



A visit on the Saturday morning to the York City archives, arranged by Stephen, Fellowship Research and Projects Administrator, gave us all a fascinating insight into the workings of the 'professional' archivists. We were shown how they store and file records on the historic city. The York Archivist, Victoria Hoyle, gave a most interesting talk and tour.

Also, on display were a number of historical documents. These included: A charter

for the City of York dated 1155; a house book from the days of Henry the 8th created in 1541 and a book kept by George, a local pawn broker, dated 1777.

Following the visit to York archives, John M gave a presentation concerning his latest project, a book titled *'They Kept Coming Back.'* Whilst this is not yet AA approved literature (but supported and published by the South East region) everyone agreed it was certainly a valuable addition to the AA archives. It tells the stories of 11 old timers with 50 years sobriety and five 49-year-olds. Anyone who wants to order a personal copy can do so by contacting jvalmar@btinternet.com and the price is £3.50 per copy.

Gratitude and thanks were given to Tom B, (GSB member) for his three years service as Chairman of the meeting. Tom was presented with a copy of Experience, Strength and Hope signed by all present.

Archivist Footnote:

A cutting from The Sunday Mail of August 22, 1948, featured a report headlined "Alcoholics Anonymous come to Scotland". One paragraph presumably referring to a 12-step call, read:

"The service might consist of several members sitting up all night with an alcoholic, sitting on his chest if need be and giving him the small supplies of liquor prescribed by a doctor – without taking any themselves".

By Mike C. archivist for West End Intergroup, London.



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"The Archive carries the message from yesterday into today and hands it on to tomorrow"

I believe archivists are not just the keepers of AA history, memorabilia, documents and so forth. We are people privileged (if we care to) to have a great knowledge of what makes AA tick and thus are and should be used as conduits for lots of avenues of AA service; I am particularly thinking about what we have to offer Intergroups and region.

Sometimes there are long gaps between liaison officers service. We can encourage each liaison officer who does not have someone to hand stuff on to, to write a brief resume of what they have done (Thanks to Elaine G. Lincolnshire Intergroup) for that tip; or pass on all files to the archivist for safe keeping until the next officer is elected. I have experienced occasions where as there is no one to sponsor them in they hold back from offering or have to start from scratch because they do not know what avenues have been tried. Archivists are people (not just the job) and we have a much wider view of AA than an individual officer. There are of course people who have much wider experience and have been going to Intergroup, Region, conference and board meetings longer than most of us, I learn so much from them I do not want to miss out.

Archivists are the link within Intergroups and region, we must be awake to realising our unique position and not afraid to use all our acquired and yet to be acquired knowledge to help and aid meetings. It is for this fact alone for me it is important I attend every Intergroup and Region meeting I can. My problem is judging when to speak and when to keep quiet. I have found numerous occasions when I can go away and check on how a similar issue has been dealt with in the past – what goes around, comes around. In some cases actually help to move the discussion forward.



Not only do we have a responsibility to share with each other our experience strength and hope on what we hold. If we are not prepared to share and use with others we are



bound to be seen as dinosaurs and be questioned 'by ye of little faith' that archives has a pertinent place in AA service.

Yours in Fellowship Miri. South West Region Archivist, Archives Sub Committee Member.

Harrys Sponsor

My sponsor informed me that I would be attending a meeting in a local hotel set up by another member. It was not a polite request. I dare not refuse as it would severely impinge upon my people pleasing skills.

These skills had been honed to a fine level over many years, but justified in any number of ways.

My sponsor was a man you did not openly disagree with. He was known to "invite" people to leave meetings if the Traditions were not strictly adhered to. If the guilty party was particularly unlucky a flight of stairs may be involved. Conscience meetings were "lively".

So we went along to the hotel, me completely unaware as to what was involved, only told that it would further my education in AA. The member who set up the meeting was commonly known as the "educator", at any given moment or opportunity he would spout forth on any facet of AA history. If he was asked a question that he didn't have an immediate answer to, days of research would follow.

Approximately 25 people attended, whereupon Harold C gave us a dazzling discourse on how AA come about, it's history and its Traditions. I cannot recall exactly how long the meeting went on for but can recall a couple of cigarette breaks and at least one coffee break.

I was completely bowled over, I think I spent most of the meeting with my mouth wide open as he gave insightful instances as to the early struggles of Bill and Dr Bob. Afterwards I regarded him as cross between both with a dab of Dr Silkworth thrown in.

To this day I hold this man in very high regard as he, along with my sponsor, imbued me with the history of our wonderful fellowship. They, along with a few others, gave freely



of their time to help the newcomer, me.

Fast forward 10 years and I am appointed the Archivist for West Yorkshire. I have never lost that boyish enthusiasm instilled in me by Chis and Harold. I thank them both dearly for passing on the passion for AA.

I will "Carry on Archiving" as long as God wishes me to be of service, to others and to the fellowship as a whole.

Harry R

Annual meeting of Archivists held at GSO

If anyone thinks being an AA archivist is like watching grass grow – think again!



The annual meeting of archivists from all over the UK – and one from Bavaria – once again reflected the importance and essential role of keeping records (and memorabilia) of AA history at group level.

An impressive presentation by Charlie C, Northwest region, showed what could be achieved with hard work and imagination. Charlie has produced a number of time-line brochures (A4 copy paper) including one showing important dates and venues from the formation of Cumbria Intergroup in 1974. He even produced a photographic timeline of the intergroup venues plus a history of various groups and reports.

He emphasized the importance of records with this simple sentence: "Time is moving on and we are losing people."

The meeting was held on Friday and Saturday October 9 and 10th at GSO in York. Sixteen Intergroup and region archivists were present. This was down on previous years and somewhat disappointing considering the total number of archivists currently listed in the confidential directory.