



**SURVIVORS OF
BEREAVEMENT
BY SUICIDE**

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NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

BI-ANNUAL JANUARY/JUNE

JULY 2013

Dear All,

Time for another newsletter and the work of SOBS continues for us all. What worthy work we are all involved in.

The Telephone Helpline and email Helpline have been busy with many enquiries and our groups offer a safe place for people to talk.

As you all know we have been meeting with Primetimers and they have been giving us some good advice and guiding us in becoming self sustainable. Watch this space!

Angela has been busy with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Suicide and Self Harm Prevention.

Thank you to all of who have contributed to this Newsletter. Enjoy your read and keep sending in your articles.

Ann

THE SOBS CHALLENGE

At the volunteers conference Doug McQueen issued a challenge by giving anybody who would take it, a crisp £50 note and three months to see what they could do with it. This has now been extended to the end of the summer as many people wanted to take advantage of summer fairs etc. So far it has been encouraging; out of approximately 30 volunteers we have already had 5 very successful group reports.

Wirral Group has raised in excess of £1,500 with some pledges still coming in. This was done on the back of a Bingo night. Another great contribution Scunthorpe Group raised £431 by hosting a tea party with homemade cakes, to an auction at Bolton which raised £265. Aylesbury also did cake baking and raised £ 187.50. Essex group have raised £350. There is a certain volunteer, who wishes to remain anonymous, who put £50 on the Grand National and received £80 back – quote “I’ve always wanted to put £50 on the nose”.

We look forward to other stories coming in and hopefully we will be able to update you in the next newsletter.

Many thanks for all the efforts that are going into this. As we said at the Volunteer’s conference, half the amount raised is going back to the group and the other half is going to central funds towards training etc.

Doug

SCUNTHORPE

We took the £50 challenge from Douglas McQueen at the volunteers’ day in Derby. We had a very good turnout for our tea party with cakes on Easter Saturday afternoon.

We raised a total of £481.....deducted £50 in expenses profit for the day was £431 and a lot of awareness raising, I think we must have had between 60 to 70 people joining us between 2pm and 5pm.



On the sad part Nina’s husband had a heart attack on the Saturday afternoon.....he is now recovering well, after a short stay in Hospital and a stent fitted.

Nina and Lucy

THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON SUICIDE AND SELF HARM PREVENTION

In 2011 we were invited by the MP for Bridgend since 2005 to become part of the All-Party Group (APPG) on Suicide and Self Harm Prevention.

The purpose of the APPG is to raise awareness within Parliament of and encourage discussion and debate about all issues involved in suicide and self harm reduction and prevention.

As the name suggests, the group has cross-party representation and its run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, although many APPG’s, of which there are many, involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities. This is where we play an important role.

The group is chaired by Mrs Moon and representatives from several charities and professional bodies meet in the House of Commons about every three months. The main aim of the group initially was to contribute to the Suicide Prevention Strategy for England that was launched 10th September, World Suicide Prevention Day 2012. The launch was a great success and our involvement as a charity of people with lived experience was highly praised. You can download a copy of the strategy here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-launched>

When we saw the draft report we were delighted to see the newly included section titled Area for Action: Provide better information and support to those bereaved by suicide. It felt like an enormous leap forward and at long last real Government recognition of the importance of the work that many of our volunteers have been carrying out for a very long time.

In the forward to the Strategy, Norman Lamb, Minister of State for Care and Support wrote: In England one person dies every two hours as a result of suicide. When someone takes their own life, the effect on their family and friends is devastating. Many others involved in providing support and care will feel the impact.

As a follow up, we were invited to give evidence to an inquiry into the future of local suicide prevention plans in the House of Commons with a cross-party, cross-house panel.

On Wednesday 27th February I took a very deep breath and made my way down to London once again to answer questions about our work, how we could and do contribute to local suicide prevention plans and how our view of the future in the light of changes in the NHS structures and the new Suicide Prevention Strategy. The inquiry also wanted to hear about how existing suicide prevention plans were working at a local level, the challenges that voluntary organisations faced in working together to support people at risk of suicide and self-harm and what further action the government could take to ensure that the priorities in the national strategy are put into practice and make a difference to vulnerable people in local communities.

The evidence that we gave alongside other charities was compiled into a report that can be downloaded here. It looks at the future funding challenges that we face as well as the importance of support for those bereaved The Future of Local Suicide Prevention Plans in England

Amongst other worrying facts, the report revealed that more than a quarter of local authorities in

England didn't have any specific suicide prevention strategy. The existence of any such plan is open to chance rather than determined by any national policy.

Our work as part of the All Party Parliamentary Group will continue as although both reports are not published, MP Madeleine Moon is determined to see that the recommendations of both reports are followed up, with the help of people like us who are working directly with those affected by bereavement by suicide.

Angela Samata

CUMBRIA

Cumbria group have been very busy and have managed to get their libraries to support our cause by having the books we suggest on their shelves with a label inside the book with SOBS information on it.

This is a great move on their part and maybe something other groups could do.

The photos below give some idea of their work.

Helen Towers



CHRISTOPHER JENKINS

I just wanted you to know that I completed the London Marathon, my first ever marathon. It was an amazing day. There were plenty of tears, but also plenty of laughs and happiness. But even more remarkable has been the support and donations that I received for SOBS along the way. I think donations currently stand around £700 (which for the small timeframe of being live) has been overwhelming for me.

It was a bit of a last minute decision to run for charity, but I felt I had to use the opportunity to raise funds and spread the word of the good work that SOBS undertakes. Sadly I lost my father to suicide in 2008. As I have discovered with many other instances, there were no signs, no reasons and it was to intents and purposes completely irrational. Through attending the SOBS group in Cardiff back in 2008 I was able to understand more, talk through my feelings and reconcile any

guilt and shame that I may have been feeling at the time. so the chance to run for SOBS at London has allowed me to commemorate my father, whilst at the same time showing other people that know me that I am not ashamed of what happened and that I have made many positive improvements in my life since my father's suicide. I think as survivors, we have a choice as to whether to be a victim or whether to turn things into a positive and make the most of life. Life will never be the same since my father's death and I would always choose to have him back (and to share everything that he has missed). But it doesn't have to mean it's the end of my life either. More the beginning of a new life. I just wanted to thank SOBS for helping to get me back on my feet in 2008 and seeing a positive future.

Unfortunately, I had lost contact with the old Cardiff group ... so please pass on to them my gratitude for helping me.

Thank you.
Christopher Jenkins

NORWICH CATHEDRAL SATURDAY 20TH APRIL

We were a small group, just twelve in total, brought together by a shared experience. Our destination was Norwich Cathedral where a remembrance service was being held for all those who had taken their own life. We were joined by people from SOBS who travelled from as far apart as Yorkshire and Gloucestershire and survivors also attended from Hertfordshire to join the local East Anglians. It may surprise many to learn the cathedral on that sunny afternoon was full of those bereaved by suicide who had in fact come from all corners of the country to be part of this service.

Amongst our own group were those that had a strong religious belief, some of us were more spiritual and at least one survivor was an atheist. The service itself lasted approximately one hour followed by tea/coffee and informal chat. The Bishop commented during afternoon tea that this service would be an annual event and maybe more people from SOBS would attend next year if word spread.



The above is all factual but the real message has to be our emotional response to this event. Perhaps the combination of sitting in a truly amazing building and historically the role played by the church in the past was a contributory

factor. Perhaps it was the kind and compassionate message given to all survivors by the Bishop of Norwich that brought tears to so many eyes. We all had the opportunity to light a candle and sign the remembrance book and the police presence was noted. All in all a successful first trip out for Suffolk SOBS. I hesitate to speak for the rest of the group but I do hope like me they saw it as a positive experience. It was encouraging to see both church and police giving a very clear message of support, a small act on its own but with the potential to heal.

Suzy Clifford and Dan Pennock

MATT HALL MEMORIAL

Linda Davey writes:

"Please sponsor me – I am running in memory of Matt and raising funds for Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide".

www.justgiving.com/remember/47153/Matthew-Hall

Thank you.
Linda Davey

ANTONY JACKSON BREEZE MEMORIAL

Caroline Hedley writes:

"Welcome to the club that no-one wants to join. On 4th August 2012 the world lost a very special young man; a dad, a son, a brother, an uncle, a cousin, a partner and a brother-in-law. His loss affected the lives of many and for some of us our lives just stood still. We exist day to day because that's all we can do to function. We may never know why Antony died".

Our thanks go to Caroline Hedley who has set up a 'just giving' page for her brother who died by self-immolation. The money raised will go to Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide.

www.justgiving.com/remember54756/Antony%20Jackson-Breeze

Thank you
Caroline

NEW GROUPS OPENING

Uttoxeter – 07950 269 539
Aylesbury – 07890 973 751
Swindon – 07543 242 332

BERKSHIRE: NEED OF GROUP CAN YOU HELP?

The Beaconsfield group leader writes; Beaconsfield (Buckinghamshire) group continues to meet on the second Monday morning each month and has proved an extremely useful time for some attendees; however we will need a new facilitator for the August meeting onwards as I am moving away to Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

Additionally, there is a need to offer a Group in Berkshire – possibly in the Reading area – funding will be available from a Rotary Club in order to set this up and this could develop into an ongoing financial support but it has to be in Berkshire. At least two people living in the area would be needed for this to get off the ground.

Henley-on-Thames Group will continue meeting on the third Wednesday evening each month. We have a new meeting place and have changed time 7.15pm for two hours. Jill will take over as Group Facilitator from 21st August.

If you have an interest in the above, or know of suitable volunteers, please let me know as soon as possible. Email highwycombehenleysobs@live.co.uk or leave a message on 07958 434 082.

Suzanne Mattingly

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BOLTON RETREAT

At Franciscan Friary, Pentasaph, North Wales. Friday 13th September – Sunday 15th September 2013. For more information contact Janet/Noel on 01942 201744 or email janet750uk@yahoo.co.uk

GLOUCESTER

Will take place at Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire On Friday 25th October – Sunday 27th October 2013. For information call Trish Thomas 01452 371 945 or Email trishthomas@talktalk.net

KENT RETREAT, MAIDSTONE 2014

At the Friars Friday 4th April 2014 – Sunday 6th April 2014.

For information call Sheila 01622 751 976 or 07751 522 125

Or email: shebee330@gmail.com

DOMENIC

As you moved along your chosen path
You always strived to do your best
Yet you never seemed to realise
You were far above the rest

You were such fun to be around
Your love of life was a joy to see
Cramming so much into your days
You were happy and care free

Then came the day you lost your way
Completely fell off track
And though you tried to right yourself
There was no turning back

Your life became a challenge then
Dark clouds gathered up above
It did not even help to know
How deeply you were loved

Now all we have are memories
And those we will hold dear
Some will make us laugh some may make us cry
But they will keep you ever near

Emptiness engulfs our lives
Now you have gone away
We cannot express the pain we feel
There are no words to say

And so to your final resting place
On Angel's wings you soar
You are safe at last, your pain has gone
You are not broken any more

ABR 15-03-2013

THANK YOU

Thank you to all who have kindly donated and raised funds for our organisation and also to our Volunteers for their sterling work in helping others.

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Submission of articles, news, events, reflections, etc. for consideration for the January 2014 newsletter must reach the editor no later than 1st December 2013. We reserve the right to publish those submissions that seem most relevant and suitable for the newsletter. Submission does not guarantee inclusion. Submissions can be sent via Email to Ann Culley sobs.news@googlemail.com or sobs.admin@care4free.net or by post to Ann Culley, Flat 26, Elizabeth House, Park Lane, Cheam Village, Sutton, Surrey SM3 8BT.
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