

NEW LIFE

Issue 1
March 2019

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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GA NEWS
Southern Region
One Day Convention

Date: 08 Jun 2019
Time: 09:00 - 17:00

Location:
The Fitzwilliam Centre,
Windsor End,
Beaconsfield,
HP9 2JW

Wheelchair Access:
Yes

Message from the Editor

My name is Paul K and I'm a compulsive gambler in recovery. My home group is Bundoran in Co Donegal in the Ulster Region.

At the January 2019 National Committee Meeting, I decided to take on the role of New Life Editor.

I want to thank my immediate predecessor, Yong (Eastcote), who is probably the reason I am editor today. A year earlier, Yong and I had agreed to split the editing of New Life magazine and Let's Talk magazine between us. I don't think I'd have taken on either of these magazines, had it not been for Yong agreeing to do this with me.

Yong's circumstances changed, and he was no longer able to edit this magazine. As I had already managed to get a Let's Talk edition published, I was, by now, confident enough to edit this magazine as well.

Recognition and respect needs to go to Ian (Pensby), who was, more than two years ago now, the last person to successfully publish this magazine.

I would also like to thank the contributors to this edition. I hope you will agree, when you've read them, that they are of a high quality.

Hopefully we can get this magazine out every three months, but remember, we can only publish if we have enough material.

Please continue to send your therapies and poems to

newlife@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Finally, I am only too well aware that this edition looks different to previous editions. It is much more basic than those of my predecessors. I could have spent more time trying to make it look more modern. However I am not blessed with a great degree of technical knowledge when it comes to formatting magazines. Ideally someone will emerge at the AGM who can become deputy editor and help me to improve the next edition. In the meantime I have prioritised getting a magazine out as it is long overdue. I hope you can understand this line of thinking.

Best wishes

Paul K, Editor

Mark, Stockport Sunday

A year ago today, I was faced with a decision. Desperate and exhausted by a life controlled by an indescribably destructive, compulsive gambling addiction, I couldn't take it anymore. I had only two options open to me, as I couldn't take another day under its control.

For 30 years it had defined me. I had so much potential as a young man, academically gifted, from a nice home, with good friends and family. To anyone looking on, most would have assumed a pretty straight forward life lay ahead of me. They'd have been wrong. In the last 30 years gambling has cost me everything. Yes, it's cost me money, but that's only a fraction of the price tag this addiction comes with.

First there's the lying. It starts off as a necessity, when questioned about the missing money or time. Then it becomes a habit, when you're so adept at doing it, you don't even pause before spinning some story or other. Eventually it becomes such a part of your character that you even convince yourself with the lies that you tell.

Next to go is pride. Everyone is raised to appreciate praise and respect from others. It makes us feel good. Compulsive gamblers like myself crave it. Many addicts suffer from a huge inferiority complex with incredibly low self esteem. It's why they seek escape in drugs, drink or a dream world of gambling. What better fix than someone telling you you're great, that they're proud of you or that they envy you? Well pride and a gambling addiction don't come hand in hand.

I was made to leave home as a teenager. My parents were at a loss with me. Phone calls and visits about my debts, stealing my dad's stamp albums to pay for one more bet.

I began a life on the streets. In and out of homeless shelters and hostels. I once saw a girl over the road from me, I knew from school. She had seen me picking up cigarette ends from a bus stop to smoke. I can still picture the look of disgust on her face. Pride? I had none.

From a middle class home and not at all street wise, I was often preyed upon for what I did have. I'd get beaten up and robbed, sometimes only for an item of clothing.

During one particular beating, in which I was robbed for the forty pounds I'd just collected from the post office, three Scottish lads pinned me to a wall with a knife to my throat while taking it in turns to punch me in the face. Due to the knife at my neck, I couldn't move enough to even flinch as they beat me to eventual unconsciousness. After that, battered and bleeding, I just walked. I spent days walking, not wanting to stop, in case I was found. I'd try and grab sleep where I could, at bus stops and on benches, but I was usually moved on or scared off. After about 10 days of stumbling around with no hope or purpose, I lay down in a field near where I grew up. I lay down to die. Gambling had killed me and I wasn't even 20.

It was my brother who found me. He brought me home. I slept for 4 days and my shoes had to be cut from my feet.

After recovering I tried to stop. I enrolled at University and moved to a new town. With the hope of a new life and the memory of the last year still painfully with me, you would think I'd placed my last bet. You'd be wrong. Addictions don't work to logic. I was gambling within weeks. My student loan was usually gone within days and I survived by working day and night and using everyone around me.

After Uni I found success in the car trade. It was a recipe for disaster, huge wages especially for those driven by greed and the ability to manipulate, which by now I was almost a professional.

Relationships came and went, usually because of debts. I was often deeply hurt but it was always by my own actions and I sought recovery where I always had, in bookmakers and Casinos.

Out of greed and necessity I found plenty of success in my job. But the more I earned the more I gambled. Compulsive

gamblers keep going until it's all gone, always.

Through success I was promoted and soon found myself in a position of trust and responsibility. I used this responsibility as many others who suffer with my addiction do, by stealing. I didn't set out to, but opportunity and an uncontrollable craving led me to use thousands of pounds that had been entrusted to me. I was sacked, the reputation I had within the industry ruined and the police were called. I was married at the time with a young son. She left and took my son with her.

While awaiting trial I had to find work. I used the last of my money to get a bus to where no one would know me. I got off at Melton Mowbray (the pork pie place!). I went into a car dealership and pretended I had never been in the car trade before but thought I'd like to try it. I played down any experience I had so that references weren't asked for.

As with all car sale jobs, I was given a company car and had a month to wait until my first wage. The big shot in me that wanted to impress, then ignored the fact I'd said I'd never sold cars before and broke every record the dealership had in my first month. I enjoyed the adulation, it was my fix as I had no money to gamble.

I sold all those cars despite the fact that every night, I slept in my car without enough fuel to keep it running for warmth. I survived that month by making false complaint calls to fast food stores in the day and collecting my complimentary apology meal at night. Finally, after a month of clinging on, constantly cold and hungry, I got paid. My plan was to book in to a bed and breakfast for a month and have plenty left for new clothes and food. I gambled my whole salary that day. I know there is no logic to that, but mine is an illness that puts the need to gamble before everything. Even survival.

Somehow, I lasted until the day of my trial. I plead guilty, so it was really just a matter of what punishment I would receive. My barrister advised a suspended sentence. I was sentenced to 15 months in prison and taken to Strangeways.

Looking back at the time I was in prison is a little like remembering a scary film I once watched. I survived by reassuring myself that tomorrow I could always kill myself if it ever got too bad. I lived every day with that thought but always found enough will to find one more day survival in myself.

Gamblers often say that the only hope of recovery is reaching rock bottom and I'd found mine. Or so you'd think. I was released with £90 and after buying a pack of fags, I then gambled the rest. I applied for car sale jobs everywhere but my name and past closed every door I came to. Except one. A garage in Warrington asked me to come for an interview. I had no bus fare, so set off to walk the 20 plus miles to get there. I was starving and weak but arrived 9 hours later. During the interview, I was completely honest. It was a new feeling to me, but I needed to rebuild my life and that wouldn't work if I'd hidden my past. I expected to get shown the door, but the garage owner told me to take a seat. He came back, with 2 sets of keys. One for my new car and one for a flat that was to be mine. He also gave me £500 to buy some food and clothes ready to start work in a week once I'd got some strength back. He had tears in his eyes as he looked at me. "I was you once" he said. "And you'll be me one day when you're ready".

Over the past 14 years I have rebuilt my reputation within the motor trade, I have found success and high earnings and it is all because of that man. I'd love to tell you that it also put my on the straight and narrow with regard to gambling, but unfortunately my will to gamble was still too strong. I lost every penny I earned from that point and the defects of character that resulted in my need to gamble were as broken as they'd ever been.

I had another son and although I've always loved being a father to my two boys, even they didn't come before the time I needed to gamble.

What happened on the 25th January last year I suppose isn't important to this story. What is important is what came next. My choice. My head wanted to take my own life. I'd lived the last day I could as a gambler and my last day as a liar and I couldn't beat this illness. Hurting people I loved, lying as a way of life and the utter helplessness I felt every day of my life had to end. I mentioned earlier, my boys had always come second to gambling. It turns out they didn't. On the 25th January 2018, they saved my life. The one thing I had left was being their dad and that was enough.

I went to a Gamblers Anonymous meeting and my recovery began. Since that first meeting, I have put everything I have into my recovery. I promised myself that I would and I have. I've not missed a single meeting, even arranging my holidays so that I would be back for my Sunday night meeting. I've had to work and work daily to address the parts of my character that caused me to gamble and ensure they changed. I now chair GA meetings and support my friends, who have supported me so much back. I'm now a loving dad who is a big part in my boys lives and live a life I'm proud of. I'm writing this because if anyone reading this is suffering and feeling helpless, there is hope. You can begin your life whenever you're ready to.

My name is Mark, I'm still a compulsive gambler and always will be....

But today I'm proud to say that I haven't gambled or lied for a year.

Karun (Acton GA) - My Story

Nearly two and a half years - two and a half years since I had my last bet. A time frame that shares its anniversary with the last time my family spoke to me, and the last time I tried to kill myself, because killing myself seemed the only way I could stop gambling.

I walked back into Acton GA at 25 years of age, but it was different to before. I was forced into the room at 21 by my dad, after my family had identified compulsive gambling traits in my personality. I remember sitting in the room and 'feeling' as though I was too young. I struggled to put myself in their company. I wasn't ready. I needed to gamble more, and as mentioned in the room that day, I needed to suffer more misery.

So I did. Four years of absolute chaos. I heard in the room at 21 that people had lost their friends, family, cars, jobs, houses and marriages, and that if it hadn't happened to me yet, it would. I remember thinking they were barking mad. Everyone loved me, they 'needed' me. I wasn't going to lose anyone or anything. I was wrong. In those four years away from the room, I lost everything. I lost my job, my house, my wife, my family, my respect, my dignity, my personality, my confidence, and almost my life.

The destruction I caused was mind-blowing, and until it all came to the fore in 2015, not a single person around me had a clue how deep my gambling addiction was. In fact, those that did know about my gambling habits thought I was the 'best gambler' ever. I have my ego to thank for that. Win a bet, and I made sure everyone in the bookmaker knew I had backed the winner. Lose, and I'd quietly scrunch the slip up, and drop it in the bin. I wanted to be the 'big shot'. I wanted to be the young man who had money in his pocket, and knew how to back a winner. I remember how boosted I would get when I'd walk into the bookmakers and they'd offer me free tea, and give me as many soft drinks as I wanted, where

everyone around me had to pay. Not ever thinking once that the can of Pepsi I'd just been handed for 'free' would cost me every single penny in my pocket every single time.

One of the scariest things compulsive gambling did to me was the ability to cheat people for money, and lie. Oh, I was the best liar out there. To get my hands on money, I would say and do anything. Once, I remember telling someone close to me that my uncle had died, and that I needed to 'temporarily' borrow some money for his funeral, and I'd give it back. Yeah, you guessed it, he wasn't dead, still isn't. I'm now dead to him though.

Every single day. I needed to be in action. I needed to gamble. I didn't care what it was, I needed to have a bet on. I pretended to 'study' form, but the truth was, I didn't have a clue. I wanted to bet. I remember sitting with my sport coupons, having studied Sports Journalism, I knew everything about sport, so accumulators would be easy. Yeah right. I could count the number of accumulators I won over 8 years on one hand.

So how did I stop gambling? How did I manage to find a job after stealing countless money from my first job? How did I keep hold of my wife? How did I get my personality back? Those around me would probably say it would have been impossible, I say it's a bloody miracle. It had to start with Step One of the recovery programme. Admit I'm powerless over gambling. I was, if I won, I wanted more. If I lost, I wanted my money back. A vicious cycle that left my 'broke' and 'broken' daily.

I spent a lot of time gambling. A void in my life that I needed to fill. I loved sitting on the sofa on a Saturday afternoon watching Jeff Stelling and praying my bets come in. I loved watching the dogs come out of the trap and seeing trap 6 make the bend. I loved jumping with each horse as it came to the fence. I needed to replace these moments and these thrills. I did.

I handed my money over to my suffering newly-wed wife, who decided to put her families respect before anything and not leave me straight after the wedding. I worked hard to get myself back in the industry I worked in, without a reference behind me. I put my head down and worked, paid rent in a small room in someone's house, and told myself I'd stay away from that first bet. I know I will pay for (physically, mentally and emotionally), what I've done, but today, I can hold my head up high and know I'm doing people proud. I don't need to hide from friends, I can look people in the eye and know I'm being truthful, and I can sleep at night, because I have peace of mind.

I realised from a friend in the room that 'I can have everything I want, without having a bet', and he's spot on. I'm alive, I'm starting to get back everything I lost, and my wife even occasionally says 'how proud she is of me'. I needed to take GA seriously, and I'm glad that I have. Now I try and do my bit to make sure newcomers don't go away and live my story. GA in Acton is my family, and I try and do my part to keep the group as tight as possible. An honest room, with beautiful people. It saved my life, and gave me one worth living.

Karun, Acton

Lost, always looking over my shoulder for karmA,
Outcries not heard, a life that had become toxic,
Vying to be the man of the moment, the so called big shoT,
Extreme liar, all I wanted was money in my ChinO,
Young and stupid, but they only saw a clever gentlemaN,
Only for money, would I ever be happy to beG,
Unmasked, I finally accepted that I needed GA.

Katie's Story: A silent illness - from a female perspective

My name's Katie and I am a compulsive gambler.

In my late teens I remember enjoying a flutter on the Grand National with my family, the odd football accumulator and a few pounds on the fruit machines in the pub now and again. This continued into my twenties and was only ever a little bit of fun. Things changed in December 2010, six months after my 30th birthday, where the occasional fun turned into what became an uncontrollable addiction that escalated rapidly. In October 2010, I started a new job and my Line Manager at the time was nothing short of a bully, he made my daily work life unbearable. As I was the new girl and still in my probation period, I didn't want to cause any upset so I sat quietly, got on with my work and went home in an evening miserable and looking to escape.

I had an online betting account that I used infrequently for football accumulators and I remember logging on one evening feeling very depressed and suddenly I was drawn to slot machine games on the site. Within half an hour, after an initial deposit of £25, I'd won £500. I thought this is easy. I withdrew the winnings and walked away. The next day, following another miserable day at work, I found myself depositing more money into my online betting account. I continued to escape in this way whenever I was alone and not at work. Before I knew it, bills weren't being paid, my mortgage was in arrears and I was struggling to repay the high interest payday loans I'd taken out to feed my addiction. One of my lowest points was throughout 2011 when I broke down in front of my father as I couldn't afford food for my dog or lunch with my friend that very same day. I didn't tell my dad the real reason why I was so short of money at this point but it wasn't long before he found out. My body language was a giveaway, although the signs weren't obvious as I wasn't high on drugs or drunk from alcohol, the vacant stare on my face spoke a thousand words.

I confessed to my family and partner that I'd been gambling and got myself into a bit of a financial mess and vowed to not do it again. At this point I never admitted I had a problem or that my gambling had become uncontrollable and making my life unmanageable. My dad paid off the small debt I'd incurred and paid the arrears off my mortgage and made it clear that he wouldn't be happy if I got myself into such a situation again.

Time passed by and I was still unhappy in my 'new' job and I just couldn't stop gambling. No amount of willpower worked. I was controlling my partner's bank account at the time as he suggested I was better looking after his finances so you can imagine what was happening with easy access to money. So more payday loans as well as stealing from my partner, I was soon back in a similar financial mess, only the debt grew bigger as well as my addiction.

Everything blew up in October 2012 when I now had circa £40k of gambling debt to repay and my life was unmanageable. My dad repaid the money I had taken from my partner's account but the larger debt would have to be controlled by some form of debt management plan. I had the option to declare myself bankrupt but this wasn't an option for me, I had a mortgage to pay and didn't want to lose my house plus I wanted to do the decent thing and repay all of my debt that I owed, I guess to punish myself.

Seeing the disappointment and hurt in my mum and dad's face is something I will never forget. Only at this point after two years of excessive gambling and growing debt did I realise I had a problem. My dad found a GA meeting and insisted I went to it, he actually drove me to my first meeting and waited two hours outside until it had finished.

Walking through the doors of the meeting, I didn't know what to expect. I don't think I was particularly nervous but I did walk in with an open mind, what did I have to lose at this point? I soon realised that I wasn't alone and was sitting

amongst other compulsive gamblers with similar stories to mine. What I didn't realise was that attending GA would be a lifelong commitment and not somewhere you go for a couple of months until you are 'cured.' That was quite difficult to digest.

As well as attending the weekly Steps meetings, I'd also set up a debt management plan and although life was pretty tough, at least I wasn't gambling and getting myself into more debt. I stuck to the repayment plan and kept up with my meetings but I did have the odd slip in recovery. However, whenever I slipped I always went back to the meeting and declared myself, I didn't want to lie or run away from my problem.

In February 2014 I started a new job with better prospects and more money. This meant I could increase my monthly debt repayments to ultimately reduce the term. As with anything with me, I'm very impatient and want everything paid off quickly, instant results, quick fixes etc. What I've learned over the last 6 years of coming to GA is that the programme is about the individual's recovery and how they can become a better person by gaining humility and addressing their character defects, not just abstaining from gambling. The programme concentrates on living in the day, something I struggle with as I tend to project and worry about future events. I also learnt that gambling was never about the money and the big wins, it was a means to escape from my life.

Moving onto late 2017/early 2018 when my debt management (DM) plan had less than a year to go, I had another couple of slips. Whilst my DM plan wasn't affected I took out high interest short term loans which have impacted me financially and damaged my credit rating that was looking healthier as a result of making regular payments to my DM company and coming to the end of the plan. I was awarded a sizeable company bonus in March 2018 which allowed me to pay off my debt in full sooner than expected so I could then

look to buy a new car on finance (subject to credit status) and re-mortgage my house to make much needed home improvements. All sounds positive until my natural instincts kicked in and following a call with a financial advisor, I was told that my credit status would take some time to recover and that it's highly unlikely that I'd be able to obtain credit for a car, let alone re-mortgage. This wasn't welcoming news and I was driven to gambling once again.

My last bet was on 27th May 2018 after doing further damage both financially and to my credit score and I can safely say I'd hit rock bottom. Ten days later my loving, loyal pet dog passed away and losing her has put everything into perspective and since then (8 weeks later) I have had no desire to gamble. I've put blocks in place so that I can't physically gamble online but I haven't even attempted to check if they work.

Without the help of GA and the support I receive both inside and outside of the meeting, I don't believe I would be where I am now in terms of my recovery. I am still young enough to do something with my life and fight this silent illness. I do try hard to implement the twelve steps into my daily life, especially my character defects as I know I can't rely solely on willpower.

Just for today I will not gamble.

Tony T, Acton

Hello my name is Tony and I am a compulsive gambler and on reflection have been for the last 37 years since the age of 14 or so.

In my early days I was brought up and raised in Acton West London with Irish parents, both of whom came across from Ireland in the 60's. My upbringing was in a house where my dad stayed in the pub too long for my mums liking and my Mum stayed in the Bingo hall too long for my dad's liking. The drain on money from both of their activities I can only assume did not help the atmosphere and the hostile environment me and my two sisters were brought up in.

There were arguments and physical violence from as early as I can remember which resulted in my mum leaving home when I was around 8 years old. As strange as it may sound this came as a relief for me and my sisters as this meant she did not need to suffer any more violence and me and my sister did not have to hear or witness it anymore either.

My dad then raised the three of us into adulthood and in doing so I saw a new side to him, as being a single parent as he was, it must have been extremely tough.

He would feed us breakfast at 6am Monday - Friday and then jump into a van that would pick him up at the top of our road and off to the building site for a 10 hour shift.

Money was tight and so at around the age of 10 I took up a paper round, which meant every Saturday evening I would be delivering the Standard which had that day's football results and write ups. I would get paid in sweets from the shop owner Jack which was fine with me as I have a sweet tooth. As time passed over the next 2 years the Newspaper ceased to run and Jack who was an elderly man passed away.

His step son Bob then took over the running of the shop. I was by this time 12 years old and started delivering the morning newspapers getting up at 06.00 in the morning and delivering papers until 07.45 and then back home to get ready for school.

Within 2 years the Newspaper Shop was becoming my second home and Bob was becoming my second dad. I would sometimes get up earlier and help him write up the papers for delivering and we would even go and pick up the papers from Menzies at Wembley when there were issues getting papers out from the Warehouse there.

Over time I would become close to Bob, his wife Chris and their young family.

One Xmas when I was around fourteen the five paperboys at the shop shared the Xmas box which was a collection of money given to us by the customers. That Xmas it amounted to

approx £80 each which was the most money I had ever had.

With money in hand I, and the other 4 paperboys, went off to do some shopping. We got to Shepherds Bush with some going to the Market and others going to Stuarts a clothes shop where the clothes were very dapper and where the latest must wear fashions were on show.

As for me, I headed to the amusement arcade where I managed to lose all I had within 2-3 hours on the fruit machines, the first real sign of my addiction.

We all then met up again and returned to the shop where we were asked what we had bought with our Xmas box money. Whilst the other 4 had items to show I had nothing to show. I made up an excuse, which now I know it to be a lie, by saying there was nothing I saw that I wanted. The real truth was hidden by me. I had gambled all I had been given. I had worked hard all year and had nothing to show for it! How common this was to become in my young adult life! In hindsight this was the first signs that gambling would become a real problem.

As time moved on Bob, who also liked a bet far too much for his wife's liking, would ask me to put bets on for him at the local Bookies, which was eight shops down from his own paper shop. I would take the betting slip already written as he had a stock hidden in the shop away from his wife's sight. Chris, as I said, did not like the idea of Bob gambling and certainly wouldn't have liked the thought of a 14-year-old placing his bets for him.

Some of Bob's bets naturally would win and some would lose. When he won I would pick up some large sums of money which made me think this was the way to get everything you wanted without having to work too hard – the easy life.

My eyes were being opened to the idea that a quick win would solve the problems I had at home where there wasn't a lot of money about.

At High school I was fairly well behaved but focussed far too

much on being the class joker and making the football team, rather than revising and completing homework.

It's fair to say I was capable of more, if only I would've tried harder at the more important things. A misspent youth you may say!

I would play pitch and toss at school with my dinner money. That's if I had any left as most days I would pop into the Acorn Café in Acton's Horn Lane on route to school where a JPM fruit machine would have my full attention.

I had studied the fruit machine reels and knew where every symbol sat so if there were nudges I would capture the best possible result which was the 3 melons with their £2 Jackpot. I was popular with others there as I would be able to get the best win possible, little knowing at the time that it was never really going to make a difference to me at least, as there was only ever going to be one winner!

Back to the paper shop and Bob, where I continued to run his bets to the bookies.

I was like an Olympic sprinter, flying back and forth along the Uxbridge Road. One day Bob asked me to put a bet on for him and by the time I got to the bookies the race was already off so I couldn't place the bet, I listened to the race as there were just audio on most races at that time. The horse Bob wanted to back had got beat and I walked back to the shop where his wife Chris was stood next to him so I couldn't tell him that I had missed placing the bet. Anyway, he gave me a look that said don't mention the bet so I didn't.

Then the idea came into my head that I could keep the money as Bob wouldn't have known either way. This was the start of my gambling now affecting others. Bob, who had never done me any wrong, had just had money stolen from him and didn't even know it.

My justification thought at the time was that he would have lost it anyway as the horse didn't win. Alas this was the start of my trashy thinking and wrong doing.

Adulthood started when I left school at 16 and started straight away on the building site with John Laing's. I had no real qualifications, a few CSE's but nothing to turn the head of any future employer! The work on the building sites was hard but the money was good. I met a few old Irish lads who knew a bit about the horses and so I started to learn a few things. That's when I started to becoming a visitor to the bookies for my own pleasure and with my own money. I no longer needed to get my fix from running Bobs bets I could run my own now. Although I was only 16 the local bookies knew me all too well and didn't turn me away. I started picking a few more winners than losers and all was good with me and the world.

Back at the building site the Irish guys, with whom I was working, were telling me to find a better job with more security and future opportunities. They knew life on the building site was tough and with fewer chances of future opportunities coming my way.

For some reason, I actually listened to them and went to my local careers office. I accepted a new role with the governments Youth Training Scheme (YTS) as a British Rail Permanent Way track worker. This meant a drop from my £100 per week wages to £25 per week which was massive drop in salary. But something inside me told me it was the right thing to do. Until this day,⁹ this has been the most important decision away from marrying my beautiful wife that I have made.

So now with only £25 per week my gambling, you may think, would be reigned back in? Nothing of the sort. I would walk into the bookies pick a Greyhound and place £20 down without any thought about the rest of the week if it was to lose.

I was losing touch with reality. I thought I was a big man, fearless, but the reality was that I really had no money or brains! At 17 years of age I was still living at home with my dad and eldest sister Margaret. My twin, Ann, had left to live with

her boyfriend. My dad would leave money for one of us on a Saturday morning to go and get the weekly shop in.

One Saturday when I had lost my money, I then took the shopping money and ran straight to the bookies. There I lost the shopping money and had to go to Bob in the shop to ask if he could lend me some money and made up some excuse why I needed it. This soon becomes a regular occurrence! Around this time I was spending some time in my local pub the Askew Arms in Shepherds Bush. There I encountered an Asian guy called Gooch who was a compulsive gambler. He would take me horse racing with him, more than anything to keep him company I guess. He was about 5 years older than me and he seemed to know the ropes around gambling. One day he took me to Lingfield races. We went by train first class return and got to the race course at around 12.30.

After a few races he had backed a few winners and it was at this time about 15.30. Gooch had been given a tip for a horse elsewhere and wanted to get back to West London so he could get his money on. Instead of getting the train back he took a taxi! This cost him a good few quid but he never battered an eye as he was up. We ended up in what I could only describe as a gambling den in Ladbrooke Grove. It was like a scene out of a mafia movie or *The Hustler* with all sorts of undesirables in there. I thought it was amazing but at the same time scary. The horse, whose name still stays with me today over 35 years later, was Maintop. It was the favourite and Gooch put his money down and the horse duly obliged at odds of 9/4. This all felt very exciting especially for a 17-year-old who had no money and seemingly no real future opportunities where finance was concerned.

A few months later I bumped into Gooch outside our local Pub where he asked me to shoot down to the White City dogs to back Trap 1 in the first race. Gooch then thrust £100 into my hand to place the bet for him and gave me a tenner for me to pay for the taxi-cab there and back.

I duly set off and hurried to the stadium and ran up the stairs

towards the bookies stalls. As I got to the top of the stairs at White City, the bell rang and the hare was running.

I tried to put on the bet, but it was too late as they were out of the traps! I stood and watched in dread as they raced around the track trap one was in second place coming off the last bend and I was praying it would stay there as I didn't want to go back to Gooch and tell him the dog he thought he had money on had won but I hadn't got there in time.

I was feeling stressed and was thinking of how I was going to tell him that it wasn't his day. Thankfully trap 1 failed to get up and finished second. The relief was immense. Thank god I thought. Then as I headed out the thought then crossed my mind that I was now holding £100. What do I do? The right thing and return it to Gooch, or keep it for all the stress he had put me through? I was only earning £25 a week with the YTS so £100 was a big deal. I hurried home and hid the money under the carpet in my house and then sped back to the Askew Arms. I went in where Gooch was waiting and he asked if it won? I said no, it finished second. Did you get the money on, yes I said which was not true. What price was it he asked? Well I now had to think fast as hadn't had the chance to even look at the bookies boards. 6/4 I said lying through my teeth. Oh, ok was his response... phew I thought to myself, I had got away with the deception and nicked £100.

The Askew Arms pub had been my social meeting point since the age of 16, I was a keen Pool player and footballer so was playing for both teams in the pub even though I was too young to be drinking. To be honest I was not that keen on alcohol anyhow. Gambling was my drug and in the Askew there was always a Friday night to look forward to. There would be a pool competition £2 per man with 16 players, then there was always a card school on a table nearby and if they didn't satisfy me there was the fruit machine to escape to. Friday night was the highlight of my week and all the locals would be in. When the 10.50pm last orders bell rang time on the Friday night the gambling wouldn't stop

there, off I would go to a house nearby with 6 or so others to continue the gambling with a card school until the early hours. We would only know how long we were playing for when the bird song kicked in at around 4am.

The people in the Askew were decent people. I could always lend a few quid from them to feed my addiction when my luck was out, and for me this seemed like most of the time. This was a regular event for me for a good few years.

Moving on, I managed to stay the distance with the YTS and then British Rail took me on at eighteen. This increased my salary but it didn't change my behaviour. I was gambling my own money and then gambling the shopping money and I would find myself living like this for the next few years.

In 1988, at the age of 22, I had somehow managed to get a girlfriend. She was great and her dad owned a Greyhound at Wimbledon a double winner! At the time she didn't know the extent of my gambling. That was not to last too long. We had been together for just over a year and she started to become aware of my behaviour, like my staying in; not spending money on clothes; no fancy meals out; no dates other than popping out to the local pub where I could ponce more money from my mates etc... One day I borrowed money from my girlfriend and couldn't return it when I promised and this was when she realised I had a problem.

I was about to get my first taste of GA! The first steps were then taken by my girlfriend to get me help. In 1989 she took me to the nearest GA meeting in Acton. She parked outside the Hut, as we called it, and waited for me to go through the door. I walked towards the door of the GA room and hesitated. I turned around and she was still parked there with the engine running. Please drive off, I thought to myself, as I didn't want to stop doing the one thing that kept me dreaming and feeling alive with the hope of one day hitting the big time. But she just sat there in the car looking at me. She knew I was a devious so and so! I had no choice and so I took a deep breath and walked in.

The room was full of smoke and there was around 8 guys sat around two long tables. I was greeted and sat down not knowing what to expect next. The meeting started at 8pm and in turn they all spoke about their own life and the misery gambling had caused them. It was amazing to see and meet people I had only known for 5 minutes tell me about their short comings and the damage they had caused to themselves and the people that loved them. It was powerful stuff!

I was told "Tony give GA a few weeks. If you don't like us you can go back to your misery, you will end up in 3 places, the gutter, prison or the river." That was Albert talking, boy did I need him. A straight-talking man who was a staunch GA member and he was what I needed. I was then asked to share my therapy. This was going to be difficult. You see I had locked in my emotional side for a long time as I had no one to share it with. So when asked to actually talk to a group who seemed to care and were ready to listen was a first. So I started to talk and within seconds I was in tears. My life had lost all its value; I was ashamed of my actions and didn't know where to start to pick up the pieces. Though the tears were mainly of sadness there was also the tears of relief of knowing that I was no longer alone and wasn't some kind of freak or nutter. I was told I had an illness and it was progressive, I didn't quite get it at first to be honest but that was fine. I had now found a place with people of the same ilk as me.

I hadn't really taken it all on board but knew I must keep going to the meetings. In my early years in GA I was still gambling for table stakes playing cards at work etc... but stopped going into the bookies and losing my wages every week. So as you may notice this was by no means a conventional approach at all. But I was content and I told the group my approach which was tolerated then. I was staying away from the hard stuff if you like and my life was more manageable.

As I was still gambling I never obviously received a pin or recognition but for me that was fine, I had started to get a bit of balance back into my life. Alas this was not to last. You see I had crossed the invisible line so to speak and was still feeding my addiction.

Inevitably I was sucked back into the bookies after losing too much at work playing Rummy. My mind thought it was the best way to win the lost card money back. So off I went again dreaming of making everything right by backing winners, not realising it was an emotional problem. Clearly I hadn't learnt my lessons and set about causing myself and others round me more misery.

I stayed away then from GA for a few years with my life drifting nowhere fast and with my gambling getting progressively worse.

All the previous GA meetings and lessons learnt were no match for my desire to keep gambling. You see when I'm in the midst of this addiction I simply forget how powerless I am and how reckless my behaviour becomes. So this eventually led me to my darkest hour. As unusual I had gambled my entire weekly wages and walked out of bookies with the sick feeling in my stomach and was searching for someone, anyone, to lend me some money.

I soon realised I had used up all my credit with friends and family who had bailed me out for many years and was at a loss. A thought then came to me that although my dad had not worked for the previous 4 years or so due to a bad back, he always seemed to be able to go out for a beer or two. So I went home and looked through his room. I found a small amount of money; enough to try recover some of my losses. I stole the money and gambled with it. I managed to win and had enough to keep me going for that day so sneaked back into my dad's room and put the money I had stolen back. The very next day I went back to the bookies, lost what I had and returned to steal from him again.

This time the result was not so good, I had lost his money. Now I had nowhere to turn. My friends had had enough of me and I couldn't stay at home as I couldn't face my dad. I was now out on the street! I stayed away from home and went on the missing list for 48 hours or so.

Walking the streets, I ended up in Shepherd's Bush. Desperate for money I walked into a convenience store and brandished a knife at the shop keeper. She screamed I then turned and hurried out but I didn't run. My head was gone. I think I wanted to be caught, as I had nowhere else to go anyhow.

I eventually went home hoping to find no one in so I could sneak some food. My dad was home and I had no choice but to face the music. His words to me which I will always remember were "I have walked down the streets of Shepherds Bush and the Askew Road for the last 20 years and never been robbed. Now my own Son has robbed me". These words cut like a knife through my heart. I had never set out to hurt my dad. My intentions were to look after him and my family through all the riches I was going to win through my gambling and schemes. Alas the reality was very far from my dream. It was a living nightmare. I had just failed the one person who had stayed with me through the tough times of my youth and teenage years.

Enough was enough so I returned to the GA rooms to learn some more about myself and the illness I have. This time it was a different me with a different approach. It had to be, as the last approach never worked.

I was attending meetings a lot more frequently and thought I had finally overcome my addiction. This wasn't the case. I went back to gambling for the third time in 1996. I had split up with my girlfriend and I had stopped going to meetings and thought I didn't need GA anymore, but as commonly stated and rightly so, this illness is a progressive illness and soon my finances were in a bigger mess than ever and my now new girlfriend was noticing changes in me such as me

not wanting to go out etc. I was skint week in week out, but just saying I was tired or some other lies.

My latest return to my gambling in 1996 was different, as it was now no longer enjoyable. It had lost the fun element I once enjoyed and it became a chore. My head was all over the place. When I backed a winner I didn't have enough money on it and when I backed a loser I had too much money on it. My brain was starting to fry and my life was back in turmoil once again.

My girlfriend was beautiful and I knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her. Well if I wanted to keep her I would have to change my ways! See she was independent and didn't need me. Why would she need a compulsive gambler in action with no prospects, no future, and no money?

What would I bring to our relationship except heartache and misery? Trying to keep her gave me a reason to stop gambling as I could see a future with her if only I could stop gambling.

I knew where I should be so I dusted myself down and managed to face the facts about myself and my illness and so I finally surrendered to this insidious disease. I had to face the fact I could not win by playing, I could only win by abstaining.

From my first meeting I always knew that the GA room was the place where I really belonged and where the real winners were to be found. The relief was tangible. I soon set about planning my future. Wow! I couldn't normally the next day let alone the next year or so. I had made my mind up that this was it; no more of my hard-earned cash would be given to the bookies or any other form of gambling.

I was now drawing the line. No longer will a newspaper cost me £10 as nine scratch cards would usually be added or; a pint of lager £20, as the fruit machine was calling.

So late into 1997 I stopped and returned to the Acton GA room. I was greeted warmly by some of the faces that had

greeted me back in 1989, Albert, Harry, Andy and many new faces. They did not judge me though I'm sure Albert knew my plan at the start of recovery back in 1989 was flawed.

So the start of my recovery was to stop gambling, attend at least one GA meeting every week. Then I worked the Programme, perhaps not by the book but I worked on changing my thoughts and actions which was another challenge. Though I stopped gambling it took me a while to stop lying. You see it had become second nature to lie! Now I had no reason to lie but it still took me a good few months to get used to the idea that I no longer had anything to hide.

I made a change and started to help those around me that I had affected and hurt with my illness. I took an active role with the Acton GA group, becoming the Secretary of the group, for which I was immensely proud. All these little actions helped those around me, but more importantly it helped me. See it was now time to pay back. The first feelings of the Higher Power were now working in my life.

When I done a good turn for someone good things started to happen. I was really starting to see the light which I had shunned for many years. It felt great to be alive. No more hiding for me and no more sleepless nights.

There were still challenges to face - of course there was, this was real life. My ego was one. How do I control this when offered the chance to play someone in a game of pool for fiver when I believed I could take them easy?

Well I did manage to keep this in check; I reminded myself that my future recovery was worth a lot more than a fiver, a million times over. So, I really had surrendered and understood my illness.

That being said, I did happen to find myself in a bookies after ten years of abstinence. I guess reflecting on it now I had like a weekend away etc...

MEETIN VENUES ACROSS THE UK - MIDLANDS

Region	Group	Day	Meeting Type	Start Time	Finish Time	Wheelchair Access	Gamblers Anon	Address
Midlands	Coventry	Sunday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	Yes	The Great Meeting House, 116 Holyhead Road, Coventry, CV1 3AE UK
Midlands	Nottingham	Sunday	Mixed	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Royal Naval Association, 22 Church St, Lenton NG7 1SU
Midlands	Swansea	Sunday	Mixed	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Quaker Meeting House, 2 Page Street, Swansea, SA1 4EZ UK
Midlands	Birmingham	Monday	Main	19:15:00	21:15:00	No	No	Quinborne Community Centre, 98 Ridgacre Road, Quinton Birmingham, B32 2TW UK
Midlands	Quinborne	Monday	Main	19:45:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Kingsheath Community Centre, 8 Heathfield Road, Kings Heath Birmingham, B14 7DB UK
Midlands	Kings Heath	Monday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	Convent of Mercy, 11 Bridge Gate, Derby, DE1 3AU UK
Midlands	Derby	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Raven Centre, Here Lane, Gloucester, GL1 2BB UK
Midlands	Gloucester	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	St-Albans Church Hall, 39 Weymouth Street, Leicester, LE4 6FP UK
Midlands	Leicester	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	Yes	Church of Christ, East USK Road & Riverside, Gwent NP19 7AG UK
Midlands	Newport	Monday	Mixed	19:15:00	21:00:00	Yes	Yes	Temple Baptist Church, 1 Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd, CF37 2BP UK
Midlands	Pontypridd	Monday	Mixed	19:15:00	21:00:00	Yes	Yes	
Midlands	Mixed	Monday	Mixed	19:15:00	21:00:00	No	No	Ross-on-Wye, The Friends' Meeting House, 3a Brampton Street, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7EQ UK
Midlands	Ross-on-Wye	Monday	Steps	19:30:00	20:30:00	No	No	St John's RC Church, 8 St. John's Street, Tamworth, B79 7EX UK
Midlands	Tamworth	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	No	No	The Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street, Colmore Circus Birmingham, B4 6AF UK
Midlands	Birmingham	Tuesday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	
Midlands	Colmore Circus	Tuesday	Main	19:15:00	21:15:00	Yes	Yes	Broadmead Baptist Church, 1 Whippington Court, Bristol, BS1 3HY UK
Midlands	Bristol Central	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	Lower Penarth Community Centre, Brockhill Way, Lower Penarth, CF64 5DD UK
Midlands	Penarth	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Brookside Methodist Church, Gunthorpe Road, Peterborough, PE4 7TG UK
Midlands	Peterborough	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	Yes	Quaker Meeting House, 2 Page Street, Swansea, SA1 4EZ UK
Midlands	Swansea	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	Solihull Centre, Oliver Bird Hall Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3HY UK
Midlands	Solihull	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	Yes	The Salvation Army, Lion Street, Telford, TF2 6AQ UK
Midlands	Telford	Tuesday	Main	19:15:00	21:15:00	Yes	Yes	Corpus Christi Church, Ellenborough Park, South Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1XW UK
Midlands	Weston-super-Mare	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	
Midlands	Super-Mare	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	Horfield Quaker Meeting House, 300 Gloucester Road, Horfield Bristol, BS7 8PD UK
Midlands	Bristol North	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Highbury Congregational Church, Priory Walk, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 6DU UK
Midlands	Cheltenham	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	St-Albans Church Hall, 39 Weymouth Street, Leicester, LE4 6FP UK
Midlands	Leicester	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Royal Naval Association, 22 Church St, Lenton NG7 1SU
Midlands	Nottingham	Wednesday	Main	19:45:00	21:45:00	No	No	Methodist Church Centre, 16 South Parade, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1QY UK
Midlands	Sutton Coldfield	Wednesday	Mixed	19:30:00	22:00:00	No	No	
Midlands	Bath	Thursday	Main	19:15:00	21:15:00	No	No	Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW UK
Midlands	Birmingham	Thursday	Main	19:45:00	21:45:00	Yes	Yes	Kingsheath Community Centre, 8 Heathfield Road, Kings Heath Birmingham, B14 7DB UK
Midlands	Cardiff	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	City United Reform Church, Windsor Place, Cardiff, South Glamorgan CF10 3BL UK
Midlands	Coventry	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:20:00	Yes	Yes	The Great Meeting House, 116 Holyhead Road, Coventry, CV1 3AE UK
Midlands	Derby	Thursday	Main	19:00:00	20:55:00	No	No	Convent of Mercy, 11 Bridge Gate, Derby, DE1 3AU UK
Midlands	Gloucester	Thursday	Steps	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Christ Church, Brunswick Road, Gloucester, GL1 1JZ UK
Midlands	Wolverhampton	Thursday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	Yes	Friends Meeting House, 38 Summerfield Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 4PR UK
Midlands	Bromsgrove	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	The Methodist Centre, 19 Stratford Road, Bromsgrove, Worcester, B60 1AS UK
Midlands	Northampton	Friday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Victoria Road Congregation Church, Victoria Road, Northampton, NN1 5ED UK
Midlands	Dudley	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	Central Methodist Church, Cross Street, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 1RW UK
Midlands	Bristol South	Saturday	Main	10:30:00	12:30:00	Yes	Yes	Victoria Park Baptist Church, 195 Sylvia Avenue, Bristol, BS3 5DA UK
Midlands	South Yardley	Saturday	Main	10:00:00	11:30:00	Yes	No	South Yardley, South Yardley Methodist Church, Broadayates Road, South Yardley, Birmingham B25 8JF

NORTH WEST

Region	Group	Day	Meeting Type	Start Time	Finish Time	Wheelchair Access	Gamblers Anon	Address
North West	Liverpool Central	Sunday	Main	18:30:00	20:00:00	No	No	Sharp 17 Rodney Street Liverpool, Merseyside L1 9EF UK
North West	Stockport West	Sunday	Steps	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Cheadle Heath Community Centre Essex Avenue Stockport, SK3 0JA UK
North West	Manchester (Women Preferred)	Monday	Main	18:00:00	19:00:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS UK
North West	Barrow-in-Furness	Monday	Main	19:45:00	21:30:00	No	No	Barrow 23 Carlisle Street Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 10T UK
North West	Liverpool	Monday	Main	19:15:00	21:15:00	Yes	No	Our Lady & St. Nicholas Church Old Church Yard Liverpool, L2 8TZ UK
North West	Manchester Central	Monday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS UK
North West	Bury	Monday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	Salvation Army Citadel 18 Brookshaw Street Bury, BL9 6EB UK
North West	Wigan	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	Halgate House Haligate Halgate, WN1 1HP UK
North West	Wrexham	Monday	Main	19:15:00	21:30:00	No	No	Salvation Army Centre Garden Road Wrexham, Wrexham UK
North West	Manchester Central	Tuesday	Main	18:30:00	21:15:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS UK
North West	Oldham	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	The Salt Cellar 11A Church Lane Oldham, OL1 3AN UK
North West	Stoke on Trent	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	St Saviours Church Hall Ford Green Road Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 1NX UK
North West	Stockport West	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Cheadle Heath Community Centre Essex Avenue Stockport, SK3 0JA UK
North West	Liverpool East	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	St Michaels Church Presbytery Horne Street Liverpool, L6 5EH UK
North West	Liverpool Central	Wednesday	Steps	19:15:00	21:30:00	No	No	Sharp 17 Rodney Street Liverpool, Merseyside L1 9EF UK
North West	Chester	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	Salvation Army Building St Anne Street Chester, CH1 3HU UK
North West	Manchester Central	Wednesday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS UK
North West	Blackburn	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	Yes	Salvation Army Vicars Street Blackburn, BB1 5BE UK
North West	Blackpool	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	St. Kenigens Parish Church 25 Newton Drive Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 8BT UK
North West	Liverpool Huyton	Wednesday	Steps	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	St. Agnes RC Church Huyton Hey Road Liverpool, L36 5SD UK
North West	Liverpool North	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	Antrre Baptist Church Longmoor Lane Liverpool, L9 0EF UK
North West	St Helen's	Thursday	Main	19:15:00	21:15:00	Yes	Yes	St. Helens Deafness Resource Centre 32 - 40 Dentons Green Lane Dentons Green St. Helens, Merseyside WA10 2QB UK
North West	Middlewich	Thursday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	No 28, Drop in Centre 28 Hightown Middlewich, Cheshire CW10 0LN UK
North West	Manchester Central	Thursday	Main	18:45:00	21:15:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS UK
North West	Burnley	Thursday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	The Salvation Army Richard Street Burnley, Lancashire BB11 3AJ UK
North West	Birkenhead	Thursday	Main	18:45:00	20:45:00	Yes	No	YMCA Whetstone Lane Birkenhead, CH41 2TJ UK
North West	Preston	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	St. Wilfreds Church Hall Chapel Street Preston, PR1 8BU UK
North West	Warrington	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Pathways to Recovery Addiction Rehabilitation Centre 14 Bolt Street Warrington, WA1 1DE UK
North West	Liverpool Central	Friday	Main	19:00:00	21:15:00	No	No	Sharp 17 Rodney Street Liverpool, Merseyside L1 9EF UK
North West	Bolton	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	Unitarian Church Bank Street Bolton, Lancashire BL1 1TS UK
North West	Manchester Central	Saturday	Steps	10:00:00	11:00:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS UK
North West	Manchester Central	Saturday	Main	11:00:00	13:00:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House Mount Street Manchester, M2 5NS UK

NORTHERN

Region	Group	Day	Meeting Type	Start Time	Finish Time	Wheelchair Access	Gamblers Anon	Address
Northern	Sheffield	Sunday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	St Thomas Philadelphia Training Centre 6 Glipin Street Sheffield, S6 3BL UK
Northern	Chesterfield	Monday	Main	19:15:00	21:15:00	Yes	Yes	Chesterfield Community Centre Tontine Road Chesterfield, S40 1QU UK
Northern	Huddersfield	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	Smart Recovery 3a Union Bank Yard New Street Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD1 2BP UK
Northern	Middlesbrough	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Salvation Army Citadel Admirals Avenue Middlesbrough, TS3 8ET UK
Northern	Newcastle	Monday	Mixed	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	George Street Social George Street Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7JN UK
Northern	Darlington North	Tuesday	Mixed	19:15:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Harrowgate Hill Methodist Church 11 Lawson Street Darlington, DL3 0EY UK
Northern	Doncaster	Tuesday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	Yes	The Wellness Centre 45 Montrose Avenue Intake Intake Doncaster, DN2 6PL UK
Northern	Hull	Tuesday	Mixed	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Wellington House 108 Beverley Road Hull, HU3 1XA UK
Northern	Leeds Tuesday	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	21:45:00	Yes	No	West Park United Reform Church Spen Lane Leeds, LS16 5BD UK
Northern	Newcastle Central	Tuesday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	Yes	Brunswick Methodist Church Brunswick Place Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7BJ UK
Northern	Scarborough	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House Quaker Close Woodlands Drive Scarborough, YO12 5OZ UK
Northern	Billingham	Wednesday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	High Grange Community Centre Casson Way Stockton-on-Tees Billingham, TS23 3TX UK
Northern	Rotherham	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	Yes	Wellgate Court 68 Wellgate Rotherham, S60 2LR UK
Northern	Lincoln	Wednesday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	Croft Street Community Centre Baggholme Road Lincoln, LN2 5AX UK
Northern	Huddersfield	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Smart Recovery 3a Union Bank Yard New Street Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD1 2BP UK
Northern	Leeds Thursday	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	21:45:00	Yes	No	West Park United Reform Church Spen Lane Leeds, LS16 5BD UK
Northern	Newcastle	Thursday	Mixed	19:15:00	21:15:00	No	No	George Street Social George Street Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7JN UK
Northern	Pensby	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:15:00	Yes	No	Pensby Library Pensby Road Pensby, CH61 9NE UK
Northern	Wakefield	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Salvation Army Citadel Vicarage Street Wakefield, WF1 1OX UK
Northern	Bradford	Friday	Main	19:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	St Stephens Church Newton Street West Bowling Bradford, BD5 7BH UK
Northern	Darlington	Friday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	West Park Hospital Edward Pease Way Darlington, DL2 2TS UK
Northern	West Park	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Wellington House 108 Beverley Road Hull, HU3 1XA UK
Northern	Hull Central	Saturday	Main	10:30:00	12:00:00	No	No	Holden House York Street Barnsley, S70 1BG UK
Northern	Barnsley	Saturday	Main	10:30:00	12:00:00	No	No	Holden House York Street Barnsley, S70 1BG UK

SOUTH COAST

South Coast	Haywards Heath	Sunday	Main	18:45:00	20:45:00	Yes	No	Yew Community Centre 55 Boltro Road Haywards Heath ,West Sussex RH16 1BJ UK
South Coast	Southampton	Sunday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	Yes	Friends Meeting House 1A Ordnance Road Southampton, SO15 2AZ UK
South Coast	Weymouth	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Saint Paul's Church Hall Abbotisbury Road Weymouth, DT4 0AW UK
South Coast	Jersey	Monday	Main	17:30:00	19:00:00	No	Yes	St Pauls Centre Dumaresq Street St Helier ,Jersey JE2 3RL UK
South Coast	Bournemouth	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	St Michaels Church Poole Road Bournemouth,Dorset BH2 5PS UK
South Coast	Brighton & Hove	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	Yes	Polish Community Centre 78 Farm Road Hove, BN3 1FD UK
South Coast	Plymouth	Monday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	Quaker House Outreach Centre 74 Muffley Plain Plymouth, PL4 6LF UK
South Coast	Isle of Wight	Monday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	Aspire Ryde Trinity Buildings 43 Dover Street Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 2BN UK
South Coast	Exeter	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Palace Gate Centre Palace Gate Exeter, EX1 1JA UK
South Coast	Worthing	Tuesday	Main	19:00:00	20:30:00	Yes	No	Sydney Waller Centre Sussex Road Worthing, BN11 1DS UK

SOUTH COAST (CONTINUED)

Region	Group	Day	Meeting Type	Start Time	Finish Time	Wheelchair Access	Gambiers Anon	Address
Southern	Havant	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	St Faiths Church House The Pallant Havant, PO9 1BE UK
Southern	Poole	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	Sea View Centre Croft Road Poole, BH1 2 3LD UK
Southern	Chichester	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	New Park Community Centre New Park Road Chichester, PO19 7XY UK
Southern	Eastbourne	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Community Wise Ocklynge Road Eastbourne, BN21 1PY UK
Southern	Portsmouth	Thursday	Main	19:45:00	21:45:00	No	No	Bucklands Community Centre Mailins Road Portsmouth, PO2 7BL UK
Southern	Bournemouth	Thursday	Main	19:45:00	21:00:00	No	No	St Stephens Church St Stephens Way Bournemouth Dorset BH2 6LZ UK
Southern	Camborne	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Camborne Parish Church Church Street Camborne, TR14 7DF UK
Southern	Hythe	Friday	Main	18:30:00	19:30:00	Yes	No	United Reformed Church 29 East Street Hythe, Kent CT21 5ND UK
Southern	Hove	Friday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	St Phillips Church New Church Road Hove, BN3 4BB UK
SOUTHERN								
Southern	High Wycombe	Sunday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Room 2, Bakers House 41 Baker Street High Wycombe, HP11 2RX UK
Southern	High Wycombe	Sunday	Steps	19:00:00	19:50:00	Yes	No	Room 2, Bakers House 41 Baker Street High Wycombe, HP11 2RX UK
Southern	Southgate	Sunday	Main	17:15:00	19:15:00	No	No	The POD, Grovelands Priory Hospital, The Bourne Queen Elizabeth's Drive Southgate, N14 6RA UK
Southern	Swindon	Sunday	Main	13:30:00	15:30:00	Yes	No	Gorsehill Community Centre 86 Chapel Street Swindon, SN2 8DA UK
Southern	Barnet/Finchley	Monday	Steps	20:00:00	20:30:00	No	No	St Pauls Church 50 Long Lane London, N3 2PU UK
Southern	Bishop Stortford	Monday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	Yes	All Saints Hockerhill Stanstead Road Bishops Stortford, CM23 2DY UK
Southern	Colchester	Monday	Steps	18:30:00	19:30:00	Yes	No	The Kingsland Church Rooms London Road Lexden Colchester, Essex, CO3 9DW UK
Southern	Colchester	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	The Kingsland Church Rooms London Road Lexden Colchester, Essex, CO3 9DW UK
Southern	Gidea Park	Monday	Main	19:30:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Gidea Park Methodist Church 398 Brentwood Road Hornchurch Romford, RM2 6DH UK
Southern	Hackney/Leyton	Monday	Main	20:15:00	22:15:00	No	No	Emmanuel Church Hall 149 Hitcham Road Hackney, E17 8LL UK
Southern	Harold Hill	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	The Betty Strathern Centre 41 Myrtle Road Harold Hill, RM3 8XS UK
Southern	Kingston	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Richard Mayo Centre Eden Street Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 1HZ UK
Southern	Leighton Buzzard	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Salvation Army Church & Community Centre Lammass Walk Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 1JA
Southern	London Central	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	Yes	All Souls Club House 141 Cleveland Street London, W1T 6QG UK
Southern	London West End	Monday	Main	18:30:00	20:00:00	Yes	No	Hinde Street Methodist Church Hinde Street London, W1U 3JY UK
Southern	Maldstone	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	Yes	St Faiths Church Hall Moncktons Lane Maidstone, Kent ME14 2PY UK
Southern	Newmarket	Monday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Newmarket Community Centre Unit 11 Studlands Park Avenue Newmarket, CB8 7AU UK
Southern	Reading	Monday	Steps	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Kennet Valley Free Church 63 Carters Rise Calcot Reading, RG31 7YT UK
Southern	Reading	Monday	Main	19:30:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Kennet Valley Free Church 63 Carters Rise Calcot Reading, RG31 7YT UK
Southern	Stevenage	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House Curtys Lane Stevenage, SG1 1UP UK
Southern	Sutton	Monday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	Highfield Hill River Church 320 Carshalton Road Carshalton, SM5 3QB UK
Southern	Upminster	Monday	Main	12:00:00	14:00:00	No	No	Upminster St Laurence Church Corbets Tey Road Upminster, RM14 2BB UK
Southern	Uxbridge	Monday	Steps	19:00:00	19:50:00	Yes	No	Christ Church Methodist & United Reformed Church 1 Redford Way Uxbridge, UB8 1SZ UK
Southern	Uxbridge	Monday	Main	20:00:00	21:55:00	Yes	No	Christ Church Methodist & United Reformed Church 1 Redford Way Uxbridge, UB8 1SZ UK
Southern	Watford	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House 150 Church Road Watford, WD17 4QB UK
Southern	Wembley	Monday	Main	20:15:00	21:45:00	Yes	No	Kingsbury Baptist Free Church 13 Slough Lane Wembley, NW9 8QG UK
Southern	Whitechapel	Monday	Mixed	19:30:00	21:00:00	No	No	Reset Recovery Centre 183 Whitechapel Road 183 Whitechapel Road London, E1 1DN UK
Southern	Action	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	St. Mary's Church The Mount Acton High Street, Acton London, W3 9NW UK
Southern	Basildon	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:15:00	Yes	No	St Andrews Church 3 The Fremmels Basildon, SS14 2DX UK
Southern	Braintree	Tuesday	Main	19:00:00	20:00:00	No	No	Braintree & Bocking Community Association 19-21 Bocking End Braintree, Essex CM7 9AH UK

SOUTHERN (CONTINUED)

Region	Group	Day	Meeting Type	Start Time	Finish Time	Wheelchair Access	Gamblers Anon	Address
Southern	Enfield	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	Trinity Church, Gentlemen's Row, Enfield, EN2 6PT, UK
Southern	Guildford	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Canterbury Room, Christ Church, 23 Waterden Road, Guildford, GU1 2AZ, UK
Southern	Guildford	Tuesday	Newcomers	19:00:00	19:30:00	Yes	No	Canterbury Room, Christ Church, 23 Waterden Road, Guildford, GU1 2AZ, UK
Southern	Hatfield	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:15:00	Yes	No	Highlands Methodist Church (Room 1), 1761, A13, Southend-On-Sea, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2UR, UK
Southern	Hertford	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House, 50 Railway Street, Hertford, SG14 1BA, UK
Southern	Hertford	Tuesday	Newcomers	19:45:00	20:00:00	Yes	No	The Friends Meeting House, 50 Railway Street, Hertford, SG14 1BA, UK
Southern	Ipswich	Tuesday	Main	20:15:00	21:45:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House, Fomereau Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 3JH, UK
Southern	London Central	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	All Souls Club House, 141 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 6QG, UK
Southern	London Central	Tuesday	Newcomers	18:30:00	19:45:00	Yes	No	All Souls Club House, 141 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 6QG, UK
Southern	Loughon	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	21:45:00	No	Yes	Loughon Baptist Church, 90 High Road, Loughon, IG10 4QU, UK
Southern	Luton	Tuesday	Newcomers	19:45:00	20:00:00	No	Yes	Loughon Baptist Church, 90 High Road, Loughon, IG10 4QU, UK
Southern	Luton	Tuesday	Main	20:15:00	22:00:00	No	No	Our Lady Help of Christians RC Parish Hall, 52 Castle Street, Luton, LU1 3AG, UK
Southern	Maldenhead	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	Maldenhead United Reformed Church, West Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RL, UK
Southern	Milton Keynes	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	The Quaker Centre, Oakley Gardens, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK15 9BH, UK
Southern	Milton Keynes	Tuesday	Steps	19:00:00	19:45:00	Yes	Yes	The Quaker Centre, Oakley Gardens, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK15 9BH, UK
Southern	New Cross	Tuesday	Main	20:30:00	22:30:00	Yes	No	Telegraph Hill Community Centre, Kitto Road, London, SE14 5TY, UK
Southern	Oxford	Tuesday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Holy Trinity Aylesbury, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 7QP, UK
Southern	Swindon	Tuesday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	South Oxford Community Centre, Lake Street, Oxford, OX1 4RP, UK
Southern	Swindon	Tuesday	Main	19:00:00	20:30:00	Yes	No	Garseth Community Centre, 86 Chapel Street, Swindon, SN2 8DA, UK
Southern	Albidge	Wednesday	Main	19:00:00	20:30:00	No	No	St Katharine Cree, 86 Leaderhill Street, London, EC3A 3DH, UK
Southern	Aylesbury	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Holy Trinity Aylesbury, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 7QP, UK
Southern	Aylesbury	Wednesday	Steps	19:00:00	19:45:00	Yes	No	Holy Trinity Aylesbury, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 7QP, UK
Southern	Barnet/Fitchley	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	St Pauls Church, 50 Long Lane, London, N3 2PU, UK
Southern	Beaconsfield	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	The Fitzwilliam Centre, Windsor End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, HP9 2JW, UK
Southern	Bedford	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	No	No	Chapter House, St. Peter De Merton Church, De Parys Avenue, Bedford, MK40 2TP, UK
Southern	Borehamwood	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Allum Hall Community Centre, 2 Alum Lane, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 3PJ, UK
Southern	Borehamwood	Wednesday	Steps	19:00:00	19:55:00	Yes	No	Allum Hall Community Centre, 2 Alum Lane, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 3PJ, UK
Southern	Cambridge	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	The Meadows Community Centre, St Cathelines Road, Cambridge, CB4 3XJ, UK
Southern	Chelmsford	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Road, Chelmsford, CM2 6HR, UK
Southern	Guildford Steps	Wednesday	Steps	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Canterbury Room, Christ Church, 23 Waterden Road, Guildford, GU1 2AZ, UK
Southern	Hammersmith	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Grove Neighbourhood Centre, Broomfield Park Road, London, W6 0DT, UK
Southern	Harrow	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Harrow Potter Street Baptist Church, 98, Potter Street, Harlow, Essex, CM17 9AW, UK
Southern	Hitchin	Wednesday	Main	18:30:00	20:30:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House (Quakers House), 1 Paynes Park, Hitchin, SG5 1HF, UK
Southern	London	Wednesday	Main	12:30:00	13:30:00	Yes	No	Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street, London, W1W 6DL, UK
Southern	Newbury Park	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	St Teresa's Church Hall, Eastern Avenue, Newbury Park, Ilford, IG2 7HZ, UK
Southern	Newbury Park	Wednesday	Newcomers	18:30:00	19:15:00	Yes	No	St Teresa's Church Hall, Eastern Avenue, Newbury Park, Ilford, IG2 7HZ, UK
Southern	Norwich	Wednesday	Main	19:45:00	21:45:00	Yes	No	St. Mary Magdalen Church, Silver Road, Norwich, NR3 4TF, UK
Southern	Orpington	Wednesday	Main	19:45:00	21:45:00	No	No	Mind Charity Building, Anchor House, 5 Station Road, Orpington, BR6 0RZ, UK
Southern	Romford	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	St Michael's Church, Main Road, Romford, Essex, RM2 5EL, UK
Southern	Staines	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Calne Room, Wraybury Village Hall, 37 The Green, Wraybury, Staines, TW19 5NA, UK
Southern	Stood	Wednesday	Main	19:00:00	20:00:00	No	No	St Nicholas & St. Mary Church, 143 High Street, Stood, Kent, ME2 4TR, UK
Southern	Swindon	Wednesday	Newcomers	19:00:00	20:00:00	Yes	No	Gorsehill Community Centre, 86 Chapel Street, Swindon, SN2 8DA, UK
Southern	Swindon	Wednesday	Steps	20:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	No	Gorsehill Community Centre, 86 Chapel Street, Swindon, SN2 8DA, UK

SOUTHERN (CONTINUED)

Region	Group	Day	Meeting Type	Start Time	Finish Time	Wheelchair Access	Gamblers Anon	Address
Southern	Wimbledon	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	William Morris House 267 The Broadway Wimbledon, SW19 1SD UK
Southern	Wimbledon	Wednesday	Steps	19:00:00	20:00:00	No	No	William Morris House 267 The Broadway Wimbledon, SW19 1SD UK
Southern	Bexley	Thursday	Newcomers	19:45:00	21:30:00	No	No	Hurst Community Centre Hurst Place Bexley, DA5 3LH UK
Southern	Brentwood	Thursday	Main	20:15:00	22:15:00	Yes	Yes	United Reformed Church New Road Brentwood, CM14 4GD UK
Southern	Clapham	Thursday	Main	18:30:00	20:00:00	Yes	No	St Lukes Church Ramsten Road Clapham South London, SW12 8RQ UK
Southern	Croydon	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	West Croyden Baptist Church Meeting Room 1 Whitehorse Road Croydon, CR0 2JH UK
Southern	Eastcote/Plinner	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	22:15:00	No	No	Else Fischer Room, St Lawrence Centre Bridle Road Eastcote, HA5 2SJ UK
Southern	Eastcote/Plinner	Thursday	Steps	19:00:00	20:00:00	Yes	No	Else Fischer Room, St Lawrence Centre Bridle Road Eastcote, HA5 2SJ UK
Southern	Edgware	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Edgware Masorti Synagogue Stream Lane Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7YA UK
Southern	Hainault	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	St Francis Community Hall 144 Fencepiece Road Hainault, IG6 2LA UK
Southern	Heme Bay	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	No	No	Christ Church William Street Heme Bay, CT6 5BP UK
Southern	Kingston	Thursday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Richard Mayo Centre Eden Street Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 1HZ UK
Southern	Lingfield	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Lingfield & Dormansland Community Centre The High Street Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6AB UK
Southern	London Central	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	Yes	All Souls Club House 141 Cleveland Street London, W1T 6QG UK
Southern	London Central	Thursday	Steps	18:45:00	19:45:00	Yes	Yes	All Souls Club House 141 Cleveland Street London, W1T 6QG UK
Southern	London Central	Thursday	Newcomers	18:30:00	19:45:00	Yes	Yes	All Souls Club House 141 Cleveland Street London, W1T 6QG UK
Southern	Lowestoft	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	Yes	Yes	All Souls Club House 141 Cleveland Street London, W1T 6QG UK
Southern	Luton	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	21:00:00	No	No	Central Baptist Church 52a Park Street Luton, LU1 3ET UK
Southern	Reading	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	22:15:00	Yes	Yes	Kennet Valley Free Church 63 Carters Rise Calcot Reading, RG31 7YT UK
Southern	Reading	Thursday	Newcomers	19:30:00	19:45:00	Yes	Yes	Kennet Valley Free Church 63 Carters Rise Calcot Reading, RG31 7YT UK
Southern	St Albans	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House 7 Upper Latimore Road St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3UD UK
Southern	Stevenage	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	21:45:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House Outbys Lane Stevenage, SG1 1UP UK
Southern	Stevenage	Thursday	Steps	19:00:00	19:45:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House Outbys Lane Stevenage, SG1 1UP UK
Southern	Barnet/Finchley	Friday	Main	19:45:00	22:30:00	Yes	No	St Marys Church Hall 26 Hendon Lane London, N3 1TR UK
Southern	Barnet/Finchley	Friday	Steps	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	St Marys Church Hall 26 Hendon Lane London, N3 1TR UK
Southern	Bexley	Friday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	St Andrews Church 3 The Frennels Basin, SS14 2DX UK
Southern	Brampton	Friday	Main	19:30:00	21:00:00	No	No	Hurst Community Centre Hurst Place Bexley, DA5 3LH UK
Southern	Southend	Friday	Main	20:15:00	22:15:00	Yes	Yes	Memorial Centre Memorial Playing Field Thrapston Road Brampton, Huntingdon PE28 4TB UK
Southern	Watford	Friday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	Friends Meeting House 18 Dundonald Drive Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1NB UK
Southern	Weybridge	Friday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	Friends Meeting House 150 Church Road Watford, WD17 4QB UK
Southern	Soho	Saturday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	Yes	Canon Francis Meeting Room PAX Building Christ The Prince of Peace RC Church, Portmore Way Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8JD UK
Southern	St Albans	Saturday	Main	08:30:00	09:30:00	Yes	No	The Soho Recovery Centre 123 Charing Cross Road London, WC2H 0EW UK
Southern	London Ealing	Saturday	Main	20:00:00	21:45:00	No	No	Friends Meeting House 7 Upper Latimore Road St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3UD UK
Southern	Broadway	Saturday	Main	14:30:00	16:30:00	Yes	No	Polish church 2 Windsor Road Ealing Broadway London, W5 5PD UK
Southern	London West End	Saturday	Main	14:30:00	16:30:00	Yes	No	Hinde Street Methodist Church Hinde Street London, W1U 3JY UK

ULSTER

Region	Group	Day	Meeting Type	Start Time	Finish Time	Wheelchair Access	Gamblers Anon	Address
Ulster	Ballybay	Sunday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	Cuan Mhuire House Monaghan Road Ballybay,Co. Monaghan UK
Ulster	Belfast	Sunday	Main	19:00:00	21:00:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Armagh	Monday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	Malachy Centre 1-5 Chapel Lane Armagh,County Armagh BT61 7EG UK
Ulster	Belfast	Monday	Main	18:30:00	20:00:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Belfast	Monday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	Esher Community Centre South Link Belfast, BT11 8GX UK
Ulster	Bundoran	Monday	Main	20:15:00	21:45:00	No	No	Magh Erne Parish Centre Church Street Bundoran,Co. Donegal
Ulster	Carrhill	Monday	Main	20:15:00	22:00:00	No	No	Resource Centre 576 Carrhill Londonderry, BT48 8BZ UK
Ulster	Newry	Monday	Main	21:00:00	22:30:00	No	No	Girl Guide Hall Dominic Street Newry, BT35 8BN UK
Ulster	Omagh	Monday	Main	20:30:00	22:15:00	No	No	Omagh Community House 2 Drumragh Ave Omagh,Co. Tyrone BT78 1DP UK
Ulster	Randalstown	Monday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	St MacLissis's Parish Centre, Station Rd, Randalstown BT41 2AE
Ulster	Ballybay	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	21:30:00	No	No	Cuan Mhuire House Monaghan Road Ballybay,Co. Monaghan UK
Ulster	Belfast	Tuesday	Main	20:15:00	22:30:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Dungannon	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	Yes	S.V.P Shop 27 Union Place Dungannon, BT70 1DL UK
Ulster	Letterkenny	Tuesday	Main	20:30:00	22:00:00	No	No	The Pastoral Centre Cathedral Car Park Letterkenny, UK
Ulster	Newcastle	Tuesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	Yes	No	MMW Building 19 Dundrum Road Newcastle ,Ulster BT33 0BG UK
Ulster	Co Down	Wednesday	Main	12:15:00	13:30:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Belfast	Wednesday	Main	20:15:00	22:30:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Craigavon	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	20:30:00	No	No	The Town Hall 2 Union Street Lurgan, BT66 8DY UK
Ulster	Creggan	Wednesday	Steps	20:15:00	21:30:00	No	No	The Creggan Neighbourhood Assist. The Old Clinic Fanaad Drive Co. Derry, BT48 9QE UK
Ulster	Dundalk	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	The Community Service Centre 15 Clenbrassil Street Dundalk,Co. Louth UK
Ulster	Donegal	Wednesday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	Bill W Club The Diamond Donegal Town,co Donegal UK
Ulster	Derry	Wednesday	Main	19:30:00	21:30:00	Yes	No	Methodist Church 21 Carlisle Road Londonderry,Ulster BT48 6JU UK
Ulster	Newry	Wednesday	Main	18:00:00	19:30:00	No	No	Girl Guide Hall Dominic Street Newry, BT35 8BN UK
Ulster	Belfast	Thursday	Main	20:15:00	22:00:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Coleraine	Thursday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	Mountfern Adult Centre 13 Rugby Avenue Coleraine,Ulster BT52 1JL UK
Ulster	Belfast	Friday	Main	10:00:00	11:30:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Belfast	Friday	Main	20:15:00	22:30:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Dungannon	Friday	Main	20:00:00	22:00:00	No	No	S.V.P Shop 27 Union Place Dungannon, BT70 1DL UK
Ulster	Newry	Friday	Steps	21:30:00	23:00:00	No	No	Girl Guide Hall Dominic Street Newry, BT35 8BN UK
Ulster	Belfast	Saturday	Drop In	12:00:00	15:00:00	Yes	Yes	23-29 Little Patrick St Belfast BT15 1BA
Ulster	Newry	Saturday	Main	10:00:00	11:30:00	No	No	Girl Guide Hall Dominic Street Newry, BT35 8BN UK
Ulster	Derry	Saturday	Main	13:30:00	15:00:00	Yes	No	Methodist Church 21 Carlisle Road Londonderry,Ulster BT48 6JU UK

started to feel a bit flat within myself. I was procrastinating and failed to make plans and defaulted back into my old ways. For example I stopped giving myself a few little treats. Anyhow, and regardless of the reason, there I was stood in the local bookies to where I live. I took a look around. I saw sad looking men looking for the next winner to make their day and turn their world around, when I knew there was never going to be a big enough win to keep me away from the next bet. I pondered what the hell was I doing there and whether I was going to place that first bet. After 5 minutes being stood there, thankfully, I turned around and walked home and told that beautiful girlfriend, who was by now my wife, what had just happened.

I then got on the phone and called a very good friend of mine, Paul, a fellow compulsive gambler. I explained to him the event that had just taken place. He said to me, 'Tony can I ask you one question?', I said of course. He asked me and I quote "If you won the lottery would you be happy?" I digested the question and then responded by saying thank you Paul and then I put the phone down. He was right, for by asking this question, he was confronting me with the fact that winning the lottery would not satisfy my gambling craving or be enough. Even if I won the lottery what would I then do to my family and friends and how big would my ego then be? I would start by giving money to my wife and children (by now I had a six-year-old son and eight-year-old son), mum, dad etc... Then I would go on glorious holidays abroad and keep gambling. Within a short period of time I would then look to take back the money I had handed out with some cock and bull story that the winnings I had left were tied up in some account that was secured for a few years but don't worry I will give it back to you, with me knowing full well there was no account!

So, in a nutshell, if winning the lottery was never enough then nothing would be. I had now become mature enough and had spent enough time within the GA room's week in week

out to now realise that I am the problem and not the bookies or the fruit machine.

My first 9 years in GA I just took and never gave anything back to GA and it showed. My recovery never stood a chance whilst I still entertained playing games for table stakes. I was deluded and I was only kidding myself.

So, no more trying to shortcut the necessity to attend a GA meeting on a regular basis which means at least once a week, no more good intentions that turned into misery for others around me, no more letting people down on a daily basis, no more not turning up for parties as I was skint or too embarrassed to borrow money to go to a party. Funny I was never too embarrassed to borrow money to gamble! No more suicidal thoughts and lastly no more of the sick feeling in my stomach when I had just lost the last of my months wages and had to walk home looking down into the gutter and phone boxes looking for a lost wallet or something to keep me going.

Today I have all I ever dreamed of without having to have a bet.

I am married with three beautiful children. We bought our house and I've thrived at work with Network Rail the same company that I had joined back in 1984. For this I can only thank GA and the great men and women within these rooms that have supported me throughout my battle with myself.

Too many to name they know who they are; some have passed away now but are never forgotten by me. For without these people I would not be here today. I would have been taken by the gutter, the prison or the river, alas a reality for many who have never made it to the GA rooms.

I have still a lot of work to do on myself, for example you may note that I have been in GA for nearly 30 years and this is the first time I have written about some of my experiences, so procrastination of the highest order here I think! So as I say, still work to be done. What really keeps me off the next bet is

simple: I can't stop when I am winning because I want to win more and I can't stop when I am losing because I want to get my money back. So I stay away from the Betting shop and replace it with a GA room.

It's the same people you may say, in a similar sized room to a grimy betting shop, but boy its a whole different vibe, different prospects and undoubtedly a new future that offers a 12 step recovery in your life. GA hasn't just saved my life it has given me a life. Having peace of mind should not be underestimated!

Today I am so thankful that I found the rooms when I did. I now have a life and I can now live a life.

You see I would never walk to the bookies, I would run to the bookies, and no one pointed a gun to my head and made me gamble. These were my actions and for that I take full responsibility.

Since I first walked into a GA room back in 1989 I have known the place where I belonged. In the rooms that gave me a choice, have the good life or end up in those 3 places! In the words of a former GA member, Barry, who passed away some years ago, 'GA, I am a very grateful customer', thank you.

Tony T, Acton GA

Alan, Lowestoft Group

After years of reading therapies in the New Life magazines I feel that I must add mine. I am a compulsive gambler and feel I always will be but my last bet was on 26 October 1998, so I must be doing something right.

My gambling started twenty years ago when a few friends and myself would go to the local arcade to play the fruit machines I would on occasions take (steal) ten pounds from my mother's purse, when discovered I would deny having ever seen the purse, these times were usually the days that I would have done my earnings (five pounds from my paper round) on the Friday straight after school. I would deliver the local weekly paper that came out Friday afternoons then collect my pay and go straight to the arcade to double my money for the weekend. I never did! I left the job before I was pushed, I had started stealing from my employer.

On leaving school I got a job on a building site labouring for a couple of bricklayers and all my money went into saving for a motorbike.

When I had about half the money Dad lent me the rest, I never paid him back - good old Dad. What happened to the motor bike you're thinking? I know you all know where it went! Within two years it went from my dream bike to a smaller one to a step through Honda to a bicycle, the same bicycle I did my paper round on.

The work ended after about a year and I found myself unemployed with hours of the day to fill. The day I signed on and got my cheque was the highlight of the week down to the arcades leave the fiver at home for my keep and the other twenty five through the fruit machines. When it was gone I'd be scrounging off mum the rest of the week so she never kept that fiver.

At eighteen I got myself a job and I was so pleased with myself I threw myself into my work. It wasn't much, only a

warehouseman at a local supermarket, but with a regular turnover of staff who did not like the work I found myself as senior man in charge of three employees. The staff had regular get together's and, although I still gambled, having to work late nights and weekends I seemed to be in control of the problem.

I met my wife and we got married. If she had known what life would be like nineteen years down the line she may not have turned up. I am grateful now that she did for after all the hurt and pain my compulsive gambling has caused her I know that I could not have got through the years without her support.

Throughout those nineteen years my gambling got worse it started in small ways. I would take money from the joint account and then tell my wife that it must be a mistake made at the bank because I had not had the money. My job changed yet again but this time I was made redundant. It meant working shifts whilst my wife worked days. I would be bored so I'd gamble the day away spending hundreds of pounds chasing a £5 or £6 jackpot of tokens which I would then recycle hoping to win cash but the gambler in me would always want to go for the big payout.

As the years went on the lying and deception got more and more involved, hiding bank statements, ordering credit cards hoping that they arrived when my wife was at work so I could use them for a month before I had to worry whether she would be finding the statements. If she did not, I had another month until they wanted a payment and stopped the card normally. By this time it would be at its limit and no good to me anyway. But my wife would then have to know and all hell would let loose.

It all came to a head in September 1998 when my wife told me she had been to C.A.B. and got two numbers for a local Gamblers Anonymous group (Rick and Ron) and that if I did not call she would take my children and leave. Something inside registered this as a major problem! I knew that I did

not want to lose my wife and children and something inside made me realise that she actually meant it this time and I decided that help was needed. After discussions with my wife I called one of the numbers (thanks Ron) . He told me of the meeting and that it was the only place to go for help as he doubted that I would be able to do it alone. He was right I'd tried that before.

I went to that meeting and I felt sick. There were only a few people there. I told them my name and briefly what gambling was doing to me. They told me their tales all of which I could relate to, thinking I do that, as each one outlined another trait of the compulsive gambler. I was given the GA bible my little orange book to read through the week. I left the building after the meeting and felt so good it was like walking six feet above the ground but I soon came down to earth when phoning home to tell my wife all about the meeting she had heard it all before and just did not believe I had gone. This made me realise that she really did not trust my word and that hurt me but on reading my G A bible I realised that was how I made her think. Years down the line I still have no trust where money is concerned. I keep receipts whenever she gives me money for petrol\shopping\bills so that she knows that the full and correct money has been paid and not just half the bill or half a tank of petrol (we must have had a 3.5 litre engine in that 1.3 Lada the way it went through a tank of petrol) pocketing the rest for my gambling, but it does not bother me as I know that it is all my fault .

The stupid thing is, we gambled together as a family! The cry would go up Sunday afternoon where shall we go today and I as the driver would go to a seaside resort where I knew there was an arcade. We invariably would end up in the arcade and the whole family would be gambling. When the money ran out I would pick on someone usually my daughter. If she did the slightest thing wrong I would jump down her throat and ruin the whole afternoon with a horrendous mood. Other times I remember going in the arcade together as a family only for my wife and kids to leave 30 minutes or so later

sitting in the car waiting for dad. One time, I'm reminded, four hours later.

Now on a Sunday we go out down to the local park to play games e.t.c. My wife has even stopped gambling and only very occasionally does the dreaded lottery. My children do not even enter arcades anymore and I hope it stays that way.

So life has ceased to be a round of lies and stealing and although the debts are still there, and want their money, we pay them what we can afford and have the occasional day out to treat ourselves. I am a happier person, a more content person. I still have days when I go off in a mood but they are getting fewer. I talk my problems out instead of hiding them in the back of my mind. Life is generally reasonable and that's the best it can get at the moment.

I have been more involved of late doing the odd telephone duty when I am able working shifts makes attending meetings every week difficult and I find that hearing the sad voices on the telephone and directing them where possible to a G A meeting (as Ron did for me) is as good as a meeting to me. Hearing their tales of woe and passing on information that if they want could change their lives if they are willing to change like myself. I still hear the little man in the back of my head say "go on just one quid no one will know" as I sit in the mess room at work - just that fruit machine and me. The GA bible gives me the strength to walk away. I'm thankful for GA friends to talk to, to keep me from the machines, true friends indeed. It's not something I would have done years ago.

The above was written around three years after my last bet, I am now in my ninth year still having problems I am ill now with M.E. work retired me in April I have been very low. If anything was going to drive me back to gambling the last 6 months would have, but the strength I draw from my meetings talking to Rick and the others have kept me on the straight path. I still try to do a phone duty once a week, more if I can. I have taken on more responsibility in the group

doing the Secretaries duties. Throughout my recovery two people have been a constant support, my wife Wendy and my great friend Rick.

It's not all doom and gloom though. Since I stopped gambling we have had a family holiday every year only to holiday parks in the UK, but what fun they are playing tennis, volleyball, ten pin bowling, climbing, archery, activity clubs for the kids, swimming and in the theatre in the evenings for the entertainment, after the dreaded BINGO, even paying for full board so Wendy did not have to worry about meals. Compare that to the cheap self catering flats where Wendy would sit with the kids in the evenings whilst I was out in the arcades during those nineteen years. I enjoy life. I do not have much money but I have peace of mind. I have my wife and family and I have to remember that all this could be gone if I have a bet. It doesn't matter how much the bet is it could be a pound or a hundred pounds the cost would be my life as it is now. My wife children and peace of mind will surely be gone. That is my thought that I try to bring forward when that little man in my head says "just one pound, no one will know". It's eight years since my last bet but yes he is still there!

Update I'm in my 18th year bet free, my children have grown up I have two gorgeous grandsons who I spoil rotten. If they want something and I have the money they can have it. Life dealt me a reminder last year that even now my wife still doesn't trust me completely, I used to say that if I had a slip now after so many years I thought Wendy would forgive me, but on holiday last year we ran out of teabags. I said I'd go and get some. The camp shop didn't have my preferred brand and I'd left my phone behind. I decided to go to the local shop which was closed so I carried on to a 24hr superstore returning about an hour later to find a worried family. They said they thought I had been in a crash only to tell me later that Wendy had thought I may have been gambling. This hit me like a punch to the stomach, to realise the trust I thought I had was not 100% You can never

take your partner for granted 19 years of hurt will truly take a lifetime (plus) to mend. But every day is a blessing. And with the relaxing of the gambling laws in this country I know there will be a lot of new "friends" in the future. Let's strive to be there, when they come through our doors, with a friendly smile because anyone who wants to follow the recovery program is a friend of mine.

Another 2 years on and this 28th October was my 20 years abstinence the group has grown as I expected but that only spurs me on to be there for the next poor soul who comes through the door, I'm still group secretary organising the x'mas get together again this year. It's great to see those sad faces in the room for the first time come together and laugh and joke with family. At my pinning the group clubbed together for a pocket watch inscribed with the serenity prayer on one side and a sentiment on the other. It is proudly displayed on my mantelpiece.

The grandsons are growing and they're still spoilt. I still get an allowance from Wendy each month and the boys get a good portion of it in pocket money, toys, treats out etc. I've been known to give them the last of my money then be skint till I get paid at the end of the week, it's what I should have been doing all those years ago with my own children but didn't

G A membership is about unity and friendship, we must stick together or we shall fall together as the saying goes. Rick is still there a best friend as well as adviser.

Thanks to my wife and all those GA members for their support.

And let the fellowship grow in strength and unity.

Yours sincerely,

Alan

Glenn K, Plymouth

Hi my name is Glenn K and I am a compulsive gambler. Gambling at one point in my life is all I ever wanted. My senses were alive, free from the claustrophobic, chaotic and mind numbing world of the nine to fivers. I stalked my pray within this animated world of slots machines, card tables and roulette wheels. A force majeure! Ruthless and brave, this playboy gambler, he has it all. For the first time in my life, I felt alive, on fire and in control. Or so I thought.

What I was craving was an escape from the outside world. I didn't belong in this banal, dreary world. I was bored, restless, irritable and discontent with everything. Gambling was the solution! It had to be, what else is there? It is the only respite I have. It came to define my very existence, every walking minute, scheming and thieving. I had a plan, it will pay out sooner or later. As long as I have time and money, nothing else mattered. Nothing ever mattered. Just time, money and my gambling plan.

Years were lost, it was never my fault. Sure, I was hounded by bad luck all of my life. Carpe diem was my motto. Seize the day. If you are not in you can't win it. You're the man that's going to make them pay! Thirty second later, same old story! Everyone else is to blame. I would curse and swear - Jesus Christ -give me a break! Why did that muppet have to win! Why me! Why me! What the fuck am I going to do?

At this, my dark passenger would raise his angry head and spit and tear me apart. His white bile spittle and frothing, he would make his displeasure known. Call yourself a man! You are nothing but a loser! Why don't you do us all a favour and do one!

And so the cycle would repeat over and over again. And every time, I expected a different outcome, yet the result was always the same. Bet, lose, and chase the debt. Bet, lose, and chase the debt. Time and money that's all I was interested in. I was caught in the headlights of a never ending cycle of self-destruction. Every bet made, never once thinking about the

lost money and time, such was my insanity and compulsion. My pride and ego led me by the hand to the edge of a precipice. I could feel my Dark Passenger's talons tear deeper and deeper. With every bet made we would edge closer and closer to oblivion. My beady eye vulture enjoyed this torment. Sure it was no more or nor less than I deserved.

There was no power to stop. I chose to ignore the suffering and humiliation I had caused to my loved ones. I did however, manage to wallow in my own self-pity for a short period of time, until the pressure built and I had to release the bird from his cage. During my gambling addiction I never had the strength of character to admit to myself and anyone else for that matter, that I had a serious problem. Admitting I was a compulsive gambler addict was one thing. Acceptance and recovery was a whole different matter.

How many days were lost to trying to work out why? Why am I like this? What makes me act and behave this way? Why do I act and behave in a way which is against every fibre of my being! To this day I have no idea and I suspect I will never know why. What I have I learned is to deal with my addiction one day and at a time, be of service and follow the advice of other compulsive gamblers with sobriety in their lives. It worked for them, surely it can work for me.

I was pushed through the doors of the fellowship, I had no fight left in me. I wanted to find a way out and I was desperate for a cure. So I sat and listened to others just like me. For the first time in my life I saw strength, hope and recovery. They seemed to be living normal lives. How was this possible?

In time I came to realise that it is an inside job! I had to stop trying to change the world around me and focus on making a change from within. I now know the cause of my addiction is located within my past. For years this toxic baggage was buried deep within the darkest recesses of my mind. Long forgotten and unresolved this malignant tumour was where it all started. For after all addiction starts in pain and ends in pain.

There are no short cuts to recovery. Whether you follow a programme of abstinence or take a sponsor under a 12 step programme, please bear with it. As soon as I laid down my arms and gave up the fight, I began to get results. Not what I expected, but it was the start of my recovery from the vile, baffling and cunning illness.

As for my dark passenger, he walks in my shoes. His demeanour is amicable and friendly. He has to be nice and pleasant to me today as I have not had a bet today. He is however ever so patient. I have no doubt that if I lose my conviction that I am powerless over gambling and that my life is unmanageable as a result, the bird of prey will return with great vengeance.

My recovery was brought about by a progressive character change that could not be accomplished through will power alone. I needed the help of other compulsive gamblers, the 12 step programme and a higher power of my own understanding. It has worked for me and relieved from the bondage of self. It can work for you too, but it is up to you and you alone. May you find recovery and peace of mind.

Yours in recovery

Glenn K

Nav, Acton

Hi, my name is Nav and I am a compulsive gambler who has been gambling for around 10 years on and off until I started consistently coming to GA meetings in September 2017. I am pleased to say I haven't gambled since 26th September and as part of my recovery I wrote this email below to my ex wife who I have not spoken to for a couple of years:

Hi Hardeep!

As you know from the first time we met and I said you were marriage material I am not one for small talk so I will cut to the chase, I owe you an apology.

This isn't about the divorce or anything after and I think its important that I don't use that as a way to justify my mistakes so here goes...

I wanted to write sooner but always found a reason not to, but it popped into my head again after coming back from India and then I looked at my phone and realised it was March 8th, which is exactly 4 years since you moved out so I took it as a sign!

I have reflected a great deal on the thing that has defined me the most and that has been my gambling. I can pin point exactly when it started and worked out we had been together for a year, which meant for the other 9 you had to put up with the compulsive gambler along with all the lies and deceit and it made my stomach turn.

I want you to know, there is NOTHING you could have done differently in our time together that would have made a difference. In fact if the roles were reversed and you were doing the things I was doing I would not have stayed with you very long at all. In the last four years I have made some strides forward in other areas where you always got upset with me but although I abstained from gambling I never really acknowledged it and so often had little slips for a few weeks here and there.

There is a quote recited in Gamblers Anonymous which goes 'God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference' and I always liked it but didn't understand its importance until last year when I accepted that I cannot change the fact that I am a compulsive gambler but that meant I also found the courage to go back to Gamblers Anonymous and have been attending regularly ever since and it feels like the last piece of the puzzle because I am finally content.

I remember once at Bham uni where I lied and told you I was meeting a friend from uni (you knew I was lying I could see

in your face but I didn't care) instead I went to Star City to gamble....i lost every penny and had to walk back from there to your halls in Lakeside. I remember walking and talking out loud to myself like a mad man and remember being so frightened because I was just powerless against this thing and I knew it would get worse....and we both know it did.

You didn't deserve any of that when all you did was try to love me and be there for me while always trying to see the best in me.

Everyone tells me I'm so much better now, im more consistent and a better person and I started thinking about how you would feel hearing that and it really made me sad. I don't want you to ever think you were reason I couldn't get things on track, if I am better now its not in spite of you but BECAUSE of you (and others close to me I let down). Sometimes you were the only thing that stood between me and absolute oblivion Hardeep and you kept me sane at times when I didn't know which way to turn.

What drives me now is to makes amends where I can and to not let anyone down the way I let people like you down. I was speaking to Sadia the other day (yes, the girl you hates!) about someone completely different and she said 'if someone made you feel loved at any time and never been malicious in the way they treated you, then they should always be regarded in nothing but high terms'. In ten years you always put me first and loved me so you defo fit into that category.

The advice you gave me was always for my own good and for my best...and In fact you were almost always right! In fact the only times I'd say you weren't is when you urged me not to get Manj a job at CCL and I did it anyway...he's now the Ops manager and once a year he always comes to see me and take me for a drink to say thank you and the second is you said a beard looked terrible on me but I am assured I look way better with it!

Anyway I digress, I have no doubt we are exactly where we are meant to be and that us was never meant to be forever, but I now look back on our time with utter fondness and warmth, you were (and am sure you still are) an incredible human and I am privileged to have shared the time with you that I did.

I am sorry for every lie I told, argument we had where I manipulated you but most of all I am sorry that I didn't listen enough, and for the record when I heard you were engaged it filled me with nothing but happiness for you because you deserve to be happy after me causing you so many problems.

Lastly, this email doesn't need a reply...I needed to apologise for me and nothing else so if I don't hear from you that's totally cool...hopefully you're now chasing 50 countries (try Colombia its incredible) and never wonder whether I realised my mistakes, I do and I remind myself of them every day to hopefully not make them again.

May the best of your todays, be the worst of your tomorrows (you may need to google that, it's not an insult)

Kindest Regards,

Nav

Graham, Darlington

I was a late developer to gambling. I used to look down on my father with a smug "I'm so much better than you and I'd never gamble or drink like you do!" I ended up doing both and beyond the limits he ever achieved.

I have a compulsive nature; be it drinking; smoking; sex; eating, I ended up being excessive in all of them and nearly destroying my life and more importantly the lives of those around me. I've often shared the example of a packet of biscuits in meetings. No point in putting them in a biscuit tin, I'd only need to take the lid off again until they'd all gone. Yet with gambling I was even more deadly, but in much

different way. I've heard so many stories of people not even having the bus fare home. Me? I'd walk out with some money still in my wallet and tell myself I had money. The truth is I'd already gambled money I couldn't spare. So keeping a tenth of what I had was pointless really.

I had a distorted view of my chances. I was always going to get the accumulator that was going to cure all my problems. When I didn't win I'd lie to myself; pointing to the people who'd won a fortune on the Lottery only to lose it all or have their lives torn apart emotionally.

That was my dreadful secret; that I could lie to myself and believe it. My wife suffered my lies for years "are we alright with money dear?" "Yes of course pet!" and that head in the sand attitude nearly broke me.

What happened to save me? GA did. I went to a meeting in Darlington and the rest as they say is history. Not that it has been easy since. Sorting out the debt has been a nightmare, but GA gave me the courage to face my problems and begin to get my life on track.

The most magical thing is that I don't have to lie to my wife anymore. The pain shows from time to time, but we work through it together. The most important thing is that she can see that I am really trying and that makes all the difference. I try to carry out my Step 12 because without the room that night I dread to think where I'd be.

Graham

Last bet 31st August 2009

Compulsive gambler

Karun, Acton

The Day I Went Back

Yesterday I went back to my aunties house. A home I left 2 and a half years ago - being told to never step foot in the house again. To put it into context, when my mum died when

I was a little boy, my dad struggled to deal with the loss, and turned to alcohol, my aunty and uncle turned to me and my recently born brother.

Yesterday I was reminded of the time my aunt gave birth on the same day as my Year 4 school play, but discharged herself the same day to ensure I'd have a family member like my 'mum' at the play. My uncle, who married into the family is not my blood, yet has gone against his whole family, to ensure I was looked after like his own child. A family I broke because of my illness.

2 years ago I stood in that very living room, alongside my distraught wife, my aunty and uncle, and my former employer, who I had stolen a mind-blowing amount of money from. I had so without his knowledge, and through a vulnerable, old accountant, who I had managed to wrap around my little finger. That day will always be regarded as the worst day of my life - and yesterday, I went to live that moment again.

Years ago, I still remember walking out of the room and apologising, though the word 'sorry' had come out of my mouth more times than most. The boy that cried 'wolf' summed up their feelings towards me that day. I was blamed for breaking my family, I was told that it was better off that my mum was dead so she didn't have to see me like this, and that my wife should never have my children, as I'd ruin her life.

When I got the message from my aunt yesterday that she'd accepted to see me and 'talk', my heart sunk. I thought I was ready to speak, but in a split second, my world had crashed again. Only this time, I had a wife beside me who was 'proud' of me, and left her evening at her mum and dad's to be by my side.

My biggest fear was speaking to my family and being told they wanted money back. I mean, I pay monthly but I could never clear off debts, and I knew that. But as soon as I walked through the door, and sat in the same spot on the

sofa as I did before, I quickly realised what the room teaches - 'it's not about the money'.

I was told how my actions had caused my aunt to sell a house, a house that was her last memory of my grandad and mother. My younger brother needed to be picked up on a daily basis, because his immediate family was either dead, or addicted to a life-ruining cause. My cousins who looked up to me had blamed themselves for months, and were pulled out of Private School because of the effect it had on them.

These were a few of the things that I was told. But I have learnt a lot in the last 2 and a half years, and I explained that I'm a compulsive gambler, but my recovery was being treated seriously this time. After all, it was the first time I'd faced them after accepting step one, "I had admitted I was powerless over gambling, and my life had become unmanageable.'

I told them that I've worked hard, and despite being told I'd never work in the PR industry again, I've grafted my way back to the top, and hold a better job than I ever have. I've had 5 jobs in the time I'd been away, but not gone longer than 2 weeks unemployed. I explained how I hadn't just stopped gambling, but how I work on my compulsive nature - and control my drinking, anger and most of all, my truthfulness. I explained how my money is controlled by my wife, how I come to the room every week, and how dearly I miss having them around.

If GA and the room has taught me anything, it's one step at a time. Not just with staying away from the first bet, but one step at a time for recovery as a whole. Yesterday was a baby step in my recovery - but something that helped me immensely.

Over two years ago I walked away from that very house alone, and tried to kill myself. Yesterday, I walked away smiling, holding my wife's hand as tightly as I could imagine.

Thank you GA Acton.

GA & GAMANON UK

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B	£150.00			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£30.00
C	£15.00	Day Visitors pay for Welcome pack/Tea/Coffee & Sat Buffet- Workshops free							Pay on day
	£10.00	If booked and paid for before the end of July 2019							

Price is per person No single person supplement Full payment to be received by the end of July 2019

Cheques to be made out to
"PT GA" 20-63-25 00453374
and sent to:

564 Stafford Road
Wolverhampton
WV10 6NN

Contacts:

Darren Tel: 07505152007 GA

Elizabeth Tel: 07476231747 GAM-ANON

Convention email: g.a.55thconvention@gmail.com

**GOD GRANT ME THE
SERENITY**

**TO ACCEPT THE THINGS
I CANNOT CHANGE**

**COURAGE TO CHANGE
THE THINGS I CAN**

**AND THE WISDOM TO
KNOW THE DIFFERENCE**