



Journeys

Stories, poems and artwork
about alcohol recovery
through counselling

 **FASS**

FIFE ALCOHOL SUPPORT SERVICE



About 'Journeys'

Over the years our clients have relayed to us their stories and experiences. Some of these stories may ring a bell or inspire you to think more deeply about the effect alcohol is having on your life.

With alcohol, people often put the brakes on at the right moment, but for those who find it difficult, there's always help out there. FASS supports people in making positive changes in their lives, enabling them to put the negative effects of alcohol behind them.

This booklet illustrates some of those difficult but successful journeys.

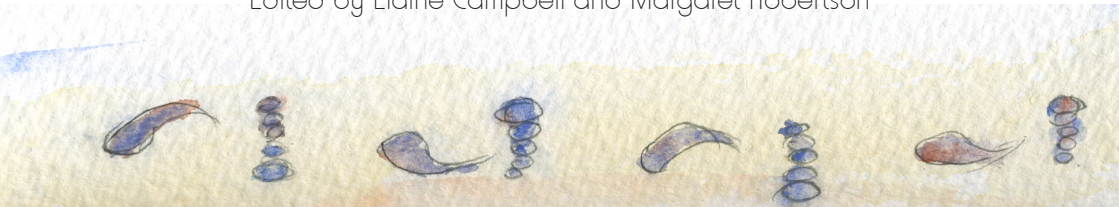
We understand that everybody's life is unique and that no matter how rocky a road we travel, with a little help, we can all get there in the end.

Happy browsing!

Fife Alcohol Support Service (FASS)

If you would like to get in touch with FASS, you will find contact details at the end of this booklet.

Stories and poems by FASS clients
Artwork by Margaret Robertson and FASS clients
Edited by Elaine Campbell and Margaret Robertson



Every weekend I used to wake up feeling ill and exhausted. One day I woke up with a hangover yet again and was so sick and depressed that I looked online for advice about alcohol.


I read a factsheet on the FASS website that made me think about the effect alcohol was having on me, especially my mental wellbeing. I always felt depressed for a few days after a drinking session. I also realised that I was drinking well over the limits and that the quantity of drinks made me a regular 'binge drinker'

I decided that day to give up drinking for a while. It was tough to begin with when I was out with my friends and they were drinking. I felt different because I wasn't having my usual glass of wine or having that initial relaxation that I associated with my first couple of drinks.

Then the great feeling came on a weekend morning when I woke up without a hangover. I was still tired of course, as I had been out late, but I felt so much better. I was actually able to get things done instead of lying around feeling dreadful.

After a couple of weeks off the drink, I knew that I couldn't go back to my old ways. Although I felt good about it, I also felt worried that people would view me as being dull or boring. Thankfully though, I realised that most people don't actually notice that I'm not drinking.

I also realised that the people who gave me hassle about it weren't really friends, as they weren't looking out for my wellbeing – they were just thinking of themselves. Now I can go out at the weekends and enjoy myself without making myself ill. I feel more positive about my life, and my health.



I nursed my husband for many years. It was when I became ill myself that he was taken into a home. I was so deeply disturbed by that event as well as with my own illness that I turned to alcohol.

One night I tried to commit suicide and ended up in hospital. After that crisis I began to get help. Somebody at the hospital told me about FASS and my GP arranged an appointment for me.

Counselling helped me a great deal. We talked about a lot of things and I felt I was being listened to properly for the first time.

I began to get the help I needed for my alcohol dependency and other difficulties I was experiencing due to my illness. I was now getting the support I needed.

I felt much happier and confident that there was light at the end of the tunnel. I felt I was moving in the right direction. I began to turn things around and with the continued help and support of FASS, felt so much better within myself.

I really valued the support counselling gave me. It gave me back my get up and go. I have benefited from one-to-one counselling and have also joined a group at FASS. I thoroughly enjoy it and look forward to it and the things we get up to in the group. It has helped me so much to get on with my life.

I have gone through a long battle against alcoholism, a battle that has seen me go down many different roads. I have been to numerous psychiatric wards and a residential rehabilitation centre as well as seeing a CPN.

All of these have helped in my recovery but it was my FASS counsellor who guided me back to the good life I have today. Compared to five years ago when I was physically and mentally at my lowest point, I now have my own flat, business and my two children are a major part of my life.

It is without a doubt that self-determination and one-to-one support from FASS has brought me to where I am today.

I had a stroke ten years ago. I was struggling to regulate my alcohol consumption and my GP recommended FASS. I had been to psychology sessions after my stroke, and had enjoyed talking to someone – later I realised I needed more help because I was drinking too much. So I was prepared to give FASS a go.

It took me a few visits to build up trust and to get to know my counsellor. Focus, support, a bit of a lift and someone I trusted outside the family – that's what I got from FASS.

It was helpful being able to talk openly about anything, in confidence. It gave me an opportunity to explore issues that were affecting me, outside of the family.

Counselling helped to make me stronger in myself and I was able to try out new experiences. Even though I may not stick at everything, I know that I've learned something from trying anyway.

In general I feel more focussed, confident, relaxed and able to try new things. I still appreciate the support I get from counselling – I am confident I won't slide back because of the strength I have gained from FASS.

As soon as I contacted FASS, I received courtesy and kindness from the receptionist and she promptly sent me some helpful leaflets. I received a letter with my first appointment and what to expect from it.

My counsellor was sympathetic, non-judgemental and she put me at ease. Most importantly she was practical and informative and gave me lots of good ideas including writing lists, tasks and getting up and doing something when I got 'twitchy'.

Of course I still have days when I am not so good, but I'm proud to say it is now twelve weeks since I've had a drink. I would like to thank you for all your help. I have kept your phone number just in case – it's good to know that support is there if I ever need it.

A chaotic watercolor illustration depicting a party scene. The background is a dense, swirling mix of colors including purple, blue, pink, and green. Overlaid on this are numerous small, sketchy drawings of party-related items: wine bottles, glasses, and plates. The overall style is expressive and somewhat abstract. The word "HELP!" is written in a red, handwritten font in the upper left quadrant.

HELP!

NEVER
AGAIN!



It has been a traumatic year for me; not only learning to deal with life without alcohol but the added stress of my dad's addiction and the death of my mum. However, the people at FASS have been there to listen and give lots of really helpful advice.

Life has turned around for me and is much more stable now. I am able to cope without medication and felt ready to end my regular counselling sessions with FASS. But I know FASS support is there if the need arises and that is a great comfort.

So, I just want to say thank you FASS, for all that you have done for me, I really appreciate your support.

Unforgettable *Journey* 'ABOUT 90 PER CENT OF ME IS A FRUSTRATED STAR'

MENTAL BLOC TRAGIC ACCIDENT INTO A LIFE

SOCIAL PHOBIAS DO NOT DISTURB

CONCERNS

COCKTAIL HOUR A THING OF THE PAST

Looking for ADVICE, AND EXPERTISE,

IT HAS TO BE NOW. DETERMINED TO GET IT ALL

doing it for herself

GET WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE SELF-ILLUMINATING STRIKING CLARITY

WISER TODAY NEW STARTS

GENUINE *Finishing Touches*

To Boldly Go SWEET DREAMS

ROCK FINE

cheery

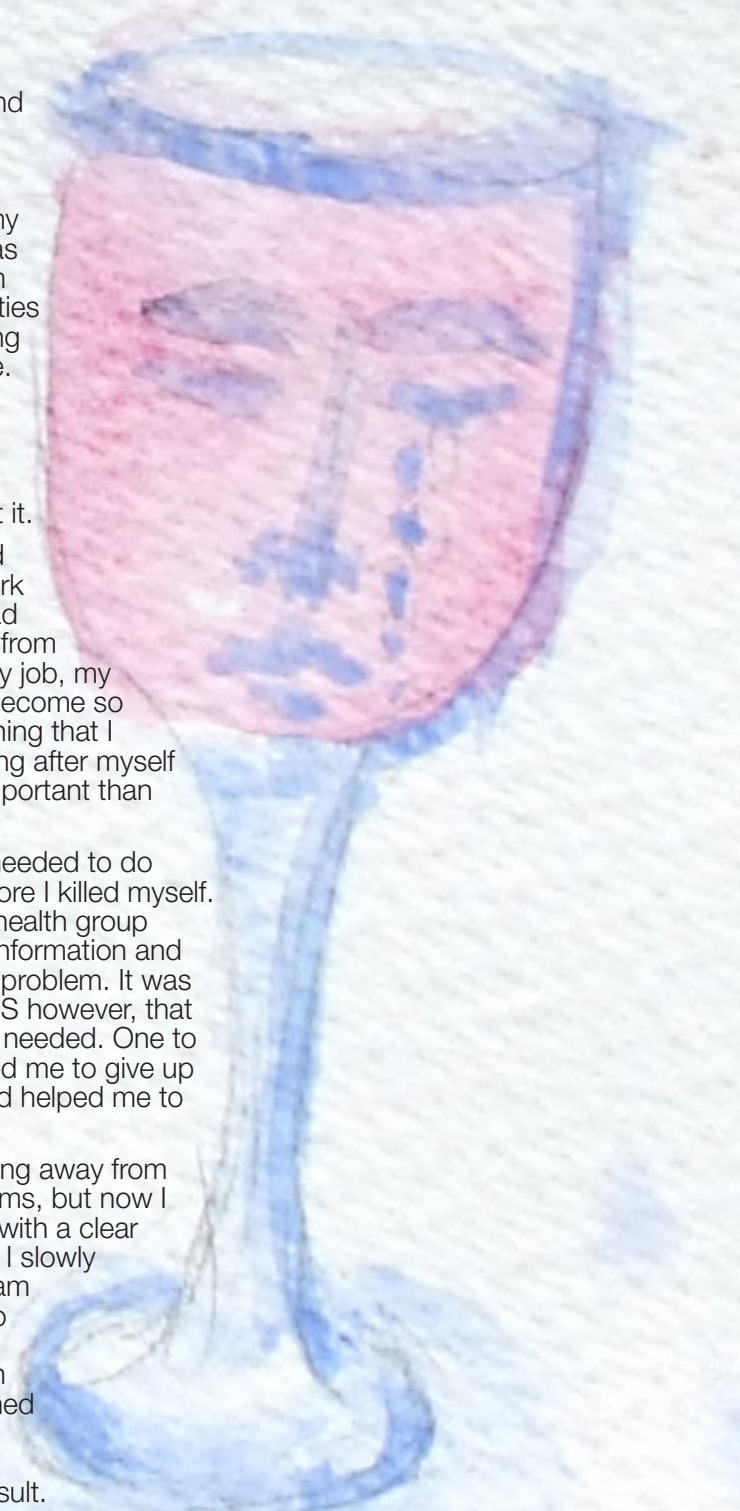
Look at me now! **BRIGHT SPARK** **ON**

I was fed up with my job - all the changes and increased paperwork were making it much less attractive. Instead of saying anything to my wife, I began drinking as a way of escaping from my feelings and difficulties about my work. Drinking slowly took over my life. I used it to cope with my disenchantment with everything so that eventually I couldn't manage my life without it.

I drank excessively and secretly and my work noticed how much I had changed. Things went from bad to worse - I lost my job, my wife, my home. I had become so low and full of self loathing that I didn't care about looking after myself - drinking was more important than anything else.

Eventually, I realised I needed to do something about it before I killed myself. I got help from a local health group which gave me some information and insight into my alcohol problem. It was when I discovered FASS however, that I really found the help I needed. One to one counselling enabled me to give up drinking completely and helped me to understand myself.

I had spent years running away from my feelings and problems, but now I could face things fully, with a clear mind - and it felt great. I slowly got my life back and I am determined never to go to that very dark and scary place again. With FASS's help I have turned my life around and I'm a much more rounded, happier person as a result.



HAPPY

LIFESTYLE

Earning her stripes

Excited Out
About

GET WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE

comfort and warmth

Smile.

'Feel at home'

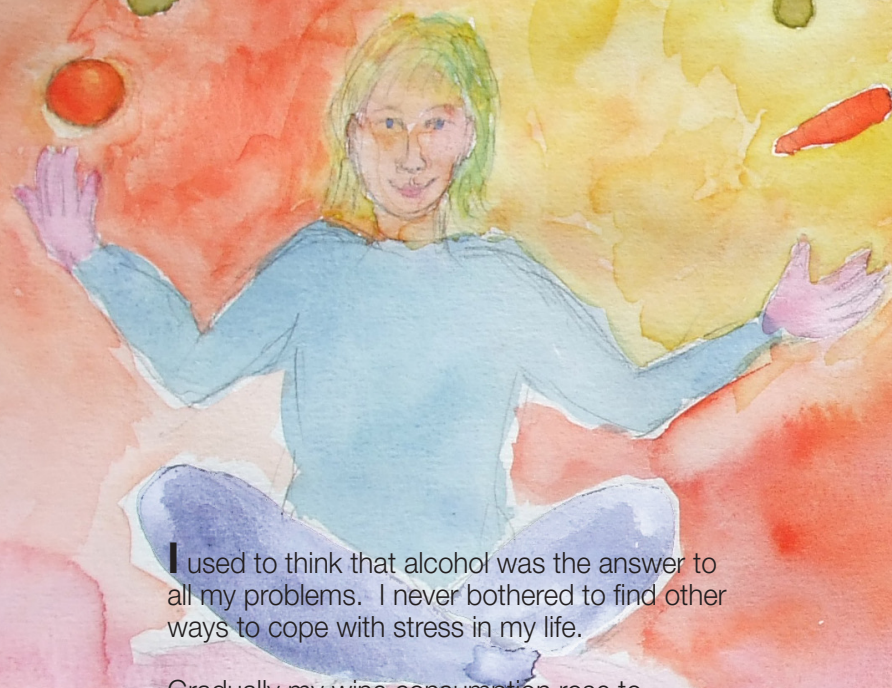
SPECIALIST listener

local knowledge garden

dreaming

RELAX AND ENJOY YOURSELF

Welcome
change



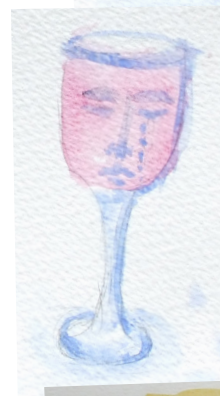
I used to think that alcohol was the answer to all my problems. I never bothered to find other ways to cope with stress in my life.

Gradually my wine consumption rose to alarming levels and I was having difficulty sleeping or coping without it.

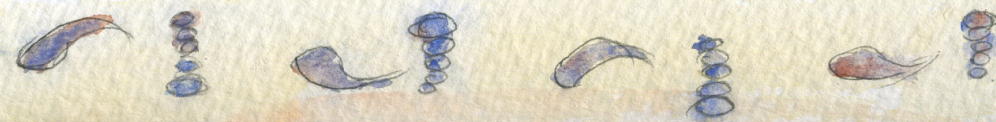
I only drank in the evening, but I knew my children were at risk because I was in such a state after they had gone to bed - anything could have happened.

I realised I had to do something about it or I would lose everything. FASS counselling really helped me to face up to my problems and take control of my drinking.

I have stopped losing myself in an alcoholic haze and feel much better and more positive about the future. My children are much happier now too.



We hope you
were inspired by
the journey...





Fife Alcohol Support Service (FASS)

offers one to one counselling, in confidence,
for anyone aged 16+ with alcohol difficulties or
concerned about someone close to you.

Check out our website at:

www.fife-alcohol-support.org.uk

or call **01592 206200** to make an appointment.



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