New

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

WWW.GAMBLERSANONYMOUS.ORG.UK

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.

Opinion expressed may not necessarily be those of the fellowship.

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Editor's Message

I'd like to thank Peter, the previous New Life editor, who last year produced a New Life journal every couple of months. I'd like to encourage any members who haven't previously written a 'therapy from the heart' to give it some thought and perhaps put fingers to keyboard. It can be therapeutic and helpful for your continuing recovery. In the last edition Peter asked if all groups could try and contribute one article per group per year... doesn't sound too much does it? If you're unsure what sort of contributions we're looking for read on!

During the years, I've written on different recovery themes and perhaps there are some budding artists in our fellowship that would like to describe their changing life in a different way? Perhaps future articles could contain a cartoon, a comic drawing or some satirical art? Please give it a go!

I believe the New Life journal can help people by giving examples of lives changing for the better and being a source of information such as meetings and contact details. I look forward to getting lots of advice and support from Chris (who puts the New Life in order and creates the magic) and Simon (Sheffield) who gets the Journal to us safely. Thank you on behalf of the fellowship.

I am available at newlife@gamblersanonymous.org.uk and look forward to receiving future contributions soon.

Ian S. New Life Editor

An open meeting is where GA members and their friends and family gather to congratulate periods of abstention from gambling. Every group holds an open meeting at least once per year. Get <u>YOUR</u> open meeting noticed. Go to the website and click on submit an open meeting and fill out the form.

Forthcoming Open Meetings

Please contact the 'New Life' editor with any news about any GA Open meetings or events – newlife@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Newbury Park, Wednesday 18 March at 7.30pm – Recognitions: Tony "Tesco" 8 years, Mehmet 6 years, Frank 5 years, Ashley 2 years, Danny & Tony "the nurse" both 1 year

Eastcote, Thursday 19 March at 8.00pm – Recognitions: Maz 1 year & Neil 3 years

Oldham Tuesday, Tuesday 24 March 2015 19.30pm – Gary M 1 year

Enfield, Tuesday 24 March at 8.00pm – Recognitions: Shane & John both 2 years & Martin 3 yrs

Birkenhead Thurssday, Thursday 26 March 2015 18.45pm – Paul 3 year, John 2 years

Wigan Monday, Monday 30 March 2015 19.30pm – Ian 4 years, Jeff 5 years M 1 year

Watford, Monday 30 March 2015 at the usual meeting place and time, Various Pins/Recognitions

St Helen's Thursday, Thursday 02 April 2015 19.15pm – Steve 14 years

London Central Thursday, Thursday 16 April 2015 8.00pm at the usual meeting place, various pins/recognitions (earlier meetings not affected by the open meeting)

Milton Keynes, 21 April 2015 8.00pm – The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK15 9BH – Taj, Mark & Paul 2 years

Preston Friday, Friday 24 April 2015 – Kerry 2 years, Norman 2 years

Please see the GA website for more upcoming GA Open Meetings

Neil - Guildford GA

Hi Friends

My name is Neil and I am a compulsive gambler. I attended my first meeting in 25 years on 25th February 2013 and have been a regular member of Kingston GA and now the new Guildford GA Meeting.

I am a binge gambler who can go for years without a bet but when I finally succumb I cannot stop and will spend every penny until it is gone. I then throw myself back into work and try to restart my life, often in perilous circumstances.

The 25 year gap occurred as such a result. When I was 21 I attended my first meeting (coincidentally in the old Guildford Group). I knew I had a problem so attended a couple of meetings but was too immature and didn't really want to stop and felt that everyone else around the room had a problem far worse than I. How little I knew.

I haven't had a bet for 10 months now and when I look back on my life I notice the best times occurred when I had little or no money. Being a student (6 years) Travelling (3 years) Supporting a young family (4 years) were all times when I had no time or money to even consider gambling as an option.

I am now facing a prison sentence (I have already pleaded guilty) which I have been mentally preparing for over the last two years. This is the inevitable result of financial abuse in a position of trust. I'd taken everything off my own family and then committed fraud against the most vulnerable person I could imagine, a truly abhorrent crime. I haven't forgiven myself yet and I'm hoping that my due punishment, which is wholly deserved, will give me the chance to turn that corner and start being the person I'd always wanted to be but only found in the dreamworld of a compulsive gambler.

The meetings have helped a great deal over the last two years, even if I am a slow learner, and I regard it as a privilege being in the company of others who share my addiction. Their therapies, advice and friendship have contributed to my well-being and kept me focused on changing myself rather than everything else around mealthough I have to admit that a budget of a few pounds a week helps.

Those few pounds a week used to give me the greatest joy though. Cleaning chewing gum off the outside stairs at Marks and Spencer at 4.30am in the morning before throwing myself into a full day's education and learning with like-minded students. Changing a nappy and feed for the 6th time during the night (we were blessed with twins to start with) and singing lullabies to sooth them and lying prostrate between the cots with my little finger on each hand gripped tightly by theirs as we all fell to sleep. Travelling around India on £2 a day thinking I was Royalty as I journeyed with the impoverished and lived with the cockroaches underneath the bed. All of these I wouldn't swap for anything in the world. And so when I enter prison, I'll carry in my mind the poem I wrote when I was 25 years old in the Himalayan mountains which remains for me the way I want to lead my life, this time gamble free.

Appetite for Life

Feed me on the summit of a mountain:
Let the seething wind be my stimulant;
The cold my hearty breakfast,
Crystal light my lunch
And the warm cave my supper.
Let the snow be my cup of wine;
And ice my sugar, sweet;
And let me swallow the view
In its infinite variations.

Dress me in a field of wheat: Let the furrowed soil be my footwear; And the golden stalks my trousers, Itching with every stride; Let the buds of grain be the sleeves of my shirt, Flapping in the breeze, And the dispersed seeds the buttons on my tunic.

Let the clouds be my hat And let the sun break through and refresh my brow.

Educate me in a fast running river; Let the rolling stones be my path, The swirling currents my tutors, And the boulders and ravines my examinations.

Let the swollen pools be my successes And the rain my companion in failure Let my goal be the waterfall, Boundless in its knowledge and wisdom.

In Unity Neil

Bryan – Watford GA

My name is Bryan and I am a compulsive gambler. When I first came to GA I believed that I should not accept help from anyone else because when it came to the awards ceremony at the end of the year called "My Open Meeting" I wanted to take full credit for being so well recovered. My first year pin was exactly that, I was so pleased with myself for having achieved so much in just 12 months I was a shinning example, I was outstanding. My wife was there to give me my pin and I think she was so overcome by my achievement that she could not put into words what she felt and therefore just stuck the pin in my lapel and left the stage. I did ask her why she didn't say anything and she replied "I didn't want to say what I felt in front of your parents". Sue was not known to be shy so I asked what she meant by that and she replied along the lines of "that despite me not gambling, the last year had been shit for her and she wanted a divorce." We had only been married 9 months at the time.

I never knew what ego was let alone thought I suffered from it but clearly I did. At my first ever GA meeting I entered the room with no

idea how I would get out of the hole I had dug believing that suicide would be the only answer but still had the audacity, the ego, to try and give advice to another member who had been in GA for I think 3 years. I only began to understand that my problem was not my gambling but was me and my ego once I had been directed, in no uncertain manner, to go to a steps meeting. It wasn't an instant "light bulb" moment but over a period of time I gradually came to understand why just stopping gambling is not the answer for me. Abstinence is not recovery but there can be no recovery without abstinence. If I tried to carry on the way I was then I would remain the way I was and in truth I didn't like me. I heard Bernard from Cork describe EGO as Edging God Out and that was true for I did not believe there was any power greater than me.

The early steps of recovery make it very clear that I can not succeed trying to recover on my own. Step 1 when I took the whole of it properly showed me that doing things my way meant my life was unmanageable. I believed that gambling was the solutions to all of my problems not the cause. If I had not eventually changed my attitude, my thoughts, my ways I would have ended up in one of 4 places, the gutter, in prison, in a mental ward or a cemetery. GA, the members and the programmeme not only saved my life but changed the direction I was heading. This happened just as it say's in the GA bible through honesty, open-mindedness and willingness. It is H.O.W. it works.

I would not be where I am today had I not begun to practice the 12 steps of recovery. Without the programme my progress would be stifled by to my ego. I had to get out of ME and into the PROGRAMME. I had to allow God in and not edge him out. I had to learn to be grateful for what I have and also to be grateful to all those members who have helped me. I listen to EVERY member of GA regardless of whether I like them or not because each has something to give me. Sometimes it is an example of

something that is bad for my recovery and therefore one to avoid but mostly it is good suggestions that will help my recovery.

Every so often I get something from someone that boosts my recovery by making me look at things in a different light. Sometimes it comes from a therapy, sometimes a tape and sometimes a suggestion to read a particular piece of literature. Not all of my help comes in the form of GA literature, the last two books recommended to me are non GA but have helped me change direction once again. Recovery for me is not about "DOING THE STEPS" it is about continued working the 12 steps over and over and making progress. There is no final piece of the iigsaw, no end to the amount of recovery that can be achieved. I believe we only stop growing in the Fellowship if we stop being willing to learn or stop being honest or open-minded. This really does get better and better the longer I am in GA.

I have just come to understand after 27 years abstinence that I must stop telling people how this works and instead just share with then how it works for me.

I still have an ego but it is, with the working of the steps, much reduced from my early days in GA. I have to work on it every day because for me the danger of my ego is that if it get's out of control it could lead to me gambling again and I have no wish to do that.

Yours in GA

Bryan - Watford

Danny

My name is Danny and I'm a compulsive gambler. That sentence was the hardest and strangest sentence I've ever said. Even when I said it for the first time in Oldham on the 20th of June this year I still really didn't believe I was.

Although gambling nearly cost me my life...

I can remember saying to my wife on several occasions." I can stop gambling tomorrow if I wanted too", and I believed that.

Although at the time I didn't want to. I can't put a time or a date on when I started gambling but I can remember having a pound bet on the Grand National with my family ever year as a teenager growing up. I guess my gambling really began whilst at University. Having a student loan and a regular income from my parents I always had access to money. My housemates regularly used to go to the casino after a night out and would always come back with large amounts of winnings.

I wanted some of that.

Roulette was my game of choice, I had set numbers and I knew that if they came in within the first three spins I was up. I loved the buzz of the casino, the free drinks and how it made you feel almost like a celebrity when the croupier used to pass over the large amount of chips to you. I can remember one night being up around £500 and putting the £25 chips in my pocket so I didn't spend them - I can just gamble with the colour chips then. After 5 minutes I was losing and was dipping into my pocket placing £25 chips on my numbers, they didn't come in. I think I walked out of the casino that night with £150 still up though in my eyes as I always went in with £20 -£50.

Leaving university and getting a regular job I didn't have time to bet. There were no smart phones then and the only way you could bet was by going into a bookies. I could take it or leave it then.

I remember in the summer of 2004 being bored with six weeks off work as a teacher and not having a holiday to look forward to and not in a relationship. I spent a lot of it at a friend's newsagents shop in LIttleborough. After finishing work we would walk across the road and go into the bookies. Just betting on horses,

not looking at form, just betting on names on numbers. I was lucky,

I was always lucky, all my family used to say I was lucky, I would win a raffle every time I bought a ticket.

I can remember once in Littleborough winning a small amount of money on a horse and then turning around to walk out with my friend when I said I'm gonna have a go on one of these. It was one of the new machines that now seem to grace every single bookmaking shop throughout the UK. Betting on my numbers and winning my monthly wage in 5 minutes was incredible. The adrenaline pumped through my body.

That night I bought champagne and everyone in the bar was a friend.

I stopped gambling then for a bit. Being a compulsive gambler and having a problem with gambling then didn't even cross my mind.

I was just lucky lucky Danny.

Meeting my wife in 2005 turned my life around. I knew from the moment I met her that I wanted to marry her, She was the one.

On average I probably only had a bet once a week then and it was probably a football accumulator, losing £5 didn't seem to bother me.

I was in love and my new addiction was Siobhan

In August 2008 we moved into our first house. I always wanted a better life, more money, a better car, holidays abroad; I saw this as being ambitious and wanting to better myself constantly, although I guess my problem was I wanted them immediately.

Gambling can help with this.

Large amounts of money fast.

I am Lucky Lucky Danny.

It wasn't until December 2012 when I started to have a bet on a regular basis. Owning a smartphone and having an account online made it simple. £5 here or £ 10 there didn't seem to matter. I'd often win and increase my monthly wage. Although it wasn't until my wife printed off our bank statements, that I began to realise my betting was getting a bit out of control. Highlighting all the deposits to sky bet totalled over £600 for the month but I had won £480 so I was only down a £120, that's ok then isn't it? Betting in play was brilliant! I'd be in the pub and utd would be losing 1-0 at half time. Utd always win in the second half and the lovely Ray Winstone was offering ridiculous labho

Utd won and easy money again.

I didn't go out and buy a new wardrobe or put some away for a family holiday. Winning just meant I could bet bigger stakes later that week. Bet big win big. That was my motto!! What a load of bull****!!!

Before I knew it I was using my credit card to withdraw cash from the bank. £500 a day was the limit. I'd forgotten my PIN number so I had to go into the bank with ID, opposite the bank was a bookies. It was perfect. By now I was chasing my losses, being a few thousand down didn't make me want to stop, I knew I'd have a big win soon.

I am Lucky Lucky Danny.

I can remember refereeing a school football match after work and I had been given a tip, I'd backed a horse and halfway through the second half I was watching the race on my iPhone and trying to ref the game!!! What a joke I was! Parents on the touch line must have thought I was mental!!! I didn't care!

I was in my betting bubble.

After being suspended from work on full pay I was in the bookies one day spending again.

I'd planned to stay there all day!!!

Who the hell does that??

I decided to bet on the 2 dog and the number two horse in every race! I was up over £100 within and hour. I then went on to the roulette machines

This was my day.

By the mid afternoon I couldn't close my wallet.

Even the William Hill staff told me to go home.

I ordered a taxi and planned to celebrate in the pub with some mates.

The next 10 minutes to this day is still unexplainable. The taxi pulled up outside the bookies and I walked outside. Just as I put my hand on the car door to climb in my brain went to mush.

Greed, Greed Greed.

I wanted more, I gave the taxi driver a £10! And I went back inside. Needless to say within half an hour of playing those bloody machines I had lost it all. I was physically sick in the car park next door. I was in shock.

I went home.

The World Cup had started but I only had funds left via my my credit card which was getting even closer to the limit. Playing black jack online for £500 a hand, I just need to win. 4 times on the trot to get my money back and then I will stop.

I promise!!!!!!

That night changed my life for the better. I'm glad I lost because I wouldn't be here now. I ended up spending the mortgage money that

would be coming out of our joint account 12 hours later. If the mortgage payment declined I was not only gambling with my money but my wife's and my two children's too. I was asked to leave the family home. I was no longer wanted. The lies and deceit had torn the relationship apart with my wife.

I had been on anti depressants for 18 months previous but I was at an all time low.

Suicidal thoughts were constantly in my mind. I purchased rope from B&Q with a plan to hang myself.

I had written notes to my wife and children explaining everything.

As I walked out of B&Q I bumped into an ex pupil who sang my praises as a teacher. I put the rope in the bin and drove home crying all the way. I admitted to my parents what I had done and the following week I attended Oldham GA. Walking through that door was the best thing I ever did. Members don't have two heads and look like homeless tramps. After deciding to speak in the second half of the meeting a weight was lifted from my shoulders and I knew that my new life was due to start.

Since June 18th of this year and attending meetings whenever I can there are several things that I have learnt...

There is no such thing as dead cert, Ray Winstone is a clown, and just for today I will not gamble because I am lucky lucky Danny.

Danny

Kerry – **Preston GA**

My name is Kerry and I'm a compulsive gambler. My last bet was on 13/04/13

I rocked up to GA a broken person desperate for some hope and someone or something to help me. I had no idea what I was walking into, but I had nothing left to be fearful of as my life was completely destroyed by gambling. So, in August 2011, I decided I had nothing left to lose by giving GA a try and turned up at my first meeting.

To be completely honest, the first meeting was a total blur, and by the time I had got back home again afterwards I couldn't remember a single thing that had been said. However, I did feel a positive energy in the room and I wanted to feel like that myself so I went back again the following week. It took a few weeks for me to even start to understand the concepts of GA and in the meantime, I was trying to stop gambling, but as my brain-fog was so thick that the message was struggling to get through, I was struggling and so surrendering to the urges as I didn't yet have any tools to help me through and start regaining control.

After a few meetings, I finally plucked up the courage not just to tell my family that I was going to GA but also about my gambling, as it was a very well kept secret and while they knew I had an occasional night at the bingo or a few goes on the slots if we were out, they had no idea of the true extent of it or how dire the situation was. Once I had done that, the brainfog started lifting and the GA message started getting through. At this point, I started my recovery albeit tentatively and settled into a new gamble-free lifestyle.

I wish that was the end of the story, and I could say that I had gambling beaten then and things have been better ever since. Of course, that isn't the case, because you never know what life is going to throw at you and the default mode for a compulsive gambler is that of sticking their head in the sand, hoping everything goes away, and gambling to escape it.

I had been plodding along, going to a regular weekly meeting and then over time getting involved with setting up a new meeting in Preston, However, while my financial pressures were easing, because I wasn't actively working on my recovery I was not gaining the tools needed to deal not only with the urges but with the challenges of life too. Eventually, the inevitable happened and the fragile house of cards I had built came crashing down when outside things went wrong. It wasn't even the gambling that got me at first, but a combination of things outside my control happening which started the downward spiral back into despair, hopelessness, and ultimately both suicide attempts and back to gambling.

Once things started to settle again and I was in a position to be able to get back to meetings. I got straight back on the path to recovery. That first meeting back was horrible, especially as I had had to resign from my position within my group and so have an even more constant reminder of what had happened. This time around though I took the recovery program serious and started working at it daily. Things haven't been easy as the after effects of the relapse have been long lasting, not in a financial sense, but an emotional sense. The outside pressures didn't go away, and some of them still persist to this day. The hopelessness and despair, along with the suicidal feelings and behaviours, have been cyclic, going from extreme to negligible and back again. However, working the programme and learning from it about how to handle things differently as well as deal with the gambling itself, has made the good times better even if the bad times as still as intolerable. The main difference though, is that I have been able to make one change and face things head in, even if it means getting hurt even more, instead of burying my head in he sand and trying to gamble away every single problem that comes up.

These days, approaching 2 years since my last bet, I am actively involved within GA at both group and regional levels, and the combination of working the recovery programme constantly and having an ever expanding support network around me, means that I am in a much better place, gamble free and my whole life is improving slowly on a daily basis.

I am no longer ashamed of my faults and I am happy to admit them, because I have learned the hard way that only by admitting my faults and facing them head on can I start to do something about them and make changes to my life. I now accept that I will always be a compulsive gambler and other issues away from gambling will come and try to pull me back down whenever they can, but because I am aware of these demons, I can continue on the recovery path and deal with problems with increasing maturity as I continue my recovery journey.

Kerry (Preston)

Danny

Hi my name is Darren. I am a compulsive gambler. I haven't had a bet today or since my last meeting. Well actually I haven't had a bet for 2vrs. 3months. 19days, a miracle for me. believe it but hey who's counting, my last bet was on a Sunday afternoon on the 10th of June 2012. Here goes, to trying to explain, my insanity, my story, in the grips of my addiction. I like so many, remember the amusements/ arcades and playing cards for pennies as a kid on holiday's. Well to me, that was just harmless fun. For as a child. I had no real pressure or financial responsibilities and I never felt the pain, which gambling brought to me, or my family and friends, later on, in my life. It may of set a seed but It wasn't till I was 20 and the pressures of my up and coming wedding day. approached that I turned to gambling. It offered me a escape, from the pressures and financial responsibilities of life. Like so many at first, I seemed to win and thought it was

easy money. That attitude easy money, easy come, easy go, kept me or should I say, helped me, cope with my gambling addiction. I gambled for over 20vrs and a lot of my life is a bit of a hase, maybe it needed to be, because if I didn't, forget the loses, the pain, the lies, the stealing and the feelings of worthlessness, well? I think the guilt would of killed me. In my addiction I justified everything, even things I thought. I would never do, but when it has you. in it's grips, it controls you, it's hard to explain. only a fellow compulsive gambler, truly understands, it's power over you. People say stop, but I couldn't, I even took a walk, to end my life, to end my pain. I tried to stop, many times and when I promised so many thing's. I ment than, a 100%, at the time, but my illness was stronger, than my own willpower alone. In my addiction, I did many bad things, it took me to many lows, it made me cry and lay motionless in my bed depressed. In the mist of my addiction I emptied my brother in laws account. I spent the shopping money the elec and gas money everyone's money even my own, the only time I stopped gambling was when I couldn't borrow steal lend or had any money left. My ex wife felt the brunt of my gambling and we separated, not sure if the gambling was to blame but it didn't help and I did put her through hell while I had an affair with gambling. The one week I lost all my wages before I made it home, kids and wife waiting for the shopping and electric. When I got home I said I had been mugged at knife point and asked her not to tell anyone because of my masculine pride and began to cry. It was easy to cry cos I had been mugged by the bookies and felt like a mug. A couple of years later in 2002 I got custody of my son aged 10. You would have thought being a single dad with responsibilities I would have stopped. No, I gambled more to escape, it sounds mad and stupid but I was powerless over my illness. Then one day after work. I picked my son up from school and took him to our local, for a meal, all sounds nice. Well when leaving the flashing lights of a bandit caught my eye and a few hours later a member of staff told me sorry kids are not allowed in after 9pm. Did I leave.

no. I put my 10 year old son outside and he was still there, when closing time came and the staff asked me to leave again, I still didn't want to stop, for once I started, I couldn't stop. I used to think I was a proper gambler because I would bet it all, even the shirt off my back. Enough was never enough, for me, whether I won or lost, I couldn't stop. About a year later, I got custody of my youngest daughter, she had come to live with me before but this time it was for good. How I got custody of two of my three kids while in the depths of my addiction, I will never know. I still carried on gambling but now suicide wasn't an option. As credit started to run out, even Provident, payday loans started saving no and the letters, the knocks at the door and phone calls were becoming unbearable. I sank to new, lower low, I started growing drugs to fund my habit. I justified it like I justified everything I did. I risked losing my home, my kids even my freedom, how insane is that and still I couldn't stop. I turned to GA, not for my first time but my 3rd and all 3 times if I am truthful I didn't want to stop gambling. This time was different, why? I think it was because, this time my sister and my 2nd wife came with me, to support me, I still didn't want to stop. I think it wasn't. I didn't want to stop, I think, I didn't think I could stop, I had given up all hope. GA gave me the hope, the strength, the wisdom but most of all it showed me I wasn't alone anymore. I owe a lot to GA, to all those who were in the room before me, all the ones I have met but most of all, all the ones yet to come. For the newbie reminds me of my pain, I relate to their stories and I no longer feel alone. I KNOW that, I don't know. how many times I have tried, how many tears I've cried, how hard I strived, to overcome my gambling. But what I know, is that I'll fight, do things with all my might, I'll not only survive but I will grow one day at a time. Thank you for listening and for helping me. because I know I will never be cured but as long as I keep taking my medicine. I can arrest my illness, my gambling, one day at a

time in unity Darren and one last thing. I am responsible, responsible to be there for those who still suffer and want a hand of friendship. Just to end. I am enjoying my recovery, enjoying a serenity I had never felt before. I am at peace and I feel worthwhile. I have self respect. I no longer need a wad of cash in my pocket, to feel good, GA works if you work it, there is a saying in the fellowship that I love and it's, "in GA, all Suggestions are free. The ones you don't take are the ones you end up paying for, the first two times, I paid for most of them, even the third time struggled but most of my life had been influenced by gambling. It takes effort but not a fraction of the effort I put in to feed my addiction.

Stay safe, avoiding the first bet, one day at a time....Just For Today. Darren Wolverhampton.

Stephen – London

My name is Stephen and I am a compulsive gambler.

I started gambling over 5 years ago. It started out as 100 pounds in the casino. I never really went on a regular basis back then but slowly it became more acceptable to take out 200 pounds and then 300 pounds. In 2011 I started increasing my bets and then would start taking out 500 pounds. In 2012 I increased this to 1.000 and then 2.000. By 2013 I could go up to 8,000 in one night. Though would usually stop when I had lost 4.000. I slowly watched my savings erode away and then, over time, took all of the money out of my flexible mortgage. Eventually I was gambling with my salary as soon as I got paid and then had to cover the losses by taking cash withdrawals from my credit card. When I reached about 20,000 worth of debt across two credit cards I eventually broke down and admitted to a friend that I had a problem. They suggested I go to a GA meeting

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GROUP MEETINGS LIST - NOVEMBER 2014

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk/meetings

NORTH EAST

BARNSLEY SATURDAY

Holden House, York Street, Barnsley, S70 1BG Saturday 10:30 to 12:00 Barnsley@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BRADFORD FRIDAY

Community Arts & Resource Centre, 17-21 Chapel Street, Little Germany, Bradford, BD1 5DT Friday 19:45 to 21:30 bradford@qamblersanonymous.org.uk

CHESTERFIELD MONDAY

Chesterfield Tontine Centre, Tontine Road, Chesterfield, S40 1QU Monday 19:15 to 21:15

DARLINGTON TUESDAY

Harrowgate Hill Methodist Church, Lowson Street, Darlington, DL3 0EY Tuesday 19:00 to 21:00 1st Tuesday of month is a unity meeting

DONCASTER TUESDAY

CVS Building 5, Trafford Court, Trafford Way, Doncaster, DN1 1PN Tuesday 19:00 to 21:00 Next to doncaster railway station

GRIMSBY TUESDAY

Grange Community Centre, Carnforth Crescent, Grimsby, DN34 5EF Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30

HUDDERSFIELD MONDAY & THURSDAY

New North Road Baptist Church, New North Parade, Huddersfield, HD1 5JU Monday 19:30 to 21:30, Thursday 19:30 to 21:15 Huddersfield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

HULL TUESDAY & FRIDAY

Wellington House, 108 Beverley Road, Hull HU3 1XH Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30, Friday 19:30 to 21:30

HULL MONDAY STEPS THIS METING IS NOW CLOSED

LEEDS TUESDAY & THURSDAY

West Park United Reform Church, Spen Lane, West Park, Leeds, LS16 5BB Tuesday 20:00 to 21:45, Thursday 20:00 to 21:45

LINCOLN WEDNESDAY

Croft Street Community Centre, Baggholme Road, Lincoln, LN2 5AX Wednesday 19:00 to 20:00

MIDDLESBOROUGH MONDAY

Salvation Army Citadel, Admiral Way, Palister Park, Middlesborough, TS3 8ET Monday 19:30 to 21:30

NEWCASTLE MONDAY & THURSDAY

Destiny Church, 4th Floor Watson House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear, NE1 1QE Monday 19:00 to 21:00, Thursday 19:30 to 21:30 newcastle@gamblersanonymous.org.uk
Opposite Northern Goldsmiths/Next to Old Odeon

NEWCASTLE TUESDAY

Brunswick Methodist Church, Brunswick Place, Newcastle, NE1 7BJ Tuesday 19:00 to 21:00

ROTHERHAM WEDNESDAY

Wellgate Court, 68 Wellgate, Rotherham, S60 2LR Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00 Building below Civic Centre rotherham@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

SCARBOROUGH TUESDAY

The Friends Meeting House, Quaker Close, Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, East Yorkshire, YO12 5QZ Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

SHEFFIELD FRIDAY

Victoria Methodist Church, Chapel Walk, Sheffield, S1 2JB, Chaple Walk Across from the Crucible Theatre Friday 10:00 to 11:30 Meeting in Room 49 sheffield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

SHEFFIELD SUNDAY

Croft House Settlement, Garden Street, Sheffield, S1 4BJ Sunday 19:30 to 21:30 sheffield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

WAKEFIELD THURSDAY

Salvation Army Citadel, Vicarage Street, Wakefield, WF1 1QX Thursday 19:30 to 21:00

NORTH WEST

ACCRINGTON SATURDAY

Maundy Relief, 36 Abbey Street, Accrington. BB5 1EN Saturday 13:00 to 15:00

BIRKENHEAD THURSDAY

YMCA, Hope Prospect, 56 Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead 18:45 to 20:45

BLACKBURN WEDNESDAY

Salvation Army Buildings, Vicars Street, Blackburn, BB1 5BE Wednesday 19:30 to 21:30

BLACKPOOL WEDNESDAY

St.Kentigerns Parish Centre, 25 Newton Drive, Blackpool, FY3 8BT Wednesday 19:30 to 21:30

BOLTON FRIDAY

Unitarian Chapel, Bank Street, Bolton, BL1 1TS Friday 19:30 to 21:30 Entrance opposite multi storey car park on Bow Street

BURNLEY THURSDAY

The Salvation Army, Richard Street, Burnley, BB11 3AJ Thursday 19:00 to 21:00

CHESTER WEDNESDAY

Salvation Army, St.Annes Street, Newton, Chester, CH1 3HU Wednesday 19:30 to 21:30 chester@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

CREWE & NANTWICH THURSDAY

Wells Green Methodist Church, 1 Brookland Avenue, Wistaston, Crewe & Natwich, CW2 8EL Thursday 19:30 to 21:30

LIVERPOOL WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Sharp, 17 Rodney Street, Liverpool, L1 9EF Wednesday 19:15 to 21:15, Friday 19:00 to 21:15 Saturday 19:30 to 21:00, Sunday 18:30 to 20:00 LiverpoolSunday@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LIVERPOOL MONDAY

Our Lady & St.Nicholas Church, Chapel Street, Pier Head, Liverpool, L2 8tZ Monday 19:15 to 21:15 Side entrance in old Churchyard, opposite Thistle Tower Hotel liverpoolmonday@qamblersanonymous.org.uk

LIVERPOOL THURSDAY

Aintree Baptist Church, Longmoor Lane, Aintree, L9 0EF Thursday 19:30 to 21:30

LIVERPOOL TUESDAY

St.Michaels Church Presbytery, 1 Horne Street, Liverpool, L6 5EH Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

LIVERPOOL WEDNESDAY STEPS

St.Agnes RC Church, 82 Huyton Road, Huyton, Liverpool, L36 5SQ Wednesday 20:00 to 21:30 Please note this is a steps meeting

MANCHESTER MEETINGS

The Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 19:15 to 21:15 Sat 11:00 to 13:00 Manchestertuesday@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

MANCHESTER - WOMEN PREFERRED MEETING

The Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS Monday 18:00 to 19:00 sec.manchesterwomenpreferred@outlook.com

MANCHESTER SATURDAY STEPS

The Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS Saturday 10:00 to 11:00 Please note this is a steps meeting (off Albert Square, facing rear of central library

OLD COLWYN TUESDAY

Tan Lan Community Bay, Tan Lan Road, Old Colwyn, Colwyn Bay, LL29 9BB Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

OLDHAM TUESDAY

The Rock Street Centre, Oldham, OL1 3UJ Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30

PRESTON FRIDAY

St.Wilfrids Church Hall, Chapel Street, Preston, PR1 8BU Friday 19:45 to 21:45 Parking around Whinkley Square

STOCKPORT MEETINGS

Underhill Day Centre, Underhill, Romiley, SK6 4BL Tuesday & Friday 20:00 to 22:00 Sunday 19:30 to 21:30

STOKE ON TRENT TUESDAY

St.Saviours Church Hall, Ford Green Lane, Smallthorne, ST6 1NX Tuesday 20:00 to 21:30 Opposite kebab house, parking at rear of kebab house

ST. HELEN'S

St. Helen's Deafness Resource Centre 32-40 Dentons Green Lane, Dentons Green St. Helen's, Merseyside WA10 2QB Thursday 19:00 to 21:00

WIGAN MONDAY

Hallgate House, Frank Street, Hallgate, Wigan, WN1 1HP Monday 19:30 to 21:30

WREXHAM MONDAY

Wrexham Salvation Army Centre, Garden Road, Whossdu, Wrexham, LL1 2NU Monday 19:15 to 21:30

MIDLANDS & SOUTH WALES

BATH THURSDAY

Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, Bath and North East Somerset BA1 1JW Thursday 19:15 to 21:15 bath@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM MONDAY & THURSDAY

Kingsheath Community Centre, Heathfield Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7DB Monday 19:45 to 21:45, Thursday 19:45 to 21:45 Family and Friends Meeting on Thursday only birmingham@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM MONDAY QUINBORNE

Quinborne Community Centre, Ridgacre Road, Quinton, Birmingham, B32 2TW Monday 19:15 to 21:15 No Friends And Family Meeting

BIRMINGHAM TUESDAY

The Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham, B4 6AF Tuesday 19:00 to 21:00

BRAMPTON FRIDAY

Memorial Centre, Thrapston Road, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4TB *Fridays 19:30 to 21:00*

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BRISTOL TUESDAY at 7.15 (GamAnon)

Broadmead Baptist Church, 1 Whippington Court, Bristol BS1 3HY Entrance at the back of M&S bristoltuesday@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BRISTOL WEDNESDAY

Horfield Quaker Meeting House, 300 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 8PD Wednesday 19:00 to 21:30 No Family and Friends Meeting

BRISTOL SATURDAY

Victoria Park Baptist Church, Sylvia Avenue, Bristol, BS3 5DA Saturday 10:30am to 12:30pm Newcomers and weekend meeting

BROMSGROVE FRIDAY

The Methodist Centre,19 Stratford Road, Bromsgrove,B60 1AS Friday 19:45 to 21:00 Enter at rear of Church, through small car park, at the top of council car park bromsgrove@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

CARDIFF THURSDAY

City United Reform Church, Windsor Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BZ Thursday 19:30 to 21:30 Towards eastern end of main pedestrian shopping street – Queen Street cardiff@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

COVENTRY THURSDAY & SUNDAY

The Great Meeting House, 116 Holyhead Road, Coundon, Coventry, CV1 3AE Thursday 19:30 to 21:30, Sunday 19:00 to 21:00 Off ring road towards Birmingham, besides block of flats

DERBY MONDAY & THURSDAY

Convent Of Mercy 11 Bridge Gate, Derby, DE1 3AU Monday 19:00 to 21:00, Thursday 19:00 to 20:45

GLOUCESTER MONDAY & THURSDAY

Raven Centre, Hare Lane, Gloucester,GL1 2BB Monday 20:00 to 22:00, Thursday 19:30 to 21:30

LEICESTER MONDAY & WEDNESDAY

St.Albans Church Hall, Weymouth Street, Leicester, LE4 6FN Monday 20:00 to 22:00, Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00 (Steps 1st Sat Month), Steps Sat 10:00 - 12:00

NEWPORT MONDAY

Church of Christ, East Usk Road, Newport, Gwent, NP19 7AG Monday 19:30 to 21:00 newport@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

NORTHAMPTON FRIDAY

No meetings on Bank Holidays

Victoria Road Congregation Church, Victoria Road, Northampton, NN1 5ED Friday 20:00 to 21:30 Cyril Street Entrance, off Billing Road

NOTTINGHAM SUNDAY

Thomas Helwyns Baptist Church, Church Street Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 1SJ Sunday 20:00 to 22:00

NOTTINGHAM WEDNESDAY

St.Stephens Church Hall, Windmill Lane, Sneinton, Nottingham, NG2 4QB Wednesday 19:45 to 21:45 Meeting is held in building at top of car park

PENARTH TUESDAY

Lower Penarth Community Centre, Brockhill Way, Lower Penarth, CF64 5QD Tuesday 20:00 to 21:30 Behind the Spar shop

PETERBOROUGH TUESDAY

Brookside Methodist Church, Gunthorpe Road, Peterborough, PE4 7TG Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

PONTYPRIDD MONDAY

Temple Baptist Church, Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd, CF37 2BP Monday 19:15 to 21:00 No meetings on Bank Holidays pontypridd@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

SOLIHULL TUESDAY

Solihull Centre, Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

SUTTON COLDFIELD WEDNESDAY

Methodist Church Centre, 16 South Parade, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1QY suttoncoldfield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk Wednesday 19:30 to 22:00

SWANSEA TUESDAY & SUNDAY

Quaker Meeting House, Pagefield House, Page Street, Swansea, SA1 4EZ Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30, Sunday 19:30 to 21:30

TELFORD TUESDAY

Suite 3, The Court, Church Street, Wellington, Telford, TF1 1DG
Tuesday 19:15 to 21:15
On Church street, take first left then first right into car park
telford@qamblersanonymous.org.uk

WESTON SUPER MARE TUESDAY

The Old Hall, Corpus Christ Church, 14 Ellenborough Park South, Weston Super Mare, BS23 1XW Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30 Entrance from Walliscote Road, rear of car park

WOLVERHAMPTON THURSDAY

Friends Meeting House, 8b Summerfield Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 4PR Thursday 19:00 to 21:00 Behind Doctors.Parking On Site

WORCESTER MEETING IS NOW CLOSED

ULSTER

ARMARGH MONDAY

Malchy Centre, 19-21 Ogel Street, Armargh, BT61 7EN Monday 20:00 to 22:00

BALLYBAY TUESDAY & SUNDAY

Cuan Mhuire House, Corfad, Ballbay, Co.Monaghan Tuesday 20:00 to 21:30 Sunday 20:00 to 21:30

BELFAST MONDAY

Ehssr Community Centre, South Link, Belfast, BT11 8GX

Monday 20:00 to 21:30

Resource Centre, Racecourse Road, Carnhill, Derry, BT48 8Bz Monday 20:15 to 22:00

COLERAINE THURSDAY

Mount Vern Adult Centre, Rugby Avenue, Coleraine, BT52 1JL Thursday 20:00 to 22:00

CRAIGAVON WEDNESDAY

The Town Hall, 2-6 Union Street, Lurgan, Co.Armargh, BT66 8DY Wednesday 19:30 to 20:30

CREGGAN WEDNESDAY

The Creggan Neighbourhood Assist, The Old Clinic, The Creggan, BT48 9QE Wednesday 20:15 to 21:30

DERRY WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY

Methodist Church, 21 Carlisle Road, Derry, BT48 6JJ Wednesday 19:30 to 21:30 Saturday 13:30 to 15:00

DONEGAL WEDNESDAY

Bill W Club, The Diamond, Donegal Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00

DUNDALK WEDNESDAY

The Community Service Centre, 15 Clanbrassil Strret, Dundalk, County Louth Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00

DUNGANNON TUESDAY & FRIDAY

St.Patricks Hall, Union Lane, Dungannon, BT70 1DL Tuesday 20:30 to 22:00 Friday 20:30 to 22:00 (steps)

LETERKENNY TUESDAY

The Pastoral Centre, Letterkenny Tuesday 20:30 to 22:00

NEWRY MEETINGS

Girl Guide Hall, Dominic Street, Newry, BT35 8BN Monday 21:00 to 22:30 Wednesday 18:00 to 19:30 Friday 21:30 to 23:00 Saturday 11:30 to 13:00

OMAGH MONDAY

Probation Offices, 11a High Street, Omagh, County Tyrone, BT78 1BA Monday 20:30 to 22:00

ROSSKEEN FRIDAY

42 Rosskeen Park, Hazlebank, Derry, BT48 0RH Friday 20:30 to 22:00 (Newcomers)

SOUTH COAST & WEST

BOURNEMOUTH MONDAY

St.Michaels Church, Poole Road, Bournemouth, Dorset Monday 19:30 to 21:30

BRIGHTON MONDAY

St John The Baptist Church, Bristol Road, Brighton, BN2 1AP Monday 20:00 to 21:30

BRIGHTON & HOVE FRIDAY

St.Phillip's Church Hall, New Church Road, Hove, BN3 4BB Friday 20:00 to 22:00

CHICHESTER WEDNESDAY

New Park Community Centre, New Park Road, Chichester, PO19 7XY, Wednesday 19:30 to 21:30

EASTBOURNE THURSDAY

Community Wise, Ocklynge Road, Old Town, Eastbourne, BN21 1PY Thursday 20:00 to 21:30

EXETER TUESDAY

Palace Gate Centre, 3 Palace Gate, Exeter, EX1 1JA Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30 Off South Street exeter@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

HAVANT TUESDAY

St Faith's Church House, The Pallant, Havant, PO9 1BE Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30 White building at rear of Bear Hotel Carp Prak

JERSEY MONDAY

St Pauls Centre, St Pauls Gate, Dumaresq Strret, Jersey Monday 17:30 to 19:00 jersey@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

PLYMOUTH MONDAY

Quaker House Outreach Centre, 74 Mutley Plain, Plymouth, PL4 6LF Monday 19:00 to 20:30

POOLE WEDNESDAY

Sea View Centre, Croft Road, Poole, BH12 3LD Wednesday 19:30

PORTSMOUTH THURSDAY

Bucklands Community Centre, Malins Road, Portsmouth, PO2 7BL Thursday 19:45 to 21:45

SOUTHAMPTON SUNDAY

Friends Meeting House, 1a Ordnance Road, Southampton, SO15 2AZ Sunday 19:30 to 21:30

WORTHING SATURDAY

Parish Centre, 117 Broadwater Road, Worthing, BN14 8HT Saturday 14:00 Beginners group

WORTHING TUESDAY

Sydney Walter Centre, Sussex Street, Worthing, BN11 1DS Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

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SOUTHERN

ACTON TUESDAY

St.Mary's Church, The Mount, Acton High Street, Acton, W3 9NW Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00 Opposite Morrisons Supermarket

BARNET & FINCHLEY WEDNESDAY

St.Pauls Church, 50 Long Lane, Finchley, N3 2PU Wednesday 19:45 to 22:30

BARNET & FINCHLEY STEPS MONDAY

St.Pauls Church, 50 Long Lane, Finchley, N3 2PU Monday 19:00 to 20:00

FINCHLEY FRIDAY

Blue Beetle Room, St Mary at Finchley 26 Hendon Lane, Finchley, London, N3 1TR Friday 7.45pm to 10.30pm

BASILDON TUESDAY

Basildon United Reformed Church, 6 Honey Pot Lane, Basildon, SS14 2JZ Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

BEDFORD WEDNESDAY

Friday 19:45 to 21:30

Chapter House, St.Peter De Merton Church, De Parys Avenue, Bedford, MK40 2TP Wednesday 20:15 to 22:15

BEXLEY THURSDAY & FRIDAY

Hurst Community Centre, Hurst Place, Bexley, DA5 3LH Thursday 19:45 to 21:30 (beginners meeting)

BISHOPS STORTFORD MONDAY

All Saints Church, Hockerill, Stansted Road, Bishops Stortford, CM23 2DY Monday 20:15 to 22:00 19:00 to 20:00 (steps Meeting) Entrance through red vestry door at rear of church

BOREHAMWOOD STEPS WEDNESDAY

Allum Hall Community Centre, 2 Allum Lane, Borehamwood, Herts WD6 3PL Wednesday 19:00 to 19:50 Almost opposite Borehamwood Mainline Station

BOREHAMWOOD WEDNESDAY

Allum Hall Community Centre, 2 Allum Lane, Borehamwood, WD6 3PL Wednesday 20:00 to 22:15 Almost opposite Borehamwood Mainline Station borehamwood@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BRAINTREE TUESDAY

Braintree & Bocking Community Association 19-21 Bocking End, Braintree, Essex CM7 3AH Tuesday 19:00 to 20:00

BRENTWOOD THURSDAY

United Reformed Church, New Road, Brentwood, CM14 4GD Thursday 20:15 to 22:15 Via Coptfold Road brentwood@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

BURY ST. EDMUNDS THURSDAY

The Centre, St John's Street, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1SN Thursday 19:30 to 21:30

CAMBRIDGE WEDNESDAY

The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St.Catherines Road, Cambridge, CB4 3XJ Wednesday 19:30 to 21:00

CHELMSFORD WEDNESDAY

Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Road, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM2 6HR Wednesday 19:30 to 21:30

CLAPHAM THURSDAY

St Lukes Church, Corner of Thurleigh Road & Ramsden Road, Clapham South, SW12 8RQ Thursday 18:30 to 20:00 Ring Eagle Room Buzzer. Meeting on 1st Floor

COLCHESTER MONDAY

The Kingsland Church Rooms, 86 London Road, Lexden, Colchester, Essex, CO3 9DW Monday 19:30 to 21:30 steps meeting 18:30 to 19:30 (1st Monday of every month) colchester@aamblersanonymous.org.uk

EASTCOTE / PINNER THURSDAY

St.Lawrence Centre, 2a Bridle Road, Eastcote, Pinner, HA5 2SJ
Thursday 20:00 to 22:15
Closest tube is Eastcote (10 min walk)
eastcote@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

EDGWARE THURSDAY

The John Keble Church Hall, 142 Deans Lane, Edgware, HA8 9NT Thursday 20:00 to 22:00

ENFIELD TUESDAY

Trinity Church, Gentlemans Row, Enfield, EN2 6PT, UK Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00 Off Church Street

GIDEA PARK MONDAY

Friends Meeting House, 7 Balgores Crescent, Gidea Park, RM2 6AB Monday 19:30 to 22:00 Off Balgores Lane

GUILDFORD TUESDAY

Christ Church, 23 Waterden Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2AZ Tuesday 19:30 to 22:00

HACKNEY / LEYTON MONDAY

Emmanuel Church Hall, Hitcham Road, Leyton, E17 8HL Monday 20:15 to 21:30 Off Lea Bridge Road

HAINAULT THURSDAY

St.Francis Community Hall, 144 Fencepiece Road, Hainault, IG6 2LA Thursday 19:30 to 21:00 Bus Route 150,167,247,462 Car park next to Church

HAMMERSMITH WEDNESDAY

Grove Neighbourhood Centre, 7 Bradmore Park Road, Hammersmith, W6 0DT Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00

HARLOW THURSDAY STEPS

Friends Meeting House, 1 Churchleys, Tendring Road, Harlow, CM18 6BX Thursday 19:30 to 20:15

HARLOW THURSDAY

Friends Meeting House, 1 Churchleys, Tendring Road, Harlow, CM18 6BX Thursday 20:15 to 22:30

HERNE BAY THURSDAY

North Room, Christ Church, William Street, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 5BP West side of Herne Bay 300m from The Hampton Pub Thursday 20:00 to 22:00

HERTFORD TUESDAY

Friends Meeting House, 50 Railway Street, Hertford, SG14 1BA Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

HIGH WYCOMBE FRIDAY

St Andrews House, St Andrews Church, Hatters Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP13 7NJ, Next to St. Andrews Church *Friday* 20:00 to 22:00

IPSWICH TUESDAY & SATURDAY

Friends Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich, IP1 3JH *Tuesday 19:30 to 21:30 Saturday 10:00*

KINGSTON MONDAY

United Reformed Church, Eden Street, Kingston, KT1 1HZ Monday 20:00 to 22:00 Room 22, First Floor

LINGFIELD THURSDAY

Lingfield & Dormansland Community Centre, The High Street, Lingfield, RH7 6AB Thursday 20:00 to 22:00 Opposite Victoria Club

LONDON CENTRAL MEETINGS

All Souls Clubhouse, 141 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 6QG Monday 20:00 to 22:00,
Tuesday 18:45 to 19:45 (newcomers)
Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00
Thursday 20:00 to 22:00,
Saturday 20:00 to 22:00,
Saturday 20:00 to 22:00
Tube: Gt. Portland Street or Warren St.

LONDON WEDNESDAY

Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street, London, W1 6DL Wednesday 12:30 to 13:30

LONDON EALING BROADWAY SATURDAY

Polish Church, 2 Windsor Road, Ealing Broadway, W5 5PD Saturday 20:00 to 21:45

LONDON WEST END MONDAY & SATURDAY

Hinde Street Methodist Church, Hinde Street, London, W1U 3JY

Monday 18:30 to 20:00, Saturday 14:30 to 16:30 Room 2 Juntion Hinde and Thayer St. Tube: Oxford St or Bond St

LOUGHTON TUESDAY

Loughton Baptist Church, 90 High Road, Loughton, IG10 4QU Tuesday 20:00 to 21:45 (19:45 to 20:00 for newcomers) loughton@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LOWESTOFT THURSDAY

North Lowestoft United Reformed Church, Lowestoft, NR32 1HB Thursday 20:00 to 22:00 Rear entrance opposite Police Station

LUTON THURSDAY

Luton Central Baptist Church, 52a Park Street, Luton, LU1 3ET Thursday 20:15 to 22:15 Junction 10, next to Matalan

LUTON TUESDAY

Our Lady Help Of Christians Parish Hall, 52 Castle Street, Luton, LU1 3AG Tuesday 20:15 to 22:00 Entrance on Cumberland Street

MAIDSTONE MONDAY

St.Faiths Church Hall, Moncktons Lane, Kent, ME14 2PY Monday 20:00

MILTON KEYNES STEPS TUESDAY

The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, Milton Keynes, MK15 9BH Tuesday 19:00 to 20:00

MILTON KEYNES TUESDAY

The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, Milton Keynes, MK15 9BH Tuesday 20:00 to 22:00

NEW CROSS TUESDAY

Telegraph Hill Community Centre, Kitto Road, SE14 5TY
Tuesday 20:30 to 22:30
Entrance at side of Church, top of Kitto Rd, off Pepys Road
newcross@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

NEWBURY PARK WEDNESDAY

St.Terresa's Church Hall, Eastern Road, Ilford, IG2 7HZ Wednesday 19:30 to 22:00 Suffolk Road Entrance 10 mins from Newbury Park Underground

NEWMARKET MONDAY

Newmarket XChange, Unit 11, Studlands Park Avenue, Newmarket, CB8 7EA Monday 19:30 to 21:00 Access of Willie Snaith Rd, Unit 11 is on the left

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NORWICH WEDNESDAY

St. Mary Magdalen Church, Silver Road, Norwich, NR3 4TF Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00 Half way up Silver Road on right from City End norwich@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

ORPINGTON WEDNESDAY

Anchor House, 5 Station Road, Orpington, BR6 0RZ Wednesday 19:45 to 21:45 Opposite Tesco

OXFORD TUESDAY

South Oxford Community Centre, Lake Street, Oxford, OX1 4RP Tuesday 19:30 to 21:00 19:00 for newcomers – (Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday) Last meeting every month is an open meeting

READING MONDAY & THURSDAY

Kennet Valley Free Church, Carters Rise, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7YT Monday 20:00 to 22:00 (steps) Thursday 20:00 to 22:00 Building 2, rooms 3&4

READING THURSDAY NEWCOMERS

Kennet Valley Free Church, Building 2, Bless Others (Rooms 3&4) Carters Rise, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7YT *Thursday* 19:00 to 20:00

ROMFORD WEDNESDAY

St Michael's Church, Main Road, Gidea Park, Romford, RM2 5EL Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00 Meeting in Manley Room

ROYSTON THURSDAY 1ST & 3RD THURSDAY'S OF EVERY MONTH

Royston Methodist Church Hall, Queens Road, Royston, SG8 7AU Thursday 20:15 to 22:15 Short walk from Royston Railway Station

SOUTHEND FRIDAY

Quaker Meeting House, 18 Dundonald Drive, Leigh on Sea, SS9 1NB Friday 20:15 to 22:00

SOUTHGATE SUNDAY

Grovelands Priory Hospital, The Bourne, Southgate, N14 6RA Sunday 17:30 to 19:30 Drive into priory and go straight down. car park is on the right

ST. ALBANS THURSDAY & SUNDAY

Friends Meeting House, 7 Upper Latimore Road, St.Albans, AL1 3UD Thursday 20:00 to 22:00 Sunday 20:00 to 22:00 Meeting is in small meeting room No car park.Park in upper Lattimore Rd, Malborough Gate or Victoria Street stalbans@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

STAINES WEDNESDAY

Wraysbury Village Hall, The Green, Wraysbury, TW19 5NA Wednesday 19:30 to 21:30 Colne Room PLEASE NOTE: This meeting is closed until further notice due to flooding SOUTHEND FRIDAY

Friends Meeting House, Cuttys Lane, Stevenage,

Herts, SG1 1UP
Thursday 20:00 to 22:00

STROOD WEDNESDAY

St. Nicholas & St. Mary Church, High Street, Strood, ME2 4TR Wednesday 20:00 to 22:00 Parking at rear of Netto Supermarket in North Street

SWINDON MEETINGS

Goreshill Community Centre, Chapel Street, Gorse Hill, SN2 8DA Tuesday 19:00 to 21:00 Wednesday 19:00 to 20:00 (beginners) Saturday 10:00 to 12:00 Sunday 14:00 to 16:00

UXBRIDGE MONDAY

Christ Church Methodist & United Reformed Church, Refford Way, Uxbridge, UB8 1SZ Monday 20:00 to 22:00 Underground: Uxbridge uxbridae@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

WATFORD MONDAY

Friends Meeting House, 150 Church Road, Watford, WD17 4QB, *Monday 20:00 to 22:00*

WEMBLEY MONDAY

Baptist Free Church, Slough Lane, Kingsbury, NW9 8QG Monday 20:15 to 22:00

WEST HAMPSTEAD SATURDAY

St. Vincent De Paul, 14 Quex Road, NW6 4PS Saturday 14:00 to 16:00

WHITECHAPEL MONDAY

Booth House, 153-175 Whitechapel Road, Whitechapel, E1 1DN Monday 19:00 to 21:00 Training Room.Fully staffed reception, sign in with first name only (not surnames)

• All group details correct at time of going to print - 25h February, 2015 •

Question: How can the New Life magazine be published without new material?

Answer: With more contributions from you - the GA fellowship - it's your magazine - please fill it with your new material -Thank You

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Your New Life Needs You please contribute your stories



REQUIRED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

and I attended my first gathering on the 1st October 2013. Since then I have had three returns to the casino in 2013 (my last being on New years Eve 2013).

This year I have had three non-casino bets to the sum total of 16 pounds. Although not the hefty losses I was experiencing I am ever conscious of the slipperv slope of indulging in any betting. I feel better now for not gambling and I feel a level of control, however, from attending the meetings and hearing stories of relapses I am ever conscious of how easily it would be for me to slip back in to my bad ways. I recognise that I have a mental illness and that this is something that I will now have to manage for the rest of my life – which is probably one of the hardest things to understand and accept. Through the support of the group, my friends and family I hope that I can avoid ever returning to this life style again.

In recognition of my journey I wrote a poem/ story about it. I read it probably once a week depending on how I am feeling. For me it serves as a strong reminder of how horrible I felt in my darkest hours... and although it makes me feel sad and sometimes emotional I find strength in recognising where I am now, because I no longer gamble. I hope that anyone else who has suffered at the fate of this terrible disease can read this and gain some comfort that they are not alone — and that there is hope no matter how bleak things can look

The poem is called - How did it begin?

It feels so strange, not been before, Through the fancy and glittery door Back then a passport needed as ID Nice friends from work had Nervous at first, how do I play? Making wrong decisions – learn the hard way.

Though here lies a chance, a chance to win big,

Sometimes pockets full, you are dancing a jig!

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And then if you can, just walk away Think of it again some future day But bizarrely the devil allows you to win. In his camp he sits with a grin

The addiction takes hold and soon you are gripped,

From the moments of laughter to feeling tight lipped

Even when you are up, you still want more, But slowly it goes and then lose it all.

But the memory of winning still fresh in the brain.

You lose, but you know you could win it again!

The repetition, a cycle of pleasure and pain

But each time left feeling exactly the same

If this time you could win, you can clear your debt,

Or pay off your mortgage - better yet! But how many times must it be endured, How many times will you be lured?

Returning home at the sun rise, Tears in your eyes not feeling wise You destroy the card and promise a friend, that you will return no more this is the end

But back you go - The stakes getting higher.

You feel your heart racing, burning like fire!

But the losses come and suck you dry, You want to curl up in a ball and die

The embarrassment, self loathing, you feel no hope,

Suicidal thoughts come in to scope How on earth did it get this bad? You feel lifeless, distraught, a new level of sad

Seduced by the lights the glamour the "fame", And now you are broken feeling the shame

The time has come to stop this trend You need to seek help so that you can mend

The weekly GA meeting offers a light, The strength to regroup and put up a fight

The talking helps, we all do share Our stories of hope and also despair

Friends rally round and offer their time, No judgement made, for your crime A chance to escape and start anew The support is there, but it's all up to you.

Mike - Sutton Coldfield

I am the eldest of three children and my mom and dad worked their fingers to the bone to ensure us kids had a happy childhood.

I was certainly brought up appreciating the values of money. I could see them working so hard and still not having all the luxuries of life that they so deserved.

I wasn't going to be like this. I was going to do as little as possible for as much reward as possible. I was going to gamble.

Looking back on my latter teen years the warning signs were there in big neon lights. If only I had opened my eyes.

It was a seamless transition to go from playing arcade penny slot machines one minute all the way through to casinos and on-line betting exchanges the nex.t

Roll forward to 1996 when I received a substantial redundancy settlement. The problem was that the vast majority of mine was owed to credit cards through gambling.

However, it didn't matter now. I was debt free

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and I could now gamble responsibly. OR SO I THOUGHT.

Over the next decade I gambled more and more frequently for larger and larger sums, after that big win.

My debts were spiralling out of control but credit cards were as simple to obtain as reciting ABC.

In November 2005 I took my now wife to Paris and proposed, to which she agreed. I was elated but at the same time kept wondering just how I was ever going to tell her of my mounting debts.

It was early 2006, things came to ahead when, after yet another day of wasting money, I arrived back home and broke down in tears to my wife. Just imagine being told this a few months after agreeing to marry the person you love and have complete trust in.

My wife broke down in tears and for the first time in my life I realised the hurt and pain that I had caused her. She asked if I had a problem which I callously rejected.

We both agreed that the house could be remortgaged and that I would pay this back as it was my stupidity.

So in June 2006 we happily went off to (of all places) Las Vegas, got married and had the best time ever. Gambling had never been further from my mind.

By the time the re-mortgage had been agreed, what with interest on the credit cards, there was still a small amount o/s although this was manageable. Of course to me it wasn't. Surely I could win it back by a new system and gambling responsibly.

Once again, I chose the road to ruin. Gambling was soon once again every day at every opportunity. The lies and deceit naturally

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started and I was in debt more than ever. I would get back home late each working day having spent the majority of time losing large sums on the betting exchanges. When asked by my wife where had I been or why was I late, I would always ask her to repeat herself as to give me a couple of extra seconds to come up with another lie.

In sheer desperation I tried phoning the bank to re-mortgage the house again, oblivious to the fact that my wife would have to know. My application was declined as the credit crunch had started to hit.

Then one evening my wife came home and broke down in tears. She had noticed on our account the refusal of another re-mortgage. Again, I felt like the most worthless human being on the planet as I confessed to what I had done. Yet, looking back, in the back of my mind, there was this nagging voice telling me that all I needed was one big win. Which was achievable with a new system and responsible gambling.

This time around my wife insisted that I must tell my parents, which I did. I even told my boss who is a very close friend, all of whom were very supportive. Did I really deserve their sympathy? They didn't know what I had done before hand.

The only way we were going to keep the house was if my mother-in-law came to the rescue and bailed me out. So my wife went around to her mums and cap in hand explained (in a round-about way) what had happened. Once again, I was given a lifeline.

My wife asked me to give over all credit cards and cancel my accounts which I still never did to any degree. Sure I gave some of them but made sure I kept a few back for myself just in case I needed them. I was already deceiving her but sheer stubbornness meant I would still not admit to having a problem.

Even after all of the pain and misery I had caused not only my wife now but my mother in law, for the third time I chose the wrong path as there was this constant nagging voice telling me I was one big win away from greatness. Surely this time I could win back all my losses with a new sensible approach and new system.

Within 18 months debts had started to spiral. The only redeeming factor was I had cancelled a few of my cards and my debts could in no way get as big as they had been previously.

Lying had again become the norm and more inventive, direct debit alterations, phantom phone calls etc. The ideas of borrowing money became more and more unrealistic. By this time the deep dark feelings, mood swings and depression were constant. For a few months there wasn't a day that went past when I didn't think about ending my life. Just what was the point of my existence? MY wife, family and friends would be better off without me.

However, I just couldn't go through with it.

My last bet was on Friday 30th July 2010 at the casino. I went in with my last $\pounds 50$ and promptly lost the lot.

As my wife was on holiday at the time, I had arranged to go and see my mother-in-law on the Saturday. I broke down to my mother-in-law fully expecting her to bail me out again but left disappointed to say the least.

I was dreading my wife's return on the Sunday as I would have to come clean and devastate her yet again. In the end, like the coward I was, I waited until the Monday. She simply could not believe what I had done after all of the heartache I had caused. I will never forget the look of sheer despair and devastation on her face.

"You must go to see someone and talk about it. You have a major problem." she shouted.

Somewhat begrudgingly I knew she was right and I had to go, if only in the first instance to save my marriage.

I drove to my parents to tell them what I had done again. The following day, I told my boss who just looked shell shocked. He escorted me to the local casino to ensure I self excluded myself. I broke down when I came out and the enormity of just what I had done began to slowly sink in. It was now time to take some responsibility of my actions

It was Wednesday 4th August 2010 when my life took a massive step in the right direction. I attended my first GA Meeting at Sutton Coldfield. I hadn't a clue what to expect but was at least now determined to get help. A gentleman by the name of Roger greeted me and began to tell me what to expect.

When introducing myself to the group I still had a bit of billy big shot about me as I somewhat quite proudly announced just how much I had lost in my latest instalment. The response I received was not quite what I expected at the time. I think I was probably looking for some kind of congratulations at look how much you lost. Needless to say I was put in my place and told figures are not discussed. I was asked how I was going to pay my debts back. I had never even thought about it up until that point which summed me up. A self centered person who thought the world revolved around him

I came away feeling that a massive weight had been lifted off my shoulders. No-one had judged or critisized me in any way but only offered me sound advise and support. I felt rejuveninated. I got back home and was keen to share all of the advice that I could remember with my wife.

Despite all that I had put my wife through 3 times over, she took everything on board and supported me yet again and has attended semi-open meetings when possible.

Financial barriers were put in place and passport and driving licence handed over. All daily expenditure was accountable.

My parents, brother and sister and a few close friends were all informed of my attendance at GA and all were amazingly supportive.

Within 6 months I took on the role of club secretary. I felt as though I wanted to give something, no matter how small, back to GA as they helped me to start to turn my life around for the better. I started venturing to other GA meetings in an attempt to gain more wisdom and knowledge. I had finally learned to accept what had gone was gone. I could not change the past, only direct my future.

That first 12 months seemed to pass by so quickly. I felt quite a sense of achievement in abstaining from gambling. Looking back I think I thought that was it. Not that I had cracked it, but as long as I didn't gamble, that was enough.

About 6 months later, I was asked by a member why I didn't change my Bank Account to joint names. At the time, I couldn't see the point as I didn't have access to this card anyway. I discussed with my wife and we decided to leave it.

It was 3 or 4 weeks later, when I actually started to understand what was being said and the meaning behind it. If I wouldn't make the smallest of changes to further prevent me from gambling, what chance had I of changing the bigger picture (my personality defects).

I went back home and explained to my wife the reasons why I thought we should amend the account. That Saturday the account was amended to joint names.

A little after my 2 year anniversary (and after several half-hearted attempts) I finally got around to making a more concerted effort on my character defects. The results were quite alarming, just how do you go about correcting all of your bad character traits and habits. I didn't know where to start and found myself switching from working very little on my defects (but still expecting the results) to trying to change everything in the space of a day, a week, a month.

The gambling mentality. Wanting something for nothing or wanting it all at once, now.

Procrastination
Patience
Forgiveness (myself)
Looking for the good in people (Criticising)
Honesty (false promises + slightly over exaggerating)

Remain the tip of the ice-berg in faults I have, that I am very conscious of and trying to make a real effort in changing.

A little under two years ago, November 30th 2012 when my beloved mother-in-law passed away. This had quite a profound effect on me. I felt it most appropriate that I should say a few words at her service. It was the least I could do. The following day I felt I had finally grown a pair.

And yet for all of my wifes grief, not once during this time did her support for me ever wain.

As so to today

I would like to think I am a more mature person today than the idiot of 4+ years ago but know I still have a mountain to climb still to get to the person I would really like to be.

I find it very helpful trying to work the Just For Today's. Either one for the week or to change every couple of days. I still fail quite regularly but the successful days have definitely increased from when I started.

Just as helpful I've found is the art of

communication, (rather apt as I work for a communications company) whether that be in the room on a Wednesday, with a GA member outside, or your family and friends. Bottling things up doesn't work (well not for me) so I thank all of you that have been bored by me waffling on about the most trivial issues over the past couple of years.

I cannot help but feel sympathy and empathise with every person that walks through the GA doors for the first time. When I hear their stories of despair and woe it only gives me strength to remind me (if ever I needed it) that I never want to go back to those dark days again.

Life is very good at the moment, my motivation at work remains, which has resulted in me getting a promotion recently. Amazing what you can do when gambling isn't controlling you.

I really appreciate what I have in life and take nothing or no-one for granted.

I would like to thank my wife who I will be indebted to eternally, my late mother-in-law, friends and family who have only ever supported me, and by no means least each and every one of you sat here today for showing me there really is a better life without gambling.

My name is Mike (Sutton Coldfield), I am a compulsive gambler and I have not had a bet today or since my last meeting.

Gambling Ruins Lives

Years ago it was such excitement and fun
An old sixpence each way no harm could be done
As the starter called them to orders and the Grand National got going
I didn't know the demon seed inside me was growing

I was smitten and through school year after year
The bug grew inside but I hadn't a care
I'd change my school uniform to go lay a bet
Gambling was fun, surely not a threat

Everything was cash, no credit then
I'd lose all my birthday money in the flick of a pen
I felt numb every time I squandered that cash
But the next day with my pennies to the bookies would dash

As I got older technology just grew and grew I was offered credit, what should I do? It was easy just take it, I now had a job My life wouldn't change if I lost a few bob

Then came a wife and a family too It didn't stop me gambling the urge it just grew Although there was always enough for the family to survive For that elusive big winner I still had to strive

I was hiding my statements from my good wife
This gambling addiction had overtaken my life
I thought of betting 24 hours a day
Even in sleep thought of the next day's bets I would lay

The gambling bug was eating up all of my time I still felt at ease, I wasn't committing a crime But in essence from my wife and kids I was stealing How much more could they have if I got rid of this feeling?

I could have done so much more, got down to saving But unfortunately my next bet I was still craving The addiction went on for years and never abated My desire for a winner was never sated

My life was in turmoil my marriage was hit hard I was gambling with my marriage on the turn of a card I was ignoring my children because of my failings I'd be betting on my phone at the school railings

It wasn't now just gambling my moral inventory was low How much lower would I let myself go? I didn't seek help soon enough, what a mistake My relationship in tatters, what else could I break?

So eventually coerced into seeking some aid I had to stop gambling the decision was made. So off to my first meeting one Thursday night There were others there who lives mirrored my plight

The help I received was good in every way
Don't have a bet, Just for Today
Follow the steps, so many to mention
To lead me on the road to recovery and abstention

GA gave me the tools to help beat this disease Each day the thought of gambling really did ease But I got complacent and thought I was cured And one day had a bet because I was bored.

Oh! what a disaster the feeling came back It wasn't a social bet just for the craic I was quickly back into that morally low life Wasting again and being dishonest to my wife

It all had to stop the proof was right there I couldn't have a bet, I just couldn't dare It was so easy for me to get out of control And dig myself into a really bad hole

So back to the rooms, I told of my plight Being back there among equals felt ever so right And I now follow the steps and regularly read The GA philosophy to beat this evil seed

So I am back on the road to a gamble free life
No more thoughts of a bet, can't cope with the strife
So as for the GA ethos Just for today
God grant me the strength to keep it that way

Alan Birkenhead

LITERATURE

FOR THE GROUP

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God

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

