed on a firm or exploratory basis?
5. Q. What benefits can result from the proposals?
6. Q. What should be the function of a Region?
7. Q. HOW should the Regional Committee be constructed?
8. Q. What qualifications should its members have?
9. Q. How should reporting back be carried out?

A. The consensus of opinion of the Committee is that Regionalisation is desirable because of the benefits which will accrue to the Fellowship as a whole, and which will further our Primary Purpose which is service to the suffering alcoholic.

The Committee are of the opinion that in these days of rapid growth within the Fellowship there is a need for additional structure between Intergroup and Conference.

It is felt that the most obvious benefits of the structure will be :

- a. To improve communications between neighbouring Intergroups.
- b. Ensuring that the Region recognise the areas that are weakly served by the Fellowship do not remain in 'no mans land' but are identified by a particular Intergroup as its responsibility.
- c. The sharing of Intergroup experiences within a region in the field of co-operation with outside agencies, Prisons, Hospitals, Social Services, Council on Alcoholism, Churches, Courts etc. will ensure that the highest possible level of service will be maintained.
- d. To increase the opportunity for more members to participate in AA service activities.
- e. To enable members with particular experience to serve a wider area.

Despite the Committee's feeling that a Regional Structure is desirable it is felt that AA is not yet equally ready throughout Great Britain.

Certain areas are already putting into practice their own concepts of Regionalisation.

It is also agreed that it is desirable for areas which are ready for Regional Structure should implement Regionalisation as soon as they so wish.

It is also recognised that whether or not Regionalisation should be adopted should be the sole decision of the Intergroup concerned.

Ideally it is felt that a Regional Committee should meet 2/3 times a year.

It is also considered that the construction of the Regional Committee should be two delegates per ten groups, and one additional delegate for every additional ten groups up to a maximum of four. This does not restrict members attending as visitors, but they do not have voting powers. The Committee may co-opt other Intergroup members to serve on sub-committees as required.

#### QUALIFICATION OF DELEGATES

Delegates to the Regional Committee should have a reasonable period of sobriety - at least two years is suggested - as active members of the Fellowship in AA.

The final decision about suitability of a delegate should rest with the group conscience as expressed through Intergroup.

Delegates should have a thorough knowledge of the 12 Traditions also be conversant with the AA Service Handbook of Great Britain.

Minutes should be prepared by the Secretary of Regional Committee. These to be sent to each delegate. However, each delegate is responsible for reporting personally to the Intergroup. The extent of further dissemination of the reports should be the responsibility of each Intergroup.

In conclusion the general policy regarding regionalisation is viewed as a natural development resulting from growth and should be reached by evolution rather than by decision.

Thus in each area intergroups may combine their efforts in such matters as Prison work, Hospitals, Probation and other channels of service which can further our primary purpose to carry the message.

By this process, Regions will emerge as natural combinations of Intergroup working together following a period of consolidation.

Representation at Conference however should continue to be based on the Intergroup until such time as Conference shall approve a change.

#### APPENDIX E

TENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1975  
COMMITTEE NUMBER 4. "INTERGROUPS AND REGIONS -AIMS AND STRUCTURE"  
CHAIRMAN:NEL H. General Service Board.

Our group conscience and shared experience expressed at Conference is the means whereby recommendations are made to ensure that our structure is based on sound guidelines, so that the AA message continues to be carried speedily and effectively.

1. Q. What should be the composition of a Region?

A. The composition of a Region is a convenient number of Intergroups in a convenient

geographical location, with common internal and external interests. It is suggested for consideration that these geographical areas might be:

London - Southern – South Western - Midlands – North Eastern -North West -Scotland -Wales

2. Q. What Office holders are required for a Region?

A. The delegate to a Region should elect their own Officers. It is suggested these should be Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and also there should be elected or co-opted such additional officers as circumstances may require, for example, Prison Liaison, Hospital Liaison, Public Relations, Young People's representative etc.

3. Q. What should be the period of service of its members?

A. Three years, with appropriate provision for rotation and continuity of experience.

4. Q. How should the Region be represented at Conference?

A. Ideally and ultimately when regionalisation is complete, four representatives per established Region.

If and when a change from Intergroup to Regional representation is made, any displaced member of Conference who has not completed his/her full three years term as a delegate may be considered for further service at a later date for his/her remaining period.

5. Q. What are the Committees views on the formation of local Service Offices?

A. The Committee approves the idea of the formation of local Service Offices in areas of dense population.

6. Q. What views have the Committee on the possible diversion of funds from General Service Office?

A. Such Service Offices should be self-supporting by their own efforts, and not divert funds from the General Service Office.

7. Q. What would be the purposes and functions of such local Service Offices if so formed?

A. The purposes and functions of each local Service Office so formed would be to achieve our primary purpose of passing the message to the still suffering alcoholic swiftly by means of telephone or other means within the traditions of the Fellowship, by effecting liaison with other bodies for the dissemination of information in regard to the purposes of the Fellowship. It is recommended that such Service Offices be established by the appropriate Intergroups and be



involved themselves in the minimum of administrative procedures.

8. Q. Is it desirable that those groups in Great Britain not now in an Intergroup and those Groups in areas where an Intergroup does not exist should be encouraged to become members of an Intergroup (see maps of existing Intergroup Boundaries and New County Boundaries) .

A. It is highly desirable that every Group not already so involved should be encouraged to join its appropriate Intergroup in order that they may enjoy the benefits of growth in accordance with the Traditions of AA.

9. Q. If so, what steps should be taken to encourage their inclusion in an Intergroup?

A. Uncommitted Groups should be invited to participate freely in the activities of appropriate Intergroups as observers in the hope that they may be so encouraged by example as to join and to contribute to the growth of the Fellowship in Unity.

It is further recommended that information in regard to Intergroups which is published regularly in Box 514 be drawn to the attention of unattached Groups, and the cooperation of Secretaries thereof be requested in seeing that the information is placed before their members.

To draw the attention of individual members, particularly to the wealth of information regularly published in Box 514, it is recommended that a secondary or subtitle be printed in the masthead of the publication, and AA NEWS was suggested.

10. Q. Consider the previous General Service Conference recommendation that under normal circumstances an Intergroup should comprise 15 groups or thereabouts.

The Committee considered the previous General Service Conference recommendations that under normal circumstances an Intergroup should comprise 15 groups or thereabouts, and reaffirmed this principle.

This ended consideration of the regular Agenda of the Committee.

The Committee then considered Resolution No.1 referred to it by Conference, and while reaffirming the findings of the previous Committee on the subject, recommended to the General Service Board that arrangements be made to obtain details of U.S. activities in regard to T.V. coverage in that country, and further to keep in close touch with British T.V. and Radio authorities, with a view to securing any method of drawing attention to the Recovery Programme of the Fellowship within the Traditions of AA, the further facts and information so elicited to be placed before Conference 1976.

Furthermore, that the Board contact the Medical Council on Alcoholism and the National Council on Alcoholism with a view to co-operating with those bodies in making the general public aware of the AA programme of recovery.

BOARD REPRESENTATION IN REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

It was resolved to recommend that the attendance of a Board Member be arranged wherever possible at Regional Assemblies.

FRIDAY 9 APRIL 1976

The 1975 Conference recommended that if possible the Delegates should assemble earlier to afford a greater opportunity for informal discussion.

This year the Delegates commenced registration from 4.30p.m. and the welcoming of old and new friends continued until 6.30p.m.

#### OPENING OF CONFERENCE

Jack G. (Scottish Committee) the Conference Chairman opened the Eleventh General Service Conference at 8.45p.m. in its first full session with a few moments' silence in which to collect our thoughts to remember the purpose of the assembly and especially to recall with gratitude the service of Ronald L. the late Chairman of the General Service Board.

The General Secretary read the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Jack G. warmly welcomed the overseas visitors from Ireland and Norway and further addressed the Delegates:

When planning a Conference such as this, a great deal of time and thought is devoted to selecting an appropriate theme and rightly so, as Delegates and Committees are then guided as to where their efforts should be directed in order that the objectives of such a Conference may be achieved.

'As Delegates to this Conference, we may set ourselves many objectives and hope for many achievements, and in doing so, we may appear to have created for ourselves a more than formidable task. However, by using the wisdom and experience available to us within the Fellowship we can learn to see our problems in their proper perspective and I know of no better way of doing this than by keeping in the forefront of my mind at all times, 'Our Primary Purpose' which is surely the governing factor whenever we meet together as A.A. Members.

'The theme we have adopted for this year's Conference 'REACHING OUT', has personally given me a great deal of food for thought and reflection on the various ways that we have all been involved at some time in reaching out.

'I try to picture in my mind that memorable day in Akron, Ohio, when Bill W., struggling to preserve his new found sobriety, reached out in desperation, seeking another alcoholic and eventually found himself in the company of Dr. Bob. I firmly believe that the feelings of Bill W., on that particular day, were more concerned with self preservation, rather than helping a still suffering alcoholic, but as we all know, he was successful in doing both. I'm quite sure that every A.A. Member has experienced such feelings of desperation and well remembers the day when he also had to reach out.

'From those early days A.A. has continued to grow and Members have been Reaching Out to all corners of the earth, and we are today a truly international fellowship, giving hope, where before

there existed only hopelessness.

‘During this Conference, we will be ‘REACHING OUT’ in Committees to examine, in particular, the experiences and problems of our members in Prisons, our young members, our members involved in industry etc.; and by sharing our experiences, we will be seeking not only to maintain our services in these fields, but if necessary, to recommend any changes that may improve them.

‘The fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is no doubt unique in many ways, none more so, than when we who have Reached Out to A.A. have in turn allowed A.A. to Reach Out and enter our hearts, our minds, and indeed our lives.

‘The success of our annual General Service Conference now lies squarely in your hands, and I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you well in your deliberations this weekend.’

## GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

Gordon W., Chairman of the General Service Board was asked to present the Report of the Board for 1975 to Conference, and prefaced the discussions:

‘It is with much sadness that I stand before you this evening to present the General Service Board Report covering the activities throughout 1975 because, as you know, Ronald L., our Chairman, died early in March and in this the Fellowship suffered a tremendous loss. Those of us who had the privilege of working with him are grateful and will forever remember it.

‘Ronald has been associated with the affairs of the Fellowship for quite some time and we are indebted to him for so much. During the latter days of the A & G.R.C. where there was, I regret to say, unrest and acrimony, it was Ronald with his continuous wise guidance and tireless efforts that brought about resolution and unity. Following the A & G.R.C. it was Ronald and the late Leslie K. who masterminded the restructuring of the services and administration of the Fellowship; and he conducted and guided the developments through the various stages to what it is today.

‘In his closing address at last year’s Conference Ronald told us how the Conference was growing into its responsibilities as a responsible and objective body which speaks for A.A. throughout Great Britain, which speaks with moderation, which approaches the problems in a positive way with the desire only to find the answers which best represent the guidelines which the Fellowship should follow in seeking out better ways of helping the still suffering alcoholic and proving our own arrangements.

‘In our Board and Executive Meetings he continually reminded us of these responsibilities. We must continue to follow that path with all our strength and determination.

‘Turning now to the Board Report itself which has been circulated to you all, I trust it may be taken as read.

‘The foreword to the Report gives some of the highlights of the activities during 1975 while the individual reports give in more detail what has taken place during the year by each of the functions of the services, each one being the responsibility of a Board Member.

‘The Board is always conscious of being the servant of the Fellowship in the United Kingdom and is guided by the Twelve Traditions and the recommendations and guidance of Conference in all its deliberations and actions.

‘Board Membership - I would ask you to ratify the appointment of Bill M. of Largs as stated in the Report, and also Geoff H. of Bolton, not given in the Report as his nomination was only approved by the General Service Board at its meeting on 20 March, the Report having gone to press previous to the meeting.

‘I must also mention at this stage the retirement of John M. who will complete his six years membership at the end of this Conference. In the six years John has worked tirelessly in both external and internal communications. In the former he has liased closely with the National Council on Alcoholism and has influenced the improving of relations with them not only at national level but extending such to the Regional Councils and the respective Intergroups. He has given much time and effort to the re-organisation within the London area and the development of the four Intergroups.

‘We would like to thank him for all he has done and done so well and wish him well so that he may continued to share his large experiences whenever and wherever called upon to do so.

‘Those of you who were present last year will recall that Ronald told us about the situation of the Fellowship in Bombay where they were desperately short of funds and consequently literature.

It was agreed we would make a gift of some Big Books to them and this was carried out.

‘News of such must have travelled across the Bay of Bengal. We have had an appeal for literature from Sri Lanka Intergroup which according to the International Directory is composed of 7 Groups. If you are agreeable and approve I will write to them and so obtain some idea of their situation and requirement and provide for their need in similar fashion to what we did for Bombay’.

## **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

Gordon W. introduced Bill M. (Ayrshire) and Geoff H. (Bolton) and asked for confirmation of their appointment as members of the General Service Board.

This was approved unanimously.

## **FINANCE**

Alex A., Hon. Treasurer and member of the Board presented the Financial Statement and Balance Sheet. He stressed that to have been entirely self supporting by our own contributions in 1975 would have required contributions of approximately £40 per group, as against an actual sum received of £22 average. To further put the problem in perspective the average group contribution in 1974 was £25 -a drop of £3 per group in spite of inflation.

Alex stated that if every member was to put only one halfpenny extra in the ‘pot’ each week it would produce at a very conservative estimate a total of £1300 per year, sufficient to operate

General Service Office activities for 2.5 weeks. This figure gave a guide to really how little extra was required as direct contributions to the General Fund to implement the tradition of self support.

## SRI LANKA

Unanimous approval was given to the suggestion made by Gordon W. in his presentation address and that the General Service Board should pursue the matter further.

The General Service Board Report to Conference (Appendix A) was formally accepted.

## 6. RESOLUTIONS

Two resolutions had been accepted for consideration by Conference, and these were presented by the Chairman.

### Resolution No.1.

‘That this Conference recommends that the resolution of the Eighth General Service Conference 1973 regarding the holding of any office in A.A. by members who are paid employees of agencies mainly engaged in work with alcoholics or alcoholism, be extended as follows:-

‘That the private or business telephone numbers of such members should not be published as Group Contacts’

Following full discussion this resolution was adopted unanimously. For record purposes the consolidated resolution now reads:-

‘That this Conference endorses the action of the General Service Board as being entirely consistent with the Traditions of the Fellowship in not appointing to the Board of Trustees, or to any other Office under its control, members of Alcoholics Anonymous who are paid employees of agencies mainly engaged in work with alcoholics or alcoholism. The Conference suggests that members of Alcoholics Anonymous who are paid employees of such agencies do not hold any Group, Intergroup or other office within A.A. and that the private or business telephone numbers of such members should not be published as Group Contacts.

The Conference further suggests that members of Alcoholics Anonymous who undertake voluntary unpaid work for such agencies should hold Office in the Fellowship only if the individual and group conscience has so decided in the light of the guidance given by Bill W. on pages 114-117 of ‘A.A. Comes of Age’ and in the A.A. Pamphlet ‘Co-operation not Affiliation’.

### Resolution No.2.

‘That -this Conference recommends that the following be added to Section IV of the A.A. Service Handbook for Great Britain under the heading ‘Desirable Qualifications for Alcoholic members of the General Service Board’ in sub section (c) Grasp of A.A. Structure, inserted after the third paragraph:

‘A record of attendance as a delegate at General Service Conference’

This resolution was discussed at length, but when put to the vote did not receive the necessary two thirds majority required to amend the Service Handbook - and Section IV therefore remains unaltered.

## CONVENTIONS

Conference accepted with pleasure the willingness of the West Riding Intergroup and the Solent Intergroup to be responsible respectively for the Northern and Southern Conventions in 1977. It was considered premature at this time to investigate the possibility of holding one National Convention every five years to celebrate an Anniversary.

Attention was drawn to the necessity of starting arrangements for Conventions well in advance of the event - at least one year being the general opinion. All delegates were asked to take back this matter to their Intergroups for full consultation, and that bids for the sites of the 1978 Conventions would have the complete approval of the local intergroups before presentation at next year's Conference.

It was agreed that this procedure should be adopted for all future National Conventions in England and Wales.

## NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1977

The undermentioned were duly proposed as Chairman of the Twelfth General Service Conference 1977 :

Tom K.                      Humberide Intergroup  
Maureen J.     London South Intergroup

The election was to take place at the final session. The session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## SATURDAY 10 APRIL

Commencing at 9 a.m. through to 4 p.m. with appropriate breaks, the Conference divided into four committees, each to discuss and share experience on subjects of particular interest.

The Committee subjects were:

- No.1. 'The Member in Prison'
- No.2. 'The Younger Member and Special Groups'
- No.3. 'Alcoholism in Industry'
- No.4. 'Structure'

During the period in which the Committee Chairmen and Secretaries prepared their reports for the agreement of the committees, the Delegates met in a workshop session from 4.15 p.m. to 5.15p.m.

## WORKSHOP - 'PUBLICATIONS'

Ronnie H. editor of SHARE, chaired the meeting. He described the origins of the magazine which had grown out of the previous publication, THE NEWSLETTER which started up in 1951. It had changed to the new title in October 1972. Most of the information about the past year's progress was contained in the General Service Board Report but it was possible to pinpoint some ways in which members and groups could assist in a practical way. For example, there was a need for the services of a skilled photographer from within the Fellowship to assist with the art work, and there were vacancies to be filled for Intergroup issues. It was requested that future themes for forthcoming issues of SHARE might be announced in advance. Where possible, this will be done.

Nel H. briefly outlined the purpose and achievements of the Information Sheet -BOX 514. There was an interested discussion from which it emerged that while its actual content was acceptable, the name and heading came under some criticism, although no constructive alternative was suggested. One delegate felt that the news sheet would be better known if more copies were sent to all groups, but as this would involve further cost, it was left to the Board to consider further. Quite a few delegates advocated making a charge for BOX 514. It was still noted that the publication was insufficiently well known, the main trouble seeming to be the failure of group secretaries to draw sufficient attention to its arrival and content.

A suggestion was made that Intergroups should put BOX 514 on the agenda of every meeting, to act as a reminder that information was always required from the Intergroups themselves.

The healthy revival of ROUNDABOUT, which is produced by the Scottish Committee, was welcomed and its editor, Alec T. introduced. He reported that the magazine was put together by a committee which meets twice a month. ROUNDABOUT now appears regularly, and on time, and aims at a simple style of presentation. It is hoped to extend its circulation to groups and individuals south of the Border; and enquiries can be made c/o The Scottish Service Office.

Following the showing of the film 'Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions' the delegates participated in discussion over a range of subjects.

#### SATURDAY SHARING SESSION

The final event on Saturday evening was a get-together originally arranged for Chairmen of Intergroups or their representatives in cases where Chairmen were not at Conference themselves. Actually there was a turn out of delegates far greater than the original limited objective, and it was this which contributed very much to a lively and wide ranging sharing session. There was no set agenda, and while the principal objective had been to explain the financial workings of the Fellowship and to share ideas regarding the provision of the necessary 'Sinews of war' this was only the springboard for the discussions, and many fringe items were ventilated, and explanations given by members of the General Service Board present, as necessary.

All present agreed that it was important for us always to bear in mind that 'we are self-supporting by our own contributions' and that any other sources of revenue, such as Books and Literature, Share, investment income or 'spin-off' from Conventions, must primarily be regarded as a nest egg for such future projects as the re-housing of the General Service Office, either on expiration of the lease at 11 Redcliffe Gardens, or owing to expansion, so helping to avoid pressures and unnecessary diversion of effort from the pursuit of our primary purpose in the future when such problems arise. It was realised that the actual source of all revenue is in the hand of the member who puts his contribution into the pot, and it is to this level that the ultimate appeal must be made. With this end in mind, all present were asked to convey the feeling and enthusiasm of the



meeting to their Intergroups on return to their home areas, so that the atmosphere of Conference itself might in some way be conveyed to the members of the groups in whom all ultimate authority lies.

Before the Serenity Prayer at the end of the Session, numerous useful ideas for raising funds had been shared, and these were the subject of many conversations between delegates before Conference ended.

## SUNDAY 11 APRIL

At 9.15 a.m. the Conference assembled for the final session. The Chairmen of the four Committees presented their respective Reports. After full discussion and agreed amendments the Reports were adopted and are attached as follows:-

Committee	No.1.	Appendix	B.	(Pages 18		20 )
Committee	No.2.	Appendix	C.	(Pages 21	-	22 )
Committee	No. 3.	Appendix	D.	(Pages 23	-	24 )
Committee	No.4.	Appendix	E.	(Pages 25	-	26 )

## ELECTION OF 1977 CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

Jack G. Chairman placed before the Delegates the nominations received at the Friday evening session, and Maureen J. of London South Intergroup was elected.

## CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

The Conference Chairman, addressing the meeting, pointed out that although those present had enjoyed the experience and the work of Conference, they now faced the difficult task of conveying to their Intergroups the information and recommendations contained in the written reports which they would take back with them. Many delegates had already arranged for special Intergroup meetings to discuss the Manchester findings, and this was an admirable way to do things, and one to be recommended to delegates who had not organised such a presentation. To communicate the written word is one thing, but to convey the atmosphere and heartfelt feelings of Conference itself, with all the spontaneous enthusiasm generated there, is quite another, and this is something which delegates must try to do. The comradeship and unity which prevailed over the weekend at Manchester was an approach to an ideal which must be passed on to those not privileged to be present.

He then invited John M., as a retiring General Service Board member, to speak.

John, after referring to his Scottish origins, for the benefit of those present from North of the Border, paid tribute to the memory of Ronald L. and the example he had set for those who follow him. He gave a brief resume of the progress of the Fellowship since the time, some ten years ago, when he took over chairmanship of the A & G.R.C. and the events which led up to the inauguration of Conference. He referred to the growth of Conference after its early teething troubles, into its present state of responsibility.

Talking of his own work on the General Service Board, John referred particularly to his personal involvement in the build up of the Intergroup structure in the London area, and as an observer at meetings of the National Council on Alcoholism, and of the progress which had been made in these activities. He had enjoyed his work with the Board at all levels, and paid tribute to all with whom he had been associated.

Gordon W., Chairman of the General Service Board then addressed Conference. After thanking John for what he had said Gordon said that at times we tend to forget the progress which has been made, not only in Conference, but through the Fellowship as a whole, and the little reminders of some things which had happened in the last ten years, to which John had referred, were well worth noting. All the developments which had taken place had been for the fulfilment of our objective and our Primary Purpose. He took the opportunity of thanking John for all the years of effort he had given so tirelessly in every activity he had undertaken for the Fellowship.

Gordon then reviewed the Conference as a whole and referred to the perennial problem of the time factor. In particular, two matters had arisen this year which he thought should receive consideration in arranging future Conferences. Firstly, in connection with the presentation of Resolutions, there seemed to be a certain lack of background information which did not bring forth the best appreciation of the points at issue and the suggestion which had been made that Resolutions should be presented by the originators or originating Intergroups might well be found to be a good one. The second point concerned the Saturday afternoon Workshop, held for the first time this year. Interest engendered had been so keen that there appeared to be too little time for all to contribute and a hard look should be taken at this when programming special workshops at future Conferences, with a view to more time being allowed for this valuable sharing of experience.

He then said, again referring to Ronald's 1975 theme of 'Growing into our Responsibilities', that a lot had gone through the Conference this year. A lot had been said, a lot of information had been passed and a lot of experience shared. It was now up to everyone to communicate all this through the Intergroups to the grass roots of the Fellowship. A lot of time, effort and expense had been put into the Conference and it was up to those who had been fortunate enough to participate in it to share with those who had not. He considered it a great opportunity of service to have been present at the Conference and an even greater one to be the Chairman of the General Service Board. He was sure from the sentiments which had been expressed to him that he would have the support of all throughout his time and of this he was very appreciative. Gordon concluded then by invoking the blessing of the Higher Power on all present.

Jack G. then proceeded to close the Conference by expressing his thanks to the Management and Staff of the Hotel, to the General Service Board for their support, and to the General Secretary and his staff for the preparatory work which had gone into the Conference and for all the background material which had been supplied to each Committee to assist it in its deliberations.

Finally, he thanked Gordon W. and Bill S. for the help they had given him over the weekend, and to Conference itself for his happy experience as its Chairman.

Jack G. then called upon John M. to lead all present in the Serenity Prayer and the proceedings of the General Service Conference for 1976 were then at an end.

APPENDIX 'B'

REPORT OF COMMITTEE No.1.

'THE MEMBER IN PRISON'

CHAIRMAN: WILF H. AVON INTERGROUP

It is necessary to explain to members of prison groups that though they may not have access to alcohol they can derive benefit from the programme of A.A. while they are in prison. The time spent in confinement can be used developing the mind and spirit so that they look outward instead of inward. That they should try to live with society as it is and not as they would want it to be, and to this end it is necessary to discuss the whole of the A.A. Programme of Recovery in its entirety. While this may present difficulties because of time factor, we feel sponsors should refer at every opportunity to parts of the programme, i.e. one of the Steps or Traditions, or a part of the Big Book. In this way we feel that it is possible to make the inmate member aware that he or she can live the A.A. Way of Life prior to discharge. This will assist in practicing a tolerance towards others which in turn should help the member to live a more serene life in prison, despite all the pressures.

The message 'Just for Today' can help the member come to terms with the situation he/she has found themselves in.

A.A. in Detention Centres presents a problem because of the usually short term sentences, but it is recommended that Intergroups contact the senior officials of Borstals and other Young Offenders institutions to inform them of our existence for at least contact purposes. It is desirable that a group be formed if sufficient sponsors are available for continuity to be maintained.

In order to overcome the reluctance of some members to offer themselves for prison sponsorship we feel it more advisable for existing sponsors to talk personally to individual members rather than to have impassioned appeal from intergroup level. To this end the potential sponsor could be encouraged to become a casual visitor if a particular prison rules allow such visitors.

Every encouragement should be given for the inside member to become 'trusted Servants' of their group as recommended by Committee No.2. Eighth General Service Conference 1973, Section 1, part d.

In practice it has been found advantageous and time saving, if the inmates are encouraged to meet say half an hour before the arrival of the sponsors to enable them to determine the issues with which they would like the meeting to deal.

Difficulty is experienced in providing additional speakers because of rules laid down by individual governors. As the existence of a group inside calls for considerable co-operation and mutual understanding between the authorities and the A.A. people from outside who want to help, (P.5. Pamphlet 'A.A. in Prisons') it is felt such rules may only be changed by our continued acceptance of his wishes together with a persuasive dialogue between sponsor and authority.

This Committee felt that personal contact was preferable to tape recordings, though a number of such recordings could perhaps be made available should circumstances arise making it impossible for sponsors to attend a given meeting. The use of recording material we feel should be in conformity with the letter of 6 October 1975 from the General Service Office, i.e. that such material should be played on equipment provided by the Prison.

Nothing must be done to damage A.A.'s activity. Where rotation of prison sponsors occurs there must be no loss of liaison with the authorities. Relevant material and information must be made available to the new sponsor, and it is felt that Intergroup should ensure this is done in every case.

In discussing the desirable qualities of prison sponsors we feel they should be chosen and appointed according to group and intergroup conscience, having due regard to an acceptable period of sobriety (ideally 2 years) and would suggest an interest in prison sponsorship, sustained enthusiasm, tact to deal with many rules laid down by prison governors, reliability, and the ability to mix at all levels.

We feel that if a member is practising the A.A. Programme of Recovery while in Prison, the problems of 'follow through' are reduced on his discharge, but during this period of insecurity on release, discreet help must be given, unless he expresses a wish to go it alone. Even so the hand of friendship must be there, and the ex-inmate must always be treated as a member of our Fellowship and his past forgotten. Every effort should be made to meet him on release and contact with his home town group be given, if this is his wish.

Our prison activity may be co-ordinated and expanded at Intergroup level to include co-operation with the Probation and After-Care Services of the 51 areas in England and Wales and the Social Works Department in Scotland, by similar action to that taken by the London Intergroups with the Inner London Area Probation After-Care Service.

APPENDIX' C ,

REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.2.

THE YOUNGER MEMBER & SPECIAL GROUPS ,

CHAIRMAN:NANCY R. CHESHIRE INTERGROUP

The evidence seems to point to an increase in younger members i.e. those under 30, whilst the number of teenagers coming forward is very small.

No special procedures or actions have been undertaken to deal with the influx of younger members nor does this seem to be necessary as our primary purpose of sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other, applies to all suffering alcoholics irrespective of age.

The Committee feels that education in schools can play a useful part, so that the younger person will know where help is readily available should the need arise. To this end it is suggested that Intergroups approach school Head Teachers and Youth Club Leaders directly to let them know

that speakers are available.

Ideally, it would be helpful when 12th Stepping a young member for an older (in years) and a young (in years) member to go together.

Recovery stories should include reference to the part that each individual's sponsor played in their own recovery, and the advantages of having a sponsor pointed out. The subject of sponsorship could be discussed advantageously more frequently at all group meetings.

The Committee hopes that all groups accept young people who ask for help with the same warmth and ease as they would any other person, and that with love and understanding they will realise they have gained a richer and fuller life rather than have missed out.

On the other hand young teenagers who are directed to A.A. by outside agencies should first be counselled by an A.A. member with a view to taking them to a meeting if they so desire. We are very conscious that we should always be thorough in our sharing the crucial key contained in Step One, and the deadly seriousness of this progressive disease.

We feel that Young Peoples' Groups can be helpful but should never be restricted, in accordance with Tradition 4.

They should be given the same support at Intergroup level and indeed at all levels, as any other group.

#### SPECIAL GROUPS

This Committee recommends that A.A. does not recognise any restricted special group as such groups are contrary to the spirit of the 4th Tradition.

However, we know that unrestricted special groups exist and might well exist as stepping stones for some alcoholics for full recovery, but feel that the proliferation of such groups should not be encouraged.

#### ELEVENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1976' APPENDIX 'D'

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.3. 'ALCOHOLISM IN INDUSTRY'

#### CHAIRMAN: DERRIK A.-GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

There is a greater public awareness of the problem of alcoholism and a large number of enquiries are being received from Industry generally. In order to help individual members and the Fellowship, this Committee has considered the various points relating to this subject. Because of the complexity of the circumstances which can arise in this field, of necessity, this report can only contain broad guidelines.

In an enlightened industry there is no danger in twelfth stepping a fellow employee who is seeking help, but generally speaking it is felt that with few exceptions it is better for an A.A. member to refer the alcoholic to another A.A. member outside the company. Whether this takes

place in company time or not is dependant upon how the request for help arose. So much will depend upon whether or not the A.A. member has identified himself as such to his employer. It is generally felt that it is better to carry out this step outside business hours unless the introduction was made with management knowledge.

In the foregoing situation and in the case of the unenlightened industry, where the inherent dangers to his security and sobriety are much greater, the final decision must always remain with the individual.

Requests by management for information on Alcoholism in Industry should be referred to Intergroup and General Service Office and at the same time attention should be drawn to the existence of other agencies active in this field.

The co-operation of A.A. members jointly with such agencies should be encouraged at all levels and with proper co-operation a better relationship can be established, always bearing in mind the Twelve Traditions.

Where difficulties exist the intention should always be 'to be Friendly with our Friends' and so produce constructive progress towards a mutually beneficial end.

If given the opportunity, it is advisable for A.A. members to talk to members of senior management and officers of trade unions provided the effort is directed at a purely educational level, in relation to the problem e.g. what A.A. has to offer and where it is available. It is advisable for this question to be raised at Group or Intergroup level to decide suitability of speakers.

If offered, facilities for A.A. Group Meetings within company premises may be accepted, always provided that no unacceptable conditions are attached to the offer.

The Committee is of the opinion that suitable pamphlets exist for the guidance of industrial management in Great Britain. It is firmly recommended it would be of great benefit to have Dr. John Hughes's article 'Alcoholism in Industry' published as Conference Approved Literature for distribution and general use.

Hopefully the guidelines contained in this Report may be used as a basis for incorporation in a Conference Approved pamphlet to be used by A.A. members employed in Industry.

The Committee feel that the findings contained herein should always be considered within the framework of the Twelve Traditions.

## APPENDIX 'E'

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE No.4

CHAIRMAN: ALEX A. -GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

#### 'STRUCTURE'

##### 1. PUBLICATIONS

- a) Having discussed the Board's Report the Committee accepted it and recommended that the Board should continue to pursue the possibilities of making A.A. more widely known in the field of public relations and information, at all times bearing in mind the Traditions.
- b) The Committee advocate that Intergroups take the initiative to make and develop contact with the Local Press, Radio and T.V. with a view to making the services of A.A. more widely known, again referring to the Traditions for guidance.
- c) The Committee discussed the relationship between Regional Councils on Alcoholism and ourselves and concluded that a close degree of co-operation existed between us, and that we should continue our efforts thereby fulfilling our primary purpose in helping the still suffering alcoholic.
- d) The Committee advocated that the General Service Office be kept better advised of all activities taking place at Intergroup level and local level.

## 2. A.A.SERVICE HANDBOOK FOR GREAT BRITAIN

The Committee discussed fully the Annex to Section IV 'The Role of Intergroups' and proposed the following changes and additions.

- a) Item 1. To be amended to read:

Intergroups exist to help the groups in their area to reach the still suffering alcoholic more effectively. They do so by maintaining contact with such outside bodies as hospitals, prisons, family doctors and the media, and by seeing that the work done by groups is divided up so that there is someone always available to carry out important duties.

('and the media' has been added)

- b) Addition to Para 5.

The Treasurer should keep a proper account of the Intergroup finances, ensure that funds are available for its essential current requirements with a prudent reserve of say two months estimated expenditure, and report to Intergroup at regular meetings the balance remaining for transfer to General Service Office or ( in Scotland) to Scottish Committee .

## 3. REGIONALISATION

Some progress has taken place and efforts towards Regionalisation should continue.

However, the Committee concluded after much discussion that strengthening the existing Intergroups structure was the Fellowship's short term objective and that a natural progression to Regionalisation would follow at some future date.

The Committee recommends that the progress towards Regionalisation should be discussed again during future Conferences.

## 4. LOCAL SERVICE OFFICES, CLUBS, CENTRES & OTHER FACILITIES

- a) Local Service Offices which allow wider participation by members in such duties as manning telephone services etc., should be encouraged when it is felt that a need exists and could be met. Careful guidelines should be instituted by Intergroups ensuring that the finances of such ventures should not divert group funds from General Service Office.

Please refer to A.A. Guidelines on Central or Intergroup Offices, G.S.O. New York.

b) When considering such facilities as Social Clubs, members are advised to refer to the pamphlet 'A.A. Guidelines - Clubs - G.S.O. New York.

The overall guide to action on both these activities are contained in Traditions 6 and 7.

5. CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

a) This question has been answered under 2 b.

b) Providing the Traditions are adhered to and the publications self financing the committee felt that local involvement at Intergroup level in producing local literature was in no way detrimental to the Fellowship.



FRIDAY 1 APRIL 1977

The Twelfth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at the Midland Hotel, Manchester on Friday 1 April to Sunday 3 April 1977.

69 delegates representing 44 intergroups together with 17 members of the General Service Board and 4 observers from overseas, Maureen J. the Conference Chairman and 2 G.S.O. Staff members gathered from 4.30 p.m. on Friday to register their arrival and generally get to know each other.

The subsequent two hours were well occupied and profitably spent in renewing old friendships and welcoming new delegates.

Only four intergroups were unable to be represented.

#### OPENING OF CONFERENCE.

The first full session was opened at 8.45 p.m. by the Conference Chairman Maureen J. (London South Intergroup) with the usual few moments silence, following which the General Secretary read the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Maureen welcomed all the delegates, especially those attending Conference for the first time and the visitors from Ireland, Finland and Norway and then addressed the assembly

‘The theme for our Conference this year is taken from Tradition One. “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on A.A. unity”. It is on this unity that I should like to speak to you tonight.

‘It was, I am certain, no accident that this Tradition was put in first place - any more than it was by accident that Step One was the first Step we had to take in our own personal recoveries. Unless we first admit that we are powerless over alcohol the other eleven Steps can have no meaning. Unless we take that first Step we cannot get sober, never mind remain sober.

‘So it was with our first Tradition. Tradition One is the broad base, the firm and solid rock upon which all the other Traditions rest.

‘The Fellowship of A.A. follows a spiritual programme. Without a deep spiritual unity of purpose this Fellowship could never have started and grown. It would not have stood the test of time. As individuals we have, all had to learn to put the feeling of the Group Conscience above our own personal opinions and desires. We have good reason to learn to do this. We have perhaps the greatest incentive in life – life itself. All of us know that our own recovery, our own survival, depends upon the survival of the Fellowship. It is in the group and not in ourselves that our sobriety rests. The killing disease of alcoholism lies dormant within the recovering alcoholic only too ready to awaken and strike should we stray from the safe pathway of our A.A. Way of Life. We have seen this happen to friends less fortunate than we are today. Our continued sobriety depends on the group, depends upon that continuing spiritual unity of purpose which binds us all together in our common resolve to stay sober and pass the message to the still

suffering alcoholic.

Our Founders are those who followed them were obedient to the spiritual principles set out in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I thank God and I am truly grateful for that obedience. I owe my life to all of these people and to the simple message of hope and life that they passed on to me.

This Fellowship just happened to be born in the year of my own birth. As I lived through my childhood and my schooldays, became an adult and then slowly but surely messed up my life until it was seemingly beyond repair, this Fellowship was also growing up. The message of hope was born and being forged out of human experience. It passed from person to person. As more and more Groups were formed it eventually crossed the Atlantic Ocean and when I needed it, here it was, waiting for me. It was as pure and honest, as simple and as true as the day it was conceived. It was a miracle and I am here today because of that miracle.

The message of life was kept simple by the men and women who kept faith with our Steps and Traditions. The Group Conscience and the Unity of A.A. was put. First. It was above self interest.

We learn from Bill W. that this was not always easy - not even for himself. The alcoholic does not have to be drunk to have self-esteem and self-will run riot. The habits of a life-time cannot be changed easily or overnight. For myself I know that I am a person who needs very clear guidelines on which to base all my thoughts and actions. Without guidelines my life would return inevitably to the confusion and mismanagement of the past.

The Founders and older members of this Fellowship fulfilled The Primary Purpose. It is now in our hands to try to live up to the principles which they have passed to us. They kept it simple, they passed the message and they stayed sober. We have the same task to perform for the babies born today.

We are living in a bewildering world. It is an era when great social changes are taking place. Old attitudes and the institutions of the past are being overturned and swept aside. New values are emerging. Much more time and attention is being given to the understanding of all mental illnesses. Great advances are being made in medical science.

As with all change there is some confusion. This is inevitable. With change, with any growth of new ideas we have a period of experiment, a time of trial and error until the best new way is found.

All of us in A.A. should welcome wholeheartedly any change in public opinion towards the disease of alcoholism. We should welcome the growth of understanding and the more enlightened attitude that is beginning to show itself.

In the past man has been limited by his ignorance. For centuries the alcoholic has been an outcast from his tribe. We have been objects of abuse and of pity, we have been ridiculed, despised and rejected. We have been excluded by our fellows. We should be grateful today that there is a growing public awareness that alcoholism is an illness. A great deal of discussion is now taking place on the possible causes, the dreadful consequences and the possible treatment of the disease of alcoholism. It is difficult to pick up a newspaper or magazine without finding

some comment or some new statistic about the growth of the illness. After centuries of uncaring indifference the alcoholic finds himself front page news. We are almost becoming fashionable - the new 'in-thing' of the seventies. All very heady stuff for such as we.

Nationally and locally there are growing groups of well-meaning and often highly qualified people involving themselves in working with and seeking to understand the still suffering alcoholic. Different theories, different experiments and different practices abound throughout the country. We in this Fellowship are being asked to help, to co-operate and to play a part. And this is good, for we have a part to play. What that part is, is up to you and all the members in all the Groups throughout the Nation. The decisions will be your decisions. It is a great responsibility.

Already we have had experience of working with others, of co-operating with outside agencies. We are learning that sometimes this is successful and sometimes it is not. We are learning that whilst we are eager to fulfil our Primary Purpose there can be pitfalls and dangers for the unwary. It is my belief that never before in this country have we in A.A. had greater need of Tradition One. The theme of this Conference "Our Common Welfare" seeks to stress and underline that need for unity.

It may be that in seeking to work with others we may be tempted to stray from our Programme. In our enthusiasm to seize the widening opportunities to pass the message to the still suffering alcoholic we may seek to find an easier softer way. We may disagree with one another as to how the future interests of our Fellowship may be served best. There may even be some who feel that in a changing world we ourselves should change and that perhaps our Founders have become outdated with the passing of time. It is a time of growth and great opportunities, but it holds grave dangers for those who would have us stray from the well-trodden path to take part in the experiments going on around us. In A.A. we have no need to experiment. We are here, we are sober because it works.

Left to ourselves and to our own natures we could have quite a problem in the days to come. But we are lucky. Besides our Steps and Traditions to guide us we have the knowledge that we are not alone and left to ourselves. I believe, passionately, that we have in this Fellowship an added ingredient. I believe that that ingredient, that other something, is here in this room today. It is always present wherever and whenever members of this Fellowship meet. It manifests itself in our willingness to hear the other person's point of view, in our desire to listen to one another. It shows in the genuine caring and sharing that we have for one another's welfare. It comes to light in our good nature and in our plain common sense. We are able to keep an open mind, we do grow in maturity, we can let go and let God. It is in all of these things that our Group Conscience is guided. It is in all of these things that our Unity rests.

We shall at this Conference have an opportunity to discuss the things I have mentioned, and many that I have not. We are gathered here from all parts of the British Isles to share our experience, strength and hope with each other. We shall all learn and grow from that sharing. When the talking is over it will be our duty to take back to our own patch the message and more important the feeling of this Conference.

#### GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

Gordon W. Chairman of the General Service Board was called upon to present to Conference the

Boards report on its activities during 1976, and he addressed the meeting:

“On behalf of the General Service Board I would also extend a welcome to you all to this the Twelfth General Service Conference and hope you will find it enjoyable and rewarding, I feel sure you will. It is a very full programme from now until it ends at lunchtime on Sunday. There will be no time for frolics.

My job as Chairman of the General Service Board is to present the Board Report. You will have had copy of the report for some time so I trust you have read it. It is comprehensive and somewhat long. Some of you I am sure must be feeling weary after your long journey so I have no intention of reading it all but will mention one or two of what I consider the highlights. “Following Ronald’s death a certain deficiency in our structure was revealed - there was no appointed stand in. This was taken care of in the appointment of a Vice Chairman and an appropriate addition to the Service Handbook to cover the situation is to be considered by Committee No.4. at this Conference.

“The first of a series of Guidelines has been produced entitled “Group Meetings” copies of which have been distributed - I hope they meet with your approval and bring uniformity throughout the Fellowship and be of assistance to Group members.

“It is more than pleasing to note that in Scotland there is now 100% cover in all the penal establishments and for this we are indebted to the fine co-operation given by the Director of the Scottish Prison Service, Mr. Jack Scrimgeour and the members of his Staff along with all the Prison Sponsors. We were indeed pleased when Mr. Jack Scrimgeour accepted our invitation to join the Board as a non-alcoholic member. He is here with us this evening and we extend to him a hearty welcome .

“The demand for our monthly magazines Share and Roundabout grows each month as the publications get better and better. We are indeed grateful to all those who work so hard on these productions.

“We believe that Box 514 is at last taking on and is becoming more widely read among group members rather than just group officers. You will all I hope note the appeal to all the P.I. Officers for the supply of information and news.

“There has been a significant increase in the number of enquiries placed on G.S.O and Intergroups for information for publications of all kinds on the subject of alcoholism and for radio talks by the local radio stations. The personal contacts that have resulted from these indicate that the efforts have been well worth while. Because of the growing all round awareness of the problem we believe we must strengthen our P.I. facilities and we look forward to the recommendations from Committee No.2. on this matter.

“Turning now to Board membership. Tom H. will retire by rotation at the close of this Conference having served six years. We thank you Tom for all the generous service and wise counsel you have given during your term of office. We wish you well so that you may continue to share your experiences whenever and wherever called upon to do so.

#### BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Gordon W. introduced Joyce C., Angus M., and Jim H., and asked for confirmation of their appointment as members of the General” Service Board.

These appointments were approved unanimously.

## FINANCE

Gordon invited Alex A. Hon. Treasurer to present the Financial Statement; and Balance Sheet. Alex referred to the Statement and his notes contained in the Board Report, highlighting the fact that although the total net assets now exceeded £50,000 approximately half of that sum is required to maintain the book and literature service, leaving only £25,000 available for any rehousing project.

Alex commented on the favourable response to the unofficial intergroups targets and intimated that the increase in number of groups and retaining the same group target any anticipated increase in expenditure due to growth and inflation would be covered.

After discussion the General Service Board Report to Conference (Appendix A) was formally accepted.

## FOURTH WORLD SERVICE MEETING

The Conference Chairman invited Tom H. to present his personal reflections in support of the delegates printed report contained in the manual. Tom said:

“It was my great privilege to be a co-delegate with Ronnie H. to the Fourth World Service Meeting in New York last October. I will try and give you some personal impressions of this wonderful experience. Factual and detailed reports appear elsewhere and are included in your Conference Manuals. In addition a full report is issued by the General Service Office, New York. However, these can only give dry as dust facts and fail completely to convey the great emotional and spiritual uplift which I experienced through being involved on this great occasion. How can one tell you in cold words the intangibles of the heart and spirit?

“For weeks preceding the meeting I had ample opportunity for self examination in an effort to assess what I had to offer, if anything, to further the objectives of such a forum. Excitement built up but this was to suffer an anti-climax as my flight out of Prestwick was delayed 9 hours and the less said about this the better. Imagine my feelings arriving at Kennedy Airport after midnight and at the Statler Hilton Hotel some time after 1 a.m.. And this my first visit to U.S.A.

Fortunately, as we have come to expect all arrangements had been efficiently handled by the G.S.O. Staff and from that moment on everything went as smooth as clockwork.

“How good it was to see so many old friends such as Dr. John Norris; Maria Marta from Argentine; Hugh M. from New Zealand; Mike T. from South Africa and many more plus all our lovely girls from G.S.O. who spread an aura of loving care and efficiency around us all.

“Naturally the sessions were long and arduous from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and because of the concentrated effort the work took its toll mentally and physically but this was counteracted by the uplift gained from sharing and caring world wide. We were literally carrying out the theme of the W.S.M. which was “Working with Others”.

“Though everything was a highlight in experience for me a few which seemed to hold something special must be mentioned. These I will hold and treasure for the rest of my days. During the days of the W.S.M. itself I was thrilled to hear of the Finnish and German efforts to carry our message beyond the Iron Curtain. Things so casually explained, yet to realise the personal courage involved and the element of personal danger faced so willingly in order to reach out the hand to those unfortunates who suffer the added burden of alcoholism under very trying circumstances, made me feel so very humble. In an entirely different way I listened to the successful efforts made in the Central American Zone to solve the great problem of literature production and distribution. How inspiring to hear of the co-operation between the Scandinavian countries, W.S.O. and those engaged at the grass root level in the Central American Zone. It made me feel so grateful that here in the United Kingdom we have no political strictures or literacy problems. At least most of our contacts can read and understand simple words. In many areas of the Caribbean and South America our message must be conveyed in pictures by tapes or by word of mouth because so many cannot read. How lucky we are and we may not even realise it.

“The visit to G.S.O. and the Sunday trip to Stepping Stones were for me something special as it took me to what I have always felt are the heart springs of A.A. To see, feel and sense all that has gone before to enable me and countless other fortunate members to be reborn had its own unique and unforgettable magic.

“Dinner at The Hilton Hotel on Saturday night as guests of the New York I.G’s at their Annual Dinner was an exciting experience with Lois starting the Candlelight ceremony, reading Bill W’s last message, with over two thousand people taking part.

To be honoured to sit in with all the other World delegates at a U.S.A Service Board meeting taught me many things in relation to the fantastic organisation which enables our world services to be so effective. The depth of caring shown by everyone warmed my heart and gave me a great feeling of pride and security just to belong to A.A.

“On the lighter side. I had been asked to speak at a Long Island get together that week-end and when it was found time did not permit I was asked to make a tape for them. There was I taking a cab very late Thursday night to a lodging house down town to find that the recorder offered did not work and the owner an A.A. member definitely a bit off. This was solved by making the tape at G.S.O. after I had beat a hasty retreat.

“Sunday night a party of us delegates went along to Times Square at midnight and believe me what you have seen on the films is overrated. We looked for an all night cafe to have a meal. To see Maria Marta that delicate little person from the Argentine trying to eat a French loaf cut in half with about six different kinds of stuffing is something I will never forget. It was about six inches thick. Monday I went with other friends to a lunchtime A.A. meeting at the Mustard Seed Group. This was in a very dimly lit basement with all sorts of people and nationalities but the message was just the same.

“Spending the two final hours sharing with an old A.A. friend at Kennedy Airport rounded off the visit and seeing the myriad lights in the darkness over the city and the Hudson river as the plane departed left me with a great feeling of something worthwhile accomplished and brought me very close to my Higher Power.

I must thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me this great opportunity to serve. “

## CONVENTIONS

Conference noted and accepted with pleasure the willingness of the East Lancashire Intergroup to be responsible for the Northern Convention 1978. This will be held at the Norbreck Hydro Hotel Blackpool on 17 - 19 March. The Intergroup will be assisted by neighbouring intergroups.

The Southern Convention will be arranged by the Southern Region and will be held October 1978.

## NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1978

The undermentioned proposals were duly tabled:

Maurice S.     East Midlands Intergroup  
Tom S.         Southern Region

The election was to take place at the final session.

The session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## SATURDAY 2 APRIL

Commencing at 9 a.m. through to 10.30 p.m. the delegates met in Workshops sessions and in committee to discuss and share experience on several topics.

The Committee subjects were:

- Committee No.1.     ‘Sponsorship’
- No.2.             ‘Public Information’
- No.3.             ‘A.A’s Role in Industry’
- No.4.             ‘Service Handbook and our Structure

and the workshops after receiving two presentations discussed in full session the following subjects:

### Workshop

- No.1.             ‘Responsibilities of Service Representatives’
- No.2.             ‘Finance - Money in A.A. ,
- No.3.             ‘The Traditions in our Living’

The Committee Reports and summaries of the Workshop discussions are attached as Appendix B-H (pages 17 - 28)

SUNDAY 3 APRIL

At 9.15 a.m. the Conference assembled for the final session. The Chairman of the four committees presented their respective reports which after full discussion were adopted.

#### ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 1978 CONFERENCE

Maureen J. Chairman placed before the delegates the nominations received at the Friday evening session and Tom S. of Southern Region was elected.

#### CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Maureen invited Tom H. retiring member of the General Service Board to present the closing address.

‘It is with some diffidence and a great sense of honour that I stand before you at this moment in time. I have been extremely fortunate to have been privileged to serve this wonderful Fellowship at every level from Group to World Service Meeting. In my early sobriety I can well recall the feeling of there being a great chasm between my small self and those members of the General Service Board who seemed to sit on Olympian Heights in far away London. Six years ago with no little trepidation and heart searching I travelled to London to join these forbidding ranks, hoping that in some small way I might be able to help in their deliberations. Since then I have been witness to the bridging of this imaginary gulf, - the breaking down of the syndrome of ‘We’ ‘They’. I feel that in no small way this has been accomplished by the example and guidance of Ronald L., our late Chairman, and the unremitting efforts of my friends on the Board who have shared and cared at all levels.

During these years I have taken a very active part in the; work of changing the structure of the Fellowship in this country whereby the Board really have become the trusted servants carrying out the decisions of Conference which is without doubt the conscience of A.A. as a whole in this country.

‘Six years at this Conference has allowed me to see it grow in stature and purpose. Each of us feeling our way rather uncertainly in the beginning but gradually walking tall as we discovered a new vision and an ever new horizon. In the process I humbly pray that I have also grown in stature, if only a little bit.

‘On this way of sobriety we have many lessons to learn and this has applied to me most of all. As the mind clears and the scales fall from our eyes life takes on a completely new dimension. Sobriety is a new experience to everyone of us and in its unknown quantity it can be very frightening and painful. However, the guide posts are shown clearly in our programme of recovery and growing along spiritual lines can be a magnificent experience. What wonderful thoughts the words compassion; caring; tolerance, understanding and love conjure up in the minds of us all? Surely the reward is worth the effort?

‘My term of office is now nearing an end and the feelings in my heart are right now sad and sweet simultaneously. Sad at the thought of losing close touch with so many friends and sweet in the knowledge that this is the way that it must be so that all may have a chance of involvement. Certainly for the good of A.A. and more important - in order that each may have the opportunity to grow in maturity as a result.



‘The more days I run given in trust by my Higher Power in the programme the more convinced do I become that unity is the foundation upon which all our lives depend. I have seen this unity grow at this Conference over the years and this weekend has shown to a marked degree that it is still growling. Today we see the face of A.A. expanding so rapidly with Intergroups growing stronger across the face of the land and Regionalisation being very near to realisation. As a valedictory message to you I feel that the most important thing I can say - Beware of the danger of dissipating our precious resources by getting our priorities wrong. Because of this growth I see a greater need for a closer co-ordination of our efforts in order that services already functioning effectively are not duplicated in ever smaller areas whereby they overlap. If this happens and I feel it may be happening now it could consume time, energy and money unnecessarily. It is paramount in importance that all our assets be channelled towards carrying our message of hope to the still suffering alcoholic, in the most effective way possible. We hear great discussion and sometimes no little self congratulation at how great the growth of A.A. is. My question to you is not -’Are they ready for A.A?’ but rather ‘Are we as individuals, Groups and Intergroups and General Service Board prepared and ready for them? I wonder.

‘Finally I would like to express thanks from the depth of my heart to all those who have given me so much friendship and love; sympathy and tolerance; and above all understanding during the past six years. Remember we can do anything within our individual limitations except take the first drink. To me this is the ultimate in freedom.

God bless.

In thanking Tom for his remarks Maureen commented:

‘Before this Conference began I asked a certain friend of Tom’s if he could give me a few details I might use. What he said to me was short and explicit and I shan’t repeat it here. It was the kind of remark which only a good friend can make. He did however remind me of Tom’s work in the prisons and hospitals and of his service with the Scottish Committee. For this and for your service with the Board our grateful thanks Tom. I am sure that you will continue to contribute to the work of this Fellowship. Please take with you our best wishes and our love.

Gordon W. Chairman of the General Service Board addressed the Conference:

‘This the Twelfth General Service Conference is now drawing rapidly to a close. We cannot let it pass without showing our appreciation to Maureen who has conducted us through the proceedings so efficiently and with such fine grace and humour.

‘I think you will all agree with me that it has been an enjoyable and rewarding two days .

Following the success of the Workshop on ‘Publications’ at last years Conference Workshops were extended on the programme this year and I believe with great success so much so we will continue the format next year.

‘As I indicated in my opening remarks on Friday evening there has been evidence that we must strengthen our P.I. facilities and this has come over loud and clear in the reports of Committees 2 and 3. We will be giving this our full attention. Also the weakness in the communications down

to the grass roots - the group members - has again been strongly revealed so much so I think we must consider such as the subject for one of next years Workshops.

‘It now only remains for me to ask you all to show your appreciation to Maureen for her wonderful chairmanship throughout this Conference.’

Maureen then proceeded to close the Conference:

‘It is now my final task to close this Conference. It has I think been a good one. We have all shared our experience, strength and hope with each other and I’m sure we all feel a little richer for the sharing. When I look back over the weekend it is with some surprise that we have in fact accomplished what we set out to do. What is even more surprising is when I look around this hall and see you all sitting up as fresh (well almost as fresh) as when we began. I am sure you would wish me to thank the Chairman of the four committees for the clear and concise presentation of their reports - also the speakers at our three workshop sessions.

On a more personal note I should like to thank publicly Bill S. our General Secretary for all the help, guidance and patience that he has shown to me over the past twelve months. It was considerable and without it I could not have coped with this weekend.

Being involved in the preparation of this Conference has brought home to me just how much work Bill and the girls at Redcliffe Gardens do, in the past I have been guilty of taking so much of what they do for granted. That statement in itself is quite a compliment to the Staff at the Office. It is a measure of how quietly and competently they get through the mountain of work required of them. The collecting of material, organisation and preparation for this weekend is formidable. Thank you all for making this weekend so pleasant and easy for all of us.

Also I think we should thank the management and Staff of this Hotel for the splendid facilities and excellent service that they have given us. We have lived in comfort, been well fed, with all our needs most courteously attended.

Last - but not least -I want to thank you the delegates for everything that you have contributed to the weekend. No doubt one’s friends back home thought you were coming for a thoroughly idle time. Aside from Hewitt St. I doubt you’ve seen much of the sights of Manchester.

On Friday night I said I was privileged to be your Chairman - may I now also add that I have been happy. Your friendship and enthusiasm, your goodwill and very genuine Fellowship is what for me A.A. is all about.

Thank you all.

Although Conference itself is at an end it is my duty to remind you that the real work for the Fellowship is just beginning. When we leave it is up to us who have been so fortunate to be here to take the message of this Conference back home. If what we do here is to have any real value or meaning we must pass on what we have learned to the groups and individual members in our Intergroup areas.

In the Saturday morning workshop it was mentioned that ‘Business’ is so often misinterpreted by some members of A.A. One hears that awful word ‘politics’ in the group - it is a word which smacks of government and has overtones of rule. How we share our experience, the manner in

which we pass the message of this Conference is a responsibility which each delegate must face up to. As your Chairman it is my earnest wish that we will all do our best in the coming months to make sure that more people understand better what goes on at both the Intergroup and this Conference. Without some measure of structure and organisation we could not continue to grow. Without a complete and total sharing in all our affairs we cannot keep the unity and understanding necessary to fulfill our Primary Purpose. I am confident that you will see to it that the message from Manchester is passed on, received and understood.

May I wish you all a safe, serene and sober journey home..

The Twelfth General Service Conference in Great Britain then came to a close with all present joining in the Serenity Prayer.

## **TWELFTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1977. REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.1."SPONSORSHIP"**

### APPENDIX B.

CHAIRMAN: Alan D. G.S.B. SECRETARY: Joyce C. G.S.B.

A.A. began with sponsorship; with two people who met and needed to talk. The purpose of sponsorship is to carry the message to the suffering alcoholic, to share our experience of hope and recovery and 'to help the unlovable become lovable'.

There is a difference between Twelfth-Stepping and Sponsorship. The purpose of the Twelfth Step is to bring hope to the newcomer and encourage to come to meetings and join the Group. A Twelfth Step call may be the beginning of Sponsorship, but the member who answers the twelfth step call is not necessarily the sponsor.

The Committee felt that there is more than one kind of sponsorship. There is firstly sponsorship by the Group. The Groups purpose is to welcome the newcomer, make him feel wanted and comfortable, to give him friends and information and eventually encourage him to find a sponsor for himself..

Secondly, sponsorship by the individual member, who shares his own experience with another, and shows by his example the benefits of sobriety, and what the programme of recovery means.

Some members chose a sponsor immediately; others may wait some time. In either case it is the individual's own choice.

Members telling their stories should always include reference to the contribution sponsorship has made to their own recovery. It is thought desirable that every member should have access to a number of sponsors, but only when he is ready for them.

The Committee felt that as the member's horizons broadened and recovery continued, the need for sponsorship grows rather than lessens.

The Committee suggests that the sponsor should have a measure of happy sobriety. He should have the ability to listen with compassion and humility. He should be able to show what is meant by the A.A., Way of Life by his own example. He should not be possessive but be glad for the member to choose other sponsors as he grows in A.A.

The Committee suggests several kinds of action:

1. Making a newcomer welcome to the Group, introducing him to other members, providing him with literature, telephone numbers, taking him to other groups in the area and making him feel welcome and wanted.

It is suggested that Groups should nominate an individual to welcome newcomers.

2. Group meetings at which sponsorship is a subject for discussion can help both the individual and the Group.

3. Mention should be made at Group Conscience Meetings of the Group responsibility towards sponsorship at all levels.

4. The Groups should share the responsibility for the support of the newcomer with the sponsor.

5. The Group should make more use of Chapter 7 in the Big Book, "Working With Others" and of the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship".

The Committee considered that special reference to sponsorship in institutions, such as hospitals and prisons, was outside their terms of reference.

## APPENDIX C

### **REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO. 2."PUBLIC INFORMATION"**

CHAIRMAN: John G. West Riding

SECRETARY: Sean B. South Wales

The time has arrived for a more realistic assessment of our public information needs. But it is important at all times that we remember to work within the framework of the Traditions which are there for our own protection

Traditions 11 and 12 deal with anonymity but this should not be confused with invisibility. It is the responsibility of Groups and individual members to carry the message and to co-operate to the fullest extent with all agencies in the alcoholism field.

The best advertisement for A.A. is the power of example - the impression created by the physical presence of a sober and contented recovering alcoholic.

The Committee's views on questions posed to it were as follows:

1. Who should be responsible for the giving out of information to other organisations: e.g. an individual or should it be collective Intergroup activity, and why?

Public information of all kinds should be a collective Intergroup responsibility and should be carried out only by members authorised to do so.

2. Are there any limitations to co-operation with outside agencies?

The only limitations to outside co-operation would be those imposed by the Traditions. This implies full co-operation without affiliation.

3. In a status seeking society should we always be conscious that we should not be in competition with other bodies? How can we ensure that the welfare of the suffering alcoholic, is our prime cause for concern?

We should avoid any sense of competitiveness with other agencies and should always be mindful of our primary purpose as stated in Tradition 5.

4. What sort of information should we be trying to pass on to outside agencies?

The basic information should be that A.A. is available; where, when and how it can be contacted, and that it works for those who want it. It should also be stressed that A.A. has a special contribution to make because of the personal experience of its members.

5. Are we always conscious of the vital importance of complying with Traditions 11 and 12 and what action should be taken when these are broken?

This question focuses attention on the great need for more emphasis on the reading of the Traditions at Group level. Too many members are unaware of the vital importance of the Traditions in protecting the well-being not only of A.A. but of the individual member.

There is no blanket answer to the problems created by the breaking of Traditions 11 and 12, and action would depend on the specific circumstances. However, it is up to the Intergroup concerned to deal with individual cases.

It is recommended that all Intergroups should have Public Information Committees to handle requests and needs in this field.

There is also a need for a review of the pamphlets currently available for professional and social agencies; and the General Service Board should consider what new pamphlets should be produced for a United Kingdom audience.

## APPENDIX D

### **REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.3."A. A ' s ROLE IN INDUSTRY"**

CHAIRMAN Jack G. Scottish Committee

SECRETARY: Derrick A. G.S.B.

The Committee were asked the following questions :

- 1. Review any progress made in this field of activity since the last Conference .**
- 2. Make recommendations for future conduct in the light of any personal experiences that exist.**
- 3. Has the time arrived when we should pursue some course of positive action?**
- 4. If so, what suggestions within the Traditions can be made to implement any actions?**
- 5. What suggestions are made regarding material for inclusion in the proposed 'Guidelines'**

This Committee reported at the Eleventh General Service Conference that there is a greater public awareness of the problem of alcoholism and a number of enquiries are being received from Industry. These enquiries continue and, whilst individual A.A. members are doing all they can to cope with them, this Committee is of the opinion that our Fellowship has made very little progress during the past year in this particular area. Progress made has been largely due to the individual rather than the Fellowship as a whole.

Very few companies, large or small, appear to have a specific policy on programmes relating to the problem of alcoholism and this is probably because the majority of them have little understanding of it. Indeed, some appear not wanting to admit to having the problem even though they recognise it exists. It is suggested that the major barrier between Industry and A.A. is that Management in general will not admit to the problem.

It is felt that the time has come when we should pursue some course of positive action and that this be at all levels within Industry. This course of approach might be on the following suggested lines.

An approach made to Industry at senior level, probably such bodies as the C.B.I., T.U.C., and Employers' Federation. All of these at national level. This would best be made by members of the General Service Board in the same way in which approaches have been successfully made to the medical profession, the probation service, the National Council on Alcoholism and Social Services etc. Ideally an industrialist with an understanding of the problem and capable of drawing attention towards it showing how A.A. can help would be invaluable. He or she might also be invited to join the General Service Board as a non-alcoholic member.

Intergroups should make contact at local level with Chambers of Commerce and Employers' Federations as well as local Government. Existing Conference Approved Literature might be distributed to them as well as personal contact by A.A. members. Intergroups could arrange public meetings, show films to industrialists on the subject of Alcoholism.

Individual A.A. members can inform their employers of their own experience with the problem, but there are inherent dangers as were highlighted in the Committee Report of last year. An example of one successful approach was given by a member whose personal recovery lead to an A.A. Group being formed within his local industry and as a result both management and

employees became aware of the way in which the problem can be overcome through personal example.

Use could be made of the British Safety Council by encouraging them to publish articles informing on the subject of alcoholism through their official publication "Safety and Rescue".

As a Fellowship though we should not become involved in setting up Company Programmes or policies but can and should indicate where information and experience in this field can be obtained.

This Committee recommends that the A.A. publication "Alcoholism is a Management Problem" should be re-written to be more suitable for United Kingdom industry, at the same time drawing it to the attention of management and trade unions alike, possibly even renaming the leaflet "Alcoholism is a Problem in Industry".

Having made Industry aware of the problem the form of action taken by A.A. when Industry responds by asking "What can we do?" could create a difficult situation for individuals, Groups and Intergroups, unless there are some precise 'Guidelines' within which to work.

The creation of these 'Guidelines' should be the direct responsibility of the General Service Board who should be asked to publish them as a matter of some urgency. In so doing this Committee is of the opinion that the positive action which it suggests might then be implemented.

## **REPORT OF COMMITTEE No 4 "SERVICE HANDBOOK AND OUR STRUCTURE"**

### **1 The Service Handbook for Great Britain**

The Committee considered the amendments and alterations to the Service Handbook for Great Britain which had been drafted following the recommendations of the Eleventh General Service Conference. It was agreed that these amendments should be adopted as drafted, subject only to an alteration in the final sentence of the fifth paragraph of page 5 which should now read:

"He should report to the Region regularly the balance remaining for transfer to the General Service Office; or in the case of Scotland, either to the General Service Office or to Scottish Committee".

Committee No 4 accordingly recommends that Conference should give its approval to the reprinting of the Service Handbook for Great Britain with these agreed amendments.

### **2 Reports on progress towards Regionalisation**

The Committee considered reports on progress towards Regionalisation in the Highlands and Islands, London and the South of England. In each of these regions it was clear that substantial progress had been made towards a regional structure; though as was proper, different aspects had been given priority according to local requirements. In the Highlands and Islands the important factor to be taken into account was the geography of the area which made it necessary to devise a structure that would reduce the need for lengthy journeys. In London priority had been given to

the functions that had to be carried out over the whole Metropolitan area; and in the Southern Region, priority had been given to establishing a satisfactory structure.

The Committee noted with satisfaction the progress that had been achieved. They were grateful to receive a written report from the Southern Region on the birth of a Region, and read with interest the Guidelines for the Southern Region Assembly. It was clear that where it had been tried, regionalisation had resulted in an improved service to the still-suffering alcoholic and no major difficulties had been encountered.

The Committee agreed that discussion of regionalisation should continue to take place annually and that in due course, when sufficient experience had been gained, consideration should be given to the production of a Guideline on Regions.

### **3 Publishing Policy**

The Committee agreed that any literature produced in Great Britain which had a bearing on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions should be submitted through the General Service Board, to the World Service Meeting Literature Publishing Committee so that the Committee could ensure that any such literature published in the name of AA did not infringe upon the principles of the Steps and Traditions. Local Newsletters and directories containing factual information about local events and meeting arrangements and AA journals, such as 'Share' and 'Roundabout' need not be submitted for World Service approval in this way.

TWELFTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1977

APPENDIX F

#### **REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO.1. "RESPONSIBILITIES OF SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES" MODERATOR: Jim C.**

Valerie spoke, amongst other points, of the need to grow into the capacity to take responsibility and the need for Service Representatives to prepare themselves by absorbing the Service Literature.

Tom spoke of the need for communication to be two-way and stressed the importance of the GSR's activities inside the Group as well as outside it and the necessity of learning what the Group conscience actually is. Although the precise roles of Regions areas yet undefined we need to think about the functions of Regional Representatives.

In the general discussion which followed certain themes emerged. One was that most Delegates saw themselves as being sent to Conference to present the views of the members who sent them; to participate in the exchange of experience, to modify their opinions if necessary and to reach agreement preferably by consensus according to their conscience. It was to report back to the membership in such a way as to stimulate their interest. Most members felt that they were not bound to vote according to a fixed mandate from their Intergroup; it was always possible to realise that the Group was mistaken.

Communication, and the need for it, and the means of accomplishing it was another theme that ran through much that was said by a number of Delegates.



There was a need for persistence in carrying the message of Conference back to the Groups. The Legacy of Service is part of what keeps us sober and we should not feel shy about it.

The point was made that participation in the Conference was not confined to the Delegates but was to be shared with the membership from the time the agenda was circulated for discussion before the Conference. Participation does not end with the close of Conference but is to be continuing activity throughout the year, beginning with the report back to the Intergroup. It was important to move around the Groups after the Conference; a verbal report to Intergroup alone was hardly adequate. There was a suggestion that the results of Conference should be circulated to all Groups in written form so that even geographically remote Groups should benefit from it. This could be done by the Delegate summarising the key agreement on a single sheet of paper and sending a photocopy to each Group.

The voting status of the General Service Board members on Scottish Committee was discussed and it was agreed that this was a matter capable of being resolved by the members directly concerned. The Membership's suspicion of A.A. 'politics' was mentioned and it was stressed that the purpose of Conference was to support Twelfth Step Service at Group Level rather than undue concern with technical matters. The broadcasting of Delegates' viewpoints from parochial to fellowship level is a benefit of Conference.

Various comments were made on a possible lack of enthusiasm for regionalisation in some areas and the need to keep the workings of Conference close to the member in the early years of sobriety.

The Delegates shared their experience of practical devices to attract the interest of the members, such as holding an Intergroup meeting especially for the reporting of Conference matters with all members invited to attend; also the holding of a regularly scheduled business meeting at monthly intervals in the half hour before the evening of the normal group meeting.

Jersey Intergroup is now on the mental map of all who took part in the Workshop. It was noted that Jersey is a separate Intergroup and that there is not a Channel Island Intergroup at the present time.

Regions were generally commented on as being a worthwhile development allowing a closer growing together of experience and resources.

A stimulating and worthwhile Workshop in which numerous Delegates contributed their share was only brought to a conclusion by the need for Conference to go into Committee for the next part of the Agenda.

REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 2."FINANCE - MONEY IN A. A"

MODERATOR: Alex A.

## APPENDIX G

After the presentation of papers by Bob W. (Highlands & Islands Intergroup) and Ken H. (South Midlands Intergroup) the Moderator, Alex A. (General Service Board) invited the delegates to

comment on the suggestions that had been put to them and to give their own views on ways in which the funds provided by the Fellowship to finance its central services can be increased. In the ensuing discussion the main points were as follows:

a) It is essential to get the message across at Group level that more money is needed to provide vital services.

In the present time of rapidly rising costs, the financial contributions from Groups do not cover the expenses of the General Service Office, despite the improvement 'which the Treasurer had reported to the Conference. Groups should be constantly reminded of the increasing cost of providing vital services without which the message of sobriety cannot reach the still-suffering alcoholic. One useful way of doing this would be for the Group Treasurer to tell the Group at the end of each meeting how much money has been collected in the 'pot' and how this money is to be used. Another suggestion was that a large card be placed on the top table for all to see with the question 'What Price Sobriety'? Group Officers should not be hesitant about urging upon members the need to contribute generously, even at the risk of becoming unpopular for doing so.

b) Money contributed by members must not be allowed to lie dormant or frittered away needlessly.

Once a member places his contribution in the 'pot' that money belongs to the Fellowship of A.A., and it is the responsibility of trusted servants at every level to ensure that it is put to the most effective use.

In the present time of high inflation, sums of money which are not required for immediate use or to cover expected expenditure should not be left dormant in bank accounts, or even in cash boxes, where its value diminishes quickly. It should be remitted without undue delay to General Service Office where the Treasurer will ensure that it is immediately put to good use or invested at the most favourable terms for the good of the entire Fellowship. Groups and Intergroups should consider whether it would be more advantageous to the Fellowship as a whole if they did not tie up funds in large stocks of literature; though it was accepted that in some cases the balance of advantage might lie in maintaining 'a reasonable stock of literature at local level. Group and Intergroup servants should be constantly on the alert to ensure that funds belonging to A.A. are not being frittered away from the time the money is placed in the 'pot' until it reaches General Service Office.

c) The covenanting of donations can greatly increase the income of the General Service Office at no additional cost to members.

If a member covenants to pay £10 annually to General Service Office and provided he is paying Income Tax at the standard rate of 35% General Service Office can recover an additional £5.38 annually from the Inland Revenue on this donation, which means that for every £10 donated the Fellowship receives £15.38, at no additional cost to the members.

The Deed of Covenant to be completed does not include any reference to Alcoholics Anonymous, so that members need not fear any breach of their anonymity if they contribute in this way. General Service Office will supply Deeds of Covenants to any member who asks for one.

REPORT OF WORKSHOP No.3. "THE TRADITIONS IN OUR LIVING"  
APPENDIX H

MODERATOR: Maureen J.

The opening remarks included 'Our Common Welfare' and the re-stressing of the importance of 'Unity'.

The Twelve Traditions were often neglected in that the emphasis was on the Twelve Steps at group meetings. we must ever be mindful that in the words of Bill W., the Traditions had been hammered out on the anvil of experience.

Beryl D. and Gerald D. then made their individual presentations.

The following is a summary of the main points made in a wide ranging discussion:-

Group meetings. Group discussions of the Twelve Traditions are not as popular and often take second place to 'Twelve Step Content' meetings. But growth in sobriety brings the realisation that the 'wholeness' of the recovery programme requires the study and discussion of the Twelve Traditions. Groups should be encouraged to discuss the Traditions occasionally. Large wall charts of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions might be displayed. They could promote inquisitiveness should there be any boredom with a drunkenlogue.

Self Support. Should we accept free premises, lecture fees, travelling expenses from outside bodies? Quite clearly we must stand on our own feet financially lest the danger of unacceptable conditions implied with such remuneration creeps in. Excessive expenses incurred by outside speakers can properly come from group/intergroup funds, Struggling new groups can be financially supported from Intergroup funds but the accent should be placed on providing personal help/literature etc. and a supportive atmosphere - people before money!

Publicity Do we make enough use of the media? In general wide use is made of local radio and newspapers to publicise group meetings and contacts. Fears were expressed that over publicity could bring such a response that would overstretch our abilities to cope with this situation. To date this has not happened. Television advertising is extremely expensive and at present is not contemplated, however members have taken part in television programmes with an educational slant. With regard to publicity and the 11<sup>th</sup> Tradition in summary, Attraction is drawing toward, Promotion can be pushing possibly with a profit motive, Co-operation is working with others and Affiliation would be joining in a common cause.

While preserving our own anonymity we must be careful in safe-guarding others, advertise the group but not the individual. A.A. is anonymous but never secretive.

Traditions/Commandments The positive helpful nature of the Traditions was strongly emphasised and especially when viewed in relation to the strictures of the ten commandments.

In conclusion. It was impossible to sum up such a wide and varied range of discussion. The individual interpretation or the Traditions when discussed in a non-specific way produced much food for later and deeper thought, and served to re-emphasise why Tradition One deals exclusively with UNITY.



FRIDAY 14 APRIL 1978

The Thirteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on Friday 14 April to Sunday 17 April 1978.

This was the first occasion the General Service Conference has been held at this venue.

Conference comprised 76 delegates representing 41 Intergroups and Regions, together with 18 members of the General Service Board, representatives from the magazines Share and Roundabout, 3 observers from Germany and 2 from Ireland, together with Tom S. the Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and a staff member.

Registration and reception commenced at 4.30 p.m. and this provided an opportunity for the delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue and renew friendships from the past and welcome delegates attending for the first time. Only one intergroup was unable to be represented.

OPENING OF CONFERENCE

The first full session commenced at 8.30 p.m. by the Chairman, Tom S. calling for the usual moments silence which was followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous by the General Secretary.

Tom welcomed all the delegates, old and new, with a special word of welcome for the observers from overseas and then addressed the assembly -

“The Theme of this Conference - 'INTO ACTION' was suggested by the title of Chapter VI of our Big Book. This chapter points out that the 12 Steps are merely the tools for our recovery; they need to be practised, that is put into action, for them to work. In our personal recoveries, the inventory of Step 4 needs to be followed by the action of Steps 5 to 9 and eventually Steps 10 - 12; just so, the expression of our collective Group Conscience, which we hope will take shape here this weekend, needs to be followed by appropriate action by Regions, Intergroups and Groups everywhere, if the exercise is to be worthwhile.

“If the theme is to be meaningful, and if not why should we have one at all? I hope that it will lead us all, during the business of this weekend, to remember that what takes place here, and any suggestions that are made are not ends in themselves but merely a prelude to necessary action at the roots of the Fellowship -the Groups. For we are not here to ‘pass the message’ to each other, but rather to suggest more effective ways of passing it to those who might not even know of its existence, yet who need it so desperately; the suffering alcoholics out there, in Prisons and Hospitals, but most of all at home and at work.

“I know you realise that when you leave here on Sunday your jobs as delegates are just beginning; spreading the message found here and helping to put suggestions into action is a continuing job for the other 362 days (one day at a time, naturally).

“I think you will find that your time is fully occupied - as usual. Perhaps more so than the first-year delegates will have bargained for! The first workshop - 'Internal Communications' - should be both useful and interesting. After all, communication should be our major stock-in-trade (how else do you pass messages?). Certainly we need communication at and between all levels if we are to co-ordinate our actions to the best effect. In the South, we have found that a great improvement in communications between Intergroups has resulted from Regionalisation - in fact, this may prove to be the major benefit.

“The four Committees all lend themselves to suggestions for action. We must take positive action to safeguard the copyrights of our fellowship, which can so easily be put at risk; also to make full use of all our publications, produced by such great efforts in the past. Co-operation with Professionals can lead to more effective 'message-carrying' but needs action on our part to get it going. In the States, our friends in A.A. there have progressed into active participation in Court Programmes, in order to help offenders who also have drinking problems; can this be done here too? Certainly the subject will bear discussion, as there must be many problems in that area. As always, we must look to our own 'house-keeping' - this needs continuous action if we are to achieve controlled growth with unity.

“The second Workshop - 'New Groups and Growth' - was included because there is some evidence that the opening of new Groups is not always a sure sign of true growth, but can be merely a re-distribution of existing membership which may be divisive; there is always the danger of 'divided we fall' to consider. No doubt there is much experience to share in this Field.

“Having suggested the Theme, I feel bound to abide by it; therefore, I am going to keep this Keynote short and hand you over to others who have some action to report. As you will see, we have found a new home for Conference, at a considerable saving incidentally, and Bill will be telling you of its facilities. Then Gordon will be reporting on the progress made by the General Service Board since last year.

“I have stressed 'action' rather much just now, but that is not all that we shall be concerned with. There is something much more vital, that for me has shown itself more at Conferences than anywhere else; I mean the very Spirit of the Fellowship. I sincerely hope that you will all be able to open your hearts and let this Spirit forth once again, and be guided by it throughout the weekend. I thank you all, firstly for the part each of you plays in the manifestation of this Spirit, but most of all for giving me the privilege of experiencing it once again in this unique form. Thank you all very much” .

## GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

Gordon W. Chairman of the General Service Board presented to Conference the Boards Report for the year 1977 and addressed the meeting:

“Let me on behalf of the General Service Board welcome you all to this the Thirteenth General Service Conference. There is a change of scene this year, we are no longer at the Midland Hotel where we started 13 years ago. However, I am confident you will find this venue comfortable and with an atmosphere conducive to good sharing and deliberations. I hope you find it enjoyable and rewarding.

“The programme is a very full one, you will find no time for fun and games .

“According to the programme my task here and now is to present the Report covering the activities of the General Service Board during 1977. You have all had a copy of the Report for quite some time and have no doubt studied and digested it. I have no intention of reading it but wish to draw attention and make comment on one or two of the items.

“It was indeed a sad blow when we lost our devoted Treasurer, Alex A., who died rather suddenly in August. He had a wonderful way of explaining in a simple manner the various items of the finances and making appeals for increases in contributions to the ‘pot’. He had the power to do this very effectively in a most humorous manner. It is a great pity that he did not live to witness the results of his endeavours, the result of the year in which we achieved our pledge of being fully self supporting through our own contributions. “While on the subject of money I think you will agree it has indeed been a satisfactory year having met all expenditure from group contributions and realised quite a reasonable surplus overall from other income. We cannot however afford to become complacent through these results and relax our endeavours, we must be constantly aware of the eroding effects of inflation and the necessity of a prudent reserve to meet the requirements of the future.

We must realise the lease of 11 Redcliffe Gardens terminates in 1986. What the future of the building will be then we know not nor do we know whether it will be large enough to house all the service requirements of the Fellowship then if the lease can be renewed. The Executive Committee of the Board are giving some time to examining the full situation so that we will be aware of all the courses open to us as and when the occasion arises.

“At Conference last year it came over loud and clear that we should strengthen the P.I. facilities and this has been actively pursued throughout the year. Guidelines have been prepared covering ‘Intergroup’ and ‘A.A. in Industry’. These have been issued and I hope meet with your approval. The fourth in our series of Guidelines covering Service Representatives has been completed and is presented to you here at this Conference. These Guidelines I feel sure will prove valuable to all in furthering our purpose.

“We have had very worthwhile meetings with senior Officers of the Department of Health and Social Security. They welcomed these meetings and are now very well aware of our recovery programme and the part A.A. can play in the recovery from Alcoholism as well as in the educational field in the problems of drink.

“We have also had meetings with the appropriate departments of the Confederation of British Industry and the Trade Union Congress which in time will bring about a better understanding all round. Since these meetings took place members within these organisations, some in high office, have come forward prepared to co-operate in the furthering of our Primary Purpose through these channels .

“The meeting with the team of Officers from B.A.O.R. was very enlightening. The Higher Command there had come to recognise the problem as being serious and requiring immediate attention resulting in a paper - ‘Alcohol Abuse-What are we doing about it’ being presented at the Army Commanders Conference. It was obvious throughout our meeting that security was the over-riding factor prejudicing the establishment of A.A. Groups within the Rhine Army. However, I feel sure the meeting we had with these Officers will result in a satisfactory outcome

with a change of attitude and understanding within the Command before very long.

“During the year there has been exciting developments in the structure of the Fellowship in Scotland -they are now pretty well fully Regionalised. Co-operation with the Social Works Services Group has continued and developed to the extent of the formation of Regional Committees of all parties involved with the alcoholic.

“Turning now to Board membership, Nel H. will retire by rotation at the close of this Conference having served six years during which she has been involved in the publication of Box 514, Prisons and the Conventions at Selsey. We thank you Nel for all your generous service and wise counsel you have given so unstintingly and conscientiously throughout your term of office. We wish you well so that you may continue to share your wide experiences whenever called upon to do so.

## BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Gordon W. introduced Valerie L., Jack G., and Peter F., and asked for confirmation of their appointment as members of the General Service Board.

These appointments were approved unanimously.

## FINANCE

Gordon presented the audited Financial Statement and Balance Sheet and referred to the notes drawing particular attention to the achievement of ‘Self Support by our own contributions’.

After discussion the General Service Board Report to Conference (Appendix A) was formally accepted.

Gordon concluded by saying:

“Now to the theme of this Conference ‘Into Action’. The Committees of the Conference will be studying Literature, Co-operation with the Professional Community, and Court Programmes, covering a wide field for which to find links in carrying the message.

“We must find new ways to co-operate with others working in the field of alcoholism. We must find other ways to let the people know about A.A. what we do and where we are. We must have new thoughts, new concepts, new ideas just as the early members did. Go to it - Into Action. Find stimulation, new thoughts, new ideas to extend the hand of fellowship to alcoholics wherever they may be and whatever the circumstance”.

## CONVENTIONS

The siting and responsibility for the conventions to be held in the North of England and South of England during 1979 were discussed and the suggestions of retaining the Norbreck Hydro, Blackpool and Pontins at Selsey were agreed.

Invitations were extended to the intergroups in the North West of England and to intergroups in the Southern Region to be responsible for the conventions in their respective areas.



## NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1979

Only one nomination was forthcoming and duly tabled - Ken H. of South Midland Intergroup. The formal election was to take place at the final session of Conference.

The session closed with the Serenity Prayer and the delegates then retired into informal sessions.

### SATURDAY 15 APRIL

Commencing at 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. the delegates met in workshop sessions to discuss and share experience on 'Internal Communications'. The summary of these discussions is contained in Appendix F.

From 11.15 a.m. until 6 p.m. with a break for lunch the Conference divided into four committees discussing the following important subjects:

Committee	No.1.	'Literature '
Committee	No.2.	'Co-operation with the Professional Community'
Committee	No. 3.	'Court Programmes'
Committee	No.4	'Our Structure'

At 8.30 p.m. Conference re-assembled for the workshop session and the subject discussed was 'New Groups and Growth'. The report of this workshop is contained in Appendix G.

At the close of this meeting the printed reports of the Committees were circulated and are attached as Appendix B -E.

### SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL

At 9.15 a.m. the Conference assembled for the final session.

Tom S. the Conference Chairman invited each of the Chairmen of the four Committees to present their respective reports which after full discussion were adopted.

### ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 1979 CONFERENCE

There being only one nominations, Ken H. - of South Midland Intergroup was elected.

### DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

It was agreed that the Fourteenth General Service Conference in 1979 should be held at the same venue, Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on 6th. 7th and 8th April 1979.

### CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Tom invited Nel H. retiring member of the General Service Board to present the closing address:

“At about my fourth or fifth A.A. meeting I was standing at the end of a long thin table in a long thin room and the people all round me were putting away Literature and stacking the chairs and washing up the cups, and I was just standing there wishing that the meeting had not ended because I wanted more of what was in that room, when a big chap at the far end of the table called out, “Chuck up the ashtrays will you, Nel? Golly, I thought, He not only knows my name, but he has asked me to do something... I must be in. I must belong. It was a heartwarming moment for me.

“You may laugh at this, but I cherished those ash trays. I took them home and washed them frequently and I remembered to return them. I even went early to meetings so that they were there on time . . . . For the first time in years I was being responsible for something and was re-learning the meaning of the word reliability. Those ashtrays opened the door for me to involvement and to our Third Legacy.

“A bit later I was promoted to Tea Lady. I use the word promoted because that was how I thought of it then. I had not yet learnt that there is no such word as ‘promotion’ in the A.A. dictionary, one just becomes a trusted servant whatever job one may be doing.

“To begin with I had trouble following the Steps I don’t think I am alone in that either, but I happened on the Traditions. These I loved. They told me in a very straightforward way how to behave in and around and even outside A.A. They were quoted in all the pamphlets and literature along with the Steps so they must be part of the programme .

“There were those who said, “Oh, you don’t want to bother with those, they are for ‘Them’. Who were “They?” Nobody seemed too certain.

“Don’t you get mixed up with the Politics of A.A.” these same dry people told me. ‘What Politics?’ I asked. ..They didn’t seem to be able to answer that either.

“Then I had a sort of - back-handed stroke of luck. My sponsor got drunk. So I picked myself a new one. This new one explained all these things to me and encouraged me to become more involved and so I ended up very happily a ‘Them’. Just as all you here in this room today are ‘Them’. Which for my book makes us ‘US’.

“Then a lot later came the day when I was to attend my first Board Meeting. Feeling rather lost and alone I walked into what seemed like a roomful of very large men. It reminded me a bit of that meeting I described to you just now, but I was made very welcome and it was only a little time before it was suggested that I took on a certain job and at once I felt at home and again it was no longer a case of ‘Them’ but of ‘US’.

“At my first conference where I was a delegate, the chairman, one Idle John. I may say for those of you who didn’t know him, he was far from idle, he just happened to come from that town...held forth at length and with very strong words on the reason for the Conference and how delegates should approach it. Not as a nice weekend with A.A. friends but an occasion to which we come ready to put our backs into some hard work... where we come with the knowledge of what we need on our own patch but with open minds and ready to compromise with the chap whose area is totally different from ours, and to practise our Legacy of Unity.

“Looking back I can see that John’s strong exhortation was needed and indeed has been heeded.

The sense of purpose and responsibility that the Conference has now in 1978 is infinitely stronger than it was then.

“I count myself fortunate to have been here during this period and seen so much happening, and to have seen the constructive and positive beginnings of many aspects of our A.A. Way of Life.

“The start and now regular issue of Box 514. was one..... The co-operation with the probation and aftercare services and the great improvement in the prison service are others. I have seen the first guidelines for our own country issued which seem to have been well received and which will help to strengthen our unity. I have seen the first tentative steps into Industry.

“Very many new intergroups have sprung into being and now the first Regions are operating successfully and from what I hear and from what I have found in my own experience an unexpected bonus and pleasure is found in this new communication and co-operation.

“I have seen an explosion in the number of mini or one day Conventions, happy days which so often inspire a newcomer and which emphasise the fact that we are not alone. Talking of mini Conventions reminds me of a friend, a newcomer to A.A. who when asked by a non-alcoholic friend to do something with him on a certain Sunday in July. took his Convention ticket from his pocket, looked at the number on it and said “I am sorry I can’t that day. I am lunching with 302 friends”.

“Besides these, there are several new weekend Conventions which look like becoming annual events, and the National Conventions get bigger and bigger.

“One of the intangible things that is happening is the slow but noticeable growth of public recognition of Alcoholism as an illness. The stigma is going. This is I think partly due to A.A. members continuing and steady efforts on their own patches to talk to social workers, probation officers, doctors and hospital staff, and prison officers, in talks to schools, Rotary clubs, Boys Clubs, Womens Institutes and many other organisations, but it is also due to educational programmes put out by Government departments, Councils on Alcoholism, by many reports in the National press, local press, Radio and Television. There seems to be something about alcoholism in the media almost daily.

“Often there are things that I personally as a recovering alcoholic and a member of A.A. don’t agree with but I have to remember that they might set off a spark of light somewhere to someone, and that someone might make enquiries and end up in A.A. and then they would be alright, of course.

“Finally I come to the sad bit for me personally. Today is my last day as a member of the Board. I am not the first woman to have been elected to the Board - I believe in fact that I am the third, but the first to complete a full term of service.

“Because I live near London I have been able to be on the Executive Committee, a lovely experience. I wondered at first if having just one woman on the Board would be a nuisance and I asked Ronald, our late Chairman about this, and he assured me that the only effect it had was to moderate the language a little. I believe I was asked to join the Board originally because it was felt it was time that the woman’s point of view was represented. I see women coming into the fellowship at a great rate now and I don’t think it will be long before the numbers are one for

one.

“Now you have two lady members and no doubt in the future there will be others.

“I have told you what I have seen, and I have told you what I have thought, but I have not the words to tell you what I feel.

“Great Gratitude to the Fellowship, and great gratitude to my fellow members of the Board, and to all the staff at G.S.O. who have been unfailingly kind and patient for the last six years. Which, six years I may say, have passed in a flash.

“I now have to ‘let go’ and return home and find out what retired Board Members do.

“At the end of the newest guideline, the one you have found in your folders this weekend, on Service Representatives are a couple of sentences, and I quote: “It would be indeed premature to imagine that having served in all or most of the capacities listed in this guideline, the end of the A.A. road has been reached. For the road of A.A. Service is one that has no end.

One day at a time, the future will unfold in a way that today we cannot imagine. Let us therefore be ready at all times, as we have been each day during our period of sobriety, to remain a trusted servant in whatever capacity is asked of us”.

“I like that very much. It might have been written for me. So, while you take up the suggestion of our Chairman, Tom S., and go ‘Into Action’ I think I will get back to those ashtrays” .

In expressing the assemblies thanks to Nel, Tom S. concluded:

“This Conference has now completed the agenda and it only remains for me to ‘put it to bed’ so to speak.

“In conclusion I feel sure that I am expressing the general view when I say that the Conference as a whole has been successful and that a consensus of opinion has been reached on all the topics covered, with a high degree of tolerance and ‘live and let live’ and a pleasing absence of any fuss or acrimony - hence we are well in hand for time.

“I think I can safely say that the concept of the theme has been realised here and the hope expressed in the final paragraph of my Keynote has been realised.

“I think the move to the new venue went without a hitch, as indeed did the whole conference.

“Our thanks for this are due to the Warden, the Administrator and all the Staff of Hulme Hall of the University of Manchester, with whom we look forward to renewing our acquaintance next year. To the General Secretary and staff of the G.S.O. and to the General Service Board for all the careful preparation behind the scenes, which has been in progress virtually since the close of the previous Conference. I cannot stress the role of their contribution too highly. We see the agenda before we come here, but on arrival receive our blue folders and always discover that a large proportion of our work has been done for us. The folders may come off the shelves of the bookseller but there’s certainly nothing in them when Bill gets them a vastly different story when we get them. This is the foundation on which our Conference stands - an absolutely vital

contribution.

“We are sorry to hear that Mr. Eric Crowther, one of our non-alcoholic members of the General Service Board was unable to attend this year, especially since Committee No.3. was right in his court - so to speak, but we thank him for putting his thoughts on paper for us which were most useful to that Committee.

“Thank you also to Robin, our sole clerical helper this weekend, who with Bill managed to prepare the Committee Reports well before bedtime last night despite unexpected difficulties with the machinery. Well done.

“On a personal point, I must also thank Bill S. for his support and help in my little part of the preparation and to the General Service Board for the privilege of attending several of their meetings and the positive contribution which came out of these. To my friends in the Southern Region for their support during the year, then to the members of this Conference, first for giving me the unique honour and privilege of carrying out the task of Chairman at Conference and then making it virtually unnecessary - I feel a bit like an airline pilot with George switched on - the automatic pilot.

“Above all else for me I thank my higher power because I handed this job over to Him in my bedroom at the Midland Hotel about ten minutes after the close of last years Conference - and if you feel thankful perhaps you will join me; which is an appropriate moment to ask you to stand - perhaps you would like to join hands - as I ask Nel to lead us in saying the Serenity Prayer”.

Gordon W. Chairman of the General Service Board expressed to Tom the gratitude of the Conference Delegates for his conduct of the meetings throughout the weekend.

The theme ‘Into Action’ had been Tom’s suggestion and the principle which he had so efficiently displayed throughout the proceedings. The wishes and suggestions of Conference so clearly expressed in the various reports would be studied and implemented by the General Service Board during the coming year and hopefully the Board’s report would indicate that the recommendations had been implemented.

Additionally, there was a lot of action to be taken by all delegates throughout the year and I feel confident that we will all try to the best of our ability to fulfil our pledge of responsibility.

The Thirteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain then came to a close with all present joining in the Serenity Prayer.

THIRTEENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1978.

APPENDIX B

REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.1.

‘LITERATURE’

Chairman: Alex T. Glasgow Central

1. CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE

a) The Committee recommends that Conference gives its approval to the draft Anglicised version of the pamphlet 'If You are a Professional A.A. Wants to Work with You', and that it should be submitted to the General Service Office, New York for the approval of A.A. World Services as Conference approved literature.

b) The committee does not feel able to recommend that the seven leaflets:

15 Points to Consider

Introduction to A.A.

Who Me?

Now that You've Stopped

Who Are We?

Just for Today

What is A.A.?

should become Conference approved literature, although it is accepted that they will continue to be used widely in the Fellowship as aids, particularly to new members, in achieving and maintaining sobriety. The committee feels that there are already a number of A.A. Conference approved pamphlets which cover the points made in some of these leaflets more effectively. For example, the material in 'What is A.A.?' and 'Introduction to A.A.' has been superseded by 'A.A. at a Glance' which the committee considers to be superior to either of these. The committee recommends that these old leaflets should be phased out and should not be reprinted. Where there is no comparable Conference approved pamphlet, the old leaflets will continue to be used but the Committee recommends that the General Service Board should take steps to establish where the copyright rests for each of them. If it is clear that the material has been produced by A.A. members for the benefit of the Fellowship, the General Service Board should claim the copyright for the publication. Where the copyright belongs to someone else, proper acknowledgement should be made of this.

The committee further recommends that the General Service Board should consider whether any of those leaflets whose copyright rests with A.A. and which are to continue in use should be re-written and should put in hand any revision considered necessary with a view to the submission of fresh drafts to the next General Service Conference with recommendations as to whether the revised drafts should be submitted for full Conference approval.

The committee recommends that the General Service Board should give consideration to the production of a Twelfth Step pack which could be handed to those who approach A.A. for help with a drinking problem.

c) The committee was informed that there are several items circulating within A.A. in addition to those listed in l(b) and recommends that the General Service Board should establish who holds the copyright of these as a preliminary to any further consideration of the question whether they should be proposed for full Conference approval. One example of such a leaflet 'A.A. Danger Signals' which has been produced in Scotland, was circulated to the committee.

d) The committee considers that much greater encouragement needs to be given to A.A.

members to acquire and read A.A. Conference approved literature and recommends that groups should appoint a literature secretary whose job it should be to promote the sale of A.A. literature at every group meeting.

e) This has already been covered under l(c).

## 2. GUIDELINES FOR A.A. IN GREAT BRITAIN.

a) The Committee has reviewed guidelines 1 to 4 which it finds to be entirely satisfactory.

b) Most of the guidelines have only recently been produced and it is still too early to judge how widely they are being used; but the committee is in no doubt about their value and recommends that they should be drawn to the attention of group members and promoted by group literature secretaries.

c) The committee recommends that the production of guidelines on other subjects should continue, and that in particular a guideline should be produced on the responsibilities of the trusted servants within the group. This should also deal with the responsibilities of group literature secretaries.

## 3. NON CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE.

a) In considering the sale in A.A. of commercially produced books and pamphlets (ie. non-Conference approved literature) the committee expressed the strongly-held view that A.A.'s own Conference approved literature should be given preference at all levels of meetings. Our own literature contains all the answers to the problems recovering alcoholics are likely to encounter at every stage of their growth. The committee therefore recommends that A.A. Conference approved literature should be prominently displayed at all meetings and that its sale should be actively promoted.

Nevertheless, the committee recognised that there are other non-A.A. publications which members find helpful and which they look to their group officers to supply. The sale of such publications can not be prevented and the committee does not wish to make any recommendation to this effect. It does, however, draw attention to the difficulty of making a clear distinction between non-A.A. publications bearing directly on recovery from alcoholism and other publications the sale of which might offend some members. The committee is confident that such difficulties can safely be left to the group conscience to resolve.

Where non-A.A. literature is exposed for sale at A.A, meetings it should be displayed separately from A.A. literature.

b) The committee does not feel able to make any recommendation about the production and promotion by A.A. members of local magazines (as opposed to 'Share' and 'Roundabout').

## APPENDIX C

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.2.

## “CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY”

Chairman: Ken H. Southern Region

Secretary: Mike S. Cheshire East

### GENERAL

The Agenda emphasises the principle of our service activity, ‘Co-Operation but not affiliation’, and the spirit of our Twelve Traditions.

The Committee felt that our relationship with the professional community was an area of our service in need of revision in the light of the growth of the Fellowship. However, we must continue to remember that we are only qualified to talk about A.A. any extension of our activity with professional workers does not entitle us to claim expert knowledge or treatment of the disease.

We also feel it necessary to emphasise the U.S. experience whereby any CPCC formed consists only of A.A. members who have a responsibility in making special efforts to ensure that local professionals and agencies know about A.A. and how to refer problem drinkers to us. The committee did not feel that non-A.A. professional workers should be members of the CPCC.

The committee endorsed the following list of professional persons in direct contact with the suffering alcoholic:

Doctor	Magistrate	Clergyman
Employer	Nurse	Teacher
Member of HM Forces	Psychiatrist	Psychologist
Social Worker	Prison Officer	Samaritan
Police Officer	Personnel Officer	

and, indeed, any other professional person who works with alcoholics.

The committee responds to the specific questions posed by the Agenda in the following way:

1. Where possible a CPCC should be formed separate from a PI committee because it is essential that:

a) A.A. develops the special skills required in communication with professional representatives.

b) We identify the priority sectors and concentrate effort in the right direction.

c) We provide continuity of contact with the various professional sectors.

2. Although there does not appear to be any formal Intergroup or Regional CPC Committee operating to share their experience, several arrangements exist and are working examples of what is possible in this field.

For example, the Fellowship is involved with police, medical, nursing and social services in Tayside, in the Talbot Centre - Glasgow, and in certain detoxification centres around the country.



In addition, many Intergroups arrange talks for student nurses, and A.A. members already play a prominent part on the committees of some Councils on Alcoholism, as individuals and/or observers.

3. However, all the current work is part of Intergroup general and Public information activity. The formation of specific CPC Committees is to a large extent subject to geographical constraints. Rural areas sparsely covered by groups may find it well-nigh impossible to find the numbers required to get together and co-ordinate activity with the professional community.

Some intergroups while covering a relatively small area consist of so few groups that they are stretched to support even a P.I. service other than on an individual basis.

It is the unanimous recommendation of the committee, however, that it is possible for the following action to be taken:

a) Regions -a Regional CPC Committee be formed to co-ordinate the co-operation with professional workers in the areas covered by that Region's Intergroup.

b) Intergroups containing a sufficient number of groups to form a CPC Committee. Intergroups not having this capacity should consider joining together with one or two neighbouring Intergroups to form a CPC Committee.

c) Intergroups geographically well spread should continue to liaise with the professional community as part of their normal P.I. activity .

The committee recommends that, when formed, a CPC Committee should consist of four or five members each with two years sobriety, although it is not considered necessary that members should be established Regional/Intergroup officers.

A recommendation was also made that any A.A. member of a specific vocation e.g., a teacher, police officer or a clergyman, would be of a particular influence in the working of a committee of this kind.

4 Committees on co-operation with the professional community should be formed with the following objectives:

a) Introduce the A.A. Fellowship as an aid to the recovery of alcoholics.

b) Emphasise the unique first-hand experience of A.A. members which can be shared with another alcoholic.

c) Stress the importance of anonymity so that the professional worker may re-assure the problem drinker of privacy.

d) Set up two-way lines of communications between professional workers, public agencies, and the Fellowship i.e., personal contact, Open and Public meetings, A.A. members on Councils on Alcoholism as individuals in their own right or as an observer for A.A.

e) Referral Procedure - The results of all CPCC activities should be reported back to the sponsoring agency i.e. Regional, Intergroup or Group committees.

## CONCLUSION

The continued growth of A.A. will dictate as and when Regions and Intergroups support the formation of CPCC's but equally, where possible, the early formation of such committees will

stimulate the growth and influence of the Fellowship.

## APPENDIX D

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE No.3.

#### “COURT PROGRAMMES”

Chairman: Jim H. General Service Board.

Secretary: Tom R. London South East.

1. Experience of working directly with the Courts is varied but minimal as compared with liaison with the probation service, social service, police and other bodies. In some areas e.g. Scotland and South East England a good personal relationship has been developed between individual A.A. members and the Courts, at all levels, and this co-operation would appear to be increasing.

2 The Committee feels that this type of co-operation should be pursued. It was felt that this liaison should be arranged through the Intergroup, or with the knowledge of the Intergroup so that suitable experience should be made available. It was felt that this should be achieved by extending our existing contacts with probation and social services, and by attempting to make contact through joint meetings with the judiciary and probation services.

Intergroups can use and develop the experience of members who have personal contacts or an interest in working in this particular field. It was recognised that some people reveal quite an unexpected aptitude for this type of service and as such should be given every encouragement to develop and participate in it.

3 It should be explained to those concerned how A.A. can, and how A.A. cannot help the suffering alcoholic. It was felt that there is a danger of members being tempted into speaking up for an individual in Court on behalf of A.A and through his inexperience damage the relationship between the Fellowship and the judiciary .

It was recognised that in some areas the Fellowship will be limited by lack of resources and availability of members to participate in this type of service.

It was suggested that Intergroup initiate action and monitor the result of this activity .

4 Feelings were divided on the question of ‘proof of attendance at meetings’ and it was felt that this would have to be a matter of the conscience of the individual concerned.

A reference was made to the pamphlet A.A. Guidelines Co-operating with Courts, ASAP and similar programmes. However we recommend that arrangements for proof of attendance should be avoided if possible; and that referrals should be encouraged to do their own reporting to avoid groups or sponsors being involved.

5. Co-operation with Probation and After-Care Services appear to be improving. We have many good friends in this field of activity, although some areas reported a poor response to

initiative on their part.

6 It was considered that we should maintain and improve our existing relationship with these services and it was pointed out that it is part of the Intergroup function to continue to initiate efforts, to offer the assistance of A.A. to the probation services.

7. The committee believe that the facilities to the released prisoner are available, but failure, where it does exist appears to be in a lack of communication between groups, prior to and immediately after release. Prison sponsor meetings are vital in this aspect of communication.

It was the considered opinion of this committee, that more effort be made to strengthen the bonds of communication in this area. It was particularly recommended that prison sponsors should make every effort to communicate end work closely with prison welfare officers.

Liaison with detoxification units are generally good. In the case of hostels experience varies widely from very good contacts to no liaison at all.

It was felt that every effort be made to offer our co-operation and where an interest is shown, sponsorship and all other help should be extended to the alcoholic seeking help.

## APPENDIX E

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE NO.4.

#### ‘OUR STRUCTURE’

Chairman: Nel H. General Service Board

Secretary: Bob W. Highlands/Islands Region

#### 1. REGIONS

a) Review the progress made in the formation and development of regions.

The committee heard reports from delegates of the formation of regions as follows:

Scotland - Four regions have been formed which cover most of the country with the exception of the Western Isles which elected for geographical and communication reasons to form themselves into an independent intergroup. Aberdeen and East of Scotland have not yet completed the formation of Scottish Region 5, but it can be said that progress to date has been satisfactory.

England & Wales -Satisfactory reports of the formation of two regions were received. These are Southern Region and Eastern Region, the latter of which may be expanded by the inclusion of further Intergroups. Reports were also received from the areas of Cheshire, Humberside, Birmingham and Manchester who are proceeding with willingness towards regionalisation and further communication with neighbouring Intergroups will probably achieve their goal in the not too distant future. The situation in London is that there has been a coming together of various services, and closer co-operation is growing which is expected to lead to regionalisation in due course.

b) Has it become apparent how many regions may eventually be formed; and has enough experience been gained to formulate recommendations as to size, area, functions etc.?

The eventual number of regions has not yet become apparent, but it is estimated that there could be between 12 and 15. The size of regions will depend greatly on population and communications in the various areas and the functions to be undertaken in these areas.

It is suggested that holding Workshops after Regional Assembly meetings could have constructive results and allow for total participation.

It is suggested by the committee that a set of guidelines for regions be produced and circulated widely with a view to encouraging the formation of regions and to assist in uniformity of formation.

## 2. LOCAL SERVICE OFFICES & TWELFTH STEP ARRANGEMENTS

a) Review current situation regarding local Service Offices.

b) Where LSOs exist, are they dealing mainly with 12-Step arrangements? Also do they cover the whole area of the Intergroup which sponsors them?

c) Are other suggestions made at previous Conferences being observed? Also are these still valid?

d) What other types of organisation for 12-Step calls are working successfully, and can any recommendations be formulated on this subject?

The Committee heard reports from many areas, five of which are operating Local Service Offices and the remainder being served by some other form of telephone service contributing to 12<sup>th</sup> Step work. Some of these are by Ansafone service, others are in co-operation with other bodies such as hospitals police and Samaritans, but all apparently are working satisfactorily.

We appear to have stayed broadly within the guidelines provided by previous Conferences with one exception - the diversion of funds from General Service Office. It would seem that where service offices are independent of local Intergroups this is largely because they are self-financing - where Intergroup involvement exists there has been some diversion of A.A. funds from General Service Office, but it is also felt that this has happened because the need for such services existed, and that cash so diverted has been used in the fulfilment of our service responsibility to the suffering alcoholic.

The committee feels that where funds that are normally forwarded to General Service Office are used for fostering essential services locally, great care should be exercised to ensure that contributions are restored to their former level as soon as possible.

## APPENDIX F

REPORT ON WORKSHOP: "INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS"

Moderator: Sean B. South Wales  
Secretary: Hugh D South Wales  
Presentations: Chris F. Southern Region  
Ginger W Cheshire East

The presenters, Chris F. and Ginger W. both dealt with the importance of promoting the magazines and Box 514, and Chris also stated that he felt some thought should be given to producing a simplified version of the Service Handbook.

Other points covered in the presentations included the need for stress on the Traditions, the importance of Intergroup exchange visits, and the availability of a wide range of literature at group level.

Chris said he felt the reluctance of many members to become more deeply involved in service could be put down to what he called 'blameless ignorance' - their failure to recognise the full value of activity within the Fellowship.

Points raised during the discussion following the presentation included:

BOX 514 - That more copies be sent to each group; that they be circulated and not filed away by group secretaries, and that, if possible, it be circulated in conjunction with Share magazine.

NOTE: These suggestions have previously been discussed by the General Service Board and considered to be impractical since not all groups subscribe to Share. The number of copies per group was increased to three sometime ago and additional copies are available on application.

SERVICE HANDBOOK - Some speakers felt it was too difficult to understand and suggested that a pamphlet setting out briefly the structure of the Fellowship be published. It was, however, stressed that those with a desire to become involved in service work had no difficulty getting answers from the existing Handbook or from those members already involved in service.

It was pointed out that since the handbook was based on Conference resolutions and worded accordingly, it would be difficult to simplify it without the possibility of losing its validity.

GUIDELINES - Several speakers zeroed in on the urgent need for guidelines for group officers and said many people now holding office were in doubt about their responsibilities.

It was mentioned that an existing pamphlet 'The A.A. Group' already covered this need, but it became clear that some delegates were unaware that this was available at GSO.

## INTERGROUPS

The Workshop dealt also with suggestions on how to make Intergroup meetings attractive and one speaker said that it was important to follow Intergroup meetings with a period of sharing. This could be achieved by ensuring that the business part of the meeting was not unduly prolonged.

On Intergroup affairs it was noted that considerable benefit could be derived from Intergroups meeting each other and sharing their experience in dealing with specific problems.

One delegate also suggested that the Intergroup Directory should include a list of names and addresses of Conference delegates.

## LITERATURE

The suggestion was put forward that more Intergroups should consider creating a literature float so that a wide variety of pamphlets are available to members of local groups. This could be done by setting aside an initial amount of money for a bulk purchase from GSO.

## SUMMARY

The consensus was that in the final analysis internal communication is part of personal responsibility.

Positive communication begins with the 12<sup>th</sup> Step call and from that time onwards, there should be a natural progression not only of sobriety but of the desire to learn more about the Fellowship and involvement in it.

The sober member has a duty to make himself fully aware of all aspects of the Fellowship and to pass on this knowledge to newcomers.

The subject under discussion seemed not to be one so much of communication as of instilling in members the importance of A.A. activity.

There was an apparent need to diversify duties within the groups and to avoid situations in which one individual carried total responsibility for the groups affairs.

The living, word - as distinct from the written or spoken word was what mattered; there is no substitute for the power of example.

## APPENDIX G                      REPORT ON WORKSHOP:

### “NEW GROUPS AND GROWTH”

Moderator:    Eric McG.    East Midlands

Secretary:    Ann McG.    East Midlands

Presentations: Joan H            South East Scotland  
                         Sue W                    London West.

### PRESENTATIONS:

Joan spoke of the desirability of new groups having a basis of one or two experienced members

to provide stability and take responsibility for an initial period to enable the new member develop sobriety without strain.

Sue spoke of growth in terms of the development of our services citing as an example 12th-Step meetings which have been developed in hospitals in the West London area. Growth arising out of increased co-operation with outside agencies was also mentioned.

In the general discussion which followed a number of different themes emerged.

#### NEW GROUPS NOT REFLECTING GROWTH

A number of delegates related experiences of a proliferation of Groups within an area which were not really an indication of growth and which tended to give a misleading picture of the development of the Fellowship within that area. It was generally felt that these situations arose either as a result of the problem of personalities being placed before principles or due to over enthusiasm leading to attempts to develop in an area without the support necessary to give consolidation. This latter was thought to be a problem associated more with rural areas with a low density of population.

#### GROWTH BY NATURAL DEVELOPMENT

It was agreed that genuine growth was attained where an existing group grew to be too large and naturally split to form two new groups. Concern was expressed, however, that on occasion successful groups might fail to recognise that beyond a certain size it is difficult to give the necessary degree of involvement to the new member to enable him or her to have the feeling of belonging.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT TO NEW GROUPS

Various methods of giving support and encouragement to new groups were mentioned. Sponsorship by existing groups or by the local intergroup in the sense of an ongoing arrangement for the group to be visited regularly by a number of experienced members who undertook this responsibility for a period of time was suggested as a means which has worked successfully in many parts of the country.

The high degree of personal responsibility involved in the decision of a member to start a new group was also emphasised.

#### GROWTH THROUGH CO-OPERATION WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A number of examples were given of growth which had taken place as a direct result of increased co-operation with outside agencies. Notably the situation in the North East of England was quoted where a very rapid and sustained increase of membership had taken place over a short period of time largely as a result of the co-operation of A.A. in that area with an educational programme being run under the auspices of the Health Educational Council.

More generally it was felt that the degree of active co-operation being undertaken by the Fellowship had increased over the last few years and that this was an important factor in continuing growth.

In this connection mention was made of the importance of seeing the positive nature of the traditions in providing guidelines within which the Fellowship can develop rather than looking on them as negative and restrictive.

#### GROUP DEVELOPMENTS

There would appear to be a development of groups, especially in urban areas, meeting outside the traditional mid-evening times which are enabling the message to be carried to people who might otherwise have difficulty in being able to attend meetings regularly, e.g., housewives with young children, shift workers etc.

#### SUMMARY

The Workshop covered a wide range of aids to growth and although some concern was expressed over the necessity to try to ensure that new Groups did genuinely reflect a growth situation it was felt that we are in a period of fairly rapid and sustained growth.



## CONFERENCE 1979

### FRIDAY 6 APRIL 1979

The Fourteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester commencing with reception at 4.30 p.m. on Friday 6 April through to Sunday 8 April.

Conference comprised 72 delegates representing 35 Intergroups or Regions together with 16 members of the General Service Board, representatives from the magazines Share and Roundabout, 2 observers from Finland and one each from Norway, West Germany and Switzerland. Ken H. Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and two staff members made a total of 99.

The Registration and Reception which commenced at 4.30 p.m. provided a wonderful opportunity for renewing old friendships and to share with those delegates attending for the first time.

### OPENING OF CONFERENCE

The first full session commenced at 8.30 p.m. - the Conference Chairman, Ken H. calling for the customary moments silence followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous by the General Secretary.

Ken welcomed all the delegates and observers from overseas and presented his keynote address:

“The Theme for this Conference “Our Programme of Attraction” came to my mind as a direct result of recent personal experiences in A.A., particularly in being instrumental in making arrangements on behalf of my Intergroup for a G.P.O Operator 24 hour Interception Service. This commenced in December 1977 covering 3 counties and because my combined home and business number was easily manned for 24 hours a day, I was the contact at the G.P.O. switchboard off and on for several months without hardship or inconvenience.

“As more and more calls were received, I was astonished at the variety of sources from whence they came, in fact I was intrigued that so many calls for help or advice did not come from the suffering alcoholic in person and, if they did, the variety of reasons which prompted the call, other than the usual rock bottom desperation. There were the usual recommendations from doctors, hospitals, social and probation services etc., but so often the caller (or someone on his behalf) had read something in the press, in a magazine, or had seen or heard something on the T.V. or Radio etc., all mentioning A.A. Very often, the approach had been instigated by a friend, relation or work-mate of the alcoholic, even domestic helps and a baby-sitter!

“Having made requisite 12-step arrangements when necessary, it became evident to me that Attraction to the Fellowship was of paramount importance and that there were many different ways of presenting the message to such varying types of personality, that is, if we spare no effort to hang on to them and if they want what we have to offer.

“It has become evident to me that the stigma attached to the word ‘alcoholic’ is slowly becoming less but we should be conscious that it is still a dirty word -we should spare no effort to improve this by power of example and attraction, especially when talking to schools and outside bodies of the younger age group.

“The increase in number of younger (under 30) members and those seeking help is considerable, noticeably within an Alcoholic unit where I was myself a patient, so much so that I am ceasing to believe that one has to become a three-fold complete wreck before A.A. attracts you, as I imagined and was told when I first joined the Fellowship during hospitalization.

“Attraction by the individual means that it is the personal responsibility of every member to become involved in furthering his knowledge of the Fellowship and manifesting it by power of example plus ‘salesmanship’ within the Traditions, protecting his personal anonymity only as he thinks fit.

“The conduct of each member reflects on the Fellowship as a whole but controlled enthusiasm is always a joy to behold.

“As I see it, attraction by the group means, firstly, welcoming the newcomer then continuing to encourage him to participate more fully both before, during and after a group meeting and thus become one of ‘us’ instead of ‘them and me’.

“In any community, there is bound to be friction resulting either from disagreement or clash of personalities and this should not be allowed to become heated or even evident during a group meeting for fear of causing distraction rather than attraction. Each group being autonomous, I believe that the most internal frictions can be settled within the group but, if any situation conflicts with the Traditions, G.R.’s should refer it to intergroup bearing in mind Bill W’s words “let us never fear needed change”.

“Group Attraction results from many forms of involvement, for instance, the member who attends only his own ‘home’ group meeting each week (usually sitting in the same place), and declines all requests to hold office is invaluable if he consistently talks sound A.A. relative to the Speaker and is pleasantly helpful to the new and less experienced member.

“Attraction by the Fellowship depends mainly on each individual member’s attraction to whoever he or she comes into contact with and that attraction stems not so much from personality as quality of sobriety and knowledge of the Programme. So often the ex-drunk dossier can exude attraction as powerful as that of the ex-drunk doctor or lawyer, both to individuals and the public alike. These same extremes of A.A. personalities often also have the same beneficial attraction within the Fellowship itself, thus playing an important part in achieving and maintaining our Primary Purpose.

“In order to further attraction to outside bodies and the general public and to emphasise (and indeed broadcast) that A.A. is not anonymous, Intergroups and Regions already have elected members or committees who are responsible for such tasks. But what more can we do? I believe that we can enhance our efforts by more seriously reflecting on our individual gratitude for what A.A. has given us and the responsibility we should shoulder in trying to make the Fellowship as attractive as possible to the general public which includes so many suffering alcoholics, as well

as to those in the professional community who really ought to know much more about the capabilities of A.A. in dealing with those who need help and, more important, those who want help. A new slogan might well be “Attraction rather than Medication” or, in the case of Industry “Attraction not Dictation”.

“A.A. history tells us that attraction has been largely responsible for continued growth of the Fellowship starting with Bill W’s example of attraction by Dr. Bob. Dr. Silkworth’s attraction to both co-founders, a press review of the publication of the Big Book increasing membership to 800 in 1939, John D. Rockefeller’s dinner with A.A’s raising the membership to 2,000 in 1941 and, in the same year, Jack Alexander’s article in the Press raising the figure to 8,000 ---and so on.

“During this weekend I am confident that you will all be able and willing to put forward for discussion ideas for improving attraction, especially on Committees 1, 2 and 3, and I hope that you will not hesitate to make suggestions however feeble or even daring they may seem to you. Committees 4 and 5 (Literature and Structure) are by no means the subject of routine and this Conference theme can well be reflected in the writing of new or revised publications, and the functioning of the structure of A.A. at all levels very much embraces the theme. The Open Forum is bound to produce some interesting questions - probably some controversy too - but that is quite healthy among ourselves. I always enjoy the Workshops and Presentations because they are so well prepared, with a fund of knowledge resultant from experience, dedication and research.

“We are all here to share, not only our experiences but our ingenuity, remembering that we are professionals resulting from experience as opposed to academic qualifications. Our source of inspiration will, I feel sure, be our Higher Power, the 12 Steps our source of knowledge and our Traditions will guard against enthusiasm.

“I am so happily grateful to you all for giving me the privilege of being at this, my fifth, Conference and in the role you now see me. Thank you all very much”.

#### GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

Gordon W., Chairman of the General Service Board presented to Conference the Boards Report for the year 1978 and addressed the meeting:

“On behalf of the General Service Board I welcome you all to this the Fourteenth General Service Conference with a very special welcome to our European friends who are with us as observers and to further the recommendations of the World Service Meeting held at Helsinki last year in establishing a European Information Centre, and furthering the ideals of Unity and Service within the European Area.

“The programme is a full and concentrated one but I am sure you will find it enjoyable and rewarding.

“According to the programme my task - here this evening is to present the report covering the activities of the General Service Board during 1978. You have had a copy of the report for quite some time and no doubt have read and digested it. I trust you found it good reading and to your satisfaction. It was a very busy year and much was achieved. The Board is always conscious of

being the servant of the Fellowship and the custodian of the Traditions within the United Kingdom and guided by Conference in all its deliberations and actions.

“During the year three Guidelines were produced along with three short give away leaflets as well as a short pamphlet ‘If you are a Professional’.

“There was continued liaison and full co-operation with many of the other agencies dealing with the problem of alcoholism as you will have seen in the report.

“We are very much indebted to the members of the Board along with the Staff at General Service Office who have worked so hard throughout the year in the production of this literature and co-operating with the various bodies.

“The Conventions and Mini-conventions held throughout the year were enjoyable and successful affairs all showing the wonderful joy of living following the philosophies of our way of living.

“The need to strengthen our P.I. has become more and more evident. We have therefore added it to the functions within the Executive Committee. There has been much publicity recently about alcoholism in published books, press, radio and T.V. but in spite of it being recognised as an illness the term alcoholic is still a dirty word. There are thousands of dying alcoholics in this country of ours who have never yet heard of A.A’s language of the heart, don’t even know where it is spoken. To come to A.A. they will need to know more about us. Who we are and where we are. That responsibility is ours -we have our responsibility pledge. When anyone anywhere etc ..... The better the understanding along with the attraction of personal examples of recovery the sooner they will come. Can we here at Conference develop means to better the attraction and so get home to some of those thousands still suffering. That must be our aim.

“I will now turn to Board membership. It is with regret that we have to say farewell to Derrick and Alan who retire by rotation at the close of this Conference having served us well for six years. We would thank them both for their generous service and wise counsel they have given so unstintingly and conscientiously throughout their term of office. We wish them well so that they may continue to give of their wide experience whenever called upon to do so”.

Gordon then introduced Maurice S. of Nottingham and Sean B. of South Wales and asked for confirmation of their appointment as members of the General Service Board.

These appointments were approved unanimously.

## FINANCE

Gordon requested Peter F. the Hon. Treasurer to present the audited Financial Statement and Balance Sheet and commented that the Fellowship had once again responded well to the pledge of self-support, but we should not allow ourselves to become complacent but always be aware of the eroding effects of inflation and the necessity for a prudent reserve.

Peter F. presented the accounts drawing attention to the notes on the Financial Statement which were included in the full report.

Peter F. pointed out that although the nett assets of the Fellowship totalled £98,409.00 this was not all available for immediate use.

As the Fellowship in Great Britain grows so will the amounts invested in stock increase as will also the amount of sundry debtors.

The Board have adopted a policy of investing surplus amounts in short dated local Government Bonds that will mature prior to the expiration in 1986 of the lease of 11 Redcliffe Gardens, the home of the General Service Office.

After discussion the General Service Board Report to Conference - Appendix 'A' -was formerly accepted.

## FIFTH WORLD SERVICE MEETING REPORT

Joyce C., in presenting the World Service Meeting Delegates Report, a copy of which was included in the folder, said:

“Before referring to the report, I would like to thank the members of the General Service Board for doing me the very great honour of asking me to go with Bill as a British delegate to the World Service Meeting. It has been an unforgettable experience, which has meant more than anything in my life so far - both before I even started taking to drink, or since I got sober.

“The detailed report of the proceedings of the WSM has been given to all Conference delegates, and a summary appeared in the autumn edition of Box 514. Rather than give another account of what you have all read, I propose simply to tell you of some of the highlights that have struck me personally, looking back after six months.

“First let me emphasise that this was a real working session. All the delegates were hard at it from morning to night. We really did tackle almost every aspect of Service in A.A. At one stage I thought it was almost too much, and perhaps typical of us in A.A. to try, in our enormous enthusiasm for carrying the message, to try and do everything at once. Yet, looking back, one of the strongest impressions is the way affairs of importance to the Fellowship crystallise out of what at first seems an almost confusing mass; producing the right answer, when the time is right, and when we are ready for it. And given time, patience, and a true willingness to be guided by the Traditions, we will be ready when we need to be.

“The most important example of this was the recommendation that a European Information Centre should be established, operating initially from Redcliffe Gardens in London. This, of course, was not a new idea; it has been discussed at earlier World Service Meetings for some years, but perhaps the time was not right until now. At Helsinki it did crystallise out - the right time and the right people in the right place -in particular, Bill was there to give the idea a final push into positive action. And we have already seen results from this. Bill has had communication with several countries, including some not yet represented at the World Service Meeting, who may be encouraged to join.

“One of the main things which stands out is the reinforcement of the conviction that the health and future of the Fellowship depends on the sharing of experience at all levels. We all know that - that is why we are here tonight. But I must say that the growth of A.A. outside this country was

until relatively recently something which I took for granted without thinking too much about how it may happen. Meeting with our fellow delegates from 18 countries made me see that this is how it is, and how it should be. It also made me marvel once again at the truly remarkable vision of Bill W., who foresaw how the Fellowship might develop world-wide, - and foresaw that it must be growth in Unity.

“The need is for sharing and unity world-wide for quite practical reasons, as many experiences related at the World Service Meeting showed. Firstly, because growth is quite simply faster when it is growth in unity - the message is carried more quickly and more effectively. Secondly, without sharing and unity on a world-wide basis, there is the ever present danger of the message and the Traditions being diluted and distorted, and, as we have all learnt from time to time, when that happens more people stay drunk, and more people die who might have been saved.

“Also highlighted was the realisation of how much we in this country have to give. We are especially lucky, as has often been said, in having been able to take A. A. in its original language; this in itself is, I am sure, one reason why we have been able to grow so steadily over the years. But while we share the North American language, we are very different in size, and therefore in structure. Developing a sound service structure in a vast area like North America (USA & Canada) presents quite different problems from those in a country of our size, and because of this we have developed our different and much simpler structure, which meets our needs. In this respect the smaller European countries are more like this country, so that our experience of growth are more alike. We can act as a kind of bridge perhaps, and help to ease the task of the non-English speaking countries, who have to translate both the language and the structure into their own ‘terms. This is exactly the same as sponsorship at the personal level - both sides learning from each other and strengthening each other.

“This raises another practical point which was obvious at the World Service Meeting. We talk of the language of the heart, which is certainly very real, but I think we must guard against oversimplifying here. The language barrier is real and difficult for non-English speaking countries who have to translate everything, not only the discussions at the World Service Meeting, but every bit of the literature for use in their own countries. It is hard, slogging work for many of them, and we need to appreciate their difficulties. A different kind of ‘language’ problem was raised by delegates from Belgium and South Africa, who gave presentations of teen-age alcoholism. They spoke of some problems in communicating with these youngsters - of putting the A.A. message over in terms they could identify with. We all know that teen-age alcoholism is increasing, and this is something we should be aware of. There is no doubt that when the time is right we shall be ready, but it is perhaps something we should be thinking about.

“What of the practical outcome of this meeting? I have already mentioned the establishment of a European Information Centre, which really is a great and exciting step forward. Otherwise, as the detailed report shows, there was nothing particularly new about our discussions. But then there was not meant to be. The purpose of these meetings is the same as the purpose of this Conference; not to find new aspects of our message, but to reinforce the one which has been passed on to us. To share our experience, to exchange ideas, but above all to keep the Traditions and the A.A. message of hope and recovery clear, and shining and pure - and unchanged, so that we may all better fulfil our primary purpose, world-wide.

“Since this is an account of ‘highlights’, I must mention the beauty and peace of the centre in

which the meeting took place, and thank again our Finnish hosts for their wonderful welcome and hospitality. And the people; our fellow delegates -here truly the language of the heart was being spoken. It really is amazing how total strangers with totally different cultures, backgrounds and languages can be so full of joyful love, for one another. This was an almost tangible thing, which I shall never forget.

“I am utterly convinced that these World Service Meetings are serving the primary purpose of A.A. by reinforcing and strengthening our unity and our effectiveness, and safeguarding our Traditions. I know myself to have been privileged to be there”.

The World Service Meeting Report was adopted.

## NORWEGIAN GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE REPORT

Angus presented his observations on his attendance as our observer to the Norwegian General Service Conference and commented:

“The Fifth World Service Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous which ‘took place at Helsinki in October 1978 has had important consequences for A.A. in Europe. Delegates from the European countries represented at Helsinki decided that steps should be taken to further the ideals of Unity and Service within the European area. The first measure to be put into effect has been the establishment at 11 Redcliffe Gardens, London of a European Information Centre which will serve as an exchange for information about activities in each of the European countries where A.A. is active.

“Another of the Helsinki recommendations concerning A.A. in Europe was a proposal that neighbouring countries should send observers to each others’ General Service Conferences. It will be our pleasure in Britain to welcome several observers from other European countries at our own General Service Conference in Manchester in April; and we ourselves received an invitation at the end of 1978 to send an observer to the Fourth Norwegian General Service Conference in Oslo on the 9-11 February. The General Service Board decided it would be in keeping with our declared intention to strengthen the links between A.A. in the various European countries if this invitation were to be accepted, and nominated one of the members of the Board to attend. Accordingly I found myself bound for Oslo on Friday 9 February on what was to prove a memorable and enjoyable A.A. experience.

“In size, Norway is very much larger than the United Kingdom, the land area being roughly double that of our Country. On the other hand, the population, at about 4 million, is less than a twelfth of our population. These simple statistics help to explain why, although A.A. started in Norway at the same time as it did in Britain (1947), the number of Norwegian A.A. groups is much smaller than in the United Kingdom. Norway is a large country, with great areas of sparse population and long lines of communication. The northern most delegate at the General Service Conference reminded me with some amusement that if he were to fly south from Oslo on his return journey instead of North, the equivalent distance to his home would take him to Rome! The same delegate also illustrated another of the problems of living in a country which extends far to the north of the Arctic Circle by telling me that for about three weeks in December and January the sun never rises above that horizon in his home town.

“Despite the severe winter climate in north Norway there are several prosperous and thriving

communities there - one of the four Norwegian universities is at Tromso, well over 200 miles north of the Arctic circle. AA is there too, and I was very interested to hear of the recent establishment of a group at North Cape which must be the most northerly group in Europe, indeed possibly in the World. However, as might be expected, A.A. groups tend to be concentrated round the main centres of population, the city of Oslo especially and the larger towns such as Bergen Trondheim and Stavanger. The latter is Norway's Houston with a sizeable population of Americans working on oil-related developments, and of course linking the local A.A. groups with American AA.

“Even so, there are only some 80 AA groups in the whole of Norway, and until four years ago the Fellowship there was loosely organised, rather as we were in Britain until the mid 1960's. In 1975 however Norway held its first General Service Conference, and a new structure for AA came into being. This is modelled on 19 districts, evidently based on local government counties and the city of Oslo. Each district sends one district representative to the General Service Conference. Since the Norwegian General Service Board is quite small in numbers, the Conference itself consists of not more than 30 participants, and I was agreeably surprised to find that the full Conference sessions could comfortably be accommodated in quite a small room. This greatly helped the friendly and speedy transaction of business.

“There is a General Service Office in the centre of Oslo, well equipped and appointed; but because of lack of resources it can be staffed only on a part-time basis.

The General Secretary undertakes a vast amount of work for A.A. in the time he can spare from his daily employment. Clerical and typing assistance is provided by staff who attend for odd days each week, and telephone communication is maintained when the Office is not staffed 'by means of a highly efficient telephone answering service. I had the pleasure of visiting the General Service Office when the Conference was over.

“The Conference took place in a conference centre some 8 kilometres from the centre of Oslo, situated at a height of about 1500 feet. This situation gave us a magnificent view over Oslo and its long fjord. The sun shone brightly throughout, glistening on the thick snow all around. The Norwegian members gave me a most warm and courteous welcome. Despite the language barrier I felt immediately at home, and I was indeed much moved at the evident kindness and friendship with which I was greeted. I had considerately been seated between two delegates who spoke excellent English and who interpreted for me; Oskar H., world service delegate, a large, genial man with a twinkling sense of humour, and Erland R., widely-travelled in Britain and America and also indeed in Scotland.

“Proceedings followed very much along the lines of our own General Service Conference, the theme being what we could do in gratitude in return for what we have received from A.A. The delegates were divided up into small groups (not more than six to a group) to discuss two main topics: the work of the district representative and the duties of sponsorship. It is clear that many of the problems we have encountered in respect of structure and sponsorship are common to other European countries. To the best of my ability, I took part in the working groups, but the need to interpret slowed down the proceedings when I became involved, and I tried to intervene only when invited to.

“The Language barrier brought home to me how very fortunate we are in Great Britain that A.A. was first established in an English speaking country and that all the approved literature was first



written in English. Although many Norwegians speak and read English with ease, there is a great need for A.A. literature in Norwegian, apart from the main publications such as the 'Big Book' and 'Twelve and Twelve' which are already available in translation. The financial resources which a relatively small number of groups can provide must naturally be limited, and the expensive work, of translating and publishing A.A. literature in Norwegian can not proceed as fast as the members would wish.

"It would not be particularly profitable to give a detailed account of the proceedings at the Conference, since much of what was said was only relevant to A.A. in Norway. Was my visit therefore worth-while? I have not the slightest doubt that it was. Above all, it was a clear demonstration of our keen desire in the United Kingdom to develop close links with A.A. in neighbouring European countries. There is no better way of doing this than by sending members to attend General Service Conferences in other countries, and it is particularly gratifying that Hans, the Norwegian General Secretary, is to be an observer at our Conference in Manchester in April. In A.A. there is no substitute for the personal contact, and once that has been established all sorts of other developments may be expected to follow. I took the occasion of a few remarks I was invited to make at the end of the Conference of stressing that A.A. in Britain, and particularly in Scotland which has historic ties with Norway, wanted to build a bridge of friendship between the Fellowship in both countries. Friends are there to help one another and I am confident that as time passes we shall come to develop closer links with our Norwegian friends.

"Certainly any A.A. member visiting Norway from Britain can be assured of a very cordial welcome. And if you are visiting in winter-time, be sure to take your skis. My sole regret was that I could not join the thousands of citizens from Oslo who were out skiing all round the Conference centre. It looked such fun that I hope I may be able to return again with a little more time to spare".

The Conference Chairman thanked Angus for his presentation.

## CONVENTIONS

At the invitation of the Chairman the General Secretary reported that the Northern Convention in 1980 is being arranged by the Intergroups in the North of England and will be held at the Norbreck Hydro, Blackpool and the responsibility for the Southern Convention in October 1980 is being undertaken by Southern Region.

## RESOLUTION.

A resolution calling upon the General Service Board to present at the 1980 Conference amendments to Section VI of the A.A. Service Handbook for Great Britain dealing with the General Service Board was thoroughly discussed and as a result the resolution was withdrawn.

## NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1980

Two names were proposed and seconded, those of Ginger W. of Cheshire East Intergroup and Eric McG. of East Midlands Intergroup. The formal election was to take place at the final

session of Conference on the Sunday morning. This first session closed with the Serenity Prayer and the delegates then retired in formal sessions.

## SATURDAY 7 APRIL

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The five Committees convened at 9 a.m. through to 12.30 p.m. and re-convened at 2.15 p.m. until 4 p.m.

### OPEN FORUM

From 4.15 p.m. until 5.30 p.m. whilst the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Committees were preparing their reports a full session of Conference met in 'Open Forum'.  
A summary of the points raised is included as Appendix 'G'.

### WORKSHOP

The theme of this session which commenced at 8.30 a.m. was 'The Spiritual Value of Giving' the Moderator was Ginger W. of Cheshire East and presentations were made by Bill M. of Highlands Region and Valerie L. of the General Service Board.

The report of this workshop is contained in Appendix 'H'.

At the close of this meeting the printed reports of the Committees were circulated and are attached as Appendix 'B -F'.

## SUNDAY 8 APRIL

At 9.15 a.m. the Conference assembled for the final session. Ken H. Conference Chairman invited each of the Chairmen of the five Committees to present their respective reports.

These reports were fully discussed, amended as thought necessary and were adopted.

### ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 1980 CONFERENCE

The two nominees - Ginger W. and Eric McG. for the chairmanship of the Fifteenth General Service Conference were put to the vote.

Ginger W. of Cheshire East Intergroup was duly elected.

### DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

It was agreed that the Fifteenth General Service Conference in 1980 should be held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on the 18 -20 April, 1980.

### CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Ken H. invited Alan D. and Derrik A. retiring members of the General Service Board to address Conference.

Alan said:

“I want to share with you some of my service career in A.A. and strange though it might seem it started in spite of myself and almost immediately as joining the Fellowship 13 years ago.

“I was sitting in a large room at a clinic for alcoholics - we did little at this clinic but I went there hoping against hope that someone would tell me how to avoid the consequences of my drinking.

“This night a new man appeared and said “My name is - and I am an alcoholic”. I was spellbound by his story - the attraction of this man’s sobriety for me was irresistible. I did not know then that he, although a long time member of A.A. was a constant slipper of (on this occasion) two days sobriety.

“Next day we formed a group and toured all the agencies who were liable to come in contact with practising alcoholics. At our first meeting we had five people. Two, John D. and Glenys L. are still sober and my good friends, of the others, one is dead never having known sobriety and my 12th stepper is still slipping and sliding - I am here.

“As secretary I began to get letters from G.S.O. mystical letters. A & G.R.C. figured largely in these communications - “What’s this A & G.R.C?” “Go and find out” I was told - so I went - 6 months sober. I don’t remember much of that meeting except that there was, to say the least, a great deal of bitterness and umbrage over something called Al-Anon House Fund! It was a very long time before I understood what it was all about and I don’t intend to explain it today. Suffice is to say that if Tradition 6 had been adhered to then the whole sorry business need never have happened. The next A & G.R.C. meeting helped little with my sobriety and I resolved that I and my group could survive without it!

“With two other South Wales groups an Intergroup was formed - guess who was secretary! Now because no-one in my group was prepared to accept any office I was appointed Chairman, secretary and treasurer and now to add to it secretary of Intergroup! Ye Gods!!

“Within six months I was also treasurer because the person so appointed got drunk and spent the kitty. Before the year was out I was despatched to the Conference at the Midland Hotel as G.S.R. and financed by S.M.I.G. and S.W.I.G.

“To me this weekend seemed to be a replay of the A & G.R.C except that it lasted longer. Epithets were hurled, ancestries impinged and reputations questioned! However I did espy and hear some who were talking sense and eschewing personality assassination. These gave me hope for the future.

“Later on C.I.G., S.M.I.G., and S.W.I.G. held exploratory talks to try to persuade conference to Regionalise the country in an effort to reduce the numbers of representatives at Conference and to adopt the 3rd Legacy Manual and try to achieve some sense of order.

“Letters did I receive from the General Service Board telling us to cease and desist, that

Regionalisation was unnecessary and undesirable - and we were not ready for the 3rd Legacy Manual - that was America and we were British! And I in my innocence thought we were all just alcoholics.

“The three intergroups were undeterred by the G.S.B’s attitude and in the following year we sent just one person, dear old Ronnie G., to Manchester to represent the three intergroups.

“It caused quite a stir because he could not get all the names on his badge. But it was the start of a Region.

“Soon, in 1973, I was asked to join the General Service Board - I believe the Board thought that it would be better to have the rebel where they could see him! - and I accepted the invitation because I thought that I would be in a better position to influence decisions for I believed (as did the I.G’s by whom I was nominated) passionately in the 3rd. Legacy, by this time renamed the A.A. Services Manual and we wanted it implemented or something very like it.

“One interesting side, when I was being vetted by the Chairman he said “Do you know that we have never had anything less than a unanimous decision at Board Meetings I thought ‘That’ll change! - and it did.

“Slowly over the next two years our own A. A. Service Handbook was given form and substance and although not a perfect document it is now serving the Fellowship well.

“Slowly too, the membership and thus the character of the Board changed the atmosphere became relaxed and happy and I believe that under the wise chairmanship of Gordon W. the Board has well and faithfully served the Fellowship. Long may it do so.

“There are two outstanding topics that I strongly believe must be looked at by the Board and Conference - and the sooner this is expedited the better. It has been said that I like to drop pebbles of contention into placid pools - this may be because the reflections in placid pools are always inverted and I dislike disorder. However I am about to drop a pebble now concerning the Fellowship and television. Some years ago a resolution was cobbled together by a sub-committee and passed by Conference denying this Fellowship the use of the greatest media for communication that exists. This seemed to me at that time to be a nonsense. I opposed it then and I oppose it now and I think that Conference should reconsider the resolution.

“The second pebble concerns the constitution of the Board itself. I have long felt that more active non-alcoholic members would help in the business of communication and I strongly feel that if the Chairman is an alcoholic the Vice-Chairman should be a non-alcoholic. For this reason - by virtue of the traditions of which he is a custodian communicate at the level of press, radio, television and films.

“If I have learned anything at all in my service career it is that the better informed we are the better can we serve A.A. and the more open the lines of communication within and without the Fellowship the more suffering alcoholics will we reach and introduce to the loving care and recovery of the A.A. programme.

“I would like to place on record my loving appreciation of all the Board members who helped me through two personal crisis during my service - they will never know exactly what their caring

did for me.

“I would also like to say thank you to those of them - some now retired - who once again with loving care stopped me, when in my unmitigated arrogance, I asked to be allowed to resign so that I could better help the growth of A.A. in my region - whatever made me think that I alone could succeed in this? From that moment A.A. in South Wales took off and the number of groups jumped from a long-time static five in number to the present day 16 or 17 - a salutary lesson in humility.

“I will miss not just the Board meetings but meeting regularly with my friends on the General Service Board. I will miss too the pleasures of meeting you all at Conference - but I have learned the lesson that I am not indispensable and know that the future of A.A. is in good hands as long as we all put our trust in God and place principles before personalities.

“Lastly, I would like to echo the words of Bernard Smith one time Chairman of the N. American General Service Board, on his retirement. “I confess to one regret. And that is that I did not have the skill or the gifts that would have enabled me to do more than the little I have tried to do to further the purposes of this great and enduring Fellowship”.  
“May God bless you and shine through all your councils” .

Derrick said:

“My name is Derrick A. a class ‘B’ member - but still an alcoholic.

“During the years in which I have been a member of this Fellowship, I have come to recognise that whilst there are no rules or regulations, certain recognised practices have become traditional.

“In recent years one of these has been that retiring alcoholic members of the General Service Board present the closing address to this Conference. This year, for the first time, there are two of us and I am delighted to have the privilege of sharing this tradition with Alan D., from South Wales.

“You know in some ways I feel that I have been engaged in a game of chance and the time has arrived when I finally threw a six only to end up on the square marked ‘Go back to start’.

“Although I have been a member’ of this Fellowship for many years, I cannot in all honesty pretend to have been a particularly good one. My attempts to live this programme of recovery are pathetic ‘when compared with each of you here -nevertheless my attempts are based on sincerity and hope - two things I learned from you - and which enabled me to make progress - however slow it might be. From your point of view, it is a pity that this is the case for had it been otherwise, I would merely have been required to thank you most sincerely for your help and support in attaining sobriety and then quietly take my leave of you. As it is, I shall take full advantage of this unique opportunity to share some of the recent years’ experiences with you.

“It is some years since I first came to Conference al though right now it seems but a short time ago. Nevertheless I well remember that first Conference and although I can recall very little of the events which took place there, I certainly recall the sense of achievement at the end of it. Although as I recollect I took little active part in the Committee I was attached to and even less in the body of the Conference itself, I now know that it was at this point in my life that I acquired a

far greater thirst for knowledge of sobriety than my thirst for alcohol had ever been. Such was the impact of that first Conference on me. Indeed the following and subsequent Conferences became much more meaningful to me, so that on the occasion of my election to Conference Chairman I realised that I had acquired a deeper and more intimate knowledge and understanding of the steps and traditions of this Fellowship.

“From my earliest days in A.A. -thanks largely to my Sponsor - I had always had a high regard for the manner in which members respect anonymity and I have always strived to uphold this tradition. Although I am sure that it came about quite accidentally, I am inwardly delighted that the name of the Chairman of the 7th General Service Conference did not appear on the Programme -and to the best of my knowledge this is the only occasion in 14 Conferences when this has been the case. I am sure that you do not need me to tell you who was Chairman of Conference that year.

“What I do recall of that particular occasion though, was the fact that by then Conference had become well established in the United Kingdom and although it still had a great deal of work to do it was not the time to make changes merely for the sake of change, but rather, as with a ship set on a fair course, merely to trim the sails. I believed that by that time Conference had come through the troubled waters of its formative years, growing into a responsible body and with a strong General Service Board. On reflection now I believe that this has proved to be the case.

“I said at the beginning of this address that I had never been a particularly good member of this Fellowship. If I am honest, I have rather looked forward to giving this address at the culmination of my six years on the General Service Board and being able to draw your attention to the outstanding achievements I have been able to bring about, together with a little help from the other members.

“Before doing so though, I am reminded through our recovery programme of the dangers of egotism, and my thoughts go back to that first Conference, and to an experience I had just prior to leaving for home at its conclusion.

“Shortly before I left, two delegates from Scotland approached me - both of whom I knew rather vaguely - and one of them invited me to speak at the Scottish Convention to be held in Dunblane a fortnight later. As this was the first time I had been asked to speak at such an important Convention, I readily accepted, and my mind immediately began to conjure up all manner of inspiring things with which to deliver a unique and memorable oration. I saw myself standing on the platform, delivering a powerful address to a, spellbound audience. Just as my imagination really began to run riot the other Scottish member said ‘glad you can come Derrick – you will be required to speak for twenty minutes and the subject is humility’. You will understand then why I now refrain from relating my achievements as a General Service Board member; and incidentally whenever a moment of uncontrolled egotism looms near, I find it a most useful exercise to repeat; if you doubt me try it for yourself.

“I realise now, of course, that what I have been called upon to do these six years, has been to serve the Fellowship as one of its trusted servants. This in itself gives me cause to be thankful, for it means that my life has not only changed for the better but has been seen to change by people who understand these things, for that I shall always be truly grateful.

“Were I to be asked what single thing stands out in my mind during the last six years, it would be

not so much to relate the fascination of some of the main items of Agendas discussed during that time, but the fact that I had been invited to serve on the Board at all. If during these past six years, I have been of any help or use to the Fellowship, then I am truly delighted because without doubt, my term of Office has been a wonderful experience for me. It has helped me I know, to have a better understanding of myself as a person, as well as that of others like me. Above all it has been invaluable in ensuring I become a more responsible member within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and to help join with others in ensuring that the hand of A.A. is always there to reach out to the still suffering alcoholic.

“For my own happy and contented sobriety, I thank each and everyone of you from the bottom of my heart. It was attraction which brought me to A.A. and attraction which keeps me here.

“In conclusion I would like to offer you a Latin motto which I came across some time ago and which is:

‘Virilitae agitae estotes fortes’  
Quit you like men - be strong’ .

Valter of Finland, Maurice of Switzerland , Hans of Norway, Dieter of Germany each added their own personal appreciation of their attendance and felt that they had gained a great deal of experience.

Hans mentioned especially that the structure in Norway had been based to a great extent on our Service Handbook and Dieter mentioned that as yet West Germany had no Service Conference structure but felt that the experience gained over the weekend had been invaluable and he would share this on his return.

In formally closing the Conference Ken H., Chairman remarked:

“I know that it is not usual procedure in A.A. to give praise in case we sound like a mutual admiration society but I feel sure that you would wish me to express thanks on your behalf to several people before I close this Conference. Firstly, to - the Warden, the Administrator and Bursar and all the Staff of Hulme Hall of the University of Manchester.

“I think you would like me to thank Bill S. and his Staff for their faultless and thorough work behind the scenes before and during this Conference, particularly in respect of the contents of our folders which contain a vast amount of relevant information, not only for reference during Conference but also to take back with us and pass on .to our fellow members at all levels. Please convey our thanks to your Staff, Bill, and I will personally thank Robin and Elaine who have worked very hard for us here all the weekend. For myself I thank you, Bill, for helping me do my homework ever since last Conference because, as you know, I had minor health trouble last July and could well have ‘retired hurt’ without your support. I have also had every encouragement from my friends in Southern Region and my Intergroup.

“I would like Conference to know that the members of the General Service Board have shown me every kindness and encouragement during the past 12 months concerning preparations for this weekend. For the first occasion during my time in A.A. I actually received an order from our Chairman, Gordon W., to take things easy and, what is more, he even confirmed it in writing! He then said “you are a fool if you don’t!”

“I think it would be appropriate at this juncture if we expressed our appreciation of and affection for the members of the Board for the work they do on behalf of the Fellowship. In particular, we should thank them for their efforts prior to and during this Conference.

“The theme ‘Attraction’ was mainly aimed at the suffering alcoholic and the newcomer but we have also had examples of Attraction within the Fellowship at International level, as portrayed by Joyce C., and Angus M., resulting from their visits to Helsinki and Oslo respectively, not to mention the instigation of a European Information Centre at Redcliffe Gardens to which Gordon referred in his report. Also, our European observers this weekend.

“Finally, I would like to put the spot light on you who comprise this Fourteenth General Service Conference. Your sense of purpose has been akin to dedication and you have certainly done your duty as delegates and, as far as I have observed, without a semblance of friction or disunity. For this I congratulate you. I now ask you to take back this spirit of unity and message of Attraction to your Regions, Intergroups and Groups and to communicate to them all that has been deliberated here this weekend.

“I can now only say that I feel happy, fighting fit (the sun is shining there is no wind or rain) and I wish you all a safe Journey home. Thank you all and God bless you”.

Gordon W., Chairman of the General Service Board expressed to Ken the gratitude of all the Conference delegates for his work prior to the Conference and for his conduct of the meetings throughout the Conference. He reminded delegates of the duty of carrying back through Regions, Intergroups and Groups the message from Conference and commented that all the Committee reports would be thoroughly studied by the General Service Board who will if at all possible implement the recommendations which had come forward and progress made would be reported back to Conference next year.

Gordon felt that the very fine workshop on Saturday evening had resulted in an uplifting and stimulating sharing session and indicated an ever greater acceptance and growing into our responsibilities.

The Fourteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain came to a close with the delegates joining in the Serenity Prayer.

#### COMMITTEE No. 1.                   “ATTRACTION BY THE INDIVIDUAL”

The importance of the individual member in drawing the suffering alcoholic to the A.A. way of recovery was stressed. By guarding his/her own behaviour, morals, dress, ethics, tolerance, sympathy, compassion and understanding of all human beings he carries the message or leaves a slur on the name of A.A.

The A.A. member can maintain and enhance carrying the message by attraction to the suffering alcoholic in several ways:



1. By being available - especially at group meetings
2. By answering a call for help in person – preferably with another member -and explaining how A.A. members and A.A.’s Twelve Steps have helped him to arrest the illness and to raise himself out of the mass of troubles and problems it has brought upon him. The suffering alcoholic is not helped by watering down the A.A. programme for he is denied full access to a proven way of recovery. Don’t sell the programme short.

It was mentioned that saying the Serenity Prayer to oneself before actually meeting the suffering alcoholic could prove helpful by placing things in perspective and preparing one for what could well be a matter of life or death. The alcoholic who asks A.A. for help is no longer on his own, he meets his peers who cannot reprimand or preach for they are just ex drunks. Initial reference to a “drinking problem” could be useful as there was still unfortunately a stigma attached to the word alcoholic.

The Committee felt that the newcomer would benefit by being taken to a meeting at the earliest opportunity and introduced to other members. The 12th Stepper could serve as caretaker sponsor until the group could be handed over to the newcomer who would choose his own sponsor. Whenever possible a man should call on a man, and a woman on a woman.

On the question of anonymity the Committee felt that a member could go to any extent in disclosing his membership of A.A. to friends and personal contacts so long as it caused no harm to himself or others. If it was to boost the ego it would be harmful. If it was to help in carrying the message of recovery it would be beneficial.

In this sense prudence was a good thing. The message from “A.A. Comes of Age” reminding us that A.A. is neither a secret society nor a vaudeville circus was read and sober quiet disclosure of one’s membership approved.

It was good to go back over one’s tracks and let professional and service bodies who had helped one’s recovery see for themselves that A.A. worked. These bodies so often only see the suffering alcoholic. However, when in response to invitation it would be desirable to clear with one’s group or intergroup any opportunity to give a talk to an outside body. On such occasions careful preparation by reading Conference approved literature, and studying one’s appearance and attitude would be profitable.

The Committee felt that anonymity would not inhibit a members ability to carry the message at any level other than press, radio, film or T.V. where precautions to maintain anonymity would need to be scrutinised by the General Service Board.

In conclusion the Committee recalled that all A.A. meetings are privileged occasions and that “what one hears here stays here”. They were told of a little girl who came home from school one day and said to her mother “It’s alright Mum, you’ve nothing to be ashamed of: you can get help from A.A.” The message had been carried through the classroom.

COMMITTEE No.2. “ATTRACTION BY THE GROUP”

The group is the core of the Fellowship. Each group is autonomous but this independence should not be used to cover up a lack of constructive work.

Healthy groups are attractive groups. They are made up of individuals who are trying to apply the Programme of recovery in their own lives. This is reflected in the spirit of the group itself.

Groups which tend to remain disorganised usually remain unattractive. Those groups which experience healthy growth are usually groups which are following closely the principles laid down in the Twelve Traditions.

These groups take their responsibilities seriously and carry out their commitment - not only to the newcomer but to all their members, and to the Fellowship as a whole through Intergroup.

By becoming involved in service work they get their members involved. Thus an infectious enthusiasm is generated and this tends to have a positive effect on the membership.

Groups which study and follow the experience related in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" can hardly fail to become attractive, for this booklet outlines almost all there is to know about activity including the all important question of regular group inventory.

The Committee felt strongly that some of the areas which require emphasis at the group level are:

- 1 The appointment of greeters to welcome strangers and visitors.
- 2 Making sure that newcomers are fully "serviced" with literature and other support and some follow-up is arranged.
- 3 The starting and finishing of meetings on time and the provision of a suitable period after the meeting for informal sharing.
- 4 The early involvement of new members in minor activities such as emptying ash trays, making tea or stacking chairs.
- 5 Thought should be given to the celebration of anniversaries as a means of creating a change from regular routine and expressing the joy of recovery.
- 6 The holding of regular group service meetings without which it is impossible to know the group conscience or to organise positive activities.
- 7 The importance of members having a home group since floating members are denied the benefits of involvement in group decision making and responsibility.
- 8 The regular rotation of group officers so that the group affairs do not fall into a monotonous pattern.
- 9 Maximum possible involvement in Intergroup activity, together with more exchange visits between groups.
- 10 The stimulation of interest in service by the inclusion of service-related articles in Share and Roundabout rather than exclusively in Box 514.
- 11 Improvement of the general group image by ensuring that meeting rooms are well maintained and are not allowed to degenerate into scruffiness.
- 12 The importance when speaking at outside meetings to spell out not only what A.A. is but also what it is not.

The Committee recommends that the image we should adhere to is that contained in the

following extract from the pamphlet - The A.A. Group:

“A.A. is concerned solely with the personal recovery and continued sobriety of individual alcoholics who turn to the Fellowship for help. The movement does not engage in the fields of alcoholism research, medical or psychiatric treatment, education or propaganda in any form although members may participate in such activity as individuals.

The movement has adopted a policy of “co-operation but not affiliation” with other organisations concerned with the problem of alcoholism.

Traditionally, Alcoholics Anonymous does not accept or seek financial support from outside sources, and members preserve personal anonymity in print and broadcast media”.

### COMMITTEE No.3. “ATTRACTION BY THE FELLOWSHIP”

#### 1 GENERAL

- a) It is clear from the General Service Office Survey (October 1978) that a lot of people know little of A.A.
- b) It is also clear that there are various public images of A.A. many of which are distorted.
- c) Whilst we are clear in our own minds what A.A. is, the correct image does not get over to the professionals particularly in:  
Industry  
Health  
Courts/Probation/Prisons  
through whom many potential members may be reached. Some of the professionals in these fields are highly suspicious of the “secret undercover activities of A.A.”
- d) To make any progress we have to tell those who have the tools, and the contacts with alcoholics, about the existence of A.A., and to increase public awareness about A.A.
- e) We are not aware of our real strength in the situation where professionals recognise that many A.A. members are “experts” through their own recovery by actually working in the field, often for many years.
- f) Whilst not wishing to define it too closely, our public image could either be as a “Fellowship” defined in the Preamble or as a “Vehicle for Recovery by Example”.

#### 2. THE PRESENT SITUATION.

- a) There are very few P.I. or C.P.C.(Co-operation with the professional Community) Committees.
- b) There are a few A.A. Publicity Professionals.
- c) The best model was where the P.I. Officer worked with a P.I. Committee and was also a member of the C.P.C.C.
- d) There are some informal meetings of P.I. Officers.
- e) One area sponsored a P.I. and speakers’ teach-in.
- f) Some P.I. Officers are working on their own.

- g) There is scope for improvement of Central Services.

### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS.

- a) Q How can visibility be reconciled with anonymity?  
A With proper safeguards, based on the Traditions, it is important to use the tools of Publicity in an honest way to try to communicate the correct image of A.A. and to correct any misconceptions of A.A.

- b) We note with approval that the Board is considering the appointment of a National P.I. and endorse it as a requirement.  
c) We encourage Regions to form P.I. Committees.  
d) Where Regions do not exist P.I. Officers should be encouraged to make ad hoc arrangements to meet on a regular basis and to liaise with any developments at Board level.  
e) We reinforce the Recommendation in numbered paragraph 1 of the Report of Committee No.2. to the 13th General Service Conference )page 22 Appendix 'C'):

Where possible a C.P.C.C. should be formed separate from a P.I. Committee because it is essential that:

A.A. develops the special skills required in communication with professional representatives.

We identify the priority sectors and concentrate effort in the right direction.

We provide continuity of contact with the various professional sectors.

- f) In addition we encourage the P.I. Officer to join the C.P.C.C.  
g) Q. Are there any ways in which our public image can be improved, if so, how and in what direction?  
A In all our P.I. work we should seek as a secondary aim to communicate the facts that A.A. is for everyone with a drinking problem, from all walks of life and at all stages of progression of the illness.

- h) General P.I. suggestions:

- a) The Board give some thought to the possibility of the B.B.C., T.V., Open Door programme, where the material would be supplied by A.A. under full control.  
b) Should a T.V. Governor/Executive be approached as a possible non alcoholic Board Member?  
c) A.A. Radio tapes for hospital and local Radio with A.A. professional scripts for regional variations. As an example, Norway is to arrange 20 programmes of 10 minutes each.  
d) A travelling exhibition could be set up, possibly in conjunction with Al-Anon.  
e) What's On columns (often free) in the local Press.  
f) Finland get space in the telephone directory alongside the main Emergency Services.  
g) Public Meetings can be useful apart from Mini-conventions and in areas where there are no Mini-conventions. Attention is drawn to Guideline No.1. "Group Meetings". In Norway success has been achieved by using a good quality Invitation Card which lists all the Agencies who are being invited with an addressed R.S.V.P. tear off portion. This way it was found that the Agencies felt obliged to attend. They did not use local people as speakers.

- h) In Scotland an A.A. week was a success. All meetings were Open ending with a large Public Meeting at the end.
- i) If the idea is to get outside Agencies to participate in Min-conventions it is essential to make clear that one of the meetings is a Public Meeting.
- j) Intergroup Meetings. The Swiss invite a few non-alcoholics by special individual invitation, to some Intergroup Meetings.
- k) Public Speaking. We recommend that P.I. doing Public Speaking should try to take along newcomers so that they may gain experience.
- l) We recommend P.I. organise teach-ins for those members interested in outside speaking.
- m) We recommend contact with the Educators at all levels.

#### COMMITTEE NO.4.

#### “LITERATURE”

##### 1. LITERATURE.

- a) The Committee reviewed the British version of the pamphlet “If You are a Professional” which had been produced by the General Service Board following the decision of the General Service Conference 1978. The new pamphlet received the Committee’s approval.
- b) The Committee considered the draft of a suggested new leaflet to be entitled “A Newcomer Asks”. A number of amendments were proposed. Subject to these amendments the Committee were of the opinion that the leaflet, produced in an attractive form, would be a very helpful introduction to anyone approaching A.A. for the first time, and recommend that Conference gives this leaflet its approval.
- c) The Committee considered the text of a leaflet handed to all prison inmates on arrival at prisons in the East Midlands with a view to the preparation of a leaflet on similar lines which could be used in all prisons in Great Britain. The production of such a leaflet was a matter of urgent priority, and the Committee agreed that the East Midland leaflet provided a very suitable pattern. The Committee accordingly recommend that Conference should invite the General Service Board to prepare and publish such a leaflet as soon as possible. The leaflet should be in a similar format to the two recently published leaflets “Where do I go from Here?”, and “Carrying the Message inside the Walls”. A suggested title might be “How did I get Here?”
- d) The Committee considered the “Doctor’s Surgery Card” currently in use to see whether it could be amended to make it suitable for use in other places where people affected by personal drinking problems might see it. The Committee recommend that the present card could very easily be adapted for more general use by the deletion of the phrase “consulting your Doctor” and the substitution of the one word “concerned”.
- e) The Committee considered the progress that had been made by the General Service Board in carrying out the recommendations on literature of the Thirteenth General Service Conference 1978. In the course of discussion the following points were made:
  - i) Twelfth Step Pack. The General Service Board members present reported that the Board had given careful consideration to the suggestion that a Twelfth Step Pack should be produced, but had decided that this exercise would be unduly costly in terms of money and staff time. Some Intergroups were already making up Twelfth

Step Packs themselves however, and it would be helpful if they could be given some guidance as to what such packs should contain. The Committee accepted that, for the reasons given, the General Service Board were unable to put together the sort of material which should ideally be given to the newcomer; but the Board should nevertheless be able to draw up a list of publications which they regarded as especially suitable for new members. The Committee recommend that Conference should invite the General Service Board to prepare such a list.

ii) Literature Order Form. The Committee recommend that new items of literature should be specially indicated on the literature order form, and that items published free of charge should always be included. They further recommend that the Twelfth Step list referred to in the foregoing paragraph should be printed separately on the list.

iii) Guideline on Literature. The Committee recommend that the General Service Board should give consideration to the preparation of a Guideline on Literature.

iv) Copyright. It was reported to the Committee that the leaflet "Just For Today" was no longer covered by the copyright laws and that it could be freely printed by A.A. The Wallet Card, "A. A. Danger Signals" had been prepared by an A.A. member living in the East of Scotland (who is now deceased) and it was reported that copyright was not being claimed for this item.

Having considered the action taken by the General Service Board since the 1978 Conference, and in particular the work that had been carried out in producing a number of new publications as recommended by Conference, the Committee expressed themselves well-satisfied with what had been achieved and placed on record their thanks to the General Service Board for the work they had done. The Committee considered that there was a strong case for ensuring that their own work on literature was carried on from year to year, and accordingly recommend that Conference should resolve to establish a standing Committee on Literature to be composed of delegates attending the General Service Conference each year.

- f) The Committee reviewed the three new single-sheet leaflets which had been published since the 1978 Conference: "A.A. at a Glance", "Where do I go from Here?" and "Carrying the Message inside the Walls". It was agreed that these were very attractive and effective and there was no doubt that they would become increasingly useful as time went on. It was noted that "Where do I go from HERE?" could also be used in other institutions as well as in prisons.

## 2. GUIDELINES.

The three Guidelines published recently: No.3. on Service Representatives, No.5 on Group Officers, and No.6. on Regions were reviewed and thought to be generally acceptable. The main problem was to ensure that they were read by members. Groups had a vital part to play here, and one way of ensuring that they brought the Guidelines to the attention of members was for the General Service Office to send a copy of Guideline No.5. to each new Group Secretary as the intimation of a change of Secretary reached 11 Redcliffe Gardens. In addition there was scope for articles in "Share" and "Roundabout" of a general nature which would prompt members to seek out the Guidelines and read them.

## 3. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.

- a) Attention was drawn to the fact that many A.A. pamphlets circulating in Great Britain were published by A.A. World Services Inc., New York and bore the address of the

General Service Office there. The Committee recommend that Conference should invite the General Service Board to consider ways in which the address of the General Service Office, London, could be shown on these pamphlets, possibly by having this address, overstamped on them. It was recognised that in time more and more of these pamphlets would be produced in a United Kingdom version. The Committee recommend that the General Service Board should, in preparing United Kingdom versions, give priority to pamphlets which would be of most use in the public information work of the Fellowship.

- b) In order to meet the needs of the large communities of non-European immigrants in certain parts of Great Britain whose first language was not English, the Committee were of the view that one or two of the basic pamphlets of A.A. should be translated into languages commonly used in these communities. The Committee therefore recommend that Conference should invite the General Service Board to pursue this matter.
- c) The Committee recommend that when the leaflet, "How it Works" is next reprinted the text should be extended to include the passage in Chapter 5 of "Alcoholics Anonymous" about the three pertinent ideas. At the same time two printing errors in the present edition should be corrected.

The Committee were very pleased to welcome Pentti K. from Finland to join the deliberations. They heard a brief account from him of the Fellowship of A.A. in Finland and asked him to convey their warm greetings to his fellow members on his return to Helsinki.

## COMMITTEE NO. 5

## "OUR STRUCTURE"

### 1. REGIONS

- a) Up to date situation -Regionalisation is complete in Scotland but still developing - or in some districts barely beginning - in England and Wales. Concern is expressed over the lack of progress in view of its appearing to stem from apprehensiveness of what is sometimes regarded as unnecessary change.
- b) Effectiveness of existing Regions - It is generally agreed that existing Regions are working well, but practice and procedures vary. The rapid progress in Scotland has been characterised by flexibility and "an honest desire to become regionalised"; the achievement of regionalisation has accompanied rather than followed the working out of procedures. All over, Regions show a healthy ability to get on with business and the Committee believes that frequency of meetings should follow the Guideline, that is, twice or three times in a year. Suggestions towards standardising agendas and Committee structures, which Eastern Region is already doing under six headings (namely, Literature, External Communications, Institutions, Professional Community, Internal Communications and Structure) were noted and are offered to the General Service Board for consideration.
- c) Guideline No.6. "Regions" - The Committee considers that no amendment is required at present, but of course this must always be reviewed as regionalisation develops.
- d) The Committee recommends:
  - 1) That Conference ask the General Service Board to continue to do all it can

to encourage the information of Regions.

- 2) That in so doing the General Service Board act as “overall mentor” much as Scottish Committee did, co-opting special experience as needed and
- 3) That Conference delegates here present from Intergroups not yet Regionalised should try to start thinking to that end immediately, through furthering discussion between Intergroups and enlisting if possible the assistance of General Service Board members in their areas for more positive guidance and leadership.

## 2. LOCAL SERVICE OFFICES

- a) Current Situation - The Committee heard detailed experience from Bolton, Dundee, Glasgow, Leeds, London, Manchester, Nottingham and Reading. It is clear that little more is needed than Telephone Service, except in the case of Scottish Service Office. Attempts to operate “Service” Offices for purposes other than telephone service have run into many difficulties.
- b) Local Service activities – and
- c) Principles of setting up - The Committee believes that close liaison with General Service Office is essential and that local services must keep to our primary purpose in all simplicity. General Service Office cannot provide local telephone service and these, if thought necessary, should be set up locally. But General Service Office can, and does best, provide literature and general services; there is therefore no necessity for local service offices if they merely duplicate this. It is noted and accepted that Scottish Service Offices’ wider role is a special case in light of its growth; otherwise the Committee believes that local service should be restricted to telephone 12th Step work and contact.

The Committee recommends:

- a) That “Local Service Offices” as such need not be set up merely to duplicate the work of General Service Office and that local efforts confined to “A.A. Telephone Service” contact points, always within the framework of our structure, should not be referred to as “Local Service Offices”. Experience has shown that 12th Step work on the premises is not normally desirable. The financial obligations of these services should be seen to be secure on the local structure, but the Committee believes that the normal operation of our Traditions of autonomy and self-support render detailed recommendations on finance unnecessary.
- b) That as soon as possible the General Service Board should invite Intergroups and Regions to share current experience to the end of early production of a Guideline: and that the Guideline should include warning of pitfalls.

## 3. SURVEY.

The Committee has noted with great interest the preliminary findings of the Survey, which is not yet complete, and eagerly awaits the full report and the information it may hold for us.



## OPEN FORUM

### T.V. and Anonymity

The question of a well known public figure appearing on Television was discussed - this appearance had been a break of Tradition 11.

One delegate drew attention to an American pamphlet advising how such appearances could be undertaken, by using an assumed name and being filmed in shadow.

The General Secretary drew attention to our own Conference decision that no members should take part in T.V. programmes however presented; but referred to the film currently being produced in America. The techniques employed could overcome many of the objections to shadow appearance, which in the past has suggested secrecy.

The Hon. Treasurer, Peter F., referred to the Notes on the Financial Statement and pointed out that the Reserves were in fact not high. Provision for a 1980 Rent Review and Renewal or otherwise of the lease for General Service Office accommodation in 1986 must be taken into account. It was also advisable and sound practice to have two years operating cost in reserve - a figure not yet achieved.

### Reserves and Investments

A delegate queried the necessity for such high reserves, and the interest and accessibility of the investments.

The General Secretary listed the investments, interest rates and maturity dates. The short and medium term local government bonds mature and will be available prior to 1986.

Can Box 514 be published monthly?

The Chairman of the General Service Board reminded the delegates that material for issues depended to a large extent on communications and information from groups, intergroups and regions. If there was no shortage of articles, consideration could be given to the more frequent publication, although it must be borne in mind that each issue costs approximately £350/400.

### Alcohol at A.A. Conventions.

The opinion of Conference on this question was sought, and although there were no definite opinions it was pointed out that in the case of National or large Conventions which were held in hotels or similar licensed premises, the licensee was obliged by law to open the bars at the appropriate time.

### Covenants.

Attention was drawn to the apparent reduction in income from covenanted sources.

The General Secretary explained that a number of covenants had expired without renewal, and others had ceased by reason of death of members.

It was suggested that efforts should be made to popularise this method of donations - such as supplying all Intergroups with the necessary forms and explanations.

It was emphasised that anonymity is maintained and only one certificate of tax deduction is required for amounts under £50 per annum. A requirement of the certificate is that the sum has been donated from an individuals income.

## THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF GIVING

## APPENDIX 'H'

After two lucid presentations from Bill M. and Valerie L. Ginger opened the workshop. There was a long pause, always a good sign since it usually indicates that members have been given food for thought. This was no exception and speaker followed speaker sharing in such depth that the workshop was transformed into an A.A. meeting.

The 5th and 11th Steps were referred to by many speakers and the feelings that came over most strongly was the gradual growth of giving by receiving firstly the love of our fellow members which secondly enabled us in our turn to pass on to newcomers. The sharing of love and way of life is a continuing process. Regular involvement leads to a gradual spiritual awakening which enables us to sense spiritual trouble in others.

The feeling of security that we absorb at meetings eventually is absorbed in such a way that we carry it with us everywhere. This growth of faith and hope we give away by passing it on to newcomers as these were given to us. The charisma of the spirituality that is given to us draws us back to normal living, our defensive barriers crumble and we are reborn. Many members expect a spiritual awakening to be a sudden experience but in many cases this was a gradual feeling of calm and inner peace which grew over a period of time.

Everyone of us reached a spiritual crossroads and it was through giving by other members that we were pointed in the right direction. Our giving started with giving in and an admission and gradual acceptances of the unmanageability of our lives and our own insanity. Through the giving of others we became able to do something about this. This led to us becoming able to hand over, to examine ourselves and to acquire the courage to share with other A.A. members.

When we learn to love ourselves we become able to love others. In the 9th Step we give of ourselves by making amends for our past behaviour. The giving away of what we have received enables us to retain our sobriety. The more we give the more it is replaced.

Everyone who comes to the Fellowship contributes something of themselves, this is pooled together and all members share in it. The slogan "Think, Think, Think" inspired all who spoke. The Higher Power, the spiritual source enables us to carry the message.

Our closing speaker summed it up by saying "Do what you can, God will do what you cannot".

Lastly what a pleasure it was to welcome our European brothers in the Fellowship and the sharing of our experience, strength and hope with them enabled a mutual giving to take place, the message of which we hope they will carry back with them to their own countries.

European Meeting held at the conclusion of the Fourteenth General Service Conference of Great Britain, 8 April 1979.

Present:	Pentti K.	Fin land	
	Valter L.	Finland	
	Dieter B.	West Germany	
	Hans F.	Norway	
	Maurice S.	Switzerland	
	Angus M.	G.S.B. Gt.Britain	
	Joyce C.	G.S.B. Gt.Britain	WSM Delegate
	Ronnie H.	G.S.B. Gt.Britain	ex WSM Delegate
	Gordon W.	G.S.B. Gt.Britain	ex WSM Delegate
	Bill S.	G. S.O. Gt.Britain	WSM Delegate

The following points were raised.

To establish a European zonal meeting to be held alternatively against the World Service Meeting. Suggested date 1981.

Regards financing these zonal meetings it was suggested that we follow the example of World Service Meeting and contribute towards the countries who are not as well off financially as others, in following our primary purpose.

It was felt unanimously that personal contact was of far greater benefit than reading, writing, correspondence etc.

Dieter B. -West Germany

- 1 Each European country should compile a list of groups in the larger towns, for circulation throughout Europe.
- 2 New Orleans 1980 Convention -three possible means of travel:
  - a) Charter from Bremen, 956 D.M.
  - b) Pakoreisen - from Luxembourg, 925 D.M. (one way only)
  - c) Charter (approx. 300 people) from Berlin 960 D.M.

The above prices are for flight only; duration of stay could possibly be 12 days .

The Service Office in Munich is to be used as a clearing house for flight arrangements.

3 They are experiencing difficulties in obtaining literature from General Service Office, New York (sometimes takes four months to arrive). They would, therefore, like to purchase literature in future from General Service Office, London -this was agreed.

It was suggested that all European countries should circulate literature list to other countries,

enabling them to see what is available in other languages.

Maurice S. - Switzerland.

Suggested that perhaps two pages of the next edition of Box 514 should have nothing but European contacts listed on them.

Hans F. - Norway.

Suggested that there should be a letterhead for communal use among the countries (Alcoholics Anonymous E.I.C). It was proposed that Ronnie H. should be responsible for this.

Also suggested that there should be one person responsible in each country for sending information etc. to General Service Office London.

The question of Denmark was brought in, and it was pointed out that this particular country is a central point in Europe for travellers, but that A.A. is not found there at all easily.

Ronnie H. said that he had a contact in Copenhagen called Leif, who is active in one particular group, but there are also two or three groups in existence. There seemed to be no obvious sharing between the groups.

Valter L. - Finland

Suggested that perhaps by using articles which have already appeared in Norwegian newspapers, the Danes could be made more aware of the existence of A.A. Ronnie said this has already been done by a doctor member in Copenhagen but that only a little response have been received, due to opposition from the Government.

Hans F. -Norway

Asked if literature and Guidelines could be sent to Norway, as they find the British Guidelines more applicable than those of the U.S.A. It was suggested that all European countries should be sent a set of Guidelines and a Service Handbook. Permission would be given to translate as they wished.

Pentti K. -Finland

Suggested we look into the possibility of inclusion of an article in one of the magazines which are circulated in Europe; i.e., Readers Digest, Time Magazine. One widely read Medical Journal throughout Europe was the "Lancet". It was suggested that Dr. John Hughes and the Medical Council on Alcoholism could be approached for help in this direction.

## CONCLUSIONS

### General

It was unanimously felt that personal contact was of far greater benefit than correspondence etc. as this meeting and the preceding Conference had illustrated. Efforts should be made to promote this principle by the exchange of visits as observers to each others' Conferences, in addition to continuous sharing of experience and information by correspondence and bulletins.

## 1. European Directory

It was agreed that efforts should be made towards the publication of a European Directory which would contain information of contacts etc. not only the General Service Offices, but major European cities as well.

All delegates to liaise with their respective Service Offices and provide the European Information Centre at 11 Redcliffe Gardens, London SW10 9BG with complete details of Service Offices and contacts in the major cities.

It was also recommended that each country should include in their own Directory of Groups, the addresses and telephone numbers of each European country's Service Office.

## 2 Literature

All European countries should exchange literature lists and General Service Office, London undertook to supply books and literature in English, on request.

General Service Office, London, also undertook to supply packs of the British Guidelines and Service Handbook for Great Britain.

## 3. European Service Meeting

Efforts should be made to establish a European zonal meeting as soon as conveniently possible - such a meeting to be held on alternate years to the World Service Meeting.

Everyone agreed that serious consideration should be given to a European Service Meeting being held in 1981 and that this could take place in Switzerland to coincide with the 25th Anniversary of A.A. in that country. A provisional date of the 7th June 1981 was given by Maurice (Switzerland).

The financing of such a zonal meeting would be on a similar principle to that of the World Service Meeting.

Each country present was asked to consider how much they would be prepared to contribute. The General Service Board in Great Britain will be asked to consider a subsidy in a similar manner that New York subsidises the World Service Meeting.

## **FRIDAY 18 APRIL 1980**

Hulme Hall, University of Manchester was the site for the Fifteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain. The registration and reception commenced at 4 p.m. providing its usual opportunity for the delegates to renew old friendships and to get to know those delegates attending for the first time.

The Conference comprised 86 delegates representing 38 Intergroups or Regions together with 16 members of the General Service Board, representatives from the magazines Share and Roundabout, 2 observers from West Germany, 3 from Sweden and one from the English Speaking Group Central Europe. Ginger W. Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and two staff members made a total attendance of 114.

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE**

The first full session commenced at 8.30 p.m. - the Conference Chairman, Ginger W. called for the customary moments silence followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions by the General Secretary.

Ginger welcomed all delegates coupled with a special welcome to the observers from overseas and presented his keynote address:

“The theme for this Conference “Involvement -Strengthening our Recovery” is, I’m sure, the reason each and everyone of us are gathered here this weekend.

“I for one am very grateful today to those members who encouraged, or perhaps looking back, pressurised me into ‘getting involved’. They made the point it was much more exciting to be part of a team than to stand on the ‘touch line’, and this now I fully appreciate. Although at this moment I feel an absolute nervous wreck, for the remainder of this weekend I have no alternative but to hand over completely to my God, as I understand Him, and this I know works because there are many times that without His strength and guidance my recovery would not be as it is today.

“For me as it was with many, my first involvement was in trying to understand our twelve steps. Mental involvement with a sick and confused mind in trying to come to terms with the ‘first step’, admittance and acceptance that one was, one is and one will always be an alcoholic has to be made before any recovery is at all possible. From then on involvement by attending meetings regularly and sharing with others, particularly on a one to one basis over a cup of tea after the meeting, in getting to know one’s self so as to find a base on which to start building the new life that is available for all who want it - but things have to be different this time. The ingredients have to be changed if we are to succeed and that means if we are to LIVE.

“In six of the remaining eleven steps, a God as we understand Him, is suggested. This cannot be overlooked, so to me another involvement must take place, this time spiritual and this we see and above all feel when we hear members of the fellowship sharing their experiences, and nowhere

more so than at these, our Annual Conferences.

“I am sure that delegates here for the first time will already begin to feel that something extra special is happening around them.

“I know I did when I was first privileged to attend. I cannot and will not ever be able to describe this feeling and I know, that each year I have returned to my Group and Intergroup trying to pass on this feeling of joy, happiness and strength that one gets only to find it is nigh impossible. It is so far away from those dark days of despair and hopelessness that we all experienced on the road to this wonderful fellowship. Unfortunately, as we have seen on too many occasions many have wandered back on to that lonely road. Yes they stopped being involved - the recovery ceased to continue and for us that means DISASTER.

“This leaves only five steps to attempt. Did I say only? I am glad to have come to know a God in the previous steps and become involved with Him, especially Step Eleven. This to me is the most wonderful and beautiful step of all. The last part - praying only for knowledge of HIS will for us and the power to carry that out. Without this steps 4, 8, 9 and 10 would not be possible. I don't think any of us could possibly have tackled this enormous humiliating task of house cleaning, soul cleansing and making of amends without HIS help.”

“If these have been done we have arrived at Step Twelve which suggests “Involvement” loud and clear and as we all know there is nothing better for strengthening our recovery than to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

“It is very hard for me and I am sure for many of us, to fully appreciate as we enter the ‘eighties’ that our fellowship was born during many of our life-times, which as foundations and organisations go, is in its infancy. However, I am sure we would all wholeheartedly endorse that by our growth in the, ‘seventies’ we would leave all the others cold. I feel that the Committees, with the exception of No. 4 Literature, which is a must at all Conferences for constant revision and addition, give you all enormous scope for deep personal ‘involvement’ to produce your Committee Reports on what I hope you feel will be topics that will stimulate the Fellowship in maintaining it's growth in helping the still suffering and struggling alcoholic as we enter this new era. Amongst these none more so than No. 5 ‘Structure and Services’ and No. 6 ‘Regionalisation’. From my point of view, and thank God I only speak for myself, these two committees have the task of making recommendations right to Group level, No. 5 Telephone Guidelines, Premises, Intergroup Functions and Size, Sale of Souvenirs etc., what other organisation would have the courage or moral strength to tackle so many controversial topics? This we know to be essential if we are to survive. Tradition 12 reminds us ‘Principles before Personalities’. Last but not least - No. 6 ‘Regionalisation’. As you can see by the amount of work done in providing information on this topic.

“It was interesting to me to read and remind myself that the 10th General Service Conference 1975 agreed that Regionalisation was desirable ‘because of the benefits to the Fellowship and the fulfilment of our primary purpose’ and the consensus of opinion was that because of rapid growth there was a need for an additional structure between Intergroup and Conference. If that was so in 1975 surely now in 1980 it is time for a conclusion and implementation as is suggested to this Committee and indeed whole of Conference and I can think of no better words than the first paragraph of explanation of the 12th Tradition in the book ‘Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions’ to commence this Conference “The Spiritual Substance of Anonymity is Sacrifice”.

Because A.A's Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realise that the Sacrificial Spirit - well symbolised by anonymity - is the foundation of them all. It is A.A's proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people their high confidence in our future.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Gordon W. Chairman of the General Service Board presented to Conference the Boards Report for the year 1979 and addressed the meeting:

"I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to you all to this General Service Conference, and as Ginger has already said, particularly to those who are here for the first time. I know that you will be feeling a little nervous, but don't feel like that - relax and enjoy it all. A warm welcome, too, to our observers from overseas. You will always be very welcome because we have got a lot to offer you and you have got a lot to offer us, and what better way than in the forum of the General Service Conference.

"This involves sharing. Sharing is the key to it all. I would like to suggest that apart from getting together like this, and during the programme itself, which you will see is an extensive one, there being no time for frolics, there is time for sharing outside, and if you have, and I am sure you may have, doubts and queries about some parts of the programme, ask questions, and mix in. Sharing is one of the great advantages of this Conference - you meet so many people, and get a much better idea of sharing. This is the key to communication.

"Now, as you see on the programme, my job here this evening is to introduce the Board Report. As I have just returned from three months in Australia I thought you may be interested in hearing about the Fellowship over there. I went over there on the 15 January, and I had no sooner arrived at my son's house and was settling in with a cup of tea, feeling rather jaded after the jumbo jet, when the telephone rang. My son said "It is for you, Dad". They had got on to me pretty smartly - it was a 'phone call from the Secretary of the General Service Office. It filled me with a grand feeling of the Fellowship, and it took away quite a bit of that jaded feeling. They particularly wanted me to visit the office and share with them some of our experiences in developing our structure.

"A.A. started off in Sydney and I think that the first message was taken by a Roman Catholic priest. This was in 1945 two years before we got the message here. It took two years to spread to the five major states. It took about ten to eleven years before it got into the Northern Territories where the aborigines are, and where alcoholism is rife, like North America with the Indians. It is understandably slow because it is a vast country and communications are difficult. Out of a population of 14 million they have about 700 Groups. Whereas we have approximately 1,250 Groups here for a population of some 55 million. They have lots of difficulties because of distances, communications etc., they are very conscious of their structural development. They wanted to know how we worked and how we had built up our structure. They have developed their Handbook, or Manual, and it is very much based on the American one. We started some years ago exactly on the same lines, but Ronald, my predecessor as Chairman, had the foresight to recognise that it wouldn't work as we are not bound by American laws. Our Service Handbook is concise and simple to follow and the results of what Conference itself has approved over the years. The Australians have followed the American Service Manual and are finding it



somewhat difficult. Their Board consists at present of a non-alcoholic Chairman and six alcoholic members, one from each State and two General Service Board members from Sydney, who are what the Americans would call the in town Trustees. They have not been able to grow as they would have liked. There has been little co-ordinated progress in prisons, hospitals, literature etc., they wanted to know how we had set about doing it all. I told them about our Board - how it is made up with 13 alcoholic members from all parts of the United Kingdom along with 8 non-alcoholic members, and the role the latter played. They are now busy trying to get four non-alcoholic members which is what they are limited to by their constitution - 8 alcoholic members and 4 non-alcoholic members.

“They were all very, very keen to know how that had happened, and by sharing, learnt from our experiences. They regretted very much their Service Manual had got too complicated, and it missed the principle of keeping it simple.

“I also attended three of their Area Assemblies. Their build up is Groups to Districts and then on to Areas. The Areas are within the States and I found it very similar to our regionalisation experience of the setting up of the boundaries.

“We had been talking about it for a long time. It was similar there.

“Their Annual National Convention took place in Melbourne at Easter and was very similar to ours in format - meetings with a Dinner Dance on Saturday night with everybody thoroughly enjoying themselves. There was ample evidence of the great joy of living throughout the Fellowship, and altogether a very good Convention. There were about 1000 - 1,200 present and, it took place in The Camberwell Civic Centre with a large theatre. Al-Anon were there and so were Al-Ateen. There was a registration fee of \$3 and the luncheon catering was on site. It reminded me very much of the Blue Bonnets Gathering in Dumfries. Group Meetings are very much as ours over here except they are all open meetings - very seldom do you get a closed meeting -just like Canada. It was a great experience, which I enjoyed very much. They have had difficulties but I think I was able to help in as far as structure is concerned. They have difficulties in getting self-support, their problems arise like everywhere else in the Fellowship when they depart from the Traditions.

“In presenting our Board Report I must say that it has been a very, very full year and I think the Board has fulfilled all the requests that were made at the last Conference. They have all virtually been carried out, and it has been a very extensive and exciting year.

“I would like to take the opportunity to give thanks and express appreciation to all the members of the Board who have taken on these functions and also to the General Secretary and all at the General Service Office for the hard work they have put in during the year. The Board is the vehicle to carry out what is voiced here, and I believe we have fulfilled that requirement to the full. Perhaps I could mention a few highlights, the first being literature. Among a number of new pamphlets “A Newcomer Asks” is outstanding. It has had approval from the States, and it was certainly popular in Australia. There have been many, many requests for more copies.

“Regionalisation has gone extremely well during the year. It was put to the Board last year that we should provide an outline plan as to how it should be developed. A special Committee produced such an outline plan and it has been well and truly thrashed out at all levels, and I hope at this Conference it will be finalised so we can go into 1981 with the implementation of it. For

several years at Conference it has come out loud and clear that we must strengthen our P.I. facilities. This has been done. We have now produced a P.I. Manual and you all have copies. This is a good tool for us, and has been called for for a long time. I would like to congratulate the General Secretary and the Staff again for the wonderful work they have done in getting it together for issue here. It will be of particular value to Groups and Intergroups”.

Gordon requested Peter F. the Honorary Treasurer to present the audited Financial Statement and Balance Sheet.

Peter commented that during the year the facilities to improve efficiency within the General Service Office by the acquisition of up to date equipment and more amenable working area had been possible. Additionally, it was now possible to provide staff pension facilities. It is only from a continued sound and secure financial position that the Board can consider undertaking any activities that will ease the passing of our message to those who call for help, just as we ourselves needed it.

Peter appealed to all delegates to take to their Regions and Intergroups and most important their Groups details of the Financial Report.

He stressed that our finances are by no means a secret and he felt sure that if our members are kept informed as to what use was being made of their contributions they would surely be keen to help in maintaining our success through self-support through our own contributions.

The Financial Report was accepted.

Gordon then continued:

“Following on from what Peter has said regarding how the money is being spent, I think we are conscious of being in a sound financial position and would like to provide more in the way of service. Quite a number of leaflets which are being produced are issued free of charge, these P.I. Manuals for example have been rather costly but we will continue to take a very hard look as to how we can plough some of the monies back to the advantage of service. There are always ways that this can be done. That completes the financial side.

“I would like to mention one particular thing. That is to remind ourselves why we need a Conference. I dug out what was written by Bernard Smith, a former non-alcoholic member of the American Board:

“We may not need a General Service Conference to insure our own recovery. We do need it to insure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to insure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined to alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth which brought us back to life.

“We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must insure can never invade A.A. We need it to insure A.A. against government, whilst insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its

Twelve Traditions and all of its services.

“We need it to insure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A. and not of any few. We need it to insure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never had locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to insure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.

“We have, service to the Group, Intergroups etc... How to make the Groups more attractive, so that the people coming in continue to keep on coming and are involved in service. We have a great service to provide to the outside world. We must ensure by our own personal example that we show we are happy people so the public realise what A.A. is and who we are, what we are and where we are so that those in the wilderness may be attracted to us. We can do this by strengthening the P.I. and by our own personal examples. I hope that will come forth during this Conference, that we will find better ways of showing the general public that we have a track record second to none and that our Recovery Programme really works.

“It is with much regret that we have to say farewell to Ronnie who will complete his term at the end of this Conference. He will retire by rotation having done his six year stint. He took over the editorial responsibilities of Share. Share had been going through a difficult time. Articles were being written on a religious theme. Ronald, my predecessor, recognised that the Board must takeover the responsibility of the magazine, and Ronnie came in and took over the job. He has built it up over the years, and now we have got a very good editorial team. Share has gone from strength to strength, but Ronnie has to leave us unfortunately. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Ronnie, for the generous service you have given us, and we wish you well and good health and continue with your sharing. Thank you very much.

“We have two new Board members. This is their first Conference. Miss Sheila Innes of the B.B.C. who is not with us, and Dr. David Robinson who is most interested in self help groups. David has a very sound understanding of the Fellowship and has written a very fine book. We are fortunate that he has joined the Board and we wish him well”.

#### **FIFTH NORWEGIAN GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - OSLO - 1-3 FEB. 1980**

Bill S. presented his observations on his attendance as our observer to the Norwegian General Service Conference and commented: “At the last General Service Conference Angus M. reported on his attendance at the Fourth General Service Conference in Norway and spoke in glowing terms of the warmth of the welcome he received and the spirit of unity he experienced.

“It was my privilege to attend the Fifth Norwegian Conference and I wholeheartedly confirm Angus’s feelings and experience.

“Our representation at the General Service Conferences of other European countries, when invited, is in furtherance of our objective of promoting and establishing firm links and communications within the European Fellowship.

“This simple principle of co-operation between various countries in Europe was first agreed at

the Second World Service Meeting in 1972. On that occasion it was a hastily arranged ad-hoc meeting held over a working lunch. The Third and Fourth World Service Meetings had a more formal committee included in the Agenda. It is in this way that we have slowly but surely exchanged experiences and ideas with each other for the future. "Our General Service Board has always fostered the principle of exchanging information, correspondence, and personal contact and I am sure that these exchange visits greatly contribute towards this end. This is fully endorsed by our General Service Conference and in fact provision is made in our Service Handbook for Great Britain that observers from the European countries should be invited to join in our deliberations and we have been in past years privileged to welcome and establish lasting friendships with many friends from the continent.

"At the Norwegian conference I joined observers from Sweden and Finland but it was my good fortune that I lost nothing of the sense of the meetings since I had a most admirable and conscientious translator and during the open sharing sessions found a considerable number of members able to speak English.

"The Conference was made up of sixteen district representatives together with seven members of the General Service Board, two of whom are non-alcoholic, the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer and two service personnel, four observers and the Conference leader.

"The main item on the Agenda was to approve a new structure for A.A. in Norway which is based on twenty districts covering a total of 76 Groups. The estimated membership is 760.

"The structure was agreed in accordance with the Guidelines" in the Service Handbook for A.A. in Norway. It was pleasing to learn that our own Conference and structure had to some extent influenced the preparation of their Handbook, Structure and Composition of Conference. After discussion there was only one dissenting delegate who supported a proposal from his Group. The spirit of A.A. prevailed and the delegate felt certain that the group and district would support the new structure wholeheartedly.

"An important item on the Agenda was the discussion of the regular distribution of their magazine BOKS 205. It was agreed that this means of communication was essential and that ways and means should be found to ensure a regular distribution even if this meant on a two-monthly basis just as long as it was regular and not at infrequent intervals.

"Another important item was the possible change of districts - it was agreed that for the present time one district which was in the far north and currently not very strong could be represented by its neighbouring district for the time being.

"From open discussion it would appear that there is only a small percentage of women members - approximately three in one hundred although Dr Olsen did intimate that from his experience ten years ago the ratio was one in twenty - it is now one in seven coming forward for treatment.

"A Swedish delegate reported that although their growth was slow, about half of their membership were women and also he reported that the Fellowship in "Sweden was holding a special weekend meeting on March 14-16 to examine and if possible to find ways and means of encouraging growth.

"We took the opportunity on the Sunday morning to have a European meeting. Present were the

Norwegian World Service Meeting delegates and the delegates from Sweden and Finland with Hans the Hon. Secretary and Arne B. and Bjorn O. who have been nominated to be Norways observers to our Fifteenth General Service Conference.

“The general, idea of a European Directory was well received - the directory would contain the addresses of the Service Offices and any local telephone offices for contact purposes but giving in full the list of any foreign speaking groups in the country.

“The idea of a European Service Meeting of about fifteen countries being held in 1981 in Geneva to coincide with the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of A.A. in Switzerland was agreed as being a further step forward.

“The continuing exchange of reports of each others Conferences, Bulletins, information and literature, Group Directories, Guidelines etc. was recommended.

“I am sure you will appreciate that it is not possible for me to give you a verbatim report but I hope that this resume will convey to you the spirit of the Fellowship in Norway and, of course, also in Sweden and Finland and the desire of those present that al though we may sometimes be separated by distance and languages we nevertheless are one and the same Fellowship.

“Personally this was a memorable occasion and one which will remain with me always - the hospitality, friendship and Fellowship cannot be forgotten.”

The Conference Chairman thanked Bill S. for his presentation.

After discussion the General Service Board Report to Conference -Appendix “A” - was formerly accepted.

## **CONVENTIONS**

At the invitation of the Chairman the General Secretary reported that the Northern Convention in 1980 is being arranged by the Intergroups in the North East of England and will be held at the Norbreck Castle, Blackpool on 6-8 June 1980 and the responsibility for the Southern Convention in October 1980 is being undertaken by Southern Region.

The Northern Convention 1981 has been arranged to be held at the Norbreck Castle, Blackpool for the weekend 27-29 March 1981 and al though no firm undertaking has been given in all probability the responsibility will be that of the North West Region.

The location for the Southern Convention 1981 has not yet been decided upon but in view of the shortage of accommodation at Broadreeds Camp, Selsey enquiries are being made regarding possible alternatives which would necessitate the reservation of one central meeting hall with members making arrangements for their own overnight accommodation.

## **RESOLUTION.**

The undermentioned resolutions were submitted, discussed and unanimously agreed:

1. It is the desire of this the Fifteenth General Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain to place on record and confirm the relationship between Alcoholics Anonymous and AI-Anon Family Groups; and to acknowledge A.A's debt of gratitude to the AI-Anon Family Groups, therefore -

It is RESOLVED that Alcoholics Anonymous recognises the special relationship which it enjoys with the AI-Anon Family Groups, a separate but similar Fellowship. It is further RESOLVED that Alcoholics Anonymous recognises the great contribution which AI-Anon Family Groups have made, and continue to make in assisting the families of alcoholics everywhere.

2 It is RESOLVED that this Conference recommends that the General Service Board thoroughly re-examines the decision of the Fourth General Service Conference 1969 especially on the question of appearance of members on television and films.

The General Service Board is requested to report its findings to the Sixteenth General Service Conference in 1981.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1981**

The undermentioned names for Conference Chairman 1981 were proposed and seconded:

Charles N	Cornwall
Willem H	Southern
Dugald F	London South East
David L	North West
Gabrielle H	West Riding

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election was to take place at the final session of Conference on Sunday morning. This first session closed with the Serenity Prayer and the delegates then retired to informal sessions.

### **SATURDAY 19 APRIL**

### **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The six Committees convened at 9 a.m. through to 12.30 p.m and re-convened at 2.15 p.m. until 4 p.m.

### **OPEN FORUM**

From 4 p.m. until 5.30 p.m. whilst the Chairmen and Secretaries were preparing their reports, a full session of Conference met in 'Open Forum'. A summary of the points raised is included in Appendix 'H'.

## **WORKSHOP**

The theme this session which convened at 8.30 a.m. was 'Back to Basics'. The moderator was Maurice (Leeds) General Service Board member, Secretary David L. of North West. Presentations were made by Elizabeth K. of South East Anglia and Jim F. of 'Roundabout'.

The presentations are enclosed as Appendix 'I' and 'J'.

A summary of the Workshop is contained in Appendix 'J'.

## **FILM**

The film "A.A. - An Inside View" was shown. It received a somewhat mixed reception although it was agreed that the technical aspects of the film whilst using A.A. members did not infringe Tradition Eleven.

A decision on its distribution etc. will be made after further consultation with the copyright holders - General Service Office, New York.

At the close of this meeting the printed Reports of the Committees were circulated.

## **SUNDAY 20 APRIL**

At 9.15 a.m. the Conference assembled for the final session. Ginger W. Conference Chairman invited each of the Committee Chairman of the six committees to present their respective reports.

These reports were fully discussed, amended as thought necessary and adopted. They are attached as Appendix 'B to G'.

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 1981 CONFERENCE.**

Prior to voting Dugald F. London South East withdrew and the nominations of:

Charles N.	Cornwall
Willem H.	Southern
David L.	North West
Gabrielle H.	West Riding

for the Chairman of the Sixteenth General Service Conference 1981 were put to the vote.

David L. of North West Intergroup was duly elected.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Sixteenth General Service Conference in 1981 will be held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on 10-12 April 1981.

### CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Ginger W. invited Ronnie H. the retiring member of the General Service Board to address Conference.

Ronnie said:

“At this point in the Conference I’ve become aware of a sort of general ‘fidget’ - a bit like when, at the movies, you are within sight of the final clinch and everyone around you is diving under the seat for bags and coats and preparing to make a rush for the exit. I have to admit that sometimes I’ve been among the fidgeters.

“This year it’s rather different. I’m clinging on to every second of what remains of this Conference, including this afternoon’s session with our friends from overseas. Because as from today it’s goodbye to the Conference scene from me, and I’m not altogether sure how I feel about it.

“You see, I’ve been around for so long - quite legitimately, I understand - that I must seem like a part of the furniture. I was at the Midland Hotel for that first exploratory Conference, when I represented the fledgling Prison Intergroup. For a while my ticket to Manchester was as a floating, non-voting delegate for Share magazine. Finally, I am today completing my term as a member of the General Service Board.

“When I joined A.A. I certainly didn’t see myself as the sort of person who sits on committees or anything like that. I believed that all I needed was to be able to get to meetings and listen. I might even discover what had made it all happen, and even something about the person I really was. Later I might learn to live with the person I really was, and with the rest of the world as a result I might get to feel more relaxed; certainly more sober in the broadest sense of the word.

“But involvement took hold in the sly way that it does and all sorts of surprising things began to happen. That’s why I’m here.

“I found myself getting involved with the work in prisons. My motives were not always the right ones and I played God quite a bit. Once or twice I got fairly neatly conned but finally I emerged comparatively unscathed and a lot wiser.

“I’d always found it easier to say things on paper than out loud. So when I felt I had something to say, I wrote an article for the Newsletter, and then another. ‘In the end I was closely involved with the magazine’s re-birth as Share.

“On the way I had discovered a voice of a sort at meetings and after a little while stopped being afraid that if I opened my mouth people would laugh at me. Soon you couldn’t shut me up and I was asked to speak at meetings other than my home group. I went all over the place. It was rather a heady experience and I revelled in it. It was like being on a successful tour and the



climax was reached at the 1972 Convention in London with an open meeting at Sadlers Wells Theatre. Don't ask me how I got to be chairman of that open meeting, but I was. After that, whenever anyone was needed to introduce a line-up of A.A. speakers I was the Number one choice. Years ago I used to face an audience as part of my job and I must have picked up one or two tricks along the way which I later used to good effect at places like Selsey.

“My Higher Power obviously thought things had gone far enough and taught me a sharp little lesson by making my already defective hearing become markedly worse. So there was only one thing I could decently do: get out.

“During the years I've been attending Conference I've seen many changes. One year, a high-powered 'A.A. politician' for want of a better description, telephoned me immediately after Conference had ended, to find out what had happened up here. Do you know, my mind went totally blank; I could not remember a single thing that had been said. So I took a deep breath and came up with one word – 'Growth'.

“Actually, it was true. In fact, Conference has been growth all the way. More and more, I've been aware of the way in which this annual event grows more mature and responsible. The Service Handbook represented growth and gave us a structure of our own. There's a big stride forward in P.I., and considerable growth where our literature is concerned; in the last couple of years alone, much headway has been made with new/or revised pamphlets and seven Guidelines. As we have edged nearer Regionalisation, over several years, we have found new horizons. Of course, in the midst of all this progress, I've been aware of a few private skirmishes which flared up and died, but which have at the time been enough to cause me some alarm, mainly because I detest disharmony. But in the end I've come to recognise and trust the strange miracle we call the Group Conscience.

“When I was asked to join the Board, I was stunned. It was the most amazing and unexpected nod of approval I'd ever had, even greater than the time I'd been allowed to walk unescorted from the main gate of a prison to my destination some distance away. I remember saying on both occasions 'They trust me' I hope that I have honoured that trust.

“Time will prove whether I can join the ranks of those who retire by rotation gracefully or otherwise. Nobody has ever explained entirely to my satisfaction exactly what a Bleeding Deacon is but instinctively I know that 'Old Timer' sounds better to me.

“I defy anyone to become involved in A.A. service without learning things that will transform your life. When I was ready, when the time was ripe, I learned something that I never fully appreciated before, that perhaps I needed to know. It came to me quite painlessly, unlike other re-adjustments that I needed to make that were only possible when accompanied by a good deal of hurt.

“It's awfully simple, this big truth I learnt. It's a matter of identity. All I have to offer to the world is myself - just the way I am. There is no need to create, or allow to be created, an image of Ronnie. Images have to be lived up to and that's like doing it the hard way. If my very best is more or less in tune with what is required of me, if I do not offend the group conscience, if I can be a small cog in the wheels that keep our Fellowship running smoothly, what more can I ask?

“At my very first A.A. meeting, I heard the Serenity Prayer and was bowled over by the wonder

of the words. I remember saying to myself, ‘I have found a blueprint by which to rebuild my life, which is a mess. If I can only follow that blueprint, the mess will disappear’.

“That was, and is, my vision. I believe that Conference is a place where many, many visions meet. Add to the Serenity Prayer, (the source of my vision) our Steps and our Traditions, together with our precious legacies of Recovery, Service and (especially) Unity, and with these gifts A.A. must continue to grow and inspire till the end of time, one day at a time.”

In formally closing the Conference, Ginger W. the Chairman remarked; “As Ronnie steps down from his term of office as a Board member he does not step directly out of service. He will still have his involvement with ‘Share’ magazine and the continuing hope it brings to us all.

I would like to offer praise and thanks to Elaine and Sarah and the other Staff members for their work prior to and during the Conference. I would also like to extend to the staff of Hulme Hall our grateful thanks for their warmth and welcome once again and as always they have been most helpful.

“It has been a very overwhelming experience for me to be asked to be your Chairman on this occasion and it was very inspiring to attend three General Service Board meetings for the preliminary discussions prior to the weekend.

“I feel that one has to come to this Conference to get the real feeling of our Fellowship and I am sure you will all go forth into Regions with this same one spirit in our hearts.

“I will go back with my ego deflated a little bit and will have to step down a few rungs of the ladder. It will bring me back to basics.

I have been very privileged to be your Chairman on this occasion and can only say how much I have enjoyed the event.

“The name of the game is Sharing and each and every one of us has a duty to the suffering alcoholic who comes to us for help”.

Gordon W. Chairman of the General Service Board expressed to Ginger the gratitude of all the Conference Delegates for the part he had played in such an important and inspiring Conference.

Gordon continued that there was really nothing more he could add to what had already been said except to express to all delegates many, many thanks for all the contributions that had been made. To this was added a hope that they would take back to the Fellowship outside all that had been learnt and all the messages received during the Conference since this in fact was to the pledge that had been given to us in 1935 by our co-founder Bill W.

The Fifteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain came to a close with the delegates joining in the Serenity prayer.

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## APPENDIX 'B'

### COMMITTEE NO. 1.

### “RECOVERY THROUGH SERVICE”

Service, as clearly shown in our Steps and Traditions, is a sure way to personal spiritual growth and a full and happy recovery.

Service is essential if we are to effectively carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic, and fulfil our primary purpose.

1 The Committee felt that we should encourage the new member to become involved in Group and other service activities in general. However, the Committee felt there is reluctance on behalf of some members to become involved. We would point out that to step out of an A.A. office you love can also be difficult but can be a step towards growth as quoted in “The A. A. Group” pamphlet.

We felt that appointment of members to welcome new faces to our groups is of great value.

Early encouragement in sharing our service experience and an explanation of service responsibility available within the Group is of value.

After a reasonable period of approximately three months sobriety, the newcomer could be introduced to further A. A. service. We recommend regular Group service inventories.

2. To stimulate interest within the Group, and to be constantly conscious of our primary purpose, we recommend new members to accompany older members on Twelfth Step calls, which in turn enables the newcomer to gain the necessary experience in carrying the message. We confirm the advisability of two people doing Twelfth Step work when possible.

A good literature table is essential and should include information on G.S.O., Conference and Intergroup. The meeting content was also felt to be important, whether it be a Step theme or a Sharing Meeting.

3. The shared experience regarding the recommendations of Guideline No.5. “Group Officers” in the filling of Group responsibilities however small, was that the Group Officers should be made aware of their responsibilities as stated in what the Committee considered to be an excellent Guideline No.5. However, this publication does not seem to be used by all the Groups. It is suggested that Groups conduct a Group inventory on this Guideline.

It was recommended that copies of all current Guidelines are on our literature stands.

We would ask the Board to consider making available for next Conference a folder containing all current and modified Guidelines.

4 It is considered desirable that rotation of Group Officers takes place regularly, as is suggested in our Guidelines, so that others may share in the experience and service for the benefit of the individual and the Fellowship.

5 We recommend the regular use of Group conscience/service meetings, remembering that every member of the Group, irrespective of length of sobriety, is a part of that conscience, so that the Group conscience may be that of a loving God and not of anyone person.

6 We feel that decisions, as a result of such inventories, should be freely shared with other Groups at Intergroup level. It is our opinion that decisions at Group level should be carried by responsible persons to Intergroup, in a genuine feeling of sharing.

While this is the ideal, we are aware that frequently at Intergroup level this is not achieved, and we recommend Intergroups to take a good look at how they fare in this respect. We suggest that Intergroups follow relevant Guidelines.

7 We are of the opinion that Intergroup representatives are at times chosen for the wrong reasons, and strongly recommend that Groups endeavour to select a stable and experienced member as their representative per Guideline No. 3. appreciating that their representative may go on to further service in the Fellowship.

8 It is suggested that we get members to recognise the importance of the structure of A.A. by sharing our personal experience of A.A. involvement, stressing the Twelve Traditions and encouraging the new member to read: "A.A. Comes of Age" and other pamphlets available.

Also encouraging Group discussion on all aspects of A.A structure.

At the present time Share is publishing articles on the Twelve Steps, and will later publish articles on the Twelve Traditions.

Advising all Group members of any A. A. activities in their area.

## **COMMITTEE NO. 2**

## **"STRENGTH THROUGH ANONYMITY"**

The committee were deeply impressed by Bill's last message in which he says:

"My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our Fellowship and for the myriad blessings bestowed, upon us by God's Grace.

If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a Fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity".

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.

A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn

back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace".

These words were very much in our minds during our deliberations. Our considered opinions were:

1 Complete anonymity has to be preserved particularly on initial contact and throughout the early stages of recovery. Once confidence has been built up the member should then be able to assess the true value of his or her anonymity.

2 The very sick alcoholic shows indifference to anonymity but becomes aware of its importance in the course of the first few weeks. Less sick alcoholics who are better able to assess their condition can find the attraction of anonymity to be of the highest value.

3 With Bill's last message in mind, the Committee were unanimously of the opinion that the sacrifice of personal prestige to achieve spiritual strength through anonymity was of the first importance. It was felt, however, that some Groups were not putting sufficient emphasis on spiritual growth as leading to humility and serenity, at which point there should be no need for personal prestige.

4 In answer to the question "Is the use of full names ever justified, and if so, at what level?" the committee were of the opinion that the use, with discretion, of full names can be justified eg., to facilitate communications with the medical and legal professions etc. Extreme caution, however, must be taken when handling communications within the public sector.

5. Anonymity need not inhibit the presentation of the A.A. programme to other agencies. Information as to local offices or Group meetings can be adequate. However, in some cases communications can be much more effective and prompt by making the full name and relative particulars available. In the case of prisons it may be essential to break anonymity before contact can be made

6. With regard to the directories, the committee felt that the use of full names was valuable at the level of Intergroup and Regional Officers where the confidentiality of members could be relied upon. Concern was expressed about the accuracy of international directories. It was felt that there were considerable difficulties in keeping such publications up to date. In most cases information as to local offices could suffice.

After a long discussion on anonymity in relation to the mass media, no consensus was reached. The report of the General Service Board on this subject will be of utmost interest to the members of this Committee.

The deliberations of this Committee have convinced its members that anonymity is, and will remain, the spiritual foundation of our Traditions.

## APPENDIX 'D'

### COMMITTEE NO. 3

### "P.I. C.P.C."

This Committee's task was to review progress in the P.I. - C.P.C. field and it was noted with satisfaction that the past year has produced a growing awareness at both national and local level of the importance of a properly co-ordinated public relations policy.

The Committee especially welcomed the new P.I. Workbook which all committee members agreed filled a long felt need.

It also was gratified to learn that a National P.I. Committee is in process of being set up and that its first task will be to formulate a public relations policy for A.A. in Great Britain. Approval was given to the prototype of the new portable exhibition equipment for use at public events and it was hoped that Intergroups and Regions would eventually be able to devise their own equipment based on this model.

Reviewing progress at the local level, it was found that as a result of the recommendations of last year's Conference there was a new surge of interest in P.I. - C.P.C. activity, but while areas like Birmingham are far advanced in the use of the media including public service announcements on radio and television, in other places the amount of P.I. activity is still negligible. There was a strong feeling that, regardless of the immediate results achieved, involvement in P.I. - C.P.C was creating great enthusiasm within the Fellowship and was contributing positively towards the growth and spirit of A.A.

The Committee believed, that where it is still lacking, enthusiasm could be created by ensuring that P.I. - C.P.C. suggestions originating at Conference be relayed to local Groups, and by those already involved in P.I. calling regularly for volunteers to help out in these activities. Emphasis was again placed on the need for Group secretaries to convey relevant information to their Group members.

It was felt that in terms of the media, we must be prepared to take all available opportunities to carry the message, but we must accept that media coverage may not be exactly to our liking. Therefore we must be willing to accept the rough with the smooth without attempting to dictate policy to editors or producers. (See pages 7 and 8 in the P.I. Workbook). However, in all dealings with the media we should carefully explain the importance of anonymity as the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship.

The Committee found that the principle of "let's be friendly with our friends" was not being strictly adhered to. It was noted that some members project an arrogant attitude towards other agencies and that the question of controlled drinking was a particularly emotive one for many people.

Despite personal misgivings, it was felt that we must be more open-minded and tolerant and be willing to accept that we do not have all the answers in all cases. It was stressed that members engaged in P.I - C.P.C work should thoroughly study the pamphlet entitled "How A.A. Members Co-operate with other Community Efforts to Help Alcoholics".

We should, at all times, show willingness to accept invitations to explain our programme of recovery but members doing so should remember that they are not speaking on behalf of A.A. but merely as recovering individuals. Where possible, it was considered preferable to have at least two A.A. speakers at any outside event, and every effort should be made to ensure that all speakers read the pamphlet "Speaking at non-A.A. Meetings" before participating at the public level.

In choosing non-A.A. speakers for A.A. platforms, great care should be exercised in selecting people whose message suits the purpose of the meeting. If meetings are to convey information about A.A. and how it works, there is no point in having speakers who cannot fulfil this requirement.

There was a strong feeling that where possible at the public level Al-Anon speakers should be invited to take part because of their vital understanding of the family illness aspect of alcoholism and the subsequent recovery process.

The Committee acknowledged that P.I. activity is central to our primary purpose which is to stay sober and to help carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Only by fulfilling the latter responsibility can we guarantee our own continued recovery.

## **APPENDIX 'E'**

### COMMITTEE NO. 4.

### "LITERATURE"

#### Literature

- a) The Committee reviewed the new leaflet "A Newcomer Asks" which had been produced by the General Service Board following the decision of the General Service Conference 1979, and considered "the pamphlet to be highly successful in terms of content and layout.
- b) The Committee reviewed the redesigned and amended leaflet "How It Works" and noted that the excerpt from Chapter 5 had been extended to include "the three pertinent ideas as requested by" the General Service Conference of 1979. The leaflet received the Committee's approval although it was felt that the heavy black lines edging the white band where the title is printed were rather severe. The Committee expressed a preference for the cover of "A Newcomer Asks" where there is no black edging to the white band and recommends that this is borne in mind when reprinting takes place.

The Committee also recommends that the origin of the passage be acknowledged in the leaflet so that newcomers may be attracted to reading the book "Alcoholics Anonymous."

- c) The Committee reviewed the leaflet "How Did I Get Here?" and in general were well pleased with it. However, it was felt that some of the questions were not directed strongly enough at a prison readership. The Committee recommends that when the leaflet is reprinted the question "Did you crave a drink at a definite time?" be deleted and that the fifth question be moved up to take its place, and the following be inserted as the

final question, “Do you do things drunk you’d never do sober?” The Committee also expressed reservations about the three dimensional lettering of the title and recommends that in future printings the title be printed without this.

- d) The Committee considered the draft leaflet as a replacement for “Who Me?” but do not feel able to recommend this to Conference for its approval. It was felt that the old version had an immediate impact on the alcoholic not able to concentrate for long periods which was partly a result of content and partly of layout. In the Committee’s unanimous opinion the new version was heavier both in content and appearance. It was particularly felt that the questionnaire had an integral part to play in persuading an alcoholic that he might have a problem and that if permission to reprint can be obtained from the copyright holders it should be included in any new version.

The Committee recommends that another attempt be made to produce and anglicise, modern equivalent which has the impact of the old but uses new material written by A.A. members.

- e) The Committee reviewed the descriptive literature list and expressed approval. Amendments were suggested for the next reprint. The Committee also recommends that the brief paragraph (possibly contained in a box) outlining the process by which literature becomes Conference approved, is included, together with the suggestion that at meetings where non A.A. literature is on sale in addition to Conference approved literature the two be kept separate.

The Committee approves the method by which literature, suitable for newcomers is indicated on the new order form, but suggests that in future printings the asterisk be made heavier throughout and the words “suggested as suitable for a Twelfth Step Pack” be placed in a more prominent position, possibly at the top of the sheet beneath the heading.

- f) The Committee considered the question of what basic pamphlets on other languages are required in addition to those already available, and recommends that the General Service Board takes steps to ascertain from Intergroups the local needs in their area.

## **GUIDELINES**

- a) The Committee considered draft Guideline No. 7 “A.A. Telephone Services” and approved it in the main with certain amendments. The Committee recommends that subject to these changes Conference approves this Guideline.
- b) The Committee considered the draft Guideline No. 8 “The Relationship between A.A. and Al-Anon” and subject to approval of an alteration recommends that Conference approves the Guideline. The Committee also recommends that the General Service Board include an expression of gratitude to Al-Anon for their co-operation in the production of the Guideline.

### **Further Points**

Some members of the Committee felt strongly that in view of the amount of reading matter for the Committee to consider, it would be helpful that where possible draft Guidelines are circulated to Committee members prior to Conference.



The Committee were very pleased to welcome Sten G. from Sweden to join the deliberations. They heard briefly from him about literature and the intended Swedish publication of "A Newcomer Asks."

**APPENDIX 'F'**  
**COMMITTEE NO. 5**

**"STRUCTURE AND SERVICES"**

**1 Consideration of draft Guideline No. 7 "A.A. Telephone Services".**

Draft Guideline No. 7 was considered, and it was recommended that this should be endorsed subject to an amendment and an addition.

2 After a full discussion, during which arrangements for telephone services in many areas were noted, it was recommended that where possible, premises could be rented from any agency other than those engaged in the field of alcoholism lest confusion should arise in the identity of our Fellowship. The Committee further recommended that the telephone service office should be kept separate from all other A.A. activities.

3 Review Intergroup functions and activities. After a lengthy discussion by the Committee when reviewing the function of the Intergroup the following points were made:

- a) Intergroups appeared to be functioning satisfactorily but there was room for growth and development within their services.
- b) There was a need for Intergroup Officers to go to Groups or hold Workshops in order that the primary purpose of the Intergroup should be made known and properly understood.
- c) There was a need to consider the method by which the A.A. recovery programme could be presented in a more attractive manner. The Presentation should be varied according to the needs of the audience, placing emphasis on recovery and the means of helping the alcoholic. The Public Information Workbook should assist in this endeavour.
- d) Liaison with staff in prisons and hospitals should be close, continuous and on a personal basis where possible, rather than any other form of communication.
- e) Intergroups should emphasise continually to Groups that the newcomer should be welcomed, made to feel at home and given encouragement.

**4. Does the Committee feel it necessary to review the recommended size of an Intergroup?**

The Committee recognises that the number of Groups in an Intergroup must vary with the population density and geographical configuration of the area of the county involved and therefore the number of Groups constituting an Intergroup could be determined only by its effectiveness in dealing with the service needs of the relevant area.

**5 Does a club constitute a Group?**

Each Group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole (Tradition 4). In view of the above Tradition and in the light of experience coupled with the information in the pamphlet "The A.A.Group" page 40, item 39, "technically there is no such thing as an A. A. club" the committee strongly recommended that clubs could not be considered as A.A groups.

## **6 What are the Committee's views on the sale of souvenirs etc., at Group meetings and Conventions?**

The Committee recognised that it is not possible or desirable to attempt to interfere with the buying of souvenirs by individuals for their personal use or for gifts for others.

However, the Committee recommended that the convenors of Conventions and the Officers of Intergroups and Groups should examine the motives of individuals for the sale of souvenirs and the profits involved taking into account the Traditions of A.A. Private individuals should be discouraged from making profits from A.A. members. Any money from the sale of souvenirs should be used for A.A. purposes.

## **APPENDIX 'G'**

### **COMMITTEE NO. 6**

### **"REGIONALISATION"**

#### **1. Regional Boundaries.**

The Committee considered the proposed boundaries shown on the map attached to the General Service Board's paper on regionalisation, and the suggested areas set out in Table 1 of that paper. Accepting that the Fellowship as a whole wishes to see decisive and prompt action on regionalisation, and is waiting for a positive lead from the General Service Conference, the Committee endorses the boundaries set out in the paper, subject to the following qualifications:

- a) A Group or Intergroup situated close to a regional boundary may, if it wishes, and if there is agreement by all concerned, move across a regional boundary, provided there is a good reason for this e.g., to make it easier for regionalisation to take place.
- b) Where an Intergroup, or Intergroups, have yet to decide what region they wish to join, they should be given time to reach an amicable decision on this question.

#### **2. Regional Representation**

The Committee agreed that each Region, regardless of the number of constituent Intergroups, should nominate six delegates to the General Service Conference. This will enable a delegate from each Region to serve on each of the six Conference Committees.

Subject to the qualifications referred to in 1.a. and b. and to the revised regional representations, the Committee recommends that Conference should give its full approval to the proposals in the General Service Board's paper, and that they should be put into operation with effect from the 1st January 1981. This will mean that representation at the Sixteenth General Service

Conference 1981 will be on a Regional basis throughout Great Britain.

### **3 Channel Islands**

The Committee agreed that the Channel Islands Intergroup should send two delegates to the General Service Conference, and that for other purposes it should be linked to Region 8.

#### **ADDENDUM**

After approval of this report the question of the use of Third Legacy procedure for the election of Officers was discussed. Various experiences were shared, and it was agreed that such procedure could be time wasting and served little useful purpose. It was agreed that the normal majority decisions used within the Fellowship should be quite satisfactory and certainly 'keep it simple'.

#### **OPEN FORUM**

#### **APPENDIX 'H'**

##### **Certificate of Attendance for Probationers etc.**

The consensus of opinion appeared to be that the signing of a probationers or parolees certificate of attendance at an A.A. meeting was a matter for the conscience of the signing member. Such a signature merely confirmed the individuals attendance and in no way inferred any assessment of recovery whatsoever - such assessment must be left to the Probation and After-Care Service.

##### **Social Drinking Theory.**

It was felt that as a Fellowship guided by Tradition Ten we have no opinion on this theory or on programmes being undertaken to teach problem drinkers to again drink socially.

It was recognised that there were undoubtedly dangers in the propagation to new members but it was felt that individual efforts at a personal level to highlight the dangers are our best answer.

##### **Discussion on Hospitals and Prisons.**

The question was asked as to when specific activity in institutions and hospitals and prison establishments would be discussed at Conference. It was noted that one committee in 1978 and prior to that in 1976 had specifically discussed this service.

However, it is planned that future conferences will have six Standing Committees and it is envisaged that an Institutions Committee will be a permanent feature. This year Committee No.6 has been especially studying Regionalisation and it is hoped that if this question is satisfactorily settled this year the Institutions Committee would replace it.

Box 514

It was suggested that the Bulletin Box 514 should be issued with the Share magazine since it was

felt it was not getting to all members.

It was pointed out that Box 514 is a free issue on the basis of three copies to every registered group whereas the magazine Share was only purchased by slightly more than 50% of the Groups.

It was strongly suggested that all delegates should raise this matter at group level to encourage group secretaries to inform the members that the bulletin was available for any interested member to read. It was also pointed out that not all members are interested in service since at any one time a large proportion of our members have under one years membership.

Several other matters which were purely of an administrative nature were brought up and it was agreed that these should be dealt with in the normal way through correspondence with the General Service Office.

## **APPENDIX' I                      WORKSHOP                      "BACK TO BASICS"**

Elizabeth K. South East Anglia

Since coming into the fellowship of A.A. so many things have happened to me and I have come to believe that often these things happen to me for a reason.

When invited to make a presentation for the workshop on "Back to Basics" for this Conference I was able to accept if not with complete alacrity at least with a feeling of gratitude that today I have been given the choice of accepting opportunities as they are presented to me or making excuses.

In the weeks since making this commitment the subject hasn't been far from my mind and acting on a suggestion I made copious notes by jotting down my thoughts as they came to me. Which, just like that, sounds very simple but I have found it far from easy although it has helped to accept that this too can be used as part of my 'treatment' as I think of my recovery.

When I 'arrived' in A.A. I was quite convinced that my problems caused me to drink. I don't know which problem it was that made me pick up a drink again a week after my first meeting but the experience served as a painful lesson about it being the first drink that does the damage. Chastened, I was more prepared to listen but progress was slow because of my reluctance to talk at meetings and would shy away from 'one to one' sharing that might have helped me. As an avid reader I was attracted to the A. A. books very early on but it was some time before I did more than just glance through them. Still looking for a way out I bought and borrowed books on Alcoholism and learned a lot about the illness. It was more in desperation than anything that made me turn back to the Big Book and it was here, when I was good and ready, that I found my answer. Yes, I was an alcoholic but it no longer seemed such a devastating thought because the Big Book told me there was something I could do about it and not only that it showed me how, in a way that was acceptable to me.

The relief was like a huge weight being lifted from me and I thought it would be plain sailing from now on. But it was only the beginning, just the first step. Staying away from one drink one

day at a time things were getting better, I was learning to apply some of what I could understand to my day to day living and even going on 12th Step calls but deep down I knew somehow that something was missing.

One day on a 12th Step call I was confronted by someone who wasn't only not accepting the message but was throwing it straight back to me. I was told I didn't understand and that was true. Looking into totally hopeless eyes I began to feel the hopelessness myself when suddenly it was almost as if something gave inside me and I found I was talking about myself in a way I had never been able to before. It was on the way home, when I was able to think about what had happened that I knew that at last the missing something had fallen into place. It was in the giving of myself that I knew the feeling of the joy of giving. The feeling passed but I have had it back from time to time.

Not long ago at my home group the whole meeting seemed to revolve around an obviously suffering new member. After the meeting, another member, relatively new herself, turned to me with glowing eyes and said "Well that really was back to basics" wasn't it. Her remark enabled me to share the meeting through a new member's eyes and I was aware that I had missed something of that special feeling of the meeting. I was grateful that my close association through sponsorship had allowed me to accept being brought back to basics.

My recovery is made up of these and other experiences that I'm learning to accept a day at a time. I was told by people who knew, that I couldn't give what I hadn't got, but when I did get it, I had to give it away! I made many mistakes and I don't know all the answers but I do know that whether it is with a new member or as a delegate to Conference, when I say my name is Elizabeth I'm an alcoholic and I haven't had a drink today, I am fulfilling A. A.'s primary purpose - to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.

## **APPENDIX J'**

## **WORKSHOP**

## **"BACK TO BASICS"**

Jim F. Roundabout

I am an alcoholic and therefore axiomatically not a very basic person having lived for many years in a world of delusion and fantasy, until I found a group of men and women who had once been like me. They told me that A.A. was not just about stopping drinking, but about staying stopped and learning to live with reality. Perhaps it is for this reason that the theme "Back to Basics" is so important for our Fellowship.

The Preamble states a basic requirement for membership and then proposes a continuing commitment for members. I did not come to A.A. with the membership requirement. I only came in search of peace of mind and relief from pain and anguish. Alcoholics Anonymous might have been just another interlude in my endless search, but there it was to end. For this I have to thank those members who showed me the hopelessness of my position, by explaining the nature of the illness of alcoholism from the alcoholics point of view. I sometimes ask myself why so many of those whom I have seen coming through our doors are still searching. We sometimes take the easier, softer way and write them off as "not yet ready". The first members more precisely described them as "those who did not succeed because they could not make the

admission of hopelessness”. Would we be here today had we not been given the description of the illness first suggested to Bill by Dr. Silkworth. In their personal stories Dr. Bob and Bill bear testimony to its importance. Was it this description that brought their admissions of powerlessness, thus enabling them to seek and find a Power greater than themselves and the recognition that they could achieve together what they had been unable to do on their own?

Are we erring from this principle? Do we passively accept or ignore the trotting out of endless drinking stories. Some of those who are still researching tell me that they find our stories boring and depressing. Now, while we rightly take the excuses of the practising alcoholics with a pinch of salt, there is seldom smoke without fire. Chapter two of the “Big Book” reminds us that the “ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached little or nothing can be accomplished”. Do our stories help the newcomer to make the admission of hopelessness or does the over elaboration of our drinking history compound it.

There seems to be a Divine logic in our A.A. programme. We are told that “our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built”. Is this a clue for us to why so many members balk at the Twelve Steps and look for an easier way; while coming to meetings again and again to express their unhappiness and the same fears and hang-ups.

When faced by these members do we mis-apply the slogans and suggest to them “easy does it”, and “This too shall pass” for fear that we may drive them away. Or do we care more for their lives than their feelings and tell them that “here are the steps we took which are suggested as a programme of recovery”. Pills and the psychiatrists couch are no substitute for spiritual growth and a return to sanity through the programme of recovery. I believe that, the A.A. way is the simple way. I tried pills and fighting booze and the controlled drinking experiment before coming to A.A. That was the hard way. There is nothing wrong with the saying “Keep it Simple”, providing it is properly explained. Thinking myself to be an intellectual, I was told that the graveyards of the world were full of intellectual alcoholics, so “Keep it Simple”. My own sponsor, fearful of the results of my intellectual recitations, told me to read and then apply the Twelve and Twelve to me and not to others. I acted on his suggestion and there I read that “A.A.’s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which if practised as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole”. On becoming willing to try and practise these Steps to the best of my ability, my life took on a new purpose and I began to experience a happiness which had previously eluded me. I quit preaching and commenced sharing the outworking of the recovery programme in my own life. I was once asked what message was I carrying. What message are we carrying today? Are we denying to those we twelfth step and sponsor, that which for us expelled the obsession to drink and enabled us to become happily and usefully whole?

I have stated my belief in the Divine logic of our programme. I would now suggest that it has a Divine order. A.A.’s Twelfth step states that “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practise these principles in all our affairs”. For me, the Twelfth step is the distillation of the other eleven Steps. Our practise of this Step can be a reflection of the degree to which we have practised the others. I believe that if we have been fearless and thorough from the start then further action will follow - Strengthening our recovery through involvement. A.A. literature tells us that this was the very foundation of

our Fellowship. The Twelfth Step in action may take many forms. It may be helping the newcomer and we often do this before we have had much progress with the Steps. Even when it has not been of much help to him, it has often helped us. In his early days of sobriety, Bill himself often found it to be an effective antidote to resentment, despair, self pity and the first drink. He once described it as “a design for living that works in rough going”. I too have found it to be so. It is the way to personal and corporate growth. Other forms of action include coffee making, acting as a Trusted Servant from Group through Intergroup and Region to membership of this Conference. Our principle of rotation and the rate of growth within the Fellowship offer each member many opportunities for strengthening their recovery through involvement. This Conference has given a lead in Co-operation with the Professional Community, Public Information, A.A. in Industry and the development of our literature service, which can challenge us all to deeper involvement in service. That handful of pioneers met the challenge of the large number of enquirers resulting from the Jack Alexander and Reader’s Digest articles and the publication of the “Big Book”. It meant the expenditure of time, effort and money but they have told us “that no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done”. I believe that this is as true today for us. Joy is the theme of this Step and action is the key word. Are we doing all in our power to meet the call to action in the opportunities and problems created by tremendous growth?

Growth has always been associated with growing pains. It was experienced in the formative years and it is no different for us in 1980. Thankfully many newer members are becoming involved in Service at Group and Intergroup level. Lack of knowledge and inexperience are often evident at business meetings. I feel that time and effort is sometimes dissipated which could be better spent in the more constructive pursuits to which I have already referred. The early members hammered out the Traditions from controversy, dissensions and their own mistakes. Can we not learn from them and avoid many of our difficulties by making greater use of the Traditions. Should we be discussing them more often at meetings? Should there be more articles on them in our magazines? They are read in full at this Conference. Do we read them in full at our business meetings? I believe it would be time well spent, not wasted.

Finally, my own recovery owes much to our literature. When 3 months sober an old Canadian of 26 years sobriety handed me the “Big Book” and “A.A. Comes of Age” and urged me to read them carefully, lest he might give it to me wrong. We would do well to ponder these words.

I believe too great an emphasis has been put on non-A.A. literature. The recent survey shows that 25% or nearly 5,000 members hardly ever or never read the “Big Book”. A book that was written by the first hundred members to describe precisely how they had recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Their hope was that the pages would prove so convincing that no further authentication would be necessary. Years later in the Preface to the Second Edition the statement is made “This Book has become the basic text of our Society and has helped large numbers of men and women to recovery”. Is the hope of those members being fulfilled among us today or are we doing it our way. Last years Conference wisely concluded that the reading of A.A. literature would not be encouraged by the negative action of preventing the sale of non-approved material. We do not drive by mandate, we lead by example.

Are we erring from the fundamentals shared with us by the founding brethren or are we following their example by getting “Back to Basics”?

The Workshop was opened by Maurice S. (Leeds) following the excellent presentations by Elizabeth K. and Jim F. Speakers quickly warmed to the atmosphere created by the presentations and shared their own experiences of going 'Back to Basics'.

The opportunity to share what we have is a privilege but our lives must be built on rock and not on sand. Sand can be blown away whereas building on rock means getting 'Back to Basics'.

Hope is given to the newcomer when the basic message is passed, but altering attitudes must be seen in A.A.

The most important messages can be found in the Big Book and Twelve by Twelve even though the co-founders had only their drinking experiences to share strength and hope with each other which is what we do with the newcomer. Many people are too smart to get sober but there is no one who is too dumb - thus the importance of 'keeping it simple'.

It is in the recognition of defects of character that we are brought to the basics of the Twelve Steps and when we rely not on our own strength but the strength of God as we understand Him. It is not length of sobriety that is important but the depth of sobriety gained from practising the Twelve Steps in our daily programme of living.

Before coming to the Fellowship many of us have a faith which is lost whilst drinking but can be regained when one uses the spiritual programme of A. A.

Acceptance of the A.A. programme gives us peace of mind, contentment and joy with the world. This joy can be experienced when sharing on a one to one or at group level. It can also continue through every stage of service to the Fellowship and help to the suffering alcoholic.

Group meetings bring us back to sanity - Back to Basics. Lousing up one's life comes when after handing your life over to the Higher Power, you take it back again. Back to Basics is having love and concern for those we hurt in our days of drinking, sharing, sharing from the heart, the language of the heart.

Many of the 'Basics' - the slogans, were used by those who spoke - keep it simple, just for today, but God as we understand Him is the spiritual source of our recovery and the last speaker concluded by saying - if you don't think that you have any faith then 'act as if you had'.

Again this year we had some European friends with us as observers but who shared, in spite of the language differences, their experiences had strength with us. We hope that the mutual joy experienced is not kept to ourselves but shared with our fellow countrymen.

A brief report of a meeting held after the close of the Fifteenth General Service Conference between the observers from European countries and past and present World Service delegates is given below.



As scheduled at 2 p.m. on Sunday afternoon the observers from the European countries met together with past and present World Service delegates.

It was agreed that a general exchange of ideas and the sharing of experience was most beneficial.

David K. explained that the English Speaking Intergroup in Central Europe felt somewhat disconnected from the remainder of the Fellowship, the groups were spread over many countries and majority of their members were unable to speak the many local languages and consequently unable to participate fully in the affairs of the various countries.

It was suggested that serious consideration be given to the English Speaking Intergroup forming an extra territorial Intergroup of Great Britain. The possibility of this Intergroup becoming part of the General Service Conference of Great Britain was discussed but it was agreed that such a decision would rest with both the English Speaking Intergroup - Central Europe and our own General Service Conference but it was felt that there would be many benefits arising from such action.

Sten of Sweden confirmed the importance of the English Speaking Intergroup and its co-ordinating function throughout Central Europe.

It was agreed that we should proceed with arrangements for a European Service Meeting in 1981 and it was felt that when this matter was discussed at the forthcoming World Service Meeting the possibility of firm commitment could be assessed.

Originally the idea had been for a meeting to coincide with the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of A.A. in Switzerland being held in Geneva. It was felt that if it were not possible for the Fellowship in Switzerland to host such a meeting by reason of their involvement and arrangements for their own Anniversary Convention that arrangements should be made for an alternative site.

David of the English Speaking Intergroup intimated that there were many locations to choose from and undoubtedly arrangements could be made.

Representation at the European Service Meeting was suggested to be on the basis of two delegates per country, plus a Chairman to be nominated with a secretarial staff provided by the European Information Office.

It was suggested that the first meeting would be conducted in English but it would be a matter for the meeting itself to decide on future arrangements, in the meantime enquiries should be made as to the possibility and cost of simultaneous translation.

The European Information Office is still awaiting replies from certain countries regarding a commitment to participate in a English Speaking meeting and also the provision of details of meetings held in languages other than their own.

It was felt that a directory of European Groups would serve a useful purpose for the travelling member. It was agreed that the principle of inviting observers from other countries helped to maintain our contact with each other and it was suggested that this principle be continued.



FRIDAY 10 APRIL

The Sixteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was again held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester. The registration and reception commenced at 4 p.m. with the distribution of delegates folders and conference material and also providing an ideal opportunity for delegates to get together.

The Conference comprised 80 delegates from 14 Regions, one delegate from the Channel Islands, representatives from the magazines Share and Roundabout, 16 members of the General Service Board, 10 observers from Europe, David L. Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and 2 staff members made a total attendance of 113.

OPENING OF CONFERENCE

The first plenary session commenced at 8.30 p.m. - the Conference Chairman, David L. (North West Region) calling for the customary moments silence followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions by the General Secretary.

David L. in welcoming all the delegates extended a special welcome to the observers from overseas and presented his keynote address:

“When twelve months ago I was privileged to be elected as Chairman to this Conference and in consequence was given the initial task of selecting a theme, it was to Twelve Steps of recovery that I turned and in particular to the Eleventh Step. ‘Growth in Unity’ is the theme of our Conference this year and it is my belief that it is the result of not just my use of the Eleventh Step but others ‘praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out’, that the theme has been arrived at.

“Growth without unity is impossible, and I believe that unity comes from the constant searching of the spiritual values that the fellowship has, the spiritual values that are there for each and every member who ‘steps through the door’.

“Bill W. in a letter dated 1949 said, “though many of us have had to struggle for sobriety, never yet has this Fellowship had to struggle for lost unity”, thank God that this can be still said for our Fellowship today. However, with the increasing number of identifiable alcoholics it is of paramount importance that we continue to identify and implement ways and means of strengthening A.A., not just for us today but more importantly for those yet to join us.

“Progress represents the combined will of us all in this unique fellowship and it is when we are joined together for action that we will continue to move ahead and prepare the way for those who come after us. Let us at the same time always remember those that have gone before us and what they have given you and me. Without their communicative powers we may not have the life that we have and enjoy today. I thank God for our co-founders, Bill W., Dr. Bob and those first

members. Because of their obedience to the spiritual principles laid out in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions I have life today. It was because of them, what they shared, what they wrote, what they passed to me, that simple message of hope, that today I have sobriety, today I have LIFE.

“When I came to the Fellowship it gave me a worthwhile purpose for living, which was, that the lives of those I came in contact with would be enriched. In the first six months of my sobriety I tried to sober up the whole of the North West of England, not one responded! But the great paradox of A.A. ‘in giving we receive’, in trying to give I gained some stability of mind.

“Disunity is so often caused by lack of communication and it was with this in mind that I felt a strong need for the two committees on communication. Alcoholism, the killer disease, is just lying in wait for anyone of us to err from the ‘A.A.Way of Life’. Good communications can only help to bind members of the Fellowship into the love and greater understanding of each other and of our Traditions, where so much of our strength lies.

“It is from our Traditions that a lot of our communicative abilities have stemmed. As I have grown in the Fellowship, and the greater my knowledge of the Traditions, so my confidence in being able to communicate has grown.

“Many members of Alcoholics Anonymous are endowed with abilities that could be used for the corporate benefit of the Fellowship. The mobilisation of these members could well be achieved through improved communications. I hope that this objective will go some way to being reached through committees one and two.

“When I came to A.A. there was hope passed to me through the written and spoken word. Since then I have seen both of these channels grow and what a privilege... I have been able to contribute myself.

“Since coming to my first Conference I have seen and experienced so many areas where we as a Fellowship have matured and grown. In numbers of groups, Public Information, Co-operation with the Professional community, regionalisation, the work carried out by the General Service Board and many other activities that time will not allow me to dwell on. I must say however that with the decision of last years Conference to initiate national regionalisation, I feel the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in this country has reached a new stepping stone.

“Our walk through the programme of A.A. is very often described as us placing our Feet on stepping stones which are in a fast flowing river, the fast flowing river being the river of life and the stepping stones the Twelve Steps of Recovery. I thank God that I am fortunate enough to be taking an active part in the Regional functions, knowing that this is going to give us the ability to enhance our ‘primary purpose’... to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

“The workshop on Regional Development will I hope give all of us the opportunity to share what the last twelve months experience have given us and perhaps more importantly, how we see ourselves stepping off from that stepping stone into the future.

“How comfortable and easy it would be for us to take what we have gained in A.A. although its not a gain but a gift, and use what we have just at group level. I believe our sobriety was given to us to give away at all levels and thus we should be looking always at our individual and

collective communications inside and outside of the group.

“There are many opportunities open to us where we are able to use out individual talents to fulfil our Primary Purpose. Some of us may not see eye to eye as to how our future interests may best be served but experience teaches us that it is only by adhering to the principles of those who have walked the walk and by doing God’s will, that we can look to the future with that assurance of success. We are here today, we are sober today, because it works.

“When I came to the Fellowship I was ‘born again’. I had to learn to crawl, stand on my own two feet and then to walk. I am still growing today and this is one of the most important objectives for us all, to be growing. We should be content to be making progress, rather than pretending to be perfectionists. Perfection is only a result of false pride, we should be willing to make mistakes and have no fears of stumbling, provided we are always stumbling forward.

“We have made great advances in working with others and co-operating with outside agencies. Not all are success stories, not every hospital sees the need for an A.A. meeting! The Hospital and P.I. bulletins being sent out by the General Service Office are of tremendous advantage and give sound guidelines to those who are active in the field. Committees 3 and 5 will I’m sure, through their sharing of experiences, give us more knowledge of how we can best continue to progress in this important aspect of our activities.

“Our literature holds so many pearls of wisdom. How many of us have after turning to the literature been able to get rid of resentments, depressions or some other mental state we know is not good for us. There are such great and versatile avenues of communication through our literature, and whilst the Committee dealing with this subject will have no easy task. I’m sure the end product will improve the leaflets and topics being dealt with.

“If we had to rely on our own strength and abilities the Future would seem to be full of problems and difficulties, but we are very fortunate because we have first of all our Steps and Traditions. The Steps for personal recovery and our Traditions which give us the strength and Unity, so vital to our Fellowship. But there is far more besides our Steps and Traditions. I felt it for the first time I walked into an A.A. meeting and I can feel it in this room today. It is the Power of God, however you may perceive Him. It is as we improve our conscious contact with Him that we can look to the future with an untroubled mind and an assurance that with His help and guidance that the problems will not seem like mountains but more like mole hills.

“Many of the things I have mentioned will be discussed in great detail this weekend. There will also be many other topics where our experience strength and hope will be shared. All of us here have a great responsibility because what we learn must be taken back to our area, and the message from this Conference should be passed to the grass roots of our Fellowship, the Group. This is no easy task but it is one where every effort should prevail to ensure success.

“It is my hope and prayer that these next two days will give each of us that sense of a Spirit of Harmony. That we will take what we learn and grow, not by ourselves but we shall grow together as people that our God wants us to be. That means to Grow in Unity with love for each other.

“I thank each and everyone of you here and all of those in the Fellowship who have been responsible for the tremendous privilege I have in being your Conference Chairman this

weekend.

“May the God of your understanding guide each of you to perform the tasks set before you, to the best of your ability.

## GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

Gordon W., Chairman of the General Service Board presented the Board Report for 1980 and addressed the meeting:

“On behalf of the General Service Board I extend to you all a very warm welcome to this the Sixteenth General Service Conference, and particularly to those of you who are here for the first time. You will, I know, feel a little nervous and perhaps somewhat overawed, but relax - we all felt the same at our first Conference - relax and you’ll find it all rewarding and you’ll enjoy every minute of it. A very warm welcome, also, to our visitors from overseas - from Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland, Germany and from the English Speaking Intergroup Europe. I am sure you’ll find we have much to offer to you as you have to us, what better way of sharing than in this forum.

“As in all things in our Fellowship, sharing is the key, and much of it will be done during this weekend. If you have any doubts or queries about anything don’t be backward or frightened - ask. ‘Tis all part of the sharing process. ‘Tis communication about which I will have more to say later.

“You will see that according to the programme, my task this evening is to present the Board Report. You have all had a copy for some time. I trust you have read and digested it and found it to your satisfaction. The Board is always conscious of being the servant of the Fellowship, the custodian of the Traditions within the United Kingdom and guided by Conference in all its deliberations and actions. Conference is the voice of the Fellowship. The Board is the vehicle which carries out the wishes expressed at Conference. We are often asked “Why do we need a Conference?” In reply I would like to quote the words of Bernard Smith, a former non-alcoholic member of the American General Service Board. I did so last year and I make no apology for repeating it this year. I think it is as well to remind ourselves.

“We may not need a General Service Conference to insure our own recovery. We do need it to insure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to insure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined to alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth which brought us back to life.

“We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must insure can never invade A.A. We need it to insure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over-integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions and all of its services.

“We need it to insure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the

wants of all A.A. and not of any few. We need it to insure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to insure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.”

“We have service to the Group, Intergroups etc. How to make the Groups more attractive so that the people coming in, continue to keep on coming, and are involved in service. We have a service to provide to the outside world. We must ensure by our own personal example that we show we are happy people so that the public realise what A.A. is and who we are, what we are and where we are so that those in the wilderness may be attracted to us.

“In presenting the Report, I have to say it has been a very full year and much has been achieved. We have, I think, fulfilled all the requests made at last year’s Conference. I would like just to highlight a few of these achievements. At last year’s Conference we were left with the resolution that this Conference recommends that the General Service Board thoroughly re-examines the decision of the 4th General Service Conference 1969, especially on the question of appearance of members on television and films. The General Service Board is requested to report its Findings to the Sixteenth General Service Conference in 1981. A sub-committee was formed and carried out a thorough investigation into the content of the resolution and issued a report, copies of which you have received, and it is on the agenda to be considered by Committee No. 3 at this Conference.

“The go ahead to a full Regional Structure was given at last year’s Conference and this has proceeded extremely well, and the benefits of such are becoming more and more apparent. Since last year the number of Intergroups has increased from 62 to 73, so furthering the opportunity for members, to participate in Third Legacy activity. There has also been apparent all round strengthening in the co-operation with the outside agencies which will be mentioned later. Regional forums are taking place very much on the lines of the American Regional Forums started a few years ago with the purpose to meet the need, in our ever-growing Fellowship, of providing better communication between A.A. Service workers, the General Service Board, the General Service Office and Grapevine - in our case Share and I would include Box 514. These forums air many feelings, voice many opinions, answer many questions and make many suggestions but no decisions. Naturally ideas expressed at these forums may be later presented to Conference for consideration if thought fit to do.

“There has been considerable advancement in our P.I.- C.P.C. activities and several useful bulletins prepared and issued. I believe our ideas on the implementation have changed somewhat following experiences. I know mine have. The real action rests with the Groups and Intergroups with co-ordination at Regional level.

“I must give mention to the seminar held in October when we met with members of the Magistrates Association, Parole Board, Probation and After-Care, DHSS and Departments of the Home Office. It was a most successful meeting and a deep impact was made on those attending so furthering the awareness of who we are, what we are and where we are. It was all fully reported in Box 514 and the introductory papers are contained with Committee No. 5 supporting papers in the folder along with a list of all the branches of the Magistrates Association by Regions following a very useful and informative meeting held with the Secretary of the Magistrates Association. We trust there will be active follow-ups to all these linkages at all

levels. All the information is provided and encouraging lead-ins made.

“I would like, now, to take this opportunity to give thanks and express appreciation to all the members of the Board who have carried out the functions and piloted all the various achievements and advancements throughout the year, also the General Secretary along with the staff at General Service Office for the hard work they have put in during the year, not only in servicing the Fellowship here in Great-Britain but also the European Information Centre along with all the spadework in formulating and publishing the Directory of A.A. Groups throughout Europe and getting the first European Meeting off the ground.

“Turning now to the Financial aspect of the Report, I would ask Peter F. our Honorary Treasurer, to present the Financial Statement and Balance Sheet”.

Peter referred to the Notes on the Financial Statement and in particular to the fact that direct contributions had only covered 65% of SERVICES EXPENDITURE for the previous year, and pointed out that whilst this was in no way creating a drama or panic situation, nevertheless self-support was always a more desirable condition. From the detail shown on the Group and Intergroup Contributions for 1980 regarding the National Target figure it did appear that perhaps a more basic and simple system could be more effective. Peter then drew attention to the new additional list showing how contributions had worked out in each Intergroup on the basis of weekly contributions per group. Taking the total number of groups in England Scotland and Wales figure as at January 1st this year (1400) we could arrive at a minimum target figure PER GROUP PER WEEK which should cover our estimated Services expenditure for 1981. Allowing for growth and trusting that those Intergroups who always had provided strong support would not reduce their contributions, the amount needed would be £1 PER WEEK PER GROUP, a simple message which delegates could carry back to their Region and subsequently Intergroups.

Hopefully, this would bring about a regular flow of support to the General Fund as ‘bottle-necks’ of cash were not in the interests of the Fellowship as a whole.

Peter commented that the total nett assets figure of £143,798 should not be confused with our ‘reserves for the future’ so often referred to, because part of this amount provided the working capital required, as much as by our Fellowship as any other viable business.

Our financial status had enabled us to continue to improve our Services, notably our accepted responsibility for the European Information Office and the new desk-top portable display kit for P.I. which was to be subsidised to allow a selling price of just 2/3rds of the actual cost. As always, there is the need to add improvement to assist the efficiency of our General Service Office in all that has to be done.

After discussion the Financial Report was accepted.

Gordon then continued:

“It is somewhat regrettable that unlike the last few years, we have failed to meet our pledge of self-support and following on Peter’s observations on the financial situation I would like to read to you an article written by Angus and published in the recent edition of Roundabout. I believe it to be most appropriate to the present situation.



“From time to time good members of A.A. mindful of the injunction in Tradition 6 that problems of money, property and prestige should not divert us from our primary purpose, draw attention to the total nett assets of the Fellowship in Great Britain (approximately £144,000 at the end of 1980) and ask why the General Service Board is always urging Groups, Intergroups and Regions to send money to the General Service Office. It is a fair question that calls for a straight answer.

“Like many of the answers in A.A. it is a simple one and not very palatable. The fact is that for every £1 it cost to run our general services in 1980, the Fellowship contributed only 65p. The Board had therefore to find the remaining 35p from other sources. These notional figures represent large sums. The total cost of providing our general services in 1980 was about £65,000 and the deficit on these services was over £22,000. The total nett assets, seen against these figures, represent just a little over two years’ running costs, making no provision for inflation.

“Without the income from our investments and from our publishing enterprise A.A. in Great Britain would now be in serious financial difficulty, to put it mildly. This would have obliged us to cut back on vital services, all of them geared to helping the still suffering alcoholic. Furthermore, we would not have been able to help our friends in Europe to establish a European Service Conference, as we hope to do later this year”.

“We will continue our policy of examining ways and means of ploughing some of the monies back to the advantage of service, but much will depend on the responses from Intergroups, Groups etc., i.e. from the pots and what is passed on to General Service Office and the General Fund.

“We now come to Board membership. It is with much regret that at the end of this Conference we say farewell to Maurice of Leeds as he completes his term of office and retires having done his six year stint. Maurice has been prominent in the Leeds and Yorkshire area for many years, and during his six years on the Board has contributed widely in all matters and deliberations. We will miss you, Maurice, and we take this opportunity to thank you for your generous service always so freely given. We wish you well and good health for the future. I am sure you will continue with the sharing of your wide experiences for many days to come.

“Now we have a Regional Structure regional membership for the alcoholic members of the Board seems a natural development. As mentioned in the written report all the present members will have completed their terms of office of six years by 1985, so by then full Regional Board membership could be in being.

“The theme of this year’s Conference is “Growth in Unity”. Quite fitting to the activities we have recently been pursuing. Perhaps we could reflect the words of our co-founder, Bill W. I quote: “The unity of A.A. is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives and the lives of all to come depend squarely upon it. Without unity the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God”. We have the opportunity to extend and make these thoughts more effective, not only at home but throughout Europe. Let us go to it with added vigour and resource.

“That completes my report, and I would now ask for its acceptance. I would like to conclude by saying a word or two about communications which I referred to early on in this Address. I think we are all very conscious of the hard and extensive work put in in the preparation of these Conferences. As soon as one is finished we start on the next. You have in your possession a

folder containing a vast amount of supporting information etc. covering the various subjects for discussion etc. at this Conference some of which was circulated to you all some time ago.

“As we know the voice of the Fellowship is Conference but Conference gets its voice from the grass roots, the Group. I wonder to what extent this is fact. I also wonder how much of the good work carried out by Conference gets back to the grass roots. If we are to do full justice to Conference and to all the efforts and expense of it, these linkages Up to Conference and Down from Conference should be strong, but I don't believe they are anything like as strong and developed as we would all like them to be. I would therefore ask you all to give serious thought to ways and means of strengthening these linkages which will provide more strength in fulfilling our primary purpose which, as always, must be our aim”.

After discussion the General Service Board Report to Conference (pages 25-28) was formally accepted.

#### SIXTH WORLD SERVICE MEETING, NEW YORK 27 - 30 JUNE 1980

Angus M. General Service Board presented his report on the Sixth World Service Meeting and added his personal observations.

“I am deeply grateful to the members of the General Service Board for their confidence in asking me to undertake the task - as enjoyable as it was important - of representing the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain as one of your two delegates at the Sixth World Service Meeting last summer. This is an honour which I cherish dearly and I shall long remember those happy, crowded days spent with A.A. friends from all parts of the world. It gives me particular pleasure that several of my fellow World Service delegates are to be with us at our own General Service Conference in Manchester this year.

“Joyce, your other World Service delegate, and I have agreed that I should present this short personal account to the General Service Conference. She did this for the last World Service Meeting, so it is only fair that I should take my turn. You will, of course, find in your folders a formal report on the business that was transacted during these four days, and I do not intend to repeat what you will find there. I should like instead to give you my impressions of what took place and of what were in my opinion the significant decisions that were reached.

“Despite the sheer pleasure of being with such a widely representative group of A.A.'s and the joy of sharing experience with each other, I must stress that a World Service Meeting is no holiday from work. On the contrary, it is hard grind from beginning to end - a bit like having two General Service Conferences one after the other. Moreover, although 24 countries were represented at New York, the total number of delegates present was only 34, so everyone had a job to do - sometimes two jobs. Naturally, a good deal of time was devoted to the functioning of the World Service Meeting itself and to such questions as what role it should fulfil; what its future agenda should be; how it should be financed; and in what languages it should be conducted.

“I suspect that several other first-time delegates had reservations similar to my own as to what it would be possible to achieve at a meeting lasting only a few days held once every two years. There is no doubt that the problem of international communication between World Service Meetings is formidable, though our good friends at the General Service Office in New York take great pains to keep World Services delegates informed about what is going on between meetings.

It is also very expensive to convene a World Service Meeting - the total cost of the New York meeting was about 64,000 dollars (roughly £28,000). Rather more than half of that sum was met by the General Service Office, New York, the remaining part coming from payments by participating countries. Is all this expenditure worthwhile for a four-day meeting? On mature reflection, I think that it is, and that certainly was the view of the delegates at New York who agreed that the World Service Meeting should be continued in its present form, at least for the time being.

“I support that decision for two important reasons. First, I believe that the World Service Meeting is the embodiment of the group conscience of A.A. worldwide, a living demonstration of the abiding unity and purpose of our Fellowship in its Steps and Traditions.

Secondly, it is clear that the World Service Meeting can be a powerful influence in encouraging countries which already have a formal A.A. Structure to share their experience with those countries that do not have such a structure but who nevertheless have an urgent need for A.A. I consider that these two principles - the operation of the group conscience and the sharing of experience - are of cardinal significance for the secure growth of A.A. and the extension of our message of sobriety, at world level, at national level, at regional and at intergroup level. One of the privileges of being a world Service delegate is to be able to testify that I have seen these principles working at every level from the group onwards. Milton Maxwell, Chairman of the General Service Board of the U.S./Canada put this very well in his closing address: “My main reaction to our meeting has been delight at how much the same spirit of A.A. exists in every country. This should not really be a surprise, but still it is a marvel, and I am pleased and reassured.” Tomas Tomasson of Iceland expressed the same feeling in another way: “Back home, we will report that this Fellowship is one: within it, borders do not exist”.

“Of all the decisions that were reached, I select the following three to bring specially to your attention because they should in my judgement help to give effect to the two principles I have just mentioned. First, it was agreed that Zonal meetings (I shall explain that term in a moment) should continue to be encouraged and that countries which already have an established structure should share their experience along zonal lines with countries which do not have a structure, and should encourage them to participate in Zonal Meetings. Such meetings would involve several neighbouring countries with geographical or cultural affinities. One such Zonal meeting has already taken place for countries in Latin America. This was in November 1979 at Bogota in Columbia. The first European Zonal meeting will be held in Frankfurt, Germany, in October 1981, and our own General Service Office has taken the lead in making the arrangements for this. The General Service Board of Great Britain have also agreed to assist financially with this meeting in much the same way that the General Service Board of the U.S./Canada has shouldered the main financial burden of the world Service Meeting. I should add that all the decisions in principle about this European Meeting were reached in New York (and in New Orleans) by the world Service delegates representing the various European countries attending.

“Secondly, having regard to the importance which the Fellowship of A.A. worldwide attaches to the printed word, it was agreed that an International Co-ordinating Centre should be established to disseminate information to all countries about the A.A. literature that is available in different languages. Our own General Service Office in London was invited to take on this task, and I am glad that the Board and the General Secretary have consented to do so. It was suggested that each country should establish a system for reviewing and approving its A.A. literature within its conference structure - we shall of course be doing this at our own General Service Conference

again this year. The World Service Meeting also recommended, and this is a point in which we have a special interest, that where literature is being displayed or sold, every effort should be made to separate non-A.A. literature from A.A. Conference-approved literature.

“Thirdly, it was agreed that public information activity should be used as a means of contacting the public as a whole through the use of press, radio and T.V: that co-operation with the professional community be achieved through work by committees and individual A.A’s carrying the message to organisations of doctors, nurses, school administrators, clergyman and other professionals, and also on an individual basis; that committees and individual A.A’s work with the administrators and staffs of institutions to carry the message to patients and inmates by forming A.A. groups, offering to conduct A.A. meetings and providing follow-up sponsorship upon release. In advocating this comprehensive policy, the World Service Meeting recommended that particular emphasis should be given to the fact that A.A. is a spiritual programme. It would also be necessary to ensure that our Tradition of Anonymity is fully observed in T.V. appearances by A.A’s and to provide special literature for young alcoholics and those in prison.

“I wish there was time to tell you more about the growth of A.A. worldwide, the successes and the challenges. The development of A.A. in Latin America is particularly exciting, and I am delighted for several reasons that the next World Service Meeting in October 1982 is to be held in Mexico. A.A. in Spain and Portugal is now being helped by the tremendous growth of the Fellowship in the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of the New World. I would guess that, after English, Spanish maybe the language that is most widely spoken in A.A. throughout the world. The vast continent of Africa with its teeming population has virtually no formal A.A. structure and the only country which has the experience to give a lead is South Africa. Given the existing political alignments it is not easy for South Africa to play an active part promoting the growth of A.A. elsewhere.

“My final reference must however be to the United States and to the kind friends at the General Service Office in New York, who did so much to make the World Service Meeting a wonderful memorable experience. The warmth of their welcome and their affectionate concern for all our needs are still remembered with pleasure. This particular delegate was very proud and happy to have taken part”.

A full delegates report was presented to each delegate and this was formerly accepted.

#### SIXTH NORWEGIAN GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - OSLO - 6-8 FEB. 1981

Maurice S. (Leeds) General Service Board presented his report on his experience of attending the Norwegian Conference.

“As the result of an invitation from the Norwegian General Service Board to send an observer to their Sixth Conference, I was delighted to be asked to represent A.A. in Great Britain at this event. I arrived at Oslo airport carrying my February issue of SHARE as a means of identification but I immediately recognised Hans F. who had come to meet me, as I had seen him previously at the World Service Meeting in 1974 and at a subsequent Conference here. He took me back with him to the Oslo General Service Office where he was still busy preparing all the Conference Brochures which had to be ready for the following day. It took him until 10 p.m. before everything was ready. Their Office is staffed by only three part time workers.

“The Conference was held at the Vokesenasen Hotel which is situated just beyond Holmenkollen (where the 19B2 World Ski Championships are to be held) where one has a fantastic view of the Oslo fjord and the city, which is about 12 km. away. The theme of the Conference was “The A.A. Group - Where it all Starts” and there were present 29 Delegates from 16 Districts, 6 Board Members, 2 Proposed Board Members, the General Secretary and 2 Service personnel, the Conference Leader, and 3 Observers. Apart from myself there were two from Sweden.

“As each of the District Delegates reported to the Conference, one began to realise the size of the country. The most northern District was about 1700 miles from Oslo, and each District covered a very large area. The total number of groups represented was 80, compared with 76 in 1980. For the first time there was a woman member among the Delegates.

“Although the previous year they had passed the new Handbook for A.A. in Norway, which is modelled on ours it seemed to me that coming to terms with the new structure had been a major production of the Districts, and had brought the usual crop of growing pains. It is always interesting to see how differences at Conference are gradually resolved as the true spirit of Service and Fellowship emerges as stronger than the initial discrepancies of opinion.

“Another important item discussed was the proposed information of a public information committee. I was able to make observations about our own experiences in this area which were well received, along with our offer of assistance with Guidelines, and copies of our own Public Information Handbook. The Conference accepted the proposal, and an Information Officer was elected.

“After a presentation by a World Service Delegate, Oskar H., on the Conference theme, discussion on Sponsorship took place. This seemed to be an under-developed aspect of Norwegian A.A. but a very positive discussion ensued as to how this could be improved.

I was invited to address the Conference, with the help of Bjorn, who kindly interpreted for me. I saw a parallel between our early problems, and those currently being experienced in Norway. I spoke of our pre-Conference days and relatively poor lines of communication, and our early Conferences and the growing pains that accompanied them, and the growth development that led to our present structure. It was when we produced our A.A. Service Handbook, and put its contents into practice, that we achieved the growth and unity we now have.

“Up to now a past or present Board Member has been the Conference Leader, but starting next year this job will be done by one of the District Delegates. Another point of interest was the discussion by Delegates of the possibility of arranging a chartered aircraft to take A.A. members from Norway to 25th Anniversary of Swiss A.A. in Geneva in 1981.

“After the Conference fifteen of us went to the Service Office in Oslo where Delegates had an opportunity to see for themselves their well equipped and appointed Office. I learned there that the Norwegian translation of the second edition of the Big Book had been approved by New York and would be available in June. It is to be published by a company in the town of Drammen, which being translated means “The Drink”, a point which caused some amusement.

“There is, of course, nothing written in this report that can adequately express the warmth, welcome, hospitality and indeed love that was shown to me. I shall always treasure the memory of this experience of sharing an occasion that transcends language barriers. I bring back to this

Conference the love and warm wishes from A.A. in Norway, and their expressed appreciation of the attendance by Great Britain.

“On my return journey I had a slight setback; my case was missing on my arrival at Leeds Airport. The tie-on label had come off. The only identification I could offer them was a Norwegian manual entitled “Anonyme Alkoholikere” with “Maurice S.” stuck on the cover. Incredibly, the case was located by telex at Johannesburg, and re-routed to Britain the following day, and delivered to my home by taxi.

Maurice’s report was accepted.

The Conference Chairman thanked Gordon, Angus and Maurice for their presentations.

## CONVENTIONS

At the invitation of the Chairman the General Secretary reported that there is a full calendar of Conventions this year with a tremendous number of Mini-conventions coming into being. The Northern Convention in England was held two weeks ago at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool, and it is understood that this was a most successful occasion.

The 25th Anniversary Convention in Scotland is being held on the first weekend in May, and it is hoped that as many friends from South of the Border as possible will attend.

The Southern Convention this year will be changed from Selsey to the Brighton Centre, and the reservation forms for this event were included in the delegates folder. Early reservation is recommended, although there is a large upper limit on the attendance, some 5,000, there is a limit on the number of lunches that can be served. It is hoped that this venue will provide, the same happy atmosphere experienced at Selsey. No overnight accommodation will be provided at the Centre, but there are many hotels in Brighton.

An additional Convention that has come into the calendar is the South Wales and Borders Region on 13, 14 and 15 November. This will be held at the Metropolitan Hotel, Llandidrod Wells.

## RESOLUTION

The following resolution was submitted, discussed and unanimously agreed:

“That the English Speaking Intergroup Central Europe be invited to be full members of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain, and that they be represented at future Conferences by two delegates with full voting rights”.

## NOMINATION FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1982

The undermentioned were proposed and seconded for Chairman of the Seventeenth General Service Conference 1982:

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The First session closed with the Serenity Prayer and the delegates then retired to informal sessions.

#### **SATURDAY 11 APRIL**

The six committees convened at 9 a.m. through to 12.30 p.m. and after lunch re-convened at 2.15 p.m. until 4 p.m. The committees met again at 5.30 p.m. to review and approve their committee reports.

#### **WORKSHOP REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

This Workshop was chaired by David L. and presentations by Alex M. South Midland and Thomas M. Glasgow.

The presentations are given on pages 43-44

Following the presentations a general discussion took place and it was agreed that Regionalisation has contributed tremendously to our sharing in services and improving communications.

#### **WORKSHOP**

#### **UNITY IS A WORKING HUMILITY**

This Workshop commenced at 8.30 p.m. Saturday evening with Jill M. of North East Region being the moderator and Joe E. North West Region the Secretary.

Presentations were made by Ian T. London and Sim P. South Wales and Borders and the text of their presentations is given on pages 45-49

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer after which the printed reports of the committees were circulated.

#### **SUNDAY 12 APRIL**

At 9.15 a.m. the Conference assembled for its final session.

David L. the Conference Chairman invited the Committee Chairman of the six committees to present their respective reports.

These reports were fully discussed and after some minor amendments were adopted.

They are shown later in this Report

## ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1982

The nominees received on Friday evening were presented and finally Ian T. of the London Region was duly elected.

## DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE

The Seventeenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on 23-25 April 1982.

## CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

David L. invited Maurice S. the retiring member of the General Service Board to address Conference.

Maurice said:

“It seems to have become the tradition that the retiring General Service Board member should be given the privilege of making the closing address to Conference. Because this year it happens to be me, and as it is included in the Conference report it was written well in advance of this weekend.

“Since, then, of course, I have the opportunity of experiencing the kind of uplift in spirit through meeting you all here at my final conference.

“This conference has been as good, perhaps for me in my situation, better than most that I can remember. I was particularly impressed with Saturday night’s workshop “Unity is a Working Humility” which provoked me into a little introspection. I can recall about three occasions this year when perhaps a glimmer of humility may have overcome my self-centredness. The first time in January when I was asked if I would go to the Norwegian General Service Conference. It was the last thing I thought would happen to me (there were times when I expected things to happen to me - and they didn’t - that’s the way it is in A.A.)

“The second time was on Friday when my Board Chairman, Gordon, said so many nice things about me and you endorsed his kind remarks.

“The Third time is now when I stand before you both privileged and greatly honoured in being allowed to express my gratitude to you and through you to the Fellowship as a whole for the great happiness you have given to me and my family since we joined you.

“Most men live their lives in quiet desperation”. I read this somewhere recently, and it is an apt description of my life 22 years ago when after 18 years of alcoholic drinking, I first found A.A. I had experienced enough despair, and was ready to try anything that might work. I believed what I read in the literature and heard at meetings, and accepted as an act of faith that if I followed the example of those who had gone before me, and worked this programme in its entirety, a happy and permanent recovery might be mine. My faith was justified; as far as I am concerned, A.A. is a success.

But faith alone was not enough, it needed action on my part. Nor did the happiness I hoped for



come at once. I had a wise sponsor who saw to it that I soon became involved in the recovery of others. Although my own sobriety was very shaky at first, I needed something that would draw me out of myself. My early efforts to carry the message of recovery to fellow sufferers not only helped me to remain sober but gave me back a little of the self-respect and compassion that I had lost. By this time A.A. had made its first breakthrough into prisons, and I became a sponsor of the first prison group in Wakefield. This involvement was I think the most helpful thing to me personally. Later on I became Group Secretary, and after that I don't think I ever refused to do any job I was asked to do. My recovery was very closely linked to service in A.A.

“As you will know, these conferences started in 1966, but the fore runner to the Conference was the Area and Group Representatives' Committee which met three times a year in London, Birmingham and Manchester respectively. In 1961 I became the North Eastern Delegate. The function of this Committee was to share experience on how the interests of the Fellowship could best be served. We were all very enthusiastic but because of inexperience, often groping in the dark! We had a system of block voting in those days, and I am amused when I remember that in the (unlikely!) event of a Yorkshireman and a Lancashire man agreeing on an issue, their combined votes out numbered those of the Home Counties' Delegates, much to their unease! These meetings served a very useful purpose in keeping us all together, although sometimes only just!

“Since 1966, when this General Service Conference first met, it has been my privilege to have attended most of them. I can't recall those early conferences without mentioning John H. (Idle John, he was known as - he came from a place called Idle). John, up until 1971 when he died, chaired these Conferences, and had nursed and cajoled us through the transition period before that. In a sense, we became of age. I shall always think of him as the father of Conference. He was always kind and patient with me, but I am sure he must have been very uneasy in 1974 I chaired 'his' Conference! I can look back on a lot of happiness and fun at these Conferences, and a lot of gradual progress, and now and again some humour. I remember, in 1974, when I was Chairman, the atmosphere growing more and more heated as we were debating - it seemed then to be a highly contentious matter - what to call the “A.A. Service Handbook for Great Britain and Northern Ireland”. As it all seemed to be getting out of hand and I was losing patience I had a brainwave - I called the coffee break a half hour early and closed the session, it worked wonders - a breathing space, time to collect our thoughts - and almost as soon as we reconvened the satisfactory solution had been found.

“When I look back on the statistics of the growth of A.A. - from the 100 groups when I joined in 1959 to over 1,400 today, I can see why our growth has accelerated. It is because we have all worked hard, through these Conferences, to put into practice, the A.A. Service Handbook that we adopted in 1974. Through our developing structure, and our strengthened unity of purpose, we have been more successful in spreading the message of A.A. to the alcoholic who is still suffering.

“I have enjoyed serving on the General Service Board over the past six years. I have learned a great deal from my colleagues, perhaps I may also call them my friends, both past and present, and I learned much about myself in the process. I think I have given what I had to give, and I am ready to make way cheerfully for someone with new ideas and a fresh approach. Of course I shall miss the Board Meetings and Conferences, and it is with a sad heart that I say goodbye today. But one thing I am sure of, that is that I shall continue to practise our primary purpose back home in the group”.

The three observers from Europe expressed their feelings; Pentti from Finland said:

“I want to thank you for the possibility to take part in your Conference. I feel deeply that it is our duty to report back to our Conference and our Intergroups what we have seen and heard here in Manchester during these few days. If we share your experiences in our countries I think we have the links about which we have spoken during these wonderful days.

“I want to thank you General Service Board and General Service Office who have done so much for A.A. in Europe. Please take our best regards to your Intergroups and your home Groups”.

Gudni from Iceland said:

“Good morning friends. On behalf of the two Icelandic observers here I would like to express our gratitude for allowing us to attend this Conference and take part in the proceedings. Although the first group in Iceland is 27 years old today - now we have 90 groups and a National Service Board. This is a tremendous growth. We have difficulties in coping and need all the help we can get. We would be much better qualified to help in Iceland and share with our fellow members what we have learnt here after these wonderful days in Manchester.

“I would like to present our flag to the Board. Again thank you very much and God bless you all”.

Heinz from Germany said:

“I want to thank you all who have made it possible to spend three such wonderful and exciting days at this Conference in Manchester. I think I have learnt a lot from you, especially that unity and humility are not only two words but happen in the group meetings and especially here at Conference and that was new to me.

“I am full of new overwhelming impressions and it will take a long time to work them out. I will report back to the German Board. I hope that I will be able to transmit to this Conference all this experience I was allowed to share with you.

“Thank you so much and I hope to see you again”.

## CLOSING ADDRESS

In formally closing the Conference David L. said:

“Before asking Gordon to officially close the Conference, I would just like to say a few words in conclusion myself.

“The first are words of thanks, and my first has to go to Bill for the tremendous help he has given to me in first of all preparing for this Conference, and secondly for the efficient way in which he has organised this successful weekend.

“I would also thank the General Service Office staff for all their hard work leading to and during

Conference. The work that has gone into the preparation of the Committee Reports alone is enormous.

“My thanks also to the General Service Board. Having had the privilege to attend a Board Meeting in preparation for Conference it has made me more aware of just how much effort has been put in by our trusted servants, the Board Members.

“The Chairmen and Secretaries of the Committee have performed their tasks in a conscientious manner and I thank you all for the efficient way in which the final Committee Reports have been presented.

“Next I must thank all of you as delegates for making this what has certainly been for me a fruitful, and I hope, well spent weekend.

“My final thanks have to go to God without whom I would not be here, and would not have had what for me has been a profitable Conference.

“Being Chairman of this Conference has been a real privilege and this being my fifth and final year, the first being an alternate, makes this occasion far more sad.

“This is not the pinnacle of my walk through A.A. because I sincerely hope that I can continue to serve at all levels.

“I know that during this weekend you have all felt the tremendous bond of friendship and love between us. It is experiences such as this that makes our sobriety so valuable.

“Communication has been much on our lips this weekend. Let us take what we have experienced and communicate this back where it matters, to the grass roots of our Fellowship, the Group.

“As I said in my Keynote Address, it is our responsibility what we have learnt, what we have experienced to take back to our roots.

“I now ask Gordon to officially close the Conference”.

Gordon W. Chairman of the General Service Board said:

“David has already said that all good things must come to an end. Regrettably we are reaching the end of the Sixteenth General Service Conference. I was deeply moved when presented with the flag from Iceland to show their appreciation from the members of Iceland, and also the appreciation that has been shown by our other friends from overseas. This, I can assure you, will now rest in the General Service Office as a memory of this particular Conference.

“When Maurice was speaking my mind went back to the early days when he made particular reference to our Service Handbook which is the basis of this Conference. I think Maurice said it was 1974 when it was discussed whether it should be “Handbook” or whether it should be “Manual” and eventually we decided it would be “Handbook”. When I went home I got out the dictionary and I read up “Manual” and it said “Handbook” and I read up “Handbook” and it said “Manual”. Nevertheless, that is typical of how we got through these Conferences, and they are

all so much joy, but over the years we have seen much development, and I recall what dear old Ronald said about Growing into our Responsibilities. We look more and more into our responsibility and we make further advancements in our primary purpose, and that is always what we must keep very much in mind - to stay sober.

“I feel very satisfied now, having heard the Reports of the Committees Nos. 1 and 2, and we must try to implement what is contained in those Reports. I am sure the linkages will be extremely strengthened.

“Finally, I would like to, on your behalf, thank David for conducting this Conference so admirably, and taking us through every little piece so well.

“Thank you for attending and coming along and giving so much and displaying so much happiness and showing the joy of living in this Fellowship. May God go with you, and those that are returning next year we look forward to seeing you, and those that do not - continue with “Service”.

The Sixteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain came to a close with the delegates joining in the Serenity Prayer.

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After the close of Conference a meeting was held with the European Observers at 2 p.m. on the Sunday afternoon.

Those present discussed in detail the proposed first European Service Meeting to be held in Frankfurt on Maine on 23, 24 and 25 October 1981.

Consideration was given to a suggested programme which was developed and - finally agreed as being a good basis for the first meeting.

A theme “Support Your Neighbour Country” was agreed.

Gordon W. was invited to be Chairman in Frankfurt.

It was unanimously agreed that Bob P. Chairman of Services New York who would be attending the meeting should be invited to present the Keynote Address.

It was suggested that news of developments etc. from the differing countries should be included in the programme with a brief resume of the activity to be confined to one page per participating country.

The Secretary will circulate the suggested programme to all European Service Offices, copy to the World Service Delegates of those countries and also call for nomination of two delegates from each country.

The observers attending from the countries were appreciative of the decision of the General Service Board in Great Britain to subsidise this first meeting. This offer will enable the meeting to be established after which it could hopefully make its own decisions for the future.

Many other points of mutual interest were shared and it was reported that the European A.A. Directory would be available in the near future and circulated and the International Literature list requested by the World Service Meeting was in an advance stage of preparation.

Pentti of Finland asked if it was possible to produce a list of doctors working in the alcoholism field who are friendly towards Alcoholics Anonymous.

The meeting finally closed with those present joining in the Serenity Prayer.

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## COMMITTEE NO. 1           “COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE GROUP”

### The Group at Work

- a) Group Conscience Meetings and Business Meetings are an asset and should be arranged on a regular basis.
- b) Our trusted servants are exactly that. But where there is no communication in the running of a Group there can be no unity. There must be feedbacks from the Secretary, Treasurer and the Group Service Representative to the Group. Group Service Representatives in particular should have the right amount and quality of sobriety, and a working knowledge of the Group which can only be attained by attending meetings.
- c) Treasurers have an important role within the Group and should regularly announce how much money the Group is holding. After Group expenses, the Committee feels that money should be sent to Intergroup or the General Fund rather than left to accumulate.
- d) The Guidelines, particularly Numbers 1 and 5 have reference to all Group problems, but the Committee suggests that a simplified pamphlet on the running of Groups would be a great asset - suggested working title “Your Group - Why it Works...”
- e) Who receives correspondence should communicate the contents to the Group, including a summary of Box 514. The Committee wonders if “514” is an appropriate title because it does not readily convey the nature of the contents. Why not “U .K News” with Box 514 underneath?
- f) Twelfth Step packs should be available from the Literature or Group Secretaries free of charge for use for that purpose only but other literature for personal use could be paid for. Groups should automatically display A.A. books and up-to-date literature at all meetings.

All healthy Groups have a conscience that will over-ride personal feelings and personalities.

### Communication with the New Member

A prime duty of a Group is to give special attention to new members, and it is suggested that an experienced member should be detailed to greet them on arrival. The Committee feels that this is a Group responsibility that should be rotated. When newcomers arrive the meeting is usually orientated towards giving them hope. A sense of belonging to the Group and A.A. should be evident for their benefit. Chairpersons and visiting speakers can be made aware that new members are in attendance. Our experience of sponsorship has proved beneficial and should always be stressed, together with the advantages of belonging to a Home Group. Visits to other Groups should also be encouraged.

The approach to the newcomer should generate confidence. The Group should ensure that members with Twelfth Step experience are available to encourage and accompany the new member to further meetings. Contact by telephone and visits to the newcomer, where desired, are a good follow-up between meetings in the early stages. There is also a time, after the initial introduction and the message has been passed, when the new member will make his own way to meetings of his own choice.

### Special Aspects of Open Meetings

In view of their 'public' nature, things said and done at open meetings reflect on A.A. as a whole. The Committee believes that the power of example can nowhere be better demonstrated.

Meetings should be conducted in an orderly manner, start and end promptly, and tolerance, compassion and understanding should abound.

There is no need for offensive language at any A.A. meeting, and open meetings suffer particularly if worried relatives of alcoholics, or anyone present, concerned with the illness, are unnecessarily affronted. Our initial presentation of the Fellowship could mean the difference between life and death. The Committee strongly recommends particular care, consideration and courtesy at all open meetings.

### Profoundly Deaf and Partially Hearing

All Groups should be aware that there is a large number of deaf people and that many of them have a drinking problem. It is thought that approaches should be made on a regional level for all areas to investigate the possibility of non-A.A. members accompanying those members sent to Twelfth Step the profoundly deaf, as many of them only understand sign language.

A start has already been made in Scotland where in Glasgow a Group 'has been orientated towards helping the deaf member. Four non-deaf members of the Group have already learnt sign language, and other members are in the process of learning in order to fulfil Twelfth Step work. One profoundly deaf member has already nearly eighteen months sobriety.

Special attention and courtesy should also be given at meetings to the partially hearing, so that from their position in the room, they can understand what is being said.

If and when prepared, it is suggested by the Committee that Regions should contact Associations for the Deaf, and suffering alcoholics among them should be encouraged to find an interpreter for communication purposes.

It is also suggested that Literature might be sent to local agencies for the deaf.

## The Housebound Member

Groups should be aware of absent members who may have become housebound, and consider the possibility of sending an occasional A.A. visitor to see them or taking a meeting to them should they or their family request it. It is equally important to ensure that the housebound member has sufficient literature, where available A.A. tapes, and contact by telephone or correspondence. Another possibility is that members should tape their meetings for the housebound to keep them in touch with their Group.

In conclusion, the Committee stresses the importance of keeping to the forefront at all meetings our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety', also reading of the book 'The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions' and encouragement of members to make personal spiritual growth in order to enjoy full, sober and serene recovery.

## COMMITTEE NO. 2. "COMMUNICATION OUTSIDE THE GROUP"

### Tradition Five

"Each Group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers".

This Committee feels that the area in which communication and involvement could be most improved is between Groups and Intergroups.

'Carrying the Message' as described in the Twelve Step encompasses service within the Fellowship and service is another way to gain and to keep sobriety. This can be achieved by Group members attending Intergroup meetings and readily accepting office and responsibilities. The 'Them' and 'Us' syndrome should be dissolved by adopting and accepting the attitude that in participating in service aspects of the Fellowship, a member is enriching his sobriety by serving rather than by joining an 'elite hierarchy'.

The Committee considered, therefore, how best we could stimulate interest in Intergroup affairs and activities and how Group Members could be encouraged to accept responsibilities outside their Groups.

It is suggested that Intergroups could publish a simple newsheet, containing information upon Group Representatives on the Intergroup Committee, the names of Intergroup Representatives to Region, about Workshops, Mini Conventions and Group news. The Committee read with interest the Newsletter published by North London Intergroup, and considered it a good example.

One Day Forums and Regional Workshops encourage Group participation and Group members who are interested in service could join to form 'pilot groups' for Intergroup Officers to refer for support.

If Intergroups and Regional Assemblies constantly included an Agenda Item on 'Communications' this would perpetuate a reminder to examine this subject regularly.

Group Service Representatives could ensure they take a younger Group member along to Intergroup meetings, and perhaps further conscientious contact between Conference delegates and Group members would keep communications alive.

The Committee feels that the presence of a General Service Board Member at Regional Assemblies would be very welcome.

The Committee discussed means of giving Group members the opportunity to participate fully in all the activities outside the Group and decided that experienced members should really encourage the newcomers to join them on Twelfth Step calls, because often the recent and therefore fresh memories of the newcomer can make a strong impression upon that alcoholic who has cried for help. An Al-Anon member accompanying an A.A. on a Twelfth Step call can also be an asset.

The Committee recommends that OUTSIDE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS should be the direct responsibility of Public Information Officers and that there should be no 'freelance' speakers.

We suggest that Groups should hold regular Group Inventory Meetings to discuss purposes of Intergroup, Guidelines and activities. Also, that Groups hold more frequent Open Meetings.

There is direct evidence that some Intergroups contain too many Groups and this Committee recommends that those Intergroups take a careful, commonsense look at those areas in which the ratio of Groups to Intergroups exceeds that number suggested in Guideline No. 2 INTERGROUPS. It is felt that if an Intergroup has to cover Groups which are uncomfortably widespread or contain more than 25 Groups, then inevitably the interest and active participation from Group members will weaken.

This Committee expresses the view that Box 514 plays a valuable part in improving communications between all levels and Regions should take the necessary steps to implement this by sending to 'Box 514' items of interest either by Regions appointing a member responsible for highlighting items from the Regions Minutes or by contributing a special summary.

Communications would benefit by Intergroups sending their Minutes to Regions and by Regions exchanging Minutes with neighbouring Regions.

The Committee discussed members' contributions to SHARE and ROUNDABOUT and feels it would be encouraging and helpful if the Editors could acknowledge contributions to those magazines when those contributors give their names and addresses.

### COMMITTEE NO. 3

### "P.I. - C.P.C"

The Committee recommends that P.I -C.P.C procedures laid down in the Bulletins should be followed.

That P.I. - C.P.C. Committees should be formed in towns, cities and urban conurbations and that these Committees should maintain communication with the local Intergroup so that experience is



shared constantly.

From experience gained by this Committee it is evident that P.I. - C.P.C.'s are and have been formed in various parts of Great Britain. In some cases they are separate from Intergroup, covering a number of A.A. Groups in one town. In other cases they are part of an Intergroup as a first stage of getting P.I. - C.P.C. activity going.

Reports from all over the country suggest that C.P.C. activity whether at an Intergroup or in a P.I. - C.P.C. Committee is developing along the lines of the Bulletins. Letters are being written and appointments are being obtained with heads of organisations such as doctors, nurses, magistrates, police, probation, social services and others, and talks are being given.

It was emphasised that the selection of speakers always involved a high degree of A.A. responsibility. It was suggested that speakers have a reasonable length of sobriety and attend meetings regularly. A less experienced member who will share his recovery story, will accompany a more experienced member who will give the history and general and local information. The Committee particularly recommended that wherever possible an inexperienced member goes along to listen.

The Committee reviewed the P.I. Workbook with particular regard to local newspapers and local radio. It was recommended that P.I. - C.P.C.'s take the initiative and write to the Editor of weekly newspapers and Feature Editor of morning and evening papers, asking for a reporter to meet members of C.P.C.C. and attend an 'Open' A.A. meeting.

Continuity of contact with a newspaper ensures a good understanding of A.A. and its Anonymity Principle.

The Committee discussed the use of independent local radio using Public Service Announcements, and asked the General Service Board to produce a Bulletin detailing the objectives and the approach to be used.

The Committee commented favourably on the P.I. Free Standing Display Unit and recommended that it should be used in central libraries for a period of 2-3 weeks. Permission and dates should be obtained from the Chief Librarian and the display booked through the General Service Office. It is recommended that the General Service Office make all necessary arrangements for transportation and that local A.A. Committees are given notice of delivery arrangements.

The Committee reviewed the Table Top Unit and agreed that this would serve many purposes and could be used in a wide variety of locations.

The Committee recommended that consideration be given to the production of posters.

The Committee accepted the Report on Anonymity of the sub-committee of the General Service Board dated 31 July 1980 (pages 50-52). Doubt was expressed about the technique used in the film "Alcoholics Anonymous -An Inside View" and grave doubt was expressed regarding the film itself. It was recommended that the General Service Board should pursue every opportunity of co-operating with the television companies in the production of documentary programmes about A.A. It was felt, nevertheless, that great care should be taken in establishing the right relationship with the production team to ensure that the finished programme was entirely

acceptable to A.A. and its membership. Experience of Public Service Announcements on television were shared and it is recommended that television companies are approached with a view to showing a "still picture" and a "voice over" in a fifteen second Public Service Announcement.

The Committee have not felt the need to comment on other organisations. The intention of its reports on ALL Agenda items has been to detail the work required by A.A. members, and the need for taking the initiative in co-operation with members of the Professional Community.

#### COMMITTEE NO. 4

#### "LITERATURE"

Item 1 The Committee, having considered and restructured the draft leaflet "Who Me?", now recommends that Conference approved this pamphlet in its revised form.

Item 2 It was considered that the title "Who Me?" was perfectly adequate and that no change was required.

Item 3 The Committee reviewed three current leaflets for content and applicability as follows:

- a) "15 Points" This was felt to be an excellent leaflet of significant use in the review of mental attitudes by members at all stages of recovery. It was noted that the leaflet was not Conference-approved and it was recommended that given no impediment of copyright approval should be granted.
- b) "Now that You've Stopped". This leaflet gives ample practical hints on how to stay stopped during the critical early days. It was considered invaluable in this respect and the Committee recommends that Conference gives its approval forthwith.
- c) "Who Are We?" It was felt that this leaflet was not of significant use within the Fellowship. Its use, if at all, would be in a P.I. sense but it was considered to have been superseded by "A .A .at a Glance". It is suggested that the leaflet should not be reprinted when present supplies are exhausted unless a significant P.I. need is established.
- d) In its consideration of the combination of these leaflets into one pamphlet, the Committee felt that since each of them dealt with differing aspects of recovery and development that they should remain separate.
- e) It is suggested that future Literature Committees be advised of any copyright restriction pertaining to General Service Office supplied literature which is not already Conference-approved. This information will ease their deliberation towards a recommendation of Conference-approval.

Item 4 It is felt that a leaflet on Service would be an asset to Groups and sponsors when encouraging new and not so new members to become involved. The suggestions made in the draft are along the right lines and it was considered that the placing of emphasis on Service in the Group and in the Intergroup would be most helpful. It was felt that this pamphlet would supersede the American "Inside A.A" and that the drafting committee should include encouragement in P.I.- C.P.C. work.

Item 5 The Committee considered the Twelfth Step Wallet, and agreed its usefulness as a holder for Literature. Four items were considered for inclusion in the Wallet as a Twelfth Step Pack. These were: "A Newcomer Asks", "preamble Card", "Is A.A. For You?" and the Just for Today

Card. It was felt, however, that only Conference-approved literature should be provided and the question of copyright for the Just for Today Card was raised. This had been fully investigated and reported on by the Fourteenth General Service Conference in 1979 and found to be free of restriction. This being no known impediment, the Committee therefore recommends that the Just for Today Card be given Conference-approval and included in the Twelfth Step Pack.

The Committee further suggested that where practical, Groups should provide a local listing of Where to Find A.A. as part of the Twelfth Step Wallet Pack.

It is further suggested that if or when “15 Points” and “Now That You’ve Stopped” receives Conference-approval these should also be included in the Twelfth Step Wallet Pack.

Item 6 A review of the new leaflet “A Message to Teenagers” produced agreement in principle as to its content and usefulness for the younger newcomer. It was seen as particularly useful for P.I. Committees in their presentations to schools. The Committee suggested a further review in two years time to consider any “anglicising” of the text which had become necessary based on “in service” experience.

#### Additional Considerations

The Committee suggests that speedy consideration be given to the anglicisation of “A. A. in Treatment Centres” and “A.A. and the Medical Profession”, or alternatively that a new work be published to cover work in these areas.

The Committee were pleased to welcome Lloyd, Ollie, and Gudni as Observers to the Conference, and extend their grateful thanks for shared experience during deliberations.

### COMMITTEE NO 5

### “WORKING WITH OTHERS”

#### Introduction

The Fellowship’s history is the story of Alcoholics Anonymous co-operation with other bodies in the field of alcoholism. Generally this co-operation requires communications and although there have always been difficulties caused by lack of communications this is gradually improving. However, there is still considerable room for continued improvement both with the aforementioned professional bodies and with the involved members of the Fellowship.

The Committee expressed gratitude to the General Service Board for all the work and effort undertaken by them since our previous Conference. In expanding our communications with other bodies concerned in the field of alcoholism we recommend a continuation of their efforts in this field.

Bearing in mind a quote from the sub-Committee on anonymity - “although Traditions 11 and 12 advise that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, it does not, in fact, infer that there should be no promotion”.

In reviewing the five questions presented, the Committee decided to consider questions 3 and 5

together, so this report will conform to that pattern.

#### Question 1.

In reviewing prison activity the Committee were pleased to learn of the 100% coverage of Scottish prisons and the increased coverage of England and Wales. Although there is a problem with A.A. being admitted to some penal institutions which can often be overcome with the help of the General Service Board Prison Liaison Officer, the main problem is a lack of prison sponsors. The Committee recommends that each Intergroup should appoint and receive reports from a Prison Liaison Officer who is responsible to the Intergroup for ensuring that the message is carried to the inmates of all penal institutions. The Committee felt strongly that the message should be carried to institutions by a rota of Prison Sponsors and not just one Sponsor. The Institution Liaison Officer (or rota Secretary) is responsible for managing the rota and keeping contact with the prison official regarding the meeting.

The Committee also recommends:

1. that Regions and Intergroups should hold prison sponsor meetings which may involve and help to inform the appropriate prison officials.
2. that all institutions should where possible, hold open meetings.
3. that all interested A.A. members take up the opportunity to attend prison and hospital meetings at National and local Conventions.

Finally, the Committee wished to remind all Sponsors that to attract new prison sponsors their comments on this form of A.A. service should reflect their involvement in this very rewarding work.

#### Question 2.

The Committee wishes to commend the Board for arranging the comparatively recent meeting between the Board, the Magistrates Association, the Probation Service, the Home Office and others as a result of which it seems likely there will be an upsurge of interest in alternatives for the problem drinker offender. The Committee recommends that the Intergroup Secretaries should ensure that at the local level, whether PLO or CPCC or some other body makes contact with the Magistrates Association, the Chief Probation Officer and most importantly, the Clerk to the Court. (The names and addresses are available from the Conference delegate - England and Wales only).

#### Question 4.

Contact with Regional Advisors of the Medical Council on Alcoholism was limited, due to this development being so recent, but experience so far was very encouraging. Regional Secretaries should ensure that the Regional Medical Advisor has lists of meetings and the offer of speakers.

The Committee wished the Board to continue close liaison with this body and in due course offer guidance to Regions on how contacts could be improved.

#### Questions 3 and 5.

A number of contacts have been made with Health Authorities with varying degrees of success. The recent Hospital bulletins had been very successful, and the Committee recommends

Conference to fully endorse the three Hospital bulletins already issued.

The Committee were concerned that there was a crucial gap in communications with the Health Service in the middle tier, for example in various levels of nursing, and the Committee recommends the Board to approach the Royal College of Nursing with a view to encouraging the Royal College to include a knowledge of A.A. as part of the official Psychiatric and general nurse training syllabus.

The Committee also recommends that at Regional or Intergroup level approaches are made to the Directors of Nurse Education in their areas with a view to giving regular talks to both general and Psychiatric courses in the Schools of Nursing.

Work with the Postgraduate Medical Education Centres for qualified doctors was proving successful in several areas and should be expanded to all areas.

Although there are currently 113 meetings in the 200 Psychiatric hospitals in England and Wales, the Committee were concerned that these Groups should ask themselves whether they are doing enough in the way of ward visiting and in contact with staff.

The Committee also considered that, where possible, Hospital Liaison Officers should ensure that a contact, a sponsored meeting or a normal A.A. meeting should take place in every Psychiatric hospital and Alcoholic Treatment Unit.

The Hospital Liaison Officer should also be aware of the importance of contacting General Hospitals, and being willing to carry the message to patients in general wards if requested. All A.A. members are reminded that doctors and nurses are responsible for the patients' entire welfare, and A.A. members are not qualified to comment on drugs and treatment regimes. It would be better to have no hospital contact than use A.A. members who do not understand this principle.

## CONCLUSION

It can be most stimulating to work with non-alcoholics who are in a position to further our efforts and our policies. We recovering alcoholics have nothing to hide, bearing in mind our Traditions. Let us, therefore, examine and progress with our determination to "carry the message".

## COMMITTEE NO. 6 "STRUCTURE AND SERVICE"

Now that Regions are an established part of the Fellowship throughout Great Britain, this Committee found that Regionalisation is an active ingredient in the growth in unity of A.A. in this country.

### 1 Regional Activities

- a) The use of standing agendas coinciding with the principal committees of Conference provide a continuing preparation for the work of Conference.
- b) Intergroups are still recognised as the service vehicle of our Fellowship. Their effectiveness is enhanced by sharing at all levels of service at Region.

- c) In this sharing at Region co-ordination of Mini Convention dates and the exchange of better methods of service continue to promote Unity.
- d) New members at Intergroup have derived enormous benefit when invited to join existing Service Committees.
- e) Intergroup meetings, when arranged before Regional assemblies, improve the flow of information.
- f) Regional Forums and Workshops enable in-depth study of special service interest.

### Regional Representation

This Committee recommends that the General Service Board be requested to re-examine the procedure for the appointment of new Board Members, particularly in view of the possibility of natural development into regional representation, and report to the General Service Conference 1982.

### 2. 3rd. Edition Service Handbook

Detailed consideration was given to the 3rd edition of the A.A. Service Handbook. The Committee recommends that Conference adopts the 3rd Edition, the changes in which, allow for the new regional structure.

This Committee suggests that a fuller history of A.A. in Britain might be given at some future date.

It was discussed and emphasised that ideas for Conference agendas are welcomed from Groups, Intergroups and Regions.

We recommend the incorporation of an erratum slip indicating that the 'Scottish Committee' page 18, is now known as 'The Scottish Service Committee'.

3 P.O. Box numbers are not widely used except in East Scotland. Where there is a Service Office they are not found necessary.

It is urged that the General Service Office be notified at once on change of officers at Group, Intergroup and Region.

Telephone Services vary widely from manned telephones to operator-interrupted services. Some areas make much use of Samaritans and pay for a telephone line.

Finances do seem to be diverted where Telephone Services are in operation but this service is well used in all cases.

4 Delegates prepare for Conference by, in most cases, reading A.A. approved literature, visiting Groups, Intergroups and Regions.

Several Regions have run special Workshop sessions where ex-delegates discuss with newly elected delegates and substitutes the working of Conference.

This Committee feels that the use of a standing agenda at Region and Intergroup is an on-going preparation for Conference.

5. Reporting back to Region has proved worthwhile as long as personal impressions are given and not just a formal reading of reports.

Personal enthusiasm engenders interest and direct contact with Groups where possible creates curiosity about the General Service Conference.

It was suggested that delegates report back not to their own Intergroup but to the Intergroup of another delegate in their Region.

Penntti K. identified with Committee members in reporting back to his area in Finland. He also found that personal impressions caught more interest than a formal reading of reports.

This Committee recommends that Conference be referred to as the General Service Conference and not as the Manchester Conference at all times.

In conclusion, this Committee feels that because of Regionalisation, preparation and reporting back has vastly improved and teamwork among delegates has been rewarding.

In reporting back Box 514 should be recommended reading as the General Service Conference is fully covered. This Committee suggests that extra copies of Box 514 should be issued to delegates for distribution when reporting back.

## **WORKSHOP**

### **“REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT”**

The question of Regional structure was first considered at the Eighth General Service Conference in 1973. It was suggested that a change at this juncture would be premature. Intergroups were not ready yet.

The 1974 General Service Conference recommended that Intergroups immediately consider with neighbouring Intergroups the formation of viable Regional arrangements.

The 1975 General Service Conference agreed that Regionalisation was desirable and that areas which were ready to form Regions should do so.

The 1976 General Service Conference noted that progress had taken place but that Intergroup structure was strengthening and Regionalisation would follow naturally.

The 1977 General Service Conference saw for the first time representation by a Region. The Southern Region was formed comprising 5 Intergroups.

The 1978 General Service Conference saw Scotland represented by 5 Regions, discussions were now under way and Guideline No. 6 (REGIONS) was published to encourage the formation of Regions in England and Wales.

The 1979 General Service Conference recommended the General Service Board to encourage the

formation of Regions, to act as ‘Overall Mentor’ and General Service Board members to give guidance and leadership in their cases.

This is when Regionalisation took off in England and Wales. A working plan was submitted by General Service Board and the Intergroups started to work on them. The working plan was discussed by interested Regions and Intergroups at Selsey ‘79, where the general consensus of opinion was that Regionalisation was now required to provide the growth so necessary for the furtherance of our Primary Purpose.

During 1980 the present Regions and Intergroups worked on the plans and formulated the proposal that Regionalisation should be completed in England and Wales by the end of 1980, and that representation at the 1981 General Service Conference should be by Regions. This was achieved. We now have 9 Regions in England and Wales, 5 in Scotland. The Regional boundaries will stay fixed with representation at Conference also constant at 6 per Region. However, within these fixed boundaries Groups will form and grow as will Intergroups all for the vital growth required to fulfil our Primary Purpose.

In the 1981 Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers we see the results. The formation of Regions furthers the aims of Guideline No. 6.

The Conference would hope to further the aims and ideals namely Recovery, Unity and Service and ensure the health growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering the closer ties and greater co-operation throughout the Isles.

## **WORKSHOP**

### **“REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT”**

I was very fortunate to be involved in Regionalisation in its infancy. A sub-committee was formed by our Scottish Committee to consider and submit a suggested number of Regions and their geographical locations. The considerations and proposals submitted by the sub-committee were unanimously accepted by all the Scottish Intergroups concerned, with only a few minor amendments.

I then became involved in the formation of the Intergroups to which I now belong; it was felt at that time by the people concerned that Glasgow Intergroup was unwieldy as there were nearly 100 groups in our Intergroup. We then divided that very large Intergroup into 4 Intergroups, the South, Northwest Central and East, this concerned all the areas in the City and was done very quickly and amicably, although naturally we had our normal teething troubles in their formation, this was to be expected in such a new development.

We then formed Glasgow Region by asking each Intergroup to send two representatives, the nucleus of our Region was eight representatives. Since those early days we have found it necessary to swell our ranks; through experience it was felt that each Intergroup would be more adequately represented by three delegates.

The main function of our Region has been to co-ordinate and improve services which are always organised and implemented by each individual Intergroup, and to encourage growth in our Region. Each Intergroup now has one delegate as a ‘Roundabout’ liaison; their duties are to keep



us informed about all activities in their area, inform them about new group openings etc., also to encourage people to write articles for our magazine. Each Intergroup also has two delegates for the manning of our 24-hour ansaphone service which is located in our Scottish Service Office in the City Centre.

In the new field of Public Information where each Intergroup is autonomous, most have two or three Public Information Officers who co-ordinate at meetings held by our own Regional Public Information Officers. They discuss events in which they have been involved, and also disclose plans for future events and dates. We also have a quarterly meeting held under the chairmanship of Tom H. who is responsible to the Scottish Services Committee for Public Information activities, this meeting is open to all Scottish Intergrups, and Regional Public Information Officers. I have noticed a marked improvement in our co-operation with the usual outside agencies such as hospitals, prisons and especially the Social Works Department.

Over the last year the growth of A.A. in Glasgow has been so great, that we now have another Intergroup in our Region making our number up to five Intergrups.

I feel that the development of our Region has been an important step forward in the growth of A.A. in the U.K. leading to the general public being more aware of who we are and what we are; to group members becoming more aware of the responsibilities in Service and that greater opportunities now exist to participate and become involved in what will always be part of our Primary Purpose 'carrying the message'.

## **WORKSHOP**

## **“UNITY IS A WORKING HUMILITY”**

My name is Ian, I am an alcoholic and a very grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

On receiving the Conference Committee's invitation to make this presentation, my immediate reaction was to laugh. The thought that I be asked to speak on any subject remotely connected with humility just had to be someone's idea of a joke! But when the real meaning of the invitation began to dawn on me I felt very humbled and more than a little afraid. I never have been very good at writing essays in any case, but then to have to stand up in front of all you grand people and read it, well it was all rather a bit too much. So in accordance with all good A.A. suggestions I shared my problem with a close A.A. friend, wrote to Bill thanking him very much and of course accepting, then went off into the sunshine on holiday.

Unity is part of the subject title and whilst I have reaped many benefits from membership of this Fellowship, one of the most rewarding is the fact that I belong, that I am in accord, that I can unite with others. The obvious thing for me to do about this presentation was to consult some of my A.A. friends and see what they had to say on the subject. This Fellowship is marvellous in that I am no longer required to do anything on my own. I need no longer be an expert on such diverse subjects as brain surgery and beekeeping. I can go and ask advice and, should I feel the need, even take that advice. Therefore, as far as this presentation is concerned, I am merely a spokesman presenting my committee's report!

All around us in the world today disharmony and division are commonplace, and strife and confusion abound. I am fortunate I am an alcoholic who was allowed a brief moment of sanity to

see where I was heading were I to continue on that path of self-will run riot. I chose to come here. On my arrival I found a group of people who if they wanted to live had no option but to be united and to learn to live with each other. I learned how to pray for the strength and wisdom to cope with the problems and people that constitute normal living, instead of asking that I be spared such encounters. Since I was a child I have been upset by arguments and disharmony, and it still disturbs me today when I see someone dig their heels in and refuse to give way for no other reason than that to back down would be to lose face.

In this Fellowship, I discovered that we had to work together, that I had to try to see the other man's point of view, as my way had in the past merely served to bring me nearer and nearer to insanity and death. In the beginning I was so terrified at my position that I trusted everyone and believed everything that I was told and tried to carry out the suggestions made.

Then I started getting 'better'. I became involved in a group, and then intergroup, personalities crept in. There were certain people who always seemed to be making the suggestions and decisions - it was not this that I resented so much as the fact that they were usually correct. Time passed, and my recovery became more healthy, and I saw that these 'know-alls' were in fact people who had gone to a great deal of trouble to seek out the wishes of their groups and intergroups, they had discussed it with their sponsors, and A.A. friends, and it was therefore not just for their own benefit but for the benefit of the Fellowship as a whole that they worked. I was objecting to the man talking, instead of listening to what he had to say.

I came to Conference for the first time last year, and served on the Committee discussing Regionalisation. It was an experience which has had a tremendous impact on my life. I listened to many points of view being put forward, in none too gentle a manner at times either - in fact it got positively hairy at times - but by the end of the day I saw men withdraw their sincere objections so that a harmonious decision might be reached. I learned quite a bit about the workings of unity and humility that day. I am glad for the opportunity to serve on the local regional assembly, and have had great pleasure in seeing people who were totally opposed to Regionalisation in the first instance, now for the benefit of A.A. as a whole, unite and use those same energies to ensure its successful working, and submerge their personalities in the cause for the common good.

I am very happy in my membership of this Fellowship and content in the knowledge that I do depend upon you, and upon our continued unity for my happiness and peace of mind, indeed for my life. A willingness to keep an open mind, to listen to the other man, and a wee bit give and take; these are just some of the necessary qualities for achieving that blessed unity through a working humility.

## **WORKSHOP**

### **“UNITY IS A WORKING HUMILITY”**

“Workshop” is a good name for this session. It took me an evening's work to try to understand the proposition, let alone expand upon it. When I came across, anything in A.A. which I find difficult to understand or decide upon, I bring it down to a personal level. After all, I am in the Fellowship for me and my sobriety and if a statement is to have meaning, it must have meaning for me at this personal level or it has no meaning at all.

“Humility” is a vexed word and I’ve never been able to agree a definition with anybody. Whatever it may mean to you, to me it means an awareness of my dependence on God and my fellow man. In the A.A. context in particular it means a direct knowledge that my sobriety came through this Fellowship and its continuation depends upon my ‘sticking with the winners’.

I am one of these clever chaps whose brain was so unaffected by alcohol that I was able to take the whole 12 Steps one summer’s afternoon. The whole programme was so clear to me that I was able to explain it to anyone who was prepared to listen.

One Sunday I gave the members of the Cheltenham Group the benefit of my wisdom and afterwards one of them, who should have known better, said to me, “Sim, it is great to hear one so young in A.A. who has such a grasp of the programme”. I made modest chucking noises but there was no denying that he was right. On the Thursday, I was drunk.

Occasionally since then, people have been foolish enough to pat me on the back for my sobriety and I steadfastly believe that I must on such occasions point out that any strength or understanding I may have has been given to me by other members. This even applies when someone at a meeting quotes me as uttering some wise saw. As soon as the opportunity occurs, I tell the meeting where and from whom I first heard it, because I know that since I joined the Fellowship I have had no profound or original thought to add to the accumulated wisdom that was here waiting for me.

In my personal relations with other members of my home group, it is well that I should be aware of my dependence on them. Without the new member I would be denied the opportunity of reliving the fear, the shame and the despair which brought me on my knees for help. Without those members with a little sobriety, I would be unable to share the sheer joy of being sober today. Without any of them at all, I would have to travel many miles to get help from the members of another group.

Every member contributes to my sobriety - even the one whose views are completely at variance with my own and even if he is completely wrong. The process of examining the validity of my own beliefs cannot help but strengthen those that are well-founded and bring forward for review those that cannot stand the test of being challenged. As long as I am aware of my own need for each other member, so long can I be sure that any differences between us will be superficial only and will not effect the unity of the Group.

The Group’s relationship with our neighbouring Groups and with Intergroup is the same situation writ large. If we are properly to fulfil our primary function, we need help. This help may be in the provision of extra bodies to enable us to carry the message to some hospital or prison in our immediate area or it may be in the very opportunity to help another Group in similar circumstances.

For many years my home Group believed that it could function perfectly well in isolation but since we have started to participate in joint enterprises with our neighbours we have benefited enormously from the wider sharing which has become possible. If the Group were to take its moral inventory now, I am sure it would find that some measure of humility has gone hand in hand with the greater degree of unity within our Intergroup.

So it is at Regional level and at Conference.

At this point I must tell you a story of my own pride - the antithesis of humility.

Two years ago, I came to my first Conference, determined to tell these bloody ‘politicians’ what A.A. is all about. To tell them that the most important member is the newest member and that the most important unit in A.A. is the Group. You already knew. Of course you knew.

If I may quote Bill of Ludlow, I have never heard of a man or woman who woke up one morning and said, “I feel great, Life is full and rich. I think I will join A.A.” Most people come in as I did - beaten, frightened, desperate for help. I came because there was nowhere else to go and because I needed what you have got. I remain in A.A. because I still need your help and it is help which none but you can give.

There is, of course, another aspect of humility when it comes to the relationship of the Fellowship as a whole to the rest of society. Our Tenth Tradition “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues”, is an expression of this humility. We know as a Fellowship how to stop drinking and how to stay stopped. We are the experts on recovery in alcoholism. But there our expertise and our interest stops. By having that small degree of humility necessary to admit that we do not hold the remedy to all the world’s ills, that we do need other people in other Fellowships and organisations to do their own thing for the common good, we are able to devote our whole attention to the basic reason for our existence -to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. So long as we keep things as simple as that Unity is no problem.

May I leave you with this thought, that if I am prepared to speak to you for eight minutes on the subject of ‘humility’ I should be automatically disqualified by my arrogance in doing so.

## **DISCUSSION**

The sharing that followed the speakers presenting the two papers on the above theme was indeed very moving, inspiring and obviously came from the heart.

The delegates here for the first time especially expressed their feelings of warmth, the belonging, the togetherness and the humility they felt in the room. They had also felt and seen this humility at work in the Committee Rooms during the day.

Those delegates who had been to these Conferences before expressed their feelings of gratitude and privilege to be part of this wonderful Fellowship. They emphasised the necessity to ‘keep it simple’, to practice the A.A. way of Life in our daily living and to feel the need of ones Higher Power.

Sobriety is a fantastic gift, something to be treasured, cherished, enjoyed and should be fully shared with others. When people say that they have humility, they do not really have it at all, ‘naked truth’ could be described to be humility or rid oneself from self-centredness.

The theme “Unity is a working Humility” is indeed something for us all to think about. Delegates expressed that Unity (i.e. one of our Legacies) is our strength and vital in our Fellowship. We should all take from this Conference this message and apply it in our dealings with Groups, Intergroups and Regions.

Delegates also expressed that we should never feel too big or ‘we know it all’ in our dealings with other people (i.e. our Third Legacy). As demonstrated in our Committee Rooms, we should also be open-minded and show willingness to co-operate at every opportunity with other people - agencies concerned in the field of alcoholism.

As long as we try to practice our Primary Purpose i.e. “to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic” we fulfil the above theme admirably.

Report of the Sub-Committee of the General Service Board formed at the request of the Fifteenth General Service Conference 1980 to enquire into the subject of Anonymity at Public Level and .in particular the appearance of members on Television and Films.

Those Present:

Valerie L.  
Sheila Innes  
Bill Morrell  
Dr. David Robinson  
Jim H.  
Sean B.  
Bill S.

The Committee considered the Report approved by the Fourth General Service Conference 1969 on this subject, and agreed that the pledge of responsibility....

“When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible”.

reinforces the desire to implement Tradition 5.....

“Each Group has but one primary purpose to carry this message to the alcoholic who still suffers”.

The whole question of anonymity at public level is quite clearly defined in Traditions 11 and 12 and although the former Tradition advises that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion it does not, in fact, infer that there should be no promotion, but rather that the attraction of each individual’s sobriety was of paramount importance. The words of Bill W. the co-founder came clearly to mind..... “Alcoholics Anonymous is always prepared to publicise its principles and its work but not its individual members”. This statement reinforces Tradition 12.

The Committee considered that before stating their conclusions some thoughts and explanations should be included in this Report. None of the ideas contained are new, but they will serve to remind us all of the prime importance of the principles involved.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were very meticulously thought out as suggestions

to help alcoholics in A.A. to recover from alcoholism. In exactly the same way the Twelve Traditions of A.A. were arrived at in order to protect and guide the Fellowship as a whole.

We use the word “protect” advisedly in order that desires for power, prestige and money by the individual member do not cause havoc and chaos or threaten the future of A.A.

In Tradition 11 it states very firmly that personal anonymity needs always to be maintained at the level of press, radio, films and television. (Television is mentioned in “A.A. Comes of Age”). We feel we must stress the word “always”. Surely this should be a comfort to us all. It tells us A.A. will continue to be strong. It will continue to grow without the need for any of us to seek personal power, acclaim or approval - things we may have needed to do in our living before we came to A.A.

This same principle must also be a comfort to any newcomers approaching us, for they, too, can feel secure in the knowledge that our doors are open to them with no risk of their identity being revealed.

We may find that techniques within the media have progressed. We may find that due to this perhaps new doors will be opened and available to us in order to carry our message, but we must never lose sight of our Tradition 1.... “that our common welfare should come first”. This Tradition incorporates the members who are with us today and those who are still to join us. Therefore it is recommended that any structural programmes discussing A.A. its work and what it does should be guided by a team of experienced members and not left in the hands of an individual member.

The guidance of the word “always” in our Tradition 11 leaves no loophole for the use of full names, or photographs in the press, on radio, on film or television. It means what it says - personal anonymity is vital to us all.

We have tried to explain our reasons, but perhaps the words of Bill W., can put it better than we do.

In A.A. Comes of Age” he says:

“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Traditions ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. The entire future of our Fellowship hangs on this vital principle. If we continue to be filled with the spirit of anonymity no shoal or reef can wreck us. If we forget it the lid of Pandora’s box will be off and the spirits of Money, Power and Prestige will be loosed among us.

No A.A. principle merits more study and application than this one. I am positive that A.A.’s anonymity is the key to long term survival – the substance is sacrifice. We give up our personal desires for the common good.

Experience has taught us that anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all pervading spiritual quality which today keynotes A.A. life everywhere”.

We do not feel we have more to offer you than these words Bill W., has given us. Yet we are reminded of an example of this feeling of truth expressed by a member at a recent Conference who said “As members of A.A. we, as individuals, are perhaps the only examples of the Big

Book of Alcoholics Anonymous people outside the Fellowship will ever see". This surely is a definition of attraction rather than promotion, and certainly a desire to place principles before personalities.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. In view of the techniques now available in the production of television programmes such as are used on the American film "Alcoholics Anonymous - An Inside View" we should offer our co-operation in the production of professional plays or films designed to portray Alcoholics Anonymous, provided this co-operation is undertaken by members properly authorised to do so.

2. The Committee are happy to report the professional skills and advice available to the Board and recommend that further enquiry be made into the possibility of co-operating with the B.B.C. Community Programmes Unit, and possibly the Head of Drama with a view to the production of separate programmes or the inclusion of the A.A. message and principles into other programmes.

Where such oblique approach is used, enquiry be made into the possibility of a message at the end of the programme as to how any interested party may contact us.

3. The use of radio presents no problems providing anonymity by name is preserved, and that during such broadcasts Alcoholics Anonymous is not drawn into any controversy. These principles equally apply to Press articles.

4. The Committee recommends that all television and sound broadcasting companies, as well as the Press, be regularly reminded of our Tradition of Anonymity.

5. No professional fee can be accepted by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous for any suggestions or advice given.

No member, acting as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, who co-operates in the production of an article in the press, or a programme on radio or television shall personally financially benefit from any fee.

6. Television, as a medium, is not considered suitable for, the portrayal of members of Alcoholics Anonymous in full face or using full names.

7. The technique of screening members in profile, silhouette or in the shadows is also not considered suitable, since this; whilst protecting Tradition 11 would portray our Fellowship as a secret society and would perpetuate the stigma.

The Committee finally concluded that the following extract from Bill W's last message was an invaluable guide ..."If I were asked which of our blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a Fellowship, and most vital to our community, I would say "the Concept of Anonymity".

31 July 1980





## FRIDAY 23 APRIL

The Seventeenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester. Registration of delegates and distribution of delegates folders and other material commenced at 4 p.m. The subsequent reception, as always, was an ideal opportunity for the delegates to get together. The Conference attendance totalled 109, made up of 80 delegates from 14 Regions, one delegate from the Channel Islands, two delegates from the English Speaking Intergroup Europe, representatives from the magazines "Share and "Roundabout", 18 members of the General Service Board, an observer from Norway, Ian T. Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and 3 staff members.

## OPENING OF CONFERENCE

The first full session of Conference commenced at 8.30 p.m. -the Chairman, Ian T. (London Region) calling for the customary silence, which was followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions by the General Secretary. Ian T. welcomed all the delegates, with a special welcome to Erik, the Norwegian observer and presented his Keynote Address:

"At the time of last year's Conference when I was afforded the privilege of being elected your Chairman for this Conference, I was leading a nicely quiet, manageable life. I adhered to the philosophy that one ought not get into the habit of doing today that which might well be left until the morrow. As the days passed, however, I began to have the uneasy feeling that this time I had bitten off more than I could chew. You know the feeling - "That's torn it this time!"

"I knew in myself that I was neither experienced nor worthy enough to honour your trust. I confided this to a friend in the Fellowship and he pointed out that this was merely another step in Service. He went on to say that if I felt that I could not do it, then it was high time that I found out why, and did something about it. "Thank God for those who keep it simple!

"I have always been afraid of the unknown and here it was again. The trouble was not only did I not know where to start, I did not even know what to start. There was a difference this time - I am sober - I now know what to do about these fears and self doubts. I no longer have to know everything. I went along to the man who has helped a number of others in the same predicament before me. After a chat with him my fears were dispelled, I did not have to do it all on my own, and I began to enjoy what has been a wonderful year of self searching and change.

I am grateful that through the grace of God and the help of this Fellowship, I am now free to change. "When I learned that it was yet another of the privileges of the Chairman to select the theme for Conference, I had this "freedom to change" very much on my mind. The Fellowship itself is constantly going through a process of change.

Recently we have experienced Regionalisation, the first European Service Meeting and new developments in co-operation with industry, to name but a few. Bill once wrote in a letter "Change is the characteristic of all growth - only God is unchanging; only He has all the truth there is".

“When I tried to develop the theme “Freedom through Change”, I began to fear that I was placing too great an emphasis on the word ‘Change’. Help was at hand and my mentor suggested that what I really meant was ‘Develop’. So there we had it, “Freedom to Develop”.

“To develop and grow one must, by the very nature of evolution, change. Change can unfortunately be destructive just as well as constructive. The secret is in knowing when change is necessary. Provided we are ever mindful of the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Steps in our programme of recovery, we have freedom to change. Life is a continual process of change, only God’s love is constant. To further the growth of the Fellowship, and indeed our individual development, and to enable us to continue to carry this message of hope efficiently, change is a necessity and constructive. Change simply for the sake of change could be detrimental and destructive. The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails.

“I am grateful today that I have developed the ability to learn and a willingness to give back some of the time that I have been given by God through this Fellowship. During the past year I have visited various Regions other than my own in an attempt to learn how they work and by that curious paradox of A.A. the blessings have far outweighed the effort.

“One small instance was when I was at a meeting in Wales. At one point during the meeting there were several people talking together at the same time. The Chairman having decided that the meeting be brought to order said simply, “Let’s keep together chaps”. The talk stopped and the original speaker continued - a fleeting glimpse of the love and understanding, one of the most cherished qualities of this Fellowship the unity without which the heart of A.A. would cease to beat and, as it says in the first Tradition, “Our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God”. The strength which I have found through the Unity I have experienced in A.A. has given me the courage to face change. I well remember the warmth of the welcome that I received when I first came into an A.A. room, that firm handshake, so full of strength and hope, but I oft-times feel that it is not just the newcomer who requires a warm welcome and word of encouragement, but also the older member, who may be in strange territory or circumstances and in need of some reassurance .

“This last year has been a great awakening for me, I have been forced into searching those places of myself unknown to me before and to questioning my motives and reasonings. Part of this awakening has been a new understanding of tolerance. I had thought that tolerance was simply allowing the other man to have his say. It would now appear that there is more to it than that, and the whole thing requires us to think not of ourselves but of the truth. We must never stop our search for the truth, always trying to learn from those who hold a different view. We must try to listen to others, and to learn from others, and especially from our opponents, if we are seriously wishing to get nearer to the truth. We must be prepared to say “I may be wrong and you may be right; and by talking things over rationally we may be able to correct some of our mistakes; and we may perhaps both of us get nearer to the truth, or to acting in the right way”.

“On the other hand to agree with one another need not necessarily be the correct thing either, after all through the ages people have agreed most strongly on various erroneous doctrines: the world is the centre of the Universe; the world is flat and one could fall off the edge; or, if only my luck would change my drink problem would go away. Agreement is often the fear of intolerance. Fearing to be intolerant we are inclined to extend toleration, as a right, also to those who are

intolerant; also to those who are trying to spread intolerant ideologies, ideologies that entail the principle that all who dissent from them must be suppressed, and I suggest that in our devotion to tolerance, we could be in danger of destroying our own freedom of thought and hence our principles and traditions. Ideally we ought to try to establish the attitude that, in the search for the truth, we are all bound together. We must co-operate, because only in this way can different points of view be brought to bear on our problems. Again I quote from the first Tradition “It is plain that the group must survive or the individual will not”.

“This ability to give and take and compromise cheerfully is the quality of good leadership and the making of a good servant. In our anxiety to put principles before personalities we may be in danger of creating a leadership without any personality. A faceless robot trying to please everybody. A leader in A.A. service is one who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us naturally want to pack him up and help him with his job. Leaders, having been delegated authority and using it wisely, should not be constantly interfered with, else they will be demoralised, their authority to do their work having become subject to arbitrary invasion, and no effective leadership can be possible.

“The Conference Charter makes clear in a general way that the groups have given ultimate and operational authority to Conference. A delegate, having prepared himself in the proper manner and having sought the views and opinions of the members and groups in his Region, is entitled to cast his vote according to the dictates of his own conscience. Because the A.A. group holds the ultimate authority there can be no doubt that they have the right to give instructions to their delegate on any and all A.A. matters. I would however suggest that a delegate who cannot act on his own conscience is not a trusted servant but merely a messenger. If our leaders are to be trusted servants then we ought entrust to them the responsibility of deciding, within the understood framework of their duties, how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation as it arises.

“The insurance against this being misused lies in the Fifth Concept where it gives right of appeal. When a minority considers an issue to be such a grave one that a mistaken decision could seriously affect A.A. as a whole, it should then charge itself with the actual duty of presenting a minority report to Conference. “I make no apologies for the non-originality of the subject matter of this opening address. A very good friend of mine said here last year, and I quote, “I have never, since joining the Fellowship, had any profound or original thought to add to the accumulated wisdom that was here waiting for me”. I am indeed privileged to have access to such a treasury.

“I hope and pray that over this weekend each one of us may be able to share and debate one with the other in what Bill W described as the “Faith that is more than our greatest gift; its sharing with others is our greatest responsibility. May we all continually seek the wisdom and the willingness by which we may well fulfil that immense trust which the Giver of all perfect gifts has placed in our hands”.

“Ever mindful that Conference is the group conscience of A.A. as a whole, we must look well to our own conscience and conduct in our deliberations over the next two days.

“Everything I have I owe to this Fellowship, and I would thank you all for that, and especially today I would like to thank all of you who have been responsible for giving me this privilege of being Conference Chairman and for guiding me through the last year.

“May the God of your understanding guide and support you as you take up the responsibilities that have been entrusted to you for this Conference”.

## GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT

Gordon W., Chairman of The General Service Board, presented the Annual Report of the Board for 1981: “On behalf of The General Service Board, I extend to you all a very warm welcome to this the Seventeenth General Service Conference, and particularly to those who are here for the first time, and who perhaps are feeling a little overawed and nervous. I would say to you - don't be so. We all felt the same at our first Conference. Just relax. The nervous feeling will soon pass, and you'll find yourself in the thick of it. You'll enjoy every minute of it. As in all things in our Fellowship, sharing is the key and there will be much of it over this weekend. If you have any doubts or queries about anything don't be frightened - ask. 'Tis all part of the sharing process, and what better way than in this forum. I must also give a warm welcome to our friend, Erik, from Norway.

“I am sure that all members present understand that The General Service Board is the servant of the Fellowship, whose voice is heard through the annual Conference to which all Regions send their delegates. Each year the Board accounts to Conference for its stewardship over the past year. The annual Report of The General Service Board, which was circulated to you all some time ago, gives a brief account of the work of the Board and of the main events of the year. No doubt you have all read the Report and are familiar with the contents. In presenting the Report, I have to say it has been a very full year, and much has been achieved. We have, I believe, fulfilled all that was asked of us at last year's Conference. I don't intend to go through each item individually, but will contain myself to mention one or two highlights.

“Throughout the years we have recognised that there has been room for the strengthening of our communications. In Committee No. 1 last year the plight of the housebound member was highlighted. Over a period of time there has been correspondence from several loner members expressing an interest for Loners Meetings by Post Bulletins. Such should also be ideal for the housebound member and I am pleased to say that our General Secretary is proceeding with this project.

“As a means of communication, we have Box 514 in which all matters of interest which take place within the Regions should be reported and so shared. I regret to say such is not happening, in spite of many appeals. It has been recommended, here at Conference, that each Region appoint a member with special responsibility for passing information to G.S.O. and Box 514. I appeal to you all to ensure the implementation of this function. To date the response has been far from satisfactory, and has been a constant worry to those responsible for the publication of Box 514.

“From the reports that are received at our Board Meetings, it would appear that Regionalisation is proceeding extremely well, likewise PI-CPC, following the introduction of the Workbook and the Bulletins. The Board Member responsible for this PI-CPC function has done a great job, and there has been a very obvious impact of PI throughout the whole country. We are now at the stage of consolidation, the tools have been provided in the Workbook and Bulletins. It is up to the Intergroups now to cover their particular area.

“Work in the hospitals continues to grow and again we are indebted for the bulletins provided. They are certainly being put to good use.

“Work in the prisons has continued at a high level, as you will see from the Report on this subject. It is, however, a very sad reflection that several prison groups have had to close during the year because of lack of sponsors. I wonder whether there has been too much enthusiasm for some of the newer activities of service thereby overstressing the resources to the detriment of other services. This is something we must always guard against. Continuity of our service in the outside fields is terribly important, and in this we just must not fail.

“As I said in my introduction to the Board Report, 1981 will be remembered in our history as the year of the first European Service Meeting, and the first Regional Forum. Regarding the former, you will see on the programme we have a Workshop tomorrow afternoon on European Service with an introductory paper by me, so I will say no more on this at present. With regard to the Regional Forum held last November by the South West Scotland Region, I would just like to say what a tremendous success it was and so very well attended. We hope it will have been the forerunner of Forums by other Regions. I have heard whispers of others likely to take place in the not too distant future.

“I feel that special mention must be made to our regular meetings which take place with representatives of the Department of Health and Social Security during which there is always an interesting and informative exchange of views and ideas. They very much respect and pay great tribute to the work of our Fellowship and fully recognise the effects brought about by the recovery of so many, and the growing number of recoveries through our recovery programme. At our last meeting with them we were informed of an increasing interest by the CBI and TUC following the Health and Safety Executive document “The Problem Drinker at Work”. We told them of our previous efforts with both the CBI and TUC when we got so far but without a really satisfactory conclusion, and decided to leave it in abeyance for the time being. We were requested at the meeting to approach both parties again, and this we will do.

“I would now like to express thanks and appreciation to all the members of the Board who have carried out the functions and piloted all the various achievements throughout the year. Also, and by no means least, to our General Secretary and the staff at G.S.O. for all the hard work they have put in during the year, not only in servicing the needs of the Fellowship here in Great Britain, but also all the spade work put into the arrangements etc. , for the very successful European Service Meeting in Frankfurt in October last, and also all the preparatory work etc., for this Conference.

“Turning now to the Financial aspect of the Report, I would ask Peter F., our Honorary Treasurer, to present the Financial Statement and Balance Sheet.

Peter drew attention to the Financial Statement and Balance Sheet as at the 31 December 1981, and the notes on the Financial Statement contained in the Annual Report of The General Service Board. Special mention was made of the fact that only 58% of service expenditure was covered by direct contributions and that although a sum of £7,143 had been spent on Public Information activity where there was an overall surplus of £11,816. This had been made possible by the income from publishing and investments. The nett asset figure of £153,199 was an increase of only 6.5% during the year and he drew attention to the further erosion in value by reason of inflation - a trend reported for the first time last year.

Peter remarked that special appeals were not necessarily the answer since they did have the tendency to start everyone thinking of ways and means of raising money, and these sometimes could detract us from our primary purpose and from essential Twelfth Step work. A strong financial position minimises the necessity to deviate from our primary purpose and it is from this position that we have been able to improve and extend, for example, our Public Information activities by way of literature etc., available on a free of charge basis. When looking at the nett asset value, it is well to remember that little of this amount is, in fact, immediately available - the remainder is invested to preserve, as far as possible, its value.

At the present time, no-one can be certain of what funds will be necessary to have available when the lease of the General Service Office expires in 1986 so we need to provide a prudent reserve for this purpose and for other necessary items to cope with the increasing responsibilities of our central services.

The first quarter of the current year shows that 63% of service expenditure had been covered by direct contributions, but this is only a quarter of the year, showing an improvement, and although it would appear that a great number of groups are contributing £1.00 per week, it is sometimes rather like the Grand National - most of the entrants do not finish the course.

It is felt that if the Group conscience is reminded of the necessity to support the General Fund, and that no undue or unnecessary reserves are kept at local level then there will be no need for any special appeals or fund raising activities.

After discussion, the Financial Report was accepted.

Gordon then continued:

“We must think about inflation. I am quite sure that in some parts of the Fellowship there is money held that is not coming forward to the General Service Office. We must keep our pledge of self support always well to the fore. We say this nearly every Conference - try and impress it upon your Group. Money is a very important subject to talk about. Our financial situation has improved. Fifteen years ago it was in a very serious state but we have improved upon it. We have now got to the position of ploughing back through Public Information efforts. The whole point is for the outside world to know who we are, what we are and where we are. So we come back to our pledge of self support. Over the last two or three years we have failed to meet it to the full. I hope that after what Peter has said, and what you have seen on the Board Report, you will take heed and take away the message that we are not fulfilling our pledge.

“We now come to Board Membership. At Conference last year, Committee No.6 recommended that the Board re-examine the procedures for the appointment of new members, particularly in view of the possibility of natural development, into regional representation. In actual fact, from time to time over the years the Board have reviewed the question of Board Membership, and particularly so with the birth of the Regions. Following a request made through Committee No.6 further thought was given to this and certain proposals have been made and are outlined in a paper prepared on the subject and circulated to you all. You will see there are a number of quite fundamental changes proposed. The establishing of the Regions along with the growth of the Fellowship, and the growing in maturity, not only of Conference but also the Fellowship as a whole, the proposed changes are, I believe, fully justified at this time. They will further

involvement within the Fellowship which always adds to our strength. We hope Conference will concur the proposals along with the consequent amendment to the Service Handbook. These will be discussed and studied in Committee No.6.

“At the end of last year we lost two of our respected and valued non-alcoholic members, Bill Morell and Dr. John Hughes, both dying within a week of each other at the beginning of December. Their friendship and support will be sadly missed. As a recruit to our non-alcoholic membership we are pleased to welcome His Honour Edward Clarke, QC, formerly a Judge at the Old Bailey. I feel sure his wide experience and willingness to serve will be of great value to the Fellowship throughout the years to come. We have to welcome the following as new Regional members, Sim P, South Wales and Borders, Jill M North East, Frank C South West, Raymond McC Glasgow and Colin N Highlands .and Islands, who unfortunately cannot be with us this weekend.

“At the end of Conference, regrettably we have to say farewell to Bill M and Geoff H, both having completed their six year term. Bill M has been prominent in the Fellowship activities around Ayr, Irvine and South West Scotland for many years and has been responsible for the Fellowship within the Scottish Prison Service which has built up to 100% cover. Geoff H has been concerned with the affairs in the North West and in particular the successful running of the Northern Convention at Blackpool. They will both be missed. We take this opportunity to thank them both for their generous service, always so freely given. We wish them well with good health in the years to come. We know they will continue to give of their service and wide experience. Nominations have been received, and their replacements agreed. Jim C for Bill M ( South West Scotland Region) and Hugh T for Geoff H (North West Region) who will assume membership after Conference.

“As you all probably know, I complete my term of office as Chairman at the end of Conference, having completed six years as a member of the Board, followed by six years as Chairman. I have enjoyed every minute of my twelve year stint, and am most grateful for the honour given to me to serve in both capacities as Member and then as Chairman. I now announce my successor, Jim H, with all good wishes to him for a happy, rewarding and successful term of office, and may the Fellowship continue to go from strength to strength under his leadership.

“That, Mr. Chairman, completes the Report. I would ask you to put it to the Conference for discussion on any points, and then to approve its adoption.”

After discussion, The General Service Board Report to Conference (pages 29-34 ) was formally accepted, and the additional appointment of Raymond McC, Jim C and Hugh T to The General Service Board ratified.

## FIRST EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING

Angus M., General Service Board, presented his Report on the First European Service Meeting:

“I am most grateful for the privilege of representing the Fellowship of A.A. in Great Britain at the First European Service Meeting which took place in Frankfurt-am-Main, West Germany, from 23 to 25 October 1981. I was not, of course, the only member of A.A. from Great Britain. Valerie L was the other delegate, and Gordon W, Chairman of our General Service Board, was the Chairman of the Conference, a fitting tribute to him in the final year of his service on our

own Board. I may say that the European delegates liked the idea of a British Chairman so much that they elected as Chairman of the next European Service Meeting, Valerie L, though I am sure that her popularity with the delegates owed more to the moving talk she gave on “The Language of the Heart” and the charming way in which she acted as Chairman, or “Chairperson”, of one of the Committees.

I should also mention that Bill S, our own General Secretary , played much the same role at Frankfurt as he has done at Manchester for the past seventeen years: that is to say he organised everything and everybody single-handedly without appearing to be involved in the proceedings at all, and with his usual combination of tact and efficiency.

“Fourteen European countries were represented at Frankfurt which is in my view a remarkable demonstration of the growth and maturity of A.A. in Europe. I felt, and I have no doubt that many other delegates shared the feeling, that here was the fulfilment of one of Bill W’s visions. Bob Pearson, General Secretary at the General Service Office in New York, who gave the Keynote Address at the beginning of the Meeting had this to say:

“I am sure Bill W. would have been delighted to be here. Bill was not only the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, but he was also the founder of the World Service Meeting, and hence, indirectly, of this First European Service Meeting. I knew Bill and I was serving on the US/Canada General Service Board when he was sharing with us his vision of our Fellowship spreading and growing all over the world in all countries, all cultures and all tongues - wherever our common enemy, alcoholism, leaves its trail of loneliness, misery and despair.”

“It is good to feel that we are helping to give effect to the vision of the co-founder of our Fellowship, and that we are stepping out in the path which he charted for us many years ago. That was certainly the feeling which I detected at Frankfurt among the 31 delegates present. There was a strong sense of friendship and fellowship, of deep concern and care for each other and for the enormous tasks that have to be undertaken in our different countries as we seek to bring the message of sobriety to the still suffering alcoholic. As an indication of this concern and care, it is noteworthy that the theme of this First European Service Meeting was “Support Your Neighbour Country.”

“Although there were delegates from fourteen European countries, speaking between them twelve separate languages, sadly not all European countries with an A.A. structure were represented. We had hopes that at least two other countries might have been able to send delegates; but these hopes will have to be fulfilled at the next European Service Meeting which is due to take place, also in Frankfurt early in 1983. I am in no doubt that these two countries will be represented then, and probably some other newcomers as well, for this Fellowship of ours is growing fast in Europe as well as in Great Britain. It was a great joy to all the other delegates to welcome three relative newcomers to A.A. internationally: Italy, Portugal and Spain. From small beginnings in each of these countries, A.A. is developing rapidly.

“All this growth, while it is encouraging and to be welcomed, does give rise to difficulties, as might be expected in a Fellowship of recovering alcoholics, and Bob Pearson mentioned a couple of these. I think that it is worth commenting on them for our own benefit, because A.A. in Great Britain cannot claim to be immune from problems that crop up elsewhere. First there is the tendency to re-write parts of the Big Book, particularly those which refer to God or to a Higher Power. In Britain, however much some of us might want to change these passages in the Big



Book, it has not been feasible to do this because the publication is safeguarded by copyright, and being in English does not require to be translated. Many countries, however, need to translate the Big Book into their own languages and the translators have at times succumbed to the temptation to gloss over certain passages which they feel might not appeal to those who do not favour the idea of God or a Higher Power. I am glad to tell you that the A.A. World Services Board, who own the copyright, stubbornly resist any such attempts, and insist on keeping the Big Book intact, word for word as it has existed for the past forty two years: and they try to ensure that translations into other languages adhere faithfully to the original.

“Another difficulty that arises occasionally in some countries is that the last two Traditions – those relating to anonymity are ignored, on the grounds that getting the message across to a large audience justifies breaches of anonymity in the press, radio and television. We are familiar with arguments along these lines in Great Britain too, but have found that once we start to ignore Traditions Eleven and Twelve this begins to undermine Tradition One: “Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.” In this connection we were reminded of the words of Bill W:

“The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives, and the lives of all to come, depend squarely on it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat.”

“You may think that this is a very appropriate reminder to ourselves as we begin our deliberation for the Seventeenth General Service Conference.

“I do not propose to give you an account of the business that was transacted at the First European Service Meeting. Those of you who wish to be informed of this may read of it in the Report issued by the European Information Centre in Redcliffe Gardens. I would, however, like to tell you, in conclusion, of the Statement of Purpose which was prepared, and which will be submitted, to the next European Service Meeting for ratification. This reads as follows:

“The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, wherever he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The European Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the Group conscience throughout Europe”.

“Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The European Service Meeting encourages the planning of sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries and the exploration of expanding A.A. services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, literature distribution, public information, community relations and institutions work.”

“This sums up the achievement of Frankfurt 1981, and I am sure that Frankfurt 1983 will build upon it.”

Angus’s Report was accepted.

## SEVENTH NORWEGIAN GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

Valerie L., General Service Board, presented her Report on attendance at the Norwegian General Service Conference in February:

“I feel very privileged to have been given this tremendous opportunity to serve A.A. by going as an observer to the Norwegian Service Conference at the Voksenaasen Hotel, Oslo, in February. I received warm hospitality from members of the Board, delegates and also from individual members who entertained me in their homes, giving me guided tours around Oslo to visit their Service Office and to see the surrounding countryside, which is so very beautiful. Their kindness was overwhelming. I was fortunate too to have Helge S as an interpreter. His English was exceedingly good, and kept me well informed of all that was taking place at the Conference itself. It was exciting and very interesting.

“I was given a warm welcome by the Chairman, Bjorn C, who presented me with a plate representing thirty five years of A.A. in Norway, to bring back to our Service Office, a very kind gesture for which I could only say a “thank you” . I was unprepared for such a gift.

“The Norwegian Conference is run on similar lines to our own Conference in Great Britain. Their Board Report was presented and discussed. News from GSO, Norway, finances and growth were fully gone into. Each one of their delegates representing their 20 Districts seemed to participate. Even though their language is so different to ours I could feel their sincerity and maturity together with a genuine desire to do what is best for A.A. in Norway and the Fellowship as a whole. This seemed to be apparent, too, during the report of the First European Service Meeting held last October in Frankfurt.

“The 3rd Edition of the Big Book recently translated into Norwegian will be for sale in March. This has been an enormous task, needing the help of a professional translator guided by a team of A.A. members.

“The Conference has asked that the P.I. Workbook of Great Britain be translated into Norwegian as quickly as possible. I could feel an enthusiastic and willing readiness to create P.I. - C.P.C. committees in order to encourage and stimulate growth of A.A. in Norway. It is a large country with areas as yet unrepresented or covered by A.A. Groups. They all feel there is a lot of work to be done. It should be an exciting but hard working time for them all once P.I. - C.P.C. is established. One Workshop was devoted entirely to P.I. - C.P.C. and the final suggestions were “to get ready and go ahead”. I was asked to sit in on this particular Workshop and invited to share with them our P.I. - C.P.C. activities in Great Britain, what in-roads we had managed to make so far, what contacts we had made and most important, how we had made them in order to reach the still suffering alcoholic.

“The Sunday morning session began with a presentation by the Chairman on The Traditions. This was translated for me, it was very fine, stressing Unity, Un-professionalism, Communication, Service and the Spirituality of Anonymity. It was received with loud acclaim by all those attending.

“The Conference was then closed with an Address by Dr. Oscar Olsen, a non-alcoholic Board Member. Dr. Oscar has run an alcoholic clinic in Norway, but he said “I have found that the Higher Power takes over that which medical men can’t truly understand -this Higher Power they

find in Alcoholics Anonymous”. He went on to say, “this Higher Power gives them, through the A.A. programme, true faith and happiness”. His talk then continued around Four T’s, the first T being Easy Does It which he feels is ,Time, the second T being patience, in Norwegian the word is Tolmodighet, the third T is Tolerance and the fourth T is Takk, Norwegian for thanks or gratitude. This was a very moving and inspiring talk.

“We all then stood to say the Serenity Prayer. Although our languages were different, I am sure our feelings were the same, that of intense gratitude and love for each other and A.A. I was truly grateful to be there with them all at this Norway’s 7th Service Conference.”

Valerie’s Report was accepted.

The Conference Chairman thanked Gordon, Angus and Valerie for their presentations.

## CONVENTIONS

The General Secretary reported a very full calendar of Conventions and Mini Conventions in addition to the National events. In England, forward reservation of accommodation has been made:

Southern -Brighton Centre	1982 - 24/26 September
	1983 - 16/18 September
	1984 - 14/16 September
	1985 - 20/22 September
Northern -Norbreck Hydro	1982 - 28/30 May
	1983 - 25/27 March
	1984 - 30 Mar/1 Apr

The first Welsh Convention was held on 13/15 November 1981 in Llandidrod Wells, but unfortunately the venue was not available for this year. This event would take place on 5/7 November at the Crest Hotel, Cardiff. The 1983 Convention would possibly return to Llandidrod Wells.

The Scottish Convention continues to be held on the first weekend in May, and the Blue Bonnets Gathering the first weekend in October.

## RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolution was unanimously agreed:

“This Conference asks the General Service Board to investigate the feasibility of an all England Convention to be held in a central location. “

The undermentioned Resolutions, after full discussion were not agreed:

“This Conference recommends that The General Service Board appoints a small team of suitable people to work throughout the year between Conference to evaluate the literature presently imported from the United States, and to produce for Conference approval a body of A.A.

literature specifically tailored to U.K. needs.”

“That the handbook (page 16) be amended to show the period required for resolutions to be submitted prior to Conference as four months (instead of two months) in accordance with the practical needs of G.S.O.”

After further discussion, it was agreed that resolutions submitted to Conference must be moved and seconded before discussion.

#### NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1983

The undermentioned were proposed and seconded for Chairman of the Eighteenth General Service Conference 1983:

Tommy McD -Glasgow  
Jenni W-South West

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session closed with the Serenity Prayer and the delegates then retired to informal discussions.

#### SATURDAY, 24 APRIL

The six committees met at 9 a.m. through to 12.30 p.m. and after lunch re-convened at 2.15 p.m. until 4 p.m. The committees met again at 5.30 p.m. to review and approve their committee reports.

#### WORKSHOP - EUROPEAN SERVICE

Moderator: David K. , English Speaking Intergroup Europe

The Workshop on European Service revolved around a discussion of ways to encourage co-operation between the fully developed and efficiently functioning structure of A.A. in Great Britain, and those European countries who service organisations are either non-existent or just beginning.

Gordon W., Chairman of The General Service Board, presented a paper on the First European Service Meeting held in Frankfurt, West Germany from 23-25 October 1981.

A delegate from Great Britain to the European Service Meeting shared her personal experience of how fortunate we, in Great Britain, are. She pointed out that many countries have translation problems with the literature, and that some countries even must hold their meetings clandestinely.

It was suggested that correspondence with those countries who did not participate be continued regularly, even though no responses have been received by them.

The concept was proposed that one healthy A.A. Group in Great Britain may wish to consider

“adopting” a Group in another country. Also, the “twin-town” concept should be explored, since already many towns have twins on the Continent. A special fund might be established for the specific purpose of fostering communications with, and even sending ambassadors to, foreign Groups who need assistance.

The combination of the English Speaking Intergroup Europe Meeting Directory with the European Information Centre’s Directory could be considered.

It was pointed out that a close association between members of some Groups in Scotland exists with the Groups in Majorca, and that a full aeroplane with Scottish members continually travels there to attend the Majorca Annual Convention.

The continued encouragement and support of developing A.A. Groups in European countries was emphatically endorsed.

The text of the Presentation is given on pages 52 - 54.

#### WORKSHOP -”UNITY -CHANGE -GROWTH”

This workshop commenced at 8.30p.m. on Saturday evening with Sim P., General Service Board, being the Moderator, and Peter F., North East Region, the Secretary.

Presentations were made by Ann W (Berks) South Midlands and Bert C., South West Scotland - the full text of the Presentations is given on pages 55 - 58.

Following the two Presentations by Ann W. and Bert C. an informal, friendly and very warm sharing session developed.

There were contributions from some 23 A.A. members, including both David K. and Ollie T. from the English Speaking Intergroup Europe, sharing on the theme of Unity, Change and Growth. Members were agreed that the theme of the Workshop had a great bearing on their individual recovery, as well as on the Fellowship as a whole. The Meeting was closed with the Serenity Prayer.

The printed Committee Reports were circulated.

#### SUNDAY, 25 APRIL

The final session of the Conference commenced at 9.15 a.m. with the usual silence.

Ian T., the Conference Chairman, invited the Chairmen of the six committees to present their respective Reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These committee Reports are included later in this report:-

“Tolerance in Practice”

“Growth through Change”

“P. I.-CPC”

“Literature”

“Working with Others”  
“Structure and Services”

#### ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1983

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and finally Tommy McD. of the Glasgow Region was elected.

#### DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

The Eighteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on 15 - 17 April 1983.

#### CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

Ian T. expressed his thanks to all delegates for a marvellous and unforgettable weekend, and for the support he had received throughout. He felt that the committee Reports reflected well the deliberations, and would be of great benefit to the whole Fellowship in Great Britain. Before asking Gordon W. to close the Conference Ian invited Jim H., Chairman Elect, and Angus M., Member of The General Service Board, to address the delegates.

Jim H. said:

“I think the Conference would feel it right, that before Gordon closes Conference, something is said about the long term of service that he has given to the Fellowship and General Service Board, and I am afraid that when I first met Gordon, which was nearly fifteen years ago, he was obviously well involved with service in A.A. at a pretty high level.

“We have heard about the power of example during Committee Reports this morning, and we should remember that some of us have seen that the service you have given to the Fellowship is not always easy, so that while things seem to be going well for us now we should remember that anything that is worthwhile has got to be hard sometimes. I have seen you holding things together under difficult circumstances. I remember in 1979 at my first Conference, facing up to a certain amount of flack coming your way. I remember Bill saying to me then the spirit shown was not quite the same as this Conference, and “Don’t worry, Jim, sit and let it all wash over you. A.A. principles and common sense always win out in the end.” I think everything said and watched this Conference over the last couple of days, that you must be a very satisfied and very proud man to have seen how the Fellowship has developed, and how this Conference has been conducted.

“When you go, having closed this Conference, you take with you our affection and the whole Fellowship for the very great service that you have done for this Fellowship.”

Angus M. said:

“Mr. Chairman, it would not be appropriate to allow Gordon’s departure to take place without a word from Scotland on behalf of the Fellowship there. I would like to say a few words to express from the Scottish delegates and members of this Conference, our deep affection for him.

We all feel sadness that he is going, but hopefully we will be seeing a lot of him in the future. The role of General Service Board Chairman is a very important one, the task being to bring the Fellowship together over the whole of Great Britain.

“Gordon is the first Chairman of the Board who is almost a Scotsman himself. He spent many years working in Scotland, and he is a Cameron Highlander, and knows Scotland very well, having visited most of the Intergroups and Groups.

“It has been a great pleasure to us to have had an Englishman who was so closely concerned with Scotland, and we are very happy indeed that he did this job for so long, and spent so much time in Scotland. Gordon being a fairly substantial citizen, it is very gratifying that the next General Service Board Chairman is not exactly slender. We all have to take a bit of flack. A word to Jim - we are very happy indeed, the Scottish members of the Board, and wish you all the best. We all send you our greetings on this occasion. We hope you will come up to Scotland so we can get you into a kilt. We have had a tremendous amount of fun, especially so when the General Service Board nearly had a collective slip together in York when our trifle was laced with sherry flavouring. Only when we had finished did we realise what we had done.

“Gordon, we give you our very best wishes and our warmest greetings for your retirement, and hope to see you in Scotland.”

Gordon W. said:

“Well, ladies and gentlemen, how can I follow that? One thing Angus said about my associations with Scotland, that although I am a Sasanach I am Scots by absorption.

“Before I give my last talk to you, I did attempt something when I was making my report on Friday evening, and I do apologise, but Eric Crowther, who has been a non-alcoholic Board Member for quite some time, because of his commitment in the Magistrates Court in London, dispensing justice to those who have an alcohol problem, sees where they are directed to and that is A.A. He has told us he feels very guilty that unfortunately he has no time to attend Board Meetings etc., and should resign. We were very sorry, but thoroughly understood his feelings. When we met, I said to him “that’s all very well, you have got to find for us a damn good substitute” and he went along and did some thinking, and he has found a good substitute, and we have had the pleasure of his company at this Conference - Edward. Eric, thank you for your support. When you go you go with all our good wishes, and I know you will be a good friend of this Fellowship, and will continue to do good work, and we will be able to consult you. May you have many, many years in the Courts and good health and happiness. Thank you for all you have done whilst you have been a member of the Board. Thank you, Eric.

Eric Crowther said:

“It seems the way to court popularity at this Conference is to claim some connection with Scotland. You may like to know that one of the activities in which I engage is donning a kilt and teaching Scottish dancing. If you ask me if I am Scottish I would have to be honest and say I was born just to the north of London. I am probably the saddest person here today, and probably quite a lot of you are feeling the same way. For me, it marks the end of my association with A.A. It began with that great man, Ronald L, who asked me to consider sitting on The General Service Board. He died soon afterwards, since when the Chairman has been Gordon, and it has been a

great joy and privilege for me to have worked with him. I have enjoyed those meetings very much, but it is a fact of life that Magistrates Courts sit on Saturdays, and I couldn't manage both without feeling guilty.

"I can assure you it is unusual for a London Magistrate to get an Old Bailey Judge to sit for him. I have known Edward for all my legal years - thirty years, and I am quite sure that he has been impressed by the great friendliness here. As long as I have the little Courts there will be a stream of people coming to A.A.

"I would like to thank all of you for your friendship and friendliness. I thank you for that friendliness from the bottom of my heart. One impression I take with me is the sense of dedication that every one of you has to your commitment to A.A. - from the Chairman of The General Service Board to the newest member. I shall always carry with me that feeling. Thank you very much."

Gordon W. said:

"Before I start the address, which I have hastily prepared to give to you this morning, at breakfast I was reminded of an experience that happened to Geoff H. and myself a few years ago, and thought it worth relating. Our worthy Secretary arranged for a Board Meeting to be held in London the Saturday of the Cup Final, and Manchester United were one of the teams to play.

"Geoff and I were to travel down to London on the Friday and Geoff said to me over the 'phone "what about going on Friday morning?" "No, don't bother" said I, "we will catch the 4 p.m. train".

"There were tremendous crowds at Piccadilly Station, with all their football regalia, flags and banners etc. Although we had reserved seats, in they came with huge plastic bags full of booze all around us. They started supping away in front of us, all manner of stuff, whisky, gin, sherry, vodka and cans of lager which they offered to us, and we said "no thank you" and kept on saying "no". They went on chatting, and one of them said "Don't you drink?" and we said "no". They then asked me if my wife drank, and I said yes, my wife drank, and they said "well give her this bottle of Drambuie". It went on like that, and they observed that Geoff and I weren't drinking, when one of them said "You know, these chaps, they're well dressed, they speak well -I bet they're Directors of some company. I bet they're Directors of Alcoholics Anonymous". That is a true story.

"It will no doubt come as a surprise when I say this is my Seventeenth General Service Conference and final one. I wonder at this particular stage, whether I may be worthy of a place in the Guinness Book of Records. It is an emotional experience for me -this talk will be my last conference talk. I was present at the exploratory Conference in 1965. I had heard there was to be a talk on A.A. and Industry and felt I must find out what it was all about. I pushed my way in on Saturday morning and stayed for the rest of the day. I remember I was very impressed, and departed feeling that there was certainly scope for activity within industry, and even in my own Company. The early Conferences, the first three, if my memory serves me correctly, were the brain-child of Idle John, a terrific character - idle belied him, he was a terrific worker bounding in ideas - Idle was the name of the village near Bradford where he hailed from.

"For these early Conferences there was Conference Committee of about six, led by Idle John



whose job it was to plan and draw up all the details for the Conference. This was done at a weekend in November at the Midland Hotel. I can assure you it was a tough going weekend of sweat and toil. I remember one that I attended where we worked until late on the Saturday evening and retired to our beds with some feeling of relief that it was all firmly buttoned up. However, on the Sunday morning Idle John, who had been up most of the night, pacing his room, decided it was not as it should be so we had to start all over again, and John was right .

“Those early meetings of Conference were, at times, far from pleasant. Rancour, argument and personalities before principles seemed to be the order of the day. The Board came in for a tremendous amount of stick, and one couldn't help but wonder about unity and our first Tradition.

“Looking back on it all now I believe it was all for the good of the Fellowship. We had to go through the teething stages. We had to grow up. We had to learn. We gradually matured and grew into our responsibilities. We learned to face heavy and continued criticism. We have learned to give and take along with the ability to compromise cheerfully when considered necessary. A strong mutual trust has been gradually built up. Unity has been really strengthened and I believe it is now quite strong.

“It has been a truly wonderful experience for me to have witnessed such a change from the early days of rancour to the present of hard concentrated work mixed with so much fun, joy and laughter. There have been several changes in the pattern of Conference. We now have four Standing Committees responsible for Literature, PI-CPC, Working with Others like hospitals and prisons and structure and Services. I am sure in time others will be added as the needs demand.

“A lot of ground is covered each Conference between Friday evening and Sunday lunchtime. I have had a nagging feeling now for some time that because of the amount of ground we have to cover we are frequently rushed and when it Comes to the Sunday morning and the consideration of the Reports I wonder if we do them full justice. I believe the time is not too far distant when serious thought will have to be given to extending Conference by at least another day. I must say a word or two about service. No doubt many of you will have read my contribution in April Share entitled “Full Circle”. I have been most fortunate in my service. I started off as a very reluctant Group Secretary, then a very resentful G.S.R. Looking back on my term with the Manchester Intergroup I realise now it was a worthwhile apprenticeship for things to come. It was here I cultivated the ‘open mind’. It was here I learned that in A.A. we do all that is asked of us to the best of our ability and that is what service is all about.

“I won't bore you relating all my experiences of service, but there are some I will always remember. The disbandment of the old A and GRC in 1969 was an arduous and somewhat difficult time. I was the last Chairman so the closure fell upon me. It was also a most interesting time, a time of great change within the Fellowship. A Service Committee was formed to really get down to establishing our structure, the result being virtually the structure as it is today. There was a strengthening of the Board by a number of new members from all parts. Unfortunately two of the giants of the day, Bill H and Alan B. who had carried the Fellowship right through from the first meeting with Grace Osler in the Dorchester Hotel in 1947, decided they had had enough and retired. We can only read about those early days. Those two lived it and helped to make it. What a lot we owe to those early campaigners. I well remember Alan B. telling me that in those early days he did every Twelfth Step call north of Golders Green - some task. He started the first Group outside London in Manchester, and the first meeting was in the Midland Hotel where we

had our first Conferences.

“We have come a long way since 1970. We certainly have a sound structure. The Board is strong and we are reaching the stage of Regional representation with more and more individual involvement and participation. Some Board Members have functional responsibilities for such things as PI-CPC, Hospitals, Prisons, Literature, Finance. I don't think the time is far away to a similar arrangement at the General Service Office with staff members. One of the things I was very conscious of when I first joined the Board - we were thought of throughout the Fellowship as the faceless ones. There was an atmosphere of Us and Them. I certainly made up my mind to change this, and I believe we have succeeded. We get out and about more. Regional Board Members will certainly have to do so if they are to perform their job properly. I have been privileged to give service in many ways, and one I must mention is World Service. I was lucky enough to be asked to attend the Second World Service Meeting in 1972, an experience I will never forget. It was there I learned the full meaning of the “language of the heart” and saw with my own eyes the strength of the Fellowship throughout the world - the carrying of the message to the alcoholic no matter where he is or what language he speaks.

“The greatest lesson I have learned in service is that I would have been quite incapable of carrying out any task as a trusted servant without sobriety given to me by the Fellowship through its Twelve Steps, and all its teachings and above all, its members. Everything I have today I owe solely to the Fellowship. How, then, can I express my gratitude other than by doing everything I am asked to do to the best of my ability, finding as always that the more one gives the more one receives.

With God's help I will continue to give what little I have to give for as long as I live.

“I wish I had the time to thank individually everyone to whom I am personally indebted. Perhaps the best I can do is to say to you all as did the Arab in Bill W's last message. “I thank you for your lives for without your lives I would have had none; without you there would have been no me.”

“I must single out one person, and that is Bill S., our General Secretary. Without his help on occasions I would have been lost. His contribution, his wide experience and his unstinting service at all times pointed the path to follow. I find it quite impossible to express in words my appreciation and thanks to him for all the help, encouragement etc., etc., he has given to me during my time as Chairman. Thank you, Bill.

“This brings me to the end, except in conclusion from the point of view of this year's deliberations, I would just like to say there are no problems that we can't handle provided we trust each other and are trustworthy, and if we communicate. I believe, and have said so often, we must somehow improve our communications. They are getting better, but there is still much room for improvement. This has been a great weekend of communication. I appeal to you all to carry it all back to your Regions, Intergroups, Groups and individuals so that the Fellowship as a whole reaps the benefits of this glorious weekend. Go to it and may God bless you all.”

The Seventeenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain came to a close with the delegates joining in the Serenity Prayer.

**COMMITTEE NO. 1 "TOLERANCE IN PRACTICE".**

CHAIRMAN: Bill S. North West

SECRETARY: Cathie D. Eastern

The Committee were grateful to Ian, our Conference Chairman for touching on the subject of tolerance in his address, and to be guided by the writings of Bill W taken mostly from "As Bill Sees It"; and within the framework of the lead-in questions discussed and now recommend the following:

It was felt by this Committee that Tradition 1 in practice is the basis for tolerance. The degree of unity of a Group shows the amount of tolerance exercised. Tolerance should not, however, extend to indulgence and should not be condoning.

Information about Group procedure arising out of discussion at regular Group conscience meetings would lead to greater understanding and helpful participation. Tolerance will be evident in those Groups which follow the Guidelines, and we hope will not inhibit free discussion.

To show tolerance to the new member we must show we care, that we can identify with how he feels, and show love and kindness with firmness, for it is on him or her that our own sobriety and the survival of the Group ultimately depends.

The power of example cannot be over emphasised. We should not sell the programme short and we should give the facts about the illness and the solution we offer, stressing that he does not have to accept it all at once, but to try to remain open-minded. This should also allow him or her to have their say but this should not be allowed to continue to the detriment of the Group as a whole.

Tolerance between Groups could be extended by larger Groups supporting smaller Groups going through difficult patches. Intolerance between two Groups would evaporate should they join in a Committee to work on a project outside ordinary Group activities.

Better communication all round should be encouraged by Intergroup Secretaries, G.S.R.'s and Group Secretaries by regularly reading a summary of Intergroup and Regional Minutes at Group level. The sharing of experience in service when talking of our recovery passes this message. Regionalisation has been a help in the understanding of and progression along the road of service.

Tolerance could also be increased by Intergroups sharing with Intergroups and Regions with Regions so widening experience and activities and improving methods of carrying the message .

We feel that there is some lack of tolerance of other organisations and agencies and that this needs to be worked at. We need to initiate and maintain contact with these Groups, and not only to pass on our message but to listen to what they have to say. We feel that anything or anybody that can help the suffering alcoholic should not be rejected out of hand because it is not A.A., co-

operation but not affiliation at all times should be our policy.

It was felt that most Groups show a willingness to help the handicapped person, bearing in mind our primary purpose. But little thought has been given to practical planning for the future, and this should be given more consideration.

#### Recommendations

- 1 Tolerance does not extend to indulgence or condoning that which is wrong.
- 2 That the wall chart showing the structure of A.A. should be available for display.
- 3 That every Group should acquire and display or make available easily the A.A. Guidelines.
- 4 That positive action be taken to contact other agencies and organisations outlining what A.A. does and does not do, talking and listening to them and reporting back.
- 5 That contact be made with local or national bodies who deal with handicapped people, and information given about A.A. Further thought should be given to provision for access for handicapped people.
- 6 That there is more co-operation between local Groups.
- 7 We urge that Groups be encouraged to start and finish on time as advertised in "Where to Find A.A.", this being of particular importance to visitors from other areas.

#### COMMITTEE NO. 2 "GROWTH THROUGH CHANGE"

CHAIRMAN : Geoff H. General Service Board

SECRETARY: Colin Ho South East

- 1 The Committee unanimously expressed the view that the Fellowship as a whole was certainly not afraid to make changes when necessary. There are, however many individual members who are reluctant to implement change as Alcoholics Anonymous grows.
- 2 As to identifying the need to change, the Committee felt that Groups, Intergroups etc., etc., should certainly monitor their performance (against agreed standards), by frequent and regular taking of inventory, being ready to admit their shortfalls and prepared to make the necessary changes.
- 3 We should prepare for change by acquainting ourselves, Groups, Intergroups etc., with all aspects of the Fellowship's policies, affairs and history (pertinent to the change in question) and "to practice these principles in all our affairs".
- 4 On an individual basis, we should prepare ourselves for change, by making sure that we stay close to our programme of recovery and that we always remember "Principles before Personalities". Collectively we must make certain that all our deliberations are in accord with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 5 The influences that allow constructive change

(a) In the individual

Firstly, by following the programme of recovery of Alcoholics Anonymous, developing a sense of belonging and identifying with the members of one's Group. The individual, as he becomes more involved, will wish more and more to contribute to the development and growth of his Group. The Committee also felt that the "developing a healthy fear of alcohol" and "the consequences of you will die if you do not change" were factors which added much to the individual's attitude to constructive change.

(b) In the Group

The Committee felt that the Group conscience should be allowed to express itself on a frequent and regular basis, and certainly before any decisive change, especially taking note of the size and type of meetings held. The regular rotation of officers is essential and everybody in the Group should be encouraged to become involved. The Committee also reiterated the feelings of the 1978 Conference in that "Groups which tend to remain disorganised usually remain unattractive and stagnate". Groups which experience growth are usually those which follow the principles of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(c) In the Intergroup

It was agreed that most Intergroups ran their "business" affairs efficiently. We felt, however, they urgently need to attract a much wider attendance at meetings. A real effort should be made to welcome everybody to Intergroup meetings and G.S.R.'s should make sure that all members of their Group "know that they are invited". Intergroups are asked to consider changing venues on a regular basis if this is practicable. Workshops/discussions after official Intergroup meetings should be encouraged and a well presented News Letter is invaluable in keeping everybody up to date.

(d) With the Fellowship as a whole

When we discussed the question of change with the Fellowship as a whole, we continually found ourselves reverting to discussing the individual. We came to the conclusion that one of the most important factors relating to growth in the entire Fellowship, is that such growth is a function of the individual member.

6. Lack of communication is by far the greatest factor that prevents constructive change. Most new members (and for that matter many members with long periods of sobriety) consider their "trusted servants" some form of A.A. management. Ignorance of this structure and the philosophy of how our trusted servants operate, also leads to negative thinking.

7. Various members shared their experience of other anonymous Groups, e.g. Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous. It was strongly expressed that no move to greater association should be even considered and would be a dangerous precedent.

Our present relationship with Al-Anon and Al-Ateen are healthy and correct .

Addendum

During the discussions in plenary session it was requested that future Committee Reports should not use abbreviations, e.g. "P.I.-C.P.C." without first having quoted the title in full followed by the initials in brackets.

### COMMITTEE NO.3 "PUBLIC INFORMATION -CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY"

CHAIRMAN: Jackie B. South West Scotland

SECRETARY: Pat H. London

1. The Committee felt that the formation of a P.I.-C.P.C. Committee was important for the future of this activity. Four/five members who would commit themselves to writing to Heads of professional bodies in turn, concentrating on one or two of the professions to begin with. The Committee then should report back to Intergroup and through Intergroups to the local Groups, and in this way the Committee would be able to compile, a list of members who are able and experienced to give talks. New members should be encouraged in two ways. The Committee recommends that wherever possible, (when a talk is being given), a new member should be encouraged to go along to listen, and that secondly, older members should consider sponsoring new members in service, just as they sponsor them in recovery.

2. The consensus was that P.I.-C.P.C. Committees should have a reporting relationship with Intergroup and an Intergroup meeting should be an opportunity for P.I.-C.P.C. Committees to share their experience. It was felt that the relationship with local Groups should be via Intergroup through the normal G.S.R. and with this status it was not necessarily the case that P.I.-C.P.C. Committees had to refer directly to local Groups. In the fourteen Regions represented here, there are 50 P.I.-C.P.C. Committees.

3. The Committee showed great enthusiasm for Hospital Bulletin No.2 which lists the 9 people by title to contact in Health Authorities. The general view was that it opened so many doors for Alcoholics Anonymous, and furthermore started a chain reaction where more and more doors were opened. A special note was made of the opportunities for giving out free literature throughout a Health Authority and experience showed that in most cases it was possible to give hundreds of pieces of literature for distribution through the internal Health Authorities networks. The Committee felt strongly that this Bulletin is both effective and valuable.

4. Extensive use of the Bulletin No. 5 "How to Place an A.A. Public Service Announcement on Local Radio" had been made by members of the Committee, and it was considered to be very successful.

The Committee were aware that it is possible to get Public Service Announcements (P.S.A.'s) on I.B.A. T.V. companies and it was felt that as the procedures for doing so are similar to Radio P.S.A.'s that P.I.-C.P.C. Committees should investigate the possibilities with their local T.V. companies. The Committee wish to clarify the distinction between a T.V. P.S.A. and a T. V. programme on Alcoholics Anonymous, and it was felt that because of the long negotiations and the time and work involved for such programmes, that the General Service Board should continue as has been its practice of communicating directly to the 12 I.B.A. T.V. companies.

It was recommended that a Bulletin be published to this effect.

5 The Committee had a lot of experience to report on the insertion into local newspapers of meeting times and telephone numbers. There was also considerable experience of getting feature articles published in local papers but it was felt that, so often, the contact with the Editor was lost after a successful article, and that it was much preferable to have a continual contact with local newspaper Editors so that at reasonably frequent intervals further articles could be published, and that the Editors would retain their knowledge of A.A. and its Traditions, particularly the anonymity Tradition.

6 The large display unit is being used continually in libraries, and there is a waiting list for its use. Many parts of the country have prepared and displayed their own exhibitions in libraries, and the Committee felt that the question of locally based permanent exhibitions should be explored further.

The Committee recommend that P.I.-C.P.C. Committees contact the most senior person in charge of the libraries in their city, town or area with a view to holding such permanent exhibitions in all library premises. These exhibitions to be devised by the P.I.-C.P.C. using whatever A.A. material is available.

7 The Table Top Display Unit has been very well received, and experience has shown that it has many applications : it was felt that the unit should be displayed at Regional and Intergroup meetings, thereby giving more members an opportunity to see the Unit and hopefully increasing the purchase and use of them.

8. All the experience of talking to schools and youth clubs had been successful. Where the leaflet "A Message to Teenagers" had been used, this had been well received. There was some experience of a Director of Education asking for very large quantities for distribution through the school system. It was felt that the opportunities for block distribution of the leaflet would arise more and more in the future, and for this reason the Committee appreciated that the leaflet was free, and could be ordered in large quantities.

9 The Committee established that there was a demand for a postcard size publicity material for display in shop windows in London. The Committee realised that there maybe a similar demand in other large cities, University towns and anywhere where there is a continually changing population and need for accommodation.

#### COMMITTEE NO.4 "LITERATURE"

CHAIRMAN: Alex M. South Midlands

SECRETARY: Tony F. South East

1 The Committee, having considered and restructured the draft leaflet "Growing into Service", now recommends that Conference approves this document in its revised form.

2. Having considered the various suggested new headings for Box 514, the Committee

recommended the adoption of the title “A.A. News” for one year in the first instance in the presented style.

3. (a) The Committee approved in total the new presentation of “Who, Me?”  
(b) The Committee approved in total the new presentation of “15 Points”  
(c) The Committee approved in total the new presentation of “Now That You’ve Stopped”
- 4 (a) The Committee welcomed the new leaflet “A.A. and Occupational Alcoholism programmes”  
(b) The Committee welcomed the new presentation of the leaflet “A Message to Teenagers”

In both cases favourable reports were received on the impact of these, and in particular on the identification amongst teenagers with the latter leaflet.

5. The Committee considered that there was insufficient evidence at the moment though the Hospital Bulletins had been helpful. The present “A.A. In Treatment Centres” pamphlet should no longer be left in circulation.

However, the Committee recommended that it felt that there was sufficient evidence to produce a similar leaflet to “A.A. and Occupational Alcoholism Programmes”, incorporating information that would be useful to the medical profession and all others in Health Care activities.

#### Addendum

Arising from the discussions on the draft of “Growing into Service”, the Committee recommended that the Board produce a draft leaflet on finance to give guidance to members of the Fellowship on the continuing need to recognise the importance of being self supporting - (Tradition 7)..

#### COMMITTEE NO.5 “WORKING WITH OTHERS”

CHAIRMAN: JimmY C. South West Scotland

SECRETARY: Terry N. South Wales and Borders

The Committee found the subject matter very stimulating and far reaching, and have reached the following conclusions:

1. The Committee welcomed Edward Clarke, the new non-alcoholic member of the Board to this Committee. His experience could prove invaluable in furthering the Fellowship’s work in this field.

Intergroups are reminded of the importance that should be given to sponsoring prison work, and



where there are prisons without sponsors this should be regarded as a high priority.

The Committee welcomes the appointment of two new Board Members, Raymond and Jill who are responsible for prisons in Scotland and England respectively, and asks all Regional prison liaison officers to keep close and continuous contact with them.

As requested by Conference, a list of individuals willing to correspond with prisoners has been established, and prison sponsors should now inform inmates of the availability of this list. Conference recommends the new Board Members to consider the value of issuing prison bulletins in particular on relationships with governors and staff .

The Committee endorse the value of using rotas. They also noted the successful experience of women sponsors in male prisons where they have the Governor's permission.

Intergroups are reminded of the value of establishing probation liaison officers to develop and maintain contact with that service.

In conclusion prisons generally in England and Scotland are being very well served by A.A. Where problems do exist invariably this is due to a lack of regularity in sponsors visits.

2 The Board should continue its efforts to have A.A. included as part of the nurse training syllabus, but the emphasis should continue on talks to local schools of nursing (see hospital bulletin No.2).

The Committee recommends that local P.I. Committees should make contact with the Secretary of the local family practitioners committee with a view to requesting that they send a copy of the A4 question mark poster with a telephone number to each G.P.

The most effective contact is the personal one - to go back to those who saw us drinking and present ourselves sober.

The Committee shared experience of inviting professionals to seminars, i.e. open meetings or working lunches during the working week because busy doctors and others value the little free time they have. There was value in using the contacts listed in Hospital Bulletin No. 2 and also in requesting invitations to existing professional meetings.

The Committee feels that the Fellowship would benefit by further suitable non-alcoholic members of the medical and/or nursing professions being asked to join the General Service Board.

The Committee would wish to reiterate the statement in last year's Report that "all A.A. members are reminded that doctors and nurses are responsible for the patient's entire welfare and A.A. members are not qualified to comment on drug and treatment regimes.

It would be better to have no hospital contact than use A.A. members who do not understand this principle".

3 The Fellowship is not a referral agency and does not refer alcoholics to other agencies as a rule (though individual members may guide alcoholics to them). The Fellowship should build

good relationships with other agencies and individuals who may be able to help.

Is the Fellowship open-minded enough? Agencies make referrals to us, perhaps we should guide alcoholics to them. Our friends should include the medical profession, ATU's, detoxification centres, the National Council on Alcoholism, Social Services and others, but let us take courage and be friendly with our friends.

A sponsor who is wise will suggest outside agencies for dealing with a number of personal problems relating to the alcoholic. The Committee advises a note of caution as this development is in its early stages, and all the implications have not yet been experienced.

4.5. and 6. These were dealt with together and the conclusions were:

1 The Committee recommends that action should be taken at all levels of the Fellowship on the question of the alcoholic employee.

- (a) The General Service Board should approach the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) to encourage the National Health Service (NHS) personnel departments to give a lead. The Board should also again approach the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Trades Union Council (TUC) Scottish Trades Union Council (STUC) and the Institute of Personnel, Marketing, Banking, Insurance and Directors and the Business Education Council. Where this has already been done further contact should be made.
- (b) The Regions should co-ordinate approaches to Regional Officers of as many Trades Unions as possible.
- (c) Intergroups, through the P.I.-C.P.C. Committees, should seek to meet with the medical officers of all large firms to discuss the role of A.A. and offer telephone numbers and dates and times of meetings.
- (d) The individual member will, by his example, be the most effective carrier of the message.

2 The Committee welcomed the leaflet "Alcoholics Anonymous and Occupational Alcoholism Programmes" which it considered excellent. This leaflet could be used with national organisations, particularly those listed in 1.(a) above. It should also be widely used by P.I.-C.P.C. Committees for mailing or talking to local branches of the Institutes of Personnel, Marketing, Banking, Insurance, Directors, Chambers of Commerce and Trade Councils and also to colleges who train managers and personnel managers for the future. Purchases of this literature for this purpose should be made by Intergroup.

The Committee expressed its gratitude for having been afforded .this opportunity of involvement at this level.

COMMITTEE No. 6 "STRUCTURE AND SERVICES"

CHAIRMAN : Mary s. Midlands

1. General Service Board Report on Board Membership

The Committee considered the General Service Board report on Board membership and the amendments to the A.A. Handbook for Great Britain (Third Edition) which would give detailed effect to these. The Committee welcomed the Board's proposals, and the spirit in which they were put forward, and recommends these to the Conference for approval. The amendments to the Handbook were also considered, and the Committee recommends that these should be approved as they stand, subject to two minor drafting changes which have been notified to the Conference secretariat. (See attached Appendix).

2. Suggestions to improve the effectiveness of Regions

It was the experience of all members of the Committee that regionalisation has led to a much greater degree of involvement by A.A. members in service to the Fellowship, particularly on the part of newer members. Communications have improved at all levels and this has been an encouragement to members living in remote areas who have not hitherto found it easy to obtain the guidance they needed from more experienced members of A.A. It has been especially valuable to have had General Service Board members attending Regional meetings, and acting as a direct link between Intergroups and the Board. Some Regions have concentrated their attention on Public Information activities during the past year.

Against this background of satisfactory growth during the past year, when great strides forward have been taking place, the Committee has relatively few suggestions to offer to improve the effectiveness of Regions. Its main recommendations are that:

(a) General Service Conference delegates should continue to take an active part in their Regions in carrying back to Intergroups the main decisions of Conference. This can be done in various ways. Where possible, Conference delegates should visit Intergroups to give personal accounts of what took place. In some Regions there have been meetings between Conference delegates and Group Secretaries. It is clear that the Fellowship will take an interest in Conference decisions if these are presented in an interesting manner.

(b) Conference delegates should devote a good deal of time to preparing themselves for the Conference as recommended on page 15 of the Handbook. (The Committee has commented further on this under question 3 below).

(c) It is very important to involve A.A. members who are interested in service but who have not been given responsibilities. Newer members with a sound grasp of basics and a keen desire to serve have a valuable contribution to make and must be encouraged to come forward.

(d) Despite the gratifying improvement in communications which has taken place as a result of regionalisation, the Fellowship must continue to give priority to ensuring that this is maintained. More use should be made of Box 514 in this connection, as recommended by the Sixteenth General Service Conference. Minutes of meetings at all levels should be circulated freely so that everyone concerned knows what is going on. We must conscientiously develop the attitude that service representatives at the various levels are in no way special people: they are just ordinary A.A. members with a job to do.

### 3 Regional Conference delegates meeting as a team

Several Regions have arrangements by which their Conference delegates meet as a team, both before and after the General Service Conference. This has proved to be most valuable, and has stimulated increasing interest in the work of the Conference. After the Conference, several Regions take steps to ensure that their delegates report direct to the members in the Region by asking them to write individual accounts of what took place, or by arranging for them to make personal visits to Intergroups. One Region has given a past delegate the task of acting as a team leader in order to ensure that delegates and suitable alternates are fully aware of their duties, and to see that they are all fully briefed and prepared.

### 4 Experience of Regional Forums

So far, there has only been one Regional Forum in Great Britain: the Forum held by the South West Scotland Region in Dumbarton in November 1981. This was entirely successful and led to a much greater interest in service by all those who attended, particularly the newer members of A.A. The Committee acknowledge that more Regional Forums will now be held, but suggest that the Fellowship should try to ensure that not more than 3 or 4 (for example, one in Scotland and two in England and Wales) are held each year in order to minimise the demands which such gatherings are bound to impose on the General Service Office and on General Service Board members whose active participation in such Forums is regarded as of great importance.

### 5. Help for deaf and house-bound members

The Committee was greatly heartened to hear of developments that have been taking place in a number of Regions to enable A.A. members, sensitive to the needs of the deaf, to communicate with them. Sign language classes are now being held in several centres, and some of these have been provided directly as a result of approaches by A.A. members to senior social workers with responsibilities for the deaf. In many areas A.A. members take a particular interest in handicapped and house-bound members, by visiting them, taking them to meetings, holding meetings in their homes and in other ways. The Committee stresses, however, that the house-bound member's family must always be taken into consideration and visits should be arranged to suit the family's convenience. The Committee is pleased to hear that the General Service Office is producing a Bulletin and a contact list for loner members.

### 6. Twelfth Step Calls

The Committee appreciated the spirit in which Committee No.2 of the Sixteenth General Service Conference 1981 referred to the possibility that an Al-Anon member could, on occasion, with advantage, accompany an A.A. member on a Twelfth Step call. There are obviously circumstances where direct co-operation between A.A. and Al-Anon would be valuable, but the Committee takes the view that the extent of this co-operation must be left to individual members to decide for themselves in each particular case; and does not therefore feel called upon to express a view on the particular question whether an Al-Anon member should be invited to accompany an A.A. member on a Twelfth Step call.

### 7 Surplus funds held at Group, Intergroup and Regional Level

The Committee found very little evidence that surplus funds are being held unnecessarily at Intergroup or Regional level. A good deal of anxiety was, however, expressed that in many Groups such funds are not being properly accounted for. This is essentially a matter for the Group conscience, and the Committee recommends that determined efforts should be made by the Fellowship at all levels to ensure that Group members are continually made aware of the

importance of accounting for the money which is put into the pot at meetings. This belongs to A.A. and is needed to pay for vitally important services. Groups which hold regular business meetings generally contribute satisfactorily, and other Groups who do not hold such meetings must be encouraged to do so. The General Service Board should consider the issue of an eye catching poster which would demonstrate in simple terms where the Fellowship money goes.

See Appendix pages 49 -51 for Re-drafting of Section VI (The General Service Board) of the A.A. Service Handbook for Great Britain -Third Edition.

## APPENDIX. COMMITTEE NO.6

### **“RE-DRAFTING OF SECTION VI ( THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD)OF THE A.A. SERVICE HANDBOOK FOR GREAT BRITAIN –THIRD EDITION**

Page 21 paragraphs 1 and 2 Delete and substitute:

“The General Service Board, whose full title is “The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous ( Great Britain) Limited” consists of 17 alcoholic and 8 non-alcoholic members. The Board is responsible to the General Service Conference for carrying into effect the decisions taken by the Conference on service matters and is required to give an account of its stewardship to the Conference annually. In addition, members of The General Service Board have certain legal obligations in connection with the Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing Company (Great Britain).

“The General Service Board is the custodian of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous in so far as they apply to A.A. in Great Britain. As such, it has a responsibility to ensure that the Traditions are preserved intact and that the Fellowship of A.A. in Great Britain acts in accordance with the Traditions” .

Page 21 paragraph 3 sub-paragraph 5 Delete and substitute:

“On their appointment to the General Service Board alcoholic members simultaneously become full members of the Regional meetings which nominated them and are expected to attend such meetings”.

Page 22 Delete side-heading “Structure” and the following three paragraphs, including “our debt is very great indeed”.

Insert above “The day by day work of the General Service Board is administered. ...” the side-heading “The Executive Committee”.

Page 22 second last line Delete “help with the Annual Conventions and to”.

Page 24. paragraph 2, lines 6 to 8 Delete “a figure invariably .... procedure for alteration”.

Page 24, paragraph 2 Delete final sentence (“In practice the number ...Regional representation”) and substitute: “In practice the number of alcoholic members of The General Service Board is determined by the requirements of the Fellowship at a particular time, the availability of suitable members in the light of the qualifications described above, and the number of regions in Great

Britain”.

Page 24 paragraphs 3 to 8 Delete and substitute:

“Alcoholic members of The General Service Board are appointed, on the basis of one from each of the 14 regions in Great Britain.

In addition a region whose regional Board member is elected to serve as Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Treasurer of the Board shall be entitled to submit new nominations for another Board member to take the place of the member elected to serve in one of these offices. Board members appointed under this provision shall serve a full term of membership.

At least six months before the retirement of an alcoholic member, the Secretary of the Board will notify the region which the retiring member represents, and invite the region to submit the names of suitable candidates for consideration by the Nominations Sub-Committee.

Regions are requested to nominate at least two candidates in order to afford the Nominations Sub-Committee the opportunity to select the candidate whose personal qualities are most needed at a particular time. This may mean that an excellent candidate whose experience and aptitudes are already matched in the existing membership may be less suitable than another candidate who could make a unique contribution to the work of the Board.

In considering whom to nominate, regions should bear in mind the service of former office-bearers who may no longer be active but whose experience would make them especially suitable for Board membership. Regions will wish to give careful consideration to the suggested qualifications for Board membership outlined in previous paragraphs.

The Nominations Sub-Committee will make its recommendations to the General Service Board which is empowered to make an appointment to the Board. The appointment of an alcoholic member will be submitted to the next General Service Conference for confirmation and will take effect immediately after such confirmation. Ideally, nominations of new alcoholic members should be approved by The General Service Board at the meeting immediately prior to the General Service Conference.

When an alcoholic member moves away from the region which nominated him as a member of the Board, the Region and the Board member concerned should consider whether in all the circumstances he or she should resign from the Board. Vacancies resulting from such resignations, or from resignations for other reasons, will be filled by the procedure described above.

Non-alcoholic members are appointed to the General Service Board, without limit of time, for the special contributions they are able to make by virtue of their personal experience and background. Such appointments are made by the General Service Board on its own initiative and are not subject to confirmation by the General Service Conference. The Fellowship of A.A. owes a deep debt of gratitude to our non-alcoholic Board Members who have helped us very greatly over the years by opening many doors which might otherwise remain closed to the message of A.A. They come from many different walks of life and gladly and voluntarily share in the work of spreading the A.A. message.

Page 24, final paragraph line 2 Delete “six”, substitute “four”

Page 25, paragraph 2 (The Chairman) line 1 Add at the end of the line: “from among their own number”

Page 25, paragraph 2 line 2 Delete “six” , substitute “four”

Page 25, paragraph 3 line 2 Delete “six”, substitute “four”

Page 25, paragraphs 4 and 5 ( The Vice-Chairman) Delete and substitute:

“The Vice-Chairman is elected by the members of the General Service Board from among their own number to act in the absence of the Chairman for any reason. If an alcoholic, the Vice-Chairman ceases to hold this appointment at the expiry of his, or her, four-year period of Board membership. The Vice-Chairman does not have the automatic right of succession to the Chair”.

Page 25, last three paragraphs Delete and substitute:

“The Secretary of the General Service Board is also General Secretary of the General Service Office. The holder of this joint appointment is the principal paid official of the Fellowship and is responsible to the General Service Board for the day-to-day management of the General Service Office. The Secretary is appointed and employed by the General Service Board under a formal contract of employment setting out the terms and conditions of the appointment.”

“The Treasurer is elected by the members of the General Service Board from among their own number. If an alcoholic, the Treasurer ceases to hold this appointment at the expiry of his, or her, four-year period of Board membership”.

## **WORKSHOP PRESENTATION**

### **“EUROPEAN SERVICE”**

Gordon W., General Service Board

Like many good ideas in A.A., the idea of zonal service meetings originated with Bill W. away back in 1967 when he started sowing the seed for a World Service Meeting to take place in New York in the fall of 1969. At that meeting twelve countries participated, of which six were from Europe, France, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Finland and ourselves. At the time, Bill had the vision that regional or zonal structures would evolve. The possibility of a European meeting was first discussed at the Second World Service Meeting held in New York in 1972 at an informal luncheon attended by the delegates from the European countries. At that meeting the seed was sown and it gradually germinated through the years until in October last the first European Service Meeting was held in Frankfurt at which delegates from fourteen countries attended, and Bill’s earlier inspired vision of the late 60’s was fulfilled.

The way the idea was developed is interesting. As I’ve said, the seed was sown in New York at the 1972 World Service Meeting. At the fifth World Service Meeting held in Helsinki in 1978 there were three Workshops on communications among countries. At the Workshop covering the European countries it was recommended that to further unity and service within the European area a European Information Centre be established, initially with headquarters at our General Service Office, 11 Redcliffe Gardens. The purpose was to create a line of communication among the countries in order to exchange information on services, structure and other matters, and to

circulate requests for the sharing of experience to all countries in the zone. Our worthy Secretary, Bill S., picked up the cudgels soon after he had returned from Helsinki and before long the European Information Centre was established, information bulletins were being issued and literature lists exchanged.

For a number of years we had invited overseas observers to our General Service Conference, and several had accepted and attended. At the 1980 General Service Conference, an exploratory meeting was held with observers from Sweden, Germany, Switzerland and Norway, when it was agreed to go ahead and take positive action to set up the first European Service Meeting in 1981, each participating country to send two delegates and that the first meeting would be English speaking. It was finally decided that Frankfurt, Germany, should be the site for the first European Service Meeting and it should be held in the autumn of 1981. The staff work for the meeting was carried out by Bill S along with the staff at the General Service Office, ably assisted by a few of the German English speaking members in Frankfurt and by members of the English speaking Intergroup Europe. In order to assist the less developed countries and ensure some success to this first venture our General Service Board generously agreed to underwrite the expenses for this first meeting by paying all the hotel expenses (rooms and food). This to be charged to the Royalties Account which is for purposes such as this, the countries paying only for the travelling expenses of their delegates.

After much work in the preparing and arranging, the meeting took place at the Hotel National, Frankfurt - 23 to 25 October 1981, with an astonishing total of fourteen countries participating along with the English Speaking Intergroup giving an attendance with staff of forty one. The countries that sent two delegates each were Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and ourselves.

The theme was "Support your Neighbour Country" and most appropriate. The programme was very much in line with World Service Meetings, commencing with an opening address, followed by a keynote address, then getting down to business with the presentations of reports from each country present, Standing Committees of which there were three covering Agenda/Policy/Admissions/Finance, Literature/Publishing and Working with Other Countries, and Workshops on Twelve Concepts for World Service, Public Information and Sponsorship and Communications between European Countries.

The reports of the various countries were exciting and moving, many reporting surprising growth and development. Spain and Portugal reported proudly their struggles to get established. It was a tense and joyful moment when one of the Portuguese delegates announced they have now nine groups and thirty members. The experience was mind opening to all.

It was obvious from the reports that there was quite a variation in the strengths and state of development of the Fellowship within the European countries and this get-together provided the opportunity for the weaker countries to learn from the experience of the stronger ones. We had much to offer but each could learn from the others no matter their state of development.

As to be expected, there were several interesting agreements arrived at; in the various Committees, for example all countries in Europe, including the English Speaking Intergroup should be invited to send two delegates regardless of whether they have a formal service structure - delegates to serve for two meetings. The costs of future meetings should be shared equally by participating countries. However, no country should ever be excluded because of



inability to pay the full cost and it was accepted in the true spirit of sharing that the wealthier countries could continue to subsidise the cost of the European Service Meeting. A similar system applies to the World Service Meeting.

It was very heartening when the meeting came to the election of the Chairman for the next European Service Meeting, and our Valerie was ceremoniously, and with great fervour, elected as my successor.

It was the feeling of the meeting that it should express its aims in the form of a written Statement of Purpose in order that the membership in general should be made aware of the reason for the meeting, and it was agreed that the following Statement should be ratified at the 1983 Meeting: “The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers wherever he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The European Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout Europe.

Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The European Service Meeting encourages the planning of sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries and the exploration of expanding A.A. services to reach the alcoholic through internal communications, literature distribution, public information, community relations and institutions work.”

There were three notable absentees from the meeting, i.e. Denmark, Greece and Austria and there were many regrets expressed at this. There was an all-round feeling that admission to future European Service Meetings should be as open as possible, and following the theme “Support your Neighbour Country” every encouragement and support should be given, in particular to these three for them to be present at the meeting in 1983.

### WORKSHOP PRESENTATION “UNITY – CHANGE – GROWTH”

My name is Ann and I am an alcoholic. When I received the letter from the Conference Committee inviting me to speak today, my immediate reaction was ‘Who? Me? I can’t do it’ and I started to tremble. I felt inadequate and unworthy. One of my guiding principles has been not to refuse any request to serve A.A., but to talk it over with my sponsor first. So, I telephoned my sponsor who reassured me that I would be okay, after all, I would be among friends. Although the thought of standing here in front of you all frightened me, I accepted.

Before I came into A.A., unity was just a word to me. Within myself there was disharmony and conflict. I was “disunited” so how on earth could I belong. I came to A.A. and heard about the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. Well, neither applied to me, or so I thought. Anyhow, after more experimenting with alcohol, it dawned upon me that perhaps those A.A.’s were right and if I wanted what they had, then I had better do what they did. So, I tried to work the Steps. I felt that the Traditions were for the boffins, the people who ran A.A. and knew everything. They did not apply to such a lowly alcoholic as me.

In my early days, I was encouraged to get involved, and my first office as tea lady was one I took very seriously. It was important not to spill the tea. Then I became Secretary of a Group and I learned quite quickly about that part of Tradition Two which states 'our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern'. My attitude towards the Traditions began to change. Unity began to have real meaning in my life.

My home Group at one time was a Discussion Group, but if a newcomer was present, the meeting reverted to a chaired one to provide identification. This practice was discontinued. Gradually the Group changed, and some of us felt that we were not following the intent of Tradition Five because the discussions were not being directed to the still suffering alcoholic when one was present. This was aired at the Group Conscience Meeting all was well. So, slowly I am learning the importance of the Twelve Traditions and the Unity of Alcoholics Anonymous which keeps us coming back.

Individuals change and grow. Groups change as the members within them change, new members arrive, other members leave, by the Traditions are a stabilising influence so that A.A. continues in "right manner." We don't need rules when we have such marvellous Traditions to follow. Whenever we have a problem, the solution lies in the Twelve Steps or the Twelve Traditions. From this foundation the individual and A.A. can change and grow.

In my short time in this Fellowship, the number of Groups in our Intergroup has expanded from five to fourteen. We used to be part of a rapidly growing Intergroup. Less than two years ago, we divided to form a new one and it has been a privilege to be a part of this development.

I am deeply grateful to you for listening to me, and I would like to end with a quote from the book 'Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions' - 'The Unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole or A.A. dies.'

## **WORKSHOP PRESENTATION**

### **"UNITY - CHANGE - GROWTH"**

Bert C., South West Scotland Region

UNITY - as an active alcoholic I had no unity in my life. As we all well know we had only inner conflict and conflict with those around us.

CHANGE - was only for the worse as I could not stop drinking. Much as I may have wished to change, I could not.

GROWTH - as the illness progressed my will and purpose to live diminished and as I have learned in A.A. a man without will or purpose cannot grow.

I believe the largest contributory factor in bringing about all three has been the good members who have been willing to give their time and to share from their hearts their experiences, their

strengths and their weaknesses too, so that I may find unity, change and growth.

As a new member it was soon pointed out to me that it took a long time to get into the condition I was in, and it would take a long time to get well. After a while I was also taught to “THINK-THINK-THINK” for myself about all the principles - RECOVERY, UNITY and SERVICE, not just to parrot others. In that way I would experience my own recovery through Unity, Change and Growth for at the end of each day I was left answerable to God, myself and A.A. So having unity in my life through God and the Twelve Step recovery programme I would now have tapped the power that can help me change. It also gives me a purpose to life to serve God through carrying A.A.’s message, and surely this must bring about personal growth.

To achieve Unity, Change and Growth within the Fellowship I try to apply the same principles because any situation can look quite different seen through the eyes of the inexperienced new member to those of the experienced old member and both can be right or wrong.

It has been my experience that consultation is better than confrontation as the latter smacks of ‘I will win at all costs’ and with such motives there can be no unity. I also believe that change should not come at the expense of our principles. It can be an exercise in growth when we find we have to quietly stand by the principles, especially having experienced rejection as we did as active alcoholics. Our concern should now be to quietly speak the truth which can save lives, and not become over-concerned with individual members feelings. I daily thank God for the members who put their principles before their personalities to help me when my thinking was still sick and wrong.

My life and my family’s happiness depend on our Unity as a family, so it is within A.A. our sobriety and contentment depend on our adherence to our Traditions that we may carry this message to the best of our ability, if we are to grow properly. We then have the freedom to develop and if we do not push our ‘will’ on others I am sure we will be given that freedom.

Let us develop, as I surely had to do, to grow up and realise that we should not make A.A. a secret society for this is as much a break in Traditions as it is to personally appear on television. Instead let us go forward in co-operation with others, using all the means at our disposal in our constant caring and sharing of a stable diet, our drinking experience, our recovery and our service.

In so doing, we are no longer living our lives, ashamed of being alcoholics and this will slowly help in doing away with the stigma of the illness as it may appear to others. Let us advertise who and where we are - our principles but not our personalities. This will also help new members to seek help, and young members to stay and through our sharing with them our service experience, whether at top tables, Intergroup Workshops, Regional Forums or whenever asked to do so, we in turn will encourage others to grow into service and become fully involved in Unity, Recovery and Service resulting in our Unity, Change and Growth as a Fellowship.

May God bless each and every one of our efforts towards this end.

FRIDAY, 15 APRIL

The Eighteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester. Registration of delegates and distribution of delegates folders and other material commenced at 4 p.m. The subsequent reception, as always, was an ideal opportunity for the delegates to get together. The Conference attendance totalled 118, made up of 82 delegates from 14 Regions, two delegates from the Channel Islands, two delegates from the English Speaking Intergroup Europe, representatives from the magazine "Share" and "Roundabout", 21 members of the General Service Board, two observers from Europe and one from Hong Kong, Tommy McD, Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and four staff members.

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE**

The first full session of Conference commenced at 8.30 p.m. The Chairman, Tommy McD (Glasgow Region) calling for the customary silence, which was followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions by the General Secretary.

Tommy McD welcomed all the delegates, with a special welcome to the three overseas observers, and presented his Keynote Address:

"In all the years I have been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I found that my involvement in service has enhanced my growth in sobriety. During these years in service, many wonderful and exciting new experiences have happened to me and last year at the Conference was no exception. On Sunday afternoon when I was chosen by you as this year's Chairman I experienced feelings that I never knew existed inside of me, I will never forget them as long as I live.

I had to wait until I arrived home to Scotland before I realised the importance of the task that lay ahead of me. In the quiet of my own thoughts I realised that for a job as big as this I needed some guidance. I made contact with a very good friend of mine in the Fellowship who had the experience of having done the job years previously. He assured me that although it was a very important one, which requires a lot of effort and hard work, it was just another step forward in my growth in the Fellowship. I have always been a willing worker for the Fellowship, rather than a talker.

It is one of my privileges as Chairman to choose the theme for the Conference; this is something I spent a lot of time on. I allowed my thoughts to dwell on two slogans which are very important to me "Live and Let Live" and "Keep it Simple". With these on my mind the theme is: **SERVICE - A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

For years I have watched many people come into our Fellowship and very selfishly take what they need for themselves, then leave without putting anything back. By the same token I have seen many members accept important positions in the Fellowship then find they cannot give the

job 100% effort. I have found that through the light of experience I ask myself have I got the time, am I willing, have I got the wherewithal?

Service for me always seemed to happen. I seemed to be in the wrong place at the right time. In the beginning my service, like most of us, started at Group level by emptying ashtrays, putting away the chairs after the meeting. Through this early involvement I soon became an active member of the Group. I was part of the family. It was so different to what I had been used to, I was always left out of everything, for years nobody wanted to know me, now I had a tremendous feeling of belonging. I then knew that I was No Longer Alone.

As I grew in the Group, I became more aware of the other aspects of service, twelfth step work, answer-phone etc., and having been well tutored at Group level, service at Intergroup seemed to be for me another opportunity to put something back in, my way of showing gratitude for that most precious gift of sobriety. Little did I realise that by becoming involved in service at this level it would lead me to having an even deeper sense of gratitude and fulfilment within myself.

As servants of the Fellowship we become the custodians of the Twelve Traditions, bringing unity among all our members, unity being one of the most cherished qualities in Alcoholics Anonymous and with guidance from our Higher Power we are pointed in the right direction. When it comes to survival nothing short of our very best will be good enough. Bill W wrote “An AA service is anything whatsoever that helps us reach a fellow sufferer, ranging all the way from a ‘phone call, a cup of tea, to our General Service Board, the sum total of all these is our Third Legacy of Service.”

Years ago our co-founder, Bill W, very kindly gifted 1,500 Big Books to AA in Great Britain to help us get established and be self-supporting. It was also his wish that the royalties from the sales should be put aside into a special fund not to be used for the day to day running of the Fellowship here, but for the furtherance of AA outside our boundaries. That wish came true last year when with the financing and the know-how our General Service Board launched the first European Conference, thus giving back to AA what was given freely and generously.

Service for me has always been very important, but not paramount in my sobriety. I have never lost sight of the grass roots of my Group. Attending meetings on a regular basis, always ready with the hand of friendship, always available for twelfth step work, encouraging the new member, new ideas to make the Group more attractive, as it is a programme of attraction rather than promotion.

In November 1982 I spent a wonderful weekend in Oban where the second Forum was held. It was a most successful weekend, well attended by members who were already in service. I would like to see new members being twelfth-stepped into service and the Forum is the ideal place for this job to be done. During the course of this weekend you will be called upon at your own respective Workshop to make recommendations and as a Conference Delegate you will have come prepared as recommended in Guideline No. 3.

With this knowledge, and guided by your conscience, what is best for AA in the United Kingdom will be forthcoming. May the God of your understanding be with you over this weekend “.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Jim H. the Chairman of the General Service Board presented the Annual Report of the Board for 1982.

“I am going to highlight some of the points from the Board Report which you have before you and leave it to you to ask any questions. The first point I want to mention, because I think it may have particular significance for the future, are Regional Forums, the first of which were held in Dumbarton in November, 1981 and Oban in November, 1982, because I feel that Forums could have a considerable influence on strengthening our unity by sharing our service experience in AA. I am sure all of us have some very good friends in the Fellowship who are active at group level but who do not become involved with Intergroups or Regions. This is fair enough. What I find tends to happen, is by a coincidence, members like this do not believe in the red tape of rotation etc. and this can be an influence which discourages participation and good communications and can lead to misunderstandings. From what I have seen, there is an opportunity through Regional Forums for members already benefiting from participating in AA service who feel this is relevant to their own recovery, to make service sound exciting and attractive, and this is my hope for future Forums.

All Forums will be attended by myself as Chairman of the Board, the Treasurer, the General Secretary and as many Board members as possible. We welcome this opportunity to share and learn and be identified as ordinary AA members just like everyone else. There are two Regional Forums planned for this year, Llandrindod Wells on May 15 and London on June 11, and two per year is about what we can manage.

As we all know Bill S. is retiring as General Secretary at the end of April, and one of the most important jobs we had during the year was to find a replacement. All of us depend a great deal on the General Secretary, and perhaps members do not realise just how much we rely on the support and experience that is so readily available from the General Service Office. I am delighted that we have been able to find someone of the calibre and experience of Jack G. who was willing to take over from Bill, and I am sure you would all like to join me and welcome Jack and to wish him the very best.

Since the Board Report was published we have been informed of the resignation of Maurice Rena, Non-Alcoholic Board member for reasons of failing health. Maurice became involved with the Fellowship in the early 1950's and in 1966 was elected as the first Chairman of the General Service Board in Great Britain. He served the Fellowship with great love and devotion, and as a barrister his wise counsel was of inestimable value. Maurice will be sadly missed and we send him our thanks, our love and our very best wishes”.

The Financial Statement was presented by Peter F, Treasurer to the Board.

Delegates noted that the Financial Report was given, not only in its conventional form, but also with explanatory notes, and additionally a “Keep it Simple” Income and Expenditure chart had been included.

The Hon. Treasurer referred principally to the matter of self-support. Recalling the notes on the Financial Statement for the year 1972 (presented to Conference 1973 when a direct coverage of 58.75% was reported) Peter F. quoted from those notes the following extract:

“It is hoped that the Fellowship, with these facts before them, will feel that it would be desirable for a much greater proportion of the services required by them to be paid for by direct contribution through Groups and Intergroups.

From then until 1979 we had experienced virtual self-support. Then in the years 1980/81/82 we had only averaged 62.5% coverage.

Delegates were reminded that every Group is supported by the General Service Office for its services and information, and more importantly this provided the constant means of two-way communication. It was suggested that the need for self-support might be assisted by Conference delegates not only bringing questions on finance to Conference, but also referring back to Intergroups, the ‘1982 Group and Intergroup’ contribution table included in the Conference folder, to which had been added the first quarter of this year for up to date guidance.

Whilst many contributions totalled far above the previously suggested minimum target of £1.00 per Group per week average, a number fell well below this figure. Perhaps delegates might seek the reason if the latter applied to their area?

This two-way communication could provide the answer to either self-support or not self-support, and the new pamphlet “Money Matters”, produced to show all our members what we do, what it costs and where the money comes from could be of great help if delegates ensured that Intergroups and Groups were made fully aware of its existence. The often quoted “desperate financial situation” referred to Group, Intergroup and Regional meetings and even Conventions, by well meaning members seeking to encourage contributions hardly agrees when one sees/the figures on our Balance Sheet.

The situation today is not desperate, but it is a fact that there always are desperate alcoholics and that is what the need for self-support is all about.

Three years ago there were queries as to why we appeared to have so much money. Since then it has become apparent that we have been able to do much to further improve our services to help the still suffering alcoholic. Public Information expenditure in two years has gone up 36.5%. We have produced several free leaflets and some 300,000 have already been sent out. The new CPC Workbook has cost approximately 2,500.00 to produce. Last year our money was eroded by inflation. This year we have improved our net worth by some 8% - just about the rate of inflation. With self-support we would have achieved much more.

The message today is that AA should be self-supporting, simply enabling us to continue providing the means of meeting the demands on our Legacy of Service.

There then followed Presentations on the World Service Meeting, the European Service Meeting and the Norwegian General Service Conference 1983.

## **SEVENTH WORLD SERVICE MEETING, MEXICO 14 - 18 OCTOBER 1982**

Dr. David Robinson, General Service Board, presented his Report on the Seventh World Service Meeting and added his personal observations.

“To be asked by the General Service Board to be one of the United Kingdom delegates to the Seventh World Service Meeting was an immense honour. To have the wise counsel of my co-delegate, Angus, was a wonderful reassurance. To meet with delegates from 24 other countries was an enriching experience. To do so in the beautiful setting of San Juan del Rio was a delight and a joy. But as Angus and our immediate predecessors as delegates, Joyce and Bill, will certainly agree, the World Service Meeting is, at heart, four days extremely hard work; itself the culmination of two years of planning by our good friends at the General Service Office in New York.

In the formal Report of the meeting you will find the outcome of the deliberations by Committees concerned with Agenda; Literature and Publishing; Policy, Admissions and Finance; and Working with Other's, in addition to the Workshops on Public Information; Women in AA; the Twelve Concepts; and Communication between Countries. As I read through these Reports again recently I thought they were clear, well written, interesting and contained a wealth of material which the Fellowship will have to consider, accommodate and act upon in the years to come. On the other hand, my re-reading of the Report made me slightly disappointed because I did not really get any of the atmosphere of the Meeting which I still remember so vividly - the enthusiasm with which topics were discussed, the excitement at the sheer volume of ideas and suggestions which were contributed and the stunning realisation that we could all, by using our shared variety of experiences from around the world, make so much progress, so amicably, so quickly.

I can assure you that your delegates were fully involved from beginning to end. Perhaps “involved” is too mild a word. I well remember Angus coming dashing into my room, where I was frantically preparing a Report for the next session, and flopping into a chair for a moment while I read through his draft Report of a Workshop on Communication between European Countries in which we had both participated, before he rushed off to find a Secretary to type it, and to collect the typescript of yet another Report which he had written the previous day and which he was due to present at a report-back session later that evening. All very hectic but, as you would expect, he did it all and it was all excellent.

Each of you will, I am sure, find many points of interest in the Report. I shall just touch briefly on three matters; service structure, the international survey and the worldwide nature of the Fellowship.

In 1968, the year before the First World Service Meeting, Bill Wilson presented a position paper to the North American General Service Board in which he said, among other things, that:

“While AA is a loosely knit society, we do know, nevertheless, that properly authorised and organised AA services are necessary to enable Groups, local areas and AA as a whole to function. In no other way can we carry the message to the alcoholics who still suffer”.

The theme of the Seventh World Service Meeting was “Carrying the AA Message” and the truth of Bill W's words was emphasised many times as delegates shared their personal experiences of service and outlined the development of the service structures and the growth of the Fellowship in their own countries. Because, of course, “Carrying the AA Message” does not just happen, any more than the growth of the Fellowship just happens. Both require a mature service orientation and a service orientation needs the support of a strong service structure.



Listen to the first paragraph of the Mexican General Service Board Report where the growth of AA in that country is outlined:

“In 1941 a few loners appeared in our country. They stayed sober for a certain time, and occasionally one group or another stayed together as a group for several months. The first group that shared stability was started in 1946 and the meetings were conducted in English. It was not until 1956 that a Spanish-speaking group emerged and a new group was founded each of the following four years. (So in 1960 there were five groups in Mexico, DR). Thirty-eight groups were functioning in 1964 and 181 in 1969. The 1970’s brought practically a burst since the number of groups doubled by 1971 and another 260 started up in 1972. In 1974 there were 928 registered in our General Service Office (a 500% increase in 5 years, DR) and in 1977 they increased to 1650. The Directorio Nacional reported 2500 groups in 1980 and in 1982 they reported 3900”.

That paragraph tells a remarkable story, I am sure you will agree. But the first sentence of the next paragraph of the Report contains the key piece of information - “a General Service Structure began to function in Mexico in 1969”. So the first twenty-eight years of AA in Mexico resulted in 181 groups by 1969. In the thirteen years since 1969, after the establishment of the national service structure, the Fellowship has grown to 3,900 groups. The lesson is clear and can be repeated from the history of AA in many countries round the world. The task for the World Service Meeting, the European and other zonal meetings and the Fellowship as a whole in the years to come is to encourage and support the establishment of general service structures in as many countries as possible. In relation to European countries we here have a major service responsibility.

The 1980 international Survey of AA in seven countries, Great Britain, Belgium, Brazil, Finland, France, New Zealand and North America was discussed on the first evening at the meeting. I was called upon to comment on the Survey as a whole and to highlight any particular points of interest from Great Britain. As a result of that discussion I am hopeful that a larger number of countries will take part in the next Survey, that it will cover a rather broader range of issues and that it will be conducted on sounder methodical principles. As you know these regular Surveys are extremely important for telling us about ourselves, our growth and development and also for use in our work of Public Information, Co-operation with the Professional Community and, generally, in “Carrying the AA Message” to the still suffering alcoholic.

I would like to finish by just touching on the issue of the “worldwideness” of AA which was certainly brought home to me at the World Service Meeting. I had read, of course, as we all have, that AA has “over a million, members worldwide”. But, like many of you I suspect, I have always thought of the Fellowship as really being a North American animal with British, or at least English-speaking connections and a number of other pockets of activity in Scandinavia, Germany and so on. But, as you have already heard, AA in Mexico is unbelievably healthy and fast-growing. The same is true of many countries in Latin and South America and elsewhere. This is, for all of us, an immense joy. But it also raises problems to which World Service Meetings and zonal meetings must pay particular attention.

Most of these problems can be alleviated by taking seriously the matter of “Communicating between Countries”. An example of a problem which can arise through inadequate communication came up at the Mexico meeting. The General Service Office in New York had been working for some time on a Spanish version of the Public Information Workbook, only to

discover when the staff arrived in San Juan del Rio and looked at the literature display that the Mexicans had themselves just completed a Spanish version of the Public Information Workbook. It was the sense of the Literature and Publishing Committee that the role and function of the Latin-American Translation Commission should be a main topic on the agenda at the next Latin-American zonal meeting. That is not our direct concern here. However, it was also hoped that the role and function of the European Information Centre should be given some consideration at the next European Service Meeting because there was a feeling that it ought to be more active but delegates were unsure of how this could best be achieved. It needs thinking about.

But let us not get too bogged down in problems and difficulties for, of course, the problems are only there because AA is growing so quickly, and that means that the AA message is being carried by one AA speaking to another and by the Fellowship being there when someone needs it. This simple basic fact about AA was brought home to us on our way to Mexico.

Angus had arrived in America a day or so before I did and was, as he himself will admit, feeling a little lonely in his hotel room. He decided to go down to the lobby to see what was going on and there, waiting to register, was one of the Portuguese delegates to the First European Service Meeting. He was in New York on business, quite unconnected with AA, but he and Angus spent the next day together, reminiscing about Frankfurt and going to a midnight meeting in Downtown New York. The worldwideness of AA was also shown in the moving, closing ceremony in Mexico when the Serenity Prayer was said in all the fourteen languages represented at the World Service Meeting; Portuguese, Flemish, Swedish, French, German, Italian, Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic (guess who), Finnish, Dutch, Norwegian, Spanish, Icelandic and English. Distinctions between English English, American English, Canadian English, South African English, Australian English and New Zealand English were not made”.

## **SECOND EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING**

“Sharing Experience In Service”

Colin N. of the General Service Board spoke of his experience as a delegate at the Second European Service Meeting which was held at the Hotel National, Frankfurt-am-Main, 18-20 February, 1983.

“I would just like to say that it was indeed a great honour and privilege in being chosen as a delegate to represent Great Britain in Frankfurt, and I would like to thank AA and the Board for the chance of meeting and sharing with all the other delegates from Europe and also Phyllis from the General Service Office, New York. I cannot put into words the feeling of fellowship which surrounded this Service Meeting. It was a very lovely experience which I will never forget. I think Bill w. forecast the likes of this happening and somebody said “I am sure he is watching us from above”, but Phyllis said he was with us in our midst, and I am sure she was right because of the serene and productive manner in which everything was handled. I think one of the highlights of the Meeting was the welcome given to Ryszard from Poland from all the other delegates - I hope we all keep in touch with our Polish friends and give them all the help we can and maybe one day soon we will see the love and affection of AA bring all our Countries closer together.

I would like to mention the wonderful job done by Valerie in Chairing the Meeting. It must have been a worry to her at first but with her lovely serene nature and understanding she put us all at

ease and came through with flying colours – and also Bill S. as usual, it would not have gone on without his prolific experience at organising this Meeting. I would like to thank Phyllis and also all the other delegates who attended for making it such a memorable occasion for me and wish Hubert, the Chairman for 1985 all the very best on his appointment”.

An abridged version of the full report is as follows:

On this occasion delegates from sixteen countries, together with those from the English-speaking Intergroup, Continental Europe assembled. The delegates came from:- Belgium (Flemish speaking), Belgium (French speaking), Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, English-speaking Intergroup, Continental Europe.

Valerie L, Vice Chairman of our General Service Board, acted as Chairman for the Meeting. Peter F. and Colin N. were delegates representing Great Britain.

It was heartening to welcome, for the first time, delegates from Denmark, Malta and Poland although it was regretted that Portugal and Switzerland had not been able to attend.

Our get-together in the form of Registration and Reception was held from 1500 hours on Friday, 18 February. During this period a renewal of old friendships and the making of new ones promoted a feeling of unity.

The programme for the meeting allowed for the sharing of Reports from the individual countries and the discussion and sharing of experience in service in Committees and Workshops with the final reporting back to the full meeting of their recommendations.

The highlight of the Saturday evening session was an AA sharing meeting with the theme “Practice these Principles”, chaired by Phyllis Masback of the New York General Service office and Presentations by three members, followed by a general open sharing session, clearly illustrated that all our service discussions are built on spiritual foundation.

The up-dated Reports from countries who had been present at the First European Service Meeting were received. These were supplemented by short Reports of the new participants. The Reports from Denmark and Malta were received enthusiastically, but a special display of affection was reserved for Ryszard from Poland, who, although he could not speak English, made his Presentation in German which was then translated - not instantaneous translation - but perhaps superior because of its warmth and love.

The Second European Service Meeting closed at the end of the final session on Sunday morning, 20 February; the decision having been taken that the Third Meeting should be held at the same venue in early March 1985. Hubert O’R of Ireland was elected to be Chairman of this next Meeting.

**EIGHTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NORWAY, OSLO 5-6 FEBRUARY 1983 - As Reported by Raymond McC, GSB**

“It was a great honour to be chosen as the observer at this Conference, and I would like to thank the General Service Board for the privilege. Within ten minutes of my arrival on the Friday evening I received a telephone call inviting me to a local meeting. I didn’t need to know the language to recognise such words as “alcoholic” and I certainly felt the spirit of the Fellowship. A most enjoyable evening.

This year the venue of the Conference was changed to the “Stratos” Restaurant. The meeting room was on top of a twelve-story building and the view of the city was impressive. Following registration, the Conference started at 11 a.m. on the Saturday morning. Sixteen delegates, seven Board Members and three others attended. The Chairman of the meeting sat at a top table between two Secretaries, while the rest sat at tables of two or three facing them. I was seated at the front with Dr. Oscar Olsen, a non-alcoholic member of the Board, who acted as my interpreter on the Saturday. Because we were seated at right-angles to the top table, and our table was covered in green baize, Dr. Olsen said he felt like a Press Reporter.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming myself, representing Great Britain, and the new delegates. The Twelve Traditions were read, and the Conference started in earnest. Each delegate then gave the Report from their respective Districts on what had happened over the past year. The Chairman of the Board, Oivind S, before giving the Board Report, welcomed me on behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous in Norway. He said that he knew I had no idea of the Norwegian language and therefore all present would use the International Language - “The Language of the Heart” so that I would understand - I understood!

One of the difficulties facing the Fellowship in Norway is the fact that they do not have a permanent Secretary in the General Service Office. Board Members who reside in the Oslo area were having to take turns in filling the position, and this was proving difficult. At a further discussion, it was eventually decided that the position of Secretary should be filled from within the Fellowship and that any helpers could be non-alcoholics.

It was reported that the Minister of Social Services had been approached regarding the distribution of literature to the various Services and to the general public throughout Norway. It was hoped that this would show results within the next few months. On the subject of literature, the cost of using professional translators was proving prohibitive. Some amateurs have been used for translating pamphlets but in many cases this has proved disastrous. Even with professional translators, the full meaning of the text has not come across; they do not fully convey the “love” and “feeling” and as a result many have had to be rejected. It has proved to be a long, slow process and has cramped the growth of the Fellowship in Norway. Hence, the delegate to the World Service Meeting in Mexico, asked if they would consider hiring professional translators in New York so that when new material comes forward it could be printed in all languages at the same time.

In the afternoon, the Assembly split up into three groups. Each group was to discuss the same subjects – practical problems which concerned the country as a whole. This took up quite some time and was to be continued on the morrow.

To conclude the day’s proceedings, Dr. Oscar Olsen gave a talk on humility. He based his subject on an article from “Share” magazine of April 1978. “The day our Group went wrong” (all about the wee fellow who was anonymous among “the anonymous”. He was only missed the night he didn’t appear to do the menial jobs everyone else took for granted). The Doctor advised

the members to forget their personal ambitions within the Fellowship. "It is not self-prestige that counts in AA but what one can do at the grass roots".

The Sunday morning started off bright and early at 8.45 a.m. Long discussions followed and the conclusions of the three groups were voted upon. It was agreed that the Board be increased by one alcoholic and one non-alcoholic. The latter to remain in office instead of rotating unless by mutual agreement. The Districts are to be increased by one and some of the boundaries changed. The Board is to be known officially as the "Service Board" to stress the function of Service, but among themselves would be referred to as "The Board". The General Service Office is to remain in Oslo. Committee was formed for Public Information on a national basis and one to look after "Institutions". Our own Guideline on Penal Establishments is in the process of being translated as is the P.I. Workbook.

Among many other subjects discussed were "Open" meetings and inevitably, Finance. Both of these took up a great deal of time, but during the latter, I couldn't help feeling a touch of "deja vu"! The Chairman of next year's Conference was elected, and the delegates to the European Conference and our own General Service Conference were nominated.

Toward the end of the Conference, Gunar (who acted as my interpreter on the Sunday) presented me with a new edition of the Big Book in Norwegian, and I thanked all the members who had signed it for their lovely hospitality, and said that the experience was certainly one for my AA treasure-chest of memories. It is said that it's a small world within the Fellowship, and this was the case with myself once again. Among those present at the Conference was Erik, who was with us in Manchester last year, and Bjorn M who had been to Bristol last October. Bjorn took time to show me the city of Oslo.

At this point I would like to thank all those who made this a memorable experience. I have already named both of the interpreters, but I would like to thank all the members who took time to speak to me in my own language and tried to make me feel at home. Although they were not part of the Conference, I would particularly like to thank Bjarni and his wife, Gro, who took me to the meeting on the Friday night and invited me into their own home. I thank the General Service Board for affording me the opportunity to Share and Serve - and enjoy it!

## **CONVENTIONS**

The General Service Board appreciated the tremendous effort, involving many willing members, toward the success of the Mini and Full weekend Conventions and Gatherings during 1982. It is noted with interest that the introduction of service workshops in addition to the normal sharing of experience, always associated at these occasions, have met with enthusiasm and approval. The Sub-Committee report on the "Feasibility of an All England Convention in a Central Location" is printed in full at the back of this report.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

"This Conference recommends that there should be a General Service Board member responsible for the work in connection with Probation Services and corresponding Services in Scotland" was proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted.

The undermentioned Resolutions were not accepted:

“This Conference recommends that in view of the expanded activities in the field of Public Information, the General Service Board consider ways of improving its P.I. services”.

“That Conference consider the employment of one full time salaried staff member to be responsible for public relations throughout Great Britain”.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1984**

The undermentioned were proposed and seconded as nominees for Chairman of the Nineteenth General Service Conference 1984:

Lionel J.	Midlands
Terry N.	South Wales & Borders
John T.	South East
Eddie L.	North West
Ian W.	Roundabout

All five delegates signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference. The first session closed with the Serenity Prayer and the delegates then retired to informal discussions.

### **SATURDAY, 16th APRIL**

The six Committees met at 9 a.m. through to 12.30 p.m. and after lunch re-convened at 2.15 p.m. until 4 p.m. The Committees met again at 5.30 p.m. to review and approve their Committee reports.

### **WORKSHOP -"ANSWERING SERVICES"**

This Workshop met at 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoon with Mike S. of London Region being the Moderator and Ian W. of Roundabout acting as Secretary. Presentations were made by Bert R. Glasgow and Lionel J. Midlands and were well received.

During the ensuing discussions it was agreed that well established and efficiently operated telephone answering services were very important in our efforts to provide a service to the suffering alcoholic. It was thought, however, that in some areas this was our weakest link and that every effort should be made locally.

The Workshop was advised that a Sub-Committee of the General Service Board were currently studying the question of facilities available and will, in due course, report back.

Lively discussion resulted in the conclusion that a person making an enquiry could be answered in one of the following ways:

1. By an AA member.

2. Telephone interception by operator.
3. Answering machine.
4. Another Agency.
5. Unanswered etc.

The services provided, vary from area to area and are naturally dependent upon willing members and technical equipment available, such as manual or automated telephone exchanges. Whereas several examples of successful systems were operating, the Workshop was of the unanimous opinion that there was no substitution for a call for help being answered by an AA member.

If the suffering alcoholic cries out  
Let it be AA that hears  
Let it be AA that answers

### **WORKSHOP - "A NEW LIFE"**

The Workshop on Saturday evening began at 8.30 p.m. with Clinton as Moderator and Polly as Secretary. We shared the customary silence to remind ourselves why we were here. Clinton read the Preamble and introduced the first Presenter - Bill D. (Highlands & Islands). The second Presenter was Bill S. (General Secretary).

Personal glimpses of the vision held out to all suffering alcoholics were then shared as thirty three of the members present gave their experiences of a new life, sober in AA. Just before the Workshop ended, a warm appreciation marked our gratitude to Bill S. for his service to AA. Then Clinton closed the evening with the Serenity Prayer.

The full texts of all Workshop presentations appears on pages 40 to 49.

### **SUNDAY 17<sup>th</sup> APRIL**

The final session of the Conference commenced at 9.15 a.m. and after the customary silence, Tommy McD the Conference Chairman, invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective Reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included later in this Report:

1. "Individual Responsibility"
2. "The Traditions - our way of Unity"
3. "P.I. - C.P.C."
4. "Literature"
5. "Institutions"
6. "Structure & Services"

### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1984**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Lionel J. of the Midlands Region was elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Jim H. Chairman of the General Service Board, then thanked Tommy for his hard work, and the way in which he had acted so well as Chairman of Conference. Jim also thanked Joyce C. and Angus M. for their unfailing cooperation as members of the Board. Both Joyce and Angus have retired from service, by rotation.

Bill S. Was thanked again for the smooth running of events during the weekend in conjunction with the staff from the General Service Office and Scottish Service Office. The Chairman referred once again, to the great debt of gratitude owed by the Fellowship to Bill S. who is retiring on April 30th.

It was then Tommy's turn to thank everyone for participating so well, and making Conference 1983 such a memorable occasion for him. He then asked everyone to stand and join him in the Serenity Prayer.

The General Service Conference 1983 was now at an end.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Nineteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on the 13th to 15th April, 1984.

## **EIGHTEENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1983**

### **COMMITTEE NO. 1**

### **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Committee considered the question of service, its understanding by members of its meaning, how best service experience can be shared with the new member and how the younger in age can be sponsored into service.

On the whole the Third Legacy is understood by the majority of groups, but there seems to be certain misconceptions in places. Some of the attitudes that have been heard are:-

- (a) "Don't get involved in service - that's politics".
- (b) "It's a question of us ( ordinary Group members) and them (people who sit on Committees and go to Conferences)".
- (c) "He's involved in service - he thinks he's Mr. AA".
- (d) That there are two levels of service: Group level and "higher" involvement.
- (e) That "involvement in AA" is fine, but that "service in AA" is too complicated.
- (f) "I don't believe in all service stuff" said by members heavily involved in carrying the message at Group level.



**After a full sharing of experience, the Committee suggest the following ideas:**

- (a) Those involved in service talk freely about their service experience, avoiding both false pride and the temptation “modestly” to play down the amount of service given. Humility is telling the truth - false modesty is detrimental.
- (b) The benefits obtained from areas of service by those involved should be stressed.
- (c) Any mystery should be taken out of the idea of service. Minimise the jargon and talk simply about it.
- (d) The fact that service, and AA’s Twelfth Step, is anything whatsoever that helps to carry the AA message to the suffering alcoholic should be stressed. Washing up is service. Attending this Conference is service. There is no hierarchy in AA.
- (e) Service should be talked about to the newer member from the start. An awareness at the beginning will prevent any later feeling of “us and them”.
- (f) The most important commodity required is time. Sponsoring the newer member into service requires explanations and time .
- (g) The newer member should be shown the example of recovery and service rather than just be told about them. The new member is joining a spiritual Fellowship: let him feel part of this, and be given the tools for recovery before being rushed into service aspects of AA.
- (h) Our attitude should be to encourage rather than discourage, but also felt that the newer member should definitely not be pushed beyond his capabilities.
- (i) The Committee recommends that the pamphlet “Growing into Service” is highly suitable for giving information on service to those interested.
- (j) That the experiences of the first 100 members is an invaluable guide. The chapter in the Big Book on “Working with Others” is as relevant today as ever. The Committee suggests that it be borne in mind constantly that it is this message that needs to be carried. The AA message rather than just the individuals.
- (k) The Committee felt that young people should be sponsored into service exactly as older members. Age makes no difference.
- (l) There are, however, areas in which young people can serve especially usefully:
  - (i) Young Peoples Groups
  - (ii) Talking to schools, youth clubs and other teenagers about AA.

The Committee recognised that the responsibility for Group service and AA as a whole rests with each individual member. The member’s responsibility was, the Committee felt, first and foremost to the Group. Service would automatically follow if the Group was healthy, active and adhering to the Traditions.

The attitude of “someone else will look after it” is dangerous. I am responsible - not someone else. On the other hand it is possible to take on too much. The passage in the Keynote Address was relevant here: “Have I got the time; am I willing; have I got the wherewithal?”

We should not lose sight of the primary purpose of the Group, and of AA as a whole: it is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Jobs should be shared around: responsibility for a Group does not involve doing everything. There are no bosses in AA and no skivvies either.

If the individual feels responsible for and acts in a responsible way towards his Group we shall all grow together through individual responsibility to the benefit of AA as a whole and the suffering alcoholic.

The Committee recognised that when considering how far an initial sponsor or Twelfth Stepper should continue to be responsible for a newer member the Committee remembered that the newcomer is the lifeblood of AA, and the Committee felt that love, consideration and care must be shown. Each sponsor is different. Each newcomer is different. It will be an individual decision, therefore, as to how far the sponsor's responsibility should be carried depending on the relationship.

**The Committee suggests:**

- a) that the sponsor avoids being over-protective, and allows the newcomer to grow at his own pace.
- b) that the initial sponsoring should continue for as long as it is needed, until the newcomer is comfortable in AA.
- c) that over-dependence on the sponsor should be avoided. A suggestion in this direction was that the responsibility should be shared between two or more people, to widen the circle of friends and contacts.
- d) that the newcomer be encouraged to stand on his own two feet as soon as he is ready.
- e) that it is a question of finding the happy medium between carrying the alcoholic the whole way and dropping him shortly after the start.

Experience of Group Conscience Meetings and their value was thoroughly reviewed, but firstly the Committee recalled Tradition 2 and that our ultimate authority is a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group Conscience. The Group Conscience must be expressed, and how is it to be heard without Group Conscience Meetings?

Various types of meetings were shared - from business meetings to Group inventories. Some were held before regular Group Meetings, some after, some at separate meetings and some at the same time.

Some problems were expressed about getting a clear Group Conscience when large meetings consisted mainly of non-Group members.

**The experience shared suggested that Group Conscience Meetings clear the air effectively of any ill feeling 'or' complaints.**

**The Committee emphasises that all members of the Group must be welcomed to Group Conscience Meetings: the newly sober as well as the old timer. Not all the good ideas come from the latter.**

Experience was shared of Group Conscience Meetings ranging from Group level through Intergroup and Region, to Conference and the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting - where the Group Conscience from the whole Fellowship is expressed. They all came down to the Fellowship looking at itself, and the Committee felt that the Group Conscience Meeting at all these levels was as important as the Tenth Step for the individual.

**The Committee recommends that Intergroups and Regions consider a Group Conscience Meeting in addition to the straight business matters discussed: an inventory perhaps of how that Committee is really doing.**

The Committee unanimously thought that prompt action was required where a trusted servant appears not to be following the required duties; our common welfare must come first. If no action is taken, damaging consequences can follow: gossip, suspicion, ill feeling and mistrust.

The action to be taken will depend on the circumstances. The Committee felt that gentle action would be best, provided it was effective, and that the trusted servant should be asked for explanation before drastic action such as removal from office is taken.

The Committee felt that if the job taken on was fully explained in the first place, a number of problems would be avoided; and that prevention was much better than cure.

The temptation is to avoid upsetting the trusted servant, but principles have to be placed before personalities, and a trusted servant should be able to accept some criticism. It is to protect the Fellowship that action must be taken.

## **COMMITTEE NO. 2**

### **“THE TRADITIONS - OUR WAY OF UNITY”**

It was wonderful to remind ourselves of the words from “AA Comes of Age” :

“Today we, in AA, are together and we know we are going to stay together. We are at peace with each other and with the world around us. So many of our conflicts are resolved that our destiny seems secure. The problems of yesterday have produced the blessings of today”.

With these words in mind we felt that our Higher Power would guide us in the right direction. That we would be able to share our experience, strength and hope with each other.

#### **1. How important is our common welfare?**

The Committee were unanimous that our common welfare was of primary importance. Unity is the lifeline of our Fellowship. We must always remember that each member is but a small part of a great whole. Our common welfare lies within the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous. We remind ourselves of Bill’s words - “May we never forget that without permanent unity we can offer little lasting relief to those scores of thousands yet to join us in the quest for freedom. “

#### **2. What can the individual do to encourage unity?**

The Committee believed that involvement in service is the best way of creating unity and that personal example is the best way of encouraging this. We can do this by sharing our experience of service and of the structure of AA at Group, Intergroup and Regional level, and sharing our awareness of the existence and purpose of the Traditions in all we do in the Fellowship. By personal example we can encourage Group Conscience Meetings and open discussion of any problems which may cause disunity. By involving ourselves in service we can encourage others to join us.

The Committee believed that we need to be aware of what might cause disunity, and that the need for patience and tolerance should not allow us to accept practices which may give rise to disunity. For example, we should accept Group, Intergroup and Regional decisions as an expression of the Group Conscience and not afterwards start discussing any disagreement we may have with these decisions. By our acceptance we are personally encouraging unity. As a further example we should discourage gossip and criticism by refusing to listen to them. These can be strong forces for disunity and should not be condoned. But patience and tolerance will help to solve genuine disagreements. Open discussion of these is healthy and helps to involve all members in the life of the Group. Having said that, time, patience and willingness to share and to listen will often produce the solution.

### **3. Are the Twelve Traditions displayed and read at Group Meetings?**

The Committee's experience was that at most Groups the Twelve Traditions were seldom displayed. When they were, this was sometimes for decorative purposes. At some meetings the Traditions were read out, but this did not seem to be a regular practice. The Committee felt that the Fellowship as a whole would benefit if both the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions were read more frequently at Group meetings. This would increase awareness of the existence of the Traditions and the link between personal recovery and growth through the Steps and the growth and maturity of the Fellowship through the Traditions.

### **4. Have we any experience of Tradition Meetings?**

The Committee found that Tradition Meetings were becoming less uncommon, and that they had contributed a great deal to both personal recovery and AA growth, particularly for the "older" member. There was also some experience of less successful Tradition meetings, but the general view was that when there was a felt need for these meetings and when the time was right, they would be successful. Personal example and sharing was again felt to be the main way of encouraging this success.

### **5. How can we apply the Traditions in our daily AA living, rather than merely a reference in cases of dispute?**

The Committee felt at first that some clarification of the phrase "daily AA living" was needed, but it became apparent that our daily personal living could not be divorced from our daily AA living, so both aspects were discussed as one.

The Committee believed that getting to know the Traditions and learning how to apply them will show us how to put aside problems of ego and personal prestige. Having a regular home Group will help. This gives us a better chance of becoming involved in service, and helping each other, and shows us how to deal with particular situations. As an example, when encouraging the Group to become self supporting we should explain the reasons why this is so important to the health of AA as a whole, giving examples from the history of our Fellowship.

It was also felt that holding Workshops about the Traditions can be a most valuable way of creating awareness of the history, meaning and purpose of the Traditions.

### **6. How can we best resolve problems arising from the breaking of a Tradition?**

The Committee felt that problems which arise from the breaking of a Tradition by an individual can best be solved by talking to him and talking through the problem, drawing his attention to the Tradition in question, remembering that he may not be aware of it. The purpose is to explain the consequences to himself as well as the Fellowship in the light of the common experience of AA. This applies equally to Groups, and here Group Conscience Meetings and open discussion of the problem should be encouraged. Drawing attention to the “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” and to “AA Comes of Age” can often help.

If there are problems which cannot be solved at individual or Group level the Committee suggests that the wealth of experience which exists at Intergroup, Region and in particular at the General Service Office should be drawn on.

Above all, the Committee felt that whether with the individual or the Group, loving, restraint and tolerance should be the keynote.

### **7 Are there any particular Traditions which appear to create greater problems than others?**

The Committee had difficulty in identifying anyone Tradition creating more problems than others. We shared experiences of Tradition-breaking in nearly all twelve.

When, however, the question of interpretation was discussed, Tradition Eleven seemed to create the greatest problem for Groups to solve. The question of anonymity in relation to Tradition Eleven was best answered by the genuine practice of humility in all our affairs.

We must not, however, become a secret society for if we wish to attract rather than promote, the “world at large” must know something about our wonderful Fellowship.

## **COMMITTEE No. 3 “PUBLIC INFORMATION - CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY” Cont. ...**

### **1. How many PI and CPC Committees are there in each Region and what is their relationship with:**

- a) Intergroup**
- b) Local Groups**

North West.	13	
Highlands and Islands		1
Channel Isles ( Jersey )	1	
Scotia	7	
South Wales and Borders	6	
London	4	
South West	5	

East of Scotland	0
Midlands	5
Eastern	5
Glasgow	6
North East	6
South East	8
South West Scotland	4
South Midlands	4
Total	75

There are 75 PI-CPC Committees active in Great Britain. Each Committee report back on a regular basis to their Intergroup and local Groups are informed of PI activity through Intergroup Minutes and are encouraged to participate on a local basis.

2. What is the experience of using PI-C PC Bulletin No.7 “Public Service Announcements on Television “?

Since the issue of Bulletin No.7 in May 1982, five Regions have made use of it resulting in three companies broadcasting a public service announcement and a further two awaiting broadcasting dates. The above experience of success should encourage the Intergroup, PI-CPC Committees in the remaining IBA areas to re-read Bulletin No.7 and take the appropriate action.

3. What is the experience of making and keeping contact with editors of weekly newspapers and feature editors of morning and evening newspapers?

The Committee found that successful articles were the result of careful planning and preparation as recommended in the PI Workbook. A Reporter should be invited to attend a PI-C PC Committee followed by an invitation to an open AA meeting, prior to the publishing of the article.

After the article has been published, the Committee should write to the Editor of the newspaper, thanking him and the Reporter for the article or feature.

From then on continuity of contact should be maintained by letter or telephone to obtain a follow-up with a second or subsequent article.

4. What recommendations can be made to further our activity in industry with regard to:

- a) Personnel Departments
- b) Medical Departments
- c) Trade Unions/Professional Organisations

The Committee members report that on the whole, the degree of success with industry was disappointing. It is recommended that Workshops on industry are held where CPC procedures are discussed. Letters should be written to Personnel Directors and Company Medical Officers asking for an appointment. In the case of Trade Unions it is felt that PI-C PC Committees should write to area full time officials of Unions. Personnel Officers can also be contacted through the Institute of Personnel Management’s local Honorary Secretary. Local Secretaries of business

institutes such as Production Managers, Marketing Managers, Insurance Brokers etc., should also be written to.

## **5 Review the CPCP Workbook.**

The Committee unanimously welcomed the addition of the Workbook - it will further help us with our primary purpose.

In anticipation of the growth of Treatment Centres, members may need clearer guidance on co-operation and not affiliation.

The Committee recommends the following amendments to Section 2 sub-section V for schools, to include colleges and universities. Section 7 to include Secretary to local law societies in the last paragraph of this section.

## **COMMITTEE NO.4 "LITERATURE"**

We were pleased to have Doug from Hong Kong as an Observer of our Committee.

1 The Committee reviewed the leaflet "Growing into Service" and agreed that it would stimulate members' service activity. We were, however, disappointed about its presentation and recommend a larger type when it is reprinted. It would be useful if the Committee, when finally agreeing the content of any future literature, also makes a general recommendation about layout and typesetting at the same time, e.g. "make it like pamphlet x".

2 "AA as a Resource for the Medical Profession" meets with the approval of the Committee who recommend a review of its use after one year.

3. "Money Matters" was approved for distribution in its present form, but it is recommended that consideration be given to a possible alternative to the word "Administration" when it is reprinted.

4 "The AA Member" was approved.

5 In view of the wide distribution of the Survey Highlights, the Survey Report and the article in AA News, the Committee consider that there is no need for a separate leaflet.

6 Guideline No. 9 - "AA in Penal Establishments" is reported as having been well received in the Regions.

7 "The AA Group" is widely used in its present form. The Committee recommends that an anglicised version is produced, but that no major revisions are required. We draw attention, however, to Sections 7,8,9, 18 and 28-31 where account will be need to be taken of the Service structure in Great Britain. The possible addition of information about the roles of alternate representatives and Group contacts in the "Where to Find" should be considered. "The AA Group" should be compatible with and, where appropriate, cross-referenced to other relevant

literature. the Committee recommends that a typescript revised version of “The AA Group” should be presented next year.

8 The Group Conscience Meeting is outlined in Section 26 of “The AA Group”. The Committee did not consider that a separate leaflet should be published.

9 The “ AA News” has proved to be totally acceptable in its new form. We recommend continuation.

Addendum 1. In order to stimulate contributions to Share, and to ensure its wider distribution, it is suggested that Share representatives might be appointed at Intergroup and that their precise role be discussed in future articles in Share and AA News.

Addendum 2. The Committee noted that Addlestone Recording Group have added “Living Sober” to their list of AA literature on tapes.

Addendum 3. The need for a Guideline on “AA in Hospitals” was discussed. It was felt that, if there is now sufficient accumulated experience consideration should be given to producing the draft of a Guideline or pamphlet to explain the procedures for carrying the message into hospitals.

## **COMMITTEE NO.5 “INSTITUTIONS”**

The Committee welcomed Bjorn of Norway.

1. The Committee welcomed Guideline No. 9 “AA in Penal Establishments” and expressed the thought that it would be of great help to all members involved in prison service. It was felt that it would be beneficial to the Fellowship if the Guideline be given to Prison Governors, dependant, of course, upon permission being granted by the Home Office and Director of Prisons in Scotland. We felt that the benefit of this would be to familiarise Prison Governors with our aims of co-operation and our respect for regimes within Penal Establishments.

2. When reviewing AA activity in Prisons we felt that on occasion, members of the Fellowship outside the prison have been at fault in their lack of communication with Prison Governors and Prison Officers. The tragic result of this has sometimes been the cessation of an AA meeting.

It was thoroughly recommended and thought imperative that every Region has an active Regional Prison Liaison Officer, who, ideally is a Prison Sponsor, and ensures the continuity of service by the various Intergroup Prison Liaison Officers and Prison Sponsors.

We recommend that the Board member for Prisons in England and Wales convene a half yearly meeting of all Regional Prison Liaison Officers to further our carrying of the message within Penal Establishments. As a result of this type of structure in Scotland, where a Prison Liaison Secretary is used, a 100% coverage of Penal Establishment exists.



We strongly urge Prison Sponsors to use the “Question Mark” poster within Penal Establishments, and arrange for the issue of the pamphlet “How Did I Get Here” to all new arrivals, the latter is already taking place at some prisons in Scotland. Refer also to Item 7.

3 There are some 25 Hospital Liaison Officers in Scotland who provide a near 100% service to the alcoholic in hospital. Much benefit was gained from the Workshop held by the Scottish Hospital Services. Bearing in mind the report of that Workshop, and our shared experiences, we make the following recommendations:

- (i) that work be commenced on a Hospital Guideline which would incorporate Hospital Bulletins 1-4 and possibly pertinent parts of the pamphlet “AA in Treatment Centres”.
- (ii) that hospital liaison teams be set up in all Intergroups to work with Hospital Liaison Officers, and, in conjunction with CPC Committees, ensure that the message is carried efficiently by the increased involvement in service.
- (iii) that communications be improved between Hospital Liaison teams and PI-C PC Committees.

To summarise, in almost every case problems which arise in hospital visiting are caused by inexperience and sometimes over-zealous members who do not understand the basic principles for hospital work. It cannot be over-emphasised that our primary purpose is to carry a simple spiritual message of hope to the alcoholic and not to interfere with the running of hospitals. We feel very strongly that it is worth repeating a conclusion from Committee 5 of the 1981 and 1982 General Service Conferences :

“All members are reminded that doctors and nurses are responsible for the patient’s entire welfare and AA members are not qualified to comment on drug and treatment regimes”.

We thoroughly recommend the constant use of updated “Question Mark” posters in all hospitals whether they be psychiatric or general.

4. Referrals from treatment units do exist, and are more numerous in some areas than in others. When considering “Treatment Units etc” we included any facility which provides direct treatment for the alcoholic, half-way houses such as those run by the Richmond Fellowship and agencies which include LIBRA, ACCEPT and MIND. The responsibility lies with us to make contact and portray our willingness to co-operate. This is generally carried out in a professional and structured way by Hospital Liaison teams or CPC Committees at both Group and Intergroup level.

The Committee recommends that an approach be made at Board level to such large organisations as the Richmond Fellowship in order to further our work with the alcoholic in halfway houses.

5 The Committee next considered the item “How do we carry the message to alcoholics coming to us from treatment facilities?” It was our conclusion that we have only one message to carry to alcoholics coming to us from any source, let alone treatment facilities by our personal example. Indeed it was considered our personal responsibility to ensure via our Group conscience that a member welcomes new members at the door. Caretaker sponsorship was strongly recommended, and by this we mean individuals taking responsibility for the newcomer.

6. The pamphlet “AA in Treatment Centres” albeit a profound document with a content of great importance, was thought to be applicable to America in parts. However, we recommend that it be kept intact until the Fellowship in England, Scotland and Wales has sufficient accumulated experience to produce its own particular leaflet. You will have noticed that we have already mentioned this particular piece of literature under Item 2 - “Activity in Hospitals”.

7. (Continued from Item 2). When considering the subject matter of AA activity in Borstals, Detention Centres and long term institutions we shared our experiences in relation to Young Offenders. In some cases we have simply an introductory-type talk given in remand centres. However, it is in Scotland that most apparent progress has been made, and AA meetings are established, being established and indeed consolidated in quite a few of their penal establishments.

It is worthy of particular note that in Scotland’s experience, younger speakers with a strength in sobriety are more than welcome by young offenders.

Having shared the experience of our work in Scotland it is heartening to note that many borstal institutions in England and Wales have a healthy AA meeting.

The Committee recommends that Prison Liaison Officers at Intergroup or Regional level contact Governors and Assistant Governors of all Young Offenders Penal Institutions at least once a year to further facilitate Tradition 5, bearing in mind our new Guideline No. 9.

8 Albeit we do have a good relationship with Probation Officers and Social Works Department Offices within the Prison Service, at least in general terms, the Committee shared its experiences of co-operation with the Probation Service outside Penal Institutions. A healthy relationship of co-operation does exist in certain areas and is on an established basis, and the Committee recognised that certain strides had been made in this area.

Having shared the aforementioned fact the Committee do recommend that Probation Liaison Officers or CPC Committees write to all Chief Probation Officers in England and Wales or Social Works Department Officers in Scotland extending our offer of co-operation and possibly extending invitations to open AA meetings.

We further recommend that the Board Member selected to be responsible for Probation liase closely with the Board Member responsible for Prisons in England and Wales.

9. There are a few Detoxification Centres per se known to us and AA has an extremely sound relationship with one or two. Thus our experience in working with Detoxification Centres is very limited.

The Committee as a whole expressed its gratitude to Conference for the opportunity to share, listen and make constructive recommendations in relation to the reported subject matter.

## **COMMITTEE NO. 6 “STRUCTURE AND SERVICES”**

The Committee were pleased to welcome Inge Z from West Germany.

1. **General Service Board on Conventions.**

The Committee have noted from the General Service Board Report on Conventions that an All England Convention in a central location would be feasible, but they feel that it is not desirable at present.

2. **Request of North Wales Intergroup to move from the North West Region to the South Wales and Borders Region.**

The Committee agrees that the request of North Wales to join the South Wales and Borders Region is reasonable and should be granted. It is felt that in this instance Conference was mistaken in separating one Welsh Intergroup from the rest of Wales, possibly due to a lack of representation of North Wales Intergroup at Conference 1980. It would seem necessary that the Region be renamed "Wales and Borders".

3. **Leaflet "Money Matters".**

The Committee welcomes "Money Matters". It is clear and direct and fulfils an outstanding need.

4. **Appointing Group Officers.**

The Committee recommends adherence to Guideline No. 5 as a way of preventing problems with the appointment of Group Officers. It is suggested that particular attention be given to the willingness and regular Group attendance of candidates for Group office. Personal responsibility in service extends to cover handing over and briefing thoroughly incoming officers regarding their particular Group, stressing the importance of becoming familiar with existing literature on Group affairs.

5. **Links from Group to Intergroup through Group service representatives.**

**The Committee found that in many areas the links from Group to Intergroup are ineffective. They recommend:**

- (i) that Groups who have not already done so elect a Group Service Representative as per Guideline No. 3.
- (ii) that a GSR discusses the Intergroup agenda with his Group before the Intergroup meeting and reports back afterwards.

6 **Further experience gained by Conference delegates meeting as a team before, during and after Conference.**

In most Regions, delegates did meet as a team before Conference. Those who engaged in this preparation found it extremely beneficial.

The many Regional delegates who met as teams after Conference felt an increased sense of the Conference as a whole, and a greater preparedness for reporting back to Region, Intergroup and Group.

It has been found that Conference delegates reporting back to an Intergroup, other than their own, works well.

7/8 **Members with special needs due to a physical handicap.**

It was noted that some existing AA literature, including “Alcoholics Anonymous” and “The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” is available in Braille from the General Service Office. Information about obtaining taped AA literature is also available from the General Service Office. This includes “Alcoholics Anonymous”, “The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” and “Living Sober”.

It is recommended that future AA directories carry international symbols denoting suitability of meetings for disabled and deaf members.

Individual members are asked to consider learning sign language to be able to reach those many suffering alcoholics enduring the additional loneliness of profound deafness.

Groups are urged to consider the needs of housebound members, including single parents.

We recommend that the Board study means of approaching the suffering alcoholic among the deaf, the blind and the physically handicapped. We ask that the Board report progress to Conference 1984.

### **9. Day Centres and Clubs.**

There was no knowledge on the Committee of satisfactory experience with Clubs and Day Centres. It was felt that the opening of such Clubs and Centres can run contrary to the Sixth Tradition.

It is strongly recommended that reference should always be made to existing Guidelines and literature. The Committee request that this matter be further studied at next year’s Conference with a view to the preparation of a Guideline for Great Britain.

### **10. Review of the 1981 Survey Report.**

The Committee feels that the information contained in the 1981 Survey is of great help in hospital work and Public Information and recommends the use of the pamphlet “The AA Member”.

The Committee recommends that members invite their General Practitioners to Group open meetings.

The Committee noted from the 1981 Report that an increasing number of dually-addicted people are seeking help from AA. We recommend Groups to refer to the pamphlet “Problems Other Than Alcohol” should they experience any difficulties in this area.

## **WORKSHOP “ANSWERING SERVICES”**

I wish this afternoon to ask three questions:

(1) What priority should a Region or Intergroup give to setting up an answering service?

The AA Service Handbook describes “the role of Intergroups” number 1, first sentence as “Intergroups exist to help the groups in their area to reach the still-suffering alcoholic more effectively”. I would suggest that an answering service is the single most effective way to reach the still-suffering alcoholic. When I looked for help I looked in the telephone book - and when I

could not find it I looked in the dictionary - I thought I must be spelling it wrongly. I am sure when other alcoholics or agencies look for help they too look first in the telephone directory. Frequently too when agencies give out help it is in the form of telephone numbers.

The Guideline is clear that answering services are the responsibility of Regions and Intergroups - it follows that the absence of an answering service is also the responsibility of Region and Intergroup. It is worth remembering that last year this Conference acknowledged that Intergroups should properly regard answering services as a first charge on their funds.

12th Step work is the most important service any of us have to offer and the way we offer it is through an answering service.

(2) Should answering services involve outside agencies? This is perhaps the easiest question to answer. Who in this room this afternoon would entrust his sobriety to an outside agency. No matter how good, how well meaning or how conscientious I would not wish my sobriety to depend on some other agency getting a message right. If I would not now take this chance with my own sobriety, what right have I to take this chance with the possible sobriety of the still suffering alcoholic.

AA speaks with a special voice. It is the voice of experience, understanding and compassion. It is a voice which talks to silence, to fear, to sobbing hopelessness or shouting anger - it is the first and only voice a newcomer should hear.

(3) What is a proper answering service?

I would like to share my experience of the East Midlands telephone answering service which began in November 1975. The telephone service is in a small room rented especially for that purpose in a building in which no other AA activity takes place. At present we rent a small room in the General Hospital for £40.00 per quarter. AA members are not allowed in the room unless they are on duty. There is one member on duty each night from 7.00 p.m. until 10.00 p.m. and each member is on for one night each week for 13 weeks e.g. each Monday or each Tuesday. The rota is changed four times a year and each rota requires seven members and three reserves. We therefore need 25/30 members with 6 months sobriety to take part. Members are sometimes unsuitable and are taken off the rota.

The member on duty, who is the first voice of AA, takes brief details from the newcomer. He then contacts another AA member at home who can take more time to talk to the newcomer and arrange to meet or to visit him or her. This system ensures not only that the first voice is AA but that the follow up contact is appropriate for twelfth step work. It also means the telephone line is freed quickly. The member on duty records the call in a book.

The East Midlands telephone serves Notts, Leics, Derby and Lincs and the number (Nottingham 417100) appears in 6 Directories of which 5 have to be paid for. Other costs mean the service in total costs around £450 p.a. and the treasurer and secretary report to every Intergroup meeting and money is given out of Intergroup funds.

The East Midlands telephone service receives about 1000 calls a year.

Conclusion:



“This will never work - its too complicated”

“Your average suffering alcoholic is so confused he has difficulty taking down one, let alone three numbers”

“When does Friday and Saturday begin and so on?”

Notwithstanding all this gloom we decided to have a go, and we have never looked back. Many of the initial calls come, not from the suffering alcoholic, but from relatives or friends and they are not easily put off. In practice the weekends work very well indeed and the three manners liase to give the best possible service. Indeed if all three manners are at home over the weekend we have in effect three lines because a caller, finding the appropriate line engaged will try one of the other numbers.

#### Committee Structure

Each Intergroup appoints two members to serve for three years on the AP committee. As Intergroup AGM's are staggered so we are assured of constant experience. We have seven Intergroups involved, giving us fourteen committee members. Each Intergroup is responsible for the service for seven to eight weeks. The annual cycle is so designed that each year we work a different period. In this way the busy periods at Christmas and New Year are shared. The co-ordinator phones in manners names and numbers to the Scottish Service Office and keeps a record in the AP book. Committee meetings are held each time the AP book is passed on from one Intergroup to the next.

#### Education

When a member attends his/her first committee meeting, the meeting is devoted almost entirely to their education. They in turn educate the new manner. It is desirable therefore that new committee members are experienced manners. Guidelines for manners are as follows:

Determine if there has been previous AA, Al-Anon or Alateen contact.

Main function is to carry the message and link caller with nearest AA, Al-Anon or Alateen Group.

Should not give out group contact numbers. Rather, he should obtain first names and number of caller. Alternatively, full name and address and name on door.

Have to hand:

Pen and pad

Where to Find

Area code book

Al-Anon and Alateen contacts

Co-ordinators telephone number

#### Expense

The AP committee handles no money whatsoever. The £17 per quarter rental for the AP machine is paid by Scottish Service Committee.

The £5 rental for AP committee meetings is paid by the incoming Intergroup.

Obviously, co-ordinators and to a lesser extent, members, have increased telephone bills. Our recommendation is that they adjust their normal contributions as necessary to meet this expense.

We are justifiably proud of our answering service, and are willing to share our experience so that the message can be carried even further.

## **WORKSHOP**

### **“A NEW LIFE”**

Early one fateful July evening, I left the safety of a small bedroom in a Mental Hospital and, with leaden feet, made my way to a room in another ward.

Little did I realise that it was to be the beginning of a new way of living and that a whole new life was about to open up for me, a life in which alcohol would play no part.

I was met at the door by a well groomed wee man who shook my hand and said, “Hello, nice to see you Mr. D - I’m Dave and I’m an alcoholic”.

I had just met my first self-confessed alcoholic and one who was to become the first of a host of new friends.

Within that room, Dave, in a quiet, calm voice, shared his experience, strength and hope and, for me, it was the turning point of my life.

Here was someone who understood me, who had undergone many of the experiences which had happened to me in my own drinking life and who was not ashamed to speak of them. I identified with him in his actions and feelings and found that I was not unique after all.

I WAS AN ALCOHOLIC! But how could I be an alcoholic? I didn’t want to be an alcoholic! I was too intelligent to be an alcoholic!!

Nevertheless, if the 19 “yeses” which I had given in response to the 20 questions in the “Who, Me?” were anything to go by, I was DEFINITELY an alcoholic.

I left the meeting with my mind in a whirl and clutching three pieces of AA literature - the Preamble Card, a Who Me? and a Just for Today card.

That night I lay awake in a ferment of excitement, reading those pieces of literature, jumping from one to the other, afraid to put them down - and I was filled with a great hope - a hope that maybe, if Dave was an example of a recovering alcoholic, I could do something with myself.

All my pent-up emotions exploded and, by the following night when my wife came to visit me, she saw a new Bill - one who had come back from the dead - I was alive again - I was reborn.

Words tumbled out of me as I tried to explain what had happened the previous evening. Wonder and astonishment lit up my wife’s eyes and she left for home, happier than she had been for years.



Discharged from hospital later that week, I could hardly wait to get to my first AA meeting. Confirmation of the miracle that was apparent in Dave, was waiting for me. I met other miracles; happy, calm and contented people, just like yourselves.

You took me in. You gave me love and understanding. You brought hope into my life. You gave me confidence, for confidence I had none.

I took you home with me and, by your caring and sharing, you brought laughter back into that house and to the people who lived therein. With the introduction of laughter, it was as if a clean, fresh breeze swept through that house and, in its passing, carried away all the feelings of loneliness, of fear, guilt, shame and remorse.

And so, my friends, I came to accept that I was an alcoholic. I discovered that the illness of alcoholism is incurable but that an arrestment is possible if, for one day at a time, one stays away from the first drink.

You taught me with patience, tolerance and understanding that the Programme of Recovery of Alcoholics Anonymous was there for me to use. I saw the Programme was working for each of you and so, tentatively at first, but with increasing confidence, I've tried to bring the Principles to bear in my daily living. Today, I believe in the "The Big Fellow" as I call my Higher Power and not in coincidences.

You encouraged me to become active within the Fellowship, to show appreciation for the sobriety which was, and is, now mine. This I have tried to do.

However, "The Big Fellow" seems to give me a gentle reminder every so often that I am not doing enough, and I find myself accepting other responsibilities within the Fellowship. From Group level I found myself being gently pushed into Intergroup and, from there, a little shove transferred me to Region.

By my presence here, you can see what Region have done .

Seriously, though, I have found that sobriety and Alcoholics Anonymous have almost become an obsession with me. It is my life - a new life - which I never thought was possible.

A new inner strength is mine, as long as I stay away from that first drink. Love and understanding, countless friendships and freedom from fear have come my way. Peace is no longer a dream but is a reality.

Yesterday is but a memory. Tomorrow is only a vision. Today, my dear friends, is a time for living a decent, happy, sober life and it is all made possible through this wonderful Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

To each and every one for being here, I give my grateful thanks for sharing with me and for helping to strengthen my resolve to stay sober, to enjoy my new life, one day at a time.

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple Programme”.

“If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it -then you are ready to take certain steps”.

“Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a programme of recovery”.

These three quotations from Chapter 5 of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” are no doubt known to us all - if not word perfect, at least we will know them in our hearts. However, they have a very special meaning for me, every time I read or hear them I am reminded of my first reading, the impact they had and the influence they have had since.

All my previous efforts to recover were really only an exercise in trying to buy a “cure” -in trying to find the easier, softer way out of my problems - not to stop drinking, just to get rid of the problems. However, the inevitable “rock bottom” occurred and with it the end of life, or so I thought.

The prospect for the future was very bleak indeed - in fact I was convinced that there was no solution to the insurmountable problems that faced me.

The first glimmer of hope came from my first AA contacts - those all-important examples of living happy sobriety. They obviously had something I wanted, something I had never been able to achieve through my own uninformed efforts.

This hope, coupled with the challenge contained in Chapter 5 provided the motivation and the method. To me it was a programme of action not of theory - that it works by doing not just by understanding. It is a programme tried and tested by ex-drunks for ex-drunks on how to get sober and stay sober.

There was, however, another ingredient that took me some time to appreciate. I had to learn to trust. To trust that there is a loving, caring God, and be ready to accept such an influence in my daily living. I think this act of trust is the decision suggested in Step Three.

No doubt we are all aware of the numerous theories expounding recovery from alcoholism, but there was a measure of relief for me to learn that my alcoholism was an illness that could be arrested if only I was prepared to accept the three pertinent ideas - that I was an alcoholic and could not manage my own life; that probably no human power could relieve my alcoholism; but that God could and would if He were sought.

If I may digress for a moment -some time ago I came across an article on Thomas Trotter (1760-1832) MD Edin., a Naval Surgeon who, during his service, had the satisfaction of getting 200 girl shops shut up in Plymouth alone”. In 1804 he wrote an essay - and I quote a relevant part “Rather than moral turpitude to be combated by sermonising I consider drunkenness, strictly speaking, to be a disease, more particularly a disease of the mind accompanied by mental and physical deterioration and with marked social consequences which should be treated accordingly,

though then as now a task most ungrateful. First the Physician must gain the full confidence of the patient, then he should at once take away alcohol in every form rather than little by little as in the ingenious method recommended by Lettsom. This to be followed by studying the patient's temper and character in order to ascertain the particular cause, time and place of his love of the bottle, followed by individual treatment by the Physician".

Perhaps this idea will ring bells in the memory of many of us - but I feel that through whichever door we enter AA we are as one within the room.

Forgive me for one more quotation -this time from Bill W speaking twenty five years ago "Certainly nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous. AA is a synthesis of principles and attitudes which came to us from medicine and from religion. We alcoholics have simply streamlined those forces, adapting them to our special use in a society where they can work effectively. Our contribution was but the missing link in a chain of recovery which is now so significant and of such promise for the future".

Perhaps you may conclude that I have contributed no new ideas, and you would be correct. The foundations of my path to recovery were laid forty-eight years ago, they have been consolidated by the recovery of many hundreds of thousand members since. The proof was there at my first meeting - just as surely as it is in this room tonight.

At my early meetings I heard it said that you could take the Steps in any order as and when you wished. I tried it without success, in fact it resulted in total chaos and, of course, chaos is not simplicity. Fortunately, my sponsor pointed out that there is a distinct sequence to the Steps, one leads into another - the whole becoming our programme of progress in recovery.

It has been written that sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening. If more gifts are to be received, our awakening has to go on. As it does go on, we find that bit by bit we can discard the old life - the one that did not work - for a new life that can and does work under any conditions whatsoever. A new life of endless possibilities can be lived if we are willing to continue our awakening through the practice of AA's Twelve Steps.

To the best of my ability I have followed the well trodden AA path of recovery, and the only occasions of difficulty have been when my own footsteps have strayed from the important Twelve Steps.

We speak to each other through AA's language of the heart, a language that crosses all boundaries and holds us together in unity. This joy of living is enhanced by the joy of giving and by the rewards from service.

You promised me nothing, but gave me everything. By example you gave me hope, by sharing you gave me encouragement and support; through tolerance and understanding you led me through the dark days, and with your love gave me a new life.

## **EIGHTEENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1983**

**REPORT OF THE SUB COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD  
ENQUIRING INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF AN ALL ENGLAND CONVENTION IN A  
CENTRAL LOCATION**

At the request of the Seventeenth General Service Conference the General Service Board appointed a Sub-Committee to enquire into the feasibility of an all England Convention to be held in a central location.

The undermentioned Sub-Committee was appointed:

Valerie L	Vice Chairman
Joyce C	
Frank C	
Bill S	Secretary

The Sub-Committee met on the 8 November 1982 and report:

It is feasible to hold a Convention in a central location in England. Of the places investigated, the most suitable seemed to be Birmingham. Of the many venues, the following two appeared to be most appropriate to our needs:

- 1 The Birmingham Exhibition Centre and Birmingham Metropole Hotel Complex
- 2 The City Corporation facilities in central Birmingham, using various types of commercial accommodation,

and consider that of the two, the second would be preferable as the first mentioned may prove expensive.

The Committee suggests it would be better at this time for members to support the National Conventions at present taking place.

At this point we feel there must be a stressing of our primary purpose. We considered and discussed in depth that our top priority should be a question to ourselves. Are we in danger of diverting our energies, resources, time and love from carrying AA's message to the alcoholic who still suffers?

We know there is a continuing and growing need, which unfortunately is not always met, for members willing to do telephone duties, sponsorship of Prison and Hospital groups, Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community activities and even, sadly to say, 12th Step work - the most important service any of us have to offer.

We are all aware that social activities are proliferating, and that a great deal of time, energy and money is diverted to promoting these functions.

We feel here that through group conscience we must rely on the responsibility and maturity of the Intergroups and Regions to look into this matter very seriously.

There is undoubtedly a place for mini-Conventions as a way of celebrating our sobriety, but let us take care that we do not lose our sense of direction and balance. Already experience is showing that the calendar is becoming over-crowded.

We noted that a previous Committee which studied the question of the English Convention recommended an event in the North, and one in the South, these to be held in the Spring and the Autumn. The reason was to accommodate an ever increasing attendance, and this has proved to be successful. The present venues offer us room for expansion and growth for the foreseeable future.

Due to growth of the Fellowship in Scotland, the location of their National Convention is under review. Probably this will happen in Wales, too, in due course.

In conclusion, we recommend that anyone who is considering social activities of any kind to search their individual and group conscience. Are our priorities right or are we being diverted from our primary purpose?

### **FRIDAY, 13 APRIL**

The Nineteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was again held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester. Registration and the distribution of Conference folders began at 4 p.m., followed by a reception which, as always, proved an ideal opportunity for delegates to get together over coffee and biscuits.

The attendance this year was 116 made up of 83 delegates from 14 Regions, 2 delegates from the English Speaking Intergroup (Europe), General Service Board members, 2 delegates from Share and Roundabout, 3 European observers, 5 members of staff including the General Secretary and the Conference, Chairman - Lionel J of Midland Region.

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE.**

The Chairman, Lionel J, opened the first full session of Conference at 8.30 pm calling for the customary silence followed by a warm welcome to all delegates especially newcomers (1st year delegates), and our European guests. The General Secretary read the Traditions before Lionel presented his opening address:

“Like everyone in this room I have done several jobs in service over the past twelve months. Two of them have had a particular impact on me - firstly being the Chairman of this Conference and secondly being the refreshment secretary of my local group. As refreshment secretary I did the washing up and in particular washed the dirty ash trays produced by a typical AA meeting. But what a beautiful balance - so typical of service in AA. If I ever had a false sense of importance about being elected Chairman I had only to remember the ash trays that required washing - conversely if I ever felt put upon by my group I had only to remember this great privilege and honour .

When I left here last year, having been elected, my concern was not “Can I do this Job?” but “How do I cope with an ego boost like this?” I decided that one way I could work at coping with this was to tell no-one either in AA or outside about my election. To be Chairman of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous and not tell anyone is something else! I failed, of course, on some three occasions my ego got the better of me - but that is great progress - and for the many occasions I managed to bite my tongue and learn a little bit of humility I want to thank you.

The Committee structure this year is different from previous years. All six Committees are now addressing themselves to particular problems and challenges facing our Fellowship. I know you will work hard on these Committees to give guidance to our Fellowship. I want particularly to thank the Board, the Treasurer and the General Secretary for establishing a Committee on Finance. For too long our Fellowship has left the burden of financial problems to the Board - now we are being given the opportunity to show our maturity and accept and participate fully in this responsibility.

Every Conference is unique and this Conference is special for many reasons. It seems to me to mark another step forward on our journey into maturity. We have a new General Secretary to

whom thanks and best wishes - a comparatively new Chairman, 4 comparatively new Board - the pioneers of the Conference are giving way to those who did not know and cannot imagine AA without a strong structure and a good Conference. I sense in this room a confidence that we are here to do good work together, that even if there is the odd dissenter or egotist in our midst their contribution will be made useful and not destructive.

In considering what theme I should propose, I asked myself why do I come to Conference, what am I doing here, now. Answer: I am an alcoholic who has come here tonight in order to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety. I have not come here to "lead the Fellowship into the future" or "give guidance". I have come here to work at my sobriety. I should, of course, work at my sobriety whenever and wherever I am - but Conference does offer some very special opportunities for me to grow and develop.

My life depends upon Alcoholics Anonymous. The care and maintenance of this Fellowship in good working order is vital to my welfare and happiness. These two statements - both absolutely true - point out the dangers into which I fall in matters of service; the opportunity they give me - for "righteous" anger, for resentment, for self pity, for lack of trust, for being clever - and of course the opposite - the opportunities for not being angry, to trust people and above all, for not being clever.

Whilst delivering this Address I will have to work at remembering that this is no big deal - there is no need to be nervous. I am just an ex-drunk sharing an experience with some other ex-drunks. And when, in a few moments, I end this Address I will have to work firstly at my disappointment that you are not all standing on your seats, clapping your hands above your heads and chanting "more, more". Secondly I will have to work at my suspicion that you have only applauded out of politeness and are secretly whispering rubbish to each other. I am working at balance - a balanced view of you and me - that my Address is a good try and that is all it should be. This Conference will be a lot of "good tries". A good try by our new General Secretary and the General Service Office staff, a good try by the Board Members, a good try by the delegates. And what are we trying for? Not, I hope, the best Conference ever - because that is doomed to failure - but if I try and we all try to grow personally, to work at my defects, egotism, jealousy, mistrust and if we all work at growing a little bit more sober - then we can safely leave the outcome of this Conference where it belongs.

My theme then is simple. If all of us at this Conference work at sobriety - at our personal sobriety - the Conference will take care of itself. We will all of us be facing different challenges, yet sharing not only the common experience of this Conference but the common experience of coping with ourselves, using the AA programme. I would like to consider for a moment some of the challenges you are facing. Those at their first Conference, perhaps nervous, perhaps over-excited (especially if you are Scots), not knowing quite what is going to happen, not knowing many people - could you, amongst other things, work at sharing your nervousness with us? There are those who have come with arguments to be won, points to be made, carefully worked out scripts with which to convince the other delegates - would you work at letting go? At being open-minded? For all your care and diligence you may be wrong, and Step 10 always takes me an awful lot of work. There will be those here who have pressing domestic problems and who will have to work hard at just living in this moment and this place. There are many, many others. I hope we can help and support you all.

Let the keynote of this Conference be that we are sober alcoholics working at sobriety, and the

outcome of this Conference does not rest with us but with God.”

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Jim H. the Chairman of the General Service Board presented the Annual Report of the Board for 1983, and addressed the meeting. He welcomed all delegates on behalf of the General Service Board and expressed his regret at the resignation (through ill health) of Maurice Rena and Jack Scrimgeour. Maurice Rena had been a member of the General Service Board since 1957 and Jack Scrimgeour had contributed a great deal, especially in establishing AA Groups in Scottish Prisons. He also thanked the two Board members, Valerie L and Peter F who were retiring this year by rotation, wishing to place on record his gratitude for their invaluable contribution to the General Service Board. Jim also told Conference of the heavy work-load experienced at the General Service Office during the last year and appreciation of the way in which Jack G. the new General Secretary and his staff had resolved these problems. The Chairman, said that he would be happy to answer questions that anybody wished to put to him before introducing the Hon. Treasurer to the General Service Board, Peter F., to talk about the financial problems during 1983.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Hon. Treasurer introduced the Report as one that could not be referred to as “glowing”. He drew attention to the figure under Salaries which showed a considerable increase on the previous year and might therefore call for extra detail. The simple explanation was that we had for several months of the year been operating with two General Secretaries necessitated by the change-over period before Bill S retired. There was, of course, the matter of a retiring gratuity made to Bill and we had also in the past year experienced some rather heavy temporary employment expenses, caused by illness etc.

Referring to the PI expenses it was pointed out that the figure showed an increase of some £2,500 on the previous year. In point of fact this figure would have been somewhat higher if the total cost of free leaflets issued during the year had been added to this section of the accounts. A recent check on free leaflet issue had indicated that costing was now running at approximately £600 per month. This item would in future years be included under PI expenditure so a substantial increase would be shown under this section next year for that reason alone.

Drawing attention to the fact that the increase of 44% against the previous year on Services Expenditure (with direct contributions showing an 11% increase) resulting in a deficit on Services of some £69,000. Peter said that this, in terms of our target of self-support, had only covered 50% of the requirement. By reason of this, our nett asset figure had been reduced by approximately £23,000 leaving us with a figure of £144,317. In terms of a prudent reserve of two years working expenses, this amount, if set against last year's expenditure (£139,598) indicates that our total holding would provide merely enough to cover one year. It should, of course, be considered that a nett asset amount is by no means all “ready money” and that to contain our literature stocks, investments and also prevent cash-flow problems we would need to find a means of improvement. It must be obvious to us all that having ended this year with a deficit of nearly £24,000 most of which had come from our capital, that we cannot continue in this way. We already know of two items of high expenditure to be included in our figures for 1984. The Group Handbook and the PI video tape both of which are produced at this Conference. THIS IS A BUSINESS OF CARRYING OUT OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE, so



somewhere we have got to get it right to improve the situation. The alternative would be to consider that we should not spend so much money. In other words adopt some form of budget system. This would then put us in the position that we might have to suspend operations on some project during any time in the year when the allocated money had been used up. Peter said he did not think this would be the desire of the Fellowship. Ending his Report he made a reference to the new Committee on Finance and said that he felt sure that a great deal of helpful discussion and suggestion would come from it. He emphasised that he did not think that there was any cause for any drama, just that these were plain, hard facts that we needed to accept and have the courage to change. He finally asked if there were any questions on the Finance Report.

There were none.

### **THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF AA IN HOLLAND, 27-30 OCTOBER 1983**

Maurice S attended these celebrations in Holland and presented the following account to Conference:

“When I joined Alcoholics Anonymous, sick, lonely and full of despair, I had no idea what life as a sober alcoholic would be like. I quickly discovered that it was to be not only a life of recovery but also a life of service. Each new experience a surprise and a delight. Until recently I believed I had been given my share of all the good things that service in AA has to offer, but I was wrong.

On a Thursday morning in October last I found myself on an aeroplane flying to Holland to represent AA in Great Britain at the Netherlands anniversary celebrations.

AA in Holland had two things to celebrate, the thirty-fifth year of its existence and the publication of the Big Book in the Dutch language. The weekend Convention took place in Rotterdam at the concert hall, a magnificent building somewhat larger than the Royal Festival Hall in London. The Fellowship, as we know, is the same everywhere and that long week-end was, I am sure, no different from an AA week-end anywhere in the world. One thousand alcoholics attending meetings, attending Workshops, dancing and drinking coffee.

I conveyed my greetings from AA in Great Britain. I sat through a two-hour Workshop without understanding a word that was being said and it will come as no surprise to any of you that on each of the three evenings a group of us held an English-speaking meeting.

At the final meeting on Sunday morning I was somewhat taken aback on seeing a grand piano on the stage of the auditorium and to be given a sheet of music. As I read neither Dutch nor music I simply handed over and let go. How delightful, I thought an AA meeting with musical accompaniment.

When I boarded the plane at Schippol Airport on the Sunday evening to fly back to East Midlands the Captain said something rather symbolic. We will fly direct, he said, on a straight course. Conditions are good and we will land within the hour. And so we did.

Forty minutes after touch-down I was in my own house. I was home after attending an AA meeting, another AA meeting and as always I was asked “How was it?” and, as always, I replied “It was good” and so it was.

### **EUROPEAN INFORMATION CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

Valerie L. in presenting this report prepared for Conference said:

“When I was asked to write this paper I began by wondering if I would have known that the European Information Centre at GSO in London existed today had I not been invited as a member of the General Service Board during its early beginnings.

As far back as the Second World Service Meeting held in 1972 there were suggestions that there could and should be better communications between European countries. This was discussed and talked about many times both here and abroad and for many years. It took until 1981 before the First European Service Meeting was held in Frankfurt. A meeting at which members from fifteen European countries got together for a working weekend discussion programme, under the theme “Support Your Neighbour Country”.

But before that in 1978 at the World Service Meeting held in Helsinki, the European Information Centre was suggested and immediately created at GSO in London. Perhaps this may all seem like “putting the cart before the horse”. I think not. For many years our General Service Office had been asked by our friends in Europe, for suggestions and shared experiences in service. Some of these countries had at that time no service structure, therefore to hold a Service Meeting any earlier may have been indeed ill-timed.

During those three years the European Information Centre did much to encourage AA members in Europe to share their difficulties and to ask for suggestions as to how they may move forward, not only in the growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in their country, but also how best they may proceed in service from sound structural bases. We shared with them ourselves but the Information Centre was able to pass on to them news and views of other countries who were making or had made these same decisions.

Many of you will recall how many observers from Europe we have welcomed to our General Service Conferences. Most of you no doubt know that we have, in turn, sent members to attend Service Conferences in Europe. Most of these invitations come through the European Information Centre.

Language can present a difficulty but so far in Alcoholics Anonymous we seem well able to communicate through the language of the heart. We have managed to broaden our horizons and have come closer to Europe by communications in various forms.

Through this sharing we are increasing our unity and hope that no-one and no country need carry on in isolation. We all need each other and we all have much to offer each other, both here and abroad. God in his wisdom has brought Europe closer to us, let us not lose this gift.

During the course of writing this paper I have noted some of the correspondence which moves through the Information Centre. We received an AA progress report from Poland; 22 AA groups in Poland with twelve more forming. Their first Intergroup Meeting took place in December 1983. We had welcomed a Polish delegate for the first time, at the European Service Meeting in Frankfurt early in 1983, perhaps the shared experiences at that meeting helped them in some way. They need support from us all.

A Scandinavian meeting was held in July last year with information and invitations to other

countries being passed through the Information Centre. Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Finland, Ireland and Holland have all been in touch for various reasons. There was a lot of correspondence, too much to list here, but it certainly emphasises the need for the European Information Centre.

Having been a delegate myself at the European Service Meetings I personally feel a close link with Europe. Yet I wonder if we are doing enough? Can we communicate with our friends in Europe more? There is no doubt that many of them look to us for strength and hope. I wonder if we can find more ways to share our experiences with them.

I would like to feel that you may all leave here tonight, perhaps thinking of new ways for deepening and improving our communications with our European friends. Let us all remember communication is a two-way matter, we hear from them, let us always be ready to share in return.

I repeat, God in his wisdom has given us this gift of contact within Europe let us do all in our power to carry out His will for us. Let us all therefore remember that the life and continued existence of our Fellowship, and the hope of generations of alcoholics to come, depend on how effectively we pass on the Legacy of Service both here and abroad.

We have been given this opportunity to do so through the European Information Centre. Thank you.

## **CONVENTIONS**

The General Service Board appreciated the tremendous effort, involving many willing members, toward the success of the Mini and Full Week-end Conventions and gatherings during 1983.

Details of forthcoming Conventions were read out to the Assembly including the Annual Southern Convention to be held at The Brighton Centre, 14 - 16 September 1984. The Convention this year is being organised by South East Region, South West Region and London Region.

## **RESOLUTION**

“This Conference recommends that Preliminary Committee Agendas for Conference be published in AA News in the Autumn preceding Conference” was proposed seconded and unanimously accepted.

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1985**

The undermentioned were proposed and seconded as nominees for Chairman of the Twentieth General Service Conference:

All four delegates signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

## **VIDEO FILM**

The first session ended with the showing of the Video Film “AA Works - One Day At A Time”, which was produced as an aid to Public Information. The delegates unanimously approved the film and after discussion, it was agreed that the video film should be sold at £15. Copies will be available in VHS and BETA-MAX, from the General Service Office.

This session closed with the Serenity Prayer and the delegates then retired to informal discussions.

## **SATURDAY, 14 APRIL**

The six Committees met at 9 am through to 12:30 p.m. and after lunch re-convened at 2:15 pm until 3:45 pm. The Committees met again at 4:15 pm for preparation and finalisation of their Committee Reports.

### **WORKSHOP -”THE TWELVE STEPS AND THE TWELVE TRADITIONS” .**

This Workshop met at 8.30 pm on Saturday and the presentations made by Neil O’D of South West Scotland and John T of South East were warmly received. The Moderator was Ken W of Wales & Borders and Georgia G of South East acted as Secretary and wrote the following report:

“Our Chairman, Ken W, welcomed everyone, after a moment’s silence followed by the preamble, the first of our two Presenters, Neil O’D, told us of his experiences with the Twelve Steps, beginning with the idea many of us have that simply stopping drinking was sobriety.

Working through the Steps, Neil revealed to us his gradual increase in faith and strength as he travelled along his road to recovery, of the frustrations when things did not go as he had planned were familiar to us all. The final realisation that it takes time to become sober and that by trying to apply the Twelve Steps to daily living will give us emotional and mental balance, peace of mind and contentment. Neil’s closing words, “We have been given the key of the Kingdom” says it all.

The second Presentation by John T of South East Region, dealt with our Twelve Traditions, as we grow in sobriety we become aware of the need for daily maintenance, here the Traditions come into their own with common welfare and unity at the fore. John shared at depth his feelings and the benefits that coming to understand the Traditions had brought him. In his concluding words we were reminded very much of the love of this Fellowship and of the God of John’s understanding that enabled us to reap some of the spiritual rewards by just listening.

Our Chairman thanked both Presenters warmly for a most excellent effort. Everyone was then invited to participate - after a slight pause our European visitors set the ball rolling with Harry H from Belgium telling us of his feeling of closeness he experienced at Conference. This was followed by Horst from Hamburg apologising for his lack of control of our language, but still managed to tell us beautifully of his delight to be taking literature home with him and of his wish for us to take some of our strength to Germany.

Our final visitor from the Continent who shared was Marcel from Antwerp who encouraged us to laugh when he said he had found the Committee on Finance both interesting and amusing.

It was with some mixed feelings of sadness and joy that we listened to several delegates tell of this being their last year; it was comforting to know that all were links in this big chain of sobriety.

Raymond, General Service Board, spoke of the concentrated love that dwells within these walls at Conference and of the Twelfth Tradition where we only place principles before personalities; we don't lose the personalities thereby enabling him to enjoy the two beautiful personalities within Val L and Peter F, who sadly are with us for the last time.

Val L expressed her joy at listening to excellent Presentations and would be keeping the papers as a reminder of her last Conference. She also shared her experience of the ring of love found everywhere in AA, from meetings at group to meetings at the Board.

It was exciting to hear from some first year delegates of how grateful they were to all who had made this week-end possible, of the mixed feelings they had on Friday night and of the change twenty-four hours had brought.

As always when things are going well and the clock beats you, yet again with the saying of the Serenity Prayer the Workshop closed to a room filled with love."

The full texts of the two Workshop Presentations appears on pages 41 - 46.

## **SUNDAY, 15 APRIL**

The final session of the Conference commenced at 9.15 am and after the customary silence, Lionel J the Conference Chairman invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective Reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included later in this Report:

1. "Literature"
2. "Finance"
3. "Hospital Services"
4. "Prison & Probation Services"
5. "PI & CPC"
6. "Structure & Services"

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1985**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and John T of the South East Region was duly elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Jim H, Chairman of the General Service Board, in the closing stages of this year's Conference, thanked specifically the two AA members who were the driving force behind the making of the Video Film " AA Works -One Day At A Time". They were Mike S, a Conference delegate from London Region and Gerald D a previous Conference delegate. Jim told the Assembly he felt

they deserved the gratitude of the Fellowship as a whole for the work they had done in helping make this first video a success.

He again thanked the two retiring Board members, Valerie L and Peter F, for their steadfast contribution whilst serving on the General Service Board.

Finally, on behalf of all, Jim invited the delegates to show their appreciation to Lionel J for the excellent way in which he had “chaired” this year’s Conference, this was followed by sustained applause of the assembly.

Lionel then closed Conference after thanking all concerned with its success. The Assembly rose to join him in the Serenity Prayer.

The General Service Conference 1984 was now at an end.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twentieth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Hulme Hall University of Manchester on the 12th to 14th April 1985.

## **CORRECTION**

PLEASE NOTE THE AMENDMENT, AS SHOWN BELOW, TO THE FOLLOWING “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN GREAT BRITAIN FOR THE YEAR 1983”:

NOTES ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 1983

“Service Expenditure” should read “£139,598.00”

## **NINETEENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1984**

### **COMMITTEE NO. 1.**

### **“LITERATURE”**

1. The Committee discussed the anglicised version of the pamphlet “The AA Group” .

The Committee recommends Conference approval for the draft as produced by the Board, subject to the comparatively minor amendments that are listed at Appendix I. (See end of Report) .

The Committee recommends that the colour of the original pamphlet be retained.

That the heavy type headings in the draft be retained, and also the sanserif print be kept for the body of the pamphlet.

That paragraphs be indented, if possible, and a gap left between paragraphs.

That cross-references should be by reference to section numbers rather than page numbers although the index should show the page numbers.

That great care be taken with the proof reading to correct spelling mistakes.

2. Have Share and Roundabout representatives been appointed at Intergroup? If so, have they stimulated increased readership and encouraged the writing of more articles for inclusion in the magazines?

The statistics were that 1/3 of English and Welsh Intergroups had appointed Share representatives and 2/3 of the Scottish Intergroups Roundabout representatives.

In addition one English Region and four Scottish Regions had appointed Regional representatives.

The Share and Roundabout delegates both informed the Committee that the volume of articles submitted had increased enormously over the last year, although sales as yet have stayed much the same.

It was mentioned that the possibility of Share and Roundabout linking up was under discussion.

The Committee recommends that the agenda for the Literature Committee for the 1985 Conference include a discussion about incorporating the publication of AA News with Share and/or Roundabout.

3. Review the Group Handbook.

The new Group Handbook was greeted with enthusiasm by the Committee who felt that the Board should be congratulated on a job well done.

The Committee recommend that the Handbook receive Conference approval with the following alterations:

Structure

Structure of the Fellowship in Great Britain item 4 insert new sentence at start "Each Region has one representative on the General Service Board."

Structure

Group Information for General Service Office, London. Last sentence delete "daily" .

Treasurer

The Committee recommend that a third column be included in the receipts and payments example to show a running balance.

General Point

We recommend that Section 21 of "The AA Group" be used to list a few check points for setting up a new group.

## General Point

We recommend that the pamphlet “The AA Group” be included in the Group Handbook.

### 4 Review Draft Guideline on Hospitals

The Committee welcomed the draft as an excellent addition to the Guidelines. It will be of great assistance to AA members working in hospital groups.

The Committee recommend the Guideline for Conference approval but suggested certain amendments to the Guideline which are listed in Appendix II. (See end of Report).

### 5 Review the use of the pamphlet “AA as a Resource for the Medical Profession” as recommended by Committee No. 4 Conference 1983.

The Committee found that the pamphlet was generally well received. A General Practitioner said that it was just the right length.

### 6. Is there sufficient literature or tapes produced in Great Britain for ethnic minorities?

The Committee found that a very small amount of such literature was available but that its existence was largely unknown and no list was published. The Committee heard that professionals in community development had pointed out the need to CPC Committees in London and elsewhere. The Committee noted that AA was not reaching certain members of the community because of the lack of such material. The Committee recognised the need for AA literature and tapes to be translated into the languages of minorities living in Great Britain, and recommend that the General Service Board review what such literature is already available and what further literature and tapes could be translated into those languages, and to report to the 1985 Conference on their findings on this matter.

### 7. Should tapes of AA literature be available through the General Service Office?

The Committee noted the excellent work of the Addlestone Recording Group who supply very good quality tapes of AA Conference-approved literature. It would not be practical for the General Service Office to take over this work. However, it would be helpful if the General Service Office could publicise the availability of the tapes from the Addlestone Recording Group and, in particular, insert a reference to the tapes on the Literature Order Form.

### 8. Other Items

#### “Who Me?”

One Region wanted the pamphlet “Who Me?” to be reviewed by the 1985 Conference. The Committee decided against this because the pamphlet had only recently been given approval.

#### “If You Are A Professional”

Two Regions wanted this pamphlet to be reviewed by the 1985 Conference. The Committee decided in favour of this.

### Non-AA Literature

The Committee unanimously feel it is wrong for non-AA literature to be bought with AA funds.



AA funds are for AA purposes.

“How AA Members Co-operate”

The Committee recommended that the General Service Board consider producing an anglicised version of this pamphlet.

“A Message to Teenagers”

The Committee recommended that the General Service Board consider changing the title to “A Message to Young People” due to the fact that young people object to the label “teenagers”.

## APPENDIX I “The AA Group”

The Committee recommends that the term “Chairman” be consistently used throughout the pamphlet instead of alternating between “Chairperson” and “Chairman”.

### Section 2

Delete from “sometimes” to “but” .

### Section 6

Bottom of second page insert “usually via Intergroup”.

### Section 8

Delete heading but leave the paragraph itself to run on from the final paragraph of Section 7.

### Section 9

At the end of section replace the words in brackets with “special literature is also available - see end of this pamphlet) .”

### Section 18

The advertisement

<p>Have you a Drinking Problem? Alcoholics Anonymous Can Help Tel. (Local Contact Number) For details of weekly meetings</p>
--

### Section 20 No.7

Delete “or Should we just give it our whole collections?” .

### Section 23. Third Paragraph

First sentence to read “If you feel it is not possible to reveal your membership in AA because there is no nearby group or member to help, it will be necessary to work through a non-alcoholic”

Section 27

Alter heading to read “How do such services start?”.

Section 29. First paragraph

Delete “multigroup” and insert “service” .

Section 29. Final paragraph

The Section to end “GSO can fill you in on many of the mechanics of these services”. The words following this sentence in the brackets are to be deleted.

Section 33. No. 2

Delete “Treatment and correctional facilities and insert “Hospitals and Prisons”.

Section 33. No. 8

Delete “wire services” and change “movie” to “film”.

Section 41.

To include Al-Ateen C/o Al-Anon.

APPENDIX 2 Hospital Guidelines.

Page 1 Paragraph “How do we make contact with the hospitals?” Insert the word “usually” as the third word of the second sentence.

Page 2 Second Paragraph Second sentence. Change “should” to “often”.

Page 2 Paragraph headed “Types of Hospital Meetings”. Delete “only” in the fifth line. Add at end of paragraph “In order to allow and to encourage doctors, nurses and members of the staff of hospitals to attend AA it is quite usual for these meetings to be open”.

Page 3 Section headed “The Responsibility of the Hospital Group” at the end of the second paragraph insert “It is helpful if one or two members are asked to be responsible for visiting the wards each week to enquire whether patients wish to attend the meeting”. At the end add “Consent is always needed from the staff to take a patient to a meeting.”

Page 3 General Guidance

Underline “we are not professionals”.

Underline “Do not talk about medication”.

**COMMITTEE NO. 2**

**“FINANCE”**

We were pleased to have Marcel from Belgium as an observer on our Committee , and he was made welcome .

Since Regionalisation this is the first Committee which has dealt entirely with Finance. It could not have come at a better time, bearing in mind the deficit of nearly £24,000 on expenditure for the year 1983.

As every AA “group” ought to be fully self-supporting, the discussions on Question 1 - “Are the reasons for our self-support Tradition discussed (and understood) at Group, Intergroup and Region?” were especially relevant. The basic reason why we do not accept outside contributions is generally understood but is unfortunately rarely discussed

When considering the 1983 deficit in self-support the Committee agreed that a continued drain on the assets of the Fellowship would be undesirable and certainly unwise. Until now we have been able to finance our Services from group contributions and other income without depleting our small prudent reserve.

It was felt by the Committee that we need to do two things:

1. To improve the responsible accountability for money at Group, Intergroup and Region, paying particular attention to the movement of surplus monies so as to improve our cash flow.
2. To raise the overall level of group contributions.

Dealing with the first point which is covered by Questions 3 and 4 - “How can we ensure that responsible accountability of the Fellowship’s money is practiced at Group, Intergroup and Region?” and “Do we require advice for simple accounting matters?”

At Group level, while we agree that all the relevant information is in the new Group Handbook - Treasurer Section - we should like to emphasise the following points:

1. That the job of Treasurer is one of the most important in the Group and that he/she should be a responsible, sober member.
2. That he/she should report on the Group finances at least once a month and should encourage the Group to spend five or ten minutes talking about money.

At Intergroup level we suggest:

1. That it is essential that every Intergroup should have; a bank account secured by at least two signatures.
2. The Intergroup Treasurer should produce a quarterly receipt and payments Statement of Accounts and should include a list of Group contributions. A copy of this should be available for each Group Service Representative at the meeting for consideration to enable a full discussion on money.

At Region, finance may be somewhat different from that of Intergroup, so it is difficult to identify specific procedures, but the basic principles are those that apply to Intergroup.

On Question 5 – “Is the principle of corporate poverty for our Fellowship fully understood?” It was felt that this principle is not fully understood. “Corporate poverty” does not mean having no money “but it does mean”, as Bill W says in “Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age”, “the least possible money to do the job well.” This applies at every level of our Fellowship. A possible solution to improve this understanding is a wider discussion at Group level of The Traditions and The Legacies. The book “Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age” (which is rarely seen on the table) gives most of the answers.

On Question 6 - "What is the understanding of a prudent reserve?"

- a) for Group 1 month's anticipated expenses maximum
- b) for Intergroup 3 month's anticipated expenses maximum
- c) for Region 3 month's anticipated expenses maximum
- d) for The Fellowship (General Service Office) - 2 years' - anticipated expenses - taken from the American experience. This reserve has yet to be attained by us in Great Britain.

On Question 2 - "Has the pamphlet "Money Matters" helped?" The Committee agreed that it had helped in various ways, and had brought attention to the word "Money".

The Committee recommends that the General Service Office sends out to all Groups and Intergroups quarterly details of Group and Intergroup contributions to assist in deliberations on money.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the price of the video cassette should be £15 including V.A.T.

The safeguard of the Fellowship's finances is part of our pledge of responsibility to the still suffering alcoholic. In this respect we feel that the work of this Committee has been but a beginning.

### COMMITTEE NO. 3 "HOSPITAL SERVICES"

Throughout the discussions of the Hospital Services Committee there was a strong feeling that teamwork, patience and perseverance are the keywords and that by following the Guidelines and communicating with local PI/CPC Committees most problems can be avoided or overcome.

#### **1. Review draft Guidelines on Hospitals**

After much discussion the Committee recommends the adoption of the Hospital Guideline as it stands and thanks the Board for their hard work in drafting it.

The contents of the Hospital Bulletins having been incorporated into the Hospital Guidelines and CPC Workbook. The Committee recommends that their use be phased out.

#### **2. What is the experience of ward visiting?**

The Committee strongly recommends that hospital visiting teams be set up at Intergroup level, with an emphasis on teamwork.

#### **3. What is the experience of contacting Accident and Emergency (Casualty) Departments of General Hospitals?**

The Committee recommends that once contact has been made it must be consistently followed up. Experience suggests that Public Information talks to hospital staff create a climate of opinion favourable to AA that makes liaison easier.

#### **4. What response, if any has been experienced from Medical Social Workers?**

The experience of the Committee is that where AA has contacted Medical Social Work departments in hospitals the response has largely been good.

The Committee therefore recommends that local PI/CPC Committees contact the Medical Social Work department of each hospital and that this contact be followed up by the hospital liaison team.

5. What is the experience of contacts and distribution of AA literature in General Hospitals?

Where contact has been made properly by local PI/CPC Committees the response has been good. Problems experienced have usually been caused by a lack of continuity on the part of AA. Therefore the Committee again recommends the setting up of hospital liaison teams co-ordinated by the Intergroup Hospital Liaison Officer.

The Committee recommend that the General Service Board present to the Twentieth Service Conference a literature pack for use in hospital service work.

Good results have been obtained by donating copies of the Big Book to hospital libraries and by placing copies of "Share" and "Roundabout" in waiting rooms , after removing personal telephone numbers and addresses.

6. What recommendations can be made to improve communications between hospital sponsors and PI/CPCs?

Few problems are experienced when Hospital Liaison Officers are part of the local PI/CPC Committee as recommended in the Hospital Guideline.

Workshops on Service have also made a big contribution to improved communications.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION: What recommendations can the Committee make concerning the problem of numbers of drug addicts sent by hospitals and clinics attending closed AA meetings?

This problem can only be solved at Group level by reference to the Preamble, Traditions 1 and 5 and the pamphlet "Problems Other than Alcohol" and the circular from the General Service Office March 1982.

The Committee welcomes the video and feels that it will enhance our hospital service work.

In conclusion experience shows that where local PI/CPC Hospital Liaison and Prison Committees work as a team, then few problems occur.

Finally, the Committee felt that being able to devote its attentions solely to Hospital Services was a useful step forward.

**COMMITTEE NO. 4**

**"PRISON & PROBATION SERVICES"**

The Committee was pleased to welcome Harry H from Belgium to share his experience.

#### Awareness of Prison Work

Although the Fellowship as a whole was aware of the importance of prison sponsorship only a small number were willing to be involved and consequently the need for continuity is not widely appreciated. It was considered that these problems should be brought to the attention of Intergroups and Regions more often.

#### AA Service to Prisons

The experience of finding sponsors varied considerably from area to area and often long distances had to be travelled because more local AA's were unwilling to serve. Occasional visits by un-vetted members is not allowed in some prisons - Governors are the final arbiters, and conditions for meetings are wholly dependent on them. Many areas felt a local Newsletter would be impossible to produce, and information from all areas could perhaps be handled by the General Service Office. After some discussion the Committee recommended that:

“Information of prison work and the activities of those groups be more prominently featured in AA News by the provision of that information by Regional and Intergroup Prison Liaison Officers.”

#### The Meetings

All prisons had access to AA literature, but methods of payment varied. In some cases the Home Office, and in others it was the Intergroup's responsibility. Copies of Share and Roundabout were taken into many prisons although some had requested current copies. In Belgium literature is sent to individuals by AA correspondents. In Britain the Big Book is in many libraries and in some institutions suitable pamphlets have been pinned on notice boards. Continuity of sponsors would ensure up to date magazines. The general impression of the Committee was that in many instances women going into men's prisons had done a fine job but there was far less experience of men going into women's prisons, but that, too, was satisfactory. The video should now be considered part of literature and the Committee recommended that :

Prison Liaison Officers be strongly advised to use it in all prisons and penal institutions.

#### Relationship with Prison Governors and Staff

There was some discussion about who should liaise with the Governors and staff and ideally it was thought that the principal sponsor should do this. In some areas one person would deal with several prisons but the Committee was aware of the greater risk this involved if the person was not available. A problem with a Borstal which had its own counsellors on alcoholism was mentioned which caused conflict. One area arranged annual meetings with Prison Officers, Padres etc., and this was helpful in ensuring good relations and continuity. Prison Medical Officers should not be neglected as useful and valuable allies.

#### Relationship with Probation Services

Relationships with the Probation Services in prisons was good but discussions revealed that contact with the service outside was poor and response was disappointing. Good progress has been made in many areas, and the General Service Board members responsible are now making great efforts to make the Probation Service in England and Wales and the Social Services Group in Scotland aware of how we can help.

Suggestions were made of trying to make contact through Probation Officers Conferences and other meetings. In some areas Public Information deal with this service, in others Prison Liaison Officers, and in two areas Probation Liaison Officers have been appointed. Persistence seems to be the vital word in making contact, and perhaps contact with Trainee Probation Officers would be useful.

#### AA Aftercare

There was general agreement on helping released prisoners. The important factors were the meeting of prisoners on their release and ensuring a contact at their destination. One area arranged for a "Just for Today" card to be given to the prisoner on release with a contact telephone number written on it - an idea that was warmly received by the Committee. Anonymity must be considered when giving telephone numbers. At this point perhaps ex-prisoners could be involved.

### **COMMITTEE NO. 5**

### **"PI - CPC"**

The Committee welcomed Horst of Hamburg.

After it emerged that both PI and CPC activities were generally being covered by one service group, the Committee agreed on the following:

1. Any concerted attempt at contacting/informing members of the Professional Community should come under CPC. This includes doctors, nurses, magistrates, social workers, police, teachers and other professionals. Arranging talks with these groups and generally making AA known to them is included here. Co-operation with professionals in whatever capacity, within our Traditions, is service activity for CPC groups.
2. The following come under the heading of Public Information:- public service announcements on TV and radio, hospital broadcasts, listings of meetings in the press, newspaper and magazine articles, service numbers in the local telephone directories, posters, open AA meetings.
3. Review and re-write the letter dated 1980 – "Have you a PI-CPC Committee in your town?"  
After some discussion the Committee suggested that the letter be withdrawn. It was felt that it may be superseded by recommendations the Committee are making.
4. Review the PI-CPC Bulletins No. 1 "Public Information and CO-operation with the Professional Community" and No. 3 "How do we contact the Professional Community?".

The Committee recommended Bulletin No. 1 be amended as follows:

'How do we give an AA talk?' We suggest that a third member is taken along to talks as an observer to gain experience of this service.

'What should we take with us?' The following should be included: i) free literature ii) telephone service number iii) relevant literature. Where facilities permit and where it is considered

appropriate the portable display unit or video could be used.

Bulletin No. 3. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the Bulletin in its present form.

5. There is in existence one large display unit which cost £900. The Committee would like to see more portable display units made of lighter material and at a greatly reduced unit cost so that they could be purchased by Inter-groups at a realistic price.

6. There was general agreement that the tabletop display units are proving useful. They do require regular maintenance when on display. The Committee recommended the clarity of lettering be improved - reversed out printing and the size of the letters make it difficult to read. Our displays should be simple and clear. It was also suggested the space at the bottom of the unit is too small.

7. What other aids to PI-CPC work are required? The Committee put forward the following points :

- a) More member participation
- b) the use of headed notepaper
- c) more basic literature in Braille, ie pamphlets
- d) larger print in our PI literature avoiding the sanserif typeface which is difficult to read
- e) a PI-CPC edition of Share

The Share representative requested articles from the Committee members between 200 -500 words to be sent in by 1st June. The Committee members agreed.

8. The Committee recommended that a first draft Guideline be produced for the 1985 Conference. It was suggested that paragraphs covering the following points are included:

- a) structure
- b) carrying the message to the general public
- c) carrying the message to the professional
- d) a general guideline
- e) unity
- f) length of sobriety and regular attendance at AA meetings of those involved
- g) our public image
- h) the need for internal and external communications

With the recommendation of a Guideline for PI-CPC work the Committee felt there was no need for a composite bulletin/ leaflet for AA members.

The Committee recommended the revision of "If You Are A Professional" as it felt that it was out of date. The Committee suggest that the following passage be deleted:

"3) Supplying leads to hospital or convalescent care and making emergency help for destitute alcoholics available." It was further suggested it be reduced in length and simplified with larger lettering for easy reading.

We find PI-CPC activities are usually performed together by the same committee or service group meeting regularly. In some cases there is one committee in each area, in others several



committees function under the aegis of the Intergroup. The Hospital Liaison Officer should be a member of that committee.

## **COMMITTEE NO. 6**

## **“STRUCTURE & SERVICES”**

### **1. 1983 General Service Board Report on Conventions**

Reaction to the Report has been positive. It was felt:

- (a) That no further action should be taken concerning an additional (or all England) national Convention.
- (b) Anxiety was expressed concerning the proliferation of Mini-Conventions and the overcrowding of the calendar. There are major differences in the experiences of those representing metropolitan and rural areas. On the whole the Committee feels that an amalgamation of Intergroup Mini-Conventions into Regional ones would be beneficial. There is no enthusiasm, however, at grass roots level for dispensing with local Minis at present and most seem to be going satisfactorily.

However, the importance of remembering our primary purpose is paramount, and attention is drawn to the last paragraph of the General Service Board Report .

(c) A letter from the General Service Office of AA in Ireland, distributed to all their groups and Conference delegates, was read. (See Appendix)

The Committee recommends that this should be studied by the General Service Board for their comments and recommendations.

### **2 General Service Board Report on Telephone Services**

- a) The Committee agreed that the General Service Report on telephone services should be widely circulated throughout the Fellowship.
- b) It was recommended that a telephone service Workshop should be included among Workshops at all national Conventions, and at other times as often as possible, to keep abreast of the rapid technical advances now taking place.
- c) A further recommendation was that local telephone supervisors should be approached for an opportunity to explain the importance of the AA telephone service to operators on local exchanges. Where this had occurred in one Region, the benefits had been considerable.

#### **Addendum**

A question arose concerning the function of telephone contacts in “Where to Find”. At national level the recommendation is that they should be prepared to take full responsibility as contacts, with all that this implies, and delegate where necessary.

### **3. Report from the General Service Board on Clubs and Day Centres**

- a) The Committee strongly welcomed the Report and makes the following recommendations for further strengthening its message:

- i Page 1 , Paragraph 4. Underline the quotation “We should do one thing well rather than many things to which we are not called”.
- ii. Page 1, Paragraph 4. Add to end of paragraph “The difference between the theory and the practice has proved calamitous” .
- iii Page 1, Paragraph 6, Line 1. Delete most
- iv Page 1, Paragraph 6. Change the last sentence to “As these Clubs form no part of our Fellowship, the General Service Office does not accept any responsibility for them, nor does it accept contributions from them”.
- v Page 2, Paragraph 1, Lines 1 and 3. Spell “Group” with a capital G and underline.
- vi Page 2, Paragraph 5. paragraph. Underline the whole paragraph
- vii Page 2, Paragraph 6, Line 1. Add quotation marks to “ AA Clubs” .
- viii Page 2, Paragraph 6,. Line 3. After “experiences”“ add “(recorded at GSO)”.
- ix Page 2, Paragraph 6 Line 3. Delete comma (after consequences).
- x Page 2, Paragraph 6, Line 5. Delete “AA”.
- xi Page 2, Paragraph 7, Line 1. Delete “AA”

(b) It is recommended that the Report be included in the Conference Report and in the new Group Handbook.

(c) The experiences shared by various members of the Committee of such Clubs or Day Centres in this country confirmed, without exception, the findings of the Report.

#### **4. The Elderly, Hard of Hearing and Housebound Members**

Let us remember that this is a sharing and caring programme .

- a) The importance of making ourselves aware of those in need was stressed, whether members are housebound because of illness, disability or. their circumstances ( e. g. single parent families and those suffering from agoraphobia). One Region reported the use of a notice board to notify members of those who might be in need of support or transport.
- b) It is recommended that appropriate international symbols for disabilities (wheelchair or ear) be inserted in the national “Where to Find” to indicate where these facilities are available.
- c) It was suggested that housebound members might feel greater involvement if asked to participate in telephone service work, passing Twelfth Step calls on to the more mobile members. Meetings can be arranged in the homes of the housebound, or even in a hospital. In one case this led to a new AA hospital group being formed.
- d) Some older members are worried about travelling at night, and a special effort should

- be made to ensure them a safe return home.
- e) Lost contacts have sometimes been re-established with the help of the Social Services and this channel could possibly be utilised more often to advantage.
  - f) In the case of the hard of hearing, it should be ensured that the sufferer is placed with a clear view of the speaker, and the speaker should speak clearly and out into the room.
  - g) In some areas members have learned sign language to communicate with the totally deaf.

## 5 Participation in Service

The Committee found the degree of participation in service at group level to be almost universally unsatisfactory; "About 10% of the members do about 80% of the work".

It was better at Intergroup level and fairly satisfactory at Region, as greater experience seems to lead to greater commitment.

It was suggested that more effort be directed into:

- i Actively sponsoring new members into service always remembering that even the simplest tasks - cleaning the ashtrays, washing the cups - can be the beginning of service. ii Making more use of the pamphlet "Growing into Service".
- iii Group, Intergroup and Regional Conscience meetings.
- iv Workshops
- v Taking members as visitors to Intergroup, Regional and local service committee meetings.

## 6. The Role of Regions

The role of Regions is now fairly clearly established and in some the sequence of Intergroup and Regional meetings is arranged to ensure a logical flow of information, and their respective responsibilities have been clarified.

The facility with which General Service Board members can communicate with a few Regional Liaison officers instead of a large number of Intergroup Liaison Officers is appreciated, and further experience should remove any difficulties which still remain.

It was noted, however, that more work needs to be done at group level to improve the understanding of the role of Regions.

## 7. Experience of National and International Conferences on Alcoholism

The Committee had very little experience of National and International Conferences on Alcoholism organised by other agencies. It was felt that our role should be mainly that of observers or visitors, but when given the opportunity to take part, we should do so on the clear understanding that our co-operation did not imply any kind of affiliation. If the Traditions (especially 6, 10 and 11) were strictly followed no harm could, ensue and other agencies were usually very understanding of our position.

## 8. Appointment of paid full-time Public Information Officer

It was strongly felt that the needs and the objectives of AA in Great Britain would not be better served by the appointment of a full or part-time paid Public Information Officer; that public information is already being very well handled at all levels with the assistance of the Board Member and General Service Office staff, and it should be left on that basis for the foreseeable future.

The belief that a professional approach made at high level would yield results not obtainable by our existing methods was not supported by experience.

### APPENDIX I. COMMITTEE 6.

#### THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS OF IRELAND

26 ESSEX QUAY DUBLIN 8.  
GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE  
PHONES: 7748091/714050

To: Each Conference Delegate Secretary , Each A.A. Group.

Dear Delegate/Secretary.

It was brought to the attention of the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland at its meeting held on 4th February 1984 that members of the Bundoran Group proposed to hold an Irish/Scottish A.A. Gathering in Bundoran from 23rd to 25th March 1984.

Ulster Intergroup, as per their minutes, invited all Groups in Ulster who wanted to host a mini-convention to submit their request and dates through their Area Committee and then to Intergroup, in 1983.

Bundoran did not make an application and the five mini-conventions were allocated to those who had applied.

It was only on 28th January 1984 that the Chairman of Donegal Area Committee received a request from Bundoran Group to hold the 5th Irish/Scottish Gathering on 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> March 1984. Notices had already been printed, even though no application had been received from them, and it would not have been possible to grant their request in 1984 if Intergroup was to stand by Conference recommendation.

In this regard the Board has decided to bring to the notice of all A.A. Groups in Ireland, as a matter of urgency in view of the time factor, the following matters:

At the Annual Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland held in March 1982 it was the unanimous recommendation of Conference that there would be a limit of five mini-conventions per Province each year and that the Provincial Intergroups would decide where and when these were to be held.

The Board, therefore as the "Chief Service Arm of Conference", regrettably finds itself in the position of feeling obliged, for the welfare of the Fellowship and in the interests of Unity, to advise all Groups in Ireland that the holding of this mini-convention does not have the approval

of Donegal Area Committee. Ulster Intergroup or All-Ireland Conference. In fact, it would be in direct conflict with Conference recommendation in March 1982.

We should appreciate it if you would bring this letter to the notice of all members of your group at your next meeting.

Yours Sincerely in A.A.,

Denis O'Donovan ( Trustee ); Stanley Gillespie (Trustee ); Michael Cullen ( Trustee) George Stapleton (Trustee ).

## GSB REPORT ON CLUBS AND DAY CENTRES

Owning, leasing and managing property forms no part of our programme of recovery, so technically there is no such thing as an AA Club or Day Centre .

Tradition 4 says "With respect to its own affairs, each AA group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighbouring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no groups, intergroup or regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect AA as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount".

In Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age (Pages 103/104) Bill W tells us about the formation of the first "AA Club" and its subsequent failure. Bill reminds us that under Tradition 4 an AA group had exercised its right to be wrong. It had however been humbly willing to apply the lessons it had learned.

As a Fellowship we must be willing to learn the lessons of those who have gone before us, always reminding ourselves that "Each group has but one primary purpose -to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers". "We should do one thing well rather than many things to which we are not called". The difference between the theory and the practice has proved calamitous. Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, page 106).

Finance is normally the biggest problem. People want the facilities, but frequently forget such costs as rent, rates, lighting, heating, cooking, salaries and maintenance. It is a fact of life that, by law, a lease must be signed by an individual and not by an organisation or fellowship. In the past some of these unfortunate, but well meaning, signatories have been landed with huge debts. In many cases members have had to step in and pay up quite large sums of money.

To avoid these problems of money, property and prestige, groups have learnt the lessons of our joint experience and left the running of Day Centres and Clubs etc., to separate entities well outside the Fellowship of AA. As these Clubs form no part of our Fellowship the General Service Office does not accept any responsibility for them, nor does it accept contributions from them.

From our beginnings the Group has been at the centre of AA in carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. It is the Group where AA's recover, learn to live together in unity and

grow spiritually through service. It is the place where we live and work together.

When however a number of groups join together in hiring premises for their meetings, experience has shown that several basic principles should be remembered in order to preserve each group's autonomy and unity.

Each group is responsible for its own running - for example: Election of Officers, Rent, Preparation of tea and coffee and the cleanliness of the meeting room.

Use of premises which are available during the day for AA members to provide refreshments facilities for themselves, can easily lead into an attempt to run a Day Centre. Once again this is outside our 'primary purpose' and can lead to all the problems aforementioned.

Telephone Service Guidelines .No. 7 points out the advisability of maintaining a telephone service office in premises which are separate from other AA activity.

“AA Clubs” and Day Centres have been tried in Great Britain and without exception, ALL HAVE FAILED, some with disastrous consequences for individual members. In view of these experiences, (recorded at GSO), and with an honest and realistic interpretation of our Twelve Traditions we recommend THAT CLUBS AND DAY CENTRES FORM NO PART OF OUR FELLOWSHIP IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Consequently, Guidelines for Clubs and Day Centres are therefore not needed in our Fellowship in Great Britain.

## **WORKSHOP**

## **“THE TWELVE STEPS”**

Neil O'D South West Scotland

“AA' s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practised as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole. “

This paragraph taken from the Foreword in the book “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” means a lot to me. In effect it says to me, here's what you do and what the result will be.

On first being introduced to AA I was convinced that if I could put the cork on the bottle, the battle was won, and I would automatically settle down to successful living. Staying away from the first drink did put the cork on the bottle, but there was always a nagging fear that it would come off again. It reminds us in our Big Book that an alcoholic cannot fight alcohol and that is exactly what I was doing. Out of the sheer fear of lifting the first drink I turned to the AA suggested programme of recovery in the form of the Twelve Steps. Now I was ready to fully concede to my innermost self that I was an alcoholic and as the Big Book says “This is the first step in recovery.” So to Step 1 “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.” This Step now became meaningful for me, more so when little by little I began to realise how much the illness of alcoholism had destroyed me as a whole person and the question I began asking myself then was , what now?

Step 2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. This I did and thank God, one day at a time, it has been my experience to be restored to the sanity that is the opposite of the insanity that precedes the first drink. It was as simple as that for me.

The Third Step was difficult for me but with the help of a sponsor and the 12 x 12 I did make the decision asked for in this Step and I have never regretted it; it has been a source of strength, a faith and from my own personal experiences especially when things were not going so good I know that God does care for me. The more I became willing to depend upon a Higher Power the more independent I became. I had a good feeling within me, a feeling that I was entering into a new way of life. I was reborn.

Step 4 was good for me in that not only did I have the courage to put down on paper all the wrongs I had done but also many of the things that bothered me, and ask myself why? Being honest with myself and not blaming others helped me to do something constructive about many of my hang-ups. Not being able to blame booze for those faults upset me a little, but I began to realise that this for me was the beginning of clearing away the wreckage of the past. I thought at that time, hell, no wonder I drank the way I did, with a mind and actions like mine, escape in some form was a necessity. I began to know myself for what I really was, and I didn't like it.

Step 5 I took with a Jesuit Father and he was neither shocked nor angry. He understood and helped me to feel a wee bit better about being me. At that time this Step did not give me an immediate good feeling, instead it has been more a looking back and saying to myself, I did it. Thank God, it was a great burden to get rid of and joy to know that I could do something about the not so nice things that were part of me.

Steps 6 and 7. Yes, I was willing and entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character and I did humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings. This for me did not work as I thought it would. I left it all to God and waited on actions, reactions, attitudes and stinking thinking disappearing. They didn't. I use the term "Co-operate with God" this way I put a bit of effort in myself and don't wait for miracles to happen. These two Steps, especially Step 7 are principles that I have to often remind myself of. It has not been instant change for me, more like a carpenter fashioning something out of wood and sandpaper. It takes time. In these Steps I sincerely feel, if I need God, then He also needs me, sometimes if only for me to stand aside. If that sounds egotistical or has a lack of humility as I understand it, all I can say is that I know God knows this is not so. We can be a very effective team, but He's the captain OK!

Steps 8 and 9. Made a list. I didn't realise until tonight that I have never done this. I did mentally note some of the people I had harmed and I did as suggested in Step 9. Making those amends was not too difficult for me but now that I think of it, maybe I left out the difficult ones. I really thought I had done as suggested, but putting this Presentation together is beginning to bring to my attention that I have not been as fearless and thorough as I would have liked to think.

Must do as suggested in Steps 8 and 9.

Step 10. Continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. I do this regularly but the trouble is there are times when I am wrong and don't know it. Studying this Step in the 12 x 12 was an education for me. In the first paragraph it says 'Can we stay sober, keep in emotional balance and live to good purpose under all conditions?' Emotional

balance - that's not part of a Scot with an Irish background - it was like being asked to change the laws of nature. An AA friend reminded me of a Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Alexis Carroll, who said "Prayer to me is like radium, a self-energating force, too often have I seen prayer work, where all the miracles of modern medicine have failed. Prayer would appear to be the only agency that can change the very laws of nature." Yes, prayer is powerful and I use prayer to help me experience emotional balance. This Step also brought new words into my life, words like courtesy, kindness, love, self-restraint and tolerance. It warned me about selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. I was now beginning to put a programme together for myself, this was something different. I was now not only talking differently, I was acting differently, and while ever vigilant against the first drink in any shape or form the name of the game became for me; change as a person, and this new person could honestly say he neither needed nor wanted to drink.

Step 11. Prayer and Meditation. It sounds a tall order but I have found it to be more simple than I first imagined. I read the 24 hour plan in the Big Book and here I get directions not only on how to live my life, but also what to ask God for in prayer. We in AA are indeed fortunate that we make so much use of the Serenity Prayer and this prayer or sometimes simply God Help Me has eased me out of many tricky situations.

In this Step I am reminded that one of the fruits of meditation is emotional balance and as my friends in AA say the Twelve Steps are like a set of spanners, they fit any nut that comes along.

Most of my meditation is done walking in the country or along the river bank. I usually return from these walk refreshed not only mentally but also physically, this exercise is a very important part of my programme and is one of the highlights of my new way of life.

Step 12. For me this was getting involved in AA, going to meetings regularly, sharing freely what I have been freely given and carrying the AA message to alcoholics. Accepting problems as part of life, meeting my obligations and accepting my responsibilities. Live and let live, never forgetting that all human beings are important. Today I have self dignity and I am enjoying it; I am eating, sleeping and behaving more naturally than at any time in my adult life. I have freedom of choice today and this is helping me to mature. Today I am enjoying working at sobriety.

I would like to close by reading an extract from the Big Book:

"The last fifteen years of my life have been rich and meaningful. I have had my share of problems, heartaches and disappointments, because that is life, but also I have known a great deal of joy, and a peace that is the handmaiden of an inner freedom. I have a wealth of friends and, with my AA friends, an unusual quality of fellowship. For, to these people, I am truly related. First through mutual pain and despair, and later through mutual objectives and new-found faith and hope. And, as the years go by, working together, sharing our experiences with one another, and also sharing a mutual trust, understanding and love - without strings, without obligation - we acquire relationships that are unique and priceless.

There is no more "aloneness" with that awful ache, so deep in the heart of every alcoholic that nothing before could ever reach it. That ache is gone and never need return again.

Now there is a sense of belonging, of being wanted and needed and loved. In return for a bottle



and a hangover, we have been given the Keys of the Kingdom. “

## **WORKSHOP**

## **“THE TWELVE TRADITIONS”**

John T South East Region

My name is John. I am an alcoholic and my life is still unmanageable when I try to run it. Albeit I am grateful to you all for affording me the opportunity, indeed privilege, to share my experiences in relation to our Twelve Traditions, the vastness of this AA Workshops' subject matter leaves me with the question - where do I begin?

This Workshop is not, of course, a platform for sentimental narration, but is the very stuff of life in contrast to the ever present fear, the hideous loneliness, the despair, the threat of permanent insanity and the proximity of death when I look back at what I was like.

My very entree into AA was grasped with a willingness to go to any lengths some eight years after the first meeting to which I was taken. You see, Tradition Three was there for me, a far from pure alcoholic. About six months on and dry, there was considerable disquiet within my mind and heart. Yes, I had started to read our book "Alcoholics Anonymous" and had made scant excursions into the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions". Most importantly I was getting to meetings, but my conscience was becoming increasingly more active. This is not surprising in view of the fact that I was not drinking, that my mind was responding to the call for openness, and thus the principle of contempt prior to investigation was being dissipated at a thankfully quick rate.

As a nett result of listening to my fellow alcoholics, I concluded that there was far more quality in the majority of their lives than in my own. What was I going to do about it? I got a sponsor. A man who not only talked of Steps and Traditions but lived them; a man who had walked this way before me. He is still my sponsor today.

Within a matter of days I had quit the risk business to embark upon a programme for living; I wanted to stay stopped and enhance my life with quality; that is not to say a material awakening, but one of spiritual essence.

It must be obvious to you that I do not find it easy to share my experiences on Traditions as though they were in seclusion, and yet their very nature in guiding the continuity of this Fellowship's development permits me to develop and to be in this room tonight. From the experiences which led to their first formulation and publication in 1946 to their adoption in July 1950, they have been right up until this moment, at the very heart of unity which, together with their many other positive benefits, have ensured the essential life of Alcoholics Anonymous. Where indeed would I be without these vital principles? I would place myself in jeopardy if I were to wittingly break any one of the Twelve Traditions. Like the Twelve Steps I hold them to be absolutely indispensable to me.

Consequential to quite an amount of study of our Traditions in the order they are written, I am able to see the solid threads of unity and anonymity permeating them all. The nature of our spiritual foundation encourages me to grow, or to put it factually, make spiritual progress. I do

not see a spiritual side to the programme of recovery, but a spiritual programme. The Traditions can only enrich my life by reinforcing the humility needed to join AA via Tradition Three. They precipitate compassion, sacrifice, honesty, harmony, trust, hope, faith and love within our common welfare; again they engender these positive assets in the Fifth Tradition when I am allowed to carry AA's message into a prison, a probation office, a hospital, via a Twelfth Step call for help, or within the spheres of public information and co-operation with the professional community.

The Fourth, Sixth and Tenth Traditions suggest to me the wisdom of not trying to be all things to all men if I want this Fellowship to stay whole. One simple example of this was reflected in the sadness I felt when first reading about the Washingtonians and their tragic demise; alcoholics who lost their way by expressing opinions and taking sides on issues outside their society. It augurs well for me to remember this when talking to student nurses, doctors or any member of the professional community.

I am shown the qualities of willingness and diligent application in all our Traditions. Perhaps the Seventh as much as the others poses the question "Am I responsible?" when the pot is passed to me. Do I really give? Do I? One often hears the words "Keep it simple". Other than applying this phrase to my way of life, what greater simplicity is there than that in the principle of corporate poverty, so well ensconced in our Tradition of self-support. I also have to ask myself if I am responsible in playing my part toward our financial independence by example and by willingness to share with my fellow alcoholic if he or she asks for an explanation.

It is our Second Tradition which allows me to be here this weekend as a trusted servant of my group, East Sussex Intergroup and South East Region. This Tradition has helped me enormously in the pursuit of tolerance and patience. In addition, it has enhanced my ability to understand. It would be true to say that I had little comprehension of its aim when first addressing myself to its content. I simply had trust mixed with a vigorous desire to get well mentally and spiritually. I now view the Tradition with comfort, but it is up to me to examine thoroughly the facts, the issues and principles involved whenever God is asked to express Himself in the Group Conscience.

I am frequently reminded of Traditions Eight and Nine when dwelling upon Dr. David Robinson's Report to this Conference last year, with particular reference to the growth of AA in Mexico. However, I do not have to go from our shores to witness the results of their manifestation in our own countries of England, Scotland and Wales. They tell me in basic terms that they are about orderly growth and service, so that the suffering alcoholic and the alcoholic who is yet to be born may have the same chance as I.

The Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions offer me anonymity in proper perspective, the means of forgetting self and realistically placing principles before personalities, and yet do not all our Traditions do just that?

Having shared my experiences with you all, perhaps there is some need for endorsement by telling you that without the help and love of my fellow alcoholics and God in my life, I am nothing.

Thank you for listening to me.



### **FRIDAY 12 APRIL**

The Twentieth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was again held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester. The registration and reception commenced at 4.00p.m. with the distribution of delegates folders and conference material and also providing an ideal opportunity for delegates to get together.

The Conference comprised 78 delegates from 14 Regions, 2 delegates from the Channel Islands, 2 delegates from the English Speaking Intergroup (Europe), 2 delegates from the magazines "Share" and "Roundabout", 21 members of the General Service Board, 9 observers from Europe -including 2 from Ireland, John T. Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and 3 staff members from G.S.O. London and 1 from the Scottish Service Office. Total attendance of 120.

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE**

The first plenary session commenced at 8.30p.m. - the Conference Chairman, John T. (South East Region) calling for the customary moments silence followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions by the General Secretary.

John T., in welcoming all the delegates extended a special welcome to the observers from overseas and presented his keynote address:-

"A multitude of thoughts permeated my mind when travelling home from here last year. My fellow alcoholics at Conference, together with our non-alcoholic friends on the General Service Board had given me much to think about, but more essentially to carry out.

During the course of my reflections, two particular thoughts kept recurring, in fact they were nagging at me. The first came right out of Committee No. 6, indeed its report with reference to participation in service when it was stated that at group level, about 10% of the members do about 80% of the work. The second recurring thought was that we were not a self-supporting Fellowship, indeed our financial situation had deteriorated. And yet, how frequently do I hear the word "gratitude" mentioned in A.A. meetings, whether they be at group, intergroup, regional assemblies, mini conventions or national conventions? I think it would be fair to say time and time and time again. The question I found impossible to escape was "Do I put that gratitude into action?" or, if you like, "How grateful am I?"

I remember during my first six months in our Fellowship that I was unable to utter the words "I am grateful" for the simple reason that I could not say them from my heart. Yes, I was relieved. Yes, I had a deep sense of appreciation, but gratitude was something else beyond relief or appreciation. It came to me, that other ingredient, when I found a sponsor and commenced to read and study the 1st Step and 1st Tradition. It gradually filtered through to me that "gratitude", in its complete sense, encompassed a willing accepted commitment. I can recall vividly the moments when I entered the novitiate of understanding. I was almost led by the hand via two notes of caution. The first was in the 1st Step when in the penultimate paragraph I read "Who wants to sacrifice time and energy in trying to carry A.A. 's message to the next sufferer? No,

the average alcoholic, self-centred in the extreme, doesn't care for this prospect - unless he has to do these things in order to stay alive himself." And then in the fifth paragraph of our 1st Tradition I am told that I cannot keep this priceless gift unless I give it away. Hence, self-containment is but synonymous with sterility .

The 12th Step indicates so intelligibly the value of gratitude in action. Yes, I am here tonight to stay sober because unless I do, I am of no use to any other human being. Thus, whilst practicing prudent self-love, let us discover together how best we can continue to pass on this beautiful and life-giving gift of sobriety.

This I feel we can do in all of our six committees, because each one asks all of us in this room tonight "How best can I serve in order to carry A.A.'s message of recovery?". Further, if I consider in depth our pledge of responsibility, and I do feel that it does bear repeating "I am responsible when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible", I will see that this pledge is applicable to all of our 6 committees and just as importantly to the responsibility of safeguarding our 12 Traditions.

Perhaps most, if not all of us are wondering what this weekend will bring forth. We have a fascinating but exacting Workshop ahead of us on Saturday evening, and a lot of industrious effort to be given by all of us during the hours prior to that meeting. I find it of inestimable value to me prior to any committee meeting or Workshop to think of the alcoholic who still suffers, the alcoholic who is yet to take a drink and indeed the alcoholic who is yet to be born. Not difficult to think about - I have been there. And who got me out of there? God and my fellow alcoholics who put gratitude into action. It is equally important for me prior to these meetings to make sure that I have indeed turned my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand him. Further to this, the constant use of the 11th step permits me to try a little harder in the right direction.

We have evidence within our A.A. Conference folders of a lot of hard work carried out during the past year by our General Service Board, General Secretary and General Service Office. All indeed trusted servants, and for my own part a very sincere thank you.

I believe that it will auger well for this Conference if we try hard at balance when considering any request for further literature or guidelines from our General Service Board. I find that there is a whole wealth already at our disposal. We have our own Big Book "Alcoholics Anonymous", "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age", "As Bill Sees It", "Came to Believe", "Living Sober", "Dr. Bob and The Good Old Timers", the A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts, the A.A. Service Handbook for Great Britain, the C.P.C. Workbook, ten guidelines and a whole host of pamphlets, plus a P.I. workbook, all of them ours to read, study and, essentially, use.

It is not my intention to prolong this keynote address very much further. It is my hope and sincere wish that it is God's will that we have a peaceful, hard working, happy and fruitful A.A. Conference. This should present no great problem to us if we put Gratitude into Action, bearing in mind that gratitude comes from love, and as a fellow human being once said of love in its true sense that it is patient and kind; it is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude; it does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. And if I look at love within our Steps and Traditions, it does indeed endure all things.

Again, the outcome of this Conference does not rest with us any more than in previous years; it rests with God.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Jim H., the Chairman of the General Service Board, after welcoming all delegates and friends from Europe, presented the Annual Report of the General Service Board for 1984. In addressing the assembly he said that following the 1984 General Service Conference, the consolidation of work had been considerable. The video, "A.A. Works - One Day at a Time" had been well received and was proving an asset for Public Information purposes. A.A. Groups throughout the U.K. had expressed an appreciative response on receiving the Group Handbook and although the expense had been considerable, its success proved its worth. The Third European Service Meeting, held during March of this year in Frankfurt was attended by two members of the General Service Board and a report of the meeting would be given by Colin N. later. The Chairman Jim H. and Board member Raymond McC. went to the Eighth World Service Meeting held in New York in October of 1984, returning with much food for thought from their experiences.

Jim spoke of the two Regional Forums held during 1984, one in the North East Region and the other in the North West, both proving valuable in the liaison with the General Secretary and Board members with special A.A. service responsibilities. Special mention was made of the Prison Services; a lot of hard work had been put into it and regionalisation had been a tremendous help. There was now an A.A. Group functioning at Broadmoor which had been "no mean feat" to achieve.

Jim then asked Conference to confirm the appointment of three new members to the General Service Board; Georgia G. (South East Region), Robert C. (Wales & Borders Region) and Peter M. (Midlands Region). He then asked Colin H. (Hon. Treasurer to the General Service Board) to present the Financial Report for 1984.

Colin started by saying that 1984 had been a satisfactory year and after the previous years deficit of £24,000 things were starting to go the right way. During the year £15,000 had been spent on producing the Video, £5,000 on essential repairs to 11 Redcliffe Gardens and a further £5,000 in the production of the Group Handbook. There had been much discussion about money following the 1983 Financial Report resulting in a 30% increase in direct contributions and he wished to express gratitude to all Groups on behalf of the General Service Board. Following a detailed account of each item, the Financial Report was discussed at length. The Share Representative indicated that in future, the magazine would be costed in greater detail, including the clerical support of the G.S.O. staff and the general administration costs. Following a question on the sale of the video, Colin stated that to date, 400 copies had been sold for a return of £6,000.

The General Service Board Report for 1984 was then approved by Conference.

## **EIGHTH WORLD SERVICE MEETING - 22ND TO 23RD OCTOBER 1984**

Raymond McC. attended the 8th World Service Meeting and presented the following account to Conference.

"Five days were filled with hard work and continuous sharing on the theme "The World Service Meeting takes its Inventory". There were 38 delegates representing 24 countries gathered in the

Roosevelt Hotel on Madison Avenue in the heart of “The Big Apple”. The workload was crammed into a timetable that makes Conference appear like a holiday!

During the whole proceedings, simultaneous English/Spanish translations took place. The delegates from Europe used English; but just like any other meeting of the Fellowship the main “language” was the one of the heart. The “common bond” was an experience in itself. Having people from every corner of the globe sharing emotionally, spiritually and physically brought a new awareness of the word “Fellowship”.

The official opening of the Meeting took place on the Sunday afternoon with registration and a reception, followed immediately by the video from the U.K. It was received with enthusiasm and was given a special mention by the U.S./Canada Chairman of the Board. Other English speaking countries like South Africa and New Zealand showed an active interest. After a “traditional” American dinner, there was an open A.A. meeting with the names of the speakers being drawn from a hat and each being allowed to share for two minutes.

The days that followed were filled with Committee meetings, reports, service highlights, Workshops, presentations, radio and T.V. spots, reports-back, sharing sessions - and a little bit of eating and sleeping!

The whole proceedings on the Monday morning were started by the reading of the short-form of the 12 Concepts - the key to service. Immensely important because they are a direct legacy of Bill W., being written by him personally.

The General Secretary of the General Service Office said that the quality and presentation of the abundant literature on display was clear physical evidence that the World Service Meeting is working. He went on to say that the Fellowship really had its beginnings in Switzerland, Roland H., who had sought help from Carl Jung in Zurich, was eventually told by the latter that his illness was beyond reach of Jung’s science and that he gave no hope for recovery; none that Jung knew of, except that some people had recovered by having a transforming experience of the spirit. This advice eventually came down to Bill W. via Sam Shoemaker and Ebby. In the Fellowship we are told to “Carry the Message” - what message? The message is to have a “transforming experience of the Spirit”.

The World Service Meeting showed its own maturity and responsibility by, first of all, admitting there are “missing links” in so far as many countries cannot be represented because of certain factors, one of them being lack of money, and secondly by deciding not to sponsor these countries in a monetary fashion, but allowing them to mature themselves. As has been proved in A.A., money is not the answer to all problems - growth is autonomous.

The General Service Board is responsible to Conference for the Copyright of A.A. literature. They prevent unauthorised literature which could be in competition with our own, and as a result they protect the revenue from this literature which is needed by the Fellowship. They also stop our literature being used in a tasteless manner. The Board will grant permission to print if our literature is printed word for word. Translations also come under copyright and permission will only be given if the integrity of the original message remains unaltered.

The General Service Office in New York houses the Archives Office. This office is the custodian of A.A. experience in America. The philosophy there is “that we must not forget

where we came from.” It must be of interest to many of you that there are Guidelines on Archives.

One of the main workshops was “Communication between Countries”. It was stressed that because every country was not yet able to attend the World Service Meeting, that the Zonal and European Meetings were most important for passing the experiences of the World Service Meeting on to as many countries as possible.

The reports of the various Committees and Workshops are contained in the following pages. What has to be remembered is that the World Service Meeting is a two-way sharing. Because of our Service Structure in the U.K., we can contribute much to the Meeting. What we have gleaned from the Meeting in the past are such things as:- Regionalisation, our handbooks on P.I. and C.P.C. - from which has arisen our “major growth industry” - the European Information Centre for European Countries, the European Service Meeting (which the U.K. sponsors just as America sponsors the W.S.M. ) and much of our literature. What have we gained this time? Already mentioned is the Guidelines on Archives. There is also a new Workbook on Correctional Facilities (which incorporates some interesting new guidelines) and shortly will follow a Workbook on Treatment facilities. We have been reminded that the 12 Steps are for recovery, the 12 Traditions for Unity and the 12 Concepts are for Service. Dr. Jack Norris made the point that one of the most effective ways of letting people know that A.A. works is to “Sponsor your Doctor”. There was a lot of discussion on Attraction v Promotion and we must never forget that the Fellowship is NOT a secret society - “Alcoholics Anonymous is not anonymous - but the individual member is”. Once again the World Service Meeting asked us to be selective in our speakers for P.I. Work. The members in this country don’t like to discriminate (not in print! ) but it is imperative that those selected be first class ambassadors of the Fellowship. Bad examples cannot be tolerated.

The World Service Meeting is taken more seriously in some countries than in others. For instance, Mexico have a section in their Service Manual devoted to “World Service Delegates - their function and Responsibilities.”

The spirit of the Eighth World Service Meeting was best exemplified by the final Agenda item, The Serenity Prayer, offered in all languages represented at the meeting: Afrikaans, Finnish, Flemish, French, German, Icelandic, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and English. It was a practical experience for the world wide nature of the Fellowship - and there was hardly a dry-eye in the place.

The Trinidad/Tobago delegates sang a song which was hastily translated into Spanish and was thence sung at every opportunity - in two languages.

The World Service Meeting ended officially on the Thursday evening - but did not really end until late on the Saturday night.

On the Friday morning all the delegates were given a conducted tour of the General Service Office. The Offices, which take in four floors, have been completely refurbished in the past two years and they are something of which the Fellowship can be proud. The delegates were invited to attend the weekly A. A. meeting held in the Board Room of the Offices every Friday morning at 11.00 a.m. That morning it was particularly full and the strength of the sobriety within those four walls was evident to all.



The Friday evening was hosted by the Trustees of the U.S./Canada Board. After dinner there was a Sharing Session with a twist; the Class A Trustees (non-alcoholic members) shared their experience of how they came to join the Fellowship. There were many people in that room who had shared parts of their lives with our Founders. An interesting fact learned was that Jack Alexander (of the famous article) eventually served as a Trustee. After the Sharing Session the separate tables were asked to discuss whether or not they had non-alcoholic trustees, if so, were there any problems, and what were the advantages?

The last day was both sad and joyous. First the delegates were taken to “Stepping Stones” (Bill W.’s home) where they were introduced to Bill’s widow, Lois. The house is beautiful and is full of souvenirs of Al-Anon and A.A. from around the world. The original letter to Bill from Carl Jung is there - and the last paragraph reads:-

“You see, alcohol in Latin is Spiritus, and you use the same word for the highest religious experience, as well as for the most depraving poison. The helpful formula, therefore is “Spiritus contra Spiritum”

(Exactly what Bob P. mentioned the very first day!).

That night the delegates were the guests of New York Intergroup at the Annual Bill W. dinner; because they were there, the theme of the dinner was “A. A. around the World”. Lois was there as guest of honour and one delegate from each country was seated on the dais. Bill was sober before the A.A. official anniversary of 10th June - so this year was his 50th anniversary. At one point a lighted candle was passed from the Top Table down into the body of the Hall (symbolising the passing of the Message). Then each person in the room lit a match, or lighter, and all the Hall lights were put out. There were over 2,000 people in that dining room, and the scene of all these lit matches glowing in the darkness was dramatic. For a moment there was silence, and then in unison, the Serenity Prayer was recited.

A beautiful climax to a wonderful week of Sharing and Caring.

A debt of gratitude is owed to all the staff in the New York Office who showed concern and affection for the delegates, and who worked extremely hard to make the Meeting successful.

Trying to put into words the physical, emotional and spiritual experiences is extremely difficult - as is saying thank you. An adventure of this magnitude comes into the realms of ‘Beyond your wildest dreams’.

### **THIRD EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING - 8TH TO 10TH MARCH 1985**

Colin N. attended the 3rd European Service Meeting and presented the following account to Conference.

“It gives me great pleasure in presenting the Report on the Third European Service Meeting, could I, with your permission, read the Statement of Purpose of this Meeting:

“The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity - to carry the Message to the alcoholic who still suffers, wherever he may be, whatever the

language he speaks. The European Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout Europe.

Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The European Service-Meeting encourages the planning of sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries and the exploration of expanding A.A. services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and institutions work.”

At the Meeting, 16 countries were represented which was very expertly chaired by Hubert from Ireland, who, with his very nice and humble nature made a great success of the weekend. I felt deeply honoured in being chosen to represent Great Britain in Frankfurt. When I came into the Fellowship of A.A. I never dreamed for one minute I would be given this wonderful chance to share with my fellow A.A. members all over Europe to further our purpose and in helping the still suffering alcoholics. On thinking back to my last European Service Meeting, I have often wondered what benefits had been achieved since then. I think perhaps I could single out the Polish delegates - when they gave their Report in 1983, there were 8 group, and this year they intimated that there were now 42 groups And they are now working on a structure, so I think we can all agree that growth is being stimulated through the European Service Meetings. I would say that these Meetings have done much to help the other countries participating as most have no structure as yet, but they all seem to look to the Fellowship in Great Britain for guidance and are very interested in the manner in which we run our structure.

I would like to finish by saying that I have been appointed to Chair and next European Service Meeting in 1987 and I hope and pray that I will be given the strength to make a success of the Fourth European Service Meeting.

## **CONVENTIONS**

At the invitation of the Conference Chairman, the General Secretary reported to the assembly details of a full calendar of Conventions this coming year:

3rd, 4th&-5th May 1985 The Scottish Convention, to be held at the Normandy Hotel, Renfrew.

7th, 8th& 9th June 1985 The West of England Convention at the Grand Hotel, Broad street, Bristol.

12th to 14th July 1985 Date of the First Manchester Convention taking place at Manchester University, Conference Centre, Owens Park, Fallowfield.

20th to 22nd September 1985 The Southern Convention will again be held at the Brighton Centre.,

4th to 6th October 1985 at Dumfries .Date of the ‘Blue Bonnets’ Gathering

1st. 2nd &3rd November 1985 Hotel , Cardiff: The Welsh Convention at the Crest

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1986**

The undermentioned were proposed and seconded for Chairman of the Twenty First General Service Conference 1986.

Mike S.	London Region
Tom J.	South West Scotland Region
Dan H.	Scotia Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

### **WORKSHOP - “CONFERENCE LOOKS AT CONFERENCE”**

This workshop met at 9.30 p.m. on Saturday with Vincent S. (Eastern Region, and Neil L. (Roundabout) as Moderator and Secretary respectively.

The presentations were made by Carole W. (North West) and Dan H. (Scotia). Keeping in mind the theme of the Workshop, both Carole and Dan held the attention of Conference and neither of them forgot to inject the odd shaft of ever welcome humour. The full text of both presentations is given on pages 39-43.

Vincent S., our Chairman thanked both presenters and invited those present to join in a general sharing session. This could be regarded as the “letting down of the hair session” when feelings were put into words, creating an emotion charged atmosphere. Various first, second and third year delegates commented, the first timers with an air of wonderment, the two down and one to go people almost seeming to say “We’ve been before and by jove we shall be back”, and those who completed the trilogy experiencing a tinge of sadness but going away with that certain something that can only come from three years at Conference.

Irene H. of Orpington, London, described the arrival of the letter inviting her to be Chairman of Committee No. 3 in words to the effect that it came as a short, sharp shock and felt that in future Chairmen and Secretaries of Committees should be elected in a similar manner to the Conference Chairman, that is, one year in advance.

The Chairman had earlier welcomed observers who were, Pierre F. (Belgium), Jan C. (Belgium), Roddy M. (France), Annie C. (France) and Annegret B. (Germany), and although they didn’t all comment, those who did expressed their feelings warmly and were obviously happy to be associated with our Conference.

Jim H., Chairman, General Service Board, pointed out that much of what had been said would be looked at between now and next year, and he raised the question of possibly increasing the number of non-alcoholic members on the Board. He touched on the visit of he and Raymond to New York where they attended the Eighth World Service Meeting. He read a letter from H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, inviting Jack G. our General Secretary, to attend at Buckingham Palace to take part with others in a discussion on their respective addiction fields, thereby marking another milestone on A.A.s fifty year road.

The final speaker at the Workshop was Maurice S. of the General Service Board and the following is a verbatim report of his comments.

“Over the last six years I have seen Conference grow and develop from four committees to six committees. First one then two then three committees became standing committees. This development continued and we now have six standing committees.

There is, I believe, some danger in the repetitious process of standing committees and conference should be aware of the straight jacket with which it may enclose itself.

I am very pleased to see a committee on Finance and indeed played some small part in bringing this about. Nevertheless I suspect that after four conferences the Finance committee will have exhausted its subject matter and of no longer of great interest to the delegates.

It would appear, from all the evidences, that the Literature committee should be taken from the agenda, at least for a number of years. The proliferation of literature, some of it overlapping, requires a thorough going survey and review. It is possible that the Board should take this on with the further possibility of a one-off conference committee approving for conference the dropping of some items. The case is a simple one; we have too much literature, not too little.

There are many literature items which do not sell and the Board should consider having a sale or possibly distributing items free in the group and intergroup envelopes when posting out on general circulation.

I believe a Telephone committee at conference should have priority. It should sit for three successive conferences and examine in detail :-

- (a) The present service offices procedures: where are ‘they? what type of service?(eg. operator interception or others).
- (b) The possibility of opening discussions with British Telecom to plan a national network of A.A. service telephones using the electronic systems which are being developed over the next few years.
- (c) The planning of the phasing in of such a system in line with the Telecom development programme.
- (d) The possibility of phasing out the present “Where to Find”.

### **Agenda Committee**

If it were acceptable and considered in the best interest of the Fellowship that three of the committees should be floating rather than standing, then committee six would be able to discuss the titles and subject matter of these committees. The conference, in its plenary session on Sunday morning, would then approve the committees by title for the next conference. There could be occasions when the Board and conference felt that a topic had priority and immediacy such that it required a one-off (one year only) committee. All in all, the suggestion of floating committees would give flexibility and choice. The conference may feel that it is getting its priorities right.

### **The Committee Structure of Conference**

A year between conferences is a short time as far as the Board and Regions are concerned. The

time scale and preparation cycle is a demanding one as the agenda for the committees has to be approved ready for printing at the September Board meeting. This means in effect the Board had six months rather than twelve.

The regions require the agendas by October/November so that they have enough time to arrange and hold meetings and workshops. This becomes somewhat of a treadmill bearing in mind that AT THE SAME TIME the Board are working on the recommendations from the last conference and that Regions are discussing and implementing those recommendations.

It is constitutionally correct and proper that the conference should meet annually so that the Board can give a report on its stewardship and present a financial statement. Nevertheless it may be worth examining whether or not TWO kinds of conference alternating from year to year may not serve the Fellowship better. For want of a better description, I would refer to one as the short/light conference and to the other as the long/heavy conference. The latter would have the present structure incorporating the floating and agenda committees as outlined. The short/light conference would have a much reduced committee structure and of a shorter duration. The options for this kind of conference structure are many and varied and the Board and conference could agree on the most useful way of deploying time.

It should not be forgotten that the object of the proposal is to reduce the amount of preparation, digestion, absorption and implementation in anyone year and it therefore may be sensible for a long/heavy conference to finalise on the following short/light conference so that the Board in effect are given a TWO YEAR preparation cycle. By the same token the Regions would be given more time for discussion and implementation and a longer preparation period.

The above suggestions are outlined largely in terms of the timetable but a consequence of the adoption of such procedures may well be the recreation of the importance of conference with an accompanying sense of freshness of debate and a feeling of the immediacy and priority of the work as a contribution towards the primary purpose.”

The reciting of the Serenity Prayer ended the workshop and all who had attended must surely have experienced a warm feeling of spirituality.

## **SUNDAY, 14 APRIL**

The final session of the. Conference commenced at 9.15 a.m. and after the customary silence, John T. the Conference Chairman invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included later in this report.

Literature  
Finance  
Hospital Services  
Prison & Probation Services  
P.I.-C.P.C.  
Structure & Services

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1986**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Mike S. of London Region was duly elected.

### **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE .**

Jim H., Chairman of the General Service Board, in the closing stages of this year's Conference, thanked all the Committee Chairman for the presentations of their Committee reports; they gave plenty of food for thought and action in the coming year.

He again thanked Maurice for his considerable contribution as General Service Board member for the past six years.

Finally, on behalf of all, Jim invited the delegates to show their appreciation to John T. for the excellent way in which he had "chaired" this year's Conference, this was followed by sustained applause of the assembly.

John then closed Conference after thanking all concerned with its success. The Assembly rose to join him in the Serenity Prayer.

The General Service Conference 1985 was now at an end.

### **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE**

The twenty-first General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester on 11th, 12th and 13th April 1986.

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## **TWENTIETH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1985**

### **COMMITTEE NO. 1**

#### **"LITERATURE"**

CHAIRMAN:           John O           Midlands  
SECRETARY:         John K           London

We were pleased to welcome Jan C (Belgium) and Roddy M (France) as Observers on our Committee.

#### **1.     Review the current relationship between Share, Roundabout and A.A. News and make recommendations.**

The Committee noted the recent changes at Share and that the team had decided to keep to the

tradition of unpaid volunteer editorial management. Roundabout was also running successfully and had increased sales to 3,000 per issue. Recent proposals for a merger of Share and Roundabout had not been pursued. The Share team had found that there were both technical and financial obstacles to incorporating A.A. News with Share. There was a continuing problem with the distribution of A. A. News so as to ensure a wider readership. Those in service should encourage others to read A.A. News. At present A.A. News was sent to groups and intergroups only. Extra copies could be available if requested. Group secretaries should bring A.A. News to the attention of other members of their groups to assist in sponsoring them into service.

## **2. Review the General Service Board Report on availability of literature, tapes etc., for the ethnic minorities in Great Britain.**

The Committee noted the General Service Board's list on literature available in London and New York. The Chairman of the Board reported to the Committee that the Board had reviewed the matter which presented a number of difficulties in making the right approaches. The Committee recognised the importance of the issue and recommended that despite the difficulties, some steps be taken. Some members of ethnic minorities could speak English, although not read it and would benefit from a pamphlet in their own language. Regions were asked to inform G.S.O. of the identity of members with expertise in ethnic minority languages who are willing to act as telephone contacts and/or translators. The Committee asked for more information on the Board's researches into the subject generally and asked the Board to carry out a wider international survey of available literature in conjunction with the review being carried out by G.S.O. New York and to report to the 1986 Conference. The Committee further recommended that the Board research at least one significant ethnic minority language to find out whether A.A. literature had been translated in the country of origin and could be made available in the U.K. and if not, asked the Board to report in detail on the feasibility of producing a pamphlet in a significant ethnic minority language in the U.K. at the 1986 Conference.

## **3 Review the General Service Board's recommendations on the Pamphlet "If You Are A Professional".**

The Committee agreed that this pamphlet needs to be completely rewritten and asked the Board to produce a new draft for the 1986 Conference with the following points in mind:

- (1) We agree with the P.I.-C.P.C. Conference Committee in 1984 that paragraph 3 on page 4 should be omitted.
- (2) The format should be in larger type and the print black on white.
- (3) The present pamphlet was much too long and the new one could refer, if necessary, to other literature.
- (4) A.A. in France had recently produced a short pamphlet on the subject which would be useful to read for guidance.
- (5) The pamphlet was also used by voluntary and self-help agencies who are not "professional".

## **4. Review the anglicised draft of the pamphlet "How A.A. Members Co-operate".**

The Committee recommended Conference approval to the draft, subject to the following:

Page 15, question 11 Delete "No. But"

Page 17,	foot	Change “correctional facilities” to “prisons”
Page 19,	question 18	Spell “uninformed”
Page 19,	question 18	“units” reword “facilities”
Page 19,	question 21	Put “rehabilitation centre” in full
Page 23		Include the C.P.C. Workbook
		Delete “Guidelines:”
		Add to Video - “ A. A. Works One Day at a Time”

The Committee decided, with some misgivings, that the word “programme” for alcoholic treatments should be retained in the anglicized version.

## **5. What is the reaction to the Group Handbook?**

The reaction was very favourable from all Regions and in well-run groups the Handbook gets passed round members. Some groups in Scotland enter the group finances into the pages in the Treasurer’s section which meant that the Handbook was in use at every group meeting. A.A. News and other group papers can be added to the ring binder. At some groups however, it is not going beyond the secretaries who should be encouraged to circulate it to other members.

## **6. Is there any area of the work of the Fellowship which needs a new pamphlet? Or does the Committee consider that we already have too many pamphlets?**

The Committee felt that there were too many pamphlets and that some rationalisation would be useful. Pamphlets that were selling in very small numbers should be withdrawn as it was understood would be done by the Hon. Treasurer.

Particular points were:

- (1) A pamphlet on finance could publicise the existence of personal covenants.
- (2) It would not be desirable to have a pamphlet on 12th Stepping.
- (3) The literature survey by Frances should be made available to the members of the Literature Committee in this and future years. The Committee asked that the survey include a stock-take as well as sales survey.
- (4) The Committee asked the Board to report on the feasibility of producing larger print pamphlets, especially those for newcomers.

## **7. To what extent is the Big Book still being used as the cornerstone of individual sobriety in our Fellowship?**

The Committee found that the Big Book was still widely used as the cornerstone of individual sobriety and thought it quite right that it should continue to be so. Most groups had the Big Book on sale and some sold a lot more copies than others. Some groups were called “Big Book” groups in Scotland, London, East, North-West and South-West. Extracts from the Big Book were read at meetings and this was felt to be very desirable. The Committee wished to encourage individual ownership of the Big Book and felt that new members valued the Big Book if they bought it (on the instalment plan if necessary) rather than being given one. The Committee noted with pleasure that sales of the Big Book had increased to 6,813 in 1984.

“Where to Find”



Complaints were received by the Committee about the information in “Where to Find’ being out of date, particularly about Scotland. The Committee felt that the Board and G.S.O. would no doubt put this right.

The Committee also recommended that “Where to Find” should show wheelchair access and hard of hearing facility and that the Group Information Sheet should be amended to seek information about these matters.

“Who Me?”

The Committee recommended a return to the previous version of this pamphlet, or something as close to it as possible and asked the Board to produce a draft pamphlet for review by the 1986 Conference.

Addlestone Recording Group

The Committee were pleased to receive the following message from A.R.G. - The Group would like recorded their thanks to G.S.O. for sending out order forms. This has meant a wonderful response with Scotland in the lead. Sales in recent months have been much improved.

## **COMMITTEE No. 2            “FINANCE”**

We were pleased to welcome Pierre F (Belgium) and John C (Ireland) as Observers on our Committee.

### **1        Has the Fellowship’s “responsible accountability for money” improved at:**

- (a)     Group**
- (b)     Intergroup**
- (c)     Region**

It was felt that the Fellowship’s “responsible accountability for money” had generally improved at all levels, eg. one Region has found a meeting of Intergroup Treasurers to be most useful. However, it was suggested that there was still room for improvement. The Hon G.S.B. Treasurer was asked to produce a simple three column accounting system to be used by both Region and Intergroup.

We recommended that in England and Wales, group contributions to G.S.O. should be sent via Intergroups. When groups send contributions direct to G.S.O., this incurs additional administrative costs which are inconsistent with “responsible accountability”. It was stressed that money that went into a meeting collection is “A.A. money” and should be used in accordance with the Traditions. When dealing with money matters, we felt that too many groups placed too much emphasis on the first part of Tradition 4 (“Each group should be autonomous”) and not enough on the second part (“except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole”).

### **2.        Have the quarterly details of Group and Intergroup contributions sent out by General Service Office, as requested by Conference 1984 -**

- (a) **Assisted in deliberations and discussions on money at Group and Intergroup?**
- (b) **Precipitated the raising of the overall level of Group contributions?**

The quarterly details of Group and Intergroup contributions have assisted in both discussions on money and the raising of the overall level of group contributions. It was felt that the page in Share, listing group contributions, should be dropped and replaced by a concise quarterly financial statement in A.A. News.

The Committee felt that a working budget is essential for prudent financial management and should be produced by the G.S.B. Hon. Treasurer at the earliest possible opportunity.

**3. Do Treasurers report at least once a month to the Group on finances? Please share experiences on this and any difficulties which may have arisen. Are we still reluctant to discuss money matters?**

The importance of Treasurers reporting at least once a month to the group was reaffirmed. Progress has been made but there is still some way to go .

We appear to be still reluctant to discuss money matters; but again, this attitude appears to be slowly changing. Emphasis on the importance of the Intergroup role in England and Wales and Regions in Scotland in this change of attitude was stressed.

**4. Is the following statement - “The safeguard of the Fellowship’s finances is part of our pledge of responsibility to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic” understood at:-**

- (a) **Group**
- (b) **Intergroup**
- (c) **Region**

The Committee felt that many groups still do not understand that safeguarding “the Fellowship’s finances is part of our pledge of responsibility to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic”. It was suggested that G.S.R.s should lead discussions on these matters, especially at Group Conscience Meetings.

**5. Is there a need for a pamphlet on our Seventh Tradition?**

We did not feel the need for a pamphlet on Tradition Seven. Rather we felt that the short form of Tradition Seven should be included in the pamphlet “Money Matters” when it is reprinted.

**6. How are expenses for service workers met at Group, Intergroup, Region and General Service Office?**

It was the Committee’s experience that there are few or no expenses required to be paid out at group level. Expenses paid by G.S.O. fall into two categories: (i) employees and (ii) Board Members, who are reimbursed for G.S.B. business only.

Extensive discussion on the expenses for service workers at Intergroup and Regional level revealed that there is no uniformity and often controversy. Further guidance on this matter from

the Board would be appreciated.

### **COMMITTEE NO.3           “HOSPITAL SERVICES”**

We were pleased to welcome Louis H (Netherlands) as an Observer on our Committee.

#### **1.       Review the literature pack suggested for use in hospital service work**

After consideration and discussion, the Committee suggest the following literature pack:

A.A. at a Glance

This is A.A.

A. A. as a Resource for the Medical Profession

Who Me ?

Students Guide to A.A.

Guideline No. 10 (A.A. in Hospitals)

The approximate cost is 57P..

The existing 12th Step pack should be used when visiting the still suffering alcoholic in hospitals.

#### **2.       Review the use of the Video film “A.A. Works - One Day at a Time” in hospitals.**

The video has been very well received in hospitals, where it has proved to be very useful to both patients and staff. The Committee recommends that it is preferable to have A.A. members sharing their experiences in conjunction with the showing of the video.

#### **3.       Consider the role of the Regional Hospital Liaison Officer. Make recommendations to improve communications between the Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officer.**

The Regional Hospital Liaison Officer is considered essential to act as co-ordinator for all Intergroup Hospital Liaison Officers and as a channel for sharing experience of hospital service at Regional level. Communication between Intergroup and Region leaves room for improvement.

Recommendations to improve communications are as follows:

- (a)     The Committee finds that where written reports are sent from Intergroup Officers to the Regional Officer, communications have improved.
- (b)     It is further suggested that workshops on hospital service (either at Intergroup or Regional level) be held as frequently as possible, as these seem to generate interest.

#### **4.       Review progress in improving communications between Hospital Liaison and P.I.-C.P.C. Committees.**

On the whole, communication between Hospital Liaison and P.I.-C.P.C. Committees has improved. However, the Committee would like to reiterate the importance of the Hospital Liaison Officer being a member of the P.I.-C.P.C. Committee.

It is appreciated that where there is more than one P.I.-C.P.C. Committee, any member of the Hospital Liaison team can attend the meeting and report back to the Hospital Liaison Officer.

**5. What is the experience of contacting and setting up of Hospital meetings in high security hospitals? Is a separate “code of conduct” required? Make recommendations.**

**The experience of making contacts and setting up of meetings in high security hospitals has been good, receiving a positive and encouraging response.**

All four high security hospitals in England and the one in Scotland are now covered.

When high security hospitals are visited, the prison code of conduct should apply, care being taken at the same time to abide by the rules of the individual hospital.

**6. What experience do we have of liaison with the Private Medical Sector? Make recommendations.**

Experience of liaison with the Private Medical Sector has been limited. When making contact with the aim of starting an A.A. meeting, we should be careful to abide by the 12 Traditions, Guideline No. 10 and the A.A. Group Handbook.

**8. What approach has been made to Hospital Chaplains and what response has been experienced?**

Where Hospital Chaplains have been approached, we have had a warm reception. However, more time is required for positive results to emerge from this work.

**COMMITTEE NO.4 “PRISONS & PROBATION SERVICES”**

We were pleased to welcome Annegret B (West Germany) as an Observer on our Committee.

**1. Review the use of the video film “A.A. Works - One Day at a Time” by prison and probation services.**

In reviewing the video, it had been well received in all regions and prisons but unfortunately there has as yet been little opportunity to show it to Probation Officers outside prisons. Wherever possible, it was considered preferable to have at least one A.A. member present whenever it is shown.

**2. Do prison sponsors meet with the administrators of their respective establishments in order to learn their policies and to share with them our Traditions about how A.A. can co-operate with the professional community?**

In most regions contact was regular and very good although there were one or two places where contact was difficult. It was felt that the most valuable liaison was with all prison officers because they are in constant contact with the inmates we can help.

The Committee felt that it was advisable that Intergroup Prison Liaison Officers should have visiting experience and it was agreed that in all prison work, perseverance is vital.

**3. What is the experience of the Committee regarding corresponding with inmates and is the list of correspondents names and addresses held at General Service Office being used?**

It was recommended that the G.S.O. list, being out of date, should be discontinued. There was little experience of corresponding with inmates but it was strongly felt that anonymity should not be broken in correspondence and either an A.A. posting address, eg. Intergroup or G.S.O., should be used.

**4. Does the Committee feel that the bi-annual meetings of regional prison liaison officers (in England and Wales) are of benefit?**

It was unanimously agreed that great benefit was derived from these bi-annual meetings. The Scottish members shared their experience of all prison sponsors meetings twice a year, from which valuable help was derived.

**5. In the light of the Home Office comments, review Guideline No. 9 - "A.A. in Penal Establishments". Does the Committee feel that the "Code of Conduct" bulletin is a useful aid to those members engaged in prison sponsorship?**

Having considered the Guideline, it was strongly recommended that it be revised and rewritten, incorporating the following amendments:

In the sub-heading, it is suggested that it reads "...in most Prisons and Young Offenders establishments...."

The paragraph commencing "Every effort", should read "Every effort should be taken to ensure that sufficient literature is available to prison A.A. members along with additional A.A. publications eg. Share, Roundabout, etc. which are provided by the local Intergroup/Group". (This alteration was required because the Committee felt that in receiving payment for group literature, the 7th Tradition was contravened).

Second paragraph, page 2, commencing "Wherever possible...", be deleted.

Paragraph commencing "Remember: 'I Am Responsible'", delete the sentence "Most of them would never have committed the crimes for which they are serving time if it had not been for their drinking".

It was felt that the Code of Conduct filled an important need and the Committee recommended that it be issued as soon as possible in its present form with one minor amendment :

Delete "Remember, You are an A.A. Ambassador".

This is however only an interim move because the Committee was of the opinion that it be incorporated into Guideline No. 9 to make the Guideline fully informative. It is recommended

that a draft copy of the revised Guideline be presented to Conference 1986.

**6 Have Regional and Intergroup Prison Liaison Officers contributed more information to A.A. News as recommended by Conference 1984?**

Yes. It is recommended that articles continued to be sent to A.A. News.

**7. Has any progress been made in the past year in respect of the Fellowship being made aware of the importance of prison work and the need for sponsors?**

Experience on this question was varied. Although progress in all areas had been made, some areas were finding it difficult to obtain Sponsors. There must be a constant awareness by Intergroup and Regional Liaison Officers and all Delegates, of the ever constant need for A.A. prison sponsors. Perseverance is again the keyword.

**8. How can we improve our contact with the Probation Service in England and Wales or the Social Services Probation in Scotland?**

In Scotland, England and Wales contact has been made but as it is a new service, progress is slow.

Many Intergroups and Regions have appointed Probation Liaison Officers but as new ground is being explored it is a matter of finding our way. We considered it vital that every Intergroup appoint a Probation Liaison Officer so that regular contact can be made and maintained with local Probation Offices and Social Workers .

**COMMITTEE NO.5 "P. I..C.P.C."**

A special welcome was extended to Cor - Observer from the Netherlands.

**1. Review draft Guideline P.I.-C.P.C.**

The Committee accepted the P.I.-C.P.C. Guidelines with the following changes:

Page 1. Paragraph 1 Reads A.A. needs open, trusting, and distortion free channels.

Page2 Please turn to page 4, bottom of first column. Cross out Legacies. Total paragraph - with insertion of words following solid continuous sobriety "and should have regular attendance at Group Meetings." to be placed on Page 2 following - the general public and the professional community outside A.A.

Page 2, 3rd Line , right-hand column, for conurbation read urban area.

Page 3. 3rd Paragraph should read Hospital, Prison/ Probation and all other liaison. Right hand column -following the words local A.A. members, always remembering that those selected are Ambassadors of the Fellowship.

Page 4, top line for “prior to” to read When.

Paragraph 2 Last sentence - all that is required is to share one’s experience.

Final paragraph should be headed Legacies.

Addendum

The Committee recommend that the hyphen be eliminated from P.I.-C.P.C.

## **2. Review new portable display unit**

On reviewing the new portable display unit the Committee felt that the new table-top display priced at £140 was of good value and would be an asset to Intergroups and Regions. A photograph of the stand would be helpful when deciding to purchase. The present table-top display at £10 would still be useful, but it is recommended that it should be replaced whenever it becomes shabby.

The new floor standing display unit at £600, being easy to carry and to assemble, would also be an asset .

## **3. Share experience on the use of the video film “A.A. Works One Day at a Time “**

The video is a most invaluable tool for P. I. work and provides inspiration to Speakers when presenting the Programme of A.A. It has been well received everywhere. Sometimes the video seems to stimulate more interest and more questions if shown after the Speakers have shared. Flexibility of use of the video is the keynote.

## **4. Are talks by A.A. members given to:**

**(a) Police Training Establishments/Colleges?**

**(b) Social Services Training Establishments/Colleges?**

(a) Police Training Establishments/Colleges

Sharing the experience regarding Police Training Establishments and Colleges, the Fellowship has been included in the training of Police Officers and is on the syllabus of some Academies and Colleges. One Intergroup has a Police Liaison Officer. However it was noted, that the Police, in some areas, include alcoholism under a general heading of addictions.

Could each Region provide a list of Police Training Establishments and Colleges for action by P.I. Officers?

(b) Social Services Training Establishments/Colleges

With regard to Social Service Training Establishments and Colleges, some Regions find that Training Establishments are not interested in A.A. contact, when it has been offered.

The Committee asks the General Service Board to look into the possibility of the syllabus of Social Work Training to include Alcoholics Anonymous, perhaps by an approach to the Central Council for Education in training Social Work (C.C.E.T.S.W.). However, the Committee recognises considerable success in contact at the grass roots of Social Services.

**5 How do the P.I. and C.P.C. Officers at Region and Intergroup communicate with the Groups?**

P.I.-C.P.C. Officers at Region and Intergroup find that experience shows communication between Region and Intergroup is working well. However, it is felt that Reports from P.I. to Groups need to be interesting and stimulating. Involving individual Groups in P.I. locally is one suggestion. Workshops are also a way of involving individual members. The onus is on P.I. Officers and Liaison Officers to continue the stimulation of interest at Group level.

**6 What is the experience of making contact with, and giving talks to Magistrates?**

The Committee has found that contact with Magistrates has been varied. In some areas considerable interest has been shown by Magistrates and in some Intergroups there has been regular communication for several years. Some Regions have Probation Liaison Officers. If there is difficulty in communication, an approach to the Magistrates Association is suggested as a means of contact.

We note the changes in policy in prosecution of drunkenness in certain areas .

**7 What contacts, if any, have been made at the local level with the Manpower Services Commission? Make recommendations.**

Where contact has been made with the Manpower Services Commission, the Committee has found numerous opportunities for talking to groups of all kinds, such as Rehabilitation Schemes, Youth Training Schemes, Factories, Trainees of all types, and recently to Supervisors' Training Schemes.

The recommendation of this Committee is that this contact should be exploited to the full and that where contact has not been established, Regional P.I.'s should make enquiries.

**8. What is the experience of giving talks to Management, Trade union, Educational and Training Establishments?**

The Committee has had no experience of talking to Educational and Training Establishments of Managements and Trade Unions. It is hoped that A.A. may be introduced into such training programmes. However, extreme caution is necessary in such an approach. We can only speak about Alcoholics Anonymous, thus avoiding controversy.

The Committee wished to emphasise that communication between A.A. and Trades Unions at branch level had been successful on many occasions and most encouraging.

**9. Share experience of any contacts made with the organisations for the training of Clergymen.**

Sharing in the experience of contacts made with organisations for the training of Clergymen, the Committee found that A.A. is being introduced into some training courses both full time and part time. Other training establishments are showing some interest.



We were pleased to welcome Annie C. (France) and Stanley G. (Ireland) as Observers on our Committee.

**1. Are Regions considering the amalgamation of Intergroup Mini-Conventions into Regional ones as suggested by Conference 1984, having regard to the General Service Board’s recommendations on letter from the General Service Board Ireland on restricting Mini-Conventions?**

Arising out of the concern that too many social occasions may divert us from our primary purpose, there is some movement towards a smaller number of Intergroup Mini-Conventions, but there is still a large proportion of the Fellowship which is intent on continuing its traditional Mini-Conventions. There may be a tendency towards replacing Intergroup Mini-Conventions with Regional Weekend Conventions rather than one day Conventions. The Committee thought that such a trend might be counterproductive and should be discouraged.

It is suggested that each Intergroup examine its conscience before arranging a Mini-Convention whether or not there is a history of holding a Mini within that Intergroup.

The Committee felt that it was desirable that some part of every Convention - even if only one Speaker - should be devoted to illustrating the value of Service in the recovery programme.

**2. There are reports that many Groups are finding more and more people suffering from drug addiction rather than alcohol addiction attending A.A. meetings. What experience have members had, and how have they handled the problem?**

**Ref: “A.A. Comes of Age” P.106 Tradition 5  
 “A.A. Bulletin” Treatment Facilities April 1984  
 “About A.A.” Winter 1984 (A Physician’s Viewpoint)  
 Pamphlet “Problems other than Alcohol”**

Some Groups have had problems with people whose main problem is other than alcohol. The Committee stressed that A.A.’s function is solely to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. There are dually addicted A.A. members and it is important that discussions at A.A. meetings should concentrate on alcohol and not on other drugs.

A Group whose Group Conscience is regularly exercised is not likely to meet unsurmountable problems, especially if it is guided by:

- (a) The pamphlet “Problems other than Alcohol”.
- (b) A.A. Comes of Age P. 106 Tradition 5.
- (c) The letter from G.S.B. to Groups concerned about this problem in the past which the Committee suggest be attached to the Conference Report (Appendix A).
- (d) The Preamble.

**3 Now that the Group Handbook has been distributed, does the Committee feel that it is being used to its full advantage?**

The Committee found that the Group Handbook was enthusiastically received by most Groups. Many Groups have encouraged members to borrow the Handbook for a week at a time with gratifying results. Some Groups have bought an extra copy to circulate amongst Group members and all are reminded that the Handbook is the property of the Group and not of the Secretary.

The Committee asks Conference to authorize the General Service Board to make minor amendments in the Guidelines to bring them into accord with the Handbook.

**4. Review the Resolution of the Eighth General Service Conference 1973 in respect of members professionally engaged in work with alcoholics or alcoholism and whether they should hold service offices within Alcoholics Anonymous. In the light of the supporting material, make recommendations.**

The Committee believes that although the resolution of the 8th General Service Conference was justified at the time, the Fellowship has now matured sufficiently to be able to guide its affairs by reference to the Twelve Traditions without any further restrictions. It was felt that Service is an important part of recovery in A.A. and no member should be denied the opportunity of Service solely because he or she is professionally engaged in the field of alcoholism.

The Committee therefore recommends that the restriction imposed 1973 be removed. Instead we suggest that when members of Alcoholics Anonymous, who work for outside agencies concerned with alcoholism are considered for office, the individual and Group Conscience should consider the guidance given on pages 114 to 117 of A.A. Comes of Age and in the Book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

The Committee suggest that Conference should reconsider the matter in 1990 in the light of further experience.

The Committee requests the Board to circulate the "A.A. Guidelines for A.A. Members employed in the Alcoholism Field" with such minor adaptations as may be necessary.

**5. What is the experience of the Committee in relation to telephone services being included at:**

- (a) Regional Workshops**
- (b) National Convention Workshops.**

Those Regions which have held telephone Workshops have found great benefit from them and the Committee recommends that the Regions and National Conventions which have not held such Workshops should do so at their earliest opportunity .

**6. Are pre and post Conference Meetings held by Intergroups to study the Committee agendas and reports?**

**What is the response to Conference at:-**

- (a) **The Group**
- (b) **Intergroup**
- (c) **Region?**

Most Regions devote considerable time to pre and post Conference meetings. Intergroups vary far more in their response; some are as committed as the Regions; others prefer to ignore Conference. Where Intergroups have had special meetings between delegates and G.S.R.'s, these have been most productive and encouraged more Group response. Very few Groups appear to show any interest in Conference.

**7. With reference to Guideline No. 1 -"Group Meetings" and Guideline No. 8 - "Relationship between A.A. and Al-Anon", discuss the practice of describing a Meeting at a Mini-Convention as a Public Meeting. Make recommendations.**

The Committee sees the need for a special term to describe the type of meeting at which a member of Al-Anon speaks from the platform, but to which the general public is not invited. Neither "Open Meeting", nor "Public Meeting" seems to be appropriate. The Committee asks that the General Service Board give consideration to a suitable title and report back to the 21st General Service Conference.

**8. Have Forums already held achieved the results expected?**

It was generally agreed that the Forums already held have been greatly beneficial and should be continued. Members of the Board expressed the view that a Forum was a two way learning experience.

**9. Clarify the addendum after question 2 of Committee No. 6 of 1984 Conference Report:**

**ADDENDUM:**

**"A question arose concerning the function of telephone contacts in "Where to Find". At national level the recommendation is that they should be prepared to take full responsibility as contacts, with all that this implies, and delegate where necessary .**

Clarification of "With all that this implies" :

This implies that such a telephone number will be freely available and that the contact is prepared at any time to:

- (a) Accept a call for help
- (b) Give information to a Professional
- (c) Guide a family member to the right Source for help
- (d) Speak to members of the Fellowship enquiring about meetings.

**COMMITTEE NO. 6 -APPENDIX A**

## **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS STERLING AREA SERVICES.**

Over the years the General Service Office receive numerous calls from A.A. members who, after attending certain meetings, come away with a sincere concern that some A.A. meetings are used as a blanket therapy for problems other than alcohol.

We all have varying degrees of compassion for other social ills, such as over-eating, anorexia, narcotics, not forgetting the problems within our own families, but the following quote from the pamphlet written by one of the Co-founders, Bill W, might help clarify the situation:-

“Our first duty as a society is to ensure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multi-purpose activity. An A.A. Group as such, cannot take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world.

Sobriety - freedom from alcohol - through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. Group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make non-alcoholics into A.A. members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles we shall almost surely collapse; and if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.”

Please accept this letter in the spirit in which it is written, with the love and care of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

P.O. BOX 514, 11, REDCLIFFE GDNS, LONDON, SW10 9BQ PHONE. 01-3529779

## **WORKSHOP -**

### **“CONFERENCE LOOKS AT CONFERENCE”**

Carole W North West

My name is Carole, I'm an alcoholic and drug addict, and a member of the Saturday night Step meeting in Liverpool.

When I was first asked to attend Conference, I was very flattered and proud to represent my Region and A.A., my thoughts were “you've come a long way since you lived on a beach with your bottle and syringe”, but I didn't realise what I was letting myself in for. I imagined that Conference would be like going to a City Council meeting with the judge in his robes sitting in a big chair looking down on everyone. The last time I saw a judge he looked exactly like that.

The problem I had trying to decide what I was going to wear and were my eyelashes on straight etc. On my first morning I spent twenty minutes going back and forth asking myself if I looked O.K. I was more interested in whether my hair and clothes were suitable than I was about what I had to do in the committee. After saying the Serenity Prayer, catching hold of myself, and

having a straight talk with God, I was then ready to face everyone. I was quite surprised to find that the judge wasn't tripping over his robes, but just a man, admittedly with a loud voice, but most of all with a complete understanding of A.A. and how it works. I should have known A.A. is not stupid.

Conference looks at Conference, gosh what a title. I have had a great deal of difficulty in trying to put my thoughts on paper. Am I responsible? Bill W. says :

“A.A. is more than a set of principles, it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must Carry the message else we ourselves wither and, those who haven't been given the truth may die.”

I believe this is not only true in carrying the message to people who still suffer, but in service, taking the message back from Conference to our Groups, Intergroups and Region.

Are we at Conference functioning well? Can we improve? Do we benefit the member at grass roots? Are we working for and carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers? Have we distanced ourselves from the Groups? Have we got our priorities right? Is this why we have many A.A.s who are disinterested in conference and how it works? There are many questions I feel we need to ask ourselves.

I do not have the answers, I only have my own experience. From washing cups to Conference to 12 Step work, I have found all service in A.A. has helped my sobriety and growth. At times I have disliked some of the things I have been asked to do, like now, I know that the person who is going to get the most out of this is me. I hope.

Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be heresy against “one day at a time”, but that valuable principle really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past, nor wishfully daydream about the future. As individuals and as a Fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto factitious ideas of providence. Gods real providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capability for foresight and he evidently expects us to use it. of course, we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is - better than to refuse to think at all. (Third Legacy manual, pages 125-126).

How important this statement is to all of us at Conference and the responsibility we carry, to A.A. as a whole.

In three years at Conference I have gained so much, not only in my own personal growth. The most important thing I have learnt at Conference is that the principles I have learnt in A.A. must be paramount in my thinking and living and the sometimes daunting thoughts of the trust that members have put in me to represent them and their thoughts at Conference, am I responsible?

I wish to thank you all for helping me and giving me the opportunity to give back a little of what I have gained in this very wonderful Fellowship. I hope you will share with me your feelings and experiences.

**WORKSHOP**

**“CONFERENCE LOOKS AT CONFERENCE”**

Dan H. Scotia

I have enjoyed continued sobriety since July 1970. I was very fortunate to have been sponsored by a mature and committed A.A. member who left me in no doubt that my personal recovery depended on commitment to the Twelve Steps of A.A. He stressed that our Twelfth Step is emphatic that security (and with it, serenity), is found only through involvement. The fact that this “Work” can be pleasurable and gratifying does not reduce by one iota our dependence on “giving in order to keep” the many rewards that A.A. sobriety brings. Following good advice and example, I have always been an active member of a group. I have served in every office at group level; I was involved in the telephone answering service in Glasgow in its early days. I was privileged to serve my group at Intergroup level and helped to set up Central Scotland Intergroup. Presently, I am a trusted delegate from Scotia Region to this Conference. This is my third and final year and I am privileged to make this presentation. In retrospect, I came to my first Conference feeling somewhat insecure because I had not prepared thoroughly for the task ahead of me. Although familiar with the basic A.A. literature as suggested in the Handbook, I had never studied the Handbook! I realised that there were, at Conference, some very well-informed members of the Fellowship and that I would have to do a great deal of reading and studying if I were to achieve “what they had”. I returned home firmly resolved to put more effort into fulfilling the suggestions of the Handbook in order to be prepared for my responsibilities.

The ultimate responsibility and authority for A.A. and its growth is vested in the A.A. groups. Conference has been created to provide an opportunity for groups to exercise this responsibility through their delegates. For these reasons it is imperative that the delegates discuss the agenda for Conference in his/her group, intergroup, region, and amongst his/her individual A.A. friends. He or she should know the group conscience of the region he/she serves regarding any matters arising which affect A.A. as a whole.

I have been extremely impressed by the apparent, tireless effort and dedication which goes into the preparation for, and planning of, our General Service Conference. It would seem to me that the venue is ideal geographically, the accommodation is comfortable and the sustenance offered is very good. I tended to question the need for such meals until I came to realise that this is indeed an arduous few days which make demands on our concentration if we are to gain the maximum benefit from it and being alcoholic, we require to sustain ourselves physically as well as spiritually and mentally. The excellent presentation of the brochure is indicative of the communication between all of the trusted servants in every area of service throughout Great Britain. It details the mammoth tasks done by groups of dedicated sober alcoholics in collating information for us and highlighting questions arising for discussion and consideration so that our Fellowship can continue to meet the needs of all those who have entered our doors and of those who are still to come. It is indeed a manifestation of Bill W.’s statement that “A.A. is more than a set of principles, it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die” (As Bill Sees It).

It was comforting for me, as a new man, to meet other delegates on that first Friday evening, some of whom I knew and others of whom I had only heard - it’s good to be able to put a face to names that one has become acquainted with through reading of magazines and reports etc. In the ensuing year it was gratifying to renew already established friendships and to meet new friends. I have found the Friday evening sessions informative of the Fellowship as a whole, reminding us of the responsibilities we have as trusted servants or “custodians of the Traditions and Concepts

of A.A.”

The General Service Board enables Conference to achieve its first objective by giving good account of itself. It makes sense to have six committees and to have each delegate serve on one committee for his complete term of office. I have served on Committee 6 - Structure and Service.

Preparation for Conference has been a difficult experience. I have found great difficulty in getting groups and intergroups motivated into making time to discuss the agenda. As a result of this, I have had to practice more love, understanding, patience, tolerance and humility when met with the usual, and some unusual cliches such as “I don’t get involved with the politics of A.A.”, “I keep it simple”, “To Hell with Manchester, we’re Scots”, “They’re only Guidelines”, “The Traditions are for the Yanks”. I hope that the Group Handbook will serve as motivation and that those of us, who have had the privilege to Serve will go back to our groups and try to pursue the aims of the Conference we have attended, making ourselves available to future delegates for discussion. Thus we shall fulfil that all important discipline offered to each and every one of us - love. It seems to me that groups are largely passive in their influence and direction. Perhaps delegates should be stressing that the A.A. groups, under the concept of “The Group Conscience”, held the ultimate authority and final responsibility for Great Britain services. Perhaps we privileged servants should be reminding them that this Conference is costly to A.A. and that they therefore have the right to demand that we give better account of ourselves. Perhaps it would be a good idea for delegates to give thought to helping to introduce “Service Workshops” at Intergroup level. It has been my experience that to be informed is to take the mystique and fear out of volunteering to serve.

As our Fellowship grows, there are more and more questions to be answered and perhaps in the future, it would be advisable to extend the duration of Conference. W.S.C. lasts 6 days. It might be a good idea if each delegate wore a badge which indicates his/her year of service and the committee on which he/she serves. I suggest this because it might help to encourage communication, especially for first year delegates.

I wasn’t particularly well-informed about Conference arrangements on coming to my first Conference. You see, I hadn’t been sponsored, nor had I asked to be sponsored into this level of service. This was because of complacency on my part - my surface record in service to A.A. hadn’t looked too bad and I failed to prepare as required. I know today that I lost a lot of the rewards of that first Conference and am resolved to be more than willing to pass along the understanding I have gleaned from this service to my successor at Region and to learn more about our Fellowship along with him/her. I have learned much, not only about our Fellowship, but about myself since becoming a delegate.

It came as a surprise to realise how strenuous and demanding the weekend was to be. On my return home I was very tired, but exhilarated by the deep conviction that Group Conscience acts as the sole authority and guide for the Fellowship.

I had experienced being lead gently into seeing the wisdom of ideas entirely opposed to those which I held on arrival.

The experience of witnessing a large group of recovering alcoholics from all corners of Great Britain and from all walks of life, gathering together to be directed into reaching decisions for the

good of A.A. endorses the principle of Tradition Two.

The informal gatherings during the weekend serve the purpose of helping us to unwind before retiring and to stimulate conversation with other delegates and members of G.S.B. I have been able to share ideas with colleagues and taken home with me ideas shared by others.

Conference promoted growth in me by demonstrating the true meaning of “Keep an Open Mind” -in some areas I held unbending opinions. According to A.A. this does not make for good leadership. I like to think I am changing here.

I was quite overwhelmed to receive the Committee Reports so quickly on the Saturday night. Again I realised how much is done by the few for so many in A.A. The “backroom” workers are to be congratulated.

Each Committee presents its report for Conference to attain its third objective as suggested in our “Service Handbook”. There is a tremendous aura of unity as delegates listen to each other report and put their heads together to ensure that the decisions it has reached are in the form of precise intelligible directions to the servants of the Fellowship so that they may be entirely clear about the action they have to take over the ensuing year.

In my opinion, Conference is achieving its three objectives. At this moment in time, I see no need for sweeping changes but I would ask myself “How can I better carry out its wishes and help to check whether its proposals are being carried into effect?”. I know that I’ll go home from this Conference a better, more informed delegate. I know that I will redouble my efforts to pass along my understanding of your decisions to Region, Intergroups, and Groups in Scotia Region.

Putting my thoughts on paper has been a new and formidable experience for me. It would have been easier for me to decline General Service Board’s invitation to make this presentation but that would have been almost like invoking one of my “ghosts of the past”, fear of disapproval and failure. I am known to my close friends as “ The Great Digressor”. I hope I have not confused you.

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### **FRIDAY 11 APRIL**

The Twenty-first General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was again held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester. The registration and reception commenced at 4.00p.m. with the distribution of delegates folders and conference material and also providing an ideal opportunity for delegates to get together.

The Conference comprised 84 delegates from 14 Regions, 2 delegates from the Channel Islands, 2 delegates from the magazines, "Share" and "Roundabout", 22 members of the General Service Board, 10 observers from Europe -including 2 from Ireland, Mike S., Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and 4 staff members from G.S.O. London.

Total attendance of 126.

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE**

The first plenary session commenced at 8.30 p.m. - the Conference Chairman, Mike S. (London Region) calling for the customary moments silence followed by the reading of the twelve Traditions by the General Secretary. Mike S., in welcoming all the delegates extended a special welcome to the observers from overseas and presented his keynote address:-

First I'd like to thank Jack and Jim for all the help, support, and guidance they've given me during this past year.

Last year, when my name was proposed for Conference Chairman, a member said to me that I would not be elected unless I wore a tie. I made a point of not wearing a tie and not campaigning, and to my amazement found myself elected. That seems to sum up the way things have always happened for me in this Fellowship. I felt unprepared, inadequate, unworthy of such responsibility. I thought - "Why me?"

I phoned my Sponsor and asked him. He replied "Because they thought you could do it. So KEEP IT SIMPLE and get on with it."

How I needed to hear those words KEEP IT SIMPLE.

I asked my Higher Power for guidance on a theme. I don't know how these things work - but almost immediately the word 'COMMUNICATION' came to mind. It stayed because no matter how hard I tried and others tried - it always came back to COMMUNICATION.

Why?

Well, everything I am today is through communication, and everything I have done in this wonderful Fellowship has been connected with communication. From the first moment I stumbled through the doors of a Meeting in Victoria, London - sweating, shaking, full of fear, reeking of despair. Crying. Like I had never cried, for help... I had hit rock bottom, and there's no doubt I managed to communicate that fact. Days later I choked out "My name is Mike and I am an alcoholic" - I communicated not only who I was, but far more important, what I am.

And you, members of this Fellowship, communicated hope when I had nothing else to hang on to. You communicated the understanding and trust that enabled me to reveal my real feelings openly for the first time. You spoke and listened with love. You let me know I was no longer alone while I told you how much I hurt inside. How confused and lost I felt. I was given the gift of sobriety. I have kept it by a continual daily communication with the AA programme of recovery - through meetings, sponsorship, the Steps, the Traditions, service, the Concepts, and the love and trust and the privilege of touching so many lives within the Fellowship - I have been able to get to know myself and grow a little.

To me Communication is love in action. It is carrying the Message and not talking about carrying the Message. It is sharing experience strength and hope whenever asked and sometimes when not asked. It is putting self aside and going out on a Twelfth Step call when I don't want to and sharing when I don't feel like it. I have to communicate what I have to keep what I've got. My sobriety depends on it.

This year's Conference focuses on Communication - it runs through every Committee to the Workshop - Pass it On...

Committee No. 1 is concerned with "Telephone Services". Many of us think of the Telephone as an instrument of communication - As a practising drunk I found it an instrument of torture. Cold sweat broke out whenever the telephone rang because it was usually bad news. I couldn't use the phone because I was frightened of rejection. I hated the phone. I told everybody I hated the telephone. So the first Intergroup job you gave me was Telephone Rep. A two year sentence to growth organising telephone duty rotas, Twelfth Step lists and overcoming rejection. The telephone is a lifeline. I recently heard a serious suggestion that we should not send out Twelfth Step calls to see suffering alcoholics who don't have telephones. We can get so caught up in committees and organising and running systems that we can forget our primary purpose. A telephone office that has staff, hundreds of volunteers manning the lines every month, holds telephone workshops, is certainly organised. All that loving energy, involvement, common unity is something to behold. It is my experience you can fill an office like that, ten times over, with willing volunteers, but trying to find member willing to make a Twelfth Step call can be a very different matter. So we make promises to callers that are hard, sometimes impossible to keep. Then you get suggestions like - only make Twelfth Step calls to people with telephones - Not all of us hit rock bottom in a financial position to support both a drinking habit and a telephone. My Sponsor slept in telephone boxes. I was often found sleeping rough in parks because I was too terrified to be alone in my flat... If any alcoholic wants help I go because this is not a disease that can wait for a telephone to be connected. Alcoholics die. They die nasty unpleasant deaths.

Before we make decisions about telephone offices or systems I believe we should question how effectively we are going to be able to service the suffering alcoholic and not the system. Communication systems with adequate funds, manpower, offices are fine - but they are meaningless if the suffering caller never gets to see a Twelfth Stepper, never gets taken to a meeting, because all the volunteers time and energy is used up running the system. Communication without action is useless to the suffering alcoholic asking for help - you might as well say "Thanks for calling - Drop dead."

Committee 2 is a sure sign of progress. That we can now communicate on matters of FINANCE openly in every area of the Fellowship. How many of us remember what the Group Treasurers

Report used to be like. The Treasurer rose to his feet - apologised - mumbled about the rent, whispered about digging deeper, and then sat down fast to a deafening round of silence - followed by heart-to-heart threatenings over coffee.

When we turn our thoughts to Committee 3 WORKING WITH OTHERS it is clear that Communication is growth. We live in a media age and we should learn how to live comfortably with all of it and use it to carry the message. On radio it has been my privilege to listen to some of the American AA Meetings on the air. They're broadcast in the early hours of the morning. They make the help and hope our Fellowship has to offer very available. One out of every ten listeners is probably going to be an alcoholic so it will do us no harm to open our minds to the possibilities of using local radio.

We must observe our Traditions, and also, I suggest, find a way of coming to terms with Television. It is not going to go away. Over the next few years there are going to be more and more television channels on both satellite and cable. The hours of television are going to be greatly extended. We need Conference to generate thoughts and ideas to help find a way to use it.

It has been my experience that the Group is always the most effective method we have of communicating with others. The Group that cares enough to ask itself - "What can we do to pass the message?" With the average age of this Fellowship dropping, the local Group can identify where the young hang out. and carry the message to Discos, youth clubs in their areas. The Group is in a position to pinpoint local ethnic concentrations, local community leaders and carry the message. When I first became a Trusted Servant in a Group I used to think that some high flying big shot on the Board, at General Service Office, at Region or at Intergroup would take care of all Public Information in my area. It soon became clear there are no high flying big shots in AA. We are all in this thing together. We are the only message we've got and humble low flying little shots continuously peppering local targets can be very effective.

There are questions about the way we communicate and who we communicate with in industry. We are at our best when we involve a team of sober Members. It is potentially harmful when the lone member, with the best of intentions, goes off unaccompanied to talk at business gatherings, address Trade Union AGM's, speak to the business sections of the Press, Radio, and so on. A great area of Public Information can quickly become tied up in the views and perhaps prejudices of one Member. When I communicate with industry I have to remember that I'm not everybody's cup of tea. I can be dumb. I can misread situations - so I take plenty of backup to ensure there is more than one voice getting across and, equally important, more than one mind reporting back. One member - alone - can go to talk at a business meeting - there may be a personality clash and the report back can easily become a report against. I have to be always aware that an unchecked ego trip, an unwitnessed personality clash can do this Fellowship harm.

We also look at Groups in Private Medical Centres - Treatment Facilities - How we are communicating with the Centres and how we can co-operate more effectively. Treatment Centres are a rapidly growing area. Like many of my generation of AAs I was anti Treatment Centre for a long time. My attitude was "Why pay to get the AA programme because I didn't I did it the hard way." Why? Because I was afraid of something new I didn't understand.

I was envious of those who were lucky enough to go through Treatment and instead of admitting it, I turned my fear and resentment against Treatment Centres, those working in them, and worse

those coming out -the ones who were trying to get well. I came to see my attitude was as sick as it was dishonest. I forgot that it doesn't matter how anybody gets to AA. It doesn't matter how they hear about AA as long as they reach us... as long as they have the same chance I had, we've all had, of getting better before it is too late. For me there is no them and us - we are all...all recovering alcoholics - US.

FAITH and TRUST can only be built out of good Communication in this Fellowship. Committee 4 is about the way we communicate amongst ourselves. The way we treat our anonymity. How we handle news sheets. When I was Chairman of Central London another Intergroup had a very good news sheet, so we started a news-sheet with a lot of enthusiasm. With each edition the enthusiasm evaporated. By edition six it had become the Intergroup egosheet - we never made edition seven because we realised that what another Intergroup was doing well we didn't have to do at all.

To me Communication is truth in action. It is telling you they way it is -not the way I would like it to be, or the way I may pretend it is. It was hammered into me that, as a Trusted Servant, I had a duty to REPORT BACK THE TRUTH... Not some blurry edged fantasy not some cleverly manipulated message... not some personal belief neatly disguised as a fact... I mention those because I've been guilty of all.

The General Service Representative - may be the most important job in AA. We look at the role of the General Service Representative. I was sent to Intergroup before I'd been around five minutes. I was keen but I was not sober. My mind was a bit like a Swiss clock - every quarter of an hour something 'cuckoo' would come out. I had to learn how to listen and then to stand back and not let ME get in the way of what was being said. I have simply found that if I am fearless, honest and communicate All the truth - then not a lot is going to go wrong.

Communication in our Fellowship goes right through from Group to the Board. We are only as good as our communication and communication is a two way traffic. When any of us in service fail to listen to others or fail to communicate what is happening, we create suspicion, hostility and disunity. Them and us.

Most of you have heard of Special Groups. Well, Special Groups are not formed out of good communication. They're usually formed out of defence because members feel they have special problems that are not understood. Special Groups for Special People often stir up local disunity - I've heard the first five words of Tradition Four, not the rest, used to justify their existence. Where there is good communication, love and understanding there is unity and little support for those who want to be 'special'. That's why good communication is so vital.

Committee 5 PROBATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES are two areas where continuing and growing communication are important and yet so difficult to get members involved.

Committee 6 STRUCTURE AND SERVICES we look at Conference and how we select our Committee leaders. How the Agenda is selected. Some areas have post Conference meetings where delegates report back and at the same meeting they start to make suggestions and discuss ideas for the next Conference. This stimulates interest amongst the Intergroups and the Groups. Conference Agenda is what the Fellowship communicates it wants discussed. Conference can only be as good as the Fellowship wants it to be. If we don't communicate our suggestions we really shouldn't complain if they are not included.

I arrived at my first Conference knowing which way I was going to vote on everything. Within a few minutes of absorbing this wealth of sobriety, this wonderful atmosphere, my attitude began to change. Communication on committee is listening with an open mind. If I had sat on a Committee with cotton wool in my ears and a pre-determined vote I would have sold Conference, and this Fellowship very short. Tradition Two reminds us "For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group Conscience."

I was mentally, spiritually and physically bankrupt when I came into the Fellowship. Everything I have and I am today I owe to this Fellowship. I am grateful to you all.

I hope and pray that each one of us at this Conference will communicate in a spirit of honesty, love and unity. May the God of your understanding guide you well in all your thoughts and deliberations during the hours that lie ahead. Conference is after all COMMUNICATION IN ACTION.

### **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Jim H, the Chairman of the General Service Board, extended a very warm welcome to all delegates and our friends from Europe. The Annual Report of the General Service Board for 1985 was then presented to Conference. In addressing the assembly, Jim said that it was with regret that he had to announce the resignation of Mr. Geoffrey Norman, a non-alcoholic member of the Board. Geoffrey had given some very valuable service to our Fellowship prior to his recent departure from the Board. This had been forced upon him by his professional commitments at the Lord Chancellor's office. Nevertheless, Jim was pleased that the Board were in the happy position to submit to Conference for approval the appointments of two non-alcoholic Board members elect, namely Dr. Ron Wawman, Principal Medical Officer, D.H.S.S., and Mr. Al. Adams, retired Director of Social Services Department, Scotland. Both of the aforementioned gentlemen have already given considerable service to the Fellowship in their respective areas of operation.

We were reminded by Jim of the many celebrations which took place during the past year on the 'Fellowship's 50th Birthday' .

It was gratifying to report the signs of tremendous growth in activity in service, albeit our Group growth was not as high as in previous years, but attendance at meetings appeared to increase.

Jim read two selected excerpts from Concepts 3 and 9 which highlighted the fundamental need for us to trust our leaders, and how we work as a Fellowship within the Twelve Concepts of Service. He then turned to the subject of the General Service Office Lease which expires in September, 1986. It was explained that the repair element in the Lease is a burden which will become an increasing burden in the future. The Landlords have informed us that our rent will be increased by £8000 with effect from October, 1986, and that they will require our current premises for their own usage after September, 1987. Thus, from that date our commitments in London would, more than probably be at an untenable level if they were in line with current London commercial property rentals.

Jim reported that the Board had thoroughly investigated premises in many localities, including

London, with the prime purpose of finding a suitable property to rent. Suitability meant, in this case, were such properties viable both economically and geographically? After due deliberation, the Board decided that York would be the best location. Further to that, it was the considered opinion of the Board that such a relocation would not affect the capabilities of G.S.O. in the discharge of its responsibilities.

We moved on to the next item of Jim's report when he addressed the problem of Legacies in relation to the Seventh Tradition and our charitable status. After much discussion by the Board, and the added benefits of sound legal advice, it was decided to seek a release from our legal obligation to accept monies left to us via a Private Bill in Parliament. Jim stressed that if we were to lose our charitable status, we may well suffer the loss of all of our assets. He emphasised the point that Conference has the final say in the matter, and indeed the responsibility of making the decision as to what course of action we, as a Fellowship, pursue. Conference later unanimously voted in favour of the General Service Board continuing with the action required to facilitate the passage of a Private Bill through Parliament.

The Board Chairman noted with regret that some areas of the Fellowship had not heard about the Private Bill until they had read about it in certain national newspapers, or from other sources.

The Board's apologies were offered by Jim for a mispricing of the Share magazine in January, 1985. The Board took full responsibility for the error, and no fault whatsoever should be apportioned to the Share team. Subsequently, the price increase in January, 1986 was necessitated because the magazine was no where near self-supporting.

Observations were then forthcoming from the assembled delegates, and in the first instance they were with regard to the proposed relocation of G.S.O. It was suggested that liaison with the Head Offices of those National Bodies may prove difficult if those Head Offices were located in London. After discussion, this matter was seen to present no particular obstacle because our Board members are located throughout Scotland, England and Wales. Additionally, there is a tendency toward decentralization. It was thought that the production and distribution of Share may present difficulties if such operations were performed outside of London. Our General Secretary emphasised that both he and the Chairman of the Board were looking toward co-operation with the current Share team to ensure as smooth a path as possible during the transitional period.

London Region expressed anxiety in respect of their ability to provide the necessary level of Public Information services should G.S.O. be located in York. After some discussion no insurmountable problems were apparent.

It was at this point that Jim suggested that we leave the decision as to whether or not G.S.O. move to York until we had heard and discussed the Hon. Treasurer's report.

Colin H rendered a full and detailed explanation of the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the reasoning behind the increase in the price of Share. He also gave a lucid and intelligible explanation of the Sinking Fund and the resultant revaluation which took place during year ending 31st December, 1985. Colin was asked to elucidate further upon one or two items in the accounts, and this he duly did prior to an appreciative round of applause from the body assembled.

Jim, Chairman of the General Service Board, then brought our attention back to the subject of the relocation of G.S.O. to York. He asked all delegates to vote on the matter. The result of the vote was that Conference unanimously agreed to our General Service Office moving to premises in York.

There was a proposal from the floor that the General Service Board consider the appointment of a full time Public Information Officer to be based in London. The proposal was seconded. and Jim said that the Board would consider it.

The General Service Board Report for 1985 was then approved by Conference.

### **FIFTH ANNUAL SERVICE CONFERENCE-WEST GERMANY 29<sup>TH</sup> - 31ST MARCH, 1985**

Frank C attended the Fifth Annual A.A. Service Conference - West Germany, which was held in Frankfurt. Frank's rendering of the report gave us encouragement to laugh with him and share, in reflection, the evidence of tremendous progress being made by our Fellowship in West Germany. He emphasised his appreciation of the great warmth and care extended to him from the very moment he stepped from the aircraft to the time of his departure from Frankfurt.

Frank's presentation is as follows:-

I had the privilege of attending this Conference, and feel very grateful and honoured. This, however, was not my main concern at the time. I was very conscious of the fact that my journey and presence at the Conference should prove to be of value to the Fellowship both in West Germany and at home in Great Britain.

My first evening was spent in Frankfurt among a band of active and enthusiastic workers at the Service Centre. That in itself was well worthwhile, but is not the subject of this Report.

The Conference was held in Darmstadt at the V.D.E.W. Fortbildings Zentrum which is an edifice custom built for students. Excellent residential accommodation, large lecture halls, Dining Room, and even sporting facilities. Incidentally, I neither used nor even saw the Swimming Pool or the other sporting amenities during my weekend visit.

The welcome I received was more than generous; this was due to a great extent to the fact that Joyce C had attended the 1984 Conference. She had created such an impression during her stay that her successor was assured of a great reception. There was no doubt in my mind that Joyce's visit had indeed been valuable. and well worthwhile. So many friends asked me to convey their love and good wishes to Joyce and many others; remember the Third European Service Meeting had been held in March, and the World Service Meeting the previous October. Communication within the Fellowship is improving. All these names I wrote down as I don't trust to memory and my first task when I returned home was to send all these messages of goodwill and affection.

Manfred W of Darmstadt was allocated the task of guiding me through the Conference, and acting as interpreter. This task he carried out efficiently and gently. I don't think I missed very much.

I don't want to enthuse about the love and care of the Fellowship etc.. etc.. because I find myself

occasionally queuing for meals, vying for a good seat in the Conference Hall, reserving seats for immediate friends, hogging the conversation, in fact, competing at Conference. Yet after my weekend, I found that although the language was German, notices were in German, and the food very German, I did not feel that I had been in a foreign country, I had passed a few days among friends and colleagues. In fact when I departed on Sunday afternoon anyone witnessing the occasion would have thought that life long friends were parting with one of their number being transported for life to either Australia or the Siberian salt mines.

During the weekend I could have easily been at one of our own Conferences at Manchester. The atmosphere and procedure was exactly the same. Possibly, we, in Britain, are a little more advanced in organisation and behaviour, but I have no doubt West Germans are steeped in the Traditions, and in the very near future, could well be showing us how to conduct our affairs.

One of the tasks before Conference was the selection and installation of a full time paid General Secretary. Up to the present the General Secretary has been a part-time unpaid expenses only post. A great step forward, and, of course, the General Service Board was accused of not having fully informed the Fellowship of the 'proposed change.' "Secrecy" and "Arrangements" were words that were being bandied about. It all seemed very familiar. Our Service Manual was in constant use. West Germany are in the process of compiling their own Manual. Inge Z presented a report on the Third European Service Conference held in Frankfurt in March.

During the evening our video 'A.A. works one day at a time' was shown and received very favourable comment, in spite of being in English.

On Saturday the Committees set to work. In our own Committee the first task was to find a Committee Secretary. As usual, very difficult; finally a lady 'volunteered'. Then followed discussions on the previous year's work on pamphlets and information sheets, some of which are destined for the P.I. and C.P.C. Handbook now being prepared. Attention was directed to the special care necessary in dealing with the younger members of the community needing help. Much more work must be undertaken to reach them. Comment was also passed on the fact that many Groups showed no interest in Regional and Intergroup activities. Again, our Service Manual was in frequent use during the proceedings, and my most uncomfortable moments were when Manfred would interrupt, and quote the opinion of Frank of Great Britain. Frank being presented as an authority, which he is not.

Sunday morning followed the pattern of our own Conference, perhaps a little more animated at times, but always ending in harmony.

By lunch time another Service Conference had been completed. Progress had been made, activities for the coming year outlined, and we all went our various ways to continue the work of the Fellowship. I thoroughly enjoyed the Conference, received a lot, contributed I think, a little.

My sincere thanks to everyone for the privilege of attending.

## **CONVENTIONS**

At the invitation of the Conference Chairman, the General Secretary reported to the assembly details of a full calendar of Conventions for this coming year:

Northern Convention Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool, 18th-20th April, 1986.



Southern Convention Pontins, Camber Sands Holiday Village, Rye, Nr. Hastings, Sussex, 17th-19th October, 1986.

Scottish Convention Normandy Hotel, Renfrew, 2nd -4th May, 1986.

Blue Bonnets Convention Loreburn Hall, Dumfries, 3rd -5th October, 1986.

Welsh Convention Crest Hotel, Cardiff, 31st Oct. -2nd November, 1986.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN, 1986.**

The undermentioned were proposed and seconded for Chairman of the Twenty-Second General Service Conference 1987;-

BETTY G	GLASGOW REGION
JOHN O'R	SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND
SHIRLEY C	NORTH EAST REGION
PETER M	CHANNEL ISLANDS

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

### **WORKSHOP -"PASS IT ON"**

The Workshop report appears later in this document on pages XIV -XVIII

### **SUNDAY 13TH APRIL.1986.**

The final session of the Conference commenced at 9.15 a.m., and following the Customary Silence, Mike S, the Conference Chairman, invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

The Committee Reports are included later in this report as indicated:-

- 1 "TELEPHONE SERVICES"
- 2 "FINANCE"
- 3 "WORKING WITH OTHERS"
- 4 "COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP"
- 5 "PROBATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES"
- 6 "STRUCTURE AND SERVICES"

### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1987**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented with one exception, namely Peter M who had withdrawn. Shirley C of North East Region was duly elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

A suggestion was made from the floor with regard to the possibility of Conference being held in York, especially in view of the fact that G.S.O. would be relocating to that City. On being questioned, our General Secretary said that York University would be in the position to accommodate us should we wish to use their facilities. Brief discussion then ensued, after which the assembly voted in favour of holding the Twenty-Second General Service Conference in York.

Jim H, Chairman of the General Service Board informed us that this was Sim P's last Conference as he would be retiring from the Board in June, 1986. Sim, we were told, had often been the minority opinion on the Board, but he had always bowed to the Group Conscience. He has been an example in conducting himself honourably, loyally, and with integrity whether in a minority or as part of the majority. He will, indeed, be missed, and his contribution has been immense. Jim continued by informing us that another retirement takes place this year when our longest serving staff member, Elaine I, leaves the General Service Office. Jim expressed the appreciation of the Fellowship for Elaine's contribution towards the work load achieved at G.S.O.

Finally, on behalf of all, Jim thanked Mike S for the vast amount of hard work he had invested prior to Conference. This had been a very important Conference, and a great deal had been achieved. The results were due in no small part to the efforts of Mike and the excellent way in which he had 'chaired' this year's Conference. Sustained applause by all assembled followed close on Jim's heart felt expression of our appreciation.

Mike then closed Conference after thanking all concerned who had contributed towards its success. The Assembly rose to join him in the Serenity Prayer .

Our Twenty-First General Service Conference 1986 was now at an end.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-Second General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York on 10th, 11th, and 12th April, 1987.

## **TWENTY-FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1986**

<b>COMMITTEE NO.1</b>	<b>TELEPHONE SERVICES</b>
<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>ANDY T      NORTH EAST REGION</b>
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	<b>JOAN S      WALES &amp; BORDERS REGION</b>

The meeting opened with a moments silence, followed by the reading of the Preamble by Andy, and the Traditions by James N. Sten G, an Observer from Finland, was warmly welcomed by our Committee.

### **1 .What is the experience of Telephone Answering Services ? .**

Each member was asked to give an account of his or her experiences of Telephone Answering Services. The following systems were in use in the various Regions:

- (i) A.A. manned to different degrees
- (ii) Manned systems in conjunction with an Ansaphone
- (iii) Manned systems in conjunction with call transfers of various types. e.g. Customer Controlled Forwarding and Remote Call Forwarding. Some members had a good liaison with the Samaritans and were able to utilise them as contacts. Others had telephones in meeting rooms and individual members' houses.

The Committee considered these various systems and concluded that a fully manned system by A.A. members was the ideal. Partially manned systems were probably the most practical, depending on the resources available. This could be supplemented by:

- (a) Call transfer systems
- (b) Answering machines of which there are many models which can be used to receive calls and give out messages when no member is available outside manning hours.

We recommend that each Intergroup should contact their local Telecom Office to obtain information of the best systems suited to their needs. Telephones in meeting rooms are a poor alternative, and should be considered only if other manned systems are not available.

Other organisations e.g. Samaritans can be of help, but the Committee felt that calls for help should be answered by an A.A. member. The Committee does not recommend the use of telephones in members' houses due to possible changes of circumstances and lack of continuity of numbers.

## **2 Share experience of a fully manned Telephone Service Office.**

### **(a) What seems to be the minimum resources needed to provide such a service .?**

Many Regions operated partially manned services. None operated fully manned services 24 hours daily, 7 days weekly. The Committee felt that the minimum requirements for a manned service were as follows:-

- (i) An adequate number of trained and sober members to operate the system. Numbers required varied depending on the number of hours the service operated and the number of phone lines available. It was felt that between 30 and 40 people were the minimum necessary to man a system every evening plus an adequate number of "Twelfth Steppers".
- (ii) Ideally it was felt that two lines should be available in the telephone room, one for incoming and one for outgoing calls. Some Regions with lesser resources manage with one line. A majority of the Committee felt that pay phones were unnecessary, and with adequate supervision ordinary phones would not be abused.
- (iii) Premises which were suitable, central and inexpensive were recommended. Toilets and refreshment facilities would be an advantage. Telephone operators only should be in attendance.

- (iv) The minimum annual cost of a manned system was probably well in excess of £500. It was felt that a prudent reserve of not more than six months' running cost should be held.
- (v) It is recommended that a record of both incoming and outgoing calls should be kept.
- (vi) A system of management for the service is essential.

### **3 What is the experience when calls are forwarded by telephone services to local A.A. members ?**

Most Regions found no problems in obtaining sufficient members for 12 Step Work. In London and larger inner cities problems arose due to the environment. The Committee stressed again that two people, preferably male and female, were the ideal 12th Step team.

### **4 Should Regions/Intergroups/Groups hold regular Group Conscience Meetings to ensure that telephone services:**

#### **(a) Fulfil their primary purpose (To communicate the suffering alcoholic's cry for help to an active Twelve Stepper? )**

In some Regions Group Conscience meetings at all levels are held. We recommend that all Regions should do this.

#### **(b) Question whether they involve more members on phone duty or in Office work than is really necessary.**

Yes, no Region felt that too many members are involved at present. The number of calls increased markedly after extra publicity.

#### **(c) Do not create unnecessary paperwork, administration and cost.**

The Committee felt that unnecessary paperwork is not a problem. Costs should be examined on a regular basis, particularly the rising cost of premises.

#### **(d) Question any extra role or function that detracts from the primary purpose.**

Telephone rooms should not be used for meetings, or social gatherings, or for any activities, other than telephone-related duties.

#### **(e) Are recognised as only one of the ways the suffering alcoholic makes contact with A.A. and are only one of our vital services.**

The Committee recognise that although the telephone service is a uniquely useful 12th Step tool, there are other methods of carrying the message, which should also have our support.

### **5 Are Telephone Services unnecessarily diverting funds from other areas of Service?**

The Committee felt that funds are not being diverted unnecessarily. At the inception of a telephone service funds are diverted, but contributions may be expected to increase as the service becomes established.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 The Committee further recommend that Telephone Service Officers should maintain lists of outside Agencies e.g. Al-anon, Gamblers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Families Anonymous, to which callers can be referred, when appropriate.
- 2 The Committee ask the General Service Board to consider the advisability of appointing a G.S.B member with special responsibility for the development of telephone services.

## **COMMITTEE NO.2**

## **FINANCE**

CHAIRMAN: DEREK B LONDON REGION  
SECRETARY: MARIE McC GLASGOW REGION

We were pleased to welcome as Observers to our Committee Louis H from the Netherlands and Joseph D from Belgium.

### **1 Review the Board Report on expenses for Service Workers:**

The Committee thanks the General Service Board for its guidance on expenses for Service Workers, in response to a request from the Finance Committee in Conference 1985.

We felt a few alterations were needed and the amended report is as follows:

- (i) Few things cause more controversy in A.A. than money. A.A. Service Workers' expenses are no exception.
- (ii) The payment of expenses depends upon the Group Conscience of the Region or Intergroup always bearing in mind our Tradition of self support.
  - a) Service could be defined as that which makes the Twelfth Step possible.
  - b) It is agreed that no expenses should be claimed for individual 'face to face' Twelfth Step Work.
  - c) In principle, any member who is qualified to carry out a particular task in our Service Structure should not be prevented from doing so for financial reasons, and should be offered expenses.
  - d) When carrying out an Intergroup or Region function, duly authorised Service Workers should be offered expenses.
  - e) For a variety of reasons Regions and Intergroups will probably differ in their approach to this question, and there may be no uniformity, but there need be no controversy if decisions are taken in the spirit of A.A., with common sense.

### **2 Are Groups, Intergroups and Regions using charge free banking facilities ?**

The number of Groups, Intergroups and Regions using charge free Bank accounts has increased, and many of these are free of Bank charges.

The Committee strongly recommends that all Groups, Intergroups, and Regions should have a Bank account.

### **3 What is the experience of using Bank Paying in Books for contributions from Groups, Intergroups and Regions.**

There is little experience of using Paying in Books to transfer cash from Groups to Intergroups or Regions. However, it was found that where these are used, the system works well.

#### **4 Are all Treasurers aware of the importance of a continual cash flow to GSO?**

It was felt that the great majority of Groups and Intergroups are still not aware of the importance of a continual cash flow to the General Service Office.

A regular flow of funds is essential for our General Service Office to meet its day-to-day obligations, and operate in an efficient and economical manner.

In effect our General Service Office is running at present on the “residual funds” of the Groups, Intergroups, and Regions, and a change of priority is needed.

All Groups, Intergroups, and Regions should accept responsibility for the funding of the General Service Office.

#### **5 After Conference 1985, have Group contributions noticeably increased? (or is the increase due to Groups and Intergroup Treasurers releasing somewhat over prudent reserves?)**

The Committee noted that Group contributions had increased in 1985, but felt that there was no room for complacency as the contributions for the first quarter of 1986 have been disappointingly low, and considerable extra expenditure is anticipated during the rest of this year.

(See attached: Budget for Income & Expenditure in 1986 and Summary of Groups and Intergroup contributions to date)

If our present rate of self support (76.5%) is to be continued there will have to be an increase of 30% in cash contributions to the General Service fund.

Possibly the increase of Group contributions was assisted by the releasing of somewhat over prudent reserves, but we felt unable to comment due to lack of information.

#### **6 What is the experience of Workshops being held by:**

##### **(a) Group Treasurers?**

##### **(b) Intergroup Treasurers?**

Experience of Workshops being held by Group and Intergroup Treasurers was very limited.

Nevertheless, and with reference to question 4, the Committee strongly recommends that Treasurers of Intergroups and Regions should hold, at the very earliest opportunity, Workshops with their Groups and Intergroup Treasurers respectively.

Regional Treasurers and Conference delegates should be encouraged to attend the Intergroup Workshops, and the Regional Board member, the Regional Workshops.

It is also suggested that meetings (on a geographical basis) of Regional Treasurers should be held in the very near future with the General Service Board Treasurer, General Secretary, and Regional Board members attending.

**7. Are written financial reports submitted by:**

- (a) Intergroup Treasurers?**
- (b) Regional Treasurers?**

It is our experience that the majority of Intergroup and Regional Treasurers do produce financial reports.

These are presented at Intergroup and Region Meetings and distributed with the Minutes.

Account reports should be kept simple, and show not only listings of Group contributions, but a Statement of how the money is spent and the balance of cash left in the account.

This Finance Committee would like to re-iterate what was said by the Finance Committee at Conference 1984..

“That the job of Treasurer is one of the most important in the Group and he or she should be a responsible sober member.”

Finally, this Committee felt that a Guideline on Finance was now needed, and they would like to ask the General Service Board to produce a draft Guideline, preferably, by the time of the General Service Conference, 1987.

**COMMITTEE NO.3**

CHAIRMAN: VIC J  
SECRETARY: ELIZABETH G

**WORKING WITH OTHERS**

SOUTH EAST REGION  
GLASGOW REGION

Vic (Chairman) opened the meeting with a few moments silence. He welcomed all present, and a special welcome was extended to Arnold from Norway, Herbert from Germany, Cor from the Netherlands, and Ron, the new General Service Board Member.

**1 Is full advantage being taken of facilities being offered by local radio? -**

Discuss the areas of programming we have been involved in and what have been their main features?

The Committee feel that the local radio is not being used to its full extent, and community and campus radio as well as commercial B.B.C. and hospital radio should be investigated. Experience indicates that information held in the P.I.C.P.C. work books is of value to the work.

**2. Has there been any experience of arranging meetings on the Air as in the United States?**

There has been very little experience in Great Britain of radio broadcasting of A.A. meetings. The Committee suggests that full details be obtained from the U.S.A. and circulated to P.I.C.P.C. officers for development in the U.K.

### **3 How can we best use T.V. whilst remaining within Tradition 11?**

Being aware of Tradition 11, the Committee requests that the General Service Board produce additional guidance for eventual inclusion in the P.I.C.P.C. Workbook as is done for radio with regards to working with, and approaching T.V. companies.

### **4 When talking with others, is enough reference made to the availability of A.A. and the service it provides as opposed to quoting estimated numbers of recovering alcoholics?**

The Committee believe that both the availability and recovery in the Fellowship play a major part in talking with others. Certainly availability of A.A., and the service it supplies will be important at all times, and appears to be treated so.

### **5 What is the experience of A.A. members who go in to run Groups in Private Medical Centres?**

- a) **Do we observe Tradition Seven?**
- b) **Are meetings subjected to internal interference?**
- c) **Are meetings strictly A.A. or are other methods and problems introduced?**
- d) **How can we co-operate more effectively?**

Outside London Region experience of Groups in private medical centres is variable, but we are aware that private clinics are on the increase. The Committee believe that members involved in such service are well aware of Tradition Seven, and all efforts are made to observe that, and others of the Traditions which affect our unity. There have been experiences of attempted interference mostly due to problems other than alcohol, but these have been resolved in that the meeting remains A.A. only, or that the venue has been changed. It is considered that more effective co-operation is being given where members are prepared to take patients to outside meetings, and act as caretaker sponsor for these patients, ensuring that on leaving the centre they will be put in touch with someone nearer their home.

Guideline No. 10 remains relevant.

### **6. What is the experience of P.I.C.P.C. Committees working with:**

- (a) **Large Companies**
- (b) **Small Companies**
- (c) **Trade Unions**

#### **Make recommendations**

The Committee felt that the Fellowship has a long way to go in working with employers or Trade Unions. Experience throughout Great Britain is varied from acceptance to ignoring our approaches.

It is recommended that more concentration should be made in approaching organisations where numbers of different people are collected i.e. Confederation of British Industry, Trade Unions, Chamber of Commerce, Trade Councils, Rotary Clubs, Colleges of Further Education, and particularly Technical Colleges with Courses on Trade Union Studies.



It must not be forgotten that subject to opportunity, individual A.A. members could well make an approach to their own employer, possibly through the occupational medical staff and personnel officers.

**7. Passing the Message to young people.**

What communications do we have with Youth Clubs, Discos, Sports Clubs, Football Clubs etc.?

The Committee believe that a lot of effort is being put into passing the Message to young people. Areas where the Fellowship have had a favourable reception are Youth Fellowships, Venture Scouts, Youth Training Schemes, Y.M.C.A., Young Conservatives, and Young Farmers. We are aware that this field of P.I. still has areas that have yet to be looked at.

The distribution of a poster of the size suitable for notice boards to discos, sports and leisure centres etc. is recommended. The General Service Board are requested to produce a draft poster, suitable for this task for young people, for approval at Conference 1987.

**8. Review the General Service Board Survey on the availability of services for Ethnic minorities.**

The Committee propose that the Board Report on Ethnic Minority Literature together with the translated copies of 'A.A. at a glance', be circulated to all Intergroup Secretaries in order that Groups be made aware of their existence. These pamphlets could be used as posters in such areas as they are required.

**9. Consider the suggestion that a pamphlet be printed to assist the Gay newcomer.**

After considerable discussion the Committee believe that a pamphlet for Gay newcomers is unnecessary, and should not be printed, but that existing literature should be used. i.e. 'Do you think you are different?'

**Addendum to report of Committee No.3. -**

In the light of the strength of feeling at Conference 1985 about Item 4 of Committee No.6, and the discussion on the Friday evening of this year's Conference, at the request of the Chairman of the General Service Board, and following a brief discussion, Committee recommend that the matter of members professionally engaged in work with alcoholics, and whether or not they should hold service office within Alcoholics Anonymous be placed on the Agenda for Conference 1987. Committee further suggest that the General Service Board consider the appropriate procedures for dealing with minority opinion bearing in mind Concept 5.

**COMMITTEE NO.4**

**COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP**

Georgia (Chairman) gave a warm welcome to Observer Raimo, from Finland, and all first year Delegates to the Conference.

**1. How is anonymity treated within the Group, Intergroup, Region? Are we being too anonymous within the Fellowship**

The Committee felt that every effort had to be made to ensure the protection of the newcomer, especially at Group level. Many Groups practise reading the yellow card (What you see here etc. etc. ) At Intergroup and Region, anonymity was better understood and practised.

Are we being too anonymous within the Fellowship?

Yes. The feeling expressed by the Committee was that in some areas it may be necessary to break anonymity for communication purposes.

**2 Should the G.S.R. (General Service Representative) be the Group contact for all A.A. service matters leaving correspondence and finance to Group Secretaries and Treasurers?**

Yes, but Committee felt that the Group Conscience should be the guide. It is important that Groups get all information from G.S.O. either direct to the Secretary, or if they prefer, through the G.S.R. Where the Group Secretary position is a short-term post, then the Group contact would be the G.S.R.

**3 What is the experience of local Intergroup newsheets?**

Few Intergroups have had experience of newsheets, but of those who have, where they were based on Intergroup meetings, they have been found to be successful and interesting, and members look forward to receiving them. There is also success when the Newsheet is kept informative, light hearted, and fairly informal.

**4 What is the experience of Groups and Intergroups purchasing NON Conference-approved literature?**

A few Groups do purchase non Conference approved literature, but the majority do not, and in most cases where members ask for such literature, the Secretary is usually able to assist, but A.A. monies should not be used.

**5 Are the Twelve Concepts discussed at:**

**Region?**

**Intergroup?**

The majority of the Committee answered no, but the feeling was that they would start to be discussed.

**6 Discuss ways to simplify the telephone numbers in the national "Where to Find"**

The Committee felt it was important to keep personal numbers of responsible members in the "Where to Find", as Group contacts, and emphasise the importance of remaining as a contact for a reasonable period, and the responsibility the job carries, and also that the S.T.D. only to be used, and of the importance of G.S.O. being informed as soon as possible of any change of contacts.

**7. Discuss experience of ‘Reporting back’ at all levels in the Fellowship. How can we be more effective ?**

The Committee shared how reporting back is successful from Board to Region through to Intergroup. From the Intergroup to the Group appears to be the stumbling block in reporting back to the grass roots. It was felt that it was quite important to elect the right person for the job when it comes to the G.S.R., and for reports to be sharp and to the point and if possible when reporting try and share some of the feeling, and encourage members to attend Intergroup meetings and Workshops.

**8. Discuss the following questions:**

**Is the Conference Report seen as a faithful document of communication?  
Should a sub-Committee be formed to ensure correct and full reporting?**

**(Reading: The A.A. Service Manual, 1983/84 edition, pages 72-75. Report & Charter Committee.)**

The Committee felt that the Conference Report is seen as a faithful document of communication. and perhaps a little more attention could be given to detail in the Reports of the Friday evening session and Workshops.

**9. Consider the suggestion for a large print copy of the Preamble/Serenity Prayer Card to be made available for people with impaired sight.**

The feeling of the Committee was ‘yes’, there is a need for a large print Preamble/Serenity Prayer Card, and there was a suggestion for two cards, one with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and the other with Preamble/Serenity Prayer, but not as a replacement for the Wallet Card.

**COMMITTEE NO.5**

**PROBATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

We welcomed Michael from Ireland as an Observer, and the new non-alcoholic member of the General Service Board Al Adams.

**1. Review the Prison Guideline**

It was unanimously agreed that Conference accept the Prison Guideline, and Conference asked that the new edition be marked “Revised April 1986” in order to avoid possible confusion. It has been strongly recommended that all Prison Sponsors receive a copy of the Guideline.

**2 How effective is our contact with the Social Services by:**

**Groups?**

**Intergroups?**

**Regions?**

Groups (a),(b), and (c) were discussed collectively, and the overall picture varied very much indeed from Region to Region. The most significant point which emerged from the discussions

was that a business-like letter on headed paper gave the most positive results. There is a growing response and interest by all the Statutory and non-Statutory Social Services, and we must continue to offer a service of trust and help, emphasising that the help we are offering is with the alcoholic problem.

### **3 How effective is our contact with the Probation Service by:**

**Groups?**

**Intergroups?**

**Regions?**

Again, Groups (a), (b), and (c) were discussed collectively, bearing in mind that the Probation Service is covered by Social Services in Scotland.

Talks have been given, the video shown, and after-care co-operation given with the Probation Service. Once again it became clear that the business-like approach gave positive result. In all other Regions contact has progressed with the Probation Services in Courts, Prisons, and in the field, and it would now appear that Alcoholics Anonymous is recognised as a means of recovery from Alcoholism by the Probation Service.

### **4 Have Intergroups appointed Probation Liaison Officers? Discuss experience.**

Nearly all Intergroups in the United Kingdom have appointed Probation Liaison Officers.

Progress is being made, albeit slowly as this is a new area of service calling for commitment, patience, and tolerance. It was recommended that each Region should appoint a Probation Liaison Officer, and that Intergroup Probation Liaison Officers should participate on P.I. Committees. Since the appointment of Probation Liaison Officers, better contact has been established.

The Board Member for Probation Liaison should be invited to Regional/Intergroup Meetings where no officer has been appointed.

### **5 Share experience of contact with local Magistrates.**

Four Regions have had some contact with Magistrates by letter, talks, and showing of the video which has led to good communication. Where contact has been made with the Clerk of the Court, and the Court Probation Officer, further close communication has been established with the Magistrates.

Generally, there has been little contact, and little experience, in this field.

### **6 Has contact been made with all Chief Officers of Probation?**

In almost all Regions contact has been made with the Chief Officer of Probation in England and Wales, and the Social Services Group in Scotland.

### **7. Discuss experience of contact with Local Authority and Hospital Social Services Departments.**

Experience here is somewhat varied, but Hospitals and Local Authorities are covered by H.L.O's and P.I.O's.

It was recommended that letters be sent to the Directors of Social Services to establish further communications.

**8. Have we been successful in giving talks on A.A. to Probation Officers in training?**

No, although some Regions have given occasional talks to C.Q.S.W. (Certificate of qualification in Social Work) students in their local Universities. Limited success has been experienced, but where appropriate local Intergroups should contact Heads of Department of local Universities and Colleges which offer Social Work Courses.

A list of Speakers should be made available to H.L.O's and P.I. Committees to facilitate talks on the A.A. Programme.

**COMMITTEE NO.6**

**STRUCTURE & SERVICES**

The meeting started with a few moments silence, and a reading of the Twelve Traditions. The Chairman extended a special welcome to Pierre F, and Observer from Belgium.

**1. Discuss the present method of selecting Conference Committee Chairmen and Secretaries and make recommendations.**

The Committee recommends that the Chairman and Secretary and their alternates be appointed from first or second year Delegates by members of the various Sitting Committees, to serve on the same numbered committee the following year. If this cannot be achieved, the appointments be left to the General Service Board.

**2. Discuss the present method of selecting Conference Agenda and make recommendations.**

During discussions it was felt that Regions could be more involved in providing material for Conference Agenda.

The Committee recommend that Intergroups and Regions add to all their Agendas:

‘Questions for Conference’

It is noted that each and every Region has a General Service Board member who forms a part of an Agenda Committee.

In the meantime the General Service Board may like to consider the following:

“The proposal that an Agenda Committee be formed of Conference Committee Chairmen and Secretaries, chaired by the Chairman of Conference, and hold meetings with the General Service Board, and on its own, and their responsibility be to determine the identity of the Committees and Agenda for Conference having regard to all requests from Regions for items for inclusion in the Conference discussions.”

### **3. Review the draft pamphlet “Who me?”**

The Committee recommend that with the following minimal alterations, Conference approve this pamphlet:

Outside cover blue.

Back cover - insert the telephone number of G.S.O. and delete the five lines at the top.

Inside page 1- the word “Alcoholism” should be highlighted.

Inside page 1- the words “You’re wrong” replaced with “YES”.

Inside page 1- the 20 questions be medically endorsed, if possible. (Doctors James Valentine and Ron Wawman, non-alcoholic members of the General Service Board agreed to investigate the possibilities of medical endorsement.)

Page 6 “HERE’S HOPE FOR YOU” to be printed in bold letters.

The Committee noted the following mis-spellings:

The word ‘serenity’ inside back cover.

The word ‘definitely’ in “What’s your score?”

The Committee were pleased to see the inclusion of “The Man in the Glass”.

### **4. Review the suggested titles to replace “Public Meeting” at Mini-conventions.**

Group meetings, whether open or closed, should have only A.A. Speakers. In the “Where to Find” closed/open meeting names should be used. The Committee recommends that at mini-Conventions, where non-A.A. Speakers are involved, then the name “shared platform” ought to be used. Tickets and programmes could include explanation as to whether Al-Anon/Al-Ateen Speakers are involved.

### **5. What is the experience of A.A. members holding several offices in one or more Groups ?**

In answer to this question it was found that experience varied from area to area, depending on the number of members available in those areas. The Committee generally felt that holding several offices was not desirable, however, in some cases it is difficult to avoid.

The ‘Home Group’ idea and sponsorship into service are very important.

### **6 Discuss the following suggestion:**

**Review the method of appointment of new members of the General Service Board and consider whether:**

**Regions should elect their one representative member (rather than offer candidates for the G.S.B. Nomination Committee to select the member of their choice).**

**Non-alcoholic members should be appointed for an initial fixed term, (such as the 4 years in the case of alcoholic members) with, at the discretion of the G.S.B., an option to serve a**

**further term of equal length, with the provision that they should serve no more than two terms.**

**Non-alcoholic member appointments should be ratified by/at Conference.**

**Board members who fail to maintain a regular and frequent attendance at Board meetings should be deemed to have resigned from the Board. If so, recommend a percentage attendance, or consecutive number of appearances, below which this condition would be actuated.**

## **MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

(Reading: The A.A. Service Handbook for Great Britain, 4th edition, (1984). Chapter VI pages 21-25. In particular foot of page 23, and all of 24 and The A.A. Service Manual. 1983/84 Edition. Chapter IX pages 91 and 92).

The Committee, with the exception of three dissenting Regions, see no reason for change.

The Committee see no need for change. We wish to express our thanks to our non-alcoholic Board members. No criticism was intended by this proposal.

These are ratified at Conference. The Committee recommend Conference amend the wording in the "Hand Book" at the next printing by deleting the word "not", page 24, 5th line, last paragraph.

The Committee see no need to introduce any regulations as this was an infrequent occurrence.

## **WORKSHOP**

### **"PASS IT ON"**

The Workshop began at 8.30 p.m. on Saturday evening. It was opened by Raymond, and we shared those all important moments of silence prior to the reading of the Preamble. Thus, another meeting of our wonderful Fellowship was underway - given a profound lead by our Presenters, Shirley and Terry. Such Presentations could not but help draw out the language of the heart from the members present.

It would be remiss of us not to mention briefly certain business matters which were raised at the Workshop, namely the proposed move of our General Service Office to York; the understanding of what G.S.R. meant - General Service Representative or Group Service Representative; clarification needed on certain Guidelines, and a point raised with reference to "As Bill Sees It", and our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. One other point was that a specific Region had been mentioned in connection with matters to be addressed on the Agendas of Committees 4 and 6. Raymond, our Workshop Chairman, made note of the business items, two of which were dealt with on the following Sunday morning, and the remainder to be given every attention by our General Service Board. Raymond then stressed that this was an A.A. meeting of sharing, and not a business meeting.

## **WORKSHOP PRESENTATION**

Shirley C  
North East Region

'PASS IT ON...'

In my very early days of coming to the Fellowship a lady A.A. member, who became my sponsor, told me to meet her, giving me the time and place. "Most important" she said, "bring two tea towels". I was there on time. She took me through a large hall to a back room where there was a lot of activity going on. Straight over to the sink. "Dry a few dishes, dear. I will be back". It clicked why I needed the tea towels. I was at a mini-Convention, I found out. By lunchtime I'd had enough of this, and rang my daughter crying "Please come and get me". A hand dropped on my shoulder. "Don't do that, dear". Fortunately I stayed.

When I look back, an awful lot was passed on to me, standing at that sink.

My first time of sharing was at Blackpool. I wasn't 12 months sober. I was getting ready for the big day for about 4 weeks. I wrote it all out, and got it typed to look better. I didn't share this with anyone because I wanted to make an impression. I stepped up on the platform, and the Chairman chatted to me. I sat down, putting my papers in front of me. I said to him, "This is my speech". He looked amazed. "Oh no, we don't do it that way. As we share, it comes from the heart". I was speechless, and petrified. I stood up, and it poured out from the heart. I felt so wonderful afterwards. What a feeling! I had already had so much passed on to me.

I was fortunate enough to be present at the 50th World Convention held in Montreal. What an experience! One of a lifetime. It certainly gave me so much to pass on. My own personal highlight of the whole convention was on the Sunday morning when there was a Big Spiritual Meeting. In that arena of an estimated 60,000 people, they asked for a moment's silence. You could have heard a pin drop. What Spiritual value - the feeling of emotion, the people around me crying. The memory will always stay with me. Little could our co-founders have visualised the growth of this wonderful Fellowship.

A wish came true for me. I was privileged to go to New York Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office. There I purchased the book "Pass it on". One passage at the front of the book tells how Bill Wilson met a member who was a couple of months sober, and thrilled at meeting Bill, who took his hand in his and said simply "Pass it on".

Opportunities for service came along. I was always involved. I was told "Get in there". I became very involved in prison sponsoring. I have found this very rewarding. At one of our mini-conventions we had three girls out on pass in our care from the local open prison. I was sharing in the morning on prisons, and one of the girls said to me "Please let me say something". Naturally we were only too pleased. She stood up there and shared, and she had so much to give. It's a wonderful way of passing it on, visiting prisons.

I just recently had a major operation to discover I have cancer. Why I am mentioning this is because the love and caring sent to me from inmates, male and female, at the prisons where I visit, was just beautiful. When I was fighting alcoholism I was alone. Now I have all this love, prayers and support, and it is this that has sustained me to carry on.

This is my final Conference, and it is such a great privilege to be here. I am always so excited at what there is to take back, to pass on. Following that I feel I should say that I am going back to the ashtrays - but I collect them every week in my home group.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION



Terry C South Midlands Region

The theme for this Conference is, as we know. Communication; and I am deeply grateful to this Fellowship for allowing me to re-learn how to communicate. Alcoholism has progressively destroyed my ability to communicate with myself, my family, my friends, and folk in general.

When I arrived at the doors of the Fellowship, I was a wretched and pathetic mess. I was full of fear, self pity, rage and resentment and, above all, an all enveloping feeling of self-loathing and self hatred. In spite of my bemused mental state, I was aware that I had wasted the last four or five years of my life, slowly destroying myself, and behaving very badly. I had spent those years continually lying to everyone but especially to myself; cheating on everyone; stealing from everyone and often being violent. I was convinced that I was a thoroughly bad lot with no redeeming features whatsoever.

One of the first things that I learned in the Fellowship was that I had been suffering from an illness called alcoholism. When I thought back on it, encouraged by the concept that I had been very sick rather than a moral degenerate, I slowly realised that the vast majority of my anti-social behaviour. had been when I was drunk. I came to realise that when sober I wasn't violent towards anybody, I didn't steal, cheat or betray; and I told fewer lies. I would like to tell you also that I soon learned to tell no lies, but that would not be true.

The habit of lying had become so ingrained that I had got to a stage that I sometimes didn't know the facts from the fiction. I had got to that very sick state where I had actually begun to believe a lot of my own lies. How crazy can you be? And to think that my ego and arrogance gave me great problems with Step Two in my earlier days!

As the nastier facets of my character began to recede with every day that I kept away from alcohol, so the odd acceptable facet of my character began to slowly surface. This process was speeded up when I began to learn that I could only change myself and, painful though this often was, not another individual, let alone the world! With this realisation I gradually began to learn that A.A. was not just about stopping drinking - it was actually a programme for living too.

Consequently my self-loathing began to recede, and I began to be able to communicate with myself. It was often traumatic but it was, as you all know, vital. My dealings with my family and friends, both in and out of the Fellowship were, and are, largely conditional on the stage of my emotional and spiritual welfare; and, that for me, there can be no worthwhile dealings without self knowledge and a modicum of self respect leading, obviously, to a desired state of inner peace.

A.A. taught me that, through giving me a little self respect, and occasion serenity, it allowed me to learn how to accept myself and to communicate with myself and therefore with others.

I began to communicate with my family and friends and was therefore able to begin to put into practice Steps Eight and Nine and enjoy the immense rewards thereof. For instance, it was, and has been, a priceless gift to me that my late father. who was a member of this Fellowship for many years, saw that I was three years sober before he died. I shudder to think of all the pain that

I must have caused him as I drunkenly trod the same painful path that he had done; but any guilt that I may have felt was more than offset in seeing his joy in my recovery before he died.

I have been able, in sobriety, to marry and start my own family. Having been brought up in an alcoholic household, with all the fears and terrors that that entails, I am deeply grateful that my wife (who was also brought up in an alcoholic household) and our two little girls can communicate with me without fear. Our household, thanks to this Fellowship, and its on-going programme, is an ordinary normal house, containing a lot of love, laughter, stability and security.

The gradual return to normality within myself has led to a relationship with my Higher Power. The ego, arrogance, self-pity and resentments in my drinking days left no room for anybody else other than my hurting self-centred self. I was, amongst many other things, a very angry atheist when I first came to the Fellowship. I could accept that alcohol was my problem, I could accept that A.A. could help me find sobriety and reality a day at a time provided I kept away from that first drink, but I could not accept the possibility of some Benevolent Force. "How", I feebly rationalised, "could I be in such a terrible state if this all Loving Force existed?" However, during those first few years, "strange" things began to happen. As I escaped from the limited and bigoted confines of the bottle, metaphorically, my horizons began to expand. At the same time my ego began to recede and my gratitude began to increase. Slowly but surely I began to trust, began to see the better side of people, and began to see that, for me anyway, coincidence upon coincidence had to cease to be simply pure coincidence.

Was it coincidence that one of my two sponsors telephoned me the first time an overwhelming urge to take a drink hit me a few weeks after I had surrendered? As a result of our conversation he invited me to his home and diffused a dangerous situation that I was losing. Or, was it coincidence a few months later when I was alone in a depressing hotel room in Swindon, confronted for a second time by an urge to take a drink, that I should pick up my 24 Hour book and read, for that day, the following: "Having found my way into this new world by the Grace of God and the help of A.A., am I going to take that first drink when I know that just one drink will change my whole world? Am I deliberately going back to the suffering of that alcoholic world? Or am I going to hang on to the happiness of this world?"

After reading that I telephoned an A.A. contact and not room service.

And, was it coincidence a year later when I took my first holiday in six years (any money that I had previously, had gone on paying for the booze and the consequences of drinking it) that when all my efforts to find the contact on this Caribbean Island had failed, I got into conversation with an effete gentleman in shocking pink jodhpurs (who I had been strenuously avoiding for a couple of days!) only to find that he was the contact and that he would take me to the meeting that I wanted and needed.

As I said, for me these coincidences ceased to be coincidences in my eyes and I stumbled clumsily and reluctantly into an awareness of, and then a relationship with, my Higher Power. After that everything became easier as a consequence. This relationship laid low my ego, increased my gratitude considerably and introduced a joy into my sobriety which had not been there often before and which has rarely left me since.

One of the more obvious ways in which this joy has been communicated has been service. I was thrilled to be involved with my home group. It gave me a sense of belonging which I did not

recall ever feeling before. People cared for my well being and I for theirs and there were no strings attached. It gave me a discipline, and there had been none in my life for over a decade. It played an important part in my gaining of some self respect with all the healing benefits thereof. And it provided the logical platform from which to start to become involved in 12th stepping with all the benefits that we all know that this brings. I needed then, as I do now, not to forget the pain, and I desperately wanted to share with others my good fortune.

Later, service with the local intergroup, the Chiltern & Thames, too increased my sense of belonging, my sense of discipline and my sense of responsibility. It did this by adding new perspectives and new dimensions. I slowly realised that there was more to the Fellowship than my home group Beaconsfield Tuesday: By being involved in the caring for 17 other groups it forced me out of the safe chrysalis of my own group and into a much larger world, both physically and mentally and I, of course, benefited from this, as you would understand.

Sadly, I have to report, and it's a programme of complete honesty, that I have not enjoyed service with region yet. It may be possibly too big; it may still be in a relatively young and painful time where the concept of principles before personalities is not always understood or adhered to; or it may be, and this is probably the most likely reason, that I have not matured sufficiently yet to take full advantage of it and enjoy it. I can only try to keep an open mind and hope that this will change.

But this temporary small disappointment does not distract from my overall joy in sobriety, from the great pleasure that I have derived in re-learning to communicate with myself, my family, my friends, and my Higher Power.

In closing, I know that I cannot improve Upon the opening paragraph of the Chapter "Unity, the Second Legacy" in the book "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age". It reads as follows :  
"Today we in A.A. are together and we know that we are going to stay together. We are at peace with each other and with the world around us. So many of our conflicts are resolved that our destiny seems secure. The problems of yesterday have produced the blessings of today."

FRIDAY, 10th APRIL

The Twenty-second General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York. This was a completely new venue for our Conference, which had been held for the last nine years at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester and prior to that for twelve years at the Midland Hotel, Manchester.

The registration and reception commenced at 4.00 p.m. with the distribution of delegates folders and conference material.. That period of some two hours provided an ideal opportunity for delegates and observers to get together, ask the inevitable questions prompted by unfamiliar surroundings and drink both the coffee and tea urns dry: No doubt, our new hosts will become accustomed to our need for soft beverages.

The Conference comprised 84 delegates from 14 Regions, 2 delegates from the Channel Islands, 2 delegates from the magazines, 'Share' and 'Roundabout' , 25 members of the General Service Board, 9 observers from Europe -including 2 from Ireland, Shirley C. Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and 3 staff members from G.S.O. York.  
Total attendance of 127.

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE**

The first plenary session commenced at 8.30 p.m. - the Conference Chairman, Shirley C. (North East Region) called for the customary moments silence, read the Preamble and then called upon the General Secretary to read the Twelve Traditions.

Shirley C., extended a heart felt welcome to all those assembled and invited everybody to "enjoy it", as indeed she herself had been advised. She thanked the Board, General Secretary and G.S.O. staff for the help given to her prior to Conference and then presented her Keynote address:-

When I left Conference last year I felt like a "Queen with no crown " with members shaking my hands and extending their good wishes and myself saying over and over again "thank you, thank you".

I went back to Leeds in a daze. Jake from Humberside was driving and Derrick another member from Bradford kept laughing at me and said "You should have 'Love in Service' for the theme because you have given both". I thought that was lovely.

When I got home nobody was in.

I rang my sponsor first - no answer. I tried members no answer, it was unbelievable, no-one was at home! of my home group - I felt that I would burst when, fortunately, I got hold of a member and blurted it all out. The news did travel fast; my 'phone was red hot that evening with messages of goodwill which made me realise, more than ever, that Love in Service is a two-way

thing.

It was at Group level that I received my first experience of love from the members at the meeting and it grew as I grew. Some of it was very painful. I didn't always like what I was told but I learned that it was because I was loved and they cared.

Service is anything that helps us to carry the message to reach a fellow sufferer but it begins in the A.A. Group. I was twelfth-stepped into service. I became the G.S.R. for my home Group.

It is important that all groups have a G.S.R. otherwise it is isolated from the rest of the Fellowship and cannot participate in the Group Conscience of A.A. as a whole.

I would sit at Intergroup, listening intently, writing it all down to the best of my ability then taking it back to my home Group. I would read my report out at the beginning of the meeting so that they would have to listen to me. That's love for you!

On the one hand, I was full of anxiety, worried that I wouldn't be able to do the job properly and yet, on the other, so grateful that I had the chance to serve the fellowship. The Tradition of anonymity was new to me. The concept of doing service without telling the whole Fellowship was difficult at first.

I was fortunate to be asked to become a Prison Sponsor, moving into Prison Liaison at Intergroup and Regional level. I learned so much from communicating: Prison Governors and staff, Probation officers and, of course, the Prison Sponsors themselves. Writing letters - what a worry that was to me. Had I written it correctly? Even now, I still believe that I can express myself better in person than on paper. However, I realise now that this was comparatively unimportant and what really matters is that I always try to remember my primary purpose - to help that one newcomer who has a drinking problem.

I became so involved that I took the prisons and their 'guests' as my 'baby'. Fortunately for me and the Fellowship, my Higher Power, as I understand Him, guided me when the time came to me to hand over at Intergroup level when my term of service was completed. It was very difficult for me but I knew that rotation was important to give someone else the wonderful opportunity to experience Love in Service.

At one of our Prison Liaison Regional Meetings we discussed getting Prison Sponsors into action. It was suggested 'put your hand on their shoulder and guide them into service'. The love I received and put into prison sponsorship was, and still is, unbelievable.

In Alcoholics Anonymous we all work together around and through service. It is important that the parts of A.A. all fit and work together. I had to learn to see things from another's viewpoint with love and tolerance and be responsible for informing our new members of all aspects of service -then maintain it. We must do this or we fail in our mission to those who need and seek Alcoholics Anonymous.

The symbol of A.A. is a triangle which binds together Unity Service and Recovery within the circle of Love. What is a triangle without all three sides? it was through service that I experienced the true meaning of unconditional love - being able to give without recognition or reward.

But isn't it wonderful to see the results of service working? After all, aren't we told that things can happen beyond our wildest dreams? They certainly have for me.

In time, I was privileged to attend Conference. Conference represents a vast pool of A.A. experience, strength and hope gathered over decades from A.A.s all over the country. It is a wonderful experience meeting more members of the Fellowship - some for the first time, some we have met before at conventions or other meetings and to sit having a cup of tea together before the work starts. we go to our dormitories and pray - at least I do.

That's what it is all about:

Loving and forgiving,  
And having time to spare,  
To make some person happy,  
By showing that you care.

Oh! I do care, and love you all. Alcoholics Anonymous is my life.

God be with you.      SHIRLEY C.

### **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Jim H., the Chairman of the General Service Board, extended a very warm welcome to all delegates and our friends (observers) from Europe. He acquainted those new to Conference with his plans for the ensuing fifteen minutes or so, and went on to state that he would be retiring by rotation with effect from the close of this Conference. Such retirement by rotation also applied to Colin H., the Hon. Treasurer, and he further informed the meeting that James C., South West Scotland Region and Board member responsible for P.I. in Scotland would also be leaving the Board. He then asked Conference to endorse the following appointments to vacant offices within the G.S.B. :- Colin N., Highlands and Islands Region as Chairman, Peter M., Midlands Region and responsible for Prisons in England and Wales, as Hon. Treasurer. Conference endorsed the aforementioned appointments. Jim continued by appraising those present with the old system whereby Board members elect did not attend the Conference which ratified them, but took on their duties after the event without the benefit of witnessing the proceedings and attending Committee Meetings. This year, the procedure had been changed because so many Board members were retiring by rotation and offices on the Board would have been left vacant until the July meeting of the G.S.B. Thus, Jim presented the following Board members elect to Conference for ratification:-

Pat O.	Eastern Region	
Duncan MacD.	Highlands and Islands Region	
Ian T.	London Region	
Jean D.	Midlands Region	
Richard H.	North East Region	
Jim K.	Scotia Region	
Terry C.	South Midlands Region (Not in attendance)	
Agnes Curran M.B.E.	Non-Alcoholic	
Bill Weston	Non-Alcoholic	(Not in attendance)

The appointments to the Board of the three Non-Alcoholic and seven Alcoholic member elect were unanimously approved by the assembled body. Jim gave brief details appertaining to the new Non-Alcoholic members. Alison Barnes is Hon. Treasurer of the Health Visitors Association and a Senior Nursing Officer. Agnes Curran is a retired Prison Governor and holds substantial Nursing qualifications and Bill Weston is the general Secretary of the Association of Chief Probation officers. All three were wholeheartedly welcomed by the Fellowship.

The new alcoholic Board members had already signified their willingness to take on the following offices directly after Conference:-

Share	Pat O.
Probation (England and Wales)	Ian T.
P.I. (Scotland) -	Duncan MacD.
P.I. (England and Wales)	Terry C.
Prisons (England and Wales)	Richard H.
Hospitals (England and Wales)	Jean D.
Social Services A.A. Contact (Probation) (Scotland)	Jim K.

Jim then refreshed the meetings memory regarding the Private Bill and events leading up to its birth. The Board had been informed that any Legacy received or receivable prior to the Bill becoming an Act, would have to be retained by the Fellowship. Thus, the Bill could not have been set in motion without the Board's agreement, and furthermore the Fellowship in Great Britain could have been denuded of its assets if any previously received legacies had been donated to some other body after the Act became law. Hence, it could not be made retrospective. Subsequently, Conference 1986 approved - after some discussion - the actions of the Board. When the Bill became law under the name of the "Alcoholics Anonymous (Dispositions) Act 1986, the Fellowship were enabled to follow their long standing intentions of observing in all respects the 7th Tradition whilst obeying the law of the land. Conference again endorsed the Boards action and on this occasion, the happy outcome.

The meeting was informed that the results of the 1986 survey should be received shortly. The response of the Groups had been a dramatic improvement on the last survey. Indeed a 53% return had been realised. The Board report indicated the number of groups in Scotland to be 688 as at 31st December 1986. However, further information (received at G.S.O. since the printing of the report) showed that the actual number of Groups in Scotland totalled 731 as at 31st December 1986. The updated figure appears in the delegates folders within the general section.

Jim mentioned the tremendous amount of effort put in by the London Regional telephone Service members during their move from Tachbrook Street in south west London to the first floor of G.S.O's old premises in Redcliffe Gardens. Questions and comments were then invited. A two part question was then put to the Chairman as follows:-

a) Why did 'Share' have a Board member responsible for its activities and 'Roundabout' did not have such a G.S.B. member? and b) why did Scotland not have a Board member responsible for Telephone Services?

The answer to the former question was that the General Service Board have taken on responsibility for 'Share' and that in Scotland 'Roundabout' is the responsibility of the Scottish Service Committee. The response to the latter question was that England and Wales experienced the major problems regarding 'Telephone Services'. The General Secretary was then requested to report on G.S.O's move to York. Jack stated that the usual relocating difficulties had been experienced, all these had in turn been exacerbated by building work for the first four and a half months of occupation. However, all the staff are now quartered in their appropriate offices. The computer has been installed, and certain functions are being carried out on a multi-user system. G.S.O. has witnessed its fair share of the usual new-user problems, and the staff are eager to overcome the difficulties presented to them. The actual installation provides eight work stations (Visual Display Units and keyboards) and all Groups Intergroups and Regions have been keyed into the Central Processor.

It was at this point that Jim invited the Hon Treasurer to elucidate upon the Fellowship's financial affairs.

Colin H. proceeded to render a very comprehensive explanation of the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and highlighted certain comparisons relating to the figures presented to Conference in April 1986. Those assembled were brought up to date with the contributions received during the first quarter of 1987. The Fellowships increasing awareness of responsibility regarding A.A's 7th Tradition was portrayed in the following figures:-

Contributions to 31.3.86	£17,560
Contributions to 31.3.87	£27,919

Special mention was made of the Share Teams constant striving to become fully self-supporting and the meeting was informed that the diligent and industrious efforts of the team were now beginning to bear fruit.

Colin continued by explaining the benefits of computerisation at G.S.O. telling us that the current computer Hardware (machines) should look after the needs of the Fellowship for the next ten years, and giving some details regarding the salaries, the move to York, travel expenses, professional charges, P.I. expenditure, investments, conference expenses, etc. etc. Such was the open and in depth nature of the Treasurers report that only one observation was forthcoming from the floor; and that concurred with one of Colin's previous statements. He then left the platform for the last time, and the gratitude for his unstinting efforts over the past four years was expressed in the subsequent applause.

Jim thanked him for the tremendous amount of work he had put into the office of Hon. Treasurer.

The General Service Board Report for 1986 was then approved by Conference.

## **NINTH WORLD SERVICE MEETING - GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA CENTRAL AMERICA -19TH-23RD OCTOBER 1986**

Raymond McC. and Jim H. attended the Ninth World Service Meeting and Raymond thanked the Board for the privilege, he gave a vivid description of a very large Intergroup meeting he attended whilst in Guatemala and briefly described a visit to G.S.O. in New York on route to the



venue of the World Service Meeting.

Raymond's presentation was as follows:-

The 9th World Service Meeting took place in Guatemala City, Guatemala Central America. It began on 19 October 1986 in the Camino Real Hotel at 2.30pm with the Registration of the delegates from 26 countries. Represented were Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Central America Northern Zone (Guatemala, Honduras), Central America Southern Zone (Costa Rica), Colombia, Finland, French Speaking Europe (Belgium, France), German Speaking Europe (West Germany, Switzerland), Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales), Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Trinidad/Tobago, and the United States/Canada. Unfortunately, the delegate from Norway had to pullout at the very last minute.

The Registration was virtually a Reunion of the Second Term Delegates, who were meeting each other again for the first time in two years -a very happy occasion! An open AA meeting followed the completion of the Registration.

At 8.30pm after dinner, the World Service Meeting started in earnest, with the "Welcome" and Opening Prayer, given by Jorge Roca y Roca, Class A Trustee of Guatemala. This was followed by the presentation of "The Keynote Address" by Raymond M. of Scotland. True to Tradition, some of the First Term Delegates gave their Personal Service Highlights. Throughout the whole proceedings there were simultaneous translations in English/Spanish.

Early Monday morning saw the start of the business Agenda. The main committees dealt with "Agenda for the World Service Meeting", "Literature and Publishing", "Policy, Admissions and Finance", and "Working with Others". Reports were given on the European and Ibero American Service Meetings. Workshops were held on "Understanding the Twelve Concepts", "Communications between Countries", "Carrying the Message to Prisons and Hospitals", "AA in a Changing World", and an "Unstructured Workshop".

There were Presentations and Discussions on "Telephone Services in AA", "Carrying the Message into Prisons and Hospitals", "What Makes a Good Leader in AA?", "How Can We Make Service in AA More Attractive?", and "Regional Forums". There were reports on all of the Workshops and lengthy discussions on the recommendations from the Committee Meetings.

All Reports, Recommendations and Presentations can be found in the Official Report of the World Service Meeting.

One of the main reasons for holding the World Service meeting in Guatemala was that, although AA is particularly strong in that country (they have over 10,000 members with a population of 8,000,000!), they have no structure which includes Hospitals or Prisons. So when Hospitals and Prisons were mentioned in the Agenda, they were always very attentive. Their Delegate expressed the feeling that, when he heard how so many countries were successful in this field (some countries more than others), he felt very sad that such a structure did not exist in his own country. Now that he had heard the experiences from around the world he was going to pass the message very strongly to his own General Service Board. He requested copies of our Guidelines on all relevant subjects.

(At a Special Intergroup Meeting held in honour of the WSM Delegates the Delegate from

Guatemala expressed his findings, and his views, publicly, and a resolve was given that something would be done - with urgency!! It made the whole thing worthwhile!!)

Many countries, including Guatemala, showed particular interest in our handling of Finance. They were very keen on our pamphlet "Money Matters".

It was discovered that our video "One Day at a Time" is widely used throughout the world. Ireland, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand all use it, as it is, with the address and telephone number of their General Service Offices being the only change. Finland, Sweden, and Belgium have had it dubbed in their own language, and France has had sub-titles inserted. Since the WSM, because our video system is not compatible with theirs, a film has been sent to Guatemala, so that they may make their own. They have expressed great delight at this, because, although they wanted to make one of their own, the expense was going to be prohibitive.

On the subject of how to handle the situation where Anonymity is broken at Public level, Sweden expressed a desire to have a copy of the letter that our Secretary sends to such culprits. This has been done.

For many years Great Britain supplied literature to all of the Sterling Area - including Australia. But for some years now, the latter have been buying their literature from GSO New York (apart from "The Big Book", which they now print in their own right). During the course of the WSM they discovered that Britain has "translated" the literature into English. They were about to do the same thing, and now wonder if some time and expense could not be saved, by purchasing from us again. Samples have been sent.

One of the most important discussions was on "THE CONCEPTS" - how the Fellowship should be made more aware of them, and how they could be better understood. GSO New York, with permission of their Conference, have retained Bob P. to write a simple explanation of them, and an Illustrator has been commissioned to illustrate them in simple terms. Other suggestions are included in the Official Report.

To maintain our Tradition of Anonymity with the Media, many countries write to their National Press annually, to thank them for their co-operation in maintaining Anonymity over the past year, and ask for similar co-operation in the ensuing year.

After listening to the experiences of other countries, it would appear that we in Britain are sadly lacking as far as passing Our Message through the Media, is concerned. The majority of the countries present have Radio and TV spots informing the Public at large about the Fellowship and giving GSO addresses and telephone numbers - and all for free! In many cases this is broadcast under "Health Education" .

A disturbing fact came to light during one of the Discussion Sessions. It appears there is a breakaway membership in Mexico, who have set up their own publishing company - printing "The Big Book" in Spanish (the one which is under copyright in the USA) without permission! After lengthy discussion the Delegates of the WSM officially requested that the GSB of US/Canada should look into the matter with some urgency.

But also from Mexico came a very uplifting report! There is a prison on an island 300 miles off the coast. It is served by Prison Sponsors who take turns to visit it once per month in order to

hold AA Meetings. To do this, the Sponsors have to remain on the island for eight days! During this time they have to be like the inmates themselves, and have to abide by all the rules and regulations and they are never short of Sponsors! This should put some of us to shame!

Towards the conclusion of the WSM, each of the Second Term Delegates in turn expressed their gratitude for the privilege of being present, and shared their opinions of what the results of the Meeting might be. This was on Thursday evening, and it was a very emotional experience, since this would be the last time many of these Delegates would be meeting each other ever again. But what was even more emotional was the close of this meeting when a Delegate from each country represented said the Serenity Prayer in the language of that country.

The Finale was a Banquet in honour of all the World Service Meeting Delegates given by the GSB of Guatemala. Also present were the GSBs of Honduras and Costa Rica, and the Literature Committee of the Central Zone of America. It was a truly magnificent affair, and I doubt if the hospitality could ever be surpassed!! The "Marimba Band" is one of the most popular sources of music in this part of the world, and on this evening there were SEVEN National Marimba Bands! The highlight of the evening came when a composition, entitled "Service Through Love and Humility", especially written for AA by a composer (who is also a member of the Fellowship), was performed for the very first time in public. At the end of the evening, each Delegate was presented with a small sachet of Guatemalan soil, a copy of the tape of the new Composition, and other small mementos of Guatemala.

To try and express the emotional experiences of the days of the World Service Meeting, is beyond this writer's ken. I would venture to say that only one word might cover it to a certain extent - LOVE! The days spent in hard work were certainly mentally and physically exhausting, but well worth the effort.

A great debt of gratitude is owed to all the members of GSO New York. John B., the Manager, who acted as Chairman at all the General Sessions, Helen T., who is the Co-ordinator for the 9th WSM, Eileen G., Sarah P., and Lyla B., who acted as Secretaries at the Committees and as Reporters at the Workshops, and to Helenor and Frank who acted as "Gofors", and also, to all the translators who managed to translate - even "the language of the heart". Without any of these people, each with his/her own expertise, the WSM would not have been possible. They all worked very hard, and at the same time gave us their Love and Understanding. They certainly lived up to the Theme of the Meeting - "Service Through Love and Humility".

#### **FOURTH EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING - FRANKFURT, WEST GERMANY - 6<sup>TH</sup> - 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1987**

Prior to giving his report, Colin N. thanked Conference for confirming his appointment as Chairman of the General Service Board for the ensuing four years.

Colin's presentation was as follows:-

It gives me great pleasure in presenting the Fourth European Report of the Meeting held in Frankfurt at the Hotel National. The Keynote address was presented by Helen Turnquest from the G.S.O. in New York. She brought us all many good wishes from the States for a successful weekend. The theme of the Meeting was To Serve is to Live. The Meeting started with the Roll

Call and Orientation, the presentation of Reports and sharing session by the Delegates from:-

Belgium, Flemish speaking	Denmark	Holland
Iceland	Ireland	E.S.I.G.C.E.
Finland	Italy	Malta
France	Germany	Great Britain
Norway	Poland	Sweden
Belgium, French speaking	Switzerland	

Most of the Countries were represented by two Delegates. I was fortunate to have been present at the last two European Service Meetings, so I was able to compare the improvement in the Fellowship in Europe. They have come a long way in the last few years, but we must keep carrying the message as the feeling coming from the Meeting was that they would like to have the same structure set up as we have in the U.K., so I think it is imperative that we encourage some of the Countries to send observers to our own Conference at York in future years. I think one of the happiest moments for us all on the weekend was the Polish Delegate's Report - when Aleksandra spoke she highlighted the growth in A.A. in her Country. At the second European Service Meeting four years ago there were only fourteen groups - this year to date there are now one hundred and forty-nine groups and still growing. On the Saturday we broke into three Committees:-

- (1) Agenda/Policy/Admissions/Finance;
- (2) Literature and Publishing;
- (3) Working with other Countries.

Later on we had another session of workshops.

- (1) Sponsorship;
- (2) Sharing;
- (3) Service.

Could I say we had a very good discussion and if the Delegates carry the message of the European Service Meeting back with them to their own people, A.A. may get well established in Eastern Europe. By the sounds of things they badly needed A.A. In June of 1951 Bill w. wrote an article for Grapevine entitled To Serve is to Live. It was an account of the very first General Service Conference which was held in April that year. He said in part "The Single Purpose of our Conference was to Serve A.A. Throughout the World". This unexciting statement now carries a deep meaning to us all.

I would like to close with Bill's words as he described the final session of the First General Service Conference:-

"The conference scene that Sunday afternoon when we last met will always be a precious memory in the annals of A.A. For in that historic assemblage we could all hear the voice of Alcoholics Anonymous. These were the words: 'To Serve A.A. is to Live'. We gladly accept our Third Legacy and may we guard it well and use it wisely. God grant that the Legacy of Service remain ever safe in our keeping. In that final hour the torch of service did pass from the hand of us who are older to yours which are younger. It passed to every oncoming generation of

those children of the night whose darkness, God willing, shall be banished within the society of Alcoholics Anonymous all through the bright years which destiny surely holds in store for us.’

Could I say thank you to all the Delegates for making this a happy and memorable weekend, also Jack, our General Secretary and the two girls from the office, Chris and Mary, for getting the Reports ready on time for all the Delegates. The next Chairman elected to serve at the European Service Meeting in 1989 was Barney from Cork, a very good choice. I wish him well and every success in his term, in the Chair.

## **SECOND POLISH SERVICE CONFERENCE ZAWIERCE, POLAND 20TH - 21ST SEPTEMBER 1986**

Theme:-

### **“FOR UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A.A. IN POLAND”**

When I was asked by the G.S.B. to act as British representative and observer at the Polish General Service Conference I adopted the usual A.A. policy of saying “yes”, although I viewed the prospect with some trepidation. This would be my first visit behind the iron curtain, as far as I knew I would be alone, and I gathered that there seemed to be some doubt as to the authenticity of Polish A.A. As is usually the case, in the event, my fears proved groundless.

In view of the short notice received from Poland, it was necessary for me to make a special trip to the Polish Embassy in London to obtain a visa and currency vouchers. This was a very tedious process, involving queuing for long periods, such that I was beginning to have grave doubts about the poster on the wall announcing “Poland Welcomes You”.

At Heathrow I met Hubert, the Irish representative, and we took off for Warsaw. I was hoping that Hubert would have more information than I about where we were going and what we were doing because, due to the rushed arrangements and the long delays in the Polish postal service, I had no idea where the conference was to be held or any other details. The only document I possessed was a scrap of paper bearing the name and address of my host, Slawek. Hubert, it transpired was equally ill-equipped. From a Polish gentleman, who was sitting with us, I discovered that my destination was a three-hour train journey south of Warsaw. Hubert was much luckier, his hostess lived in Warsaw and all he would need would be a taxi .

On arrival at Warsaw, Hubert and I parted company and I went off in a taxi to Warsaw Central Station. Fortunately I had armed myself with a Cook’s continental railway timetable and our Polish friend had written, on a second scrap of paper, in Polish “may I have a ticket to Sosnowiec please” and “what platform please”. At this point our Polish friend deserted me and I can recall, at this juncture, feeling somewhat apprehensive, lonely and vulnerable, in a strange land with not a word of Polish. After queuing again for ages, I eventually reached the ticket window, shoved my scrap of paper and a bundle of Zlotys at the clerk and was given a ticket and a note of the platform in exchange.

The train journey was quite pleasant and I discovered from fellow-travellers that, when I reached Sosnowiec, I should have to continue my journey by taxi. When I left the train, I stood in another queue for a taxi. Queuing seems to be something of a national pastime in Poland. The taxi driver spoke no English, but this was no surprise, because neither did anyone else that I had met

up to this point. I showed him my scrap of paper and off we went. By this time it was pitch dark and the driver had some trouble finding the address, we were lost in a huge estate of apartment blocks, the streets deserted and, to me, heavy with menace. I was beginning to feel the way I have felt on one or two Twelfth Steps - "I shouldn't have come, I shouldn't have come". At last we found the correct address and Slawek and his wife Maria gave me a very warm welcome and a much-needed meal. I had assumed that Slawek spoke English (he had written to G.S.O. in a kind of English). He didn't, the letter had been written by someone else! We conversed very slowly with the help of a Polish/German dictionary, a method not recommended for selling double-glazing!

The next day the Conference started, Slawek was the chairman, so we had to be up and away very early. Zawiercie, the town where the conference was to be held, was an hours drive from home and there was much preparation to be done. The delegates arrived continuously all morning and I began to get that feeling of warmth and love in A.A. as I was introduced to first one and then another and all the anxieties of my journeyings were forgotten. The language of the heart was essential, I still hadn't found an English-speaker. I spent the morning shaking hands, being hugged and trying to communicate by signs until, about mid-day, Hubert arrived with his hostess, Aleksandra, a very attractive lady who spoke quite fluent English. At last, all was well!

The conference was a very different kettle of fish from our own or the German conferences, more a convention. There must have been 500-600 people attending, apparently all Polish A.A. members are entitled to be there with non-A.A. friends, Al-Anon members and any other interested parties including, of course, we foreign visitors from the U.S.A., West Germany, Great Britain and Ireland. There were also two visitors from Czechoslovakia, recovered alcoholics, not A.A. members but hoping to start A.A. in their homeland. The conference was held in a sports complex, by our standards rather primitive, with very limited accommodation, just twenty five rooms. Most of the delegates had to sleep on the floor in the gymnasium and had brought their own food, no meals were provided. Slawek and I went through the day with sandwiches provided by his wife.

Proceedings began in the afternoon with a GSB report on the growth of AA in the preceding year, a financial report and a report on the literature situation. This was followed by an address from each of we foreign observers including the Czechs. We were all very well received. Aleksandra interpreted for Hubert and myself. This concluded Saturday's proceedings and Slawek and I set off for home. Meanwhile, so I understand, a marathon AA meeting started which went on until 6.30am on Sunday morning.

The next day Slawek and I were up and out again very early because an AA mass had been arranged for 7.30am. This was quite a lengthy affair which took something like two hours. We were treated to two long sermons, one for the general congregation and a second, at the end, for the benefit of the AA members.

We reconvened at 10.30am in the large hall with spectator seating which was the venue for the proceedings. An election to choose the seven new board members was undertaken. Apparently the whole board is changed every two years. The board members elect spoke of their plans and intentions for their forthcoming terms of office. I couldn't help feeling that this "clean sweep" every two years would lead to some lack of continuity, combined with the fact that they did not seem to have any non-alcoholic trustees, and that the minimum period of sobriety for a board member is a mere twelve months. I had the impression that the whole structure was on rather

thin ice.

It is unfair of me to criticise, however. AA in Poland is still very young and unformed. We, in the west, with fifty years of experience behind us are still having teething troubles.

At the conclusion of the conference the chairman gave a closing address thanking the outgoing board members and welcoming the new. He thanked especially we foreign observers, who had taken the trouble to attend, and also expressed appreciation to AA in the west for the help essential to the introduction of AA in Poland. At the present time Poland is the only eastern country with any AA structure at all. There is "something going on in the USSR" but they are not sure what. Moves are afoot in Czechoslovakia, but apart from this, AA has not yet gained any ground behind the iron curtain. The message I got from the Polish members was "You help us and we'll look after Eastern Europe".

This seemed logical to me. Overtures are more likely to be considered if they emanate from another communist country rather than from the west.

The conference closed in the early afternoon and, whilst waiting for Slawek to clear up the administrative details, I made my farewells and gave my particular thanks to Aleksandra for her help. I returned home with Slawek and the following morning made the return journey to Warsaw and the flight to Heathrow.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Fellowship for allowing me this unique pleasure and privilege.

### **AA IN POLAND - A VIEW**

The origins of AA in Poland are somewhat obscure. The first appearance reported was in 1959/60 when a Polish doctor, who had practised in the USA, returned home. No one seemed to know if he was a member or not. From 1960 into the seventies groups calling themselves AA appeared, but as far as I could ascertain, they seemed to be part of and confused with the state alcoholism service known as "Teetotal Clubs". In the early days of the struggle AA had to contend with opposition from the two most powerful bodies in Poland, the Catholic Church and the Communist government, both autocratic institutions hostile to organisations which they can't control. Since then, over the years, the attitude of the Church has mellowed and it is now completely co-operative. The present attitude of the state is that AA is ideologically unacceptable - but it works. In other words, it is an illegal organisation which is tolerated. It is interesting to note that when Hubert and I applied for our visas, we had to give as our reason for travelling to Poland "visiting friends". We were not allowed to mention AA - it doesn't exist!

In the early eighties autonomous AA groups were beginning to emerge and the first national meeting of group representatives took place. From this grew a temporary working committee to organise a national structure. This committee was responsible for convening the First National Conference in Poznan in 1984, where the first seven trustees were elected. One voting delegate from each group was allowed and at this first conference there were 34 groups represented. The trustees meet at two-monthly intervals to discuss policy and organisation within the Fellowship. Each trustee has a specific responsibility:

- 1 AA Service Conference
- 2 Secretariat

- 3 Finance
- 4 Literature
- 5 Co-operation with others (PI)
- 6 Structure
- 7 Archives

When a national structure was beginning to emerge in 1984, Poland had 34 groups and 500 members. In 1986, 112 groups and 1500 members. To date there are 140 groups and 2000 members. This is tremendous growth in a very poor country with chronic shortages of everything, even things we take for granted like paper, stationery items and duplicating facilities are expensive and difficult to obtain. They have performed miracles in the way of producing literature, having their own Big Book, 12 and 12, wallet cards etc, and a quarterly magazine similar to Share. Like us they find that they are attracting younger alcoholics, particularly younger women. Like us, too, they have difficulty in staying solvent and persuading groups to contribute sufficient funds. They have made great strides in the field of PI with the press, TV, the medical profession etc, all this whilst continually looking over their shoulder at a disapproving state machine. From what I saw and heard in Zawiercie, AA in Poland is on the move, will continue to grow and will be a springboard for the onward march of AA in Eastern Europe.

Hugh T, GSB

## CONVENTIONS

At the invitation of the Conference Chairman, the General Secretary reported to the assembly details of a full calendar of National Conventions for the coming year.

Northern Convention	24-26 April 1987
Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool	
Scottish National Convention Normandy Hotel, Renfrew	1-3 May 1987
Southern Convention	9-11 October 1987
Pontins Holiday Village, Camber Sands, Rye, East Sussex	
Welsh Convention Crest Hotel, Cardiff	6-8 November 1987

## NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN, 1988

The undermentioned were proposed and seconded for Chairman of the Twenty-Third General Service Conference 1988:

PAUL C	NORTH WEST REGION
SYLVIA O'T	SOUTH EAST REGION
GEORGE McN	SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND REGION
DIANA J	SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. Their formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.



The first session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

### **SATURDAY, 11th APRIL WORKSHOP - "LOVE IN SERVICE"**

The Workshop reports appear later in this document on pages XX-XXIII.

### **SUNDAY, 12th APRIL -**

The final session of the Conference commenced at 9.15am, and following the Customary Silence, Shirley C, Conference Chairman, invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports, which were fully discussed, amended where necessary, and adopted.

The Committee Reports are included later in this report as indicated:

- 1 TELEPHONE SERVICES
- 2 FINANCE
- 3 AGENDA COMMITTEE
- 4 COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP
- 5 WORKING WITH OTHERS
- 6 STRUCTURE AND SERVICE

### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1988**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented with one exception, namely George McN, who had withdrawn. PAUL C, North West Region, was duly elected.

### **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Jim H, retiring Chairman of the General Service Board, thanked Shirley C for discharging her duties with such warmth and cheerfulness, which had been reflected during the weekend's deliberations. He then turned his attention to the following members of the General Service Board who, like Jim, were retiring:

ANN W  
DAVID F  
JAMES C  
TREVOR O  
HARVEY L  
COLIN H

Jim expressed due appreciation to all of the aforementioned members and, indeed, spoke with affection about them individually.

Colin N, the incoming Chairman of the General Service Board, then addressed Conference. In the first instance, he mentioned what a great joy it had been working with Jim H, who had always been fair, displayed a happy approach to the tasks in hand and allowed ample time for full debate on any matter presented to the Board. Conference rose to its feet and expressed its own thanks;

the ensuing applause for Jim was filled with emotion.

Shirley C, Conference Chairman, was then presented with a floral tribute, which was a small token of a wealth of appreciation of all those assembled. Shirley closed Conference 1987, thanking all concerned for their contribution to its success. The Assembly rose to join her in the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-Third General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York from 8-10 April, 1988.

## **TWENTY SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1987**

### **COMMITTEE NO. 1 : TELEPHONE SERVICES**

Jean P, our Chairman, opened the meeting with a few moments' silence. We welcomed Rina R from Belgium (Observer) to our Committee. The delegates introduced themselves and briefly shared information as to systems being used for Telephone Services in their areas.

#### **1. Are Group Conscience Meetings in relation to Telephone Services now held at Regions Intergroups Groups**

Committee No. 1 : Telephone Services, Conference 1986 recommended that all Regions should do this.

##### **a) Regions:**

Although Telephone Services are discussed often at Regional Assemblies, few Regions are yet holding Group Conscience Meetings or Workshops. As the result of pre-Conference meetings it appears that more Regions intend to start such Workshop meetings soon.

##### **b) Intergroups:**

There are many Intergroup Telephone Committees in operation, and these generally meet on a regular basis. In some areas these Committees involve two or more Intergroups, who run the Telephone Service in co-operation.

##### **c) Groups:**

Although Telephone Services are discussed at Group level, few Groups hold Conscience Meetings on the subject at present.

The Committee recommends that Group Conscience Meetings be held regularly, and especially prior to Intergroups introducing any new Telephone Service system.

#### **2. a) Do Telephone Service Offices maintain lists of outside agencies, eg Al-Anon, Gamblers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Families Anonymous etc, to which callers can be referred when appropriate?**

The Committee reports that these lists are maintained and that callers are referred to the appropriate agency.

It is recommended that the GSB member responsible for Telephone Services produce and circulate to Regions as soon as possible a new and comprehensive list of all such national agencies.

b) Are any difficulties experienced in this matter?

There are a few difficulties due mainly to geographical boundaries in some areas, and it is felt that these problems should be overcome at local level.

**3. How can the General Service Board member with special responsibility for the development of telephone services assist**

**a) Regions**

**b) Intergroups**

The Committee recommends that the General Service Board member responsible should liaise with British Telecom to ensure that all Regions have British Telecom literature and assistance on all new systems as they become available.

It is also recommended that the General Service Board member responsible should attend, by invitation, Workshops at Regions to discuss existing telephone systems and how they can be improved.

Where new systems would overlap AA Regional boundaries, all Regions involved should be invited to these Workshops.

**4. Could the new systems on offer by British Telecom enhance the effectiveness of our telephone services?**

With three exceptions there is no experience of the new systems at Regions. These three Regions are using the RCF (Remote Call Forwarding) system.

It is generally felt that the CCF (Customer Call Forwarding) system is not suitable for AA purposes.

Star System may be suitable for AA purposes but it is not generally available at present.

The Committee recommends that the RCF system should be discussed by Regions, Intergroups and Groups. Where RCF is in use it appears to work well for our purposes, enabling the suffering alcoholic to speak directly to an AA member, night or day.

It will enhance the effectiveness of our telephone services, particularly where the telephone is answered at present by outside agency personnel.

The Committee recommends that any Region or Intergroup considering the RCF system for their area should contact the Board member with special responsibility for telephone services, who has details available of AA experience in this field.

**5. How important is it that we should be able to offer a 12th Step visit to the still suffering alcoholic who telephones for help?**

The Committee confirms that it is vital that we be able to offer the still suffering alcoholic a 12th Step visit or other direct contact.

**6. a) On the whole, how effective is AA in telephone services?**

The Committee feels that, on the whole, our telephone services are effective within the limitations of our existing systems.

b) Is it true to say that for the still suffering alcoholic who wants help, “AA is only a telephone call away”?

Yes, generally speaking, the Committee feels this to be true.

**7 What are the main problems in relation to telephone services? Has the Committee any general comments on how these problems can be overcome?**

The Committee feels that the three main problems encountered are:

Finance  
Manning  
12th Stepping

a) The Committee feels that finances could be improved by greater involvement of members at Group level in the planning and setting-up of telephone services. Also, new systems worked in co-operation by two or more Intergroups or Regions could cut costs in certain areas.

b) Groups should encourage sponsorship of new members into service. The new members should be accompanied by an experienced member when manning the telephone or doing “face to face” 12th Step work .

c) 12th Step lists should be the responsibility of one designated member, who should ensure that they are continually updated.

Lesley J (North West Region) was unanimously elected Chairman of Committee for Conference 1988 and Brian B (North East Region) Secretary.

**COMMITTEE NO.2 FINANCE**

We were pleased to welcome as observers to Our Committee Alfred W. from West Germany and Jim K., Board Member elect for the Scotia Region.

**1. Review the Board’s draft Guidelines on Finance**  
(See amended draft, - on page VI).

**2. The Twenty First General Service Conference 1986 strongly recommended that all Groups, Intergroups and Regions should have a bank account.**

**Have all Groups, Intergroups and Regions now got a bank account?**

**Has any Group, Intergroup or Region experienced difficulty in opening a bank account in its own name?**

All Regions and Intergroups now operate bank accounts but the practice has been adopted by only a small, but increasing number of Groups.

Generally no difficulty has been experienced but a few groups have been concerned about the question of anonymity.

**3. Share experience on the reception given to the General Service Board Hon. Treasurer's letter of June, 1986, written to all Group Members**

**a) Did it help members understand the factual needs of our Fellowship's General Service Office?**

**b) Has it assisted cash flow?**

**c) Have contributions noticeably increased at Group Meetings since receipt of the letter.**

**d) Has the letter prompted more discussion on Money Matters at Group, Intergroup and Region?**

a) Yes -emphatically.

b) Yes.

c) Yes - in the short run but some tendency to relapse was noted.

d) Yes, at all levels.

**4. Have any Groups, Intergroups or Regions experienced difficulties in obtaining charge free banking facilities?**

Generally no. Some isolated problems have been encountered with one or two banks. Facilities have not always been granted automatically. It is suggested that "shopping around" might be tried in case of difficulty.

**5. Should a proposed budget be published prior to Conference to be considered by Conference?**

Yes.

**6. Has the Committee any further thoughts on the Budget procedure**

The Committee generally favoured the circulation as early as possible (November was suggested) of a Budget showing annual figures only, thus omitting the present monthly breakdown. That would continue to be distributed to members of the Finance Committee. Seen as equally important is the need for more financial information and especially for notification of any changes in financial information.

Within the context of the discussion the involvement of the accountant at G.S.O. in the Committee's proceedings was discussed. It was recommended that the General Service Board investigate the methods employed in the United States, report back and make recommendations (if any) to Conference 1988.

**7 Following Conference 1986 , Meetings Treasurers were held on a geographical basis:**

**a) Were they beneficial?**

**b) Is there a need for such meetings on an annual basis?**

a) Yes. A very definite advantage.

b) Yes. The Committee recommended strongly the continuation of meetings of Regional Treasurers with the G.S.B. Treasurer at appropriate geographical locations.

The Committee elected George R. (North East Region) as Chairman of Committee for Conference 1988 and John H. (Midlands Region) as Secretary.

In further discussion it was recommended that the Board approach the Share Team about the possibility of publishing in each issue details of Intergroup contributions to G.S.O.

## **FINAL DRAFT**

### **GUIDELINES FOR A.A. IN GREAT BRITAIN**

**From G.S.O., P.O. Box 1. Stonebow House. Stonebow. YORK YO1 2NJ**

#### **FINANCE**

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Experience has as well often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money and authority.

Tradition 7

The source of A.A. money is almost exclusively that which is collected at Group meetings. Money that has been collected at a meeting is "A.A. money" and should be spent only to further our primary purpose of helping the suffering alcoholic in accordance with the Traditions of the Fellowship. People who are responsible for spending "A.A. money" at Group, Intergroup, Region and G.S.O. should never forget this simple fact.

#### **GROUP**

- 1 The job of Group Treasurer is one of the most important in the Group and it should be done by a responsible member with a reasonable period of continuous sobriety (ideally at least one year).
- 2 Treasurers should keep good, simple records, which should be open to inspection at all times, and should report on the Group finances at least once a month and encourage the Group to talk about money for five or ten minutes.
- 3 Experience has shown that, although all Groups are autonomous, the use of a current bank account is essential for good financial management of the Group funds. The bank statement then provides an additional record of the Group's finances.
- 4 The Treasurer should collect the money from passing the pot at Group meetings and count it with the help of the Secretary or another responsible member.
- 5 The Treasurer should enter the amount into a cash book and pay the money into the Group's bank account at the earliest opportunity.
- 6 After paying the proper expenses of the Group, e.g. rent, refreshments and literature, any surplus monies should be sent to the Intergroup Treasurer, preferably by cheque. Proper expenses do not include using group funds for social purposes; e.g. dances, bus-trips, birthday cakes and the like.
- 7 A.A. experience clearly shows that it is not a good idea to accumulate large funds; a prudent reserve should be no more than one months running expenses.

## **INTERGROUP**

In addition to all the guidelines suggested for a Group Treasurer the following points should be seriously considered:

1. A current bank account is essential for running the Intergroup's finances. All cheques should be secured by two signatures: Any two from three duly authorised, - normally the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.
- 2 The Intergroup Treasurer should produce at least a quarterly statement of accounts in writing, with copies available for all G.S.R.s in the Intergroup.
- 3 The statement of accounts should include a list of all Group contributions. Intergroup Treasurers should not be reluctant to approach non-contributing Groups.
- 4 The accounts should be open to inspection at all times and be properly audited or independently checked once a year.
- 5 Experience shows that the Treasurer when making any payments, whenever practical, should do so by cheque.
- 6 It is suggested that a prudent reserve for an Intergroup is three months running expenses, although telephone services within the Intergroup may need a somewhat larger reserve.
- 7 It should be noted that a regular flow of funds is essential for our General Service Office to meet its day-to-day obligations, and operate in an efficient and economical manner.

## **REGION**

At Region the basic principles of financial management are those that apply to the Intergroup. Regional expenses, including those for Conference delegates are met from a fund financed by contributions from member Intergroups. The Regional Treasurer should pay Conference Delegate expenses to G.S.O. by the 31st December, for the forthcoming year.

## **G.S.O.**

All Groups, Intergroups and Regions should accept responsibility for the funding of the General service Office.

A strict control is maintained of all expenditure, and full accounts are prepared for examination and comparison with budget at monthly intervals. The Annual Accounts and Balance Sheet are prepared in accordance with the best current accounting practice and are audited by a firm of Chartered Accountants before inclusion in the annual Board Report.

## **EXPENSES**

1. Few things cause more controversy in A.A. than money. A.A. Service Worker's expenses are no exception.

2. The payment of expenses depends upon the Group Conscience of the Region or Intergroup, always bearing in mind our tradition of self support.

(a) Service is defined as that which makes the Twelfth Step possible.

(b) It is agreed that no expenses should be claimed for individual "face to face" Twelfth Step work.

(c) In principle, any member who is qualified to carry out a particular task in our Service should not be prevented from doing so for financial reasons, and should be offered expenses.

(d) When carrying out an Intergroup or Region function, duly authorised Service Workers should be offered expenses.

(e) For a variety of reasons Regions and Intergroups will probably differ in their approach to this question, and there may be no uniformity, but there need be no controversy if decisions are taken in the spirit of A.A. with commonsense.

## **SPIRITUALITY AND MONEY**

Some of us still ask. "Just what is this Third Legacy business anyhow?

And just how much territory does 'service' take in?"

Let's begin with my own sponsor Ebby. When Ebby heard how serious my drinking was, he resolved to visit me. He was in New York; I was in Brooklyn. His resolve was not enough; he had to take action and he had to spend money. He called me on the phone and then got into the subway; total cost, ten cents. At the level of the telephone booth and subway turnstile, spirituality and money began to mix. One without the other would have amounted to nothing at all.

Right then and there, Ebby established the calls for the sacrifice of much time and a principle that A.A. in action little money."

Reprinted from "As Bill Sees It" page 324 and "A.A. Comes of Age" pages 140-141.

## **COMMITTEE NO.3: AGENDA COMMITTEE**

The Chairman welcomed members and Duncan MacD, General Service Board member elect, as Observer.

**1. Review the Board recommendation in relation to establishing procedures for the selection of items for discussion by Conference**



The Committee accepted the recommendation of the Board that an Agenda Committee should be established as an integral part of Conference, to produce a preliminary draft of next year's agenda.

This opportunity for early consideration and contribution of Conference topics should be drawn to the attention of Regions and Intergroups.

If Conference accepts this recommendation the Service Handbook should be amended as follows: Page 16, Item 10a, Line 4 - after the word Conference add "and the Agenda Committee of previous Conference".

## **2. Suggest two or three Themes for Conference 1988**

Themes suggested were:

Adapting To Growth

Keep It Simple

The Message, Not The Messenger

The final choice of theme should be made by the Chairperson of Conference who would be making the Keynote Address.

## **3. Review the Committee topics - are the present Standing Committees satisfactory or should Committee topics be varied?**

It is recommended that the Conference Committees should be varied from time to time and that next year two new Committees

AA and the Social Services

AA and Industry and the Trade Unions

should replace the Committees on Telephone Services and Communication Within The Fellowship.

Important subjects involving communications within the Fellowship should be given to the Service and Structure Committee.

Subjects suitable for the Social Services Committee:

- a) What is AA's experience in working with the Social Services and with Social and Probation Services in Scotland?
- b) What opportunities does the Fellowship have in the training of personnel in the Social Services and also in such voluntary social services as NSPCC and RSPCA?
- c) What are our correct contacts in liaising with the Social Services?
- d) What literature would be most useful in our Social Services contacts?

Subjects suitable for the Committee on AA in Industry and the Trade Unions:

- a) Review and discuss contacts between the Fellowship, the Trade Unions and Industry.
- b) Do companies have a positive policy on alcoholism?
- c) Do medical personnel of Trade Unions and companies know about AA?
- d) What role has the Fellowship in assisting both industry and the Trade Unions in developing "Alcohol and Work" policies?

#### **4 Suggest key questions which you would like to see discussed in Conference 1988 Committees**

The Committee suggested the following questions for discussion in 1988:

- a) Information on progress made in contacts with Probation Services, and in Scotland, the Social Services.
- b) Information on progress made with problems of prisoners on remand.
- c) Problems of access and communication with doctors and nurses in general hospitals.
- d) Dual addiction -there is increasing concern in the Fellowship about the number of alcoholics who are also seriously addicted to other chemicals. Whilst fully accepting that the alcoholic can only help other alcoholics, does the Fellowship feel it is worth looking further at this problem?
- e) What role do tape recordings play in spreading the message? Would a tape library, run by the Board, be of value in this respect?

#### **5 Is the Committee satisfied with the procedure of entrusting the finalisation of Committee Agenda to the Board and Conference Chairman?**

Yes. This follows on from acceptance of Resolution One.

#### **6 Is the structure of the Conference and overall time available adequate for our purpose?**

The Committee felt that the overall time of Conference was adequate. It is recommended that nominees for Conference Chairperson should be expected to introduce themselves in a brief statement.

#### **7 Now that suggestions are coming for Conference Agenda from Intergroups and Regions, should the source of questions be identified?**

It is believed that there is no need for the source of questions to be identified.

#### **8 Conference timetable**

The Committee believed that it should be the responsibility of members of the Agenda Committee to stimulate their Regions on the subject of items for next year's Conference in the period immediately following this Conference.

Any such items should be sent to the Secretary to the General Service Board by the beginning of September 1987.

Iain B (South East Region) was unanimously elected Chairman of Committee for Conference 1988 and Hazel M (London Region) Secretary.

#### **COMMITTEE No.4. COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP**

The Chairman welcomed all members and Pat O. General Service Board elect.

**1. Have the Twelve Concepts been more fully discussed since Conference 1986? If no, how can interest be stimulated regarding the concepts? For example, in the form of Workshops**

No, but there is a growing awareness since 1986 and we recommend the Fellowship familiarize itself with the illustrated pamphlet "Twelve Concepts for World Service", and also recommend that Share and Roundabout print the abbreviated concepts in each issue. The pamphlet should also be sent out to each group for inclusion in the Group Service Handbook.

**2. Review the large print Preamble/Serenity Prayer Card. Do we still need the original?**

The Committee agreed that it was better and that the original is no longer needed.

**3. Consider the advantage of retaining the two publications AA News and - Share magazine, and make recommendations**

Committee recommend that both publications be retained.

**4. Do the organising committees of One Day and National Conventions consult G.S.O. to avoid clashing dates?**

No, but the committee felt that as National Conventions kept to the same dates each year it isn't necessary. We recommend that organisers of one day conventions notify their own Regions who should keep a calendar of events.

**5. Review the drafts of amended Guidelines 1,2,3,5 and 6**

Guideline 1

Page 1 Para.3 Line 3 after 12 Traditions,  
insert The Twelve Concepts for World Service

Page 2 Para.7 (beginning THE SHARED PLATFORM MEETING)

Line 1 Delete at Mini-Conventions

Line 3 Delete could insert should.

Guideline 2:

Page 2 Para.3 (Representatives)

Line 2 Delete General insert Group

Para.6 (meetings)

Line 4 After Tradition insert and The Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Page 4 Para.3 (Treasurer)

Line 5 after General Service Office insert in Scotland, Scottish Service Office.

Guideline 3:

Page 1 Change General Service Representative to Group Service representative.

Page 3 Para. 1 Line 1 After traditions insert and Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Para.5 (Regional Representative)

Line 2 Delete General insert Group

Line 5 Underline "ALL".

Page 4 Para. 1 Line 2 after Traditions insert and the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Guideline 5:

Page 2 Para. 2 Change General Service representative to Group Service Representative.

Page 3 Para. 1 Line 3 delete Service.

(Point 1 Line 3 delete sick

Para.3 (Secretary)(insert suffering

(Point 2 Delete all.

Page 5 Para.2 (Treasurer) Point 3 after book insert or balance sheet in group handbook.

Para.3 underline NOT

Para.4 (Literature Secretary) Point 2. After Living Sober insert Pass it On, Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Page 6 Point 3 (line 1) delete word "all"

Para.2 Delete general insert group.

Guideline 6:

Page 2 Para. 2 (aims) Point 3 delete first insert field

Page 3 Para. 4 after Liaison Officer (Scotland) list Telephone Liaison Officer.

Page 4 Para. 2 Line 1 change representative to representatives.

Page 5 Para.2 line 1 delete man insert person.

## **6 Is there a need for a ready-reference index of the decisions/recommendations made at Conference over the years?**

The Committee found there was a need for a ready reference of decisions made at Conference over the years and asks that this be considered by the Board to see if it is at all feasible?

## **7. Conference 1986 considered the question:**

**“Should the G.S.R. (General Service Representative) be the Group contact for all A.A. service matters - leaving correspondence and finance to Group Secretaries and Treasurers?”**

**The report stated:-**

**“Yes, but Committee felt that the Group Conscience should be the guide. It is important that Groups get all information from G.S.O. either direct to the Secretary, or if they prefer, through the G.S.R. Where the Group Secretary position is a short-term post, then the Group contact would be the G.S.R.”**

**Can the Committee make any specific proposals as to how duplication can be eliminated**

The Committee recommended that the Group Service Representative should be the contact for all A.A. service matters and recommend that Intergroup Secretaries keep a supply of pink Group Information Forms.

**8. Has the move of the General Service Office to York caused any particular problems?**

No.

**9. Is there a local “Where to Find” in every Intergroup now?**

Yes, the majority of Intergroups now have a local “Where to Find”.

The Committee elected Press Pat of Roundabout to be Chairman of Committee for Conference 1988 and Kathy L. (East of Scotland Region) to be Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE NO.5 : WORKING WITH OTHERS**

The meeting was opened with the Preamble and the reading of the Second Tradition. The Chairman expressed a warm welcome to our overseas visitors: Cor Z from Holland, Per A from Norway, Lars T from Denmark and Andy D from Ireland, Agnes Curran Board Member elect and Ian T Board Member elect also all the regional delegates.

**1. Have all Intergroups/Regions appointed Probation Liaison Officers?**

**If not, have they considered availing themselves of the experience of the Board Members responsible for Probation?**

Virtually all Regions and Intergroups have appointed Probation Liaison Officers. Only two of the Regions have availed themselves of the experience of the Board members responsible for probation.

The Committee recommends:

- a) that where a Probation Liaison service unit is established, it should be a continuing function, and as such, available at all times when probation officers call for help.
- b) it is felt that Regions should avail themselves of the experience of Board members.

- c) where Intergroups have appointed Probation Liaison Officers they should meet on a regular basis, say quarterly, in order to monitor progress and developments.
- d) when writing to the probation services, this should always be done on official A.A. headed notepaper.

## **2. Share our current experience regarding contact with Probation in England and Wales, and Social Services in Scotland**

There is a developing and growing relationship with the Probation Officers in England and Wales and Social Services in Scotland. There is room for further growth.

The Committee recommends that where probation officers request confirmation of attendance at A.A. meetings by those on probation, these should be provided wherever possible with the permission of the member concerned. It is felt that this type of co-operation, handled carefully, is:

Not contrary to our Traditions.

Effectively co-operating with the critical area of Probationary Services in England and Wales and the Social Services in Scotland.

An important part of carrying the message.

- c) Care should, however, be taken to ensure that we are only confirming attendance and not guaranteeing sobriety.

## **3. What further progress has been made with our contact with local Magistrates**

**a) Are we now reaching more local Magistrates?**  
(See Committee No.5, Item 5, A.A. Conference 1986 report).

**b) Share experiences regarding initial approach and consolidation of liaison relationships with Clerks of Court and Court Probation Officers.**

**c) Have approaches to local Magistrates been made via the local Magistrate Associations?**

Increased contact with Magistrates is taking place, and opportunities are being identified in Regions where talks can be given to groups of Magistrates.

The Committee suggests that key further progress could be made by:

- a) Formal approaches to the Home Office and the Scottish Office by the General Service Board, in order to identify those areas which will be useful in developing further good relationships with Magistrates and the legal profession.
- b) At a local level the Committee feels that further continuing effective work could be done in developing good relationships with Magistrates and JPs.

#### **4. Review the Board's draft poster which is aimed at young people**

The Committee reviewed the draft poster exhaustively, and the majority of delegates found it unacceptable. The Committee recommends that the General Service Board produces three draft posters to be pitched to young people, for review at Conference 1988.

It is suggested that the G.S.B. may seek help from younger members of the Fellowship or by running a competition among young artists for the production of draft posters.

#### **5. Is there any way that the Fellowship can attract more members from ethnic minority groups?**

The Committee feels that:

a) Intergroups should make full use of the available ethnic minority literature in Hindi and Urdu.

b) We should endeavour to identify ethnic minority newspapers and magazines in order to place short announcements about A.A.

c) Similarly, ethnic minority clubs and cultural societies should be approached in order to see whether our posters would be of interest.

d) It is suggested that PICPC officers approach ethnic minority community leaders in order to develop a good relationship with them and to identify whether we should be producing more minority language pamphlets.

#### **6. Consider the General Service Board guidance on working with and approaching T.V. companies**

The Committee approved the final draft of AA and TV - a GSB Report, and suggests that the G.S.B. publishes and distributes copies of this to Regions and Intergroups.

It is felt that Regions should co-operate fully with TV companies, keeping within the spirit of the Traditions, in order to obtain the optimum benefit from this medium.

The G.S.B. decision to permit the A.A. video to be used only in its entirety on TV is considered by the Committee to be restrictive. The G.S.B. is asked to consider approving shorter excerpts of the A.A. video being screened on television in the appropriate context.

#### **7. Consider the U.S.A. experience in relation to A.A. Meetings on the air**

The Committee reported that Regions have had only a very limited experience of conducting meetings on the air, but a number of Regions are having some degree of success in obtaining time on local radio.

The Committee strongly recommends that regions and Intergroups should endeavour to obtain A.A. exposure within the Traditions on local radio stations.

**8. What is the experience of contact with Community Health Care professionals such as:- Health Visitors Association, (HVA) Psychiatric Nurses Association (P.N.A.), Community Psychiatric Nurses Association (C.P.N.A.), Society of Community Medicine, Society of Occupational Medicine**

Regions reported that at a local level regular contact has been established with nurses, psychiatrists and doctors. The Committee feels that contact with national associations and societies should be dealt with by the G.S.B.

**A question was asked of the Committee as follows:**

**“There appears to be a growth industry in Alcoholic Advisory and Treatment centres; is it now time that we spelt out exactly how A.A. could work with them?”**

It was decided that as this was a separate but important issue, the G.S.B. should be asked to include this on the Agenda for Conference 1988.

The Committee elected Mike D (South Midlands) as Chairman for Committee for Conference 1988 and Margaret M. (Wales and Borders) as Secretary. Sheenah H. (North West Region) was elected Alternate.

The appropriate warm expressions of thanks were accorded to the Chairman and Secretary and the session closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **COMMITTEE NO.6: STRUCTURE AND SERVICE**

Tom P welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a moment's silence. A special welcome was extended to our Observers -Joseph D (Belgium), Louis H (Holland) and Chrissie C (Ireland).

### **1. Review the Board Report on “Minority Opinion”**

The Committee unanimously accepted the Board's Report. The feeling was that the minority opinion should be heard and recorded, but the right of appeal should not be frivolously and repeatedly used. The Committee felt that we should always be guided by Tradition Two.

FINAL DRAFT

#### **MINORITY OPINION - A GSB REPORT**

At the Twenty First General Service Conference Committee 3 suggested that the General Service Board consider the appropriate procedure for dealing with minority opinion, bearing in mind Concept 5: -

“Throughout our World Service structure, a traditional ‘Right of Appeal’ ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.”

The General Service Board considers that (i) if a minority at Conference feel a majority to be in considerable error they should ensure that their opinion is discussed by the Conference, and if not



successful in altering the Group Conscience the minority opinion should be included in the final Conference Report. (ii) if a Conference decision is subsequently felt by a part of the Fellowship to have been in considerable error the matter should be submitted again to Conference by and with the approval of Region, in time to be included in the Conference agenda. The Conference delegates from the Region would then understand the problem and be able to explain it at Conference.

Conference has generally succeeded in forming its decisions and recommendations by consensus. The Board would hope that the procedures outlined above would be rarely and responsibly used. It would also point out that Conference might be reluctant to invest much of its time in matters which it considered frivolous or repetitious. However, Concepts properly used can ensure that important issues are thoroughly debated.

Bill W. writing on Concept 5 in Twelve Concepts for World Service says:-

“We believe that the spirit of democracy in our Fellowship and in our World Service structure will always survive, despite the counterforces which will no doubt continue to beat upon us. Fortunately we are not obliged to maintain a Government that enforces conformity by inflicting punishments. We need to maintain only a structure of service that holds aloft our Traditions that forms, and executes, our Policies thereunder, and so steadily carries our Message to those who suffer.”

**2. Review the recommendation of the Twentieth General Service Conference 1985, that restrictions imposed on members of Alcoholics Anonymous who work for outside agencies concerned with alcoholism, should be removed, ie such members should not be precluded from holding office of service in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (See Committee No 6, Structure and Service, Item 4, Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain, Twentieth General Service Conference**

After a full discussion the Committee understands the grave concern felt about this problem within the Fellowship. The Committee agreed that the recommendation of Twentieth General Service Conference 1985, which removed restrictions on members of AA working with outside agencies, should stand. However, there are some Regions experiencing serious problems in respect of AA members employed in the field of alcoholism. The Committee feels that there is a need for a Guideline from the General Service Board to clarify the position.

**3. Do we effectively take advantage of the wealth of service experience which has been accumulated by the older member in the Fellowship?**

The Committee feels that we do not effectively take advantage of the older members' wealth of experience and recommends that they be invited to participate at Workshops and speak by invitation at Intergroups and Regions. It was also felt that the older member would be especially valuable in sponsoring members into service.

**4. Review the revised American edition of the pamphlet “If you are a Professional”**

The Committee discussed the revised American edition of the pamphlet and reached the conclusion that the present British edition is more suitable for use in this country. They did feel, however, that the front cover of the American edition was more attractive.

**5. Is the present Regional structure sufficient to cope with the needs of densely populated areas.**

Before its adoption, the Regionalisation of the country was carefully considered, not only by the General Service Board, but also by Intergroups and Conference. It was decided on the basis of population and geographical considerations that each Region should have the same representation at Conference. The number of six was decided on the basis that two delegates should be appointed each year for the three years of their term. This produced a Conference number -namely 84 Regional delegates - which, with the General Service Board and other representation, was thought to produce a Conference of manageable size. It was decided that there should be six Committees, so that each Region would be represented by its own delegate on each Committee. Any system is bound to produce some inequalities but the present system has been tried and has been found to work effectively. After detailed discussion the Committee agreed that the present Regional structure was adequate, having in mind geographical, as well as population, considerations.

**6. (Amended) Should there be a section in “The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain” to cover the Scottish Service Committee?**

The Committee agreed that a paragraph should be inserted in the AA Service Handbook explaining the functions of the Scottish Service Committee. It was suggested that this paragraph be inserted at the end of Section (V), Page 20.

**7. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of AA publishing its own book of daily readings**

After a full discussion the Committee felt that the disadvantages of producing such a book outweighs the advantages.

Jimmy G (South West Region) was unanimously elected Chairman of Committee for Conference 1988 and Richard D (Wales and Borders) Secretary.

**WORKSHOP: LOVE IN SERVICE**

The meeting opened with the Preamble, followed by a few moments' silence and a reading of an excerpt from Chapter V of “The Big Book -Alcoholics Anonymous”.

Presentation:

Sheena H (North West Region)

Which way round does it happen? Service taught me to love, or was it vice versa? Selfless serving instead of senseless people pleasing.

Coming to meetings, being willing to learn, using the Twelve Steps and Traditions. Open mindedly becoming self honest, drawing on the wealth of experience of older members, yes those members who loved the joy of their AA Way of Life so much that they wanted me to have it too, the still suffering alcoholic. When I tried to say thank you, being told that NO THANKS were necessary - they had given to keep; just pass it on with AA love to another sufferer as freely as it had been given to me - I have tried.

What an adventure that journey has been so far, (a day at a time back to being alive), through the repetition of 'I'm Sheena, I'm an alcoholic'. At AA meetings I was to meet sharing which enabled me to have a belated growing up. I was in my middle thirties when I came to be restored to sanity, having accepted my powerlessness and that my life was unmanageable. I chose to turn my 'self will run riot' over to the care of AA and to be slowly defrosted by the love in action that are Bill's and Bob's legacies to me - a grass roots member; the legacies of recovery, unity and service. My first drink twenty years before had led to a death of the spirit, my first AA meeting was to lead me to being alive.

Learning in service to love. As with any love affair, joys are paired with pains thus making my growth possible. During the process of learning about me, this closed minded, opinionated, obstinate, over enthusiastic, lazy alcoholic, you'd have loved to have had a me in your Group - willing to do everything sometimes with a resentment, whilst having opinions on everything and everybody. Just For Today Cards were proffered. The Traditions were learnt on the anvil of experience. This prideful egotist was tempered by an AA serving of love from trusted servants who were willing to go to any lengths; sharing that they too had been like me, but by using these simple Twelve Steps and Traditions they had come to use a power greater than themselves as an ultimate authority. Isn't it joyous to move from being full of anxiety, anger, frustration, worry of life and people, unable to love, to a Sheena able to love and trust, open and caring - some of the day.

Service in AA has shown me a way: being a wife and mum, a useful member of society, willing to listen, tolerant and not living life so intensely. My family find me a 'pain' (with gratitude). As I prepared my reports to the Group as Intergroup Representative, pages of paper were spread on the floor and me in the middle composing per the Guidelines with AA love to inform them, or who else would be answerable to those I was serving, making me well loved and blessed. A little experience, and a want to stay sober mixed with a willingness to serve, found me as a Regional Delegate for West Cheshire Intergroup at North West Region. It was a humbling experience to realise how much those people cared about my AA and my passing on of that life saving message to the still suffering alcoholic so that I could go on giving to keep.

Then a Region job came next - Regional Share and AA News person - or is it AA 'newsense' they meant? The job description was to keep my Region in touch with AA as a whole through AA News, and encourage the use of Share with love. I am learning to slow down; to think, think, think. Then guess what, they wanted some of us for Conference Delegates and was I willing? Yes I was willing, I wanted to share the expression of love arrived at by the Group Conscience. Since I came into AA I have operated on Blind Faith and found it has replaced fear, not to mention getting me here sharing Love in Service back to you. Pass it on with love in Service.

Presentation:

Iain B (South East Region)

When I was eight, love and service were ingredients in boys' stories. Love, unless it was love of country and then OK, was 'soppy'; service was something you joined in order to be a hero. Since my emotional and spiritual growth, together with my self-confidence, ended with my going to a boarding school at the age of nine, I can see now, fifty years later, that my ideas on both had changed really very little.

Thus, patriotism involved loving your country and serving it, end of subject. At eighteen, it got all personal again. Love was getting into bed with a girl and service .....At twenty-eight, love was what you felt for your wife and family and service was what you did to get the money to shown them what you felt. At thirty-eight, I expected my love and service to be fittingly and frequently recognised by both my family and as many other people as possible, and at forty-eight I got both from a bottle a day at a time.

Now, at fifty-eight, I can virtually ignore my very slight experience of either love or service and realise that I'm only a beginner. Beginning, a day at a time, from an eight year old. But with this difference that putting those fifty years down to experience, love and service are the two ways in which we grow and the purpose of life is growth. Some people say that it's growing for growing's sake; others say the growing is 'for' something - for a new kind of life, or another try at the old one. I think we all might agree that it's good to know that we have grown up a bit more, we feel we ought to grow up a bit more and we're disappointed when people or events show that we have failed to grow up a bit more.

My own knowledge of love, beyond that of being a personal and fleeting emotion, dates from my first AA meeting. As a three day old non-drinking alcoholic, I was in a condition well known to many of us and I didn't understand very much of what was going on. I sensed that the atmosphere was quite different and like all alcoholics I was morbidly sensitive to 'atmospheres'. As time went on I was able to identify some of the factors that made, and make, an AA meeting have a unique atmosphere, but the 'other-ness' which is the only way I can describe it, is much more than the sum of the factors that I could, or can, identify. At any AA meeting, any place, any time, that 'other-ness' is there. Try to define it and you'll lose it; try to possess it and you'll spoil it, you can only give it a name, 'love' and what's in a name. The good book, or one of them, says this is in the name "Love is patient and kind: it is not jealous or conceited or proud, love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up and its faith, hope and patience never fail."

Certainly in my unsuccessful and selfish life so far, love is the greatest thing I have met to love is the greatest thing I can do.

If service does not result from love then there's something false in my love and something false in my service. They may look all right but they won't last! Just as love has to be more than a swoon in June under the moon, so service has to be more than being smug because I think I'M a trusted servant. Primarily I'm a fragile drunk with a daily remission from a deadly disease learning about life a day at a time, learning about love, learning about service.

We have all heard a great deal about both love and service. I should think every moralising talk I have had to listen to, and I've had to listen to far too many, has stressed either or both of them. I

don't remember any of them, able and inspiring as I'm sure many of them were. Love and service remain very difficult to actually do. Now in the book we refer to as '12 x 12' it quotes someone as saying 'Step 6 sorts out the men from the boys'. Step 6 certainly shows me that I have a great deal of growing to do. I ask myself, am I ready to have God remove that absolutely justified resentment against X? Why I wouldn't even call it anything as immature as a resentment, it's a well-considered judgement that anyone would make! Really, then why do I suck it like a sweetie! OK, then maybe I do make a teeny-weeny gesture of friendship. If that gesture is not immediately recognised, if the incredibly lucky recipient does not fall prostrate with gratitude and admiration then how quick is my anger, how swift my condemnation. 'Oh well, if that's your attitude', I say, and my resentment is increased.

I have nearly as far to go on the subject of service. The excuses I make! For example, the 12 Steps are a bridge to normal living and I've crossed it; note the self-deceiving inaccuracies! "My service is attending meetings" openly said by plain old grass-roots no-frills ego-deflated me, "where I can show off and also shell out 'one to one' revelations to you peasants", not openly said at all. Or, a favourite of mine this has been, "The Groups aren't interested; they won't understand", no, they won't unless I take the trouble to interest them; I won't bore you with any more but I think my 'states of readiness' usually run from 'no way' to 'well, all right'. I know I have a long way to travel on the road of love and service. I do know it's the right road and I believe that 'way faring men, thought fools, shall not greatly err therein'.

Granted that Step One is the only step that we can do 100% and that the others are ideals we aim for, I need first of all my Higher Power to have my will and help me use it. I have got to reach out at those ideals a day at a time because, if I'm not growing spiritually then I'm slipping back. There is no standing still. It seems plain to me that we don't hand our 'Pilgrim Kit' back until this life is over and, maybe, not even then.

The presentations were followed by a general sharing session, during which many delegates shared their experiences of "Love in Service".

As at all AA meetings, members shared their joys and sorrows, their difficulties and growth. There was much laughter and not a few tears of gratitude.

Our overseas visitors shared with 'jumping hearts' and excellent English. They had been 'observing' in more ways than one and had not found us lacking in love. They brought us greetings from their countries and took our love back with them.

The thread throughout the meeting was that service in the Fellowship had shown us how to love and be loved in all areas of our lives.

Several retiring members of the General Service Board said goodbye to Conference, and finally one Scottish Board member surprised us all by singing his farewell.

The Chairman closed what had been a most spiritual and, at times, quite an emotional, meeting by quoting Bill W's words to describe his own feelings "I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine".

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **FRIDAY. 8TH APRIL**

The Twenty-third General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Langwith College, University of York, with the opening session on Friday evening and the final session on Sunday morning being held in the Lecture Theatre at Vanburgh College.

The registration and reception commenced at 4.00 pm when coffee, tea and sandwiches were served in the reception lounge.

All 14 Regions were represented, with delegates also from the Channel Isles, "Share", "Roundabout" and the English Speaking Intergroup. There were observers present from the following countries:

Ireland

Belgium (French Speaking)

Netherlands

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

## **OPENING OF CONFERENCE - BY PAUL C (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1988)**

The first session was opened by Paul C {North West Region) with the customary moments silence and the reading of the Preamble. He welcomed all present with a special welcome to first year delegates and overseas observers.

The General Secretary was then invited to read the Twelve Traditions, following which Paul presented his Keynote address:

I was promised that my wildest dreams would come true, but I never thought that this could possibly happen to me.

When the North West Region wished to propose me as candidate for nomination for Chairman of the 1988 A.A. Conference, I could hardly believe it - I was speechless -very unusual for me!

However, I managed to get myself under control for the next weeks and I had little trouble with myself until I was driving to Conference last year, when I had to stop the car and get a very firm hold of myself and my projecting, whirling mind.

During the weekend I was able to participate, I believe, reasonably efficiently. But, of course, me being me, putting my foot in it from time to time.

This relative calm lasted until the last meeting of the Conference AND I WAS elected by the Assembly to be Chairman of the 1988 Conference - again I was speechless!

The kindness and encouragement given to me by delegates and the reminders that I was not alone and that there were enough people to put me right, both brought me down to earth and gave me

confidence for the task ahead - the 'Why me?' became 'Why Not?' - although this confidence has been a bit fragile from time to time!

All this made me wonder what had happened, and how someone like me who had lost family, business and health and -more important - self respect, could have sufficiently recovered from the illness of alcoholism to have been given this incredible honour.

For me, it all comes down to 'Growing Within the Fellowship' understanding that it was me that was the problem in my life - not everyone else. And accepting the help which was so freely being offered.

I was always a very shy person, even before I took my first drink at the age of twenty, and could never talk to more than two or three people at a time or ever have a difference of opinion. But then, of course, I discovered - like so many of us - that a drink or two would help me to a confidence I never possessed.

Memories of my first days in the Fellowship were of being picked up from street corners and taken to meetings - much of what was said I did not hear or understand. I was given telephone numbers, told to 'pick up a phone. not a glass', 'not to project into the future' and 'keep it simple'.

For many years before I found the Fellowship, I had been doing a high pressure job - or not doing it - as the case may be. When I finally reached my 'rock bottom' I was unemployed and unemployable. But, again, my friends suggested that I should 'keep busy'. So I went out to do housework, cut hedges and generally get myself tired. I had a short job in an office but I could not cope with the job and they could not cope with me.

I was told 'It would get better' - and I hated you!

My friends in A.A. were also always there to 'give me the strength to accept the things I could not change and -as important - to change the things I could'. I - if not things - was getting better, and I was growing to like myself a bit. It was tough at times though.

During this time, the message I was receiving from the Group Meetings I was attending was having a very marked effect on my family life. Messages like, 'You can't change anyone but yourself', 'Let go and let God'. (What was this Higher Power that they were always on about and I was so reluctant to accept?).

After a considerable period, for I am a slow person, I was encouraged to go to an Intergroup meeting - whatever that was - and find out a little more about how A.A. functions.

At the first meeting the subject of Public Information was talked about. I expressed an interest and, as is the way in the Fellowship, an immediate appointment was made. I found myself the P.I. Officer, with no Committee and no helpers!

During the next months, because Clive, my predecessor, had left for America before he could do a lot, I worked out a tentative talk to inflict on our local Groups in an effort to create enthusiasm - a frustrating and slow process, but I was given the strength and encouragement to stick to it.

Gradually, our numbers increased to six or seven and we started to work on contacting businesses, authorities and organisations - an equally slow and frustrating process.

So, we had to gather up our courage and start visiting the people who had responded to our requests for an appointment and begin to learn how to talk to people about A.A. I know we just have to tell our story - but it's never quite as simple as that.

And the schools! Imagine me, who at the end of my drinking, could not answer the telephone, and hiding behind the curtains if someone called, being able to face thirty or forty youngsters and tell my story. There must be a Higher Power around, for certainly it was not just me - I would never have had the guts.

Then, of course, there was the North West Regional Meetings and my appointment as a G.S.R. How difficult for my muddled brain to listen to the discussions and to be able, sometimes, to contribute, then report back to our Intergroup and to watch how differences were resolved and unity preserved. Gradually as the fog began to clear I discovered that not only things were getting better - but so was I.

My appointment as a Conference Delegate by Region started another batch of fresh beginnings, but you and Big G were there to help me grow again.

My first visit to Conference was, for me at the beginning, awe inspiring and emotional. The Serenity Prayer on the first evening - the way differences were resolved and the way harmony was reached - the unity - is an experience I shall never forget.

I soon realised I was with friends - and what friends to have.

My second year I enjoyed knowing there was one more. The third, sad, knowing this was my last.

But, how wonderful - in my wildest dreams I could not have imagined you would want me back again as your Conference Chairman for 1988 - and you and Big G are there to help.

It is one thing to talk spontaneously, and quite another to have to write this down six months before, but I hope I have conveyed some of the wonder and gratitude for what has happened to me within the Fellowship.

May I thank you all for doing so much for me, and may the God of your understanding be with you always.

Paul thanked Colin N, the Board and Jack for all the help and kindness he had received throughout the past year - He went on to say how much he had enjoyed the Board Meetings he had been invited to attend as Conference Chairman.

### **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Colin N, the Chairman of the Board highlighted items in the Board Report with particular emphasis on the recommendation by the General Service Board that the English Speaking Intergroups become part of the British structure.



He then invited Bill G (E.S.I.G.) to enlighten Conference on the growth of the English Speaking Groups.

Since the first group was formed in the early 1970's there are now around 400 groups. These groups comprise of English Speaking members resident in Europe, together with members of the American, British and Canadian Armed Forces. Delegates have been full voting members of Conference since 1980.

Having decided to adopt the Great Britain structure (groups, intergroups, regions and Conference) there are now three active intergroups operating successfully throughout Europe.

He then went on to thank the Fellowship in Great Britain for their invaluable experience and support in contributing to the development of the English Speaking Groups in Europe.

He concluded by thanking the Board for considering the request and submitting it to Conference.

Following discussion Conference formally approved the Board's recommendation that the English Speaking Intergroups in Europe be incorporated within the Great Britain structure as Region 15. It was agreed that the General Service Board would consider the amendments which would be necessary to the A.A. Service Handbook in Great Britain. The amendments would be submitted for approval to the 1989 Conference.

Colin then introduced Peter M, Hon Treasurer, to present the Financial Report.

Peter started by saying that this years excellent surplus on ordinary activities of £29,065 reflected the Fellowships determination to maintain our finances. He said it also shared the commitment of the G.S.O. staff to control costs strictly and ensure the Fellowship gets "value for money".

Some of the highlights of the year were the Regional Treasurers Meetings in London, York and Dunblane with a final meeting in York at which all Regions in Great Britain were represented.

Peter highlighted the excellent achievement of the Share Team who had turned a £5,101 deficit to a £1,743 surplus over the year.

Peter also noted that more Groups are forwarding contributions to G.S.O. via the recommended method - that is Groups - Intergroups - G.S.O. In Scotland contributions are channelled to G.S.O. via Scottish Committee.

The one area of disappointment was the failure of the computer system installed in early 1987 to fulfil the functions guaranteed by the suppliers. This matter is now being handled on our behalf by independent consultants. Following discussion during which several questions were asked and answered the Treasurer was thanked for his Report and also for all his efforts during the past year.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

It was proposed from the floor that the A.A. Service Handbook (p.20 Final para.) be amended as follows:

“All original articles are considered by the Editor and Readers, and the Editor prepares the magazine through to the final proof stage. The SHARE team, who are all voluntary workers, meets monthly to review the progress of the magazine and to plan future issues.”

The proposed amendment was duly accepted.

It was proposed and agreed that in view of the number of recent amendments to the A.A. Service Handbook - 1986 Edition, the Board should consider publishing a revised edition.

Conference formally ratified the appointment of the Board Members Elect and Colin N reported that Richard H had been appointed as Vice Chairman of the General Service Board to replace Jill M who had resigned to take up full time employment as Assistant General Secretary at the General Service Office.

As there was no other business to be discussed Conference formally approved the adoption of the Annual General Service Board Report for 1987.

## **CONVENTIONS**

The General Secretary reported to the assembly details of the following National Conventions:

Northern Convention Norbreck Hotel, Blackpool	8-10 April 1988
Scottish National Convention Normandy Hotel, Renfrew	6-8 May 1988
Blue Bonnets Loreburn Hall, Dumfries	7-9 October 1988
Southern Convention Pontins Camber Sands, Nr Rye, Sussex	28-30 October 1988
Welsh Convention Park Hotel, Cardiff	4-6 November 1988

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1989**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for Chairman of the Twenty-fourth General Service Conference 1989:

Ken M -Highlands & Islands Region  
Margaret M -Wales & Borders Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place on the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SATURDAY. 9TH APRIL WORKSHOP - “GROWING WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP”**

The Workshop met at 8.30 pm and Presentations were made by Sylvia M (Eastern Region) and Ken M (Highlands and Islands Region). The Chairman was Pat B (South Midlands Region) and Jennie N (London Region) acted as Secretary and wrote the following report:

The sharing session of the Workshop opened with an incredible silence, not surprising really as the presentations we had heard, were sober, sensitive and appreciative, but the silence did not last long, and the time flew by as we listened to members sharing their experiences in "Growing within the Fellowship". The sharing was varied and often amusing, but whatever words were used, wherever the delegate came from, the message came over loud and clear, service had been the key to growth in sobriety. Some members had taken longer than others to become involved in any form of service but now shared with joy how rich their lives had become through regular commitment. They continued to do so because it had strengthened and widened their lines of communication. A better understanding of the principles of the Fellowship had been gained, along with much practical advice on daily living.

The Fellowship of A.A. is world-wide and if we were in any doubt of this, it was soon dispelled by the retiring General Service Board member who had attended the Ninth World Service Meeting held in Central America on 19-23 October 1986 as he related some of the highlights of that meeting. Our very welcome visitors from Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands also joined in the sharing.

Another retiring General Service Board member, who made it quite clear that he was not retiring from service in A.A., as he said, there is much to be done and he intends to continue to play his part. He also encouraged us to try and appoint our officers with care and endeavour to improve communication and unity within the Fellowship by reporting back as fully as possible from all service meetings. He reminded us that Conference is the voice of the Fellowship and the Board are but trusted servants.

The full texts of the two Workshop Presentations appear on page XIII-XX.

### **SUNDAY. 10th APRIL**

The final session of the Conference commenced with the customary moments silence following which Paul C read the Preamble. He then went on to thank Jack G and the G.S.O. staff for their efforts during the weekend. He congratulated the Committees on their reports and extended special thanks to the six chairmen and secretaries,

Paul invited the chairmen of the six committees to present their respective reports, which were fully discussed, amended where necessary and adopted.

The Committee Reports are included later in this report as indicated:

- (1) A.A. AND SOCIAL SERVICES
- (2) FINANCE
- (3) AGENDA COMMITTEE
- (4) A.A. AND INDUSTRY AND THE TRADE UNIONS
- (5) WORKING WITH OTHERS
- (6) STRUCTURE AND SERVICE

### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1989**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Margaret M, Wales and Borders Region. was duly elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Colin N, Chairman of the General Service Board, thanked Paul C for his capable Chairmanship. He then went on to add his thanks and best wishes to the following retiring Board Members:

ALEX C  
FRANK C  
RAYMOND McC  
HUGH T

Colin on behalf of the Board expressed thanks to Jack G, Jill M, Mary T and Marjorie Lewis-Jones for their efforts during the weekend and for providing the preliminary reports in such good time.

Paul C expressed how much he had enjoyed the weekend and added his own personal thanks for the privilege of Chairing this Conference.

Conference closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-fourth Annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York from 14-16 April 1989.

## **TWENTY THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1988**

### **COMMITTEE NO.1: A.A. AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Chairman welcomed all members and Noel F General Service Board elect.

#### **1. What is A.A.'s experience in working with Social Services?**

In looking at 'Social Services', problems arose in defining our brief. In Scotland, for example, Social Services include Probation Services. In addition, the term 'Social Services' could include the vast voluntary sector through, for example, Councils for Voluntary Services. The Committee decided to keep the discussion to the paid professional social worker field.

Scottish Regions and Intergroups have Social Service Liaison Officers but this is not the experience south of the border, where it is part of P.I.C.P.C., probation and hospital liaison work. Many A.A. meetings are held in Social Services premises. Experience of work with Social Services was very patchy, in some areas relationships were good and others were difficult. The encouraging note was that with patience and perseverance, the general scene was improving.

#### **2 What input does the Fellowship have to the training of personnel in the Social Services or relevant voluntary organisations. and how can the input be improved?**

Some Regions and Intergroups have made progress and some good examples were given of A.A. being included in the training programmes at Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges. However, the positive input was limited and in some areas, non-existent. The wide ranging discussion opened up the kind of possibilities that the Fellowship could pursue. The Committee recommended that the correct procedure of liaison with training establishments should be best fostered by the P.I. Officer and P.I.C.P.C. team at Intergroup or Region level. The P.I.C.P.C. team should identify and target specific training establishments to be approached in their area. Work in this field should be done on a team basis, rather than an individual effort.

The Committee felt that the second part of the question, considering the sector, was too loosely defined to arrive at any meaningful conclusions. It was recommended that more specific and wide scope of the voluntary unambiguous items be placed on the agenda for Conference Committee discussion.

### **3 What are our correct contacts in liaising with the Social Services?**

The Committee agreed that Directors of Social Services in Local Authorities were the obvious contact. However, approaches to the Fellowship may come from Sub-Director level; but it was considered advisable that departmental heads were made aware of what was happening within their sphere of influence. Contacts at lower levels in Social Services can unexpectedly occur and these should be carefully cultivated and developed. Again, this should be done on a team basis.

In Scotland, the procedure was much more clearly defined and they make use of Directories of Social Services Contacts. This underlined that the Scottish experience is again totally different to the rest of the U.K.

In any contact work with Social Services, it is advisable that at an early stage in the discussions, we should introduce clearly what we have to offer. This is so that there is no misunderstanding over the role and functions of our Fellowship.

### **4 What literature would be most useful in our Social Services contacts?**

In the Committee's discussions it came out that there was a wide range of literature used during contact with Social Services. When dealing with a senior official or head of service, then any literature that would help to get points over was considered relevant.

The important role of the video was discussed and should be considered as literature in this context.

The most useful list was, after careful discussion, considered to be:-

- a) If you are a Professional
- b) A.A. at a Glance
- c) Now That You've Stopped
- d) A.A. and Young People
- e) Posters, local 'Where to Find' and contact cards

### **5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1989**

Jim G (Scotia Region) was elected as Chairman.

6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1989  
Jennie N (London Region) was elected as Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE NO.2: FINANCE**

CHAIRMAN: SECRETARY:

The meeting was opened with a moments' silence and the reading of the Preamble and the Twelve Traditions. The Committee was pleased to welcome as an observer Jacqueline from French Speaking Belgium.

### **1. Review the experience of "Sobriety" Weeks.**

It was generally agreed that, notwithstanding some failures of communication, "Sobriety" weeks had been very successful in terms of increased contributions. It was also felt that they were a reminder to us all of the spiritual value of expressing gratitude for our recovery. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That the Fellowship contrives to recognise our anniversary on 10 June by holding annually a Gratitude/Sobriety week. .

That publicity be given to the event by way of A.A. News and in particular by a letter from the General Service Board Treasurer to Intergroup Treasurers. This information should make clear the precise nature and timing of the contribution.

### **2. Should the GSO Management Accountant attend Conference and participate in the Finance Committee's proceedings? Review the Board's recommendations.**

The Committee agreed unanimously with the Board's recommendation that the attendance at Conference of the General Service Office Accountant would not at this stage be of any advantage to the Fellowship.

### **3. Review and discuss the Fellowship's Budget for 1988.**

The Budget was fully presented by the General Service Board Treasurer who emphasised its conservative nature and in that context referred in particular to the higher than expected increase in contributions during the first three months of the current year.

After dealing at some length with a number of questions including those relating to the computer system and literature profits the Committee approved the Budget.

### **4. Conference has decided that through the Finance Committee and meetings of Regional Treasurers, the Fellowship should play a much more direct role in setting the GSO Budget. How can this involvement in determining the level of service spending be matched by a similar commitment to its funding; bearing in mind the wholly voluntary**

## **nature of our Fellowship?**

It was agreed that Regional Treasurers were now accepting responsibility for discussing the means and level of funding General Service Office expenditure as well as its cost effectiveness. They are now a vital link between the General Service Board Treasurer and the rest of the Fellowship. However, the Committee saw a real distinction between this role and that of the Finance Committee which is to concern itself with the longer term financial policy of the Fellowship and the spiritual balance implicit in our Traditions.

It was further agreed:

To drop the word "Target" and substitute the words "Estimated Income" and "Budgeted Expenditure" where appropriate.

That in future it may be possible for the Finance Committee to meet less frequently. But this matter will be included as an agenda item on the Finance Committee at Conference 1989.

### **5. Consider the feasibility of the Fellowship becoming fully self-supporting by direct contributions and thereby no longer relying on profits from literature sales to cover part of service expenditure.**

The Committee confirmed its agreement with the principle of self support from direct contributions and saw this as a completely separate issue from the question of literature profits.

It was suggested that self support, assuming a prudent reserve of approximately one year's budgeted expenditure, was both a desirable and reasonable objective for the Fellowship to seek.

The Committee took the view that the question of literature prices and profits was a matter to be decided by the General Service Board.

6 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1989  
Pat B (South Midlands Region) was elected as Chairman.

7 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1989  
Sandy S (East of Scotland Region) was elected as Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE NO.3: AGENDA COMMITTEE**

The Chairman welcomed all members and Patrick D General Service Board Elect.

### **1. Suggest two or three themes for Conference 1989.**

Leadership in A.A.  
My Group in A.A.  
The Key to Recovery - A.A. Unity

### **2. When considering this year's Committee topics, does the Committee recommend**

any variations for Conference 1989. e.g.:

a) **Should Committee No.4 (1987 Conference) “Communication within the Fellowship” be retained?**

b) **Should Committee No.5 (1987 Conference) “Working with Others” be retained to deal with specific subjects either one or two each year, e.g. Hospitals. Social Services etc?**

a) It was recommended that Committee 4 be retained. The importance of maintaining our lines of communication within the Fellowship was emphasised and it was felt that we do not make sufficient use of existing facilities i.e. mail, telephone, Group Meetings, A.A. News, Share and Roundabout to discuss service matters. We are tending to rely too much on special events such as the Annual or Bi-Annual Meetings of Regional Liaison Officers. “Keep it simple” is a good rule for all communication especially at Conference level.

b) The Committee “Working with Others” should be retained to deal with the functioning of the external service work of the Fellowship e.g. Social Services, Probation, Prison and Hospitals. A Public Information Committee would deal with all P.I.C.P.C. work not included in the above.

**3. Suggest key questions which you would like to see discussed in Conference 1989 Committees.**

Should A.A. produce an annual pocket diary?

Is there a need for a professional public relations person?

Conference to look at Conference.

What is the role of A.A. with the young and under age alcoholic?

Discuss the implications of the Fourth Tradition (bearing in mind the pressures on the Tradition from specialised A.A. Groups e.g. Smoking/Non-Smoking etc.).

Should guidelines be issued for Conventions?

4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1989

Roger H (South Midlands Region) was elected as Chairman.

5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1989

Mae F (Glasgow Region) was elected as Secretary

#### **COMMITTEE NO.4: A.A. AND INDUSTRY AND THE TRADE UNIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Gabriel from Flemish Speaking Belgium and Bill G from the English Speaking Intergroup.

**1. Review and discuss contacts between the Fellowship, the Trade Unions and Industry.**

Throughout all Regions it was generally found that contacts between the Fellowship, the Trade Unions and Industry have been made in the main by individual A.A. members in a very uncoordinated manner. Other agencies appear to be the primary source of help to which Trade Unions and Industry make referrals.



There is a well established Industrial Alcoholism Unit operating in Glasgow. North West London are trying to establish a similar unit. Aberdeen has a day centre for alcoholics which is now affiliated with Aberdeen Trades Council and the National Union of Seamen. These centres are not run by A.A., however, but by individuals.

Sweden's contacts with Trade Unions and Industry are very advanced. They have had (non-profit making) centres which are backed by companies for three years, to which referrals are made. A.A. Groups co-operate but are not affiliated with these centres.

It was felt that A.A. should become more visible to Trade Unions and Industry and approaches should be made by well-informed, stable A.A. members working within the existing P.I.C.P.C. structure.

## **2 Do many companies have an existing policy on alcoholism?**

It is believed that many major companies do have alcohol policies. Some smaller companies make informal arrangements, often based on the managements' own ideas, which are not formal policies. Often it is not until disciplinary procedures are pending that help is suggested to employees. Apart from the major American oil companies and some other very large companies, there appears to be no defined policies on alcoholism.

## **3. Do medical, nursing and welfare personnel of Trade Unions and companies know about AA?**

The Committee believes that some medical, nursing and welfare personnel of Trade Unions and companies know about A.A. from individual A.A. members. However, improvements on communication with Trade Unions and companies in general would undoubtedly give these personnel a better knowledge of how A.A. works.

## **4. What role has the Fellowship in assisting both Industry and the Trade Unions in developing "Alcohol and Work" policies?**

After lengthy discussion, the Committee dismissed the idea of a Board Member and Committees responsible specifically for Trade Unions and Industry, due to the current lack of resources within A.A.

It was suggested that P.I. direct more emphasis towards the National Media in order that key centres of influence such as Personnel Directors and Senior Trade Union Officials can be made more aware of the illness of alcoholism, its effects and the remedial benefits that contact with our Fellowship can have in this area.

When interest is shown from these sources, appropriate A.A. members from P.I. teams should endeavour to be available to provide a "back-up service".

Furthermore, it was strongly recommended that the Board resume their search for a non-alcoholic Trade Union representative and also that a non-alcoholic member from an organisation such as the C.B.I., both be invited to serve on the Board to assist and to expedite the objectives of this Committee.

A further recommendation is that the pamphlet "A.A. and Occupational Alcoholism Programmes" should be re-titled and re-written.

5 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1989  
Bill G (English Speaking Intergroup) was elected as Chairman and James N (South West Scotland Region) as alternative Chairman.

6 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1989  
Jean W (Scotia Region) was elected as Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE NO.5: WORKING WITH OTHERS**

The Meeting started with a few moments silence and the Preamble was read. The Chairman welcomed Cor and Mauritis, Observers from the Netherlands. Everyone introduced themselves.

### **1. Review the draft posters pitched to young people.**

There was an appreciation of the improved standard and the Committee decided by eight votes to seven to select the poster indicated.

There was a particular recommendation that the second poster design was suitable for leaflet form.

### **2. Report on progress made in contacts with Probation Services (England and Wales) and Social Works Depts. (Scotland). Make any necessary recommendations.**

Slow but steady progress has been made in all Regions with Probation Services in England and Wales and Social Work Departments in Scotland. In one or two instances there have been striking successes.

In Scotland there has been for some time an A.A. presence at the top level and in the past year in England and Wales there has been significant progress through the non-alcoholic Board Member.

We recommend that every Intergroup appoints a Probation Liaison Officer who in turn has volunteers to help him or her. Also that Intergroup and Regional Liaison Officers send their reports to the relevant Board Member so that a regular digest can be circulated.

In England and Wales we recommend that approaches be made to the Clerks to the Magistrates whenever possible following a very helpful article in the journal "The Magistrate".

### **3. Has progress been made regarding problems of prisoners on remand? Make recommendations to enhance the achievement of further progress.**

Contact with remand prisoners remains a problem in many areas, although three Regions reported conspicuous progress. It was noted that in one instance the situation had changed overnight, due to a change of staff which shows the value of perseverance.

We recommend that even when it is difficult to arrange meetings a supply of literature is always available for remand prisoners, and that the A.A. video be offered for showing wherever possible. Where no progress has been made it may be helpful to contact either the Remand Wing Chaplains or Probation Officers - Social Workers in Scotland - using the normal prison channels of communications.

**4**

- a) **Identify any problems of access and communication with doctors and nurses in general hospitals.**
- b) **How best can the Fellowship surmount the problems identified?**

Access to the nursing profession is generally very good, but with doctors in general hospitals results vary enormously. Some are very sympathetic to A.A. but others are not interested; it is difficult to find one single reason for this. Hospitals are very busy places and the best results have been via both nurse and medical students training courses. We recommend that every effort be made to reach them at this impressionable stage. We can do no better than to reiterate Conference 84's suggestion that hospital P.I. visiting teams be established by Groups and Intergroups, the emphasis being on the personal approach.

**5 There are a growing number of private Alcohol Advisory and Treatment Centres: what is the Fellowship's experience of how best to co-operate with them?**

It was our experience that no problem need exist in co-operation with Alcohol Advisory and Treatment Centres provided we stay within our Traditions. We are prepared to carry the message in any way we can bearing in mind that it is co-operation and not affiliation.

On the subject of our own tolerance of these institutions we can but commend the words of Bill W. "As Bill Sees It" page 113:-

"Too often, I think, we have deprecated and even derided projects of our friends in the field of alcoholism just because we do not always see eye to eye with them.

We should very seriously ask ourselves how many alcoholics have gone on drinking simply because we have failed to cooperate in good spirit with these many agencies - whether they be good, bad, or indifferent. No alcoholic should go mad or die merely because he did not come straight to A.A. at the beginning."

**6. In view of the limited progress made to date, how best can AA contact the suffering alcoholic in the ethnic minority communities?**

Our progress in reaching the ethnic communities will always be limited until we attract individual people from those communities into the Fellowship. It is not merely a problem of language but of basic cultural and religious differences.

We can only reinforce the recommendations of '87 Conference:-

- (a) Intergroups should make full use of the available ethnic minority literature in Hindi and Urdu.

- (b) We should endeavour to identify ethnic minority newspapers and magazines in order to place short announcements about A.A.
- (c) Similarly, ethnic minority clubs and cultural societies should be approached in order to see whether our posters would be of interest.
- (d) It is suggested that P.I.C.P.C. officers approach ethnic minority community leaders in order to develop a good relationship with them and to identify whether we should be producing more minority language pamphlets.”

We should also try to reach local radio and television stations which produce programmes aimed specifically at those communities.

## **7. What can be done to encourage consultants and GP’s to attend PI meetings?**

Each member of the Fellowship should consider carrying the message to his own GP.

The best results in reaching doctors have been experienced where seminars have been arranged with closely targeted groups, held on their territory and at times convenient to them. This was felt to be much more effective than simply writing letters inviting them to P.I. Meetings.

Every university medical school has a Post Graduate Adviser or Dean for GPs who would be a useful contact with a view to possible A.A. participation in seminars which are part of the curriculum.

8. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1989  
Mark C (Midlands Region) was elected as Chairman.

9. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1989  
Eddie H (Glasgow Region) was elected as Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE NO.6: STRUCTURE AND SERVICE**

Jimmy G welcomed everyone and opened the Meeting with the preamble and a few moments silence. A special welcome was extended to Rina R (Flemish Speaking Belgium) and Paddy Mc (Ireland) Observers.

### **1. Review the Board’s Report on “A.A. members employed in the field of Alcoholism.**

The Committee felt that the word “Report” should have read “Final Draft Suggestions”. It was felt that, as it stood, the report was no more than a fair precis of the American Guideline, which was excellent and which, if amended, could serve perfectly well in the U.K.

The Committee identified three problems:

- (a) There was a need to brief A.A. members who were considering entering the field of Professional Alcohol Counselling.
- (b) There was a need to brief A.A. Groups on how to deal with the members who use A.A. to promote their own personal financial advantage e.g. as paid counsellors etc.

- (c) There was very little factual experience of the problems reported via Intergroups and Regions, from which the Board could formulate answers to the problems experienced in (a) and (b) above.

The Committee recommends that the Board write to all Groups, Intergroups and Regions asking for factual information on these two problems. With the feedback obtained the Board should be able to report to Conference at a later date.

**2. Our recent survey has shown that an increasing proportion of the Fellowship is “dual addicted”. What is the experience of the Fellowship in dealing with this situation at Group meetings?**

The Committee considered that sufficient material and information was available, and that Groups on the whole were handling the situations as they arose with love but firmly. They were putting across the message that A.A. was there only to deal with alcoholism and would advise that other problems be dealt with by appropriate agencies. It was emphasised by the Committee that groups should always be guided by the Traditions. The Committee also felt that, as appropriate, A.A. at Group level could usefully liaise with such agencies as N.A. The Committee recommends that the Board re-circulate to all Groups the “Blanket Therapy” letter (which should also make reference to the pamphlet “Problems other than Alcohol”) together with Bill W’s original letter On Our Primary Purpose. These two letters should also be included in the Group Handbook as issued to new Groups.

**3. Consider the need for publishing a leaflet for use in Twelfth Stepping suffering gay alcoholics.**

The Committee by a large majority felt that there as no need for such a pamphlet - the existing literature “Do you think you’re Different” - is considered to be more than adequate. It was also felt that any such leaflet would be difficult to write without first hand knowledge of the particular problem. It was however, recognised that some gays, particularly those who were isolated or not self confessed did have difficulty in coming to terms with a dual sense of guilt. The Committee felt it was incumbent on any Twelfth Stepper to reassure such persons that A.A. does not differentiate, and that whatever colour, sex or creed, the alcoholic who wishes to do something about their drinking is neither unwelcome or alone. The Committee felt most strongly that, on balance, the proposed leaflet would only add to any discrimination felt by gays and perhaps even isolate them rather than allaying their fears.

**4. What role do tape recordings play in spreading the message? Would a tape library run by the Board, be of value in this respect?**

The Committee understood that the word “tape” referred to Conference approved literature, audio taped at present by the Addlestone Recording Group. Lists of available tapes can be obtained from G.S.O. through the Group Secretaries. It was felt that this method of passing the message to such people as the blind, loners, travellers and prisoners etc was invaluable, and the service should not only continue but be expanded.

It was felt that a tape lending library at G.S.O. would be of little practical value. The cost and maintenance load on staff would be disproportionate to the benefits obtained, and would also under-mine the work and effectiveness of those at present recording the literature - namely the

Addlestone Recording Group.

There was merit however in G.S.O. maintaining a tape library of archival tapes such as those taken at Conventions etc, but, these should not be for lending purposes.

**5 Should meetings of the Scottish Service Committee, the General Service Board, and the Annual General Service Conference, be open to Regional or Intergroup Officers and any other interested AA members in the capacity of observers?**

The Committee were aware that some members felt that A.A. should be seen to be more democratic in having all meetings open to observers. After deliberation, however, the Committee decided that the present system should remain. The practicalities alone of accommodation and catering for unlimited observers would be too difficult to surmount. It was emphasised by the Committee that A.A. should trust its trusted servants, who, in turn, should honour this trust placed in them and communicate fully and clearly to the members they serve.

6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1989  
Richard D (Wales & Borders Region) was elected as Chairman.

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1989  
Joan C (North East Region) was elected as Secretary.

**WORKSHOP: GROWING WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP**

The meeting opened with the Preamble, followed by a few moments silence.

Presentation: Sylvia M (Eastern Region)

I started attending AA in June 1974 - for all the wrong reasons, I wasn't tired of my drinking, my husband, Bob, couldn't stand it any longer. I went to a meeting seventeen miles from my home because I was worried about my anonymity, for absolutely no reason at all I thought that half the people I knew might be there. I didn't reason very well in those days.

I liked the people that I met and although I was told to look for the similarities, being me I looked for the differences. I had decided that if I stuck around for about six months life would be easier at home and I would be able to return to social drinking. I hadn't bargained for Bob's reaction, he knew that I was an alcoholic even though I was very doubtful, despite all that I had heard in meetings.

I managed to stay dry for a further three months and then went back to my not very secret drinking - the results certainly weren't a secret.

By this time I had started attending a meeting at Warley psychiatric Hospital, which is near my home and for just over two years I would drink for a while and then stop, but I just couldn't stay stopped. During this time I deteriorated in many ways, I became dishonest, devious, insensitive and totally selfish.

I remember that when I was on my way home from getting my supply one morning my next door neighbour stopped me to tell me that her father had to undergo a very minor operation and she was extremely worried. Nowadays I would ask her to come straight in and have a cup of tea and sit and talk to her about it in a reassuring and kindly manner - but not then. I was being kept from my bottle, so I told her that the trouble was that she had never had anything to worry about in her life so she just couldn't cope. Surprisingly enough we are still good friends although we have both moved house since that time. I just wasn't a very nice person at all - hardly worthy to be called a member of the human race, as far as other people's feelings were concerned I was a total drop out. My dishonesty took the form of getting Bob to sign cheques so that I could pay the mortgage, etc. and paying two months on one cheque so that I would have a spare to supplement my income and house-keeping. When this was discovered I can remember one morning taking a pound note from his wallet, this really made me feel sick but I felt much better when I had a drink, or two, or three.

Thank God the day came when I was at long last ready to throw in the towel and started to learn about self-honesty, I used to say to myself over and over again "This above all - to thine own self be true; and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man".

During my longer dry periods I had become involved in visiting patients on the hospital wards at my home group and I became more involved, slowly but surely. After a few months when the fog had cleared I started to try and understand the Twelve Steps, I had completely disregarded them before, they were for the bad cases. My peers had pointed out that although my rock bottom was a high one, if I continued drinking it would certainly become a low one. I really started to enjoy my sobriety and I burnt more evening meals because my nose was stuck in my Twelve by Twelve than I had ever done whilst I was drinking.

My home life had very quickly settled down to a lovely happy comfortable and caring one. I had shut myself off for such a long time. I can remember on one occasion when I stopped drinking I was out for a walk in a large local park with Bob and he said that the difference in me was amazing, my eyes were brighter, my skin clearer and he felt that he 'had got me back' - it was as if I went away completely when I was drinking.

I knew that AA also stood for Altered Attitudes, it seemed as if by magic I became more tolerant of others, there was no need to be dishonest, the cause had been removed - a day at a time. I received tremendous help from the sober members of my home group, they were all relieved and delighted that I had at long last 'got the message'.

I had always believed in God, but I kept closing the door, He didn't. I trusted completely in my Higher Power and about two and a half years ago I started to go to church and have since been confirmed. After two years of very contented sobriety I was asked to become secretary of my group and I refused, I was afraid of letting our Fellowship down, I felt that with my record I needed to be sober for three years before taking on that task. A hospital group is slightly different because we come into contact with a large number of people outside the Fellowship.

My sponsor at that time, Mary, was determined that this shouldn't mean that I was going to have an easy time, she passed on all the hospital visits to me each week to either cover myself, depending upon how many, or for me to 'phone round to other members of the group to cover. I enjoyed the involvement and know that it helped me to grow within the Fellowship.

I was invited by a very long sober member to become involved in the Barking and Havering Advisory Council on Alcoholism, I felt rather apprehensive but I decided that if it was good enough for Joe it wouldn't harm me. I attended a course on counselling for two terms at a local general hospital and fortunately our tutor had got sober through AA and so we all had a great deal in common. We manned a clinic in Romford but every time somebody came in we ended up taking them to an AA meeting, after all, we had had what we consider to be the best so they were entitled to the same! After a year or so it was obvious that we were poles apart and we had to sever the connection. This body has now been re-organised and we have a very good relationship with them, when they send out literature, details of AA are included and they also refer quite a few people to AA.

I had also been roped in to PICPC. Maurice, General Service Board Member, had come down to Shenfield to give a talk on PICPC work, I was unable to be there but my intrepid sponsor had taped the meeting and I ended up writing it down in long-hand and then typing it back, I think this document formed our first guidelines. This led to giving talks to nurses in training, social workers, sixth form colleges, etc, and was always very rewarding.

From here on my personal life and AA life became even more closely linked. At the end of February 1980, I became secretary of Warley Hospital Group, on 1st March my husband's younger brother died very suddenly. Bob and his brother were business partners and this meant that I had to become involved in my husband's work, he was a butcher and I had to roll my sleeves up and get cracking. In addition to my part-time job of 20 hours a week, I worked with Bob for a further 30 hours, ran my home, etc. and continued with my AA jobs. This was necessary because Bob now had a sister-in-law and two children to support, in addition to me. I was now reliable, industrious, still very happy and very sober - a tremendous turnaround in three years. I really did enjoy being able to be so supportive.

At the end of 1980 Bob's eldest sister died, also quite suddenly and I was able to cope with the sale of her home, solicitors, etc. all things that I could never have undertaken whilst drinking. Doubtless, in my arrogance, I would have taken charge and made a terrible mess of things.

Life went along at this hectic pace until November 1982, when I suddenly became ill. After numerous x-rays, it was discovered that I had a tumour at the base of my right lung, and a nasty one at that. I was completely shattered by this, weeping and wailing all over the place. Yet again my sponsor sorted me out, telling me to get down on my knees and pray, not to keep talking to the God of my understanding whilst doing the washing up or mixing a cake. How right she was, as always. I went into hospital in early January 1983 and am still here today - with a clean bill of health.

I made a very good recovery and as I was no longer helping my husband I became involved in Intergroup. I eventually took on the joy of Intergroup Treasurer, thinking that with all my other commitments it wouldn't be too onerous. How wrong can one be? It seemed that immediately I took the job on the system changed and all contributions had to be sent to Intergroup and not GSO, we are also involved in the London Region Telephone Service so there was plenty to do. I thoroughly enjoyed that three years.

I had been to Region as a visitor once or twice and eventually became an Intergroup Representative, I found it very difficult to understand at first, but I persevered and gradually things started to fall into place. I had heard about this thing called Conference. I had stood in



awe for a long time of members that attended this illustrious body, my sponsor had been a Conference Delegate, but I knew very little about it.

By this time Bob had retired and life was great, we were able to have - holidays for the first time in fourteen years. This was really one of the happiest periods of my life, lots of good friends, both in and outside the Fellowship. Too good to last - yes. Quite suddenly within the space of two minutes Bob died, I tried mouth to mouth resuscitation and it worked, but then he stopped breathing again and there was nothing I could do. I got help from my neighbours and as soon as possible 'phoned a very close friend in our Fellowship, bless her heart she was round in about twenty minutes, considering this was about 1.15 in the morning it was quite an achievement. Whenever I mention this at a meeting when I am sharing she gets quite embarrassed and says that she benefited far more than I did because for years she would have been useless at that time in a morning. She was so grateful that she was sober and able to help.

My sponsor, Mary, had moved down to the West Country some time before this and I had looked round at the long sober members and decided upon the lady that I would ask to take on the job. I knew that she wouldn't give me an easy ride if I was out of line, and that is what I wanted and needed. I now have another friendship which I value and it isn't a 'one way traffic' relationship.

I prayed hard for the strength to cope and I was given it, but being a recovering alcoholic I then worried because I was coping so well. I was so desperately unhappy that it didn't seem right that I could be so much in control. I stayed very close to my meetings and friends, this helped tremendously. I carried out my duties for Intergroup and became Treasurer for my Region, again I thought that there wouldn't be a great deal to do, four collections a year, rent to pay, Delegates' fees to collect and pass onto GSO. I was wrong again, our General Service Board had decided that Regional Treasurers should play a more active part in the finance side of our Fellowship. This led to meetings of Intergroup Treasurers, Regional Treasurers and has all been very worthwhile.

In 1986 I attended Conference as an Alternate Delegate, I had done a great deal of work on the Finance Committee Agenda at our Workshop and had also tried to help our Delegates as much as possible. But the one Committee that I hadn't done much work on was - you've guessed it - the one that I ended up on. I did my best but with a combination of nerves and lack of preparation I couldn't really make a useful contribution. Our Intergroup is now inviting Alternate Delegates to Workshops and we are trying to ensure that they are reasonably well prepared for any Committee. In 1987 the Delegate from my Region who had been on the Finance Committee very kindly stepped down so that as Regional Treasurer I could sit on the appropriate committee. I felt much more at home and enjoyed being able to make some contribution.

When I was drinking I never wanted to face reality, and there are times when I don't particularly like it now - it can be a bit hard, but now I know it must be done. Life goes on and I have now sold a house which was much too large for me and bought a smaller and more suitable one for my needs, big decisions to be made but I managed, again with more than a little help from my friends.

I consider that my life to date has been well-blessed, a good marriage that lasted nearly thirty-three years and survived my alcoholism to become even better, relatives that care and are supportive and allow me to help them and many, many good friends and I know that there are many more in this room that I haven't even spoken to.

I may well be wrong but I chart my growth in the Fellowship by how I cope with my life, without spiritual, emotional and mental growth I feel that I couldn't have progressed at all and would have gone under. Just stopping drinking wouldn't have achieved a thing. I can't use a dip-stick to check on how things are going, I can only take things one day at a time, question my reactions to what has happened and also my motives for the things that I do and undertake. For me, I have to keep things simple and still stay away from that first drink one day at a time, although I do this almost without thinking, it has become my way of life. Nowadays I know that when the going gets tough the tough get going and for me that means never forgetting the basic principles of our Fellowship.

Presentation: Ken M (Highlands & Islands Region)

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Ken and I am an alcoholic. To me it is beyond my wildest dreams to be invited here tonight to share my thoughts with you on "Growth within the Fellowship". At the same time I feel very humble at being asked to speak as it is only by the "Grace of God" and the Fellowship of Alcoholic Anonymous that allows me to be with you sober "one day at a time".

For growth to begin a seed or an idea has first to be planted, then fertilised and along with some tender care and attention the seed will begin to grow and blossom. So, it was in the beginning on that most important day in our Fellowship when on the tenth of June 1935 our co-founder had his last drink and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous was born.

Now, just as out of little acorns large oaks grow, the Fellowship has been growing steadily spreading its branches into countries all over the world, arriving in this country where, in 1957, our General Service Board came into existence.

For an oak to grow large and spread its branches in all directions it needs to have safe and secure foundations and its roots have to be firmly established in the soil. As it is with the Fellowship we arrive at the door and by gentle loving encouragement we are drawn to the centre into the heart and the very roots of this Fellowship. From this foundation we ourselves will surely begin to grow in A.A.

The growth of this Fellowship will continue, of this I have absolutely no doubt. I have today complete faith in the Fellowship and the power behind it "God of my understanding". However, I believe growth can only come from within whether it be at this Conference, our Regions, Intergroups, Groups or ourselves. I think that first growth must come from within the individual - whether it is man or woman, boy or girl, it makes no difference.

I know today that the seed of recovery was sown in my mind several years before I came through the doors of Alcoholic Anonymous to that first meeting in Craig Dunain Mental Hospital. (The Group there today is the one I consider as being my home group).

It was during one of my many work trips in the North of Scotland I found myself in trouble with the police through using my employers' vehicle outside working hours and having an accident (ran off the road into a garden). Needless to say my employers were not amused so I was ordered home to Inverness to explain my actions. A work colleague drove me out to the airport at Kirkwall and in the airport lounge he told me about himself - how he stopped drinking with the

help of this Fellowship and what it could do for me if I had a problem with alcohol.

According to me then I had no problem with alcohol and was not really interested in what John was sharing with me. Of course I had other problems but they could be sorted out given time and a few visits to the pub to keep my thinking in order. Looking back I can now see that the seed began to germinate and grow. After being taken to my first A.A. meeting where I received a little hope, I was told that if I continued to go to A.A. then things would get better. I felt this from within, I just seem to know that it could somehow work.

My growth began the day that I found myself at a cross roads in life - it seemed to me that I had two choices one back to the hell I had come from, or forward within the Fellowship of A.A. There really was no contest. It had to be A.A. As I stepped forward it was as if a hand was stretched for me to grasp and in grasping this hand it would lead me safely into the Fellowship of A.A. Today I know that the hand was that of my Higher Power. Also, I could now not only admit I was an alcoholic, but could totally accept I was an alcoholic, and accept that somehow this Fellowship worked. It did not seem necessary to know how it worked - just that it did work.

My own growth within this Fellowship requires of me more than just going to meetings. I need to change constantly, change my way of life, change my thinking, have a better communication with my Higher Power, make amends to people I have hurt, put the Twelve Steps of Recovery into all aspects of my life, try and put something back into the Fellowship for all it has given me.

These things I can only do by continuing to practise the Twelve Steps and being ever vigilant at all times remembering I am only one drink away from a drunk.

I am now able to see myself as I really am - being aware how I think; watching out for danger signals; learning about my emotions and how to obtain a measure of control over them; trying not to lose my temper; being more understanding; trying to be more tolerant. Today through growing up in A.A. I am very aware of some of my shortcomings.

I have also discovered the feeling of love in its true sense of the word, love for one another, compassion, concern, understanding, love of the Fellowship, deep inward love for my family and my God. These feelings along with many others I have received from the Fellowship and I know that I will never be able to give back all I have received in my gratitude to A.A.

However one of the ways I can be of service to this Fellowship is through service at all levels of AA, from being a representative at this Conference, to helping at my own group meetings and being willing to serve the Fellowship in any capacity to the best of my ability.

It is only through the teachings and strength I receive from this Fellowship that I am able to stand here in front of you tonight. It is from realising my character defects and what I can do within my own ability through putting our Twelve Steps of Recovery into practice.

There are many things that have happened in my life since coming into this Fellowship and I also know there are many more things to take place yet "a day at a time" as long as I want to stay sober.

I notice today in my own Region there has been and still is a steady growth of this Fellowship throughout the whole Region well scattered as it is. This to me is the Fellowship growing from

within and continuing to grow as we learn how A.A. is advancing in Poland and other European countries. The growth in the use of the media and through PICPC carrying the message into schools, work places, institutions etc.

My own continuing growth also depends upon the ability to attract new members into the Fellowship so as a whole the Fellowship will grow. I think also that this Fellowship will only grow with the rotation of the office bearers whether at Group, Intergroup, Region or this Conference and that is why I think it is so important to try to sponsor other members into service as soon as possible after they come into the Fellowship.

Service has brought out in me an understanding of other people, the ability to respect their views and to be able to apologise when I am wrong - definitely changed days.

Before I close I would like to finally sum up by saying before coming to the Fellowship I was an immature, uncaring alcoholic devoid of all feelings. But today I am recovering "one day at a time" through this Fellowship, learning to cope with life, trying to be a servant to this Fellowship and staying sober on a daily basis. I leave you with the following passage from page 8 of "As Bill Sees It":

"Regardless of worldly success or failure, regardless of pain or joy, regardless of sickness or health or even of death itself, a new life of endless possibilities can be lived if we are willing to continue our awakening, through the practice of A.A.'s Twelve Steps."

"May God bless you all".

Thank you.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **FRIDAY 14TH APRIL**

The Twenty-Fourth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York, with the opening session on Friday evening and the final session on Sunday morning being held in the Lecture Theatre in the Chemistry Department. The registration and reception commenced at 4.00 pm when coffee, tea and sandwiches were served in the reception lounge.

All 14 Regions were represented, with delegates also from the Channel Isles, 'Roundabout', and the European English Speaking Intergroups. There were observers present from the following countries:

Ireland  
Belgium (French Speaking)  
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)  
Malta  
Poland

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE - BY MARGARET M (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1989)**

The first session was opened by Margaret M (Wales & Borders Region) with the customary moments silence and the reading of the Preamble. She welcomed all present with a special welcome to first year delegates and overseas observers.

The General Secretary was then invited to read the Twelve Traditions, following which Margaret presented her Keynote address:

“Since the Agenda Committee was formed and asked to submit themes for Conference no-one has yet used any of their suggestions. I am no exception.

I would like to have used one, but I had no alternative other than to propose “Acceptance” as the theme for Conference 1989.

Every time I have been asked to participate in service in Alcoholics Anonymous, I have learned a great deal from it and I assume that this lack of choice in the theme is my Higher Power’s way of directing me yet again towards an area where I need help.

When I first came to this Fellowship, I was able to accept very quickly that alcohol was my problem, so, by my reckoning, remove the alcohol and I would be O.K. People told me I would need to change, but like everything else that sounded the slightest bit like hard work, I ignored it.

Acceptance of the need to change came after a lot of pain, doubt and fear but strangely it was being involved in service that taught me how to change in many ways.

I didn't really want to be involved in service.

I was feeling miserable and sorry for myself one particular evening when the phone rang. It was a member enquiring whether I was willing to have my telephone number on the latest contact card. He asked what was wrong, and when I told him, he suggested I get my backside along to a meeting (this is the polite version).

The only meeting in our area that night was a Service Meeting. I went along and was horrified. They all seemed to be shouting at each other. I was fascinated. It wasn't long before I became involved at Intergroup and although I missed the first Regional Meeting I did get to the next one.

A lot of things were happening to me at this time and the strength of Alcoholics Anonymous kept me sane.

I was newly divorced and for the first time was taking responsibility for my life. I had a job but weekends seemed very long, so Intergroup and Regional meetings seemed a sensible way to fill them. I was too shy to say a word in front of these seemingly knowledgeable people, but I felt safe and I was learning fast.

As I accepted responsibility for myself so my confidence grew. I realised I had something to offer, my ideas were not always taken up but I was enthusiastic and I was willing to listen to the suggestions of others. I had been pretty wilful and self-satisfied up until then, and I believe it was this experience of service that made me learn to take telling. (This is a Welsh expression meaning, learning to take criticism, overcome sensitivity and generally toughen up).

It was around this time too that I realised that the tremendous patience and tolerance that I saw and heard in other members was due to their love for Alcoholics Anonymous. So many of them did so much, so graciously. I had sometimes done things resentfully. I remember someone saying it was a privilege to do telephone duty, I had always looked on it as a chore. I was told that they did these things with love because it was what God wanted them to do.

God was another of the items on my not yet accepted list.

It was at this stage which, in retrospect seemed like an almost physical battle, that I went through the most difficult period of my sobriety so far. I did not want to let go of my life to some unseen, untested, unlikely being. I did believe in something, but I didn't want that something to be in charge of my life.

I am more than happy to say that I lost that battle and that most of the time I can now accept that God, as I understand him, directs my life far better than I could have ever imagined.

I still take control now and again, but not for long.

The most recent job in which I have been involved is Regional Hospital Liaison Officer and once more I've learned something. I have to accept that the number of members involved in our area is limited and that PI, Prison, Probation Services have a similar problem. I have also come to accept that only a small percentage of members will become involved in service. One of the joys, however, is how well Alcoholics Anonymous has been received in hospitals (and it is not just because our services are freely given, although in these days of tight budgets that must be a

help). Sometimes, unexpectedly the concern has been about the staff's drinking problems as well as the patient's.

I have accepted that Alcoholics Anonymous does not have the monopoly on caring for the still suffering alcoholic, and it is not just our own non-alcoholic board members who care, but also hundreds of willing people in the caring professions. I believe that it is our responsibility to show them that Alcoholics Anonymous is a trustworthy Fellowship to which they can safely recommend their patients and clients.

In our area we believe that showing ourselves to be an efficient up to date and reliable organisation in co-operating with professional and voluntary bodies is an effective way of doing this.

Earlier I particularly welcomed people who were here for the first time. As in all areas of service I have learned so much from coming to Conference. The first one I attended was like that first Service Meeting, there seemed to be some difference of opinion. I was very tense and very conscious of doing the job of representing my region properly. The second one was easier, and the third I was determined to enjoy as it was my last. Or so I thought, and this brings me back to my problem.

I have been trying to explain how acceptance, learning and growing are all interwoven in bringing me to where I am today. However, there is one area of acceptance that I still have trouble with and that is the regard I have from my fellow alcoholics. As the years go by instead of getting easier it gets more overwhelming.

To have been asked to Chair Conference is such a great privilege, the words 'thank you' cannot express my feelings.

You have given me your respect, your care, your time and your love unstintingly. I do not deserve it but I am learning to accept it.

DIOLCH YN FAWR, BENDITH DUW I CHI GYD

That's Welsh and it means "Thank you and God Bless You All".

### **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Colin N, the Chairman of the Board, highlighted certain aspects of the Report. He also expressed satisfaction at the level of contributions received over the past year.

He reported with regret the death of Edward Clarke, non-alcoholic Board Member. He went on to say how much Edward had been respected by the Board and how he had provided the Board with invaluable expertise particularly at the time of the legacy issue when the Alcoholics Anonymous (Dispositions) Act 1986 was being prepared.

Conference was then asked to ratify the appointment of five new members to the General Service Board:-

Bob P	South Midlands Region
Richard D	Wales & Borders Region

George S      South East Region  
Peter F      North East Region  
George R      North East Region

Colin further reported that George R had been appointed as Hon Treasurer to replace Peter M, who retires by rotation at Conference 1989.

The resignation of Terry C (South Midlands Region) and Jean D (Midlands Region) due to personal circumstances was noted and thanks were expressed for their unstinting service over the past two years.

The Board is actively endeavouring to find a further suitable non-alcoholic Board Member from the Trade Unions and/or CBI area.

An index of Conference Recommendations is now available on request, free of charge, from the General Service Office.

Colin then introduced Peter M, Hon Treasurer, to present the Financial Report.

Peter commenced by saying it was a great privilege and pleasure to note there has been such splendid support to the General Funds with contributions being 17.5% up on the 1987 figure. This amount was well ahead of the target put forward by the General Service Office Accountant and Hon Treasurer. This growth is due to two or three factors, partly the growth of the Fellowship, but mainly a greater understanding of the finances down to grass roots level, the Fellowship now knows how and why we spend the money - there is also a greater awareness of Tradition 7. The Regional Treasurers Meetings, together with the Regional and Intergroup Treasurers Workshops, have all helped to dispel the feeling that money is a dirty word. As Bill said "the one place that money and spirituality can mix in our Fellowship is in the AA pot".

He went on to say that each quarter a full set of accounts is sent to all of our Regional Treasurers with a summary to each Intergroup. It was also noted that a local firm of Chartered Accountants had been appointed as Auditors and they were delighted with the procedures and general administration in the office.

A sub-committee of the General Service Board had been appointed to review pensions and investments. Following the recommendations of the sub-committee a firm of leading consultants has been appointed to advise on these matters. Peter then went on to explain that the Sinking Fund had matured and that the accumulated monies had been released by the Charities Commission - this money has now been placed in the General Funds.

Negotiations regarding compensation for the computer system installed in early 1987 are still taking place. However the depreciation charges have increased to cover the total write-off of the unsatisfactory system on the belief that by making these provisions the finances are being placed on the soundest footing for the future.

Once again Peter praised the efforts of the Share Team for remaining in profit - he did mention, however, that the circulation figures were disappointingly low in relation to the membership, and the quality of the magazine.



Negotiations on dilapidations were reaching the final stages.

Notwithstanding the substantial prudent provisions which we had made in the accounts, the final outcome was that we were still able to transfer more than £4,000 into our reserves, which is a most satisfactory achievement.

As there was no other business to be discussed Conference formally approved the adoption of the Annual General Service Board Report for 1988.

## **CONVENTIONS**

33rd Annual Scottish Convention                      12-14 May 1989  
Stakis Normandy Hotel, Renfrew

Manchester Convention                                      23-25 June 1989  
Parkers Hotel, Manchester

Heart of England -Birmingham Convention    14-16 July 1989  
Penns Hall Hotel, Sutton Coldfield

Blue Bonnets    6-8 October 1989  
Loreburn Hall, Dumfries

Southern Convention                                      27-29 October 1989  
Pontins Camber Sands Holiday Centre

Welsh Convention    27-29 October 1989  
Park Hotel, Cardiff

## **10TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING - 23-27 OCTOBER 1988**

Peter expressed his sincere gratitude at being afforded the opportunity of attending the 10th World Service Meeting and reported as follows:- “The outstanding impression which I know will stay with me long after the excitement of visiting New York, the social contacts, the visit to Stepping Stones and the Bill Wilson Dinner at the New York Hilton have faded (wonderful though they all were) will be the dedication and commitment of the AA people I had the privilege of meeting.

The day after our arrival Jack and I called at GSO and were made welcome in the way that only AA's have of welcoming friends for the first time. We were shown around like honoured guests, and in every department (each headed up by a long-time member) I felt the depth of strength and experience which guided all their actions. I was to feel this tremendous, yet unobtrusive competence when the World Service Meeting began in earnest. It was not unlike our own Conference, except that there was first an open meeting to relax everyone a little and break the ice - a useful idea when you have more than forty delegates assembled from twenty-seven countries. Sadly, Poland was the only Eastern Bloc country represented, but we were delighted that they had made it. The Meeting was opened by a welcoming address from Michael

Alexander the Chairman of the USA/Canada Board, and this was followed by the keynote address from John Bragg of GSO New York, in the historic grand ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel where the American Conferences and Trustees Meetings have been held from AA's earliest days - where Bill W must have made many of his most important speeches.

Then work began in earnest. We divided into four Committees: Agenda; Literature/Publishing; Policy/Admissions; Working With Others, each of which considered several questions deemed to be of importance to the Fellowship worldwide. For the benefit of the numerous Spanish speaking delegates there was simultaneous translation; and luckily all other delegates had enough English to get by. After Committee Sessions we all met again back in the ballroom where the entire Meeting considered each committee's report in turn; amending where necessary before giving it our approval. At these Sessions each first-time delegate read a prepared paper of his/her own service history, lasting not more than three minutes, with the accent on service - no drunkalogues by request!

Four Workshops on the topics of Sponsorship into Service; Finance; Communication within the Fellowship; and Communication between Countries were also organised very much like our own, so that every delegate shared on all the questions in all Workshops. And again, we gathered together to consider in full session the results of those careful deliberations; all of which will be available to us when the report is published.

Outside these formal sessions, but woven tightly into the fabric of the Meeting were the informal sharings; over breakfast, during coffee break, over lunch, over dinner (which was followed by another working session!) and on and on ..... we were steeped in AA in all its aspects from the saddest to the happiest.

With the five days of WSM business finally concluded we all went off to GSO where we took part with many other visitors in the GSO's staff's own weekly meeting. It was a glorious hour; half the accents of the world sharing the hell of alcoholism, and the joy of recovery with friends they had never met before: sincerely but never sombrelly, and the whole meeting ending with such laughter and good fellowship as John Barleycorn never knew.

Surely, there has never been such unity in diversity as AA affords, for throughout that whole week I heard not one word of criticism of the Traditions or Concepts - I had not expected to hear any of the Programme - Yet we had come from countries where AA is now old and respected, from some where it is newer but well established, and from still others where it is weak and struggling, barely tolerated by authority. From countries where funds are adequate, and countries where every penny must be counted. But despite these truly enormous differences there was never any hint that "we find this or that Tradition out-of-date, irrelevant or superfluous in our circumstances or culture". On the contrary, I saw on every side a deep and abiding commitment to our Traditions; and from the newest as from the oldest countries there was a total recognition that they are of a spiritual nature, just like the Programme; and like the Programme, being things of the Spirit they will endure so long as we are faithful to them.

The World Service Meeting was a truly joyous experience. To meet and share with others in such love as would not allow us to feel threatened by our differences; to know that we were of one heart though we might not be of one opinion; to go forward together in mutual trust and understanding toward the common goal for the common good

This was true Fellowship. This was AA.”

### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1990**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Twenty-fifth General Service Conference 1990:

Terry P	South East Region
Lesley J	North West Region
Mike D	South Midlands Region
Sandy S	East of Scotland Region
Bill M	Highlands & Islands Region
Eddie H	Glasgow Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

### **SATURDAY. 15TH APRIL**

#### **WORKSHOP - “PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES”**

The Workshop started at 8.30 pm Chaired by Dr James Valentine, a long serving non-alcoholic member of the General Service Board. Vicky C (North East Region) acted as Secretary and the presentations were made by Rodger P (Eastern Region) and Mike D (South Midlands Region).

The sharing began very quickly as the presentations had obviously sparked off a desire for a “get in fast” attitude from the floor. The point picked up from the speakers was mainly centred on ego deflation. A lively atmosphere continued as members shared their own experience on the “Principles before Personality” theme. Conference delegates were delighted by the participation of three of our lady members from Germany, Poland and Belgium and one of our friends from Malta who also shared their experiences on the theme.

The full text of the two Workshop presentations appear on pages XIV-XXII.

### **SUNDAY 16TH APRIL**

The final session of the Conference commenced with the customary moments silence, following which Margaret read the Preamble. Margaret then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports, which were fully discussed, amended where necessary, and adopted.

The Committee Reports are included later in this report as indicated:

1. STRUCTURE AND SERVICE
2. FINANCE
3. AGENDA
4. WORKING WITH OTHERS

5. COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP
6. PICPC

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1990**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Mike D (South Midlands Region) was duly elected.

### **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

On behalf of all Conference delegates Colin N, Chairman of the Board, paid tribute to Margaret M for her excellent Chairmanship throughout the Conference. Colin added thanks to Robert C, Georgia G and Peter M, retiring Board Members for their devoted service to the Fellowship.

Colin, on behalf of the Board, expressed thanks to Jack G and the General Service Office Staff for their efforts during the weekend and for providing the reports in such good time. He went on to express his appreciation to the staff of the University of York.

Margaret M thanked all present for making Conference 1989 such a memorable occasion.

The General Service Conference of 1989 closed with the Serenity Prayer.

### **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-Fifth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York on 6-8 April 1990.

## **TWENTY-FOURTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1989**

### **COMMITTEE NO 1: STRUCTURE AND SERVICE**

The Chairman welcomed everybody, particularly the new Regional Delegate from ESIG and our Observers from Ireland and Poland.

After a few moments silence a roll was called and all Delegates introduced themselves.

#### **1. Discuss the implications of the Fourth Tradition (bearing in mind the pressures on the Tradition from specialised AA Groups e.g. smoking/non-smoking etc.) .**

In considering a response to this question, the Committee felt that Tradition Five was also relevant. Members indicated that every AA group should exist primarily for the recovery of alcoholics and that other considerations initially should not apply. "Specialisation", if introduced at the setting up of an AA group could indicate restrictions and inhibit a newcomer. The importance of outlining the format of an AA meeting correctly by the Twelfth Stepper is emphasised. It is however recognised that there are members who may feel that there are other factors in their personal lives which affect their decision to attend a particular meeting or not.

The Committee felt that any group could, if necessary, usefully add an extra dimension to its title, if desired, while at the same time stressing that no restriction on attendance was implied. Such groups, if successful, as many are, should not harm AA as a whole at all but serve to demonstrate the capacity of AA to absorb and care for alcoholics of all backgrounds and cultures, etc, with loving impartiality.

## **2. Should a guideline be issued for Conventions?**

The Committee felt it was important to differentiate between National Conventions, full week-end Conventions and one day Mini-Conventions. As the number of Conventions, particularly the one-day variety seem to be increasing, the Committee felt that some form of guidance was now necessary. It is proposed therefore that the Board draft a paper which will take into consideration the following:-

- (1) Planning of dates.
- (2) Clear definitions on Finance and disposal of surplus, if any.
- (3) Early selection of a responsible committee.
- (4) Obtaining speakers; bearing in mind the importance of having AA speakers only at an AA meeting as well as the difference between open, closed and public meetings.
- (5) Sale of literature, including non-conference approved items.
- (6) Catering.
- (7) Raffles.
- (8) Sale of AA jewellery.
- (9) Invitations to participate to Al-Anon and Alateen and outside speakers.
- (10) Most important: The reason for having the convention in the first place.

It was felt that it would be best left to the Board, after the paper had been drafted to recommend whether it should be issued as a circular or brought back to Conference as a proposed Guideline.

## **3. Is the Agenda Committee fulfilling a useful and necessary purpose and, if not, how can we best ensure that questions from members of the Fellowship feed through to Conference?**

After discussion a majority conclusion was that the Agenda Committee no longer had a useful purpose to fulfil, although one or two members felt it should run for a year or two yet. It was pointed out that the Agenda Committee generally worked a year in arrears and could not always guarantee a smoother passage of all questions from the grass roots to Conference, and the necessity to check for duplication of questions or repeats etc. It was concluded that the Agenda Committee could be usefully replaced.

It was then decided that Intergroups and Regions should be reminded of their responsibilities to ensure that early notice of invitation for questions to Conference was given - the Twenty-First General Service Conference 1986 recommended that Intergroups and Regions add to all their Agendas:

“Questions for Conference”

Suitable timely reminders from Region and Intergroups should also be given to coincide with dead-lines given by GSO.

Such reminders could also be published in Share, Roundabout and AA News..

Care should never-the-less be taken to ensure that individual members who wished should be made aware that they could write direct to GSO with suggested subjects or questions.

#### **4 Review Draft Guideline on “AA Members Employed in the Field of Alcoholism”.**

The Committee considered that this was a very good draft document and was just what was needed. Congratulations are due to the Board for their excellent Anglicisation of the American/Canadian document which supplied much of the background experience.

Minor amendments were proposed as follows:

- (1) Page 1. The first two headed paragraphs should be transposed.
- (2) The word “intended” should be added after “specifically” in the new first head paragraph title.
- (3) On page 1, column 2, in sub-paragraph 4, after “Eleven - public relations” add “Twelve -Anonymity”.
- (4) On page 2, column 1, in paragraph commencing “From another” after “another” insert colon.
- (5) Page 2, column 1, in paragraph commencing “But this is not always clear” respell “compromising” correctly.
- (6) Page 2, column 2, in paragraph commencing “At G.S.O.,” delete “At G.S.O.”. Last paragraph, last sentence, delete first word “and”.
- (7) Page 4, column 2, transpose paragraphs 5 and 6.

#### **5. Review amendments to “The AA Service Handbook in Great Britain”.**

The Committee agreed with the proposed amendments except that in No.6, the introduction should read: “Composition of the General Service Board. The Articles of Association of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited state:-”

6 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1990.  
Rodger P (Eastern Region) was elected Committee Chairman.

7 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1990.  
Lynda B (London Region) was elected Committee Secretary.

Consideration of item 3 of this report was postponed until discussions on question 2 Committee No.3 had been concluded.

#### **AMENDMENT TO REPORT**

In view of the recommendations submitted by the Agenda Committee in answer to question 2, it was agreed by the members of this Committee to delete paragraph 1 of question 3:-

“After discussion a majority conclusion was that the Agenda Committee no longer had a useful purpose to fulfil, although one or two members felt it should run for a year or two yet. It was

pointed out that the Agenda Committee generally worked a year in arrears and could not always guarantee a smoother passage of all questions from the grass roots to Conference, and the necessity to check for duplication of questions or repeats etc. It was concluded that the Agenda Committee could be usefully replaced.”

## **COMMITTEE NO.2: FINANCE**

The Chairman welcomed everyone, especially our visitors from overseas and opened the meeting with the Preamble, followed by a few moments silence.

### **1. Review and discuss the Fellowship’s Budget for 1989.**

The Budget was explained in great detail, item by item, by the General Service Board Treasurer.

Many questions were asked throughout the review, and these were answered to everyone’s satisfaction.

The Committee therefore approved the Budget.

### **2. What is the simplest, most acceptable and economical form in which to present the basic financial information sought by groups and members?**

The detailed financial information provided to Regional Treasurers and the summary sheet provided to Intergroup Treasurers are very satisfactory, but a clear pictorial presentation would be helpful for the membership as a whole.

The Committee suggested that a simple bar chart presentation of income and expenditure, using the AA pound, be provided for issue annually to all groups, together with the Annual Report of the General Service Board.

Additionally, a graphic representation of the position of the Prudent Reserve would be included. The Committee recommended that the Prudent Reserve be based henceforth on the readily realisable assets rather than the total Accumulated Fund. That the target for the Fellowships Prudent Reserve remains at one year’s budgeted expenditure.

### **3. Is there a need for a Finance Committee at next year’s Conference?**

The Committee considers that there is no need for a Finance Committee at next year’s Conference. However, if some financial matter comes up which requires consideration by Conference, this could be made a subject for discussion by one of the other Committees, e.g. Structure and Service.

4 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1990  
Terry H (North West Region) was elected as Chairman.

5 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1990  
Jim P (London Region) was elected as Secretary.

## COMMITTEE NO. 3: AGENDA

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and welcomed everyone present.

### **1. Review the existing Conference format and structure. Make recommendations.**

A proposal was made that Conference should be held every 2 years, but after discussion the Committee decided that the Annual Conference should be retained. The reasons were an annual opportunity for the Board to report to Conference, whose Delegates should report back to Regions with enthusiasm. It is also the major route by which topics come up from members for discussion. A second proposal that the duration of the Conference be extended by one full day was considered and rejected. The present format should be retained.

### **2. Is the Agenda Committee fulfilling a useful and necessary purpose and, if not how can we best ensure that questions from members of the Fellowship feed through to Conference?**

Yes, the Agenda Committee has a useful purpose provided that it has a blank agenda, apart from the on-going review of the existing Conference format and structure. In this manner the Agenda Committee would be free to present to Conference suggestions for pertinent topics for Conference for the following year.

### **3. Is the present method of electing Conference Committee Chairmen and Secretaries satisfactory?**

A proposal was made that we revert to the method whereby the Board elect the Committee Chairman and Secretaries, but after discussion it was agreed that the present method appears to be simple and satisfactory.

### **4. Suggest Themes for the 1990 Conference.**

The Committee recommended that the themes for future Conferences be chosen by the elected Chairman of Conference.

### **5 Suggest Agenda Items for the 1990 Conference.**

We recommend the following six Committees and items:-

#### **(a) AA and the Workplace (Committee 1)**

Review and make recommendations on the Fellowship's experience with intermediate organisations between AA and Industry such as:

C.B.I.

T.U.C.

Institute of Personnel Managers

Employers Federation



Chambers of Commerce  
Health and Safety Executive  
Department of Trade and Industry

This should apply at local and Regional level.

(b) AA and the Health Service (Committee 2)

How can we best improve our relationships with the Health Service in areas such as:

Hospitals  
General Practitioners  
Personnel Training (Doctors, Nurses, etc)  
University Medical Schools

(c) Agenda (Committee 3)

Keep under constant review the existing Conference format and structure.

(d) Literature (Committee 4)

- (1) Review stock of little used AA literature.
- (2) Consider a facelift for all pamphlets.
- (3) Review current situation and cost of table top displays.

Consider the appropriate packages of literature for special targets, e.g. schools, etc.

(e) AA and Young People (Committee 5)

What is the Fellowship's experience of young people's groups in AA?

Review our experience in schools, universities, colleges and literature aimed at young people.

What is the Fellowship's experience in young offenders' institutions and at AA meetings.

(f) Communications (Committee 6)

Review current situation regarding telephone services.

Review communications between the General Service Conference and the AA group.

Is sufficient use being made of workshops at Intergroup and Regional level?

6 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1990.  
Vicky C (North East Region) was elected as Chairman.

7 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1990.  
Bill T (Eastern Region) was elected Secretary.

The meeting was duly closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **COMMITTEE NO.4: WORKING WITH OTHERS**

The meeting opened with a moments silence and following which the Chairman welcomed all delegates, especially the Observers from Overseas.

### **1. What measures are being taken at Board, Region and Intergroup levels to introduce AA into the training curriculum of Prison Staff, Probation, and Police Officers, Magistrates, the Legal Profession, Social Workers, etc?**

Board members are actively seeking, with the Home and Scottish Offices, opportunities for AA involvement in the training curriculum. This is already resulting in a fresh approach at local levels.

The Directorate of the Scottish Prison Service has been engaged in consultations with AA in relation to changes in training for Prison Officers. This will be done in individual Prisons as part of “in service” training, thus strengthening existing links with individual establishments.

Articles have also been written for “The Magistrate” Journal of the Magistrates Association and “The Link” Journal of the Scottish Prison Officers’ Association.

At Region and Intergroup level, it was felt that much good work was being done on a ‘one-to-one’ basis with Prison, Probation, Police and Social Workers. This could be further enhanced by invitations to professional bodies to attend public meetings, one day Conventions, etc.

In one Region the Fellowship are directly involved in the training curriculum of three Police Colleges and of two Local Authority Social Services Departments.

### **2. Review the Fellowship’s experience when co-operating with the Courts, and with the Probation Services in England and Wales and the Social Services in Scotland.**

There was a feeling of cautious optimism in our experiences when co-operating with these bodies, but there was wide variation in the experiences of different Regions.

Being aware that no-one in AA can guarantee another’s sobriety, Regions and Intergroups should be referred to the recommendations of Conference 1987.

“that where Probation Officers request confirmation of attendance at AA Meetings by those on Probation, this confirmation should be provided wherever possible, with the permission of the member concerned. It is felt that this type of co-operation, handled carefully, is:

- (a) not contrary to our Traditions,
- (b) effectively co-operating with the critical area of Probation Services in England and Wales and the Social Services in Scotland,
- (c) an important part of carrying the message.”

### **3. Review Draft pamphlet “The Problem Drinker in Employment: The AA Solution”.**

The Committee liked the pamphlet, but it was noted that there were a number of printer’s errors in the Draft.

In addition the word ‘membership’ should be inserted after AA at line 11 of the second page, and the word ‘the’ before ‘basic’ in the penultimate line of the same page.

It was recommended that the first paragraph be deleted, and the heading moved down to head paragraph two.

It was felt that sub-headings would help to break up the text, and the suggestions were:-

- (1) What is a Problem Drinker?
- (2) The Work Situation
- (3) The AA Solution
- (4) Insert the Preamble

The Committee felt that paragraph four required a footnote to explain the source of these statements and statistics.

We also felt that it would be of benefit for an eye-catching outer cover to be designed.

### **4. Are we too anonymous when working with others?**

The Committee considers that we may possibly be too anonymous when working with others, and would earnestly commend the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” to the Fellowship, and especially to all who are involved in service at the public level.

In particular we would emphasise the combined experience of the Fellowship as summarised on the final page of this pamphlet.

### **5. What is the experience of AA members when invited to represent AA on committees of other organisations?**

The Committee felt that the question could have been better worded. However, our experience has shown that we as individuals, should continue to attend meetings of other organisations when requested in the spirit of co-operation and not affiliation.

6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1990.  
John B (North East Region) was elected as Chairman

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1990.  
Eric Mc (Scotia Region) was elected as Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE NO.5: COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP**

The Chairman welcomed the members of the Committee, this was followed by a moments silence and the reading of the Preamble. Each member was then asked to introduce themselves.

### **1. How can we better help the young alcoholic?**

We all felt that young people coming to AA wanted to be accepted, as they are, because their age is irrelevant to the problem of alcoholism. We should be wary of being patronising.

Care in sponsoring young people is needed, but the experience is very rewarding, if approached with an open mind. Sponsorship into service within the Fellowship, and involvement in carrying the message are to be encouraged.

### **2 Review the information contained in the Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers and make recommendations.**

The directory is an invaluable document and improves the communication within the Fellowship between serving officers in all Regions.

The group conscience decision was to keep the directory in its present form, but not size, a smaller version would be preferable.

Share and Roundabout Liaison Officers to be listed in the directory.

A Regional map would be a useful inclusion to the directory.

Would the Board consider using adhesive stickers for amendments rather than the printed page?

### **3 In view of the increasing number of meeting lists now being compiled and produced locally is there still a need for a national 'Where to Find'?**

The unanimous response was 'Yes' a national 'Where to Find' is necessary. The following suggestions were made to improve the manner in which the 'Where to Find' is kept up to date.

- (1) The pink forms to be returned by the group secretary to GSO as any changes occur.
- (2) Proof reading of all relevant entries to be sent to Intergroup Secretaries prior to reprinting.
- (3) Highlight note 3 on page 1 in current 'Where to Find'. "As details of meetings are subject to change at any time, it is advisable to check, if possible with the Service Office or with the telephone contacts where these are shown."
- (4) A prominent reminder on the cover to groups to keep their entries up to date.

### **4. How can communications between Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers be improved?**

Over the past few years communications have improved and this has been helped by Workshops at Intergroups and Regions, and should therefore be encouraged. National meetings of Regional

Officers have also played an important part.

Sponsorship into service was endorsed by all members of the Committee and we recommend care be taken in the election of all officers.

Newsletters were found to be an excellent and informal way of communicating Intergroup and Regional news.

Rotating the venue of the Regional and Intergroup meetings was found to be useful in larger geographical areas.

5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1990.  
Francis B (South East Region) was elected Chairman.  
Bill W (South West Region) was elected Alternate Chairman.

6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1990.  
Jean I (South West Scotland Region) was elected Secretary.  
Sonia T (South Midlands Region) was elected Alternate Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE NO.6: PICPC**

James N opened the meeting by reading the Preamble. Otto C, Eastern Region read Traditions 1 and 2. The roll was called and each Delegate stated his or her name and Region. James N cordially welcomed Paul from Malta as an Observer.

### **1. Should consideration be given to producing a video specifically aimed at Young People?**

The Committee strongly suggests that consideration should be given to producing a video specifically aimed at young people. The American version did not seem appropriate but a new video using the true stories of youngsters living in Britain should prove helpful. The Committee recommend that the video should be professionally made.

### **2. Should the format and presentation of existing literature addressed to Young People be reviewed?**

The Committee feels that the 2 leaflets called "Young People and AA" and "Students Guide to AA" are appropriate and useful and do not require review at this time. The Committee feels that the free leaflet "A Message to Young People" is inappropriate and should not be re-ordered. The recommendation is that the Board should produce a new form of free leaflet. For example, a similar page to the front page of the present leaflet could be used with the 12 questions printed on the reverse side.

### **3. Are we making full use of facilities available from local radio and hospital broadcasting services?**

The Committee found that experience varied from Region to Region. In some cases considerable use of local radio is made but it has proved difficult to get time on hospital radios. In other Regions the situation is the opposite way round. It is felt that this is an area where considerable work by Intergroups and Regions is still necessary.

**4. What procedures are adopted by Intergroups and Regions when dealing with requests from the media at local and national level?**

At local level they are passed to PI to deal with. At national level there are not so many requests, but some Regions have set up a special committee to deal with such media requests. In the majority of cases the occasional requests are dealt with by the Intergroup or Region concerned as and when they occur.

**5. Are any difficulties being experienced at Regions or Intergroups in combining PI and CPC activities?**

It seems to the Committee that Intergroups are at different stages of development in forming a combined PICPC Committee. It further seems that Intergroups generally are working through the difficulties by constant discussion. It is felt that time is required to achieve complete co-ordination of this work but that consolidation is progressing. One of the main difficulties in some areas is getting members who are prepared to get involved in service. The Committee confirmed that Guideline 11 should be the basis of all PICPC activities.

**6. What experience have we in co-operating with Health and Safety Officers?**

Most of the consultation with industries and professions over alcohol related problems takes place with the personnel department. The term Health and Safety Officers seems to be open to differing interpretations and the instances of approaches to AA by such officers seem to be few and far between.

7. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1990.  
Gerry A (East of Scotland Region) was nominated as Chairman.

8. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1990.  
Irene G (London Region) was nominated as Secretary.

**WORKSHOP: PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES**

The meeting opened with a few moments silence.

Presentation:

Rodger P (Eastern Region)

My name is Alcohol and I suffer from a disease called Rodgerism.....  
that is as close as I can get to principles before personalities. PERHAPS I had better start again.

My name is Rodger and I am an alcoholic. However as my remaining initials are HP you will realise my major problem and the fact that I am only of your understanding. I received your letter inviting me to make this presentation on Friday 13 January. The death black type on the bleached white paper conveyed all the terrors of sharing a Step Four, not only with God the Chairman but with his disciples the Board. I hurriedly drove to my group and somehow managed not to mention it. How could I? The theme of the Workshop is Principles before Personalities. Once again I was hung by my own defects. The meeting that night was filled with pointed comments of responsibility and anonymity.

My home group of Letchworth is the group to which I returned after drinking in and around the Fellowship for nearly five years. When I first came to AA I had everything and a drinking problem. By the time I returned I had nothing but alcoholism. I had swilled away my profession, house, family, car, friends and money down the gutter of alcoholism and death would have been a blessed relief. However at 10 am on Thursday 3 September I encountered a 'power' far greater than anything I have ever experienced. He physically picked me up, mentally turned me round and put me down in the opposite direction. I crawled away from the gates of insanity and hell. Within a few days I had returned to Letchworth. I listened to Chapter Five with cotton wool in my mouth - but not for long. I knew I might drink again, I always had, what was I to do different this time? It was then that a great personality in that group took me under his wing and told me of the principles of AA.

I sat in his home childlike at his feet looking up to this great sobriety of a man, as he sat in his chair rolling cigarettes of black shag. He eventually opened the Big Book at Chapter Five and read aloud two short statements. "Rigorous Honesty" and "that one is God". He lit his cigarette and exhaled fire and damnation. "Without these you will die." I smoked one of his cigarettes with all the finality of a condemned man. He went on "and if you are to get sober you must practice the 12 Steps every day. By now the prospects of sobriety were slipping from my grasp. He concluded by leaving me in no doubt that sobriety was far too big a proposition for me by saying. "Once you get sober you must live by the Twelve Traditions in order to stay sober." Just as I tried to point out the words 'suggested programme' he shut the book and dismissed me with instructions to return the next week.

As I walked to my car I assumed in my ignorance that I was about to sit an entrance examination to this Fellowship. I was numb from brain cell to toe nail. I drove back to my caravan knowing what I had to do but not knowing how I would succeed. Fear and confusion racked my addled brain. That week I read the Big Book between jobs of picking potatoes at a nearby farm. My Honours Degree in Economics had been a sufficient reference for the somewhat bemused farmer. I tested myself, wrote illegible notes and learnt passages by heart.

The day came all too quickly. As I drove to his house my heart pounded inside the wreckage of my body. I had remembered to take a pen and as an after thought took two. I was not about to fail my entrance examination through lack of equipment. That would have been insane! I was shown in and sat opposite my mentor. I was offered a copy of what I now know is tea made the Irish way and the obvious cigarette. I reasoned that with both hands full the first part would be an oral test which I was pleased about as my hands were still a law unto themselves. He looked up and spoke quietly, "And how are you?"

I burst forth with definitions of alcoholism, unmanageability, insanity, handing back and the most fearful immoral story before his Irish chuckle stopped my fountain of confusion. Somewhat hurt

but afraid to take a resentment I asked him why he was amused. He told me that AA was the university of life from which I never had to graduate. After a few moments of watching his infectious smile and dancing eyes I found myself smiling. Tears welled at the back of my eyes as I realised that I had the rest of my life to work the programme of recovery. It was not pass or fail but more like a continual assessment. I was laughing at myself, it felt good, even human. I knew I had nothing to fear, AA was not going to reject me, all I had to do was to work on the principles and not get bogged down with my personality.

Unfortunately one of my character defects is that I am human. I therefore lived unknowingly in the shadow of this man for some months and quoted Frank G rather than the Big Book. Eventually I found myself disagreeing with something he said. It would have been an easier, softer way to re-write the Big Book but I took courage and challenged the man. He smiled, picked up the Big Book and said, "It's time to grow up". He read Chapter Five to me - the section after the Steps. He emphasised spiritual progress and stressed the dangers of perfection. He pointed out that, if sought, God would relieve my alcoholism. I slowly began to realise that Frank was not that Power but his messenger. He could not speak for AA, but only his experience. The principles of AA had to come first in all his affairs and now I had to follow that spiritual foundation of Anonymity. A few months later Frank G was to die, sober. The gift of a renewed life had been taken away. The personality died but the principle he carried lives on.

It took nearly a year before I would admit that I missed Frank. But was it Frank that I missed? Not altogether. I visited his grave on the first anniversary of his death. I climbed over the cemetery wall at 7 am on a cold wet December morning. The plot had moved, it took ages to find it by the light of a distant street lamp. As I put my flowers on the stone and thought of Frank I realised he was not there. It was not Frank that I missed so much, it was the comfort of his guidance on AA principles. I was alone but knew I had to stand my ground or be lost in the destructive personalities syndrome. Later that week I suggested a group conscience meeting at my home group. It was our first in its eleven year history. Since that day regular conscience meetings have revitalised our primary purpose of carrying the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic. It has grown in strength and contains many personalities united in one common principle.

As I walked that road towards sobriety alone I became lost. I was befriended by another traveller and today we walk together and yet separately. As Bill W went to all the trouble of 12 Steps and 12 Traditions I am grateful to the foresight of the Roman Emperor Julian for arranging 12 months in the year. It has enabled this alcoholic to share Steps and Traditions monthly throughout the year in an orderly fashion. There has been pain, disappointment and hardships but there has been growth. I like many perhaps, found it easy to practice the principles of this Fellowship in AA meetings. My difficulty was not that great at work either, especially as I claim anonymity. But what of the home? Perhaps the greatest test to my sobriety has come from my own reluctance to accept other personalities and work on my principles as a bridge to normal living. I well remember those days I jumped up and down in my home screaming at my wife for not being on the Al-Anon programme. It did not work. I have found through sponsorship an opportunity to have a two way conversation with God. I have found the undeniable truth that when two AA members gather together to talk of themselves that God makes his presence known. It is in this way that I find the direction I need to return to that road of sobriety that I have littered with obstacles.

Now that I was on the road to recovery, gained a sponsor and had the programme laid before me



all I had to do was to pick it up. Small words but heavy on action. I had reached Step Four without great difficulty. Now I was preparing for Step Five. The obstacles I built would have daunted the SAS. You must have realised by now that my greatest defect can be found in that all consuming emotion, pride. I must say that my God goes to extraordinary lengths to make me work on this defect. It seems all of AA is working for him tonight as I struggle with the spiritual anonymity problem. It's not fair. You see when I wrote my first Step Four in St Bernards the doctors were so pleased with it that Max Glatt reproduced it as a teaching aid for nurses. I thought of the possibility of film rights but got drunk instead. However now I tried this complicated idea called the truth, a fearless moral inventory and such like. I did not like what I saw. Where was the person I had imagined I was? And what's more you expected me to share with God and another human being what I could not accept myself. Character defects fight dirty when you get them in a corner. Pride was killing me. They say that if you ask for help in an AA group you will receive their experience. My group cheated. They nominated me for PI Officer at Intergroup, bribed others to stand down and so there I was. Three days later I sat round a table protecting my innocence, nobody listened. I was now an officer, not the ranks for me any more. Perhaps pride was OK. But then I was reminded of that deflating phrase 'a trusted servant'. Me a servant, and trusted? Intergroup was insane.

However to my surprise it started to work. I wrote letters, organised meetings and prepared talks - nobody came. I tried again, this time offering some humility rather than earlier directives. I began to receive a few positive replies. When I removed my grandiose title and accepted the true anonymity of a trusted servant I was swamped with enquiries. Here was the answer. I spent three very happy years carrying the principles of AA to the community. I grew in the understanding of anonymity. I applied it to my life and it became good. Intergroup became my friend, my supporter in my desire to work on my defects. I did so well they demoted me to secretary - the trusted slave. Now I was answerable to every John T and Dick H in the Fellowship. I was so busy writing minutes I could not interfere with the proceedings. It did AA a power of good, and even helped me.

One of the annoying aspects of this Fellowship is that it destroys the 'ignorance is bliss' attitude. You hear things being said around the rooms, they always seem to be talking directly to me and if they hurt I know there are defects yet untouched. I heard in one meeting that you cannot stand still in this Fellowship, you move forward or slip backwards. So now was time to move on. Region was suggested as was conventions for Intergroup. As I could never say no or make up my mind I took both, without handing over as secretary. I needed a new wardrobe for all my hats. For the first year I raced around meetings, Intergroups, Conventions and Region. In my exhaustion I tackled pride again. Firstly I could not be Mr AA, I had seen too many die for that. Secondly, I had to accept responsibility to encourage others into service. So with as much humility as I could muster I handed over as Secretary of Intergroup to the screaming, reluctant but very attractive alcoholic I was saving for other defects into service. I am relieved to say she survived and I had one less amends to make. I helped the Intergroup Convention until another keen worker took my place. I was now able to concentrate on Region. Out of the frying pan into the fire dropped me into the Southern Convention Committee. By the time I finished that saga the Board pinched our Chairman of Region and I was nominated before I could draw breath. At each stage of service I found the opportunity of working as a team the most satisfactory means of coming to terms with pride and advancing the cause for spiritual anonymity.

I have always understood, but never known why, the programme works within the Fellowship. The amazing thing about this programme is its ability to work outside the Fellowship. I am one

of those alcoholics that acquired the national debt and therefore needed work to make amends. Potato picking was a limited future so I returned to my profession, albeit in a different structure. In order to survive the painful process I knew I had to change my attitudes to my colleagues. I found an immediate response and started on the long ladder of promotion. The great opportunities of service to this Fellowship became the training ground on which to practice, without fear of rejection or ridicule, relationships with others. I had found an invincible partnership, God and the programme. Service gave me the opportunity of practice for my changing attitudes and they brought swift results. To my amazement I found myself at dizzy heights, or as we prefer to call it, beyond our wildest dreams. I had broken down the perfection barrier and now I could accept the personality I was.

There is nothing special about me, I am what I am. I cannot change overnight but I can keep working on my defects and spiritual progress. Now that I had a personality I had to bring some form of discipline into my life. I had to accept principles in all my affairs. This brought great reassurance and immense pleasure. So long as I stuck to the principles of AA the stuff that flies off the fan could not harm me. Here was the answer. In the past I hid behind arrogance, ignorance and perfection. Now all I had to do was to accept what I am, work on my programme for living and discipline my self ego by principles. This concept of spiritual anonymity has a great deal going for it.

Having reflected on the past I must bring events up to date. I was privileged to be nominated for Conference last year and as always this new opportunity brought forth old defects to deal with. I well remember the drive to York. I travelled with two other members and sat quietly in the back of the car projecting. It was raining and I wondered why God was not shining on the chosen one? Was I not a Conference Delegate? I found later that there were tears of hysterical laughter for as soon as I arrived I took an immediate resentment to that dot on my folder. I could not be what I wanted to be, I had to be what I was - a first year delegate. Apart from this minor upset the weekend went well for me. I found immense sobriety, fellowship and principles at work. The back room boys could not be faulted or placed on pedestals, but there were great personalities. However you did make me sweat it out by putting me on Committee Six and therefore having to wait for the final report of Sunday morning. As I sat in the middle of the meeting I distinctly remember the whole gathering looking at me when the report was read out. In my minds eye I could see you all criticising the report as though it was my last will and testament. Then it happened. You accepted the report without alteration and that was even worse. Here I was alone in a room of hundreds with nobody to turn to. I could not take any pride in the report, nor challenge any criticism, I just had to accept anonymity in this Fellowship. I left the Conference with mixed feelings. The words of the Serenity Prayer came to mind and I realised yet again that the 'wisdom to know the difference' was not mine but God. He has never let me down and as we drove away I became content to be but a person in the whole principle of AA Fellowship.

But what of this year? I have no spot on my folder, Committee Six has been moved to its rightful place of number one, and you have asked me to make this presentation. So far so good. But what do you ask me to share on? Principles before Personalities! How could you treat me this way? My God has a very warped sense of humour. Man believes that a miracle is when God does something for us. The real miracle is when we do something to please God. He knows my problems, and now that I have shared them with the Fellowship perhaps I will feel better.

In conclusion let me return to that passage in the 12 x 12. "Anonymity - 100 per cent anonymity -

was the only possible answer. Here principles would have to come before personalities, without exception.” I have tried somewhat tongue in cheek to express my progress in this Tradition. My wife tells me my drinking was not fun, my sponsor says my recovery should be fun. My sobriety depends on my efforts to follow and accept the principles of AA. The God of my understanding, the Fellowship and the world outside accepts me as a personality. I am an alcoholic with defects of character, but I am a person. The programme emphasises this to me, but warns that the person, I, cannot put himself before, or on behalf of, this Fellowship or its membership. To do this I need a spiritual foundation. Today I live in the knowledge that without your help I will physically perish, if I don't give it away I will mentally retard and without God I have no spiritual existence. The power in this Fellowship is not self. It is God and without him I am nothing. Thank you.

Presentation: Mike D (South Midlands Region)

I was really delighted when I was asked to speak at this meeting. Saturday night at Conference, always a wonderful atmosphere, terrific sharing, the most relaxed part of the whole weekend, what a great meeting at which to be asked to share. Then I looked at the subject: Principles before Personalities. After about two weeks, during which I tried every day to think of something deeply illuminating to say about this, and then another two weeks trying to find anything to say about it, I began to wonder if somebody was trying to tell me something. I don't mean Jill, or the Board or whoever issued this kind invitation (they've been trying to tell me things for years without too much apparent success!) I mean that uncomfortable little voice, deep inside, which listens to every sentence as it forms in my mind, and then says thoughtfully: “bullshit!” Truthfully, this has been one of the hardest things I have been asked to do in AA. It has reinforced my belief in the thought that my Higher Power never gives me anything that I don't need, so thank you Jill and thank you God for all that pain and discomfort and for the little bit of insight that has helped me to resolve one or two difficulties in my own life as a result of it.

When I came to this Fellowship, I was thirty-eight at the time and I had spent the previous twenty years trying to become a star - without a lot of success I have to say, particularly in the later stages. I came to AA for the right reason, I have no hesitation in saying that, because I desperately wanted to stop drinking. I didn't think you people were the answer but I was prepared to give it a try; and I discovered at my first meeting that I was surrounded by people who felt exactly as I did. It was wonderful, it was such a relief, and for about two weeks I came to a meeting every night, just happy to be here and to be out of the pub and not drinking. After a fortnight I figured: I've cracked it, I'm on board, I've joined, I'm part of you, you've shown me how to stay sober, it's time I started putting something back. So I began looking around for ways in which you lucky people could benefit from my special talents. It was clear to me that the AA that I saw around me in Bristol could do with a little re-organisation. I'd read all the Steps, of course - indeed I'd done all the Steps - but I hadn't discovered the Tradition which has since become my favourite, number nine, that AA, as such, should never be organised. For a while I just told people what they should be doing but after six months I was made secretary of the group. Power at last. We met in an upstairs church hall which was long and rather narrow. The top table was at the front, the door at the back; it was a 'speaker' meeting with three people sharing for an hour. They sat down, half of them addressed the table in front of them with the result that the back third could neither see nor hear them. So the first week I turned up nice and early and arranged the chairs longwise, so that there were only about four rows going back, curving round the edges, and everybody had a much better chance of seeing and hearing. Wonderful. Wrong! I had really given lots of thought to it, but the one thing about which I had

given no thought at all was asking how other people felt. There was outrage. Nearly everybody said they didn't like the change, two people walked out, and all through the meeting I sat looking just above people's heads at a shimmering cloud of resentment which ruined the meeting for me and, I suspect for many others. They eventually adopted the arrangement quite happily. Eventually - I'm sure they would have adopted it straight away, with no fuss, had I merely waited until a steering meeting and suggested it for the group's consideration. However, I learned a valuable lesson early in my sobriety, didn't I? Did I, hell. A year or so later I joined another group which met in another upstairs church hall, and guess what! This time the group (and this was a different group) were so incensed that at the next steering meeting they voted to have the chairs back the way they used to be. More than a year later, somebody else timidly suggested that we might go back to sitting in a circle which he had rather liked and it received unanimous support. You will be pleased to know that since then I have not joined any other groups. I have made a thorough pain of myself at Intergroup, on PI Committees at Region and even here, but I have never tried to re-organise the seating. I am profoundly glad, and I really mean it, that the Fellowship has a way of prodding down my ego when it gets rampant, because my recovery depends on it. I'm sure that this Tradition of reminding us to place principles before personalities is just a re-stating of Tradition One, that our common welfare comes first.

I'm sure that probably everybody here has, at one time or another, sat in some kind of AA gathering and wondered what on earth was going on. It happens all the time, and it happens at every level. There may even have been one or two people who sat here on Sunday morning last year and wondered if twenty minutes discussing one word in a report was the best possible use of everybody's time. Of course I don't know if anybody actually felt that way, I put it to you purely as a rhetorical question. But I cling to the experience that we had down in Avon when it became clear that the Intergroup was too big and unwieldy, and would have to be divided up. It took more than a year to reach the form of re-organisation that we now have. Everybody knew exactly how it should be done; the only problem was that most people's ideas were just a little different from each other. The whole thing seemed to drag on for ever, and I remember one particular occasion when I drove 150 miles back from where I was working to go to the final meeting and vote on the proposal which my group thought was the best. And after two hours more of thrashing around, the Chairman said he would defer the vote because a number of groups were not represented. I exploded out of there, muttering about the stupidity of it all, and how the hell did we expect anybody to take us seriously, and I'd made the effort to get there so why couldn't everybody else, when the chap next to me as we walked down the road grinned and said: "I think it's AA working its way through exactly as it should". I really couldn't see it at that moment, but what I could see was somebody who had been twenty five years sober talking to somebody else who was a little over five, so I figured maybe he knew something I didn't. What has happened since is that the two Intergroups which emerged, whatever their individual failings, have worked side by side in Bristol without any form of conflict at all, and that joint service committees operate in those areas where there are shared responsibilities and that the membership of AA continues to grow. That is not meant as a plug for, to coin a phrase, "AA Bristol fashion". Fifteen years ago, AA in Bristol nearly tore itself apart over personality conflicts. I was not there so I have nothing to say about it, but this time we allowed Tradition Two to operate and I think the results have been marvellous.

It has taken me ages to realise that AA will survive any egotistical assault on it that I may make - but I may not survive. In seeking to do things for AA it matters a great deal more where I'm coming from than where I'm trying to get to. This Tradition of principles before personalities actually stresses something else first: that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our

Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. I said at the beginning that I had spent twenty years trying to become a star. It was probably nearer thirty because I grew up in Belfast in the midst of a very strong Presbyterian, revivalist evangelical tradition. Everybody could be a preacher. I used to go to Saturday night gospel meetings where the great thing would be the testimony. Somebody would stand up and tell their life-story in gripping and lurid detail about how they used to drink a bottle of whisky a day, smoke forty cigarettes and consort regularly with the wrong type of woman. Did I want to be like them! Can you imagine the effect on a ten year old kid for whom the ultimate sin was kicking a football on Sunday. I came into AA with all the qualifications, and with the rampaging ego which kept whispering, "Now you can go out and be a star FOR AA". And it wasn't just ego. I was and am deeply grateful for what AA has given me, and I wanted other people to know about it so they could have the same thing. In AA Comes of Age, Bill underlines the fact that the vast majority of anonymity breakers in the early days were probably doing it with the best of intentions and the chief anonymity breaker was of course Bill Wilson himself. AA has survived all those anonymity breaks, although some of the people have not. We're often quoted as the principle reason for not breaking anonymity at the public level, the warning that we may subsequently get drunk and devalue AA's reputation. Well Bill went all over America doing radio shows, newspaper interviews and addressing public meetings, and doing them as Bill Wilson, the guy who founded Alcoholics Anonymous. Bill didn't get drunk. I'm not aware from what I've read, that any of the activity did AA any harm or tarnished the Fellowship's public reputation. It didn't cost Bill a drink, but it did cost him a breakdown. It cost him a long spell of treatment, and a lot of pain and anguish, after nine years' sobriety. I shudder to think how difficult it must have been for Bill, at that stage of AA's growth, to accept that he was not only wrong, he was off the wall. Looking for some inspiration for this talk I went back and re-read a large chunk of AA Comes of Age, and was humbled by Bill's own admission of how difficult, at times, he found it to accept some of the restraints in the Traditions. And this one in particular was arrived at the hard way. I am more than ever grateful that he and others went out and did the research for us.

I don't think that relieves us from continuing to see how best we can carry the message in whatever situation we find ourselves. I know how easy it is for me to hide behind the convenient cloak of my own anonymity and use it as a cop out. A few weeks ago, I was hurrying down a street not far from where I work, when I saw somebody with whom I used to drink more than ten years ago. I thought even then, even in the state I was in, that he had a problem, and when I saw him again recently, at three o'clock in the afternoon, he was obviously drunk - not reeling and staggering, not shouting, just wandering along rather pathetically. So what did I do? I crossed the street and hurried on, thinking "I really don't have time for this, I'm late enough as it is". Well, the amount of time that that incident has occupied in my thinking since, and the discomfort I have felt inside - it would have been a lot quicker to have stopped and said hello, taken him to a cafe for a cup of tea and a chat, twelfth stepped him, listened to his story and taken him to a meeting that evening if he'd wanted to come. But in this wonderful new up-together life of mine I thought it might be embarrassing to be seen in the street talking to a drunk. I'd forgotten that ten years ago that was me. I know that I need to balance two things in my attitude. I need to maintain the principle of anonymity so that it is available to the newcomer as a refuge against any stigma that still attaches to alcoholism. But I also need to do something about that stigma, or it will never go away. We have the most amazing programme of recovery, that achieves miracles and saves lives. I would be dead by now without it. So what have I got in my life to protect by hiding the fact that I am a recovering alcoholic. I know there is a fear that not everybody will understand, but against that, anonymity is no use to the drunk still out there who doesn't know that AA exists, or if he does, still thinks it isn't for him.

I don't know whether one word of this has made any sense to you, but it has certainly helped to keep me away from a drink, and given me the necessary boot in the right place to keep passing the message on. Thank you for listening so patiently.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **FRIDAY 6TH APRIL**

The Twenty-Fifth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Vanbrugh College, University of York. The registration and reception commenced at 4.00 pm with the distribution of Delegates folders and Conference material. The period of some two hours provided an ideal opportunity for Delegates and Observers to get together.

The Conference comprised 87 Delegates from 15 Regions, 2 Delegates from the Channel Islands, 1 Delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', 21 Members of the General Service Board, Mike D. Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and three Members of Staff. Observers from the following countries were also present:

Ireland	(2)
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	(2)
France	( 1 )
Holland	(2)
Poland	( 1 )
Portugal	( 1 )
West Germany	(1)
USSR	(2)
Total attendance	129

## **OPENING OF CONFERENCE -BY MIKE D (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1990)**

The first full session of Conference was opened by Mike D (South Midlands Region) with the customary moments silence and the reading of the Preamble. He welcomed all present and extended a special greeting to first year Delegates and Overseas Observers.

The General Secretary was then invited to read the Twelve Traditions, following which Mike presented his Keynote Address:

Welcome to Conference 1990, and a very particular welcome to those who are here for the first time. I enjoyed my first Conference enormously - I've enjoyed every Conference enormously since, which I suppose is why I've found this particular way of sneaking back for another one after my time as a delegate was over - but the first one was very special. I didn't know what to expect, one never does, so I just came and trusted and went away loving this Fellowship even more. I remember on the first evening getting my badge with the little sticker - they were orange that year - and feeling rather miffed that, however hard I tried to appear very knowing, I had this flashing beacon which marked me out as a new boy.

I had a lot to learn about why we're here, and by the end of that Conference I felt so privileged to be here that I would happily have worn a sandwich board! Well I'm a new boy again; this is my first time ever as Conference Chairman. I have looked for a little dot on my badge to indicate this but there isn't one, so you will just have to take my word for it and please be a little tolerant

and understanding when I get it all wrong.

I asked for PASS IT ON to be the theme of this year's Conference because it seems to me to lie at the heart of everything in AA, from the first tentative Twelfth Step we do, right through to the efforts of Conference and the Board. When I came into the Fellowship, the person who Twelfth Stepped me took me with him on a similar call a couple of weeks later. The telephone office had tried hard to find somebody else to go, but it was a wet winter Sunday evening, and so I was hauled along.

I have never forgotten that visit. The person we went to see did not immediately get the message, and I have no idea whether she is sober today. But I am, and the importance of that first lesson in carrying the message has had a lot to do with keeping me away from the next drink. I have a confession to make at this point. I wanted to quote one of the Traditions, but I couldn't be sure of the number, so I had to dig the card out of my wallet and look it up. It's Tradition Five - you of course, all know it so I don't need to tell you what it says. Or perhaps, for just one or two of you who, like me, have temporarily forgotten, I'll remind you: "Every Group has but one primary purpose, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers": to pass it on. A lot of the time, these days, I find myself sitting in meetings and listening to people getting in touch with their feelings. It's lovely to hear people beginning truly to find out who they really are. It was wonderful for me to discover things in myself other than paralysing fear and alcohol induced maudlin self-pity. And when I did I encountered another problem - I couldn't stop talking about it. I wanted to tell everybody in sight, and a great many others out of sight about this wonderful new discovery that I had found in AA. There are hundreds of people walking around today who were embarrassed or nearly bored to death by me and my new found sobriety. But I was surrounded by very good friends in AA who channelled my energies into more constructive activities than just pinning people to the nearest wall. Sometimes today when I approach someone after a meeting and suggest that maybe there's an opportunity to get a bit more involved in some service work, I get the reply that it's bit early in recovery, they'd like to concentrate a bit more on building up their own sobriety, they'd like to get to more meetings, do some more work on themselves, grow a bit more. What becomes clear is that a lot of people coming into the Fellowship these days see it as a resource which is provided to help them stay sober. Reading Bill Wilson's story, particularly in the book published six years ago, called PASS IT ON, I got a slightly different impression: That AA is a resource, but that we stay sober by helping to provide it.

Thousands of fine minds tried to find a cure for alcoholism - all to no avail - before Bill appeared on the scene. Psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, monastics, priests, politicians, social workers - everyone had a go, but nobody found an answer and I don't think too many people were impressed by Bill Wilson's first efforts either. Nearly six months elapsed between Bill's spiritual experience in Towns hospital and setting out on the journey to Akron, where he met Doctor Bob. During that six month period he worked with dozens of alcoholics at the hospital and in the local mission, carrying the message, passing it on. Apparently not one of those alcoholics got sober. Not surprisingly, Bill had got almost to the point of despair when the fate that nearly all alcoholics dread overtook him. Somebody from Al-Anon took his inventory. Lois, his wife, may not have quite known at the time that she was from Al-Anon, but the effect was the same when she pointed out the staggeringly simple and obvious fact - which had escaped everybody else - that of course it worked, it was the only thing which had ever kept him sober. I need to remember that, even at the expense of occasionally listening to people from Al-Anon!



As I said, this is my first time as Conference Chairman - and it's also my last. It's really characteristic of me that I begin to understand things just as the moment when it's too late to do anything about them. I had three years as a Conference Delegate, and I am now beginning to understand the extent to which I failed to do the job. When I was first asked to come here, I didn't know the first thing about Conference. I had once heard a previous delegate sharing in a meeting about his experiences, but I had mentally switched off. When my turn came I was in one of my bogus humility phases of thinking that committees and conferences were only for the self-glorifying and that what I needed to do was to go on putting out the ashtrays and making the tea. So I asked about Conference and was told that it was a weekend in April. I looked in the diary and discovered I was free that weekend and could fit it in! I didn't know, because I hadn't bothered to find out, that I was supposed to organise an intergroup briefing. I did report back to the intergroup afterwards that I had found it a very enjoyable and meaningful experience, and pointed them in the direction of the Final Conference Report where they could find all the details. I made the mistake of thinking that Conference is just a weekend in April. One consequence of that became clear at the probation workshop held at Camber Sands last year. During lengthy discussions of what's become known as the Hertfordshire Probation Scheme, a long-serving member of my own intergroup whispered in my ear (because he knew I was Conference Chairman - I told plenty of people about that!) that surely this was a matter which should be ratified by Conference. I had to admit that it already had been, three years ago, and that I was on the committee which recommended its approval. Somehow I had forgotten to pass it on. Somebody in my own group, when I announced a Conference briefing, told me she thought Conference was in October at Camber Sands, and that she'd been a delegate last year. I don't think we can expect the grass roots of the Fellowship to send their concerns to Conference if they don't even know it exists. I wish I had made the job of Conference delegate a year-round one, not only organising briefings beforehand, but doing much more to take the message back afterwards.

I'm looking forward with a mixture of excitement and dread to Sunday morning, when the Committees will report. I'm really pleased that, for the first time, we have a Committee on AA and Young People. Through talks to schools it's probably the fastest-growing area of our service work. There's also a Committee on AA in the Workplace - which was identified at a recent seminar of Regional P.I. Officers as the most neglected area of AA service activity. I'm sure that lots will come out of tomorrow's discussions on that, and indeed on every committee. For once in my life, I look forward to spending the whole day tomorrow just listening. I have to be honest and say it's not the activity for which I'm best known, but I've got great pleasure in the past year from going to a group which concentrates on Step Eleven, on the meditation aspect of the Programme. I'm sure that there will be enough time tomorrow for everybody to have a fair say. I know that for myself, if I could spend the times in between talking actually to listen to what others had to offer, I would be a lot wiser and a lot more serene.

Let me finish with just one more brief story from the book PASS IT ON, which I found riveting, and which I don't ever want to forget. It's the story of the phone call in Akron, by which Bill located Doctor Bob. The first phone call, to an Episcopalian minister, simply produced a list of ten more names to call. He called all ten of them and achieved nothing - except one further possible name to call. That was a lady who appeared to be the wife of a powerful businessman with whom Bill had once crossed swords - and who was probably connected with the deal which had brought him to Akron. I cannot imagine how difficult a prospect that twelfth phone call must have been, and sometimes I ask myself at what stage in the process I would have quit. I know that I have been faced with dozens of infinitely less challenging situations - and backed

away with a hatful of justifications. But Bill Wilson made that call, and the result is that you and I, and one and a half million others around the world, are sober today. That is the legacy that Bill gave us, and told us to pass it on.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Colin N, the Chairman of the General Service Board, welcomed all Delegates and Observers to this Conference and went on to present the Annual Report of the Board for 1989 highlighting certain aspects.

He reported with regret the resignation of Agnes Curran due to the ill-health of both her husband and herself and said her presence on the Board would be sadly missed.

Colin further reported that after investigation and consideration the Board had agreed to go ahead with the production of a video aimed at young people and this was now well in hand.

The following Board appointments were presented to Conference for ratification:-

Alcoholic		Non-Alcoholic	
Cyril H	North West Region	Matthew Waters -	Personnel Manager,
John H	Midlands Region		Vaux Breweries

Colin then introduced George R, the Treasurer to present the financial report.

George highlighted several items on the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet to the year ending 31 December 1989.

The Hon Treasurer then spoke at length on his "Notes on the Accounts for 1989" and explained the background to the introduction of the Bar Charts and the Summary Financial Statement. He continued his report by reviewing the 1990 Budget figures and outlined in detail the reasoning behind the fairly cautious view which was taken in compiling the figures.

The Treasurer concluded by paying tribute to Jean Webb our new Management Accountant for all her efforts in providing the necessary background information.

As there was no other business to be discussed Conference formally approved the adoption of the Annual General Service Board Report for 1989.

## **CONVENTIONS**

34th Annual Scottish Convention	Stakis Normany Hotel, Renfrew	4- - 6 May 1990
Southern Convention	Pontins Camber Sands Holiday Centre	26-28 October 1990
Welsh Convention	Park Hotel, Cardiff	2 - 4 November 1990

## **FIFTH EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING -20-22 OCTOBER 1990**

Charles expressed his sincere gratitude at being afforded the opportunity of attending the 10th World Service Meeting and reported as follows:-

On 20 October 1989, at a quiet hostel in the heart of Frankfurt, West Germany, the

representatives of eighteen European Countries gathered together for our Fifth European Service Meeting - the theme being "Unity Through Communication".

The purpose of this meeting was the same as that of all AA activity - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whatever their country or language, sharing our differing experiences and helping each other to spread the AA message in Europe, with particular concern for those countries which AA has not reached or where it is in its early days. There was a great range of experience present varying from Ireland and Norway, in both of which countries AA took root in 1946, to Austria and Portugal joining us at the ESM for the first time. For the first time also Russia sent delegates, but sadly owing to passport and flight difficulties they arrived three days late - however they were well looked after by our German AA colleagues, in Frankfurt.

The Welcome Address of Barney McC., of Ireland gave us a message of love, enthusiasm and commitment which brought us firmly together and the Agenda Committee, chaired by Barney, had drawn up a clear and valuable set of suggested Guidelines for our work, which was unanimously accepted. We were particularly pleased and honoured that Wayne Parks, the newly appointed General Manager of the General Service Office, New York, had come to meet us and brought with him, in his Keynote Address, many helpful ideas and suggestions towards additional co-operation and support to new areas of AA activity. We wish him a most happy and successful career at the New York Office.

Each country in turn gave a brief report of the state of AA in their land. Whilst it was exciting to reflect that these thirty delegates were reporting from some 8,000 AA groups throughout Europe with a membership of approximately 100,000, this figure sadly indicates our relatively small status compared with the International reports of the enormous extent of alcohol dependency.

The Committee work of the Meeting was divided into Agenda/Policy/ Admissions/Finance, Literature/Publishing, and Working with Other Countries.

Whilst the need for self-support in each country was stressed, we should be encouraged to give support in all areas where it is needed. Indeed we can recall that the small Royalties Fund in Great Britain which we have been using to augment the ESM finances was given to us by Bill W. in 1948 on the Royalties of the Big Book with that specific injunction. The translation of our literature into fourteen different languages so far is proceeding apace and the problems of countries with very small individual linguistic groups such as Malta and the Romanisch speaking Swiss was ventilated. It seemed clear that the translation of the Big Book into the national language has always been a critical turning point in the spreading of our message.

It was recommended that we should be trying to record our experience for the benefit of the future by putting together a short history of AA in our individual countries.

Whilst sticking firmly to the principle of attraction rather than promotion - it was deemed most important to improve our contacts with any country not yet part of our European structure. In this context we were delighted to receive a friendly letter from Prague and to learn that Czechoslovakia is getting considerable support from our German AA brothers and sisters.

Following the Committees three Workshops were held. The first of these Workshops discussed our development in relation to the Traditions. The need for early sponsoring into service, as well as into sobriety, was stressed and the value of small Workshops on the Traditions is being

experienced in several countries. The problem of people attending AA meetings with addictive illnesses other than alcohol or in addition to it has been widely experienced in Europe and the difficulties of this situation was shared. In the subsequent plenary session we all agreed that sobriety - that is freedom from alcohol - and the teaching of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of the AA group.

The second Workshop "Pass It On" - discussed PI procedure in different countries, telephone services and our relationship with professional workers.

The third Workshop on Group Responsibilities reminded us of the critical importance of our home or mother group as a fixed point of referral and of our responsibility to that group and how we best discharge that responsibility. Considerable variation in the practice of group conscience meetings was experienced but it's importance and the encouragement of it's use as a regular group event was strongly recommended.

Honesty is always needed within our Fellowship, and all at this Workshop owned up to misgivings and concern about the lack of care, and the use of our Guidelines, sometimes experienced when appointing group officers.

Perhaps the heart of the meeting was the Sharing evening, our ordinary AA meeting within the Service Meeting. This was initiated most movingly by Ernst, one of the AA founder members in Frankfurt, who read us the Preamble and gave some of his early story. Every delegate shared with conviction and love affording us with a wonderful evening's experience.

The plenary session soon adjusted, corrected and agreed the Committee and Workshop reports; and Alexandra P., of Poland was unanimously elected to be Chairperson of the Sixth European Service Meeting 1991.

So ended a most valuable and unusual experience and Bill K., and myself are most grateful for the opportunity given to attend on your behalf.

Such a successful meeting does not occur spontaneously but is the result of a great deal of hard work before, during and afterwards. All concerned deeply appreciated the Chairmanship of Barney McC., the long background work of Jack G., of the support of Uli Z., and the Frankfurt AA members; and the quiet efficiency of Mary T., and Sue Rogers in completing our reports so speedily and accurately.

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1990**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Twenty-Sixth General Service Conference 1991:

Rodger P	Eastern Region
Howard W	Wales & Borders Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SATURDAY 7TH APRIL 1990 WORKSHOP - "LET IT BEGIN WITH ME"**

The Workshop was opened at 8.30 pm by the Chairman Peter C, Midlands Region with Jean W, Scotia Region in attendance as Secretary. We observed a few moments silence followed by the reading of the Preamble. The presentations by Alastair from Wales and Borders Region and Krystyna from Poland were both stimulating and moving and were warmly received by the Delegates.

There was much sharing from the floor and the participation by several of our Overseas Observers was especially welcome.

Vladimir, one of the Observers from the USSR, surprised everyone by his excellent command of the English language and he conveyed greetings to AA in Great Britain from the Moscow Beginners Group, the first AA group to be established in the Soviet Union.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm with the Serenity Prayer.  
The full text of the two Workshop Presentations appear on pages XVI-XXIII.

## **SUNDAY 8TH APRIL 1990**

The final session of Conference commenced and after the customary moments silence, Mike D, the Conference Chairman, invited the Chairman of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included later in this report as indicated:

1. AA AND THE WORKPLACE
2. AA AND THE HEALTH SERVICE
3. AGENDA
4. LITERATURE
5. AA AND YOUNG PEOPLE
6. STRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1991**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Rodger P of Eastern Region was duly elected.

A recommendation from the floor that the nominations for future Conference Chairman be presented on Saturday was agreed.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Colin N, Chairman of the General Service Board, in the closing stages of this year's Conference thanked Mike D for his excellent stewardship throughout Conference.

He also expressed his appreciation to the staff of the University, and to Jack and the General Service Office Staff for their endeavours over the weekend.

Colin wished all Delegates and overseas Observers well and made particular mention to the third year Delegates who would not be returning but who would be able to pass on their experience to others in the Fellowship.

Mike D, thanked the General Service Board and all present for making his time at Conference and particularly his year as Chairman such a memorable occasion. He then went on to quote from the Second Edition of the Big Book a paragraph from "The Professor and the Paradox":

"WE GIVE AWAY TO KEEP. That seems absurd and untrue. How can you keep anything if you give it away? But in order to keep whatever it is we get in AA, we must go about giving it away to others, for no fees or rewards of any kind. When we cannot afford to give away what we have received so freely in AA, we had better get ready for our next" drunk". It will happen every time. We've got to continue to give it away in order to keep it,"

The General Service Conference of 1990 closed with the Serenity Prayer,

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-Sixth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York on 12-14 April 1991,

## **TWENTY-FIFTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1990**

### **COMMITTEE NO. 1: AA AND THE WORKPLACE**

Our shared experience suggests that AA has made limited progress in carrying its message to those in the workplace.

- 1 How much is the Fellowship being used by the:**
  - (a) confederation of British Industry (CBI)**
  - (b) Local Company Management**
  
- 2. How much is the Fellowship being used by the:**
  - (a) Trades Union Congress (TUC)**
  - (b) Local Trades Unions**

Our shared experience suggests that AA has made limited progress in carrying its message to those in the workplace.

After full discussion this was endorsed by all Conference Delegates present. We therefore decided to make joint recommendations for question 1 and 2.

The Committee considered that now is the time to make specific recommendations for a working strategy for use with the CBI, local Company Management, Trades Unions Congress, local Trade Unions and other organisations.

The consensus of the Committee is that AA in the workplace is the responsibility of the CPC arm of the PICPC Committees. Experience has demonstrated that the work of PICPC has tended to concentrate on all areas other than the workplace. Therefore we would suggest the appointment of Industry Liaison Officers at all levels within the PICPC service structure.

It is suggested that Industry Liaison Officers obtain names and addresses of all local contacts within these organisations. It is known that the CBI, for instance, is formed into 13 Regions in England and Wales, plus one in Scotland. These could provide information on member companies as a source of contacts, to be developed at local level.

Our combined experience suggests that letters alone are not particularly productive, unless accompanied or followed up by workshops for the professional or personal visits.

The Committee is mindful that our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion.

### **3. Report on the existing contacts with:**

- (a) Employers Federation**
- (b) Chambers of Commerce**
- (c) Health & Safety Executive**
- (d) Department of Trade and Industry**

The Committee reported little overall contact with any of the organisations listed. However, some Regional and Intergroup areas reported specific incidents of co-operation with local Chambers of Commerce and the Health and Safety Executive.

We therefore recommend that the further development of regular contacts falls within the scope of the Industry Liaison Officers referred to in questions 1 and 2.

### **4. What is the experience of AA Groups within the workplace?**

With the exception of one case reported from Scotland, there are no known experiences of listed and active AA Groups within the workplace.

However references were made to the existence of AA Groups within certain military establishments, specifically American bases. Mention was made of a number of informal meetings of AA members on a regular basis within their workplace.

### **5. Review Guideline No.4 and make recommendations**

The Committee reviewed Guideline No.4 and concluded that a number of minor alterations be made.

These were identified as the introduction; referring to pamphlets which have been replaced and this required updating.

Similarly changes in the titles of a number of organisations referred to in the paragraph entitled “AA does not plan or set up Alcoholism Programmes”.

We recommend that the Board presents a revised draft for presentation to Conference 1991.

6 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1991.

The Committee elected Russ C (North West Region) as Chairman of Committee No.1 for Conference 1991.

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1991.

The Committee elected Peter L (London Region) as Secretary of Committee No.1 for Conference 1991.

A proposal from one Region that the appointment of Conference Committee Chairpersons and Secretaries be decided by the General Service Board, was not approved.

## **COMMITTEE NO.2: AA AND THE HEALTH SERVICE**

The Chairman welcomed everybody, especially the Observers from Belgium and the USSR.

After a few moments silence a roll was called and all the Delegates introduced themselves.

The Committee had a wide ranging discussion sharing their experiences from the USSR to Shetland and their maturity and input showed their deep concern for the issues addressed in the questions.

**How can AA improve its relationship with the Health Service in the following areas:**

**(a) Hospitals**

**(b) General Practitioners**

**(c) Personnel Training (Doctors, Nurses, etc)**

**(d) University Medical Schools**

(a) Hospitals: It was felt that we were more successful in communicating and co-operating with the Psychiatric Hospitals than General Hospitals, but it was emphasised that success had been obtained in some areas with the Accident and Emergency Departments in some General Hospitals. It was also strongly felt that our ambitions must not exceed our capacity to provide a service. A personal contact was seen to produce the very best result. So keep at it.

The point was made that Psychiatric and Mental Handicap Hospitals are returning patients to the community and also that a number of alcoholic units are being closed, so some of our efforts should therefore be directed to Community Health Workers through Regional and Intergroup Officers.

(b) General Practitioners: It was generally felt that our success was not great in this area. We recommend that the GP be visited by the individual member who should take with him/her a Twelfth Step pack and the leaflet “AA as a Resource for the Medical Profession”. We also



recommend that the Board contact Family Health Service Authorities in England and Wales, and their equivalent in Scotland to request that the leaflet “AA as a Resource for the Medical Profession” be included in one of their weekly mailings to all GP practices.

(c) Personnel Training: We are satisfied with our input into Nurses Training Schools, and at Intergroup level, we should investigate input into Practice Nurse Training Courses. To talk to courses for trainee GPs Regional PIs need to contact Deans of the Faculty of General Practice.

We recommend that the Board should inform Regions of the relevant names and addresses.

We should also carry out the same exercise for Community Nursing Courses, that is Community Psychiatric Nurses, District Nurses and Health Visitors.

(d) University Medical Schools: The Deans of the Faculty of Medicine should be contacted by Regional PI Officers, so that AA speakers may be introduced into the curriculum, as we feel that our rewards will be greater with young doctors than trying to teach an old dog new tricks.

Most hospitals have Post-Graduate Medical Centres who arrange weekly multi disciplinary meetings, contact should be made with the Secretary of the Post Graduate Centre through the hospital switchboard.

## **2. Consider the special needs of the handicapped AA members:**

**(a) Physical**

**(b) Hearing**

**(c) Sight**

**(d) Speech**

### **Make recommendations.**

The physically handicapped member should be treated as any other member but with consideration of their special needs.

Physical: Hearing: Sight and Speech: The Committee felt strongly that it was now past time that the National (and local, where appropriate) “Where to Find” must include the international handicap symbols in line with the 1983 and 1985 Conference recommendations. In addition non-smoking meetings should be marked with the non-smoking symbol.

For transportation to and from meetings, local officers should make themselves aware of specialised facilities available.

We recommend that the Board undertake two enquiries. One, to ascertain how many people in the country are deaf, blind or mute, and two to determine how many are members of the Fellowship.

We recommend that:

(i) the Chairman/Secretary and Speaker of each Group should be reminded of the need to speak up and speak clearly, and that background noise can be distracting. Muttering and hand over the mouth are the biggest handicaps the hard of hearing have in a meeting;

(ii) in a meeting all members should identify themselves to the blind person and address them by name. The Chairman/Speakers during the meeting should always address the blind person by name;

(iii) we do not recommend separate meetings as this would isolate the handicapped person;

(iv) consideration should be given to producing an appropriate guideline;

(v) we suggest the Board considers that subtitles be appended to future video tapes and the Big Book be fully recorded on audio tape as a 'talking book'. We also need a full range of literature on audio tape.

3 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1991.

The Committee elected Jim p (London Region) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1991.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1991.

The Committee elected Ann H (Glasgow Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1991.

### **COMMITTEE NO.3: AGENDA**

The Meeting started with a few moments silence and a reading of Tradition 2 and Concept 12. The Chairman welcomed Delegates and all members introduced themselves at the roll call.

#### **1. Review the existing format and structure of the General Service Conference. Make recommendations.**

It was recommended that the General Service Board review the Conference time-table.

#### **2. Suggest Committees for the 1991 Annual General Service Conference.**

It was recommended that the Agenda Committee be discontinued.

It was agreed that it could not set an agenda a year in advance, but that it could monitor Fellowship trends and problems as part of its reconstituted role as a General Purposes Committee.

The Committee suggests the following Committees for Conference 1991:

#### **(1) WORKING WITH OTHERS**

Including

Unions

Industry

Voluntary Services

Lawyers

Anything not included in Committees (2), (4) & (5)

(2) AA AND THE HEALTH SERVICES

Including

Hospitals..... and AA Groups meeting in there

Treatment Centres..... and AA Groups meeting in there

GPs and Nurses (also in training)

Detoxification and Health Centres

(3) GENERAL PURPOSES

Including

Finance

Guidelines

Special Needs

Young People in AA

AA looking at AA

(4) INSTITUTIONS

Including

Prisons

Probation

Police

Courts

Social Services

DHSS

(5) PI

Including

Media (Radio, TV, Press, Journals)

Alcohol Advice Centres

Education

Churches

(6) STRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Including

Telephone Services

Literature

AA News, Share, Roundabout

Archives

Conventions

**3. Suggest Agenda Items for each Committee.**

After discussion all potential items raised were to be sent to GSO.

4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1991

The Committee elected Jim S (East of Scotland) as Chairman of Committee No.3 for Conference 1991.

5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1991

The Committee elected Peter C (Midlands Region) as Secretary of Committee No.3 for Conference 1991.

#### **COMMITTEE NO.4: LITERATURE**

##### **(1) Review stock of little used literature. Make recommendations.**

(a) The Committee believed that the information supplied at Conference was not adequate to answer this question fully (provided only with figures for the year 1989, we had no other figures to relate the relevant movement of literature to). We believe more information should have been supplied by the General Service Office.

(b) The Committee saw no need to continue the use of the large contact posters and recommends they be discontinued. We did however approve of the continuation of the A4 size contact posters and the postcard size contact card.

(c) The Committee recommends that the postcard size contact card should be supplied free of charge.

(d) The Committee recommends that the AA video produced in Betamax should be discontinued and also this system should not be used in the production of any other AA video.

(e) Where two or more leaflets are aimed at a particular target area - inside or outside of the Fellowship - the Committee recommends that the General Service Board Sub-Committee dealing with literature considers whether one leaflet could replace these in order to avoid a duplication of information.

##### **2 Consider a facelift for all pamphlets.**

(a) The Committee recommended that the General Service Board standing sub-committee dealing with literature continues to gradually facelift pamphlets.

(b) The Committee recommends that the same standing sub-committee undertake an ongoing review of all pamphlets. We ask that the sub-committee give particular attention to considering the following points:

(i) Use of a certain colour, logo, etc, to indicate the area that the pamphlet is intended to be used.

(ii) The date of the latest review or publication date of pamphlet to be printed on pamphlet.

(iii) That the order form number of pamphlets to be printed, where possible, in a suitable position on the pamphlets.

##### **3. Review current situation and cost of table top displays.**

The Committee made the following recommendations regarding table top displays.

(a) That the portable perspex display units No. (12) P58 and No. (6) P59 to be discontinued.

(b) Wire display rack (M16) to be continued.

(c) Due to lack of demand for large table top display (P57) it will be discontinued. This unit will now be only in GSO and no longer provided for National Conventions. A new floor standing unit will be made available for future National Conventions.

(d) The Committee strongly recommended the re-stocking of the plastic three-panel table top display unit.

We recommend that the AA logo and Preamble be printed on the top half of the middle panel. The rest of the unit to be left blank.

Due to the period of time that has elapsed since this item was last purchased there is no information available on current cost, but we would hope the cost would be kept at a reasonable level.

**4 Consider the appropriate packages of literature for special areas. e.g. schools. etc.**

Due to the recommendations made in questions one and two, the Committee feel there is no necessity to make recommendations on this question. The choice of literature for any specific AA service should be left to the service officers concerned.

**5. Should the contact number in the national ‘Where to Find’ be used in the local newspaper or in any public place. e.g. police stations, libraries. etc?**

The Committee strongly recommended that contact numbers in the national ‘Where to Find’ should not be used in the stated areas, e.g. Newspapers, Police Stations, Libraries, etc. Telephone service numbers should be the only numbers used in these public areas.

**6. To avoid unnecessary confusion. should the phrases ‘Conference Approved’ and ‘Non Conference Approved’ be amended to read “AA published” and “Non AA published”?**

Part of an article from Box 459 was brought to our attention concerning the use of the term Conference Approved Literature, which read as follows:-

“Conference-Approved literature deals with the recovery programme of Alcoholics Anonymous and represents the broadest possible consensus of AA thinking. It is carefully prepared under the close scrutiny of the appropriate trustees’ and Conference Committees before presentation to the General Service Conference for approval.

AA Conference approved material is copyrighted, and permission to reprint must be obtained from AA World Services Inc, in writing. Thus the integrity of our literature is protected and the AA Programme of Recovery is insurance against dilution or distortion.”

After hearing this the Committee felt after discussion that neither combination was suitable.

We recommend the use of two categories regarding literature.

- 1 Conference Approved
- 2 AA Published

We hope this will avoid any implications of disapproval that “Non-Conference Approved”

literature may imply.

7 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1991.

The Committee elected Betty H-S (South East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.4 for Conference 1991.

8. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1991.

The Committee elected Peter L (London Region) as Secretary of Committee No.4 for Conference 1991.

## **COMMITTEE NO.5: AA AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **1. Why do so few young people find the Fellowship, given the widespread evidence of the problem among the young?**

The Committee found that gradually the age level at meetings was dropping and more young people are finding the Fellowship.

It was felt important not to confuse the well publicised problems of irresponsible drinking amongst the young with addictive drinking.

This whole question is in fact part of a larger question - why do so few alcoholics in general find the Fellowship and having found it why do some not stay?

To this end it was suggested we should not patronise young people. Keeping meetings positive and attractive, reflecting a caring attitude is the best help we can offer them.

It was recommended that young people are sponsored into service as early as is healthy and encouraged to take part in PI activities targeted towards their contemporaries creating an atmosphere of personal security through belonging. "The only thing AA has to offer the young as to everyone else is sobriety and the freedom of choice."

### **2. What is the Fellowship's experience of young people's groups in AA?**

There was very little positive experience. Those groups which have been formed and not survived seem to have done so through the young people with a desire to stay sober, joining more general groups where there are already some young members.

Experience and statistics indicate that the need for AA young peoples groups seems to be neither great nor universal but where they are wanted we should give every assistance.

### **3. Review our experience in schools universities and colleges.**

The Committee wish to extend this question to include all youth organisations.

In general the Fellowship seems to be making good progress to include all youth organisations.

In general the Fellowship seems to be making good progress in visiting schools where the human message seems to be more popular than the existing video. We look forward to the new video currently being produced especially for young people.

There has been considerable success with youth organisations and colleges although in no area is there, nor should there be, room for complacency. Universities mostly proved to be more difficult. But some students with alcohol problems do find their way to local AA meetings. In order to reach those taking part in studies which will bring them into contact with alcoholics during the course of their professional career approaches can be made to the Dean of Faculty. If this is found to be unsuccessful, an approach should be made, where appropriate, to the Department Head e.g. Social Studies, Psychology or Psychiatry and Students Representative Council. Patience and perseverance may be required at all levels and a personal follow up is often essential. Consideration might be given to encouraging young speakers from further afield (i.e. from another Intergroup) if none are available locally, but a youthful and positive attitude seems to be the most successful attribute in speakers.

#### **4 Review the literature aimed at young people. Make recommendations.**

The Committee wished to recommend to the Board that consideration be given:

- (a) to producing a British version of “Young People in AA” the format of which was felt to be otherwise excellent;
- (b) producing a British version of “Too Young”;
- (c) within the near future producing British and more appropriate versions of Joe and Alice.

The Board are further asked to show the mock ups of the revised printing to a sample of young people in the Fellowship before final printing.

It was felt important to continue to have the existing fairly wide range of literature for young people bearing in mind varying educational standards and the age groups covered. Care should be taken by AA speakers at schools to distribute only literature most relevant to the students concerned.

#### **5. What is the Fellowship’s experience of AA meetings in young offenders’ institutions?**

In the institutions where entry has been gained it was found to be very worthwhile and productive. Particular attention should be given to AA representation at Induction and Pre-Release, as this has been found to be an excellent way of Twelfth Stepping. The new video for young people when available should also prove most useful here. The difficulty of getting available sponsors able to fit in with institutions timetables was a frequent problem. However as with schools patience and persistence will achieve much. Serious difficulties over entry may be helped through reference to the Board Member Responsible for Prisons.

There are still some areas in which we have no meetings or even concessionary visits and the Committee feels that the responsibility here lies with the Fellowship as we have every encouragement at present from the Home Office whose recent report “Alcohol Offenders in Prisons” speaks very highly of AA.

#### **6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1991.**

The Committee elected Don McI (South West Region) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1991.

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1991.  
The Committee elected Margaret L (North West Region) as Secretary of Committee No.5 for Conference 1991.

## **COMMITTEE NO.6: STRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **1. Review current situation regarding telephone services as a whole in England, Scotland and Wales.**

To what extent should the responsibility of AA Intergroup Telephone Services be directed towards cost efficiency on county, region and national basis?

The Committee agreed that the Telephone Systems in England, Scotland, Wales and Region 15 in general work well with many keeping an accurate logging system.

The Remote Call Forwarding system is appropriate in some areas.

The Committee recommends that each Intergroup should assess their present operational efficiency in line with Guideline No.7.

Any Intergroup considering changing its present system should refer to Guideline No.7.

It would be useful if the General Service Board would supply information on existing systems nationally, by way of workshops.

Cost should always be a secondary consideration when we are involved in our primary purpose of carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic, but accountability to the membership should also be a factor.

### **2. Review communications between the General Service Conference and the AA group.**

The Committee felt that communication between the General Service Conference and the AA group was generally good.

Communication is a two way process.

The Conference communicates with the AA group in various ways by:

- (a) The Conference Report
- (b) AA News
- (c) Pre and Post Conference Meetings
- (d) Delegates

### **3 Is sufficient use being made of workshops at Intergroup and Regional level?**

The Committee felt that progress is being made by the use of workshops for:

Public Information

Telephone Service

Hospitals

Prisons

Probation (in Scotland the Social Services)

Finance

Share and Roundabout

particularly at Regional level.



At Intergroup level the trend should be geared towards stepping up service workshops, thus giving priority to workshops leaving business matters till later.

**4. Reconsider the recommendation of the 1985 General Service Conference that the restriction imposed by the 1973 GSC on members employed in the field of alcoholism be removed.**

The Committee endorses the recommendation of the 1985 General Service Conference, that the restriction imposed by the 1973 General Service Conference on members employed in the field of alcoholism be removed.

This matter can be safely left to the individual and Group Conscience, and would draw members attention to Guideline No.13 "For AA Members employed in the Alcoholism Field".

**5 What is the Fellowship's recent experience of involvement with Television and is this an appropriate time to review past Conference decisions regarding anonymity and the use of this media?**

The Chairman read Traditions 11 and 12. The Committee recognises that television is a powerful medium today and is an opportunity for carrying the message especially as we are receiving an increasing number of requests for co-operation.

The Committee suggested that the new Communications Sub-Committee of the General Service Board, recently set up, be approached to explore ways of overcoming the difficulties associated with maintaining anonymity.

In the meantime, perhaps an information sheet similar to that provided for Conventions, condensing the material already in use, could be produced by the General Service Board.

**6 Does the Fellowship believe it would be constructive/advantageous to adopt the principle of multiple-meetings groups served by a Steering Committee in order to strengthen the service provided by the members.**

The Committee recommends adopting the principle of multi-meetings groups where appropriate and the formation of a rotating committee be duly elected by the Group Conscience to serve these meetings.

**7 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1991.**

The Committee elected Jim C (Highlands & Islands Region) as Chairman of Committee No.6 for Conference 1991.

**8 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1991.**

The Committee elected Brian F-S (South West Region) as Secretary of Committee No.6 for Conference 1991.

**WORKSHOP: LET IT BEGIN WITH ME**

The meeting opened with a few moments silence.

Presentation:

Alastair H (Wales & Borders Region)

My name is Alastair and I am an alcoholic, when I received Jill's letter asking me to share in the Workshop I read it with disbelief, after the contents had sunk in I accepted that as with everything I have been asked to do in AA, I would do my best and that you would accept that. I told my home group what had been asked of me and they assured me 'it would be good for me', typical! To be honest it has been quite a challenge. In the Fellowship we have many slogans, the three "S's", stand back, shut up and smile, but on this occasion perhaps stand up, speak up and shut up would be more appropriate.

As the theme is 'Let it Begin with Me' I will do just that. I was born in 1937 and at the outbreak of war I was evacuated with my mother and brother to a Highland Farm near Oban, I spent five years on the farm being spoiled and running free. As a result on my return to my home in the city of Edinburgh, and to a strict father, I found life very difficult with behavioural problems and learning difficulties (dyslexia) at school. At the age of nine I was prescribed Phenobarbitone, not a good omen.

As to what I was going to do when I finished my education, there was never any doubt, it was to be a farmer.

My parents agreed to my leaving school at fifteen, I was offered a working holiday in Denmark where I met alcohol for the first time. Before sailing home from Copenhagen I went on a tour of the Carlsberg Brewery, on leaving I was given a six pack of their best and strongest beers. I drank the lot on the ship, got very drunk and had my first black-out. This left me with feelings of guilt and fear, would my parents find out? These feelings were a foretaste of my next twenty-nine years. On my return from Denmark I left home to work on a farm, I worked very hard, loved the life and quickly found a good job, but from the start I got drunk at every opportunity. I moved to Pembrokeshire in 1962 as a Farm Manager, and by 1969 I had my own farm and in addition had a job with a national company selling to farmers and of course an expense account to go with it. My alcoholism developed rapidly, I had an obsession to drink, and it became the most important thing in my life. I went to my doctor with the "shakes" and he prescribed Valium for stress - my fate was sealed. I spent the next ten years seeing psychiatrists and spending increasing time in Psychiatric Hospitals, eventually losing my job. I went to my first AA meeting in 1977, I felt sorry for the people there but could not identify with them although I had by this time had a liver biopsy and been told I would be dead in eighteen months. I continued to drink.

By 1980 I was physically, mentally and spiritually very sick, convulsions were frequent and so severe that I seriously damaged my back. Towards the end of that year I started attending meetings of my local AA group in Fishguard. The first part of Step One was no problem I had known for a long time I was powerless over alcohol, but having an honest desire to stop drinking was another matter, I had an overwhelming feeling that I would inevitably drink again. The group members were very supportive but sometimes I couldn't bear to listen to them sharing their experiences because they were sharing about me. During that first year I drank a number of times and was hospitalised on each occasion. I know now that my failure during that year was my inability or unwillingness to accept that our Programme of Recovery is spiritual and that I had to believe in a Power greater than myself and to me that meant God. On my last visit to the

hospital I was mentally very ill and believed I was insane. Over the years the prospect of death had not frightened me, but I was terrified of this insanity. I believe at this time God enabled me to look at myself, and I realised “it had to begin with me”, I prayed and pleaded that I would let God into my life so that I could hand over my will and my life to His care. I became aware of the need to change and found the willingness to try to work the Twelve Steps. The Programme started to fall into place. I can honestly say that after leaving hospital that last time the craving for and the overwhelming desire to drink left me.

I wrote a Fourth Step early in recovery but did not share it for two years, the reasons for this was a mixture of pride and fear, I know today this delay held back my recovery. The Big Book became my friend and I often had to refer to page 449, ‘acceptance’, I knew that the answers to all my problems were in that passage.

Little by little the quality of my life improved by altering my attitude, making amends, being honest with myself and sharing honestly how I really felt.

During that first year the inevitability that I would drink again still haunted me, I had to concentrate on living only in today. I knew that this fear and others unknown had to be replaced with faith. Fishguard was a small group - about six members - and I was soon asked to be responsible for opening the meeting room, then to be secretary and to go on Twelfth Step calls. These seldom proved successful but they were good for me. After about a year the group fell apart and I found myself alone at a meeting. I do not believe I was responsible for this “happening”, although at the time I managed to pick up feelings of guilt. I shared at another group what had happened in Fishguard and was told I was responsible for my sobriety and therefore for keeping the meeting open, this I did with the help and support of other groups. I started to attend P.I. and Intergroup, thus meeting new friends willing to share their recovery with me and learning from their experiences.

After about one year in recovery “sure I had the Programme under my belt”. I expanded my farming by growing an increased acreage of potatoes - I had this idea of making up for lost time and money spent drinking, this was really another obsession, how that word obsession keeps cropping up in my life. All went well for a couple of years, but after two bad harvests I found myself insolvent. After paying all the debts I could, I filed my own petition in Bankruptcy, this was the lowest point in my recovery but it was never as bad as those last years drinking and I mean that. My wife and I stood to lose everything including our house and furniture. I prayed a great deal for Gods help and guidance and kept reciting the Serenity Prayer. I knew that my sobriety was the most precious gift I had and that no person or circumstance could take that away, but I found that whilst it had been easy from the comfort and security of my home to say that it is the spiritual and not the material things that matter, it was very difficult to put into practice at this time.

It was only through the support of the Fellowship and especially the groups who listened week after week to my problems, that I gained the strength and the hope to recover my self-esteem. I am also very grateful to the members of my Rotary Club of Fishguard who helped me in many practical ways. I now fully understood the meaning of “through pain we grow”. The outcome of my Bankruptcy after three anxious years was that my wife and I were able to keep our house and we now use it as a successful guest house, and I am fortunate enough to spend the summer months as a skipper on a luxury yacht cruising the beautiful West Wales coast and enjoying my obsession with sailing. The greatest satisfaction in my life today is the time I am able to spend

within the Fellowship going on Twelfth Step calls, involvement at Service Meetings, Intergroup and my present job as P.I. Officer for my Region, and of course the privilege of attending this Conference as a Delegate, although I would have enjoyed today more without this task tonight.

I believe that I came into this world to experience everything that has happened to me, the good times when I thought alcohol was my friend and crutch, the ten years of insanity and the lessons I have had in recovery daily working the Steps.

I have no certain way of knowing why I became an alcoholic but I believe my recovery was God given and the effort to maintain this recovery has to come from me, I owe that to my God. Today I am a better, more caring person, I am stronger spiritually and I experience as much serenity as I am prepared to allow myself. It is my choice what kind of day I have, I am guided by my gut feelings, God feelings if you like. This Fellowship has given me the freedom I lost all those years ago when I left that farm near Oban at the age of seven.

I would like to touch, only touch on one of my many defects of character - I can still be devious. I hope by going public tonight will help me to deal with this, at least it puts all of you here tonight in the picture. As a recovering alcoholic tonight's theme "Let it Begin with Me" is, I believe, clearly explained in the Declaration of the International Convention 1965, it reads: "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible." It asks for a commitment from each one of us to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Carrying the message is about communication and in this Fellowship that is about saving lives. Communication at every level depends on us being willing to become involved in Service, we each have something to contribute.

As P.I. Officer for my Region I have realised how difficult and frustrating communication can be at Regional level. I felt very inadequate for the job I had been asked to do. However, I am sure that by sharing the experiences of Region throughout the country, as we did recently at a P.I. Officers meeting held here in York, many of the problems can and will be sorted out - that meeting proved invaluable to me.

I am taking the opportunity tonight to remember with gratitude the medical profession and hospitals who kept me alive long enough to find my God and this Fellowship. I thank my wife Monica and my family who went through hell during twenty years of my drinking and I also thank our sister Fellowship Al-Anon for the support Monica received at the time and still does - without that support my recovery would have been more difficult and less fulfilled.

From the earliest days in the Fellowship it was suggested I read the Promises in Chapter Six, towards the end it states; "are these extravagant promises, we think not", at the time I felt sure that they were, but I can say now they truly have been fulfilled beyond my wildest dreams.

As my group told me it has been good for me to share with you tonight, to take a fresh look at me, where I came from and where I am today.

Presentation: Krystyna P (Observer - Poland)

My name is Christine and I am an alcoholic. ...  
Usually at this moment I used to talk about my life: unsuccessful, unhappy and full of defeats. It

is quite obvious that my life was just like this because I am ill and my disease is called alcoholism. And now I realise that my illness had started much earlier than I drank my first glass of alcohol.

I have always been anxious, excitable, impatient and full of fear. At the same time I was an idealistic person and a dreamer. I was afraid of everything, first of all I was afraid of pain - physical and mental pain. I can remember very well the period of my late childhood. I was afraid of the dentist. I was afraid so much that before the appointment with my dentist I started to go into convulsions. I behaved during the visit in the surgery so awful that my mother and doctor agreed they had never seen so hysterical a child in their lives. The same situation happened in the case of visiting the doctors. When I saw a man in a white coat - in Poland doctors wear white coats - I ran a temperature. The same problem I had at school. I was quite an intelligent child of moderate abilities but my notes were rather bad because I was so transfixed by my fear that sometimes I was not able to answer very simple questions.

As I was growing up I was not still liberated from my fear and it referred to other spheres of my life - more mature life. For example my first contacts with equals, when I was looking for a friend, were completely disastrous and they caused that I started to be afraid of people and pain they could give me. But at the same time I was desperately looking for people, I needed them and loved them. Until I did not discover alcohol my life had been led by fear. Fear and impatience. Therefore being seventeen years old I married the first man I had met in my life. I did not love my husband, I did not even know him well. I did not realise that he was a completely inadequate person for me. But I got married because of my fear and impatience.

My father whom I loved very much was an alcoholic. I had also sister and brother but I was the oldest one. Situation in my home according to my father's alcoholism was difficult. There were financial problems and quarrels. And I was afraid of these things the most. When my father did not drink my life was good but when he was drinking I felt terribly: broken dishes, damaged furniture, cry and tears. I was dying of fear. I suffered physically and mentally, I could not bear it so I married my husband being so young. In fact my marriage was a panic escape from my family home. I dreamt about love, homeliness and better life but I got suffering, fear, uncertain future again and a child - my daughter Kate. My husband who was twelve years older than me turned out to be a man indulged too freely in alcohol, he was absolutely irresponsible person who cared neither of himself nor of our child nor me - although I was under age.

It was the way I was coming into my mature life which was so unhappy from the beginning.

Why am I writing just about it? Because I am sure that my alcoholism was caused by my fear and emotional immaturity. Because although now I know defects of my character I also realise that I did not get rid all of them. Especially I did not get rid of my fear. So when I received a letter from Jill inviting me to present my experiences connected with the subject "Let it begin with me" I was in a terrible panic and I was asking God in despair: "Why am I to do this? Why not anybody else? Could not the General Service Board choose another person?" Unfortunately asking such questions happens still to me in the moments of panic. And it took me some time to realise that it was a great honour and privilege shown to me and I started to cry. I thought that life gave me an opportunity to overcome my fear of public presentation in the large group and when my presentation was finished I would be happy and satisfied. It always happened when I was able to defeat my fear.

Looking for an inspiration to this work I started to review documents concerning Conference 1989. I read Mike D's presentation and I admired his happiness when he had been invited to present his experiences. I was not happy then and I wanted to sit quietly during the whole Conference admiring speakers, listening to others' presentations and putting down valuable information which could be useful for AA Fellowship in Poland. So I am grateful to God - and the Board for making me solve my spiritual problems because my fear is quite irrational. All I am to do is to present, honestly and in the best way, myself and my experiences among my friends who are tolerant persons and who, I'm sure, can perfectly understand my pain, fear and effort to liberate myself from my faults.

Defeating this fear here during the Conference in Great Britain means a lot to me. Because I started my alcoholic depths here and I began my clear-headed life during AA meetings here in London, too. And I thank God and you, my friends, for it. But before it happened I had had to go through many bad experiences.

Well, at the beginning when I discovered alcohol my life completely changed. I felt, thanks to alcohol, free of fear and complexes. Alcohol made me a resolute even insolent woman, it gave me strength and self-confidence. After drinking some glasses of wine I became hardened to reverse of fortune. I worked a lot and earned much money. I wore elegant clothes and looked quite attractive. I had many admirers and acquaintances. But I did not want to be related to anybody. I was not looking any more for a real love and sentimentality. When I noticed that somebody had treated our relationship too seriously I searched the pretext for leaving. Now I know that I was still dominated by my fear - deeply hidden fear of ordinary life, responsibility, weakness of character, fear of myself of me as I really was. This fear made me drink and do what I did. But this illusion lasted shortly. After a few years alcohol step by step started to take away everything I had been given by it first. It brought me more and more suffering and problems. But I did not know anything and I did not understand anything at this time. I accused the political situation and God of leaving me. I was like a crazy woman fallen into a trance. Alcohol became my God and I believed that it would give me back all I had received from it before. Of course it did not give me anything except suffering but I still believed in alcohol. I imagined that everything I had lost would return to me in freer and more welfare country for example Great Britain. I left Poland and came to you. And then the worst period in my life started.

I had a very bad car crash I hardly saved my neck. But it was still too little for me. I returned to drinking at once after a few months of hospital treatment and convalescence. I still do not understand anything and accused everything and everybody except myself and alcohol of my cruel fate. The results of this situation were: loneliness, loss of memory, depression, terrible fear, body shivers and misery. It happened that I really had to take away somebody's beer in a pub because I did not have enough money to pay for mine and my body desperately demanded some alcohol. I started to use drugs and took more and more tranquillisers. My utterness was coming. I hated myself and really did not want to live. I write "really" because I had tried to commit a suicide many times before but this time it was quite different. I started step by step to realise that I was not able to live without alcohol any more but with alcohol I could not live either.

In this situation I found AA by accident. It was a real relief and wonderful experience but it was still too little for me. Because I - stupid person - instead of looking for similarities in people's statements found only differences of course "favourable" for me. You know what I mean. I felt more worthy because I had not had many of your experiences.

Therefore very fast I forgot what I had experienced and what had made me look for help in AA. So I had to go through nightmare of my alcoholism once more. Today I know and understand that I had to go through it once more. I passed through it intensely and painfully. These few days of mad drinking brought me closer to everything I thought I had not experienced before. And this experience for the first time in my life caused that I fell on my knees before God and my illness. And although my body was dying my brain felt illuminated and I understood everything. I understood and approved of the fact that I was an alcoholic and that the only force stronger than me could release me from this madness and wonderful AA Programme is the only remedy for my weakness and for myself.

My further experiences were not easy either when I had to discover myself as I really was, i.e. full of fear, egocentric, impatient, shortly speaking: very unpleasant person. But at the same time I discovered in myself some qualities, for example sensitiveness to human harm, romantic nature and shyness. I noticed that I could be responsible, well-regulated and punctual person.

Understanding more and more of myself I also started to understand other people more. Approving more and more of myself I also started to accept others more. Discovering myself and other people became my passion. I understood that the world and people would be just as they were and it was me who had to change and adapt to the world and people living around me. I also realised that some attributes of my character and my passion to AA gave me a wonderful opportunity to win other alcoholics over. I discovered vocation in myself to serve in AA, especially to help directly to suffering alcoholics in hospitals, disaccustoming centres, contact places and during AA meetings in taking care of new members of AA. I will never forget how much patience and love, understanding and time I was given by my friends from AA in London. And if I had stood total in abstinence in the beginning of my way to sobriety I owed it just you. People who are similar to me are especially close to me: shy, timid, full of complexes in the beginning of their new way. Then with all my heart and soul I want to be with them, I want to help them to pass through their fear and anxiety. I understand them because during four years of my abstinence I have gone through many different fears and got rid of many anxieties and complexes.

I have some ways to defeat my fears and complexes and I hope some of them could be helpful for others. First of all I deeply believe in my Higher Power, which I call God. He never disappoints me when I honestly and on my knees show Him my weakness. His power is much more stronger when I show Him much more weakness and humility. And it is wonderful and I know that God loves me, needs me and will never leave me, especially during difficult moments of my life.

My life during my abstinence was not easy at all. Many dramatic events independent on me happened but proper passing through these tragedies attributed to my emotional maturity. And I deeply believe that things which now seem to me bad and painful can be good in the future. The same situation was with my alcoholism in the past and today. Today I am happy that I am an alcoholic. I discovered myself, sense and joy of life and also aim which means a clear-headed life for me.

I was elected a chairman of Warsaw Intergroup of AA for this tenure of office. It is a great honour for me and at the same time a challenge for myself and my possibilities. Unfortunately, not everything goes on so good. I have some problems in my work in organisational structures of AA in Poland. I think it is connected with my visits to other countries and my experiences I got

there and my efforts to adapt foreign solutions in Polish situations. I can see failing and incorrectness in these structures in Poland but unfortunately I meet resistance and lack of understanding. And sometimes I feel anger, regretness and discouragement. But I know that my impatience is a fault. I often have to repeat to myself that my activity should correspond with my conscience and it is more important for me than how my activity is received by others. I am not sure if everything I wrote corresponds to the subject "Let it begin with me" but one thing is obvious: I wrote this text as honestly as I could in agreement with my conscience.

Before I started to write my experiences I had thought about this problem about two weeks. I talked to some people from AA about their general outlines of this theme. And everybody had his own suggestions. I think it is quite natural. These experiences and feelings belong to me only and I would like to thank you for your patience and listening to me till the end.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.



## FRIDAY 12TH APRIL

The Twenty-Sixth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Derwent College, University of York. Registration and the distribution of Conference folders began at 4.00 pm, followed by a reception which, as usual, proved an ideal opportunity for delegates and observers to get together.

The Conference comprised 88 Delegates from 15 Regions, 2 Delegates from the Channel Islands, 1 Delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', 24 Members of the General Service Board, Rodger P, Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and three Members of Staff. Observers from the following countries were also present:

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	(2)
Denmark	(3)
Eire	(2)
France	(1)
Holland	(2)
Iceland	(1)
Malta	(2)
Portugal	(1)
Germany	(1)
USSR	(2)
Total attendance	138

## OPENING OF CONFERENCE - BY RODGER P (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1991)

The first full session commenced at 8.30 pm -the Conference Chairman, Rodger P, called for the customary moments silence and the reading of the Preamble. This was followed by the reading of the Twelve Traditions by the General Secretary.

Rodger welcomed all delegates and extended a special welcome to the Observers from Overseas - he then presented his Keynote address:

May I start by welcoming you all to this the Twenty-Sixth General Service Conference. It is perhaps apt that I have been asked to chair this particular Conference as 26 plays a significant role in my life. Twenty-six years ago I left school and moved from amateur to professional alcoholic status. Secondly, it was at the age of 26 that I met my present wife who played a major role in getting me to the Fellowship and to my recovery. Finally after ten years of sobriety I have reached the mental age of 26 whereas my physical age is rapidly approaching 62.

Now that we can all relax and settle down to this evening's opening of Conference can I say a special welcome to our General Secretary, Jim K, and wish him every support in the days to come. I would also like to say a special welcome to those of you who are here at their last Conference. I know many in the past have welcomed the newcomer, and so do I, but I would

like to remember those of you who have completed their term of office and simply say thank you for being here.

One of the many gifts that last year's Conference gave me was to write this keynote address. I will ensure that those of you who volunteered me so readily last year will very shortly regret their exuberance. Like past Chairmen I had to prepare this address earlier this year and although the events are still relevant, the seasons and climate have moved on. I felt it was important to keep my address to the day it was written rather than project what I might be feeling in April.

It is mid January and I look out of my office window at the frost covered playing fields. The trees bend in the wind, children run and shout. There is no fear. The bell rings and teachers line the children up in neat rows. They all know I am watching and they want to impress. They walk away glancing sideways to see if I am still watching or can they make a quick dash out of the wind. The scene returns to the bleakness of winter.

Something in my mind lingers. I have a few moments to myself. My mind wanders back it is twelve years ago, mid January and probably just as cold. The bell rings in a different classroom, the pupils around me go wild, but what do I care. I stare across the muddied field towards my next drink. The off-licence stands out against the grey sky. It's neon sign lighting a haven in the storm. My mind is wild with dangers today. Will I be seen by the staff who all hate me and would gladly drop me in it with the Head. Will the licensee believe that I had forgotten to pay last month's bill? Would my credit be good? I had to go, I could not get through the afternoon without it. What excuses had I used recently in case I was caught again. Why is life so unkind to me? On my way back I am seen, will he send for me? My bottle is nearly empty it's all their fault.

It seems so long ago, a different world so obsessed and full of fear. I shudder as I return to my desk, even the work piled high looks welcoming. But my mind will not let go. Again, I think back. It's 1981, mid January but a different classroom and different playing fields. This time I am the pupil. It is strange but my life always seemed unreal.

Our teacher, for want of a better description was a psychologist or a psychiatrist or more likely a psychopath. it was the art and relaxation class at St Bernard's Mental Institution. ...The home for the disillusioned. Here, a hundred years ago, alcoholics were chained to the dungeon walls for three days (sounds familiar) and then alternatively bathed in iced and boiling water. If they survived they were returned to society. Not changed much, has it? But back to class. This gentleman taking these alcoholic friends of mine for art suggested that they draw something they like. Now that didn't sound so bad so I thought I would give him the pleasure of my artistic ability with a quick Picasso charcoal etching. Unfortunately I did not hear him say that he would then analyse the results. So off I go and draw a bottle of wine what else? Beautifully proportioned, shaded and perfect. I drew it from memory. Just to help this poor man I included a label showing broken bars as the concept of escape. I thought that even this limited teacher could fathom that out, especially in an alcohol ward. However, as I told you I had etched in charcoal and this lunatic went on about my life being black and white. Absolute idiot. Do you know any other colour for charcoal? I told Doctor Glatt that he was surrounded by idiots and he agreed with me ...he also smiled.

Actually my close friend and sponsor did, in similar circumstances a drawing of something he liked best he drew a picture of himself. Perhaps that is why we understand each other so well.

Even as I write (read) this my spine feels as though cold water is running over me. Of course I can laugh at those times now. But one thing is clear I was totally obsessed and powerless over ALCOHOL. Perhaps you can see why a few months ago the theme FREEDOM came to mind immediately.

But what of freedom in more recent sobriety? Like many alcoholics I lost the desire to drink at some unknown date in early program. Suddenly it was no longer there, the fear had gone. Then came those growth years of pain and elation as I tackled each new first, each new gift and tried, but not too hard, to see if I could actually find any defects. Of course there were many, but one by one I was able to come to terms with many of them. As time went by those early flushes of youth and vigour grew less and I found less excitement in life's many mysteries. Well, eighteen months ago I was thrown back to those fears of the last years of drinking.

It was October 1989 and Margaret, my wife, and I were fortunate to take a party of children to West Berlin. We visited most of the major landmarks and burnt plastic in the magnificent shops. One evening we took our party by train to East Berlin. I found the experience most difficult to live with. The next day we entered East Berlin via Checkpoint Charlie, it took two hours to get through. By the afternoon we had left but the memory still haunted me for many weeks. It was not the military presence or doctrine that had worried me. It was the way people looked at me, the way they moved away and did not trust me. Eyes that followed me, television cameras that followed my every move. It was like reliving those terrible days of drinking all over again. Since the day I stopped drinking nobody has ever turned away from me, nobody has been afraid to look at me, nobody has passed me by without a smile. If there was ever an occasion when I felt that my alcoholism showed this was it. I felt the leper again. I was societies outcast, I was not able to go on my own course. I had lost my most treasured gift ...the gift of FREEDOM.

Last April as I sat in Conference, knowing that my name had been put forward I wondered what theme I would choose if I was fortunate enough to be nominated. As I sat and listened that Saturday night to the experiences of our East European members I knew in my heart what I had to be, for me, the theme this year FREEDOM.

At the same time our Saturday night workshop had to follow with THE PROMISES. I do not intend to steal their thunder so let me conclude my final thoughts on what I see as the great freedom this Fellowship gives me, the alcoholic.

I am told, and I have come to believe, that having worked through the program of recovery I have had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps. But that is not all. There is no fee or restrictive clause. No condition that adheres to the law. Our Twelfth Step grants us the great freedom of trying to carry the message to alcoholics. I do not have to get them sober to retain my gift ...all I have to do is try. It then follows that I am asked to practice these principles in all my affairs. I do not have to be perfect. I am allowed to make mistakes all I have to do is to make spiritual progress ...and that is freedom to this alcoholic.

Again we see the freedom of the Fellowship in our Twelfth Tradition in allowing me anonymity as a spiritual foundation. It is the program of recovery, the principles, that I must place first in my life ...not me. And here at Conference our Twelfth Concept reminds me that it is not I, nor you, but the spirit of AA Tradition that we serve.

So we come to the end of my address, but I cannot finish without mentioning my greatest freedom. Not only is it my greatest freedom but it is my belief that it is every recovering alcoholic's greatest freedom. It is called many names, the AA group, Higher Power, a power greater than ourselves, or more simply God. What an absolute freedom to see my power, my spirit, my God as I want to see Him, or Her if you prefer. I do not need to conform to a religion, or again I can if I wish. I do not have to pray to Him only in church, but I can if I wish. I can call upon Him in the centre of a traffic jam or shopping queue. I do not have to accept your God or the God of fear. All I have to accept is the idea that there is a power greater than myself and that one can, if I wish, be called God. He is God as I understand Him and without Him I am nothing now will I have freedom from alcoholism without His support.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Colin N, the Chairman of the General Service Board, extended a very warm welcome to all delegates and our friends (Observers) from Europe. Prior to presenting the Report of the Board, Colin reported with sadness the death of Jack G who had served the Fellowship loyally and long. He further reported with the same measure of regret the resignation of Dr James Valentine who had been a non-alcoholic member of the Board for 27 years - his accumulated experience and wisdom will be a great loss to the entire Fellowship.

He went on to state that he would be retiring by rotation with effect from the close of this Conference. Such retirement by rotation also applied to Pat O, Eastern Region and Duncan McD, Highlands and Islands Region. He then asked Conference to ratify the appointment of Charles McK as Chairman, along with the following Board appointments:-

### Alcoholic

Ian B	London Region
Bill D	Highlands & Islands Region
Dan H	Scotia Region
Rodger P	Eastern Region

### Non-Alcoholic

Professor Fred Edwards	(Director Social Work Department Strathclyde Regional Council)
Dr Brian Hore	(Consultant Psychiatrist North West Region)
Peter Jacques	(Secretary of Social Insurance & Industrial Welfare Department Trades Union Congress)
Professor Kathleen Jones	(Professor Emeritus Social Policy University of York)
Dr Ron Wawman	(Retired Consultant Psychiatrist)

The Chairman was delighted to welcome Jim K in the capacity of General Secretary and wished him well for the future.

Colin then introduced George R, Hon Treasurer, to present the financial report. First, George presented the new format consisting of an already abbreviated and simplified income and expenditure account with related pie and bar charts, and contrasted these with the old style. A similarly abbreviated budget for 1991 was attached.

He, then emphasised the goals of simplicity, openness and greater realism in the new and evolving financial strategy of the General Service Board while adhering strictly to the underlying

spiritual essence of self-sacrifice and prudence.

The “one-offness” of 1990 was indicated together with a return to conditions more reminiscent of the early 1980’s. At that time, a contribution to GSO of £1 per group, per week would have produced self support. Today the equivalent sum is approximately £2.

In the face of adverse pressure on expenditure, falling “other” income, and only a marginal increase in contributions, a surplus of £25,000 could be regarded as a satisfactory performance. It was suggested that the arrears for 1991 appeared to be distinctly less propitious. Assuming a continuation of the present economic climate, together with the recent adverse trends in income and expenditure, a deficit of some £14,000 seems not improbable.

Earlier in his presentation, George had paid tribute to the sterling support he had been given by the staff at GSO, the Finance Committee of the General Service Board and the Regional Treasurers Meeting.

As there was no other business to be discussed Conference formally approved the adoption of the Annual General Service Report for 1990.

## **CONVENTIONS**

35th Annual Scottish Convention	Stakis Normandy Hotel, Renfrew	3-5 May 1991
Southern Convention	Pontins Camber Sands Holiday Centre	25-27 October 1991
Welsh Convention	Park Hotel, Cardiff	1-3 November 1991

## **ELEVENTH WORLD SERVICE MEETING - 14-18 OCTOBER 1990**

(Read by Duncan McD in Charles Mck’s absence)

The commitment of our German AA colleagues in making this meeting such a success was indicated immediately. Every delegate was personally met at the airport and courteously escorted to their hotel. All countries with an operating General Service Board and a headquarters office are entitled to send two delegates to this meeting and on this occasion twenty-four countries; five from North and South America, fifteen from Europe, and Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa all attended.

The theme was “Twelve Concepts for World Service” and most of the delegates, including yours, were honest enough to admit that their understanding and mastery of the Concepts was considerably less than perfect.

We were reminded that the Concepts are in fact the only piece of approved literature that carries Bill W’s personal signature, and that their rather formal phrasing, which to many of us has proved a stumbling block, masks the fact that they have a spiritual as well as a practical significance in our service activities. Whilst deepening our own knowledge of the Concepts by a series of excellent presentations, the formal standing committees reviewed world service policies as a whole and made a number of recommendations and revisions.

The problem of encouraging members into service always comes up for discussion. An Australian delegate had calculated that of the one thousand two hundred groups in Australia only

two per cent knew he was over in Europe representing them. He produced for us a useful slogan: 'SPONSOR SOMEONE INTO SERVICE EVERY MONTH'. "Communications with others", and "Are we really self supporting?" are two hardy annuals which benefited from fresh discussion and new ideas. Sympathy was extended to special interest groups, which should not however be used as a substitute for mainstream AA, and which should be open to all AA members. Group contributions should not be used for social functions; these events should be self-supporting. The need for TRUST at all levels of service was emphasised by many. To many of the delegates, the UNSTRUCTURED Workshops where we had the opportunity to share and obtain advice on our current various problems, were one of the most valuable sessions.

Perhaps the most interesting and important matter on the Agenda followed the excellent presentation by Alfred Welack of Germany on the state of development of AA in Eastern Europe. Although there had been considerable individual contact with alcoholics in the German Democratic Republic since 1970, self-help groups were apparently strongly discouraged behind the former Iron Curtain. It was not until 1980 that an AA group was actually started in the GDR, and by the time of the Union of the two Germanies last year there were only some forty groups in a community of about sixteen and a half million in the GDR.

In the USSR in the last five years AA has become active. Inevitably it is still relatively disorganised and there are probably only forty to fifty AA groups in the whole of that vast country. Germany, the USA/Canada and Great Britain and Finland have all helped with providing literature. Hungary started an AA group in 1986 and now has six groups; Czechoslovakia since 1990 has two groups. In Romania, the laws of that country prohibited any sort of private gathering whatever so the members of their only group conduct their meeting walking along the street! There is currently no information about Bulgaria at all.

In this presentation of the AA situation in Eastern Europe we should not forget to recall that Poland, alone in Eastern Europe has for several years had an active AA organisation, opening a General Service Office in 1989 and currently has some three hundred and fifty groups and nine intergroups. They had one delegate at this meeting - a survivor from the tragic Warsaw uprising in 1944 - and happily this year's Chairman of the European Service Meeting is a Polish lady.

Although there is no question of undermining our principles of self-support we recalled that all countries received considerable initial help with both visits and literature generally from the USA/Canada and it was unanimously agreed that all General Service Boards should be asked if they are willing to participate in sending contributions to a special fund to be set up by the World Service Office to provide start-up literature for countries with difficulties in financing translations and/or provision of essential literature. Any suggestions we might have as to how this fund would be best administered would be acceptable and the new fund would be without prejudice for the help currently given by individual countries. It is greatly to be hoped that our General Service Conference will approve this proposal.

World Service Meetings are held biennially and naturally everyone wants to have the honour of hosting them. We were reminded however that this was a business meeting, not a convention, and should be held at a site selected both for economy and ease of access. The cost per delegate for the next meeting has been fixed at \$2,200 and we should not forget that currently the USA/Canada AA's are subsidising these meetings to almost sixty per cent of the total amount. The next meeting in New York in 1992 has the theme "SERVICE; EVERYONE'S PRIVILEGE"

We could not end this brief outline of a most valuable and instructive meeting without mentioning with deep gratitude the sterling work carried out both at the meeting and throughout the year by the World Service Office staff and other members of the staff of GSO New York which made this meeting such a success and run so smoothly.

At the close we thought of the last sentence of the Twelfth Concept: "To a man, we of AA believe that our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live - the freedom in which we have our being."

Duncan and Charles thank you for the privilege of serving the Board by attending this meeting.

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1992**

Rodger made reference to the procedure of electing Conference Chairman and he indicated that on reflection it was the consensus of the Board that Conference had not had the opportunity to discuss fully the implications. It was pointed out that this matter constituted part of the agenda of Committee No.3.

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Twenty-Seventh General Service Conference 1992:

Peter L	London Region
Francis B	South West Region
Jim P	London Region
Russell C	North West Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SATURDAY. 13TH APRIL 1991 WORKSHOP - "THE PROMISES"**

Russell C, North West Region, chaired this session of Conference. Gordon B, East of Scotland Region, was Secretary. Before the Preamble was read, Conference was asked to observe a few moments of silence. Russ established the theme by reading from pages 83 and 84 of 'The Big Book'. The presentations were made by Georgina H, North West Region and Francis B, South East Region. The speakers illustrated the part that "The Promises" had played in their recovery. The presentations differed in approach and delivery but both carried a clear message on the theme. They were well received.

Unusually, sharing from the floor was slow to start. In the event, the quietness was a fitting prelude to a rare experience; the sharing by Viktor B for USSR. He spoke through an able interpreter, Michael Z also from USSR. Viktor conveyed the hardship and misery of life for the struggling alcoholic in his country. Somehow, the sharing was curiously enhanced by the need for translation. The listeners were visibly moved, some to tears. Warm applause thanked both visitors for their contribution to Conference. Sharing continued from around the theatre until the meeting ended, around 10.00 pm with some Conference business, followed by the Serenity

Prayer.

## **SUNDAY. 14TH APRIL 1991**

At 9.00 am the final session of Conference commenced with a few moments silence. Rodger P, the Conference Chairman, invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included later in this report as indicated:

1. WORKING WITH OTHERS
2. AA AND THE HEALTH SERVICE
3. GENERAL PURPOSES
4. INSTITUTIONS
5. PUBLIC INFORMATION
6. STRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1991**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Francis B, South West Region was duly elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

The Conference Chairman invited Duncan McD as a retiring Board Member to express the appreciation of both Conference and the Board for the long and committed service which Colin N had given to the Fellowship.

Colin responded by saying how much he had enjoyed his time in service and in particular his years on the General Service Board. He went on to thank both the staff of GSO and of the University for their considerable contribution for the undoubted success of the weekend. He also thanked Pat O and Duncan McD retiring Board Members and added how much he had appreciated the opportunity to serve alongside them on the Board.

Pat O, retiring Board Member expressed her appreciation and gratitude for her years of service with the Board and with Conference.

The Conference Chairman for 1992 took the opportunity of thanking Rodger P for the excellent way in which he handled the business of Conference.

The final session of Conference 1991 closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-Seventh General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York on 3-5 April 1992.

## **TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1991**



## COMMITTEE NO.1: WORKING WITH OTHERS

CHAIRMAN:           RUSS C       NORTH WEST REGION  
SECRETARY:         PETER L      LONDON REGION

### **1. Consider the current shortage of Liaison Officers in many of the service structure areas and if possible make recommendations (see Guideline 11).**

The shortage of Liaison Officers seems to be more marked at Intergroup level.

The two main recommendations were that Workshops should be more widely used, and that experienced members (or members presently in service) should consider sponsoring newer members into service.

One Region found that Workshops for Group Officers, Secretaries, Treasurers and Group Service Representatives brought a good response.

Another suggestion was for speakers at Group Meetings to be encouraged to include (with enthusiasm) the benefits of being involved in service.

Groups should continue to be encouraged to hold regular Group Conscience Meetings.

It was further recommended that passing on of what was involved in service jobs, would demystify what the job entailed and remove the fear for the newcomer.

Commitment to a Home Group was felt to be beneficial.

### **2. At the recent World Service Meeting it was suggested that those countries with a reasonably well established Fellowship structure and a General Service Office might consider setting up jointly an International Fund to give initial help in the literature field to those countries coming into first contact with Alcoholics Anonymous. What are the views of Conference?**

The unanimous view of the Committee was that we take up the suggestion from the World Service Meeting.

The feeling was expressed that this was a rare opportunity to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic (making their first contact with Alcoholics Anonymous) from other countries.

We recommend that we give as much as we can, as soon as we can and it was further felt that we leave our Trusted Servants (General Service Board) to co-ordinate this operation.

We finally can only remember Bill W's help when he donated 1,500 Big Books to help us in this country.

### **3. Review progress in the contacts with Management and Unions in the light of the 1990 Conference recommendation of appointing an Industry Liaison Officer within the PICPC structure.**

Ten Regions reported that they had not yet appointed Regional Industry Liaison Officers. Those which had made this appointment reported considerable success in their approaches to Industry - however, much still needed to be done.

The appointment of Industry Liaison Officers at Intergroup level is so far rare.

The 1990 Conference suggestion the Industrial Liaison Officers be appointed at all levels within the PICPC structure does not seem to have had the required effect.

The Committee recommends:

- (a) That the General Service Board approach the Trades Union Congress and Industry to establish high level contact and communications.
- (b) That those Regions who have not yet appointed an Industry Liaison Officer, do so wherever possible, as a matter of urgency (within the PICPC structure).

#### **4. What is Conference's experience in co-operating with local voluntary services. Make recommendations.**

A considerable amount of progress was reported by most Regions - but more could be achieved through active participation with this large sector.

It is recommended that co-operation should be encouraged with Committees of local organisations.

That Intergroups organise open Forums and Workshops to which Voluntary Service Organisations be invited.

This has already proved successful in several parts of the country. One area reported the appointment of a Co-ordinator, to deal with the Voluntary Service Sector.

Attention should be paid to the Guidelines for AA members who serve on outside bodies, as to their conduct and responsibilities. The information sources for Groups to identify their local Voluntary Services are to be found in most libraries. There is also a Directory of Voluntary Services.

5 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1992.

The Committee elected Karin G (Region 15) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1992.

6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1992.

The Committee elected John F (Glasgow Region) as Secretary for Committee No.2 for Conference 1992.

#### **COMMITTEE NO.2: AA AND THE HEALTH SERVICE**

CHAIRMAN: JIM P LONDON REGION  
SECRETARY: ANN H GLASGOW REGION

The Chairman welcomed everybody. After a few moments silence there was a roll call.

**1 How can AA best work with private treatment centres, whilst staying within our Traditions, particularly bearing in mind the problems these can create for local meetings?**

It was the general view that AA can best work with private treatment centres by maintaining our policy of co-operation without affiliation, whilst mindful of Traditions 3 and 6.

We recommend:

- (a) Where possible that the problem drinker should be taken to meetings outside the treatment centre.
- (b) That personal contact should be made with the treatment centre by responsible AA members and a meeting set up where possible. Sponsorship teams should be developed under the guidance of the Hospital Liaison Officer within the Intergroup.
- (c) AA sponsorship should continue to be offered when the patient leaves the treatment centre.

**2 What is the current experience of carrying the AA message to General Practitioners?**

Progress has been very slow. The Committee's discussion identified a gap in carrying the message through General Practitioners. Every person in the country has a GP; yet we are not getting the referrals we should expect.

We recommend strongly:

- (a) Within the Hospital Liaison structure we create 'Twelfth Step Teams' to provide a service for GPs. GPs should have easy but certain access to AA.
- (b) That recovering individual AA members visit their GPs thanking them for their help and stressing the benefit of AA in their lives, whilst emphasising the traditional confidential nature of the contact.
- (c) Hospital Liaison, PI Officers and Teams should organise joint workshops to facilitate ways to implement (a) and (b).
- (d) The Deans of Post Graduate Training Centres should be contacted with a request to include AA speakers in their meetings. Care should be taken in selecting the members involved.

**3. What progress is being made in the Conference recommendation to liaise with medical and nursing schools?**

Progress is steady. It was felt that there was a need to link up with key professionals in medical and nursing schools.

It is recommended that PI approach staff tutors to have AA speakers included in the curriculum

of these schools. An awareness of the work of AA should be communicated to those who work in this field.

**4. There has been a considerable reduction in the number of Alcohol Treatment Centres in the National Health Service. Has this affected our relationship with the Hospital Service? What is the experience of Conference on this matter?**

Conference was of the majority opinion that the question leads to involvement in outside issues which would put us in breach of Tradition 10.

**5. Discuss the experience of AA members working in their Health Service with reference to possible difficulties in regard to anonymity etc.**

There was no experience of serious problems in this area and it was agreed that personal anonymity was the concern of the individual.

6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1992.  
The Committee elected John T (South East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1992.

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1992.  
The Committee elected Jean W (North East Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1992.

**COMMITTEE NO.3: GENERAL PURPOSES**

CHAIRMAN:	JIM S	EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION
SECRETARY:	PETER C	MIDLANDS REGION

After a few moments silence the Preamble and relevant Traditions, the Chairman welcomed all delegates, in particular new delegates and observers from overseas. Introductions were made at roll call.

**1. Should Conference re-consider the election procedure of Conference Chairman and recommend to the Board accordingly?**

The Committee considered that the present Conference Chairman election procedure is working satisfactorily as evidenced, in the experience of the Committee, by the quality of Chairmen in recent years.

We recommend however that some indication of the AA service experience of nominees be given by proposers on the Friday night. There is also a need to revise the wording of paragraph 9, page 16 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain to clarify that nominees be third year delegates.

**2. Does Conference re-affirm that the Fellowship must continue to strive to be fully self-supporting through direct contributions without relying on the benefit of a literature surplus? Consider the implications.**

Yes. All members support the principle (direct contributions were considered to be money in the pot, but it is acknowledged that most literature sales are to members and hence a contribution).

Consequently, we must ensure that contributions are maintained at a level necessary to support the service structure and we should seek to obtain a regular flow of funds by immediately releasing all monies beyond a prudent reserve.

**3 Discuss the possibility of financing GSO expenditure by suggested levies for each region.**

There was an emphatic agreement that such a proposal would be contrary to the spirit of AA as embodied in the Traditions. However, there was a full discussion of the implications and examples were quoted of instances in Intergroups and Regions where “suggested voluntary targets” were acceptable to Groups for specific purposes.

**4 Annual meetings of Regional Liaison Officers appear to have considerably improved communications within the Fellowship. Are Regions, particularly the more distant ones, finding difficulties in their delegates attending such meetings?**

The majority of opinion was agreement that such meetings are of great value but all the more remote Regions have some problems with costs. One suggestion is that costs might be pooled or shared between Regions.

Consideration might also be given to having such meetings either on a geographical area basis, or alternatively, if at York, on a need rather than an annual basis.

A number of delegates made the point that such meetings were on occasions too short. With the time and travel involved it was felt they might be longer and more comprehensive.

**5 Share. Only one in five groups in England and Wales subscribes to Share. How can more groups be made aware of the value of this magazine?**

We urge strong support be given to Share Liaison Officers and that Share be included in all Region and Intergroup agendas. Copies might be sent out free periodically to groups who do not presently order and a copy of Share could be included in Twelfth Step call starter packs.

Content does have some effect on circulation. The content has been rather mild and of more value to the newcomer - although it is accepted that content is dependent on contributions from members.

We recommend the Share Team introduce editorials.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1992.**

The Committee elected Mairi G (Highlands and Islands Region) as Chairman for Committee No.3 for Conference 1992.

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1992.  
The Committee elected John H (London Region) as Secretary of Committee No.3 for Conference 1992.

#### **COMMITTEE NO.4: INSTITUTIONS**

CHAIRMAN: BETTY H-S SOUTH EAST REGION  
SECRETARY: EDDIE B ROUNDABOUT

**1. Should Conference consider the production of a guideline for AA Probation Liaison Officers in England and Wales and for Social Service Liaison Officers concerned with probation in Scotland?**

The Committee unanimously agrees that a guideline for AA Probation Liaison Officers in England and Wales, and for Social Services Liaison Officers in Scotland, should be produced. However, it recognises that impending legislative changes should delay the production of a blue guideline, and recommends the production of an interim information sheet to assist those dealing with this area of service.

**2. Consider the need for publication of an information pamphlet for use by Probation Officers in England and Wales and Social Workers in Scotland.**

The Committee reported many examples of the need for a separate pamphlet for use by Probation officers in England and Wales and Social Workers in Scotland. At this point in time particularly, when the philosophy of sentencing is intended to be changed so that more offenders will be dealt with in the community, the Committee felt that Social Workers in Scotland, and Probation Officers in England and Wales, should have a concise pamphlet directly addressing their specific needs.

**3 The 1987 Conference recommended that where Probation Officers requested confirmation of attendance at AA meetings by those on probation, this should be provided wherever possible. with the permission of the member concerned. What experience have Intergroups had in implementing this scheme in their areas and with what success?**

Intergroups have reported limited experience in this area, but that experience has been good. Where there is no experience and opinions are expressed, reservations and apprehension are evident. Where experience has been accumulated, the system is working quietly and positively, and difficulties are answered by using the Traditions in a spirit of open-mindedness.

**4 Consider the production of a British version of the pamphlet “AA in Correctional Facilities” and/or a new pamphlet “AA and the Probation Service”, bearing in mind the cost implications.**

The Committee does not feel that either an anglicised version of the pamphlet “AA in Correctional Facilities”, or the production of a new pamphlet, “AA and the Probation Service”,

would be relevant to the current needs of the Fellowship, irrespective of cost implications.

**5. What progress has been made in co-operating with local Police and Magistrates?**

Co-operation with Police, although patchy, is increasing. In some areas, local Intergroups are invited to participate in Community Contact Courses in Police Training Colleges. Invitations to contribute to Alcohol Forums, where professional workers dealing with alcohol problems can meet with, and learn about, self-help organisations, have also proved fruitful. AA's twenty-four hour answering service, where available, seems to be a unique service that should be brought more to the attention of Police and Magistrates.

Co-operation with Magistrates is established in some areas, with tremendous benefits. Our shared experience indicates that an indirect approach is often successful, even where a direct approach has already been rebuffed. Perseverance, personal experience, and the living example will continue to be our main means of attraction.

6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1992.

The Committee elected John G (Glasgow Region) as Committee Chairman for Conference 1992.

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1992.

The Committee elected Mike S (North West Region) as Committee Secretary for Conference 1992.

**COMMITTEE NO.5: PUBLIC INFORMATION**

CHAIRMAN:	DON MCI	SOUTH WEST REGION
SECRETARY:	MARGARET L	NORTH WEST REGION

The Meeting opened with a few moments silence and a reading of the Preamble. The Chairman welcomed all Delegates and Observers. All members introduced themselves at the roll call.

**1. Consider the report of the General Service Board Communications Committee on Anonymity and the Media and make recommendations.**

The Committee is in full agreement with this report. It should be adopted and communicated to all levels of the Fellowship, perhaps printed in AA News.

**2. What is the current experience in the Fellowship of the use of local radio stations.**

Our experience showed that where contact had been made with radio stations, the results have been good.

It proved beneficial when these factors were taken into consideration:

(a) With whom contact was made; the fact being that there are several people at a radio station who can be contacted i.e. alternative types of programmes may have different producers.

Persistence and patience prevail.

(b) List of speakers available, members who can think on their feet in the spirit of the AA programme.

(c) The approach should ideally be made in the first instance by the PI Officer or Officer appointed to deal with the media, who should ensure that an up to date list of responsible speakers is available.

**3. What is our current experience in the use of regional TV for public announcements etc?**

In all TV regions contacted by AA response has proved to be encouraging. Cable TV being especially receptive to the use of AA material i.e. repeated showing of AA video.

**4. How successful are we in co-operating with other agencies engaged in the field of alcoholism?**

In general co-operation with other agencies is good. Attention is drawn to the sound advice and experience contained in the pamphlet "How AA members co-operate with other community efforts to help alcoholics".

**5. Have recent changes in education affected the number of requests for information and talks to schools?**

The Committee found that recent changes have had little bearing on the number of requests for information and talks in schools. Where contact has been made in schools, a good relationship with our Fellowship has ensued. The Regions participate, on a regular basis giving talks to students and distributing AA literature.

6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1992.

The Committee elected Mick W (South Midland Region) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1992.

7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1992.

The Committee elected Mike B (Wales and Borders Region) as Secretary of Committee No.5 for Conference 1992.

N.B. The Committee identified that Mike B was, in fact, an alternate delegate and the appointment of a Committee Secretary would be made by the General Service Board.

**COMMITTEE NO.6: STRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

CHAIRMAN:	GEORGE MCC	GLASGOW REGION
SECRETARY:	BRIAN F-S	SOUTH WEST REGION



The Chairman opened the meeting with the Traditions and a special welcome to observers.

### **1. Consider the redraft Guideline 7 - AA Telephone Services.**

Although one or two delegates felt the redraft should be seen by Regional Telephone Liaison Officers first, the Committee decided by a large majority to go ahead and consider the document and make any recommendations.

Consideration was given to the mention of the use of answering machines and the implications of Tradition 8. The Committee understands that such use is within the Traditions and is for individual Group and Intergroup consciences.

We recommend the following:-

Draft, page 3, paragraph 2, to start: "Our growing experience is that successful telephone services concentrate on putting an individual contact or local AA Group in touch with the suffering alcoholic, twelfth-stepping on the telephone is not recommended. It is the responsibility of the members"(continue as per draft).

Draft, page 3, Telephone Services and Twelfth Step Work - paragraph 5. Delete paragraph beginning "A telephone service requires support" and insert at page 1, under the box, immediately before the sentence beginning "telephone Services can be of benefit"

Draft, page 4, paragraph 4. "It is important to have a large number" delete "large", substitute: "sufficient", so that the sentence reads: "It is important to have a sufficient number of members to share."

With these amendments, we find the draft acceptable and recommend it to Conference for adoption.

### **2 Does Conference feel there should be a time delay between the formation of a new group and its registration at General Service Office?**

The Committee's consensus is, there ought to be a delay: three to six months is favoured. Initial literature needs should preferably be supplied through Intergroups rather than by direct request to GSO.

The delay will give new Groups a chance to firm up details for the registration form for eventual inclusion in the printed "Where to Find". It will provide opportunity to encourage the new group into service.

### **3 What is the local experience in dealing with and responding to Twelfth Step Calls:**

- (a) Do we have difficulty in finding members to carry out the Twelfth Step Calls?**
- (b) How promptly are such calls dealt with?**
- (c) Is there any danger of our AA message becoming diluted in any way?**

(a) Fewer difficulties are experienced where proper up to date Twelfth Step lists are maintained.

Difficulties arise for a variety of reasons, often because listed contacts are not prepared to service the call.

Difficulties experienced include:-

- building up an initial list of experienced, reliable members.
- covering a wide or isolated geographical area.
- keeping “older” members involved.
- trying to arrange for members to visit in pairs.
- a shortage of women Twelfth-Steppers in some areas.
- a shortage of members with transport.

We all need constant reminders that we are responsible for carrying the message. A printed reminder is recommended in the “Where to Find” such as: “The telephone services of Great Britain would like to thank all responsible contacts for accepting their Twelfth Step calls. Thank you.”

(b) In the Committee’s experience the overwhelming majority of calls are dealt with promptly. Promises in response to a call should not be made unless they can be fulfilled and commitments should not be made on behalf of third parties. Follow up on action taken is important.

(c) There is less danger of the message becoming diluted when dealing face to face, rather than on the telephone.

Persons responding should preferably be regular members, attending meetings, sober with a message to carry: it helps to remember how the message was carried to us.

We should be careful to keep to the main issues when dealing with newcomers, emphasising our programme of recovery. Attendance at telephone and Twelfth Step Workshops helps.

**4.(a) South West Region request Conference to reconsider the viability of a National Convention on an annual or five year basis, in view of the growth of AA. and the existence of suitable, centrally sited facilities.**

**(b) Would Conference consider the possibility of holding a Celebratory Convention in 1997 being the 50th year of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain. This would obviously involve the 15 Regions in Great Britain and Europe. The convention would be centrally held in our country.**

The Committee considers the 50th Anniversary of AA in Great Britain should not go unmarked in 1997. A celebratory Convention (b) then might, if successful, lead to a regular National Great Britain Convention as in (a).

Many details would need to be worked out. We note the existence of experienced National Convention Committees which could advise and help.

We note a minority but significant opinion that there are already too many conventions, and that

they do not necessarily form part of our primary purpose.  
We recommend Conference asks the Board to instigate a feasibility study.

**5. Consider the implications of the present London Region being re-formed into two or more separate Regions.**

We note that at Conference 1977 it was decided that a Region consists of a geographical area of the Fellowship. We recommend maintaining the present fifteen Regions as an optimum for the Fellowship in Great Britain and the English-Speaking Groups in Europe.

London Region may wish to consider alternative ways of solving the problem, such as:

- the multi-meeting group (as recommended by Conference 1990)
- the way this kind of problem has been handled elsewhere (e.g. in Los Angeles, California).

N.B.

Arising from the fact that insufficient material was available, a proposal was made that London Region should make good that deficiency and review their current structure; the results of their action to be submitted to the General Service Board.

It was further recommended that the General Service Board produce a report for inclusion in the 1992 Conference Agenda.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1992.**

The Committee elected Rick S (Region 15) as Chairman of Committee No.6 for Conference 1992.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1992.**

The Committee elected John M (Midland Region) as Secretary of Committee No.6 for Conference 1992.

## **WORKSHOP: THE PROMISES**

The meeting opened with a few moments silence.

Presentation: Georgina H (North West Region)

My name is Georgina and I am an alcoholic. When I first received the invitation from Jill to share with you tonight I felt honoured, pleased and reasonably confident. I was still churning out the Regional minutes then and I couldn't foresee any difficulty. As soon as the minutes had been sent out it was a different matter. I panicked. How on earth can I go droning on for 20 minutes, I wondered. At worst, I shall dry up - at best I'll start galloping along just as we did at my Infants school during singing lessons. In the end I did what I always try to do when faced by difficulties. I prayed for guidance and freedom from self. If everybody's asleep by the time I'm half way through my worst fears will have been realised.

If I'd heard of the Promises before I came to AA I would probably have assumed they went something like this:

You will be a multi-millionaire within six months.  
You will become even more beautiful/charming/clever than you are already (impossible).  
You will be surrounded by soft spoken, gentle people who will agree with everything you say.  
You will become famous. (After all, I was already quite well known in the area where I lived).

One dictionary definition of the word 'promise' is "an engagement to do or keep from doing something" followed by a "a ground for hope of future excellence". I was brought up to believe that promises should never be broken and that I should not make a promise if it could not be kept. At school this was simply translated as "Promise you won't tell or I'll bash you".

I made countless promises before I came to AA and found the freedom of our recovery programme. All these promises were meaningless and empty, however, because they were based on unsound reasoning. How could I know that it was virtually impossible to fulfil what I promised when my mind (or what passed for it) was locked into continuous denial? My false pride demanded that I present myself in a good light but I was incapable of perceiving the cunning, baffling, powerful nature of my alcoholism. The more I drank the more devious I became, and the worse I felt the more I drank - and vice versa.

When I was in the depths of despair and I was heartily sick of letting myself down, as well as everyone else, I started to attend AA meetings. By this time I no longer made promises to anyone. Although my case seemed pretty desperate I was willing to have an open mind. I stopped drinking in October 1974 and stayed stopped, on a daily basis - which was a miracle in itself.

I didn't hear about the 12 Promises when I first joined AA or, if I did, they didn't register. I began to find out, however, that the more effort I put in the better I felt - regardless of the circumstances.

My slightly open mind took in some of the early promises without, of course, realising what they were. "If you don't take the first drink, you won't get drunk", "This too shall pass" (to which I frequently added "despite me"). "You only have to live for today, because tomorrow hasn't yet come and yesterday has gone", "Things will happen in your life beyond your wildest dreams", "This is a simple programme but no-one ever said it would be easy".

I found myself repeating these simple sayings whilst going about my new daily life. They became even more important when my long-buried emotions began to surface. At times of great stress I comforted myself with the promise that "this too shall pass".

I started to work for my sobriety. I did things I didn't understand because I was told it would help me. I didn't agree with everything that was said at meetings but I went on trying to have an open mind. I attended a small Intergroup meeting and was terrified. By Intergroup standards it was fairly mild but I didn't like the idea of AA members disagreeing with each other and thought it should be abolished. I also didn't see the point of Intergroup but lacked the courage to say so.

The Promises tell me what to expect from AA but they also tell me, indirectly, what not to expect. AA is not a Marriage Guidance Council, although many marriages do survive. AA is not a bank or an employment agency although AA members may become more financially secure and get a job. I came to AA in the first place because I wanted to keep custody of my daughter

and save enough money to payoff my debts. It didn't work. My first husband ejected me from the house soon after I joined AA and, in the subsequent divorce, was awarded custody of our daughter. I came to AA because of my secondary problems. I stayed because I wanted sobriety more than anything else.

I'm not quite certain when I first read the 12 Promises on pages 83 and 84 of the Big Book (although I remember reading the Big Book from cover to cover very early on and thinking "I've read that!"). I know it was some time into my sobriety before their true meaning began to register.

We were fortunate enough to visit the United States several years ago and, at a meeting in Roanoke, Virginia, I saw the Promises printed on a card - which really reinforced their importance in my sobriety.

My response to the Promises is perhaps best summarised by the effects I felt from taking positive action on Steps 5 to 9. I certainly felt release from the anguish and guilt of the past - there were no longer any skeletons in the cupboard - and I was experiencing exactly what the Promises said. Encouraged, I began to seek out the bits of me which were more difficult to let go of, but with which I had become familiar (what my mother calls the old coat syndrome). Although this has perhaps been the most demanding part of my recovery I have been helped many times by an uplift in my spirits when a breakthrough has occurred. I have also been helped by the honesty and humility of members of long sobriety who have shared when their lives have been difficult. It was during this period that I began to see myself as a potentially useful person, instead of being negative and coy about who I was. By the time I reached Step 9 there was no room for self-centredness or self-indulgence (although they frequently return if I'm not careful). There was total acceptance of responsibility for the way I had treated people. I also had to accept that whatever happened in the future would come through the guiding will of a Higher Power, however I might feel about it. Because I had stopped blaming my ex-husband, my parents and society for my drinking I became free of the crushing burdens of guilt and resentment, as far as the past was concerned. I was also able, finally, to let go of the affair of the green pig.

When I was five my mother knitted me a green pig, which I promptly lost. I was very upset about the loss of this member of the family, to whom (or which) I had become immediately devoted. My mother, because of lack of any more green wool, was unable to replace Pig - although she might have produced a blue one - I can't be sure after all this time. Anyway, the point (if any) of this saga is that, although I am almost positive that I swiftly recovered from this traumatic experience, I managed to convince myself at one stage of my drinking that this was one of the main reasons for my alcoholism.

During this period of my sobriety I learned a very valuable lesson. I began to refrain from making promises to myself about how I was going to change. I discovered that, by depending on a Higher Power, any changes that occurred were as a direct result of my willingness to comply with that Higher Power and not by running the show myself. I had learned that "faith without works is dead". I did the footwork and my Higher Power did the guiding.

Once I became involved in service I learned something else. I had to keep any promise I made to an alcoholic, especially on a Twelfth Step call - because it might mean the difference between life and death.

The theme of this workshop is the Promises. I should like to finish with something which I view as the most important promise in the Big Book. It goes like this: “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path”. It goes on to say “Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point and asked his protection with complete abandon. Here are the steps we took”.

Thank you very much for listening to me.

Francis B (South East Region)

My name is Francis and I am an alcoholic. When I received Jill’s letter all the old feelings of inadequacy mixed with ego swept into my head. I immediately spoke with my sponsor (an old Conference hand) who quickly knocked the ego out and told me, as I already knew, that the feelings of inadequacy were only a cover up for pride. I spent the next two weeks mentally practising what I was going to say and delivered some excellent “chairs” in the solitude of my car on long motorway drives in the course of my business. However I found a mental block when I tried to get it down on paper until I remembered my first sponsor’s words to me when I initially approached Step 4. You can go on trying to design the perfect aircraft for a lifetime but its not much good if you never build it. I realised again that it was the seeking of perfection, which has a little to do with Pride, which was holding me back. One cold and frosty morning in early February I sat down with a blank sheet of paper in front of me, read Chapters 5 and 6 of the Big Book again and accepted I would write how I felt that day about the Promises.

I came into the Fellowship early in 1979 and spent the next eighteen months as an “associate” member slipping out and crawling in again. During that time I certainly heard the Promises read but they meant nothing to me and sickness and stubbornness stopped me from asking more about them. In a way they seemed to begin to come true for me when I once managed three months without a drink. I did know a new freedom and a new happiness without booze but it was quickly extinguished by the I, Self and Me which drove me back to my old cruel comforter. I was like the farmer after the tornado.

When I finally put the last drink down and admitted defeat, the hardest thing this prideful alcoholic had ever done, I found that at last I could hear properly, but frequently not understand, what those who had successfully trodden the path before me, the Winners, were saying. It took me a long time for simple things to stick in my brain: only the first Step mentions alcohol, the next 11 Steps deal with the unmanageable life; the first 3 Steps are Acceptance Steps, the next 6 Action Steps and the last 3 Maintenance Steps; Faith and Honesty are the greatest requirements for sobriety. Although I read and re read and continue to read the first 164 pages of the Big Book wherein lies the key to the sober life there was much that I missed. Most relevant to this Workshop I was blind to the first sentence in The Promises “If we are painstaking about this phase of our development” i.e. the Promises will not begin to really come true until after Step 9 and Step 9 is where it is because of Bill W’s and other Old Timers’ experience and not through random choice. There was an awful lot of acceptance and an awful lot of action to go through before I reached that point. But I have reached it, although there will always be much to be done as I gradually get a better understanding of myself. I have reached it because I have tried, although frequently with less enthusiasm than should have been present, to understand and to work those first nine Steps. I have struggled to reach it because I have always felt that the Promises are the most personal and for me, emotional, words in the Big Book. They are as if Bill

W, Dr Bob and the others of that time were standing with their hands on my shoulders and making these great firm promises of hope to me. Along with the first paragraph of Chapter 5, I can never hear them without being greatly moved.

As the booze drained away from my brain in early days of dryness (I don't now call that long period "sobriety") I was filled with horror at my past, almost unbearable remorse at what I had had and lost, what I had done and above all at my present situation. I had been like a pin ball in a great alcoholic machine of life and finally I had fallen to the bottom. My score was abysmal. So concerned was I about myself in those early days that it was a while before I began to see some of the harm I had done to others, most particularly my family and close friends but extending over a wide field many of whom I should never remember. Gradual acceptance that I suffered from an illness, which I have still have today but do not have to suffer from, helped me with my first sponsor to get some perspective on the situation. A man of some years true sobriety and a very spiritual person he gently guided me to the necessity of living a spiritual life in order to achieve serenity. I still struggle some days. My first step upon that path was the realisation that although in the last desperate days of fear and loneliness I had gone into churches, knelt down and begged whatever God there was to take away the pain, tears of self pity pouring down my face, and yet had gone out again and drunk because nothing seemed to have changed. I had nevertheless been cared for by my God (as I very definitely did not then understand him!) because I had finally been brought to AA. Those of you familiar with the passage "The Footsteps" will I am sure agree with this.

Gradually I began to get some understanding and some acceptance of this great untapped power in my life and as time passed not only was the raw urge to pick up a drink removed but also I discovered an exciting ability to cope with daily life in the real world by trying to apply the spiritual theory. I don't always get it right and there are certainly times when I allow people, places or things to dictate to me how I feel. When such self-inflicted pain occurs I know now that it is no good demanding it to be removed or seeking the old escape route. As my present sponsor says, quoting from elsewhere "We don't give orders to God, just report for duty each day". I try to do that. I feel today a security that I never felt, even before I picked up the first drink for the wrong reason some 34 years ago. Despite the apparent normality of my life then and the security of my home and my family I felt a square peg in the round hole of life and quickly found that booze made everything easier, or so I thought.

Thereafter my path was downhill all the way and when I woke up from the nightmare in the arms of the Fellowship it was a long struggle to accept my past. To accept that there were areas I could never put right, that there were things of which I could never speak except to my sponsor. The hurt that I caused lived on for some long while in my family of today and signs of it can still appear if I am thoughtless or treat as lightly in my home things of which I can now speak easily in the Fellowship. I would like to take this opportunity of paying a great tribute to our sister Fellowship Al-Anon for all that it has given me through what it has shown my wife. My road would have been much harder without the sharing and love which she has received and the love and understanding she has tried to give me as I once again try to climb the mountain of life.

I have learned that my past has a use which I had never dreamed of. Not only is it a reminder of where I will return to, only darker still, should I decide to pick up the next drink, but it is also a wonderful common denominator with my fellow alcoholics and in carrying the message to those who still suffer. The idea that I may be able to be of some use in carrying a message to someone else with our potentially fatal illness is quite simply miraculous. Who ever would have thought

that out of such hopelessness and uselessness would have come such a gift. That is the miracle of AA. The message is passed through identification, our paths and actions may have been greatly different, our emotions and reasoning are so extraordinarily similar. Here has been hammered home to me the necessity of unselfishness, of giving to others that I may survive. However much at times I would wish to give the impression of being a better person, of having worked my programme better, it is beholden on me to be honest in my sharing. I have certainly been guilty in the past of giving chairs, especially on the Steps, which have been little more than regurgitated AA literature hopefully disguised to fool the meeting into thinking I was a better person, more advanced than many in my path to serenity. Those occasions have only deceived me and I regret them. They were the anxious inflation of “self”.

Today my past, before AA, is, to quote: “Another country, they do things differently there”. It is a fact that I travelled in that land and did those things but I do not have to travel there today.

So much of my early years in AA were centred on ME, however much more experienced members tried to explain that it is in self forgetting that we find. My appalling economic insecurity was frequently added to by my wanting to buy something for me which I certainly did not need but at that moment thought would make me feel good. Hardly surprising is the fact that once purchased the item became of no significance other than as a further debit on the bank balance. I have grown up a little since then and learnt to try to apply Think, Think, Think to these situations and to try to separate my wants from the needs. Sometimes I indulge myself and I accept that that is human but must be controlled if peace of mind in the financial area is to survive. My acute self-consciousness and fear of people has eased greatly (or I wouldn't be standing here today!). This has come about through the example and encouragement of my fellow alcoholics who have found that trusting in their Higher Power and standing on their own two feet with nothing to feel ashamed of is a remarkable recipe for honest self confidence. AA has given me back my self respect without inflating my ego.

I am not afraid to ask for help, to say I don't know, whether in the Fellowship or outside. This is a lesson which service has taught me. There are no more all seeing judges than some of those whom it has been my privilege to serve at group, intergroup and regional levels. They have quickly spotted the false pride, the whimpishness and the ego and spoken honestly and fairly with me. It took me a while to sort out those whose judgement I could really trust from those whose own sickness, despite sometimes years without a drink, made them seek to keep me at their level. My love for them as unknowing but still suffering alcoholics has today conquered my resentment at their thinly veiled criticisms and I know I can learn from them too.

So where do I stand today on my path through life? Above all I stand grateful to our Fellowship whose simple message has led me from the abyss of the broken, egotistical alcoholic to the firm ground of sobriety where I know my trust in my higher Power will never be found wanting. I have learned to accept my life and to enjoy my sobriety never forgetting what a fragile thing sobriety is. No number of days without a drink can guarantee tomorrow's sobriety, as some good friends have sadly taught me through their bitter experience. The programme requires me to be as painstaking about the last three steps as about all the others but if I continue to Put in the effort then I know more surely than anything that God will continue to do for me what I cannot do for myself. Again I see the faces, although only known from photographs, of Bill Wand Dr Bob smiling with encouragement as yet one more alcoholic treads firmly and surely on the path of life. But I owe too a great debt to many, many others whom I have met and learned from in my time in the Fellowship. Some, like my first sponsor who died sober, are no longer with us, but



they passed on the message that they might live and others too might find new life. To all of you here tonight I say thank you too, not only for letting me try to tell you how the Twelve Promises have, and continue to come true for this ex drunk, but also for being my friends. May God bless you all and keep you safe.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **FRIDAY 3RD APRIL 1992**

The Twenty-Seventh General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York.

The registration and distribution of Conference folders began at 4.00 pm on the Friday afternoon. This was followed by a reception which provided an ideal opportunity for the delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates attending for the first time.

All fifteen Regions were represented, with two delegates from the Channel Isles, one Delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', twenty-two members of the General Service Board, Francis B, Conference Chairman, the General Secretary and four Members of Staff. Also in attendance were Observers from the following countries:

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	(2)
Eire	(2)
French Speaking Europe	(1)
Netherlands	(2)

## **OPENING OF CONFERENCE - BY FRANCIS B (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1992)**

The first full session was opened on the Friday evening by the Conference Chairman, Francis B, with a moments silence followed by the reading of the Preamble.

The General Secretary was then invited to read the Twelve Traditions, following which Francis presented his Keynote Address:

May I start by welcoming you all to this Twenty-Seventh General Service Conference. A special welcome to our overseas observers, I look forward to their sharing over the weekend. I always find it humbling as it reminds me of the worldwide strength of our Fellowship. To First Year Delegates I would just say that five years ago I arrived for my first Conference, as an alternate at two days notice. I clung to my fellow regional delegates like a newcomer at a strange meeting, did my best and came away on a cloud of spiritual emotion I have never forgotten. Suddenly AA had taken on a new meaning and with delegates from all over mainland Britain converging on this College to share their experience strength and hope for our Fellowship, my horizons were broadened dramatically, and I realised how privileged I was to be a very small part of that great whole. I am not sure that Conference or my Region got any great benefit from my attendance but I certainly did.

It is an even greater privilege to be asked to Chair Conference but I am still just a small part of that whole. I have one great disadvantage this year, I only get one shot at this job so please be

tolerant as I learn on the hoof! My aspirations to perfectionism will definitely have to be on the slow burner this weekend! I have however had immense help and support from Board members, particularly last year's Conference Chairman and also, especially, from GSO staff, that frequently under appreciated part of our structure. Looking back to the not so distant but dim past when I came into AA I am amazed to find myself standing here, but just as in every other job I have been asked to do I know tonight that I have the love of my fellow members to calm my fears.

I chose the theme Faith and Honesty because I have never forgotten reading Bill W's words "Faith and Honesty are the two greatest requirements for sobriety". I have to start tonight by being entirely honest and telling you I cannot now find where these words are recorded but no doubt someone will enlighten me before the weekend is over. It seemed suddenly so simple and I need to keep it simple. Neither the concept of Faith nor of Honesty are in themselves at all simple but by cutting it down to two words was like coming out from a shaded place into sunshine. There have been those, most notably my sponsor, who on hearing of my choice of theme have given me a long hard look which spoke volumes. Their attitude has been "well you chose it, I hope it does you good!" Great for my ego!

As a drinking alcoholic and in the early days of dryness I had no understanding of either concept. Faith to me meant religion and I was only too aware that I had never found the key to that particular door. Honesty played absolutely no part in my daily existence. They were words which I heard in meetings but like so much else it all seemed too difficult. I stuck around, helpless, by then I had nowhere else to go and you at least tolerated me. After eighteen months as an "associate member" I put down the last drink and began to realise that if I wanted to live I had not only to listen but also to act on the pretty tough love which was being directed towards me. "Get honest with yourself, Francis" "they" would say when I contributed in meetings on my dishonesty, my lying, cheating, stealing. For a severely pickled brain like mine this was a tall order and one which could only be fulfilled with the help of a good sponsor. God guided me to such a man and I started on the long road to find out who and what I was, where I had been and where I might go. The face you see in the mirror is the face God sees he told me. It was painful, at times in the extreme. I had always had this vision of myself as someone rather special and different and the disillusion of the last few years of my drinking as I singularly failed to keep my prideful stage set together was further compounded by finding that I was just another alcoholic, no better or worse than the rest.

But the pain was relieved as my sponsor shared his experiences and above all the Faith which he had found. He demonstrated to me that I was already showing signs of faith in my hesitant agreement that something other than Francis was keeping me away from a drink for a longer period than at any time in the previous twenty-four years. It was like gradually building a house, brick by brick, in which I could live secure. Each day, each new experience, good or bad, that I came through without needing to take that drink (however much I may have wanted to) was another brick firmly laid. Faith came to me despite myself, by doing what was suggested, whilst not necessarily understanding why, and through the love and encouragement of others. There came a time when I could no longer deny that I had faith in AA and finally faith in God.

My sponsor sadly died, sober but with much suffering, throughout his faith shone brightly. During our few years together he showed me that self honesty was a hill I had to climb if I was to find serenity. I am still climbing that hill with the help of my present sponsor whose experience shared on a frequent basis strengthens my resolve. It is getting easier, at least some days, I know who and what I am even if I don't always want to accept responsibility when it confronts me or

my powerlessness in so many situations. I am growing up, slowly but safely. Sobriety is a fragile thing a long sober friend once told me. I know today what he meant.

Kicked into service after only a few months I have never managed to find an honest way to say no when asked to do a job. I have been on the ego trips, the fear sweats, the plain “this is a chore” resentments but through it all I have gradually learned gratitude and to have faith in a Higher Power as shown through the conscience of our Fellowship, whether at group, intergroup, region or conference levels. It is hard sometimes not to think that I know the answer and that I’m right but conscience meetings have often disagreed with me and I have had to learn to grow up and accept that I do not always know although sometimes my experience may be useful.

My faith lies in the Twelve Traditions, the buttresses, as Bill W called them of our walls to contain us in unity. It is the freedom which I am given within those Traditions and yet can remain secure which is so important. This alcoholic, like many others, kicked out so often against rules, against imposed authority whilst living in a state of total insecurity. In AA I am free because I now accept willingly and have faith in the boundaries which the Traditions, honed from bitter experience of the danger which can befall us, give to my life in AA. My dictionary defines traditions as principles or accumulated experiences of earlier generations handed on to others. They are not rules, there is no government although sadly some seem to believe that Conference is a form of government. Conference can only act honestly within the Traditions in the knowledge that there is but one authority, a loving God as we may understand him, as shown through our group conscience, and only one destroyer, John Barleycorn in all his various disguises. If I am honest in my motives in what I put forward and have faith in the conscience of the Fellowship, I shall not suffer the pains of beating my fists against the wall, of anger and resentment because I cannot have my way. Neither I feel is it acting honestly or in good faith if I seek to turn AA at Conference or elsewhere into some sort of philosophical debating society asking it to redefine our Traditions, under whatever guise. That is a recipe for dissension and disaster.

Of course I have my own ideas of how best we should do things but I have to accept that sometimes I may only receive the privilege of expressing my minority view. I have had to learn through reading, particularly in AA Comes of Age, and through listening to the experiences of those who have gone before me, that there will often be differing views, mostly, as Bill says, about how to do the greatest good for the greatest number of drunks. I must always remember that there is but one Primary Purpose and anything which is not honestly aimed at fulfilling that can lead into dangerous and uncharted waters. I spent a long time in those places and I never wish and know that I never need, to return there.

This Conference faces some knotty problems which have caused resentment and anger amongst some in the past year. I remember the second time I came to Conference, all eager and with strong voice to have my and my Region’s say, determined that we knew best on many points. Thank God there were people in my committee, just as there are in my meetings, who made me listen, made me realise that maybe there were other points of view and that my Region and I were just a small part of a great whole. I went away without resentment, I had taken a hard lesson in Faith in our Fellowship.

If I am honest with myself I know that alone I am powerless but if I have faith and am really part of this great Fellowship, there is a power so great that it can restore the dying alcoholic to life, as it did with me, and bring peace and serenity to my daily life, if only I will let it. That I do not

always enjoy that peace and serenity is not because there is something wrong with this Fellowship but that there is still something wrong with me - a lack of total faith, of complete self honesty. I don't know how many more miracles God has to work for me before I can say, You do know best, I really do have faith, I will accept.

As a trusted servant, like all of us here tonight, I have sometimes had to make decisions and stand by them. If I have made them honestly believing them to be for the best and aware that all authority is matched only by an equal responsibility to the Fellowship, I am showing my faith in the structure of this Fellowship. The decision may turn out not to have been correct in the circumstances and in those cases the conscience will prevail, but to criticise, as I have done, a servant or body of servants who have acted in honesty is to chip away at the very mortar of the buttresses of our home, our security. We have ways of changing things in AA whilst staying securely within our structure and our traditions. Only if it is done in Faith and Honesty will it bear fruit.

I have faith that this Conference will be a place for views to be aired without rancour or resentment and that it will play its part in guiding our Fellowship to whom it is answerable. I owe my life to AA and the security of my life to come depends upon its healthy survival. But more importantly than me are the lives of all those yet to come. The alcoholic of tomorrow who is perhaps being born this very night may depend upon us for his or her hope of a life of freedom. May we all always remember Bill W's words "We must think deeply of all those sick ones still to come to AA. As they try to make their return to faith and to life, we want them to find everything in AA that we have found, and yet more, if that be possible. No care, no vigilance, no effort to preserve AA's constant effectiveness and spiritual strength will ever be too great to hold us in full readiness for the day of their homecoming". Only if I have Faith without reservation in the conscience of this Conference and make my contribution honestly believing it to be my best effort in furtherance of Bill W's words am I really giving of myself with true love for my fellow alcoholics and those to come.

Thank you and God bless.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Charles McK, the Chairman of the General Service Board, after welcoming all delegates and our friends from Europe, presented highlights of the General Service Board Report for 1991. He then went on to add his thanks and best wishes to the retiring Board Members, Patrick D, Noel F, Jim F and Doris H for their unstinting hard work and dedication over the past four years.

The following Board appointments were presented to Conference for ratification:

Gordon B	East of Scotland Region
Peter G	South West Scotland Region
Thelma J	South West Region
George McC	Glasgow Region

Charles then introduced George R, Hon Treasurer, to present the financial report. First, the Treasurer introduced the financial statement with a reference to the change in the financial year end from December to September and to the advantages that could be expected to

ensue in future years. In this year of transition the price to be paid is the total absence of comparability in the Income and Expenditure Account.

Secondly, he underlined the open and democratic nature of the financial structure and the decision making process rendering the whole operation a team effort with a myriad input checks and balances. A grateful tribute was paid to the many who had participated.

In the absence of comparability, the Treasurer draws on data from the January/December 1991 and October 1991/92 periods to illuminate further what looked like a deteriorating situation. The full year 1991 showed some improvement but by February 1992 a deficit of some £8,600 had emerged. Basically, expenditure hitherto restrained by real economies and savings was gaining momentum while income sagged or declined marginally.

Some omissions had been made from last years pie chart presentation to accommodate graphs. The rationale was to give some perspective to the present situation, by revealing longer term trends and to underline the apparent deceleration in the rate of growth of groups and income, accompanied by a continued acceleration in expenditure, fuelled by rising prices and a system which produces ad hoc and uncoordinated expansion of our service activity.

Finally, the view was expressed that a budget deficit of some £6,000 may seem a somewhat roseate scenario, but Conference was reminded, and exhorted to take back to grass root members, the thought that no more than £2.50 per group, per week, contributed to GSO (after all local expenses and prudent reserves had been met) would bring virtual self support to the Fellowship in 1991/92.

The General Service Board Report for 1991 was then approved by Conference.

## **EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING - 4-6 OCTOBER 1991**

Delegates from eighteen European countries, representing nearly ten thousand AA groups, attended the Sixth European Service Meeting held in Frankfurt, Germany, on 4-6 October 1991. For the first time we were able to welcome delegates from the USSR and it is hoped that perhaps Czechoslovakia and Romania will be able to join us at the next ESM in 1993.

The purpose of the ESM is the same as that of all AA activity - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he may be, whatever their country or language, sharing our differing experiences and helping each other spread the AA message in Europe with particular concern for those countries which AA has not reached or where it is in its early days.

Perhaps the most important feature of the meeting was the clear need for the countries of European AA to keep in regular communication with each other between the biennial meetings. All members agreed that the ESM should assist the development within Eastern Europe, but efforts and levels of communication should be co-ordinated and improved. It is hoped that later this year we can set up a European newsletter which we are sure will be a worthwhile step forward.

It would not be possible to share everything that was discussed over the three days of the ESM but you will hopefully be able to draw your own conclusion on the themes: "Living Sober", "Our Primary Purpose", "Twelfth Step Work", Sponsorship in Service" and at an AA sharing meeting

on the Saturday evening we listened to two members' presentations on "Unity".

There was a great sense of unity and purpose with all delegates participating and sharing in depth. We all came away with a great deal of food for thought and many ideas that could be translated into action.

We cannot better sum up the atmosphere of this meeting than to quote to you the words of one presenter: "My primary purpose in service will always be to serve our common welfare founded in the 'Big Book', the 12' x 12' and our 'Preamble' so that any 'AA group' anywhere can be found exactly as I found my original home group. My home group, which was the beginning of a new life for me and gave me the joy it is to have found peace in myself, with those I love, and with my 'God'."

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1992**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Twenty-Eighth General Service Conference 1993:

Jim H           (Glasgow Region)  
Mairi G         (Highlands & Islands Region)  
Billy B         (North East Region)

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SATURDAY. 4TH APRIL 1992 WORKSHOP - "FAITH AND HONESTY"**

The Workshop began with a few moments contemplative silence introduced by the Chairman for the evening Professor Fred Edwards, Non-alcoholic Vice Chairman of the Board. Fred said that he felt disposed to tell people his thoughts and to say "What lovely people you are" and that we needed and were entitled to hear it said. He added jovially that he had never met a group of people who were so preoccupied with what they were getting wrong! He suggested that we have got it right not only for ourselves but also for others including many yet to come. He praised the determined work lovingly done in committee which did not judge the issues.

Fred expressed great pleasure in introducing the presenters Helen R (Wales and Borders Region) and Mairi G (Highlands and Islands Region).

Both ladies spoke with simplicity and in a very moving way of the deep influence that Faith and Honesty had held in their individual recovery. The meeting paid rapt attention and applauded both speakers with much warmth.

Members from the floor (including a welcome contribution from Michael (Observer from Ireland) shared their experiences with the meeting which closed at 10:00 pm with the Serenity Prayer. Secretary for the meeting was Chris B (Midlands Region).

The full text of the two Workshop presentations appear on pages 24-28.

## **SUNDAY 5TH APRIL 1992**

The final session of Conference commenced with a few moments silence following which Francis read the Preamble. He then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included later in this report as indicated

STRUCTURE AND SERVICE

LITERATURE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

HOSPITALS AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

PICPC AND INDUSTRIAL LIAISON

PRISONS AND PROBATION

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1991**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Mairi G, Highlands and Islands Region was duly elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

The Conference Chairman thanked GSO staff, the General Secretary and the Board for their support during the past year. He went on to express his appreciation to the staff of the University for their endeavours over the weekend.

In closing Francis then went on to ask all delegates to go back to their Regions, Intergroups and Groups, and not only share their experience and recommendations of Conference but also seek out questions for next year. He noted there had been complaints, not for the first time, that the Agenda came out so late. However he pointed out it can only come out earlier if questions were received earlier. He asked that questions be forwarded for consideration, following this Conference as soon as possible.

The final session of Conference 1992 closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-Eighth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York on 2-4 April 1993.

## **TWENTY-SEVENTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1992 COMMITTEE NO.1: STRUCTURE AND SERVICE**



**CHAIRMAN:**  
**SECRETARY:**

**KARIN G**  
**JOHN F**

**REGION 15**  
**GLASGOW REGION**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Committee especially those overseas observers from French Speaking Europe, Holland and Eire. A roll call was taken and the Preamble was followed by the Serenity Prayer.

**1. Should we phase out the use of the title “Officer” in our Service structure and use another word? Example “Trusted Servant” or member.**

The Committee recommends that we retain the word Officer within the Service Structure. However discretion may be used where necessary, e.g. in the Prison and Probation Services.

**2. AA Structure -Multi Meeting Groups served by a Steering Committee.**  
**(a) Review the progress made at Group level since Conference 1990**  
**(b) Suggest how Intergroup/Groups can be encouraged to adopt the 1990 Conference suggestions.**

**Conference 1990 - Committee 6 - Structure & Communications**

**Question:**

**Does the Fellowship believe it would be constructive/advantageous to adopt the principle of multi meeting groups served by a Steering Committee in order to strengthen the service provided by the members?**

**Answer:**

**The Committee recommends adopting the principle of multi meeting groups where appropriate and the formation of a rotating committee be duly elected by the Group Conscience to serve these meetings.**

(a) Since 1990 Conference only a few Multi Meeting Groups have evolved. There have been mixed results, some have been successful and in others there have been unfortunate experiences.

Since this is a new concept within the Structure of the Fellowship in Europe it is expected there will be growing pains. However the Fellowship should encourage this growth where appropriate with the time honoured traditional AA way of a loving and caring attitude.

(b) To reinforce the recommendation of Conference 1990, the Committee suggest that the Fellowship encourage the concept of Multi Meeting Groups by:

(a) Regular Group Conscience Meetings with the Steering Committee.

(b) Specific Business Meetings which would not interfere with the running of meetings.

(c) A hints and suggestions sheet from GSB, based on experience obtained within the Fellowship.

(d) Workshops on Traditions and Concepts is also recommended.

**3 With the growth of the Fellowship more and more Intergroups have been formed. Should the Fellowship encourage any reorganisation to be discussed at Regional Assemblies in the spirit of Tradition 4?**

The present Service Structure is becoming more complex due to the increase in Intergroup numbers. This has added further complications, and for this reason it is recommended that any changes with regard to this area of the Service Structure is firstly discussed within the relevant Region.

**4 Conference is asked to examine the implications of and to offer suggestions concerning proposed changes in AA structure to allow the existing London Region to adopt one of the following:**

- (a) Reform into 2 or more full Regions. each with representation on the Board and at Conference.
- (b) Introduce a new intermediate level of structure between Region as it now stands and the Intergroups.
- (c) Adopt any alternative suggestion from Conference.

**Brief Background**

**London Region. as currently structured. is in danger of losing its usefulness as a co-ordinating Assembly because of communications difficulties caused by:**

- (1) the remoteness of member Intergroups from one-another. when they are at opposite extremes of the geographical area covered by the Region:
- (2) the increasing size of the Regional Assembly. due to the local needs for more Intergroups.

**The proposed solutions at 1a) and 1b) above are the only ones which have been propounded to date: these are being discussed now at Intergroup level. However, since both suggestions are implying changes in the structure of AA in Great Britain guidance is sought from Conference.**

This Committee recommends that London Region introduce a new intermediate level of Structure between Region as it now stands and the Intergroups in accordance with the Service Manual, for a trial period until Conference 1994. This would be on the understanding that, if this does not work, London will reform into two Regions for a trial five year period.

During this period a reappraisal by GSB of the whole of the Service Structure should be undertaken, taking into account the effects of the growth of Multi Meeting Groups and the reappraisal of Intergroups within Regions.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Edward H (South East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.1 for Conference 1993.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Colin S (North East Region) as Secretary of Committee No.1 for Conference 1993.

**COMMITTEE NO.2: LITERATURE**

CHAIRMAN:	JOHN T	SOUTH EAST REGION
SECRETARY	JEAN W	NORTH EAST REGION

The meeting opened with a few moments silence and a reading of the Preamble. The Chairman welcomed all delegates and the observer from Belgium. All members introduced themselves at the roll call.

**1. Would Conference look specifically at two pamphlets: “AA for the Woman” and “Letter to a Woman Alcoholic” to assess whether they ‘duplicate information’ or discuss different aspects of the message of AA. Is there a need for both pamphlets?**

Yes. There is a need for both pamphlets as the information contained therein was considered to make reference to different aspects of carrying the message of AA.

**2. Consider the introduction of a Bulletin for Professionals (on the line of the American AA Newsletter to Professionals). Make Recommendations.**

The Committee felt that the introduction of a Bulletin for Professionals was a good idea, and that the Communications Sub Committee of the General Service Board be asked to investigate the feasibility and implementation of the introduction of such a bulletin.

**3. Could Conference consider the possibility of using a symbol in the “Where to Find AA” that would indicate without endorsement the Groups that have an associated Al-Anon and or Alateen meeting in close proximity of venue or time?**

The Committee felt this was an impractical scheme.

**4. The Twenty-Fourth General Service Conference commended newsletters as “an excellent and informal way of communicating Intergroup and Regional news”. Review the Fellowship’s recent experience in producing newsletters and consider whether the Board should be asked to compile a set of suggestions or other explicit guidance which will help Intergroups and Regions wishing to establish local AA newsletters.**

The Committee felt that the General Service Board should be asked to compile a set of suggestions (or other explicit guidance) which will help Intergroups and Regions wishing to establish local AA newsletters.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Jean W (North East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1993.

## **6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Chris H (North West Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1993.

### **COMMITTEE NO.3: FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES**

CHAIRMAN: MAIRI G HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS REGION  
SECRETARY: JOHN H LONDON REGION

The Chairman welcomed everyone, read the Preamble, led the introductions and asked the Secretary to read Tradition 2 and Concept XII.

#### **1. Consider the draft Guideline 12-Finance. Make comments and recommendations.**

##### AA MONEY

Paragraph 1: Delete “Some two thirds” and substitute “Most” (line 1).

Paragraph 2: Delete “Currently the” and substitute “The” (line 6).

##### GROUP

Paragraph 1: Delete “demands honesty, reliability, and stability” and substitute “requires honesty and reliability” (line 1).

Paragraph 6: Delete “not be hoarded but” and substitute “be” (line 3).

##### INTERGROUP

Paragraph 5: Insert “cash” before “payments” (line 3).

##### REGION

Delete Paragraph 4.

##### GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

Retain the original first paragraph of the current Guideline 12 as the first paragraph of this section, i.e., “All Groups, Intergroups and Regions should accept responsibility for the funding of the General Service Office”.

Paragraph 1: (New Paragraph 2) Insert “Conference through” after “to” (line 1).

Penultimate Paragraph (beginning Paragraph “Computerised accounts”) Delete “professional accountants” and substitute “registered auditors” (line 4)

##### MONEY EXPENSES & SPIRITUALITY

Paragraph 2: Delete first sentence and substitute “It is agreed that no expenses are paid for individual ‘face to face’ Twelfth Step work”.

#### **2. Regarding Conventions - is it thought that acceptance of money entrance fees etc. from non “AA members” is in breach of Tradition 7?**

The acceptance of contributions from non AA members to AA funds would be in breach of

Tradition 7, but the acceptance of money in return for goods and/or services would not.

**3. Consider the results of the Feasibility Study for the Celebratory Convention 1997. Make recommendations.**

There was overwhelming support for this event and for it to be held in Blackpool, preferably in June.

We recommend that a Steering Committee initiate arrangements, once a detailed budget has been accepted by the GSB.

The Committee should comprise:

GSB Members	2
Scottish Reps	3
Southern Reps	3
Welsh Reps	1
Northern Reps	2
General Secretary GSO	1
Region 15	1
Total	13

drawn from the National Convention Committees

Members may be co-opted at later stages.

All members to serve the full term, irrespective of tenure of Board or Regional service.

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Ken P (Eastern Region) as Chairman of Committee No.3 for Conference 1993.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Derrick M (Wales & Borders Region) as Secretary of Committee No.3 for Conference 1993.

**COMMITTEE NO.4: HOSPITALS AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES**

CHAIRMAN: JOHN G GLASGOW REGION  
SECRETARY: MIKE S NORTH WEST REGION

The chairman opened each session with a few moments silence and the reading of Traditions 1 and 2. He welcomed all delegates particularly those attending their first Conference and all delegates introduced themselves.

**1. Consider the draft Guideline 10 - Hospitals and Treatment Centres. Make comments and recommendations.**

The Committee recommended acceptance of the portion of the Guideline referring to Hospitals and Treatment Centres, with the addition of “administrators/chief executives” at the end of the paragraph headed “ How do we make contact with the Hospitals and Treatment Centres ? “

A number of points, such as involvement with hospitals’ radio, were considered and we felt these could in due course be incorporated into a hospitals information sheet.

On the subject of Community Care we recommend acceptance of the second alternative with the following amendments:

1st paragraph: Delete “on the brink of changes” Insert “undergoing change”

2nd paragraph: Final sentence to read “Hospital and Treatment Centre Groups should also continue to maintain close links with the voluntary sector in a spirit of co-operation not affiliation”.

3rd paragraph: We recommend substitution here of the final paragraph of the first alternative.

## **2 How may the Fellowship best respond to the current change in policy affecting the Health Service? Make recommendations.**

As many changes are still taking place in the Health Service, it is essential we are available and flexible within the Traditions and guidelines.

Contact should be made at AA Regional level with the NHS Regional Alcohol Mis-Use Co-ordinators so that AA can establish a presence as a resource at projected advisory committees. This presence should be maintained.

We should also take the opportunity to introduce or reinforce contact with GPs who, because of current changes, will now find the need to offer as wide a range of services as possible to patients. AA should co-operate in this.

As the changes in the NHS necessarily involve changes in Social Services, it is recommended that all service areas within the AA structure work more closely together throughout the development of Community Care.

## **3. What is the experience of AA members who are involved in running groups in Private Treatment Centres?**

**(a) Do we observe Tradition Seven?**

**i.e. are we declining free use of**

**(b) Are the meetings subjected to influence from those who (manage) run the Treatment Centre?**

**(c) Are there any adverse effects or (difficulties) experienced by the established AA Groups which are in the area of the Private Treatment Centres?**

**(a) e.g. other problems introduced other than alcohol problems.**

**(b) disruption of regular meetings by an increase of Treatment Centre patients**

attending, if so.

**(i)How is it best coped with by the AA Group?**

**(ii)How do we approach the difficulties with the Management Team of the Private Treatment Centre?**

Not every Region had experience in this respect. However where there was experience, the following were the Committee's thoughts.

(a) Tradition 7 was always observed. Where rent would not be accepted, a donation to a suggested charity ensured we observe the Tradition.

(b) Generally speaking there seemed to have been little experience of attempts to influence groups, but in one particular region a group had allowed itself to be influenced by the management of the centre. However it was felt this was best resolved locally.

(c) (a)Where other problems are introduced these have generally been quickly dealt with by pointing out that we only deal with alcohol. Even where the Treatment Centre has directed people to AA, we should always bear in mind redirection to NA, GA, OA, etc, where this is felt appropriate.

(b) (i) It was accepted that wherever there was an influx of treatment centre patients at local groups, it was inevitable that some disruption would take place. Groups with strong experienced membership seemed to have dealt with these problems best and they should always be treated with patience, tolerance and an honest desire to carry the message. Running a Beginners Meeting concurrent with the normal meeting had proved beneficial in some areas and obtaining larger premises had also proved to be an answer in others.

(b) (ii) After the matter has been discussed by the Group Conscience, we should try to iron out difficulties by personal communication in the spirit of the Fellowship - always being mindful of the Traditions. Intergroup support could be sought if appropriate.

**4. Considering the change in availability of hospital treatment for alcoholism and the rapid increase in use of Community Care many more volunteers will be needed from within AA to work actively in this field: Would Conference endorse an ongoing campaign in order to recruit these and make practical suggestions on the planning and co-ordination of same?**

The Committee recommends that Conference endorses an ongoing campaign, in order to sponsor more members into service to help meet the increasing workload in Community Care.

This should be done at Regional level or, where appropriate, at Intergroup level, through integrated PICPC Committees, or through sub committees with specific responsibility for Community Care - ultimately reporting back to Region. Workshops on Community Care could also be held at Regional and Intergroup levels.

As the co-operation of Intergroups and Groups is absolutely vital to this recruitment, Conference

urges these bodies to be mindful of our primary purpose to encourage participation and to provide willing members.

We should also approach Family Health Service Authorities to offer involvement in training for GP staff. Directors of Community Nurses could also be approached for involvement in training for District Nurses, Health Visitors and School Nurses.

Maybe Share and Roundabout could consider devoting an issue specifically to Community Care and AA News or a newsletter could also carry information on this subject.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Tony J (Midland Region) as Chairman of Committee No.4 for Conference 1993.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Bob H (Highlands & Islands Region) as Secretary of Committee No.4 for Conference 1993.

**COMMITTEE NO.5: PICPC AND INDUSTRIAL LIAISON**

CHAIRMAN:	PETER F	GSB
SECRETARY:	OTTO C	EASTERN REGION

The Committee Chairman welcomed everyone and, in particular, first year delegates and those from Region 15.

**1. Review our service work in relation to members of the Armed Forces with a problem of alcohol abuse and make recommendations.**

Region 15 appears to have had most success with the Armed Forces, the Services there found that it cost too much to lose trained personnel and that it is cost effective to rehabilitate them. Most Clergy, Medical Officers and Commanding Officers are convinced that AA works. Also there are non-alcoholic people of high rank who are also pro AA.

Generally, most other Regions felt that AA is more accepted in the US and Canadian Forces rather than British Forces who often deny that there is a problem.

Owing to objections from certain members of the Committee to the term "Alcohol Abuse", the Committee decided to interpret this term to mean "Alcoholism".

Recommendations:

1. The experience of Region 15 could play a great part in making high level contact with the forces stationed here in collaboration with the General Service Board.
2. Our approach to the Armed Forces should be on three levels: firstly Heads of Personnel, then the Medical Director General of each service and finally to the Commanding Officers of



individual bases. Our approach should be purely informative as to what we do and do not do.  
3 Command and Medical Officers of local units to be invited to all Public Meetings and Forums held in their area.

Our experience shows that this can be an effective means of contact.

4 Follow-up visits after meetings.

5 AA posters and contact cards to be placed on unit notice boards.

6 That the editors of "Navy News", "Soldier" and its RAF equivalent be contacted with offers of help as regards articles, interviews and details of AA in the area.

7 Target establishment and unit broadsheets. Each army unit has its own "in house" bulletin.

8 The personal touch. AA service personnel should be encouraged to share their AA experience with members of their old units or service. Successful contacts have been made through members' relatives or friends in the services.

**2. The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous aims to attract people from all walks of life: including women, young people, members of ethnic minority groups, gays and people with disabilities. The members are not only welcome, but essential to the growth of our Groups.**

**Following recent Conference decisions, what are our practical experiences of carrying the message to such potential members?**

The Committee felt that AA is about identifying and belonging and not being made to feel different. Any alcoholic should be made welcome.

The Committee identified, amongst others, such people as those with young children, the visually and/or hearing impaired, the elderly, ethnic minorities, gays and young people as being those who might have difficulties in establishing and maintaining contact with the Fellowship.

The Committee recommends an increased availability of foreign language literature and posters. One Region already has a multi-lingual poster.

The Committee felt that the way forward was through already established services but increased activities e.g.:-

1. Baby sitting rotas, lunchtime or daytime meetings, crèches, childminding by the Social Services.
2. Targeting womens hospitals and treatment centres.
3. Protecting vulnerable women from exploitation.
4. Encouraging and sponsoring young people into service.
5. Making contact through the Social Services to the elderly and especially those alone.
6. Making contact with such organisations as the Royal Institute for the Blind to establish any special needs. Making contact with ethnic community leaders.

It was suggested that PI Committees identify and target as many of these people as possible, within the constraints of resources available, ensuring a committed and continuing follow up procedure.

It was also suggested that, wherever possible, members volunteering for these tasks have a good understanding of the group they are to meet.

### **3. Review the draft proposed AA Service Handbook on Public Information.**

The Committee unanimously endorsed the draft AA Service Handbook on Public Information. Minor but significant amendments were proposed, and after full discussion accepted. The Board Members were asked to make the necessary changes before publication.

The Committee asks the General Service Office to make this Handbook available to the Fellowship as soon as possible.

Conference is asked to accept the Committee's endorsement of the new Handbook together with the amendments.

The Committee further recommends that Guideline 11 on PI/CPC be subsequently reviewed, and a draft be presented to Conference in 1993.

### **4. Would Conference recommend that the Board investigate the feasibility of a single national telephone number for AA.**

The Committee, by a majority of 17-3, recommends that the Board investigate the feasibility of a single telephone number for AA.

All members expressed concern about the implications of a single telephone number, which should be taken into consideration during the study.

To this end, the Committee feels that the Fellowship as a whole should be consulted.

### **5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Jane L (Jersey Intergroup) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1993.

### **6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Barry F (Region 15) as Secretary of Committee No.5 for Conference 1993.

## **COMMITTEE NO.6: PRISONS AND PROBATION**

CHAIRMAN:	RICK S	REGION 15
SECRETARY:	JOHN M	MIDLANDS REGION

The Chairman welcomed everyone. A roll call was taken followed by the reading of the Preamble.

**1. What is the Fellowship's current experience of providing a Prison Postal Sponsorship service?**

The London delegate described a postal scheme which has been running successfully over the last few years.

The Committee endorsed the concept of a Postal Sponsorship Service and recommends to Conference that this service be implemented as soon as possible.

**2. In view of the imbalance of Prisons to AA Groups in certain areas how best can the Fellowship serve these areas that are thinly represented? Make recommendations.**

Some members of the Committee shared the problems involved in areas trying to service a large number of prisons with a relatively small number of groups.

The recommendations made were:

- (a) To invite neighbouring Intergroups to ask members to volunteer for sponsorship.
- (b) To attempt to hold public information meetings or workshops in prisons.

The imbalance of prisons to AA groups could be alleviated by the recommendations of question 1, i.e. implementation of the prison postal sponsorship service as soon as possible.

**3. What is the Fellowship's current experience in producing newsletters, etc. for prison inmates?**

There is experience of producing newsletters for prison inmates as well as taking Share and Roundabout into prisons.

The Committee felt that more interest is generated where the content of the publication is by inmates, sponsors, ex-offenders and others involved in prison service.

Region or Intergroup support has proved beneficial.

N.B. After a long discussion the committee recommended that the calendar and group news items of Share and Roundabout be removed. This is in no way a reflection on the prisoners, should the magazines be left lying about they could fall into the wrong hands.

We would recommend that this question be discussed more fully in the Committee of Structure and Service next year as it also affects other services.

**4. How best can more members be involved in prison sponsorship, bearing in mind the necessity of the ideal of a minimum of two members for each meeting?**

It was felt that the best way to involve more members is by continual encouragement to sponsor

members into prison service.

Considerable importance was placed on the sharing of experience and information among sponsors by regular group meetings and workshops.

Involvement in a prison postal service will result in more members being actively involved in service.

We would suggest that emphasis be placed on our primary purpose which is to carry the message.

**5. What is the Fellowship's current experience with regard to meeting offenders on and at point of release?**

Considerable experience of meeting people on or at point of release exists.

The Directory of AA Contacts (Prison and Probation Service) is generally used to establish a link with AA members in other areas.

The good experience at meeting prisoners coming out is a great part of prison AA work. To see a prisoner come out of prison, and then to meet them a few months later, still sober, generates a tremendous feeling.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Iain McM (North West Region) as Chairman of Committee No.6 for Conference 1993.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1993.**

The Committee elected Colin A (Eastern Region) as Secretary of Committee No.6 for Conference 1993.

**WORKSHOP: FAITH AND HONESTY**

The meeting opened with a few moments silence.

Presentation:           Helen R                   (Wales & Borders Region)

My name is Helen and I am an alcoholic. The old fear rose up to engulf me when Richard D phoned me to ask if I would be willing to do a presentation for the Workshop at Conference. My first reaction was for them to invite someone more dynamic than yours truly, and I asked for twenty-four hours before giving my answer. After a chat with my sponsor who has always been there when I need her, the answer was yes - I would do my best.

In due course the invitation arrived from Jill, and it gave me great pleasure to accept such an honour and privilege to have even been considered.

It was December 1983 when I reached my rock bottom. I have never felt so desolate and alone as I did that night when I cried out to God to help me, and from that moment I believe I was guided

to the Fellowship.

The terrible fear in the pit of my stomach - until the time came for me to attend my first meeting - nearly drove me crazy. All I received was love, hope and understanding from the lady in the chair that evening. Here were people whom I had never met before; who were willing to share their experience, strength and hope with me. At the end of the evening I knew that I was an alcoholic.

I went to the Fellowship for me. Perhaps God knew that it had to be that way for me, because I shut him out of my life when drinking took me over. He showed me the way, but sometimes I had to be really convinced. He showed me through people how powerful he was. The obsession with alcohol has been removed from my life. I had to get honest with myself, and stop blaming other people mainly my husband and family for my drinking. The responsibility was mine. I had to be still and know that he was God.

Many years ago, before alcohol played a part in my life, I failed my state preliminary nursing exam - not once but twice. For years I lied about not finishing my training because of my mother's illness. They say that the truth will set you free. I no longer have to fear that failure. Today I am a nursing auxiliary; and have been for twenty-three years, even in the throes of my active alcoholism.

Since being in the Fellowship and working the Programme on a daily basis, I have lost a lot of my fear of people, places and situations. It took me a long time to accept that I was powerless over a lot more than alcohol. This Programme of Recovery has shown me to live in harmony with my fellow travellers, to ask for God's will for me each morning and the power and strength to carry it out, but it has taken a long time to have a little understanding of myself. There have been quite a few episodes of pain which I have inflicted on my daughter because of my self will and fear of letting go absolutely. It has been said that the antidote to fear - is Faith.

When I was in the Fellowship seventeen months my husband had to have open heart surgery. All seemed to go well, and he was discharged home to my care. A few days later he was rushed back into hospital. They tried all manner of treatment, and nothing seemed to work, his condition had become critical. My daughter took me home from the hospital. I was hurting inside and thought that I was being put to the ultimate test.

The Consultant rang me to tell me that they were going to operate again. I remained in the waiting room for seven hours, and during that time I read and I prayed. The prayers were not begging God to save my husband, but that I would accept the outcome as his will for me. My husband spent a number of weeks in hospital, and I nursed him at home for six weeks. He made a remarkable recovery. God showed me that he could perform miracles. My husband and I have a wonderful caring relationship for one another. God gave me the opportunity to make amends to my husband for all the hurt I had caused him.

I believe that I had to go through the dark days of my alcoholism to get where I am today. The Faith I have today is strong! There is a power greater than me whom I choose to call God. I know that he has a purpose for me in life, to become part of a great whole. This is what I had been searching for all my life, and I found it within, with the help of this Fellowship.

In time it dawned on me that the God of my understanding was doing for me that which I could

not do for myself.

I was not the most willing person to sponsor into service, but it has done me a power of good, and it is not the end of the world if I make mistakes, as long as I learn from them. It is lovely to be able to laugh and not take myself too seriously.

When I get over my initial fear when asked to do service of any kind, the willingness is always there, and it is certainly a lot better today than it was a few years ago.

My Faith has stood me in good stead over the past seven months. Something happened in my sister's family, which was the cruellest blow that anyone could accept. Her whole world seemed to crumble about her. There seemed no sense or reason to what had taken place. My sister is a very strong person, who has always stood on her own two feet, but she turned to me in her hour of need, and through the Grace of God of my understanding I have been able and most willing to support her through her pain. This would certainly not have been possible a few years ago.

I firmly believe today that nothing is wasted in God's economy. Out of every situation even the most tragic, there is good if we look for it!

I am grateful today for my countless blessings, and my gift of sobriety. It is wonderful to know that we are all capable of contributing something to the bigger picture or plan, which is revealed to us one day at a time.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

Presentation:           Mairi G                           (Highlands & Islands Region)

Good evening - I'm Mairi and I'm an alcoholic. Sober today by the grace of God and this Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. A Monday in January was, as is every morning since becoming an honest member of this Fellowship, marvellous. I woke, swung my legs over the side of the bed in the certain knowledge that they would hold me up and I would be able to stand erect, something I was quite unable to do in the latter stages of my drinking. Without alcohol I was without power.

I returned home about noon after completing a voluntary round, full of gratitude for my health, both mental and physical. Some of those I had visited had neither. I was told Jim had called and would I call him back. There were no suspicions aroused as Service in this Fellowship often leads me to direct contact with GSO. Jim's line was engaged but he would ring me back. Five minutes later I was not so sure that my legs had power. I felt weak at the knees and the stomach was up to its tricks again - as in days of yore I'm sure you all know the feeling!! Jim had asked me if I would make this presentation. I cannot rightly remember what I said but my initial reaction was to say no. After all I was hopefully chairing Committee No.3 and I felt that was ample for me to cope with. In my early days in AA I was told that if I was asked to do anything for the Fellowship and it was in my power to do it to say "Yes". Today as I write this I am not so sure that I was right!!

I was first taken to the Fellowship in July 1975 with no desire for sobriety. All I wanted was peace to do as I pleased and have people off my back. For eleven months I continued to frequent

AA meetings and off sales premises. After my third admission to a Mental Institution did I admit with all honesty “My God, I’m beat” and truly meant what I said; that was June 1976.

My previous admissions to hospital had taught me that medication made my withdrawals bearable and AA meetings had told me “cold turkey” was unbearable but memorable so this time I believed AA. I really didn’t want to drink again so I suffered the hells and agonies against psychiatric advice. I came out on the eighth day - unable to walk unaided, leaning on the arm of an AA member. I would not employ her in her drinking days so this was my first lesson in humility having to ask for help, which needless to say was given most willingly. She had been around for the eleven months previously and knew my total dishonesty at attempts to stay away from alcohol so there were not too many suggestions as to how the Programme should be worked they were all “musts”.

I was brought up with a Faith and a belief in God and for many days prior to my alcoholic drinking, I had to live my life “one day at a time”. I was nursing both my father and husband with incurable illnesses unaware that I was nurturing the illness of alcoholism. My trust in God strengthened daily during this time as I constantly asked for help to see me through each day. Every opportunity that I could snatch for myself was offered up in gratitude for the ability to cope. My father died fifteen months before my husband who died in 1972. I was left with five young children, not bitter - I knew that was wrong but numb and a perfect vessel for self pity. In order to fill the void in my life I turned to alcohol which was readily available - I was in the trade. In the last painful stages of my drinking I doubted if this God I felt I knew and trusted so much was anywhere near me and my prayers were then directed via St Jude - the Patron Saint of “Hopeless Cases” which I felt I was. The spiritual side of the 12 Steps was therefore very easy for me to accept.

I knew I had to work these Steps so I started with all honesty to work them in their entirety one by one. I didn’t find them too difficult. The word “alcoholic” was my biggest stumbling block - I found it hard to apply it to myself and came out in “goose pimples” with the effort.

My renewed Faith soon started to lessen the dreadful fears that were part and parcel of my drinking. The harder I worked at myself through the Steps a semblance of sanity, self respect and trust in myself returned. I was well known in the town and my drinking was a cause for concern for all those who came into contact with me. I knew I really had to adhere to this wonderful recovery programme to maintain the desire for sobriety that I was enjoying.

Chapter 5 of the “Big Book” tells us about rigorous honesty and there are many references in literature to it being the basis to contented sobriety so I had to look at the many aspects of honesty and how they applied to me. Initially I had to be rigorous in my truthfulness to my family. For so long well meaning promises were never fulfilled so of course there was distrust. Honesty in the spoken word is essential. Decisions taken had to be adhered to be they right or wrong - if wrong an apology distasteful thought it was, had to be made.

The more I worked on myself, the more I realised and came to accept that total honesty, no matter how difficult it may have been was the key to success. My early upbringing had taught me that not even “white lies” were acceptable. Through the illness of alcoholism I too ended up a pathological liar. There could be no more fronts. The emotions I had hidden to keep a brave face and be strong were completely smothered and I really was devoid of any feelings.

Through many painful experiences I learnt that honestly sharing on a one to one basis with my sponsor was the only way I could get relief and achieve any form of recovery. I was told I had to alter my attitudes on every aspect of life. I had to keep it simple and the initial changes in myself soon reflected in my family and before long their attitudes changed towards me.

As my Faith in my Higher Power increased through my daily contact with him, so my own self respect began to return and a new found confidence came into my life. I was still plagued with a “grass hopper” mind - the inability to concentrate on anyone subject for any length of time but by trying truthfully to sort out priorities nine times out of ten I could settle it down.

I was now realising that the AA Programme was for me, not about drinking, but the guide lines of a marvellous true, clean way of life and one that I was craving. I could have peace, mentally and physically because I was in tune with my Higher Power and each day I coped with the contents because I asked for help.

Faith is trust or confidence either in another human being or religion but we only talk about spirituality here so I shall try and talk about a God of my own understanding. Step 2 tells us “that no human power could relieve us of our alcoholism”. For myself, I believe I was given a moment of sanity in a period of total insanity, to allow me to surrender, this was only achieved by prayer. Not those taught at my parents knee but words of my own, just talking to someone who knew exactly what was happening to me. Someone who had planned my path of life since before birth, led me to the gates of hell with alcoholism and was now snatching me back and trying to give me another chance.

Many call it “blind faith” but today I can accept all my Higher Power chooses to pack into each day for I have the knowledge he is there with me every moment and it’s up to me not to ask but to thank him for all the sorrow, heartaches and suffering that are sent, they are little to offer for the blessings bestowed on me.

My spiritual growth has given me the ability now to cope with service in AA. Initially I was inveigled into going to an Intergroup meeting and soon found myself as Treasurer. The post itself posed no problems for me but my immediate reaction to others did!! This made me look at another facet of Honesty, interpretations of the 12 Traditions. How could so many angles be put forward from plain simple facts.

I have been asked to do many things in this wonderful Fellowship and up till now have coped with them to the best of my ability but writing this Presentation has, so far, been the most difficult.

Today I can honestly say I have contented sobriety in my life - in my early days I used to say I was glad to be at meetings and sober - that’s how I felt then but years on I know I was just dry, and I am sure as I read this out on the Saturday night of Conference, I will also have different feelings. I feel privileged and honoured when asked to do anything in the Fellowship for I am the one who benefits. Today I try to the best of my ability to put my heart and soul into anything I do.

Before closing I would just like you to hear this writing, author unknown, found by my husband - also a member of this Fellowship -in an old fashioned chest of drawers. It has often been a source of inspiration to me:-



“Follow the voice that speaks within. Go forward unafraid in strength of your own conviction, never being swayed by this or that opinion. On your own set course proceed, knowing that within yourself you have the power that you need. If you pray for guidance there is nothing to fear. Doors will open as if by magic, obstacles cleared and a way prepared. Have faith and go ahead never doubting, knowing that your steps are being led. Do not halt or hesitate between two points of view or lean too much on other people for advising you. Even if at times you are wrong, it’s all experience. Listen to the voice within and trust in Providence.”

God Bless you all.

## **FRIDAY 2ND APRIL 1993**

The Twenty-Eighth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York.

On the Friday afternoon registration and distribution of folders was followed by a reception which provided an ideal opportunity for the delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates attending for the first time.

The Conference comprised eighty-eight delegates from fifteen Regions, two Delegates from the Channel Islands, one delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', twenty-one members of the General Service Board, Mairi G, Conference Chairman and four members of staff. Observers from the following countries were also present:

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	(2)
Denmark	(1)
Eire	(2)
French Speaking Europe	(1)
Netherlands	(2)
Sweden	(2)

## **OPENING OF CONFERENCE -BY MAIRI G (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1993)**

On the Friday evening the first full session was opened by the Conference Chairman, Mairi G, with the customary moment's silence followed by the reading of the Preamble and the Twelve Traditions.

Mairi then presented her Keynote Address:-

Good evening, welcome to this, the Twenty-eighth General Service Conference of Great Britain. I am Mairi and today a sober but extremely jittery alcoholic. A special welcome to our overseas visitors, first year delegates and our extremely hard working office staff from GSO.

To help me settle down and to strengthen this wonderful feeling of unity I would like to ask you to please introduce yourselves - not to the people beside you, I hope you have already done that, but to those in front and behind you.

One night in late January, I gave some thought to what I might say in my opening address to Conference -outside a threatened 92 mph gale was gathering momentum -my gratitude for being safe and warm in my own home was overwhelming. This brought me very close to my Higher Power and when I looked out of the window, Loch Linnhe, an artery of the Atlantic only a hundred yards or so from my front door, was lashing over the main road. A sudden surge of fear welled up in my body, and I began to shake. I had experienced shakes before, but of an entirely different kind, and my Higher Power had produced a flash of sanity in a tortured mind which allowed me to admit defeat. I knew that night I could no longer put off writing and decided to make a start.

My thanks are extended to all who have supported and encouraged me so strongly throughout the last few months. At this time last year I was experiencing the same jitters as tonight. Conference is an experience which, hopefully, I shall not forget for a long time and I feel extremely privileged to have been elected as Conference Chairman. Since then I have been fully involved with the Board Conference Committee and the experience has been quite traumatic. Hence my choice of theme 'Back to Basics', although I must admit it was not my first, and I am grateful to our General Service Board for this innovation and to the General Secretary for the unstinting assistance and reassurance he has given me over many years of service within the Fellowship.

When I accepted honesty as being of prime importance in my life in this Fellowship if I wanted sobriety, I had to look at the basis of this wonderful programme - Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. For me they must not be separated. I had to join a group and attend meetings regularly and, in my early stages of staying away from alcohol, I was incapable of understanding or retaining anything I read, so I had to listen. Fortunately, I was blessed in having several older members, involved in service, who really instilled in me the need for this programme in its entirety and its total acceptance. I knew it worked - here was living proof about me. I knew these people when they drank and I wanted what they had. As the arrogance and egotism started to disappear and the fog cleared from my mind, I became willing to ask questions and was very soon told to get "stuck in" to the Big Book and the Twelve by Twelve - this I did. I was also told that I wouldn't find an end, and that my understanding would be ongoing. For these wise words I am today extremely grateful.

I was reluctant to enter service and was quite happy opening the hall, making the tea and being Group Treasurer for quite a number of years. My thoughts were that I was repaying the Fellowship in a small part for all the blessings I had received, although my sobriety had reached a 'marking time' situation and I was not progressing as I would have liked. At this point, I was told to go back to basics once again, and start reading a bit more. It may sound illogical to go back before starting to come forward - nevertheless - it works for me.

The Group and Service Handbooks were suggested as good for a start and out of that came lots of questions so Intergroup was suggested as the next step. I became Treasurer so Guidelines were thrust into my hand and there my enthusiasm started and I began to get down to serious work, ever bearing in mind our co-founders words "Keep it Simple". I had to progress through all recommended literature including the Service Manual and there my eyes were opened.

By the time I reached Region I knew that this progression once again required me to go back to the beginning. I found as the days had advanced in sobriety my understanding and interpretation were altering. I had to sit and listen to differing view points regardless of my own feelings and try to encourage "the open mind". It did make me learn to be a lot more tolerant. As alcoholics are drawn from all walks of life, so too are recoveries with all the various ideas of understanding and working this programme. At one stage I wondered if I really was being restored to sanity but I stayed because I knew I needed to be there for me. I was beginning to enjoy a quality of life that had a great measure of contentment with myself - I had mellowed. I found that I was not reacting the way I used to and that greater feeling of purpose in my life was being achieved.

I became Chairman of Region and then I really had to study the literature. I cannot remember word for word what I read but usually can recall where I saw it, so every time I needed to refer to facts I would get waylaid and find out something else of much more importance.

I had to learn how to chair in the Fellowship. It was entirely different to the way I operated in my profession. Every representative was entitled to their opinion, but I had to keep mine very firmly to myself until I got the feel of the meeting, and when I thought enough discussion had been entered into and a decision was reached, try very hard to close that subject. Not always easy with a group of ex-drunks!

I personally feel it is very important that Conference Delegates be in an elect position for one year at least prior to their nomination as full Delegates so that they may become really well versed with not only their own Region, but the Fellowship as a whole.

In Scotland we have another tier of service - The Scottish Committee and I was Regional Delegate there and later became Chairman. I felt really inadequate and vulnerable but I did as was asked of me -my best. The wealth of knowledge I acquired on that Committee really helped strengthen my sobriety and understanding and enabled me to show in some small way my gratitude to this Fellowship. I am still on that Committee as Treasurer and my heart goes out to George R and his valiant efforts to try and make us self-supporting.

Many times I have to go back to the Three Legacies of AA especially the Second where we are told and I quote from "AA Comes of Age" "we would blow up or stay together. Today we have the answer" .

I am encouraged and spurred on today by people I am prepared to listen to, perhaps not always agree with but because of my ability to go back to the beginning eventually reach a compatible solution.

Many times I find it necessary to go back to the second part of Step One. With many days of sobriety behind me my life can still be unmanageable, I forget that I still have a mental illness with the highs and lows, the excesses and the feelings of self worth. The inability to cope and inadequacy appear and once again I am an empty vessel then I remember what I am -an alcoholic. Today who I am is not of primary importance to me. What I was and what I am doing with my life today are my waking thoughts but only with the help of this Higher Power that dominates my life in this Fellowship.

When I became Conference Delegate, like everyone else, and especially those of you here tonight for your first year, I didn't know what was ahead of me. What was Conference? Why was there a Conference -do we need one? I soon found out and I quote from the late Bernard B Smith:  
*"We need it because we, more than others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for Power and Prestige which we must ensure can never invade AA. We need it to ensure AA against government, while insulating it against anarchy, we need it to protect AA against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous a lone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all its Services.*

*We need it to insure that changes within AA come only as a response to the needs and wants of all AA, and not of any few. We need it to insure that the doors of the halls of AA never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to insure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social*

*position is. “*

My first year was an experience I shall never forget and I found out when I returned to my own Region how difficult it is to try and share the wealth of knowledge I gained. I became frustrated and realised that to eventually get this information back to Group level is hard work. Not everyone wants to go into Service but we all need to be sober. We cannot enhance what we get if we don't give it away. Am I doing enough to encourage and Twelfth Step newer members into the basics of this Fellowship at an early stage in their sobriety, or am I frightened that they may feel it is beyond their ability to cope with such matters.

I hope I have not inferred any great knowledge or authority this evening for I do not believe I possess these attributes. I am sharing my experiences about learning the basics of AA necessary for Service, something I have never entered into lightly or without a lot of thought and research. Unless I can give of myself wholeheartedly I will not give at all.

Nomination to Conference Chairman filled me with a sense of awe and utter fear and uselessness because I know that Conference needs the very best one can give so please bear with me this weekend for I am trying and that is all I am asked to do.

In closing may I just give you yet another quote and what finer than from Bill W in an article written in 1948 when he said:-

*“Our Traditions are securely anchored in those wise precepts of Charity, Gratitude and Humility. I hope I as an individual have acquired these attributes. May I be able to serve God as I understand Him and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, for as long as I am needed. God bless you all”* .

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

The Chairman of the General Service Board, Charles McK, thanked Mairi for her Keynote Address and extended a very warm welcome to all delegates and in particular the Overseas Observers, whose presence was a powerful reminder that throughout the world wherever one journeys the friendly hand of AA is available.

Charles reported with sadness the death of Peter Forder, the Board Member for the North East Region, whose presence would be greatly missed; also we had lost the services of Dr Ron Wawman a very enthusiastic non-alcoholic Board Member. His last act was to put us in touch with the British Psychological Association and as a result we met a distinguished lady Psychologist, Dr Jenny Firth Cozens, who has been invited to join our Board.

On behalf of the Fellowship he thanked the retiring Board Members for their services: Richard D (Wales and Borders Region); Bob P (South Midlands Region); George S (South East Region); George R (Hon Treasurer).

One of the great features of our Fellowship is that willing hands are always available and he next asked Conference to ratify the appointment of five new members to the General Service Board:-

Lynda B	(South Midlands Region)
Margo W	(Wales & Borders Region)
Francis B	(South East Region)
Billy B	(North East Region)

Charles then introduced George R, Hon Treasurer, to present the financial report.

George introduced the financial statement which, in addition to the now familiar graphs, pie chart and histogram, included a new cost centred income and expenditure account, as well as a revision of the published budget, based on the October/February 1992/1993 management accounts.

The Conference was then invited to join him in a sincere tribute to the many who had contributed, in the course of the past four years, in transforming the financial operations of the Fellowship and the opening up of accountability and reporting. Not least had been the grinding work of the Finance Committee's working groups and the increasingly influential and informed input of the Regional Treasurers.

The limitations of the cost centred approach, in terms of subjectivity and arbitrariness were recognised but deemed to be more than offset by the added realism in the separate identification of our commercial and service activities.

The surplus of £22,000 generated at the year-end is an outcome which the Fellowship may regard with some satisfaction, but the fact that the overriding contribution to that end stemmed from a reduction in expenditure of 12%, or some £30,000, may give rise to some second thoughts as to its longer run tenability.

Comment on the budget was preceded by the reminder that it is at best a series of estimated cash flows on the expenditure side and intense contemplation of a crystal ball as far as income is concerned both of which may be compounded rapidly. The Board had decided, therefore, to discontinue its publication in the Annual Report, and replace it with an updated statement, to Conference, by the Treasurer.

The main point which emerged from the revision was a reduction in the predicted deficit from £17,000 to £2,300 brought about by a marginal increase in income, compounded by a slightly smaller rate of increase in expenditure.

Attention was then focused on the Information Technology Strategy and what might be considered its attendant capital budget. It was reported that, at its last meeting the Board had agreed unanimously (after thorough research and intense scrutiny of the recommendations) to an outlay of £47,000 on the installation of a new computer system at GSO. It will be financed by drawing down our reserves currently equal to £355,000. This action was viewed as an investment decision (and the source of future economies) over which the Board had virtually no choice since the existing system is terminally stricken. Its replacement is a necessity of considerable urgency which required the Board to exercise the powers of initiative and active responsibility with which it is endowed. To have failed to do so would have been a dereliction of that responsibility and a threat to the morale of staff and the efficiency of operations at GSO.

An order for the completion of the work has been placed with the Dell Corporation.

In conclusion, the Treasurer dismissed any hint of crisis and underlined the 'normality' of the financial position. Having espoused the principle of corporate poverty, AA's destiny is to walk a

tightrope strung between surpluses and deficits while avoiding either in large measure. The present situation lies comfortably with these aims and is entirely manageable - as long as we remember with gratitude, where we came from and where we ought to be going, and as long as we talk about money openly and without fear or mistrust.

Given that we continue (in Bill's words) to search assiduously "for that point in spiritual space where the proper use of money fades into misuse or abuse" finance should not become a cause for undue concern.

The General Service Board Report for 1992 was then approved by Conference.

## **12TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING -25-29 OCTOBER 1992**

An inquisitive pigeon, flying high above the lights and clatter of Broadway, New York, might have noticed with surprise on the last Sunday in October some fifty men and women sitting around a large room and quietly throwing each other a large red ball. This was not a new American sport, but the opening of the 12th World Service Meeting - if the ball fell at one's feet we had to introduce ourselves and our theme for this meeting was SERVICE - EVERYONE'S PRIVILEGE. This introductory ball game was followed by serious business for the next four days when from 9 am to 10 pm we tackled a wide series of problems related to World Service.

The World Service Meeting currently has four permanent committees: Agenda; Policy, Admissions and Finance; Literature and Publishing; Working with Others; and their work was followed by workshops on intercountry communications, the spiritual value of giving, and unstructured workshops where a variety of topics were discussed.

There were excellent presentations on the Twelve Traditions in Recovery, Unity and Service; on Service, everyone's privilege -with privilege comes responsibility, and service is its spiritual fulfilment; the future of the World Service Meeting; and most appreciated by all were three wonderful papers on the spiritual aspects of the Twelve Concepts.

Those of us limited to the English language and it is well known that the British are the World's worst linguists, were lost in admiration at our colleagues' ability to express quite complex thoughts in a foreign tongue.

It was sad that the Netherlands and Portugal were unable to join us but it was a great pleasure to welcome Spain for the first time and to learn how rapidly the Fellowship had expanded in Spain where there are now 324 groups and some 7,000 members. We hope that Czechoslovakia, Russia, Byelorussia, the Baltic Republics, India, and others will be able to join us at our next meeting which is to be held at Cartagena, Columbia in 1994.

The European countries held their own workshop on Communications in Europe and their findings, which were approved by the whole World Conference, summarised below:-

1. The need to combine our efforts in taking the AA message to other countries in Europe and to further develop the European Information Centre at York to support these efforts and to use this centre to report, record and co-ordinate new developments. The urgent establishment of a European Newsletter to keep us in closer touch with each other.

2. The need to report back to our respective countries the work of the WSM, so “opening a window” to alcoholics in our countries on the wider activities of the Fellowship.
3. The value of sharing our differing experiences including comparing our different service structures and helping to support by discussion and friendship those countries which have not yet fully developed an AA structure, or who have problems in their own service organisation.
4. Continuing to support “the start-up” Fund at the World Service Office, New York, and for the European and World Service Offices to keep in close touch to avoid waste and duplication of effort.

With further generosity, the US/Canada General Service Board invited us to join them for their own Committee Meetings and Board Meeting. From all of them we gained valuable guidance and ideas to the improvement of our own service structure.

I think we all felt that our stay in New York was marked by a really strong spiritual tone that enhanced our discussions, and sent us home with renewed gratitude for our wonderful Fellowship, and a determination to try and continue to contribute to the improvement of our World Services.

The highlight of our ‘free time’ in the USA was for all of us, the visit to ‘Stepping Stones’.

In twenty minutes we seemed to move into a different world.

The racing traffic, the noise and the crowds of Manhattan disappeared. We were in wild thickly forested hill country; most of us seeing for the first time the extraordinary beauty of the orange, red, yellow and brown colourations of the American ‘Fall’.

For many miles not even a cottage could be seen.

Virtually all of us have had serious financial problems by the time we stopped drinking, but we had not realised that Bill and Lois literally lived out of suitcases for no less than twenty-three years, both before and after his sobriety.

This beautiful wooden house in the woods had been a virtual gift before he was able to buy it. Lois died only four years ago and the house, its friendly, warm atmosphere augmented by the kindness of the two caretakers, has been preserved as it was.

As we wandered at will around the house with its surprising, huge, central living room and up through the woods to Bill’s little shack or study where he did his writing, which is called “Wits End”, our conversation and chatter died away and most of us were silent with our own thoughts.

To be in this house, where so much of our AA history was created, and from which so many thoughts guiding our own recovery had stemmed, was a most moving and humbling experience and Jim and I are most grateful for the opportunity you gave us to attend this meeting.

Ove Ronneman, a former Swedish representative to the World Service Meeting was asked by a new delegate what was it like.



He replied: "At the World Service Meeting you will feel the heart of Alcoholics Anonymous beating; and that will change you."

I am sure all of us fortunate to attend this meeting would agree with those words.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1994**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Twenty-Ninth General Service Conference 1994:

Edward H	(South East Region)
Rodney N	(North West Region)
Ken P	(Eastern Region)

The nominees signified their willingness to service. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

### **SATURDAY. 3 APRIL 1993 WORKSHOP - "LET IT BEGIN WITH ME"**

John M (Midlands Region) opened the meeting, to be helpfully told he was fading away (sound), as he is a fine figure of a man, this caused great hilarity. I have often felt and noticed how members, send out love and support, from the floor, helping those who are nervously preparing to share. It worked! We all settled down.

The presentations from Rodney N and Gudrun McK on the theme, were warmly received. They both spoke of their love for their children motivating them towards sobriety.

Contributions from the floor quickly got under way, as it transpired the Chairman had threatened his Region to pick on them, if there were any silences.

AA's love laughter, so the humour of George S and Dennis C was much appreciated.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer and everyone filed out looking relaxed and happy.

The full text of the two Workshops presentations appear on pages 23-31.

### **SUNDAY 4TH APRIL 1993**

The final session of Conference commenced with a few moments silence following which Mairi read the Preamble. She then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included in this report as indicated:

PRISONS AND PROBATION  
SERVICE AND STRUCTURE  
LITERATURE  
FINANCE  
GENERAL PURPOSES  
PUBLIC INFORMATION

#### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF CONFERENCE 1994**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Ken P (Eastern Region) was duly elected.

#### **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

The Mairi G, Conference Chairman, gave a hearty vote of thanks for the sterling work of the Committees and all present who had participated in Conference. She went on to also express her appreciation to the staff of the University for their endeavours over the weekend and then Mairi thanked everyone for making Conference 1993 such a memorable occasion.

The Chairman of the Board, Charles McK, then gave a special thanks for the office staff, Anne, Sharon and Mary for their dedication and efficiency in running the meeting in the absence of the General Secretary and the Assistant General Secretary.

Charles then drew Conference's attention to the proposal that a package consisting of

1. The revision of the Handbook (possibly accompanied by the addition of some of our guidelines)
2. The Conference Charter for the Fellowship in Great Britain
3. The Twelve Concepts.

This should be considered and prepared for Conference 1994 and a Committee, comprising Board Members and Selected Conference Members, should carry out the preparatory work.

Members were recommended to discuss this matter at their Intergroups and Regions and try and report back to GSO before 30 September 1993.

He asked and was given Conference's approval for this resolution.

The General Service Conference of 1993 closed with the Serenity Prayer.

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Twenty-Ninth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held on 15-17 April 1994 at York University.

#### **TWENTY-EIGHTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1993 COMMITTEE NO.1: PRISONS AND PROBATION**

CHAIRMAN: EDWARD H SOUTH EAST REGION  
SECRETARY: COLIN S NORTH EAST REGION

**1. How best can we carry the AA message into Young Offenders Institutions? Make recommendations.**

This Committee suggests that we do not treat young offenders differently.

We recommend that:

- (a) where induction courses exist we encourage AA involvement;
- (b) make available the Young Peoples' video and appropriate literature;
- (c) encourage young AA members to share in Young Offenders Institutions.

**2. What experience has the Fellowship in the use of the video "Message to Young People" in Young Offenders Institutions?**

The video has been very well received in most areas of the country, and is encouraging. However, in some establishments difficulty has been encountered because of lack of available equipment.

**3. Would Conference consider the production of an explanatory leaflet of 12 Steps for use in Prisons, Institutions and elsewhere?**

The Committee felt that there was a need for a 12 Step explanatory pamphlet, and that the American sample of the Twelve Steps Illustrated (P55), received by the Committee at Conference, should be made available to the Fellowship in Great Britain, and its suitability be reviewed after a two year trial period.

**4. Would Conference consider, in the light of experience gained, the use and value of the Prison/Probation Directory? Make recommendations.**

The Committee felt that the Directory no longer served a useful purpose and should be discontinued.

We recommend that Intergroups through their Regions supply local AA service numbers to GSO for normal distribution. Where there are not any local service numbers GSO or Scottish Service Office numbers should be used.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Stewart S (East of Scotland Region) as Chairman of Committee No.1 for Conference 1994.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Debbie R (Eastern Region) as Secretary of Committee No.1 for Conference 1994.

## COMMITTEE NO.2:SERVICE & STRUCTURE

CHAIRMAN:                   JEAN W                   NORTH EAST REGION  
SECRETARY:                 CHRIS H                 NORTH WEST REGION

### **1.     Would Conference consider how we can bring the Group Handbook to the notice of more groups?**

(a)     The following suggestions were made:-

(i) the Handbook be displayed and accessible at all meetings for example with the literature;  
(ii) that experience of its use be shared by group officers wherever possible, and that sponsorship into service should include reference to it.

(b)     This Committee also recommends that the Board explore the feasibility of incorporating the complete Group Handbook within the “AA Service Handbook for Great Britain”.

### **2.     Would Conference review the content of the Group Starter Pack?    Make recommendations.**

(a)     This Committee recommend that the content of the Group Starter Pack remain the same;

(b)     endorses the 1991 Conference recommendation regarding time delay, and that the period between receipt of the registration form and registration by GSO be three months

(c)     recommends that free initial literature, i.e. starter packs should only be available through Intergroups, and not direct from GSO, and that groups should bear in mind the tradition of self-support wherever possible with regard to such literature.

### **3     Would Conference consider and agree the amendments to the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain as itemised on the attached paper?**

This Committee agrees the amendments to the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain as submitted, subject to following alterations:-

( i )    Last paragraph, page 12

That the words “for a trial period” be inserted between “introduced” and “a further tier between Intergroups and Region”.

Which will then read as follows:-

“In 1992 the 27th Conference introduced for a trial period a further tier between Intergroups and Region, to assist London Region with handling over 450 groups through 18 Intergroups”.

( ii )   Page 16, Item 9(a)

Delete the word “consecutive”. This now reads:-

“Also eligible for election will be those delegates who came to Conference as alternates and are

attending their third Conference.”

The Committee notes that these amendments are part of an ongoing revision.

**4. Review the Hints & Suggestions Paper on Multi-meeting Groups. Make recommendations.**

This Committee recommends:-

(i) that the growth of multi-meeting groups be supported as referred to in 1990 and 1992 Conferences, and that Groups, Intergroups and Regions be encouraged to implement these recommendations;

(ii) that the Hints & Suggestions sheet be published and made available to the Fellowship to be used in conjunction with the pamphlet “The AA Group”;

(iii) that the ‘Hints & Suggestions Sheet’ be updated, as and when appropriate, when further experience of multi-meetings groups becomes available.

**5 Following last year’s Conference recommendation. a budget has been prepared for the proposed Celebratory Convention 1997. In the light of this. budget and its financial implications would Conference consider:**

**a)(i) Re-endorse the proposal to hold a Celebratory Convention considering that many others may be held**

**(ii) Make recommendations on how the Fellowship could finance such a Convention.**

**b) Make alternative suggestions as to how to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. e.g. special edition of the ‘Big Book’ etc.**

a)(i) This Committee re-endorses the proposal to hold a Celebratory Convention in 1997.

(ii) Recommends that the Celebratory Convention Committee be entrusted to examine and implement ways to finance the Convention.

b) Recommends that the Celebratory Convention Committee explore additional ways to celebrate the anniversary.

**6 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Chris H (North West Region) as Chairman for Committee No.2 for Conference 1994.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Sue D (London Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1994.

**COMMITTEE NO.3: LITERATURE**

CHAIRMAN:	KEN P	EASTERN REGION
SECRETARY:	SHEILA E	EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION

**1. In keeping with Tradition 6, would Conference consider the preparation of a Guideline which addresses the subject and sale of literature at AA Groups/Conventions that is not Conference approved or AA published.**

The Committee recommended that in keeping with Tradition 6, a guideline should be prepared which addresses the subject and sale of literature at AA Groups/Conventions that is not Conference approved or AA published.

The Committee accepted that the word literature should be taken to include all tapes and souvenirs.

**2 Would Conference please consider re-wording the pamphlet “Who Me” to read “the chances are you may be an alcoholic” rather than “You are definitely an alcoholic”. (Page 5 following questionnaire).**

The Committee recommends re-wording of the pamphlet “Who Me” page 5 following the questionnaire as follows:

delete: the word “definitely” in the third sentence

insert: the word “almost certainly”

**3. Consider the present policy of publishing separate “Where to Finds”**

**(a) England, Wales & Channel Islands**

**(b) Scotland**

**(c) London Area**

**and make recommendations.**

The Committee noted that the London area “Where to Find” is published, paid for and authorised by the London Telephone Service.

We recommend that GSO should only publish one National “Where to Find” and this should be expanded to include Region 15, when appropriate.

**4. Review the size and content of the Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers and General Service Board Members -Great Britain. Make recommendations.**

It is recommended that content and page size remain the same in this publication. Industrial Liaison Officers should be included. It is also recommended that the publication be re-designed with a view to reducing the number of pages.

The Committee felt that the choice of weight of paper used should be made bearing in mind postal charges.

**5. Review draft Hints and Suggestion sheet on Newsletters as recommended by Conference 1992. Make recommendations.**

We recommend that the Hints and Suggestions sheet on Newsletters be changed as follows:

(a) Paragraph 1, line 1: between “of” and “Intergroups” add the word “some”.

(b) Under Structure and Format add (d) If items are reprinted from AA literature it is recommended that acknowledgements be made as to their source.

(c) Last paragraph, line 3: Comma instead of a full stop after swiftly.

Delete: "some Intergroups and Regions are supplying full sets of Assembly minutes on request only". Full stop after information.

Line 5, delete: "through Newsletters".

**6 In view of the 1992 General Service Conference recommendation that calendar and Group News be removed from copies of Share and Roundabout for prisons. Would Conference make recommendations whether or not to remove these pages when the magazines are for non-AA consumption. such as treatment centres, libraries and medical waiting-rooms.**

The Committee recommended that the centre pages of Share and Roundabout, which contain Calendar and Group News, be removed before distribution for non-AA consumption.

**7. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Polly H (Region 15) as Chairman of Committee No.3 for Conference 1994.

**8. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Ted R (North West Region) as Secretary of Committee No.3 for Conference 1994.

**COMMITTEE NO.4:FINANCE**

CHAIRMAN:	TONY J	MIDLANDS REGION
SECRETARY:	BOB H	HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION

**1. What is the experience of Conference in respect of adherence to the Guideline advice on prudent -reserves and the frequency which surplus funds are passed on?**

Group Treasurers are, perhaps, being nominated and elected without due attention being paid to Guideline 12 and Concept 10, and without the general responsibility and authority of Treasurers being fully explained.

Experience shows that, at all levels where informed Treasurers actively practise AA principles, fewer difficulties are experienced.

**2. Finance Guideline No. 12 suggests that each group should have a current bank account. What is .the experience of Conference in opening and operating bank accounts and make recommendations.**

Our experience is that while bank accounts may be appropriate for many groups, in smaller

groups they may create rather than ease difficulties.

A system, whereby groups are issued with numbered pay-in books for the Intergroup account, has been found to have many advantages and is recommended.

Groups with no bank account could have the facility of passing cash to the Intergroup Treasurer in return for an Intergroup cheque for literature etc., thus discouraging the use of personal cheques, which is not recommended.

The Committee further recommends that the Board consider the introduction of information and advice on this matter in the Group Starter Pack.

**3. Consider how the Membership might be kept better –informed on a regular basis of the financial health of the Fellowship and thus be encouraged to observe Tradition 7 adequately.**

Our experience shows that any lack of communication could be remedied by the proper passage of information through the structure from the Board to group level.

It is recommended that Intergroup and Regional Treasurers encourage the dissemination of relevant information through workshops, which experience has proved to be the most successful means, and that groups ensure that GSRs attend Intergroup and workshops to make themselves aware of the current situation. Experience shows that if the structure is used it works!

**4. What is the. experience of the Fellowship in relation to self support within multi-meeting groups?**

Should each meeting be self supporting or the group as a whole?

Our experience is that there is confusion between multi-meeting groups and separate groups using the same premises.

It is felt that the Traditions and Guidelines of the Fellowship are already sufficient to cover this question; localised difficulties would be dealt with by the group conscience meeting.

**5. A suggestion has been made that Intergroups might consider the preparation of a simple budget which would include an estimated annual contribution payable to GSO on a monthly basis. Discuss and make recommendations.**

In view of the difficulties which fluctuating income and expenditure create for Intergroups, the Committee feels that this suggestion is not realistic and cannot recommend it.

If the recommendations made in answer to the previous questions were to be implemented there should be no need for the action implied in this question to Conference.

**6 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Mike D (North West Region) as Chairman of Committee No.4 for Conference 1994.



## **7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Anne S (Eastern Region) as Secretary of Committee No.4 for Conference 1994.

### **COMMITTEE NO.5:GENERAL PURPOSES**

CHAIRMAN:	JANE L	JERSEY INTERGROUP
SECRETARY:	BARRY F	REGION 15

**1 In the light of the explosive growth in the number of 12 Step recovery programmes and, as a result, the number of non-alcoholics attending open AA meetings. Would Conference consider whether the Board should be asked to revise Guideline 1, with particular reference to Open Meetings?**

After long discussion the Committee recommends that Guideline 1 be revised.

**2. Mindful of our Traditions would Conference confirm that all groups who wish to call themselves AA groups be non-restrictive-and that no additional designation be given to define or imply qualification for membership.**

The Committee recommends that Conference confirms that there be no restrictions, additional designations, and/or implied qualification, for membership. Descriptive information should apply to meeting place only.

**3. Does Conference consider there are too many One-day Mini Conventions? Consider and make recommendations.**

The Committee does not consider there are too many One-day Mini Conventions.

The Committee recommends that all Mini Conventions be organised through the local intergroup service structure.

**4. Bearing in mind the diverse nature, and background, of AA members are we as a Fellowship practising the true meaning of Fellowship?**

**Can Conference suggest ways in which the spirit, and practice of Fellowship, particularly by individual members and at group level, should be maintained and improved for the benefit of newcomers, existing members and our Fellowship as a whole?**

The Committee suggests that the true meaning of Fellowship be improved by the following:

- (a) Encouraging the 'Home Group' principle, in order to foster caring and involvement.
- (b) Utilising the pamphlet 'The AA Group', and/or the Group Handbook, with particular emphasis on the group inventory.

- (c) Temporary sponsorship for newcomers.
- (d) Workshops sponsored by Intergroup on improving the spirit and practise of Fellowship within the group.
- (e) All members who are, or have been, involved in service sharing their experience at every opportunity.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Keith G (South East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1994.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Dave N (Midlands Region) as Secretary of Committee No.5 for Conference 1994.

**COMMITTEE NO.6:PUBLIC INFORMATION**

CHAIRMAN:	IAIN McM	NORTH WEST REGION
SECRETARY:	TOM M	SCOTIA REGION

**1. 1987 Conference considered that we did not take advantage of the wealth of service experience which has been accumulated by the older member in the Fellowship.**

**With the enlarging field of service activity there are a number of opportunities for their involvement. Make recommendations.**

The Committee felt that a paragraph should be inserted in the new Service Handbook stressing the wealth of experience that lies with the older member and, as a matter of policy, Regions, Intergroups and Groups should always bear in mind the value of keeping the experienced members in view for further service or, as a back-up in consultation on service matters, ever being mindful of the principle of rotation.

The following points were also considered worthy of consideration.

- (a) That, at both Intergroup and Region level, greater use be made of Service Committees. These Committees should contain a blend of experienced members (of varying degrees) and newcomers to Service, whilst being careful not to deny the newcomer Service opportunities.
- (b) That they, the experienced member, be given the opportunity to talk at workshops designed to introduce the new member to Service.
- (c) The experienced member should be encouraged to share from top tables and to write to both Share and Roundabout magazines about the benefit of Service.
- (d) That, for a period, they work in tandem with their successor. Many experienced members

would be delighted to assist in Service so the direct approach is often the best. Ask them!

## **2. Would Conference consider how we can improve communications with all organised religions?**

The Committee felt that the most effective place to improve communications was at the grass roots. This is particularly important where the religion does not recognise that their members can have a drinking problem.

Inviting religious leaders to attend open meetings could prove beneficial.

Care should be taken how the message is passed to different cultures. Perseverance and patience are necessary. Work at the grass roots should not preclude contact at a higher level.

It was felt that PI could have a positive input into training establishments.

## **3. Would Conference consider the draft document to be beneficial as a standard write-up for Company and Trades Union Journals. Make recommendations?**

The Committee consider the additional material supplied is suitable as a draft document for Company and Trade Union Journals with possibly a better heading, and the omission of the London and local telephone numbers.

The opinion was that the original back-up material should be considered at the 1994 Conference for use as a general handout.

Draft

30.06.93

## **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS-For Company and Trades Union Journals**

AA General Service Office  
PO Box 1  
Stonebow House  
Stonebow  
York  
Y01 2NJ

Tel. 0904 644026

### **AIM**

To stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

### **BACKGROUND**

AA was formed in the United States in 1935 by a New York stockbroker and an Ohio surgeon, both alcoholics. They found that meeting and talking together helped them stay sober. Today AA is active all over the world. There are approximately 70, 000 groups and more than 2,000, 000 members in 115 countries. AA started in Great Britain on 30th March 1947.

## **SERVICE OFFERED**

AA is a voluntary fellowship of men and women, who are alcoholics and who help each other to achieve and maintain sobriety by sharing experiences and giving mutual support. Members are helped to achieve sobriety by staying away from one drink, one day at a time. Group meetings help to maintain this and a programme of Twelve Steps to recovery is followed by each member. Self-honesty amongst members is fundamental and anonymity preserved.

They are able to contact each other at any time for help and support and often arrange social activities amongst themselves. There is a General Service Office and telephone services throughout the country are open all the year round for information. An international network of support is available if a member travels abroad. An AA group meets somewhere every night

## **ORGANISATION**

Each group is autonomous and self-supporting. They are linked to the General Service Office and obtain literature and information from it, but otherwise they are run and organised by the members themselves. The fundamental principles of AA and its recovery programme are adopted by each group. AA is in no way affiliated to any other organisation. There are no membership records nor follow-up procedures. Contact and membership depend on self motivation.

## **FINANCE**

Each group is self-financing and receives no financial backing from the General Service Office. The groups contribute to the running of the General Service Office and telephone services, and members contribute what they can to the expenses of the group -literature, coffee and tea, rental of room, etc. AA has a tradition of being self-supporting.

## **STAFF**

Each group is run locally by members. The General Service Office is manned by paid staff.

## **USERS**

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Men and women from all walks of life benefit from AA and there are no dues or fees for membership. People are welcomed who are still drinking but express the desire to stop. Members are free to visit any of the AA groups for support but they join AA through their own motivation.

Telephone services direct enquiries to individual members and advise people of local groups. Local AA numbers may be found in the telephone directory. Group size varies and new members are continually assimilated. Open meetings are held to inform relatives and those interested in the work of AA but closed meetings are for members only. There are over 3,000 meetings in the UK each week and 40,000 to 50,000 members.

## **USERS' VIEWS**

There is a strong sense of hope, strength, achievement and happiness amongst group members. Each member is encouraged by the example of other members as well as by the mutual help and support. Members feel they can overcome their problem by learning more of themselves, accepting themselves, overcoming fear and lack of self-esteem and finding alternative ways of coping with life other than

through alcohol.

## **THE FUTURE**

To continue in sobriety and to help others achieve the same.

30.06.93

### **4. What is the Fellowships experience of co-operating with Regional Health Authorities through the new structure for providing community care.**

As it is early days, the experience is still patchy, and as the situation is ongoing, a similar question asking for recommendations should be included at the 1994 Conference. Regions are asked to closely monitor progress.

A considerable amount of groundwork has been done and the Committee would like to make the following comments:-

- (a) When dealing with Regional Health Authorities it should be emphasised that, because AA is self-supporting and its services are free, it makes no demands on the Authorities' funds, or resources.
- (b) When sitting on outside Committees the AA member should make clear what AA can, and cannot, do.
- (c) AA must stay clear of any issue other than its primary purpose.

### **5 Review the Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers. Make recommendations.**

The document on Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers was discussed by the Committee and the amended document is as follows:-

The group is responsible for sponsoring members into 12th Step Service. The Big Book, in Chapter 7, has much to say on this topic and the following suggestions have been prepared to assist groups with that responsibility, and are based on the collective experience of the Fellowship in Britain.

1. 'When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible.'
2. The suffering alcoholic should be visited at home preferably, after an initial contact, unless he/she specifically asks not to be so visited. They need to see you and hear your experiences. It is not enough to meet at a meeting.
3. When practicable, take another member with you, as you do not know what you may find. Introducing newer members of the Fellowship helps them to gain experience.

- 4 Ideally men should 12th Step men, and women should 12th Step women, or, as a reasonable alternative, a man and a woman might go together.
- 5 If you are unable to deal with the request quickly, telephone the caller, explain the delay, and offer assurance that you do care. Remember your own first call, and need for immediate help.
- 6 If the suffering alcoholic is not on the telephone, and there has been no pre-arranged time for a visit, take a note in an envelope, confirming that you have called, and asking them to contact you again.
- 7 Make sure that the new member at their first meeting is introduced to other people, and is offered telephone numbers, local 'Where to Find', 12th Step pack etc.
- 8 Newcomers should be taken to several different meetings, so that they may be introduced to as many local members as possible.
- 9 Experience shows that some people do not want to be visited, or go to a meeting. In this situation, contact may be maintained for a short period. If there is no response, we need to detach and let go.
- 10 12th Steppers should be prepared to look after the newcomers until they feel at home in meetings. Contact on a regular basis, and an explanation of AA sponsorship would also be helpful.
- 11 There is no such thing as an unsuccessful 12th Step call; you are bound to have planted a seed and reinforced your own sobriety.
12. REMEMBER - 'Continue to speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady' (Alcoholics Anonymous, p.92)

The Committee feel that this document should be circulated as widely as possible within the Fellowship.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected Tim J (South West Region) as Chairman of Committee No.6 for Conference 1994.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1994.**

The Committee elected John G (East of Scotland Region) as Secretary of Committee No.6 for Conference 1994.

**WORKSHOP:LET IT BEGIN WITH ME**

The meeting opened with a few moments silence.

Presentation: Rodney N (North West Region)

My name is Rodney and I am an alcoholic.

‘Let it begin with me’ is the theme I’ve been asked to talk around and the ‘it’ I take to be my sobriety and it’s also the things that can stem from this in my own life and possibly in the lives of other people also.

I didn’t know where to begin with this particular topic when it was first proposed to me, but eventually I came to think that like so many other things in my life it had actually been mapped out for me already in the form of the Twelve Steps of this Programme.

My sobriety had to start with me. It couldn’t possibly start with anyone else because throughout the entire period of my drinking I was not in the least bit interested in what anybody else thought about what I ought to do about my drinking. Over quite a long period of years, a number of people suggested that I should do something about it.

It was pointed out the harm being done to other people and to myself. This kind of thing was said to me when I was still at school. It was evident to one of my teachers then the way my life was likely to go, but from the age of about fourteen to the age of thirty-five nothing was going to begin with me except the kind of things that go with alcoholic drinking.

But I didn’t want to do anything about it -it never occurred to me. However, I did know that there was something not right with me. I came to see myself as a kind of emotional cripple -an unfortunate doomed to go through life with one foot dragging behind the other, as it were, and adrift in an almost constant condition of tension and anxiety.

I’d no idea what could be done about this. I did, on the odd occasion, see a psychiatrist but I didn’t fit in with their scheme of things and they’d say something to the effect that I was probably wired up wrongly but that there wasn’t very much they could do about this and it basically wasn’t a very interesting case for them, so I went on my not-so-merry way.

The thought never occurred to me that I could, or should, do anything myself. But one day that thought occurred to me -one day which I thought was the worst day of my life. Looking back on it now, of course, it was the best day -the day I phoned the Samaritans and went to my first meeting.

I could see nothing ahead of me except darkness, gloom and a complete abyss. I felt as though I was on the edge of a psychological precipice and was going to fall into it, literally any second, and that my mind was going to unravel. What had brought me to this was the consequences of my drinking. My job was hanging by a thread. I was on a kind of probation with my employers and I knew that I was not going to get through this period. My wife had left me -not for the first time -but I knew it was for the last time. So I ‘phoned the Samaritans. I didn’t know what was wrong but fortunately they did and they suggested that I go to my first meeting, which I did.

I think that my recovery started at the moment when I was prepared to pick up the telephone and ask someone, anyone for help because I had no notion whatsoever where I could turn.

I can’t remember very much about my first meeting but I do recall my second one, the next day, a

little better. There was one thing I'm assured I said then though I can't remember saying it. I'm told that what I said was "Unless I do something about me, then my life is going to fall apart entirely. "Now, I don't remember saying this so where did the idea come from? It can hardly have come from me. I don't think that I was in any condition to form an idea. Twenty-odd years of drinking had meant that I wasn't able to work anything out for myself. Yet there was a glimmer of sanity operating there without my being aware of it.

This was the beginning of recovery. After all, I hadn't even fully realised what I'd said but I'd not only seen that the responsibility for my sobriety lay with me but also I'd said it to the only people who were able to do anything for me and who would respond to that and say "Yes - you can do something for yourself -you've got to do something for yourself -but we're here to help you."

I'd come to the one place, I think in the world, where when I said "I want to do something about me", there were people who were able to point me in the right direction and offer me their help. Step One presented no difficulty to me whatsoever that day.

When I went to meetings, in the few moments silence at the beginning of each meeting there was a particular picture came into my mind. It was a snapshot of the aftermath of a particular night's drinking. That was the reason I had been there at each meeting. I didn't want it to happen again. But after about three months, one night there came into my mind quite unbidden a different picture. It was a snapshot picture again but this time of my baby son who'd been born a short while earlier, in my sobriety -and this was something else again.

Up to that point I'd been thinking only in terms of me and had been governed by fear -thinking only of what I didn't want to happen again. Fear did serve its purpose for quite a long time in keeping me sober. I don't know that it's a sound basis for long-term sobriety but it had its uses. I was terrified of drinking again.

But that night when that picture of my son came into my mind, I realised that I was beginning to look outside myself -that there was something good out there -that there was my son who depended on me and I could do something about that. I could actually hope that something positive would happen to me and this for me was when I felt Step Two had become part of me.

So time went by and I was doing alright with Steps One and Two. The trouble was that Step Three came next and I was baffled. I couldn't really see what I could do about it.

There were still many things oppressing me. One in particular was a phobia that stemmed from the time when I lived in a run-down hovel which I'm glad to say was burnt down in the Toxteth riots a few years back. It was the best thing that could have happened to the place it was full of cockroaches. It worried me. Every night I had to go home from the meeting -not to the same place but I still had the phobia. I didn't have any cockroaches but I still had the phobia so I talked about this after a meeting one night with someone and told them that I was quite unable to rid myself of this fear. I ended what I had to say by saying "To hell with it anyway" and their reply was "No -not to hell with it -to heaven with it. Pray for release from this fear." Such was my desperation that I thought "Well, alright -I might just about go so far as to do that -I might." So I went home. It was about ten o'clock in the evening and I started to Hoover the house. I hoovered downstairs, and I hoovered the stairs and then all the bedrooms. This isn't something I usually do when I come home from a meeting and after I'd been doing it for about an hour I started to ask



myself why I was doing it at all. I suddenly realised what it was. It was because I was more afraid of praying than I was of my phobia. So I realised that I had to do something about this fear -this fear of praying. So, very awkwardly, I went down on my knees and I asked for release from this fear -and I got it. It worked. Of course it worked -but I didn't know it was going to work. I didn't know then what I know now -that this whole programme is an intensely practical programme, that prayer is a very practical measure. After all, there wouldn't be a great deal of point in doing it if it didn't work.

So that was when I discovered that I could actually pray, if only I was prepared to overcome my fear of kneeling down in an empty house with the curtains drawn. And when I had that, things really began to open up a lot because I had the means of dealing with all manner of issues -for example my boss with whom I'd had this difficult relationship. We would call it resentment though for a long time I didn't call it that -I didn't know what the word meant. I knew the meaning of loathing, I knew the meaning of hatred, I knew the meaning of blind fury. I couldn't see why just resentment was such a problem. That was the least of my problems. But I eventually realised that all this came under that heading and that I had to deal with it. So instead of carrying out my former intention of connecting his car battery to a bomb, I prayed for him.

This was again something that had to start with me -there wasn't a great deal of scope for him to do anything about bringing about any kind of reconciliation. He had no particular need to anyway. It was me who was brooding about him all day rather than him brooding about me. So I got rid of my resentment in the familiar practical way -I prayed for him, not that he would invite me to dinner but simply that I could look upon him as being just another man -no more, no less. This worked fine because after about a week or so I found myself wondering why I was praying for him at all. There simply wasn't an issue any more, so I stopped.

Over this period, I was, from time to time, asked to go out on Twelfth Step calls. The very first time I did this, I thought it was a Twelfth Step but it wasn't really. I went to see someone in the Royal Hospital who'd had a spell of sobriety but was drinking again. I remember coming out of the hospital feeling terribly frightened that exactly the same thing would happen to me even though I didn't want it to. I didn't really have a message to pass. I didn't have confidence. I didn't have a faith.

The first time I went on a genuine Twelfth Step call was when I'd again had one of my periodic attacks of gloom and anxiety. It began on Friday, it carried on through Saturday and Sunday despite my going to meetings at every opportunity. On Sunday evening I went to yet another meeting. I'd been sitting there about two minutes when a man came in Terry and said "Come with me -we're going to see someone -a Twelfth Step call." So I said "I can't come. I feel rough." "Come along anyway," he said, "This is what needs to be done." So I went along to see this particular person and Terry was radiant, like the Archangel Gabriel. I just sat there and shook inside. And then, listening to what was being said, I realised that substantially this woman's circumstances were much the same as mine at that particular time. So I started to contribute to the conversation and realised later that I had in fact said what I could, that I'd shared my experience and in the course of doing so I'd actually forgotten about myself.

I didn't know then what became of this person -things didn't look very hopeful. I didn't see her again for about six months and didn't recognise her initially. She knew me, but she looked very different. I said that I remembered going to her home on this particular occasion and she said, "Oh, you did me a power of good. I couldn't identify with Terry at all but I thought that if

someone could look like you and still stay sober, then there was hope for me.” I just had to carry on and hope that my example would maybe do something even if it was maybe not the example I ideally wanted to present.

Things got better. One of the ways through which they got better was acceptance. This was an idea, a concept that started with me. How could someone else begin to give me what was needed -an acceptance of things as they are? It came to me at another meeting. I must have heard the word ‘acceptance’ many times before but it never really registered.

But one night at a particular meeting which on this occasion was like the night of the Ragman’s Ball -there was a rock group rehearsing in the next room, there was someone demented with drink -very unserene yet in the middle of it all there was a woman who said that her car had been stolen that evening but that was OK -she had accepted it that morning. She had accepted the day as it was that morning, and it was another revelation to me. I was ready -I was receptive.

So the next morning I decided I would incorporate this into my few minutes of prayer and meditation that had developed, evolved over a span of time. I knelt down and said “I accept today just as you have planned it and arranged it for me” and immediately added “Provided there’s nothing unpleasant lined up, that is.” The next morning, I tried again. This time I said “I accept today just as it is” and mentally thought “provided it’s OK” but with some perseverance -just a few days -that reservation had gone. Only I was able to accept my life -nobody else could do that for me. But once I had accepted, things again expanded.

The acceptance was wonderful but it needed something else -something else to provide a liberation and that was Steps Four and Five. Only I could do this. I had had a go, and had abandoned it because it was painful resurrecting many memories and feelings. Then eventually I decided that I would do these two Steps -coolly, calmly, rationally, eagerly? It wasn’t any of these things at all.

I’d been looking at the ‘Twelve by Twelve’ one day, where it says that until we do Step Four we will continue to be prey to irritability, anxiety, remorse and depression and I was overwhelmed by a tidal wave of everyone of these emotions simultaneously, and thought “Oh, my God, I’m going to have to do it.” I couldn’t sit around anymore listening to myself and other people doing prototype Steps Four and Five at meetings -I had to do my own. So I did. It was difficult but very, very illuminating it was a very profound experience indeed.

A part -only a part -of this was in the immediate aftermath of Step Five. In the early evening of that day I wasn’t going to a meeting. I was wanting some quiet time by myself and I went into town to go for a meal. I was walking down the street when a man came up to me and said “I’m terribly, terribly lonely.” We started talking and I asked him whether he thought drink had anything to do with this and he said “Well, yes -I think it probably has.” He was half-drunk at the time. Why should he seek me out? This isn’t something that commonly happens to me, for someone to approach me in the street in this particular way but I’m sure it was more than a coincidence that he came up to me on this particular occasion as a medium -just as a medium - because he was standing almost outside an AA meeting. Of course, he wouldn’t have known that. He’d have walked right past without even knowing it was taking place.

A few years ago, there’d been talk for some while of the possibility of setting up a telephone service on Merseyside and a group of people formed to look into getting it under way. I couldn’t

attend the meeting that was going to take place to discuss this but I said that if there were any odds and ends of things needed doing, I would lend a hand. That evening I got a phone call saying "You're the treasurer." It wasn't what I'd envisaged. I'd thought of maybe sweeping out a rented room somewhere. Treasurer? I'd never been the treasurer of anything in my life and it looked as though there was going to be quite an amount of money involved. But, as it says, 'Love and service keep me sober' so it was something else, that didn't begin with me in the sense that I was solely responsible -but it was something whose beginnings I was able to contribute to.

I've found over and over again it's got to be my effort, it's got to be me who does the footwork. I find the demonstration of this programme in the AA rooms -in the people with whom I identify in every AA meeting.

I have a feeling that I identify with AA members partly because they are alcoholics. That's part of it but I don't think it's the whole reason. I think it's also the identifying with people who are looking for a spiritually based life and who are agreed on what the route to that spiritually-based life will be.

I don't know who the next person to walk in through the door is going to be, but I know they are looking for the same thing as I was when I came to my first meeting. They're looking for an antidote to themselves just as I was looking for an antidote to me -which came from a willingness to actually make a change of direction in my life with all that that entails - all the efforts it takes but also the vastly greater rewards.

Gudrun McK

Hi Friends, my name is Gudrun and I am an alcoholic, a very nervous one I might add. Let It Begin With Me is the topic for tonight and I really don't know where to start. Maybe by telling you that one Thursday morning sometime in mid January, I was sitting in my office basically minding my own business, when my return call to Jill came through. I thought we would be discussing Region business and believed she would have some news from the last Board meeting. Well she did. But in addition to that she invited me to do this presentation. Sitting there writing this, I don't quite remember what went through my head, but all I wanted to say was no. However, I was told that I would not do that, so here I am.

Let It Begin With Me. You know if you had told me a few 24 hours ago when I stepped into my first meeting, that some day I would be addressing a crowd as large as this one I would have thought you were out of your mind. Sure I had spoken publicly before, but always in the line of performing my profession, I never shared anything about myself. Nor would anyone have asked me to for that matter. You see during my drinking years, or my other life as I chose to call it, no one ever expected me to do anything, because I was not to be trusted. The disease I suffered from had a total hold of me and the only task I could successfully complete was to get another drink. All my efforts were channelled that way and as a result there was no room for anything else; feelings and emotions were numbed. There was great suffering in my life and the lives of those around me.

During those few clear moments I had, (you know the ones full of remorse), I was convinced that I was incapable of loving another human being, especially those closest to me -my children. I am

sure you can imagine what that means to a mother and, looking back, I think that was the worst part of my alcoholism -giving me suicidal tendencies. I used to think of ways in which I could depart out of their lives -for surely they would be better off without a mother than one who was incapable of loving them.

Then a miracle happened in my life. For no apparent reason I was guided to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. A friend needed the moral support from another one, someone to go to a meeting with him and that is how I came to go to my first AA meeting. Straight away I could feel that there was something in that room which was different from any other room I had ever been in. Then people began to share and all of a sudden I realised what each and everyone was saying. They were actually putting into words what I was feeling, and for the first time in my life I did not feel like that square peg trying to fit into a round hole. There were other people in this world who felt as I did and were not ashamed to voice it. That terrible loneliness, (or was it a feeling of uniqueness?), left me right there during that first meeting. I came away hopeful. It was a feeling so marvellous it is hard to describe, but being the compulsive person I am I wanted more of it.

That is how it began for me. A whole new life opened up to me. Insatiable as I am I went to as many meetings as I could and gradually, very gradually, I started to get better. You, my fellow alcoholics, loved me back to health because you truly cared for me and when I was incapable of loving myself, you taught me by example. Loved me to a point where I could accept the Twelve Steps of this programme and let the love of a Higher Power begin within me, loved me to a point where I could learn to trust myself and allow myself to experience LOVE.

Then you trusted me enough to let me begin in service work. Actually that happened very early in my sobriety, and that allowed for a certain confidence to begin developing within me -step-by-step shaping me to become as you see me here today - Gudrun the person who had been hidden for years inside of an active alcoholic. It was not easy to find confidence under all those layers of destructive behaviour I had amassed, for you see, never before, even prior to my active drinking years, had I been able to carry out a task to anyone's satisfaction. I grew up in an environment where no matter what I did I was always told I could have done better and, as you might guess, somewhere along the line I simply gave up trying. But you gave me another chance.

I guess it won't come as a great surprise to you if I say that I am most grateful for that and today, when I wake up, I thank my Higher Power for saving me from the trenches of this horrible disease which had taken hold of me. I remember very vividly the first time I felt spirituality in my life. What an extraordinary experience that was - because for the first time ever it was okay to just be. No longer did I have to carry the world's burdens on my shoulders, all I had to do was to let go and let God. It was the willingness I had been praying for and I guess one day I was allowed to become willing and let go. Never before was I so at ease with myself and the world I live in and today the most important part of my sobriety is that I know I am taken care of at all times, that all my needs are being met -no matter what. Nothing has happened to me since I found this wonderful programme that wasn't in my best interest. Not once has a door closed where a better and bigger one did not open for me. I began to have the ability to do new and different things. For instance, I had been wanting to study and upgrade my education for years but never had the nerve to progress to such an enormous endeavour. What I lacked was the belief in Gudrun and her abilities. Well a few 24 hours ago I began to study for a university degree on a part-time basis and, hopefully, I will be able to work with mistreated women and children some day. This may sound a little bit funny to you but it was very much like taking my Step 4 - thinking about it was a lot more difficult than actually doing it.

Today there is a lot of love in my life. First and foremost that for my Higher Power. Today I know that I love my children and that they love me, also there is that special love of, and for, my friends in the Fellowship.

As a result of all these changes in me, I began to pass on what I learned from this wonderful programme. God gave me the opportunity to reach out and help others who also did not know how to get released from the clutches of active alcoholism but who could relate to what I was saying. You know all that began when I was given another one of those wonderful gifts in recovery which have been presented to me ever so freely - the ability to listen, and then I was able to let down some of my own walls. You trusted me enough to share your innermost feelings with me which taught me that it was okay to trust and enabled me to let out some of my feelings that is after I understood two things about them.

First I learned that it was okay to have them and then I learned to identify them. You know that was a task in itself. For weeks I would walk around after some of the old-timers in my group and share with them what was going on inside of me, hoping that they would tell me which feeling it was that I was experiencing at that moment. With the wisdom that only old-timers have they would look at me, smile and say: "Gudrun, you will figure it out." Now I am not a very hateful person, but I sure wanted to do unmentionable things to them at that time. It was so difficult and earlier on during a meeting they had let me believe that they knew all about feelings now. So why wouldn't they share them with me when it would have been so easy for them to simply say things like: "it's anger, it's sadness or whatever", but no they would not. I guess they rightly thought that it was a softer, easier approach I was searching for and they knew that I would not learn from that. I don't know about you, but I do know that only the demanding lessons are the ones Gudrun learns anything from and as I mentioned earlier I did eventually figure it out, just like they said I would .

Then came the sharing during meetings. Initially I believed I did not have a whole lot to say, because everyone was always saying profound and wonderful things that pertained to me and all I had to do was sit there and nod my head in agreement. What could I possibly add to statements such as these. But somewhere along the line came a time where I too began to share, had the need to let out what was going on inside of Gudrun and today I know that is the time when recovery actually began within me. The secrets I shared with you took on a totally new perspective and they no longer haunted me as they used to. Sure it seemed like it was a risky thing to do, for it meant that I had to open up and by doing that I felt very vulnerable, when all I really did was to begin to be honest. These abilities all came to me when I learned to trust my Higher Power after thoroughly doing Step 3 -which was of course followed by Steps 4 and 5. What a relief they turned out to be and it also opened me up to carry on with the remaining 7 steps, allowing me to begin with 12 step work, just one part of the Service I mentioned earlier.

Before that there were other areas of services my group allowed me to perform. Originally I was responsible for birthdays. The Group trusted me enough to make sure that anniversaries were celebrated according to the group conscience decision. Then they allowed me to look after the money matters for a while and that was a scary beginning for me. You see, financial matters were never my strong point and I thought Group Officers surely must have been out of their minds, for I had shared with them that I was unable to manage my own budget, so how could I do theirs? Well, again it was trust that was bestowed on me and was the start of yet another phase of my recovery. After that I was hooked on service and proceeded to different levels at Intergroup and

Region. You see I had learned that my personal recovery could greatly benefit from this administrative service thing. I had the opportunity to meet additional people, all of them wonderful in their own way and all of them eager and willing to share their experience, strength and hope with me in every phase of my development. And that is how come I am here with you today.

Now it may sound like everything was always very easy and came to me without a lot of problems. Well that is not the case, but I do believe no matter what happens to me today, it will always be easier to deal with than anything I had in my former life. Sometimes I wonder about myself when I always look on the positive side of things, is it that softer, easier approach again? But no -it is my belief in this programme. And there are trying times, I often have to go back to the basics and let it begin again with me. As I am progressing and changing my old behaviour patterns, new issues come up on a daily basis and I have to start at the beginning by admitting that I am powerless.

Regardless of how far I have come there is still a lot of room for improvement, but that is what makes my life so interesting and challenging today. This alcoholic has become somewhat of a sponge trying to absorb as much as is possible on a daily basis, but then I always did consider a day where I didn't learn anything new a wasted one.

All of these changes and progresses are directly related to that first meeting I stumbled into a few summers ago causing a miracle which allowed me to become a caring and sharing human being, one capable of living and letting live -quite a change from the narrow-minded judgemental and bitter woman I used to be.

For that I am very grateful and it is you I have to thank for that. The words "thank you" seem very inadequate when speaking of receiving the gift of life, but they are all I have. I thank you for my life, for being here for me and for listening to me tonight. Have a good night and may God bless you.

## CONFERENCE 1994

### **FRIDAY 15TH APRIL 1994**

The Twenty-Ninth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York.

On the Friday afternoon registration and distribution of folders was followed by a reception which, as usual, provided an ideal opportunity for the delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates who were attending for the first time.

The Conference comprised ninety delegates from fifteen Regions; two Delegates from the Jersey Intergroup, one delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', twenty-one members of the General Service Board, Ken P -Conference Chairman, General Secretary and five Members of Staff. Also in attendance were Observers from the following countries:

Australia	1
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	2
Denmark	1
French Speaking Europe	1
Ireland	1
Italy	2
Netherlands	2
Portugal	2
Sweden	2

Total in attendance 136

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE - BY KEN P (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1994)**

The first full session which commenced at 8.00 pm was opened by Ken P (Eastern Region) with the customary moment's silence and the reading of the Preamble. He welcomed all present with a special welcome to first year delegates and overseas observers.

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE -BY KEN P (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1994)**

The General Secretary was then invited to read the Twelve Traditions, following which Ken presented his keynote address:

My name is Ken and I am an alcoholic. We now come to that item on the Agenda which has been a thorn in the side of all past Conference Chairmen, will be to all future ones and most certainly has been to the present one -the keynote address. By way of introduction may I recall that about four or five years ago I was invited to share at the Southern National Convention at Camber Sands. The theme of that convention was "Beyond Our Wildest Dreams". I know now what I was talking about then, since this weekend is certainly beyond my wildest dreams and I

thank you for it. I thank you, as it was you who twelve months ago on Sunday at approximately 12.30 pm, elected me to be Chairman of Conference for this year. I mention the time because just two hours later at 2.30 pm on the train travelling home I was already writing this keynote address.

I've been writing it ever since -but, never fear, all my best efforts came to nought so that when, in the middle of January, Jill started making polite enquiries for the keynote address I still had nothing down on paper. About two weeks later, when Jill's still polite enquiries became a little more insistent I decided it was about time I actually started to write. On a Sunday afternoon I cleared all the family into the front room with the T. V. whilst I, armed with paper and a couple of dictionaries, sat down in the other room to do in half a day what eventually took me three weeks. I soon found out that I can talk a lot easier than I can write. I had decided that perhaps the best place to start would be to look up what unity actually meant. Unfortunately my two dictionaries each gave three different definitions and none of them seemed to fit AA. At this moment my son, who is in his early twenties and who has been brought up all his life in an AA atmosphere, came through the room and asked what I was doing.

"Oh", says I, "I'm writing a talk for AA".

"About what", he asked.

"It's about unity", I said.

"Ah yes", he replied, "that means sticking together so you don't fall apart at the seams".

I thought for just a moment before answering "Yes, that's exactly what it means".

Sticking together so we don't fall apart at the seams. The seams of a garment or whatever are what holds it together. The seams of AA are the groups, and unity in AA means sticking together at all levels so that we don't fall apart and disintegrate at Group level. That's one of the things that Tradition One says to me when I read 'personal recovery depends upon AA unity'. I started to recognise the paramount importance of the groups at a very early stage in my recovery.

I came to this Fellowship a homeless, helpless, unemployable drop-out. Several years earlier my first wife had implored me time and time again to do something about my drinking. In the end I did the only thing I could possibly do under the circumstances - I contrived to get rid of her. To my great surprise she went, but not before she had told me that she wanted nothing from me. All she wanted was I and my crazy destructive drinking out of her life. Off she went taking my ten year old son with her. I was to have no contact with them again for many years, I was far too busy either drinking or contriving to get drunk. I'm not proud of this nor do I say it just to get the laugh that it sometimes raises. I merely wish to indicate to you how things stood with me at that time -nothing, absolutely nothing, was allowed to come between me and my drinking. Indeed, at this point of time, I still had a very good job with excellent career and pension prospects. Yet some three months later I was standing on the main concourse of Kings Cross Station in London when the realisation came to me that my drinking was interfering with my job. Something had to be done about it. Immediately and without thought I walked across to the personnel office in Gt. Northern House and gave in a month's notice. If I had been surprised when my wife left me I was even more surprised at the ease with which my notice was accepted. I declared myself sick to avoid working that notice and went on my way to devote myself to what had become the main purpose of my existence. From that time on my life became an increasingly rapid surrender of myself to my ever deepening problem. I ended up, as I have already said, a drop-out and as such I came to the Fellowship.



The fact that I knew anything at all about AA was very fortunate. I knew nothing about alcoholism, I had no understanding as to what an alcoholic really was. I had never read anything about AA and had only once heard a very brief mention of it. At that time I still had a battered old portable radio -the only reason I still had it was that no one would give me half-a-crown for it which would have bought me a bottle of cheap red wine. Had someone been willing to do that, it would have gone the same way as all my other saleable possessions, However, I still had it and from time to time, when financial circumstances permitted, I would renew the batteries and listen in. This was in the days of the old BBC Home Service, a programme on which the run up to the eight o'clock news was always ten-to-eight 'Prayer for Today', five to eight 'Weather forecast' followed by that 'News'. When I made up my mind to seek help over my continuing problem I didn't know where I could possibly go. I needed someplace where my welcome wasn't already worn out -I couldn't think of one. As I turned the matter over in my mind I suddenly recalled having, at one time, heard a man speaking on the prayer for today programme who said he was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I didn't remember anything else except that at the end of his five minutes he had said that anyone who needed help could find the number in any telephone book. That was the only mention I had ever heard of AA. I found the Fellowship when I was ready because some anonymous member in service had taken time out to make that broadcast. Much later I was to find out who he was and thank him for it. Later that Saturday morning I found the number and made the call. That call put me through to the London Telephone Service, and again some member in service was there when I needed him. I spoke to Keith. We talked for some time about his drinking and mine before he asked me if I would go to a meeting. I agreed and that night he took me to my first meeting -the old London Saturday group. I could talk for hours about that meeting but time does not permit. Suffice to say that it was very special and it was for me. I didn't go out on the Sunday, I stayed in and read and re-read all the literature that I had been given. The following night I went to my second meeting -the Golders Green Monday Group. By the time I went back to that group a week later I had been to nine more meetings, I'd got a sponsor and I hadn't had a drink for seven days. I knew then, as I know today, that the reason I hadn't had a drink for seven days was because I'd been going to those meetings. Unbeknown to me at the time this was the beginning of my awareness of the paramount importance of the groups. I immersed myself in group meetings eventually entering into service myself, but I confined my service activities to group level. I did become involved with Intergroup, seeing, as I did, how that affected all the local groups but everything beyond that was for other people -not me. Then in the late seventies came the proposal to establish Regions. We were asked by GSO to discuss in our Intergroups and report back. Well we discussed for a long, long time over many meetings, in fact we were still discussing it when the first Region was prematurely up and running. We discussed, debated and argued. I was quite certain that these regional assemblies would be just another talking shop, another barrier between GSO and the groups and would serve no useful purpose. I did go to the first meeting of the Eastern Region but soon decided that I had been right all along and didn't go back for a long, long time. Some years later the then Chairperson and the Secretary of the Eastern Region visited our Intergroup meeting, pointed out that we were not being represented and invited us to become involved. We agreed and there and then set about electing three regional representatives. To my surprise and utter consternation I was one of the only three people available. I decided, however, that I would go along with it but made a mental note that I would stick it for two years by which time there would surely be someone available to take my place. That was some eight or more years ago - I've been going ever since and I'm still there. Region was and still is a joy to me, and my home group and my Intergroup benefited immediately and immensely from our attendance. This is not meant to be a plug for Regions, I am merely sharing how things have been. My sobriety has been enhanced and my recovery advanced by my service at regional level. The icing on the cake of

course has been Conference, this one in particular. As I see it for AA purposes, Conference is the greatest thing since sliced bread and I am proud to have been a part of it. Of course there have been troubles along the way. There are always troubles even at Conference. We might even have some this weekend. Some Conferences seem to have more troubles than others. I am sure that it was such a Conference that Bill W was attending in 1958 and when he addressed the final session he said this.

**“I think that this particular General Service Conference holds promise and has been filled with progress -because it has had trouble. And it has converted that trouble into an asset, into some growth and into a great promise. AA was born out of trouble, one of the most serious kinds of trouble that can befall an individual, the trouble attendant upon this dark and fatal malady of alcoholism. Every single one of us approached AA in trouble, in impossible trouble, in hopeless trouble. And that is why we came. If this Conference was ruffled, if individuals were deeply disturbed -I say “this is fine”. What parliament, what republic, what democracy has not been disturbed? Friction of opposing viewpoints is the very modus operandi on which they proceed. Then what should we be afraid of?”**

I commend these words to you. If we bear them in mind together with AA’s tried and trusted precept of ‘acceptable compromise’ we shall surmount any troubles we may encounter. We shall come out the other side, united, unafraid, still sticking together and not falling apart at the seams.

God bless you all, enjoy the rest of Conference and thank you for listening.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Cyril H, Chairman of the Board, thanked Ken P for his Keynote address and extended a warm welcome to all attending Conference and went on to present the Annual Report of the Board for the year ending 30th September 1993. Cyril mentioned that this period in the UK Fellowship’s history is of significant importance, when we are faced with challenges to the very core of our being. The challenges are whether we accept there is room within our Fellowship for those who would wish to identify themselves specifically, together with the essence of trust we are asked to place in our ‘trusted servants’.

The Fellowship has a long tradition of sorting out its difficulties through consultation, dialogue, debate and, in most instances, cheerful compromise. It is up to us to see that we utilise all of these very necessary stages, in seeking democratic solutions to our difficulties.

By the same token, we ought to recognise the delegated authority placed in those who have to discharge responsibilities on our behalf -the trusted servants of the Fellowship.

Cyril reported with sadness the death of Bill D, the Board Member for Highlands and Islands Region, whose input to the Board had been invaluable. He also reported the retirement of the previous Board Chairman, Charles McK, due to ill health.

He then went on to add his thanks and best wishes to the retiring Board Member, John H, for his tireless work for the Board and the Fellowship as a whole. He further noted that Peter Jacques and Matthew Waters had resigned due to business commitments.

The Board then asked Conference to ratify the following Board Appointments:-

## ALCOHOLIC

Mairi G -Highlands & Islands Region  
Rodney N -North West Region  
Stewart S -East of Scotland Region  
Monica H -Midlands Region  
Harry O -London Region

## NON-ALCOHOLIC

Sheriff Principal Graham Cox, Q.C.  
Dr. Jenny Firth-Cozens, Psychologist

There are proposals to expand the roles and responsibilities of the Conference delegates through co-option to some sub-committees of the Board. The important part of this begins on the Saturday night with the Workshop on the Twelve Concepts, Conference Charter and Service Handbook, when all Conference delegates will have an opportunity to take part in discussions. It is intended to use the Workshop to decide the structure of the subsequent sub-committee/s, to carry on this work through to the next Conference.

It is also proposed to extend an invitation to the Chairmen of Conference Committees to attend the January meeting of the Committee, immediately prior to the Board Meeting.

The chief role of the General Service Board is that of communications, and to this end we have been looking very closely on how they may be improved, with better ways of informing the Fellowship at large.

The Board will continue to many its public responsibility under the law, as directors and trustees, in what the law regards as a company, with the traditional way of viewing our role as the trusted servants of the Fellowship.

There have been consequences of recent legislation on the manner in which the GSB has to do its business, to comply with the Charities Act as well as the Companies Acts. These changes affect the Board's relationship/responsibilities to the Fellowship, and require clear interpretation within the Conference Charter and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

The responsibility for organising attendance at three major Conferences (TUC, CBI and IPM) will be given to those Regions within close proximity of the events, thereby extending the involvement of the Fellowship with the work of the GSB.

Conference 1992 recommended that London Region tried a new structure for a trial period of two years, after which, if it did not meet their needs, they would have the opportunity to split into two Regions for a further trial period of five years.

Cyril finished his report by quoting the following from AA Comes of Age:

**“Implicit throughout A.A. ‘s Traditions is the confession that our Fellowship has its sins. We confess that we have character defects as a society and that these defects threaten us continually. Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living, and they are also an antidote for our various maladies. The Twelve Traditions are to group survival and harmony what A.A. ‘s Twelve Steps are to each member’s sobriety and peace of mind.**

**But the Twelve Traditions also point straight at many of our individual defects. By implication they ask each of us to lay aside pride and resentment. They ask for personal as well as group sacrifice. They ask us never to use the A.A. name in any quest for personal power or distinction or money. The Traditions guarantee the equality of all members and the independence of all groups. They show how we may best relate ourselves to each other and the world outside. They indicate how we can best function in harmony as a great whole. For the sake of the welfare of our entire society, the Traditions ask that every individual in every group and every area in A.A. shall lay aside all desires, ambitions, and untoward actions that could bring serious division among us or lose for us the confidence of the world at large.**

**The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous symbolise the sacrificial character of our life together and they are the greatest force for unity we know”.**

Cyril then introduced Gordon B, Hon Treasurer, to present the financial report.

Gordon hoped that the finance report in the Annual Report was self explanatory. The use of the rather inaccurate £AA as an aid to comparison had been abandoned in favour of the actual sums involved and it was pointed out that the extract of the accounts had the approval of the auditors. It had been a kind financial year for a new treasurer, the year-end surplus of £25,274 and the vastly improved cash flow pattern made life comparatively simple. However the Fellowship was to make up for this in the current year. Delegates were reminded that last year’s Conference had asked that an update of our financial position and estimates of future expenditure should be presented at Conference 1994 rather than a budget drawn up at the start of the financial year. Therefore the report would review the first six months of 1993-1994 before outlining expected expenditure. Gordon felt that it should be an up-to-date picture since the half year had ended only two weeks ago and because he had finished writing the report only that afternoon!

## **1 The first six months of the current financial year**

The position was not good. Halfway into the year our accounts showed a deficit of about £34,000 At the same point last year we had a surplus of £10,000 or so. To explain the deficit we needed to look at income and expenditure over the period. (Rounded off sums would be used for simplicity). Contributions to GSO had dropped by about £13,000 (12%) and there were decreases in other income but the fall in contributions accounted for the major part of the £18,000 shortfall. Expenditure rose by 8% to £18,000 over last year. Adding this to the decrease in income gave us £36,000, the actual figure is less (£34,000) because we have ignored several small decreases in expenditure and increases in income. The level of self-support over the first six months had been around 42%. A fall in the level of contributions then is the major factor.

Why were contributions so low? There were certainly growing financial pressures at all levels of the Fellowship and many small groups were struggling to survive, particularly new groups, because of the need for insurance, rent increases and other pressures reflecting today’s economic

climate. A knock-on effect seemed to have been that money was being held back “just in case”. There were reports of large sums being retained in convention accounts. In some cases money was just not being sent up. Gordon told Conference that he had heard that afternoon of a treasurer who kept the group’s money in jam jars under the kitchen sink because he didn’t know what to do with it. The general impression was that cash was not being passed on to GSO for a variety of reasons. The 8% rise in expenditure reflected the following costs: the World Service Meeting -£4,500, the draft Service Handbook -£1,600, and the 1997 Convention -£900. Legislation required the carrying out of a risk assessment at GSO at a cost of £1,300 and retrospective payment of increased service charges for Stonebow House amounted to £4,300. Irrecoverable VAT rose to £3,000, increased asset values raised depreciation to £5,000 and the associated insurance charges were £1,000. These items summed to a total of £20,000. The actual expenditure (£18,009) is less because we had ignored several smaller decreases in outgoings. Again, figures are rounded off.

## **2. Expected expenditure in the next six months**

The cost of AA’s presence at the National Conferences referred to by the Chairman would be around £3,500. The preparatory work of the 1997 Convention Committee would require funding of £900 in that period. Ordinary expenditure would inevitably rise as government budget changes in V AT regulations fed through. Charity rebates were also beginning to be eroded. In future, employers would be responsible for the full payment of Statutory Sick Pay and professional fees would be considerable because of the need for consultation to ensure legal compliance with changes introduced by the Government. The bottom line was a forecast expenditure of about £500,000 against real expenditure of £478,000 last year -a rise of about 4.6%. To attempt to forecast the year end balance would be foolhardy and pointless in the light of current cash flow patterns. We were certainly facing a very large deficit coupled with a serious depletion of the reserves at the end of the financial year if the contributions arriving at GSO did not increase.

Finally, we were often told that AA’s biggest problem was poor communication. Gordon did not disagree with this diagnosis but said that he would have liked to think that financial communication was improving all the time. Board Members and Regional Treasurers were kept informed of the financial situation. They were sent full monthly accounts and a quarterly financial report. It had been decided that the finance report should go also to Intergroup Treasurers together with the accounts summary that they presently received. The second quarter’s report was in the post at the moment. In addition AA News carried regular articles on finance and Conference was now given a report at the half year point as well as at the year end. It seemed that information was being sent out from GSO but it was not reaching all parts of the Fellowship.

Was this a financial crisis?. We certainly had a serious cash flow problem. Our prudent reserve was sufficient to cover only six months expenditure. So far we had been able to handle the deficit by using the cash reserves. At the end of March the Board considered the financial position and agreed that the Fellowship should be asked to send up available money as soon as possible. All levels were asked to look again at the guidelines and suggestion sheets and to make sure that money which was not really needed was passed on. This message had to be spread through the Fellowship by Board Members, Treasurers and Conference Delegates. The Treasurer had already been in touch personally with most of the Regional Treasurers. The Board would review the situation at its meeting in July. Amongst other contingency plans the Treasurer has

been empowered to realise investments should that prove necessary and warning should be given that it may become necessary to begin cutting back on services.

Gordon thanked Conference Delegates for their attention and asked them to go home and seek out the jam jars.

As there was no other business to be discussed Conference formally approved the adoption of the Annual General Service Report for 1993.

## **CONVENTIONS**

<b>38th Annual Scottish Convention Walker Hall, Troon</b>	<b>27 - 29 May 1994</b>
<b>14th Welsh Convention University Hall, Cardiff</b>	<b>9 - 11 September 1994</b>
<b>Southern Convention Pontins Camber Sands Holiday Centre</b>	<b>28 - 30 October 1994</b>
<b>Northern Convention Pontins Ainsdale Beach, Nr Southport</b>	<b>7 - 9 April 1995</b>

### **National Convention 1997**

An interim report on the above was then presented to Conference.

## **APPEAL**

Cyril H, Chairman of the General Service Board, then introduced the matter of the Appeal against the recommendation of Committee No.5, Question No.2 (Conference 1993).

A motion was put to the assembly by Glasgow Region to uphold the 1993 recommendation and therefore to dismiss the Appeal.

After all Regions had given their views, individual contributions were made by a number of Delegates and Board Members. A vote was taken which showed 53 in favour and 56 against the motion.

The Chairman, therefore, suggested that as there was obviously no consensus the Delegates should give the matter further thought and a second vote would be taken on Sunday morning.

## **SEVENTH EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING -15-17 OCTOBER 1993**

(John H, GSB, Great Britain Delegate)

The Seventh European Service Meeting was attended by delegates from 19 European countries covering some 10,000 AA groups. The theme of the meeting was 'Sponsorship' and the Chairman was Christina C. from Ireland.

Prior to my attendance at this gathering I had previously met and shared with some of the delegates at our own General Service Conferences. Whilst these experiences have added considerably to my own recovery, I was still apprehensive about going to Frankfurt.

As always, my fears were unfounded, and as I shared and listened at a series of workshops and meetings, I was rewarded with a powerful spiritual experience. How else can I explain the ease and simplicity with which a group of 40 AA members from many different countries shared

about such diverse subjects as: 'Policy and Finance', 'AA Literature', 'Working with Other Countries', 'Understanding and Growing with Anonymity', 'Tradition Two and Concept Four', 'The Challenge of the Seventh Tradition'.

Underlying all the meetings and the personal discussions was a deep sense of gratitude for the gift of sobriety and a common desire to carry AA's message of hope more widely and effectively to suffering alcoholics within Europe.

It was a humbling experience for me to learn at first hand about the difficulties experienced by AA in other countries. What I take for granted in Great Britain is not yet available in many parts of Europe, where groups struggle to survive without a service office, translated literature, suitable meeting places, 12th step telephone services or the financial resources to pay for their basic needs.

As I listened to the workshop report on the Challenge of the Seventh Tradition, I became aware as never before that AA's Twelfth Step has a world-wide dimension. Countries with a mature service structure and a sound financial position have a responsibility to share not only their service experience, but also their money and literature until such time as these poorer countries are financially self-supporting.

**'...an AA service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer. The sum total of all these services is our third legacy of service'. AA's Legacy of Service by Bill W.**

It was a privilege to attend this meeting as one of your representatives and I wish to record my grateful thanks to you all. More than any previous experience, it has given me a deeper understanding of AA's third legacy of service,

#### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1995**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Thirtieth General Service Conference 1995:

Gudrun McK (Region 15)  
Mike D (North West Region)

The nominees signified their willingness to serve. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

#### **SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1994**

#### **PRESENTATION : DRAFT HANDBOOK. 12 CONCEPTS AND CONFERENCE CHARTER**

#### **Presentation 1: George McC -GSB**

George opened the meeting by welcoming all present and reading the Preamble. He then stated that in the course of implementing last year's Board decision to involve the Delegates, four had been invited to take notes at tonight's presentation. He continued by saying that he would present the amendments to the Draft Handbook, copies of which had been sent to Delegates and which, hopefully, had been studied.

George then went through the amendment list, item by item, and since there were no comments he closed by assuring Conference that any recommendations to the Handbook arising from this Conference would be presented for consideration for inclusion in the next draft.

Next he introduced George R, to present the 12 Concepts and the Conference Charter.

Presentation 2 : George R ex GSB and co-opted member of the Handbook Committee

## **I INTRODUCTION**

This introductory statement will be brief (a) to give maximum time for discussion and (b) because nearly everything that can be stated, at this stage, has already been written and circulated fairly widely. Comment will be confined, therefore, to an under-lining and update of the main points before discussion of the suggested amendments and those which may arise from the floor.

What we are to be concerned with are the 12 Concepts for World Service together with the Conference Charter (US/Canada) and the changes which have been proposed, to provide this Conference with its own Charter and a set of 12 Concepts more suited to the structure and operation of the Third Legacy in Great Britain.

## **II US/CANADIAN CHARTER & 12 CONCEPTS**

To this end it may be useful to recall, and note, one or two of the salient features of the US/Canadian Charter and the 12 Concepts for World Service.

The Charter is simply an informal agreement drawn up between the whole Fellowship and its trustees, articulated and committed to paper, at St. Louis, in 1955. It high-lighted and clarified the position of Conference, but its fundamental principles apply to all activities throughout the service structure, for Conference is no more than the groups in action, because of the "complete authority" which they have delegated to Conference.

It is not a legal instrument and (with the exception of Article 12, 6 Warranties) it does not "try to freeze our operations against needed change", as is shown by the 12 amendments to which it has been subjected since its adoption.

The Twelve Concepts are an attempt to interpret the AA world structure as it was in the early 60's, again, in US/Canada. They provide detailed information as to WHY the structure developed as it did, and WHY its working parts are related as they are. The matter of HOW to operate that structure is contained in the Service Manual, to which they form a complement.

As with the Charter, in his introduction to the 12 Concepts, Bill W recognised clearly that there must and would be change, (1) to meet new service needs, and (2) to provide remedial action for flaws unseen, or unvisualised in 1962. The hallmark of such changes, it was suggested, was that



they should be labelled for an appropriate time period as “experimental”, and recorded as amendments to the original. And so it has been. Twenty footnotes have been added to the Concepts to reflect the changes that have been made to the Service Structure and to the GSB of US/Canada -the most recent only 2 years ago.

### **III THE NEED TO CHANGE**

Quite clearly, the RIGHT to change has always been there, and, now, any doubts there may have been about the NEED to change have been dispelled by the provisions of the Law Reform Act (Scotland) 1990, the Charities Act 1992 and SORP2 1993. These instruments make amply clear that “For a Charity to operate successfully, and to continue the purpose for which it is established there must be communication with those who support it financially, or by other means. A consultative committee provides one way of finding out the wishes and views of the charity’s supporters and also of telling them the Charities plans, problems and achievements”. Conference could meet such a need, that is act as a consultative committee, provided that its purposes and functions were stated in writing. In other words. the law now requires a clear written description of the nature and structure of the Fellowship in this country; and AA cannot operate outwith the law.

A Charter incorporating a spiritual and practical balance of responsibility and authority, in the composition, election, purpose, procedures etc. of our various service activities, becomes something of a legal imperative. It would have the additional advantages of (a) raising the profile and responsibilities of Conference delegates, (b) giving emphasis to the centrality of Conference’s position in our service structure and ( c ) correct some of the unease which surfaces when some of our structural differences ( compared with US/Canada) are set alongside some World Service Concepts such as 4,7,8 or 10.

The same legal necessity does not apply to the 12 Concepts but since they, and the Charter, are virtually inseparable, it would require only a simple logical extension of the revisionary process to ensure that a Charter and Concepts for Great Britain are both consistent and compatible with each other.

### **IV REACTIONS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS**

The Committee has attempted, on paper, and by word of mouth to communicate our intentions as clearly and unambiguously as we can, but it seems that in this (as in much else) we have achieved something less than perfection. Whatever the reasons, it is fairly clear that some misunderstandings and misconceptions remain in the minds of some members. Allow me, if you will, one more attempt to dispel some of the doubts.

First, what has been presented is nothing more than a rough, FIRST working draft of the proposal. There is no hint or suggestion that it should be viewed as the FINISHED ARTICLE to which Conference is being invited to give the stamp of approval. Admittedly, a great deal of work has already been done, dating back to the initial suggestion made in 1988 and many suggestions have already been adopted by the committee. BUT VERY MUCH MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE in what I believe will inevitably prove to be a lengthy exercise. At this early stage no-one could reasonably be expected to suggest a year when a final draft may be produced for Conference approval. The emphasis tonight is on the broad format; the real work

will commence with the appointment of an editorial committee ( or some such) which will be charged (presumably) with the task of revision and presentation of an interim, or final, draft.

Second, there never was (and still isn't) any intention that, this stage, or any other, should be RUSHED. Initially it was important to give some kind of concrete form to the proposal; to get something written. Now, it is vital that we get it right.

Third, notwithstanding the emphasis we placed on continuous allegiance to, and co-operation with US/Canada in world service, it is entirely understandable that the proposals may have been viewed as some kind of break away or attempt to distance ourselves from the Fellowship worldwide. For this reason (among others) the closest liaison has been maintained with GSO, New York and A.A. W.S. Publishing Committee at all stages of our work and we are grateful for the counsel and advice we have received.

Predictably, their reaction has been of a kind to allay any fears or concerns. Their's has been a warm, welcoming and wholly encouraging response. Our actions have been readily endorsed conditional on the fulfilment of 4, entirely reasonable requests.-

- (i) Sight of a copy of the FINAL draft prior to submission to Conference.
- (ii) That consideration be given to the insertion of an introduction or history of the 12 Concepts including reasons for any adaptation undertaken.
- (iii) Prior to publication, the inclusion of a statement that A.A.W.S. permission has been sought and granted.
- (iv) Finally (and most importantly) the removal of any kind of implication that US/Canada possesses, or wishes to possess, any authority whatsoever, with respect to the service structure of any other country. (Ref. Concept 9).

The letter closes with the words, "Certainly the Board understands and supports what you are trying to do, and the reasons for it".

This reaction, seems to me to be entirely in line with the traditional spiritual and democratic principles, embraced by the first US/Canadian Conference, in 1955, and maintained unswervingly since. Then it was stated that -"Other sections of the Conference may be created in foreign lands as the need arises out of language, or geographical considerations. The N. American section of the General Service Conference will then become the Senior Section, related to the other sections by ties of mutual consultation and cross linking of Delegates. But no Conference section shall ever be placed in authority over another. All joint action shall be taken only upon 2/3 vote of the combined sections. Within its boundaries each Conference ought to be autonomous.

N. America has consistently eschewed any thought, or action, which might hint at "world government" or the creation of "dependencies". Initiative in matters of importance has always been welcomed. Great Britain is seen as fulfilling a role in world leadership which would result in a greater sharing of the burden and responsibility traditionally borne by N. America.

What is proposed, never has been, nor is it now, intended to be a substitute for the Concepts of World Service, but rather a complement to them, which would go a long way to helping the Fellowship in Great Britain to understand its own structure more fully, while fulfilling the requirements of the law.

What we have tried to give you tonight is an INTERIM REPORT on the preparatory work, which you sanctioned and approved last year (Conference 1993). We have reported, in the main, that what would be a Charter, by any other name, is something about which we no longer have any realistic choice. That the compilation of 12 Concepts for Service in Great Britain would provide a logical, practical and highly desirable complement to such a Charter.

In conclusion, we recommend that the further work required be undertaken, by the groups, suggested by the Board (with due consultation) and that, in due course, proposals be brought to this Conference for approval.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

A number of issues were raised by several delegates, the main aspects of which are presented in summary form:

- (i) All responses from Regions, received by the Committee, had been considered and, generally, had been incorporated in the latest draft. Opportunity for further input was amply provided.
- (ii) The General Secretary assured London Region that Article 12 (6 Warranties) remained unaltered and that a full and complete response to their enquiries had been posted in late March 1994 (two weeks after the last Committee meeting on 5th March). A copy of that letter was presented to one of the London delegates.

The General Secretary also confirmed that, notwithstanding the different legal system in Scotland the proposed 12 Concepts would be equally valid and applicable in all parts of Great Britain. They and the original 12 Concepts for World Service would be published as an integral part of the new Handbook. Reference in the short form would also be made to Bill W's essays.

Jim K then read, in full the letter from AA World Services Committee, dated late March the substance of which is contained in Presentation 2.

- (iii) Both the original and the proposed Concept 5 were read to Conference to re-affirm that no change was suggested in either the spirit or the sense of that Concept.
- (iv) It was also stressed that many amendments arising from suggestions had already been incorporated in the latest draft reflecting a need, seen first as a probability, as early as 1960.
- (v) It was also stressed that, at this stage, it was not possible to specify the extent or the mode of communication between the suggested Committee(s) to be appointed by Board and Conference Delegates. The composition of the Committees had still to be determined and nomination to them would call for great care and a due adherence to Concept 9, 10 and 11.

(vi) Finally it was proposed, seconded and agreed that Delegates go back to their Regions and nominate only the most able, experienced and well qualified, with appropriate CVs for the consideration of the Board.

George McC closed the meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

SUNDAY 17TH APRIL 1994

The final session of Conference commenced with Ken P, Conference Chairman, asking for a few moments silence. He then invited Cyril H, GSB Chairman, to re-open the Appeal. After brief discussion it was agreed that a vote should be taken as to whether or not the Appeal against the 1993 recommendation (Committee No.5, Question No.2) should be granted.

The voting was as follows:

78	In Favour of the Appeal
34	Against the Appeal
5	Abstentions

Conference agreed that this vote represented substantial unanimity and therefore the Appeal was granted.

### **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1995**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and Mike D (North West Region) was duly elected.

Ken P, Conference Chairman, then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee reports are included in this report as indicated:

### **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Cyril H thanked the Chairman of Conference for his hard work over the last year. He also thanked the Committee Chairmen, Secretaries and all present for their input over the weekend.

John H, retiring Board Member expressed his thanks to Cyril H for the courtesy and respect he had extended to everyone over what had been a particularly sensitive weekend.

In closing, the Conference Chairman went on to express his gratitude to the Conference Committee for their hard work and the support given to him throughout the year. He also gave a special thanks to those members of the GSO Staff that he had been closely involved with during that period. He further went on to thank the staff of the University for their efficiency over the weekend.

Ken said how much he had enjoyed his term of office at Conference during the past four years and said “There are no strangers in AA, only friends we have not yet met and I wish each and every one of you many years of contented sobriety. God bless you all”.

The final session of Conference 1994 closed with the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Thirtieth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at the University of York on 31 March- 2 April 1995.

## **TWENTY -NINTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1994**

### **COMMITTEE NO.1**

**CHAIRMAN:            STEWART S            GENERAL SERVICE BOARD (Elect)**  
**SECRETARY:        JONB                      LONDON REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

#### **1.        What action, if any, should the Fellowship take where the confidential directories are used as mailing lists or for any purposes outside/inside AA ? Make recommendations.**

Communication within the Fellowship is essential and no action should be taken which might inhibit legitimate use of confidential directories by Officers of Regions and Intergroups. However, their use for the promotion of commercial or non-AA activities, whether or not organised by AA members, is to be deplored.

It is recommended that confidential directories should contain the following or similar wording:

“[This directory] is not to be used as a mailing list for any purpose outside AA, nor should it be used for any form of solicitation or commercial venture inside or outside the Fellowship.”

The most effective response to abuse would be for members who receive such mailings to write directly to the senders, in courteous terms, requesting them not to send such unwanted correspondence again. Repeated abuses should be reported to GSO, who should write in similar terms.

#### **2.        Following the General Service Board’s feasibility study of a single national telephone number for AA. Conference is asked to consider and make recommendations based upon this information, or any other relevant information available.**

The Committee strongly endorses the idea of the 0345 number system. The Committee recommends that, if the South East Region of England and the Scottish regions, or a reasonable part of either of these areas, are willing to set up and fund such schemes:

- (a)        that pilot schemes should be set up in both of these areas;

- (b) that the schemes be monitored through the External Communications Committee;
- (c) that a full report be made to Conference 1996.

The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to those individuals in the Fellowship who have given so much time to this matter and whose contributions have been invaluable in assisting in our deliberations.

**3. Would Conference consider the following:**

**(a) From time to time events, which are only social in nature, are organised by AA members for their friends using non-AA money. Should financial profits from such events be accepted by the Fellowship.**

**(b) Should Intergroups and Regions give financial support to events which are only social in nature?**

**(c) Should events which are only social in nature and organised by a member(s) of an AA Group be identified with the Fellowship ?**

The only possible answer to each part of the question is “No”. Any other answer would be in breach of Tradition 7 (part (a)), Guideline 12 (part (b)) or Tradition 6 (part (c)). The question refers to purely social occasions, and none of the answers should be taken to apply to occasions, such as conventions, which combine both service and social elements.

**4. Would Conference consider whether in the final published report on Conference decisions, there should appear a summary of the main arguments whereby decisions on policy are reached.**

To try to summarise the main arguments is impractical and could be dangerous insofar as brief printed sentences cannot easily reflect the feelings of the Committee. Conference recommendations should always be accompanied by the *reasons* in the published report, but it is the responsibility of the Conference Delegates to report in detail to their Regions, Intergroups and Groups.

**5. Would Conference consider whether the following should have full voting rights at Conference:**

- (a) Non-Alcoholic Board Members**
- (b) General Service Office Staff**
- (c) Observers**
- (d) Share/Roundabout Representatives**

In summary, the suggested answers are as follows:

- |                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| (e) Non-Alcoholic Board Members      | Yes |
| (f) General Service Office Staff     | No  |
| (g) Observers                        | No  |
| (h) Share/Roundabout Representatives | Yes |

Non-alcoholic Board Members have been selected and appointed because the Fellowship values their contribution to policy making, and so they clearly should have voting rights. The executive staff of the General Service Office are also highly valued, but their role is in implementation rather than formulation of policy. Whilst the 12 Concepts for World Service give a contrary view, it does not seem appropriate, especially in the light of the principle of rotation, for GSO staff to be voting members of Conference. Observers are, as the name suggests, here to observe and not to participate in decision-making. The representatives of SHARE and Roundabout have a constituency to represent, and should be entitled to vote.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Charles G (Glasgow Region) as Chairman of Committee No.1 for Conference 1995,

**7, Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Vivien U ( North West Region) as Secretary of Committee No.1 for Conference 1995.

**COMMITTEE NO.2**

<b>CHAIRMAN :</b>	<b>CHRIS H</b>	<b>NORTH WEST REGION</b>
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	<b>SUE D</b>	<b>LONDON REGION</b>

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1 Our Eleventh Tradition gives guidance to AA members in dealing with the media. Does Conference feel that GSO handles this adequately at present, or is there any more that the Fellowship can do?**

It was generally felt that our Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions give adequate guidance to members and these existing guidelines are satisfactory. The Committee could see no problems except where individuals act against the Traditions.

The purpose of maintaining anonymity at media level - that we demonstrate the promise to the member of anonymity by keeping strict anonymity for ourselves and everyone else in AA at media level - should be re-iterated whenever possible.

In our dealings with the media, we must ensure that they are aware of, and wherever possible, respect the principle of anonymity, possibly by providing them with an information sheet explaining the position of AA in relation to anonymity. We would ask the Board to draft such an information sheet. The General Service Board External Communications Committee should take responsibility for dealing with the media at a national level.

**2. In view of the important role of Conference delegates within the service structure of the Fellowship will Conference review their qualifications, rotation and responsibilities. Make recommendations.**

Quality of sobriety and service record should be the guiding principles when electing delegates.

It is recommended that delegates have a minimum of five years continuous sobriety, and that before electing a delegate, a Region satisfies itself that the member has demonstrated a commitment through service to the Fellowship.

Potential delegates should be made aware, before election, of the commitment this post entails. In order to be elected as a delegate, a member need not be a serving member of their Region at the time of the election, but an elected delegate becomes a full member of Region.

The Committee recommends that the rotation and responsibilities of delegates remain unchanged.

These recommendations apply equally to Conference delegates and alternates.

### **3. Consider the advantages of deleting individual group telephone contacts from the National “Where To Find”.**

The Committee can see no advantages to deleting the telephone contacts from the “Where to Find”, while acknowledging that difficulties may arise when changes are not notified to GSO.

It is therefore recommended that two personal telephone contacts are retained in the “Where to Find”, as at present.

### **4. “ Each Group has but one primary purpose -to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers”. Tradition Five.**

**A strong home group with an elected GSR attending local Intergroup meetings is the spiritual basis from which our service structure is built. Many AA meetings choose to remain within the Fellowship but outside the service structure. We need the experience, strength and hope of these groups to help us carry the message more effectively.**

- (a) Are we fully aware of this situation?**
- (b) What are we doing about it?**
- (c) What more should we be doing about it?**

(a) Yes

(b) Experience varies greatly from Intergroup to Intergroup, but success was far greater where efforts were made to carry the message of service on a personal basis;

(c) The following suggestions were made:

- (i) Intergroups should take their own conscience on a regular basis
- (ii) The Chair or Vice Chair of each Intergroup should adopt the role of Intergroup Liaison Officer and attempt to ensure that groups are visited from time to time.
- (iii) Regular service workshops should be held
- (iv) Full use should be made of newsletters
- (v) The adoption of multi-meeting groups should continue to be encouraged.



It is apparent that personal sponsorship is the most effective method of bringing members and groups into the AA service structure.

**5. In order to operate more effectively the General Service Board has adopted a service structure using Committees:**

e.g. **Finance/General Purposes**  
**Internal Communications**  
**External Communications**

**The Board believes this may be the way forward and asks Conference to recommend that a similar structure now be implemented throughout the Fellowship.**

**Would Conference also consider how this structure would affect Conference.**

The formation of Committees along the lines proposed by the Board should be encouraged in the Fellowship where it is appropriate but there should be named Liaison or Contact Officers for specific areas of service at all levels, including the Board.

The Committee feels it is too early to make recommendations in relation to implementing this structure at Conference and recommends it be reconsidered at Conference 1996 and that this question be accompanied by sufficient background information to enable an informed view to be brought to Conference.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Les B (South East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1995.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Jean C (South West of Scotland Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1995.

### **COMMITTEE NO.3**

<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>CHARLES F</b>	<b>MIDLANDS REGION</b>
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	<b>TED R</b>	<b>NORTH WEST REGION</b>

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Conference is asked to consider whether AA .News and SHARE publications are meeting their objectives. What various alternatives could be considered? Make recommendations.**

The Committee felt that AA News and SHARE meet their objectives; AA News as a communication channel from GSO to the Fellowship on service activities and structure and SHARE as a meeting between meetings.

The Fellowship is invited to send any contributions on service activities within their Region to the Editor of AA News.

**2. What are the functions of a telephone contact in the “Where to Find” what are we doing to ensure members know why their names appear?**

The functions of a telephone contact in the ‘Where to Find’ are recommended by Conference 1985:

“They should be prepared to take full responsibility as contacts and delegate where necessary” .

This implies that such a telephone number will be freely available and that the contact is prepared at any time to:-

- (a) Accept a call for help
- (b) Give information to a Professional
- (c) Guide a family member to the right source for help
- (d) Speak to members of the Fellowship enquiring about meetings.

To ensure that members know why their name appears the Committee recommends that this information is incorporated in Guideline No. 1 of the new Service Manual.

**3. Would Conference review the situation of Industrial Liaison as recommended by Conference 1990.**

Progress has been made in the area of industrial liaison at both Regional and Intergroup level. Following the recommendations of Committee No.1 at General Service Conference 1990, the GSB have arranged that AA will attend the CBI TUC and IPM Conferences in 1994.

In order to ensure continuous growth the Committee recommends a National Workshop for Regional Industrial Liaison Officers or suitable alternates be arranged in the near future by the GSB.

**4. “The aims of an Intergroup are to aid the constituent Groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic and by using their combined strength and unity to improve and maintain good relations with those organisations in the community which have contact with alcoholics.” Guideline No. 2.**

**Since 1957 the Intergroup structure has remained largely unchanged. Consider the way Intergroups are working today and suggest changes that will help the Fellowship to carry the message more effectively.**

The Committee feels that since 1957 the Intergroup structure has remained unchanged and has served the Fellowship well. However, since a large proportion of Groups do not participate at Intergroup level we recommend that a Board Sub-Committee, including four members from Committee No. 3 review Guideline No. 2 and report their findings to Conference 1995.

**5 Does Conference believe that a small, pocket sized booklet of slogans (the original six slogans), printed on stiff paper would be a suitable addition to AA approved literature?**

After careful consideration the Committee felt that no benefit to the Fellowship as a whole can be foreseen from this suggested addition to AA approved literature.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Joe H (North East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.3 for Conference 1995.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Jim C (Glasgow Region) as Secretary of Committee No.3 for Conference 1995.

**COMMITTEE NO.4**

**CHAIRMAN .  
SECRETARY.**

**MIKE D  
ANNE S**

**NORTH WEST REGION  
EASTERN REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1 In order to assess P.I. activities both nationally and locally would Conference consider recommending ways of improving communications.**

The Committee recommends the following:

- (a) That GSB members and GSO staff be invited to attend Regional and Intergroup Workshops.
- (b) That where their service areas overlap Intergroups should be encouraged to co-ordinate service activities to correspond with Local Authority areas.
- (c) That Intergroup Liaison Officers should meet regularly as a Combined Services Committee to discuss areas where their interests and activities overlap; and that Group members should be encouraged to attend and participate.
- (d) That meetings at GSO of Regional Service Officers should be re-established.
- (e) That all newly appointed officers be made fully aware of their duties and the need to communicate regularly at all levels.
- (f) That PICPC activity be published in AA News as frequently as possible.

**2. Will Conference confirm that Intergroups should be responsible for compiling all 12 Step lists used by Groups for service activities. Discuss and make recommendations.**

Committee Four recommends that Conference confirms that Intergroups, where appropriate, compile and co-ordinate 12th Step service lists from information supplied by Groups.

**3. Because of the growth of the Fellowship in Great Britain, have we arrived at a point in time where the service duties of the Fellowship are in danger of deteriorating?**

**If so, what steps can be taken to rectify this situation, in addition to, and alongside, “sponsoring into service”.**

To avoid possible deterioration in our services as the Fellowship grows, this Committee recommends the following:

- (a) ‘Personal sponsorship’ is still of paramount importance and should be the first priority.
- (b) That Intergroup Chairmen explain on a regular basis the structure of the service network, avoiding such abbreviations as GSR, PLO, SSC, etc. etc.
- (c) That Groups be encouraged to invite service officers to speak at their meetings and share their experience.
- (d) That regular Workshops on services should be strongly encouraged.
- (e) Activities should be prioritised and targeted, in order to ensure that what we can do, we do well.
- (f) That we implement the recommendation of Conference 1993, Committee 2, Question 4 regarding “Multi Meeting Groups”.
- (g) Literature should be readily available and its reading should be encouraged; the existing pamphlet “Growing into Service” could be made more visually attractive.
- (h) That we implement the Conference recommendation of 1993 with regard to the more experienced member.
- (i) That those in service share their experience in contributions to SHARE and Roundabout.

**4 Would Conference consider and make recommendations that the votes on each question should be recorded on the Sunday morning, as to whether it is a two-thirds majority plus or not, so that the Fellowship can be fully informed on each question.**

In the interest of clarification and communication Committee Four recommends that whether or not it is a two-thirds majority plus should be recorded at the Sunday morning session.

This decision was not unanimous two members of the Committee dissenting.

**5. In view of the recommendation of the General Service Conference in 1978 regarding non-Conference approved literature. Would Conference recommend that Paragraph 8 of the Hints and Suggestions Sheet for AA Conventions should be suitably amended and suggest appropriate re-wording.**

The Committee recommends that Paragraph 8 should be amended to read as follows:-

Literature stalls should be attractive and well stocked with AA Published literature which should be given preference. The setting up and staffing of the stall is the responsibility of the sponsoring body or the Literature Secretary .

Where the Group conscience of the sponsoring body allows the sale of Non-AA Published literature, separate facilities should be provided.

It is recommended that this amendment be included in the Draft Handbook.

**6. Following the presentation of inaccurate information regarding the publishing and payment of “London Where to Find”. Would Conference reconsider this element of the recommendation made at Conference 1993.**

The Committee recommends that GSO continue to publish and distribute “London Where to Find” -for which an obvious need exists -in addition to the National “Where to Find”.

**7. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Sandra J (London Region) as Chairman of Committee No.4 for Conference 1995.

**8. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Bob H (Highlands & Islands Region) as Secretary of Committee No.4 for Conference 1995.

**COMMITTEE NO.5**

<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>GERRY K</b>	<b>SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND REGION</b>
<b>SECRETARY.</b>	<b>DAVE N</b>	<b>MIDLANDS REGION</b>

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. How can the Fellowship generate more interest in Intergroup and Regional Workshops which are very often poorly attended?**

Our experience shows that the best way to generate interest is through sponsorship at Group and Intergroup level.

The following suggestions have been prepared to assist those planning Workshops:-

- a. Workshops should be well structured with a commitment to planning.

One format, that appears to work well, is using multiple speakers sharing on the topic, breaking into discussion groups, and finally reconvening for a reportback session with everyone.

- b. That they should be publicised well in advance, utilizing flyers and GSRs to promote them.
- c. To maintain interest, they should be regular, using experienced speakers from outside the immediate Intergroup/Region area. Consider using PI Committees to organise them.
- d. Workshops might be considered for part of a convention/mini convention.
- e. Consider publicising “discussion meeting” rather than “workshop”.
- f. Intergroup/Region officers should lead by example, by attending Workshops and by offering transport to those who otherwise might not be able to attend.
- g. Time permitting, Regional Assemblies should hold Workshops and these should be minuted as an agenda item. Experience shows that morning Workshops lead to a better attendance.
- h. Attendees should be welcomed and encouraged to get involved in the discussions. Make it clear that everyone has a right to be heard.
- i. Workshops should be fun, as well as informative.
- j. Reports on Region Workshops should appear in AA News whenever possible. A summary should be given of any Workshop and circulated to all attendees.
- k. GSRs should try to make report backs interesting and informative, and, if necessary , ask for more time to give their report.

**2. Bearing in mind Traditions 4 and 12. would Conference consider the implications of making the locations and times of meetings available to the general public through local newspapers and other media. In addition. consider any such recommendations on the publicising of AA group activities, which may affect AA as a whole.**

Publicising of AA activities and meeting schedules should be left to the group conscience of the local Group. We strongly urge that any advertisements by local AA Groups keep in mind the tradition of anonymity. All Groups are urged to work through the service structure of AA.

**3. Would Conference consider whether the service structure in Great Britain is adequate to ensure the carrying of the message to the still suffering alcoholic.**

For a large portion of our Fellowship, the service structure appears to work. For those Regions that have problems due to size and number of Groups/Intergroups and the difficulties involved in communication, we recommend that they be encouraged to adopt methods that will work best for that particular area.

**4. Is Conference satisfied that the present system of selecting Conference delegates from Region is working effectively and in the best interests of the Fellowship?**

The Committee recognised that there is no fixed system for selecting Conference delegates. The conscience of the Committee expressed satisfaction with the way in which Conference delegates are currently selected. "The final decision about the suitability of any delegates shall rest with the Group conscience as expressed through the Region" -The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain p14.

**5. With the changing face of hospital care. combined with the effects of care in the community. Would the Fellowship share their experiences in handling these changes. Make recommendations.**

After long discussion and shared experience, the Committee recommends that:

- a. Make known a desire to help at every available contact.
- b. Stress that we are a free, universal service, available at all times.
- c. Watch out for exclusion by professionals and counter that.
- d. Regularly review the experiences of the Fellowship regarding the Community Care Plan.

We further recommend that the deliberations of this Committee be passed to the Internal Communications Committee of the GSB for consideration and distribution to the Fellowship.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Bill M (Wales & Borders Region) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1995.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Malkie McL (Glasgow Region) as Secretary of Committee No.5 for Conference 1995.

**COMMITTEE NO.6**

<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>TIM J</b>	<b>SOUTH WEST REGION</b>
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	<b>JOHN G</b>	<b>EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION</b>

The Committee opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1 Owing to the busy schedule at Conference, very little time is available to "get to know the nominations for the following year's Conference Chairman". It is felt that in place of, or in addition to, the general sharing on the Friday evening, a suitable period be set aside where the nominees could share about themselves and possibly answer any Questions put to them by delegates. Make recommendations.**

The Committee recommends that a period should be set aside during the opening of Conference (Friday) for nominees to give a short resume of their experience in AA service.

We also thought it would be unnecessary to subject them to questioning at this stage.

We feel that by identifying themselves at the beginning of Conference all delegates have the opportunity to approach nominees during the course of the weekend to get to know them better,

**2. The 1989 Conference recommended Board members to actively seek AA involvement in Prison Officers training curriculum. What progress has been made in England and have we been able to emulate the involvement of Scotland with the Directorate of the Scottish Prison Service?**

The progress in England to date is that an initial meeting has been held with the Home Office in London. Since this is such an important initiative a short report of this meeting follows: -

*“A very fruitful meeting was held and it was very useful to explain our work to members of the Home Office staff who, because of staff movements, had not previously met members of the Fellowship.*

*It was clear that they know of our work and were obviously sympathetic, but it was also apparent that details of AA were not known to them, although at one point a reference was made to the Twelve Step programme. AA in prisons is considered a useful aid in their work and the AA facilities now come under Health Care.*

*Since earlier AA contact Private Prisons have come into being but the Home Office does not think any different or additional problems are likely to be encountered in that sector.*

*We raised the matter of our involvement in Officers’ Training and the reaction was that at the Initial Centralised Training there is so much information for the officers to absorb that a better opportunity would be presented at later Refresher Courses at local level,*

*We mentioned our participation in the Induction Pre-release Courses in one or two instances but it did not seem to generate very much response. Obviously a matter that can be pursued on a later occasion.*

*At the end of our meeting we agreed that twice yearly contact would no doubt be useful.”*

The answer to the second part of the question is that England and Wales have not so far been in a position to emulate the experience of Scotland. To give an idea of what this experience entails an extract from their written contribution to the Committee follows:

*(a) In Scotland our 19 establishments have AA involvement in some capacity and there is a variety of services taking place: Induction, Pre-release One on One Sharing, Staff In-house Training, Prisons Postal Service, also discussions with Governors or Governor grades are frequently taking place which prove of immense value to all concerned.*

*In Scotland contact with the Directorate of Prisons and also the Scottish Prison Officers Association is of vast benefit to the Fellowship and both England and Wales should go forward and emulate what is in place at present time in Scotland.*



*AA will have already taken an active part in the SPOA Conference by the time Conference is taking place and we are hopeful that this would be an annual event*

*Having a Scottish Prisons Liaison Officer to cover all the establishments proves of great value and is in contact at all times with the Regional Officers and their local officers.*

*If both England and Wales can get Conference to look at the possibility of having above positions in place, then these officers would be able to go forward and make contact with Directorate of Prisons and also Prison Officers Association. The officer can also make contact with Staff Training Colleges and should be also able to arrange meetings with his own Regional Officers as is presently occurring here in Scotland, though the Combined Services Meetings.*

*(b) The reconvening of National Meetings in York to pass on our own individual experience and to lend support where it is needed would be of maximum benefit to all concerned. Scottish, Welsh and English liaison officers could liaise with each other on an annual basis to improve and assist matters through co-operation and communication within the penal establishments all over the United Kingdom “*

After a lot of helpful discussion we abstracted a number of suggestions which we put forward for consideration.

- (i) That Prisons Liaison Officers be appointed for both England & Wales
- (ii) That there be regular meetings of Prison Liaison Officers at York
- (iii) That, in the meantime, the Scottish experience be made more widely available through AA News and PI Newsletter.
- (iv) Experience has shown that contact at the very top of the Prison Service brings results when dealing with Prison Governors and staff.

**3 Bearing in mind the need for sensitivity in our literature, would Conference consider the following to be adopted in all future AA publications:**

- (a) He/She to replace “he”, as is currently used.**
- (b) Religious/Spiritual leader to replace references to Christian faiths only, as is presently the case.**

A clear majority agreed that the changes proposed in this question ought to be endorsed and that they be taken into account in the preparation of all new AA publications in Great Britain.

- (a) Yes, or a suitable form of words -gender bias to be avoided
- (b) Spiritual leader

**4. What is the Fellowship doing to attract suffering alcoholics from the ethnic minorities?**

The consensus of the meeting was that this Fellowship is doing as much as it can in view of its present limited understanding of other cultures and ethnic minorities.

However discussion revealed a number of suggestions which we felt would be useful in developing ways in which we might carry the message more successfully. These include:-

A. COMMUNITY /CULTURAL LEADERS

Experience suggests that there is a more positive response by making contact through Community and Cultural Leaders.

B. EDUCATION:

(i) INTERNAL AA:

We believe that most of us simply do not know enough about cultures to enable us to make appropriate contact (i.e. sensitivity/courtesy) and we suggest therefore that consideration be given to the preparation of an AA guideline publication to explain the major differences.

An example of what has already been done in dealing with this in Great Britain is represented by AA's production of material in the Welsh language for radio and literature.

(ii) EXTERNAL /SCHOOLS ETC:

A great deal of useful work is being done around Great Britain in talking to schools at all levels and showing the AA video. This of course includes children of ethnic minorities and it is believed that the message is carried into homes and to adults by this means (i.e. educating parents through children).

Other means of communicating with communities have been tried including display of posters in Asian and other languages; the advertising of Box 2000 on STV etc.

**5. Since the introduction of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, what has been the Fellowship's experience of communicating with and carrying the message through the Magistrates and Police Authorities to the still suffering alcoholic.**

Positive experience of carrying the message through the Magistrates and Police Authorities since the Criminal Justice Act 1991 seems to be very limited. In some cases contact appears to be more difficult partly as a result of pressure on the system to deal with petty offences. Some positive aspects were reported from around the Regions and these included the following experiences and suggestions.-

(i) That we try to establish or re-establish relationships with Police Training Colleges

(ii) That Custody Sergeants have proved to be particularly helpful by virtue of their direct contact with offenders.

(iii) However, the Committee were fortunate enough to have the benefit of a professional view of the legal system and it is clear that we need to understand more about the different components of the Criminal Justice System and the discretion each may exercise.

(a) The Police

They have a very limited discretion in very minor cases not to prefer a charge and instead may refer the alleged offender to an appropriate responsible person or organisation.

(b) The Prosecuting Service

Increasingly is interested in diverting cases from the Criminal Justice system. If AA is known to the Prosecutor and respected a referral to AA may be made.

(c) The Courts

The Courts discretion is very wide but only arises after a plea or finding of guilt. Courts prefer to deal with established and dependable organisations upon whom they can rely to provide reports and to carry out the programme which it sees suited to the offender either by postponing sentence or through the medium of Probation. This degree of commitment may pose problems for a voluntary, unfunded organisation such as AA.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Alan C (South Midlands Region) as Chairman of Committee No.6 for Conference 1995.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1995.**

The Committee elected Jeremy S (South East Region) as Secretary of Committee No.6 for Conference 1995.

## CONFERENCE 1995

### **FRIDAY 31ST MARCH 1995**

The Thirtieth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York.

Registration and the distribution of delegate folders and Conference material began at 4.00 pm, followed by a reception which, as usual, proved an ideal opportunity for delegates and observers to get together, renew friendships and to share with those delegates who were attending for the first time.

The Conference comprised eighty-seven delegates from fifteen Regions; two delegates from the Jersey Intergroup, one delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', eighteen members of the General Service Board, Mike D -Conference Chairman, General Secretary and six members of Staff. Also in attendance were Observers from the following countries:-

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	2
Ireland	2
Italy	2
Netherlands	2
Portugal	2
Sweden	2

Total in attendance 129

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE - BY MIKE D (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1995)**

The first full session, which commenced at 7,30 pm, was opened by the Conference Chairman, Mike D (North West Region) with the customary moment's silence and the reading of the Preamble. He welcomed all present and then invited the General Secretary to read the Twelve Traditions, the orientation update and the National Convention dates which are as follows:

Northern Convention 7 -9 April 1995  
Scottish Convention 26 -28 May 1995  
Southern Convention 27 -29 October 1995

It was announced that Rodger P had been elected Chairman of the Board at the March meeting of the General Service Board.

Conference was then asked to ratify the following Board appointments:

Les B	South East Region
Ted McG	Eastern Region
Stewart M	Scotia Region

Mike then presented his keynote address:

Hello and welcome everyone, especially our overseas Observers and new delegates. My name's Mike, I'm an alcoholic and I'm from Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria. It wouldn't surprise me if some of you don't know exactly where that is. It's about thirty miles west of England. Actually it's at the end of Junction 36 off the M6 Motorway. A road sometimes called the longest cul-de-sac in Europe. We have two groups there holding five meetings a week and I'm a member of the Barrow multi-meeting group.

I took a drink and liked what it did for me, then the drink took me and I opted out of the world, living chemically for many, many years. I don't like drunkalogues, although I know at times they are effective and necessary for identification and to remind me where I came from. Reliving those years for me is painful and pain is a personal thing. It's not made any more or less painful by the degree of someone else's suffering. It was sordid, miserable, pathetic, horrid and sad for everyone. The personal pain of anger, frustration, hurt, disgust, bewilderment and the feeling of utter worthlessness - all the legacies of active alcoholism are things that I hope are behind me forever. Anyway, I found the Fellowship or it found me - I don't know quite which, or care for that matter, I knew that at last I'd found somewhere I belonged. The Fellowship enfolded me, cocooned me, protected me, enveloped me and then taught me to live again in the real world and to stand on my own two feet. But! Never to forget that I didn't do it on my own - I couldn't.

So to briefly qualify. By profession I am an Electrical Engineer. By circumstance I became an alcoholic. By effort and the help of a Higher Power I am a recovering alcoholic. By choice I'm in service and by election, I am your Chairman, and delighted to be so.

When I was notified that part of my remit as Chairman was to pick the theme of the Conference, it stumped me. What should it be? What hasn't been done before? What would be popular? I was at a loss as none of those questions or categories were the right ones. Later at a Workshop we were discussing how the Fellowship seems to be in a climate of change and development at the moment, with many more activities to consider. I voiced my hopes and fears for the Fellowship, as did others, and the idea came to me for the theme. Yes, I am worried we may be overstretching ourselves, I am worried that we may be losing sight of our objectives. I am worried that we may be falling between stools in our quest for improvement, that we're throwing the baby out with the bath water. Yes I do feel we cannot meet all our commitments at our level of support, both financially and physically and yes I feel that Conference may be getting off course. I worry that we sometimes forget we can be wrong, that our Traditions Three and Four ALLOW us to be wrong, both as individuals and as groups.

I want to talk about KEEPING IT SIMPLE and about service and helping the alcoholic who still suffers, which is the purpose of a Service Conference. That all adds up to the theme of this Conference, OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE.

Take Service - somebody has to - funny, yes but it's not a joke. Somebody does have to because without it, the third legacy of AA is not there and AA is a dead duck not only for us but for those who would have followed us. When I first came to AA and heard service discussed by that "special few" it was all double Dutch but I could see immediately, with my impressive IQ of barely one more than a plant pot, that there were two categories in AA. "Us" and "Them" and the "Thems" looked after the "Service" whilst we held the meetings. They were the sort of Special Branch like the SAS, those "officers" of AA. They had a wonderful set of initials, a sort of code

language of their own for their secret activities. Things like GSR's and HLO's with the odd PICPC and they talked of meetings with people of the GSB at GSO. There were mention of the AA pigeons and meetings over the border with SSC's at SSO, and I thought Al-Anon was a sort of para-military wing of the WVS. No wonder I was a little confused!

I saw a wonderful definition of service in a dictionary, I love it, it's beautiful, it said:- Service - "Labour, assistance or kindness to another", isn't that lovely. Labour, assistance or kindness to another. That's what our Primary Purpose and our responsibility is all about. Our responsibility is defined in a simple concept. "Whenever anyone anywhere reaches out for help I want the hand of AA always to be there and for that I am responsible" -that's a biggie. To make that come true needs not only commitment but also structure and communications, and we have those. It can seem complicated but it isn't. It's intricate and has many, many moving parts but those parts are simple -the moving parts are "Us", there are no "Thems". Those parts make up a fine and wonderful "machine" which when combined with the spirit of AA is much, much more than the sum of its parts -it becomes the Fellowship. I heard it said at a Workshop that there was no more dangerous a person in our Fellowship than the "one-man-band" and I completely agree with that. We all know them, the Frank Sinatra's "I Did It My Way" people -well intentioned but usually doing more harm than good. This weekend I'm really looking forward to listening to our 120 piece "orchestra".

Bill W spoke of our need to change in his "Last Message" when he said:- " AA must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot nor should we turn back the clock". This does not mean "change or changes' sake", we must be careful that in our zeal and enthusiasm to do better, or be more effective, we do not lose sight of our aim, our Primary Purpose.

I think maybe at this stage, a word or two, and not only for our first year delegates to Conference. Those lovely Red Dots on badges signify that whilst fully functioning, trusted and totally experienced members of this Fellowship, you are not familiar with the layout of this Conference facility and we hope you will ask all the "How, What, Where and When" questions. We all had to. What we ALL should remember is that we have a job to do, but we have nothing to "prove". We don't have to "justify" our presence here or give Gettysburgh Addresses every time we speak. An opinion is no more valid for being repeated or said more loudly. We're not always right, because God hasn't finished with us yet. Probably the most important, remember HALT. Don't get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. We are on a very tight schedule over this weekend but we owe it to our Fellowship to stay in shape for the task we have undertaken. It will become even more difficult to make correct, loving and spiritual decisions if we have been up half the night or become angry and resentful after "debating energetically" differences of opinion. Anyway I intend to be last up to bed after shoos you all off, and I need plenty of beauty sleep before the morning AA meetings.

Our Primary Purpose is what this Assembly is here at York to help accomplish. This is our function and what we are entrusted by our Regions, Intergroups, Groups and consciences to do. This is the responsibility given to us. As you will see the GSB are on a "Busman's Holiday" this weekend, they are, as you know, our Trustees but when this Conference began the plenary session, we took the Fellowship back again. They are all here and available and working just as hard and responsibly as ever but the weight of all the needs, expectations, promises, made and to be made, is on us. Quite a thought that, isn't it? Don't look elsewhere, except for advice, we and our Higher Power are the authority of this Fellowship until the Sunday Session is finished. When

we leave here on Sunday let's not leave behind more work for others than is necessary, more cost than is prudent or more commitments than can be serviced properly.

I wonder what we will hand back? Will it be -sound, loving, practical recommendations born in the spiritual concepts of our Fellowship and our experience? Will it be -this is too complicated, we can't make our minds up, let's ask for a Hints and Suggestions sheet or new Guideline, that's near enough? Or -will it be those matters which we have allowed our personalities or prejudices to affect because we cannot hear, or don't listen to, that small voice? That small, but insistent voice that, at times last year, saved us and the Fellowship. The voice of our Higher Power. Will we ask twenty-five to do what one hundred and twenty are here to do and haven't done?

How is the responsibility beginning to feel now? I hope it feels good because it should do. We are here because we have been chosen by our own, as worthy to represent them, with the authority that goes with that responsibility, and we will. We will be pushed at times, we will be sorely tested and we will, with the help of a Higher Power and our Primary Purpose in mind, do everything and more than was expected of us. We will wear the mantle of responsibility this weekend and wear it well, then hand the Fellowship back to our Trustees all the better for having made our acquaintance. That's what we will do. Let's enjoy doing it.

Thank you.

## **THE CHARITIES ACT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

The Vice Chairman (Francis B) addressed Conference on the problems and options available to the Fellowship regarding the Charity structure and legislation.

He concluded with a solution, strongly recommended by the Board, that the Fellowship in Great Britain accept the conditions which follow:

### **The Situation today -a Solution**

There has been protracted discussion with the Charity Commissioners and their lawyers and they have finally agreed that the groups, intergroups and regions of Alcoholics Anonymous will be regarded as "affiliated groups" which are autonomous, informal bodies having the right to submit nominations of persons to serve as trustees of the main Board Provided that groups, intergroups and regions are not formally established by constitution and do not seek funding from outside agencies they will be ignored by the Charity Commissioners. In addition, the Inland Revenue consider that groups, intergroups and regions are unlikely to generate enough bank interest on accounts held in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous to concern them if these entities follow the existing, voluntary financial guidelines of the Fellowship

in summary:

We have on offer a position which allows us to maintain our Traditions and, indeed, our guidelines. In other words we are being allowed to continue, more or less, as before the new legislation. In order for this special treatment to continue, the groups, intergroups and regions:

- 1 Must ensure that they do not have a constitution\* which identifies them as an independent body.

2 Must not hold themselves out to be a charity in their own right and must not use the Board's charity registration number for any purpose (this is the case at present).

3. Must, if funds are kept in a bank account, ensure that the account is in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(The Inland Revenue consider that groups, intergroups and regions are unlikely to generate enough bank interest on accounts held in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous to concern them if these entities follow the existing, voluntary financial guidelines of the Fellowship).

\*Constitutions our advisors tell us that the setting up of a document describing how the group, intergroup or region is set up, eg how committees are elected, are acceptable but any such document must not contain objects which are the same as the main charity or they set themselves up as stand-alone bodies independent of Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain. The advice also suggests that it might be safer to drop the term constitution and give the document some other title

After full discussion the recommendation was proposed, seconded and accepted by Conference by a substantial majority.

## **CONFERENCE CHARTER**

The Vice Chairman moved on to the Conference Charter. After outlining the background the draft was fully discussed. Acceptance was then proposed and seconded and following a vote, was passed by a substantial majority. The Charter is set out below:

### **CONFERENCE CHARTER -GREAT BRITAIN**

Great Britain Article 1, Purpose: The General Service Conference (Great Britain) of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA in Great Britain. The Conference shall be a service body only; never a government for Alcoholics Anonymous

Great Britain Article 2, Composition: The Conference (Great Britain) shall be composed of six delegates from each Region and two delegates from Jersey Intergroup (Channel Islands), the trustees/directors of the General Service Board ex officio, and one delegate each from the committees of Share and Roundabout Conference may invite from time to time non-voting foreign observers

Great Britain Article 3, Conference Relation to AA: The Conference will act for AA in Great Britain in the perpetuation and guidance of its services and it will also be the vehicle by which AA in Great Britain can express its views on all matters of vital AA policy and all hazardous deviations from AA tradition. Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to Group or Intergroup level, whether for information, discussion, or their own direct instruction.



But no change in Article 12 of the Charter or in the Twelve Traditions of AA or in the Twelve Steps of AA may be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of all registered AA groups worldwide.

Great Britain Article 4, Conference Relation to the General Service Board and its Corporate Services: Since 1966, Conference has been for all practical purposes the voice and the effective conscience of the Fellowship in Great Britain

A quorum of Conference shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered

Conference decisions will be addressed by the General Service Board as the body responsible for any action that may be required as a result of resolutions approved by Conference

To give effect to this purpose, and as a matter of tradition, it will be understood that a simple majority vote by Conference constitutes a recommendation to the General Service Board to take any necessary action; and that a two-thirds vote of Conference shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board (provided that in each case the total vote cast constitutes at least a Conference quorum) except where this shall conflict with the General Service Board's legal obligations as a charitable company; and no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service entities to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts

It will be further understood, regardless of the legal prerogative of the General Service Board, as a matter of tradition, that a three-quarters vote of all Conference members may bring about a reorganisation of the General Service Board and the directors and staff members of its service entities, if or when such reorganisation is deemed essential

Under such a proceeding the Conference may request resignations, may nominate new trustees, and may make all other necessary arrangements regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board.

Great Britain Article 5, Regional Assemblies, Composition of: Assemblies, designated as Regional Assemblies, consist of the elected representatives from a workable number of Intergroups in a convenient geographical location and with common internal and external interests. Consequently, some regions may be large territorially but relatively small in terms of AA population, and vice versa

It is suggested that a Regional Assembly should comprise two or three regional representatives from each of its constituent Intergroups, together with its elected officers and General Service Board member. The aforementioned are the sole holders of voting rights.

Regional Assemblies may co-opt a member, or members, of the Fellowship to carry out specific tasks

Great Britain Article 6, Regional Assemblies, Purpose of: Regionalisation throughout Great Britain was established in 1980 following the approval of the Fifth General Service Conference.

Regional Assemblies are a link in the chain of communication between Groups, Intergroups, Conference and the General Service Board. Their primary function is to help their member Intergroups by offering co-operative co-ordination of service activity in Great Britain.

Each Regional Assembly may elect six delegates to the General Service Conference of Great Britain irrespective of the number of its member Intergroups

Great Britain Article 7, Regional Assemblies, Methods of Electing Officers and Conference Delegates: Whenever practicable, regional officers and conference delegates are elected by written ballot from the current membership of the assembly Variants of, or approximations to, the Third Legacy procedure, as provided in “The AA Service Manual”. have been employed, from time to time, for their election

Great Britain Article 8, Regional Assemblies, Terms of Office for Officers and Conference delegates: Unless otherwise directed by Conference, the terms of office shall be for a maximum of three concurrent years

Great Britain Article 9, The General Service Conference Meetings: The Conference will meet yearly in the City of York, unless otherwise agreed upon Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may also render advisory opinions at any time by a mail or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services

Great Britain Article 10, The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities: The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital and is a registered Charity composed of alcoholic and non-alcoholic trustees who appoint their own successors, subject to approval by Conference, from nominees presented by the Regional Assemblies According to its Memorandum and Articles of Association the number of members with which the company proposes to be registered is unlimited. In practice, the number of alcoholic members is determined on the basis of one per region and the number of non-alcoholic members by the requirements of the Fellowship at a particular time

The General Service Board is the chief service arm of Conference and is essentially custodial in character

Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance or AA Tradition, liable to seriously affect AA as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the AA service entities in Great Britain and may name suitable committees and elect members to its subsidiary service entities in pursuance of this purpose

The General Service Board is primarily responsible for the financial and policy integrity of its subsidiary services and for such other service entities as the Conference may decide to form

Except in a great emergency, neither the General Service Board nor any of its related services ought ever take any action liable to greatly affect AA as a whole, without first consulting the Conference. It is nevertheless understood that the Board shall at all times reserve the right to decide which of its actions or decisions may require the approval of the Conference.

Great Britain Article 11, The General Service Conference, Its General Procedures: The Conference will receive an annual report from the General Service Board on policy and finance including the accounts for the previous financial year.

The Conference will advise on all matters affecting AA as a whole, engage in discussion and debate and make recommendations for the advice or direction of the General Service Board and its related services

USA/Canada/Great Britain Article 12, General Warranties of the Conference: In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the AA tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principles; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, wherever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action

## **TWELVE CONCEPTS**

The proposed adaptation of the Twelve Concepts for Great Britain was then discussed fully by the members of Conference. The Vice Chairman drew Conference's attention to the letter dated 30th March 1995 from AA WS granting permission to adapt the Twelve Concepts for World Service to the needs of the AA structure in Great Britain. They also proposed an attribution and disclaimer in all publications. This was accepted by Conference.

A further presentation was made by the Vice Chairman on behalf of the Board suggesting how the Concepts might be printed and it was agreed that they should appear as a full appendix to, but in no way a substitute for, Bill W's Twelve Concepts for World Service. This also was accepted by Conference as the best way forward. It was proposed and seconded that the draft Twelve Concepts for Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain be accepted by Conference. A vote was taken and a 74% majority in favour was recorded.

The presentation of the Twelve Concepts in all literature in Great Britain will appear as follows. In the proposed Handbook Bill W's Essays will be printed within the Statements of the Twelve Concepts for World Service in their original form.

## **STATEMENTS OF THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE**

### **Concept I**

The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

### **Concept II**

When, in 1955, the AA groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active

maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference -excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter -the actual voice and effective conscience for our whole Society

### Concept III

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the AA General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional “Right of Decision”

### Concept IV

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional “Right of Participation”, taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge

### Concept V

Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

### Concept VI

On behalf of AA, as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognises that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

### Concept VII

The Conference recognises that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the AA purse for its final effectiveness.

### Concept VIII

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that

of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities

#### Concept IX

Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of AA must necessarily be assumed by the trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

#### Concept X

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority -the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws

#### Concept XI

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for AA's world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs, and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

#### Concept XII

General Warranties of the Conference in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the AA Tradition, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others. that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

“The Twelve Concepts, Long Form, and Bill W's Essays on the Concepts are reprinted with permission of AA World Services Inc, The Long Form of the Concepts are adapted with permission of AA World Services Inc. In granting permission to adapt, AA World Services did not undertake to evaluate the contents of the adaptation and expresses no opinion regarding the adaptation”.

The text following should be regarded as an appendix to, but in no way a substitute for, Bill W's Twelve Concepts for World Service as printed on the preceding pages. The appendix has been drawn up in order that the charitable company The General Service Board of Alcoholics

Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited may properly describe the governance of AA in terms appropriate to the law of England and Wales.

#### Concept I

The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for British AA services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship in Great Britain

#### Concept II

When, in 1995, the British AA groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our services and thereby made the Conference -excepting for any change in the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter -the actual voice and the effective conscience of the Fellowship in Great Britain.

#### Concept III

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship between the groups, the Conference, the General Service Board, and its General Service Office, and of thus ensuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested we endow each of these elements of service with a traditional “Right of Decision”

#### Concept IV

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional “Right of Participation”, taking care that each classification or group of our servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge

#### Concept V

Throughout our service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered

#### Concept VI

On behalf of AA, in Great Britain, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognises that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act amongst themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain)

#### Concept VII

The Conference recognises that the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the General Service Board (Great Britain) are legal instruments that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered

to manage and conduct all of the British service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the AA purse for its final effectiveness

### Concept VIII

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to the executive services provided by the General Service Office, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to appoint staff who are charged with carrying out their policies.

### Concept IX

Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety.

### Concept X

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority -the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description, by appropriate charters or legal instruments.

### Concept XI

While the Trustees, acting together as the General Service Board (Great Britain), hold final responsibility for AA's service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible committees, service executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore the composition of committees and service assemblies, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs, and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

### Concept XII

General Warranties of the Conference in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the AA Tradition, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

## GOVERNANCE

The matter of governance of the Fellowship, relationships between the Board and its supporters, was discussed and after full consideration was approved by Conference:

#### Governance -the Relationships Between the Board and its Supporters and Consultation Mechanisms.

The Board is a limited company regulated by its Memorandum and Articles of Association as laid down in the Companies Acts. This instrument is a legal document which has bearing only on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited

The Board is the servant of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain and, in common with all other groups of Trusted Servants, depends upon the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Concepts for Service and the Charter of the General Service Conference to guide its policies. Because the Board is a charitable company registered in England these instruments must be appropriate to their application in Great Britain and written in language which makes it clear that the Board recognises its responsibilities under English law

#### Governance of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses or opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety

AA members meet as Groups which form elected, representative service bodies, Intergroups and Regions, whose purpose is to facilitate the carrying of the AA message by the groups to the still-suffering alcoholic This service structure nominates persons for election to the General Service Board The General Service Board serves the Fellowship by providing central services of various types and is a registered charity

The Groups, Intergroups and Regions are recognised by the Charity Commissioners as informal, autonomous “affiliated groups” which have no independent constitution As such, they are not held to be accountable to the General Service Board nor to the Charity Commission

The governance of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain is based on the voluntary instruments; The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Concepts for Service and the Charter of the General Service Conference

Consultation between the main charity, the General Service Board, and its supporters the Groups, Intergroups and Regions of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain takes place on a regular basis through service forums and workshops and an annual General Service Conference comprised of elected delegates from each of the Regions in Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain and the trustees of the Board



Attention was drawn to the following points for 1996:

1. The Handbook Committee will be submitting a draft review of the Handbook to Conference 1996 for deliberation at the 1997 General Service Conference.
2. An update on the National Telephone Number pilot scheme was given and a full report will be presented to Conference 1996 as recommended by Conference 1994.
3. Minutes of the Workshop "Conference looks at Conference" held on the Saturday evening are included in this report to help delegates in their discussions with their Regions. This topic will be discussed at Conference 1996 following the recommendations of Conference 1994 - a copy of that question is written below:

Conference 1994. Committee 2. Question 5

In order to operate more effectively the General Service Board has adopted a service structure using Committees:

e.g. Finance/General Purposes  
Internal Communications  
External Communications

The Board believes this may be the way forward and asks Conference to recommend that a similar structure now be implemented throughout the Fellowship.

Would Conference also consider how this structure would affect Conference.

The formation of Committees along the lines proposed by the Board should be encouraged in the Fellowship where it is appropriate but there should be named Liaison or Contact Officers for specific areas of service at all levels, including the Board

The Committee feels it is too early to make recommendations in relation to implementing this structure at Conference and recommends it be reconsidered at Conference 1996 and that this question be accompanied by sufficient background information to enable an informed view to be brought to Conference.

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1996**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Thirty-First General Service Conference 1996:

Eddie R	Glasgow Region
Paul F	South Midlands Region
Jeremy S	South East Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve and each gave a brief summary of their AA service background. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SATURDAY 1ST APRIL 1995**

The Conference Chairman opened the meeting with the Preamble and the usual moment's silence.

Mike, Conference Chairman, returned to an item of business that was deferred from the Friday evening session. He called upon a delegate from Region 15 to propose a resolution:

### **RESOLUTION**

A proposal was made that Region 15 no longer be called by a number, but should be known as Continental European Region. This was unanimously accepted by Conference.

Mike then invited Rodger P, Chairman of the Board, to present the Board Report,

The GSB Chairman thanked Conference for the warm welcome on Friday night. Rodger then went through some of the points covered in the GSB Report, which covers the period between October 1st 1993 and 30th September 1994, adding an update on certain items.

### **BOARD PERSONNEL**

The Chairman expressed his personal thanks to Dan H (Scotia Region) who was retiring from the Board and a warm welcome to the three new Board members - Stewart, Les and Ted.

### **GSB ACTIONS**

A new document "A Trustees Guide" had been issued to Board members outlining their responsibilities as Trustees under both Company and Charity law. This document would be made available to all Regions when nominations need to be considered so that nominees for future Board members could avail themselves of the up to date requirements prior to election,

Attention was also drawn to the implementation of 1994 Conference recommendation that specific contacts be re-introduced, so that Liaison Officers are now able to move through one central person (ref. back of service directory for names ).

### **EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING 1993**

Delegates from 19 countries were united by love and fellowship. The GSB Chairman said how good it was to see such growth in this area. A summary of the ESM is included as part of the Board Report to enable members to share the main points of the meeting. However, as this Report is only fully available to the member countries and their delegates it is not possible to reproduce the Report in full (see later point raised and full answer given).

### **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

In addition to heavy involvement in routine matters, great progress was being made in the collection of archives material, and it is hoped to produce a display for the 1997 Convention. The Archives Committee was reconvened, and the first Regional Archives Meeting was held in February 1995.

## **SHARE**

The cost of the magazine was increased to 70p in January 1995 in order to counter the deficit. Regional Share Liaison Officers met on March 4th, and a questionnaire regarding future content has been prepared.

## **ROUNDABOUT**

There is now a new 'Round and About' section for contributions from members abroad. There had been an edition compiled solely by women members, and another containing articles and letters by those imprisoned.

## **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Highlights included the Blackpool TUC and the IPM Conferences attended last year, and ongoing plans for regional representation at future conferences, subject to Conference Committee's recommendations this weekend. The Conference of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association and the Social Services Conference in Harrogate will be reported upon next year

The Chairman of the Board expressed his personal belief that the Board and Conference had "Come of Age", and that we now have an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between ourselves. The Board was aware of its shortcomings, action is being taken, and apologies have been made. It is perhaps now the right time to go back and rebuild the love, trust and unity described in the Traditions.

## **FINANCE**

Gordon B, GSB Treasurer, was devastated at being unable to attend Conference, but was having to comply with doctor's orders. Francis B (Vice Chairman) presented the Financial Report, and offered to obtain written answers for any questions that required a specific reply from the Board Treasurer.

1994 had been a difficult time, but the year end deficit of £16,837 was lower than expected, due largely to the Fellowship's response to the blue information sheet, and expenditure being contained.

Contributions for the first five months of 1994/95 are about 30% up on the same period last year. Although there are still ups and downs, there has been an improvement in the prudent reserve. Expenditure is expected to rise about 5% over last year. A contribution of £2000 has been made to the European Service Meeting, and costs for postage and packing are expected to continue. Provided the level of increase in contributions continues there will be no problem, but we need to continue talking about money at Group, Intergroup and Region.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

In reply to questions from the floor, Conference was informed that the documents referred to on page three of the Annual Report were compiled to form part of the formal induction procedures for new Board members. This documentation will soon be available to Regions when considering suitable replacements for retiring Board members.

It was further noted that the first sentence of the statement of purpose of the European Service Meeting was incomplete. The full sentence reads: ‘The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity -to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he may be, whatever the language he speaks’. (Page 3 GSB Report).

The General Secretary explained that the function of the ESM is that of sharing experience within European countries. It was pointed out that the budget proposed was for the ESM and did not form part of the General Service Board Accounts. The ESM Report is paid for by the ESM and is therefore not circulated within the Fellowship in Great Britain. A summary of the main points of the Report is therefore included in the Annual Board Report for information and interest. The following is an extract from the ESM Report and clarifies its purpose and availability:

**THIS REPORT IS A ‘CONFIDENTIAL AA DOCUMENT’ AND IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING DELEGATES AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.**

Thelma J (South West Region) and Barry F (Continental European Region) have been elected by the General Service Board as delegates to the ESM.

A query was raised regarding the principal activity statement shown in the audited Accounts for 1993/94, and Conference was advised that a change was made following advice given. A full explanation by the GSB Treasurer regarding this change is included as Appendix One to this Report.

There was an enquiry regarding professional fees involved in preparing the Concepts and Charter for Great Britain, and Jean Webb (GSO Management Accountant) felt it was unlikely that further substantial amounts would be required. It was pointed out, however, that letters from individual members to our financial advisers which required a detailed response can only involve the Fellowship in unnecessary expense. A more detailed answer would be compiled by the Treasurer and is included in Appendix Two.

## **MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION**

The first statement of the main objects clause was changed for the purpose of clarifying that the Fellowship’s services also operated outside Great Britain and made it necessary for the two words “or elsewhere” to be added. This helped to remove any misinterpretation arising and now reads as follows:

“To help chronic alcoholics whether in the UK or elsewhere to overcome their addiction to alcohol, and with a view thereto:”

## **MINUTES OF CONFERENCE 1994**

The Chairman agreed that the Saturday evening report did not appear to accurately reflect the emphasis of the discussion, and Conference as a whole should receive an explanation. See Appendix Three following Report.

As there was no other business to be discussed Conference formally approved the adoption of the Annual General Service Report for 1994.

### **NATIONAL CONVENTION 1997 (Margo W, GSB)**

Registration forms were made available to delegates and a progress report was given on the above Convention. It was pointed out that because of the Charities Act, the committee and sub-committee meetings and all other expenses need to be financed by the Fellowship through the Region network and it was hoped that early registration by members would facilitate “self support” of the work yet to be done by the Committee.

The aims of the Convention are to inform the public that AA is available in Great Britain, to carry the message of recovery and to show the growth of the Fellowship in this country over fifty years.

The full Committee, consisting of eleven members, met twice during the last year in Blackpool as it allows on site consultations with the staff at the Winter Gardens and Town Council officials. The three sub-committees have met in their own areas as necessary. All Regional Secretaries have been contacted after each main meeting in order that up to date information is available to the Fellowship.

It was noted that a member of Al-Anon had attended the last main meeting and will take responsibility for Al-Anon and Al-Ateen matters. They will be using separate function rooms within the Winter Gardens but, of course, open meetings will be included in the programme.

Registration Forms are now available and it is hoped that the whole programme will be produced by the end of the year.

Hotel bookings will be handled by a Blackpool Agency (free of charge) which deals with all large Conventions. Any services provided by the Town Council will be covered by a donation from AA, thus upholding the Seventh Tradition.

Each Region has been asked for £300 to cover the cost of producing the programme, holding committee meetings and for worldwide postage. Once the £10 registration fees start coming in the finances should be well covered. Set out below is the income and expenditure to date:

#### Income

Donations from Region	2,700.00
Donations from Groups	100,00
Interest	4.12
Total income	2,804.12

## Expenditure

Accommodation	250.00
Gratuities	25.00
Travel	454.20
PO Box Number	100.00
Printing	1,258.00
Secretarial Expenses	24.00
Petty Cash	25.00
total expenditure	2,136.20
Balance	£ 667.92

### **TELEPHONE SERVICE (Stewart S, GSB)**

Stewart reported on the current position with regard to the 0345 service operating in the South East Region. There were 435 calls in the first quarter, and the telephone bills so far have been exceptionally low. The Scottish trial scheme is providing more difficulties, with a starting point of eleven different systems. Improvements are now going ahead Region by Region, with RCF services being established in most areas. Glasgow have asked to link up with the South East Region.

It was noted that the 0345 systems were running for a trial period, and fuller information will be available next year, as requested by Conference 1994, together with an up-date on cost implications. All regions have a choice, and the opportunity to look at systems, but for the moment there is reason to be confident in the trial scheme.

It is proposed that a public announcement will be issued to inform people that AA will on no account use the 'caller identification' system, and a letter regarding this will be produced in due course.

### **HANDBOOK COMMITTEE (Rodney N, GSB)**

Rodney briefly reported that the Committee had been preoccupied with the elements of its work concerned with Concepts and Charter for Great Britain over the last few months, but that phase of it had been concluded with the previous night's transactions. The Committee now need to consider the rest of the contents.

A full draft will be presented to Conference 1996 for full deliberation prior to consideration and possible adoption at Conference 1997. Delegates were asked to ensure that sufficient time be set aside for full discussion of the draft during this period.

### **WORKSHOP: CONFERENCE LOOKS AT CONFERENCE**

Conference 1994, Committee No.2 (Q5) was asked the following question:

In order to operate more effectively the General Service Board has adopted a service structure using Committees

eg

Finance/General Purposes  
Internal Communications  
External Communications

The Board believes this may be the way forward and asks Conference to recommend that a similar structure now be implemented throughout the Fellowship

Would Conference also consider how this structure would affect Conference

To which it gave the following answer:

The formation of Committees along the lines proposed by the Board should be encouraged in the Fellowship where it is appropriate but there should be named Liaison or Contact Officers for specific areas of service at all levels, including the Board

The Committee feels it is too early to make recommendations in relation to implementing this structure at Conference and recommends it be reconsidered at Conference 1996 and that this question be accompanied by sufficient background information to enable an informed view to be brought to Conference

Therefore this question will be included in Conference 1996.

This Workshop is designed to open up the discussion and delegates are asked to use the following points raised at the Workshop as an introduction to full consideration on these and any other points raised at Regional and Intergroup level prior to any recommendations proposed by Conference 1996.

The Conference Chairman emphasized again that this was not a decision making exercise, but an opportunity for delegates to put forward as many ideas as possible. It was hoped that it would be a learning exercise, and perhaps an opportunity to discuss the number and quality of questions submitted. The amount of committees and the number of Conference delegates, together with the costs could also be considered.

The following points are just some of those raised during the open discussion:

1. One solution was offered regarding delegate numbers and committees. It was suggested that committees could possibly be reduced to four, and that four delegates, instead of six, be nominated by each region.
2. The quality of Conference questions was one of the main issues. It was felt that only matters of real concern should be considered at Conference, and that the details of carrying the message should be left to the Fellowship. Some delegates felt that questions should not be edited by the Conference Committee, but should be submitted verbatim. It was further suggested that

more supporting material/information be supplied with the Conference Agenda and for questions to be made available earlier.

3. A query was raised with regard to the omission of 'named' committees, and it was explained that very few questions relating to specific liaison service had been received in recent years, so that the ones which had been received had to be spread around the six committees. Conference Committee is dependent upon input from the Fellowship in this respect.
4. The tendency to more involvement by Conference delegates and Committee Chairmen was welcome, and should provide a better framework for Conference.
5. Conference is the authority for the weekend. The Fellowship is the mainstay of the structure, and needs to play a more active part, but there is a need for this to be structured.
6. Disappointment was expressed at some of the 'nit-picking' and legalistic aspects of Conference. Perhaps there is a need to enforce rules of debate, and an agreed amount of time allowed for each delegate.
7. The important role of Conference delegates was highlighted. They should be well prepared before coming to Conference, have a good working knowledge of the Three Legacies and be prepared to report back fully to Groups, Intergroups and Regions. It is also the responsibility of Conference delegates to ensure that Conference recommendations are implemented whenever possible.
8. An intermediate area for England and Wales, similar to that of the Scottish Service Committee was suggested as a way of involving more members in service, and of providing better and more relevant questions.
9. Forums were also suggested as suitable functions for formulating questions for Conference.
10. It was generally felt that there was a lack of understanding by Groups of Conference and that more effort should be made to encourage communications between the two.
11. One of the concluding remarks expressed the general awareness that we are all equally responsible; 'Let it begin here, this weekend'.

The Conference Chairman thanked everyone for their invaluable contributions and then went on to ask everybody to join him in the Serenity Prayer.

### **SUNDAY 2ND APRIL 1995**

The final session of Conference commenced with a few moments silence following which Mike read the Preamble. He then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included in this report as indicated:



Committee No. 1	Pages 31- 34
Committee No. 2	Pages 35- 37
Committee No. 3	Pages 38- 42
Committee No. 4	Pages 43- 45
Committee No. 5	Pages 46- 48
Committee No. 6	Pages 49- 51

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF CONFERENCE 1996**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and after a vote Eddie R (Glasgow Region) was duly elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Mike D, Chairman of Conference, in the closing stages of the final session thanked all the Committee Chairmen for the presentation of their reports, which he said gave plenty of food for thought and action in the coming year. He also went on to say that he no longer felt the worries that he spoke of in his Keynote address, and said he felt Conference had worn the mantle of responsibility well and if we are not actually on the road yet, we certainly know where it is.

Mike then went on to welcome the new Chairman of the Board and to thank members of the GSO staff for their hard work, not only for the three days this weekend, but also for the other 362 days of the year.

Finally he thanked everyone for letting him become a part of AA “Coming of Age” in Great Britain,

The assembly rose to join Mike in the Serenity Prayer .

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Thirty-First General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Alcuin College, University of York on April 12-14, 1996.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995**

Financial Statements of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited,  
Director’s Report -Principal Activity

The Principal Activity Statement in the Directors’ report in the Financial Statements for the year 1991-1992 reads:

“The company is a self-supporting society, the objectives of which are to help alcoholics achieve and maintain sobriety. It is a registered charity -number 226745”.

Preparation for the financial year 1992 -1993 involved discussion of the presentation of the Board's financial statements in light of the projected charities legislation, with KPMG Peat Marwick, who were the Board's charities advisers at that time. We were advised by KPMG Peat Marwick to expand the statement of principal activity to avoid possible misunderstandings. For example, it was felt that it could be misleading to refer to the Company as self-supporting when, in fact, it was financially maintained by the groups and that there was a need to clarify how help was given to alcoholics. The wording was altered in consultation with KPMG Peat Marwick to the form which has been used in subsequent statements :

“The company's main objective is to assist alcoholics to overcome their addiction to alcohol and maintain sobriety. It carries out this objective by publishing and distributing books, pamphlets and other literature in relation to alcoholism. The charity supports independent local groups established to uphold the primary objective of the company”,

In January this year, two members of Chelsea Intergroup wrote directly to KPMG Peat Marwick suggesting that the current Statement of Principal Activity might be incorrect because it was the groups which supported the company in the financial sense. The reply from KPMG Peat Marwick (18 January 1995), stated that they were only required to comment on the Directors' Report if the information therein was inconsistent with the accounts and that was not the case. This is true in respect of Peat Marwick's role as auditors but the writer of the letter seemed to be unaware that the Statement of Principal Activity was reworded on their advice as charity advisers in which capacity they were also retained at that time.

To remove dubiety the Board will be asked to consider rewording the Statement of Principal Activity as follows:

“The company's main objective is to assist alcoholics to overcome their addiction to alcohol and maintain sobriety. It carries out this objective by publishing and distributing books, pamphlets and other literature in relation to alcoholism. In these ways the charity supports independent local groups established to uphold the primary objective of the company”.

Gordon B  
Hon. Treasurer

## **APPENDIX II**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995**

Financial Statements of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited, Professional Charges -Concepts and Charter

The work involved in preparation of the Conference Charter and Twelve Concepts for Service in Great Britain has been carried out by the Board within the Fellowship and no professional charges have been incurred. The Conference Charter and Twelve Concepts are, of course, part of the governance document. The negotiations and placing of this document with the Charity Commission and the Inland Revenue has involved payment of professional charges. Conference

approval of the recommended description of governance makes it highly unlikely that there will be any further significant professional charges associated with this subject.

The Professional Charges category in the Board's Financial Statements comprises fees to our charities advisers, auditors, solicitors and to IRPC (Industrial Relations and Personnel Consultancy) who advise on Health and Safety employment legislation and other related legal matters. Despite the fact that the last few years have been marked by many changes in legal requirements for charities, our expenditure within Professional Charges has not increased. The year-to-date total for this financial year in the category Professional Charges is £4,685 compared with last year's figure of £5,824 -a reduction of roughly 20%. This reduction is a consequence of the Board's investigation of the quality and costs of professional consultation and the subsequent decision to change auditors and charities advisers.

We do expect to incur charges associated with the implementation of the charity accounting regulations and SORP which become statutory at the end of 1995 and for other on-going matters involving professional consultation. It is not possible to forecast, but it is likely that expenditure on professional charges will increase over a period although it is not anticipated that the outlay will require special provision nor that any increased level will persist.

Gordon B  
Hon Treasurer

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995**

Minutes of Conference 1994

In order to clarify and ensure the fullest information, an exact copy of the notes made by an appointed Conference Delegate is given below.

In reading this, two points need to be borne in mind:

1) As at every level of service, minutes are a summary of discussion, and occasionally points may not be as clearly recorded as would be liked. It is also necessary that, on occasions, rephrasing and or additions to aid clarity need to be made.

This is in fact what was done and in no way was there any intention to distort information.

2) The second point for consideration is as follows. Given the opportunity of Conference Looking at Conference following the workshop on Saturday evening Conference 95 and the ongoing discussion prior to this being considered at Conference 96, would Conference delegates and their Regions consider how a true and accurate record of the Minutes can be ensured in the easiest and simplest manner.

#### **CONFERENCE 1994 (TRANSCRIPT OF ORIGINAL NOTES)**

#### **DRAFT HANDBOOK, TWELVE CONCEPTS AND CONFERENCE CHARTER**

Presentation:

George M opened the meeting by welcoming all present and reading the Preamble. He then stated that in the course of implementing last year's Board decision to involve the delegates, four of them were asked to take notes at tonight's presentation. He continued by saying that he would present the amendments to the Draft Handbook, copies of both were sent to delegates and which hopefully were reviewed.

George then went through the amendment list item by item. and since there were no comments he closed by ensuring Conference that any alterations to the Handbook which might be presented tomorrow would be incorporated in the next draft.

Next he introduced George R, a former Board member who was co-opted to present the 12 Concepts and the Conference Charter.

When George R opened the floor for discussion David from London Region raised the following points:

- a) Are there compelling legal reasons for changing Concept by Concept?
- b) Workshops in his Region revealed that the sense of the Concepts was changed.
- c) If the reason for changing the Concepts is a structural difference, why is the structure not changed?
- d) Why was his Region receiving slow incomprehensible replies to inquiries?
- e) Was Conference aware that if changes are made to Concept 12, Article 12, all groups world wide have to be informed?

The General Secretary responded by stating a letter had been sent to London Region on 25 March 1994, two weeks after the last Committee meeting (5 Mar 94). There are no changes to Concept 12, Article 12.

All responses from Regions, which were received by 6 Nov 93, were included in the last draft.

In closing Jim stated that there is ample time left and plenty of opportunities for input.

During the following discussion Sue inquired if, in view (if the different legal systems in Scotland and England, the Concepts would work in all of the UK. The answer was yes.

Joe from NE Region asked if the delegates would still be the focal point of the update. even though no new draft copies were handed to delegates this year.

George R replied that the new drafts were completed too late to provide copies for all delegates and that new Committees would still be formed. Editors should be given a free hand in fulfilling their tasks and surely Conference would grant them that right.

Gordon asked if the original Concepts will be published in the new handbook. The answer was yes. Jim also read to the assembly a letter from the World Services Offices which was dated 9 Mar 94 and in which World Services clearly stated that it had no objections to the changes as long as three criteria were met: the long or short form of Concepts were printed, World Services receive a copy of the final draft before it is presented to Conference and ?

Joe from NE Region asked if Committee members would correspond with Conference delegates? A question the General Secretary was unable to answer as Committee requirements were not yet established. Jim also stated the many amendments were made to original Concepts in conjunction with a need recognised in 1960.

David from London Region stated that it was not fair to compare amendments with changes of sense.

When discussing the printing of the long or short form of the Concepts, the General Secretary stated, the short would be printed with a reference to the essays.

Once again, emphasis was placed on the fact this is the First Draft only.

The Secretary was then asked who would appoint the Committee and it was established that Conference would. A decision would have to be made whether to form one or two -editorial and content -and a point of contact in the Board would also have to be named

Michael J then stated that he was grateful that the original Concepts would remain, however, he requested assurance that Concept 5 would remain unchanged. George R read both the original and draft. to detail the difference and changes do not affect its sense.

John then proposed that the delegates go back to their Regions and nominate experienced able persons for the Committee. Nominations and the prospective candidates' CV to be presented to the Board to choose from no later than

George M closed the meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

## **THIRTIETH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995**

### **COMMITTEE NO.1**

**CHAIRMAN:**

**CHARLES G**

**GLASGOW REGION**

**SECRETARY**

**VIVIEN U**

**NORTH WEST REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

### **1 In view of the profit made by Literature in our Financial Report, why is AA Literature in Great Britain so priced?**

The Committee feels that the profit made by literature, as shown in the financial report, is reasonable. AA literature in Great Britain is so priced because the Fellowship is not fully self supporting (contrary to the spirit of Tradition 7).

This surplus also helps to cover the cost of ‘free’ literature used to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic

In addition the Committee recognises the 8% contributions made to the Development Fund from the sale of all ‘Big Books’, ‘12 x 12’ and ‘As Bill Sees It’, in line with Bill W’s specific request to carry the message outside Great Britain.

**2. With our finances periodically in a state of crisis, should we not attempt to work out a system whereby our support of General Service Office Funds is more in ‘keeping’ with the annual budget. As the under funding of GSO affects AA as a whole, is this not contrary to Tradition 4?**

The answer would have to be a resounding NO! We should not attempt to work out a system which smacks strongly of some kind of ‘dues and fees’. It is ideas like this one, which are truly contrary to Tradition 4.

The Committee recognises that each group is autonomous, but that each group has a responsibility to the Fellowship as a whole. According to our 7th Tradition every AA Group ought to be fully self supporting. That includes such pooled services as GSO (reference Page S 130, AA Service Manual ).

The attention of the Fellowship is however drawn to the current Guideline No. 12 (Finance 1992).

**3. In the light of the recurring financial crisis would Conference consider:**

**(a) changing the prudent reserve from one year to two as a target**

**(b) increasing the amount of activity on the financial front as it has been proven beyond doubt that the more you talk about money, the more comes in.**

**(c) What can your Region do to emphasise that it costs money to “carry the message” by all parts of the service structure?**

(a) The Committee feels changing the prudent reserve from one year to two is not desirable.

(b) Money should be talked about regularly, remembering always the paramount importance of the spiritual message.

The Committee would like to draw attention to the sheet ‘No Dues or Fees’ used successfully in some parts of the Fellowship.

(c) This can be done by -

(i) finance workshops

(ii) ensuring that the quarterly finance report from GSO is passed to Intergroups and hopefully thereby to groups.

(iii) Committee recommends to Conference to look at the feasibility of re-introducing the leaflet ‘What is AA Money’.

**4. Following a recommendation at the Twenty-Second Conference 1987 (Committee No.2 -Finance) that the Board approach the SHARE Team about the possibility of publishing in each issue details of Intergroup contributions to GSO, SHARE has each month published this information. as recommended.**

**Would Conference agree that AA News would be a more appropriate medium for this financial information, thereby releasing a further half page for SHARE or should this information be deleted as it creates a 'league table' concept?**

The majority decision of the Committee was that the financial information of Intergroup contributions be removed from the centre pages of SHARE and placed in AA News for a trial period, and, if necessary, to be reviewed by Conference no later than 1998

**5 In light of the many AA activities that have cost implications which have been added on an ad hoc basis by Conference over the years, would Conference recommend that a thorough review of expenditure be undertaken at all levels, and, clearly detailed so that the membership can understand the need for further increases in contributions?**

It was considered by this Committee that a one off review would not be the most effective way of achieving the intentions behind question 5. The Finance Committee must be charged with, and held accountable for, a continuous review of expenditure, bearing in mind the need to keep Conference aware of the cost implications of existing projects and future recommendations for development.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Sue A (London Region) as Chairman of Committee No.1 for Conference 1996.

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Kevin D (Highlands & Islands Region) as Secretary of Committee No.1 for Conference 1996.

NO DUES OR FEES

The 7th Tradition urges A.A. members to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous is fully self supporting.

At this meeting, the 'pot' has collected £.....

£.....of this will be used for group purposes.

the remaining £.....will be passed forward into the Service Structure to ensure the continuance of A.A. services

Thank you all for fulfilling your responsibility

# THIRTIETH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995

## COMMITTEE NO.2

**CHAIRMAN**            **LES B**                            **SOUTH EAST REGION**  
**SECRETARY.**        **JEAN C**                            **SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1        The level of similarity, and in some cases duplication, in Conference questions discussed in different committees and/or sequential years whilst possibly furthering debate or increasing the scope of views expressed, is inefficient and sometimes confusing in outcome.**

**Would Conference consider either; consolidating such composite questions in any one year: discouraging the see-sawing of recommendations between Conferences: or, if there has been a lack of specific questions from the membership, especially bearing in mind the need for economy in AA activities hold Conference bi-ennially (thereby saving the Fellowship approximately £22,000 overall each alternate year).**

a)        The Committee recommends the consolidation of questions of a similar nature, ensuring that the spirit of the original questions is maintained. It is also recommended that the Fellowship submit clear and unambiguous questions and in accord with the recommendation of Conference 1986, Committee No 6, Question 2, that Intergroups and Regions add Conference questions to each agenda, thus ensuring a constant flow of questions throughout the year.

b)        It is also recommended that no questions are included in the Conference Agenda for a minimum period of 3 years after a previous inclusion, unless referred by the Conference.

c)        This Committee recommends that the Index of Conference Recommendations be updated on a regular basis and made available to the Regions.

d)        The Committee unanimously recommends the continuance of an annual Conference

**2        Does Conference consider that £3.500 allocated for attendance at TUC, CBI and IPM National Conventions is the best way of spending AA's money in carrying the message? Should alternative venues and other means of communication with these organisations be investigated?**

The Committee considers that attendance at National Conventions such as the TUC, CBI and IPM was desirable and that a figure of £3,500 was a reasonable outlay and a good way of spending AA money in carrying the message at this level.

It was also felt that alternative venues should be investigated and all other means of communication with these organisations pursued.

**3        At present. Conference Committee comprises of General Service Board members and the newly elected Conference Chairman.**



**Would Conference support the recommendation that the Fellowship would be better served by a revised committee comprising:-**

**One Board Member acting as Chairman,  
all the annually elected Committee Chairmen,  
and. the annually elected Conference Chairman.**

This Committee supports the recommendation that the Fellowship would be better served by a revised Conference Committee comprising:

- a) one Board Member acting as Chairman.
- b) a Board Member for guidance, support and continuity.
- c) all the annually elected Committee Chairmen
- d) the annually elected Conference Chairman.

**4. Would Conference discuss and make recommendations on the following:-**

**1. Alternate delegates attending four consecutive meetings.**

The Committee considers attendance of alternate delegates at four consecutive conferences should remain as stated in the AA Service Handbook for GB (Section IV, part 3 - Rotation of Delegates)

**2 Alternate delegates becoming Chairmen/Secretaries after their first full delegate year.**

It was felt that alternate delegates should ideally be eligible for nomination as Chairmen of Committees after their second full delegate year, and secretaries becoming eligible for nomination after their first full delegate year.

Successful candidates should only serve once in these capacities.

However, it should be at the discretion of the Committee to elect the Chairman/Secretary from the resources available.

**3 The situation regarding broken attendances at Conference.**

The consensus of opinion is that the situation regarding broken attendances at Conference is adequately covered by the AA Service Handbook for GB, Section IV, part 3 (a), (b), (c) and (d).

The Committee would specifically call each Region's attention to the points made under Section IV, part 1 (c)

**5 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Francy M (Scotia Region) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1996.

## **6 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Mary S (London Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1996.

## **THIRTIETH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995 COMMITTEE NO.3**

**CHAIRMAN.           JOE H           NORTH EAST REGION**  
**SECRETARY.           JIM C           GLASGOW REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

### **1. Would Conference review the progress on multi-meeting groups?**

#### **(a) Has this recommendation been taken up by the Fellowship?**

Sharing in Committee revealed a gradual taking up of the Conference recommendation.

#### **(b) What benefits have been experienced?**

An improvement in finance and structure. Commitment and unity was strengthened at all levels.

#### **(c) What negative reactions have there been?**

Fear of loss of autonomy. Reaction to change and the practice of placing personalities before principles.

### **2 In view of the .Fellowship's appeal for increased contributions, would Conference consider setting up a Conference Workshop in 1996 to discuss the duplication of services in the AA structure.**

The Committee unanimously agreed that 'duplication of services' was an excellent subject for a workshop and recommends that it take place at Conference 1996

### **3. Would Conference review draft Guideline No.1 and make recommendations.**

Draft Guideline No 1 in its present form was unacceptable to this Committee. We recommend that a sub-committee drawn from Committee No 3 be established to review the Guideline and present a draft review to Committee No 3 of Conference 1996.

The Committee agreed that the experience gained from the revising of Guideline No.2 by sub-committee suggested that this was a good method. The Committee felt that being asked to revise two Guidelines in the time allocated at Conference was an impossible task.

### **4 Would Conference review draft Guideline No.2 and make recommendations.**

The Committee recommend that Conference accept the revised draft Guideline No 2 entitled 'INTERGROUPS',

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Michael Mc (South East Region) as Chairman of Committee No 3 for Conference 1996.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Norella B (Eastern Region) as Secretary of Committee No 3 for Conference 1996

**GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain**

From General Service Office, PO Box 1, Stonebow House, Stonebow, York YO1 2NJ

**INTERGROUPS**

**No2**

**REVISED APRIL 1995**

The first Intergroup in Great Britain was formed in 1957, some ten years after Alcoholics Anonymous came to London, and incidentally in the same year that the General Service Board was incorporated in the British Isles.

These landmarks in our AA history were the initial steps towards the formation of a sound Service structure, which has over the years evolved and grown to help us meet our ever increasing responsibilities.

The Fifth and Tenth General Service Conferences reviewed the purpose and work of Intergroups and from time to time committees at other Conferences have suggested activities which should be undertaken at Intergroup level. This Guideline gathers together these recommendations.

**AIMS**

The aims of an Intergroup are to help the constituent groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the still-suffering alcoholic and, by using their combined strength and unity, to improve and maintain good relations with all organisations in the community.

**AREAS**

When exercising their voluntary choice to co-operate within the AA service structure, groups take into account that service activities are made more difficult where Health Service and local government boundaries do not coincide with Intergroup boundaries and that their ability to play their part in Intergroup will be affected by this and by the proximity of other groups. Practice has shown that boundaries evolve without the overlapping of neighbouring areas. Where two or more Intergroups fall within a 'local authority' area their liaison officers co-operate in trying to carry the message e.g. Prisons or Hospitals etc.

**MEETINGS**

Intergroup meetings should be held regularly, wherever possible, six times a year. It should be remembered that these are business meetings and should therefore be conducted in a businesslike fashion having particular regard to the guidance in the Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts.

One meeting in the year should be set aside for the Annual General Meeting to receive and approve the accounts as well as rotate officers. Intergroup officers should prepare a suitable agenda to be sent to all groups far enough in advance of the meeting so that it can be discussed and any group views be made know to GSRs. Observers are welcome at Intergroup meetings. They may express their view only at the invitation of the Chairperson, and they may not vote.

## **GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**

By choosing as GSR one of the group's most qualified individuals the group helps its own future and the future of AA as a whole. It is suggested that groups should also elect an alternative representative who would attend meetings should the need arise.

The GSR is the first vital link in the communication chain between Group, Intergroup, Region and General Service Board, carrying the Group conscience to Intergroup, and Intergroup conscience to the Group.

Groups should take care in electing their GSRs. It is suggested that the GSR should have at least two year's continuous sobriety, as a GSR may be elected to Intergroup office. The GSR needs to be familiar with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and be prepared to uphold them, as well as with being conversant with the following books: Alcoholics Anonymous, AA Comes of Age, the latest edition of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, The AA Service Manual, the pamphlet 'The AA Group', and all the 'Tradition' pamphlets.

GSRs should be prepared to serve for a minimum of two years and maximum of three years so that the principle of rotation is observed.

## **OFFICERS**

An Intergroup should appoint a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and members with other responsibilities (see overleaf) as its officers. These officers should have an established period of sobriety, ideally not less than two years.

It is recommended that they should serve for not less than two years and not more than three years.

Careful consideration should be given to staggered rotation so that in the interest of continuity, all the officers do not terminate their service at the same time.

In the event of a vacancy occurring among the officers before the expiry of his/her term of office a member may be co-opted to fill the position. The appointment should be ratified at the next AGM.

The officers can co-opt a member, or members, either from GSRs or from Groups, to perform a specific service such as organising a convention, convening a public meeting or social occasion. The Intergroup may establish sub-committees for specific purposes.

## **DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**THE CHAIRPERSON** has the responsibility of convening and conducting the meetings and approving the agenda and minutes before they are published.

**THE VICE CHAIRPERSON** has the responsibility of conducting the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson,

**THE SECRETARY** has the responsibility with the Chairperson for preparing the agenda and minutes of meetings and for distributing these documents to the groups well before meetings so that there is ample time to discuss the contents. The Secretary deals with all correspondence, passing, for example, requests for speakers to outside organisations to the Public Information Officer or a suitable member. The Secretary keeps in touch with the GSO, making sure that it promptly has a copy of the minutes and notice of any changes of officers.

**THE TREASURER** has the responsibility for keeping a proper account of all Intergroup finances and ensuring that funds are available for its essential current requirements with a prudent reserve of, say, two months' estimated expenditure. The Treasurer reports to Intergroup the balance remaining for prompt transfer through the service structure to the General Service Office and in the case of Scotland, the Scottish Service Office. The accounts should be open to inspection at all times and properly audited or independently checked before the AGM. The Chairperson will carry the executive authority of Intergroup but should account for any action taken at the next meeting.

## **OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is suggested that Liaison Officers work together through a service committee structure as outlined in Guideline No. 11.

**A PRISON LIAISON OFFICER** should gather and collate all information about the prison groups in their area (including open prisons, Young Offenders Institutions etc) and forward the information to their Regions and to GSO. He/she should also keep informed via their Region and GSO on Home Office and Conference policy with regard to special subjects such as parole, the use of AA tapes and other AA published material, to help prison sponsors with any problems that may arise in the area. The General Service Office and General Service Board maintain excellent contact with the Prison Department of the Home Office and Intergroups should communicate with GSO regarding any problems which may arise.

**A PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER** is responsible for ensuring that information about the AA message and programme of recovery is conveyed to outside organisations to the best possible advantage. The provision of a panel of members to comply with requests for speakers is an important part of this activity. Assisting local media to obtain accurate information about AA is another important function and calls for a thorough appreciation of our Traditions.

**A HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER** co-ordinates all hospital and related activities in the local area as is suggested in Guideline No.10.

**INDUSTRIAL LIAISON OFFICER** assumes responsibility for liaising with all sectors of commerce and industry.

**A PROBATION LIAISON OFFICER/SOCIAL SERVICES AA CONTACT**, is responsible for establishing links with the Probation Services in England and Wales. In Scotland, Social Services provide the Probation Services.

**SHARE/ROUNABOUT LIAISON OFFICERS** provide the essential contacts between members, groups, and the editorial teams. They actively encourage the contribution of articles and letters and the promotion of the magazines.

**TELEPHONE LIAISON OFFICER** co-ordinates the working of the Telephone Service as recommended in Guideline No.7.

### **THIRTIETH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995**

#### **COMMITTEE NO.4**

**CHAIRMAN.**

**SANDRA J**

**LONDON REGION**

**SECRETARY.**

**KEN K**

**SOUTH EAST REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Would Conference consider how to present the Fellowship and its message to the public via its Service Liaison Officers more effectively. Make recommendations.**

PREFIX This Committee endorses the recommendation of Committee No.4, Question 1 and 3, of Conference 1994

Further experience suggests that Liaison Officers should be fully conversant with the 12 Traditions, AA structure and relevant literature.

This Committee recommends care in selection of Officers, bearing in mind that Workshops are a valuable aid as a part of in-service training to develop our presentational skills.

Approach all organisations at appropriate levels.

All correspondence should be of a professional standard, and a diary kept regarding appointments, meetings and so forth. It is important to reply promptly to all letters and to express our thanks where appropriate.

Care to be taken of personal appearance in public information duties.

That we be aware that we are NOT in debate but simply to carry AA's message.

Not less than two members to give talks/presentations. Maximise use of videos and relevant AA literature.

Maintain good relations with other organisations in the alcoholism field.

**2. Would Conference approve the dual role of the Hospital Liaison Officer to contact GPs and Primary Care staff in line with the increasing development of GPs working in larger units and the shift of care of the suffering alcoholic towards primary care. Make recommendations.**

This Committee does not feel that a fixed dual role is necessary. However, due to the ongoing changes in the Health Service -especially with regard to care in the community, it is felt that the way to co-ordinate activities in the field of hospitals, GPs and the primary care of alcoholics is to set up a Combined Services Committee or equivalent according to local needs and resources. The Committee recommends that progress be reviewed in 1997.

**3. Would Conference review the attached posters and make recommendations.**

The Committee recommends -

- (a) That the existing poster should be retained and should not be superseded by any of the three presented here.
- (b) That the 'trapped' in a bottle poster be offered as an additional poster, provided that it meets the criteria of being a prudent expenditure.
- (c) That the 'trapped' poster be amended to the following wording

TRAPPED? -THERE IS A WAY OUT'

The word alcohol should be emphasised (possibly in black). The full width of the poster should be allowed for the telephone contact number.

In addition it was suggested that the existing poster should be printed in more colour fast colours. Also that a variation should be provided in A5 size.

**4 Review the draft Hints and Suggestions Sheet for AA attendance at non-AA Conferences and Exhibitions.**

The Committee approved the Hints and Suggestions on External Exhibitions. The following amendments are suggested by the Committee -

ITEM 8: to read: A compilation of information giving local meetings and appropriate Service Contact Telephone Number.

ITEM 13: to read: Take supply of Blue Forms for supplying literature to non-AA persons

ITEM 14: ADD: USING THE PREAMBLE.

ITEM 17: to read: Take copies of 'Where to Find' Service Directory for members' reference only

ITEM 19 to read: To discourage smoking/eating on the stand ensure refreshment breaks are arranged for those manning the stand/

ITEM 26 ADD: (ON POSSIBLE SALE OR RETURN BASIS -seek advice of GSO)

ITEM 31 to read: Have a minuted meeting of all those involved in the event whilst still fresh in mind to ensure that the experience gained is not forgotten and can be passed on to others including GSO for future reference.

**5. Should the Intergroup or Region be responsible for the costs and organisation of local exhibitions in their area(s)?**

The Committee suggests that the responsibility for the organisation and cost of local exhibitions should be decided in advance by the Intergroups and Regions concerned.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Patrick P (South West Region) as Chairman of Committee No.4 for Conference 1996.

**7 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected John S (East of Scotland Region) as Secretary of Committee No.4 for Conference 1996.

**THIRTIETH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995**

**COMMITTEE NO.5**

**CHAIRMAN .  
SECRETARY.**

**BILL M  
MALCOLM McL**

**WALES & BORDERS REGION  
GLASGOW REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1 Conference is often asked to consider complex issues concerning service and structure. and frequently produces non-answers, or refers the question back to the Board or a sub-committee.**

**The General Service Board has an over view of the Fellowship which puts it in a unique position to influence the development of the Fellowship's service structure.**

**Whilst the members of the General Service Board are only trusted servants. does Conference consider that the Board should show leadership. and present its views and recommendations to Conference in the form of questions. identified as originating from the Board?**

Committee considers that the GSB has a right to submit questions to Conference provided the question is not identified as coming from the Board.

**2. Previous Conferences have referred back to GSO/GSB questions which Conference have been unable to resolve.**



**What options would Conference suggest which would prevent this situation and thereby return to the delegates the responsibility for Conference decisions.**

The situation can be prevented by

1. More background information should be supplied to the Conference delegates with the question.
2. The question being written more specifically and with more clarity. More care being given to the formulation of the question
- 3 The Conference Committee should not accept questions unless sufficient background information pertaining to the question is supplied by the questioner.
4. The Committee Chairman should be part of the agenda committee and thus help ensure the correct interpretation of the sense of the question.
5. Conference agenda should come out as early as possible in order that longer time is available for consideration of the questions
6. Questions should not necessarily be allocated exactly five per committee. There could be fewer questions than five allocated if the questions are detailed or complex

However, it is accepted that on occasions the Committee/Conference will not be able to resolve a question. In this case it is recommended that it is not left in limbo but is addressed by a sub-committee of Conference delegates who come back to next Conference with a recommendation or a redirected question.

**3 Bearing in mind the make-up of the committees and sub-committees for major events, can Conference recommend that in future, whenever practicable and possible, membership of all committees is made up of delegates representing and endorsed by Regions.**

If ‘major events’ means ‘major national events’, then the Committee should include delegates representing and endorsed by Regions where practicable and possible.

**4. Bearing in mind the information in the pamphlet “How it Works” is already contained in the Big Book, does Conference feel this publication is still necessary?**  
Yes.

**5 Problems have been experienced from time to time by Twelfth Steppers over taking young persons (under 16) to closed AA meetings. Although the child has expressed a wish to attend, the parents or legal guardian may be against the suggestion.**

**Please share any experience on this matter to assist Twelfth Steppers.**

1. We should twelfth step young people (under 16 ).

2. There is little experience available on twelfth stepping young people and such experience gives little guidance for the future.

3 The legal position is, as far as is known, still as in the General Service Board note of 1987.

4. However, it is recommended that the Board verify if the legal position is still the same in all parts of the UK.

5. The young person should be encouraged to involve their parents. If agreeable to the young person, the parents should be asked to come along to an open meeting with the young person.

6 It is suggested that in all cases an under age person is twelfth stepped by two AA members, one of either sex

7 It is suggested that twelfth steppers consider carefully their personal involvement outside the meeting with a young person in order to avoid the possibility of any adverse accusations.

#### **6 Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Harry McC (South Midlands Region) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1996.

#### **7 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Debbie R (East of Scotland) as Secretary of Committee No 5 for Conference 1996

### **THIRTIETH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1995**

#### **COMMITTEE NO.6**

**CHAIRMAN?  
SECRETARY.**

**ALAN C  
JEREMY S**

**SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION  
SOUTH EAST REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

#### **1 Sponsorship**

**(a) What is the experience of Conference regarding the use of phone services (RCF etc.) for sponsorship into telephone service by new and not so new members?**

**(b) Does Conference consider that sufficient emphasis is placed upon the importance of sponsorship in early recovery and as an extremely useful tool in living sober?**

(a) The Committee felt that sponsorship into telephone service is working well, and that the existing Guideline No.7 does not need updating. However six key points emerged as being important.

(i) New responders should be chosen with care, and endorsed through the Intergroup service structure. A minimum of twelve months sobriety is ideal

- (ii) No one should start telephone duty without being fully sponsored into service
  - (iii) A starter pack for new responders is necessary, together with up to date back-up information including a comprehensive list of available Twelfth Steppers
  - (iv) Stress to potential new telephone responders that costs may be reimbursed
  - (v) Hold regular workshops for responders, and include guidance on how to deal with PI enquiries as well as calls for help. Also emphasise the desirability of giving Twelfth Step calls to women if the caller is female, and to a man if the caller is male
  - (vi) When sharing at meetings, past and present responders should talk of how telephone service has helped in their own recovery.
- (b) There is not enough emphasis placed on sponsorship of newcomers. The existing pamphlets ‘Questions and Answers on Sponsorship’ and ‘The AA Group’ already give clear guidance on sponsorship, and we strongly recommend that these pamphlets should be part of every group’s literature stock, and be referred to during conscience meetings.

We also recommend that groups look at their responsibility for helping newcomers to find a sponsor at every Group Conscience Meeting and consider offering a temporary sponsor to newcomers.

**2. Would Conference consider that as individuals, groups or sponsors, we pay enough attention to the vulnerability of the new member when it comes to the pitfalls of sexual and emotional relationships. In what way can members share openly and talk about the problems if and when they arise**

The Committee strongly feel that insufficient attention is paid to the vulnerability of newcomers when it comes to the pitfalls of sexual and emotional relationships. It was agreed that both individuals, particularly sponsors, and groups are responsible for bringing the subject into the open, and giving clear guidance to both newcomers and any member, male or female, who is behaving inappropriately.

**3 Would Conference suggest a way in which the Fellowship can underline the importance of “man to man”, “woman to woman” 12th stepping.**

The wallet card ‘Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers’ already recommends ‘men to man’ and ‘women to woman’ Twelfth Stepping. It is recommended that telephone responders are strongly advised to deal with Twelfth Step calls on the same basis

The Committee suggests that all Group Secretaries and relevant Liaison Officers should review their Twelfth Step lists to try to achieve a balance between males and females

**4 Would Conference consider the implications of the adoption of the practice by AA in Great Britain of inviting speakers from overseas and paying their expenses. Make recommendations.**

Having considered the implication of the adoption of the practice by AA in Great Britain of inviting speakers from overseas and paying their expenses, the Committee decided that neither AA money nor AA's name should be used for this purpose, as to do so would be in breach of Tradition 4 and Tradition 12.

**5. What experience has the Fellowship on the regular updating of contact numbers given to outside organisations. Make recommendations.**

RCF and 0345 telephone services are making liaison contacts much easier to maintain. It is important that outgoing Liaison Officers hand over properly to their successors, including details of past contacts. This is an ideal time for the new officer to make contact again, and re-establish communications whilst introducing themselves. Regular contact is essential, as staff changes in outside agencies happen frequently, and we cannot assume that they will pass on the AA contact. This is a two way problem but it is our responsibility to maintain contact.

**6. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Bill Y (Midlands Region) as Chairman of Committee No 6 for Conference 1996

**7. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1996.**

The Committee elected Michael J (North East Region) as Secretary of Committee No.6 for Conference 1996.

FRIDAY 12 APRIL 1996

The Thirty-First General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York, with the opening session on Friday evening and the final session on Sunday morning being held in the Lecture Theatre in the Chemistry Department.

Registration and the distribution of delegate folders along with Conference material began around 4 pm, the reception in the Snack Bar was the ideal opportunity for delegates and observers to get together, renew friendships and to share with those delegates who were attending for the first time.

The Conference comprised ninety delegates from fifteen Regions, two delegates from the Jersey Intergroup, one delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', twenty members of the General Service Board, Eddie R - Conference Chairman, General Secretary and six members of Staff. Also in attendance were Observers from the following countries:

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	(2)
Denmark	(2)
French Speaking Europe	(1)
Ireland	(2)
Netherlands	(2)
Sweden	(1)

Total in attendance 132

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE BY EDDIE R (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1996)**

The first full session, which commenced at 7.30pm, was opened by the Conference Chairman, Eddie R (Glasgow Region) with the customary moments silence and the reading of the Preamble. He welcomed all present with a special welcome to first year delegates and overseas observers.

The General Secretary was then invited to read the Twelve Traditions (Long Form), the orientation together with the very last minute changes and the National Convention dates which are as follows:

Scottish Convention 24-26 May 1996  
Southern Convention 25-27 October 1996  
Northern Convention March 1997 (date to be arranged)

Eddie then presented his Keynote Address:

Good evening, friends, on behalf of the General Service Board and the Conference Committee I

would like to extend a very warm welcome to everyone here this evening to this the 31st General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. A very special welcome also to all of the first year delegates -who are easily recognised by the red dots on their lapel badges! There are two schools of thought concerning these red dots among past delegates: there were those who felt they were a discomfiture and could barely wait for the time when they could dispense with them; then there were those too, who, like myself, enjoyed all the attention that was lavished upon them during their first term. That is precisely the reason why they are placed there - so that the rest of us who have been over the Conference course can help to make these delegates feel more welcome and a part of the Conference.

So why don't each and everyone of us see how many of their hands we can shake over the weekend. Why not let this be a measure of the responsibility and the gratitude we have for our sobriety and the Fellowship?

Like so many of us, I came to Alcoholics Anonymous a beaten, confused and pathetic drunk. I thank God for the people who Twelfth-Stepped me, especially the man who was to become my sponsor. He -and they -taught me so much about this Twelve-Step programme for personal recovery as well as the Twelve Traditions -which would protect the Fellowship from me! They also made me aware of the Twelve Concepts for World Service, which lets us know how best we can structure our service committees so as to be of maximum help to the still-suffering alcoholic.

They also suggested that I make myself familiar with the history of AA so "that the highly-valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost."

"All AA progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: humility and RESPONSIBILITY. Our whole spiritual development can be accurately measured by our degree of adherence to these magnificent standards". This simple truth was first expressed by Bill Wilson, one of our founder members, in a talk more than 30 years ago, which subsequently appeared in the 1966 January edition of "The Grapevine". It is a dictum that still holds good today. Humility is the key to personal recovery; responsibility is the touchstone of service.

Facing up to responsibility can be intimidating for anyone never mind someone who has spent most of his life in full flight from it. Nevertheless, if I wish to avoid the first drink I have to be at the very least willing to look at what my responsibilities are, and if I can bring a measure of honesty to this, then my chances of success will be enhanced.

It is my experience that Alcoholics Anonymous opens the door of opportunity for us to serve. We may hesitate at that threshold or we may even decide not to pass through it. But neither we nor circumstances can ever close the door. The hand of friendship is always extended -"AA remains forever all-inclusive and never exclusive". I feel very grateful to have been given this opportunity to serve and to be responsible. While drinking I was unreasonable and lacked discipline. I was devoid of any kind of plan or agenda for living -I drifted from one crisis to the next, never being able to recognise the beauty and vitality of life or the importance of the here and now. My life was one long catalogue of failing to seize opportunities as they presented themselves.

There is nothing to compare with the first time that we became involved in service -in our desire to please, our eagerness and enthusiasm to do what was right, to make changes ALWAYS FOR

THE BETTER. We were carried along effortlessly, it seems, on a sea of goodwill and tranquillity.

As we proceeded with what we believed to be clarity of thought and accuracy of perception, we were determined to put to rights all of the defects and deficiencies that we encountered along the way. It was only then that the small niggardly doubts began to appear. At first we pushed them to the back of our minds, but still they would not go away. On the contrary, they were persistent and accumulated. Only then did we realise that things were not as wonderful as we had at first imagined.

It is only after we have become involved in service that we are made aware of the intricacies and complexities that are inherent within our commitment and obligations. Trying to grow up and mature -to be responsible! -in the service of Alcoholics Anonymous is without doubt the most difficult exercise I have ever undertaken in my life. Also, in spite of my being a self-proclaimed reluctant committee man, I have spent the greater part of my time in Alcoholics Anonymous serving on numerous committees with members, who, for me, represented the driving force behind AA services.

These committees ought to be action-orientated rather than simply “talk shops”. They have to be given a clear remit to identify where action needs to be taken, to pull together existing initiatives in these areas, and to set any necessary action in motion. To look at ways of how to enhance the standing of Alcoholics Anonymous in schools, hospitals and churches and to harness the full potential of the Fellowship in the courts, prisons, social and probation services.

It is only after we become more reasonable in our behaviour and judgement that we can then try to use our new-found faith to shape the world around us and to do it unseen! Accepting responsibility has changed my life so much for the better -it has allowed me to attain a measure of humility , integrity and perseverance. It has given me a new perspective and a positive outlook on everything. Also, it has made me more aware and understanding of myself and others. I know what it means to say: “I am not unique”.

Left to my own devices, if all I had to rely upon were my own instincts and abilities, I should never have gained sobriety. For me, true self-knowledge comes through good and meaningful relationships. Through caring and sharing with each other and sponsorship, we are enabled to realise our full potential.

I know you will bring to this Conference the desired levels of responsibility and enthusiasm, and I look forward this weekend to the renewing of old and the beginning of new friendships.

In conclusion, I would say I don't believe that it is the extra workload that we have to shoulder, nor the constraints that we feel are placed upon us, or the contention that we inevitably have to face that keeps us in service. No, I believe it is in accepting our responsibility to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic on a daily basis, and to trust all else without reserve to the will and the power of a loving God as He expresses Himself in our group conscience.

“Let the words in our mouths and the meditations in our hearts be acceptable in His sight”. For that I AM RESPONSIBLE!

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Rodger P, Chairman of the Board, thanked Eddie R for his Keynote address and extended a warm welcome to all attending Conference and went on to present the Annual Report of the Board.

Over the years the General Service Board has published an Annual Report to comply with legal requirements. It covers the period October to September being the financial year of the Company. The Board feels this is unsatisfactory in communicating with Conference and the Fellowship. An update has to be given and items appear in different publications as a result.

We therefore propose, and ask Conference to endorse the following:

1. The Annual Report to continue as required by law.
2. The Board to consider that a Report running April to March could be published and sent to delegates prior to Conference. This Report to be discussed, accepted and published in Final Conference Report for distribution to the Fellowship.

This will provide a more thorough and informative document relevant to the communications needed by the Fellowship, of matters relating to the General Service Board and Conference each year. Accountability and communication established in one document.

Conference approved the above.

### **BOARD PERSONNEL**

The following resigned or retired by rotation from the Board:

Sheriff Principal Graham Cox, QC -resigned  
Professor Kathleen Jones -resigned  
Les B -resigned  
Gordon B -resigned  
Francis B -resigned  
Peter G -retired by rotation  
Thelma J -retired by rotation  
George McC -retired by rotation

The following were appointed as new officers:

Monica H -Vice Chairman  
Harry O -Treasurer

The Board asked Conference to ratify the following appointments:

Alcoholic



Charlie G -Glasgow Region  
Tim J -South West Region  
Dick McC -South West Scotland Region  
John T -South East Region

Non-Alcoholic

Dr Giri Rajaratnam -Consultant Public Health -Medical

### **GSO PERSONNEL**

Rodger reported with sadness the death of Peter D (Literature Department) who had been a valuable member of the staff for the past eight years. He will be sadly missed by the Fellowship and his colleagues.

Rodger went on to also report that Mary T (Secretarial Staff) had resigned due to ill health and thanked her for her input during her time at GSO.

### **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Members of the Board also attended the North East Regional Forum and the first meeting of Regional Chairmen was held on 25 November 1995. This meeting was attended by 14 Regions looking specifically at communications between Regions and the Board. A similar exercise was held by the Board looking at communication with Regions and the reports are being reviewed by the Internal Communications Committee. A presentation paper will be available following that review.

The Internal Communications Committee will also be considering the workings and practices of the General Service Board and will present its recommendations over the coming year.

### **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

A Regional Hospital Liaison Meeting was held on 14 October 1995 and part of this meeting was spent in looking at the changes brought about by the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 with fewer alcoholics being admitted to hospitals. It was agreed that contact should be made at Board level with the Department of Health.

A Regional Telephone Liaison Meeting was held 20 January 1996, and a Prison Liaison Meeting on 2 March 1996.

Invitations have been received to attend the Victim Support and Samaritans Conferences, and there will be an AA presence at the Royal College of Nursing Congress in late April 1996.

A fully equipped display stand with lighting has been obtained for these and future events.

### **THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD AND GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE**

Further to our responsibilities as employers of the General Secretary and staff at GSO a management appraisal was carried out by Clive Owen, Management Consultant and Principal

Partner. He carried out a study of practices leading to improvements in GSO staff workings and communications with the Board.

This has now been carried out and the Report fully adopted by General Service Board and General Secretary -its implementation begins immediately and will continue over the next two years.

## **SHARE**

1995 was a excellent year for SHARE the meeting between meetings. It was the year of:

- (a) The Inventory
- (b) The Calendar -a first for this country
- (c) A surplus was made -and that in itself is unique.

However, on the down-side it was noted that only 23% of Groups take the magazine -77% of our Groups don't have SHARE.

SHARE is going to produce a Jubilee edition which will be available at Blackpool, as well as GSO, and this will be special, it will be a book, a memento, something you can keep.

The 60 Year issue of SHARE printed last year was completely sold out and ordering for the Jubilee edition will be increased with an option to re-print if the need arises.

SHARE's aim for the coming year is to increase its profile, hopefully try and get some of those 77% of Groups who do not take the magazine to maybe look at it and look at the ways in which it can be used as a tool for newcomers when they come to AA.

Please remind your Regions that articles are always needed.

## **ROUNDABOUT**

Earlier this year Eddie B Glasgow was appointed editor of Roundabout by Scottish Service Committee.

Roundabout will continue to be put together using Desk Top Publishing each month and sent to the printer on a high density disk. The quality, presentation and content of the magazine will be maintained and hopefully improved in the long term.

AA members over a wider geographical area are now involved in typing up articles submitted to Roundabout by members of the Fellowship. They do this in their own home, using their own computers, sending the completed work direct to the editor through the medium of electronic mail. This is a significant change, and presents new opportunities for interested members with special skills to become involved in the long term future of Roundabout.

The introduction of an Electronic Mail article in the magazine is another 'first' for Roundabout. The e-mail address is printed on the inside of the front cover of the magazine.

Although the circulation of Roundabout remains at 3,000, an increase in the long term is

anticipated, through the wider participation and co-operation with the Intergroup and Regional Roundabout Representatives and, by regular meetings of a well informed, integrated and enthusiastic editorial team headed by the editor.

## **FINANCE**

Harry O, the Treasurer, was then asked to present the financial report.

The Boards Annual Accounts were audited and filed at Companies House six months before this Conference and are therefore of little use in considering the position today. This financial report relates to the Conference Financial Year of April 1995 to March 1996.

Expenditure over the 'Conference Year' has increased by about 9%. Much of the increase is accounted for in Professional Charges. These costs include negotiations with the Charity Commission, Inland Revenue, a management consultancy report and legal advice.

Any periodic shortfalls have been handled within the cash reserves without having to draw on investments. At the end of March the Prudent Reserve stood at £333,298 compared with £304,487 at the end of March a year ago. This level of reserve is considered satisfactory. A reasonably high reserve is required to generate investment interest to help make up the shortfall between contribution income and expenditure.

Following a discussion at the last Regional Treasurers meeting in December 1995, the Finance Committee considered the question of increasing the regional contributions towards the cost of Conference and recommended that no further increases should be contemplated at present. The Board accepted this recommendation.

A question for Conference 1996 had been received suggesting the re-writing of the pamphlet 'What is AA Money'. Research indicates that there is confusion with the pamphlet 'Money Matters'. The phrase 'What is AA Money' appears on a section cover sheet in The Group Handbook. The Finance Committee considered that a pamphlet of this type, which would go out of date quickly was not needed with the up-to-date financial information which was in place.

## **GREAT BRITAIN CONVENTION 1997 (Margo W)**

This is the report of progress made in the year since I spoke to you at the 1995 Conference. The main core committee met three times, on each occasion in Blackpool. Other parties involved in the Convention were also asked to attend from time to time. The three sub-committees met more locally, at the discretion of their Chairmen.

The Scottish sub-committee continued to handle publicity. The Northern and Wales sub-committees dealt with registrations and other matters within the Winter Gardens. The Southern sub-committee dealt with the programme and entertainment.

A further member of AA was co-opted on to the main committee because the need arose for us to have an Opening and a Closing Ceremony in a venue other than the Winter Gardens. This member's brief was to organise these events so that all who attend in 1997 are able to come together in one place, rather than in separate rooms linked only by TV screens.

AL-Anon has a member who attends most of our meetings, and their and Alateen's programmes are in place. Other AA members are now joining the many working teams.

After considerable discussion, and the viewing of various sites in the Blackpool area, the Committee unanimously decided that the Children's Boating Lake on the Lower Promenade would be ideal for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. The Town Council, the Police and the Fire Brigade all passed the site as being suitable in every way. The one thing we cannot guarantee is of course the weather, but at least we have checked the tides -the rest is in God's hands. The ceremonies will include a flag ceremony, music, speakers and many other moments. The Mayor of Blackpool will open the week-end, and there will be a Non-denominational Service on the Sunday morning leading on to the closing hours.

The Convention has been widely publicised through AA News, Share, Roundabout, and also through Overseas channels. The General Service Board has been given regular updates, and an update letter has been sent by the Convenor to all Region Secretaries after each Blackpool meeting.

North West Conference Connections are lined-up ready to send out details of hotel bookings as soon as the hotels give prices for 1997. NWC is checking that all accommodation is of a good standard, and all hotels booked through them will have coffee at a very realistic price. It is planned to hold two or three dinners in hotels on the Saturday night, varying in price, for those who would wish to attend them. It will in no way detract from the events in the Winter Gardens, which will consist of the show in the Opera House (for approximately 3,000), the dance and the disco.

Registration forms have been widely distributed both in this country and abroad. The green cards are evidence that the bearer has paid the £10 fee, and must be produced at Blackpool in order to obtain the badge at the registration points in the Winter Gardens. These badges will then be the key for entry at all the events. Green cards will be allowed for people who have not had time to go along and collect their badges before the Opening Ceremony. However, badges only after that. We regret that we cannot take any new registrations at Blackpool that week-end.

Badges will be handed out on receipt of green cards from Thursday at the Registration points in the Winter Gardens, and some informal meetings will also be held that day.

We have three floor managers who are responsible for the various areas in the Winter Gardens complex. There will be coffee areas, an Archives Exhibition, Share stand, also Roundabout, and local Blackpool entertainment's stand. There will also be special help for the disabled.

AA has produced a Souvenir Book which will be on sale at the Convention, but not before. There will be one raffle (more details later).

The programme of events for the week-end has been put in place, and we hope it offers something for everybody; there will be Sharing meetings, Marathon meetings, Come-and-Go meetings and Workshops, including those suggested by members in their local Intergroups and Regions. Many hotels will provide opportunities for friends, old and new, to meet and to have quiet times together.

We hope that the Opening and Closing Ceremonies in particular will be occasions that will stay

in our hearts for a long time to come. This is a one off!! Many of us will not share such an experience again. It is a moment to show gratitude for those who brought us to this time in Great Britain as sober members in this wonderful Fellowship, and a moment to hand on this powerful message of love and hope to those who will continue this journey into the future.

### **0345 PILOT SCHEME REPORT**

My name is Stewart and I am an alcoholic and it is a privilege to be here today. I am a member of the General Service Board's External Communications Committee with responsibilities to report on telephone matters in the Fellowship.

This report will be presented as follows:

1. A repeat of the 1994 Conference question.
2. Recommendations and options from the participants in the pilot scheme and the Regional Telephone Liaison Officers.
3. A summary of how progress was made, problems encountered and decisions reached.
4. Copy of report on the 0345 single telephone number trial, accepted by South-East Region of Alcoholics Anonymous, from the Treasurer and Telephone Liaison Officer on December 1995.

### **1994 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE NO.1 QUESTION 2**

2. Following the General Service Board's feasibility study of a single telephone number for AA, Conference is asked to consider and make recommendations based on this information, or on any other information available.

The Committee strongly endorses the idea of the 0345 number system, the Committee recommends that, if the South-East Region of England and the Scottish Regions, or a reasonable part of either of these areas, are willing to set up and fund such schemes:

- a) that pilot schemes should be set up in both these areas
- b) that the schemes should be monitored through the External Communications Committee
- c) that a full report be made to Conference 1996

The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to those individuals in the Fellowship who have given so much time to this matter and whose contributions have been invaluable in assisting our deliberations.

As a consequence of two meetings held at York on the 11 November 1995 and 20 January 1996, the group conscience of the meetings put forward the following proposals for consideration by 1996 Conference:

- 1) that Conference should extend the trial for a further 2 years

or

2) that Conference allow the trial to expand geographically to include South West, South Midlands, London and Eastern Regions or parts thereof, if they so wish, and provided they have existing 'remote call forwarding' (or equivalent) networks with experienced responders providing 24 hour coverage, British Telecom can arrange for all calls to be paid for by the Regions/Intergroups direct.

## **REPORT ON THE EVENTS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS LEADING TO THESE PROPOSALS**

On 17 April 1994 Conference gave approval to the Fellowship to proceed with an 0345 telephone trial in South East England and Scotland. South East had in place 'remote call forward systems' whereas Scotland had many various systems from 'RCF' to Ansaphone and answering machines.

South East started work on discussing the trial with the nine Intergroups and Groups mainly to determine how the trial would be financed. Seven of the nine Intergroups (5 RCF's) agreed to participate in the trial, the 2 Intergroups not participating had reservations about costs and the effect on funds to GSO. Since the trial has proceeded these reservations have not materialised and another Intergroup in the Region has joined in the trial.

The trial commenced on Tuesday 25 October 1994 at 10am on number 0345 697 555. The Contract was signed by the Telephone Liaison Officer of South East Region who was then responsible for the payment of bills through the Region. A prudent reserve was laid aside by Region before the commencement of the trial safeguarding the good name of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The trial was monitored continuously and during the first few months when statistics were not available approximately 30 calls per week were received. As confidence grew South East Region placed the 0345 number on the B.T. database for a period of two years, this increased the calls to approximately 150 per week. This was done in June 1995.

This step change in the number of calls has made it more difficult to assess correctly the overall cost of the service. South East feels that more time is necessary to present to Conference the definitive costs to the Fellowship of the 0345 number. Now that the 0345 number is established and on the database of British Telecom Enquiry service a much more accurate estimate of the costs can be determined over the next two years, which would prevent any misleading conclusions being drawn from the present inconclusive figures. However the participants of the trial feel so confident and enthusiastic about the help being given to the suffering alcoholic they would like to see the trial expanded in a controlled manner to the South of England, because in this way the trial would be monitored geographically in the same B.T. area.

The only cost that can be considered stable is the approximation of the average telephone call to the help line for the 0345 service; this is working out at 30 pence per call. This cost is over and above the cost of the local call rate to the caller and the cost of the 'remote call forward' system borne by the Intergroup. These costs appear to be reducing over the last year and in late 1995 B.T. introduced a new system called 'remote call diversion' which is now being used by South East Region. This system is cheaper than RCF and has many advantages including:

1) As many responders as required instead of being limited to 10.

- 2) Caller goes straight through to responder with no delay through computer (saving money).
- 3) No need to change numbers in computer every month saving £15 per month.
- 4) Responder number can be changed at any time in an emergency saving another £15.

This innovation (long sought by AA Helplines) has made the task of running the helpline in the South East much easier and cheaper.

These continuing improvements in the service available to AA makes participants in the trial optimistic for the future of the Single Telephone Number for AA.

In Scotland there was a greater divergence of services provided by Helplines from R.C.F.'s to using telephones in Hospitals. As a result discussions were more protracted. In March 1995 Glasgow Region and Highlands and Islands Region decided to join the 0345 trial. On September 1 1995 the system went live. The average number of calls received by Highlands and Islands was 15 per week.

Glasgow received an average of 8 calls for the first 14 weeks then on 1 December changed to R.C.F. and published the number; as a result the average calls rose to 143 per week.

At present all Regions are in favour of the 0345 trial but some Intergroups have reservations about benefits and costs. If acceptance is forthcoming the plan is for Scotland to provide an 0345 service using three 'Remote Call Diversion' centres based at Elgin, Glasgow and Edinburgh. This would suffice the whole of Scotland.

On the 11 November 1995 a meeting of those participating in the trial met at York to discuss findings and pose recommendations, South East gave a report itemising costs and progress.

All representatives from South East were enthusiastic over the help available to all who contacted the helpline and were pleasantly surprised at the lower than expected costs. The funds sent to G.S.O. had not diminished which had been one of the anxieties. However it was felt that there was insufficient information available to produce an accurate analysis of the costs overall, and it was felt that more time was required to provide the Fellowship with proper costs. Glasgow and the Highlands and Islands felt the same way as South East and were sure it was the way ahead even though they had less information about costs and agreed that more time was necessary to present an accurate picture.

The meeting also asked that a letter be sent to B.T. asking for clarification of contracts and billing. This was done and B.T. gave assurances on 30 November 1995 that:

- 1 Remote call diversion was available.
- 2 Separate quarterly bills could be sent to individual Regions. (Later agreed per second billing would still apply).
- 3 Each Region could sign an independent contract with B.T. if they wished to join the 0345 single number.

These assurances cleared the way for expansion of the trial if it were approved.

A meeting was then convened at York on 20 January 1996 for all Regional Telephone Liaison Representatives to discuss and question the participants of the trial and formulate an agreed way ahead for consideration by Conference, at the same time reporting back to their Regional Conference

Delegates the information available from the trial with the benefits and problems.

The meeting agreed to use the report given to South East Region and approved by the Region as the basis for the Report to Conference with any additional information available before April 1996.

The information from the Report is listed but it is felt by the participants that there are insufficient facts to establish a conclusion and more time was needed.

The cost for the 0345 trial for the 4 quarters up to 25 November 1995 are as follows:

Total Cost for 0345 service	£3,628
Cost for connection	£ 607
Cost of rental	£1,818
Cost of calls	£1,203

Accepting the average cost of the call as 30 pence per call the approximate number of calls will have been 4,000. This was achieved by the information being given to B.T. database. This caused an increase as already stated from 30 per week to 150 per week. It is hoped that eventually all the calls to the helpline will be routed through the 0345 number, as at present the R.C.F. numbers can still be used separately as this is but a trial. The connection fee is a one-off and will not be repeated. It is hoped that the continuation of the trial will provide more positive evidence of the effectiveness and true cost of the service.

South East considered that the potential advantages were as follows:

The suffering alcoholic will have immediate 24 hour access and will be automatically dealt with by the nearest participating Intergroup's RCF/RCD telephone system using their current 12th step procedures.

The public services and individuals who may wish to contact AA -whether for support, advice or help e.g. Hospitals, Industry, Police, Emergency Services, Probation, Education and Schools etc.

The 0345 number provides inbuilt anonymity and enables everyone to have just one telephone number rather than a whole range of numbers some of which may be out of date or refer to internal boundaries such as Intergroups. This in turn cuts back the need to publicise many different numbers throughout the country which is expensive.

The big problem at present is the extra cost to the Fellowship and the burden placed not only on the poorer Regions but possibly on the contributions to G.S.O., whereby some other service may suffer. It is hoped this will be determined by the extension to the trial for a period of two years.



There is also the problem that due to finance or other factors some Intergroups or Regions may not wish to join the 0345 system. This would complicate the administration and financing of the remaining Regions and would prevent the system becoming a national number. The path ahead is strewn with problems and difficulties which we can only face step by step.

The 1994 Conference only asked for a report on the 0345 pilot scheme and due to the limited time at the disposal of the Conference Chairman this is all that has been presented. There are other telephone systems that can be used to reach the suffering alcoholic. These have been examined by the Telephone Liaison Representatives and it was thought that at present the only system which could reach all parts of Britain was the 0345 system.

The biggest fear expressed by Regions and Intergroups was the financial cost to the Fellowship. Indeed this really is the purpose of the trial, and it is accepted there will be a price to be paid for this service as opposed to those systems which place the cost of the call on the caller. The method of payment used by the South East is as follows:

- 1 Caller -pays local rate
- 2 Intergroup -pays supporting service (RCF or RCD)
- 3 Region -pays 0345 lines

The aim of the trial was to present a comprehensive appraisal of the cost of a single telephone number for Alcoholics Anonymous. It is hoped this can be achieved with an extension of the trial. The Telephone Liaison Meeting also looked at the statement made to Conference 1990 by Committee 6 on Question 1 "Costs should always be a secondary consideration when we are involved in our primary purpose of carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic, but accountability to the Membership should also be a factor".

I feel certain that the Regions, Intergroups and Groups involved in this trial are aware of their responsibilities to the Fellowship as well as to the suffering Alcoholic.

### **DRAFT HANDBOOK REPORT (Rodney N)**

A copy of the draft Handbook will be given to all delegates over the weekend.

We, the Handbook Committee, have sought to include all the material which members in a variety of service capacities would find useful whilst being mindful of the need to keep the quantity of material manageable.

The working draft Handbook also includes recent changes relating to the way in which AA conducts its affairs in Great Britain as made necessary by the Charities Act. These changes are as discussed and agreed at Conference 1995 (mainly concerned with the sections on the Twelve Concepts and the Conference Charter for Great Britain).

We have made changes to the 1989 edition where circumstances have changed and there have been minor corrections to spelling, punctuation and grammar. We have tried to present all the material in a logical sequence and for this reason the order in which the Guidelines appear is different. This has entailed re-numbering them but in the interests of clarity we have indicated the original numbers also.

Guideline No.1 (Groups) remains for the time being in its 1987 format awaiting this Conference's approval of any changes, and any other changes arising from this 1996 Conference will be incorporated.

Conference delegates should begin the process of the widest possible discussion through Intergroups and Regions. Comments should be submitted in writing to the Handbook Committee through GSO as soon as possible and certainly no later than 30th September 1996. The Handbook Committee will then prepare a further presentation to Conference 1997.

It had also been agreed that the draft Handbook should be circulated to all Regional and Intergroup Chairmen.

### **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT (Monica H)**

Conference 1995 adopted the recommendation that the Fellowship would be better served by a revised Conference Committee comprising of:

1 Board Member acting as Chairman

1 Board Member for guidance, support and continuity

All the annually elected Committee Chairmen Annually elected Conference Chairman

The Committee met approximately four times during the year.

The Committee felt the need to broaden the scope of its Terms of Reference and these have been circulated throughout the Fellowship.

Next year's Committee will circulate these again and it is hoped that this will encourage the Fellowship to send questions throughout the year rather than them all arriving at the deadline, in the usual sackloads.

The organisation of Conference dealing with all questions submitted, the Conference Agenda and the Programme is now where it rightly belongs with the Fellowship through the Conference Committee.

The Committee has worked hard on our behalf and the Fellowship has appreciated receiving the Agenda earlier and welcomed the wider circulation of the support material. I would like to thank all concerned on behalf of the Fellowship and look forward to the continued success of the Conference Committee.

### **ANY OTHER BOARD BUSINESS**

Rodger informed Conference that Charlie G had replaced Harry O as Board Member with responsibility for prisons. He asked Conference to endorse the proposal that Charlie G and the National Prison Liaison Officer -England and Wales, work together over the coming year to find a way forward and report back to Conference 1997.

### **European Service Meeting 1995**

This meeting was a great success with nineteen countries attending. Much of the weekend was spent discussing self-support, literature, publications and, most importantly, country sponsorship. Each of the countries present were keen to sponsor the European countries where AA is still in its infancy, with Great Britain sponsoring Greece.

The atmosphere was one of enthusiasm and everybody shared their experience. It was encouraging to see the way that delegates helped each other out by translating difficult concepts from one language to another, for instance from English to Polish, by a Russian.

There was a deep sense of gratitude for the gift of sobriety and a common desire to carry AA's message of hope more widely and effectively to suffering alcoholics within Europe.

#### Guideline No.2 'Intergroups'

The above Guideline had been reviewed at Conference 1995, however, following this it had been brought to the attention of the Board that the paragraph on Regional Representatives had been omitted. Conference was asked to approve that this paragraph be included in the next re-print of this Guideline to which Conference agreed.

Statement by the Chairman of the General Service Board concerning the two members and the letter sent to all groups on 4 October 1995.

It has come to my notice that my letter to members of 4th October 1995 has raised some anxiety because, by the very nature of the problem, I did not set out in detail the actions to which I referred -although I did give some clear indications, and particularly mentioned the issue of the breach of anonymity .

I wish to take this opportunity of clarifying the Board's position and the reason why it was felt necessary to take the step of writing the letter .

The two individuals have, since approximately January 1994 to date, carried on a continuous campaign against individual members of the Charity, being members, office holders and Board members.

Fundamentally, their activities fall into two categories.

1. Those which constitute nit-picking as to procedure, allegations of breach of procedure and the questioning of the activities of office holders and the Board. Basically, this type of behaviour can be dealt with within the managerial system of the organisation, even to the extent of dealing with allegations to the Charity Commissioners that the Charity is being operated illegally, allegations to Companies House that the Company is operating in breach of its Memorandum and Articles, and correspondence with the Auditors challenging various aspects of the Accounts.

Having said that, the nature of the correspondence by which this campaign is pursued is so abusive, rude and on occasion allegedly defamatory that it causes anxiety and distress to those who have to deal with the matters -and, of course, raises the issue of why two members should behave in this manner within the Fellowship.

However, there is a further element to their conduct which is wholly and utterly unacceptable and which exposes them for what they are.

2. This behaviour falls into the category of sending get-well cards to members for malicious purposes, and ultimately writing letters to members at their home addresses, in breach of confidentiality by putting 'Alcoholics Anonymous' on the envelopes.

It seemed to the Board that, when there had been two instances of this behaviour (in June and September 1995), the position had arisen whereby the Board had to take action -which resulted in the letter of 4th October .

I do believe that there is nothing anybody could do to damage the Fellowship and its members with more obviousness and deliberate intent than to breach anonymity in the way done by these two.

However, as it is put to the Board by the gentlemen concerned, they invoke their right setting out what they call a 'statement of facts' upon which they wish to be heard. I quote:

“A direct attempt to discredit us by means of your letter”

“Total dishonesty by the Board in regards to the changing of the Concepts as enclosed letter from the Charity Commission points out, they are in fact precluded from acting in the administration of a charity by Section 1 (4) of the Charities Act 1993”

“The Board's failure to amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association as regards the changing of the year from 12 months to 9 in 1991”

I hope that what I have said thus far is sufficient to demonstrate to Conference the dilemma of the Board and why I wrote my letter of 4th October 1995, but finally, to deal with the points contained within the so-called 'statement of facts' by these members, the position is as follows:-

1. My letter of 4th October 1995 was not an attempt to discredit the gentlemen, but to warn members as to their activities, but if it did discredit them it is the result of their own activities - which can only have one motive.

2. There is absolutely no question of any dishonesty by the Board with regard to the changing of the Concepts, and the letter referred to from the Charity Commissioners is totally irrelevant to that allegation and in no way supports it.

3. There was no requirement in law to amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association as regards the changing of the year end from 12 months to 9 in 1991, as is evidenced by the advice received from the Auditors.

This statement is by way of explanation, and is not an introduction to a debate. The Board has decided that a debate would be inappropriate, because the issue remains the subject of advice from legal counsel and the Board does not wish to make any further statement in relation to this matter. I trust that Conference will accept that I have put this matter in good faith before you so as to clarify such anxieties as may exist, and in the hope that my letter of 4th October 1995 on

behalf of the Board is shown to have been necessary .

Conference formally approved the adoption of the Annual General Service Board Report for 1995.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1997**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Thirty-Second General Service Conference 1997:

Francy M	Scotia Region
Michael McM	South East Region
Al H	Continental European Region
David C	London Region
Debbie R	East of Scotland Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve and each gave a brief summary of their AA service background. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with the Serenity Prayer.

SATURDAY, 13 APRIL

### **WORKSHOP -"DUPLICATION OF SERVICES"**

Eddie opened the Saturday evening session with the Preamble and went on to remind all present that tonight's Workshop was a non-decision making sharing session, the theme for this having been decided upon by Conference 1994. All the Regions were asked to put together their thoughts on the matter and the Board were also asked to do the same and Monica H (Vice Chairman, GSB) was asked to open the Workshop:-

My name is Monica and I am an alcoholic and here are a few of my thoughts:

A question to Conference Committee No 3 - 1995 asked:-

"In view of the Fellowship's appeal for increased contributions would Conference consider setting up a workshop in 1996 to discuss duplication of services in the AA structure".

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee unanimously agreed that "duplication of services" was an excellent subject for a workshop and recommends that it take place in 1996.

In preparation for my contribution I asked several AA friends involved in different areas of service throughout the Fellowship to give me their interpretation of "duplication of services".

Here are some of the answers I received:

Lack of planning and co-operation at all levels of service concerning Public Information and Liaison Services.

Too many layers in the AA structure.

Not enough dialogue between neighbouring Intergroups and Region e.g. where one Health Authority is covered by several Intergroups.

What do the Board think?

Which services are duplicated? We appear to be more troubled by “gaps”.

I then re-read

“AA’s Legacy of Service” by Bill W

“Our Twelfth Step -carrying the message -is the basic service that the AA Fellowship gives; this is our principle aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, AA is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die.

Hence, an AA service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer -ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to AA’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

Services include meeting places, hospital co-operation, and Intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship”.

Bill reminded us that these services are vital to our existence and growth and that we can not make AA more simple by abolishing such services. He suggested that we ask of any given service “is this service really needed?” If it is then we must maintain it in order to reach those who need and seek AA

As a member of the General Service Board I am involved in an area of Service described by Bill as:- “One of the least understood. One which enables us to function as a whole.”

Part of my service as a Board member is to serve on the External Communications Committee, the role of which is to promote the carrying of the AA message to the professional and caring communities in an ever changing society -for instance -Government Policy changes in the National Health Service, changes in Law and Communication technology. The Committee comprises of those Board members with responsibility for different service disciplines, prisons, probation, telephones, industry, hospital and public information. There is often overlap of these services and, working as a Committee, we hope to restrict any duplication of effort. All the Board Committees need to interact with each other and co-operation is required between the Board and the General Service Office so that we do not “double up” or conversely to avoid situations where no appropriate response is made. Enquiries for information by a professional or for support in an area of AA service may require the input of more than one Board member and/or the General Service Office. Failure to co-ordinate a response or to share information can

lead to confusion and does not present a good impression of our Fellowship.

The Fellowship has become more active in its approach to National Organisations to request a presence at their National Conference or Exhibition. The initial approach is ideally made by a member of the General Service Board with the event co-ordinated by the local Intergroup or Region. In this way we have seen the Fellowship work well together involving different levels of the service structure on the same project. Regions and Intergroups have made approaches to local organisations without the need to involve the Board or G.S.O.

Experience has indicated that an approach to a national statutory or voluntary agency is best made by the Board or G.S.O. Contact with local organisations or branches of National organisations is best made by the local Intergroup or Region with the appropriate knowledge of resources. Duplicating the approach to a single contact may not only dilute our resources but confuse those we are trying to reach.

Regional Liaison Officer meetings have enabled us to share the experience of different geographical areas. Those of us attending have seen considerable commitment to the Fellowship illustrated as well as co-operation between neighbouring Intergroups and Regions. Overlap of liaison services was also highlighted.

However, these meetings are only relevant if the information shared is disseminated throughout the Fellowship e.g. in workshops at Region and Intergroup.

This evening we will hear from the Conference Delegates of our fifteen Regions their contributions to this workshop. They may be similar or totally different. They will provide information which may encourage debate and will, hopefully, stimulate questions for future Conferences. I look forward to hearing our delegates. Conference is the conscience of our Fellowship and although this is not a decision making forum we are here because we are involved in service and have a wealth of experience to share of service at Group, Intergroup, Region and Conference.

To finish I would like to share my concern that we should not try to emulate other charities or organisations. We are unique and our strength relies on this. One side of the triangle is service and a triangle requires all three sides. To quote Bill W again “we must all have the opportunity to carry the message and be involved in service, we need this for our sobriety”.

Eddie thanked Monica for her presentation and went on to invite Regions to share their experience on this topic:

#### Eastern Region

We were asked to discuss duplication of services at our five pre-conference workshops. The initial reaction of members present was that they were surprised that duplication is an issue. The most common view expressed was that there are so few people in service that there is very little chance of any duplication of services. At none of the workshops did we hear of any actual duplication but having raised the issue potential opportunities for duplication were discussed along with some experience on how they may be avoided.

Firstly, in various parts of our Region, the Intergroup boundaries do not mirror Health Service,

Probation, Social Service and British Telecom boundaries. In the south east of our Region, Essex and North Thames Intergroups overlap with regard to Health and Probation. Duplication is avoided by the experience of members aware of this situation. Social Services in Hertford covers Lea Valley, North Herts and Stort & Roding Intergroups. Liaison is through Lea Valley, Probation is run from Harlow and Stevenage and not from Hertford. British Telecom directories do not align with Intergroups. In the Fellowship entries for Lea Valley which also is published in North London directories, the names of the towns served by the Lea Valley local telephone service are included to avoid callers from out of the area choosing the number.

Region and Intergroup reports are distributed to adjoining Regions and Intergroups in order that information on service activities may be shared but there is no way of guaranteeing that this information filters to the service officers. Regional officers circulate their reports on service activities to Intergroup service officers and this provides some feedback of what is being done in the Region as a whole. Again this works well as long as there is a Regional Officer, if not then this important task may not be carried out.

Secondly, the successors of Regional and Intergroup Officers who do not complete their term of office for whatever reason, have often to start their period of service as if they are the first person ever to have carried out the service. Records are not available and there is no information on what their predecessor has been doing, who they have written to, etc. This situation may never be completely avoided but the use of an Intergroup Service Committee with all the service officers sharing about their activity and where necessary supporting one another has been found to be helpful. Also they all have some notion of what a particular officer is doing in the event that the person suddenly ceases to serve.

## London Region

The experience at London Region is that it is difficult to get members to take on service responsibilities at Intergroup and Region level. The notion of service and self-support are things that seem to be missing from a lot of members' understanding of what being a member of AA entails and what AA recovery is all about. The message does not seem to be getting into group dialogue.

### Why is this?

It may be that fewer members are being twelve-stepped into the programme but are sent from treatment centres. These places may not feel it in their best interests to explain (indeed, they may not know) how AA works.

It may be that while lots of people join AA many do not stay around and get stuck in. Thus fewer and fewer members know what service means and how important it is to continuing sobriety. There are fewer and fewer members who can pass that message to newer members. Although there is much talk about sponsoring people into service, if not enough members are around to (1) explain and (2) take on that responsibility, when someone quits and another member comes into the job, there is nothing in the way of continuity between them.

### If this is the scenario, what can be done?

It is London Region's suggestion that these matters be discussed at Intergroup and Region level.



The appropriate service officer {PI, Industrial Liaison and Hospitals) can be delegated to visit the treatment centres (hospital wards, doctors surgeries etc.) to explain how AA works and what self-help, self-support and service mean. Service officers can double up to do this necessary educational job.

Secondly service officers need to be constantly talking about service and its benefits to members and the larger community. They also need to be constantly on the lookout to bring newer people along.

Any other points?

It is London Region's feeling that we can most profitably address the topic of duplication of service from the point of view of doubling up and sponsoring into service, especially in a climate where finding anyone at all to do service is a problem. Finding two people to do one job, possibly one shadowing the other -a buddy system -can possibly be easier than finding one. When two people are sharing a responsibility they are learning something about co-operation, responsibility, dependability, accountability -just the sort of things an active alcoholic avoids like the plague.

London Region feels that AA recovery is about growing up and behaving like an adult, about everyone having the same vision about carrying the message to future generations and implementing it -putting the principles into practice. That means taking responsibility, freely giving back for what has been freely given. How can anyone know how to do that if service is not being discussed in meetings, if there are no models around? How can anyone know how to do that if members aren't being asked to, nor see the attraction in getting active?

Midlands Region

After much pondering over the title of this workshop -Duplication of Services - I feel compelled to add a few words" and how to avoid it" -because surely that is our aim?

Many examples of this spring to mind and I have no intention of boring you with a list of these as I am sure that everyone present could add to such a list. On one thing we must be agreed -that services are being duplicated in many areas throughout the Fellowship.

My first reaction to the subject is that all service is undertaken from the best of motives with the ultimate intention of bringing relief to the still suffering alcoholic. The strength and energy put into service is enough to move mountains or, if you prefer to perform miracles, for I have no doubt that nothing short of a miracle has brought me to the point where I can stand here tonight addressing you, instead of being the shambling wreck which I was a number of years ago.

So -we have, on the one hand, enormous efforts and on the other we have waste, for what else is duplication of services but waste? Waste of energy, waste of talent, waste of time -all of which could be better used in the further spread of the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The causes of this waste? I find it difficult to apportion blame of any sort, certainly to any individual because I firmly believe in the good intentions already mentioned. To seek to blame is to add to the waste which we can already ill afford. It would be more profitable to examine the root cause and, in this direction, I feel that the major defect must be that which besets almost any

organisation -lack of communication. First of all, the Board must speak to Regions, Region Delegates must speak to their Intergroups, General Service representatives must report fully to their groups and last, but by no means least, groups must speak to their neighbouring groups.

If this could be done on a regular and thorough basis I have no doubt that we, as a Fellowship, could almost eradicate duplication. Multiple approaches, e.g. to Health Authorities whose boundaries do not coincide with our own, could be avoided and, possibly even more important, good ideas generated by one group could be improved by sharing with another.

This, so far, deals with duplication of services within the Fellowship, but another thought occurred to me when writing this paper. This may be controversial, but Conference is no stranger to controversy, and so I dare to voice it. What about duplication of services outside the Fellowship but involving the Fellowship, even if indirectly? I refer, merely as an example, to services in Prisons.

I am trying to do so, as far as I can without any personal experience, to see this from the point of view of the prisoner who is subject to advice, counselling, exhortation, help -call it what you will -from many sources, Prison Officers, Probation Officers, Alcohol Problems Advisers, Prison Visitors, Chaplains and Alcoholics Anonymous. Imagine the confusion!

Once again, the solution seems for all the agencies involved to talk to each other. It may be difficult to break down barriers but, from personal experiences, I know that this can be done. Locally, in Derby, we have had a meeting with Derby A.P.A.S.; we had a frank discussion and exchange of views. Many misconceptions were corrected and local groups have had referrals from D.A.P.A.S. and this agency has been mentioned to people who came to meetings and found that they were not alcoholic although drinking was causing them problems.

In conclusion ..... there is no conclusion, only a humble suggestion –share your intention of service with other Members, Groups, Intergroups, Regions, the Board or even other agencies. By doing so you may find your service improved, enriched, spread further -or even unnecessary.

#### North West Region

When I was “asked” to prepare a report on this subject, my immediate reaction was to write down what I thought of it. Then I realised that it is the views of the Region that matter and not mine. When I asked one member their thoughts on this subject I was met with blank stares. ‘What do you mean’ was the question from most. What do we mean?

Over the last few years it has been necessary to create new officers within AA e.g. Share Liaison, Archive Officer etc. This has been needed to preserve AAs history and the more efficient running of AA. By that I mean making more use of all available means of carrying the message. The more recent and needed, was the implementation of Industrial Liaison Officer. This was a field (and in some areas still is) covered by P.I. but it became increasingly clear that the workload of the P.I. would be reduced by this position, and also would have someone dealing solely with this area of carrying the message to industry and specialising in the field. Thereby dealing with the need for Industry. Here a problem arises, for example Occupational Nurses, although they are incorporated in large firms, who should deal with them? Well naturally the I.L.O., but what about when they have their own meetings? outside working hours. If they require an AA speaker at one of these meetings does the H.L.O. or P.I. become involved?

Conference has on the agenda the erecting of a Health Liaison Officer, instead of having a Hospital Liaison Officer. This would give the person more scope, especially with the Care in the Community Act introduced in 1994, and would cover every area of health and not confining it solely to Hospitals. There would be a clearly defined perimeter between P.I., Industrial Liaison and Health. It is a means of efficiently using the resources AA has.

Several Intergroups in the North West Region have Tradition Five terms to cover all our services. Each Intergroup Officer encourages group members to become involved. This also reduces the flack of the "Lone Wolf" the person who goes out to spread the message of AA without telling anyone, and without reading the guidelines or Traditions. Team work would seem to be an answer, and also good communication. Also the excellent draft from Scotland on combined workshops should be noted.

The only concern from North West Region was, in creating a Health Liaison Officer, would his workload increase, and if so, would he need to create a working party similar to C.P.C?

### South East Region

Bearing in mind the workshop for Saturday night at Conference, the South East Region had a combined services workshop on 25 February (having been thwarted by the snow in January!).

Present at that meeting were representatives from Prisons, Probation, Industry, Hospitals and Public Information.

It was made quite clear that close co-operation between all branches of service result in a far greater ability to carry the message. All the Intergroups (nine in all) in the South East Region have certain similarities in the way they are carrying out their duties.

I can speak with confidence on Southdown Intergroup as I am Secretary of that Intergroup. There is a PI meeting on a specific day of each quarter. Whilst calling it a PI meeting, it is in fact called by the Public Information Liaison Officer and is chaired by her, but all disciplines are present. Anyone else who might be interested is also free to attend. The meeting is a sharing meeting where the sharing is done round the table, starting with Public Information and then going through all the other Liaison Officers (although not Telephone, up until now). These meetings are usually quite small and very friendly and it is very easy for some one who is new in their job to share any doubts they might have about the right way to go about something. By sharing in this way it is also much easier to see where there might be a gap between disciplines, or where there is an overlap. In these days of the Government re-organisation of the Health Service and the reduction of hospital treatment this is very important.

Other Intergroups felt that if care was not exercised a talk shop would develop. Some felt that GSRs should be involved. Mid Surrey has a system of two teams one each for PI and Hospitals, with a lot of co-operation between the two, but the Liaison Officer who told us about it was far from keen to put the whole idea in writing for Region.

Generally it is felt that newcomers to the service area should be encouraged to attend combined workshops, so that they could see what being involved in service would mean, and how much it all helps in carrying the message in different ways to the still suffering alcoholic. All Liaison

Officers should present a job description. The demarcation lines are becoming increasingly blurred -where, for instance would you put Social Services, and should nurses come under Industry, Hospitals or PI?

The Telephone Liaison Officers did not attend combined workshops in any of the Intergroups and it was felt that this was a mistake which should be rectified. Most important for AA members doing daytime telephone service is to know who to refer a query from the public to.

Also need to bear in mind that in dealing with the public we are not dealing with the areas in our own Intergroups or even Regions -for instance, British Rail is covered by unions who have divided the whole network into four Regions. Therefore the combined workshops should be ready to work with workshops in other Intergroups/Regions.

Quite a few people said that they had felt quite isolated in their job before linking up with other Liaison Officers. The other enormous advantage in a combined team is that there are no gaps when there are vacancies for Liaison Officers which have to be filled.

I noticed that in Southdown Intergroup it is sometimes difficult to persuade Intergroup Liaison Officers that they must attend Region Workshops and that they seemed to feel they did not know anyone else, and could not see the value of interchange with other Liaison Officers.

It is my Region's opinion that only good can come out of combined workshops.

#### South Midlands Region

In Great Britain our Fellowship is actively served, we are given to understand, by some six to eight per cent of its membership. It is, therefore, vital that at every level of service duplication of work is avoided wherever possible.

Moreover, when it comes to external services we want and need to make the best impression on our friends "out there". Most will know little of AA and many will have good reason to doubt our intentions and ability. So we need to be really "up together" and to display a professional image at all times. Probably the best way to do this is to avoid duplication of services.

Taken at its simplest level there is little opportunity and less reason for duplication within the group. If the six-to-eight per cent figure is correct, and the average group membership is ten, then it is clear that some groups have not a single serving officer and many groups must have just one. It is difficult to see how those groups can fulfil their primary purpose. It has become increasingly clear that there are many advantages to multi-meeting groups, so we need to encourage small groups and those with inadequate numbers of trusted servants to join together. This would both improve the efficiency of our service structure and release others to work elsewhere in AA.

At Intergroup level we have further complications. I come from a city of fewer than half a million people, but that city has two Intergroups. Why? one asks, when Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester each get by with one, and areas with greater populations, diversity and possible reasons have only one each.

Clearly there is no way we can split the administrative area of local government with its attendant

services of police, probation and the courts; schools and social services. The Prison service and the various National Health Trusts require the combined service help of both Intergroups, and the Chamber of Commerce does not recognise our arbitrary boundary. Not content with two Intergroups each struggling to find officers, we boast with misplaced pride an autonomous telephone office, that although its voracious appetite for money is quenched with AA funds, can not find the necessary volunteers; and so it operates only a very limited service of questionable value. Here, surely is duplication of service structure taken to a degree where both our truly vital resources of money and humankind are stretched to the very limit and beyond, and with predictable results. I contend that one Intergroup, carefully using its scarce resources and following Conference recommendations would be vastly more efficient.

In contrast let us look briefly at what happens in our Region. We have, for some time, been working towards the concept of the simplified service structure as outlined at this Conference in 1994. Then Conference recommended the formation of service committees to deal with external communications, internal communications and finance. The result of implementing this at Region has been outstanding and produced very positive results. The precious time, formerly devoted to individual reporting is now spent on consultation and collective exchange of information -duplication becomes inexcusable when you know what your neighbour is doing, and, of course, this makes the assemblies more lively and interesting, and encourages Intergroup officers to attend, which not only avoids duplication but exchanges ideas and sponsors into service.

From what I've said you would be right to assume that we believe that the General Service Board's decision to work in this manner has helped enormously, and we can not help thinking that in future this Conference would do well to adopt the same principle. The detail of just how will be up to others, but we are very aware that our resources throughout the Fellowship are, and no doubt always will be, limited. It is this and the fact that we must learn to operate with a competent and efficient approach if we want to work with professionals, that obliges us to avoid at every level duplication of service.

### South West Region

I was asked by Patrick P to prepare a short paper giving either my own or my Region's views concerning possible, wasteful duplication of effort in the service structure of the Fellowship. What follows is a personal view based on my own experience in the Fellowship as there was insufficient time available to consult with a representative selection of the Members of my Region.

In 1975 or thereabouts the original Southwest Intergroup ("SWIG") split in two. The newly constituted SWIG took in the whole of Dorset, the Salisbury area of Wiltshire, a Hampshire group on the edge of the Bournemouth/Poole urban area and two small East Somerset groups which soon found their way into a more appropriate geographical home. The Hampshire group subsequently allied itself with the Solent Intergroup based in Southampton.

The new SWIG was blessed with dedicated Officers, in particular, the first Chairman, Bill D and the Treasurer, Frank C who was later a Board Member. Bill set up a cohesive structure of teams dealing with public information and the rest. We had an excellent relationship with the Samaritans who looked after a dedicated AA telephone line dealing with Twelfth Step calls which were passed on to AA contacts promptly and discreetly. The message was carried

vigorously and with good effect.

When the present South West Region was formed, SWIG became the Wessex Intergroup and carried on the good work. The key posts were always filled by sober, enthusiastic members without too much difficulty. Probably due to the diverse nature of the Intergroup there was little "Factionalism".

About five years ago the number of groups had grown to about 40. In the face of some resistance a decision was taken to form three new Intergroups from the existing Wessex Intergroup. These consisted of :

West Dorset (in effect the county and seaside areas away from the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation);

Bournemouth (formed mainly, but not exclusively, from Groups based within the Borough of Bournemouth);

Poole (Groups within the Borough of Poole and the smaller towns and villages on the outskirts of the conurbation).

All three of the Intergroups came within the County of Dorset. The Poole and Bournemouth Intergroups shared an area with common administrative services; for example the same Health Authority , Central Government Services, Probation Service, Telephone Area etc. West Dorset has, in the main, its own local service structure to deal with.

All three Intergroups continue to share and finance a local telephone service which had been formed after the Samaritans indicated they no longer wished to carry our burden. The service is not only effective, it is a model of co-operation which has served the area excellently for several years. Its Officers are drawn from the various Intergroups mainly "promoted through the ranks" needing only confirmation by the Intergroups without any jealousy as to which Intergroup should occupy which post.

The Poole and Bournemouth Intergroups have a total membership of 32 meetings. 21 of these are attached to Bournemouth and the remainder to Poole. Some of the groups are numerically weak and some, mainly in Bournemouth, have a large proportion of members from treatment centres and half-way houses.

A considerable number of members attend groups in both Intergroups. An educated guess at the combined Membership of the two Intergroups is 400 to 450. Each Intergroup still tries to find its full complement of Officers; the present number in the Guidelines is eleven. 22 Officers and 32 GSR's plus 32 sets of Group Officers must be nearly half the sober Membership of the two Intergroups.

The division of the Intergroups has brought increased participation at grass roots level because of the local nature and more members have been brought into service. However, many of the Officers from the two Intergroups are competing for the attention of the same audience.

This situation is not healthy. The small size of the Intergroups means that there is a danger of members lacking in experience and length of sobriety being pushed into positions beyond their

capabilities, with possible adverse consequences both to the members concerned and public perception of the Fellowship. Where, as in the case of West Dorset, there is a strong local identity, there is a good case for having a small but cohesive local Intergroup. With the other two Intergroups serving a common conurbation with shared services, I consider the duplication is wasteful and much of the PI effort should merge (as probably should the Intergroups, although there is much local pride at stake).

The problem seems to have arisen from the supposition that an Intergroup should not have more than 25 groups in membership. In a conurbation with fewer than half a million inhabitants this does not seem to be a practical proposition. I guess that our situation is not unique.

I am sure our founders did not anticipate that we would treat concepts and guidelines as rules and regulations to be followed slavishly. This, to me, seems to be our present danger.

### Wales and Borders Region

At the end of our Regional meeting in December last, unknown to me as I wasn't listening to what was being discussed, I agreed to submit to Conference our Regions views on "Duplication of Services". As I've procrastinated over the months unable to give my Regions view, wondering what on earth we meant last year by duplication of services this thought kept coming to mind. That I will be for ever grateful for AA's duplication of services. For no matter where I go in Britain, or indeed the World, I will be able to find a group not dissimilar to my home group. Upon entering I will be met by a friend who has never met me before and yet knows me. Another will be making tea and coffee, others will be GSR's, Intergroup Officers, Delegate to Region and Conference, and many others who have been there, done it, got the badge and as is the case in our Region made the video. Long may these duplications continue for quite simply I could not have been here without them.

Yet I'm sure last year we must have meant something else. Since we as a Region were unable, due to a lack of time, to discuss this theme before March, I can share my Intergroup's, that is West Wales, experience.

Four years ago numbers going to our PICPC Group of Intergroup had dropped and as a result filling liaison posts was next to impossible. It was suggested that the PICPC become a Committee with a few simple guidelines, one being when you attended you were a member of the Committee. All activities were then as they are now co-ordinated through the Chairperson and Secretary. Speakers are appointed to fulfil specific visits, certain areas targeted and letters written by volunteers, all responses reported back to the Committee. The only officers with specific duties are the Telephone and Literature Co-ordinators. Care is taken when approaching say a Health Authority that once contact is made to ensure continuity, further contact wherever possible is made by the same person. For example our Intergroup has attended a Task Group set up by the Pembrokeshire NHS Trust for four years and always one of two AA's attend invariably accompanied by an observer from the Committee. This system has removed to a large degree any confusion occurring between duties such as Hospital or Health Liaison Officers. Having tried this at PICPC level the next step was to adopt it at Intergroup. Due to distance our PICPC has had to be split into North and South. With seventy miles separating the two extremes of the Intergroup asking Liaison Officers to attend monthly evening meetings or arranging talks proved cumbersome, so Intergroup became a committee structure bearing in mind Conference 94's recommendations Committee 2, Question 5 even though we do not have three Committees it

operates as one. Named contact Officers are achieved by again having a Telephone, Literature plus a Share Officer, all other aspects go through the PICPC Chairperson.

At Region we have discussed, argued and prayed for over two years before adopting the three committee structure. The Chairpersons of the three committees are the contact names for our Region. It is early days and we are still learning, but as time goes on and members of the Fellowship become aware of the Officers and the areas they cover, greater use will be made of them. This structure cannot prevent loose cannons going off on their own and doing their own thing, it certainly in time will lead to less "Duplication of Services". It is hoped we as a Region will be more streamlined, have less paperwork with a simpler structure and therefore better able to carry AA's message.

#### East of Scotland Region

A service structure using committees could be used at Intergroup level if sufficient talent was available on the ground. One member would have the responsibility of reporting to both Intergroup and Regional Assembly. This would preferably be the Regional delegate. All manner of services could be covered this way, bearing in mind that although only one member of the committee would have the responsibility for reporting to Intergroup and Region, there would be an overlap of experience and knowledge on the subject in hand should the unforeseen happen to that member, and it would also give stability to ongoing services in as much as a fresh head would not be thrown in at the deep end without any knowledge of the situation or the responsibilities the position carries.

Region Five however decided at the pre-conference meeting that this subject requires discussion with an open mind.

Quote. Bill W and Dr Bob and the Old Timers handed over to the New Trustees in 1950 what we have today, one reason for which was they recognised that they themselves were not invulnerable.

Following the 1988 Conference recommendation, Committee No.5 -(report on progress made in contacts with Probation Services -England and Wales and Social Works Department -Scotland) the appointment of a Court Liaison Officer with volunteers in committee would hopefully cover all aspects of liaison at Prison, Police, Probation, Magistrate and Sheriff Courts, Legal Profession and Social Work Dept. This was a recommendation made at a recent Combined Services Meeting at Perth.

With the implementation of the Community Care Act -Hospital Liaison officer could now be changed to Health Liaison Officer with a view to covering local Hospitals, the Community Care Centres that are springing up, Doctors' surgeries and Health Centres.

A Public Information Officer would cover all local aspects such as Citizens Advice Bureau, local Alcohol Advisory Services, poster libraries etc, on the principle of co-operation without affiliation.

In reference to the Scottish Service Committee -in a letter dated 19th February 1996 to the Scottish Service Office, Region Five proposed that Scottish Service Committee responsibilities be undertaken by serving Regional Liaison Officers on a rotated basis. Each Region would



monitor its own particular service(s) for a period of time decided by Scottish Service Office. This would reduce by half the number of reps required to visit York and each Region would be responsible to report to Combined Service Meetings on their own particular services.

This would also equal out the vast East West divide that exists in Scotland and would give a feeling of equilibrium to all Regions in decision making.

### Continental European Region

Because we lie as an English speaking Alcoholics Anonymous in an area that is covered by several other General Service Offices we are a bit of an anomaly throughout Europe. Our service structure has recently been re-organised and this started about two years ago, so as part of this re-organisation we ended up taking a look at the service structure at that time. It was almost like starting all over again from the previous structure -the bottom line was that the duplication of services to us didn't seem to be an issue. We just wanted to say that as part of the re-organisation it enabled us to take a fresh look at ourselves and the other part of it is that we cannot find enough people to fill the slots that we have got -we are spread so thinly geographically and by numbers.

In closing, the primary thing that has helped with us is communication. The communication has increased ten-fold in the last two years and it has led to the only area we identified, which was printing phone numbers for the different help lines so that they all got printed in one place by one of the Intergroups, and the cost was borne by all the Intergroups saving an annual \$1600-\$2000.

Once again, the bottom line with us is that we just don't have enough people to do everything.

### Glasgow Region

In the early eighties duplication within the services was an extreme problem, several reasons being individual members crossing over into other Intergroup areas carrying AA's message.

Other problems arose because individual members were unprepared and ignorant of their own particular duties within their own service, and also there was an enormous problem with the growth of the number of Intergroups within the Glasgow Region.

Glasgow Region being aware of the ongoing problems at the time put together a committee to work along the lines of reducing the Intergroups from nine down to three. This would no doubt not only eradicate some problems that we were experiencing, but would benefit the Region and the Fellowship as a whole. This exercise has proved a success. (4 Intergroups)

The Region then looked at other ways of eradicating problems by putting in place Conference Recommendations for Workshops, where the liaison officers from both the Region and the Intergroups could participate and iron out any difficulties that would arise, and to liaise with each other on a more regular basis.

The next step was to introduce and encourage the Intergroups to adhere to Guideline 11 P.I.C.P.C. This led to the umbrella system where all services work along side each other and also assist each other wherever possible.

Multi Meeting Groups are being encouraged and the Region will continue to press ahead with this Conference recommendation as we go along.

The Region also put into place, through the efforts of its Board member, meetings for all delegates/alternates to Conference, these delegates meet at least five times before Conference to deliberate over questions and then have a pre conference meeting to bring on board a broader perspective from all Groups and Intergroups. This not only benefits and prepares the delegates well, but it also reflects the input to the Conference from the Region.

The Scottish Combined Services Group and its officers decided that a job description was necessary to assist those who may be coming into service at Intergroup level, and this would ensure that no duplication would arise in the future. This action will hopefully be rubber stamped in the months ahead.

At this present moment in time, there is no duplication within the services within the Glasgow Region, and we will continue to be vigilant to ensure that we do not go back to having any serious problems.

If Guideline 11 is adhered to and an umbrella committee is formed duplication is removed.

Regular workshops at Regional and Intergroup level also help as does adhering to local job descriptions.

Standard letters should be used for all services.

Amalgamation of Intergroups i.e. as in Glasgow Region where ten Intergroups were amalgamated to four. This has helped tremendously.

Liaison Officers at Regional level should meet regularly with Intergroup Liaison Officers.

Clear communication is vital.

Conference delegates and alternate delegates are important in passing on various matters from Regional level to Intergroup and then to Group level. This helps to foster two way communication as do pre-conference and post conference meetings.

Scotia Region

To avoid or try to avoid some of this and to help in carrying the message of recovery that Alcoholics Anonymous has to offer, Scotia Region has started a combined services meeting which meets every two months and reports to Region.

This is made up of Region Service Liaison and Intergroup Service Officers. All work being done in their Intergroup is reported and discussed, each service then knows what the other is doing. Workshops are also held, this also encourages other people to be sponsored into service.

As Scotia Region has just started this we are still having problems of getting Intergroups interested. All this looks good on paper and works well. In some areas distance seems to be the problem, but in saying that I have to watch what excuses I can come up with, I must always

remember unity and to go to any length. The cost of those committees must also be kept firmly in mind.

There is a jobs description paper being made out, this will also help to avoid duplication. Everyone will know what each job is and again help anyone interested in service, and what that service means. The guidelines of Alcoholics Anonymous are also there to help us. They are constantly being updated, if everyone is aware of the guidelines or hold workshops on them, this will also avoid duplication of services.

Forever remembering Tradition Four.

South West Scotland Region

Q: What can be done to eliminate the duplication that presently exists within the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous?

ANSWER

This has been discussed at Group level, Intergroup level, and Regional level. One of the main problems discussed is the amount of workshops at higher level and the reporting of these such meetings, etc. back to the heart of AA.

Inaccurate contents in reporting to and from Board, Region, Intergroup and Groups can lead to misinformation being given in reports throughout the structure. Also, many reports are diluted and may be highlighted on a personal basis, rather than all round information.

The Board members and GSO seem to be slightly distant from the workings at root level. The majority of AAs would desire to be informed about the type of people who contact GSO and the nature of their enquiries. It is felt that this practice adds or subtracts work to the Fellowship. Other problems arising are due to the majority of the whole structure, i.e. group registration forms not kept up to date, the Where to Find not kept up to date, the Confidential Directory not kept up to date, and above all the time lapse between meetings and reporting, sometimes means that the information is obsolete.

Here are some of the suggestions which could help minimise duplication:

Groups should regularly be reminded of the need to keep GSO fully informed of all changes as and when they occur. Members should stress the importance of taking GSB, Region, Intergroup reports back to groups. The groups should frequently ask questions of the structure from their group representative.

GSO to issue summary minutes of Board meetings. Also, they should distribute minutes of the World Service Meetings to see what is happening around the world. This could be done on a more frequent basis than is being done at present. The members would also like to know what goes on at the office between Board meetings. It has also been suggested that the Chairman or the General Secretary could be seen more at National Conventions and perhaps make themselves known by giving a short introduction.

Lastly, and most importantly, the encouragement of workshops to be held at local level rather

than meetings at York. Upon completion of these workshops, prompt reports should be sent to York with decisions taken and ideas of improvements of service.

It has been strongly felt that people should go through their Intergroup structure with the nature of their enquiry. It is felt that by approaching Intergroup rather than York, the practice of AA will be carried out to the letter. This will help to eliminate duplication that is unnecessary, i.e. questions for Conference, which is one of the major duplications that is time consuming and financially expensive. We of AA who have drafted this letter in response to the Board's request, hope that this will be a start towards the end of duplication in AA.

Eddie thanked all the Regions for their contributions and reminded us that our aim was to improve service delivery. He then invited other members to share their experiences with the meeting.

## **BOARD MATTERS**

At this stage further discussion took place on Board matters carried over from Friday evening:

Statement by the Chairman of the General Service Board concerning the two members and the letter sent to all groups on 4 October 1995.

A minority opinion was presented to Conference by one member. Conference acknowledged the right for a minority opinion to be heard, but overwhelmingly endorsed the statement presented to Conference on Friday evening.

### **Prison Liaison**

Conference was asked to confirm the proposal that the new Board Member for Prison Liaison and the National Prison Liaison Officer -England and Wales work together to find a way forward and report back to Conference 1997.

Telephone 0345 Pilot Scheme

Following the presentation on Friday evening, the two recommendations were again put forward:-

- 1) that Conference should extend the trial for a further 2 years
- 2) that Conference allow the trial to expand geographically to include South West, South Midlands, London and Eastern Regions or parts thereof, if they so wish, and provided they have existing 'remote call forwarding' (or equivalent) networks with experienced responders providing 24 hour coverage, British Telecom can arrange for all calls to be paid for by the Regions/Intergroups direct.

After discussion Conference recommended that the second recommendation be accepted and a progress report be made annually to Conference.

The meeting ended around 10.15pm with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SUNDAY, 14 APRIL**

The final session of Conference commenced with a few moments silence following which Eddie read the Preamble. As agreed at last year's Conference each recommendation will be voted on and whether or not it is a two-thirds majority will be recorded. Also, it had been agreed by the Conference Committee that the Committee Secretaries would act as tellers if required.

Eddie then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included in this report on the pages indicated below:

Committee No. 1	Pages 43-44
Committee No. 2	Pages 45 - 46
Committee No. 3	Pages 47 - 53
Committee No. 4	Pages 54- 61
Committee No. 5	Pages 62 - 63
Committee No. 6	Pages 64 - 66

At this point Rodger P, GSB Chairman, thanked Eddie for his excellent Chairmanship over the weekend and for all his hard work over the past year with the Conference Committee. He went on to say "every Conference is a sad moment on the Sunday because we have people who are leaving Conference, they have come to the end of their term. Now, obviously, I don't want to mention delegates, that is the privilege of our Conference Chairman, but as Chairman of the Board I would like to take this opportunity of, first of all, welcoming those four new Board Members that I mentioned on Friday night, and ask them to stand so that those who have not seen them, can do so -we look forward to their future contribution.

"After that happy note we go on to a slightly sadder note, as we are saying goodbye to three Board Members who have served this Fellowship and the Board exceedingly well. However, we know we will be in touch, and knowing this Fellowship, we will bump into each other again. Farewell to Thelma (South West), Peter (South West Scotland) and George (Glasgow Region).

"Having said goodbye to our Board Members, there is somebody else that is here today to attend their last Conference, that person has attended sixteen Conferences on behalf of this Fellowship as delegate, Board Member and member of the General Service Office staff, and for those of you looking round thinking 'who must have survived those sixteen?' may I very proudly ask Jill M, Assistant General Secretary, to stand and receive some flowers from us all for all her contribution. Thank you -Jill".

Rodger then returned Conference to the Conference Chairman.

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1997**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and, after a vote, Al H (Continental European Region} was duly elected.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

In closing, Eddie R, Conference Chairman said he could not thank everyone enough for being given this opportunity and that it had been a great experience. At first he had been a bit apprehensive, had nightmares about what might go wrong, but those attending had made it easy for him and everything had run smoothly.

He went on to express his appreciation to the staff at the University for their efficiency and hard work, and all the staff at GSO for their considerable contribution towards the undoubted success of the weekend.

Conference 1996 ended with everyone joining hands and the saying of the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Thirty-Second General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Alcuin College, University of York on 11-13 April 1997.

## **THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1996**

**COMMITTEE NO.1**                      **CHAIRMAN:**                      **SUE A**                      **LONDON REGION**  
**SECRETARY:**                      **KEVIN D**                      **HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Bearing in mind our Seventh Tradition, would Conference recommend discontinuing all free pamphlets, literature, etc., from GSO, and Intergroups to new Groups?**

No, we do not recommend discontinuing free literature. Tradition Seven states , AA groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal.' (Tradition Seven, Long Form.)

**2. In view of the recent financial history of the Fellowship, would Conference recommend the advocating of covenanted contributions as a stable source of income?**

No, we could not recommend this as a stable source of income to the Fellowship. Although covenants are of value, our emphasis should be to follow the structure of AA by making donations to the pot and thus through Intergroups and Regions to GSO.

**3. Would Conference review the following leaflets:**

- (a) AA at a Glance and Students Guide to AA with particular reference to titles, colour, print and updating of statistics in the former; and**
- (b) Would Conference review the 'free' AA literature currently available and make recommendations; and**
- (c) The leaflet 'The Problem Drinker in Employment, The AA Solution' is a very useful**

**tool in Industrial liaison. Would Conference recommend a paragraph being included on the use of the AA Poster and Contact Card on notice boards at workplaces so that the employee with a “drink problem” can find help without going through the official process?**

We recommend that a sub-committee with expertise from within the Fellowship be formed to look at leaflets and pamphlets and produce drafts and report back to Conference for approval at Conference 1997 in respect of (a) and (b). With respect to (c) we further recommend that the proposed paragraph be included in the leaflet.

**4. In view of the attached, would Conference make recommendations on the practice of members advising other members, particularly newcomers, on matters of a medical nature with particular regard to prescribed medication.**

This Committee recommends that members of AA should not, under any circumstances, meddle in the relationship between doctor and patient, especially in matters of treatment and medication. AA's position is and should always be non-interference in such matters.

‘Our society therefore will prudently cleave to its single purpose; the carrying of the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled us to do well in one area we are destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody.’ (AA Comes Of Age page 232.)

It also recommends an addition to the ‘Hints for Twelfth-Steppers’. Do not advise about medication. It has absolutely nothing to do with us.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Jim F (Scotia Region) as Chairman of Committee No.1 for Conference 1997.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected William McC (Glasgow Region) as Secretary of Committee No.1 for Conference 1997.

All recommendations on Committee No.1 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority

THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1996

COMMITTEE NO.2 -  
SECRETARY:

CHAIRMAN:FRANCY M  
MARY S

SCOTIA REGION  
LONDON REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Conference 1994 recommended that the following question be re-considered at Conference 1996:**

**In order to operate more effectively the General Service Board has adopted a service structure using Committees:**

e.g    **Finance/General Purposes**  
      **Internal Communications**  
      **External Communications**

**Would Conference consider how this structure would affect Conference. (Please refer to Conference 1994, Committee 2, Question 5).**

The Committee feels that the service structure adopted by the General Service Board is not presently suitable for the General Service Conference and would be unworkable.

2.        Conference 1987 (Committee 4 Question 8) asked ‘Has the move of the General Service Office to York caused any particular problems?’ The answer was ‘No’. Now 9 years on is this answer still correct?

Having reviewed all available information the Committee feel that the 1987 answer is still correct.

**3.        In the light of the widespread mis-use of copyright due to the advances made in Desktop Publishing, should Groups, Intergroups or Regions be involved in the reproduction of:**

- |                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>(a) the AA logo for</b>       | <b>(i)    Internal use</b> |
|                                  | <b>(ii)   External use</b> |
| <b>(b) AA literature for</b>     | <b>(i)    Internal use</b> |
|                                  | <b>(ii)   External use</b> |
| <b>(c) non AA literature for</b> | <b>(i)    Internal use</b> |
|                                  | <b>(ii)   External use</b> |

**Make recommendations.**

(a)        The Committee recommends that no logos be used at Group, Intergroup or Regional level for internal or external communications. However, if the use of the logo registered to the charity (viz. , circle enclosing triangle with the words, ‘Unity’, ‘Service’, ‘Recovery’) is sought, written permission must be obtained from the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

(b)        The Committee recommends that no AA literature be reproduced by Individuals, Groups, Intergroups or Regions for either internal or external use. Extracts for use in newsletters or bulletins may be reproduced in accordance with AA Service Manual page S104. (1994-1995 Edition.)

(c)        The Committee recommends that non-AA literature should not be reproduced for internal or external use.

**4.        Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Mary S (London Region) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1997.



## 5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1997.

The Committee elected Nigel O (Wales & Borders Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1997.

All recommendations on Committee No.2 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority

THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1996

**COMMITTEE NO.3 CHAIRMAN: MICHAEL McN      SOUTH EAST REGION**  
**SECRETARY:            NORELLA B                                    EASTERN REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble,

### 1. Would Conference review draft Guideline No.1 and make recommendations.

The Committee reviewed draft Guideline No.1 and recommended the attached.

**2. There is a growing tendency for AA members to belong to ‘new-wave’ Twelfth-Step Fellowships and for these matters to be talked about at AA meetings. Clearly, what any member does outside of AA meetings in pursuit of personal recovery is a matter for that individual -and AA expressly does not have any opinion on the value or otherwise of any other organisation. However, it is likely that there is a good deal of experience and feeling on this issue within the Fellowship. Would Conference please share its collective view and, if appropriate, give guidance for the benefit of groups.**

After sharing our collective experience the Committee strongly recommends:

a) That the following should be read after the Preamble at a closed meeting:

‘This is a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. In support of AA’s singleness of purpose, attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking. If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you are welcome to attend this meeting. We ask that when discussing our problems we confine ourselves to those problems as they relate to alcoholism’.

b) That the following should be read after the Preamble at open meetings:

‘This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are glad you are all here -especially newcomers. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states that “The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking”, we ask that all who participate confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol’. (1987 GSC New York).

c) That the previous statements are made freely available to the Fellowship on a printed card.

d) That the Board re-circulate to all groups the attached ‘Blanket Therapy’ letter.

### **3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Marie AA (East of Scotland Region) as Chairman of Committee No.3 for Conference 1997.

### **4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Sally J (Midlands Region) as Secretary of Committee No.3 for Conference 1997.

All recommendations on Committee No.3 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority

## **DRAFT No 1**

### **GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain**

From General Service Office, PO Box 1, Stonebow House, Stonebow, York, YO1 2NJ

### **GROUP MEETINGS**

**No1 REVISED APRIL 1996**

Tradition 3 (Long Form). Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

Tradition 4 (Long Form). With respect to its own affairs, each AA group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighbouring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect AA as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

TYPES OF MEETINGS: Whilst a group is free to hold any type of meeting its members decide, groups must work within AA's Traditions and Guidelines. Our experience indicates that we must exercise certain precautions at our meetings or risk collapse.

THE CLOSED MEETING is for alcoholics only. Usually these are informal discussions devoted to members' problems and questions, the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Concepts, topics suggested by articles in the magazines 'Share', 'Roundabout', 'Grapevine' etc. Many other formats are used, but common to all meetings is the sharing of the experience, strength and hope of its members.

THE OPEN MEETING is one at which non-members (partners, friends, other interested people ie doctors, clergymen and social workers etc) may attend.

It is the practice in many cases for a chairman to introduce speakers who tell what they were like, what happened and what they are like now. This provides ready opportunity for identification, and illustrates the possibility of personal recovery .

Some groups feel it is important to balance the programme making sure that both men and women members, young and old in years and in sobriety, are on the panel of speakers. The chairman and speakers are, of course, all members of AA, but in any subsequent discussion, participation by non-members is welcome.

THE MULTI-MEETING GROUP is an AA group that accepts responsibility for providing more than one meeting per week. The General Service Conference has recommended the establishment of such groups where favourable circumstances exist and the group conscience approves. Examples of such circumstances are:

- a) where premises are already shared by groups or where a number of groups meet in the same area
- b) where growing numbers result in the group proposing a new meeting
- c) where there is a shortage of group officers e.g. in rural areas with a number of small groups.

Because multi-meeting groups require fewer officers, they can be an effective means of freeing members to become involved in other service activities.

THE GROUP CONSCIENCE AND BUSINESS MEETINGS. There remain further types of meetings that should be mentioned here, which are sometimes overlooked but can play an important part in our group progress. We refer to the group conscience and business meetings. Some groups schedule special sessions, several times a year. For this purpose as distinct from the usual closed meeting, depending on the wishes of the members, this may precede or follow the normal meeting or, on the other hand, a separate session may be arranged.

Most members feel more at home in one particular group than in others, and consider it their home group where they accept responsibilities and try to sustain friendships. They do not meddle in the business or policy of groups which they visit in which they would accept no service assignments.

These meetings provide an opportunity for the group officers to report on such matters as progress, future plans, Intergroup matters and the financial position. The group may take this occasion as an opportunity to appoint its officers and to conduct a group conscience meeting which usually takes the form of a group inventory .

THE PUBLIC MEETING places emphasis on informing the general public about AA. These are speaker-type meetings. Invitations are issued to persons who may have a specific interest such as doctors, social workers, clergymen and others who may have cause to refer to AA in the course of their daily work. In addition to the member-chairman and speakers, a guest is usually invited, frequently a well-known personality working in the field of alcoholism, or perhaps an Al-Anon member to outline the family aspect. Such a meeting is an excellent way to celebrate group anniversaries.

THE SHARED PLATFORM. An AA meeting where non AA speakers are involved should be chaired by an AA member. Tickets and programmes should include explanation as to whether Al-Anon/AIateen speakers are involved.

## THE ANONYMITY TRADITION

At open, public, and shared platform meetings, it is considered advisable to stress the importance of our Anonymity Tradition No 11 as a precaution should any members of the press or other communication media be present.

AA members remain anonymous in public for two reasons:

1. Our promise of privacy to the still-suffering alcoholic and family, and
2. A spiritual reason summed up in Tradition 12 or in the word humility .

## PARTICIPATION

The sole purpose of an AA group is to offer sobriety through the teachings and practice of the Twelve Steps. To help achieve this objective it is desirable that as many members as possible who wish to participate in the discussions and service should be encouraged to do so.

The meeting most likely to attract and keep members is the one which starts on time, which has its stock of literature well displayed, where the seating is ready, where members of an unofficial ‘welcoming committee’ are ready to help pass the message each in their own way. There will be a warm welcome for all comers and in particular for the new member, ensuring that the newcomer is made aware of the possibilities and promises contained in the programme. Ultimately the strength of any meeting depends on willing support and involvement of the entire group.

## WHERE TO FIND AA.

‘Where to Find AA’ is the national meeting directory for Great Britain, and as such is an invaluable source of information and help for the new member and the travelling member. In order to ensure that it remains accurate, group secretaries are requested to keep the General Service Office informed of any changes in the address of the meeting place, the starting time of the meeting or the telephone contact numbers for the meeting.

Members, whose names appear in the ‘Where to Find’ should be prepared to take full responsibility as contacts and delegate where necessary. This implies that such a telephone number will be freely available within the Fellowship and that the contact is prepared at any time to:

- a) Accept a call for help
- b) Give information to a professional e.g., GSO number
- c) Guide a family member to the right source for help e.g., Al-Anon
- d) Speak to members of the Fellowship enquiring about meetings

## PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL

Tradition 5 (Long Form). Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose -that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Where problems arise from the attendance of non-alcoholics at open meetings, it is suggested

that the following extract from the pamphlet 'Problems other than Alcohol' is read out and printed copies are distributed:

'Now there are certain things that AA cannot do for anybody regardless of what our several desires or sympathies may be. Our first duty as a society is to ensure our own survival. Therefore we have to avoid distractions and multi-purpose activity. An AA group as such cannot take on all the personal problems of its members let alone the problems of the whole world. Sobriety - freedom from alcohol -through the teaching and the practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an AA group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make non-alcoholics into AA members.

'We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our AA groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles we shall almost surely collapse, and if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.'

I am responsible When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there And for that: I am responsible

Although these words were written by Bill W in 1958 they continue to offer sound guidance on this difficult subject.

TO:

## **ALL GROUPS**

Over the years the General Service Office receives numerous calls from AA members who, after attending certain meetings, come away with a sincere concern that some AA meetings are used as a blanket therapy for problems other than alcohol.

We all have varying degrees of compassion for other social ills, such as over-eating, anorexia, narcotics, not forgetting the problems within our own families, but the following quotes written by one of the Co-founders, Bill W, might help clarify the situation:

'Our first duty , as a society, is to insure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multi-purpose activity. An AA Group, as such, cannot take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world.

'Sobriety -freedom from alcohol- through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an AA Group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make non-alcoholics into AA members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our AA Groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone'.

(From the pamphlet: 'Problems other than alcohol').

## **WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY**

‘An AA Group, as such, cannot take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone those of non alcoholics in the world around us. The AA Group is not, for example, a mediator of domestic relations, nor does it furnish personal financial aid to anyone.

‘Though a member may sometimes be helped in such matters by his friends in AA, the primary responsibility for the solutions of all his problems of living and growing rests squarely upon the individual himself. Should an AA group attempt this sort of help, its effectiveness and energies would be hopelessly dissipated.

‘This is why sobriety -freedom from alcohol -through the teaching and practice of AA’s Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of the group. If we don’t stick to this cardinal principle, we shall almost certainly collapse. And if we collapse we cannot help anyone’.

(From As Bill Sees It, page 79, Letter 1966)

## THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1996

### COMMITTEE NO.4

CHAIRMAN:	PATRICK P	SOUTH WEST REGION
SECRETARY:	JOHN S	EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Would Conference review Guideline No.6 ‘Regions’ taking on board the 1994 Conference recommendation regarding Conference delegates and the 1995 recommendation of Regional Finance Workshops, also encouraging the Service Structure adopted by the General Service Board.**

The Committee reviewed draft Guideline No.6 and recommended the attached.

**2. Would Conference agree to the introduction of a new group post of SHARE/ROUNABOUT representative, thus increasing the profile of the Fellowship’s Official Journals in Great Britain.**

Conference recognises that the position of SHARE/Roundabout Group Representative is not a new position and is described in the booklet ‘The AA Group’ Section 9 page 14 and also Guideline 5 (Group Officers).

Conference would encourage those groups which have sufficient members to fill the position of SHARE/Roundabout Group Representative to do so.

If a group decides to have a Representative he/she will be responsible for promoting SHARE/Roundabout by:

- a) Ordering sufficient copies for the members

- b) Selling it when it arrives
- c) Displaying it at Group meetings
- d) Asking the Treasurer to pay the Group's subscription
- e) Suggesting to members to submit articles for inclusion in forthcoming issues.

### **3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Ann S (South East Region) as Chairman of Committee No.4 for Conference 1997.

### **4 Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Chris A (North East Region) as Secretary of Committee No.4 for Conference 1997.

All recommendations on Committee No.4 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority

## **GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain**

From General Service Office, PO Box I, Stonebow House, Stonebow, York YO 1 2NJ

### **REGIONS**

**No6**

**REVISED APRIL 1996**

In October 1965 an exploratory Meeting was held to discuss if there was a need for a General Service Conference in the United Kingdom. A formal conclusion included this statement:

“The Conference would hope to further the aims and ideals, namely Recovery, Unity and Service, and ensure the healthy growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering closer ties and greater co-operation throughout the Isles”.

This Guideline on Regions is one further step on the road of growth, development and co-operation.

The Fifteenth General Service Conference in 1980 approved and established Regionalisation throughout Great Britain.

Following further Conference recommendations in 1981,1987, and 1988 we have seen the establishment of 15 Regions in Great Britain and Continental Europe.

The growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain has been sure and steady; and this growth has always been accompanied by a service structure that has evolved to meet the need. A brief history of the growth in AA in this country can be found in Section 3 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

The Tenth General Service Conference in 1975 made a recommendation that Intergroups should consider the formation of Regions -an assembly of neighbouring Intergroups to prevent fragmentation which could follow Group growth and the formation of more Intergroups. This

has created the opportunity for the maximum amount of participation involving more and more active and experienced members, and has strengthened our lines of communication as they have grown.

### **AIMS**

1. To promote communication and co-operation between neighbouring Intergroups thus implementing our traditions of unity and creating service boards or committees where needed.
2. To ensure that the Region recognise areas that are sparsely served by the Fellowship do not remain in 'no-man's land' but become part of that Region's responsibility .
3. To share Intergroup experience in the field of co-operation with outside agencies, prisons, health services, schools, social services, alcohol abuse agencies, churches, courts, Probation Service (Social Work Department, in Scotland), industry , and any other appropriate institutions and areas of society .
4. To increase opportunity for members to participate in our Third Legacy of Service.
5. To enable members with particular experience to serve a wider area.
6. To promote improved two-way communications between the Fellowship, General Service Conference, and the Board, and to foster clear understanding of the work undertaken by these bodies and by the General Service Office on behalf of the membership.

### **COMPOSITION**

It is suggested that a Region should comprise a convenient number of Intergroups in a convenient geographical location with common internal and external interests (Committee 4, 1975). It is therefore likely that some Regions will be large territorially but not large in terms of population, while some will be relatively small territorially in densely populated areas.

### **THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

It is suggested that a Regional Assembly should comprise up to three Regional Representatives from each participating Intergroup, who should be prepared to serve for a term of three years. Provision should be made for rotation to preserve continuity .

It is recommended that Regional Representatives should have a least three years continuous sobriety and sufficient Intergroup experience. An important factor is the availability of elected members to devote time to the work without adversely affecting their family or careers.

The Regional Representatives should elect their officers from members of the Assembly. These should consist of:

Chairman  
Vice-Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer



In addition, members should be elected, taking into consideration their experience or interest, to the following positions:

Prison Liaison Officer  
Health Liaison Officer  
Public Information Liaison Officer  
Probation Liaison Officer/Social Services AA Officer (Scotland)  
Telephone Liaison Officer  
Industrial Liaison Officer  
Share/Roundabout Liaison Officer

It is recommended that these officers should serve a maximum of three years and be confirmed annually.

The Regional Assembly may also co-opt a member of the Region, not necessarily a Regional Representative to carry out a specific task as a non-voting member of the Assembly for the duration of the work involved (e.g., Convention Convenor, Archivist).

Having served three years a Regional Representative should retire by rotation, thus providing a place for another to gain Regional experience and so enrich experience of Service in the Fellowship. He/she could then be eligible for re-election after a minimum period of one year.

When the Regional Representatives of an Intergroup are depleted due to the fact that one of their number has been elected to serve as an officer, then another suitable member may be elected by the Intergroup concerned to take their place.

Only Regional Representatives and Officers may vote. Observers and visitors are welcome, but may not participate unless invited by the Chairman to do so.

It is suggested that the Assembly should meet 4 times annually. The meeting should be called in a proper manner with a settled agenda and minutes should be circulated after the meeting with copies to interested persons such as GSO, the Board, neighbouring Regions for information as an additional means of sharing experience.

It is suggested that when time permits and business is completed a sharing session on some specific subject be held in which observers may participate, the object being to forward our primary purpose and improve services in the Region.

## **SERVICE STRUCTURE**

The formation of committees along the lines proposed by the Board:

Finance and General Purposes  
Internal Communications  
External Communications

should be encouraged in the Region wherever appropriate, but there should be named liaison or contact officers for specific areas of service at all levels.

## **FINANCE**

Regional expenses, including those for Conference Delegates are met from a fund financed by contributions from member Intergroups.

The Treasurer should present annual accounts and a budget for the coming year. Intergroup contributions should be calculated from this budget and the monies collected before the end of the year in order to pay Conference Delegates' expenses.

Conference 1995 recommended that the responsibility for the organisation and cost of local exhibitions should be decided in advance by the Intergroup and Region concerned. Each Region may elect to fund certain exhibitions and this item may need to be included in the annual budget.

Any monies surplus to the prudent reserve should be forwarded without delay to GSO, or in Scotland to the Scottish Service Office.

Money should be kept at a bank convenient for the Treasurer and payments made by cheque signed by two of the three signatories authorised by the Assembly.

### **CONFERENCE DELEGATES/ALTERNATES**

A Region is entitled to send six delegates to Conference. These should be from suitably experienced members able to conform to the requirements set out in the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain and who have been nominated by member Intergroups for election by the Regional Assembly. They should be elected well before Conference so that their names may go forward when required by GSO and so that they will have time to absorb the relevant papers and re-read the suggested literature.

Quality of sobriety and service record should be the guiding principles when electing delegates. It is recommended that delegates have a minimum of 5 years continuous sobriety and that before electing a delegate, a Region satisfies itself that the member has demonstrated a commitment through service to the Fellowship.

Potential delegates should be made aware, before election, of the commitment this post entails. In order to be elected as a delegate a member need not be a serving member of their Region at the time of the election but an elected delegate becomes a full member of Region.

While remembering that the best person for the job should be elected for the sake of AA as a whole, consideration should be given to ensuring that Intergroups have easy access to a Conference Delegate.

A Conference Delegate's duties do not finish with the end of the Conference, in fact this is only the beginning so he or she should be available and willing to report back fully to the Region and also be willing to travel to Intergroup and Group meetings if invited to do so.

Conference Delegates' duties are fully explained in Section IV / AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

### **WORKSHOPS**

The following suggestions have been prepared to assist those planning Workshops:

Finance workshops are an excellent method of emphasising that carrying the message costs

money by all parts of the service structure.

a) Workshops should be well structured with a commitment to planning.

One format, that appears to work well, is using multiple speakers sharing on the topic, breaking into discussion groups, and finally reconvening for a report back session with everyone.

b) That they should be publicised well in advance utilising flyers and Service Representatives to promote them.

c) To maintain interest, they should be regular, using experienced speakers from outside the immediate Intergroup/Region area. Consider using PI Committees to organise them.

d) Workshops might be considered for part of a convention/mini convention.

e) Consider publicising 'discussion meeting' rather than 'workshop'.

f) Intergroup/Region officers should lead by example, by attending Workshops and by offering transport to those who otherwise might not be able to attend.

g) Time permitting, Regional Assemblies should hold Workshops and these should be minuted as an agenda item. Experience shows that morning Workshops lead to a better attendance.

h) Those attending should be welcomed and encouraged to get involved in the discussions. Make it clear that everyone has a right to be heard.

i) Workshops should be fun, as well as informative.

j) It is suggested that reports on Region Workshops should be submitted to AA News whenever possible. A summary should be given of any Workshop and circulated to all attendees.

k) Service Representatives should try to make reportbacks interesting and informative and, if necessary, ask for more time to give their report.

Bill w (Letter 1966)

This Guideline has been produced as the result of experience to date, but possibly in time modifications may become necessary .

'When we get into questions of action by Groups, by areas, by AA as a whole, we find that we must to some extent organise to carry the message -or else face total chaos. And chaos is not simplicity'.

THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1996

**COMMITTEE NO.5**

CHAIRMAN: HARRY McC

SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Would Conference consider the standardisation of accounts throughout the Fellowship. For example: General Service Board would issue, subject to Conference approval, a standard accounts sheet for implementation in the Regions and Intergroups.**

While one Region found standardization of accounts beneficial at an Intergroup level, the majority of the Committee felt that standardisation of accounts was not necessary or beneficial to the Fellowship as a whole.

**2. Probation Services and Community Health Services have sought ways of including attendance at AA meetings as a condition of their clients probation period or course of treatment, requesting that their clients obtain proof of attendance.**

**Please share any experience on this matter which would assist groups or Intergroups to co-operate with these agencies and the still suffering alcoholic who might be directed by them to the Fellowship.**

The Regions co-operating with these conditions have positive results.

Experience has shown that:

- a) Certification of attendance at meetings is a matter for local discussion.
- b) The use of a meeting Ref. No. or other system avoids members' personal signature on attendance cards, forms or other documents.
- c) If someone is recommended to go to AA he/she should be Twelfth- Stepped in the usual manner, wherever possible.

**3. Would Conference consider changing the title 'Hospital Liaison Officer' to 'Health Liaison Officer'? This would still retain the 'HLO' for service work, but may help to prevent duplication of PI/CPC areas in the community.**

The Committee agreed unanimously that the change to title Health Liaison Officer would cover a much wider area than at present and would be more appropriate in view of the changing social climate regarding Community Care.

This change would, of course, entail an update of relevant guidelines and the Handbook and any other internal documents.

**4. Would Conference consider the following:**

**(a) Conference 1988 (Committee 5, Question 2) reported 'slow but steady progress has been made in all Regions with Probation' and 'there have been striking successes'. This state of affairs seems to have deteriorated, and progress in the Probation Service seems to have come almost to a halt in some areas. Could Conference consider new ways of approaching this important area?**

While recognising the problems existing in the area of probation it is recommended that a guideline be prepared for referral back to Conference 1997. Such action should draw on the success currently enjoyed in some Regions, through direct contact with the Courts.

**(b) That the 1996 Conference recommend the Board Members to actively seek AA involvement in the Probation Officers' training curriculum.**

As the training programmes of the Probation Services are currently under review, it is not possible to approach them at present. However, the 1996 Conference recommends that Board members actively seek AA involvement in the Probation Officers' Training curriculum when and if a National Training curriculum is introduced and report back to Conference 1997. Meanwhile, approaches to Assistant Chief Probation Officers responsible for In-Service Training can be made at local level.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Stan F (Midlands Region) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1997.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Lynette S (South East Region) as Secretary of Committee No.5 for Conference 1997.

All recommendations on Committee No.5 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority

THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1996

**COMMITTEE NO.6**

CHAIRMAN:	BILLY	MIDLANDS REGION
SECRETARY:	DAVID C	LONDON REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. In view of the growth and changes that have taken place since regionalisation in 1980, does Conference consider that the present structure best serves the Fellowship? What is the experience of Regions and Intergroups?**

Several Regions have experienced communication difficulties since 1980 and have adapted their internal Regional structure. Some have been successful and others less so. A number of Regions feel that whilst their situation is currently fine, observing the problems that have arisen elsewhere, they can foresee similar difficulties in the future.

In order to investigate the situation further, the Committee recommends that

- a) Each Regional Chairman should submit a synopsis of how, and how well, their regional structure works to the Internal Communications Committee of the GSB by not later than 1st October 1996.

- b) A workshop should be held on Saturday night of Conference 1997 to discuss this topic. Presentations by 5 representative Regional delegates, as well as 1 person from the GSB Internal Committee, are suggested.
- c) The Internal Communications Committee will report back to Conference 1998 with recommendations of changes to the service structure, as necessary, and taking account of matters arising at a) and b).

**2. What is the experience within the Fellowship of preparing local ‘job descriptions’ of Groups, Intergroups and Regions. Does Conference consider that this assists ‘Twelfth-Stepping into service’.**

The experience of the Fellowship has been that local job descriptions of Groups, Intergroups and Regions, wherever tried, have worked well and have provided great benefit in assisting Twelfth-Stepping into service.

It is acknowledged that there is a danger that they can be used to restrict or dictate activity if applied too rigidly. However, with a flexible approach they allow the adaptation of the role to differing local requirements. A job description containing local detail, contacts, and so on, aids the handover from one officer to another and clarifies what is required of the incoming officer. In addition it is felt that this fuller information of what the job entails will encourage people with the right level of commitment to come forward and stay. Such job descriptions have great value at all levels in the structure from Region up to Group.

In addition it is suggested that Regions, Intergroups and Groups submit their local job descriptions to Archives at GSO so that they are available to the Fellowship.

It is suggested, also, that where local job descriptions are not in use that they be compiled and implemented at all levels.

**3. How best can we maximise the input from our General Service Board members and their availability to the Fellowship, which would improve communication at all levels of structure, especially for groups and intergroups.**

The committee recommends that Board Members:

- a) Make themselves available to attend their Intergroups within their own area upon request.
- b) Try to stimulate better co-operation and communication between Groups, Intergroups and Regions.
- c) Be ready to answer questions that GSRs may have in order to improve communications and reduce the flow of correspondence to GSO.
- d) Make themselves known to Intergroups so that they can become familiar with their own members, and would be able to assist the Intergroup in any way they can to overcome problems which arise.
- e) Make themselves available for talks at Workshops, Conference delegates’ meetings,

forums etc, so that they become more familiar with the on going problems at Group, Intergroup and Regional level, countrywide.

f) Should encourage Conference delegates' meetings prior to Conference and pre and post Conference Regional meetings.

These are subject to the following:

- a) Communication goes two ways and the Fellowship has a responsibility to communicate with Board Members.
- b) With respect to GSB workloads, this committee recommends that Groups, Intergroups and Regions utilise the service structure and particularly the experience of Conference delegates.

**4. Would Conference recommend that Intergroup Representatives to Region as Intergroup Officers should be included in the Confidential Directory, to ensure that they are furnished with the information required to fill their responsibility of liaison between their Intergroup and Region.**

Committee felt that the inclusion of Intergroup Representatives to Regions in the confidential directory would not be an efficient move in terms of cost benefit. Any problems arising over poor communication and dissemination of information should be addressed at local level through the existing service structure. For example, Conference papers should be obtained from Intergroup secretaries.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Billy H (Glasgow Region) as Chairman of Committee No.6 for Conference 1997.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1997.**

The Committee elected Bill C (South East Region) as Secretary of Committee No, 6 for Conference 1997.

All recommendations on Committee No.6 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority

CONFERENCE 1997

## **ESSENCE OF GROWTH**

THIRTY SECOND  
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

GREAT BRITAIN

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

### **FRIDAY 11 APRIL**

The Thirty-Second General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York, with the opening session on Friday evening and the final session on Sunday morning being held in the Lecture Theatre of the Chemistry Department.

On the Friday afternoon registration and distribution of folders was followed by a reception which, as usual, provided an ideal opportunity for the delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates who were attending for the first time.

The Conference comprised eighty-eight delegates from fifteen Regions; two delegates from the Jersey Intergroup, one delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', twenty members of the General Service Board, Al H -Conference Chairman, General Secretary and six members of Staff. Also in attendance were Observers from the following countries:

Belgium (Flemish Speaking) (2)  
Denmark (2)  
Ireland (2)  
Sweden (1)

Total in attendance 127

### **OPENING OF CONFERENCE BY AL H (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1997)**

The first full session, which commenced at 7:30pm, was opened by the Conference Chairman, Al H (Continental European Region) with the customary moment's silence, the Serenity Prayer and the reading of the Preamble. He welcomed all present with a special welcome to first year delegates and overseas observers.

The General Secretary was then invited to read the Twelve Traditions (Long Form), the orientation together with the very last minute changes and the National Convention dates which are as follows:



Scottish Convention 9-10 May 1997  
1997 Great Britain Convention 13-15 June 1997  
Southern Convention 24-26 October 1997  
Northern Convention 1998 T.B.A.

Al then presented his Keynote Address:

Good evening friends, my name is Al Hamos and I am a grateful recovering alcoholic. Just to qualify myself, I came into AA a piece of trash out of a garbage can. I was defeated in every sense of the word. I was on the verge of losing a family (a second time), losing another job, and thinking that death was the best alternative I had. I had nowhere else to go and didn't know that I could live without alcohol. I had the body of a thirty year old man, but the mentality of a small child. I found out at my first AA meeting that I had in fact stopped growing the minute I started to drink. Those old-timers told me, if I wanted to quit drinking and stay quit I would have to do nothing more then change my entire life. They insisted that if I didn't grow, I would have to go. What a choice, follow these strangers path or continue on drinking and die.

I got a rather tough sponsor who explained the deal to me. He said that in order to grow, I would have to learn what AA was all about. That meant that I was to start studying the Big Book, AA Comes of Age, Pass it On and the AA Service Manual. He took it upon himself to volunteer me into service work. I was hand fed the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. He and the other old-timers told me if I lived the AA way of life, and practiced these principles in ALL my affairs, I would have a good chance to become Happy, Joyous and Free. He also insisted that one of the best ways to continue growing was to stay involved in service work.

After being elected to chair this General Service Conference I was given a brown envelope with a fairly large stack of papers which contained all the duties I was to perform as chairman. One of these duties was to write a Keynote Address. At the time I thought that this task would be no problem. Well that was a year ago and I am standing here to tell you that I was definitely wrong. There are some delegates here tonight that can verify the fact that when it comes to sharing Experience, Strength and Hope about the miracles which were given to me through this program, I am never at a loss for words. I can talk for hours about this program that saves my life on a daily basis.

Now, to try and put some type of words of wisdom down on paper made me realize just how powerless I really am. I wasn't able to start this address until I got down on my knees and asked my Higher Power to give me some guidance. Thank you God.

Another job as chairman is to come up with a theme for Conference. And if you think this is an easy task, think again. For months I researched the AA literature, wrote down at least a hundred different themes and changed every one of them a hundred times. This was not going to be an easy job. I used the process of elimination. Crossing this theme out because it was already used. Changing the wording of the this theme. Adding another one, deleting another one, night after night changing, adding. Again I had to get on my knees.

Then one night I arrived at a meeting, early as usual, opened the book As Bill Sees It, and there on page 115 was the theme for this years Conference.

You see, since coming into the Fellowship and especially during the last four years I experienced growth within myself, within the Fellowship and especially here at Conference. It dawned on me that the A.A. program is one of continual growth. We must grow or we've got to go.

What exactly is meant by ESSENCE OF GROWTH?

Bill W. explained it this way. "Let us never fear needed change. Certainly we have to discriminate between changes for the worse and changes for better. But once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, in a group, or in A.A. as a whole, it has long since been found out that we cannot stand still and look the other way.

The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails."

In order to grow I have got to make changes in my life. I have to make decisions and be responsible for those decisions. Today I am not afraid to make a wrong decision, because I know that if I do, I can always make another decision. The right decision. The point I am trying to make, is that decisions must be made, right, wrong or indifferent they need to be made. The AA Service Manual tells me that there should always be charity for occasional mistakes. That is the beauty of our program. It lets us be human beings. It says OK, so we've made a wrong decision, let's change it.

At last years conference I made one of those occasional mistakes and today I must apologize for that mistake. An individual was presenting a minority report to Conference, and I being who I am, shut this report out of my mind. After the report was given and the chairman of Conference thanked him, there were hisses and clapping from the assembly. I was one of the guilty ones. After reading the following I realized just how important the minority view is.

"And when a minority considers an issue to be such a grave one that a mistaken decision could seriously affect A.A. as a whole, it should then charge itself with the actual duty of presenting a minority report to the Conference. In granting this traditional "Right of Appeal," we recognize that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are partly or wholly in error they still perform a most valuable service when, by asserting their "Right of Appeal," they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority ."

It was also here at Conference, having a minority opinion, I learned to question my motives. Am I thinking about the still suffering alcoholic or am I thinking selfishly about me? Is the majority decision going to adversely effect AA as a whole or is this another chance for the Fellowship to grow? These were some of the questions I had to ask myself, before or if I was to assert my "Right of Appeal."

We are celebrating fifty years of AA in Great Britain this year, and as of today the decisions of the past seem to have worked, thank God. I realize today that AA has grown and will continue to grow, with or without me. I am so grateful that I have the privilege to be a part of this growth.

When you were elected to represent your Region here at Conference, those who elected you placed their trust in you as a leader, to decide within the framework of your duties, how you will interpret and apply your own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation

as it arises. I was told that this was called the “Right of Decision.”

This weekend, we will be given a chance to grow. I hope you will see why, as delegates, you are primarily the world servants of A.A. as a whole, and that only in a secondary sense do you represent your respective areas. Consequently, you should, on final decisions, vote according to the best dictates of your own judgment and conscience at that time.

With all this said and done, what I really wanted to say from the beginning of this talk was, it is a honor and a privilege to be a part of Conference. It is a once in a lifetime deal. Enjoy this weekend in the company of those who are just as dedicated to this Fellowship as yourself. Respect the minority and accept the majority. Base your decisions on the still suffering alcoholic and the future of AA, but most of all have fun and remember the last promise in the Big Book. “We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could never do for ourselves.”

I thank each and every one of you for helping me realize the true meaning of, “Essence of Growth.”

## **RESOLUTION**

The Conference Chairman requested a representative of Midlands Region to present the Resolution to Conference:

My name is Rod C, I am an alcoholic and a second year Conference delegate from the Midlands Region.

I have been chosen from the Region to present this Resolution to Conference under the Conference approved ‘Minorities Opinion’ Report of 1987. The provision of which states:

“if a Conference decision is subsequently felt, by a part of the Fellowship, to have been in considerable error, the matter should be submitted again to Conference by, and with the approval of Region in time to be included in the Conference agenda. The Conference delegates from Region would then understand the problem and be able to explain it to Conference”.

We submit, on behalf of Midlands Region, that recommendation (a) of question 3 by Committee 2 is contradictory and needs clarification. The first half of the recommendation states ‘no logos be used at Group, Intergroup or Region level for internal or external communications’ then, in the next sentence, says ‘if the logo registered to the charity is sought, written permission must be obtained from GSB of AA ,.

We believe this to place the Board in an impossible position. On the one hand (when written permission is sought) and on the other that no such permission be given.

We feel sure that this was not the intention of Committee 2 of ‘96. Unfortunately, the wording in the first sentence is explicit and, in this way, the Board has been obliged to say ‘no’ when such permission has been sought.

It is our experience that this recommendation is hampering our ability to fulfil our commitment under Tradition 5. “Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

In the fields of PI., Industrial Liaison, Health Care and P.L.O. we need to pass the first hurdle of integrity -our logo gives us that.

Some Intergroups, having written asking for permission and having being told that none could be granted, asked what they should do with existing stocks? They were advised to use existing stocks -which they then 'stock-piled'!

1 With regard to the question itself, Midlands Region feel that the Fellowship at large was not provided with information about the nature or extent of the wide spread misuse referred to in the question. No intergroup in our Region had experience of such misuse.

2. Where such irresponsible behaviour of a small minority exists, the recommendations replace the traditional autonomy of AA groups with an authoritarian ban.

We wish Conference to consider these matters and, as a suggested way forward, suggest that GSB be asked to prepare a guideline which would deal with the responsible use of logos and literature to help further our primary purpose. This guideline could be placed before Conference 98.

Suggested, alternative wording:

'Conference recommends that GSB delegate to Intergroups and Regions the right for duly elected Officers to use the logo registered to the charity (viz circle enclosing triangle with the words, Unity, Service and Recovery) for service purposes to assist our primary purpose. Conference further recommends that the logo should not be used by any other individual without first having obtained written permission from GSB'.

Thank you all, for receiving this presentation with such courtesy and I look forward to Conference's decision.

After brief discussion Conference recommended that the above Resolution be carried.

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

AI invited the Chairman of the General Service Board, Rodger P, to present the Annual Report, which covers the period 1st October 1995 to 30th September 1996. Rodger read highlights from the Annual Report which included Personnel, items from both the Internal and External Communications Committees making special reference to Archives as much work had been done in this area due to the approaching 50th Anniversary of AA in Great Britain.

He then went on to give an update of Board Report covering the period October 1996 to March 1997 as follows:

### **INTERNAL COMMITTEE**

Literature Committee

The committee has revised and updated the proposed Handbook since the distribution of draft

text at Conference 1996, and this version is to be presented for Conference consideration.

The recommendation of Committee one, Conference 1996 has been followed through regarding Fellowship literature and this too is to be submitted later for your approval.

May I also address the points raised by Conference last year. Namely the way that Guidelines can be best addressed by Conference. We recommend that all Liaison guidelines are addressed by Liaison Officers at their Regional meetings held approx. every four years. Their experience will revise and update information and this in turn will be handed to the Literature Committee for final presentation and layout. Once completed this would be presented to Conference for approval. No discussion can be addressed. Firstly the best informed have contributed. Secondly the Literature Committee will oversee the presentation. The decision will be acceptance or rejection and be sent back for further discussion. Guidelines not covered by Liaison contribution will remain the responsibility of Literature Committee and Handbook revision process to bring changes direct to Conference.

### **Archives**

Joe H (N E Region) is the Fellowship Archivist and the sub-committee have met three times to date.

The Regional Archivist meeting was held in February when arrangements were finalised for the 1997 Convention archives display and two plans laid out for the workshop on the Saturday.

Reaffirmation of archives policy as accepted by GSB and Conference and a need to discuss medium and long term strategies of archives.

Regional Archivists have each produced a local inventory and sent a copy to the Fellowship Archivist. This will form part of the display at Blackpool.

### **Conference Committee**

The Conference Committee have been extremely active over the past year consolidating those questions received from the Fellowship and the preparation of agenda for Conference 1997.

Within the criteria of the Terms of Reference all questions submitted from individuals, Groups, Intergroups or Regions during the year are considered. Special consideration shall be given by the committee to any matters of major importance that have remained unresolved from previous Conferences or have been referred for further deliberation by Conference.

The hard work and commitment of the members of the Conference Committee will ensure greater participation and consideration by the Fellowship to the benefit of the Fellowship in 1997 and beyond. Sixty-nine questions were received by the Committee for consideration to Conference 1997. The majority of these arrived at the last minute. This places an unfair burden on our elected Committee and we would request that conference delegates inform those Groups, Intergroups and Regions that it would assist and benefit your Committee if they were encouraged to forward questions for Conference at the first opportunity .

The Committee will reflect the theme of the 1997 Conference “Essence of Growth” in the years

ahead .

Before moving on...

The GSB recommend that the closing date for Conference questions be brought forward to 31 August each year and that this be revised in the Handbook. This will give more time and greater consideration via Conference Committee. Conference approved the recommendation.

## **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **PRISONS**

As the result of dedicated input by all Intergroup and Regional Prison Liaison Officers throughout Great Britain, plus detailed sharing at two Regional Prison Liaison Officers meetings, AA activity in penal establishments has increased by 30% since August 1996. To assist the further momentum of such progress, another Regional Prison Liaison Officers meeting will be held this year, 1997.

### **HEALTH**

The new Board member responsible for Health Liaison made an appeal for up to date information in respect of this vital area of service. Eleven out of fourteen Regions responded, and a separate presentation by the Board member will be made at this Conference.

### **PROBATION**

The newly appointed Board member for Probation and Social Services Liaison has produced the first quarterly Newsletter relating to this area of service. Please remember that any AA member who is active in this particular service is invited to contribute to future editions. A meeting of Regional Probation and Social Services Liaison officers will be held in York on 18 October 1997. Furthermore, a seminar involving AA Liaison officers and professional practitioners from Probation and Social Services, will be held in November 1997.

### **PI. AND THE MEDIA**

Alcoholics Anonymous -50 Years in Great Britain was the subject matter of an extremely busy and successful workshop held on 22 February 1997 in York. The agreed "Press Release" will tell you about the outcome, but not the vast amount of work invested.

### **PROBATION/SOCIAL SERVICES**

Great effort is being made to improve communications within the Fellowship, and to gather the background information needed in order to present a Guideline to Conference 1998.

Newsletters, Liaison meetings, seminars and the "Hints and Suggestions" sheet will all play a part within AA, whilst meetings with the professionals is helping to open doors for us.

Vacant posts need to be filled at Regional and Intergroup level in order to fully exploit the efforts being made. The GSB member for Probation/Social Services will happily assist in any way that

he can.

## **CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

In my introduction to the Board Report I made reference to our Preamble and to the final sentence.

“Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety”.

The function of Alcoholics Anonymous via its Conference is to help each other stay sober, to help others achieve sobriety and to work with and accept our Group Conscience.

After going through the Annual Report the Chairman asked for Conference for any comments and the following points were highlighted:

A delegate queried the inclusion of the Governance Statement and was reminded that Conference 1995 had accepted the Governance Statement in total and it was to appear in all future Board Reports.

When asked about the Opening Statement inside the front cover it was explained that this was the Chairman introducing AA to the readership and that this was good use of the Preamble.

Two members asked for additional clarity regarding the Concepts as some confusion had arisen through numerous correspondence. The Chairman of the Board gave clarity to the position and this was accepted by Conference.

## **FINANCE**

Harry O, the Treasurer, was then asked to present the financial report.

I will make one or two comments on comparisons with this year, the year we are talking about, which ended in September, and the previous year. Sadly I have to tell you that the contributions are not as high as they were. Now I know that Treasurers should not always be saying “we want more money, we need more money” but that really is the truth and when you start looking and comparing these figures, I can only point to the end. If you look at the surplus or the deficit at the end of the year, you will see a surplus of £49,000 in the previous year and a deficit of nearly £9,000 in the year we are reviewing. It is only because we sold some investments we show there is not a final deficit. Investments sold are not income so we should discount them when we are considering our position.

The graphs indicate the differences in the levels of expenses and the levels of income. We have the indication of one year being very much better than the other. I always look at the contributions to see what the Fellowship is actually sending to us and then I look at the other forms of income. ‘Self-supporting’ has always meant contributions coming from the Intergroups and Regions and that has never covered our expenses.

If contributions don't continue to rise because of ever increasing expenses we are not going to be able to maintain the services we now enjoy, something will have to be cut as we have made all the economies we can. That is why, if you want more services, you are going to have to ask your

Intergroups and your Groups to always consider the money they send, and just how much they put in the pot.

Gratitude week is coming up in June -you are always being reminded about it and the first year everybody was very excited but now it seems to have faded away. Perhaps you will have the opportunity of emphasising in your Regions that it is the Golden Anniversary year.

Your Treasurers receive quarterly reports so they know exactly the situation of our finances and they can always keep your Region and Intergroups informed.

Have you noticed the little sentence after every question 'consider the financial implications'. Please do so.

## **NATIONAL CONVENTION 1997**

(Margo W)

Introduction:

At Conference a few years ago you asked us to form a committee to arrange a Convention to mark 50 years of AA in Great Britain. Our vision was an event in which all members of Alcoholics Anonymous could join together in a true spirit of unity and fellowship.

The vision we had back then, will come to be a reality in June this year when the focus will be on Blackpool, the chosen venue for our Great Britain Convention 1997 and it is our belief that we have put together a great Convention for our Fellowship - one which will be talked about for years to come.

The event, centred upon Blackpool's Winter Gardens, will be the largest gathering of AAs in Great Britain and promises to be a truly remarkable event. The Programme which has been set out gives something for everyone, young or old, newcomers and old timers alike.

All the financial aspects have been considered and the Convention will, in the very worst case, simply pay for itself, however, the best case will be that the event provides the Fellowship with a sensible surplus bringing us to a successful conclusion.

So what have we arranged? Opening ceremony followed by a rich and varied spread of meetings all through the weekend which includes speciality workshops covering many interesting and informative talks on how the Fellowship works. In addition to our own AA programme of both open and closed meetings, there is also a full programme of Al-Anon and Alateen meetings right through the weekend too, so all are catered for.

The entertainment programme will be second to none with some of the best available acts to help the weekend go with a swing. And all this will culminate in an evocative closing ceremony on Sunday which will look forward to the future of AA reviewing the lessons of our past.

Let me give you a taste of what we have planned.



Programme:

For early arrivals there will be a welcome meeting at 8pm on the Thursday and another at midday on Friday in the Winter Gardens which will be a marvellous way to begin our celebration weekend.

But of course, the weekend starts in earnest on the Friday at 5pm when our Opening Ceremony gets under way at the Boating Lake toward the North Shore of Blackpool's promenade. This arena provides a marvellous setting for welcoming everyone to our Convention. We will be looking at the history of AA in Great Britain and the way it has grown, followed by what will be a stunning line of speakers giving all their experience, strength and hope. I am looking forward to being part of this historic gathering of AAs at Blackpool.

Of course, the opening ceremony is just the beginning. The Friday continues with Open and Closed Meetings at the Winter Gardens well into the evening followed by a traditional sing song and other meetings at Midnight! The speakers we have brought to share at our meetings are nothing short of the very, very best we could find within our shores and also from overseas. The messages they will provide us, newcomers or old timers will, in my opinion, embody the spirit of AA.

Saturday's meetings begin at 9am and go on till 4pm and whilst these are in progress, there will be ten workshops to attend showing other aspects of AA at work outside the regular meetings. From Public Information to Prisons, Communications & Telephone to Health, there is a topic of interest to suit every AA. There is even a workshop showing AA's work in Europe. These are just a few of the ways for us to carry the message.

Once the meetings are complete on Saturday, the chance will arrive to gather informally with friends before the evening events begin, and what a programme we have put together. There are no less than three disco's and a live band for people to attend and dance the night away whilst a Big Band has been arranged for those who want to dance more formally in the Empress Ballroom.

There is going to be an absolutely magnificent extravaganza which Blackpool's Civic Entertainment have laid on, especially for us in the Opera House seating 3000 people. The Band and other artistes will give us something to remember as we enjoy this spectacular evening.

Of course, no Convention would be complete without its raffle and the Great Britain 1997 Convention will be no exception. We have a superb line up of prizes and the result will be relayed live to all venues during the Saturday evening at 11 pm, so buy those tickets and cross your fingers!

A Midnight meeting rounds off this wonderful programme and leads us into Sunday morning when for those who wish, there are various denominational Services early on Sunday before the meetings commence, but our main Spiritual meeting will begin at the Boating Lake at 10am and this promises to be a very moving, emotional meeting as we look towards bringing our 50th Anniversary to a close. Looking out to sea to the west where it all began, we will be reflecting how we came to be here and all that AA has done for us.

The actual Closing Ceremony begins at 12 midday and will have some of the most powerful

speakers who will remind us of the past, look at the present and where we are going. Our Chairman will provide us with some visions for the future giving us a meaningful message to take away with us.

Our finale takes place with a song which climaxes the 50th Anniversary .

### **Conclusion:**

I hope you will forgive me for getting a little carried away, but I feel this is going to be such an exciting, spiritual and moving Convention, that emotions run away by just thinking about it and we will be getting all this for just £10.00 registration.

The Hotels and their staff in Blackpool are already getting quite excited about laying out a warm welcome to us all and to their town and it is my belief that we have put together the most tremendous, dynamic Convention that AA in Great Britain has ever seen and ask you to go away from here today encouraging everyone to register as soon as possible.

### **0345 PILOT SCHEME REPORT (JOHN T)**

My name is John; I am an alcoholic and a member of the General Service Board where a part of my responsibility is the role of Convenor of the External Communications Committee. Obviously, one of the areas of service within External Communication is the Fellowship's Telephone Service. Perhaps I was asked to present this progress report because my very voice gives a hint of inter-galactic communications! What greater progress could we make in just one year? More likely it is because I am a member of South East Region where it all started some two and a half years ago; indeed, it was at 10 am on Tuesday 25 October 1994 when 0345697555 came online. You may ask on whose authority did the vision of a single number - the 0345 system - for AA in Great Britain start to become a reality, albeit on a trial basis? It was the basic authority for all AA service, whether for Groups, Intergroups, Regions or for the Fellowship as a whole. Yes, our Second Tradition as expressed at the General Service Conference of 1994 (see Committee No.1, Question 2) and subsequently on the evening of Saturday 13th April 1996, when Conference recommended that the trial be expanded geographically. I mention this because I am told that one Intergroup in England has adopted a different system and that one of the telephone service offices may also be adopting an incompatible system. I find this difficult to believe because trusted and responsible servants of the Fellowship must surely know that unanimity is vital in this field as in any in the Fellowship.

Now to the progress reports from the 0345 single telephone number's "User Regions". In both cases I have included them as written by the Telephone Liaison Officers concerned, because to attempt a précis would dilute and sell short their compelling message.

The first report is from Scotland.

*Conference '96 endorsed proposals that Alcoholics Anonymous extend the trial for a further two years, and that the trial be allowed to expand geographically, providing the Regions or Intergroups have existing Remote Call Diversion or equivalent, also that they have twenty four hour cover.*

*The period since Conference has been a busy time for the telephone service in Scotland, there has been a steady and substantial growth within the trial period. As was reported at Conference '96, Scotland proposed three Remote Call Diversion centres based in Elgin, Glasgow and Edinburgh, which would service all of Scotland.*

*Since then British Telecom have installed our Remote Call Diversion system, this has made a big difference:-*

- 1 We can have as many Responders as required, instead of only 10 on Remote Call Forwarding system.*
- 2. There is no cost in change over*
- 3. Caller is direct to Responder, rather than through the computer.*
- 4. No need to go through computer every time we change Responders.*
- 5 All the above save Alcoholics Anonymous money.*

*I enclose a rough copy of a map, showing the 3 areas covered (see appendix 1)*

- 1. North of Scotland - covers two Regions: Highlands & Islands and East of Scotland, which includes nine of their ten Intergroups.*
- 2. West of Scotland - covers three Regions: Glasgow, South West Scotland and part of Scotia Region, sixteen Intergroups involved.*
- 3. Scotia Region, six Intergroups involved.*

*The two Remote Call Diversion centres in Glasgow and Elgin joined the trial on 28 August 1995. The average number of calls for North of Scotland in the first fourteen weeks was given as 15 per week. The average in January '97 is 57 over the previous fourteen weeks*

*The average for Glasgow in the first fourteen weeks of the trial was eight, then on 1st December, '95 they changed over to Remote Call Forwarding and publicised the number, as a result the average rose to 141 calls per week. In the fourteen weeks leading to January '97 the average calls per week were 171.*

*Scotia Region joined the system on 20 July 1996, their average over the last fourteen weeks is 10 per week.*

*Our experience to date shows the 0345 number has many pluses, the main one being direct contact for the suffering alcoholic.*

*Members of the public also have the benefit of the service. many are directed to other means of help*

*We have calls from Hospitals, Industry, Police, Education and General Practitioners, these calls can be forwarded through the service structure. There are also many advantages for the Fellowship, anonymity is protected through one single number.*

*The average cost of calls to 0345 was given as 30p (over and above Local Call Rate) at Conference '96. I will make the present cost available as soon as possible. As yet all billings and costings have not been available to me, one difficulty being we have no previous costings to compare, although we do know that by reducing the amount of telephone services in Scotland to three Remote Call Diversion centres there have been considerable savings. We hope to see monetary benefits coming through the service structure in the next year or so, from the saving of not having to advertise roughly 22 different numbers in the national press. This is dependent on British Telecom advertising our National number in ALL directories throughout Scotland. We are on their database at present, if anyone asks British Telecom for Alcoholics Anonymous in Scotland they will be given our help line number.*

*We have found British Telecom to be very helpful in all our dealings, we are supplied with separate quarterly bills to individual Regions and individual contracts for each 0345 area*

*To conclude:- The trial is developing well in Scotland, thanks to those responsible; recovering alcoholics who liase, respond and twelfth step throughout Scotland. God bless you all.*

*John A. T.L.O. S.C.*

*And now to South East Region.*

*As far as the single number trial is concerned in the South East Region, I think we would fairly say that it is a success. We have had a noticeable increase in calls in all participating Intergroups and apart from the odd hiccup mostly on the billing side, everything is going well.*

*We started with 7 of our 9 Intergroups participating in the trial and by November '95, Northdown had joined us. North Kent Intergroup (London Region) has joined the West Kent/East Sussex Intergroups to field calls from the Maidstone number which leaves East Kent. They have been waiting for the chance to change over to the new RCD (Remote Call Diversion) telephone system before committing themselves but are now ready to join the trial and we are hoping that they will be up and running by Conference '97.*

*We started with around 30-40 calls a week coming through 0345 697555 and when the number was released onto the BT Directory Enquiries Database, the calls jumped immediately to between 120-130 per week (all excluding Scotland). We now seem to have evened out at around 150 per week, allowing for seasonal variations. Within the statistics that I receive every week from BT, we are able to see the number of calls to each destination and where the calls have come from. It is interesting to see that we get odd calls from around the country in the South East Region. Without asking each individual caller, it is not possible to know whether people know the number or if it has been given to them rather than their local number. It is not a great problem and the numbers are not that significant.*

*We also get some calls from Scotland although that has diminished since Scotia started their number. We still get the occasional calls but obviously as and when the system spreads around the country, this will stop as callers are put through to their nearest answering destination.*

*After the Conference decision last year to allow the trial to expand naturally, I received several calls from interested Intergroups and Regions. I have made two visits to Eastern Region, where Anne and her team of TLO's are very enthusiastic about progressing towards the single number. They have to ensure that all Intergroups have 24 hour manned services before they can take up a contract with BT. South Midlands Intergroup (SMIG) already have a 24 hour service and are very keen to join in and I visited one of their Intergroup Assemblies to answer what questions I could. I was invited to speak to South Midlands Region, of which SMIG is one Intergroup. There was a very mixed reaction there and I think we have to recognise that the enthusiasm can be, at the very least, patchy.*

*I think it must be born in mind that for any Region to take part in the 0345 system, takes time. The requirement that all participating Intergroups have 24 hour services means a great deal of hard work to achieve this aim. The introduction of the RCD system by BT has come at just the right time as far as most of us are concerned. It makes the manning of a 24 hour service so much easier as the telephone responders do not have to give such a heavy commitment to the service. It has opened up the possibilities from just 10 responders to as many as needed although 15-20 seems to be the optimum by the Intergroups running the RCD system. With the structure of our Fellowship, suggestions at Region are taken back to individual Intergroups and if necessary back to groups, returned to Intergroups and hence back to Region. In most cases a minimum of 3 months would be the norm. In our Region, the system is working well, it appears to be good for the still-suffering alcoholic and it appears to be good for the Fellowship. It is a help for the other disciplines that they only have one number to publicise and we have had much more of a feeling that we are all working together instead of each Intergroup's telephone service standing alone.*

*Wendy K T.L.O. S.E.R,*

Clearly, financial implications of the 0345 number are the major *concern* of those thinking of joining. However, as pointed out at the Regional Treasurers' meeting held in York, in December 1996, the unit cost decreases in direct proportion to the number of Regions joining the scheme, and there is little doubt that if and when a major part of Great Britain participates, then BT's charges will be subject to review with larger reductions anticipated. I am in complete agreement with our Hon. Treasurer summing up at that same meeting when he said "*whilst we must not waste money we cannot put a price on sobriety, and that is what telephone service is about*". It augurs well for the health of our finances to know that modern technology has precluded any need for telephone office premises and the savings in costs of overheads associated with these should offset any superimposed costs of the 0345 system.

At the end of this presentation you will find attached three additional appendices, making four in all. They were originated by South East Region's Telephone Liaison Officer and Treasurer for the Regional Treasurers' meeting. Please give the information therein due consideration when reporting back to your Region, especially when debating the 0345 trial and its expansion. You may rest assured that the figures presented are based on Fact and not impressions which can prove to be dangerous. You know, in my brief experience within this area of service, the greatest problem I have encountered is that of rumour and unsubstantiated hearsay. All surmountable if one bears in mind our very First Tradition, and essentially the first line therein. "The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our society has".

With regard to the absolute importance of our primary purpose to stay sober and help other

alcoholics achieve sobriety, it was with the second part of that purpose in mind and after due deliberation that the External Communications Committee recommended to the main Board that an "AA Telephone Service - Single Telephone Number Subcommittee" be formed. In brief, the Board agreed and I was charged with its formation of co-opted AA members with active experience of the 0345 scheme. It has two distinct objectives in mind:

1. To progress the current 0345-697555 telephone number usage, i.e. to monitor and encourage the implementation of the recommendation made by the General Service Conference meeting at York on 12-14 April 1996 (see pages 13-16 and page 40 of the full report). Members of the sub-committee will be available therefore to any Region seeking further information regarding the 0345 number and, if requested, attending an interested Region's Assembly to answer questions, give a presentation and allay cost fears.

2. To keep abreast of any new technology which may be beneficial to the Fellowship's Telephone Service. For example when Remote Call Diversion was made available by BT it was found to be of great benefit to the 0345 system. I must stress that investigation of other single number systems has taken place in the recent and distant past but nothing has been found which covers the whole of Great Britain and offshore islands so efficiently or completely; no other system compares more favourably in cost when considering the alcoholic who seeks help.

So far the sub-committee has two members from South East Region; both with in-depth experience of 0345, the Telephone Liaison Officer from Scottish Service Committee, a Board member from the North East, and me, if you like, the novice. Why not invite one or two of us along to share our experience in relation to the single telephone number; this may be done via GSO. It would be irresponsible to leave all of the expansion work to just one person, as indeed it would in any area of service.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your attention during my presentation, and may the God of your understanding be with you during the hours of work and sleep which lay ahead of us this week-end.

## **DRAFT HANDBOOK/LITERATURE**

(Rodney N)

1) This Proposed AA Service Handbook for Great Britain had its origin several years ago when it was felt that the various documents and sources of information widely used within the Fellowship could usefully be collated for ease of reference. It was also foreseen that developments outside the Fellowship were going to make necessary a number of changes for AA in Great Britain.

2) Accordingly, following a number of preparatory meetings in the Regions, a suitably qualified Committee consisting of a GSB member as Convenor and three other persons chosen from those nominated by their Regions was established. This Committee produced the Working Draft Handbook which was circulated to Conference delegates in April 1996 and thereafter also to the Chairs of the Intergroups, Regions and Board members in order that as wide a cross-section as possible of Fellowship opinion could be sought on the Draft.

3)As a result of the views submitted and further consideration by the Committee of various matters, modifications have been made resulting in the present Proposed Handbook.

4)By far the greater part of this Handbook consists of various texts already in circulation, some of them having been so for many years whilst others are more recent. An over-riding principle we have sought to apply is to make no alterations to such texts without there being a clear necessity to do so. Thus the writings of Bill W., for example, are unaltered (though the most authoritative text has been used for his article "Leadership in AA" which differs from the article as sometimes printed).

5)However since this is a new edition of the existing AA Service Handbook, its purpose is both to bring information up-to-date and to revise errors in earlier editions. The Sixth Edition has been in circulation since 1989.

6)Accordingly we have sought to ensure the current accuracy of the information given. Because AA is constantly developing, there will inevitably be certain things requiring to be added or altered at any given moment. For example, a guideline for AA in Penal Establishments is currently being drafted but it is not in this Handbook because the drafting process is not yet complete. There are other similar instances. To overcome this, and to maximise the useful life of this edition, we propose that the Handbook will be printed in loose-leaf format

7)The Handbook Committee has taken the opportunity to correct some instances of faulty grammar, spelling and punctuation whilst taking care not to alter the meaning and intention of what has been written. Also the recommendation of Conference '94 (Committee 6) on avoiding gender bias has been followed.

8)There are also instances where the text layout on the page has been modified to make for a more readable presentation and for greater consistency throughout the document, again without seeking to alter the meaning.

9) We have sought to include sufficient material to give a comprehensive view of the nature and range of AA in Great Britain. Thus there are sections on the elements which constitute AA as well as all the current Guidelines. We hope that having all this material in one place will be informative and useful to anyone who refers to it, not only for their immediate purpose but beyond it as well. At approximately 100 pages we feel that it is comprehensive enough to be widely useful without becoming physically unmanageable and excessively costly to produce.

10) An undertaking was given to Conference '95 that Bill Ws Essays on the Twelve Concepts for World Service would be included. As this is a draft edition of the Handbook they have not been put in at this stage. If this Handbook as it stands is approved, these Essays will be added, but it is worth noting that these are available in the United States as a separate item of literature and could possibly be made available in Great Britain.

11) This Proposed Handbook is presented to you for your consideration with a view to its being adopted either as it is now or with some amendments after consideration by the Fellowship at large. Comments should be submitted to the Committee, via GSO, by 30 September 1997.

12) There is an inconsistency between Article 8 of the Conference Charter GB and the Service Representatives Guideline in that part of the Guideline dealing with Conference delegates, which is the correct description of the position. We propose that the wording of the Charter be amended to read: "Unless otherwise directed by Conference, tenure of office shall be for a three year period". This modification is necessary because the present wording is inaccurate and the word "concurrent" cannot stand. It is however simply an error of phrasing and can be readily corrected subject to your approval.

#### Literature Committee

Conference '96, Committee 1, asked for a review of some of the Fellowship literature currently available, specifically "AA at a glance", "Student's Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous", the "free" literature, and "The Problem Drinker in Employment".

This has now been done and the revised prints of these will be available at Conference '98.

In addition, a number of items have been translated into Welsh viz. "If you are a professional, AA wants to work with you", "AA as a resource for the medical profession", "Who me?", "Now that you have stopped", "A newcomer asks", "Is AA for you?" and "AA at a glance" and these should be available in the near future.

After discussion on the Proposed Handbook, Rodger P, Chairman of the General Service Board brought to the attention of Conference a single sheet dated 24 April 1997 entitled 'The Executive Committee'. This is the proposed composition, function and structure as recommended by the General Service Board and we would like your consideration for that to replace what is in the proposed Handbook. Please consider the two issues:

1. regarding the word 'concurrent' as in item 11 in the Draft Handbook Report
2. of the Executive Committee composition, function and reporting.

Voting to take place on Sunday morning.

Due to the time constraint it was agreed that further Board business would take place following the presentation of the Committee Reports on Sunday morning, but for the sake of continuity is reported below.

#### HANDBOOK (Rodney N)

Relating to the Handbook just some amplification and clarification of what was said on Friday evening. For the guidance of delegates the following is a summary statement of how it is intended to progress the proposed Handbook.

In the near future the delegates will receive a summary of the modifications made to the Handbook as it stands at present. We know that there are certain things that need to be altered, added, etc. to this document. The proposed Handbook should be discussed as widely as possible throughout the Fellowship. Comments and proposals arising from this consultation process



should be sent to the Literature Committee no later than 30 September 1997. These comments and proposals will be considered by the Committee and copies of the proposed Handbook will be circulated to the Conference '98 delegates, and other recipients, as soon as practicable after the 30th September - in order that the version to be presented can be thoroughly discussed well in advance of Conference '98.

The Essays on the Twelve Concepts will be available as agreed at Conference '95. We suggest that as it is anticipated that the Handbook will be a loose-leaf volume then the Essays will be an optional extra to be inserted, and paid for, if requested by individuals ordering the Handbook. They will be incorporated in the Handbook. However, as the Essays do not change – it will be possible to purchase the Handbook without these or, alternatively, the Essays can be obtained separately from GSO.

At Conference '98 the proposed Handbook will be submitted for approval in its entirety, by Conference as a whole, along with the procedure for updating, the format that it will take and that this be reviewed two years later.

Conference approved the above.

## **NATIONAL PRISON LIAISON**

(Charlie G)

On arrival at Conference you were given a presentation relating to the Prison Service structure throughout Great Britain as at 1990 outlining the service structure in Scotland, England and Wales. Also included in the presentation is information dating back to Conference 1994 as to how the position of National Prison Liaison Officer was put in place and reference to both 1994 recommendations - Committee No.2 and Committee No.6.

The Chairman of the General Service Board informed Conference 1996 that both the Liaison Officer and myself work together to find the way forward and report back to Conference 1997. The creation of this position has caused some difficulty in such a way that accountability has not been possible within the normal service structure. In a number of ways it has been helpful but, in light of the Conference 1994 recommendation, Committee No.2 "*that Board members should have designated responsibilities for our services*" this has resulted in duplication of effort and in some ways has caused mis-understandings. In conclusion, the final outcome on any decisions that may be necessary is entirely left to be resolved by the group conscience of the Fellowship and the Conference.

I therefore ask Conference to accept that consideration has been given, but that this post of Prison Liaison Officer for England & Wales is not necessary and that this should be the responsibility of the Board Member responsible for Prisons as a whole.

After discussion Conference accepted the proposal.

Charlie went on to thank, on behalf of the Board, the member concerned for the work and effort he has put in over the past two and a half years and every endeavour will be made to maintain

and continue the progress to date.

## **HEALTH (Bill Y)**

### Personal Introduction

My name is Bill Y and I am an alcoholic. I am also board member elect with special responsibility for healthcare liaison.

You may wonder what qualification I have to do this job, I know I did. I am not medically qualified nor do I work in healthcare. My last service post at Region was that of HLO but I have another reason to be concerned about getting the AA message to the right people in healthcare.

I wonder how many of you recovering alcoholics, like me, found your way to AA through the suggestion (or stronger) of someone who works in 'healthcare'. As a suffering alcoholic I was totally dependent upon the wise words from medically qualified people, most of whom were blissfully unaware of AA and were unable to see below the mask of denial I had put on around my drinking. I hung on their every word awaiting the 'cure' to my various illnesses and pains..... does this sound familiar?

However, it wasn't until one very kindly man, a retired psychiatric consultant, and yet another person to whom I'd lied about my drinking, said to me 'Yes, Bill, but I think we need to look at the alcoholism'. My road to recovery through AA began with that wise man and I will never know how many other alcoholics had the seed of recovery sowed by him. He was not an alcoholic himself but someone, at some stage, had taken the time and trouble to explain to him about AA, and I thank God for that!

### Background to this Report

When Conference 1995 (Committee 4, Question 2) was asked to consider changes in the role of the (then) Hospital Liaison Officer in order to help AA to be more responsive to the changes taking place in the healthcare services, particularly as they affect the suffering alcoholic who is receiving care in the community, it recommended, amongst other things, that progress be reviewed in 1997.

The experiences and views of all regional healthcare liaison officers, throughout England, Scotland & Wales, have been sought. They, in turn, sought the experience of their intergroup healthcare liaison officers and this report is an attempt to reflect our collective experience, nation-wide, in compliance with the 1995 recommendation. I have had responses from almost every UK region.

### The Shifting Target

AA has a simple message to carry to the still suffering alcoholic. Unfortunately, by their very nature - and each of us can confirm this from personal experience, such alcoholics are not always easy to find. Probably the majority of them have contact with the medical profession, long before they ever make it to a meeting. When their condition was deemed to be severe enough, they would have been admitted into hospital for 'drying-out and this would usually have been a

psychiatric hospital, with or without a specialist alcohol/substance abuse unit

In the past, AA has known exactly where to find the healthcare professionals who were dealing with alcoholics and what they were called - they were in psychiatric hospitals or psychiatric wards of general hospitals and they were called doctors and nurses!!

Financial cutbacks and policy changes in the NHS has brought about the closure of many large psychiatric hospitals and their accompanying addiction units.

The Community Care Act which came in to force in April 1993, was the enabling legislation which started a fundamental change in what is done, where it is done and by whom, in the treatment of alcoholics. The contacts which we have had in the past - the 'targets' for dialogue and information, are changing.

For instance, healthcare is no longer the sole province of the health service; many areas of service provision are now the joint responsibility of health services and local authority social services departments, so the lines are blurred as to who exactly is ultimately responsible for what.

### The Experiences of HLOs

Change has been the main theme in this area of service over the past 2 years, and that change is becoming increasingly marked. However, there are substantial regional variations and it is not possible at this stage to know whether these variations lie within the healthcare services, the local AA response to those services, or both.

There is still a great deal of AA activity going on in both NHS and private hospitals/treatment centres, i.e. where the healthcare professionals are, mainly, regular nurses and doctors.

- there are normal AA meetings in hospitals;
- there are sponsored meetings for patients with one or two AA members in attendance;
- there are some hospitals where AA has the permission of the ward sister/ manager to visit a particular ward (psychiatric or specifically addiction) on a regular basis
- there are talks being given to hospital and allied staff
- information is being distributed in hospitals through display stands in outpatients or A&E, by announcements on hospital radio or electronic posters on TV monitors in waiting areas

All of these activities, which fell within the remit of the Hospital Liaison Officer, as was, seem to be going as strong as ever in some areas, while others are beginning to feel the bite of policy change and are responding, or not able to respond, as the case may be.

However, there are also many other new initiatives being carried out by HLOs at local level, which need to be shared with the rest of the Fellowship (see Recommendation 2 below).

There is no apparent pattern or standard for healthcare liaison in AA, outside of hospital liaison - it appears to be down to the time, bodies, commitment, footwork, perseverance and understanding of members involved in this particular area of service.

There is a particularly worrying fact which comes through very clearly from the reports of regional HLOs - and that is the number of HLO posts which are vacant at Intergroup level. I cannot give you an absolute figure, but it is a lot. What does this mean? Well, for a start it means that

*no-one in AA is taking on the responsibility for co-ordinating the carrying of the AA message to healthcare professionals, in most of those Intergroup areas where there is no HLO. In turn, that means that the chances of the still suffering alcoholic hearing the AA message is reduced.*

Do we write this off as another symptom of complacency towards service, or is there perhaps another reason?

Well, my belief is that the job of HLO has become more daunting and the brief is ill-defined.

### Role of Healthcare Liaison Officers

Compared to most of the jobs at Intergroup, the HLO role is woolly. For the person considering taking on the job, it has become much more than organising a rota for the local hospital meeting, having a chat with the ward manager from time to time and ensuring that there are posters/contact numbers on the appropriate notice boards at the hospital.

We are now asking the HLO to do not only all of those traditional things, but also to move into this new arena of combined health services and social services with its new job titles, new remits, new committees, new initiatives etc. This in turn requires the HLO to rethink his or her concept of healthcare professionals ...the who, the what and the where so far as the people involved, the service they provide and our strategies for communicating with them are concerned. On top of all that, we will be expecting the HLO to educate the rest of us about what is going on and then to involve and motivate us!!

Part of the problem seems to lie in the apparent sheer volume of the work but the other part, and possibly the biggest barrier to taking on this work, is the perceived complexity 'where do I start, it doesn't make sense, its beyond me'.

I believe that this is a real problem which requires discussion, changes to the way we work and generally much improved communications amongst ourselves,

### Recommendations

1. This issue should be discussed at every Intergroup meeting, possibly convening a special service meeting to review the HLO job description
2. We need to share experience around the Fellowship - we could consider:
  - i) having a healthcare newsletter
  - ii) drawing up a resource list of people in the Fellowship who have special experience/knowledge and who are available to give help by telephone or workshop attendance
  - iii) setting up a team of committed members in each Intergroup and in each Region -there's strength in numbers and this job can get very lonely!
  - iv) run Intergroup and Regional workshops, possibly inviting someone with special experience/knowledge to attend but definitely getting across to groups the importance of this

work,

3. A Healthcare Liaison Hints and Suggestions Sheet should be prepared, drawing on experience from around the Fellowship, for presentation to Conference 1998 with a view to bringing a new draft Guideline to Conference 1999.

4. The Board should consider what initiatives, if any, it needs to be taking to assist in this transitional process.

Finally, 2 reminders...

1. Whatever changes may be taking place in healthcare services and structures, there is one thing which we must always keep firmly in mind - AA hasn't changed; we still *co-operate* with the professional, *free of charge* and our message of hope for the suffering alcoholic is still as simple as it ever was!

2 All HLOs (and everyone else!) who will be attending the Great Britain Convention in June, are cordially invited, no - positively encouraged, to attend the Saturday morning workshop on Health - it will be held in the Windsor Bar of the Winter Gardens and will run from 10 am to 11.30 am.

### **PROBATION (Mick W)**

First of all, for those of you who are confused by the term "Probation and Social Services" let me clarify by saying that Social Services cover Probation in Scotland, hence Probation for England and Wales, and Social Services for Scotland.

Committee No.5 of Conference 1996 requested that a Guideline on Probation be drawn up and presented to this year's Conference for consideration. One of the reasons being that "*progress in the Probation Service seems to have come almost to a halt in some areas*". A Guideline was drawn up and submitted to the Conference Agenda Committee,

The proposed Guideline was rejected due to a lack of supporting background information.

Background information is limited because of the lack of activity.

The lack of activity is in no small part due to there being no Guideline.

This circle must be broken if we are to move forward, hence the presentation to this Conference of a "Hints and Suggestions" sheet based upon the proposed Guideline, this document you have in your folder. This would greatly assist those of us involved within Probation and Social Services, generating more enthusiasm and activity, helping to fill vacant Intergroup and Regional posts, and thus supplying the background material needed to present a Guideline to next year's Conference.

I ask that Conference agree to the publication of this document as a "Hints and Suggestions" sheet for Probation and Social Services, for use within the Fellowship.

Conference agreed and the document is available from GSO.

## **FORUMS (Barry F)**

Historically there have been, within our Fellowship, three types of forums.

### Formal Informal Casual

Forums serve as an opportunity for the Fellowship to share its experience, strength and hope with each other. The goal of all forums should be to inform, encourage and strengthen the members of our Fellowship in order to help carry out our primary purpose.

#### **1. Formal (Specific Agenda)**

This type of forum usually requires a large and often complex steering committee and/or staff to which the responsibilities of the forum are entrusted. The setting that this type of forum requires is often a large hall and/or complex designed to hold large numbers of attendees. Although not always the case, this type of setting is often expensive, the cost of which must be borne by the Fellowship. The following is a list of suggestions, not all inclusive, that can help in preparing for this type of forum:

- a. Selection of steering committee at least six months prior to event
- b. Meetings of committee to be held monthly for first three months
- c. Venue secured within three months allowing ample time for the following:
  - (1) All mailing requirements, to include early publicity
  - (2) Guest speaker notification
  - (3) Contractual agreements with appropriate outside agencies
- d. Contact GSO for appropriate desired support
- e. Committee meetings as required

#### **2. Informal (Ad-Hoc Agenda)**

While this type of forum requires a smaller committee than a formal setting, the purpose and content are no less important. The planning stages are similar to those of a formal forum in that there is a time factor involved for planning and preparation. The primary differences occur in the venue selected, the number of attendees expected, speakers invited and proposed involvement from GSO.

#### **3. Casual (Workshop Setting)**

This type of forum has the benefits of dealing with a smaller number of people from the early preplanning stages through to event. While no less important than the formal or informal, this type of setting invites a spirit of togetherness that the other options can, but often do not. The committee responsible for this type of forum often finds it has the advantage of flexibility that may not be available within the other structures.

### **General hints and suggestions for all types of Forums**

Planning the event for the spring or autumn often assures a larger attendance.

Be specific in the responsibilities given to committee members  
Invite a maximum of two general service board members who will best suit your needs.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1998 (Friday evening)**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Thirty-Third General Service Conference 1998:

Marie M  
Ann S  
Jim F  
Stan F

East of Scotland Region South East Region Scotia Region Midlands Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve and each gave a brief summary of their AA service background. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with Al asking everyone to join him in saying the Serenity Prayer.

### **SATURDAY, 12 APRIL**

#### **WORKSHOP -"REVIEW OF REGIONALIZATION"**

Al opened the Saturday evening session by asking everyone to join hands and say the Serenity Prayer and went on to remind all that five Regions would be making a presentation on Regionalization, lasting approximately 10 minutes, and after each presentation there would be open discussion. Al asked for the first Region to make its presentation:

#### **CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION (John C)**

Service Structure History:

American servicemen stationed in West Germany after World War II brought AA with them. Those early meetings were held at military bases in Wiesbaden, Frankfurt and other locations. From the late fifties into the early sixties there were about twenty (20) active AA Groups in West Germany. As AA grew so did the service structure so that by 1971 an "Intergroup" meeting of all AA groups in West Germany was held at Sembach Airbase. At this meeting the "Intergroup" was divided into five (5) "Areas", each to have it's own Secretary. Communications were initiated with GSO New York and most groups registered with GSO New York. By September 1973 there were nine (9) "Areas" in the "Intergroup". Also, by this time English speaking AA Groups were starting in the larger cities in Continental Europe. Intergroup Continental Europe continued to grow and by 1980 included West Germany, Finland, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. The Chairman, David K, felt the extra-territorial service structure in Continental Europe should have a say in the whole of AA by becoming part of a conference structure. Several options were discussed and in April 1980, at the invitation of GSO Great

Britain, a representative was sent to the General Service Conference. He returned with an invitation to become part of GSO Great Britain effective in 1981 and to send two (2) delegates. The service structure continued to grow but, as it sometimes is with alcoholics, could not agree on what the affiliation with GSO Great Britain would be. In 1985 a meeting was held to decide upon re-structuring and, after a presentation by a man named Jack from London, the by then thirteen "Areas" were divided into three (3) Intergroups covering all of Continental Europe. In 1986 we became "Region 15" and began sending six (6) delegates to the General Service Conference of Great Britain. Until 1994 the service structure in Region 15 consisted of groups, areas, Intergroups and the Region. Some of the groups did not participate in nor support the service structure, choosing to remain quite "autonomous". The Region 15 approach to providing AA services to the suffering alcoholic could probably best be described as variably enthusiastic from the individual member and trusted servant aspect but experiencing a shortfall in the overall cohesiveness needed to provide these services with consistency throughout the Region.

#### Demographics and Geography of the Region:

To provide an accurate overview and synopsis of the Continental European Region it is necessary to begin by portraying the demographics and geography of the Region. Today the Region is comprised primarily by over one hundred (100) English language groups of Alcoholics Anonymous that "carry the message" by holding over two hundred and fifty (250) meeting per week in fifty plus (50+) cities in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The population of these Countries is in excess of 1.72 billion and the area is approximately 391,600 sq.mi. (626,560 sq.km.). Additionally, the Region provides provisional access to the AA service structure for groups in seventeen (17) other Countries that conduct one hundred and twenty (120) meetings weekly in an additional fifty plus (50+) cities. The membership generally consists of Americans living or stationed (military members) in Continental Europe, Great Britons living and/or working on the continent and English speaking residents of the host nation(s).

#### The Transition:

In June of 1994 the Region assembly did a collective "fourth-step" of the regional structure and as a result of this effort the need to alter our structure was recognised as necessary for our continued growth as a service organisation. At the conclusion of a comprehensive discussion on how to best begin this process the assembly voted to :

Adopt an eleven (11) Intergroup structure as the foundation for growth and the baseline for improvement of effectiveness in carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic, Adopt the "AA Service Manual for Great Britain" as the service guidelines for the Region, replacing the "Guidelines for Region 15".

Although this action would, it was felt, initially cause a certain amount of turmoil within the service structure, the following advantages envisioned by the assembly were viewed as ample compensation for this shortcoming:

Improved service to the suffering alcoholic - our principle aim and the main reason for our existence.

●Enhanced unity within the Intergroups and Region.



- Refined communications between all levels of the service structure.
- Greater possibilities for individual members to participate in service work.
- Decreased travel time and expense between business meetings.
- Improved utilisation of 7th Tradition moneys.

#### The Present Service Structure:

The original eleven (11) Intergroup structure has evolved significantly during the past few years and the service structure in the Region has taken on a distinct, albeit diverse, form. Two new Intergroups have been added and one has merged with a neighbouring Intergroup, Eight of the Intergroups have become what could best be termed “active” Intergroups that participate at the Region level. Four (4) of the Intergroups, because of size and/or geographic location, are relatively inactive and their ties to the Region depend primarily on information flow to and from Region. The remainder of the constituency consists of individual groups with minimal ties to any service structure. The bottom line: Approximately 45% of the groups have direct access to the Region structure, 17% of the groups have limited access to the Region structure, and the remaining 38% of the groups are out there with little or no finite service structure support. The “bottom line” paints a very clear picture, and a definite challenge, for the Region. Keeping in mind one of our founders thoughts that “the good is often the enemy of the best” (or words to that effect) we realise that we cannot remain static in our attempts to fulfil our primary purpose - carrying the message to the alcoholic that still suffers. The short time since the restructuring of our Region has provided us with sufficient data to have accomplished some “Regional 10th Step” work. In other words, how and how well we “carry the message” and what we have in mind for the future if God sees fit.

#### **The Geographic Challenge:**

The size of the Continental European Region primary area is about 70,000 square miles larger than the area covered by the other 14 Regions combined. Although this alone poses significant challenges in many aspects of our efforts to carry the message, the most significant is our ability to gather together often enough to conduct the business of the Region. We presently conduct four (4) business meetings annually, one(l) of which has the additional function of a Conference Workshop. Interim communications among individual Intergroups and Region officers is limited (primarily because of costs). This often leads to conflicts of interest amongst Intergroups planning conventions, workshops, etc. Awareness of these inhibitors has caused actions to be implemented to alleviate many of the problems. Intergroups are attempting to plan events further ahead of time and the establishment of a Region events calendar has allowed conflicts to be minimised and more events, such as additional Conference Workshops, to be conducted. In actuality, although the geographic challenge is of itself problematic, the greater challenge seems to be communications.

#### **The Communications Challenge:**

Communications is one of the core elements of our primary purpose - carrying the message. Without efficient communication, either one alcoholic to another or among service organisations within the Fellowship, essential information doesn’t reach the suffering alcoholic.

Some of the issues and challenges listed herein may not appear at first glance to be related to communications but when viewed simply as a communication issue have become much easier to

find working solutions for. The communications challenge is seen as threefold; internal to the Region, external within the Fellowship, and public communications.

### **Internal Communications:**

Among the normal day-to-day challenges that face each and every service organisation in AA we have identified some as more glaring and more needy of attention at present. They are:

Utilisation of Conference Delegates: The liaison positions presently held by our Conference Delegates in many cases do not meet the needs of the Region. Within our Region the liaison positions with many health organisations, institutions and other social services agencies are accomplished by the host nation service structure. To alleviate this shortcoming we are in the process of realigning Conference Delegate positions to liaise and interact with the host nation GSO.

Regional Publication (Newsletter): Much of the information that flows is in the form of region minutes, attachments from Intergroups, and other items passed to the region secretary. Because of the bulk of the material much of the information tends to get side-tracked or for other reasons does not reach the groups. One solution may be a regional publication, such as a newsletter, that will compile in one easy to distribute document a more comprehensive and timely flow of information.

Contact Information: Group and Intergroup contact information changes are not updated often enough. This includes group meeting information for the region directory. Additional emphasis is being placed on passing on changes.

Service Work Commitment: Throughout the Region there appears to be more service positions available than there are volunteers committed to fill them. Although this may not be unique to our Region, a need to attract more of our membership into service work has been identified as necessary for continued growth. Compilation and distribution of an "Introduction to Service" document containing job descriptions and other important information for the prospective service volunteer is in progress.

### **External Communications:**

As part of the greater world-wide whole of Alcoholics Anonymous our interaction with the Fellowship and those whom the Fellowship would be of service to is inherent to our legacy of service. The primary areas that are the present focal points of change are :

GSO Information Flow: Groups and Intergroups are not consistently receiving information from GSO. The main reason for this appears to be administrative, many groups are not registered or their information is not accurate. This shortfall is slowly being alleviated by the directory co-ordinator and the service representatives. As long as the groups pass the information to the directory co-ordinator it is relayed to GSO.

Host Nation Interface: Although all of the Region resides within several host nations, interface is almost non-existent. Our view is that realignment of delegate positions to fill this void will greatly enhance communications with our counterparts in the host nation(s) service structure.

Public Information: Public information initiatives to date have been intermittent at best and lack long term consistency. With few exceptions this is a problem across the board. To rectify our present public information dilemma viable PI Committees are seen as the initial focus of our efforts,

Central Service Office: The Continental European Region does not have one central location that English speaking members of the Fellowship can contact. We rely totally on volunteer support. As our Region grows, geographically as well as in members, we feel it may be time to begin planning for a Central Regional Service Office with one (1) paid part-time employee, phone system, copy machine and computer.

**Finance:** A topic that in our Fellowship seems to be often plagued with controversy and our Region is not exempt. The reality is that many Groups exercise their right of autonomy pertaining to 7th Tradition moneys, consequently the flow of funds above a prudent reserve through the service structure to GSO is sometimes a trickle. This may be partly due to lack of information and knowledge of how the “system” works, where the money goes, and what it is used for. The education of our members is one of the ongoing topics of discussion and initiatives in our Region. Additionally, the cost of “doing business” has increased. We are spending significantly more money for printing, postage and travel costs. The positive aspect of this is that the more information we are able to pass on the better we accomplish our primary purpose.

**Conclusion:** We feel we have a basically sound regional service structure that, with the occasional refinement, will serve the Fellowship well. How well is primarily dependent on the dedication, commitment, willingness and open-mindedness of the trusted servants of today and those who follow in their footsteps. To answer the question of how well our service structure works today is easy -we are blessed with good people throughout the Region and “it” works quite well with God’ s help.

Following the presentation and the questions from the floor it was established that there is little relationship between the German speaking and the English speaking AA Groups and that they were for all practical purposes two separate AAs -language is the main barrier. However, some German members who have a knowledge of English do attend the English speaking meeting. This also applies to other host nations as well as Germany.

Despite the closure of many AA Groups, the overall effect of the US Troop withdrawal from Europe had not been as catastrophic as was expected; the main impact has now levelled off. There are even signs of increased AA activity and this is due to the build up in the Balkans.

It was noted that out-lying AA Groups represented some 38% of the total and that for most practical purposes they were outside the current AA structure. However, the Region had contacted these out-lying Groups offering help, but had little response to date. Problems exist in establishing contact in the former Eastern Block Countries.

Email was seen to provide a speedy and effective method of communication between the members/groups of the Region, by-passing the existing time-consuming postal systems and provides instant access to the meeting lists of the Intergroups and Groups. It is widely utilised in Belgium, France and Switzerland and in contacting the out-lying Groups.

The way ahead seems to be for the English speaking Region to grow by working with the national GSO's of the European Service Meeting.

## **GLASGOW REGION**

(William McC)

### **HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY**

Glasgow is Scotland's largest city with a population of 800,000 rising to 1.5m if Greater Glasgow is considered. Glasgow Region's Service Committee are active in all areas of service work within hospitals, prisons, courts, social services and industry. We also have the Scottish Service Office based in Glasgow. Glasgow's first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous was held in the St Enoch Hotel in 1947, and today there are over 300 meetings each week in Glasgow.

My Experience: I have been involved in Service since coming to the Fellowship in 1986. First I went to Intergroup as GSR, and progressed to Chairman of Intergroup, I rotated to Region as a delegate in 1992. There were 10 Intergroups in the Region at that time and it became apparent that Glasgow was having difficulty in co-ordinating its services and functioning as effectively as it could.

I became part of the Committee which ultimately suggested the re-structuring of the Intergroups within Glasgow Region. The changes were agreed and took place in 1993 whereby we had reduced the number of Intergroups to 4, with each of them taking the lead from the Region in holding Service Committee Meetings, and putting in place the Conference Recommendations of forming multi-meeting Groups.

At the last AGM of Glasgow Region, I became Region Chairperson, and my experience suggests that Glasgow Region now functions more effectively than before re-structuring.

### **STRUCTURE**

- a) Glasgow Region holds 6 meetings per year.
- b) The Region's Joint Service Committee holds 6 meetings per year.
- c) Conference delegates along with their alternatives hold a minimum of 6 meetings, prior to Conference.

There are also pre and post Conference Meetings for everyone in the Region to participate in,

Each Intergroup sends three members to Region, each has a vote.

Observers are welcome at Region, but cannot participate without permission from the Chairperson. Joint Service meetings and workshops are open to all, and the Region believes that this is the best level of communication in our Region.

My own belief is that Glasgow Region works well, due to the regularity of these meetings and by commitment members provide, to ensure Alcoholics Anonymous's message is carried to those who seek it.

In response to questions from the floor.

Glasgow attributed their success to the importance of a sound service structure, based on the guidelines, with sponsorship into service through the existing PIPCP and a willingness and acceptance to work with the guidelines. When it had been necessary for Intergroups to merge this had been done amicably sharing their workloads and responsibilities and had in fact created no major problems.

In reply to North West Region, Glasgow stated that its Regional status was based on geographical areas rather than population.

## **LONDON REGION (David C)**

### **Introduction**

Since the introduction of Regions into the Fellowship in Great Britain, London Region has experienced a number of problems which have resulted from both the effect of Regionalisation within London itself and also the effect of Regionalisation upon the Fellowship as a whole which have reflected back into London Region. These will be detailed in a later section.

As a result of these problems London Region has been examining for at least the last five years, how it can change its structure in order to solve these problems. Over this period a number of alternatives to the structure that was originally introduced have been proposed. The solutions which have been suggested and in one case already tried and discarded are covered in the penultimate section 'Possible Solutions'. The most recent Regional sub-committee to examine the problems recommended that the structure be changed to correspond with that described by Bill W in 'The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service'. The process of the implementation of this structure is not complete (and as with all these matters there is a diversity of opinion and so there are those who argue that it should not be completed). The current structure is also described in a later section.

### **Problems which have occurred due to Regionalisation**

The following are problems which have occurred within London Region as a result of the current structure. Each is presented with explanations cited by those who have contributed to the debate over the last 5 years at Region. It would be wrong to interpret each as a view held universally within the Region. There is always vigorous debate within the Region on any issue. However, it is felt that each has arisen in debate often enough for them to be valid contributions to the discussion which will now take place in the Fellowship at Conference 1997.

a) Group alienation from Region: At each regional assembly, group representation is only indirect, via the Intergroup representatives. This has given rise to a belief at group level that Region is not truly answerable to the Groups in the Region. There is a sense that factions from

different Intergroups have sought to dominate the assembly by occupying the executive and service officer roles, simply for reasons of power rather than service. It is felt that decisions made at Region represent the views of these factions rather than the group conscience of the Region. According to 'The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service' any assembly should have at least two thirds group representation in order to be answerable to the group conscience. Never, as far as I am aware, has this occurred at London Region (and perhaps not under any Region as a whole) whilst under the structure instituted in Great Britain as a whole. As a response to this, some have advocated greater Intergroup representation (i.e. more reps per Intergroup) at Region, whilst others advocate an annual Region meeting at which all GSR's can attend and which has the ultimate sanction on all Regional activity, taking as their source 'The Manual for World Service'.

b) Poor provision of some services within the Region. There has been a sense that services at Regional level could have been more effective. There has not been group confidence in Region as an institution to encourage many to come forward to fill service positions. When regional service positions have been filled, some have felt that it has been, at times difficult to obtain a strong enough participation to allow a useful sharing of information of service experience within the Region. There is no suggestion that those who are working within the structure are anything but dedicated and hard working. However, possibly for the reasons given in point 'I' there has not been great enthusiasm amongst the Groups for Regionally co-ordinated services.

c) Group alienation from Conference: since Regionalisation has occurred there has been a growing sense at grass roots (i.e. group level) within London, that the annual Conference at York does not hear the accurate group conscience of the Region and the belief that it does not represent the group conscience of the Fellowship as a whole. It is felt that unless the structure ensures that *every GSR in the Region*, and hence every group, *has direct access through that structure, to every delegate from that Region*, then the group conscience of that Region cannot be represented fully at the annual Conference. Regionalisation inserted an extra layer of structure between the group and the delegate which stopped this happening. This cannot happen under the Regional structure introduced 15 or so years ago unless every delegate regularly visits *every* Intergroup in that Region. If an Intergroup sees only one delegate regularly, as commonly happens, then GSR's at that Intergroup will only have direct access to the delegate of one committee. Any contributions to be made regarding questions from other committees can only be made indirectly to the relevant delegate.

Another explanation which has been given to account for the alienation from Conference is that London is under represented at Conference. It is felt that if London were able to exert greater influence on Conference, then there would not be the same sense of alienation. Currently London Region has around 550 groups whilst there are around 3,500 in the Fellowship. So whilst London Region has roughly one seventh of the AA population, it has only one fifteenth of the delegates at Conference. This, it is felt, indicates under representation at Conference. It has been argued, in addition that London Region as a whole contributes a much higher proportion than one fifteenth of all contributions to GSO. This point has been used to argue for greater representation at Conference.

d) The alienation from and mistrust of the GSB: As mentioned above, under the Regional structure introduced into Great Britain 15 or so years ago, direct access to delegates by GSR 's has been restricted, and so delegates do not take the true group conscience of their Region to the annual Conference. Similarly, communication back from Conference to GSR' s is restricted.

Consequently, delegates are not fully answerable to the groups of the Regions they represent. This has resulted in a weakened group conscience at Conference. Conference, as envisaged by Bill W and as detailed in his 'The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service', is set up as a critical balance of the group conscience, that is, the delegates, and the executive, that is, the GSB. Ultimately, and Bill is quite clear on this, the GSB is answerable to the group conscience. Due to a weakened group conscience, the GSB is able to act without reference to Conference or secure in the knowledge Conference will not use its authority. It is felt that the evidence has been that delegates, and indeed GSB members, in the past have felt that they owe greater loyalty to the GSB than to the group and that the GSB do not feel that they are answerable to the Fellowship. See, for example, London Region Report on the conduct of the GSB regarding the changing of the Concepts. It is sad that events should have led to a degree of frustration that such a report should be written and distributed around the Fellowship. This mistrust has not abated since the writing of the report. It is felt that none of this could have occurred if the group conscience were truly represented at Conference.

The point should be made that there has never been any suggestion that anyone has acted other than with the best of intentions for the Fellowship.

The points c) and d) inevitably lead to poorer provision of services within the Region as they indicate bars to the thorough sharing of information and experience.

### **Possible solutions**

Over this period three possible solutions have been proposed by the Region.

1. Splitting the Region into two Regions. This was seen as a means of doubling delegate representation of the London area at Conference whilst creating two Regions with half the number of groups. It was thought that these smaller Regions would be more manageable and so bring the groups closer to the Region. Conference initially rejected the proposal made to Conference, arguing that it would set a precedent for other Regions to split and so lead to an unmanageably large Conference. Eventually, London Region was given the option to split. This option was not taken, however, though there was much internal debate, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, Conference's reason for the initial rejection was accepted by many in the Region. Secondly, there was a growing sense, as the debate went on, that splitting the Region into two with the same internal structure, would just create two smaller Regions with the same problems.

2. Zoning was introduced as an alternative to splitting the Region. Instead of 22 Intergroups sending a representative to Region. Four zones were created which contained 5/6 Intergroups. Each Intergroup sent a representative to a zone which in turn sent a representative to Region. Some benefits were accrued in the sharing of service experience within the zone. However, with regard to communication between group, Region and hence Conference, all problems were made worse and each zone quickly disbanded. The system was abandoned within two years.

3. The Service Structure detailed in Bill W's 'The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service'. The critical features of this are: Annual pre and post Conference Region meeting at which all GSR's are entitled to attend and vote. At the pre Conference meeting all Conference questions are discussed. At the post Conference meeting, all delegates report back directly to GSR's and delegates are elected for the following year. This system ensures that any

group can speak directly to all the delegates. It also ensures that delegates are elected directly by the GSR' s and so there can be less opportunity for factions to vote in their own.

There is one other critical feature which should be pointed out. At this meeting Region presents a report of its activities in each area throughout the year. This is scrutinised and accepted or rejected by the GSR' s. This ensures that the ultimate authority is with the groups.

There were two reasons for the proposal of this as a solution.

i) It was devised by Bill W in response to the occurrence of exactly the same problems which were occurring in the Fellowship in the US at the same time. In writing this, he also wrote the Twelve Concepts for World Service, making the structure wholly consistent with these Twelve Concepts.

ii) It has subsequently worked well in the United States where there are cities with AA populations far in excess of that of London (e.g. Los Angeles has over 3000 groups alone). It is worth noting that it also works well in the US where there is the opposite problem, that is, a very low AA population spread over huge geographical areas.

The current situation

Approximately 18 months ago, after much debate option 3, described above was partially adopted. The pre and post Conference meetings were instituted. All GSR' s are invited to attend and can vote. There is discussion of all Conference questions and these GSR' s elect delegates and alternates for the following year.

The annual report to the GSR' s was not adopted.

Typically attendance at the pre Conference meeting has been 55 GSR's. (There have been two each of these pre- and post- Conference meetings so far).

## **Conclusion**

There is a sense that as a result of the changes that have taken place within London over the last 18 months or so has helped to begin changes to the problems cited above. All GSR' s now have the opportunity to voice opinions if they wish to. It is hoped that attendance will increase at the pre and post Conference meetings as they become more established and confidence increases. It should be pointed out, however, that the writer became the Chairman of London Region shortly afterwards and so it is difficult for him to gauge this objectively. Only further elapse of time will reveal how well these changes work.

Certainly, if the structure is responsible for the difficulties which appear to exist at Conference and the GSB as described above, then they can only be resolved if and when the whole Fellowship adopts the structure described in Bill W's 'The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service'.

As far as I am aware, there is no great push at the moment (though it may change again) to increase the number of delegates sent to Conference by London Region. As long as the group conscience is accurately represented at Conference, then the Region feels well represented. It is thought that the recent changes will allow the delegates to do that.



It is hoped that it might be helpful for other Regions to hear how London Region has attempted to tackle the problems which have occurred. Similarly it would be very interested to hear how other Regions might have attempted to resolve their problems.

In reply to comments from the floor it was agreed that one of the major problems in London is the lack of communication between the Intergroups and the Region. The Intergroup Chairmen meet on a regular basis, but this is not part of the Region structure.

The existing relationships between the Region and its Intergroups is seen as a major problem and it was felt that assistance to London might be provided from an 'external' source such as a neighbouring Region or the Board. It was recommended that this suggestion be fully explored.

On the positive side, comment was made on the enthusiasm of the younger AA members for their own meetings in London.

## **SOUTH EAST REGION**

(Ann S)

### **HISTORY OF S.E. REGION**

South East Region was part of Southern Region (the original of the only two Regions in England, Wales and Scotland at the time), before Regionalisation in 1980. (General Service Conference April 1980 recommended Regionalisation for the whole of the Country).

We held our first Regional Assembly on Sunday June 1 1980 and it was decided to name the Region, South East Region' .

It was also decided at that time, to produce Guidelines which would be sent to all concerned for discussion and ratification at the next Assembly about the running of Region, election of Officers etc.

General Service Office were sent copies of minutes, current officers to continue in post until January 1982.

An extra impromptu meeting was held at Swindon on Sunday June 15 1980, marking the final meeting of Southern Region.

We had a telephone service already in place in Guildford and Solent.

In October 1981, South East Intergroup divided into three Intergroups: East Sussex, based at Bexhill (9 Groups); East Kent based at Canterbury (11 Groups); and West Kent based at Maidstone (25 Groups).

East Kent held their first Mini Convention on September 19 1981, and East Sussex Intergroup held their first Convention on weekend November 13 and 14 1982.

The first Regional Workshop took place on June 13 1982 and our first Regional Conscience meeting on February 26 1984.

March 1 1984, saw the commencement of our Sussex Telephone Service, from a room at St Barnabas, Sackville, Hove. The annual cost was £730, instalment £200; Answerphone £120.

Our first Regional Forum took place on May 19 1985, on April 21 1986 Remote Call Forwarding (RCF) went on line in Southdown Intergroup.

By September 1986 we reviewed our progress of the previous three years. This showed we had:

- a) Established annual Conscience meetings.
- b) Established Regional Guidelines
- c) Held our first Forum
- d) Encouraged the speedy production of the AA Video
- e) Established regular Workshops on Service
- f) Appointed two new Liaison Officers (Probation & Telephones)
- g) Developed an increasingly responsible attitude towards finance
- h) Three Intergroups operating the Telephone RCF system.

In 1992, we were requested to do a feasibility study on the Single Telephone Number. We held our second Regional Forum on 26 April 1992.

On Tuesday October 25 1994 the 0345 697555 single number trial commenced at 10am in our Region. Conference 1995 invited us in tandem with Scotland, to run a trial for one year.

General Service Conference 1996 allowed the trial to expand geographically to include South West, South Midlands, London and Eastern Regions and parts thereof, requesting annual progress reports.

## **THE PRESENT PICTURE**

South East Region comprises nine Intergroups, conducting 250 meetings per week. There are thirteen Multi-Meetings in this total.

Brighton	1 x 5 meetings
	1 x 2 meetings
W. Sussex	1 x 2 meetings Burgess Hill
	1 x 2 meetings Horley
W.Kent	1 x 6 meetings Tunbridge Wells
Northdown	1 x 3 meetings Andover
	1 x 2 meetings Ludgershall
Southdown	1 x 2 meetings Petersfield
Mid Surrey	1 x 3 meetings Cove
East Kent	1 x 3 meetings Birchington
	1 x 2 meetings Canterbury
	1 x 3 meetings Hythe
	1 x 2 meetings Margate

South East Region assembles five times each year: January, March, June, September and November, all assemblies have a specific focus. Our January and September assemblies are workshops. A major item in March is the preparation and briefing of our Conference Delegates so they may act on our behalf as trusted and widely informed servants. In June, they feed back to assembly their experience of Conference along with information from and answers to our Conference Questions.

Our assemblies have comprehensive agendas, all our Regional Liaison Office and Regional Representatives have the opportunity to share in the lively debates at assembly. Visitors are very warmly encouraged and we will always ensure transport co-ordination for those without their own. Some members travel up to 200 miles, round trip, to attend assembly.

The November assembly is our conscience and Annual General Meeting.

Workshops are in the disciplines of: Public Information, Industry, Health, Prison, Probation, Telephone Service, Share, Finance, Archives and Concepts; plus Regional Chairmen. We ensure good structural meetings enabling and encouraging direct communication at these workshops. We have recently co-opted a long serving member as Regional AA News Co-ordinator .

Because of the lack of space, and honouring the 7th Tradition, some disciplines sometimes have joint workshops; i.e. Prison and Probation; Public Information and Industry, and our most recent workshops focused directly on General Service Conference Questions 1997.

Conference Questions are an agenda item at all assemblies. Our September assembly has the overall task to collate questions and forward them to the Conference Committee.

As we have nine Intergroups and six Conference Delegates to serve them, Conference Delegates and Alternates make themselves available to arrange and attend Conference workshops around the Region. This is a commitment assembly expects before their election.

South East Region will hold its third Regional Forum on June 22 1997 .

Under our Aims and Structures, posts remain vacant until a candidate is found, we have a healthy attitude to rotation and sponsorship by serving officers to their successors. (It does not always run that smoothly), but we believe that the same people just changing hats may result in stagnation. Bringing new blood into service is vital. We have vacancies at present and we hope new talent will come from Intergroups.

Our recent workshop for Intergroup Chairmen showed that sponsorship is unanimously recognised as the central and strongest route into and throughout ongoing service at any level in the Fellowship. Attraction rather than promotion remains our watchword. Team working is seen as the best way of carrying the message.

That workshop showed the present relationship of Groups to Intergroups to Region here in the South East as conducive to the execution of our work in all areas of Service; if enough people are willing to do the job. This does not however leave us complacent. We have a lot to do and the

Tools of Service need to be familiar to, and used well, by our trusted servants.

Some work on communication is needed, for example Regional representatives have to attend assembly, to effectively carry the message to and from their Intergroups. Reportage and minutes can omit the personal experience.

However, it must be recognised that in some geographically smaller areas, the larger number of Groups dilutes the numbers of members available to work in service at any level. This therefore reduces the available number of General Service Representatives to Intergroups, and thus a smaller pool of members to serve at Regional level.

At least one Intergroup (E. Sussex ), rotates its meetings between venues across its area. This seems as a most positive way of carrying the message as members not in Intergroup service have the opportunity of attending without the continual inconvenience of regularly travelling large distances. This also helps demystify Intergroup work; quite formidable for some.

Mini-conventions are held across our Region, some incorporating an item on service are useful, as at these, large numbers of members can be shown the tools of service.

Our vertical communication structure, between Group -Intergroup -Region -General Service Conference and our Board Member is healthy and strong. We communicate less well laterally; Intergroup -Intergroup within our Region. Continued regular Intergroup Chairmens' Workshops will address this.

Regions are now communicating with Regions; lessons are being learned and subsequently experience is being shared; thus encouraging better lateral communication between Intergroups and we hope between the all important Group and Intergroup.

In focusing on specific issues within disciplines, it is fair to say that Probation Liaison is undergoing a difficult time at present.

This is in no way due to our Liaison Officer, who retains great strength and hope in the face of what appears to be a general lessening of interest from the Probation Service.

However, as is so often the case, we can learn and gain strength from our experiences, one of which is that until recently, our carrying the message into prisons was not working as well as we would have liked, we had no Liaison Officer in place.

Communication has improved with the 21 prison establishments within our Region. Three of these are on the I. o. W. and three on the Isle of Sheppey. In thirteen we have regular meetings, in six we maintain contact and in only two we have no communication, one of which an outside agency (Cornerstone) is given priority over AA participation.

Where neighbouring Intergroups can assist each other in setting up and staffing prison meetings this is being done. Our Regional Prison Liaison Officer has established good relations across our wide area.

Alongside financial responsibility within Region our Treasurer also handles the funding of the 0345 telephone trial account.

## **THE FUTURE**

From what has been said so far, it may be seen that our Region has developed a firm yet flexible manner of business that ensures as far as possible that we are responsible to those we serve; from every Member to General Service, with Group, Intergroup and Region along the way.

Against this background we must be aware that complacency with what has been achieved could lead to stagnation. It is with this in mind that we continually seek to re-appraise our ways of carrying the message, and we must ensure that service remains our constant theme.

Ongoing reviews via Conscience and Workshops enable us to consolidate what works and change what is possible and indicated necessary. We continue our fundamental involvement with the 0345 extended trial and we are very pleased to be of continued service to the Fellowship as a whole in this aspect of communication.

To continue along the theme of service, it is hoped that job descriptions for Regional Officers will be in place by Conference 1998. This will necessitate a major bringing together of material which will in turn consolidate current, but largely informally agreed good practice, into Regional Assembly agreed and supported procedures.

We have made our initial steps from firm foundations built and supported by the Fellowship; support enabling us to grow further into service.

Following the presentation from South East Region the Conference Chairman agreed that it was a good functional Region. There were no questions from the floor.

## **WALES AND BORDERS REGION**

(Nigel O)

1. Wales and Borders Region Assembly is a meeting of Delegates from various Intergroups in the South and Mid Wales areas together with one from the Welsh Border areas. At one time, it was meant to represent AA in Wales, but travel and geographical problems led North Wales Intergroups to merge with North West (England) Region.

2. Its aims -(Guideline No 5)

i) To improve and foster communication between neighbouring Intergroups, thus implementing Tradition One and being guided by Tradition Nine.

ii) To ensure that the Region recognises areas that are sparsely served by the Fellowship do not remain a 'no-man's land', but become part of that Regions responsibility .

iii) To share Intergroup experience in the field of co-operation with outside agencies, Prisons, Hospitals, Schools, Social Services, Councils on Alcoholism, Churches, Courts, Probation Services (Social Services Department, Scotland) etc.

iv) To increase opportunity for members to participate in our Third Legacy of Service.

v) To enable members with particular experience to serve a wider area.

3. The Region Assembly is held at three -monthly intervals and currently meets in the Arlais Day Centre, Llandrindod Wells. Rent for each meeting is currently £30 (considered to be very inexpensive), smoking is permitted, but no kitchen facilities of any kind are available. The room is airy, bright and spacious and car parking is adequate and adjacent.

4. Some delegates travel distances to Region Assembly as follows:

Milford Haven	200	Newport (Gwent)	120	Kidderminster	120
Swansea	120	Shrewsbury	100	Cardiff	130
Hereford	80	Aberystwyth	70	Fishguard	210

These distances are in miles, are for the round trip and are approximate.

5. Average attendance varies between 30 and 40 members present.

6. Meetings currently commence at 10.30 am with a break for lunch around 12:30pm -1315, finishing around 1430 1500.

7. At present, there are eight Intergroups in Wales and Borders Region, they are:-West Wales, Carmarthen, Swansea & District, South Wales Valleys, South East Wales, South Glamorgan and Borders. South Glamorgan sends no Delegates to Region at present, neither contributes to Region funds, and now we have Welsh Language Intergroup which as yet has not attended Region.

8. Wales and Borders Region is No 9 in the current total of fifteen in AA, Great Britain and Europe.

9. Delegates arrive by car as there is no way of arriving in Llandrindod Wells by train on a Sunday. All roads to the town are rural in style with many hills, comers, no dual carriageways or motorways. Average speed attainable is seldom over 40 mph.

10. AA continues to grow in our Region and it is not inconceivable that we will find one or two Intergroups dividing before long. This will add to the secretarial work and financial load (which includes the not inexpensive amount of photo-copying costs for minutes, etc. ).

11. Region business continues to expand, and the structure of the Assembly is being slowly altered to accommodate this within the limited time available, particularly during the winter periods of short daylight and poor driving conditions. Nevertheless, it is noticeable now that there is not enough time to debate all matters fully, and afternoon discussions tend to be hurried through.

12. It has been suggested that more delegates may be forthcoming from Intergroups if the travel factor was reduced. On the other hand, those who really wish to go into Service will make the effort in any case. We still have the problem, however, of those who wish to attend but cannot as they cannot easily connect with other members' cars.

13. Some members are also inhibited by the travel costs, -this may amount to the cost of sharing petrol costs with another member or bearing the whole cost by using their own car. For those on pension or not in employment, this can be a problem.

14. The Arlais Centre has facilities for the physically handicapped, but little to assist those whose hearing or sight is impaired.

## **SUMMARY**

It could be considered that, taking into account all the above, TWO things are ripe for review - (A) the composition of Region by Intergroups and (B) the format and venue of the Assembly itself?

Why should we do this? Some reasons could be:

1. To cut down travel time to and from the meeting.
2. To cut down secretarial costs.
3. To give more time to the meeting itself.
4. To make the Region more geographically compact this aiding Intergroup contact and communication.
5. To encourage greater grassroots progress in Service.

Questions we can ask

- a) Do we need to change anything?
- b) For any change,
  - 1 How will it affect our present Intergroups
  - 2 Other Regions
  - 3 Our own Delegates (time, travel etc.)
  - 4 Our expenses
  - 5 How and who will the change BENEFIT, how and who will it DISADVANTAGE
  - 6 Will it really enhance our communications all round remembering our primary purpose

Apart from facts given above, the rest are discussion points ONLY and are neither comprehensive or to be regarded as recommendations.

Following the presentation, surprise was expressed from the floor that cost excluded some delegates from attending Regional meetings and attention was drawn to Guideline 12 (Finance) which states that "it is also widely held that trusted servants should be reimbursed for reasonable expenses even if they are subsequently returned to the pot. Such claims should be made and accepted lest the less privileged feel denied the right of participation".

Little information was available regarding the Welsh-speaking Intergroup, its service structure or role. However, some AA literature is now available in the Welsh language.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Chairman of the Board thanked the Regions for their presentation and he pointed out that no

Regional boundaries were set in concrete - the debate was open. He accepted the need for a 're-look' at the boundaries which were based on the number of Groups some 16 years ago. He said that he wants to ensure that at future Conferences, similar discussion will be generated through the workshops. He reminded us that help was offered, and available, from Region to Region - if we cannot help ourselves how can we carry the message to others. The Board will make available support to London or any other Region and the Vice Chairman has been asked to take the feelings of the workshop back to the Internal Committee. Together, we will try to find a solution - it doesn't stop here.

The Saturday evening session closed around 10.15 with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SUNDAY, 13 APRIL**

Al opened the final session of Conference with a few moments silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. As agreed at Conference 1995 each recommendation will be voted on and whether or not it is a two-thirds majority will be recorded. Also, that the Committee Secretaries would act as tellers if required.

Al then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included in this report on the pages indicated below:

Committee No. 1	Pages 48-49
Committee No. 2	Pages 50-51
Committee No. 3	Pages 52-53
Committee No. 4	Pages 54-56
Committee No. 5	Pages 57-58
Committee No. 6	Pages 59-64

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1998**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and, after a vote, Ann S (South East Region) was duly elected.

### **Board Personnel**

Rodger P, Chairman of the Board, asked Conference to ratify the following appointments:

Mary S	London Region
Gudrun MacK	Continental European Region
Billy	Midlands Region
Mick W	South Midlands Region
Debbie R	East of Scotland Region
Howard W	Wales & Borders Region
Sam W	North East Region



He went on to say goodbye to two Board members who are rotating out of service, having given phenomenal service to us all throughout their time on the Board:

Barry F            Continental European Region  
Margo W           Wales & Borders Region

At this point Rodger thanked everybody for their contribution over the weekend, with a very special thank you to the Conference Chairman, Al H, for his excellent chairmanship over the weekend and for all his hard work over the past year with the Conference Committee.

Rodger returned Conference to the Conference Chairman

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

When I first got here four years ago I remember sitting on the Saturday night. We got into Conference and we did what we had to do and at 10:15pm we walked out the door and there were these ladies waiting to hand out the preliminary Reports, which covered everything that we had gone through Saturday all during the day, and I was just totally amazed. I didn't think that was possible -that somebody could get that amount of work done in such a short time.

I'd like to extend a special thanks to the staff - they were outstanding. In particular I would especially thank our Conference Co-ordinator, who was very instrumental in helping us get through the Conference Committee meetings and without her it would have been really rough and we appreciate it. Of course, I think a great deal of credit shouldn't go to me, it should go to your Conference Committee. This Committee spent a lot of time, all year long, working together and I thank the two Board Members on this committee who gave invaluable support to us. We weren't too sure how things should go but they helped us to put things together.

I'd like to thank the General Service Board for their fine display of understanding and co-operation with the Conference Committee and last, but not least, the General Secretary, not only for his experience, strength and hope but for being a friend.

Conference 1997 ended with everyone joining hands and the saying of the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Thirty-Third General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Alcuin College, University of York on 3-5 April 1998.

## **THIRTY-SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1997**

### **COMMITTEE NO.1**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1.        Would not the Anonymity Notice be more appropriate and less ambiguous/confusing than the current "who you see here, what you hear here, when you**

**leave here, let it stay here". This is short, and to the point and more readily leads into the Traditions.**

The Committee recommends and approves that both cards be made available to the Fellowship and be used according to Group Conscience.

**2 Would Conference discuss recommending to Regions/Intergroups the appointment (from within its own body) of a person or persons to be responsible for internal communications. Make recommendations.**

The Committee does not recommend the appointment of an Internal Communications Officer at Regions or Intergroups.

This Committee, recognising the diverse communication issues faced by some Regions and Intergroups, suggests that where a need to improve internal communication has been established, current officers, GSRs and Regional delegates should address such tasks.

**3. Would Conference review what progress has been made in the following areas with regard to the Development Fund:**

a, How are we carrying the message to European countries needing help?

We are carrying the message to European countries needing help by.

1. Acting as European Information Centre.
2. Responding to direct requests for help.
3. Utilising the overlap between Continental European Region and the European Service structures.
4. Facilitating the work of the European Service Meeting.
5. Liaising with GSO New York to facilitate literature development for the Fellowship internationally.

b. What amount of the Development Fund has been used to carry the message to those countries?

1. The Board Report for 1996 shows expenditure from the Development Fund of £3,840.
2. This expenditure includes:

Literature for Malta	£ 350.00
The Community Trade Mark	£1460.25
European Service Meeting Contribution	£2000.00

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Rosa J (Wales & Borders Region) as Chairman of Committee No.1 for Conference 1998.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Richard H (South East Region) as Secretary of Committee No.1 for

Conference 1998.

All recommendations on Committee No.1 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

### THIRTY-SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1997

**COMMITTEE NO.2 CHAIRMAN: MARY S GENERAL SERVICE BOARD  
(ELECT)**

**SECRETARY: NIGEL O WALES & BORDERS REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. In light of the recent apparent recognition of alcoholism within the Armed Forces, what is the Fellowship's experience in assisting serving members to recover. Would Conference make recommendations how Groups, Intergroups and Regions may develop contacts with Armed Forces Establishments.**

In the experience of the Fellowship it appears little has changed since Conference considered its relationship with the Armed Forces in 1992. Again, most Regions felt that AA is more accepted in the US and Canadian Forces than in the British Forces.

This Committee recommends:

a) that the GSB approaches the Armed Forces/Government at the highest appropriate level regarding how AA may be of service and be contactable at local and regional levels. The GSB will report its progress to Conference 1998. Existing contacts at the level of Group, Intergroup and Region should be maintained.

b) the pamphlet 'AA and the Armed Forces' be reviewed and updated by the Literature Committee and report back to Conference 1998. A draft revision presented to this Committee will be forwarded to the Literature Committee.

**2. What level of co-operation does the Fellowship have in relation to:**

**a. Drug and Alcohol Advisory Services**

**b. Educational Welfare Officers**

**c. Regional Drug and Alcohol Teams.**

**Please share any experience on this matter which would assist groups or Intergroups to co-operate with these agencies and the still suffering alcoholic who might be directed by them to the Fellowship.**

The agencies referred to may no longer exist in parts of Great Britain. The Committee addressed the spirit of the question in a general way. Overall there appears to be a good level of co-operation with the new organisations. Our experience suggests that new contacts with agencies should be made at as high a level as possible. All contacts should be followed up with patience and persistence. The relevant guidelines are a continuing source of information and suggestions for contact.

**3. Would Conference share its experience on the progress of Industrial Liaison service at Intergroup/Regional level.**

At more than half the Regions an Industrial Liaison Officer is in post. At the Intergroup level much of this work is being carried out by PICPC Committees. Many Intergroups have difficulty in finding people to fill an ILO post. However, the Committee felt there is plenty of work to be done within this area according to the guidelines for PI/CPC and the job description for ILO. This Committee will be putting a question to Conference 1998 as there is divided opinion as to the appropriateness of the use of the name 'Industrial Liaison'.

It was noted that occupational health nurses and health and safety organisations are primary points of contact with suffering alcoholics. Approaches to management can be used to address issues of policy.

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Nigel O (Wales & Borders Region) as Chairman of Committee No.2 for Conference 1998.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Ann R (Highlands & Islands Region) as Secretary of Committee No.2 for Conference 1998.

All recommendations on Committee No.2 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

**THIRTY-SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1997**

**COMMITTEE NO.3 CHAIRMAN: MARIE M EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION**

**SECRETARY. TOM J MIDLANDS REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Would Conference share its experience and make recommendations on:**

- a. revival of the home group principle

The Committee was not aware of a universal revival of the home group principle following Conference 1993.

The Committee recommends that:

- (i) the home group principle should be reinforced through personal sharing, group conscience meetings and reference to S47-49 of the AA Service Manual.
- (ii) more use should be made of the Group Handbook.
- (iii) the Share and Roundabout teams each be asked to consider dedicating an issue to the

home group principle.

- b. the benefits and ways in which the practice of sponsorship can be encouraged within the home group.

The Committee agreed that the encouragement of sponsorship within the home group as described in the service literature is highly beneficial to the recovering alcoholic providing support and guidance through the programme of recovery and encouraging involvement in the service structure. It also reinforces the sense of belonging.

The committee recommends:

- (i) more use of the service literature with particular reference to the pamphlet 'Questions and Answers on Sponsorship' pages 26-29.
- (ii) reinforcing the link between the home group principle and effective sponsorship.
- (iii) that Intergroups and Regions consider holding workshops on the topic of 'Sponsorship within the home group'.

**2. What is the current experience of Public Information and Co-operating with the Professional Community Committees (PICPC) at both Intergroup/ Regional level? Would Conference share that experience throughout the Fellowship and make recommendations.**

At both Intergroup and Region level the scope and success of PICPC work is varied but it was acknowledged that where PICPC Committees were in place (according to the relevant Guideline) it appeared that the message was carried more effectively with better internal communication.

The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The relevant Intergroup and Regional officers form PICPC committees (refer to the PICPC Guideline).
- (ii) These Committees should maintain adequate records to ensure continuity of communications.
- (iii) Committees sponsor into service sufficient members to ensure the principle of rotation thus sustaining development and growth.

**3. Would Conference share its experience in carrying the message to the elderly? Make recommendations.**

**The experience of the committee was varied but carrying the message to the elderly was identified as a challenging area of service.**

The committee recommends:

- (i) that Groups, Intergroups and Regions provide outside organisations dealing with the elderly with information about AA.
- (ii) reinforcing the message to professionals e.g. General Practitioners, Community Nurses that you are never too old to recover.
- (iii) that the literature committee consider producing a brief leaflet in large print directed at the elderly potential member and report back to Conference 1998.
- (iv) that the literature committee consider producing a poster directed at the elderly potential

member and report back to Conference 1998.

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Mike W (South Midlands Region) as Chairman of Committee No.3 for Conference 1998.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Richard D (Wales & Borders Region) as Secretary of Committee No.3 for Conference 1998.

All recommendations on Committee No.3 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

THIRTY-SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1997

**COMMITTEE NO.4 CHAIRMAN: ANN S SOUTH EAST REGION**

**SECRETARY: CHRIS A NORTH EAST REGION**

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. Would Conference make recommendations how the position of Archivist at Intergroup and Region level be structured.**

It is felt by the Committee that the position of Archivist at Intergroup and Regional levels is highly desirable and wherever possible should be filled. It was also recommended that the Archivists' roles should be non-rotational and non-voting and should be ratified by their respective assemblies at their AGMs.

The Archives Committee, of the GSB, already has a job description for these positions, part of which is attached as an appendix:

**ARCHIVISTS ARE**

An informal network of enthusiasts who share the same aim of preserving the Fellowship's past and ensuring that fact prevails over fiction or myth. This network exists outside the formal service structure of the Fellowship but runs parallel to it.

A Regional Archivist is someone who is in dialogue with the Fellowship's Archivist and attempts to develop, where possible, archival contacts within each Intergroup, with a view to enabling and co-ordinating the sharing of experience.

Experience suggests, an Intergroup Archivist should aim to develop a group of like minded people who can work to a group conscience in collecting and preserving the past in their area. It is suggested this meeting runs on the lines of an AA Business Meeting.

It has been found highly desirable to ask Regions to fund the expenses of their Archivist in order to attend a meeting at York.

The function of this informal network of Archivists is to further or facilitate, the identification, recording and securing of archival material, as well as stimulating interest in archival activity by carrying the message of “Don’t throw me away, I belong to AA”.

Experience shows this can be furthered by promoting workshops, based on such archival topics as:- Anonymity; Ownership of Materials; Storage and Accessibility; Classification; Cataloguing and Conservation; Confidentiality and Questions to ask Old Timers.

**2. Taking the initiative of the General Service Office (that of sending to each group a copy of the Conference Report) one step further, would Conference consider adding this item to the current UK Literature List (as is done in North America) to enable all interested persons access to a full copy of the Conference Report.**

To enable all interested persons to have access to a full copy of the Conference Report, it was agreed that the Conference Report should be added to the current UK Literature List and that the demand for it be reported by the Literature Committee.

This Committee emphasises that we should retain the existing circulation within the structure of the Fellowship. It was also agreed that a prudent reserve of copies be printed to avoid wastage and that the price of a full copy of the Conference Report reflects its production, cost, GSO staff time and postage.

**3. Would Conference consider and clarify the position of Share/Roundabout Representative at Conference. As a service they are now part of the structure and should come under the same criteria as Conference delegates. Make recommendations.**

The Committee agreed, with a substantive majority, Share/Roundabout continue to be represented at Conference.

The Committee recognises the unique position of the Share/Roundabout Delegates and therefore recommends that they fulfil the Delegate criteria in the following ways:-

(a) Preparation: that they adhere to points a) to e) in the Service Representatives Guideline headed “How Delegates should prepare themselves”. In addition, to bring the group conscience of their respective teams to Conference.

(b) Reporting back: this is via the Share service structure, rather than the Regional structure; and Roundabout via the Scottish Service Committee to whom they are accountable.

(c) Qualifications: adhered to as per Guideline 3.

(d) Rotation: that this is observed as per Guideline 3.

(e) Financing: Delegates are funded by their respective bodies.

## Minority View

While Share and Roundabout Representatives should be at Conference should not have voting rights but, more properly, should fulfil the role of observers.

### **4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Rod C (Midlands Region) as Chairman of Committee No.4 for Conference 1998.

### **5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Howard E (Wales & Borders Region) as Secretary of Committee No.4 for Conference 1998.

All recommendations on Committee No.4 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

## **THIRTY-SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1997**

### **COMMITTEE NO.5**

CHAIRMAN: STAN F MIDLANDS REGION

SECRETARY: LYNETTE R SOUTH EAST REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. At Conference 1989 and 1990 there were a number of questions relating to young people in AA. Seven years on would Conference consider and report on the following aspects:**

#### **a. Review our experience and aims in relationship to Schools and College talks.**

Our experience shows that while relationships with schools are progressing but those with colleges are proving very difficult in some areas.  
Our aim, to carry the message, remains unchanged.

**b. Since 1989 has there been a significant increase in the number of young people coming to AA and if not make recommendations?**

An increase, although not always a 'significant one' was reported by the majority of the Committee. Experience shared in the group suggested the following points for guidance:

Encourage involvement in the group; try to identify; listen; encourage telephone officers to include all age groups on 12<sup>th</sup> Step lists; don't label; don't patronise.

It became very apparent during discussions that a census is urgently required. This will give us much needed information.



**2. Would Conference review the “AA Service Handbook on Public Information”, approved by Conference 1992 with particular regard to the following:**

**a. Is it of practical use to Public Information Officers, Co-operation with the Professional Community Teams (CPC), Industrial Liaison Officers, Combined Service Committees?**

The information in the PI Handbook, as it presently stands, is of practical use when used in conjunction with other relevant material.

**b. Does it offer sufficient and practical guidance for Health Care Liaison work?**

No.

**c. Should it be in loose-leaf format so as to accommodate additional useful information, amendments to current contents or whatever else recommended and approved by the General Service Conference?**

The Committee recommends that the information in the PI Handbook should be incorporated as part of the forthcoming issue of the proposed AA Service Handbook of Great Britain.

**3. A company will sometimes consider adding a telephone number and address in the Addendum of an Alcohol Policy.**

Will Conference consider a standard entry for inclusion in Company Alcohol Policies; this could take the form of a short paragraph.

The Committee suggests that the insertion should be the Preamble, followed by:

Contact for local meetings can be made through:

**4. There have been occasions in the past when Conference recommendations have not been implemented. Will Conference discuss the merits of laying the responsibility for monitoring such matters to a delegated Board member/s. Make recommendations.**

The Committee is satisfied with the current structure but feels it would be more appropriate for the Conference Agenda Committee to continue to review the progress of Conference recommendations.

**5. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Janet S (North West Region) as Chairman of Committee No.5 for Conference 1998.

**6. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected John C (Wales & Borders Region) as Secretary of Committee No.5 for Conference 1998.

All recommendations on Committee No.5 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

## THIRTY-SECOND GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1997

### COMMITTEE NO.6

CHAIRMAN: BILLY H GLASGOW REGION

SECRETARY: BILLC SOUTH EAST REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moments silence and the Preamble.

**1. In light of the changes that have taken place within the Penal Service over the past decade, would Conference update Guideline 9 'AA in Penal Establishments' taking into account the following background. Background material collated by those involved within the Prison Service throughout Great Britain.**

The update to the Guideline was unanimously agreed and is attached.

**2. Bearing in mind it is now part of our literature would Conference review and give an update on the advantages/disadvantages of the pamphlet "The Twelve Steps Illustrated" being introduced to Prisons, Probation and the Fellowship as a whole?**

The experience shared was that where used in prisons, probation and the Fellowship as a whole, the pamphlet was found useful. However, it was felt that the pamphlet was not widely known although it is part of the literature stock.

The Committee suggests that 'The 12 Steps Illustrated' should be highlighted to the Fellowship, e.g. through

- a) the AA Service Structure
- b) AA News
- c) Share and Roundabout

This was unanimously agreed.

**3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected John Karl C (Continental European Region) as Chairman for Committee No.6 for Conference 1998.

**4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1998.**

The Committee elected Gareth L (Wales & Borders Region) as Secretary for Committee No.6 for Conference 1998.

All recommendations on Committee No.6 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.

DRAFT

GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

From General Service Office, PO Box I, Stonebow House, Stonebow, York, YO1 2NJ

AA IN PENAL ESTABLISHMENTS

No9

REVISED APRIL 1997

AA Groups have been in operation in most Prisons and Young Offenders Establishments some considerable time. This Guideline draws on the experience of these groups, particularly expressed through the General Service Conference and how our service to penal establishments can be maintained and developed.

## INTRODUCTION

The value of the AA group to the members in prison is conveyed in the report of the 1976 Conference:

“It is necessary to explain to members of prison groups that though they may not have access to alcohol, they can benefit from the programme of AA while they are in prison. The time spent in confinement can be used in developing the mind and spirit so that they look outward instead of inward. That they should try to live with society as it is and not as they would want it to be, and to this end, it is desirable to discuss the whole of the AA Programme of Recovery in its entirety. While this may present difficulties because of the time factor, we feel sponsors should refer at every opportunity to parts of the programme, i.e. one of the Steps or Traditions, or a part of the Big Book. In this way we feel that it is possible to make the inmate member aware that he or she can live the AA way of life prior to discharge. This will assist in practising tolerance towards others which in turn should help the member to live a more serene life in prison, despite all the pressures.”

Our Fellowship has long recognised our responsibility for carrying the message of AA to the suffering alcoholic in penal establishments in the British Isles. A Government Working Committee has recommended that AA groups should be established in all prisons and we feel that this must reflect on the success of AA in helping the alcoholic prisoner over a number of years.

Responsibility for sponsorship of prison groups has been placed by the Conference with the Intergroup and is exercised through the Intergroup Prison Liaison Officer.

As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous you are there by permission of the Governor and his staff and it must be remembered that every Governor, although working within a national framework, has the right of decision in his or her own institution.

## PRISON GROUPS

Prison groups sponsors are appointed according to the Intergroup conscience, having regard to an acceptable length of sobriety -preferably 3 years, to regularly attend their prison meetings. Security clearance may be necessary. Wherever possible, a panel of AA sponsors should be maintained so that the inmates will gain a broader view of how AA works.

So far as the Fellowship of AA is concerned, female members may be included in the panel of agreed sponsors for male prisons, provided they are accompanied by a male AA member, or male members on the panel for female prisons, provided they are accompanied by a female AA member, subject to the approval of the Governor. The appointed sponsor, in some cases called Rota Secretary, for the prison AA group should maintain regular and continuous contact, calling on the agreed panel of sponsors for assistance to provide the service necessary and desirable to give as varied an AA experience to prison groups as possible.

Prison sponsors should encourage "Sponsorship by Correspondence" well in advance of discharge, ideally with members of the Fellowship in the area to which they are likely to return.

Prison group members should wherever possible be encouraged in accordance with AA Traditions, to take an active part in their group and, whenever possible, the outside sponsor should adopt only a supporting role.

AA members who are invited to speak at a prison group meeting may require security clearance.

## CO-OPERATION AND COMMUNICATION

- a) Co-operation and Communication with ALL concerned is of the utmost importance and is appreciated by those involved.
- b) The Rota Secretary should pass on reports to their Intergroup Prison Liaison Officer for forwarding to their Regional Prison Liaison Officer on a regular basis outlining what is occurring within their own establishment.
- c) Participation of prison sponsors in meetings at National Conventions and in Regional Prison Sponsor Meetings are useful in sharing and extending our experiences in this form of service.

## NEW GROUPS

Where no AA group exists at a prison, the local Intergroup should make every attempt to form one. Permission for a group to be established has to be obtained from the Governor and the initial approach by the Intergroup Prison Liaison Officer should be made to him. Before attempting to start a prison group, the local Intergroup should be satisfied that there are sufficient experienced and reliable members to sponsor it. The General Service Board member with responsibility for prison liaison and the Regional Prison Liaison Officer would be willing to advise and make the initial approach to the Governor and would keep the Prison Department informed of the developments.

One of the sponsors should maintain regular contact with the person appointed by the Governor to deal with the problems of the alcoholic in prison. Contact should be maintained with all interested members of the prison staff, i.e. Medical and Welfare Officers, Chaplains, Prison Officers etc. and it is further recommended that the sponsor should, wherever possible, offer the services of AA speakers to address staff training courses.

## LITERATURE

Literature specially produced for AA members in prisons includes “How did I get here?” and “Where do I go from here?” The leaflet “Carrying the Message Inside the Walls” contains suggestions for speaking in penal establishments. An A4 size poster with space provided for the insertion of local details is also available. These items are obtainable free of charge from the General Service Office.

Other pieces of literature that can be supplied by your local Intergroup which have proved to be of benefit to the inmates are: ‘Who Me’ and ‘The 12 Steps Illustrated’.

Every effort should be made to ensure that sufficient literature is available to prison AA members, together with additional AA publications e.g. Share, Roundabout, videos, all of which can be provided by the local Intergroup.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Why a Code of Conduct?

Did You Know?

In November 1943, our co-founder, Bill W carried the AA message directly behind the walls of San Quentin Prison, California, the first AA group formed in a maximum security prison.

Just as the first Prison/Institution door was opened by Alcoholics Anonymous, the breaking of Prison Regulations by individual AA Prison Sponsors has, over the years, closed prison doors.

You have probably been given the Official Warning by the Prison Security Officer, regarding possible dangers and difficulties which may be encountered with prison establishments, but it is hoped that this will service as a further, more personal reminder.

The laws governing visitors to Penal Establishments are very clear and very strict.

It is forbidden to carry anything into a prison which would aid a prisoner’s escape.

There are clear rules forbidding giving anything to prisoners that is in controlled supply.

The penalties for breaking these laws are severe and could lead to imprisonment.

First check with the particular establishment you will be visiting -the rules may be relaxed according to the attitude of the Governor and his staff.. Some prisons allow cigarettes to be taken in for use during the meeting only Other establishments wholly forbid it. Sweets also are allowed in some prisons and not in others. CHECK,.

You may be tempted to do “little favours” for group members and give them cigarettes that are forbidden, or you may be asked to carry in or take out a card, letter, money, etc. and particularly if it is an inmate you know well because of his regular attendance at meetings, it is difficult to refuse. But it is against the law and such requests MUST be rejected.

It is misguided and foolish to risk you own freedom in this way. You can best avoid the

possibility of being put in a difficult situation by treating all requests and offers of this type firmly from the beginning and making it plain that you are not prepared to become involved in any way.

The message is all we take in, and we take nothing out.

Failure to observe these rules is a criminal offence and could cause AA to be banned.

As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, you are there by Permission of the Governor and his staff Act accordingly. From their point of view, you will be AA 's representative and their respect and esteem for the Fellowship as a whole will depend on your conduct.

- 1) Act always with courtesy and diplomacy.
- 2) Your appearance, language, manner and conduct will affect everyone's opinion of AA.
- 3) Obey smoking regulations. If inmates can't smoke, AA visitors shouldn't either (it's only an hour!).
- 4) We have no authority to discuss medication, theories on alcoholism, professionally prescribed treatments, or obtaining parole. We are only there to carry the AA message.
- 5) AA does NOT participate in meetings which are the responsibility of another agency in the field of alcoholism.

If other agencies in the field of alcoholism also have meetings within the establishment the authorities should be informed that we are not affiliated.

- 6) Punctuality and observance of the establishment visiting times should be strictly adhered to.

The personal example of the prison sponsors, cheerfulness and reliability are our greatest asset with prison authorities and in carrying the message to Penal Establishments. Whilst this is a demanding AA service, prison sponsors invariably confirm that they have gained more from their participation than they have put in, and their experience of Prison AA has strengthened their recovery and contentment in sobriety .

It is a chance to share our experience, strength and hope with other alcoholics, many of whom can only get to one meeting a week. We can get acquainted with potential members and it offers an unlimited supply of Twelfth Step work. In many cases, we will be the first AA speaker that an individual hears and his only experience of the Fellowship prior to being released into the outside world with all its pressures and temptations. Let our AA story speak for itself. Tell it like it was. Remember, the audience is more interested in learning how we stay sober than in hearing how we got drunk. Talk about the programme of recovery and the Twelve Steps. In our story, talk about the loneliness, hopelessness and fears -they will identify with us.

If in telling your story , you can laugh at yourself, do so! Humour is all-important among these individuals who have too little to laugh at in their daily lives.

WHO YOU SEE THERE

WHATYOU HEAR THERE

LET IT STAY THERE

# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

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# **DIGEST OF AGENDA**

## **Friday 3 April 1998**

Registration and Reception

Opening Session

General Service Board Report

Nominations - Conference Chairman 1999

## **Saturday 4 April 1998**

Committee Meetings:

Committee No. 1

Committee No. 2

Committee No. 3

Committee No. 4

Committee No. 5

Committee No. 6

Workshop : "Home Group Principle and Sponsorship"

## **Sunday 5 April 1998**

Presentation of Committee Reports

Election of Chairman for the Thirty-Fourth General Service Conference

General Service Board Report and Ratification of  
Board Members Elect

Closing Address



## FRIDAY 3 APRIL

The Thirty-Third General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain was held at Alcuin College, University of York, with the opening session on Friday evening and the final session on Sunday morning being held in the Lecture Theatre of the Chemistry Department.

On the Friday afternoon registration and distribution of folders was followed by a reception which, as usual, provided an ideal opportunity for the delegates and observers to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates attending for the first time.

The Conference comprised eighty-nine delegates from fifteen Regions; two delegates from the Jersey Intergroup, one delegate each from 'Share' and 'Roundabout', twenty-three members of the General Service Board, Ann S - Conference Chairman, General Secretary and six members of Staff. Also in attendance were Observers from the following countries:

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	(1)
Denmark	(2)
Ireland	(2)
Norway	(2)
Sweden	(2)

Total in attendance 133

## OPENING OF CONFERENCE BY ANN S (CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1998)

The first full session, which commenced at 7.30pm, was opened by the Conference Chairman, Ann S (South East Region):

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Conference Committee and as your Chairman I extend a warm welcome to you all. May I ask for a moment’s silence for us to collect our thoughts, and pray for guidance for the weekend ahead.

*Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.*

*The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.*

*There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.*

*AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.*

*Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.*

Welcome to our overseas observers, we are glad you are here to be part of this wonderful gathering. To the Staff of the General Service Office, whose work will be invaluable during the whole weekend. To the Trustees of the General Service Board, we look forward to your reports and the contributions you will make during our time together. To all the delegates, one third of you are new, wear your red dots with pride, they ensure extra hugs and support. To the second year delegates we are glad you are back, the going gets easier. To the old timers, those who know what it is all about, thank you for the service you have given, we shall be sorry to see you go”.

Ann then invited the General Secretary, Jim K, to read the Twelve Traditions (Long Form), the orientation together with the very last minute changes and the National Convention dates, which are as follows:

Scottish Convention	-	1 - 2 May 1998
Southern Convention	-	30 Oct - 1 November 1998
Northern Convention	-	12 - 14 March 1999

Ann went on to present her Keynote Address:

My name is Ann and I am an alcoholic, and find it truly overwhelming to be standing here as your Chairman, a unique privilege given to me by you, the delegates of Conference. My address to Conference comes from the heart, it is the only way I know to share.

I came to AA fat, forty and broken, wondering where it had all gone wrong. My drinking had started at 16 with youthful exuberance, laughter, dancing on table tops and riotous fun. My vision on life was to take and give nothing, so inevitably it continued in a downward spiral. Alcohol turned me into a person of devious behaviour, the few friends I had were subjected to the viciousness of my words, my growing inward unhappiness, my self revulsion and obsession to drink took me to places I wish not to revisit. A realisation that not only would I not remember what had happened, I couldn't control what happened. The humiliation of my family was immense. Children that I loved dearly, had to move away from a drunken mother who could not remember from one day to another the things she had done, the promises made to them, only to be broken on a wave of drunken oblivion.

My last days of insanity saw me alone, locking all doors, closing the curtains, hiding in a corner hoping no one would see me empty bottle after bottle. My obsession to

drink was still greater than anybody and anything. My vision at that time was of black, black despair, and that awful alcoholic loneliness, I cared for no one not even myself. I did not want to live and was afraid to die, so I picked up the phone, I reached out for help, a higher power who today I call God took over, got into the driving seat and brought me into the open arms of this fellowship.

My home group is Worthing Tuesday, there I was to be loved, nurtured and often kicked into wanting to be sober more than anything else in my life. I had a group, I had a sponsor, I had a programme of recovery, I had **A VISION FOR ME.**

From my early days my journey of recovery has been filled with wonderful people. Many of them stand invisibly by my side tonight, they have been my stability when I have stumbled over life's problems. When God seemed far away they gave me the words that encouraged and lifted me out of the gutter of despair into the sunlight of the spirit. My debt of gratitude to each and every one of them will be everlasting. Women showed me how to be a woman again, I learnt to love and to give, a complete reversal of my old behaviour. I started to earn the trust of my children, those precious people, cruelly hurt by my alcoholism. Today our relationship is sound. The greatest gift I can give them is a sober Mum, they in return give me love, laughter, companionship and the miracle of grandchildren. Little ones with bright eyes and brilliant smiles, they hug and cuddle up to me, my heart overflows with the joy of being sober and alive. Truly **A VISION BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS.**

Chapter 11 "A Vision for you" was the only one I read in my early days, of course it had been suggested that I started at page one, but being restored to sanity would take many days to happen. It promised that my imagination would be fired, the most satisfactory years of my existence lay ahead, I was to make lifelong friends, to be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, and to commence shoulder to shoulder a common journey of recovery. That vision for this alcoholic has happened, so in choosing a theme for Conference I looked again at Bill W's words and found in the article on leadership and on page 317 of As Bill Sees It "**A VISION BEYOND TODAY**". He states:

"Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be heresy against "One Day At A Time". But that valuable principle really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of providence. God's real providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capacity for foresight, and He evidently expects us to use it. Of course, we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think at all."

Our founders and all who followed have acted with Vision from 1935 to the present day. AA in Great Britain has now reached its Golden Years. Its stability **IS** its single-mindedness of purpose. It has loved and cherished its members, kept a steady dignity in times of upheaval, and acted upon recommendations made by previous Conferences. It has matured and shouldered responsibility for changes when they were required, kept our finances on an even keel, provided our literature, and reached out to Continental Europe and beyond. When I look at what has gone before, this miracle of recovery, this service structure based on the rotation of its officers, I know we have and will continue to bring sobriety within the reach of all who want it. To provide a haven for all alcoholics, who in the years ahead can find in AA that rebirth which brought us back to life. Truly, **A VISION OF HOPE, LOVE and SERVICE.**

Like all of you here tonight, I took on the responsibility of service because, first I was told to, then understood that it would allow me to grow and give back that which I had been given. Mostly it is very rewarding, a joy and privilege to meet so many new friends. Sometimes the going gets tough, having been put into a service position, people can start to criticise you. That is when I need to examine my own motives and actions **with honesty**, listen to the minority opinion, learn to understand that constructive criticism sometimes may hold the answer to the immediate problem. Above all I try to do my very best, I would not sell my own sobriety short, likewise in service I would not sell the fellowship short. But we must trust our Trusted Servants, perfection is an unobtainable goal, growth and maturity in service come with time, with love, and with God's help.

The Twelve Steps are my personal programme of recovery. Daily I need to focus on where Ann is, never forgetting the reprieve I have from alcohol if I trust in God and clean house. The Twelve Traditions are for all AA groups, they are as necessary to the life of our fellowship, as the Twelve Steps are to the life of each one of us. They are the key to unity, the functioning, even survival of AA.

Here at Conference you the delegates have been empowered by your groups to bring forward their thoughts and ideas, to render them a service. Your duty is to act in the best interest of AA as a whole. During the last three years I have experienced that duty. I was not just the messenger I was a trusted servant, with the responsibility of decision making. To cast my vote to the dictates of my own conscience, just as you will this weekend.

While no one can speak for AA officially, Conference comes close to being AA's active voice, the effective conscience of our whole society when dealing with its world affairs. All your hard work and preparation will come to fruition this weekend in the six Conference Committees on which you serve. I know this 33<sup>rd</sup> Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain is in safe hands and may the God of your understanding guide and support you as you take up the responsibility that has been entrusted to you.

I cannot help but be in love with this Fellowship, the vibrancy of its members who renew and reaffirm on a daily basis their commitment to carry the message. None of us would be here tonight, if somebody hadn't taken the time to explain things to us. Having taken the First Step we need others around us to share their experience, strength and hope, a sponsor to walk with us through the programme of recovery. It is written "We do not, cannot, outgrow this plan, as recovering alcoholics we must have a programme for living that allows for limitless expansion. **TRULY A VISION BEYOND TODAY**".

Whilst we are here tonight, others are playing their part in serving the Fellowship, attending meetings, answering the phone, going on a 12<sup>th</sup> Step call. Every day acts of love and service are done, the heartbeat of AA in my experience is sound and true. I know of a lady of some seventeen years sobriety travelling on an overnight train from the South of England to Inverness in Scotland. During that time a call had been received at her home advising that her daughter had been tragically killed in America. Calls were made through our telephone network, and when she stepped off the train in the early morning hours, two people from the fellowship were there to meet her. They stayed with her whilst the police broke the tragic news no mother wishes to hear. They had answered a call for help, their common bond, recovery from alcoholism, they never questioned the earlyness of the hour, a stranger who lived over 600 miles away. Their act of pure love and service helped a lady who needed AA more than ever that day. In America the Fellowship held out its hands, to strengthen and hold her as she laid her daughter to rest. How can I doubt the message that AA is always there when we reach out for help. Many instances of service such as this are done, this one is personal, that lady is my sponsor.

So let our bonds to one another be freshened and strengthened this weekend, let us listen to the heartbeat of the Fellowship, let us put our trust into the service structure of AA, in God and in each other. Let us all accept that torch of service and carry it as if our life depended on it..... **because it does.**

## **GENERAL SERVICE BOARD REPORT**

Ann invited the Chairman of the General Service Board, Rodger P, to present the Annual Report which covers the period October 1996 to September 1997. Rodger read highlights from the Annual Report which included personnel with special reference to those past members who had died recently and to those who were unable to attend due to illness, items from both the Internal and External Communications Committees including the Handbook and the 0345 telephone number as much work had been done in these areas. Conference was then asked to accept the Annual Report of the General Service Board for 1997 which was done by a majority vote.

## FINANCE

The year to September 1997 ended with a surplus of £18,952 which was almost three times bigger than the previous year.

On page 15 of the Annual Report you will see that contributions at £299,272 are 22% higher than 1996 but most of that was absorbed by increased expenses. Although the Fellowship may tire of hearing Treasurers ask for more money it is the only way we can improve and increase our services of 'carrying the message'.

Our investments are fractionally higher at £346,434 but our prudent reserve is well below the equivalent one year's expenses which was a decision taken some years ago.

BUT. With Treasurers there is always a BUT. Bringing you more up to date - in the first six months of this financial year the Intergroup contributions have shown a worrying dip of nearly £5,500 compared with last year. The lowest for four years.

We must remember when we cried for help there was a telephone number to call and literature to read because somebody had paid. Now it is our turn to pay.

Rodger thanked Harry for the financial report and went on to give an update of the Board Report covering the period October 1997 to March 1998 as follows:

## BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Henry Pomeroy	-	Friend of the Fellowship
Margaret M	-	Wales & Borders
Jim C	-	Highlands & Islands
Mike D	-	North West
Sue T	-	South East

### Rotating from the Board

Monica H	-	Vice Chair
Harry O	-	Treasurer
Mairi G	-	Highlands & Islands
Rodney N	-	North West

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Since the compilation of the Annual Report the following activities have occurred in the Internal Communications Committee:

## **Nominations Committee**

This committee was re-established and has undertaken the task of outlining the procedures for the appointment of Trustees and the General Secretary.

## **Conference Committee**

There is much more to Conference and Conference Committee than just preparing and placing of questions on committees, but none the less, questions from the Fellowship are of extreme importance if your committee is to do what has been asked of them. The closing date for Conference Questions is the 31 August of each year and your committee will be looking forward to the Fellowships commitment over the next few months as the preparation for Conference 1999 begins.

The theme for Conference 1998 is of course A Vision Beyond Today and our co founders Bill and Bob would be proud to see the growth of our Fellowship today and to ensure the carrying of AA's message to those who have yet to find AA, we are all asked to carry that same vision our co founders had in the years ahead.

**Handbook** - The final amendments were incorporated for the final distribution to the General Service Conference delegates. The Service Handbook is to be presented to this Conference.

**Literature** - The revision procedures continue, specifically in regard to the material for the elderly, the armed services, the video "AA works - One Day at a Time". Additionally, the leaflets "How Did I Get Here?", "Carrying the message inside the walls", "A Brief Guide to AA" (formerly "Students Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous"), "A Message to Young People", "The Problem Drinker in Employment, the AA Solution", and "AA at a Glance" were re-typed and presented to the General Secretary for re-printing when necessary.

## **Archives**

A sub-committee meeting was held at GSO on 23/24 January 1998 and the Regional Archivists Meeting on 21 February 1998. Forward planning includes a discussion document and a newsletter entitled "Past Particles". The first issue of this newsletter was included in the Spring 98 edition of AA News.

## **SHARE**

Another SHARE meeting was held, establishing the committee's link to the General Service Board - Internal Communications Committee. It was further stated that actual production costs will be reported to the Finance Committee and that it may be necessary to review the SHARE policy.

## **AA News**

Continues to look for support from the membership and the various Board Committees.

## **Forums**

Two Forum requests were approved by the General Service Board: one for the Continental European Region in September 1998, and another one for Glasgow Region at a date to be determined in 2000. A further request from South West Region is under consideration. The Hints & Suggestions sheet accepted at Conference 1997 is included in your folder.

## **National Convention 1997**

Conference 1992, Committee 3, Question 3, recommended that the Fellowship celebrate its 50th anniversary with a National Convention. A year later Conference 1993, Committee 2, Question 5 re-affirmed the Convention was to be held in Blackpool and established a committee to be drawn from the experienced membership of the four national conventions established as part of our Fellowship.

For four years this committee worked to create a fitting tribute to AA in Great Britain. Reports were given regularly to Conference and directly to Regions who were financially supporting the initial meetings.

Early in 1997 registrations exceeded the numbers that could be accommodated in one building. In anticipation of the experiences of other conventions a joint decision was made that there could be no going back and it was the committee's responsibility to fulfil the promises made to those who had already registered. The point of no return meant that commitments had to be confirmed six months prior to the close of registration. That decision had certain financial implications upon the convention, but again shared experience indicated that numbers would reach the break even figures and possibly exceed them.

Unfortunately, the Fellowship did not respond in the anticipated last minute rush. In fact we only saw a 10% attendance of AA members from GB. As a result of this the numbers anticipated through previous experience did not reach break even, at a point which had been set well in advance.

The Convention in other ways was a tremendous success and we feel sure that Conference would wish to thank those many members who made the Convention a fitting tribute to the message we carry.

As final accounts were drawn up it was clear that a shortfall between projected income and contractual expenditure would be significant. All efforts were made to



reduce expenditure wherever possible but the final figure stood at a deficit of approximately £12000.

Following earlier concerns regarding our position, current advice was sought from both our auditors and charity advisors. As a result of changes in practice and our desire to maintain our Traditions, the Board was advised that it could make up the shortfall using Fellowship funds via a direct contribution to the holding of both the Opening and Closing events which were OPEN AA MEETINGS.

The Fellowship has paid its way in the world, our Traditions have been upheld, we are within our Articles of Association, we have celebrated our 50th Anniversary in style, and most importantly we have recorded and minuted our experiences to be passed on to those who follow in our footsteps (Accounts appear later in this report).

All accounts have now been paid, and we ask Conference to endorse the General Service Board's actions in the full light of the 1992 recommendations which we have tried to carry out in the spirit they were intended.

## **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **Prisons**

- All nineteen prison establishments in Scotland are functioning reasonably well; some 30 prison sponsors attended a meeting, which was an enormous success.
- All running quite smoothly in England and Wales, with some rotation of AA PLO's.
- No definite feedback as yet, re: Information Sheet for Prisons.
- AA article included in prison magazine 'Gatelodge'.
- AA attendance is hoped for at the Prison Officers Association Annual Conference (1998).

### **P.I.**

- Department of Employment - London involvement to explain AA.
- Mention by AGM Medical Council on Alcoholism, Royal College of Physicians, London, of need to co-operate with other 'agencies' concerned with alcoholism is being followed up.

### **Industry**

- AA's stand at Harrogate (Institute of Personnel & Development) was (a) an extremely sound investment of Fellowship funds; (b) well organised by the local Intergroup (West Riding) and (c) an attraction which provided 164 positive

enquiries from personnel professionals.

- More liaison work has been carried out with the Royal Navy.
- Contact with the RAF progresses.

### **Probation:**

- A positive period for Probation liaison, communications within AA beginning to flow both ways.
- Very good Regional Liaison Officers meeting in York (18th October), much enthusiasm was shown. All 9 Regions of England and Wales were represented, whilst Scotland (in a state of flux at present) sent two Officers.
- Proposed Guideline to be presented to Conference 1998.
- 'Information Sheet for Probation Officers' formulated.
- Probation Workshop at Southern National Convention attracted 50 plus members.
- London Probation Convention deemed a success, with much interest shown.
- Seminar (Beaconsfield 27th November) fulfilled its promise with plenty of new interest shown by Probation Service following Seminar. Three GSB members were in attendance.
- A proposed 'Information Pack' was put before the External Communications Committee, and then to the whole Board, its aim to make available to all Intergroup and Regional Officers an information wallet targeted at the professionals and dedicated to each area of service, Probation, Health, Industry etc. The idea is to be progressed by Dr Jackie Chang (non-alcoholic Trustee), Paddy Barrett (non-alcoholic Trustee) and Mick W. A final draft will be placed before the General Service Board at the September meeting.

### **Health:**

The past year has seen a lot of clear progress for many Intergroups and less tangible results in others. This is the way of the world and it is early days.

Our Health Liaison Officers are not only seeking to find and improve external links and communications with healthcare professionals, both in hospitals and out in the community, they are also becoming more aware of the work needed to improve internal links with their colleagues in other service areas and in other Intergroups/Regions.

Now that Health Liaison work is no longer confined to hospitals, there is a growing awareness of the need to clarify overlapping responsibilities, particularly between Health and PI and, to a lesser extent, between Health and Prisons and Health and Industry/Employer.

The liaison officers of the differing service areas need to talk together, regularly, about *the service which AA delivers*, rather than that delivered by one service area or another.

Intergroups and Regions have been encouraged to examine not only the job descriptions of their various posts, to minimise the possibility of duplication of service, but also to look at the possibility of setting up a combined service committee (service group/service action group) where this hasn't been done already, to enable and promote better communications, understanding and co-operation across the service areas.

The key to our ongoing success is flexibility. The truth is that the professional community will continue to change and we have to start to think more in terms of being able to respond, flexibly, to their needs, and hence to the needs of the suffering alcoholic. Whatever happens in the outside world, AA itself has not changed. We will continue to carry our simple message about an honest programme to any health professional who is prepared to listen!

We must focus on the positive of what is happening in healthcare. We can see the movement of professional help from the hospitals and into the community not as a *problem* for AA members who seek to carry their message, but rather as a God-given *opportunity* for us to improve co-operation and communication amongst ourselves and to review the way we work!

This is a good note on which to announce that our next national workshop for Regional Health Liaison Officers will be held on 17th October this year, at the General Service Office in York. Because of budgetary constraints, we can hold such workshops only once every 3 years and the last Health Liaison workshop was held in October 1995. It comes at an important time and, with 13 out of the 14 Regional Health Liaison Officer posts currently filled (England, Scotland and Wales), and a lot of important matters to discuss, a good attendance is expected and a very good workshop is guaranteed.

Before the end of this coming year, we hope to have a new video available for external liaison officers to use when talking to professionals. Unlike the 2 existing videos which we have, this will be informative about AA and purely aimed at the external professional. Undoubtedly, Health Liaison Officers will find it invaluable when giving talks and for passing on to training centres, community health teams etc.

Progress is in the air!

- Health Workshop in NW Region attended.
- Guideline Addendum: To be presented to Conference 1998.
- 'Information Sheet for Health', formulated and distributed.

### **Telephones:**

- The 'Telephone Team' often under difficult circumstances is carrying out

much work. Presentations are being given, where requested. The Finance Committee is further asked to look at possible ways of funding 0345. A Regional Liaison Officers meeting is planned. Presentation to Conference 1998.

· Exhibitions with AA involvement have been agreed as follows:

RCN Occupational Health Nurses Forum, Glasgow	23-24 April 1998
Social Services Exhibition, Brighton	21-23 October 1998

Regional Liaison Officers Meetings have been agreed:

Telephones	June	1998 (York)
Treasurers	November	1998 (York)
Prisons	March	1998 (Birmingham)
P.I./Industry (combined)	May	1998 (York)
Health	October	1998 (York)
Archives	February	1998 (York)

## LITERATURE/HANDBOOK

(Rodney N)

Since Conference '97 the Literature Committee has been engaged in the tasks deputed to it by Conference and in its own schedule of the review of Fellowship literature.

### a) Conference '97 recommendations

i) The following pamphlets, which have free distribution inside the Fellowship, have been revised, their texts are available, and they will form (subject to Conference's approval) the new print run of these pamphlets as this is undertaken:

“Carrying the message inside the walls”

“A message to young people”

“The problem drinker in employment”

“AA at a glance”.

Work on the pamphlet “A brief guide to AA” (formerly “A students' guide to AA”) is in its final stages.

ii) The elderly.

The Committee recommends that enquiries be made by the GSB regarding the cost implications of the following:

a) the existing “Trapped” poster (showing a figure imprisoned in a bottle) be also produced in a second form viz. with the words

- “It’s never too late” added near the foot of the poster.
- b) the format of the existing pamphlet “Time to start living” be adapted by using stories supplied by members living in Great Britain who have come to AA in their later years. “Share” can carry in its May edition a request for such stories to be submitted by the autumn, thus, we trust, enabling the Committee to present a new pamphlet to Conference ’99. A similar request will be carried in “AA News” and “Roundabout”.
  - c) A large print version of the Twelfth Step pack be printed.
- iii) “AA and the Armed Forces”

This pamphlet has now been revised in accordance with Conference’s wishes. Additionally stories from British Forces members have been compiled and will be put into print as soon as practicable.

**b) Review of Fellowship literature**

- i) The Handbook, as presented to this Conference for approval has been updated since its presentation in draft form last year. The General Service Board recommend its adoption by Conference. It will continue to be brought as up-to-date as possible. Some Guidelines are many years old and their presentation needs revision in consultation with those with relevant service experience.

*The recommendation for the adoption of the Handbook was unanimously agreed by Conference.*

- ii) Videos
  - a) The video “AA works – One day at a time” has some elements in it which need updating though in general it has worn very well. Negotiations are taking place to make these necessary changes which will be kept to a minimum.
  - b) Videos produced by AA World Services are also being reviewed.
- iii) Currently quite an amount of information material relating to service is generated locally by individual members, Intergroups, etc. Some of this could usefully be adapted and used more widely, but there are also problems associated with this practice. The Committee is looking at such material, would welcome more examples and will submit a Hints and Suggestions sheet on the matter to Conference ’99.
- iv) The Committee will respond to recommendations made by this Conference.

- v) The Committee will also continue to prepare a schedule of future tasks to be undertaken as appropriate bearing in mind progress made with the undertakings listed above.

## **REGION LOOKS AT REGIONALISATION**

(Monica H)

### **COMMITTEE NO. 6 (GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1996) QUESTION 1**

**Q. In view of the growth and changes that have taken place since regionalisation in 1980, does Conference consider that the present structure best serves the Fellowship? What is the experience of Regions and Intergroups?**

**R.** Several Regions have experienced communication difficulties since 1980 and have adapted their internal Regional structure. Some have been successful and others less so. A number of Regions feel that whilst their situation is currently fine, observing the problems that have arisen elsewhere, they can foresee similar difficulties in the future.

In order to investigate the situation further, the Committee recommends that:

- a) Each Regional Chairman should submit a synopsis of how, and how well, their regional structure works to the Internal Communications Committee of the GSB by not later than 1st October 1996.
- b) A workshop should be held on Saturday night of Conference 1997 to discuss this topic. Presentations by 5 Regional delegates as well as 1 person from the GSB Internal Committee are suggested.
- c) The Internal Committee will report back to Conference 1998 with recommendations of changes to the service structure, as necessary, and taking into account of matters arising at a) and b).

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Thirteen of our fifteen Regions responded to the recommendation of Conference and five were chosen by the Conference Committee for presentation at Conference in 1997. The Conference Committee did not include a presentation by a member of the Internal Committee. The presentations were well received but there was little time for discussion at Conference and the Chairman of the General Service Board agreed, on behalf of the Board, that consideration would be given to all the information received. This, together with the views of the Regional Board Trustees would form the basis of a report to Conference in 1998.

The reports from the 13 Regions varied widely in depth and content. Some indicated the involvement of several members of the Region in the compilation and others

appeared to have been left to the Chairman. An overview of the whole Region was included in some and others were confined to the process of assembly meetings.

## HISTORY

### **Why did we adopt our present structure?**

The Tenth General Service Conference in 1975 agreed that regionalisation was desirable.

Conferences in 1973 and 74 had both included discussion on the proposed change in structure.

In 1976 Conference noted that some progress had been made and the 12th General Service Conference saw the first representation at Conference by a Region. (This is well documented in the report given at Conference 1997 by South East Region).

Following further Conference recommendations in 1981, 1987 and 1988 we have seen the establishment of 15 Regions. Fourteen in Great Britain and one in Continental Europe.

**In order to assess how well a Region works it seems sensible to look at the Aims of Regions as agreed by our General Service Conference in 1996 in the revised Guideline No. 6 “REGIONS” and then to compare these with how a Region sees itself.**

## AIMS

1. To promote communication and co-operation between neighbouring Intergroups thus implementing our traditions of unity and creating service boards or committees where needed.

Many regions commented on the co-operation, or lack of, between Intergroups and a common factor mentioned was the lack of liaison officers at Region to promote communication. Service committees are not in operation in many Intergroups and are not mentioned in half of the reports from Regions. **Conference 1997 (111. 2)** considered that PICPC service worked best when co-ordinated by PICPC Committees and recommended the formation of these committees at all Intergroups and Regions. We need to identify whether this recommendation has facilitated the achievement of this aim and also understand why this recommendation has not been implemented by some Intergroups and Regions. Is it because they have another system which works well or alternatively dismiss the recommendation as being of little relevance to themselves?

2. To ensure that the Region recognise areas that are sparsely served by the Fellowship do not remain in ‘no-man’s land’ but become part of the Region’s responsibility.

Several reports included the number of Intergroups which attended the Assemblies and commented on those conspicuous by their absence. However as the majority of reports concentrated on the assembly meetings, and not on the Region activity as a whole, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent this aim is acknowledged. Regions vary greatly in their geographical size and it is not always easy to provide support to outlying areas but reports indicate that even in urban areas we have patches of low service activity. The strict adherence to Intergroup boundaries can inhibit our response to areas in need of our support.

3. To share Intergroup experience in the field of co-operation with outside agencies, prisons, health services, schools, social services, alcohol abuse agencies, churches, courts, Probation Service (Social Work Department, in Scotland), industry and any other appropriate institutions and areas of society.

The process of sharing this information varies, reports may be compiled by Regional Officers or service Committees and circulated before the meeting so that only particular issues need be reported in detail at the meeting. However it is not uncommon for reports to be distributed at the meeting resulting in either important issues receiving little attention or time wasted reading all reports during the meeting. Sadly many Intergroup and Region reports have several items of “no report” regularly.

A number of reports highlighted the benefits of holding regular workshops often involving members from outside the Region who could share their experience in a specific area of service. Region and Intergroup meetings which include or concentrate entirely on an area of service in a “workshop” are usually well attended. It has always been acknowledged that our National Service Liaison Officers meetings are only worthwhile if followed by workshops at Region and/or Intergroup level.

4. To increase opportunity for members to participate in our third legacy of Service.

A common concern was difficulty in filling various service posts both at Region and Intergroup and this often resulted in officers rotating out of one post and into another (same monkeys different branches syndrome) or by new delegates to Region, often with no similar experience at Intergroup, elected to a post and receiving little or no sponsorship.

5. To enable members with particular experience to serve a wider area.

Many reports highlighted the benefits of having liaison officers who share their experience, participate on service committees and sponsor others into service. However the danger of such experienced members remaining in a particular post for longer than is required by our tradition of rotation was noted.



6. To promote improved two-way communication between the Fellowship, General Service Conference, and the Board, and to foster clear understanding of the work undertaken by the General Service Office on behalf of the membership.

There was considerable acknowledgement of the benefits of receiving a comprehensive report from Board Trustees by Region Assemblies. Unfortunately some Regions still feel that they do not receive adequate written information. It was not clear to what extent the written reports filter to groups, this is partially covered by the Board highlights in AA News which are only highlights and not intended to replace the communication between the GSB and all members of Region.

Sadly it is not uncommon for Intergroup minutes to include very little of the report from its delegates to Region, this could either indicate that little is reported or that we rely on GSR's to provide a verbal report to their groups.

Conference workshops feature in many reports and include a format for preparation and report back, but again this often confined itself to the assembly meeting. Some Regions describe a serious commitment to preparation for Conference by ensuring that all Intergroups have access to Conference Delegates and the opportunity to discuss Conference questions with their representatives at Conference. They also describe a similar process for reporting back. Others rely on the Regional representatives to report to their Intergroup.

Reporting back can take place before the Fellowship have received the Conference report and may not include anything other than the recommendations of the Committees or an item of "political" or controversial nature.

The relationship to GSO did not feature in the majority of reports and neither did the importance of providing the office with minutes and service reports.

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The Guideline also covers recommendations on how a Regional assembly should be composed and how the Officers and Conference delegates be chosen and discharge their duties.

Few reports indicated the process for election of Officers or Delegates to Conference or whether they had difficulty in following the guideline as to length of sobriety or relevant service.

The majority of reports did not identify particular strengths and weaknesses of the structure but interpreted the question only to discuss their own assemblies. This could indicate a basic problem in that we do not use our Region assemblies for their true purpose or that we do not see our Region as the vital communication link between Conference and Fellowship.

If we consider our present structure to be inadequate and in need of a reform, which would alter the number of Regions we have, we need to consider what effect this would have on our General Service Conference and our General Service Board.

Who would nominate our Regional Trustees?

What process would we use to elect our delegates to Conference and how would they prepare and report back?

The information, or lack of, in the reports indicate that at least, we need to review at all levels of service how we communicate with and support those we are responsible to. The impression given by the limited information that we have available at this time is that the structure provides a framework for us all to work within. It enables us all to fulfil our primary purpose and protects us from the temptation to let our egos run riot.

The general view appears to be that the problem is not our structure and that the solution lies in improving communication and sponsorship into service. As in so many other things the principles are sound but the personalities can get in the way. We often continue to do things because we always have and are reluctant to implement Conference recommendations which may alter our “tried and tested” methods of organising our affairs.

The amount of time and effort allocated to preparation and report back from Conference varies significantly. Whereas all Regions indicated some difficulty in filling all posts, the way in which nominations are sought and the procedure for elections can vary.

All Regions have some geographical areas where service is stronger than in others and distance can influence the amount of support which can be offered. However, our service structure can only be as strong as its weakest link and helping a struggling group, or one that has no representation at Intergroup is as significant as filling a role at Region.

Conference 1996 requested that the Internal Committee of the General Service Board report back to Conference 1998 with recommendations to changes in the service structure, as necessary, taking into account the information provided by all Regions and the outcome of the workshop at Conference 1997. With this information and the input from Board Trustees it does not appear that there is any great call to change our structure but to review how we all function within it.

Some of us may have expected a report to this Conference that proposed sweeping reforms to be considered by a future Conference for implementation. That may be necessary in the future but, at present, would seem to be another excuse not to accept the responsibilities we have today. Within our present structure there is room for

flexibility particularly in Public Information activity where we are aware that our boundaries do not coincide with those of Government Organisations but we can co-operate with each other to overcome the difficulties.

Our suggestion is that Intergroups, Regions and the General Service Board regularly review our activity in line with any relevant Guideline and share this so that we can learn from our strengths and weaknesses. We, the whole Fellowship, can review how we function in all areas of service at all levels in our structure. We seem to be adept at complicating things and forgetting that whatever role we play we all have the same primary purpose.

## **COPYRIGHTS AND LOGOS**

(Monica H)

*Conference approved the Guideline “Copyrights and Logos” which is now available from GSO.*

## **0345 TELEPHONE NUMBER**

(SAM W)

Part of my responsibilities is to sit on the External Communications Committee and Chair the Sub Committee investigating New Technologies and the cost of the trial use of the 0345 697555 single telephone number for the Fellowship.

In the past year members of this Sub Committee have given presentations to various Regional assemblies.

At some of these we were met with some hostility, and at many with a fear of any change, and possible exorbitant costs, and with some, a feeling that even if the 0345 number was free they would not want it.

However I have also had a tremendous feedback from members of AA who think it is a wonderful way of carrying our message to the suffering alcoholics needing help.

It is well known that the business and commercial world, and other Self Help groups use 0345 and also 0800 to stimulate interest in, and increase the use of their services by making the number more easily available to the people seeking help or information.

My colleague on the External Committee who is dealing with the Armed Forces assures me that they would welcome the use of the 0345 697555 single number.

One part of our Triangle is “UNITY” and I believe that, in the areas using 0345 this has increased tremendously.

In my own Region three Intergroups are now using one RCD system and the telephone liaison officers and responders are working in harmony.

I believe that if the Fellowship decided to use the 0345 number on a national basis and looked at the overall picture for the good of the Fellowship, that we could offer the suffering alcoholic a direct lifeline at an affordable cost to the Fellowship.

After talks with several carriers, BT and Scottish Telecom have given figures indicating cost reductions to us of around 40%.

### **Sub Committee Recommendations**

- i) Starter Pack for Regions** – Numerous requests have been received for information on the 0345 system and it was agreed that the best way to supply this would be in the form of a Starter Pack. This will include information which has recently become available based on the experiences in the South East and Scotland. To avoid confusion, it was decided that all formats for accounts would be published along with statistics showing, where possible, a comparison before and after the implementation of the trial period.
- ii) Unity regarding Carrier** – The Committee was unanimously agreed that it would be more efficient to engage one carrier for the 0345 national system and this will be incorporated in the recommendation to Conference 1998.
- iii) Availability of the Sub Committee to the Fellowship** – In order to assist non-participating Regions, it was agreed that a short article, inviting enquiries, should be included in AA News and, if possible, Share magazine. This will include names and telephone numbers of Committee members. A draft for the article was prepared and given to Jim K, at the end of the meeting in time for the Spring publication of AA News.
- iv) Continuity and Management of Single Number Advanced Link and Area Link** – This item has been included to clarify the status and composition of this Committee which is a constituted body in itself whose purpose is to oversee the establishment and continuity of the 0345 Telephone System. The members will not be subject to the normal tradition of rotation, when they retire from their national or regional responsibilities they will retain membership of, and nor create a vacancy on, this Committee. Responsibility for current planning of territories and alteration of area maps rests here and will currently be carried out by liaison between Bill C, David T and John A.

We have received offers from Scottish Telecom and BT for reduced costs in providing the 0345 service. Although the deal with Scottish Telecom is currently more attractive, saving 40-50% it could be that the one from BT would be more beneficial in the long term. It was agreed to defer any decision on these offers until Conference decides the outcome of our recommendations.

## **Funding 0345 at National Level**

Various ways of funding were discussed and it was agreed that the recommended system would be for Intergroups to fund Regions which would take responsibility for payment of the telephone accounts, passing all surplus to GSO. This could be extended to several Regions grouping together to meet costs before disposing of their communal surplus.

## **Conference Report Presentation**

It was unanimously agreed that it should be recommended to Conference that the 0345 system is now ready to be adopted nationally by the Fellowship because of the following advantages:

- i) The increased availability of service to the still suffering alcoholic
- ii) The increased number of calls received to date (333% in one area)
- iii) The experience of increased unity in some participating Regions
- iv) Greater participation produces lower costs and expansion will lead to even further reductions
- v) Drop in calls to GSO due to local availability
- vi) 0345 can sit “on top” of the best system and make it even better
- vii) RCD cuts down the cost of expensive office accommodation.

Now to the progress reports from South East Region and the whole of Scotland, both are at present involved in the trial 0345 697555. I feel that the Fellowship should have the conscience of these areas as I am told that these areas will continue with the single number even if it was rejected by the rest of the Fellowship.

## **Report on the 0345 Single Telephone Number – South East Region (Martin C)**

Conference 1994 invited South East Region to conduct a trial of the single telephone number to determine whether it was feasible for the Fellowship and to report back to Conference 1996.

At Conference 1996, the trial was extended for two years, with the option of extending it to neighbouring Regions, as long as RCD systems (remote call diversion) and 24 hour response were available. This was on the understanding that BT would bill different Regions direct.

All nine Intergroups within South East Region are now participating in the trial, as well as London North Kent.

The administration problems with BT, for example there were some instances of South East Region paying for Scotland’s calls and vice versa, have now been resolved.

Currently of out of area calls (i.e. from outside current 0345 catchment area) are being fielded by South East Region. This, of course, is a problem of running a national telephone number trial on a local basis. It is inevitable that the 0345 number will start to be used outside of the South East/Scotland – maybe this is a sign that people do want to use an 0345 number. All calls are referred back to the local area Intergroup.

When the trial was first proposed, Conference stated that anyone wishing to join should have 24 hour telephone cover. This has led to a misunderstanding in that some people are under the impression that the 0345 system requires 24 hour cover to work. This is not so, and whereas it is believed that 24 hour response is the way forward, the 0345 system will sit on top of any existing system, whether that is a telephone office or an answering machine. In addition it can be arranged so that calls can be transferred to another area if required. This is useful if, say, one Intergroup cannot provide night cover, but the neighbouring Intergroup is willing to provide cover for them. The beauty of the system is it is so flexible.

It should be noted, however, that the 0345 number is an additional cost on top of whatever phone system is being used. Due to changes in telecommunication regulations, it is now possible to change to another communication provider, whilst retaining the same number. Other providers are being researched at the current time, the result of which should be to reduce the overall call costs still further, perhaps by 50%.

The trial continues to go well, and the feed back from liaison officers is that the benefits of having only one number to distribute, verses several are many fold. However the biggest benefit seems to be that we are reaching more suffering alcoholics and the increased unity within South East Region that the trial has generated.

### **Report on the 0345 Single Telephone Number – Scotland**

(John A)

The period since last year's Conference has been a busy one for Scotland's three service centres:

1. North of Scotland – covers two Regions, Highlands & Islands and East of Scotland.
2. West of Scotland – covers three Regions, Glasgow, South West Scotland and part of Scotia.
3. East of Scotland – covers one Region, Scotia.

In my report this year, I am pleased to let you know that the telephone bill for the three Scottish centres totals £9,000, which is a factual figure. We have all telephone bills and costings for the year, £1,500 if broken down to each Region. These bills are available to any Region.

One factual example I would like to point out is from West of Scotland's telephone service, they are by far the busiest and most densely populated of the three call centres, with sixteen Intergroups participating.

Their total bill for each Region for the year being	£1584.20
Their total bill for each Region monthly	£132.01
Each Intergroup – yearly	£99.01
Each Intergroup – monthly	£8.25

When broken down further the cost to each Group would be 10p per week, which covers all telephone service costs.

Last year in my report I informed you that due to reconstruction of Scotland's telephone service that I was unable to provide factual costings, we are now able to do this.

We have found that the amount of calls over the year vary little, only by ten to twenty over the fourteen week period, this is good for we can project 'phone costs and make certain we have a prudent reserve. These figures are factual and taken from the statistics BT supply for us on a weekly basis.

There are a lot of pluses in the use of the Single Number:

1. Direct contact for the suffering alcoholic
2. Anonymity is protected through one number
3. Accountability of Service
4. Unity in the Fellowship
5. Continuity of service
6. Public use our service and are directed to other means of help
7. We take calls from hospitals, industry, police, education and General Practitioners, these calls are forwarded through the service structure.

When we were asked, by Conference, if the South East Region and Scotland, or a part thereof, would take part in a trial to find out if we, the Fellowship of AA in Great Britain, could make available to the suffering alcoholic, a low cost telephone service, many had doubts, mainly on costs, but also on structure, but now we have proof that we can afford to fulfil our primary purpose.

**FACT** - The costs of our phone bills are dropping

**FACT** - We are reaching the people we want

- FACT** - Our call numbers are increasing
- FACT** - There is Unity in Service, this is borne out by the attendance of our Joint Services meetings in Scotland and a willingness of those trying to fulfil their primary purpose.

As Telephone Liaison Officer to the Scottish Service Committee, I was invited to take part on a small sub-committee, where the Terms of Reference were set up by the GSB:

1. To progress the current 0345 697555 number usage
2. To monitor and encourage the implementation of the recommendation made by Conference '96.
3. To investigate new technology which may be beneficial to the Fellowship's telephone service.
4. To be available to Regions seeking further information regarding 0345 number, and if requested to attend Regional Assemblies to answer questions.

It has been a privilege to be part of this sub-committee.

It was also my privilege to be asked to organise the Telephone Workshop at Blackpool '97 on the 0345 number. Myself and other 0345 sub-committee members shared their experience on the single number before a very lively and rewarding questions and answer session, after which we had several invitations to speak at Regional Assemblies which have since taken place.

Following through on our reference to investigate new technology, much of the ground-work was carried out by one person, Bill C, (thanks Bill) after his first meeting with Scottish Telecom we found the difference in costs amazing:

	Scottish Telecom	BT
5 min	19p	37.5p
10 min	38p	75p
15 min	57p	£1.12

I arranged a meeting with Scottish Telecom in Perth on 12 January 1998, my concern was that although they could halve our telephone bills with the above figures, could they provide the same service as BT. After explaining how our service worked they assured me that not only can they reduce the bills considerably, but also provide the same service.



The trial has run for four years and is used by six Regions, seven if you include part of London. We know, through York, that contributions in the areas using the single number have increased. We feel in Scotland the Fellowship need and want the single national number and are waiting for Conference to recommend them to join, and to this end, Scotland's telephone service, along with the five Region's support, fully endorse the Board Sub-Committee recommendation, that the Fellowship go national with the single number. This will give people like myself a lifeline for 10p anywhere in Great Britain.

God bless you, and please remember who was there when YOU made that call.

After discussion, Conference was asked to recommend that the 0345 system is adopted nationally by the Fellowship. The recommendation was passed with 97% in favour.

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1. *The General Service Board proposed that the workshop to be held on the Saturday evening at Conference 1999 be:*

*'0345 Service'*

*- a full workshop of shared experiences, questions, answers and support on implementing the development of a National Telephone Service.*

*The Conference Committee and Telephone Sub-committee are asked to liaise in the presentation of this workshop to Conference.*

2. *Following the Conference Report of the 0345 pilot scheme made by the Sub-committee, Conference recommends that:*

*'the 0345 system be adopted nationally by the Fellowship, this adoption to be carried out with unity of a 'service provider' as soon as practicable within each Region of Great Britain.'*

*This recommendation received overwhelming support on Sunday morning.*

# EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING 1997

(Charlie G)

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity to carry the message to the Alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The European Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the group conscience throughout Europe.

Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The European Service Meeting encourages the planning of the sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries and the exploration of expanding AA services to reach the Alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and institutions work.

Those countries who were represented at the ESM were; Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, French Speaking Europe, Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, GSO New York USA.

The responsibility of putting together this event rests with our own General Service Office staff at York, the workload to ensure the success of the ESM is enormous and Conference are indebted to those individuals who make certain that things run smoothly.

The theme of the Ninth ESM was "Responsibility Begins With Us" and those delegates who attended certainly gave of their best over the three days.

Topics of discussion at the meeting ranged from Finance, Literature, Publishing, Sponsorship and of course our Structure, some of the highlights of what transpired in committees and the workshops were as follows:

Countries that can increase contributions to the ESM should be encouraged to do so - that other delegates may be invited to attend.

Class A Trustees should be invited to participate at future ESM meetings as delegates.

All delegates are very aware that Europe has greatly increased in terms of countries and that the population numbers are huge. The task of producing and distributing appropriate publishing material has expanded enormously and new languages now

have to be incorporated, the task of reaching out to those new Eastern countries is a challenge to us all.

Past Sponsorship activity has certainly contributed to new ESM membership, Ukraine and Lithuania being a case in point.

The knowledge of our 12 Concepts differed very much from country to country, some delegates reported that they were not even aware of their existence, some claim that translations are poor or not available in their own language.

Even in countries less familiar with the 12 Concepts, Tradition 2 is the basis of service, for the group and AA as a whole, rotation and sponsorship are vehicles of growth, adhering to the Twelve Traditions as part of the spiritual foundations. To learn to practice humility everyone is asked to rotate in service - this ensures sound structures.

Poland will celebrate 25 years of AA come 1999.

Ukraine is 8 years old with some 29 groups in 13 cities.

Lithuania there are 34 active groups, AA has been active for 10 years.

Theme for the Tenth ESM 1999 is "Unity" the Heartbeat of AA.

In conclusion we wish to thank all those individuals who participated at the Ninth ESM for being responsible and doing what has been asked of them, the true meaning of Fellowship was experienced by all and I shall certainly treasure my own.

It would be fitting at this time to conclude with a paragraph or two from the closing address of Richard B who was the GSO representative from New York:

Bill once said of unity, "The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or AA dies. Without unity, the heart of AA would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life giving grace of God; his gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in their caves, alcoholics would reproach us and say "What a great thing AA might have been".

So let us, you and me, take responsibility for AAs future. I don't want one person in Russia, China, Zambia or Harlem USA to miss out on a new life because we did not live up to our responsibility.

And I surely do not want to think of the possibility of our grandchildren saying "What a great thing AA might have been".

# PROBATION/SOCIAL SERVICES GUIDELINE

(Mick W)

*Conference approved the Guideline “Probation/Social Services” which is now available from GSO.*

## HEALTH ADDENDUM

(Bill Y)

### Community Health Liaison - Addendum to Guideline No. 10

#### **1. Purpose:**

- 1.1 The purpose of this addendum is to provide additional help to members who are co-operating with healthcare professionals outside of hospitals and treatment centres.
- 1.2 It is a supplement to Guideline No.10 - ‘AA in Hospitals & Treatment Centres’, and part of the process of revising that Guideline. We, in service in AA, need to consolidate our practices and share our experience more fully before the Guideline is completely revised.

#### **2. Background:**

- 2.1 AA has a simple message to carry, not only to the still suffering alcoholic, but also to professionals dealing with alcoholics. In the past, professionals caring for the health of active alcoholics were doctors and nurses working almost exclusively in psychiatric hospitals or psychiatric wards of general hospitals.
- 2.2 The Community Care Act, which came into force in April 1993, was the enabling legislation that started a fundamental change in the treatment of alcoholics - what is done, where it is done and by whom.
- 2.3 Financial cutbacks and policy changes in the NHS has brought about the closure of many large psychiatric hospitals and their accompanying addiction units. The contacts that we have had in the past - the ‘targets’ for dialogue and information, have changed.
- 2.4 Healthcare is no longer the sole province of the health service; many areas of service provision are now the joint responsibility of health services and local authority social services departments, so the lines are blurred as to who exactly is ultimately responsible for what - and this varies from area to area. In addition, there are many different private sector care providers emerging; some of these operate purely at a local level while others provide care nation-wide or across a region.

#### **3. Changes within AA:**

- 3.1 The tradition of autonomy in AA has always encouraged groups and Intergroups to organise service activities according to local needs and conditions. Most commonly, liaison with hospitals was the responsibility of the ‘Hospital Liaison Officer’ and liaison with health professionals outside of hospitals and treatment centres was usually down to the Public Information (PI) Officer. Whilst there

has never been a universal standard, such service has sometimes been co-ordinated through a PI Committee or a similar body for combined service.

- 3.2 In response to changes brought about by ‘Care in the Community’, Conference 1995 discussed whether the (then) Hospital Liaison Officer had a dual role to contact GPs and primary care staff as well as hospitals, due to ‘the shift of care of the suffering alcoholic towards primary care’ (Committee 4, Question 2). It was recommended by that Conference that:

*‘the way to co-ordinate activities in the field of hospitals, GPs and the primary care of alcoholics is to set up a Combined Services Committee or equivalent according to local needs and resources.’*

- 3.3 The following year, Conference 1996 recommended that the title ‘Hospital Liaison Officer’ be changed to ‘Health Liaison Officer’. That recommendation has been widely accepted and implemented, although the title Hospital Liaison Officer is still in use in some Intergroups.
- 3.4 The implication here is that someone – the ‘Health Liaison Officer’ – will take on a role which is likely to include hospital liaison, but will also be extended to take responsibility for ensuring liaison with GPs and a plethora of bodies whose names may or may not include the words ‘Drug & Alcohol ...’, ‘Community Psychiatric ...’ etc., but whose remit does include professional contact with the active alcoholic. Compared to hospital liaison, this is a whole new ballgame - and this game is definitely a team game!

#### **4. Problems arising in AA – are opportunities for growth!**

- 4.1 Experience so far tells us that problems tend to be centred around 2 main areas:-
- A) who in AA is responsible?
- B) who should we be talking to?

##### **Who in AA is responsible?**

- 4.2 As discussed above, ‘health liaison’ is broader, more ambiguous and less easy to define than ‘hospital liaison’ was. It overlaps with liaison work which might traditionally have fallen to the responsibility of PI and even, at times, with Prison, Probation and Industry/Employer liaison. So who is responsible?
- 4.3 As so often happens in AA, we find the answer when we start to look at a ‘problem’ situation not as a problem, but as an opportunity to grow.
- 4.4 Obviously, it is the responsibility of everyone involved in service. We are a united Fellowship and we have a primary purpose and I believe that this is a God-given opportunity for us to start taking down the barriers between service areas, to talk to each other - constructively.
- 4.5 Clearly there will be a need for someone to oversee health liaison activity, but this is a much bigger task than hospital liaison ever was and can only be done with help, co-operation and teamwork from others involved in service.

##### **Who should we be talking to?**

- 4.6 There is no short cut here. It is a truism in AA that there is no substitute for local knowledge in external liaison work – and never more so than in health liaison today.

- 4.7 HLOs need to keep records of local contacts and we need to ask those local contacts, ‘who else should we be talking to?’ We need names, job titles, addresses and phone numbers. The experience of PI and information in the PI Handbook will prove invaluable here.
- 4.8 A source of information which may prove useful is the ‘Directory of Drug and Alcohol Services’ from SCODA (Standing Conference on Drug Abuse – 0171 928 9500). A revised publication is due in April/May 1998 and HLOs will be advised if it looks worthwhile.
- 4.9 Intergroup HLOs need to talk to their opposite numbers in other Intergroups and to their opposite numbers of other service areas within the Intergroup – about what is working and what is not; about fears and concerns; about ideas for new initiatives – or simply to ask for help in getting moving. In our personal recovery lives, we are very good at sharing experience, strength and hope – its what we do best; but service tends to be (borrowing words from Step 12) one of our affairs of life in which we don’t practice the principle of sharing.

## **5. Recommendations:**

- 5.1 Form combined service committees at Intergroup and at Region.** Ensure that the matter is put on the agenda as soon as possible if your Intergroup/Region hasn’t yet done so. This is more important now than it has ever been.
- 5.2 Stop thinking of strict service areas,** of set job titles & rigid job definitions.
- 5.3 Start to think of responding, flexibly,** to the needs the professional community, and hence to the needs of the suffering alcoholic.
- 5.4 Hold regular service meetings/workshops at Intergroup and at Region.** Do more than talk – get focused on action and come out of the workshop with an Action Plan, including who is going to do what and when (e.g. before next month’s meeting, John is going to contact all of the GP practices in Anytown and try to arrange an appointment to talk with each of the Practice Managers/Administrators about AA and how we could better reach the health professionals who deal with problem drinkers. Jane is going to draw up a new rota for the sponsored hospital meeting for the next 3 months and talk to the ward manager about the possibility of an additional meeting on Saturday mornings).
- 5.5 Ask your Regional HLO to arrange for Intergroup HLOs to meet together** – perhaps some time can be allocated at the Regional Assembly (before the business meeting, at lunchtime or after the business meeting). If that is not possible, arrange to meet with one or two other IHLOs from neighbouring areas. The more that service officers support each other, the stronger the service will become.
- 5.6 Make sure that sponsorship into service is practised constantly.** Not only will this benefit the newcomer into service, it will also improve the quality of service, and therefore AA. The newcomer will be more likely to stay – *and* will be more likely to pass on the practice of sponsorship to others.
- 5.7 Pick up your Confidential Directory and phone someone** who is doing the same job as you but in a neighbouring area, if you are in an HLO post and

haven't been sponsored, or if you are uncertain about what to do next. That's what the directory is there for ... and that's what our Fellowship is there for – use it to best advantage. It may sometimes seem that you are on your own – but that is in the mind, not in reality. Just as you had to in your personal recovery, don't be afraid to ask for help – we're all human and we all have the same primary purpose!

If you are uncertain about who to ring, ask your RHLO who they could suggest, they will be happy to help.

**5.8 If you make a contact which goes well**, or an unusual contact which looks promising, tell others about it, they need to know. You can reach the whole of your Region by including it in your report to your RHLO – and you can reach the whole of the Fellowship in GB by writing a short article for AA News.

**5.9 Warning!** - when talking to healthcare professionals in the community, please, please, *please* remember:

- i) Whether it affects alcoholics or not, we have no opinion on outside matters – and that includes the shortage of hospital beds for alcoholics and the morality of alcopops. Its very tempting to get drawn in – don't.
- ii) As members of AA, we do not give medical advice to anyone – particularly doctors!

*This Addendum is now available from GSO.*

## **ARMED SERVICES REPORT**

(Mary S on behalf of John T who was unable to attend)

My name is John, I am an alcoholic and a member of the General Service Board where one of my responsibilities is Industrial (Employer) Liaison contact on the External Communications Committee. In my experience, it is a very proactive committee which engenders support and encouragement amongst its participants. This is not surprising when one considers the privilege all of us have at this Conference and throughout the Fellowship when putting into action our primary purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

When reading your 1997 Conference Report, you will have noticed that the first item covered by Committee No 2 was about the matter of alcoholism within the Armed Forces and one of the recommendations was “that GSB approaches the Armed Forces/ Government at the highest appropriate level regarding how AA may be of service and be contactable at local and regional levels. The GSB will report its progress to Conference 1998. Existing contacts at the level of Group, Intergroup and Region should be maintained.”

There are two distinct targets mentioned in this recommendation; the first contains three separate entities, i.e. the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force; the second is a Central Government Ministry which has Civil Servants at a very senior

level such as the Permanent Secretary and Permanent Under Secretary; then there are the elected politicians, such as the Minister and Parliamentary Under Secretary, et al, added to which are senior and fairly senior personnel from all three armed services based at the Ministry of Defence.

I have discovered that the most productive route into the Armed Services is most certainly via serving officers and possibly some civilians directly employed by the Armed Services or associations/organisations directly linked to them. Thus, it has been a year of discovery and learning as much as anything else.

Prior to last year's Conference recommendation, one of the Intergroups (Southdown) which is part of my own South East Region, had already formed a sub-committee within its PI-CPC structure to carry AA's message of recovery to the Armed Services. The sub-committee had some very valuable experience in the form of ex-service personnel. The Public Information Liaison Officer took the initiative and approached the Assistant Director of Naval Personnel and Families Services with a view to a meeting. The aforementioned Director answers directly to the Second Sea Lord on all matters concerning drug and alcohol education and abuse. I became involved by invitation prior to the General Service Conference of April 1997.

Eventually the meeting took place at HM Naval Base, Portsmouth on 11 June 1997. In attendance were Captain R V Lake RN (the aforementioned Assistant Director); a Lieutenant Commander responsible for Royal Navy alcohol policy production; the Naval Charge Nurse from the Alcohol Treatment Unit at the RN's Haslar Hospital; two individuals responsible for Alcohol Education in the Royal Navy and a couple of others involved in treatment processes or education.

From AA we had the Public Information LO, a lady from the aforementioned Intergroup's Armed Services Liaison Sub-Committee, and me from the GSB. All three AA members had the advantage of being able to call upon drinking experiences whilst serving in the Armed Services, and I must say that this made a telling point with the Royal Naval people present, especially the fact that practising alcoholics could go undetected for some time. One of our points was, of course, why not let AA be available and thus allow a serving man or woman the opportunity to deal with their drink problem and not necessarily progress to disciplinary action and, more often than not, dismissal from the service.

The meeting went very well and as a result Capt Lake has published an RN temporary memorandum focused on AA and how it works (the memo has been communicated to all RN ships and shore establishments). He has endorsed the "possible value" of AA presentation on ships and establishment at the discretion of Unit CO's; purchase of AA literature is under discussion. Furthermore, liaison between AA and the RN Alcohol Education Team and in particular the RN Alcohol Treatment Unit has been improved.

Five days after the meeting on 16 June 1997, Capt Lake promoted his pro-AA view to



his opposite numbers in the RAF and Army. Whilst acknowledging the work AA does - “a reputable organisation” to quote one member of the tri-service committee - the Army and RAF members were hesitant about visits to service establishments. Having said that, such visits do, as we know, take place. However, according to Capt Lake, such hesitancy reflects in part attitudes to drinking and, I fear, the very suggestion that ‘alcoholics’ are actually serving members of HM Forces. In other words, problem drinkers are dealt with in a reputable service manner!

My attempts to get a meeting with the MOD’s Directorate of Service Personnel Policy (Projects) very nearly came about. Unfortunately, Brigadier R C Walker moved to a new appointment as Director Resettlement, but he did assure me that he had passed my letter on to a Dr NF Price, Director of Service Personnel Policy 2 at the MOD. He also expressed confidence that Dr Price would get in touch. Obviously, this will be followed up by me or my successor.

I have recently had a very worthwhile meeting with the Director of the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation which was established to provide accommodation with medical and welfare care for disabled ex-servicemen and their families. Other than letting Rick Brunwin, the Director, know about AA’s policy of co-operation and its considerable activity in furthering the aims of our primary purpose, I asked for and was given an extremely useful list of individuals either in HM Forces or working for associated organisations. What was of particular value to me was a brief verbal profile of possibly appropriate contacts to further our liaison work in this particular area. As a result of advice received, we hope to be meeting with the Director of Welfare, Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association (SSAFA) Forces Help, in the very near future. This Association is somewhat like a social services organisation and it employs some 5,000 field workers.

During this past year, it has become clear that patience is very necessary in this area of service. For example, the meeting with Capt Lake did not happen just like that, it was the result of patient and disciplined persistence. Denial of alcoholism is no greater in the Forces than elsewhere, it just manifests itself more strongly because of the very nature of service life, traditions and discipline.

## **INFORMATION VIDEOS FOR PROFESSIONALS**

(Bill Y)

### **Background**

During discussions last year with the Director of Health Care, HM Prison Service, about how to improve the way in which AA is used as a resource for prisons within England and Wales, the Board agreed to look at the possibility of a co-operative project to produce a video which would be suitable for prison officer information purposes. Senior management are aware that prison officers commonly have little understanding of what AA is about and frequently have negative attitudes towards AA.

The Board set up a committee to look at the need for an information video for the prison service in particular and for professionals in general. The committee members included the trustees with responsibility for Prisons (Charlie G), Probation (Mick W) and Health (Bill Y). The Board agreed the committee's recommendation to proceed with the making of two videos at its meeting in January and the following is a summary of the position.

## **1. Information Video for HM Prisons**

It was realised that this opportunity for carrying the message to professionals was quite unique in AA service history in this country and the job had to be done well. In other words, for the video to be acceptable to its intended audience:

- it must look and be 'professional' - well produced, broadcast-quality video
- it must tell prison officers (including medical staff) what they need to know about AA
- it must appear authentic to officers working within the prison service
- it must be in plain, modern English with AA 'jargon' kept to a minimum
- it must be fast moving and last no more than 15 minutes
- it must be suitable for use by HM Prisons staff for training purposes, *with or without AA help*, and also suitable for use by our prison liaison officers to carry the AA message within the prison service.

## **2. Information Video for 'Community' Professionals**

The Board recognised that there was also an opportunity to produce, at comparatively minor cost, another 'version' of the video, tailored to spread the message in the other professional sectors, e.g. Health, Social Services, Probation, Employment, etc. using a different setting but similar drama sequences and varied voice-over details.

The Fellowship has no materials of this nature at present and the Board considered that such a resource would be of immense help to our liaison officers in the various service areas. It would also be available as a resource for professionals to use, with or without AA help, for in-service training purposes.

Put quite simply, the request from HM Prisons to co-operate with an information video has presented us with a unique chance to do something similar for a wider service area. This is not just a matter of keeping costs down. Its much more about motivation and grasping opportunities to improve the way in which the AA message

is carried to the still suffering alcoholic - as AA moves into the 21st century!

### **What are the Costs?**

The single video for prison officers, including professional actors, would have cost £16000. A second version of the video for other professionals, produced alongside the prison version as part of the same contract, will add 50% to the cost and both versions will be produced for £25000. For comparison, the young person's video (Message to Young People), made in 1991, cost £35000.

### **What Next?**

The Board has prepared draft scripts and video treatment and is now awaiting the start of detailed talks, initially between AA and the prison service and then including the video company. The prison service will have to be involved throughout the production with script/treatment/sets/costumes/filming/sound recording/editing etc. in order to advise on authenticity of location, dress, language, policy etc. from a prison service viewpoint.

If everything moves along without undue problems/delays, it is possible to have the videos completed by September. However, to be realistic, delays must be expected - organising locations within prison, getting scripts/treatment agreed etc. is not likely to be quick - that is not the way of the prison service!

Suffice to say, it is sincerely hoped that Conference 1999 will be expressing its enthusiasm for the new AA information videos for professionals!

*Conference gave its full support to the above recommendations.*

## **DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**

**(Rodger P, GSB Chairman)**

Over the last fifty years, many offices and service centres have been introduced on an ad-hoc basis. This has established disunity in structure, lack of accountability and many legal difficulties.

Today, we have the opportunity of restructuring these centres and establishing a pro-forma structure available to others who may follow.

At present we are faced with changes at London Region Telephone Service with their lease coming to an end as well as those responsible examining the present procedures. Secondly, we have been asked by Scottish Service Committee to submit options and alternatives as they are also examining their present situation with some concern. We are not criticising the past, nor those who have maintained both these and other service offices. The very opposite. The reason for our review and this discussion

document is based upon their success and the need to ensure their success continues in a changing society with changing legal requirements. This discussion document also addresses the role that the General Service Board is by its mandate in a position to provide leadership and guidance to the Fellowship as a whole.

This document is not exhaustive, nor is it set in concrete. It is a discussion document and it is hoped to present a finished and balanced review to Conference 1998. It is therefore imperative that all members of the Board and members of both L.R.T.S. and S.S.C. have the opportunity to consider and influence the future presentation.

I will now try to address what I see are the three factors that we must address:

- 1. Aims and Objectives**
- 2. The difficulties of the past**
- 3. Benefits for the future**

I would then suggest that all comments, points of both concern and acceptance are communicated direct to GSO for my attention.

### **Aims & Objectives**

To create a blueprint for the Fellowship to adopt as a guide to establishing such local offices that may wish to carry out local service needs for the Fellowship in that area.

### **Difficulties in the Past**

1. Non accountability to the Fellowship as a whole via Conference.
2. High cost of rent, wages and employment policy.
3. Duplication of service/lack of communication and representation.
4. Management liabilities/legal/company/charity issues.
5. Lack of UNITY, potentially separate companies, charities.
6. Political/Power base for individuals/groups of people who are at present not accountable nor are they "Trusted Servants".
7. Development of Constitutions and binding contracts.
8. Unable to adapt to change/entrenched in old ideas.
9. Not part of the structure or if they are, their role is not understood.

### **Benefits for the Future**

By creating a blueprint of structure we would be able to bring some continuity of growth and guidance to such offices. Once blueprint is accepted by Conference then each local/regional office could approach Conference and press their individual case to be recognised as having a NEED for such an office. The individual office management and work does not form part of this document as I believe that should be left to each to address differing local needs. However, the way such offices are set up

within our structure is the business of the GSB.

1. Run by GSO York through General Secretary
2. Staff employed and responsible to GSO and directly to GSB.
3. Accountable to Conference
4. All company/charity/legislation through GSO.
5. No duplication of services.
6. Non political/power base.
7. Payments/rent/salaries through GSO and part of Board Finances report.
8. Each office has Co-ordinating Committee with Board Member, staff member, and local representation.
9. All services within our present guidelines and Traditions.
10. Local store for Archives and local needs...such as telephone, service centres, PI/CPC, literature, etc.

### **Summary**

AN OFFICE COULD BE ESTABLISHED WITH A LEVEL OF OPERATIONAL AUTHORITY BUT WOULD BE FULLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE GSB REGARDING POLICY, FINANCE AND STAFFING.

1. TO PRESERVE THE UNITY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.
2. CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES AND LOCAL SUPPORT.
3. AVOID OVERBURDENING OF THE STAFF WITH NEEDLESS ADMINISTRATION FUNCTIONS AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES.
4. USE OF CURRENT CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER, DISPOSITIONS ACT AND VAT REGISTRATION.
5. PROVIDE A VALUABLE SERVICE RESOURCE, SUPPORTED BY GSO.
6. FREE THE INTERGROUP CHAIRMAN/REGIONAL OFFICERS OF THE ONGOING RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSONAL LIABILITY.

### **Some Questions Answered**

It is not this document's intention to interfere with local responsibility nor take over control. The intention is to divide the problem into two distinct areas. One, the GSB takes over...namely the rental, contractual, maintenance of property; the legal registration and financial returns; the employment and necessary employment responsibilities; the charity/company accountability etc. and so establish a satellite office.

The second area, local needs are provided as they are now by local co-ordinating committees, each centre being unique to local needs e.g. LRTS would still be responsible for the telephone service and Intergroup Chairmen will maintain their responsibilities via present representation. Inter-relation would be as now via the staff member, who in future scenario would be employed by GSO and General Secretary.

Finance would be as with all other levels via our Structure. Groups send money to Intergroups who pay local costs and submits rest to GSO. Local costs will be reduced as rent/salaries are not paid locally = more sent to GSO = who then pays rent etc. Volunteers would be encouraged through local co-ordinating committee as well as staff member.

Regional involvement to provide local services, information centres etc. would simply be attached to the function of that specific office. They have the choice to participate.

This is a document for discussion. We pride ourselves in being able to communicate and following discussion at Conference 1997 it is clear that we must consider helping our Regions establish ways of improving their communications and services in our attempt to fulfil our primary purpose of CARRYING THE MESSAGE.

**The General Service Board recommends -**

“The establishment of Regional Service Offices, where viable, to support the service structure in carrying out our primary purpose.”

**Conference is further asked to recommend that -**

“The G.S.B. undertakes the first of these Regional Service Offices in London and in Scotland.”

Both of these recommendations have the majority support of the local membership following Group Conscience meetings on the discussion document distributed by G.S.B.

Subject to Conference approval of these proposals the G.S.B. will co-ordinate the implementations of these offices with committees from London and Scotland in the best interests of the Fellowship as a whole.

Any further proposal for R.S.O. must be made through direct presentation regarding their viability to the G.S.B who in turn would submit the presentation to Conference for their deliberation.

*Conference passed the above recommendations with a majority vote.*

**Due to the time constraint it was agreed that further Board Business would take place following the presentation of the Committee Reports on Sunday morning, but for the sake of continuity is reported below:**

## **NATIONAL CONVENTION 1997**

As final accounts were drawn up it was clear that a shortfall between projected income and contractual expenditure would be significant. All efforts were made to reduce expenditure wherever possible but the final figure stood at a deficit of approximately £12000.

Following earlier concerns regarding our position, current advice was sought from both our auditors and charity advisors. As a result of changes in practice and our desire to maintain our Traditions, the Board was advised that it could make up the shortfall using Fellowship funds via a direct contribution to the holding of both the Opening and Closing events which were OPEN AA MEETINGS.

After discussion it was agreed that the National Convention Accounts would show additional information: contributions in total, Management - professional conference fees, Donation - 7th Tradition as premises provided free, cost of travel and accommodation OVER FOUR YEARS.

All accounts have now been paid, and we ask Conference to endorse the General Service Board's actions in the full light of the 1992 recommendations which we have tried to carry out in the spirit they were intended.





## **CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THE FELLOWSHIP**

Further to our initial letter to the Fellowship in October 1995 as reported to Conference 1996 the General Service Board wishes to update Conference of matters arising regarding the actions of two individuals.

We wish to draw Conference's attention to four distinct areas where numerous correspondence has continued.

- 1** Continual breaking of anonymity of GSB members by addressing all such letters to '..... of Alcoholics Anonymous'. This continues to cause concern both to recipients and their families and to their continued involvement within the service structure of AA.
- 2** Continual misuse of both the logo and name of Alcoholics Anonymous in their correspondence challenging decisions and actions of our service structure for their own purposes. This brings the name of AA into disrepute.
- 3** Letters to Charity Commission and MPs challenging all recent decisions and actions undertaken by the General Service Board and General Service Conference. These include such things as our Concepts, Accounts and Conference Recommendations. These also include both implied threats and formal complaints.
- 4** Letters to General Secretary and Charity Commission challenging the position of Conference and the autonomy of our Fellowship as a whole, its authority to make decisions and to answer any question from the members of AA. Concluding by demanding the withdrawal of one question from this year's Conference.

We have answered all points to the complete satisfaction of both the Charity Commissioners and all other legal bodies, at great expense of time, money and effort. We wish this matter to be closed.

## **STATEMENT ON ANONYMOUS MAIL**

The General Service Office and Trustees of the General Service Board are aware that several members of our Fellowship have received unsolicited and anonymous mail addressed in a way that causes distress to themselves and their families.

The names of the members targeted can only have been obtained from the confidential directory available to members of our Fellowship involved in service at Intergroup, Region and the General Service Board.

This confidential directory is for the specific purpose of facilitating communication between members involved in service, on matters of service.

The Fellowship relies on members in service to ensure that this directory is used in an appropriate manner and then passed on to their successors or destroyed when out of date.

Sadly, someone has obtained a copy of this directory for use in an inappropriate and hurtful way. We urge the Fellowship as a whole to be vigilant as to the whereabouts and use of this directory in the spirit of our Traditions and love for our fellow members.

This concluded the Board Report and Rodger thanked everyone for their support and approval of this Report.

## **NOMINATIONS FOR CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN 1999**

**(Friday evening)**

The under-mentioned were proposed and seconded for the Chairman of the Thirty-Fourth General Service Conference 1999:

Michael C	-	South West Scotland Region
Rod C	-	Midlands Region
William McC	-	Glasgow Region
Mike W	-	South Midlands Region
Nick F	-	London Region
Roger B	-	North West Region

The nominees signified their willingness to serve and each gave a brief summary of their AA service background. The formal election to take place at the final session of Conference.

The first session of Conference ended with Ann asking everyone to join her in saying the Serenity Prayer.

## SATURDAY 4 APRIL

### WORKSHOP - “HOME GROUP PRINCIPLE AND SPONSORSHIP”

Ann opened the Saturday evening session with a few moments silence, read the Preamble and went on to explain the format of the Workshop. Of the 15 letters sent to Regions, requesting input on the ‘Home Group Principle’, only 7 replies were received.

The Workshop opened with a sketch performed by two delegates playing the roles of two group members and a board member playing the role of a newcomer. The sketch portrayed positive and negative aspects of welcoming a newcomer to the group, and this was reflected by the many and varied comments from the floor.

Three other delegates shared their experience on the ‘Home Group Principle and Sponsorship’, this was followed by general sharing from the Conference floor.

#### **The main points arising during the evening were:**

The welcome a newcomer is given is vitally important as first impressions are lasting.

The need to attend meetings, find a group they are comfortable with and make it their home group.

The benefits of the home group are the strength and support given by committed members, experienced in the structure of AA.

Issue starter pack, local where to find and explain the importance of AA literature.

Give practical suggestions such as, keep coming back; don’t pick up the first drink; use the telephone; keep sober minded company; make recovery the most important thing in your life and re-arrange your life to do this.

Encourage the newcomer to get close to someone they feel comfortable with who will take care of them and guide them in the right direction.

Explain sponsorship and consider making arrangements for temporary sponsorship.

Show them by example what to do.

Introduce the programme of AA and concept of a higher power gradually.

Introduce newcomer to service.

Talk about newcomers regularly at group conscience meetings.

## **Don't**

Leave a newcomer to “get on with it on their own”; offer a handshake and little else.

Let them leave a meeting without someone speaking to them.

The Saturday evening session closed at 10.15pm with the Serenity Prayer.

## **SUNDAY 5 APRIL**

Ann opened the final session of Conference with a few moments silence followed by the Preamble. As agreed at Conference 1995 each recommendation will be voted on and whether or not it is a two-thirds majority will be recorded. Also, that the Committee Secretaries would act as tellers if required.

Ann then invited the Chairmen of the six Committees to present their respective reports which were fully discussed and adopted.

These Committee Reports are included in this report on the pages indicated below:

Committee No. 1	Pages	48 - 49
Committee No. 2	Pages	50 - 51
Committee No. 3	Pages	52 - 56
Committee No. 4	Pages	57 - 58
Committee No. 5	Pages	59 - 60
Committee No. 6	Page	61

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR CONFERENCE 1999**

The nominations received on Friday evening were presented and, after a vote, Rod C (Midlands Region) was duly elected.

## **BOARD PERSONNEL**

Rodger P, Chairman of the Board, asked Conference to welcome and ratify the following four new Board Members:

Margaret M	-	Wales & Borders
Jim C	-	Highlands & Islands
Mike D	-	North West
Sue T	-	South East

He went on to say, on behalf of the General Service Board and Conference, to our retiring and rotating Board Members our heartfelt thanks and best wishes for a happy retirement and future. Thanks for all the hard work:

Monica H	-	Vice Chair
Harry O	-	Treasurer
Mairi G	-	Highlands & Islands
Rodney N	-	North West

He continued by thanking the Conference Chairman, Ann S, for a wonderful Conference and went on to say “I do believe that we have found absolutely that we are one Fellowship united in purpose and for all your contributions, from wherever you are, my heartfelt thanks on that. This Conference has united our Fellowship for the future, we have had a long, hard struggle along the way, as we all know, with lots of concerns and anxieties being expressed. This, I believe, is a new beginning and it has been a wonderful experience for me, and I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart for your contributions, your love, your support and even your constructive criticism which I have welcomed. Thank you very much indeed”.

## **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

**(ANN S)**

“To me it has been truly overwhelming, you gave me the vision, you took the challenge, you accepted the responsibility to take on board on things that will carry AA on in new technology for the alcoholic. You have given me love - I love you in return for having the trust in me and I thank you for the service you have given. Most of all, go away and tell your fellow members what it was like this weekend, give them that vision, give them that love, let them hear you - you have a right to be heard. You have worked as a trusted servant and the service you have done for this Fellowship I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

In order to rotate my Chairmanship of Conference I would like to invite the Chairman of Conference 1999 to stand by my side and lead you in the Serenity Prayer of the Fellowship. Thank you”.

Conference 1998 ended with everyone joining hands and saying the Serenity Prayer.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT CONFERENCE**

The Thirty-Fourth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain will be held at Alcuin College, University of York on 16-18 April 1999.

# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

## COMMITTEE NO. 1

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CHAIRMAN:            ROSA J            WALES & BORDERS REGION  
SECRETARY:          RICHARD H        SOUTH EAST REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the Preamble.

- 1. Would Conference consider the growing concern caused by the use of foul language in AA meetings, open and closed. Give guidance.**

Any concern over foul language is best addressed by the groups through their Secretaries or Chairs at Open and Closed meetings, relying upon the tolerance, experience, understanding and support found in a strong home group reflecting its group conscience. Some groups have found it useful to use locally produced cards: 'Swearing often offends. Its absence never does'. The Secretary or Chair may remind members that 'The use of foul language makes some members very uncomfortable'.

The decision of this Committee was unanimous.

- 2. Would Conference consider re-naming the Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community (PICPC) committee title, to:**

- a) Public Awareness Team**
- b) Combined Services Committee**
- c) External Communications Committee**

The Committee felt that the title 'Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community (PICPC)' described fully the role and function of this Committee.

The Committee unanimously recommends no change.

- 3. Would Conference consider giving interim written guidance to P.I.C.P.C. Committees on the carrying and production of personal identification when representing AA.**

This Committee, having decided that interim guidance is required, suggests the following:

In today's society there is an ever increasing requirement for security and personal

identification. It is important that members of Alcoholics Anonymous remember that they are visitors/guests and co-operate fully.

Members of the Fellowship visiting outside agencies should conform to their procedures remembering that each agency, whether prison, hospital, school, or other, is autonomous.

Notification of the arrangements made for visits or talks including, where appropriate, the names of those members attending, should be provided by the sponsoring Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community Committee.

The host may indicate any personal identification that the members will need **e.g.** letter from Intergroup/Region, passport, ID card, driving licence, letter of invitation from the host.

It is important that Alcoholics Anonymous does not become invisible - some loss of anonymity is inherent in PICPC work.

This Committee recommends that the above guidance be forwarded to the Literature Committee of the General Service Board for consideration as an addition to the relevant guidelines for approval by Conference.

This Committee strongly rejected any need for an Alcoholics Anonymous identification card.

The decision of this Committee was unanimous.

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Don R of Continental European Region as Chairman of Committee No. 1 for Conference 1999.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Paul P of South West Region as Secretary of Committee No. 1 for Conference 1999.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 1 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*



# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

## COMMITTEE NO. 2

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CHAIRMAN: NIGEL O WALES & BORDERS REGION

SECRETARY: ANN R HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the Preamble.

1. **Examine the free leaflets “How did I get here” and “Where do I go from here”. Can they be improved taking into consideration the reading impaired?**

The leaflets can be improved for both the reading impaired and general use.

This Committee recommends that they be referred to the Literature Committee for submission to Conference 1999.

The following suggestions are made:

1. Keep them cheap and free.
2. Larger font - black on pastel.
3. Simple English.
4. An additional question: ‘Did you do it for drink?’
5. Space for telephone number/address of meeting place.
6. Print National Helpline number.
7. Reduce number of words.
8. Use of stiffer paper, size C6 or A5.
9. Bear in mind its use in police stations, prisons, Accident & Emergency, Public Information and Twelfth Step work.
10. Consider comic-strip versions.

2. **Regions are often asked to man stalls at ‘outside’ Conventions and Conferences, e.g. T.U.C. Conference. Would Conference give clarification as to how much notice is deemed necessary for such events to be successfully carried out.**

This Committee recommends:

For major events lasting several days, twelve months’ notice is strongly recommended to provide successful presentation. For smaller and shorter events, six to eight months’ notice would be acceptable.

A diary of forthcoming conventions and conferences published in *AA News* would be helpful.

3. **Would Conference share its experience in carrying the message to the incapacitated group member unable to attend AA meetings. Make recommendations.**

We recommend that individual groups accept responsibility for their incapacitated group members who are unable to attend meetings.

Our experience suggests that the following are useful in carrying the message to them:

- Holding meetings in their homes.
- Sponsoring them into the services that they can successfully do from home.
- Providing assistance through taping of local meetings with permission of the group.
- Including a review of ‘missing members’ at group conscience meetings.
- Using such AA facilities as tapes, literature and the World Wide Web.

4. **Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Colin H of Scotia Region as Chairman of Committee No. 2 for Conference 1999.

5. **Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Alan D of South Midlands Region as Secretary of Committee No. 2 for Conference 1999.

*Recommendations 1 and 3 on Committee No. 2 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

*Recommendation 2 on Committee 2 was rejected by Conference.*

# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

## COMMITTEE NO. 3

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CHAIRMAN: MIKE W SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

SECRETARY: RICHARD D WALES & BORDERS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the Preamble.

- 1. Would Conference review the current 'Hints and Suggestions' sheet, taking into account the following questions, with a view to producing a 'Guideline' on Conventions/Gatherings.**

This committee recommends that a guideline on Conventions/Gatherings should be produced and presented for acceptance by the General Service Conference 1999 based on the existing Hints and Suggestions Sheet (July 1994), attached.

The guideline should stress that:

- Committees should be formed by the Sponsoring Body to organise Conventions/Gatherings

and that,

- such autonomous committees should have overall responsibility and be fully accountable to the Sponsoring Body for financial and all other matters always bearing in mind the need for events to be self supporting.

- a. Examine the question of registration fees for AA conventions and gatherings.**

The Hints and Suggestions sheet recommends "that costings be obtained during the early planning stages and this, together with the drawing up of a statement of estimated income and expenditure, should assist the committee in their preparations."

This committee recommends that where it is felt necessary to charge a registration fee the organising committee should have the final decision.

- b. Consider the growing practice of making audio tapes of meetings at conventions/gatherings. Also consider the sale of such material and the subsequent distribution of income.**

This committee recommends that Conventions/Gatherings Committees should have

the overall responsibility for such recordings, their sale and the subsequent distribution of income.

The committee suggests the following information from USA/Canada's experience may be useful:

1. Shared experience makes it clear that taping of an AA convention cannot be left to chance. It is a difficult and time consuming job, including preliminary work with the speakers and decisions about who will tape the convention, the conduct of the taper during the convention and his/her staff and follow-up after the convention.
  2. That the taping chairperson could represent the convention in reaching agreements with the person who will be taping that particular convention. This could be done by developing a written agreement.
  3. The convention taping chairperson could develop a release form on which speakers agree to being taped or decline to be taped.
  4. Experience shows that it is best to encourage speakers not to use full names and not to identify third parties by full names in their talks. The strength of our anonymity Traditions is reinforced by speakers who do not use their last names.
  5. That the taping chairperson seriously consider a taper who has an understanding of the Traditions.
  6. That in the agreement prepared by the Convention Committee, the taper could determine what could be sold or displayed on-site.
  7. That the convention, as a whole, makes it clear that taping is not an official part of the convention.
  8. That the committee develop guidelines that would completely discourage videotaping of speakers.
  9. That the Convention Committees discourage any taping royalties to the Convention Committee. That the committees be encouraged to find ways to observe the Traditions, not skirt them.
  10. Any surplus monies should be passed through the AA service structure.
- c. The intended use of all group contributions after expenses is to “carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic”, would Conference review the practice of AA money being used by Intergroups to run dances and social events.**

General Service Conference, Committee 1 considered this matter in 1994 (question 3b).

After review this committee re-affirms that — AA money ought not to be used by Intergroups to run dances and social events.

The committee also recommends that a statement should be included in the guideline e.g. ‘dances and social events, other than at conventions/gatherings, ought not to be financed from AA monies’.

**d. Would Conference provide further guidance to the Fellowship regarding the sale of non-AA literature and tapes at AA conventions/gatherings.**

The committee was not able to give further guidance to the Fellowship regarding this matter.

The committee therefore recommends that the current paragraphs in Item 8 of the Hints and Suggestions Sheet (July 1994) are incorporated into the guideline.

“Literature stalls should be attractive and well stocked with AA published literature which should be given preference. The setting up and staffing of the stall is the responsibility of the sponsoring body or the Literature Secretary.

**Where the Group conscience of the sponsoring body allows the sale of non-AA Published literature, separate facilities should be provided.”**

**e. Consider the question of whether (accompanied) children should be excluded from AA conventions/gatherings.**

The committee recommends that (accompanied) children should not be excluded from AA conventions/gatherings.

Organising committees will be primarily responsible for the admission of (accompanied) children and those committees should be mindful, at all times, of issues concerning health and safety, insurance and other legal obligations.

It is further recommended that, in relation to meetings, committees observe Group Meetings Guideline No. 1 (April 1996).

**2. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Katie C Glasgow Region as Chairman of Committee No. 3 for Conference 1999.

**3. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Dawn M South West Region as Secretary of Committee No. 3 for Conference 1999.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 3 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

## AA CONVENTIONS

(Some useful hints and suggestions)

**Tradition 5 : Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

**Tradition 11 : Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion - we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.**

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A CONVENTION OFFERS THE FACILITY FOR A GREATER NUMBER OF MEMBERS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE WITH EACH OTHER, BY HOLDING A SERIES OF MEETINGS ON THE SAME DATES (USUALLY AT WEEK-ENDS), AND AT ONE VENUE

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Conventions can be sponsored by Intergroups, Regions, Service Committees and Conference. Whoever the Sponsors may be, it is suggested that the Fifth and Eleventh Traditions be the motivation for a Convention.

While no hard and fast rules can or should be laid down for the conducting of Conventions, AA experience suggests that we should consider the following points:

1. The decision to hold a Convention be by the Group Conscience of the Intergroup, Region or Service Committee.
2. A Committee be appointed for the purpose of planning and running the Convention, with members being given clearly defined roles.
3. The sponsoring body ought to appoint a Chairman or Convenor, who should be responsible to them for all the arrangements. The Committee may also wish to appoint from amongst their number, suitable members for the positions of Secretary and Treasurer.

It was recommended that a local General Service Board Member should serve in an ex officio capacity on the Committees of each National Convention eg Southern, Northern, Scottish, Welsh.

4. Finance - In all matters regarding the financing of Conventions, the principle of 'Self Support' (Tradition 7) ought to be borne in mind. Experience has shown that AA members do recognise their responsibility through the 'AA Pot'.

It is recommended that costings be obtained during the early planning stages and this, together with the drawing up of a statement of estimated income and expenditure, should assist the Committee in their preparations and help the Convention to become self-supporting.

If monies should be required prior to the date of the Convention for the payment of deposits in respect of Venue, catering etc, such items should be made available to the Committee by the sponsoring body.

It is important to bear in mind a number of practices and procedures, relating to sale or return literature.

In particular, it is recommended that:

- (i) the sponsoring group be held **entirely responsible** for the ordering and final payment of any sale or return literature.
- (ii) it is essential that such orders should be received at GSO **at least one calendar month** before the event and that final settlement be effected within the same period after the event, after which the return element in the arrangement will be considered null and void. **Stock returned damaged or any surplus not returned will be charged for.**

It is suggested that the Treasurer/Committee prepare a Balance Sheet of actual income and expenditure, directly following the conclusion of the Convention. This should be presented to the members through

the sponsoring Intergroup, Region or Service Committee. All surplus monies should be passed to the sponsoring body for disposal, as outlined in Guideline No 12 (Finance).

5. Catering arrangements should be made well in advance of the Convention. Many Committees have found it most helpful to have an individual member of a small Sub-Committee responsible for catering.

Where self-catering is being considered, manning levels, volunteers, kitchen facilities, availability of crockery, cutlery, utensils, etc, need to be determined.

At some events, particularly 'One Day Conventions', it has been known that arrangements have been made for members to bring their own packed lunches.

Where food is supplied by the Committee, costings should be obtained, and prices displayed.

When outside caterers are used, the Committee ought to ensure, in advance of the event, that they are familiar with the facilities. Most caterers require a final number for set meals in advance of the event, and will base their minimum charge on this figure. Committees should bear this in mind when determining numbers.

Confirmation of all the arrangements should be made prior to the date when the Convention is to be held. In this way, in the event of problems arising, alternative arrangements can be made.

6. Speakers should be arranged with as much notice as possible, together with possible alternative speakers. Experience has shown that AA's message can be carried most effectively when balance is achieved amongst the 'top table'.

Committees, when planning the programme, should bear in mind the various types of AA Meeting described in Guideline No 1 (Group Meetings).

Care in the selection of speakers ought always to be our aim. This is especially important in the case of Open, Public and/or Shared Platform Meetings, where members of the public and other guest speakers may see us as representatives of the Fellowship, even if it is carefully explained that no one member speaks for or on behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous. We ought to always remember that in sharing our experience as sober AA members that 'our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now'.

Sound facilities should be determined in advance of the Convention.

**The carrying of AA's message is of no avail if it cannot be heard.**

7. The Chairperson should bring the Tradition of Anonymity (Tradition no 11) to the attention of the audience at Open, Public and Shared Platform meetings. It is suggested that the Committee prepare a written format to assist the chairpersons of such meetings.
8. Literature stalls should be attractive and well stocked with AA Published literature which should be given preference. The setting up and staffing of the stall is the responsibility of the sponsoring body or the Literature Secretary.

**Where the Group conscience of the sponsoring body allows the sale of Non-AA Published literature, separate facilities should be provided.**

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While we all rejoice in the continual growth of AA, we should also remember that we are not 'Professionals'. However, let us take care to present any AA event in a competent, adaptable and attractive manner.

Our primary purpose is to maintain our own sobriety and to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic and at the same time to remember that 'our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion'.

# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

## COMMITTEE NO. 4

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CHAIRMAN:            ROD C                    MIDLANDS REGION

SECRETARY:         HOWARD E                WALES & BORDERS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the Preamble.

- 1. The General Service Offices receives many requests for 'Where to Finds' which are not available for distribution to outside organisations.**

**Would Conference consider that there is a need to produce meeting lists, without contact telephone numbers, for use by the professionals and outside organisations when referring people to Alcoholics Anonymous? Make recommendations.**

This Committee unanimously recommends that there is a need to produce a *Where to Find*, without personal contact numbers, for use by professionals and outside organisations when referring people to Alcoholics Anonymous.

It is suggested that the General Service Office should, where appropriate, inform the relevant Intergroup/Regional Secretary that the *Where to Find* has been sent as requested, so that the enquiry can be followed up locally.

The Finance Committee should monitor this recommendation and report to the Fellowship.

- 2. Following the initial report to General Service Conference 1997 (Board Report - Regional Forums). Would Conference consider the attached document re: Forums with a view to acceptance as a 'Hints and Suggestions' sheet to be made available throughout the Fellowship.**

This Committee unanimously recommends that Conference accepts the document entitled *Regional Forums — Hints and Suggestions*.

- 3. Would Conference review the decision of Committee 1 Conference 1995, to move the financial information of Intergroup contributions from Share magazine to AA News for a trial period. Make recommendations.**

This Committee unanimously recommends that financial information about Intergroup contributions should continue to appear in *AA News*, provided *AA News* continues to be published regularly.



Those who receive *AA News* should ensure that the information is made known to AA members.

**4. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Joe D of Glasgow Region as Chairman of Committee No. 4 for Conference 1999.

**5. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Clare N (*Share*) as Secretary of Committee No. 4 for Conference 1999.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 4 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

## COMMITTEE NO. 5

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CHAIRMAN: JANET S NORTH WEST REGION

SECRETARY: JOHN C WALES & BORDERS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the Preamble.

1. **In view of the suggestions made by Conference 1994, what progress has been made by the Fellowship in carrying the message to ethnic and minority groups?**

**Furthermore, what is Conference experience of ethnic/minority participation in the Service Structure at (a) Group, (b) Intergroup, (c) Region and (d) General Service Conference? Make recommendations.**

Despite the efforts made to carry the message to ethnic and minority groups, the reports indicated that there appeared to be little progress in attracting members to the Fellowship, and onwards into service.

The Committee is aware that there are sources of information on how to reach groups of all cultures which remain untapped by our Fellowship. These include professionals working in Health and Local authorities who are in contact with those cultures, and members of the Fellowship as a whole.

Further information may become available if this was an agenda item at general liaison meetings, including the forthcoming national liaison workshops, the PI/EL Regional Workshop in May, and the Health Care Workshop in October.

We recommend that the General Service Board facilitate the collection of all this information. A draft guideline to be presented to Conference 2000, with an interim report to Conference 1999.

2. **Would Conference consider changing the title 'Industrial Liaison', first mentioned at Conference 1990, to 'Employer Liaison'.**

The Committee does not agree to change the title to Employer Liaison Officer.

After consideration of other suggestions, including 'Workplace' and 'Employee', the Committee recommend that the position of Industrial Liaison Officer be renamed Employment Liaison Officer. Literature etc can be updated progressively as current stocks run out.

3. **Currently Conference Chairman is elected using a ‘first past the post’ system. Would Conference consider using the voting system described by Bill W in the “AA Manual for World Service and 12 Concepts by Bill W” often known as the 3rd Legacy System, to elect the Conference Chairman? This would avoid the situation, which has occurred in recent years, where a Chairman is elected with only a minority of delegates voting directly for the successful individual.**

The Committee felt that it was important for the Conference Chairman to be seen to have the backing of the majority of Conference delegates. Whilst in principle the Committee agrees with the Third Legacy process, the experience available indicated that this can be time-consuming using a paper ballot system.

The Committee recommends a modified Third Legacy procedure:

- Candidates will be nominated as now and the nominees will leave the room during the election process.
- Voting will be by a show of hands and follow the steps described in the Third Legacy statement.

Conference Committee should monitor the effectiveness of this proposed system from 1999 Conference onwards.

4. **Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Maurice B of Glasgow Region as Chairman of Committee No. 5 for Conference 1999.

5. **Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Lorraine E of South Midlands Region as Secretary of Committee No. 5 for Conference 1999.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 5 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

## COMMITTEE NO. 6

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CHAIRMAN: JOHN KARL C CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION

SECRETARY: GARETH L WALES & BORDERS REGION

The Chairman opened the meeting with a moment's silence and the Preamble.

1. a. **Would Conference consider the impact on AA by the rapidly expanding world of computer communications, e.g. the world wide web, news groups and e.mail.**

The impact on AA of computer communications, both positive and negative, is enormous and cannot be ignored. The Fellowship should swiftly embrace computer communications with serenity and courage. As Bill W. said "The future success of Alcoholics Anonymous may rest on how well we are able to employ the colossus of modern communications".

*(Language of the Heart, page 320)*

- b. **What methods can be recommended to safeguard the integrity of AA's message and copyrights.**

In order to safeguard the integrity of the AA message and copyrights the Fellowship needs to observe the Traditions, Concepts and Guidelines. This committee recommends that the General Service Board:

1. Set up an official AA web site by the end of 1998.
2. Produce specific computer communications guidelines for presentation in draft form at Conference 1999.

- c. **Would Conference consider an ongoing review of computer communications?**

Yes. In view of the growing importance of computer communications and the impact on AA, this committee recommends that the GSB conduct an ongoing review of all aspects of electronic media, explore possibilities of using this new technology in service areas, and report annually to Conference.

2. **Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Phil M Midlands Region as Chairman of Committee No. 6 for Conference 1999.

3. **Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 1999.**

The Committee elected Ronda M Eastern Region as Secretary of Committee No. 6 for Conference 1999.

*All recommendations on Committee No. 6 were passed with a two-thirds plus majority.*

# THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 1998

## LIST OF DELEGATES

CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN: Ann S (South East Region)

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD		COMMITTEE NUMBER	TERM OF SERVICE
Rodger	P		
Monica	H	5	
Harry	O		
Mairi	G	3	
Charlie	G	4	
Tim	J	4	
Gudrun	MacK	2	
Dick	McC	2	
Ted	McG	1	
Stewart	M	1	
Rodney	N	2	
Debbie	R	4	
Mary	S	6	
Mick	W	3	
Howard	W	3	
Sam	W	3	
Bill	Y	5	
Geoffrey Brown		6	
Jackie Chang		1	
Fred Edwards		6	
Jim	C (Elect)	4	
Mike	D (Elect)	6	
Margaret	M (Elect)	5	

## GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Jim K General Secretary  
Sharon Smyth  
Anne Drummond  
Ann N  
Elaine Pickering  
Angela Varley  
Jean Webb

## SHARE

Clare	N	4	2
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## ROUNDBOUT

John	McL	4	1
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		<b>COMMITTEE NUMBER</b>	<b>TERM OF SERVICE</b>
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**EASTERN REGION**

Jacqui	D	1	2
Roderick	W	2	3
John	H	3	1
Paul	T	4	2
Pab	K	5	A
Ronda	M	6	1

**LONDON REGION**

Carol	H	1	3
Nick	F	2	3
Henry	T	3	1
Oliver	G	4	1
Pravin	K	5	1
Desmond	O	6	1

**MIDLANDS REGION**

Ian	D	1	2
John	T	2	2
Elaine	G	3	1
Rod	C	4	3
Gordon	K	5	1
Phil	M	6	2

**NORTH EAST REGION**

Peter	G	1	3
Steve	C	2	1
Christine	S	3	3
Christine	A	4	3
Eric	R	5	1
Bob	B	6	1

**NORTH WEST REGION**

Roger	B	1	3
Marjorie	B	2	A
Patrick	McC	3	2
Nelson	B	4	1
Janet	S	5	3
Glynn	D	6	A

		<b>COMMITTEE NUMBER</b>	<b>TERM OF SERVICE</b>
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### **SOUTH EAST REGION**

Richard	H	1	3
George	R	2	A
Bill	C	3	3
Sue	T	4	2
John	G	5	1
Colin	H	6	2

### **SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION**

Mary	P	1	2
Alan	D	2	2
Mike	W	3	3
David	P	4	3
Lorraine	E	5	2
Charlotte	K	6	3

### **SOUTH WEST REGION**

Paul	P	1	1
Max	L	2	1
Dawn	M	3	1
Sally	J	4	2
Pat	E	5	2
Dave	M	6	1

### **WALES & BORDERS REGION**

Rosa	J	1	3
Nigel	O	2	3
Richard	D	3	2
Howard	E	4	2
John	C	5	3
Gareth	L	6	3

### **EAST OF SCOTLAND REGION**

Nessie	F	1	1
Jim	S	2	1
Sandra	G	3	1
Jean	M	4	1
Chris	H	5	2
Gordon	C	6	A

		<b>COMMITTEE NUMBER</b>	<b>TERM OF SERVICE</b>
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### **GLASGOW REGION**

William	McC	1	3
Andy	S	2	3
Katie	C	3	2
Joe	D	4	2
Maurice	B	5	2
Drew	C	6	1

### **HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION**

Kenny	MacS	1	1
Ann	R	2	3
Duncan	W	3	2
Bob	W	4	1
Iona	T	5	1
Sheila	A	6	1

### **SCOTIA REGION**

		1	
Colin	H	2	1
Jim	K	3	2
Billy	MacD	4	2
Jim	H	5	1
Aileen	U	6	1

### **SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND REGION**

Brian	H	1	2
John	McC	2	1
Michael	C	3	3
John	M	4	3
Joyce	McC	5	1
James	S	6	1

### **CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION**

Don	R	1	2
Roger	B	2	3
Heather	B-W	3	2
Maria	E	4	1
Jozef	B	5	A
John Karl	C	6	3



		<b>COMMITTEE NUMBER</b>	<b>TERM OF SERVICE</b>
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**JERSEY INTERGROUP**

Peter	M	6	2
Mark	K	3	3

**OBSERVERS**

Christiaan	D'H (Belgium Flemish Speaking)	1	2
Margit	G (Denmark)	1	2
Ebbe	J (Denmark)	3	1
Mary	K (Ireland)	2	1
Pat	O'S (Ireland)	5	2
Tone	O (Norway)	4	1
Finn	H (Norway)	6	1
Birgitta	L (Sweden)	4	1
Walle	S (Sweden)	3	1