

QAADRANT

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Quaker Action on Alcohol & Drugs



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'A Seed has been planted'

Jon Lyon, a trustee of QAAD from Mid-Somerset Meeting, reports on a recent seminar.

'Time to Ask the Right Questions in the Right Way: A New Direction for Addiction Treatment Research?' was the title of this event, which was organised by Action on Addiction. The speaker was Professor Jim Orford, Emeritus Professor and Head of the Alcohol, Gambling and Addiction Research Group at the University of Birmingham.

Professor Orford noted that much research has been directed at assessing the effectiveness of different types of treatment. However, despite the hopes and expectations of researchers and therapists, no major difference in outcomes was measured. Cognitive-behavioural techniques, motivational enhancement, and '12 Step' treatments all seem to do equally well, as long as they are well-delivered.

Some other research projects found that people reported an improvement in their state simply in response to the research interviews themselves, which opened their eyes to their circumstances. There are also a significant number of people who spontaneously recover from addiction with no input from treatment at all. These facts show that 'recovery' is about much more than learning a specific approach.

Jim Orford suggested that good treatments share certain key features, including a concerned and knowledgeable 'helper', methods that help the person to change old ways of thinking and feeling, and social and emotional support. He postulated that had been too much stress on training workers in technical approaches, and not enough on

helpful relationships. He suggested more space was needed for grass root knowledge (including that of service users and their close others), and that there needs to be a wider definition of the change process, and a greater recognition of how long it takes. The consensus was that more qualitative research was needed.

As a former worker within drug services, some of the points made were music to my ears. Having a new template impersonally laid before me telling me exactly what I should do with clients was a negative experience, and partially motivated in my decision to find work elsewhere.

Responses were varied. Some felt that the people who needed to hear this discussion (fund holders) were not in attendance. Others felt that a major sea change of this sort of thinking would require a significant number of years. We were reminded that current treatments do deliver.

The ending discussion brought suggestions that the description of treatment itself should be widened into further areas, such as services like housing and other forms of support. It was felt that in today's financially stringent situation this might not be possible. However, perhaps a seed has been planted to help us be more pragmatic and holistic in the future.

My own reflection is that all this is equally relevant to society as a whole. Various theories have been championed by successive governments to the detriment of accrued knowledge and experience in the delivery of Social Work, Mental Health and Criminal Justice - to name just a few examples.

It was an honour to be invited to this very thought-provoking seminar.



Problem gambling: will the government act?

100,000 more problem gamblers may actually be a conservative estimate. The latest National Gambling Prevalence Survey, which has just been published, used two screens for measuring problem gambling, in the same way that the 2007 study did. **One screen showed a rise of more than 100,000 in the numbers of problem gamblers, but the change was not statistically significant. The other showed a rise from approximately 284,000 in 2007 to 451,000 in 2010, which was statistically significant, and very concerning.** The Gambling Act of 2005, which had a generally de-regulatory effect, came into force in the autumn of 2007. The most likely explanation for the rise must surely be the advertising and extra availability the Act enabled.

There has been an extremely muted

response from the industry regulator, the Gambling Commission, which has a responsibility to advise government. However, it may be a positive sign that John Penrose, the Minister involved, is reported as expressing concern. It is to be hoped that he will follow this with action.

The question that has never been clearly addressed is what level of problem gambling will be tolerated before the Gambling Commission – and, more importantly, the government – deems that increased regulatory action should be considered. We and the other faith groups continue to press this question, as well as proposing practical solutions that could be immediately adopted – for example, that Local Authorities be given the power to decide how many gambling outlets they wish to allow in their areas.

For a full briefing on the Prevalence Study see www.qaad.org, or contact Helena Chambers for a paper copy.

MEMORIES OF NICK COLE 1954-2011

Sandra Hobbs, the Clerk of QAAD, remembers Nick Cole, who made a considerable contribution to our work over many years.

It is hard to realise that Nick is no longer with us. He was already a part of QAAD when I joined the Trustees. He was the Clerk before I arrived and from whom I took over. What I remember most about those first Meetings is the sense of relaxed warmth and humour that Nick inspired. Those three words stay with me now, as Nick never seemed to change. Whenever he was with us, as Clerk, as Trustee and later in our Nominations group, it is the relaxed warmth and humour that we

remember. It was extraordinary to read, in his obituary in Drink and Drugs News, the sheer extent and worth of his professional work in drug and alcohol services, not least in working with colleagues to create training methods in the development and delivery of substance misuse intervention strategies.

I am not sure how many of us at QAAD knew of Nick's immense input in his professional life. He wore his experience and wisdom lightly. When he came to our Woodbrooke Conferences as a speaker or panel member what came across most strongly was his ability to communicate. With anyone and at so many levels. We come back always to the warmth, the humour and the laid-back humanity that has left us with a very real sense of loss. Our hearts go out to his colleagues and most of all to his family who have lost him so far before his time.



To be a clean and sober Quaker was not what I had in mind

A Friend who attended QAAD's Woodbrooke conference last year tells his story.

I can't say I was born an addict, but recall some of my earliest memories were based in fear. I was an anxious youngster with a nervous disposition, who'd cling to my Mum and bite my fingernails until they bled. I had a short attention span, would day dream and fantasise, and found it difficult to maintain friendships. All I knew was I was an outsider; something felt wrong a lot of the time, and I couldn't quite figure out what it was.

I got exposed to drugs aged 11, and they made sense. I'd drunk before then, but I liked drugs better. And with them, I'd found a sub-culture, a magical world I could immerse myself in. All of a sudden, I belonged. I changed the way I dressed, the music I listened to, the clothes I wore, the language I used. Drugs gave me a power and place in life. The fact that they were illegal or dangerous never stopped me. I'd heard the warnings from teachers and was scared of being arrested, but that was never sufficient to overcome my curiosity.

When I was 19, I was exposed to a particular drug with a reputation. I was seduced from the start. My relationship with this drug became like a love affair.

In a naive fog I romanticised my abuse, and this helped me justify going on. I was 'hood-winked' into thinking that maybe I was living a Rock'n'Roll Dickensian lifestyle, like a cross between William Burroughs and Thomas de Quincy. Friends and family began to get worried and say things about my declining behaviour and appearance. I'd brush them off dismissively and deny any problems, finding other people to hang about with if they persisted.

It got to a point where the drugs came first. Music, travel, films and fashion, would always be neglected by my fixation of drugs. I got into relationships, but they would invariably end within a few weeks or months. Consequences from my using were starting to pile up. I was doing things to get a 'fix' that scared me, things which my family would've been ashamed of. For the first time I wanted to stop and accepted help from medical services.

It was around this time that I was lucky enough to visit Claridge House, the Quaker Centre for Rest and Renewal in Lingfield, which my Dad had booked for me, perhaps as an idea to give me some uplift. Even though I wasn't to pursue Quakerism with any more earnestness for several years after, this experience still managed to plant an important seed.

I enrolled at University. I had gone



through a physical detox with professional help, and figured that since I'd had a scare I had learned my lesson. I barely lasted a week. Before long, I found myself restless, agitated, flustered, forgetful and generally very bored. Then one night, walking home to my Mum and Dad's with a pile of exercise books under my arm and the thought of another boring evening spent studying and marking, I figured, one can't hurt now can it? There was no drama, no explosions. It was oh-so easy.

My drug taking this time was more brutal than before, and within a couple of weeks I was using drugs each day.

I consider myself to be one of the fortunate few. Through a set of events and coincidences, I found myself being lifted into the care of a medical team who took a particular interest in me, and was admitted for treatment. I was supported to recover my physical health, and feel I owe those medics my life. I remind myself of this in times of self-pity, and always get a jolt of gratitude.

Upon discharge, I found myself shaken. I've heard phrases like 'dry drunk' and, looking back, I can see that I was suffering, spiritually, from addiction, even though I wasn't using drugs any more. The sense of emptiness I'd had as a child had returned to me, and at the advice of a doctor, I started attending '12 Step' meetings of the Anonymous Fellowships. I had so many questions answered!

The solution in the 12 Steps follows a simple and practical set of actions and it has been an amazing experience for me. I've learnt that, rather than needing to be introduced to a Power external to me, what was needed was for the internal

spirit in me to be unblocked and freed from the fears and resentments that were in the way. A sense of intuition, which I've learnt is connected with my spirit, which comes from a place of Love and Truth, and which unites me with others who come together with a common purpose. For simplicity, I call this thing God.

After a few months of attending 12 Step Meetings, I attended the annual London NA Convention, taking place at Friends House in Euston. I was reminded of my time in Claridge House those years ago, and picked up a few leaflets. Then I came to a Sunday Worship. I read about Quaker Quest, and decided to attend this to learn more.

It has all happened effortlessly. I heard Quakers talking about finding a Power of their own understanding through Meeting for Worship, which avoided evangelical concepts of God. I met Friends who'd been introduced to Quakerism through the 12 Steps, and we shared our experiences.

I am now a member of the Religious Society of Friends, and enjoy getting involved in Quaker business and being of use to the Meeting. My recovery from addiction and my life as a Friend feel integrated.

My life is not as I'd have planned it. To be a clean and sober Quaker at the age of 30 was not what I had in mind when I began my drug-career, I assure you!

More and more, as each day passes and turns into a week, two weeks, a month and then a year, I've become aware of this sense that I'm where I'm meant to be.

It's the best thing that's ever happened to me.



Why do we respond to consultations?

Helena Chambers, Director of QAAD, considers this area of QAAD's public issues work

It is my responsibility to respond to government consultations on behalf of QAAD - and the 'why' question is one we continually ask ourselves. There are many within our spheres of concern on alcohol, other drugs, and gambling, and we have to make a judgement about which ones will count.

A recent example of the latter was the Home Office consultation on alcohol licensing that took place last year. Both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats had expressed disquiet at the way the laws were working, and there has been popular concern about public drunkenness in town centres - but there were questions about how the issue should be addressed. The government put forward various proposals in its consultation document.

QAAD supported the idea of making Local Authorities and local health bodies 'responsible parties' under the existing licensing legislation. Both of these measures will come into force. Effectively, it will mean that health considerations (such as Accident and Emergency rates, or other local concerns) can influence decisions about whether an alcohol licence is granted, and how it is managed. We also supported the idea of a local levy on alcohol businesses, which was also carried. It is apparent from reading the analysis of the consultation responses that the numbers in favour of these proposals did have some effect.

By contrast, a measure that QAAD supported

but which did not get adopted, was the inclusion of 'public health' as an aim of the Alcohol Licensing Act (as is the case in Scotland). This would have allowed a much broader consideration of health in local decision-making. 37% of respondents to the consultation agreed with the idea, 38% disagreed, and 25% were neutral. The proposal will not find its way into legislation.

It is certainly the case that governments tend to consult on matters about which they have already come to some judgements, and the terms of the consultation may be framed in such a way as to marginalise any fundamental questioning. The recent consultation on increasing the stakes and numbers of certain slot machines ('B3s') falls into this category - it felt like a consultation about how, not whether, this should happen. Nevertheless, with well-funded and hydra-headed industry representation, we felt it was important to do our best to balance out their influence. The other faith-based groups that have been working on these issues also responded robustly. Now that the Gambling Prevalence Study has shown a rise in problem gambling, we hope for a more cautious approach.

Sometimes the whole thing feels a very unequal process; at other times it seems we are part of a movement that will make a groundswell, even if the timescale is uncertain. Sometimes shrewdness of judgment plays a strong part; at others QAAD feels that it is simply travelling in faith. Some of our other responses are simply aimed at improving the provision for those suffering from alcohol, drugs and gambling problems. Within the resources that we have, we try to make as much impact as we can.



Quaker report for 2010

Public Issues

QAAD responded to **nine public consultations** during 2010 on alcohol, drugs, and gambling. Subjects ranged from the taxation and licensing of alcohol to treatment issues, including of the new drug strategy.

Representation at Ministerial Meetings

QAAD was represented at two meetings about gambling with the new Minister at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, at which we and other faith groups put our concerns about children's gambling and problem gambling in general, including on slot machines and the internet.

Representation at advisory meetings

QAAD continued to sit on the Community Liaison Group of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and on the Advisory Group of the Gambling Prevalence Study. We also attended Alcohol Concern events.

Work with young Friends

February: **Resource materials for young Quakers**

QAAD worked with the Children and Young People's Team at Friends House to contribute issue number 9 to the 'Journeys in the Spirit' series, entitled 'Young Quakers, alcohol and drugs.' The written resource pack contains a mixture of information and materials for reflection, drawn from Quaker and other sources. The material can be used either individually or in groups, and it can be downloaded from www.quaker.org.uk/archive-youth Paper copies are available on request.

April: **contribution of group sessions to Junior Yearly Meeting.**

Lianna Pim, the young Friend from Sibford School who made a DVD about teenagers and alcohol for QAAD, attended JYM with Helena Chambers. Lianna answered questions about the film and a group discussion ensued. The DVD is called 'Too Much Too Young,' and copies are available from QAAD.

October: **joint QAAD/Leaveners event on alcohol for young Friends**

Young Friends Rhodri Roberts, Ellie Harding and Lucy Evenden delivered and co-planned a day on alcohol, in which young Friends shared their experiences and views within a Quaker context.

Friends and Meetings

Visits to Quaker Meetings Visits were made to Warwick Quaker Meeting and Sutton Meeting to discuss aspects of QAAD's concern including supporting young people and our public issues work.

Responding to Friends we continue to respond to individual approaches for advice, and also to put willing Friends with similar experiences in touch with each other.

July: **The QAAD/Woodbrooke Conference**

Over 60 Friends met to consider our theme 'Depending on the Spirit', assisted by Harvey Gillman, our keynote speaker.

March and October: **QAADNET**

Friends who are interested in, or affected by, substances and gambling met to share experiences. On different occasions we heard from Professor Robin Touquet of St Mary's Hospital Paddington, Lianna Pim, and Dr David Marjot. We are grateful to them all.



Charity begins at...

To meet the cost of QAAD's activities we have to find around £53,000 a year. Half of this is met from donations and investment income, the rest by using up our dwindling reserves.

QAAD speaks for Friends on such important social issues as dealing with drugs misuse, gambling, and alcoholism.

Additionally, we give a lot of support to Friends working in the treatment of addiction, to individual Friends who have problems with addiction or are the victims of drug and alcohol abuse, and to local meetings which are supporting a Friend with an addiction.

So we are speaking out, and seeking to meet the needs of Friends who are not immune to the problems of addiction.

Please send your donation to: Ron Barden, Treasurer, 33 Booth Lane North, Northampton NN3 6JQ. Please make cheques and charity vouchers payable to QAAD. Individual Friends and Attenders can enhance their donation if it is by cash or cheque, by completing the Gift Aid Declaration below.

Gift Aid Declaration

Name _____

Address _____

I wish Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs to reclaim tax on all donations I have made since 6 April 2000 and hereafter.

I understand that I must pay an amount of income tax at least equal to the tax the charity reclaims on my donations in the relevant tax year.

Signed _____

Date _____

Join QAAD

AS AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Send £5 or whatever you can afford (cheque/postal order payable to **QAAD**) to Helena Chambers, 21 Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 5PD to receive a 1 year postal subscription to **QAADRANT** and advanced notice of **QAAD** events

Have you visited the QAAD website recently?

It's at www.qaad.org

Young Friends and Alcohol: a QAAD/Leaveners day

Saturday, 28 May 2011

Hampstead Meeting House

120 Heath Street, Hampstead, London

Following the success of an event for older teenagers on alcohol in October 2010, the young Friends who co-planned and delivered the day felt that younger teenagers might also benefit from the opportunity to discuss these issues. We are devising a day for 12-15 year olds, with the older teenagers as peer leaders. The aim of the event is to give information about alcohol and consider it in a Quaker context.

The event will be held at Hampstead Meeting House in London on Saturday 28th May, between 10.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Accommodation will be available in the Meeting House the night before if distance is an issue. Full parental consent will be needed, and parents and young people are invited to contact us for more details:

Helena Chambers of QAAD 01684 299247

Or Paul Levy of the Leaveners 0121 472 0099

Letters and articles for QAADRANT are very welcome, and should be sent to Helena Chambers, 21 Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 5PD. t: 01684 299247 e: helenaqaad@hotmail.com