

A.A. in the U.K.



London in 1947





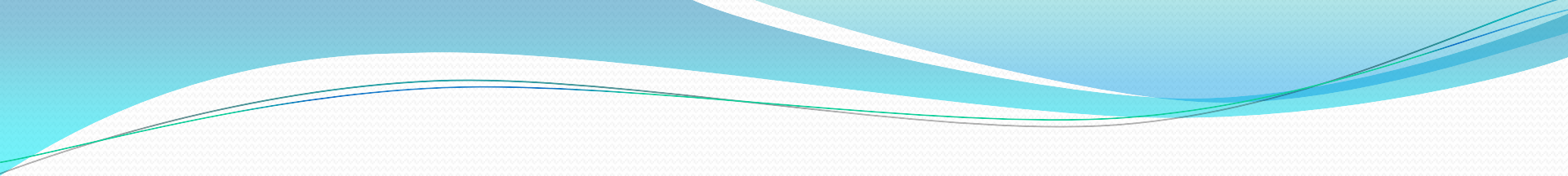
Photo. No 3 { Existing Power Station &
War-Damaged Property





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Ireland - 1946



- 1943 **Conor F**, an Irishman, gets sober in Philadelphia
- 1946 Conor F visits Ireland on holiday, resolves to create a group in Ireland before leaving
- 1946 Nov 18th – First Meeting in Ireland. First sober member **Richard P. Sackville** gets sober (“The Career Officer” story Third Edition Big Book)

(Ireland operated together with England, Scotland and Wales until forming their own General Service Board in 1968.

Ireland is ‘All Ireland’ – Northern Ireland and Eire)

England



- 1945 **Bob B** - gets sober in New York, '**Canadian Bob**'.
UK residents start to contact GSO in New York
- 1946 Readers Digest publish an article on AA. Creates world-wide interest
American A.A.s in London may have held some meetings
Dorothy H-E listed as contact, later replaced by:
Chris B, a Londoner, previously sobered up in America after meeting Albert T, a friend of Bill W.
Probably the first Englishman to sober up the 'A.A. Way'
Norman R-W, an English alcoholic writes to New York after seeing 'The Lost Weekend' – he doesn't manage to stop.

England - 1947

Grace O and husband Fulton visit England.

AA GSO gives her names of interested people.

First Meeting – Dorchester.

Grace O.



First Meeting in England

31st March 1947 in **Grace O**'s room in the Dorchester. (Room 202)

Also Present – **Canadian Bob**, **Chris B**, **Sergeant Vernon W** – an American serviceman and a founder of A.A. in Bermuda, **Norman R-W**, **Tony F**, an Irish airman, **Flash W**, an American and **Pat G**, a female member from California whom Grace had met on the voyage.

Norman R-W was still drinking and thus became the first English alcoholic to attend an AA meeting drunk.

The First Group Secretary



The second meeting was held in the tea room of the Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Road.

Present – Canadian Bob, Tony F and Norman R-W

Thereafter – meetings were held mainly in Canadian Bob's house in Mortlake

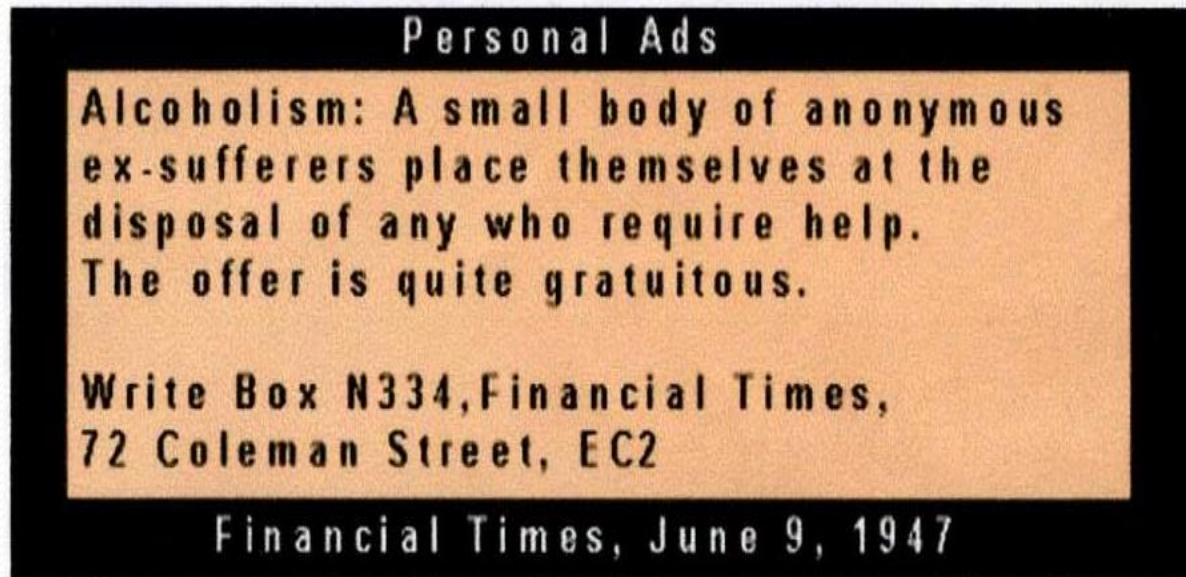
Canadian Bob appointed Secretary

1948 – **Lottie**, first female member, takes over as secretary



Canadian Bob's House in Kew which was the Venue for the first regular AA Meetings in the UK

PI Starts!



Only the Financial Times would publish it

Growth



February 1948

23 members, including two or three in Bolton and Leicester.

Canadian Bob visits Bolton and pronounces **Alan and Winnie**, his wife, to be the ‘Bolton Group.

June 1948

Marty M visits – and “*performed a miracle when she was here and we invited many doctors*”



Autumn 1948

‘First London Group’
starts meeting in 11
Chandos Street.

January 1949

Meetings on Tuesdays
and Thursdays in
Chandos Street

Growth continues



The Millgate Hotel, Manchester where the first Midland meeting was convened in November 1948

November 1948

First meeting in the
Millgate Hotel,
Manchester

January 1949

Membership passes 100

Scotland - 1949



The wife of **Philip D**, an active alcoholic, attended an Oxford Group in Scotland and heard about the Group's role in the start of AA.

Philip visited America in 1948 for a World Christian Association Conference

There he met George R, an old time Philadelphia A.A. and 'sobered up on the spot'

He visited Lottie in London and Scottish inquiries were referred to him. **Forbes C** got involved and **Marty M.** visited and gave crucial advice.

Scotland



March 1949

Public Meetings in St
Enoch's Hotel.
Glasgow

1949

Also meetings started
in Perth and Edinburgh

1950 - Bill W visits



- June 1950 - Bill and Lois visit. 1500 Big Books follow
- Bill had been to Scandinavia, Netherlands and France
- As well as many A.A. meetings he attended a meeting with doctors, probation officers and ministers of religion at Caxton Hall
- They also visited Liverpool, Perth, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dublin and Belfast, Cork and Limerick



Wales



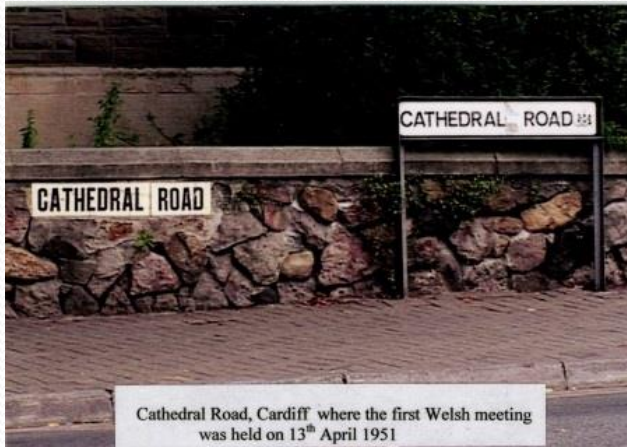
David Y brought the message to Wales.

Friday 13th April 1951 - 'First Welsh A.A. group meets at Cathedral Road, Cardiff

Present – **David Y, Norman M, Archie P, Rex and Sackville**

Rex produced the first issue of a Welsh local newsletter in December 1951 called '*Iechyd Da*' ('Good Health')

Archie later moved to London and became editor of the Central Office Newsletter



Service Structure



1948 - **Bill H**, a fruit importer, is 12th Stepped by Canadian Bob. His office in the London Fruit Exchange gives us our first 'Service Office'

1951 - GSR Committee formed – 5 members with at least one year's sobriety

1952 - London Service Office opened in Redcliffe Gardens - later becomes GSO

1957 - General Service Board of AA (Great Britain and Ireland) formed.

First Intergroup in the North West

1966 - First Conference (GB and Ireland)

1968 - Ireland forms separate conference



Gatherings

1953 - Intergroup Gatherings at Dumfries grew into the Blue Bonnets

1956 – First Convention, Bellevue Hotel, Cheltenham,

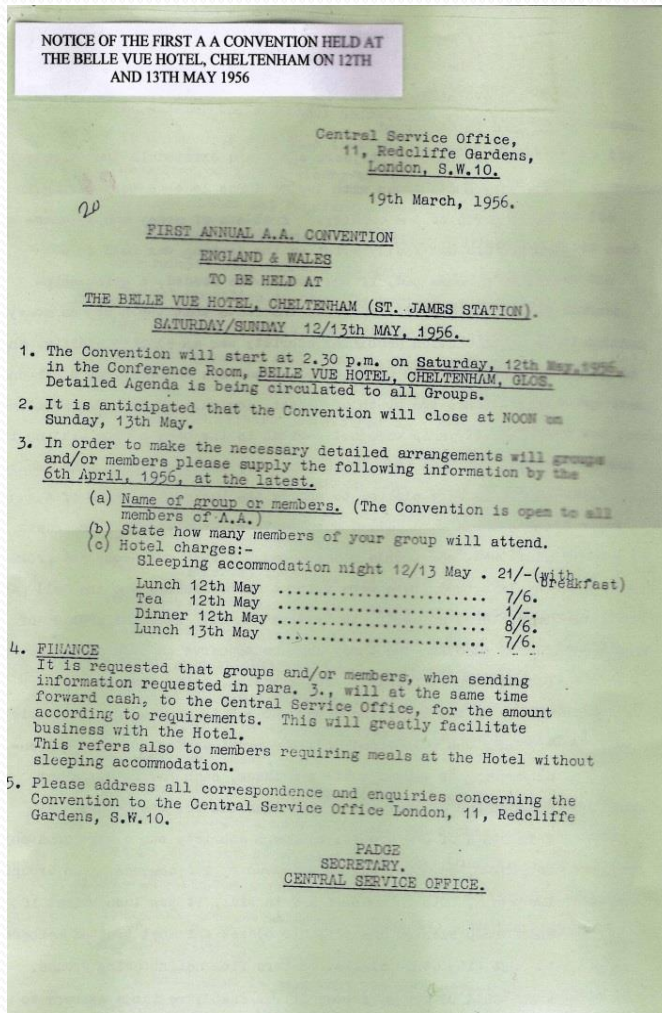
1957 - First Scottish Convention in Dunblane

1957 - First All-Ireland Convention

1971 - First European Convention in Bristol

1975 - English convention split into Northern and Southern

1981 - First Welsh convention in Llandrindod Wells



Al-Anon

1951 Belfast, the same year that Lois and Anne B opened an office at Stepping Stones.

Now over 800 groups.

Alateen started in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 1964 and is for teenagers between the ages of twelve and seventeen.

Over the years, many members have shared that without Al-Anon they would have found living with the effects of someone else's alcoholism too much to deal with.

A.A. UK Today



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

6th February, 1997.

Dear Mr. Pyrah,

I am commanded by The Queen to thank you for your letter of 30th January, written on behalf of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Her Majesty learned with interest that the Fellowship will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year and has asked me to send her good wishes to all concerned for a very enjoyable and successful Convention, from 13th to 15th June, 1997.

Yours sincerely,
Jemima Coulson.

(MRS. J. COULSON)

R. Pyrah, Esq.

- 1960 100 Groups
- 1974 Service Handbook for GB
- 1977 1,000 Groups
- 1980 1,500 Groups
- 1980 Regions formed.
- 1986 GSO moved to York
- 1997 50th Anniversary –
Convention in Blackpool
- 2005 3,630 Groups (“34,000
members”)
- 2016 4,400 Groups



A.A. in the UK. Overview Timeline.

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World Services

UK 

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---------------------------------|
| 1935 | June 10 th , A.A. 'founded' | | |
| 1940 | First WSO Office in New York | | |
| 1946 | Traditions published ('Long Form') | 1946 | First Group in Ireland |
| | | 1947 | First Group in GB |
| 1950 | First International Convention – Traditions Adopted | | |
| 1950 | Dr Bob dies | 1950 | Bill W and Lois visit |
| 1951 | First Conference linking Trustees with entire membership | 1951 | 'Central Committee' of 5 GSRs |
| 1952 | Bill writes Twelve Concepts | | |
| | | 1957 | First Overseas Board |
| 1 | | | |
| | | 1966 | First GB Conference |
| 1971 | Bill W dies | 1971 | First European Convention |
| | | 1997 | Fiftieth Anniversary Convention |

Words spoken to Jim B in his garden in the Wirral, Cheshire, by Bill W, when he visited in 1950

“Sobriety is the most important thing in your whole life without exception. You may think that your job, your hobby or your home life, or one of many other things, come first. This is not so. Just think – if you do not get sober and stay sober and get some peace of mind, the chances are you won’t have a job or a hobby at all, you may even lose your sanity and life itself. If you have taken the first step, and are so convinced that everything in your life depends on your sobriety, then you have just that much more chance of getting sober and staying sober. If, on the other hand, you put other things first, you are going to ruin your chance of living a wonderful life”



The End