

God

Grant me
the Serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
Courage
to change
the things I can
and Wisdom
to know
the difference.



New Life

The Journal of Gamblers Anonymous



*When Anyone, Anywhere,
Reaches out for Help,
I want the Hand of GA
Always to be There.
And for That
I am Responsible!*

Gamblers Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who have joined together to do something about their own gambling problem and to help other compulsive gamblers to do the same.

This journal is written by compulsive gamblers who want to share their experiences.

Opinions expressed may not necessarily be those of the fellowship.

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Literature

FOR THE GROUP

Welcome Letter (A5 card, @ 15p)
"Welcome to the Fellowship" letter to be given to new members.

Advice to help understand Step 1.

Table Card (A5 folded card @ 15p; plastic @ £1) Front reads: "Who you see, What you hear, STAYS HERE!"
Back reads: "Advice for the person giving therapy."

Handbook next edition in print now

Look after your new members A5 leaflet with guidance for looking after new members

Preamble to GA Meeting plus Serenity Prayer (A4 card, @15p; plastic @£1.) To display at meeting.

Posters (A4 and A5, FREE) For distribution in all suitable locations.

FOR MEMBERS

Questions and Answers (A6 booklet @ 25p, first copy free). Affectionately known as the GA "Bible."

The Twelve Steps of Recovery (A6 booklet, @ 50p) Reprinted from the original American "Blue Book", 3rd edition". Steps in full.

Climbing the Steps (A6 booklet @ 25p).

A personal journey through the Steps.

The Twelve Steps of Unity (A6 booklet, @ 50p) Reprinted from the original American "Blue Book", 3rd edition." The steps discussed in full.

Deviations along the Road to Recovery

(A6 booklet, @ 50p) A wealth of advice for the gambler and the gambler's partner to understand what is happening inside ourselves on the road to recovery.

Towards the first 90 days (A6 booklet, @25p) Some words of wisdom for the recovering compulsive gambler to help with the problems of the first 3 months.

Beyond 90 Days (A6 booklet, @25p) Further advice and guidance for Growth in Recovery.

Who am I? (A6 booklet, @ 25p) A look at myself and my character, responsibilities and feelings.

A guide to the "Moral" part of step 4, the "inventory" step.

Be A Sponsor, Your Questions Answered. (A6 booklet, @ 25p) The focus of a member, or members, or the Group as a whole on the Recovery of an individual member.

Phone Card (Credit card size @5p each/ 50 for £1.) The Serenity Prayer and Just for Today with space for telephone numbers.

Obtain literature: Members through your GROUP; for GROUPS from Regional Stockist; ALL OTHERS by email: nso@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

or by post from:-
NSO CVS Building, 5 Trafford Court,
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GA & GamAnon UK/International Convention 2014
Friday 5th – Sunday 7th September, 2014
Holiday Inn, Basildon, Essex

The format of the convention is an opening ceremony on Friday night at approx 8.30pm where you will meet the other GA and GamAnon delegates. The purpose is to explain the proceedings over the weekend and ask individuals, if they wish to speak, what they might expect to get from weekend. There are plans to run a marathon GA meeting going on until late following this meeting.

After breakfast on Saturday you will be given an opportunity to attend up to 4 workshops out of a total of approx 12 on various subjects dealing with Compulsive Gambling and Recovery. There will be 3 workshops running consecutively; one being a GA (closed) another being a GamAnon (closed) and the other being an Open meeting for all to attend.

Saturday night there is a dinner dance where you can relax and enjoy yourself and also firm relationships with new and old friends.

Following breakfast on Sunday you will be given the opportunity to attend two further workshops from a selection of approx 6. After lunch there is a closing ceremony where everyone can, if they choose to, express their feelings on the weekend.

The booking form explains the various options (and payment plans) and you can of course attend the workshops on Saturday without staying overnight - the cost is £10. This would include a welcome pack/brochure & free tea/coffee vouchers but would not include food which is included in the other plans.

There are many eating/entertainment establishments just outside the hotel where members could, if they wish, take a break from the proceedings.

Hotel bookings are picking up steadily. Bookings at the hotel are on a "first come first served basis", so book early. Of course, if you are coming only to attend workshops on Saturday, you need only turn up.

If you require a booking form or more information please contact convention2014@hotmail.co.uk or call Brian/Barbara on 07947 978857 or 020 8519 2134 or Dave C on 07782 384847

In Unity,
The 2014 Convention Committee

Editorial

Is it a selfish programme?

I often hear the debate played out at meetings as to whether it is a selfish programme or not. In many respects, this is just semantics. If you think that it is a selfish programme and this view works for you then that's ok. If you disagree then that is ok too. That is the beauty of the programme – it is often open to interpretation. However, I will take a look at some aspects of this debate.

When in the grip of the addiction, I wanted black and white answers. I did not do shades of grey. Today, many years down the line, I accept that there are nuances and things can often be grey. The question I posed is one of the great paradoxes for me. My own view is that it is not a selfish programme; the whole concept of getting well and helping others in order to stay well, is anything but selfish. However, there are often times when one has to be selfish in order to work the programme. Let me expand.

Do I go to meetings for myself? Yes. My family and friends (and members in the room) benefit from my consistent attendance at meetings but, ultimately, I am there to get well and to stay well. If I am there for my wife or partner, or mother or father, what happens when they think that I am now cured and don't need to go, or when they get resentful when I am at meetings when they would rather I was with them or addressing one of their priorities. This is where I need to be selfish in working my programme because, without my meetings, I can't have these relationships, my job, my finances, my home, my hopes or my hobbies. Moreover, what happens when my fellow members that I have grown close to in the meetings decide that the meetings are no longer for them? Do I let myself be influenced by their agenda or example? No, because without meetings I gamble. It's very straightforward in this regard: I have to be selfish, self-disciplined and stick to my programme. I don't wish to be the people pleaser any more when it could lead me back to gamble. There is too much at stake.

One of the important principles of this programme, however, is its unselfishness. Are those that turn up early to set up the room and make the tea and biscuits being selfish? Is it selfish for me to go to a meeting and share my experience, strength and hope, and my insecurities and fears? Is it selfish to pass on the message to the new member or to give my number to a newcomer or to my fellow member in the group who is struggling? Is it selfish to represent my group at regional meetings or to do telephone duty or any other form of service at group, regional and national level? Of course, all of these are acts of giving and ways for me to move out from the isolation of addiction. Compulsive gambling is a personality problem and to move from selfishness to service, no matter how insignificant it may seem, gets me moving on the upward trajectory of recovery.

In conclusion, it seems to me that it is an unselfish programme which requires a high degree of focus and self-discipline. The price of freedom from gambling is eternal vigilance. It requires commitment in the face of adversity, apathy, lethargy, distraction and, sometimes, hostility. The reward is to put an end to disintegration and to begin reunification, i.e. the road to getting in touch with my humanity.

Matthew
Editor

Does your group have a contact number or email address? Please let me or the webmaster know and it will be published next to the group details.

Bryan (Watford)
My Experience with God

I write as I find it therapeutic because I can then read my own thoughts. Why don't you try it, it really works and I'm sure the New Life Editor would only be too pleased to receive more contributions. The subject of this article will turn a lot of people off, of that I am sure. I want to tell you about my experience of God. Still reading this? OK, let me tell you my story.

When I was a kid I went to Sunday school but I'm not sure if I believed in God or not. I went because my friends did and the church was next door to where I lived. I then stopped going for a while but later went back this time to go to the Life Boys. At around 11 years old, I transferred to a Presbyterian church to join the Boys Brigade because they had a better football team than the one at the other church. I also attended the Methodist church for their youth club and the girls that attended. So committed to God, I was not.

After I left school, I also left the churches. Shortly afterwards, I started gambling; not that I believe that had anything to do with it. By now I had already declared that I did not believe in God. However, when ever in trouble, I would ask God for help, especially if I needed a winner.

Years passed and, aged 32, I was again in trouble. I prayed to God to give me a winning turn to get me out of debt and if he answered my prayers I would give up gambling. On the Monday, I had 3 out of 4 in a Yankee bet; on the Tuesday I had 5 forecast doubles on the dogs; and on the Wednesday I had 4 winners and a non-runner in a Canadian bet giving me my biggest win of all time. I now had enough money to pay off all my debts and as soon as I got paid out I went straight to the bank and did just that. The problem was, as the saying goes, 'be careful what you wish for'. God has a sense of humour. Instead of just

covering my debts, he allowed me to win a bit more than I needed.

I would love to say that I stopped gambling and banked the excess winnings or spent them on something useful but, and I had no idea of this at the time, being a compulsive gambler there was no way that having at last found the winning formula..... You know how the story goes. Within a short time, the extra money had gone and from there it was all downhill until 18 months later I arrived at GA.

For those who don't know, I was due to get married in October 1987. For the 6 months before, both my fiancée and I had to attend the church once a fortnight in order for the vicar to agree to marry us as we no longer lived within their parish. Things were going badly wrong gambling wise, I just could not back a winner, and so I was stealing money from work. During one of the church services, I prayed to God again, this time asking him to get me out of the mess I was in. I forgot the 'be careful what you wish for' bit. A couple of days later, I was summoned to my boss's office and sacked. At the time, I thought God had let me down, even though I still did not believe in him. That night, I rang the Samaritans, then GA and, 9 days later, I ended up at my first meeting. 24 years of total abstinence later I concede that God did answer my prayer after all, just not in the way that I was expecting.

At the time, I didn't know the meaning of gratitude and so I did not have a spiritual awakening or a belief in God. Step Two of our Recovery Programme states: 'We came to believe in a power greater than ourselves'. The 'came to believe' bit took me about 18 months.

In 1989, GA was celebrating 25 years since it started in England and there was a big convention in Birmingham to mark the occasion. When we arrived at the hotel, we were presented with our welcome pack which included a program of workshops to take place

and trying to get a better perspective on my life, how I am doing, where I would like to get to and what I need to do to get there. I just think about my recovery and when I do that my head fills with ideas which I believe come from God.

If you don't think God talks to us, ask yourself whether you have ever gone to a GA meeting with a problem and not shared that problem before someone else in the room says something which answers your unspoken question. It has happened to me on too many occasions for it to be a coincidence but then I do believe in God. I came into GA with no belief but came to believe after 18 months. I used to think that to believe in God you had to have a religion and that caused me a problem. In the past I had tried the Baptists, Presbyterian, Methodists, Spiritualists and, had my Mum not stopped me, would have given the Mormons a go too. None of these convinced me that their message was the one I should go with. Then, 18 months into GA, I came to the conclusion that I don't need someone else to explain God to me. I can talk to him direct and he talks back to me. For me, religion would get in the way of being able to forge the conscious contact with God that this step suggests. Some have said that it's my ego that's working here but I truly believe that I do have one-to-one's with God. If you don't believe me ask him.

'Today, my understanding of this step (12) is that abstinence is only a small part of the message'

Step Twelve - Having made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers. When I first came to GA, the rooms were full of members saying that they got the message first time. What they meant was that they had not gambled since their first meeting and

that going back to it would be a disaster. Today, my understanding of this step is that abstinence is only a small part of the message. Gambling is only mentioned in one of the previous eleven steps. This told me that to continue to refrain from gambling and get a better life, I needed to change and to continue to evolve away from the person I was before GA.

As I have mentioned before, I used to latch on to things people said that gave me an excuse not to follow these steps and one of those was the comment: 'There's no gain without pain'. I was in enough pain due to my secrets, my guilt and my fear, I didn't need any more. Then someone said: 'The only pain in change is in the reluctance to change'. Working the steps have helped to rid me of my pain. The message I pass to those who want to get better is that change is essential and that change can be achieved by following the twelve steps of our Recovery Programme. Countless members have told me that this is a selfish problem but step twelve specifically states we need to try to carry the message of recovery to other compulsive gamblers. This is no selfish act. The program is not selfish but is a program for oneself.

Things turn out best for people who make the best out of the way things turn out.

Courage is not having the strength to go on, its going on when you don't have the strength.

made amends to my parents by setting aside one night a week to visit them and we played scrabble and had a few drinks every Tuesday and they loved it; simple and inexpensive. I gave them quality time. My wife, I gave her a hassle free divorce, again simple but more expensive. My employers from whom I stole money and whom I had already made financial restitution, I sent the bosses a letter explaining why I had done what I had, apologised and thanked them for the way they handled my sacking. They had sent a colleague round to my house within an hour to make sure I would not commit suicide. Had they not done that, maybe I would never have been around to go to GA. Again, it was simple and inexpensive. These are examples of me making amends to others. As you can see, it's not all about finances. My parents said Tuesday's were the best day of the week for them. My wife was happy with the divorce and my ex-employees sent a nice personal letter in response wishing me well. As I said in the previous step, I had me at the top of the list and because of my years in GA and recovery I have made amends to myself. I did this by eventually forgiving myself.

Step Ten - Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. My first thought was not another list; what is it with the guys who wrote these steps. Then it dawned on me they knew that most compulsive gamblers are prone to taking their foot off the gas, preferring to take it easy rather than taking further action. Well, that's me anyway. Laziness and procrastination have to be dealt with before taking this step, that's for sure. This step does make perfect sense because the last thing I need is to have to add anyone else to my step seven inventory so to acknowledge a wrong even a possible wrong and then to make amends as soon as possible is good for me. When I lie, yes even after 25 years of trying to be honest I do

occasionally tell an untruth, I try to correct my mistake straight away. It would be best not to lie at all but I have given up trying to be perfect. I love gardening and step ten and it are a close a match. If I want a beautiful garden I have to put in a tremendous amount of preparation work on the soil and to get rid of weeds. Then I can add compost and plant the flowers. If I just left it at that, the garden would go back to its original state very quickly as there's a need to water and weed on a regular basis to make sure it thrives, just like my recovery needs me to follow the suggestions in step ten.

Step Eleven - Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out. This, to me, is about keeping focus on my recovery; prayer is talking to God and meditation is when I get his answers. I learnt to pray when I was very young and learnt how to do it properly a long way into my GA recovery. Before understanding what it should be, I used to pray for things, for money, for good health, for resolutions to problems etc. Every day I turn my will and my life over to God and pray for the power of restraint, the best way for me to deal with frustrations, the gift of happiness regardless of my circumstances and that of acceptance. If I have a specific problem or one of my nearest and dearest do, then I will ask God to provide me or mine with the strength to deal with that issue. Meditation was a problem because I thought this meant sitting in a dark room, surrounded by candles, breathing in incense, concentrating on a flower and chanting. I have tried Larry from Canada's meditation workshops at various conventions but I either fall asleep or lose my concentration and, therefore, my focus on what I should be attempting. For me, meditation is taking that quiet half hour each day (sometime hours when I am gardening)

over the weekend. After breakfast on the Saturday, there was a choice of 3 workshops and I couldn't decide which to go to. A friend called Eddie, who had attended the same steps meeting as me for the previous 6 months, asked me which one I was going to. I told him I couldn't decide between the 3 workshops. He said there was a fourth workshop and showed me a slip in his program with the additional workshop on Step 3 to be presented by Paul from Liverpool. Eddie was going and suggested I do the same. My first ever convention, my first ever workshop and my first experience of someone being so open talking not just about the higher power but about God. Did his therapy change my opinion that

'I had a spiritual awakening. I can't explain it or how or why it happened.'

GA was the only power greater than me? No, but it did make me think. Another 3 workshops later and it was time for the Dinner Dance. What a fabulous night. It was quite emotional and the drink was flowing. It all got a bit much for me halfway through and so I went outside the main hall to get some air. I then saw one of the GA founders there standing on his own: the Rev Gordon Moody. I took the opportunity of asking if we could have a chat. Half an hour later and still I didn't believe in God. However, later that evening, as I was going back to my hotel room, I fell to my knees in the corridor and for the first time in my life I knew that I believed in God. I had a spiritual awakening. I can't explain it or how or why it happened. I never set out to seek a belief in God but suddenly I believed. It wasn't the drink because 23 years later I still believe.

Every day I pray to God very simply saying: "My name is Bryan, I am a compulsive gambler. I turn my will and my life over to you and, if it be your will, would ask you to grant me the power of restraint, the best way of dealing with my frustrations, the gift of happiness

regardless of my circumstances and that of acceptance." This works for me. I never thought I would ever come to believe but I certainly do and my life and my recovery has been all the better for it. I have no religion and I don't go to church apart from christenings, weddings, funerals and the occasional historical visits. This may sound egotistical but I prefer having one to ones with God.

This article is not designed to convert anyone but a suggestion that you keep an open mind when trying to work the Recovery Programme. It works if you work it; it works even better if you live it.

Michelle (Manchester)
My Journey of HOPE – as a fruit machine addict

I really enjoyed playing on my first fruit machine
My hope was to play again – I really was keen
I felt that playing it was so much fun for me
My hope was to escape life – and be problem free

I loved the buzz that I got from actually playing
My hope was to win – instead of maybe losing
I started to play the machines more and more
My hope was to have them in my life - for sure

I felt though that the addiction got a hold quick
I hoped to control it - and to feel less inner sick
I started to do devious things in order to gamble
I hoped my mind would settle - be less of a scramble

I lied, cheated and manipulated so that I could play
I hoped to be far less devious – some very near day
I tried to give up gambling on my own quite a lot
I hoped that the addiction within me – I hadn't got

I felt the more I tried to give up the more I had to go
I hoped to leave with money – before I had nothing to show
I sat there in a cycle of winning, losing and chasing
I hoped to realise that an overall loss – I was facing

I continued to sit there with thoughts of inner despair
I hoped to get a buzz and a win – whilst sat in the chair
I sometimes started to press the buttons in a certain way
I hoped to trick the fruit machine – into giving me a pay

I would sometimes say 'I'd give up God' if I can get a win
I hoped to use a prayer – which I never usually said within
I believed the machine had to pay as I'd put so much in
I hoped that the machine – was going to give me a win

I often left the arcade after a loss saying 'I won't go again'
I hoped I would have the ability to give up – as it was insane
I felt no matter how hard I tried to give up gambling alone
My hope was lost - as I tried to win back what I had blown

I did the above over and over all the time for many years
My hope was lost trying to beat the constant – inner fears
I felt that my addiction had brought me down from my feet
I hoped without gambling I could live – but inside I felt beat

I knew in my mind I really wanted all the machines to vanish now
My hope for this - was never going to happen for me somehow
I knew instead I needed to give up because it was destroying me
I hoped to get help - before I went on another gambling spree

I was advised to go to GA for understanding support and advice
My hope was with other's help - I'd be able to live without this vice

I went to the meetings a few times a week and listened and shared
My hope was to learn to live without machines – but I was scared

I realised that this would not happen in my life straight away
My hope was making sure I tried to deal with it – each day
I knew the cravings and urges to gamble were driving me insane
I hoped to find support now to settle - my frustrated brain

I knew that by connecting with other cg's at meetings or on the phone
My hope for dealing with this addiction – made me feel I was not alone
I realise that with having effective barriers in place within my daily life
My hope to stay gambling free – can help me cope with a lot of strife

I know now that I have been told to occupy my time and fill the void
My hope was trying to find something else to do - that I enjoyed
I have managed to stay gamble free for a short period of time now
My hope now is that I could continue to stay gamble free – somehow

I once saw myself as the cg that could never give up for a day
My hope is that I now see myself for sure – as a miracle of GA
I also know that without gambling my life can feel rather strange
My hope is never to give up on HOPE - without it – I cannot change

I know I have to deal with my addiction each day as I am an addict
My hope today is knowing that without GA and cg's - I'd be licked
I am grateful that GA and other cg's have never once given up on me
My hope today is that I never give up on me – and I stay gamble free

Michelle (Manchester)
The Strong Urge to Gamble

I had a strong urge
and was on the verge
of placing a first bet
inside I felt so upset
Had an urge inside me

ready to remove some of our defects or just the ones we are happy to let go.
To move on in recovery, this is an all or nothing stage; let go of them all or nothing will improve.

Step Seven - Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings. Suddenly, God appears in our recovery. Today, this does not cause me a problem but, way back before I came to believe, it certainly did until I was told that it allows me to choose who or what I define as God. The guys who wrote these steps were good. They knew if they told us who or what to believe in we would rebel against the idea. Having gotten over the 'God' bit to the step, I then thought why do they have four steps all on the same subject. We are told to make a list, then share it, then prepare ourselves to let go of the defects and now this. Aren't we overdoing it? Perhaps those who wrote the steps thought 11 an odd number on a list, found they were unable to reduce it to just 10 so just added this to even up the numbers. It puzzled me for a long time but then I was given a sheet with someone's opinion on each of the 12 steps. Until then, I thought shortcoming was another word for defect. In the list, it said shortcomings were things where we come up short. This was the step that was emphasizing that we don't just have weaknesses. Where we come up short in things such as honesty, empathy, thinking positive, gratitude, being productive, being decisive, loving, we should ask God, of our understanding, to help us build on our strengths because it's the strengths that enable us to deal with the defects. Finally and importantly the step's first part says 'ask humbly'. So each day, I turn my will and life over to God and say if it be your will rather than just to demand his help. This is just another example of a step designed to deflate my ego just like one to six.

Step Eight - Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. Although I wanted to make amends from day one in GA, I certainly was not prepared for having to make a list. Before I sat down to do this, I thought the whole world should be on it which scared me. It scared me because I was getting too far ahead of myself. I was already thinking how impossible it would be to make amends to everyone. It was another member who eased my panic by explaining that I just had to make a list and then become willing to make amends. Before I wrote my list I thought about it and nothing gets me into more trouble than me thinking about things. I thought of each person I had harmed then tried to justify whether I could leave them off the list because of something real or imagined that they had done to me. After wasting years on this, I eventually did what I was asked to do: I made a list of ALL persons I had harmed and BECAME willing to make amends to them ALL. After a lot of thought, I put myself on top of the list because my gambling harmed me more than anyone else.

Step Nine - Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. At last, after years of waiting, I finally got to where I wanted to be but...now the step is asking me to make a judgement on whether it's possible to make amends without causing harm to those I had harmed. I have, since stopping gambling, constantly questioned my own judgement hence the problem I had with step three. I guess those who put these steps together thought that by working steps one to eight I should be capable of making this decision on my own. Eventually, I did, but only when I worked out how to do it. Had I tried this on entering GA I would undoubtedly have got it wrong and definitely would have done it for the wrong reasons, i.e. to make me feel better about myself. I

many, but I totally forgot about my strengths, probably because I didn't recognise that I had any. When I looked at the list it was depressing so I did what I would always do, I threw away the list. It replicated the times when I was gambling and recording my bets. Once I saw that I was losing, I ditched the record.

'Today....I keep to a monthly budget to ensure I do not spend what I don't have'

It took me ten years and a total acceptance of the first three steps before I had enough honesty and courage to type my inventory and it ended up 23 A4 pages long. It contained everything in my life from my earliest recollection, aged 4, when my brother-in-law taught me how to play, pontoon, poker and brag, to where I was in recovery, aged 44, after ten years of non-gambling. The most important thing was what I learned about myself when I read it back. There were things I had not realised until they were there in front of me in black and white. The main thing that jumped off the pages was that I had a fear of failure and that I would not attempt things in case I failed. Knowing the problem released me from its hold on my recovery. Unfortunately, I failed to take the financial inventory believing that there was no need after ten years of non-gambling. However, seven years later I was in major debt, five times worse than when I arrived at GA. Today my finances are in order and I keep to a monthly budget to ensure I do not spend what I don't have.

Step Five - Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. Before fully take steps one to four, step five was another sticking point in my recovery. Until I managed to be totally honest and got rid of the need for self-justification, there was no way I could admit to myself, let alone anyone else, my wrongs and even less the exact nature of them. The 'exact nature of

our wrongs' was difficult because, initially, I did not understand what this meant. I thought just telling my story of my thieving, my deceit, my lies, my inner thoughts, my nastiness, my hatred and anger etc was all that was needed. However, I learned that the step is asking for something much deeper than this. When I was sacked from work for theft and facing prosecution, I was thinking the worst thing here is that I am out of a job and facing a possible prison sentence. The exact nature of the wrong was much more. The events were not just about me. I destroyed my fiancée's trust along with her dreams and left my mother guilt-ridden because she blamed herself for what happened. Clearly, those who put the steps together knew that a compulsive gambler left to their own devices and their defect of self-justification would not be able to recognise the full consequences of their own acts and that is why we have to share it all with another person who can challenge our version of events and help uncover the exact nature of the wrongs. Doing step five correctly is essential so we can get closer to making amends as covered in steps eight and nine.

Step Six - Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed. The first time I read this, I thought 'at last, an easy one'. I mean, how difficult can it be after all the trauma of working steps four and five? Having made a list eventually, a rather long list, and had it checked for accuracy by another, surely, now, I would be only too ready and willing to have these negatives removed. However, as previously mentioned, I suffer from procrastination, laziness, self-justification, fear of failure, inability to trust my own judgement and much more, which can prevent me taking actions good or bad for my recovery. There are some defects that are hard to let go of such as gossiping, being opinionated, perfectionism, lust etc. Step six does not say were entirely

which wasn't meant to be
couldn't cope on my own
I felt so feking alone

As a gambler in need
I needed help to concede
from placing my first bet
which I really would regret

I connected with another CG
talked about cravings in me
I got support and advice
to cope with this awful vice

I thanked them for call
it stopped my gambling fall
felt I could then cope
the CG gave me hope

Hope to cope with day
To keep the cravings away
'cos of sharing for me
I am still gambling free

Kerry-Anne (Preston)
Anything to Declare?

Such a simple question
Asked to travellers all the time
Everyone answers no
Or they have to stand in line

For me it has a different meaning
One that is personal to me
Have I had a bet today
Or can I declare I am gamble free?

I believe in answering honestly
For that is the only way
That I can continue my recovery
The path I've found through GA

I dread the day I travel again
Yet I know that day will come
How will I react?
Will I just play dumb?

Maybe when that day comes
I'll be strong enough to say
Nothing to declare by me
And most importantly no gambling today

Bryan (Watford)
Sad Farewell

I have just heard the sad news that Dr Jack recently passed away. He was such a wonderful man whom I understand was at the second week of the first ever GA meeting in England in 1964. He was a gentle man and a gentleman too. He believed in GA and he believed in the programme of recovery which led him to 48 years of abstinence which is an amazing achievement and such an inspiration.

When he talked about Step One it was about holding his hands up and surrendering; it made perfect sense. He was also the first member I ever heard talk about gratitude and every day he put a new rose in his lapel just to remind him of this.

In my early days in GA, Dr Jack and his wife Sally seemed to be at every Open meeting and every Convention. Before I ever bet, they were going here and there supporting the opening of meetings around the UK. Without their efforts and those who were around at the time there may not have been a GA meeting for me to turn up to in 1987 when I needed and wanted one. I will be forever grateful to them and his passing is definitely an end of an era. I will miss him greatly.

Colin (Birmingham, Tuesday)
Christmas Past and Present

Christmas is an important time of year in my recovery.

Christmas Past

When I was gambling, I used to look forward to Christmas. Not for the celebrations and getting together with friends, family etc, but for all the horse racing and sport that would be happening on Boxing Day. I'd usually be

in a hole of some sort and would have been studying the form and picking out my favourite horses etc for weeks in a desperate attempt to get myself out of the hole. Presents would be a hindrance; bought on Christmas Eve, spending as little as I thought I could get away with.

Christmas Day - well I was single and we all used to have lunch at my brother's. We used to go down the pub first. A few of us would be there so I would have to nip to the toilet any time it looked like a round of drinks was due. At the lunch table, everyone would know that I was in the s**t and everyone would know that I was planning to blow any money I could lay my hands on the next day. My mum would be worried sick and everyone else would be trying to keep off the subject so as not to spoil the day. My mind would be elsewhere - what the hell were they worried about? After all, I'd be winning a lot of money the next day wouldn't I? Well, no, not usually, just digging the hole a little deeper. Yes, sometimes I'd win but I'm a compulsive gambler: I'd just start digging another hole.

Christmas present

This Christmas (2012) I was at my brother's again, now with my wife. Mum was glad to see us. I know she is proud of me now and doesn't worry any more. We opened our presents on Christmas morning which was nice. I did my Christmas shopping early this year to avoid the rush. We didn't go to the pub but if we had I wouldn't have needed a convenient bladder! In the morning, we went to the beach to watch about 1,000 lunatics run into the sea; apparently it was warm this year!! Not warm enough for me but it was fun watching. We then took our new dog down to the quiet end of the beach and had a run around. My dog had never seen the sea before and it was funny seeing her avoiding the surf. Running out and then back.

At Christmas lunch, there were 12 of us

around the table; my sister in law seemed to have catered for about 30! Lots of food, drink for those that do (I don't) and lots of fun. Everyone was relaxed and had a great time. The lunchtime meal seemed to just roll straight through into evening nibbles.

Boxing Day and my brother likes a bet; good luck to him, he doesn't have a problem. He knows not to discuss his bet with me or tell me of any winnings/losses. I had lunch at my sister's house; it was good. We, again, went to the beach. The day after Boxing Day we said our farewells and drove home, some more good memories that are now outweighing the bad ones from when I was gambling.

'what you do NOW will decide how future Christmases will be'

I used to hate New Year with a vengeance, everyone being optimistic, looking forward, making resolutions etc, whereas I, of course, knew that it was going to be the same old crap, just another year. It's different now. We still had a fairly quiet New Year's Eve but I do look forward to the year ahead with confidence. It will have its ups and downs of course but recovery lets me deal with both. I'm sure it will bring some nice surprises; most years do. For me, Christmas really highlights the difference between then and now; highlights the benefits that recovery can give to anyone. No doubt, many reading this will be new to GA as we always get a lot of new members at this time of year. Likely Christmas just gone wasn't so good for you. Well it's a day at a time, of course, but what you do NOW will decide how future Christmases will be.

Richard (Sheffield)

Call this what you want, label it with what you like - illness, sickness, disease - it does not matter. What does matter is that it has got us all in its

My progress was very slow and I have already listed some of my excuses but, in the early days, I do believe there were some proper reasons why recovery was difficult, if not impossible, for me. In my gambling life before GA, I never accepted I had a problem, I never shared a problem, I never sought, let alone accepted, advice or help from anyone, I did everything my way, I was unable to be honest with myself and I didn't know how to listen. I had to learn all this before I really began to work the programme.

Eventually, I got the whole of step one. Having accepted that I was powerless and my life unmanageable, this reduced my ego to a level that enabled me to consider step two as being essential for me to move forward. I worked out that if I am powerless, I need a power greater than me to get me through the recovery steps, otherwise I would continue to be unhappy despite not gambling or, worse, I would return to gambling. Step two was a comforting one; it was good that I was not going to face what lay before me on my own.

Larry from Canada gave me some recovery tapes years ago and the guy on it explained steps one and two as being up in a plane, jumping out then realising that you have no parachute. At that point, you understand fully the meaning of powerlessness. As you await the inevitable, a huge hand comes from nowhere and catches you ten feet from the ground. A voice says: 'Excuse me sir, we are conducting a survey, do you believe in God?'

Step Three - Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this power of our own understanding. This was a big problem for me because I refused to make decisions. I had come to the conclusion that making decisions in the past led me into the mess I was in. Any decisions to be made had to be made by my wife, my family, my employer,

GA, friends, in fact anyone other than me. For over two years, I allowed fear to paralyse my recovery. Guilt was also a major factor at the time and I would never spend any money on anything for me. Whenever we had some spare money, not very often, I would turn down the opportunity of spending it on clothes etc insisting that my wife buy herself something instead. This infuriated her. I just could not win. I felt guilty so I wanted to make it up to her but all I did was upset her. Then, one day we were out shopping and I decided, out of the blue, to buy a cassette of Sinead O'Connor's album because it featured her best known single 'Nothing compares to you'. I have no idea what made me do it but I remember the excitement of the purchase and how I could not wait until I got back to the car and my cassette player. Popped the tape in to listen to the first track and heard: 'God grant me the serenity.....' At first, I didn't believe my ears and rewound it to listen again. It was a big moment in my recovery. Six months before this I came to believe in God and I saw this event as a message for me to make the decision to hand my will and life over to him. I heard a story a while back when a member was told by his sponsor that he would get a reward if he just made a decision to turn his will and life over to God. "Ok", said the member "I agree, now what's my reward?" "Your reward is that your life is no longer in the control of an idiot."

Step Four - Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves. I did try to do step four after a year into GA, or at least part of it, before fully understanding and working the first three steps. It was a waste of time because all I did was part of the moral inventory. I missed the searching and fearless bit and also the financial part. I was so full of fear and negative thoughts that my inventory was not worth the paper it was written on. I listed my faults, of which there were

Bryan (Watford)

When I was first introduced to the 12 steps Recovery Programme, it was with the words that: 'it's a simple program for complicated people'. For quite a while, I used the 'for complicated people' bit as an excuse for not attempting to get into it. I thought: "yes, I am a complicated person and, therefore, I will find it difficult". I chose to ignore the 'it's a simple program' bit because it was easier to do nothing than to put any effort into trying to get better. One of my many defects of character is that I am lazy and want things without any great effort. I also suffer from procrastination, impatience, guilt and fear. I have learnt over the years that these are some of the obstacles that I put in the way of my progress. I am the only one who limits the extent of my recovery. In other words, unlike when I gambled, I have to take responsibility for my own actions. There is no one else to blame for how I am today.

The obstacles in the way of my recovery were laid by me. I made the mistake of reading all 12 steps at once and Steps 4 and 5 stood out as an excuse for not getting started on the programme and step 7 mentioned God so that was definitely out. I was desperate from day one in GA to make amends to those I had harmed, to put right the wrongs, to make them feel better about me and for me to feel better about myself but some idiot had placed them as steps 8 and 9 in our programme. I found this frustrating until I realised that the steps 1 to 12 are in exactly the right order. If they were the way I wanted them to be they would not work. I came to believe that those who went before me that wrote the Recovery Programme knew exactly what they were doing. I had to trust their judgement which turned out to be far better than mine.

Step One - We admitted we were powerless over gambling - that our lives had become unmanageable.

Once I looked at the Recovery Programme as something which might help me get better, I immediately did what I did before. I looked at step one and only took in the bit that I wanted to -, I admitted I was 'powerless over gambling'. I totally ignored the 'that our lives had become unmanageable' bit. Recovery is like building something from a flat pack: if you don't read all the instructions you can't build in the correct manner. So my early attempts at recovery were not as successful as maybe they should have been. I now believe that my life was more manageable when I was gambling than in the first few years of non-gambling in GA. I survived 17 years of gambling because I lived it one day at a time, choosing to ignore any problems believing every day that today was the day I would get out of trouble. I also believed that gambling was a solution to all of my problems and not the cause. When I stopped gambling my life was unmanageable but I didn't recognise it or maybe didn't want to.

'Someone told me drag your body to the meetings and your mind will follow.'

Despite not gambling for 2 years, 1 year of which I was going to step meetings and sharing my thoughts on recovery, there were still days when I stood on the kerb looking at oncoming buses thinking I should end it all. Clearly, there was something wrong. I believe that everyone who turns up at GA is mentally screwed and, from my own experience, it takes a long time for the mind to clear enough to allow recovery. Someone told me drag your body to the meetings and your mind will follow. Mine did some 2 years into my GA life.

Step Two - Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.

grasp, had us in a chokehold for many of years and will continue to do so for many years to come. Its name is addiction and it does not care where we get our funds from as long as we get them to feed it. It does not care who we hurt as long as we feed it. It does not care what we do as long as we feed it.

There is no beating this; there is no quick fix and there is no magic pill. This is going to be with us for the rest of our lives and how we live our lives and control and conduct ourselves ensures that we never ever give in to our addiction again. We can do this by the following: wanting to stop for ourselves; talking about this not only in the meeting room but at home to our loved ones, to friends at work; using the phone list; having the determination not to give in and go back to this addiction; and never wanting to cause the pain and anguish that we have bestowed upon our nearest and dearest ever again.

Ian (Birkenhead/Chester) *Is a Bet a Just a Bet?*

Can I walk away after placing a bet - win or lose with no consequences?

For me, placing a bet is not just about putting a penny on a wager; it's far more than that. It's risking the lives of my family, their home, their security, their relationships with me and each other, and, in all likelihood, my life.

Some may say this is a bit extreme? I'd never go as far as to bet my life on gambling, but I came very close to making that choice once and I know many others who took that final shake of the dice.

Even if we're not talking about life and death, I've heard it talked about as self-destruction of the soul, crushing all hope and changing the best qualities of myself for the most negative; that's where gambling can take me. I only need to read the poem '*I am addiction*' to remind me of this.

The price of 'just one bet', 'this is a sure winner' and 'if only I could clear my debt', 'I'd never bet again' is too high. Two things I remember: 'GA works when I work it' and 'if I avoid the first bet, I can't place the second'.

Dave (Strood) *Formerly Dave Bexley*

It has been some time since I last wrote to New Life and a lot has changed in that time. I retired from work nearly two years ago and now have all the time to do the things I always wanted to do. I have my allotment so can grow all the veg to feed my passion for cooking, I have the time and space to do my painting, card-making and other hobbies but, most relevant, I have the time to really concentrate on my recovery and enjoy all of the wonderful things life has to offer when not consumed by my addiction.

I will be forever grateful to this wonderful Fellowship and the people in it. It has been quite a journey since I came to my first meeting in April 1992 with a lot of tears along the way during the following years. My beautiful son died suddenly 3 years ago and it is only because of the skills and truths I learned in the rooms that I was able to rebuild a wonderful loving relationship with him that would have been impossible if I hadn't changed my behaviour and attitude.

I am really enjoying my recovery with the help and support I always get from my dear friends at the Strood group. They build me up when I need building up and they tell me straight when I am wrong. I will be celebrating 21 years gambling free soon but I know I am as close to my next bet as the newest member if I choose to do it but, with the support network I have got, I know I always have the tools to help me make the right choices.

MEETINGS LIST – April 2013

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk/meetings

REGIONAL PHONE NUMBERS

Manchester 0161 976 5000
Ulster 0287 135 1329

NORTH EAST

BARNSELEY: Saturday at 10.30am. Holden House, York Street, S70 1BG

BRADFORD: Friday at 7.45pm. Community Arts & Resource Centre, 17-21 Chapel Street, Little Germany, BD1 5DT.
Bradford@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

CLEETHORPES: Wednesday at 7.45pm. The Mind Centre, 50 Oole Road, DN35 8LR

DARLINGTON:

Tuesday at 7.30pm. Harrowgatehill Methodist Church, Lowson Street, DL3 0EY
First Tuesday of the month is an open meeting. Last Tuesday of the month is a steps meeting.

DONCASTER:

Tuesday at 7.00pm. CVS Building, 5 Trafford Court, Trafford Way, DN1 1PN. (GamAnon) Access: next to Doncaster Railway Station

HUDDERSFIELD:

Monday and Thursday at 7.30pm. New North Road Baptist Church, New North Parade, HD1 5JU. GamAnon on 2nd Monday of each month

HULL:

Hull and East Yorkshire Mind Centre, 41 Beverley Road, HU3 1XU. Situated at City End of Beverley Road near Hull Daily Mail Building
[Email: Hull@gamblersanonymous.org.uk](mailto:Hull@gamblersanonymous.org.uk)

Monday Steps at 7.30pm (not for new members)

Tuesday at 7.30pm (this meeting operates as an Open Meeting most weeks)
Friday at 7.30pm

LEEDS:

Monday Steps (Not advised for new members) 8pm. Quaker Meeting House, The Wardens, 188 Woodhouse Lane, LS2 9DX
[Email: Leeds@gamblersanonymous.org.uk](mailto:Leeds@gamblersanonymous.org.uk)

Tuesday and Thursday at 8pm The West Park United Reform Church, Spen Lane, West Park, LS16 5BB (GamAnon on second

and fourth Tuesday of every month)

LINCOLN: Wednesday at 7.00pm. Croft Street Community Centre, Baggholme Road, LN2 5AX

MIDDLESBOROUGH Monday at 7.30pm. Salvation Army Citadel, Admiral Way, Palister Park, TS3 8ET

NEWCASTLE:

Monday + Thursday at 7.30pm. Centre for Unemployed, 4 Cloth Market, NE1 1EA
Access: at Cloth Market between Balmbras and Circus. Nr St Nicholas Cathedral - 2 mins from Newcastle Stn

Tuesday at 7pm. Brunswick Methodist Church, Brunswick Place, NE1 7BJ.
GamAnon

ROTHERHAM: Wednesday at 8pm. Wellgate Court, 68 Wellgate, S60 2LR (GamAnon)
Rotherham@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

SCARBOROUGH: Tuesday at 8pm. The Friends Meeting House, Quaker Close, YO12 5QZ GamAnon Off Woodlands Drive

SHEFFIELD:

Sunday at 7.30pm. Croft House Settlement Youth & Community Centre, Garden Street, S1 4BJ. GamAnon
Sheffield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

WAKEFIELD:

Thursday at 7.30pm. Salvation Army Citadel, Vicarage Street, WF1 1QX

NORTH WEST

ACCRINGTON: Saturday at 1pm, Maundy Relief, 36 Abbey Street, BB5 1EN. Contact number 07974668999

BIRKENHEAD: Thursday at 7.15pm Birkenhead YMCA, Hope Prospect, 56 Whetstone Road, CH41 2TJ Access: Through main entrance at the side of the building. GA located in the café on the ground floor.

BLACKBURN: Wednesday at 7:30pm (Gamanon) Salvation Army Buildings, Vicars Street, BB1 5BE Access: Opposite Morrisons in town centre. Not the main Salvation Army doors. Entrance in side door. Contact number 07974668999

lowestoft@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LUTON: Tuesday at 8.15pm, Our Lady Help of Christians RC Parish Hall, 52 Castle Street, LU1 3AG

LUTON: Thursday at 8.15pm, Luton Central Baptist Church, 52A Park Street, LU1 3ET.

MAIDSTONE: Monday at 8pm. St Faiths Church Hall, Moncktons Lane ME14 2PY
maidstone@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

MILTON KEYNES: Tuesday at 8pm. The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, MK15 9BH

NEWBURY PARK: Wednesday at 7.30pm, Oaks Park High School, 45 – 65 Oaks Lane, IG2 7PQ Access: 10 minutes walk from Newbury Park tube station
newburypark@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

NEW CROSS: Tuesday at 8.30pm. Telegraph Hill Community Centre, Kitto Rd, SE14 5TY Access: off Pepys Road
newcross@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

NEWMARKET: Monday 7.30pm – 9pm. Newmarket Xchange, Unit 11, Studlands Park Avenue, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7EA
Access: by Willie Snaith Road

NORWICH: Wednesday at 8pm. St Mary Magdalen Church, Silver Rd, NR3 4TF
Access: Halfway up Silver Road on the right approaching from City End
norwich@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

ORPINGTON: Wednesday at 7.45pm. Anchor House, 5 Station Rd, BR6 0RZ
Access: opposite Tesco.

OXFORD Tuesday 7:30pm. South Oxford Community Centre, Lake Street, OX1 4RP
Access: off Abingdon Road, opp. Four Pillars Hotel.

PUTNEY: Sunday at 5.30pm. St Stephen's Church, Manfred Road, SW15 2RS Access: East Putney tube. Buses 37 and 337

READING: Kennet Valley Free Church, Building 2 Bless Others (Rooms 3 & 4), Carters Rise, Calcot, RG31 7YT

MONDAY at 8.00pm Step Meeting (not for new members)

THURSDAY Beginners/Newcomers 7pm

THURSDAY + Gamanon: At 8.00pm

ROYSTON: First and Third Thursday at 8.15pm. Royston Methodist Church, Queens Road SG8 7AU Access: Short walk from Royston rail station.

royston@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

STAINES, Wraysbury (formerly Slough): Wednesday at 7.30pm Colne Room, Wraysbury Village Halls, The Green, Wraysbury, Staines, TW19 5NA

SOUTHEND + Gam-Anon: Friday at 8.15pm. 18 Dundonald Drive, Leigh On Sea, Essex SS9 1NB

SOUTHGATE: Sunday at 5.30-7.30pm. Grovelands Priory Hospital, The Bourne, N14 6RA Access: nrst tube Southgate. Corner Queen Elizabeth's Drive

ST.ALBANS: St Alban & St Stephen Rc Church, Parish Room 1, 14 Beaconsfield Rd, AL1 3RB Access: Backs onto St Albans City main line. Approx 200 yards from Horn Pub, Junction Victoria Street.

SUNDAY 8.15pm
THURSDAY 8PM

STROOD Wednesday 8pm Rear of St Nicholas and St Mary's Church, High Street, ME2 4TR

SWINDON Gorsehill Community Centre, Chapel Street, Gorse Hill, SN2 8DA

MONDAY STEPS 7pm

TUESDAY 7pm

WEDNESDAY STEPS at 6pm, Normal Meeting 7.40pm

SATURDAY 10am

SUNDAY 2.15pm

UXBRIDGE (no meetings on bank holidays)

Monday. Steps at 7pm. Normal meeting at 8pm. Christ Church Methodist and United Reformed Church (Room 7), Redford Way, Off Belmont Road, UB8 1SZ opposite Uxbridge bus station.

WATFORD Monday 8pm. Friends Meeting House, 150 Church Rd, WD17 4QB Access: from St Albans Road into Langley Rd then right into Church Rd. 3/4 mile from Watford Junction Stn.

WEMBLEY: Monday at 8.15pm. Baptist Free Church, Slough Lane, Kingsbury, NW9 8QQ

WEST HAMPSTEAD: Saturday at 2-4pm. St Vincent De Paul, 14 Quex Road, NW6 4PS

WHITECHapel: Monday at 7pm. Booth House Training Room, 153 – 175 Whitechapel Road, E1 1DN

This is a MIXED MEETING attended by non-compulsive gamblers

WINCHESTER: Monday at 7.30pm. Friends Meeting House, 16 Colebrook Street, SO23 9LH

BOREHAMWOOD: [Wednesday at 8pm, Allum Hall Community Centre, 2 Allum Lane, WD6 3PL](#) Access: Almost opposite Borehamwood Mainline Stn
borehamwood@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BRENTWOOD: [Thursday at 8.15pm, Gamanon United Reform Church, New Road, CM14 4GD](#)
Email: brentwood@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

CAMBRIDGE: [Wednesday at 7.30pm The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Cathines Road, CB4 3XJ](#)

CHELMSFORD [Wednesday at 7.30pm, Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Road, CM2 6HR](#)

CLAPHAM: [Thursday 6.30pm \(Steps on first Thursday of month at 7.30pm\), St Luke's Church \(office annexe\), Clapham South, SW12 8RQ](#) Access: ring the Eagle Room buzzer on the first floor

COLCHESTER + Gamanon: [Monday 7.30pm Marks Tey Methodist Church, London Road, CO6 1DZ](#) Access: Nr junction A12 and A120 (Braintree) **Steps Meeting on 1st Monday of every month at 6.30pm.**
Colchester@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

EASTCOTE: THURSDAY at 8.00pm, St Lawrence Church, Elsie Fischer Room, 2A Bridle Road, HA5 2SJ Access: Closest tube is Eastcote. Turn right out of tube and through High St, down to roundabout and right into Bridle Road

EDGWARE: [Thursday 8.00pm \(GamAnon on first Thursday of every month\) The John Keble Church Hall, 142 Deans Lane, HA8 9NT](#)

ENFIELD: [Tuesday at 8.00pm, Trinity Church, Gentlemans Row, EN2 6PT](#) Access: Off Church Street

GIDEA PARK: [Monday at 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 7 Balgores Crescent, RM2 6AB](#) Access: Off Balgores Lane, off Main Road

HACKNEY/LEYTON: [Monday At 8.15pm Emmanuel Ch Hall, Hitcham Rd, Leyton, E17 8HL](#) Access: off Lea Bridge Rd

HAINAULT: [Thursday at 7.30pm St Francis Community Hall, Rear of St Francis Church, 144 Fencepiece Road, IG6 2LA](#) Access: bus routes 150, 167, 247, 462

HAMMERSMITH: [Wednesday at 8:00pm, Grove Neighbourhood Centre, 7 Bradmore Park Road, W6 ODT](#)

HARLOW: [Wednesday at 12pm – 2pm, Harlow Health Resource Centre, First Floor Harlow Leisurezone, Second Avenue, CM20 3DT](#)

HARLOW: [Thursday at 8pm, Friends Meeting House, No 1 Church Leys, Tending Road, CM18 6BX](#)

IPSWICH:
TUESDAY at 8pm Friends Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, IP1 3JH Access: near Christchurch Park

KINGSTON: [Monday 8pm \(closed Bank Holidays\), Room 14, First Floor, United Reform Church, Eden Street, KT1 1HZ](#)
Access: nearest Station: Kingston
kingston@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LINGFIELD + Gamanon: [Thursday at 8pm Lingfield & Dormansland Community Centre, The High Street, RH7 6AB](#) Access: opposite Victoria Club, nearest mainline Lingfield 1/2 mile
lingfield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LONDON CENTRAL: [All Souls Clubhouse, 141 Cleveland St, W1T 6QG](#)

MONDAY 8pm GA
TUESDAY 6.45pm Beginners/Newcomers
TUESDAY 8pm GA
THURSDAY 7pm OPEN
Beginners/Newcomers (This a MIXED MEETING attended by non-compulsive gamblers, ie. Family friends, key workers)
THURSDAY 6.45pm Steps
THURSDAY 8pm GA and GAMANON
SATURDAY 8pm GA
Access: Tube at Gt Portland St or Warren St

LONDON EALING BROADWAY (Polish Speakers): [Saturday 8pm. Polish Church, 2 Windsor Road, Ealing Broadway, W5 5PD.](#)
londonealingbroadway@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LONDON WEST END: [The Methodist Church, Hinde St, W1U 3JY.](#) Access: Junction of Hinde St and Thayer St. Nearest tube Oxford St or Bond St.
SATURDAY 2.30pm
MONDAY 6.30pm (closed on bank holidays)

LOUGHTON + GamAnon + Newcomers meeting at 7.15pm: [Tuesday 8pm Loughton Baptist Church, 90 High Road, IG10 4QU](#)
Access: Loughton Underground (5 mins). buses 20, 167, 397, 549
loughton@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LOWESTOFT + GamAnon: [Thursday At 8.00pm, North Lowestoft United Reform Church, London Road North, NR32 1HB](#)
Access: Rear entrance, opposite Police Station & County Courts

BLACKPOOL: [Wednesday at 7.30pm St. Kentigern's Parish Centre, 25 Newton Drive, Blackpool, FY3 8BT](#) Access: Behind No.3 pub at Devonshire Square.

BOLTON: [Friday at 7.30pm \(Gamanon\). Unitarian Chapel, Bank Street, BL1 1TS](#)

BURNLEY: [Thursday at 7pm. The Salvation Army, Richard Street, BB1 3AJ. Contact Number 07974 668999 *NEW MEETING*](#)

CHESTER: [Wednesday at 7.30pm \(Gamanon\) The Salvation Army, Chester Corps, St Anne Street, CH1 3HU](#)
chester@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

COLWYN BAY: [Tuesday at 8pm. Tan Lan Community Bay, Tan Lan Road, LL29 9BB](#)

CREWE & NANTWICH: [Thursday at 7.30pm Wells Green Methodist Church, 1 Brooklands Avenue, Wistaston, CW2 8EL](#)

LIVERPOOL

MONDAY at 7.00pm Our Lady & St Nicholas Church, Chapel Street, Pier Head, L2 8TZ
Access: Side entrance in old churchyard, opposite Thistle Tower Hotel

WEDNESDAY: [at 7.15pm. St Anne Church, Overbury Street, L7 3HJ](#)

SUNDAY at 6.15pm and **FRIDAY** at 7.00pm.
[Sharp, 17 Rodney Street, L1 9EF](#)
07563627218

TUESDAY: [at 8pm St Michaels Church Presbytery, 1 Horne St, L6 5EH, GamAnon](#)
liverpooltuesday@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

THURSDAY: [at 7.30pm \(Gamanon\) Aintree Baptist Church, Longmoor Lane, L9 0EF](#) Next to Premier School of Dance and Drama

MANCHESTER: [Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, M2 5NS](#) Access: off Albert Square, facing rear of central Library

MONDAY at 7pm
TUESDAY at 7pm
THURSDAY at 7pm Gamanon
FRIDAY at 7pm
SATURDAY STEPS at 10am
SATURDAY at 11am

MANCHESTER WOMEN PREFERRED:
[Monday at 6pm Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, M2 5NS](#) Access: off Albert Square, facing rear of central Library

OLDHAM: [Tuesday at 7.30pm, The Link Building \(near The Oldham Chronicle Offices\), 140 Union Street, OL1 1DZ](#)

PRESTON: [Friday at 7.45pm, St Wilfrid's Church Hall, Chapel Street, PR1 8BU, \(Gamanon\)](#)

STOCKPORT

TUESDAY: [at 8.00pm, SUNDAY STEPS: at 7.30pm. Cheadle Heath Community Centre, Essex Avenue, SK3 0JA](#)

FRIDAY: [at 8.00pm. Underhill Day Centre, Underhill, Romiley, SK6 4BL Gamanon](#)

STOKE ON TRENT: [Tuesday at 8pm. St Saviour's Church Hall, Ford Green Rd, Smallthorne. ST6 1NX](#) Access: opposite kebab house

WIGAN: [Monday at 7.30pm \(Gamanon\) Hallgate House, Frank St, Hallgate, WN1 1AB.](#) Access: opposite main bus station,

WREXHAM: [Monday at 7.15pm. Wrexham Salvation Army Centre, Garden Road, Rhossdu, LL11 2NU](#) Access: White side door opposite the car park at rear.

MIDLANDS & SOUTH WALES

BATH: [Thursday at 7.15pm, Manvers Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW.](#) Meeting downstairs in Southgate Room. Please look at the room board next to stairs.
bath@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM:

MONDAY: [at 8pm \(No meetings bank holidays\) THURSDAY\(Gamanon\): at 7.45pm, The Kings Heath Community Centre, Heathfield Road, Kings Heath, B14 7DB](#)

MONDAY: [at 7.15pm Quinborne Community Centre, Ridgacre Road, Quinton, B32 2TW.](#)
birmingham@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

TUESDAY: [at 7.00pm. The Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street, Colmore Circus, B4 6AF.](#)

BRISTOL

TUESDAY: [at 7.15pm \(GamAnon\) Broadmead Baptist Church, 1 Whippington Court, BS1 3HY.](#) Entrance at back of M & S
bristoltuesday@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

WEDNESDAY NEWCOMERS MEETING: [at 7pm, Horfield Quaker Meeting House, 300 Gloucester Road, BS7 8PD](#)

BROMSGROVE: [Friday at 7.45pm \(GamAnon\) The Methodist Centre, 19 Stratford Road, B60 1AS.](#) Access: by Rear Door. By Dolphin Leisure Centre

CARDIFF: Thursday at 7.30pm. City United Reform Church, Windsor Place, CF10 3BZ. Eastern end of shopping centre, Queen Street

COVENTRY: The Great Meeting House 116 Holyhead Rd, Coundon, CV1 3AE. NOTE: No Gamanon meeting 1st Thursday of each month.

Coventry@gamblersanonymous.org.uk
Access: Come off Ring Rd towards B'ham,
THURSDAY + GamAnon 7.30pm
SUNDAY + GamAnon 7.00pm

DERBY:
MONDAY and THURSDAY At 7pm, Sisters of Mercy Convent, (next door to St. Marys Catholic Church), 11 Bridge Gate DE1 3AU.
derbymonday@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

GLOUCESTER: Monday at 8pm. Raven Centre, Hare Lane, GL1 2BB

LEICESTER: St Albans Church Hall, Weymouth St, LE4 6FN
MONDAY at 8pm Gamanon
(no meetings on bank holidays)
WEDNESDAY at 8pm
Access: off Harrison Rd, off Melton Rd, off Catherine St.

NEWPORT: Monday, 7.30pm, Church of Christ, East Usk Road & Riverside, NP19 7AG

NORTHAMPTON: Friday at 8.00pm. Victoria Road Congregation Church, Cyril Street Entrance, Victoria Road, NN1 5ED Access: off Billing Rd

NOTTINGHAM: Wednesday at 7.45pm St Stephens Church Hall, Windmill Lane, Sneinton, NG2 4QB. Access: building at the top of the car park

NOTTINGHAM: Sunday at 8pm (GamAnon) Thomas Helwyns Baptist Church, Church Street, Lenton, NG7 1SJ.

PENARTH: Tuesday at 7.45pm. Lower Penarth Community Centre, Brockhill Way, Lower Penarth, CF64 5QD. Access: behind the Spar shop

PETERBOROUGH: Tuesday at 8pm. Brookside Methodist Church, Gunthorpe Road, PE4 7TG.
peterborough@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

PONTYPRIDD: Monday at 7pm. GamAnon Temple Baptist Church, Gelliwastad Road, CF37 2BP. (no meetings on bank holidays)
pontypridd@gamblersanonymous.org.uk
The first and third Mondays of the month are closed and separate GA and Gamanon

meetings. All other Mondays are joint GA and Gamanon meetings.

SOLIHULL Tuesday at 8pm, Solihull Centre, Church Hill Road, B91 3RQ.
Access: From Solihull High St turn right down Church Hill Road. Go past St. Alphege Church for about 100 yards and the Oliver Bird Hall is on your left.

SUTTON COLDFIELD: Wednesday at 7.30pm. Methodist Church Centre, 16 South Parade, B72 1QY. The 2nd Wednesday in each month is a MIXED MEETING attended by non-compulsive gamblers, i.e. family, friends, key workers.
suttoncoldfield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

SWANSEA: Tuesday (GamAnon) & Sunday at 7.30pm. 8 Quaker Meeting Place, Page Street, S41 4EZ Access: Opposite YMCA.

TELFORD: Tuesday at 7.15pm (GamAnon) Suite 3 The Court, Church Street, Wellington, TF1 1DG.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE: Tuesday at 7.30pm. The Old Hall, Corpus Christ Church, 14 Ellenborough Park South, BS23 1XW.

WORCESTER: at Tuesday 7.30pm St Michael's Parish Church, Burleigh Road, Dines Green, WR2 5QT.

ULSTER

ARMAGH: Wednesday at 8pm, Armagh Fire Station, Loughall Road, Armagh

BALLYBAY: Sunday and Tuesday at 8pm. Cuan Mhuire House, Ballybay, County Monaghan

BELFAST: Monday at 8pm Ehsr Community Centre, South Link, BT11 86X

CARNHILL: Monday at 8.15pm, The Resource Centre, Racecourse Road, Derry, BT48 8BZ

COLERAINE: Tuesday at 8pm, Mount Vern Adult Centre, Rugby Avenue, Coleraine, BT52 1JL

CRAIGAVON: Thursday at 7.30pm, The Town Hall, 2-6 Union Street, Lurgan, Co Armagh, BT66 8DY

CREGGAN STEPS: Wednesday at 8.15pm, The Creggan Neighbourhood Assist, The Old Clinic, The Creggan, Derry, BT48 9QE

DERRY:

WEDNESDAY 7.30pm and SATURDAY 1.30pm. Methodist Church, Carlisle Rd, City Centre, Derry, BT48 6JJ

DONEGAL: Wednesday at 8pm, Bill W Club, The Diamond, Donegal Town

DUNDALK: Wednesday At 8.00pm, The Community Service Centre, 15 Clanbrassil St, Dundalk

DUNGANNON TUESDAY (+ Gamanon) 8pm and FRIDAY 8pm: 1A Killyman Road, BT71 6DE

LETTERKENNY: Tuesday at 8.30pm, The Pastoral Centre, Cathedral Car Park

NEWRY Girl Guide Hall, Dominic Street, BT35 8BN
Monday 9pm
Wednesday 6pm
Friday 9.30pm
Saturday 10am

OMAGH: Monday at 8.30pm, Probation Offices, 11a High St

ROSSKEEN: Friday at 8.30pm, 42 Rosskeen Park, Hazelbank, Derry, BT48 0RH

SOUTH COAST & WEST

BOURNEMOUTH: Monday at 7.30pm, The Meeting Room, St Michael's Church, Poole Road, BH2 5QU
bournemouth@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BRIGHTON & HOVE: Friday at 8.00pm. South Portslade Community Centre, Church Road, Portslade, BN41 1LB

BRIGHTON: Monday at 8pm. St John the Baptist Church, Bristol Road, Kemp Town, BN2 1AP. Tea, coffee and refreshments available from 7.30pm

EASTBOURNE: Thursday at 8pm. Communitywise, Ocklynge Road, Old Town, BN21 1PY *NEW MEETING*

EXETER: Tuesday at 7.30pm (GamAnon) Palace Gate Centre, 3 Palace Gate, EX1 1JA. Access: off South Street
exeter@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

HAVANT: Tuesday at 7.30pm. St Faiths Church House, The Pallant, P09 1BE.
Access: Building back of Bear Hotel Car Park

JERSEY: Monday at 5.30pm St Paul's Centre, Dumaresq Street, St. Helier, Jersey JE2 3RL. (GamAnon)

jersey@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

PLYMOUTH:
MONDAY 7.10pm Quaker House Outreach Centre, 74 Mutley Plain, PL4 7LF.

WEDNESDAY 8pm, St Edward's Hall, Home Park Avenue, Peveril, PL3 4PG

POOLE: Wednesday at 7.30pm. Sea View Centre, Croft Road, BH12 3LD. Gamanon second Wednesday of every month
poole@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

PORTSMOUTH: Thursday at 7.45pm. Bucklands Community Centre, Malins Rd, Northend, PO2 7BL. Access: M275 Portsmouth, Northend exit, 2nd left at R/about 1st Rt into Malins Rd.

SOUTHAMPTON: Sunday at 7.30pm. Friends Meeting House, 1A Ordnance Road, SO15 2AZ. Gamanon first Sunday of every month
Southampton@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

WORTHING: Tuesday at 8pm, Art Room, Sidney Walter Centre, Sussex Street, Worthing, BN11 1DS.

SOUTHERN

ACTON: Tuesday at 8.00pm St Mary's Church, The Mount, Acton High Street W3 9NW Access: Opposite Morrison's Supermarket
acton@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BARNET/FINCHLEY:
WEDNESDAY at 8pm at St Paul's Church, 50 Long Lane, Finchley, N3 2PU

FRIDAY at 7.45-10.30pm at The Blue Beetle Room, St Mary's Church Hall, 26 Hendon Lane, N3 1TR

BASILDON: Tuesday 8pm, Basildon United Reform Church, 6 Honeypt Lane, SS14 2JZ *NEW MEETING*

BEDFORD: Wednesday 8:15pm Chapter House, St Peter de Merton Church, De Parys Avenue, MK40 2TP Access: behind the Swan Hotel

BEXLEY THURSDAY (beginners) AND FRIDAY (Gamanon on first Friday of every month): both 7.45pm at Hurst Community Centre, Hurst Place, Hurst Road, DA5 3LH

BISHOP STORTFORD + Gamanon: Monday at 8.15pm, All Saints Church, Stansted Road, CM23 2DY Access: Red vestry door at the rear of the church
Beginners meeting at 7.20pm