

SAMMNational
Support After Murder and Manslaughter

December 2022

Newsletter



Support After Murder and Manslaughter
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Charity Number 1000598



A word from our Chair, Marie Ellis

**I CHOSE TO LIVE IN THE SUNSHINE OF YOUR LIFE,
INSTEAD OF THE SHADOW OF YOUR DEATH.**

Such bold words, easy to say but much harder to put into practice when you are at your lowest ebb as many people reading this will be right now. Who would blame you for getting angry at those words and thinking how am I supposed to walk in the sunshine when all I feel is hurt, pain, anger and every other emotion connected to your terrible grief. I certainly respect you feeling this way, and I understand how difficult it is to get through these dark times. But somehow you do get through you just don't realise it.

Each day you are fighting this demon grief and you master it without thinking. So if all you did today was get out of bed and get dressed, be proud of yourself because that is an achievement. For every task you take on each day regardless how small it is, that's an improvement. You may be taking tiny steps forward but you are taking those steps and for that, again be proud of yourself.

Christmas is a difficult time for many people, as I'm sure it's difficult also for all people who celebrate special days associated to their faith. These are times we spend with family and friends, so these days although they are special they can be such sad and lonely times. This is when you have to be kind to yourself and take some time for yourself. Take ten to fifteen minutes out of each day for you to be alone with your own thoughts. Maybe light a candle while you take some deep breaths to release tension. Make this a special time for you to do whatever eases your pain and remember you are not alone. Many people around the country will be doing similar on Christmas morning and thinking of all their SAMM family.

I will be thinking of you all when I light my candle at 11 am Christmas morning I may not know you personally but you are in my heart, and my wish for you is that someday you find the sunshine after that long walk in the shadows.

With my kindest regards to you all.

Marie Ellis

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Candles are lit as a mark of respect to those who have had their life taken by murder or manslaughter, but we also remember all people who are suffering. Candles can bring us closer to each other, for this reason and for many years now at 11am on Christmas morning, I take ten minutes for myself, when I quietly sit to remember and pay respect to my beloved son and to all SAMM people who are suffering. I find this so special and it gives me the chance to prepare myself for the days ahead. So each year I encourage people to do the same, meaning all will be lighting the candle at the same time, we will all be thinking of each other therefore we are not alone in our grief.

I choose Christmas day for no other reason than most people are able to find the time to do this, shops closed and workplaces shut down so time on our hands.

Wishing you all comfort and peace.

Marie Ellis—Chair

Take Them With You

If someone you love
Did not make it on that trip
You can take it
for them
with them.

If someone you love
did not witness that milestone
you can show them
anytime you like.

If someone you love
did not get to do *their* living
you can finish those dreams
on their *behalf*.

The beautiful thing about love
you see
is that death
need not stop life.

If you carry someone
in your heart
you can take them with you
anywhere you like.

Donna Ashworth



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A word from our CEO, Jo Early

December is upon us which means it's another reminder and another year of living through Christmas without our loved ones. I have always found this time of year very difficult, and it starts many weeks before the actual day. I have a small memorial tree at home surrounded by

candles which I light whenever I feel the need, and this helps ease the pain a little.

Some SAMM members chose not to have a tree or acknowledge Christmas and I completely understand this as it's a very painful time of year. For those of you who are experiencing your first Christmas without your loved one, we are here for you at SAMM. For those of you who are further down the road we are also here for you. No matter how long ago you lost your loved one we will always be here for you.

They are gone from our sight but never from our hearts.

We hope to see you all at our annual memorial service on the 10th December at St-Martin-in-the-Fields. You can join us in person or watch it online. This is a special service in memory of all loved ones taken by murder and manslaughter and a chance for families and friends of loved ones to remember them. If anyone needs any help or support during this time, please don't hesitate to contact us. Our door is always open. There are several ways you can access help with us. Please contact the office to discuss your options.

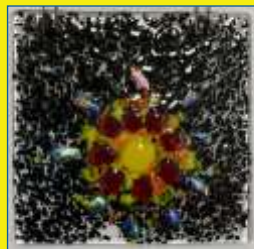
Thinking of you all.

Jo Early

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Empowerment Weekend



Glasswork from the creative session

'Thank you for that. Can I again say thank you to all at SAMM. The Empowerment weekend has really helped. It was such a safe place. I'm trying to quantify what impact it had on me. I've realised I could relax and laugh as well as cry in an environment where people weren't judging my reaction to things. 'Feel sorry or hide away from my emotions - just feel the same. I'm left with a real strength. And permission to 'not' go to where I may not feel this is strong as present. My reactions to life are starting to make sense?? With love and thanks.' **Debbie**



Memorial Bench



Memorial Service Table

2023 Empowerment Weekend Dates

17th-19th February (volunteers only)

2nd-4th June

1st-3rd September

10th-12th November

Contact the office if you would like more information.

Rob Kellas a SAMM volunteer and Trustee was presented with a certificate by SAMM's CEO Jo Early to thank him for the money he raised by completing the Kiltwalk in September.



SAMM is a charity very close to Rob's heart and he was inspired to give something back to it as it has helped him through hard times. Rob raised over £1364.45 by walking in his kilt through Edinburgh in September.

Thank you Rob from everyone at SAMM.

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Victims Commissioner for England and Wales

Dame Vera Baird recently resigned as the Victims Commissioner for England and Wales and left the post at the end of September.

We wish Dame Vera all the best for her new chapter and thank her for supporting SAMM National.

The Victims Commissioner for England and Wales is an independent role, dedicated to promoting the interests of victims and witnesses. You can find more information here:

<https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/>

We will be welcoming the new commissioner once they are appointed and we will ensure they not only under the needs of the bereaved but seek to ensure bereaved families views and needs are at the heart of the criminal justice system.

If you need to contact the Victim Commissioners Office you can email on

victims.commissioner@victimscommissioner.org.uk

Or write to:

Office of the Victims' Commissioner Clive House 5th Floor

70 Petty France

London

SW1H 9EX

Victims Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales

The Victims' Code focuses on victims' rights and sets out the minimum standard that organisations must provide to victims of crime. It's important for bereaved families and friends to know what they are entitled to, even if they have already experienced some aspects of the criminal justice system. There are 12 overarching rights which may apply to you.

If you haven't read the current Code of Practice, you can access it on the home page of our website here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936239/victims-code-2020.pdf

The Code of Practice has also formed part of the current draft Victims Bill which will also ensure that Victim's Rights are enshrined in Law. For more information, please visit the website below for further information <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-victims-bill>.

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Things I wish I'd known!

- I can ask for another FLO if I am not happy with the one I have allocated to me.
- I am entitled to have an independent doctor at the post mortem of my loved one however I may have to pay for this.
- The police press office can help me with the media.
- I don't have to make quick decisions about the funeral etc. I can have a celebration of the life of my loved one.
- I can access trauma counselling and other types of support from the Victim Support.
- Homicide Service In the run up to the trial I can meet the Witness Service based in the court and ask for a court visit so I know where everyone will be sitting in the courtroom at the trial. I can ask for a room so that I can escape the courtroom and have some privacy.
- I don't need to listen to all the evidence if I don't want to. I can go to the private room allocated to me to tell the court/judge about the person I have lost.
- I can make a Victim's Personal Statement.
- It is best not to make big decisions shortly after being bereaved i.e. moving house, getting rid of my loved one possessions etc.
- I am entitled to know my rights under the Victims Code of Practice.

The Room in the House

Tea Toast Laughing

Plotting Planning

Warm Sunny

Wasps Honey

Safe

Us Happy

Home

Him Her

Stabbing

Trying

Trying

Dying

Still

Trying

Blessings Crying

Tea Toast Laughing

Roses Petals

Us Her

Warm Sunny

Wasps Honey

Peace

By Samantha



Volunteer Profile—Tony Rodgers

1. What's the best thing about volunteering for SAMM?

Helping others who have been through what I have been through.

2. Describe SAMM in three words.

Excellent , courageous and supportive

3. How long have you volunteered for SAMM?

About 4 weeks.

4. Where is your happy place?

With my family.

5. What is something people don't know about you?

I can sometimes hold a grudge!

6. Have you met anyone famous?

I met Steve Bruce former Manchester United footballer he stopped outside my house and asked me for directions. I have also met Bruce Jones who played Les Battersby in Coronation Street. In 2015 I refereed a Memorial Football Match and the Emmerdale actor Danny Miller was one of the footballers.

7. What's the best advice you have been given?

Stop blaming myself for what happened to my brother.

8. Where is the best place you have visited?

Yumbo Centre in Gran Canaria.

9. What do you do to relax?

Watch football.

10. What is your favourite food?

Curry and kebabs.



Volunteers Wanted!



We are looking for Telephone Supporters and SAMP Facilitators to join our team.

Would you like to:

- make a difference to someone
- be part of the SAMP community
- get to meet new people
- learn new skills
- give something back
- help your well-being
- feel valued and part of a team

Full online training and support is provided. The SAMP Volunteer course is CPD Accredited. For more information and a registration form contact:

Sarah McGrory - Officer Co-ordinator

E: info@samp.org.uk

T: 07342 886 672 / 0121 472 2912

'The best thing I feel about being a Volunteer is that I'm helping others not to feel so alone knowing they can speak openly to someone, talk their feelings through and also to feel there is someone who has experienced and understand what they are going through.'

'I volunteered after hearing a man on the radio saying volunteers were needed and I thought this was a really worthy cause plus it's something I had experienced but it came home to me when one of my clients said "you are the only support I have".' Linda

'Once my life was on a relatively even keel 18 years after the event, I wanted to give something back in an area of life luckily a closed book to most people.' Sally

'I volunteered for SAMP as I felt that I was in a good situation having recently retired and having some spare time on my hands to help others. I have always been grateful for the help and guidance received from SAMP in 1993 when my twin brother was murdered and felt I could help others who found themselves sadly in a similar position. After undertaking my first phone call recently it has given me confidence that I do have the ability to help and listen to others and make a difference which to me is a very worthy cause.' Debbie

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Self Care

- Go for a walk in nature
- Read a book
- Eat something healthy
- Light a candle
- Have a bath
- Do something creative
- Watch your favourite film



Remember self care is not selfish – it's essential!

Help us protect the environment by going 'paper free'!

Reasons to go paper free:

- Save SAMM National money
- Reduce air pollution
- Increase efficiency
- Save trees
- Increased security
- Eco-friendly



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Donate & Fundraise

SAMM relies on donations to support those traumatically bereaved by murder or manslaughter, and with your help we can provide the support needed for those affected by raising much needed funds. **Ways to donate:**

- **Send a cheque made payable to SAMM**—We can claim gift aid on your donation.
- **Amazon Smile**—donate to SAMM whilst you shop!
- **Ebay**—we are a listed charity that you can support when selling items on eBay.
- **CAF**—Charities Aid Foundation.
- **PayPal and PayPal Giving Fund**—donate through PayPal or PayPal Giving Fund.
- **Direct Debit**—speak to the office to arrange.

We can help you get started with fundraising. If you have any questions please phone us on: **0121 472 2912**, text **07342 888570** or email info@samm.org.uk



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SAMM Online Pop-Up Cafés



Our Pop-up Cafés are very popular and we have lots of positive feedback about the support they provide to our members. The sessions are a chance to share your thoughts and feelings whilst being supported by others with similar experiences. If you would like to book a space on the online session please get in touch.

Women's - Tuesday 19:00-20:00 / Men's - Wednesday 19:30-

20:30Booking is essential. Call or email the SAMM office to book your place.

'Joining the men's Pop-up Cafe has really helped me before I could not talk to anyone about what I was going through but the pop up cafe has helped and saved my life.' - Tony Rodgers

'The women's Pop-up Café is like being wrapped up in a warm blanket after being out in the cold and damp for a very long time.' - Maya

Thought of the day

*"Don't think you're being weak,
for sometimes wanting to hide away,
you are tired from being strong,
it takes strength to face the world every day"*

Memorials & Tributes



If you have a tribute you would like to add to the newsletter, our website or the Memorial Book please contact the SAMM Office.

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SAMM Trustees:

Marie Ellis (Chair)
Marie Wright (Vice Chair)
Rose Dixon (Secretary)
Avi Royle (Treasurer)
Sylvia Smithies
David Reid
Steve Williams
Eugene Scardifield
Lesley Rees
Rob Kellas

Staff Members:

Joanne Early—CEO
Sarah McGrory—Office Co-ordinator
Matilda Boateng—Office Administrator

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.

The SAMM Team

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