

**THE ROAD**



**BACK**

**includes AA News Sheet**

OCT - DEC 2021  
Issue No. 436

**Celebrating  
75 Years of  
AA in Ireland**

# Editorial

Welcome to the 75th Anniversary Edition of the Road Back. You may have noticed that it also now incorporates some service news in the News Sheet. This edition is now also available in glossy print, for those that wish to keep it as a souvenir.

The evenings have gotten much longer, the days seem shorter and summer seems a distant memory. The autumn colours are once again surrounding us, as our plants and shrubs prepare for the winter. We in AA are a little like nature, and we adjust to our surroundings. When our traditional meetings were halted abruptly in March 2020, we were very quick to embrace online meetings. Now that most restrictions have been removed, many of our traditional meetings are reopening and yet there is a strong desire from many members to continue with online meetings. Weren't we quite lucky that in this day and age there was an alternative for us, through smartphones and computers. No doubt if covid had struck 75 years ago, meetings would have taken a very different turn. We now have a choice, where some people prefer to attend meetings in person, and others are more comfortable attending online - both however are helping to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

One of our plans to celebrate 75 years of AA in Ireland is to have a have an online All Ireland Meeting on Sunday 14th November at 7pm. Further details along with meeting links are included in the poster that is included with this issue of the Road Back.

Our only official website [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie) is currently being refreshed with new content and some changes that we hope you will like. While this is happening, you can help us by checking that the meeting details are correct and up to date for your group. If they need to be updated, ask your group secretary to fill in a group information sheet and send it along to [agroupinfo@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:agroupinfo@alcoholicsanonymous.ie) Our find a meeting page can only be as up to date as the information you give us - so please, check and let us know. The correct meeting information is vital for members trying to find meetings.

As usual, we are always looking for more stories. Maybe for the next publication you could let us know something special that your group did to celebrate 75 years of AA in Ireland, or some useful tips to help other members through the Christmas & New Year holidays. Our editors have asked for submissions to be an absolute maximum of 500 words. Pop them in an email or letter, we can look after the rest to: [roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

To commemorate 75 years, we have asked our printer to provide a full glossy version of this edition - simply get in touch with GSO and they will post one out to you.

Until next time, please continue to keep safe, sober and well.

The Road Back Editorial Team



UNITY | SERVICE | RECOVERY

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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, organization 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.

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# Many Reasons to Keep Attending Our Fellowship Meetings

*A member's view on why we keep going to meetings, beyond the obvious benefit of sobriety.*

People outside AA are sometimes puzzled that an alcoholic who has been sober for a long time still sticks with the Fellowship and regularly goes along to an austere and possibly chilly hall to talk with and listen to alcoholics, week in, week out, maybe for years.

They just can't see any reason or need for it. "You haven't had a drink for ages," they say. "You're cured no. Why do you have to keep going to meetings all the time?"

What they fail to realise, of course, apart from the fact that we are not 'cured', is that AA is a fellowship in the true sense of the word and its philosophy is a way of life that can raise our morale and give us a tremendous boost.

For us it isn't just a matter of going along and learning, in a course of easy lessons, enough judo or karate tricks to allow us to elbow jolt the villain booze if he ever dares to cross our path again.

AA isn't a sort of athletic coaching school to build us up for the fray, teach us the art of self-defence

and then issue us with a diploma to certify that we have passed all the tests and know it all.

**AA isn't a sort of athletic coaching school . . . Thank goodness it isn't.**

Thank goodness it isn't. In fact, AA is a much more intimate and enduring thing than that. We each become part of AA and AA become part of us. This is how we grow after the stunting years of alcoholism.

It is from this solid base that we can set out, in our various ways, to find out what life really means to us as individuals.

There are, of course, many good and simple reasons for an alcoholic to keep close to AA.

For instance, there is the extraordinary fellowship to be found at meetings. Make no mistake, it is extraordinary, and we should not undervalue it. What other organisation offers its members the sort of instant kinship

that exists in AA, where a person can go to any meeting anywhere, and feel that they are among understanding friends?

Then there is our gratitude for all that AA has given us -not just relief from the agonies of the past but the chance to participate fully in a rewarding and adequate life. We often like to express this gratitude, and where better than in a meeting of AA? Part of our active expression of thankfulness is by going along and making sure that AA will be there for any new member who might want its help. Perhaps most important of all is the fact that AA has the answers not only to the booze problem but to many of the other difficulties and situations with which life confronts us. For many of us, AA becomes our guide and mentor, and its philosophy opens exciting new paths to us. And so, we keep going to meetings because this is our life.

What many outsiders do not understand is that we are not prisoners. AA does not make us unwilling captives, bound to the Fellowship by chains of fear, in return for services rendered. It does not hold us hostage, with our sobriety as the ransom to make sure that we don't play truant.

It does not-in fact, cannot-do this because once we have found a deep, honest, inner sobriety, the AA way of life becomes our life and we do not yearn for other ways.

So, we go to meetings willingly and with gratitude and eager to

learn more and build on what we already have.

We acknowledge that AA is the key to our sobriety, and for many of us it is the key to much more: a life that is transformed because it takes on dimensions, we have not even been aware of in our drinking days.

The AA programme offers us mental, emotional and spiritual growth and exhilarating freedom. But these things do not come overnight. They come gradually as the mists of booze clear, and as we listen and talk and meditate and seek. AA offers us an exciting chance to explore areas in which we can eventually find ourselves as unique and effective individuals, able to cope and love and live life to the full.

For those of us who take full advantage of our new freedom to explore in this unbounded territory, it is a never-ending expedition. We may not find perfection but, if we are honest with ourselves, we will find a most satisfying progress. So, we can never say, "That's that. AA has taught me all the tricks. I have my diploma. I know the lot."

But, with the great rewards that the AA way of life offers us all, who would want it that way? Any who do must surely have missed the point of the programme. Because life, like alcoholism is a progressive thing.

*Anonymous  
The News July 2021*

# Grateful to AA

I have been intending to write to you for a while. My mainstay came when I first moved to New Zealand and was in major shock over this huge change to my life. I was terrified and didn't know where my next step would take me. All my best thinking had led me to a small town, which wasn't where I needed to be. I read in Mainstay about the Wellington big book study weekend which was happening the following weekend. I got in touch, and someone arranged to pick me up and take me there, and that was my introduction to AA in Wellington.

I was 7 years sober when I moved, and I really did believe that I was running towards something and not running away from something. The work I've done in the past 5 years has taught me otherwise! I'm increasingly aware of the insidious nature of my alcoholism and how it affects my relationships and behaviours.

I was a late starter to alcohol. I started drinking age 16, but by 18 I was drinking half a litre of vodka a day. Luckily, I only had to drink for 5 years before desperation brought me to AA via a treatment centre. I very much didn't want AA to be my

solution. But I had nowhere else to live except this treatment centre, where attendance at AA was mandatory. Within 6 months I felt truly at home in AA.

I have recently started attending meetings in prison. It has taught me about the value and worth of other people, no matter what their prior behaviour. I then try and apply this thinking to myself. Whatever happens, I still have worth.

**I'm very grateful for AA and that I have been given a life**

I'm working on thinking of myself as a creation of God, and therefore trying not to criticise myself, as that's criticising God's work. My favourite thing about sobriety in AA is that not only do I not drink, I no longer have the desire to drink. If every day was a struggle with desiring alcohol, this would be a very unpleasant journey.

I'm very grateful for AA and that I have been given a life beyond my wildest dreams.

*Jenny*

*Mainstay December 2019/January 2020*

Up to date information about AA meetings is available on our website at [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

# Heard at Meetings

“ It’s the first drink that gets you drunk. It’s the last one that gets you Sober. ”

“ Hope is the feeling you have that the feeling you have isn’t permanent. ”

“ A person is only as happy as they make up their minds to be. ”

“ Being miserable is an option, and so is being happy. ”

“ The worst day sober is still always better than the best day drunk. ”

“ Identify with others but never try to compare your struggles. ”

“ Stop focusing on why you are addicted to alcohol, instead, focus on what you can do about it. ”

# Sobriety Rocks

Last night was the last night of my holidays. I've spent just over a week in the west of Ireland, just as we are approaching the end of the covid 19 pandemic. I can honestly say it's been the best holiday I have had in years. I am two and a half years sober.

For only the second time in my sobriety, I walked into a pub last night. This time, I felt safe. I had three women with me who know of my alcoholism and my recovery journey & I joined them after my nightly meeting. We had earlier had dinner together, but I left them to do a step 11 meeting in my car. On re-joining them, they were in the pub, they were on their last drink each, and a diet coke was waiting for me immediately on my re-joining them. We all had that last drink together, took a few selfies & photos, had amazing craic, posted on Insta & Facebook, and I drove us all home. A super night!

Recovery & AA, along with my Higher Power has given me the gift of a wonderful summer holiday this year. I feel truly blessed. I've woken every morning with a sober, clean head, determined to make the most of each and every day of this holiday. Despite low temps & cloudy skies some mornings,

each day has started with a trip to the shore, along with coffee, recovery literature and my swimsuit. Prayer and meditation, along with strong coffee has set me up to embrace the lovely waters of the Wild Atlantic Way for my early morning swim. In that water, I realise every day what a gift it is to be alive, to be living life to the full and gives me the opportunity to be immensely grateful for my sober life today.

During my holiday this year I've made ample time to get to many of my meetings that I get during my normal working week. I've worked them into the weather, the activities, the lovely meals out, my new relationship etc. As I sit here writing this, it's hitting me again how my life has changed in sobriety.... I came from a place where my best alcoholic thinking told me that I was useless, worthless, and did not deserve to be alive. My life was very lonely, isolated, fearful & just full of misery (all self-imposed through my addiction to alcohol).

In my two and a half years on this wonderful, lovely sobriety journey my life has done a full 360. Today, I live. Today, I have a worth. Today, I am happy & healthy. My mental health is good. I have changed physically, spiritually

and mentally. I love my journey into recovery so far.

I got a sponsor about a year into my sobriety, and she is the most wonderful, helpful woman who guides me and has become not just a friend, but a huge part of my life. I have made several wonderful, genuine friends along the way and the support and assistance has been nothing less than amazing. My sponsor has rang me nearly every day of my holiday and I know it's not just to check up on me, but to hear the

news and the daily craic and to hear the plans for the day.

This morning as I pack my bags and head back to my daily regular routine, I know I have had the most wonderful sober holiday, I've made great memories to last me a lifetime. Sobriety & holidays can go hand in hand – in fact it's been a better holiday where the experiences were real, the family time was genuine and true, and each and every morning was embraced with gusto & a passion for life. Sobriety Rocks!!

Mi

Co. Waterford

# Daily Quotes

## “The Impossible Dream”

“I am free to like and enjoy *what* I have.  
I don't need to exhibit my high values by hating my rowboat for not being a yacht.  
My house for not being a place,  
My child for not being a prodigy.”

## “Tradition Five: What a Group ‘ought’ to Be

“Whatever strengthens the spirituality of the group strengthens my spirituality, and vice versa.”

## “The Physicians”

“Truly transforming spiritual  
Experiences are nearly  
Founded on calamity and collapse.”

# The Near Fatal First Drink

**Y**ep, the first drink! After ten years of sobriety, I picked up a drink. Actually, it was handed to me. It was free and only 0.09% alcohol: basically a soft drink. "It won't hurt", I thought, "Hardly any alcohol."

I had been hospitalised at 19 for alcohol withdrawal and had massive issues with anxiety, depression, trauma, stress ... and life in general! I didn't know anything about AA or alcoholism. All I remember is I did not like the way I was feeling. I was desperate and went down to the local church and asked God for help. My higher power must have been working even back then because I got clean from everything in a week. No detox or rehabs or doctors. And no AA. I relied on my willpower, and through guts and determination I was sober for more than ten years until I had that 0.09% stubbie!

Even though I had stopped drinking, I hadn't changed my thinking. After 10 years I hadn't learnt about the danger of the first drink, about alcoholism or what it meant to be an alcoholic. When I hit the first crisis in my sober life, I fell apart. I'd lost my job as well as a relationship with a work colleague. It was shocking to me, and I was close to losing the plot big time. I had no tools or support to help me cope. My self-esteem was shattered. I thought I was

boring and ugly, and a real loser. I was starting to lose my hair. I was sick of being the straight one, the misfit, and the odd one out who didn't drink.

**Even though I had stopped drinking, I hadn't changed my thinking**

So, with great hesitation, I picked up the first drink - a bloody 0.09% stubbie!

In hindsight, and armed with knowledge from AA and my experience, I see I was an alcoholic from day one. From the age of 14 I drank differently to my friends, always yearning for one more and the effect alcohol gave me. By the time I was 18 I was drinking daily and experiencing blackouts, the DTs, shaking and depression. I tried to stop but found it difficult and was consequently hospitalised. I went to a doctor who prescribed me sedatives and anti-depressants to which I became increasingly addicted. Massive panic attacks and insanity were on my doorstep until that day I went to the church and asked for help.

Even though I grew up in a very strict Catholic home that I rebelled against, I still, for some reason, went to the church that day, desperate. I turned my life

around in the following ten years, to become a teacher, sports coach, and an accomplished sportsman. I was physically very fit. Despite all my achievements I still didn't know I was an alcoholic or that I had a problem with life. I was naive and uneducated about my illness. I thought an alcoholic was the old bloke hiding grog in his front yard or the bloke sleeping in the park. And that's what I became after picking up that first drink.

Over the next 26 years I lost everything, and nearly my life as well. It was a gradual progression as I was scared of alcohol from my previous experience when I was young. However, a 0.09% stubbie soon became light beers, then heavy beers, then spirits, then anything I could find. I was eventually drinking 24/7. Hangovers, blackouts, DT's and eventually alcoholic seizures became part of my life. In the end I had to drink, otherwise I would have a seizure.

One seizure nearly finished me but luckily someone found me. I gave my last dollars, fortunately as it turned out, to a junkie who spent it on drugs. I subsequently had another alcoholic fit as my body went into seizure like a car engine does if it doesn't get oil. I reckon if I gave that money to

an alkie he would have brought a cask and shared it as we are generally kindred souls and understand the other alkie's plight when it comes to needing a drink. However, maybe I was lucky not to have that last drink as I might not be here to tell my story.

I spent a week in hospital and had time to think. Facing homelessness again, and possibly jail, I finally surrendered and accepted that I am powerless over alcohol. I had nothing left. I thought of an AA mate who had always been friendly and supportive when I did attend meetings. As a result of contacting him I went back to meetings, got lots of support, and I am gradually working my way through the 12 Steps. More importantly, I have not picked up that "fatal first drink" for 32 months.

I am glad when I see young people at AA because they have the opportunity to learn about alcoholism and gather the tools necessary to recover, and live a happy life, sober. I do what I can to encourage any new members to stay around the rooms of AA and stay away from the first drink.

*Chris, Heatherton Cheltenham  
The News May 2021*

Up to date information on forthcoming Conventions and One Day Events can be viewed on our website at [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

# When I Don't Want to Go to a Meeting

**A**s stated in The Preamble, "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety". When I don't want to go to a meeting, I find it very helpful to think of the second part of the primary purpose. If I went to every meeting just for me, I believe I'd be bored by my self-centred concern. But if I think of the purpose of helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety, I can get myself out of the way and go along to be part of the meeting. Simply by being there to listen to other speakers, I help to make the meeting. I never know if a smile or word may help someone at coffee time, and I never know, if I happen to be called to speak, who might listen and identify with something in my story.

**If I went to every meeting just for me, I believe I'd be bored**

When I go in this spirit, I can have a terrific meeting and, often, I hear the very thing I need at that time. Apart from other kinds of service, to attend rain or shine, in all moods, is called "putting something back" and it fulfils

what I've also heard from the floor "to keep this thing, you have to give it away." That seems to be true because when members I know drop off meetings through being bored, those who come back have drunk again. After even one drink, the return of defiance and denial holds up a powerful example of where I can be if I lose my defence against the first drink.

AA has saved my life and freed the people nearest me to find their recovery. I've heard it called The Greatest Show on Earth. After eight years, I am still fascinated by essentially the same story of decline and recovery told with an infinite variety of detail, voice and personality, and told at different ages and stages. At meetings, I can rejoice in seeing other people get well and in hearing of the change from the downhill slide to lives that are on the up and up. I receive the positive spirit I can never have too much of and reinforce my own day of sobriety.

*Glen, The Gallery  
The News, July 2021*

# To Avoid Being Positively Negative

- We drank for happiness and became unhappy
- We drank for joy and became miserable
- We drank for sociability and became argumentative
- We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious
- We drank for friendship and made enemies
- We drank for sleep and awkward without rest
- We drank for strength and felt weak
- We drank “medicinally” and acquired health problems
- We drank for relaxation and got the shakes
- We drank for bravery and became afraid
- We drank for confidence and became doubtful
- We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech
- We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell
- We drank to forget and were forever haunted
- We drank for freedom and became slaves
- We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply
- We drank to cope with life and invited death

*Author unknown "The News" December 2019*

# Her Foot on the Bottom Rung of a Miracle

**G**ood morning everyone, my name is Louise, and I am a very grateful alcoholic these days. I feel very privileged to be standing here. Sunday mornings, nearly eight years ago, I would be lying in bed feeling pretty awful. It would be what was going on in my head that was most significant. I just hated myself, I was full of self-loathing. Towards the end I began nearly every single day in this way. I would just say to myself that I was such a loser, and what's more, I would have to play detective on a Sunday morning trying to remember 'what did I do last night?!'; do I owe my husband an apology? I had no recollection of the evening before.

Weekday mornings were just as bad because I would be facing the children and invariably one of them would be saying 'mum you got really drunk again last night, you don't remember, you don't remember anything'. Even though life was falling apart, I suppose I was what we call a 'functional' alcoholic. I still worked; I had a little gardening business of my own which I still have today. The boys still got their clean uniforms for school each morning. The front lawn

got mowed, the car got washed. It was all these things on the surface that I was hiding behind. I did not want to go to that place where I had to question myself. I remember standing in our Kitchen thinking "Well, I can't be and alcoholic because I am still living in a house and have everything else but might be a little bit alcoholic" – and that kind of softened it for me. Eventually, life really fell apart emotionally and well as psychologically and I found myself going into hospital where I stayed for three weeks.

While I was there, I had the amazing opportunity to go to an AA meeting and that is, really, where my new life began. A lovely man there said "Louise, you have got your foot on the bottom rung of a miracle". I had no idea what he meant at the time, but I do know today. I was told to keep coming back, stay out of the old environment, and come to regular, frequent meetings of AA.

**You have to be willing  
to be willing**

The old environment is a hard one for all of us because it is normally our home. It's not a bar

any-more. I took active steps to change my home. I moved the furniture around on the back deck where I did most of my drinking and I bought a plant. It was by breaking all those connections and by having the willingness to do these things. Someone once said to me 'you have to be willing to be willing', and I got that, and to find a happy sobriety and to stay sober I had to be willing to be honest and to be open-minded.

Those are three things that have allowed me to turn one year into two, two into three and I am now nearly eight years sober, one day at a time. And for anyone who is new here, please stick around. The first year, two years, even three years are really hard at times because you are doing life with-out drinking and that's your main focus, and that's ok. I found that once I got to about the five years mark the fog in my mind cleared, just like the Older

sober members said it would. I was blessed with a whole realm of things in my life. Today I am just so grateful for being grateful because previously I did not have any gratitude in my life for anything. I do send my sponsor a very short gratitude list most nights and that's really, really effective and I highly recommend that.

I still can't believe that I am part of the Fellowship. I can stand here this morning and know that all of us have so much in common; emotionally, psychologically, and most of all spiritually. To be able to go to different meetings and talk to people who, in theory, are strangers and to find such a love and respect, still blows my mind away. Again, if you're new, you're the most important people in this room. You remind us of what it was like in our early days.

*Louise P - Burwood*

*The News November 2019*

## AA Grapevine - Thought for the Day

A BETTER WAY THAN JUDGING a man is to look for all the good you can find in him. If you look hard enough and long enough, you ought to be able to find some good somewhere in every man.

In AA I learned that my job was to try to bring out the good, not to criticize the bad. Every alcoholic is used to being judged and criticized. That has never helped him to get sober.

In AA we tell him he can change. We try to bring out the best in him. We encourage his good points and ignore his bad points as much as possible. Men are not converted by criticism.



# AA News Sheet

October - December 2021

Last March at the Annual General Service Conference, four subcommittees were set up to research and return to conference with recommendations on their findings. In September, conference members gathered again and listened to the reports from the four subcommittees

There was quite a lot of discussion around online or digital meetings and rather than give our view, see the included the full report. It was also decided to have a template included in the service handbook for digital or online meetings which groups can tailor to their own needs.

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON ONLINE & DIGITAL MEETINGS IN IRELAND

A subcommittee the General Service Conference of Ireland was setup to look at a range of concerns relating to Online or Digital meetings in Ireland. We heard at Conference many opinions on how digital meetings are here to stay. However, the question remained: are they within the structure of AA in Ireland?

## ARE DIGITAL/ONLINE MEETINGS PART OF OR STRUCTURE IN AA?

We began with the Big Book, and the section **Forward to Fourth Edition** where its quoted *"While our literature has preserved the integrity of the A.A. message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship. Taking advantage of technological advances, for example, A.A. members with computers can participate in meetings online, sharing with fellow alcoholics across the country or around the world. In any meeting, anywhere, A.A.'s share experience, strength, and hope with each other, in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics. Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, A.A.'s speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity."* As its already stated that *"A.A. members with computers can participate in meetings online"*, it was decided we can simply accept this.

## DO WE NEED TO BRING ONLINE OR DIGITAL MEETINGS INTO THE STRUCTURE OF AA IN IRELAND?

Traditionally, regular physical meetings have not been defined by Conference. We questioned if any meetings were inside or outside the structure of AA in Ireland. The structure doesn't dictate how or where a meeting is held. Meetings are a function of a group and how and where they are run is left to each group. Groups, however, are part of the structure. Conference does not dictate that meetings should be in any particular format, venue or platform. It does not define if meetings should be held in a hotel or a health center or that they should be held indoors, outdoors, or online, or indeed what length they are.

Groups throughout Ireland have embraced and adjusted incredibly well to online meetings

**We recommend to conference that as online meetings are not outside the structure, we don't need to bring them into the structure. We further recommend that this clarification is communicated to all groups.**

**Listing your online group on [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)**

- Groups have found that online meetings are less likely to have unwanted visitors when they are listed only on [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie). By listing your meeting details on the official website, you as a group maintain your zoom meeting passwords, links and codes.
- Groups can set up an email auto reply for anybody that contacts them looking for meeting details.
- You can register your online meeting using your official [alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie) email address. If you do not have one, please contact our General Service Office at [gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie). Online meetings have successfully been listed on [alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie) since April 2020 helping thousands of alcoholics.

**The above proposal received unanimous approval by the General Service Conference of Ireland on September 4th, 2021.**



## **SUB-COMMITTEE ON LITERATURE**

*"A lot of literature, particularly Pamphlets in GB, are sold to Groups for a nominal fee (1 Penny). This is done for a number of reasons, primarily to encourage Groups and Members to purchase and read this material. Are there any items of literature that we could consider adopting a similar policy with, in Ireland?"*

The subcommittee recommended and after a vote it was agreed to:

- Include a meeting template in the Service Handbook
- Introduce a GSR Introductory Pack to help new GSR's into their roll.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE TO RESEARCH A YOUNG PERSONS LIAISON OFFICER**

Investigate the merits (or not) of YPLOs within the Structure of AA in Ireland."

After discussion, conference voted and decided to:

- Introduce a YPLO at Intergroup
- Continue the subcommittee for a further 18 months to help get it off the ground

## **SUB-COMMITTEE ON SERVICE**

*"In Great Britain, retiring Delegates and Trustees are encouraged to stay involved in Service"*

The recommendation from the subcommittee focused on having the following amendment made in the service handbook:

*"Former Conference Delegates having served their full-term ought to return to Service at Group level". (Pages 14 to 22 of Service Handbook).*

*"They ought not return to Service at Area or Intergroup"*

This was also agreed.

## **OTHER AA SERVICE BITS OF INTEREST**

Did you know?

The Group Information Sheet (GIS) was updated recently to help you provide more relevant information for your group. It's really important that we have the accurate details for your group, don't forget to update your group contacts too. Remember that the contacts you provide are also used for 12 Step calls – If we don't have contacts for your group – your group won't be able to help the still suffering alcoholic.

Why not help us and check that the meeting details, contacts and general group information for your group are correct and up to date. GSO can provide you with a report that provides the current group data that GSO has for your group. If it needs to be updated, ask your group secretary to fill in a Group Information Sheet and send it to [aagroupinfo@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:aagroupinfo@alcoholicsanonymous.ie) GSO will be able to give you guidance on the most efficient method to update your group's information.

The accuracy of the 'find a meeting page' on the official website depends on groups cooperating with GSO – Remember, displaying the correct meeting information is vital for members and newcomers trying to find meetings so please regularly check your group information and update it when necessary.

There's been talk of a **new official website** for a long time now. It is coming. It has taken a bit longer than we had hoped, but we are really close now. Please bear with us, we are really excited about the changes and additions that will be in it. Hopefully it will be a lot more useful and information that is more relevant to our members.

### **The AA Literature Shop in the General Service Office is reopening soon**

Initially the shop will open ONE day each week, Wednesdays only from 3rd November 2021 between 9.30am to 4.30pm. Please note that visitors will not be able to access the shop any other days in the week. The shop opening days/times will be reviewed in due course.

Members are encouraged to place their literature orders with GSO prior to visiting the AA shop or at the very least have their order forms completed beforehand. Order forms can be downloaded from our website or posted to you.

Staff at GSO will aim to have orders completed as efficiently as possible to avoid any delays. The aim is to limit the time of each visit to approx. 15 minutes. This is in the interest of fairness for other members waiting their turn to access the shop as only one customer is allowed in the shop at any one time. Visitors will be required to sanitise their hands when entering the building and wear a mask.

We ask that members are mindful not to discuss AA Structure or group related issues with staff members while visiting the AA Shop. The shop is reopening to facilitate members that wish to purchase literature in person.

### **Listing online meetings on the official AA website**

Groups that host online meetings may or may not be aware that people who use our website to locate online meetings are required to email the group's official mailbox to request the meeting ID and password. They depend on the relevant group to respond to the request with the correct information so they can join the meeting.

Unfortunately, we recently had to remove many online meetings from the website where the official mailbox was not setup, or the group had never accessed their email. This was done as it was not possible for anybody to join, essentially the email that the person sends to the group to obtain the meeting ID and password will never be answered.

Please help us, to help you, make your online meetings accessible to our newcomers and members.

The process to set up your mailbox is simple...just contact the General Service Office at 01-8420700 and they will help you through the process.

# WISDOM OF THE ROOMS

***"You Have to Be in It to Win It."***

I came to my first A.A. meeting hoping to learn a few tips on how to moderate my drinking. After about 20 minutes I realized we were talking complete abstinence- nothing else. I had tried abstinence many times, and failed, and yet after that first meeting the compulsive desire to drink all day and every day just vanished. So, I started attending meetings regularly, and amazingly found I had stopped drinking alcohol, just like that.

After 6 months, I decided that A.A. really worked, I was now cured, and I could stop with the meetings. They took up so much time! And I drank again. It was the meetings and the fellowship and the program that were keeping me sober, and yet I gave them up. So, I came back, but did the same thing four more times. I acquired

five 6-month medallions. After those three years, I understood that addiction is a permanent condition, and needs permanent therapy to be kept at bay. And yet-after another ten years I was cured again, this time for real, I said. Finally, no more need to go to meetings or work the Steps. And I drank again ...

Fifteen years after my first meeting I took what I hope was my last drink, 25 years ago. I must have needed 15 years to understand Step One. I now understand that the meetings and fellowship and the program are not an option, not a quick fix, but a permanent and necessary answer to a permanent disability. I have tried to avoid working the program for the rest of my life but have learned that I have no choice.

*The News November 2019*

**"Are We Really Willing to Change"**

"Facing ourselves...is often more difficult than being honest with another person."

# AA Humour

The speaker at the Convention's Big Meeting walked up to the podium, looked out at the stadium full of people and said,

"My heart is beating my knees are weak, my stomach is in knots. I used to pay a lot of money for this feeling."

*Christine H., Michigan, October 2000  
A Rabbit Walks into a Bar pg 62*

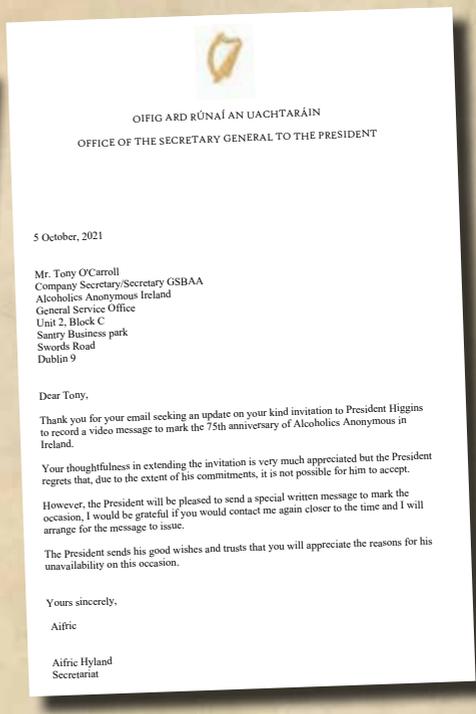


# Online Meeting (Zoom) Celebrating AA's 75th Anniversary of AA in Ireland

This year on Sunday 14th of November 2021 at 7pm we are holding an Open AA Meeting to celebrate AA being 75 years in Ireland. We have invited speakers from each of the four provinces to share their experience strength and hope. We also wrote to President Michael Higgins who kindly responded, we hope to have a special message from him to share at the meeting.

You can join this open meeting through Zoom by using the following details:

Meeting id: 870 5991 2737  
Password: 141121



**Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland  
invites you to**



# **THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF AA IN IRELAND**

**Join our online Zoom meeting**

**Sunday 14th November 2021  
at 7pm**

**Meeting ID: 870 5991 2737**

**Password: 141121**

**[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)**

# Brief History of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland

This year AA celebrates 75 years in Ireland. This brief history may be of interest to those who don't know about the early years of AA and how it came to Ireland in 1946.

Alcoholics Anonymous started in Akron, Ohio in 1935. It spread to Australia in 1943 and an AA group was formed in Sydney. In the same year, an Irishman, Conor F., joined A.A. in Philadelphia, he would become instrumental in bringing AA to Ireland.

Fr. Tom Dunlea, an Irish priest working in Australia, had noticed, and been impressed with the gradual growth and success of the Sydney group. In 1946 he came back to Ireland on holiday and while in Dublin, was asked by the Dublin Evening Mail to give an interview. Not alone did Fr. Tom give an account of his project, but he also spoke at some length on the success of the Sydney group of A.A. It was the first introduction of A.A. to the general public in Ireland.

At about the same time Conor F. was about three years sober, he had travelled to Ireland on

holidays along with his wife. She read the Evening Mail article and suggested to him that he might do something about getting AA started in Ireland. While they were holidaying in Derry, he tried to get people interested but was told there were no alcoholics in the North to try the South. In the South he was told that problem drinkers here should join the Pioneers.

Conor was near the point of conceding defeat until he met Eva Jennings in the Abbotsford Hotel in Harcourt Street, Dublin. She was sympathetic and advised him to arrange to meet Dr. Norman Moore, head of St. Patrick's Hospital, where a close relative of hers was under his care. Conor met Dr. Moore and gave him a copy of the book 'Alcoholics Anonymous' (Big Book). One of his patients Richard P. showed an interest and was sent under escort to the hotel Conor was staying at. The two men 'clicked', and Richard P. was released from hospital. That meeting is now history. As members know only too well, when one alcoholic meets and talks to another alcoholic something special happens.

Conor gave an interview to the Evening Mail, along with a Box Number for the newspaper to give to anyone interested to contacting him. He received one letter from a man requesting that his brother should be contacted. The brother was contacted but said "He is the one you should talk to." Both brothers joined. Ironically the first ever meeting of AA was held in the house of one of these brothers in Rathmines on 18th November 1946. It is believed that seven members attended that meeting, Conor F., Richard P., Jimmy R., Jimmy the Teacher, brothers Matt. S and Leo S, and another man. That was the first AA meeting in Ireland, and indeed in Europe.

A Public Meeting on 25th November 1946 followed at which 12 people joined, though most of them did not continue. That meeting according to Conor's memoirs was followed by a Closed meeting of AA on 30th November 1946 also held in the Country Shop. This was the first closed meeting to be held in the Country Shop. Meetings continued in various private houses. The Green Cinema allowed AA to meet for free in their restaurant. Matt S. was a silversmith in Dawson Street where they held lunchtime gatherings occasionally. Meetings were also held in the home of Leo S. in Rathmines and in the home

of Jimmy R. in Adelaide Road. Once finances were organised the group took on a tenancy of the Country Shop where AA meetings continued to be held until 1978 when the Country Shop closed down.

Sackville joined the group in 1947. Sackville along with Jimmy R., Richard P. and the others progressed things by communicating with newspapers and writing to New York.

Sackville was a military careerist and a devout RC, he devised a plan to get in touch with the Theologians in Maynooth and had an article printed in their magazine called the Furrow. From then on, when a parish priest was dubious about supporting the formation of an AA Group in his parish, he could be referred to Maynooth College and its approval of AA. Bill Wilson (co-founder of AA in 1935) remarked that Sackville's initiative really lit the fire under the movement.

Bill Wilson and his wife Lois visited Ireland in 1950. This was a landmark for A.A. in Ireland. He visited meetings in Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Limerick. Everywhere he visited, the Press was eager to meet him. By the end of 1950 AA was firmly established even if Group and membership numbers were still comparatively small.



Sackville started the Road Back magazine in 1949, it was continued by Gerard the Rose, then Fr. Pat and subsequently the General Service Board of AA took over as its editor.

Realising that the fellowship was growing the need for Unity became apparent. A delegation from Dublin met up with Lexie M., Joe R., Softee and Gerry D. in the Brownwell Hotel, Limavaddy, on 5th October 1968. That was truly a landmark in the development of AA in Ireland.

The aim was to get an AA All-Ireland Conference together and to persuade Ulster to become part of it. The geography of the island lent itself to the idea of four Provinces therefore four Intergrups and a united

approach to forming policy. Sir Frank Harrison QC, a non-alcoholic Trustee in Belfast, played a huge role in setting up the legal framework for an All-Ireland Alcoholics Anonymous. Ulster established a local office in Belfast years later to help with administration.

Alcoholics and their families are forever grateful to our founding members for their dedication and willingness to help the still suffering alcoholic over the past 75 years.. They helped set the foundation for Alcoholics Anonymous to become the incredible success that it has become in our small country.

For this, we thank each and every one of you.

APPENDIX 3.

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

The information requested on this form is for Archival purposes only and is confidential within the Fellowship.  
The information will serve to preserve the historical growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland.

Prepared By: Euge O  
Date: 14/6/93

**GROUP HISTORY**

NAME OF GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_  
PREVIOUS NAME (if changed): \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE FOUNDED: Nov 1946  
PLACE OF FIRST MEETINGS: COUNTRY SHOP  
TIMES OF FIRST MEETINGS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CURRENT MEETINGS: Mon (open) Thurs, Fri. at 8.30  
19 + many more who are occasionally  
Yes to Suburban Army House St. Ita to  
PRESENT MEMBERSHIP NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
DID THE GROUP MOVE: Yes to Suburban Army House St. Ita to  
WHERE: Market Square then to  
Protestant Church.  
WHEN: 1978 and 1987  
FROM: \_\_\_\_\_  
TO: \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP HISTORY (such as Anniversaries, special meetings, etc.)  
First Group in Ireland + Europe  
(See archives)  
Bank account - St. Michael St since 1951  
still use old historical Bank Group book  
still use old literature case & also old  
visitors book. Still run the Annual Dublin  
Dinner albeit on a smaller scale.

Article in 150th Road Back IMPOSSIBLE DREAM, report of 1st Public Meeting of AA in Ireland, Country Shop (25 Nov. 1946)



# The Founding Members of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland

Conor F., Richard P. and Sackville help to set the foundation for Alcoholics Anonymous to become the incredible success that it has become in Ireland.



Conor F.



Richard P.



Sackville

# Significant dates for AA History in Ireland

- 1946 First Closed AA Meeting held in Dublin (18/11/1946)
- 1946 First Public AA Meeting held in Dublin (25/11/1946)
- 1947 Conor F., who brought AA to Ireland returns to the USA (January)
- 1948 Second Irish AA Group formed in Bundoran (April)
- 1948 Group started in Belfast (May)
- 1948 Group started in Limerick (July)
- 1949 First issue of the Road Back magazine published (April)
- 1949 AA started in Cork (October)
- 1950 AA Group in Galway (no month recorded)
- 1950 Bill W., (co-founder of AA) and his wife Lois visit Ireland
- 1957 First All Ireland AA Convention held in Dublin.  
This rotates yearly between the four provinces
- 1968 First meeting of the General Service Conference of AA held in Dublin  
(24/11/1968)
- 1970 The first General Service Office opens in Essex Quay, Dublin 2
- 1974 Return visit to Ireland from Lois, Bill W's wife (April)
- 1978 The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland is incorporated  
(23/8/1978)
- 1978 First meeting of the General Service Board of AA (GSBAA) held in Dublin  
(18/11/1978)
- 1978 First edition of the Service Handbook for AA in Ireland is published
- 1979 Sackville, founding member of AA in Ireland passes away (22/8/1979)
- 1979 Census held, estimated 6000 members
- 1980 Archival material is donated to the GSBAA
- 1982 AA Ireland becomes a member of the new AA European Service Conference
- 1982 Richard P., founding member of AA in Ireland passes away (19/12/1978)
- 1983 Charity Status Number 6014 issued to the GSBAA (28/4/1983)
- 1986 AA in Ireland celebrates 40 years
- 1987 The General Service Office moves to a new premises at 109 South Circular  
Road, Dublin 8
- 1988 A new National Archival mobile display is compiled
- 1992 Second edition of the Service Handbook for AA in Ireland is published
- 1993 Conor F. passes away in Philadelphia, USA (8/7/1993)
- 1993 Census held. Conference decision to abandon the census due to lack of support  
from AA Groups
- 1994 GSBAA expands and develops the General Service Office at 109 South Circular  
Road, Dublin 8



# Significant dates for AA History in Ireland

- 1996 AA in Ireland celebrates its Golden Jubilee 50 years
- 1996 Opening event for the Golden Jubilee Year held at the Burlington Hotel, Dublin 4 (13/1/1996)
- 1996 Golden Jubilee Year All Ireland Convention of AA held in Killarney, Co Kerry (25-28/4/1996)
- 1996 Golden Jubilee Year celebrated with AA Closed Meetings held throughout Ireland (18/11/1996)
- 1996 Golden Jubilee Year Closing Event held in Newcastle, Co. Down (6-7/12/1996)
- 1997 Eva Jennings, who helped Conor F. in AA's foundation passes away (August)
- 2001 The 44th All Ireland Convention of AA (Leinster) cancelled due to the outbreak of the Foot and Mouth disease (April)
- 2005 First official AA website is launched
- 2006 AA in Ireland 60 years
- 2007 GSBAA acquires and develops a new premises at Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Dublin 9, D09 H584 (July)
- 2009 Census held, results not published due to poor response
- 2011 The Road Back film was produced for use in Public Information
- 2014 The Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) issues the GSBAA with Charity No/RCN 20010010
- 2016 CSO Belfast acquires a new premises at North City Business Centre, Unit 11, 2 Duncarin Gardens, Belfast (October)
- 2016 AA in Ireland celebrates 70 years with an event held in the Green Isle Hotel, Dublin (18/11/2016)
- 2017 AA launches a dedicated mobile for use by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community (August)
- 2018 Upgraded official AA website launched
- 2020 The Road Back magazine is published as an e-publication and made available free to members (January)
- 2020 The 63rd All Ireland Convention (Leinster) is cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic (April)
- 2020 Update of the GSBAA's Constitution, approved at the AGM March 2020 (August)
- 2020 The Reconvened General Service Conference Meeting is held online for the first time due to the COVID-19 (November)
- 2021 The General Service Handbook for AA in Ireland is revamped and updated (version v2021/01)
- 2021 AA in Ireland celebrates 75 years

## OMAGH GROUP

Omagh is a good-sized town,  
In the west side of Tyrone,  
To tell the rest of Ireland,  
And the folks across the foam.

There is a group of A.A. there,  
Though small it is sincere.  
It's just got going recently,  
But will stay for many a year.

It's far from Derry and Belfast,  
Lisburn and Portadown.  
Not to mention Lurgan,  
And dear old Newry Town

Beside Lough Erne rests Enniskillen.  
Which I can easily reach:  
I look forward to the meeting there,  
On Monday of each week.

To Newtownabbey and Rathcoole.  
Downpatrick and Bangor too,  
Always remember you're A.A.,  
That (easy does it) for you.

The towns that have A.A. up here,  
Now number ten and three,  
Let's hope that in the future,  
A lot more you will see.

Away up north in the Antrim Glens,  
There are two you thought I missed,  
Ballymena Ballymoney,  
And all I'll say is this.

To every alcoholic,  
Be you far away or home:  
You're welcome in our A.A. room,  
Omagh Hospital Tyrone.

If drinking makes you heartsore,  
And assistance I might be,  
REMEMBER to ring up Dromore  
207 will get me.

*(Wee Tommy)*

# The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and practice these principles in all our affairs.

# The Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants - they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. Group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organised; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
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.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



We, *The Road Back* Editorial Team, look forward to hearing from you with your stories, snippets of amusing things overheard at meetings, indeed anything that carries a message of sobriety to our readership.

*Your contributions can be emailed to:*  
**roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie**

*or posted to:*  
**Alcoholics Anonymous  
Unit 2, Block C  
Santry Business Park  
Swords Road  
Dublin 9 D09 H584**

Up to date information on forthcoming Conventions and One Day Events can be viewed on our website at  
**[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)**