

A word from our Chair, Marie Ellis

This year, on February 14th I was looking back 29 years to the day when my beloved son was murdered. How do I feel all these years later? I'm sad, with a longing in my heart to see my boy but I hold on to wonderful memories of happier times. On the whole I am much stronger now than in the early years and I have a happy enough life. I have managed to build my life around my pain and manage it.

These were my darkest years after Alan was murdered and I can only explain them as follows:

I was walking along a dark, lonely road. My arms were full of parcels of sadness and anger, along with all the other emotions we suffer from. I was so weak so every step I took I seemed to drop these parcels. I struggled to pick them up only to drop others as I bent down. There was no sign of an end to this road and I was weary as I struggled on for a long time.

I don't remember just how long this road went on for but it seemed like forever. The parcels didn't become any lighter. I was so low and needed help. Then one day many years later I realised I was walking a little more easily. My parcels still very heavy but I was beginning to manage them. I still didn't see the end of the road but somehow I knew it was there. How did I get to this stage? Maybe it was after another bereaved lady listened to me? She heard my voice. She was one of the first SAMM volunteers back in the early 1990's that encouraged me. She was an inspiration and a survivor and she gave me hope.

To this day I still trip and drop a parcel but I find it easier to recover and I think I have reached the end of the road. It will never be perfect and I will forever miss my Alan with a pain in my heart but this is as good as it gets after 29 years without my boy. It's been a long time and a rough journey for many of those dark years but thanks to the intervention of a lady from SAMM all those years ago I too am a survivor. She has passed away now but I will always remember her strength and courage and her kind words of comfort that I will hold onto. I hope someday you too will reach the end of the road.

SAMM volunteers are with you all the way.

With love, *Marie Ellis*



A word from our Interim CEO, Jo Early



Light at the end of the tunnel

The latest government guidance on lifting the lockdown means, at last, we have some light at the end of the tunnel in 2021. I cannot wait to be able to see family and friends and pop in for a cup of tea! I'm even looking forward to a hug! What are you looking forward to doing first? And what have you missed? I'd love to hear from you as it's often the little things that mean so much comfort in our hour of need. Post your answers on Facebook, or our online forum if you can. Alternatively, you can email us through our new and exciting website. I can only imagine how difficult the last 12 months have been, so be kind to yourselves and reach out to us if you need to talk. All services are explained on our new website. We look forward to hearing from you. Our door is always open.

Jo Early



Welcome to the SAMM ONLINE POP UP CAFE



You are invited to SAMM'S Online Pop up Café.

What is a Pop Up Café ?

It is an online peer support session with a group of other bereaved people. It gives you the space to share your thoughts and feelings whilst feeling supported by others with similar experiences.

Women's Session, Tuesday 19:30—21:00
Men's Loss Group, Wednesday 19:30—21:00

Booking is essential. Please contact the SAMM office to book your place.

Things I wish I had known...



We know only too well that traumatic grief is complex and the process that follows is confusing and daunting.

Here are a few things we 'wish we had known'. We hope they may offer help to someone else:

- **It is normal for our memory to not work very well. Things will often need repeating more than once.**
- **I'd need lots of tea, coffee and toilet rolls for all the comings and goings!**
- **To ask someone to batch cook some meals for the freezer for me so I could just warm stuff up.**
- **The family have 28 days from the sentence being announced to appeal against a lenient sentence. That appeal has to go to the Attorney General's Office.**
- **The family should have the opportunity to visit the court and meet with the witness service and be shown around the court.**

What did you wish you had known? Would it help someone else to know it now? Drop us an email at info@samm.org.uk so we can add it in next time.

The SAMM Website has had a revamp!



We are delighted to announce our new and improved website! Please do take a look. We hope that you will find it useful and be a frequent visitor.
www.samm.org.uk

New Logo Design Competition



Did you design a new logo ?

SAMM Trustees and Staff would like to say a huge thank you to all those who submitted their ideas and artwork for our New Logo Design. We are really grateful to everyone for their input.

SAMM Fundraising Packs Now Available

Do you have a fundraising event in mind? Maybe an 'Afternoon Tea' or a 'Sponsored Run' or you could create one of your own. We can provide you with help and support to get you started. Visit our website to download your Fundraising Pack.



Focus Groups—Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As part of our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion we are organising a series of focus groups at SAMM. Our aim is to gain a better understanding of how traumatic bereavement affects people from different cultures and religions and how best we might be able to bring people together with similar characteristics. If you are from a BAME and ethnically diverse background we would love to hear from you. Equally if you are from a religious background, we would love to hear from you too. If you are interested in taking part in one of our focus groups email us at info@samm.org.uk



Keeping Up With SAMM News

Would you prefer to receive your SAMM Newsletter by email? No problem. Just contact the office.

SAMM Memorial Service Dec 2020 Update



The SAMM Memorial Service in December was, of course, run a little differently due to Covid-19 restrictions. We were unable to attend in person this year but could still take part via live video link.

If you missed it and are reading online you can still watch the recorded video by clicking [here](#) . Or you can visit our website and click the link.

Even though we could not be together at the church we were chatting online and supporting one another all the way through. Well done to everyone who helped make it happen with special thanks to Reverend Richard Carter and the choir who did an amazing job and really made the service very special.

'Remember Me' - Memorial Quilt Update

We have had such a fantastic response to the memorial quilt project. It was a real delight to see how many SAMM members wanted to be involved. A huge THANK YOU and WELL DONE to all those that took part. We are really looking forward to showcasing your hard work.

The project is now closed so if anyone still has a quilt square please ensure you return it to us promptly. Here is a sneak preview!



Memorial and Tribute Section

Alan James Hooper

11/2/67-14/2/92

My beloved son. The years roll by but the heartache remains.



Miss and love you.
You are forever in the hearts of those who love you xx

Avril

2/3/69 – 29/11/91



Child of spring. She touched the hearts of many with her laughter and her love.



This is our hope for you

*That the turmoil within you is still and you find calm,
That the anxiety within you is quietened and that you find peace,
That the anguish within you be healed and you find joy,
That the gentle listening and understanding of those around you may comfort you in your hour of need,
And that the pain deep within your broken heart may ease,
That your trust in life one day be restored, that you find strength to help you through your darkest days,
And that your hope for the future is returned, to remember that you are not alone,
Those you have loved and lost walk beside you every step of the way*

If you have a tribute you would like to add to this section of the newsletter or onto our website then please contact the SAMM Office.

SAMM Secure Forum

The online forum is a valuable tool which is open to all SAMM members, offering a safe place to chat anonymously with other members of SAMM, the trustees and SAMM volunteers.

If you haven't yet registered you can do so by visiting the SAMM website, calling the office 0121 472 2912 or if you are reading the email version by clicking on the link here:

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)

L&DRC Tally Ho!
Persore Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B5 7RN



info@samm.org.uk



www.samm.org.uk



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[SAMM Facebook Page](#)



[SAMM Members Only
Group](#)

HELPLINE

Call: 0121 472 2912

Text: 07342 888 570



Donate & Fundraise

Yes please!



One off or regular donations can be made by Paypal to support at murder and manslaughter



Or Virginmoneygiving.com



You can also set up your own **fundraisers** to support SAMM through Virgin Money Giving!

Or you can send a cheque made payable to SAMM.

Don't forget to let us know if you are a UK taxpayer. We can claim gift aid on your donation making it work even harder for the charity.

giftaid it

You can also raise money for us by using Amazon Smile. Donate to SAMM whilst you shop!



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Thank you for staying in touch with us. As a valued SAMM member this is *your* newsletter. We would love some feedback and suggestions for future issues. We are also keen to receive tributes and poems that we can include in future newsletters and on our website.

Best Wishes,

The SAMM Team.

