

God

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



New Life

The Journal of Gamblers Anonymous



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

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

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

Opinions expressed may not necessarily be those of the fellowship.

CVS Building, 5 Trafford Court, Off Trafford Way, Doncaster DN1 1PN.

info@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

email: newlife@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

post: NewLife Editor CVS Building, 5 Trafford Court,
Off Trafford Way, Doncaster DN1 1PN

online: www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk/members

National committee email addresses:

Secretary: natsec@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Treasurer: treasurer@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Prison Liaison: plo@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Press: pro@gamblersanonymous.org.uk
(phone 07930 557 887)

Administration: nso@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Literature

FOR THE GROUP

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

Advice to help understand Step 1.

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

Handbook next edition in print now

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

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

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

FOR MEMBERS

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

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

Climbing the Steps (A6 booklet @ 25p).

A personal journey through the Steps.

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

Deviations along the Road to Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Unity,
The 2014 Convention Committee

Editorial

Don't take your experience from the particular to the general

A particular bugbear of mine is when I hear members' advising a newcomer that they 'must go home and tell their partner everything' or that 'they must hand over their money'. Firstly, there is no 'must' in GA – it is a programme of suggestions. Because something worked for you, does not mean it is appropriate for another person, especially a new member whose back-story you know nothing about. I think it is safe to say that if I had been told to go home and hand my money over then I might not have returned. I was in a bedsit in London and had nobody that I could trust with my money. Moreover, this is not a financial problem and I have always taken the view that members need to develop an adult attitude towards money sooner rather than later. I have often thought that the potential consequences of a new member taking literally the advice 'tell your partner everything' can be potentially disastrous. A partner who has not been to Gamanon or any other form of emotional/practical assistance might just find this tips them over the edge. A long time in recovery and careful judgement is required before some disclosures can be made (or not).

In much the same way as some members can fall into the trap of thinking that their method of recovery is the only way, I have never understood those that think they can export their meeting's format into a longstanding meeting. A meeting has its own personality and I have seen many times members who are regular attendees at another meeting trying to alter a meeting's format and conscience to mirror those of their 'home' meeting. This is an issue that exercised my predecessor as New Life Editor, the late Tony P, as I realised when I recently looked through some back copies. I quote Tony as follows from September 2006:

'Recently there has been a lot of talk about the format of GA meetings. For example, meetings can be with a single main speaker followed by time for questions and then therapies from the floor for those needing to talk. Others have therapies but allow members to comment on each. Some groups allow the chairman to select a speaker and others leave the chair 'open'.

There doesn't seem to be a 'best' way. There are strong meetings of all sorts. What I don't understand is why some members feel so strongly that the way their group operates is either totally wrong or totally right.

One of the key words in our recovery is 'tolerance' so why is it so hard to be tolerant of the way our GA meetings work? In most cases, the format of groups has evolved out of the wishes of the members through the group's conscience meetings. Be patient. Be tolerant my friends and enjoy your recovery.

What is critically important however is that we NEVER ignore our Unity and Recovery programmes. They have been the bedrock of our fellowship for almost 50 years (and of AA before that).

I don't think Tony would be surprised to hear that nothing much has changed since his time. There will always be members who believe that their recovery or their group's is the only way. As Tony implies, be grateful for your recovery but please respect the individuality of each member and the format which each group has chosen

Matthew
Editor

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

Mike (Sutton Coldfield)
33 months therapy

For me, gambling was a way of everyday life. It seemed a natural progression to go from playing arcade slot machines to fruit machines to cards to horses/dogs to casinos and online betting exchanges

Where do I start? I am the eldest of three children and my mum and dad worked their fingers to the bone to ensure us kids had a happy childhood. I was certainly bought up appreciating the values of money. I could see them working so hard and still not having all the luxuries of life that they so deserved. I wasn't going to be like this. I was going to do as little as possible for as much reward as possible. I was going to gamble. In 1996, it was announced that my workplace was to close. All staff received a substantial redundancy settlement. My problem was that the vast majority of mine was owed to credit card companies. It was not all frittered away on gambling but most of it was. However, it didn't matter now. I was debt-free and I could control my gambling. How wrong I was as that nagging little voice in my head would keep telling me that I could win back the debts I had just paid off.

The next 4-5 years of life was great. The wife and I had bought a house together. Money was split down the middle on everything from nights out to purchases for the house. Money was no problem to me but that was because all my contributions were on credit. I was continuing to gamble, only now even more so as I ventured into casinos. Each time I visited, I had developed a different 'foolproof' system and maintained to myself I would gamble responsibly. I would spend hour upon hour just waiting for that one big win. Surprisingly, it never happened.

Looking back, around the year 2000, there was a huge change in my personality. I had, no doubt, become a

lot more self-centered, and was lying and deceitful. My debts spiralled out of control but credit cards were as simple to obtain as a packet of sweets. The lies were getting larger and larger and more and more frequent, especially as to where my money was going. I was now leading a double life. I started to have sleepless nights and would race back home at lunchtimes in order to grab the post. I knew every date of every invoice delivered.

In November 2005, I took my now wife to Paris and proposed, to which she agreed. I was elated but, at the same time, kept wondering just how I was ever going to tell her of my mounting debts. It was in early 2006 that things came to a head when, after yet another day of wasting money, I arrived back home and broke down in tears to my wife. Just imagine being told this a few months after agreeing to marry the person you love and had complete trust in. My wife broke down in tears and, for the first time in my life, I realised the hurt and pain that I had caused her. She asked if I had a problem which I callously rejected. We both agreed that the house could be remortgaged and that I would pay this as it was my stupidity. So, in June 2006, we happily went off to (of all places) Las Vegas, got married and had the best time ever. Gambling had never been further from my mind. By the time the remortgage had been agreed, what with interest on the credit cards, there was still a small amount of debt outstanding although this was manageable. Of course, to me, it wasn't. Surely, I could win it back? Over the next 2 years, I chose the road to ruin. I was soon gambling every day at every opportunity. The lies and deceit naturally started and I was in debt more than ever. I would get back home late each working day having spent the majority of time losing large sums on the betting exchanges. When asked by my wife where had I been or why was I late, I would always ask her to repeat the question so as to give me a couple of extra seconds to come up with some

what he meant by: "no need to thank me, you will understand one day". It is all very well having someone there to answer all your questions, but part of the recovery process (in my opinion), in many cases, is to actually experience such things personally. One of my problems, and one that is very apparent with most other addicts that I encounter, was that I didn't want to wait for the answers or the results. I wanted everything now. I soon came to realise, though, that many of the positive aspects within the Fellowship which made it what it was for me on my first experience have merely been handed down over the years by members learning from example.

I often speak in therapies about how my way never worked; it brought me to GA on my knees. So, to accept my illness in its entirety, I must administer a different 'way'. Even after being abstinent for nearly 9 months, to a degree, I was still trying to do things my way and wondered why things in my life were not changing. Although it took me some time to take on board the 'GA way', the Fellowship is now my source of guidance. I am told that the journey ahead of me will require diligent effort. Well, I was (and still am) prepared for that and ready for what lies ahead.

I read in the Orange Book to follow the steps but this was not something that GA was showing me. I say this in sadness really as the other members of my group never really spoke of the 12 Steps, apart from reading out pages 18 & 19 in the meeting. There were other things that were not often spoken about (or poo-pooed) but I won't go into those now. I concluded that there was more to recovery than I was being taught within my local group. And, yes, I was one of those members who thought that one meeting (and the same one each week) was enough for me; how wrong I was. I started venturing to other meetings and soon found that there was a lot more

knowledge out there than I had expected. I encountered some members talking avidly about the 12-Step programme. I also noticed that these individuals spoke differently from others who didn't mention the Steps. They spoke more fluidly and it was like they had a much better grasp on knowing themselves and what they were about. Above all, I could literally smell recovery in their voices. I wanted some of this.

I started to practice the Steps and, you know what, after putting in all that diligent effort, I am then asked to give away all that I have learnt in Step 12. At first, I wanted to hold on to everything I had learnt. I felt that I had put the effort in so why should I share it with others who had sat there and done nothing. I soon realised that if I did not share my experiences, how would the 'message' be passed on, just like it was for me when my ears first pricked up?

It is unfortunate that so few members in GA practice the 12 Steps or even attempt them. Where will this Fellowship be in years to come if nobody were to pass on the knowledge they have learnt? As 'the GA message' gets more diluted, the Fellowship would get weaker; until what? It ceases to work? The 'hand of GA' was there for me when I needed it, so it should be there for the next person who needs it. My recovery has taught me many things but gratitude comes high up on the list. I am entirely grateful for what GA has given me which is why I give back. It is my duty to pass on the message. It is my duty to pass on my experiences. It is my duty to pass on everything I have learnt. Why? Because it was done for me. I do 'understand' now why that guy helped me and wanted no praise in return: because it was done for him and the person who helped him. Who is going to help the next new member who walks into the door of GA: will it be YOU!

to my unreasonable expectations of other people and life. My unreasonable expectations of other people and life started from a very early age. Because my emotional wants and needs were not fulfilled, resentments were with me from a very early age. Burying and suppressing my pains became a way of life for me.

Some people might think that healing pains is not that important. For me, healing pain in a healthy way is an important part of our recovery. Some people might think that everyone in recovery is an honest person. Yet can that be true? Many people have lied for a large part of life; giving up telling lies takes time. The same way, learning to be mature takes time, different periods of time. If a person is lying do we confront them? Or do we let them face them self over time?

The only requirement in recovery is a desire to be honest; that does not come easy for some people. I both want and need spiritual recovery today and spiritual recovery has nothing to do with religion.

Big Dave (Eastcote, Uxbridge and London Central Saturday)
Why am I responsible?

When Anyone, Anywhere, Reaches out for Help,

I want the Hand of GA, Always to be There.

And for That, I am Responsible!

In my early days of being in the Fellowship, I often looked at this on the front of the New Life magazine and wondered what 'I am Responsible' meant. Was it referring to GA, and that GA is responsible, or did it mean me, the person reading it? As I was unsure of the answer and, to be honest, too embarrassed to ask someone just in case they gave me one of those 'erm...are you stupid...have you not listened to anything anybody has said' kind of looks, I just left it unanswered until the next time I looked at it. For me

to gain a better understanding of the illness that I have requires effort, but above all, time. And, without asking someone else for the answer, finding the correct answer to that question required time and understanding also. **I AM RESPONSIBLE!** Me.

I have to look back to the first day I walked into a GA room. There was someone there who immediately greeted me with a warm welcome. They spoke to me like a friend from the start. They understood the grief I was experiencing. They never judged me nor did they criticise anything I said. I was treated with respect. My frustrations, anxieties, and misconceptions were put at ease. I was made welcome. And, above all, I felt safe. However, upon commencement of the meeting, I soon realised that every other person in the meeting was just like me; they all had the same problems and personality traits. I was now confused. How can I be responsible? I can't even be responsible for myself let alone others. So how does everyone else do it? Why would they do it (knowing they have the same negative traits as me)?

The first 9 months were a real struggle for me financially. Thankfully, I got a regular lift to the meeting from a fellow GA member. Most weeks, he would even often give me money to put in the collection just to keep me feeling part of the group. I would thank him and I once asked him why he was being so kind to me; after all, before coming to GA, we had never met. His reply to me was: "No need to thank me, you staying off the gambling is all the thanks I need." I persisted asking him why and he replied "You will understand one day. Now don't ask me again." This annoyed me for some time as I was always the type of person who accepted (and expected) praise for my efforts.

Just like many things in GA, I think I needed to find out for myself first-hand

'cock and bull' story. I eventually tried phoning the bank to remortgage the house again but was declined as the credit crunch had started. One Sunday morning, my wife handed over the phone saying a company was asking why I had defaulted on a payment. Upon being confronted by my wife, I would tell her there was nothing to worry about and that it was a mistake. No doubt she feared the worst, but she didn't dare ask me too often as I would often snap and get angry to the point where she would back down. Then, one evening, my wife came home and broke down in tears. She had noticed on our account the refusal of another remortgage. Again, I felt like the most unworthy person on the planet as I confessed what I had done.

This time, my wife insisted that I must tell my parents, which I did. I even told my boss who is a very close friend, all of whom were very supportive. Did I really deserve their sympathy? They didn't know what I had done before. The only way we were going to keep the house was if my mother-in-law came to the rescue and bailed me out. So, my wife went around to her mum and, cap-in-hand, explained what had happened. Once again, I was given a lifeline. My wife asked me to hand over all credit cards and cancel my accounts which I still never did to any degree. Sure, I gave some of them but made sure I kept a few back for myself just in case I needed them. I was already deceiving her but would still not admit I had a problem.

Even after all of the pain and misery I had caused, not only my wife but now my mother-in-law, I once again chose the road to ruin by attempting to 'win' the small amount of outstanding debt remaining. Within 18 months, my debts had started to spiral. The only redeeming factor was that I had cancelled a few of my cards and my debts could in no way get as big as they had been previously. I altered direct debit payments to ensure I had money to gamble. Again, when quizzed by my

wife as to why my standing order hadn't gone into her account, I would argue until she backed down. On one occasion, I even went outside to pretend to phone my boss and then suggested there was a problem with the company's expenses and no that nobody had been paid.

I tried putting on a brave face when around friends and family but deep down I was so depressed and considered ending it all several times over. I kept thinking of what I had put my wife through and that she and the rest of my family would be better off without me. However, I just couldn't go through with it.

My last bet was on Friday, 30 July 2010 at the casino. As my wife was on holiday at the time, I had arranged to go and see my mother-in-law on the Saturday. I broke down to my mother-in-law fully expecting her to bail me out again. It wasn't quite as straightforward as I had thought it would be. I was dreading my wife's return on the Sunday as I would have to come clean and shatter her heart yet again. In the end, like the coward I was, I waited until the Monday. She simply could not believe what I had done after all of the heartache I had caused. I will never forget the look of sheer despair and devastation on her face.

"You must go to see someone and talk about it. You have a major problem." she shouted. Begrudgingly, I knew she was right and I had to go, if only to try and save my marriage. I drove to my parents to tell them what I had done again. The following day, I told my boss who was at a complete loss for words. He escorted me to the local casino to ensure I self-excluded myself. I broke down when I came out and the enormity of what I had done sank in. It was now time to take some responsibility of for actions.

It was Wednesday, 4 August 2010, when my life took a massive step in the

right direction. I attended my first GA meeting at Sutton Coldfield. I didn't know what to expect but was determined now to get help. A gentleman by the name of Roger greeted me and began to tell me what to expect. When introducing myself to the group and outlining what a complete idiot I had been, I was asked how I was going to pay my debts back. I had never even thought about it up until that point. That summed me up to a tee. A completely self-centered human being who thought the world revolved around him. I came away feeling that a massive weight had been lifted from my shoulders. No-one had judged or criticised me in any way and only offered me sound advice and support. I felt rejuvenated. When I got back home, I was keen to share all of the advice that I could remember with my wife. Despite all that I had put my wife through three times over, she took everything on board and supported me yet again and she has attended semi-open meetings whenever possible. Financial barriers were put in place and I handed over my passport and driving licence to her. All daily expenditure was accountable and still is at time of writing. Both my parents were pleased that I was, at last, doing something about my addiction. I also informed my brother and sister and very close friends who were all amazingly supportive. Within 6 months, I took on the role of secretary. I felt I wanted to give something, no matter how small, back to GA as it had helped me to start to turn my life around for the better. I started venturing to other GA meetings in an attempt to gain more wisdom and knowledge. I had finally learned to accept what had gone was gone. I could not change the past, only direct my future. That first 12 months seemed to pass by so quickly. I felt quite a sense of achievement in abstaining from gambling for 12 months and, in addition, had been able to spend time supporting my mother-in-law who was progressively worsening from ill-health.

The first six months of my second year

proved to be somewhat stale for want of a better phrase. Sure, I was attending weekly meetings and continuing with the role of secretary but had I actively worked on my recovery and tried to change my character defects? Honestly, no, not really. I had, in the most, just abstained from gambling. March 2012 was a testing time in particular for my wife as my financial saviour, 'the mother-in-law', had become increasingly ill to the point where she was placed in a care home. Would I have offered as much support to my wife and mother-in-law had I still been gambling at the time? The answer: most probably not.

It was a couple of months later when I had what I can only describe as my penny-dropping moment. I was asked by a member why I didn't change my bank account to joint names. At the time, I couldn't see the point as I didn't have access to this card anyway and this would mean spending 'all of an hour' out of the weekend going to the bank (laziness). I discussed it with my wife and we decided to leave it. Three or four weeks later, a similar question was posed to another member. When the response came "but this won't stop me from gambling", the retort was "that is not the point". I actually understood what was being said. If I wouldn't make a small change to mitigate my financial risks, what chance had I of changing the bigger picture (my personality defects).

I went back home and told my wife the reasons why I thought we should amend the account. On the Saturday, the account was amended to joint names. This was just the kick up the backside that I needed again. I now realised that you only get back from GA what you put in. Nothing is handed to you on a plate. It takes effort and patience. Two character traits which I will always be working to improve upon. I made a note of (what I perceive to be) my key character defects and have actively made efforts to change them. Patience, laziness, procrastination and haste to name but a few.

who carried out these acts no longer exists. This is due to me putting a lot of thought and effort into my recovery. Slowly but surely I have changed who I am.

I have been attending GA now for over 20 years and, during that time, I have learnt many things; some have helped with abstinence and others have helped with recovery – most can be applied to both. It is imperative that I attend at least one meeting a week and that I listen as well as talk and contribute to the meeting. GA has taught me that I have to accept that I am a compulsive gambler for life and that gambling has me beat. I have learnt to accept that I can never place a bet again for as long as I live, taking one day at a time. GA has taught me that my recovery is at least as important as my abstinence and that you can't have longevity in one without the other. I have learnt that GA can't save every soul and that some people just aren't ready, but I have learnt that everybody is worth saving and that one day they will be ready. GA has taught me humility, patience, empathy, compassion and understanding.

When another gambler comes to the room after a slip I often think, there but for the grace of God go I. Finally, GA has taught me that gambling no longer controls me. Moreover, I am now in control of gambling by choosing not to place that first bet. There will never be an excuse for me to gamble; it will mean that I have failed to follow and act upon all the things that GA has taught me.

Whilst I can say that the last five years have been easily the best of my life, the last two years have been easily the most testing on a personal level. My father got cancer and it was touch and go whether he would pull through. Thankfully, he did. My stepdad then got cancer and passed away eight weeks after being diagnosed. My brother then got cancer, had treatment

and an operation and all looked good. My sister then lost her unborn twins. My brother-in-law then passed away, also from cancer, on January 17 this year after a very short fight. My brother's cancer came back and he is undergoing treatment for a second time. I then lost my job. I lost my mother on 26 March, which was devastating to say the least. Finally, I found out that my other sister's cancer has returned after 10 years.

The reason I felt the need to relay this is not so you can feel sorry for me but because all of this could have been an excuse for me to gamble and escape my emotions. GA has taught me through my recovery that I am not the only person that suffers and that people need me for support as they have supported me over the years. I had a choice to run away and gamble or face up to and deal with life. I am done with running away. Whilst dealing with life's problems can be tough, I have learnt that people need and depend upon me and that life isn't about me.

I couldn't have gotten through the last two years without GA and my family's support. They have kept me focussed and supported me. For that, I will be eternally grateful and will try my best to repay that support wherever possible. Today, I choose not to gamble. If I continue to practice what I preach, then I have faith that tomorrow I can say the same.

Dave (Beckenham)
Understanding our emotional triggers making my life unmanageable

Once I understood my emotional triggers and when I felt very vulnerable, I could reduce my unhealthy reactions to my pains, my fears, my frustrations, my loneliness and my periods of boredom.

Anger is an unhealthy reaction to pains I was unable to heal, my fears I was unable to face, and my frustrations due

on and waste the cash I didn't. Still had a decent life, so it proved I wasn't like those poor losers who hung around in bookies with their *Sporting Life* in their back pockets and a little red pen behind their ears. I got married and had kids and managed to put a roof over their head, food on the table, and the occasional holiday. But my gambling was escalating. Every hour was spent either planning how I could get away from work or the family in order to sit in an arcade. I knew I had a problem, but having a good job meant I could justify any losses. I even tried GA once but, after two hours in a portacabin in West London listening to old guys moaning about bookies, I came to the conclusion I wasn't like them. They were looking for that big win, but all I ever thought of was how much I could afford to lose.

I would constantly come out of arcades saying this would never happen again and that I needed to stop. By the time I had got back to my car, the thoughts would have turned to how. 35 years later and eventually the house of cards came tumbling down. My wife had found out about my gambling many times and I had managed to convince her that it was all ok. I was the most believable liar although I am sure she knew but just didn't want to face it. Finally, she could take no more and asked me to leave. My world came crashing down. It was at that moment I decided to try GA again. To be honest, I didn't go thinking it would stop me gambling. I went because I thought my wife may give me another chance.

On the 19 May 2011, I forced myself into walking through the door in Eastcote and it changed my life. I sat in a little room with a few people and they suddenly started telling my story. I thought someone had slipped something in my tea and I was hallucinating. Suddenly, I found myself opening up to strangers, telling them things I had kept hidden for years. It felt like someone had lifted some of the

weight off my shoulders. I decided to go to another meeting a few days later and another few pounds seemed to be lifted.

I have continued attending GA meetings for the last two years and am lucky enough to not have gambled again in that time. I realise now that gambling was an escape from life for me and a way of nullifying my low-self esteem. Knowing this and understanding it better allows me to replace that escape with something not so destructive. If I feel low now, I don't need to sit in my bubble for six hours in front of a fruit machine. I can speak to my friends, family and fellow GA members. I can go for a walk and appreciate the world around me. Now, I look for things of beauty when in a new place as opposed to looking for a new arcade to hide in. I have reconciled with my wife, live back at our home and have probably enjoyed more moments with my family in the last 2 years than in the previous 20. I've rebuilt friendships and rebuilt bonds with relations. It's not easy having to face up to life and it is still not a bed of roses. But to live my life with no lies is a wonderful thing.

I can't change the past but I can change the future. For the moment, that's enough. And for this, I thank the members of GA who have supported me on that journey. I pray that, one day, I can help someone with this insidious illness in the same way GA has helped me. God has granted me serenity, if only just for today.

Shawn (Sutton Coldfield)
5 years therapy

During my gambling days, I did a lot of things that I am not proud of, from lies and deceit to a theft and a complete lack of morality. My gambling took me down many dark, dead-end paths, culminating in suicidal thoughts on many occasions. However, I have let go of the past and forgiven myself for my abhorrent acts because the person

It was November 30 last year when my beloved mother-in-law passed away. She will never quite know just how grateful I am to her for all that she did for me. During my wife's loss, not once during this time did her support ever wane. I felt it most appropriate that I should say a few words about the mother-in-law at her service. No matter how hard to get through, I at least owed her that. The following day, I felt I had finally grown up. It is now another five months on and each week I learn a little more. Sure, every week is different, but if I feel the meeting becomes a bit stale or I do not get as much out of it one week, it is up to me to attend a different meeting. I cannot help but feel sympathy and empathise with every person that walks through the GA doors for the first time. When I hear the stories of despair and woe it only gives me strength to remind me (if ever I needed it) that I never want to go back to those dark days again. Gone are the deceit and lies, intercepting the post, constant sleepless nights, the anxiety of creditors calling on a weekend, the feeling of wanting to drive through the central reservation and end it all. Slowly but surely coming back are the good times, a little trust, the laughing and joking, the spending more quality time together.

Life is good at the moment; my motivation at work is near an all-time high. I finally appreciate what I have in life. First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife who I will be indebted to for life, not just financially but mentally. I couldn't have a more loving and caring person to share my life with. I would also like to thank my belated mother-in-law, my family and friends who have not once judged but just supported me. Last but by no means least, thank you to the fellowship for showing me there is a life outside of gambling and for showing me the right path to recovery.

Michelle (Manchester and Preston)
*I am a C.O.M.P.U.L.S.I.V.E
G.A.M.B.L.E.R*

I am a compulsive gambler (CG)

Admitting that I am a CG - was very hard for me
My life was a mess – but I couldn't live gamble-free

At first there was despair and no hope - until I went to GA

Connecting with other CGs felt right - in a very special way
One day at time programme - it sounded too good to be true
Meetings helped a little - with cravings I had to get through
Putting barriers in place - the simplicity of which I never got
Unfortunately I wasn't able to give up - and I felt like a clot
Learning how to cope and letting go - was so difficult for me
Slipping back into action - was stupid and not meant to be
I tried in my life to be honest, open and willing to change
Varying my day without gambling - for me was hard and strange
Emotional, physical and financial stress - wasn't at all right

Gradually taking my recovery Just for Today - there was less of a fight
Accepting that gambling had got me beat - I embraced GA
My attitude changed - I felt I had more control each day
Being in GA, helped me to make new friends and gain support
Learning from others and my mistakes – my urges I fought
Eventually I began to be responsible for actions - I made a new life
Recovery for me 'A Compulsive Gambler' now causes less strife

Mick
5 Years

My first memory of gambling is when I was young at home with my dad. Saturday afternoon, without fail, the TV would only have racing on and, at that time, I was only choosing colours numbers and silly names. My gambling

started fairly small and didn't seem to be a problem. During my first marriage, I gambled but didn't do a great deal of damage. My second wife, before I met her, was already involved with greyhounds and owned dogs. I quickly became fascinated by the whole scene and was visiting several venues. My stakes increased significantly.

Greyhounds: a 30 seconds buzz for a gambler. My ego was boosted as people believed that I had inside information and I became the centre of attention. I bragged about the fantasy big wins and showed people the cash I had in my pockets. But I was not telling them that this was all that was left from a much larger amount. I visited dog tracks at least four times a week and bookies during the day. Boxing Day was my main gambling period visiting four tracks in one day. Each meeting was timed to follow on from the other meeting so I was bumping into the same people.

My wife became pregnant with our first child and there were problems all the way through. Each time she had a stay in hospital was my cue to go gambling. Nothing else mattered; the hospital visits were kept as short as possible and I was pleased when she went into Good Hope as it was very near to Hall Green dog track. My daughter was born premature and was poorly on a ventilator. The hospital gave me 24-hour access due to her being so ill. This didn't stop me spending time at the dog track or bookies. My daughter died after three days. Then, a couple of years later, I had a son and a daughter. By this time, my gambling was uncontrollable. The dogs had to be sold.

Every minute of every day revolved around gambling. I didn't want to know or talk to people unless they had my gambling interests. I became very lazy, argumentative and my work suffered. I became a persistent liar, always trying to cover my tracks, not sleeping and worrying how I could avoid the next mess; only to repeat it over and over

again. I was not a very nice person to be around. There were regular occasions when I was paid from work and returned home with nothing for food. The bills started to go unpaid. There wasn't a credit card which I didn't own, each one taken to the limit. I was offered the chance to turn them into loans so this cleared the way for me to do it all again but on a larger scale. I would wait for all of the upset to die down; I was very good at turning on the tears. Then it was straight back to gambling.

I remember one instance when I was in a loan office pleading for money. One of the staff in the office said that a significant amount of cash had been paid in that day and that I could have it. I was relieved as this money was to pay off another card. I lost it all within 2 hours. I roamed the town distraught not knowing what to do. Then I plucked up the courage to go home. No words passed between us as the look on my face always told the same old story: HE'S DONE IT AGAIN. I was given an ultimatum to stop. I had to sit down both my children aged 6 and 8 and was made to tell them why we had no holidays, why my son's birthday party was cancelled and why they couldn't have the things they wanted. Gambling was ruling my life and the loan company's net started to close as it was phoning me at work. I always thought that I could gamble my way out of debt. On my first visit to GA, I went to the meetings not really understanding what was going on and hoped that, after all the fuss, I could calm things down. I attended for about two years and preached and actually abstained from gambling. But I had learnt nothing. By this time, I had nine sub accounts on my mortgage. Shortly after this, my wife left me. And she left me with the two kids.

Later, I met my now wife Jane who was oblivious to my past gambling. Jane's dad liked a flutter at the weekend. I thought that I had cracked it and that a small interest would not harm me. I then suggested an evening at the

also lost time whilst gambling and that I can never get that back either.

In more recent times, as my recovery has grown through working through our 12-step programme, I have come to realise just what I lost during the pre-GA years and also many years in GA, even though not gambling. My recovery was initially limited by a number of factors, not least by the fact that I still wanted to do things my way and to ignore most advice that I was being given. Then, when I realised that I did after all need all the help that was being offered, I was held back by guilt, fear, procrastination, laziness, ego, dishonesty with myself, fear of failure, living in the past, low self-esteem and lack of hope, let alone faith.

Gambling acted like an anaesthetic by suppressing my emotions and feelings and so when I stopped gambling I felt pain that comes when having to face reality. The realisation that I had to live in the real world and face my problems, rather than run away, was scary and extremely difficult. Had it not been for GA I would not have been able to cope.

After many years in the Fellowship, I eventually changed my attitude to gratitude and came to realise that every moment of life is precious. Today, everything I see, everything I hear, everything I experience are moments to cherish for they will never happen again. For years, I missed out on so much but, as they say, the past is for education not regret. I cannot change the past but I have the opportunity as to how I shape my future.

So, I have listed many of the things I lost whilst gambling but what did I gain? Well, gambling helped me forget although, once I stopped, I could not remember what I wanted to forget. It also helped me to cope with the crap life I had for 17 years whilst gambling. I only realised after I stopped that it was

the gambling causing my crap life. I thought gambling was a solution to my problems, not the cause. This sounds crazy now but, at the time, in my head, it all made perfect sense. I do now understand that this gambling addiction affects my thinking. I also understand there's a difference between thoughts and actions. Just because I think something doesn't mean I have to act it out. That is why going to regular meetings is still very important to me for, without hearing the good and bad stuff from other members, I would be alone with my thoughts and that would be very dangerous.

In conclusion, I lost nothing by stopping gambling but I gained so much more than I ever thought possible when turning up at my first ever meeting. And the more meetings I attend, the better my life is.

Ron (Uxbridge)

My name's Ron and I am a compulsive gambler. Now, that wasn't so hard to say (or type), so why did it take me so many years to get there? My story is no different than many in here. I started gambling when I was around 7 years old, just the odd few pence in a fruit machine or playing pitch and toss up against the wall whilst waiting for the school bus. Not really much of a problem and it allowed me to be part of the gang. But, whereas my friends would play a few games and then go and have fun, I found, over time, that I couldn't pull myself away. Every opportunity I had to play a machine would be taken, at the expense of all other activities. I never cared about any other gambling, so I wasn't an addict. School trips would be ruined, days out spent sitting in front of a machine playing until my last penny was gone. Still, not like it was a real problem.

Move forward a few years and when I started earning money, I found that I could isolate the cash I needed to live

Michelle (Manchester and Preston)
Memories of Beating Myself Up After a Gambling Slip

There have been so many thoughts
and feelings for me
On my journey to actually try and
become gamble-free
Being 'gamble-free' for me seemed so
far off I had to say
'Cos I kept slipping many friggings times
and in many a way

I tried hard to not go back into my
stupid gambling action
But inside there was built-up inner
tension and frustration
Even though I had promised myself
never to go back to gamble
I found the friggings urges very hard for
me to handle

But after yet another slip I felt helpless
and extremely mad
Inside there was no hope for me and
as a person I felt bad
I was pissed off at me for not having
the ability to give up
And it was then I really started to
verbally beat myself up

I started then to call myself every
single explicable name
'Cos inside I felt extreme
disappointment and inner shame
Within me I felt like a devious sneaky
worthless piece of ****
And the only place I felt I belonged was
in the gutter or **** pit

But then I connected with CGs within
my life, online or at GA
And with the help of other gamblers, I
gained a lot each day
Other CGs advised me to 'learn to
listen' and to 'listen to learn'
And I learnt to be honest when sharing
every single concern

It was suggested that I put effective
coping barriers in place
These barriers were to help me with
any urges I had to face

But sometimes their suggestions for
me didn't actually work
And I returned to GA – constantly
feeling like a stupid jerk

It was then that internal beating myself
up started over again
Not being able to stay a day gamble-
free for me was totally insane
It was suggested that I stopped using
the negative verbal whip
And instead have a kinder voice within
me after a gambling slip

I started to try and learn from each
gambling slip which I had
And 'cos I learnt what went wrong the
beatings were less bad
Once I accepted I'd had the slip I
started trying to change me
Changing who I was – seemed so
important for me to see

I started to remind myself that I
couldn't change my past
But I could try and come to terms with
this addiction at last
Within myself I actually started to find a
much nicer voice
And truly that helped me to cope and
make a better choice

So I gained courage, humility and
strength to return to GA
About a gambling relapse to other
CG's I would honestly say
Thankfully, over time I am less
negative towards the CG's mind in me
And with other gambler's help, I have
managed to stay gamble-free

Bryan (Luton)

In the course of my recovery, I have,
without actively seeking, discovered a
lot about my gambling. When I first
came to the rooms, I thought all I had
lost was my money and my job,
although I also thought I was in danger
of losing my fiancée, my house and
that my parents would disown me. I
was told to forget the money as it was
gone and I accepted that quite readily
but it took a while to realise that I had

horses then several dog meetings. I
even arranged the work's Christmas
party at the horses; the buzz quickly
came back. I wrongly thought that I had
convinced Jane my losses were small.
We took out a large loan in 2004 for our
wedding which I was unable to afford. I
even got Jane to sign the loan
documents jointly. Most of the loan was
used for the wedding but a significant
amount also went gambling. Jane
noticed the amount of time I was
spending visiting the bookies.

By this time, the electronic roulette
machines took my eye. This was quick
easy money so I thought. Quickly, more
damage was done. One Thursday
evening, we both went into the bookies;
Jane to put on her Irish lottery and me to
go straight on the machines. Within 15
minutes, I lost all my wages. I was
foolish to believe Jane didn't notice.
Outside, she asked: "shall we do the
food shopping tonight", knowing I had
no money. We went through a really bad
period as all my creditors seemed to
catch up with me at the same time.
Letters, phone calls at home, I had the
phone cut off and they pestered me
more at work. I was eventually given two
County Court Judgements as I had, until
then, avoided everyone, even the
courts. I broke down and confessed
everything to Jane. I thought we were
finished.

I contacted GA and we both went to the
next meeting. Jane had her eyes
opened to the illness and accepted that
my gambling was never a personal
attack on her. I got to the point where
after gambling for half my life, I had had
enough and didn't want to be part of this
anymore. Something clicked and I
started to listen. My rock bottom? I
finally realised that I could no longer
cope with the madness and destruction.

Giving up gambling is the easy part if
you are prepared to follow the GA
programme. Changing the person which
I had become will take a lot longer and I
have learned that I must do this for

myself. My ambition is to become a
better person and to change my
personality defects. I am, at present,
working on different aspects of this.
I regret wasting my life and all of the
hurt and damage that I have caused to
people along the way. It is very difficult
to forget and this therapy is a reminder
to me and, hopefully, is some help to
new members. I still beat myself over it.

My massive debt will never leave me but
I have a management plan in place
which allows me to live. 56 years of age
and learning to live a better life without
gambling being a part of it. It is no
hardship for two hours each week to
come to GA; this room will always be a
part of my life. Without this room, I
couldn't imagine the consequences.
Finally, to my wife Jane who has
supported me and stood by me through
all the mire; I couldn't have coped with
this illness without her.

Ian (Birkenhead and Chester)

Does it get easier not to gamble as time
goes on? This is a question I hear a lot.
The answer for me is: 'sometimes yes
and sometimes no'. Although I find the
more effort I put into my recovery, the
easier it becomes. The problem is, over
time, complacency starts to set in and I
start to question if I still need to put in
the work. Family life is better,
relationships are stronger and I start to
wonder when I ever managed to gamble
in the first place. That's probably when I
need to start putting in more effort and
working the GA recovery programme as
this addiction has a funny way of
'catching me with my pants down' when
I least expect it. GA meetings are like
my insurance; if I keep up the
instalments, I am covered.

MEETINGS LIST – June 2013

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk/meetings

REGIONAL PHONE NUMBERS

Manchester 0161 976 5000
Ulster 0287 135 1329

NORTH EAST

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

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

CLEETHORPES (Grimsby): Wednesday at 7.30pm. Grange Community Centre, Camforth Crescent, Grimsby, DN34 5EF

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

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

HUDDERSFIELD:
Monday and Thursday at 7.30pm. New North Road Baptist Church, New North Parade, HD1 5JU. GamAnon on 2nd Monday of each month. *Email:*
Huddersfield@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

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

Monday Steps at 7.30pm (not for new members)
Tuesday at 7.30pm (this meeting operates as an Open Meeting most weeks)
Friday at 7.30pm

LEEDS: Tuesday and Thursday at 8pm The West Park United Reform Church, Spen Lane, West Park, LS16 5BB (GamAnon on second and fourth Tuesday of every month)
Email: Leeds@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

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

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

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

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

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

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

SHEFFIELD:
Friday: 10am Room 49, Victoria Methodist Church, Victoria Hall, Chapel Walk, S1 2PD

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

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

NORTH WEST

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

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

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

BLACKPOOL: Wednesday at 7.30pm St. Kentigern's Parish Centre, 25 Newton

Baptist Church, 52A Park Street, LU1 3ET.

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

MILTON KEYNES: Tuesday at 8pm. The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, MK15 9BH+ Gam-Anon (1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

READING: Kennet Valley Free Church, Building 2 Bless Others (Rooms 3 & 4), Carters Rise, Calcot, RG31 7YT
MONDAY at 8.00pm Step Meeting (not for new members)
THURSDAY Beginners/Newcomers 7pm
THURSDAY + Gamanon: At 8.00pm

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

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

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

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

ST.ALBANS: Friends Meeting House (small meeting room), 7 Upper Lattimore Road, AL1 3UD
SUNDAY 8.15pm
THURSDAY 8PM

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

SWINDON Gorsehill Community Centre, Chapel Street, Gorse Hill, SN2 8DA
MONDAY STEPS 7pm
TUESDAY 7pm
WEDNESDAY STEPS at 6pm, Normal Meeting 7.40pm
SATURDAY 10am
SUNDAY 2.15pm

UXBRIDGE (no meetings on bank holidays)
Monday. Steps at 7pm. Normal meeting at 8pm. Christ Church Methodist and United Reformed Church (Room 7), Redford Way, Off Belmont Road, UB8 1SZ opposite Uxbridge bus station.

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

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

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

WHITECHAPEL: Monday at 7pm. Booth House Training Room, 153 – 175 Whitechapel Road, E1 1DN
This is a MIXED MEETING attended by non-compulsive gamblers

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

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

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

CAMBRIDGE: Wednesday at 7.30pm The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Cathines Road, CB4 3XJ

CHELMSFORD Wednesday at 7.30pm, Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Road, CM2 6HR

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

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

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

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

ENFIELD: Tuesday at 8.00pm, Trinity Church, Gentlemans Row, EN2 6PT Access: Off Church Street

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

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

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

HAMMERSMITH: Wednesday at 8:00pm, Grove Neighbourhood Centre, 7 Bradmore Park Road, W6 ODT

HARLOW: Thursday at 8pm, Friends Meeting House, No 1 Church Leys, Tendring Road, CM18 6BX

IPSWICH: Tuesday at 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, IP1 3JH Access: near Christchurch Park

KINGSTON: Monday 8pm (closed Bank Holidays), Room 22, First Floor, United Reform Church, Eden Street, KT1 1HZ Access: nearest Station: Kingston
kingston@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

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

LONDON CENTRAL: All Souls Clubhouse, 141 Cleveland St, W1T 6QG

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

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

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

LOUGHTON + GamAnon + Newcomers meeting at 7.30pm: Tuesday 8pm Loughton Methodist Church, Wesley Hall, 260 High Road, IG10 1RB.
loughton@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

LOWESTOFT + GamAnon: Thursday At 8.00pm, North Lowestoft United Reform Church, London Road North, NR32 1HB Access: Rear entrance, opposite Police Station & County Courts
lowestoft@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

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

LUTON: Thursday at 8.15pm, Luton Central

Drive, Blackpool, FY3 8BT Access: Behind No.3 pub at Devonshire Square.

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

BURNLEY: Thursday at 7pm. The Salvation Army, Richard Street, BB1 3AJ. Contact Number 07974668999

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

COLWYN BAY: Tuesday at 8pm. Tan Lan Community Bay, Tan Lan Road, LL29 9BB

CREWE & NANTWICH: Thursday at 7.30pm Wells Green Methodist Church, 1 Brookland Avenue, Wistaston, CW2 8EL

LIVERPOOL

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

WEDNESDAY: at 7.15pm. St Anne Church, Overbury Street, L7 3HJ

SUNDAY at 6.15pm and **FRIDAY** at 7.00pm. Sharp, 17 Rodney Street, L1 9EF
07563627218

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

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

MANCHESTER: Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, M2 5NS Access: off Albert Square, facing rear of central Library
manchestertuesday@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

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

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

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

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

STOCKPORT

TUESDAY: at 8.00pm, **SUNDAY STEPS:** at 7.30pm. Cheadle Heath Community Centre, Essex Avenue, SK3 0JA

FRIDAY: at 8.00pm. Underhill Day Centre, Underhill, Romiley, SK6 4BL Gamanon

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

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

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

MIDLANDS & SOUTH WALES

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

BIRMINGHAM: **MONDAY:** at 7.45pm (No meetings bank holidays) **THURSDAY(Gamanon):** at 7.45pm, The Kings Heath Community Centre, Heathfield Road, Kings Heath, B14 7DB

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

TUESDAY: at 7.00pm. The Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street, Colmore Circus, B4 6AF.

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

WEDNESDAY NEWCOMERS MEETING: at 7pm, Horfield Quaker Meeting House, 300 Gloucester Road, BS7 8PD

BROMSGROVE: Friday at 7.45pm, The Methodist Centre, 19 Stratford Road, B60 1AS. Access: by Rear Door.

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

COVENTRY: The Great Meeting House 116 Holyhead Rd, Coundon, CV1 3AE. NOTE: No Gamanon meeting 1st Thursday of each month.
Coventry@gamblersanonymous.org.uk
Access: Come off Ring Rd towards B'ham,
THURSDAY + GamAnon 7.30pm
SUNDAY + GamAnon 7.00pm

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PONTYPRIDD: Monday at 7.15pm. GamAnon Temple Baptist Church, Gelliwastad Road, CF37 2BP. (no meetings on bank holidays)
pontypridd@gamblersanonymous.org.uk
The first and third Mondays of the month are

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

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

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

SWANSEA: Tuesday (GamAnon) Thursday (Steps) & Sunday at 7.30pm. 8 Quaker Meeting Place, Page Street, S41 4EZ
Access: Opposite YMCA. No meeting on the third Thursday of every month

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

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

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

ULSTER

ARMAGH: Monday at 8pm, Malacy Centre, 19-21 Ogel Street, Armagh

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

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

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

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

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

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

DERRY:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOUTH COAST & WEST

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOUTHERN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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