



24 HOUR HELPLINE
0370 050 8881



WEBSITE
[HTTPS://GASCOTLAND.ORG](https://gascotland.org)



MEMBERS AREA
username: member
password: 125step5

GA SCOTLAND



SCOTTISH LIFE MAGAZINE

Note from the Editor

Hello fellowship!

I hope you are all doing well.

I have to say a massive thank you to everyone who has contributed to the magazine this month. I had an amazing 13 articles sent to me so thank you to you all!

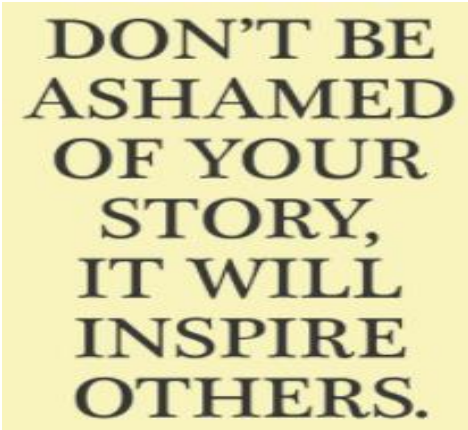
The next edition will be out in March 2023 and the deadline for this will be 1st March and I will look to have the magazine out shortly after this. Remember anyone can contribute to this magazine by submitting an article or story. It doesn't matter how long you are off a bet to submit an article. You can send an article anytime and you can send articles to scottishlife@gascotland.org or you can send it via What's App if that is easier for you.

I would also like to welcome Blair from Rutherglen Thursday who has agreed to come onboard in helping with the magazine moving forward. Its great you have him on board to keep the magazine moving forward.

Finally, I just want to wish everyone a very Merry, and gamble free, Christmas and a Happy New year!!!

Stephen

Scottish Life Editor/Motherwell Tuesday



**DON'T BE
ASHAMED
OF YOUR
STORY,
IT WILL
INSPIRE
OTHERS.**

The Editor reserves the right of refusal on all submissions and may shorten/amend articles where appropriate. Views and opinions reflected in articles in the Scottish life (GA) are not necessarily the aims and ideals of GA or the Editor.

Useful Numbers as of 01/06/2014

Citizens Advice Scotland		Debt Advice Centre	
Aberdeen	01224 569 750	Aberdeen	01224 523 738
Dumfries	0300 303 4321	Dumfries	0800 019 1278
Dundee	01382 307 494	Dundee	01382 431 167
Edinburgh	01315 548 144	Edinburgh	0131 200 2360
Falkirk	01324 626070	Falkirk	01324 506735
Glasgow	0141 552 5556	Glasgow	0808 801 1011
Inverness	0844 4994 111	Highland	0800 090 1004
Perth	01738 450580(1)	Perth	01738 450580
Saltcoats	01294 467 848	Saltcoats	08001383328

What to take with you to the Citizens Advice Bureau

You should not delay seeking advice even if you haven't got all the information listed below. In some cases, there may be only a limited time in which to take certain action. It is important that the adviser who deals with your problem has as much information about your case as possible. (It may take longer to deal with your case if you cannot provide the relevant information)

Debt/money problems

- Details of your income
- Details of all those that you owe money to (creditors)
- Copy of original agreements
- Copy of any court papers
- Proof of income
- Wage slips/benefit/tax credit details
- Details of household expenditure/bills (food, utilities, etc.)
- Copy of the latest correspondence you have received

Housing problems

- Tenancy agreement/letters from your landlord (for rented accommodation)
- Mortgage details (if applicable)
- Title deeds (for owner occupiers)
- Proof of income
- Wage slips/benefit/tax

GA Literature

- Deviations along the road to Recovery
- Be a Sponsor
- Questions & Answers (Orange Book)
- Sponsorship
- Towards Recovery in Prison
- Towards 90 Days
- The 12 Steps of Recovery
- Beyond 90 Days
- Newcomers Handbook
- Who Am I?
- Climbing the Twelve Steps
- Working the 12 Steps
- The 12 Steps of Unity
- Guidance Code
- Unity Checklist

***Now available on the website @
gascotland.org/booklets***

*****Audio versions coming soon! With ‘The 12 Steps of Recovery’, ‘Questions & Answers’, ‘Towards 90 Days’ & ‘Beyond 90 Days’ now available on the website, read by Kirsty (Dundee Monday/Scottish Life Editor)*****



Glasgow
Big
Monday

Perth
Tuesday

Glasgow
Daisy
Street
Wednesday

Aberdeen
Tuesday

Paisley
Tuesday

www.gamanonscotland.org

*Support for those affected by
compulsive gambling*

Kilmarnock
Wednesday

Dundee
Thursday

Glasgow
Maryhill
Thursday

Glasgow
Bath Street
Friday

Edinburgh
Thursday

Rutherglen
Saturday

East Kilbride
Thursday

Webteam

The Webteam have been doing fantastic work in adding lots of new features on the website to help all members in the current climate. Literature and information on conference/video calls can now be accessed. Well done and thank you for all your hard work! The Webteam are always looking for volunteers. There are many ways to help no matter what your IT level; if you have access to a computer, laptop or mobile device, you can help! Want to know more? Get in touch with Mark M at webmaster@gascotland.org



Group Secretaries WhatsApp Group

Members of the National Committee got together to create a new WhatsApp group for all GA secretaries across Scotland. It has been noted that a lot of secretaries do not have access or do not use their group's secretary email address, where any and all information such as new meetings, meeting changes, pins, need for volunteers and latest issues of the magazine are sent to. The group was created as an additional way to get important information to all group secretaries in order for them to keep their members up to date. If you would like any further information on this WhatsApp group, please speak to your group secretary.

Blair – Rutherglen Thursday

Christmas was a terrible time of the year when I was gambling. It was a time of unbelievable pressure, and I was depressed that everyone around me was happy and joyful when my esteem was at its lowest ebb.

In the run up to Christmas, I was full of worry. Worry about not having enough money to buy the people I love presents. Worry about all of the commitments that I would be expected to show for, Christmas day, work events, days or evenings out with friends. My main worry, though, was always that I would be caught. I lived in constant fear that my secret gambling and the debt I had would be revealed, and I couldn't bear the thought. So, I took out more debt – a loan, a new credit card, whatever I could get my hands on. I would use half to gamble, trying for a big win that would see me through the festive period unscathed. The other half would be a fall-back, so that, if I lost, I had enough left over to cover my Christmas duties in some way.

Inevitably, the commitments would come, and I would still be skint. I would scrimp and scrape my way through, enjoying none of it. I would dread the work occasions, the days with friends, constantly thinking about how much it might cost me; when would be an acceptable time to leave? Do I even need to go? Will I just pretend I was sick? Everyone around me was revelling in the best time of the year, apart from me. Christmas day was much the same. A day for friends and family, and love and gratitude. All I could think about was whether each of my cards would contain any cash, and the sports which followed on boxing day, and how I could try to fix my awful financial situation, and worse mental state with yet another bet.

Three years on, I'm looking forward to my third Christmas in Gamblers Anonymous. After three years in recovery, I have managed to achieve financial stability, thanks to daily practice of the principles of Step 4. But what matters more than money is that I now get what Christmas is all about. It isn't about the cost of commitments, its about the people I'm committed to.

I can't wait for my work's Christmas lunch, where we will relax and socialise, reflecting on a year of hard work and what we have done well as a team which I am a big part of today. I don't worry about how much a present will cost, but I spend time thinking about the right gift for my loved ones, to show them what they mean to me.

Above all, I'm looking forward to Christmas day itself. I don't expect anything from those around me but appreciate their company and their part in my life and our shared day. I will be right there, in the moment and making memories. The change in my mindset from three years ago until now has been drastic, and it is now the most enjoyable time of year to me.

To achieve that, all I've had to do is take on board the advice that has been given to me and practice my recovery in the way that GA suggests. I hope you all have managed to unlock Christmas from the constraints of the compulsive gamblers' mindset.



Bernard – Shawlands Thursday

Hi, my name is Bernard Shawlands Thursday I suffer from a gambling addiction and severe mental health problems because of my mental health I am on a lot of medicine.

The medication that I am severely affects my memory, but I want to talk about my gambling.

it was the 1977 things started to happen, the first thing was me and my family moved from Priesthill to Carnwadic, it was now I got my first taste of gambling. Me, my mum and my stepdad would play gin rummy, it was meant to be fun, the stakes were just coppers.

It was now I started to hear voices; I was so naïve I thought that this was normal. I was only ten years old.

It was 2 years later I had a paper round, I had over fifty customers, but I can't remember how much I was earning, just a few pounds.

It was in June 1979 the carnival came to the local park and because I didn't like the rides, I went to the amusement arcade; it was mainly games, and the only gambling machine was the one arm bandit. So, I played a few games then I started to play the one arm bandit as the stake was only 1p and the jackpot was 10p, I could have been playing for about 10 mins or until I had gambled every penny I had.

In august 1979, I started Hillpark Secondary because my mum was working, I was not getting free school dinners, so my mum would have to give me money for my dinner and my bus fare. It was now I started to play pitch and toss, and I lost my dinner money so I starved myself so that I could gamble, I also lost my bus fare. I don't know why I played this game; I was crap at it and never won.

It was in the late 70's, I used to watch grandstand. I really enjoyed the wrestling, but I thought that horse racing was boring until 1980, it was in 1980 that my uncle William asked me to go down to the bookies to place a bet. He also gave me money so that I could get a bet, I would always bet on the favourite so that I would get a real buzz when my horse was winning. Unfortunately, the favourite did not always win, this went on for 4 years.

In 1984, I left school because I did not have a job I got a giro, it was about 60 pounds. Instead of giving my mum money for digs or to help pay the bills what I did was I bought a packet of cigarettes then I went to the city centre and gambled the rest of my money in the treasure island.

On March 1985 I met Tracy, we started to date. Tracy knew about my gambling, but she did not know how much I was gambling, it was not gambling that split us up, it was all the lies. So, after 5 months we decided to go our separate ways, I was not bothered, I was not looking for a relationship. I just wanted to gamble.

In August 1985, I got a job with the YTS, so I had money to gamble. Me and a few friends would play in card schools, we would play 3 card brag or shoot pontoon there could have been 7 of us playing so there could have been £700 in the kitty. So, I would gamble until I had won the kitty or until I had lost all of my money, I was lucky I won a few times, but this went on until 1986.

In 1986 I got a job in the Coca Cola factory; I was earning good money. It was only now that I started to give my mum money for digs and money to pay the bills. I was made redundant in 1990 so I got a two-thousand-pound redundancy pay off.

It was now that I wanted to go to a casino, so I asked a few of my friends if they wanted to come, a few said yes. I took out a thousand pounds that I was willing to lose, I left the casino with over two thousand pounds. I had a great time!

When I was gambling on the slots and losing all my money, I would punch and kick the machine I also thought the machine was rigged there was only one way I was walking away, that was when I had gambled every pound that I had. This went on for 4 years.

In 1991, I started to travel with the carnival the money was crap, but it was a great life. when we got to a place where we could set up the first thing, I looked for was a bookies or any gambling premises that included any pubs as the pubs all have at least 2 slot machines. I don't drink so there was only one reason why I was in the pub, that was when I was gambling. I did this until 1994.

It was on the 3rd of February my gambling and my mental health got the better of me. I went to an ATM and took out as much money that I was able to get, I then went to the bookies. It was not long until I had lost the lot so I then had to go into the bank to get more money so that I could carry on gambling. I lost over a thousand pounds; I was close to tears.

I had ten pounds left after all my gambling, with that ten pounds I bought a concoction of tablets, I really wants to die. The next thing I remember waking up in hospital, it was my girlfriend Gail that found me. If she had not found me, I could have died.

it was on the 6th a psychiatrist came to see me he told me I was to be transferred to Leverndale so, on the 7th I was transferred to Leverndale. When I got there, they took my clothes off me and put me in pyjamas because I did not want to be in hospital, I tried to leave the ward the nurses restrained me and gave me an injection. I don't know what they had given me, but it knocked me out.

The hospital put me on a section 25 which lasted three days they then put me on a section 24 which lasted four weeks.

The very first chance I got I ran away the hospital phoned the police they started to search for me they eventually came to my mums that was where I was.

They took me back to the hospital they put me on constant watch, so I had a nurse by my side 24 hours a day they had to put me in a locked ward as they were understaffed.

The hospital took me to court so they could put me on a section 18, which lasts 6 months, they renewed this 3 times.

I got a doctor; he was called Doctor Cooper. He diagnosed me with Schizo affective disorder, he put me on a lot of medication and also 12 doses of ECT.

After a year in Leverndale I was transferred to ward 31 in the Southern General, my new doctor was Doctor Kerr, she took me off the tablets and put me on a depot injection. Doctor Kerr was a bitch I hated her, after doctor Kerr retired, I got another doctor she was called Doctor Graham, she took me off the depot and put me back on tablets.

It was in 2010 my family started to die so between 2010 and 2018 I have lost two brothers George and James and my sister Josephine and my mum and my dad. It was in 2019 my brother William and my CPN suggested that I should come to GA to get help with my gambling at this time I had never heard of GA, I had heard of AA because my dad was an alcoholic and I had heard of NA because my brother George had a drug addiction.

So, on the 27th of March I came to GA I was not pushed through the doors I did it for myself when I came into GA I was very nervous I did not know what to expect but the group put me at ease and made me welcome. They gave me support and advice. The advice I was given was if I gamble don't leave GA, just come back and let the group know what happened.

So, I was pleased to do 90 days without a bet and to get my manual, I was in GA for 8 months and I thought I had my gambling kicked, how wrong could I be! A month later I got complacent and gambled, I went on to do 90 days without a bet another 3 times. Unfortunately, I gambled 2 more times, I did not think I had a year in me.

I think it was the 21st of October 2020 it clicked. I got the only requirement for GA membership that was the desire to stop gambling. I have the desire now more than I have ever had, so it was on the 23rd of October 2021 I got my first-year pin.

Recovering from a gambling addiction is not easy it takes a lot of work but with help from friends and family but mainly GA members, I will get through it. Without GA in my life, my life would be horrendous. If you are not careful, gambling can take your life.

I am going to take you back to when I first came to GA, I did not think I had a problem with my gambling I thought that I had my gambling under control. It was only when I was asked the 20 questions in the orange book, I said yes to 17 out of 20 so I have had to put my hands up and admit I am a compulsive gambler, and I always will till the day that I die. They say it is a marathon not a sprint, it takes time there is no quick answer.

You cannot stop your gambling by yourself you need to use the tools. The tools are what the last two pages in the orange book says, get to as many meetings as possible when it was zoom meetings, I was doing five meetings a week but now that the doors have reopened, I still do two sometimes three meetings a week.

Use the telephone list if you have any thoughts or urges to gamble or if you just want to ask how you are doing.

I will not associate with other compulsive gamblers, so I have had to walk away from my old friends as they all enjoy gambling since coming to GA I have made new friends that all want the same thing that is to be gamble free. Don't get me wrong I did not come to GA to make friends, I came to get help with my gambling making friends was a bonus

I will continue to read the literature and constantly review the 20 questions and hopefully I will start to say no to the questions that I had said yes.

I will use the serenity prayer daily and if I continue to do what the last two pages in the orange book says it will be fool proof.

My daughter Natalie and my niece Kirsty have both said that they are proud of me for what I have achieved in GA they also say coming to GA will be the best move that I will ever make.

It is now 2022 I got my second-year pin on the 27th of October.



Jaffa – Blackburn Monday

Procrastination can destroy any attempted recovery; it certainly has had an effect on my previous attempts in GA. When I was out there performing my attitude to everything was mañana, bills to pay, money I'd "borrowed", problems I had to sort, tickets I had to get, holidays to be booked, it would be sorted mañana or mañana or mañana. Of course, mañana never came and the small problems I could have dealt with easily became massive problems either literally or in my brain that were too big to deal with now, which led me to the 20th question.

This led me to the door of GA, I am currently 40 months off a bet, and this is my 3rd attempt, my procrastination certainly came into my 2 failures, as it was always, I'll go to a meeting tomorrow or I don't have time to call another member, not in a good place mentally to consider changing, all just excuses, never any good reason for what I was doing.

Not sure whether "the penny dropped" or I was sick of being sick, but I had certainly seen what could be done by doing things the GA way and knew I didn't need to go back to question 20 if I was willing to change the way I was doing GA.

Coming back to the fellowship with a different attitude and an open mind has changed my life I quickly took on a couple of sponsors and started answering my phone and calling members on a regular basis. I also looked to the "Just for Today" part of Orange Book, focusing on "I will have a quiet half-hour all by myself and relax. I was advised to meditate and was led to guided sessions on you tube which I do every morning which really sets me up to tackle the day. Now in my 50's I finally have contentment in my life and am happier than I've ever been. I still have to deal with the peaks and troughs of life but while doing the right thing the troughs needn't be too deep and can now fully enjoy the peaks.

The benefits I get from doing things the GA way are innumerable and the ripple effect is also beneficial to my family and friends, a day at a time this will continue.

Rab - Kirkcaldy Wednesday

I first came to ga in March 1984. My life before ga was not good I gambled every day I had money, except Sunday all bookmakers closed on a Sunday. There was no mobile phones and credit cards never got thrown at you, no pay day loans, and I was single stayed with my parents, so I tried hard to get bigger loans from the bank. I got £500 a few times I told the manager a lot off lies I was getting engaged never even had a girlfriend new hi fi best tv etc.

When I came to ga I had none off that I got a few provident loans my dad had to sign for a loan, I remember I got a loan from them for £200 I got £180 it was my mum's birthday I took my mum and dad for breakfast at Littlewoods and my mum wanted a kitchen clock so I bought her one at every one wants and gambled the rest between losing my wages every week from the age of 15 till 26 that's when I joined ga my first meeting was in Edinburgh Epworth halls there was about 40 there I was welcomed with open arms I was really nervous I stuttered all the time. I answered 20 out of 20 questions I heard a therapy then gave mine I stuttered, and no one criticised me and that helped because apart from ga I had low self-esteem and hated myself, so I admitted I was a compulsive gambler, and my life was unmanageable.

John A and John D took me out side and said I can't gamble normally again I only came to ga because no one would lend me money so it was financial so I decided to give ga a chance because nothing I did worked so I kept going to Edinburgh on a Thursday Jim n wife Helen was my first contact and I will never forget her Jim took me to my first meeting I don't know where Jim is but I owe him my life. Harry and Ann, Jim k and Betty, Jim m and Kathleen were all there for me. I gambled on a game off dominoes and went back and reported it in them days you got told straight if you weren't doing your ga properly today you are advised so I left ga as I hadn't lost my wages since I came to ga, so I was cured. I made

excuses to my mum and myself I didn't need ga I never gambled life was good then I went back gambling on the 25th of October 84 and went back to ga that night and admitted I gambled. I got help from fellow gamblers and I said Rab's way doesn't work, ga way does so was given advice I admitted I was a compulsive gambler, and my life was definitely unmanageable in the second half there was a pinning Bill B was getting his 5-year pin everyone was happy, so I said I want a bit of this.

So I took it a day after day week after week month after month then it was my pin it was the best thing that ever happened to me I had never achieved anything before standing up there my ga and gam anon friends was a great feeling a day at a time my life has changed 5 years after I met Rosemary she changed my life we got engaged and married I have 4 step children and 11 grandchildren I have my problems like everyone else but just get on with it the ga way we have had some fantastic holidays I never thought was possible but with ga it is I retire next year I am scared as I have worked since leaving school apart from a few months on the dole ga and my higher power and Rosemary will help me from a very grateful member.



John T – parkhead Monday

Fear – Acceptance

I was brought up in the 1950s in Glasgow, when I was born in 1956 with 3 older brothers it was a hard life for my mum. There was to be another son and a daughter, my mum was to be a single parent, so it was to be tough for her. She had 3 brothers and 2 sisters, one of her sisters was brilliant with her and helped her as much as she could.

I believe I was born a compulsive gambler, my mums 3 brothers and 1 of her sisters I believe had a gambling problem. One of them was in prison more often than not and my mum loved to have a bet. So I found gambling at a young age and once I started I could not stop, that was the way my life was.

Until I found gamblers anonymous in 1981, I got married when I was 18 and a father when I was 19, I was a fully-fledged compulsive gambler. By then our lives were ruined by my gambling addiction, fear wasn't a word I could use.

At any time in my life before coming to GA I had stolen from a young age, had been in different institutions when I was younger, ran about with the local gang always in trouble, police never away from my door and it never seemed to bother me. Tomorrow would be different, that was my logic with my life and gambling. Not long before I came to GA, my little boy who just started school was to go to one of his pal's birthday party and my gave him a birthday card with £2 note in it. I was to go to the bookies on the way to the party, I took the card off my son as I was going to put my bet on for this day's racing. My son was crying because I took the card off him.

My son has grown up outside then inside of a bookies, I would leave him outside in the pram then buggy with crisps and ginger.

When I came out the bookies, he grabbed the card to see if the money was still inside, it was. It was the first time I had been affected but what I seen the affect that gambling had on him.

I broke down when I got home and told my partner I would have to do something about my gambling I was to go to my first meeting in November 1981. My daughter Claire was born that month and I had promised to go but never went. I knew if I never went, I would lose my wife and kids, I was scared that I would lose them, that was real **fear** for me.

I was to hear the word fear a lot in my early days and since GA I thought I was fearless. When I looked honestly at my life, fear was a missing part of my life. Fear – how it affected me all my life.

When I gambled it was a massive part of my daily life, I always looked over my shoulder as I was always stealing.

When the door got chapped or phone ringing, anytime the post man came to the door, this was the guy who thought he was fearless.

I wasn't until I got acceptance into my life that I started to share with my sponsors about my fears. I started to work my programme and dealing with my fears that I started having a bit of peace of mind. Facing my fears was a hard, the illness of gambling brought a lot of denial into my life so I could never own up to my fears.

Today I know fear is an emotion that everyone will have at some point in their lives but just for today it has not been in my life.



Nicky – Kilmarnock Wednesday

My story 14/11/2022

I was brought up in a loving, financially comfortable family home. I was raised with high morals, especially honesty. There were no gamblers in my family and when it came to money, I was ultra-conservative and never a risk-taker.

After watching my late father suffer terribly for 10 years after he had a stroke and eventually passed away from kidney failure, my mum then was diagnosed with dementia. I slowly watched her disappear into herself and finally, we had to admit her to a care home. She did not know what was going on but physically she was good and being well taken care of. Then one night when the home was short-staffed in 2019 and agency staff were called and a catastrophic sequence of errors by the care team resulted in my mum falling and being left for several hours. She was covered in blood and was picked up by the agency staff nurse and put back to bed with aspirin and no ambulance was called. The result of this was she died 2 days later having suffered a broken neck in the fall.

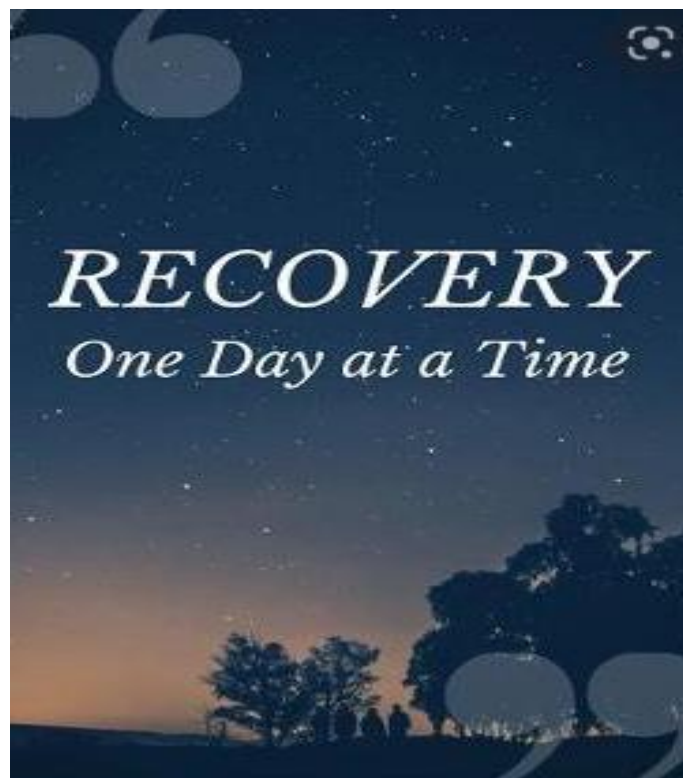
I took this badly and struggled to cope. My doctor prescribed medication for me which I am still on today for anxiety and I was ok sick leave for several months. During this time, I started trading in cryptocurrency with a firm of brokers. With all this time on my hands and not thinking straight I got deeper and deeper involved and was seeing great results. Then COVID came and I was furloughed for 7 months and then made redundant after 30 years with my employer in a senior role. During the furlough, I started investing my pension funds and not sharing this information with my wife. This was then followed by my inheritance. I had invested everything I had and then in October 2020 I discovered the brokers were crooks, my money was gone and so were they. That same week that this happened my wife was diagnosed with lung cancer, and I was made redundant. I was broken and if were not for a few great friends I would have taken my life. All I wanted from my trading was to give a better life for all my family.

We had to sell our home of 33 years and downsize to a different area. Now, I had access to funds again and started thinking I had to use this to get my money back – the spiral into my addiction started and so did all the worst characteristics of a gambler. Lying, scheming, procrastination, irrational behaviour, etc. It then became a series of events where my wife found the evidence, I could not hide of funds moving around and disappearing. In 6 months, I lost vast sums of money that had put our new house at risk and large credit card debt. I was devastated and promised to seek help. I went to counselling and got some help from this, but not the help that could stop me from trying again, to get the money back. By April 2022 I was found out again and my son took me to my first GA meeting. Answering the 20 questions that night I thought I would be asked to leave as I was not a gambler! – I answered 17 out of 20 and for the first time realised that I was an addict and needed help.

For 6 months I went to my meeting – 2 or 3 times a week. I spoke to members regularly and was feeling in a much better place. Then I started to feel vulnerable, my wife during all this was so supportive but she was at the end of her tether as were my children. I was worried about finances, the lack of them. The company I had set up after the redundancy was starting to do well and there was money in the bank account. We were living off one last small pension I had but this was running out. My car needed to be replaced and I took a call by accident from someone claiming to be from a company I used to deposit funds into some time ago, they wanted to get it back to me before it was lost. Every bone in my body screamed at me to hang up and ignore them but my illness won through and off I went handing over money to allow the funds to be released. Next thing I know they have cleared out my business bank account and hung up. I had let them onto my computer and forgot they still had access. 6 months after coming to GA I had to stand up and admit gambling at my meetings. I was on the verge now of losing my wife, children and grandchildren. I was completely broken. A member said I needed to get a sponsor and so this was the first thing I did. The support from my fellow members was overwhelming.

I feel this was a lightbulb moment for me. I had come into GA a broken man and then fell through the trap door that was waiting for me, to find myself the real bottom where there was only one of 2 ways I could go – end it all (the cowards way out) or start my recovery as I mean to go on for the rest of my life.

I choose the latter and 5 weeks on I am taking life one day at a time.



Lill-Therese – Livingston

For the love of Zoom and my one-year pin.

Tusen takk!

(Thank you very much)

I woke up on the 1st of January 2021 with a familiar feeling.

I felt shame, guilt and regret.

That`s how you feel like when you`ve spent every penny in your bank account and wake up broke after an intense night gambling online.

Relapse number five in a year.

I googled “spille-avhengighet” which is Norwegian and translates to gambling addiction.

I didn`t find any.

Even though Norwegian tv channels shows more commercials for gambling than they do of shampoo or any commodity, I didn`t find anything.

(Today they have changed their search parameters so now you will find something. But they don`t do Zoom. I would need to drive for seven hours one way or take a fifty-minute flight to get to a GA meeting)

I therefore googled gambling recovery Scotland and that way I found GA.

I attended my first meeting on the 2nd of January 2021 and it changed my life.

Thank you to whomever decided to make zoom available for everyone, me included.

GA on zoom has changed my life and for that, I am forever grateful.

I hated my first meeting because it scared me half to death.

Simultaneously, I was so happy about finding GA that I kept attending meetings all over Scotland. I found a second meeting, third, fourth and all off a sudden I attended eight meetings a week.

If I were in Scotland at the time, I wouldn't be able to attend eight meetings per week. But on Zoom, I could.

I have seen so many people, listened to so many shares, heard so much that I took to heart, I have learned so much, I have changed so much and it's all because of you who attended the zoom meetings. Thank you.

I don't remember how many weeks I was in, until I slipped the first time. I don't remember exactly how many weeks it took me to have my second or third relapse either.

But I remember going back to the meetings and being met with love, respect and great advice that I took to heart as I got back up on my feet and started all over again.

I honestly spoke about the cravings, the urges, my false fears, my uncertainty, flaws and at the same time I was falling deeply in love with the unity and all the wonderful people that it consists of.

You.

Thank you.

On the 24th of September this year it was one year since my last bet.

I would never be able to get to where I am without GA and Zoom.

Because of Zoom, I found a sponsor and have finished the twelve steps of recovery.

I am still in Norway due to several back surgeries and I still don't know when I will be able to make my official move to Scotland. But I promise you one thing.... The hugs that will be shared at the meetings I attend will be very warm and full of love and appreciation for all the kindness, care and hands of friendship I've received from afar.

I have so many people to thank for where I am now, and I hope you don't mind me sharing my list of gratitude with you.

I want to share or tell, how so many different people, even so far away can have such a great impact on my life, my hope, my belief and my recovery.

I see my GA recovery as the greatest gift I have ever given myself.

Dumbarton: Thank you Simon for welcoming me to your meeting. Thank you Janny Chris for the laughs and encouragement. Thanks, Olly, for the great conversations.

Erskine: Thank you too the “two grumpy” guys (who never were grumpy at all) for always making the meetings easier on a newcomer and for giving me a reason to laugh.

Clydebank: Thanks Ryan, for checking up on me in my early days.

Falkirk: Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Dick, for being a friend, an encouragement, a great role model, for being patient, sharing your experience and making me a firm believer that I can do this. I will love you for your friendship, optimism and great advice for the rest of my life.

Forfar: Thank you David, James, Frank and Maggie. David was my first contact in GA due to the chat on the website the day I found it. James, I hope you still are as happy and buzzing with love and optimism. You made me want what you had. Maggie, I still miss you. Thank you for your support.

Thank you, Frank, for talking to me about running my own finances. I`m doing well.

Niall (he is all over the place), The Irishman in London.

You are the main reason I started loving attending meetings. The way you talk, swear and curse worse than a sailor always makes me laugh, smile and grasp my recovery with optimism and courage.

I will love you to the day I die.

John, Glasgow.

Thank you for reminding me of how beautiful life is without gambling and helping me point out the direction when I was blind.

Edinburgh (Wednesday – daytime) Thank you Charles and Peter. For the warm welcome, the conversations, for trying to teach me patience (that was a laugh), for tolerance and the reminders that I am stronger than I think.

Kirkcaldy: I was attending this meeting on a weekly basis until they went back to the live meetings and shut down zoom. I want to thank each and every one of you. Except for my base meeting (now Livingston), I have never attended a meeting so full of encouragement and respect for one another. Thank you, Rob, Jamie and Allan, for checking in on me. That meant the world to me. Much love.

Coatbridge: I attended this meeting on a regular basis until they went back to the live meetings. I want to send a massive, collective thank you to the room for welcoming me, for reaching out to me when I didn't know how to ask for help (yet), for all the chats, the hours on WhatsApp and the single messages asking:

- are you ok hen? I truly appreciate all the help.

Finally, my base meeting at Livingston.

To all the members, I would like to say this:

- I love you.

Ever since I attended the first meeting at Livingston (March 2021) the welcome was overwhelming. The care, all the hands of friendship. How you guided me through and helped me become stronger, more fearless and more courageous, has meant so much to me. Remember when I typed H E L P on the group chat? Well, you helped. A couple of minutes later I was talking to one of you.

All the hours we've spoken on the phone, all the messages, all the laughs. I appreciate each and every one of you so much. I belong with you, regardless of where I will settle down in Scotland.

I never would have believed that I could feel so much love and

appreciation for people, I haven't met yet.

From afar, you have taken up a huge space in my heart as I have learned to know you as you have learned to know me.

Thank you for keeping Zoom open for members not able to make the meeting physically which includes me. I was so worried of losing you when all the other rooms went back to live meetings, but you decided to keep zoom so I could stay in recovery with you.

It's thanks to you, that I reached my one year off gambling and still counting.

I feel proud overachieving that from afar. I feel the appreciation, thankfulness and love.

It proves that zoom works, that the program works, and it shows that the unity of men and women has no boundaries when it comes to distance, love and friendship. Even though it's been a lack of a handshake or a hug. I stopped gambling on my own in 2018 and it lasted 1,5 years.

I relapsed five times before I found GA.

I relapsed again in GA, but this time I had all of you to hold my hand, straighten my back and wipe my tears, even from afar. And for that... I will love you for the rest of my life.

Thank you to every brother and sister in GA.

To you who welcomes, sends a message after the meeting, who calls, checks in or shares a laugh or a smile. Because of you I have the courage to be myself every day. I am forever thankful for being a part of this fellowship.

With Love,

Lill-Therese, A compulsive gambler with no gambling to report since 24th of September 2021.

Livingston GA.



December 25th Reflection for the day

Today is a special day in more ways than one. It's a day that God has made, and I'm alive in God's world. I know that all things in my life this day are an expression of God's love – the fact that I am alive, that I'm recovering and that I'm able to feel the way I feel at this very instant. For me, this will be a day of gratitude.

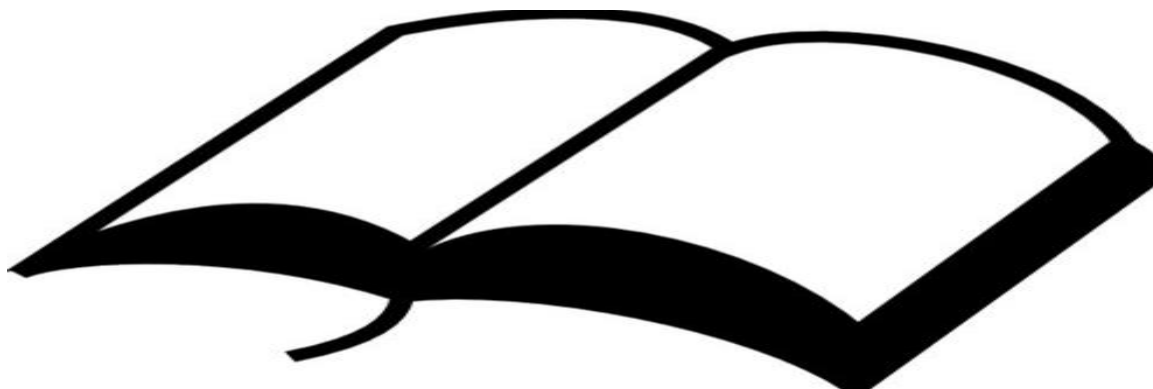
Am I deeply grateful for the dawn of this special day, and for all my blessings?

Today I Pray

On this day of remembering God's gift, may I understand that giving and receiving are the same. Each is part of each. If I give, I receive the happiness of giving. I pray that I may give myself – my love and my strengths – generously. May I also receive graciously the love and strength of others' selves. May God be our example.

Today I will Remember

Giving and receiving are equal blessings.



December 31st Reflection for the day

God grant me the SERENITY to accept the things I cannot change; COURAGE change the things I can; and WISDOM to know the difference – living it one day at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking this world-full-of-wrongs as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that my Higher Power will make all things right if I surrender my wilfulness to a Divine Will.

Do I strive above all for those qualities-serenity, courage and wisdom- that form the cornerstones of my new life?

Today I Pray

May I look back at the past year as a good one, in that nothing I did

Today I will Remember

Giving and receiving are equal blessings.



Jamie – Kircaldy Wednesday

Gambling never came into my life till I was 18 but let me give you a bit of context to my upbringing to which I feel made the gambling so addictive for me when I found it, as it was an escape from reality and the stresses and troubles of my family life and having a daughter at 16.

I was never around gambling growing up, and the only time it ever came up would be when the grand national was on. My dad would let me pick a horse and if it won, I got to buy sweets with the winnings. That's as far as it went. There was no excitement there or an interest for it on my part and no one else really gambled in the family that I can remember.

My mum and dad got divorced when I was 14, they had two twin girls 2 years prior. Around the time of the divorce my mum had a break down and couldn't look after herself let alone 3 kids. My dad wasn't there very much, and my older sister didn't live at home, mum tried numerous attempts on her life which was her way of crying out for help. The family didn't know how to cope with mental health then and she never received much help. The breakdown resulted in her developing traumatic anorexia which she still battles with today.

So I had to grow up very fast at 14 looking after my mum and help raise my little sisters while still trying to get myself away to school and raise my own child etc so there was a lot of pressure on me to be the man of the house and a role model for my own child and I never really had that relaxed teenage years where I'm supposed to be away out living up life and having fun.

So when gambling came into my life it was such a great escape for me. gambling came into my life at 18 I was working as a chef or more of a microwave technician at brewers' fayre lol. All the lads would always have a few pints after the shift and play the fruit machine. I had no idea how to play it and asked if they would show me.

So as you hear many times, I had beginners' luck and won the jackpot off a few quid with the lads telling me what to do. I thought this is easy money. I wasn't on great wages and working long hours so extra cash was a bonus for me. So, I was hooked from the start.

So every night after my shift I would be on the bandit, this quickly went on to every lunch break, If I lost my money, I would tell the bar staff to keep an eye on the machine for how much money was going in or coming out so I knew if there was a high or low chance of winning my money back. Not that it mattered if the odds were low, I would still be playing it. All I would think about for the rest of the shift would be getting back out and playing the machine as soon as possible.

This then went from lunch breaks and at the end of the shift to me coming in an hour early just to play it. At the time it was the only machine I knew how to play. I would see me putting more than half my wage in the machine. I've seen me win the jackpot and put it all back in. Didn't seem like much at the time but when I think about it know it was just mad.

I then found the amusements up the town centre, so I started going in there regularly and learning all the machines. I've seen me go in on a Friday morning and my whole wage be gone by the afternoon. Then having to take out pay day loans to see me through.

I was also going into the bookies and putting football coupons on, but they never really got out of hand it Was just an extra thing to bet money on.

By this point I was playing fruit machines anywhere they were. If I went out with friends, I was always there for the first pint and I would say I'm away to the loo and then on the way back not be able to make it past the bandit and that was me away for the next two hours. Friends would come over and say you've been playing long enough come back over. My reply was always a few more spins. By the time I came back it was because I spent all my money and would come with the tail between the legs saying I've spent all my money can I tap you a few drinks. This became regular behaviour and my reputation started to get affected.

Strangely I wasn't in loads of debt; I would always somehow manage to get a payday loan and get a decent win on different machines allowing me to pay back any loans or make up losses and still have money to pay bills and live. The emotional rollercoaster I would go through each time of winning loads getting excited, blood pumping, euphoria to then losing it all, in comes the anxiety worry, stress, then winning it back and feeling like a champ to say I'm not doing it again ever and be right back at it the very next day. Was madness. It took a massive toll on my mental health over the years.

I then remember going into the bookies one day and seeing a Chinese man pumping the cash into this machine and I noticed he also had a hefty sum of money in the bank too. So, I asked what he was playing, and he said roulette.

This would go on to be my crack cocaine of gambling. Fruit machines and footy coupons went out the window and it was all about roulette. I remember this being a turning point in my gambling life. anything I spent money on, be it fuel, food, clothes or bills etc. I had to have that for free. So, anything I spent I had to win it straight back on the spin of a roulette wheel. I totally lost the concept and value of money at this point. I would moan at partners for spending a few quid on the shopping, yet it was acceptable for me to blow hundreds on a single spin.

Just completely out of touch with reality. This is when my gambling started getting seriously bad and out of hand. Small betting amounts soon went into large stakes. Anytime I lost I just started to bet what I'd just lost on a spin of red or black. I would spend 4-5 hours in a bookies playing these machines, numerous trips back and forth to the cash machine. On every trip I'd say right this is the last one. But it never was.

Again though I always managed to bail myself out of sticky situations where the anxiety and fear were so high because everything was resting on a big win to fix what I'd done. I would get that win and promise not to do it again, but I was on the hamster wheel always. My gambling was always very secretive from family, some friends knew I was a sucker for the bandits, but most people knew nothing of my roulette compulsion. But there were the ones that clearly knew I loved a punt and tried numerous times to look out for me by trying to intervene and I'd tell them to F off basically and that I knew what I was doing.

Over the first 7 years of gambling I had 3 or 4 relationships, not really serious ones but they definitely could have gone on to something but because of all my lying, mood swings, never having money to treat them or do nice things, never being present in the moment. I was always there physically but not mentally. Neglecting them as people the relationships failed due to my gambling and what kind of person, I had become not that I knew that at the time. I thought it was everything else. Like I said my reputation was going down the drain too.

I had totally changed as a person I used to be so caring and confident, a jack the lad but I became selfish, self-centred and all I cared about was gambling and money. My mood swings were awful. People would walk on eggshells around me because they never knew what Jamie they were getting.

Then the gambling scene went to mobile phones and my gambling just took on another level. I became a recluse, never left my room. I was just completely immersed on my phone playing roulette. It started effecting my sleep, my eating, my mental health, I was gambling like 15-16 hours a day on my phone. When I was at work, I was in the toilet placing bets, on my lunch placing bets. When I wasn't placing bets, I was thinking about what bets to place. It just totally consumed me. The other scary thing about gambling online for me was I didn't see money on the screen I just seen numbers and it was just so easy to blow money with the click of a button instead of walking into a bookies with a massive wad of cash and seeing physically how much money your actually handing over.

I got myself in a bit of bother financially and finally I actually needed to ask for help to bail me out of a situation I couldn't fix. I asked my mum if she would pay off my payday loan as I had gone a bit mad with gambling. I gave her some pack of lies about I just got carried away, nothing to worry about and il pay you back in instalments. which I did. I paid her back over 6 weeks and that was the only time I actually needed bailed out. Mum never really had alarm bells ringing about it as I fed her a good story.

My gambling kept on spiralling, and I was getting worse mentally to a point where I nearly had a breakdown myself. I eventually came clean to my grandfather about my gambling but gave him the really really clean version. He never knew the half of it or how much debt I was actually in. my grandad suggested a ga meeting as his brother was in aa and it had helped him for over 40 years.

He got me the info and I called the number, and I got Craig, a well-established Kirkcaldy member. He told me about the meeting, and I went down with my grandad.

I was petrified, nervous and had no idea what to expect. I thought it would be a room full of junkies, losers and down and outs, when the reality was it was men and women of all ages and of all backgrounds. They were really welcoming, but the reality was I didn't really want to be there even as low as I felt and how mentally shot, I was I still hadn't reached my rock bottom. I was doing it for my grandad, it was his idea after all.

I hadn't reached step one yet. I wasn't ready to admit to myself that I was a compulsive gambler and that my life had become unmanageable. I never really opened up much in the meetings or really talked. I would hear lots of things I identified with but took no notice. Never listened to advice or implemented any of it on my day-to-day life. I would listen to therapies and hear the horror and carnage caused and think that's not me or my life. My gambling's not that bad. I remember Rab telling me if I didn't hang about then my life would become those horror stories. The regular ga members must have known I wouldn't be in long with the vibes I was giving off. I was there 3 months, and I did stop gambling in that time but that was all I done. I never changed as a person or worked on my character defects or behavioural patterns and thought processes that I had created and had become the norm through my gambling. eventually talked myself out of coming back thinking it was all me keeping me off a bet and I left.

Never came back for 2 years, in those two years my gambling was on and off, I met my current partner cally. She knew I liked a gamble but again didn't know the extent of it all. We were getting serious and looking to buy house together. We had saved a substantial amount each in our isas we had a mortgage meeting booked in August 2018 and for some reason my gambling just went full on meltdown in the September of 17 and in one week I sat on my phone and blew a massive, massive 5 figure sum of money. I took every bank loan, credit card, pay day loan overdraft and personal loans I could get my hands on and blew it all. The scary part about that was I never had to meet anyone or talk with a professional person to get access to money; it was all done on my phone.

At one point I had all the money back and more and lost it all again. I was a rabbit in the head lights just chasing the money and greed took over, in my head every bet was a win always. At one point I remember thinking I could turn £30 quid into the tens of thousands I needed to get back out the red. I was delusional.

I had hit my rock bottom, I had no more avenues to get money, I was fed up living this way, I couldn't tell anyone or ask for help, I was fed up with my life and being a failure, I had no idea how to fix it, who to talk to I wasn't eating, sleeping, I was distant my mental health and head were completely shot. So, I spent the next 5 months putting on a facade that everything was hunky dory and me being a postman I just took all the debt letters from the frame at work and binned them so cally wouldn't find out. Till eventually I couldn't cope any more. I needed to talk to someone.

I chose to get back in touch with ga myself and again it was Craig I got. I went straight to the next wed meeting and just completely broke down. I didn't see any light or hope or any way out of this situation. My life was in pieces, and I had nothing.

They all welcomed me back with open arms and held out the hand of friendship. I got totally stuck into the meetings and really started to listen to what was being said. I took the advice and banned myself from the bookies, got gam stop. Got rid of my smart phone and got a Nokia 3310 because I couldn't gamble on it. I got a basic bank account so I couldn't use my card online, I hadn't told cally yet as I had this grand plan in my head of solving all the problems first before confessing so I hadn't handed the finances over at that point.

I never missed a meeting in the first few years unless it really couldn't be helped, I got involved a lot and spoke more, my confidence began to build up, my mind began to clear.

I still hadn't told Cally as I had it in my head if I put all these things in place before I tell her and show that I'm actively trying to fix this she wouldn't leave me.

I never thought of the flip side of that coin that she might say why did you keep this from me for 11 months I can't trust you and leave me. Every meeting I got asked the same question. Have you told your partner and I would always say no, and they would all say you won't get a proper recovery under your belt until you come clean. It will be festering away in your head and affecting you negatively and this is an honesty programme. It was affecting me, and I wasn't being 100 % honest in all aspects of my life. But I knew I had a deadline date with the mortgage meeting, and I knew I had to come clean before that as I couldn't put Cally through going to the bank and embarrassing her when they pull up my credit file.

Me being me when I get nervous and worked-up Things come out my mouth ass to elbow so I wrote a massive letter explaining everything. I remember the day like it was yesterday. Cally's car was in the garage, so I had to pick her up from work. It was the most anxious sickening ride of my life. Picked her up and said we had to talk when we got home. She asked what about and I said wait till we are home and I never spoke for the rest of the journey. When we came in I just said I wrote you a letter can you read it and I just started crying on the bed.

At first, she thought I was breaking up with her but after she read it she burst into tears and just said I was a stupid man and that she loved me and we would deal with it together.

I was gob smacked at the reaction and she stood by me. I built up this massive monster scenario in my head of how it would go to the point it just consumed me and was petrified to actually broach the subject with her and it turned out nothing like it was in my head.

My recovery went from strength to strength after that moment. In the first 2 years of ga I had achieved more than I had in my entire adult life. I got myself in a trust deed and got all my debt sorted. They wiped 95 % off and I had to pay a set amount every week for 4 years that was a huge weight off my shoulders and that was thanks to members giving me advice and support to get that done. took me to the age of 30 to make a financial inventory of my money and get my finances in order and think about what I had coming in and what was going out and being organised with it all. I started taking responsibility for my decisions and actions and life choices.

I asked cally to marry me. I managed to pay for our entire wedding and honeymoon. I've managed to have another child, Sonny, he's 2 and a half now. He's never seen me gamble, he's never gone without, I've been there for him every step of his life and for every moment. I cherish it. You lose so much time when you're gambling and you can never get that back ever, lost time with family, not being there for individuals, missing out on so many important moments in people's lives. I never want to miss a minute of my children growing up and I can afford to provide and support them today. I had everything in that he needed, and the room and house was decorated all before he was born. We bought a couple of nice cars. I had always had a clapped-out banger. We saved up a deposit again for that house but will have to wait till my trust deed comes off my record, but once that day comes the deposit is there for it.

I'm talking about some nice materialistic things I now have which I know are not really important in the grand scheme of things but from where I've been to where I've come it's just nice to be able to say iv worked hard, managed to be sensible with money and actually been able to treat and support my family to nice things and get things for myself I couldn't have managed in the past and only dreamed of having.

I'm super rich in friendships, family, I'm more empathetic and caring towards others, I actively ask if other people are ok and how they are getting on.

I understand how my actions or decisions can affect others around me. I'm humble today and full of humility. I'm not the perfect person but I've tried very hard to change character defects and become a better human being today. This is what's really important in my life. Making a change, making a difference to the people around me and the world I live in. This is what being in ga has done for me. It's educated me and opened up my eyes. It has matured me as a person, it gave me light when all I seen was darkness, it gave me strength to overcome when I was at my weakest.

When I was gambling, I thought gambling would give me everything I wanted to achieve when the reality was my life was going nowhere, it was stagnant. All my peers were having nice holidays, wearing nice cloths, driving nice cars, buying houses and getting married, having children and living normal calm life's and I was still the same Jamie with nothing to show, nothing achieved except failure, mentally destroyed, no money, My life never moved forward at any point. Always backwards. I used to always compare myself and my position in life to what others around me had of a similar age. Today I'm content and happy with what I have in life and that things come to people at different stages of their life's and that there is no right or wrong time to have something in your life. I gambled for 12 years, and I had nothing to show for it. Every win was always a loan. It eventually always went back to the bookies.

I'm content with the money I have and earn today. I may not be rich but like I say I'm rich in other ways. Rich in family, rich in happiness and peace of mind. I sleep easy at nights because I live a life of honesty and I have nothing to hide today. I couldn't deal with stress or problems. Ga has provided me the tools to allow me to deal with these daily life problems and stresses maturely and rationally without rushing in or being impatient. I used to run away from all my problems. I used to try fix all my problems at once and felt overwhelmed. I tackle them one problem at a time and a day at a time. I talk a lot about things I have on my mind or chest that are weighing me down or are affecting me.

This is a talking illness. I don't procrastinate today. I utilise the time way better in a day now and try to be proactive. I try to give back to ga so much with new members, doing secretary cover, being the tea boy, coming in early to get meetings set. Being a live chat agent on the website. I had no hope or faith that I would fix my life when I walked back through the doors, but I am living proof like the thousands of other members that anything is possible in ga if you have the desire and want to change. Anything can be achieved one day at a time. Where I was 5 years ago, how bleak I felt, how on my arse I was, to where I am today and what I have in my life I wouldn't have believed was possible at all. It's unbelievable what you can achieve in your life in such a small period of time if you really try hard and ga has been a massive part of that reason, I've accepted I have to come to ga for the rest of my life and I'm ok with that. I used to gamble for 15/16 hours a day and my life was a mess, giving up two hours of my week or more if I want to, to allow me to continue a recovery and have a better life and be a better me but also help others. It's a no brainer. I used to be embarrassed about being an addict, about having to come to ga but today I embrace it because today I control my addiction and not the other way about and I'm actively trying to better myself and be the best version of myself I can. That takes courage and strength and I feel empowered and proud today.

We have a little saying in ga, come try it out. Give it 90 days, if your life hasn't changed or you don't like it. You can leave again and return to your life of misery. At least in the rooms you have a chance and hope. Out there alone you have no chance, no support, no hope.

My name is Jamie, and I am a compulsive gambler, 5 years gamble free.



Alisdair – Sunday Telephony Meeting

Moving on

Moving on from matchsticks in a card game at home
To a pound in a puggy, with friends ... on my own,
To all of my change from a pint in the pub,
To money for holidays ... money for grub.

Moving on from the highlife to be left high and dry,
Ever clinging to dreams which are pie in the sky.
Moving on as the trouble begins to unfold,
Moving on through the stages as addiction takes hold.

From the shadows of dusk to the darkness of night
With eyes ever closed to the glimmer of light.
From ankle deep water to knee-deep in mire,
From the heat of the frying pan into the fire.

Moving on, moving down, moving nearer to Hell,
Only digging hole, not a life-giving well.
Moving on from a want to a need to a must
'Til hopes are diminished, 'til life becomes dust.

Until just at the last, a mere flicker of light
Shows a path to recovery out of night.
Real hope that tomorrow can be a good day,
Not the dream that deluded my thoughts yesterday.

A path full of hope instead of despair,
Guided by people who've walked it, who care.
A ladder of hope to get me out of the hole -
Steps I must climb to recover my soul.

Moving on from the terrors from which I once hid,
Becoming the adult, moving on from kid;
Moving on from the immature person I knew,
Moving on, growing up, yet more growing to do.

Moving on from a life full of dreams and despair
To a life in the real world surrounded by care.
Moving on from escape in my gambling realm
Finding strength to accept real life on life's terms.

Alasdair, GA Scotland Sunday Telephone Meeting
Reflections from the GA Convention, "Therapy and Recovery"



Stewart – Blackburn Monday

My first 90 days

After many years of misery gambling, I made the decision one Sunday afternoon in early June I had had enough living in a life of turmoil and suffering and attended my first GA meeting the following day. The hurt that I had caused and the strained relationships within my family circle due to my gambling addiction were now affecting my focus in life and something had to change, or I was going to be cut off by the ones I loved. I was a compulsive liar as I always lied about what I had spent money on or why I never had money I was also telling lies and manipulating loved ones to get money to gamble.

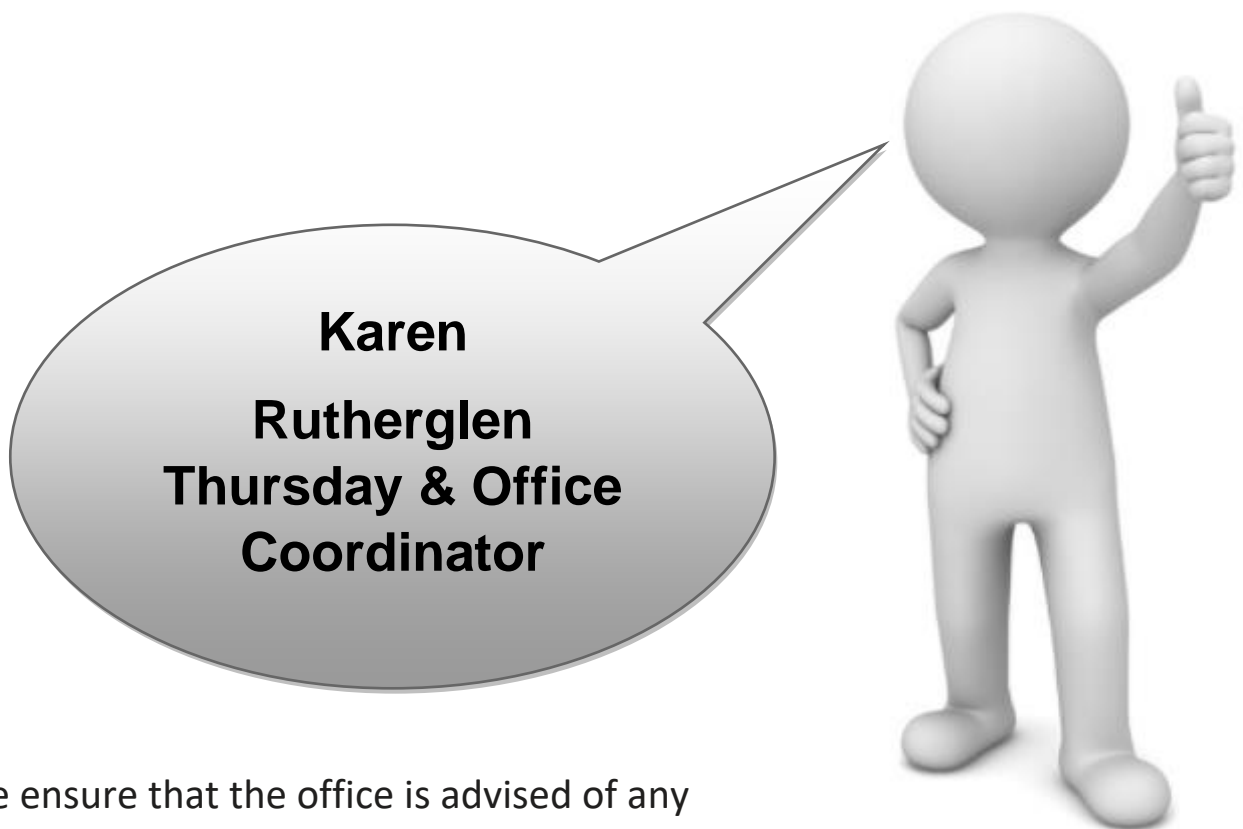
All day Monday at work I was constantly thinking about the meeting that I was going to attend that evening my anxiety was through the roof. I walked in and straight away was at ease with the very warm welcome I received from all members. Thankful the meeting I attended and is now my base meeting has a beginners meeting for the first hour I was taken through to the beginners. The beginner's coordinator at the time spoke to me and told me to relax as everyone here has been in my shoes. I was introduced to the group and spoke about my reasons for attending the meeting. At the end of the meeting, I was given some great advice from other members attend a meeting as quickly as possible and try and get two meetings a week and also try and keep in contact with members out with meetings and if you feel like you're having a bad day then contact someone within the group and talk about your struggles.

I have now past my 90 days gambling free my life is on the up I have attended two meetings a week religiously and have kept up contact with members within the group. My relationships within my family circle have improved massively. I don't have to tell lies about money anymore and have now developed a conscience about how I now treat people.

I am now in a fantastic place within my head and my mental health has also improved and it is all down to joining GA. I still only take one day at a time and don't look ahead of myself as I don't want to lose focus on where I am in my recovery.

My name is Stewart I'm a compulsive gambler & I have no gambling to report.





**Karen
Rutherglen
Thursday & Office
Coordinator**

Please ensure that the office is advised of any changes to meeting information held on the website as soon as possible.

Any meeting closures/changes over the festive period please let me know by mid-December at the very latest.

A number of meetings have still to collect the meeting Protocol Banners from the office, please make contact with myself and arrange to pick these up as soon as possible.

Wishing you all an amazing festive season and 2023

Regards,
Karen,

*Merry
Christmas*

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God (as we understand him) praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out

This step is NOT about who or what is your God.

If you have accepted step three, then you have a pretty good idea that there is definitely “something” helping you in your recovery.

This step is therefore not complicated, it is just the words that make it seem so. You are simply being reminded to keep in touch with your inner feelings on a daily basis and trust your more honest instinct.

The words “prayer” and “meditation” put me off at once. I could understand meditation as I could learn techniques from books, but prayer seemed to be directly connected with religion and this was more difficult for me. As a result, I missed the real point of this step.

I had discovered that during periods of calm and relaxation seemed to be in touch with the best parts of my character. I would think, almost unconsciously, about what I could do to help those around me.

Where did these thoughts come from? I have no idea, but I certainly like having them. I believe that if I am feeling good about myself then I must be working this step.

THINK about myself as part of mankind as a whole and how I can improve my tolerance, honesty and humility.

Taken from ‘Climbing the Twelve Steps

12. Having made an effort to practise these principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers.

It's never too soon on the programme to want to share that wonderful release with others, but do not get carried away and try and convert other gamblers

After what I get from being part of this fellowship, my greatest pleasure is giving back by just showing that I have learnt something from this programme. I don't mean just that I do not gamble, but that I am learning daily how to live properly and usefully.

HELP others through my example to see that they too can enjoy peace of mind



Taken from 'Climbing the Twelve Steps

Hamish – Perth Friday

Freedom and Higher Power

When I was gambling, I felt trapped and completely under the control of my addiction. I was like a dog on a lead, with a controlling owner who never let me stray far from the bookies or from the betting apps on my phone.

I found freedom when I found GA, but the lead wasn't cut free. Someone else was now just holding the lead – my higher power. My higher power in the early days took the lead and pulled me away from the next bet. And now a bit further down the line, my higher power now guides me to places and experiences that I never knew were possible.

My higher power guides me through life, it's a power greater than myself and I'm very grateful for it.



Kirsty – Broughty Ferry Tuesday

Happy holidays

Before GA Halloween was my season, I'd hidden behind masks for years. That was easy.

Christmas was challenging. It was what I thought was the time to shower people with gifts to compensate for never being there when gambling. Only in recovery do I realise that my family only ever wanted me, they wanted my presence and not my presents.

Today I am enough, living in the moment. Enjoying all the Christmas festivities.

Happy holidays



David - Broughty Ferry Tuesday.

Christmas in Recovery

December is a time of reflection for me more than any month of the year. On December 10th i reached out to the life chat broken and helpless after over a decade of the illness progressively destroying me and in turn my family.

On the 11th of December 2018 I attended my first GA meeting and have been here ever since, it has been a miracle to see the impact this program and the fellowship has had on my life. Gambling free one day at a time, serenity in my mind, being able to give back to my family that I stole from them during my gambling days, finances improving, stability and structure in my days and i am now living as opposed to existing. I watched my 2 boys grow up and been present in special milestones with many more to come.

Christmas before GA was miserable, I would put a brave face on and be there in body but not in mind, my kids would be excited opening presents from Santa and all i could think about was the serious debt i was in and What bets i could get on for boxing day.

I never appreciated the people and things and people i had in my life i just couldn't cope being me.

Since GA Christmas is a joyful time, cherishing moments and spending time with loved ones, my boys will wake up to their mum and dad present and together and as we embrace the family traditions and sit round the table my gratitude will explode as i know none of this would be possible without GA, the support of the members and my family.

Christmas in recovery is fantastic and i pause and spare a thought for those out there suffering with this illness without GA.

This is why giving back is so important to me, to express my gratitude for GA and to be there over Christmas for anyone out there that needs help just as members were for me.

Merry Christmas and Happy new year to all.



GA SCOTLAND WHERE DOES YOUR GROUP COLLECTION GO?

STEP SEVEN – UNITY PROGRAMME: Every group ought to be fully self-supporting: declining outside contributions.

ARTICLE 6: COST OF MEMBERSHIP

We are a voluntary self-help and self-supporting Fellowship: as such there are no fixed membership fees.

It is important and necessary for each member to support their group meeting collection as generously as their financial means permit.

- Payment of Rent for GA Office.
- Office Co-ordinators Post.
- Payment of printer/copier costs.
- Postage, stationery, and other office materials.
- Payment of Telephone system/ broadband for GA office.
- Payment for GA Helpline, Live Chat and Website.
- Buying 1st Year Pins and 90 Day Coins.
- Office Volunteer Costs.
- Yearly Audit Fees.
- Start-up cost support to new meetings. Assistance to struggling meetings.
- Producing, Printing and posting bi-monthly magazine.

Payments when outsourcing printing: members manual/ A6 Literature

Thanks to everyone for all their hard work and dedication to the chat. The amount of people coming through the door and getting the help they need thanks to all your hard work. Coming through the door and getting onto the website at rock bottom and speaking to a Live Chat agent who gave me so much hope that GA could pull me out of this deadly circle of pain was so important. For me, I can't think of a better way to repay this fellowship by donating time to help the next person ready to ask for help.

meet
&
Greet

Want to be a Meet & Greet or Live Chat volunteer?

**Live Chat & Meet and Greet Coordinator – Tam Blackburn
Monday/John Irvine Friday**

Chatting online to the compulsive gambler who still suffers, and also to friends and family affected.

Do you have a computer or a phone? You can help!

Must be a pin holder to volunteer as a live chat agent; six months off a bet to become a member of the meet and greet group (a group to ensure the chatter is put in touch with someone in their area).



GA SOCIAL MEDIA

The GA social media pages are live and sharing content on a regular basis. We share a range of material from members' stories, the 20 Questions and Just for Todays. These have so far been well received and reached a vast number of people who otherwise might not have heard about, known about, or discovered GA. Whilst still being firmly based on the 'attraction rather than promotion' principle, our aim is to make GA as accessible as possible, particularly to younger gamblers who may use social media on a more regular basis. If just one person walks through the doors of GA thanks to the social media pages, then our work will have been worthwhile.

There are loads of ways to contribute to the social media pages and so please do get in touch if you would like to be involved.

Yours in Fellowship

Hamish

Perth Friday GA



GA SCOTLAND SOCIAL MEDIA

INSTAGRAM - GA_SCOTLAND



TWITTER - @GamblersAnonym7



FACEBOOK - GA SCOTLAND



Want to 'travel'?

There are meetings all over the UK and Ireland!



GA England

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

GA Ireland

www.gamblersanonymous.ie

Next Issue: March 2023



**Contributions to the Scottish Life
are welcomed at any time of the
year.**



**Not a writer? Why not submit pictures,
photos, or even artwork!**

GA GROUP MEETING PLACE AND TIMES**(SCOTLAND) as of 1st Dec 2022****ONLINE WEDNESDAY ZOOM 8-9PM &
CONFERENCE CALL SUNDAY 7-8PM EMAIL
conference@gascotland.org**

AREA	GROUP	ADDRESS	TIMES	ADDITIONAL MEETING INFORMATION
MONDAY				
Airdrie	Airdrie	Beechbank Community Centre, Wester Mavisbank Ave ML6 0HE	7.15-9.15pm	
Ardrossan	Ardrossan	Saltcoats Town Hall, 17-21 Countess Street, Saltcoats KA21 5HP	7.30-9.30pm	GAM-ANON TUESDAY St Brides RC Church 9 Hunterston Road, West Kilbride, KA23 9EX 7-9pm
Carlisle	Carlisle	Church of Scotland, Chapel St CA1 1JA	7.15-9.00pm	
Clydebank	Clydebank	Radnor Parish Church Hall, Spencer Street G81 3AS	7.35-9.00pm	
Cumbernauld	Cumbernauld	Greenfaulds Community Rooms, Lochinvar Rd, Greenfaulds G67 4AR	7.30-9.30pm	
Dundee	Dundee	St Andrews Church Halls, 2 King St DD1 2JB	7.30-9.30pm	
Dunfermline	Dunfermline	St Margaret's Parish Church, Abel Place, Dunfermline KY11 4JJ	7.00-9.00pm	
Edinburgh	Edinburgh	Epworth Halls 25 Nicholson Square Edinburgh EH8 9BX	7.15-9.15pm	
Glasgow	Big Monday	Salvation Army Halls, 1 Houldsworth St Glasgow, G3 8DU	7.30-9.30pm	GAM-ANON 7.15-8.30PM

Glasgow	Parkhead	Parkhead Congregational Church, 77 Westmuir St G31 5EW	7.00-9.00pm	BEGINNERS 7.00- 7.55PM
Glasgow	Wee Monday	John Duns Scotus Church Hall, 270 Ballater St G5 OYT	7.30-9.30pm	
Glasgow	Garthamlock	Garthamlock & Craigend Church, 46 Porchester Street G33 5DB	7.00-9.30pm	BEGINNERS 7-8.15PM
Glasgow	Whiteinch	The Whiteinch Centre, 1 Northinch Street, G14 0UG	7.45-9.15pm	OPEN STEPS MEETING (FAMILY & FRIENDS OF GA MEMBERS)
Greenock	Greenock	Salvation Army Hall, Regent St PA15 4NP	7.15-9.00pm	
Hurlford	Hurlford	The Thistle Pub, 2-4 Riccarton Road KA1 5AQ	7.30-9.30pm	GROUP OPEN UNSURE OF DETAILS AS NO INFORMATION RECEIVED
Moray	Elgin	The University of Highlands & Islands, Moray Street, Elgin IV30 1JJ	6.30-8.30pm	
Musselburgh	Musselburgh	Fisherrow Community Centre, South Street EH21 6AT	7.00-8.30pm	
Troon	Troon	Troon Old Parish Church Hall, 51 Ayr Street, Troon, KA10 6EB	7.15-9.15pm	
West Lothian	Blackburn	Boghall Parish Church, Elizabeth Drive, Bathgate EH48 1JB	7.30-9.30pm	BEGINNERS 1ST HALF LAST MONDAY MONTH STEPS
TUESDAY				
Coatbridge	Coatbridge	St Andrew's School, Sports Community Centre ML5 5EA	7.30-9.30pm	STEPS MEETING HYBRID

		Ben View Resource Centre, 50 Strathleven Place G82 1BA		
Dumbarton	Dumbarton		7.30-9.30pm	Meeting Upstairs
		Broughty Ferry Baptist Church, 86 St Vincent Street, Broughty Ferry DD5 2EZ		
Dundee	Broughty Ferry		7.30-9.30pm	
		Colinton Mains Parish Church, 223 Oxgangs Road North EH13 9ED		
Edinburgh	Oxgangs		7.15-8.45pm	
		Trinity Church, Manse Pl, Falkirk, FK1 1JN		
Falkirk	Falkirk		7.30-9.30pm	STEPS MEETING
		Our Lady of Good Counsel, Craigpark G31 2JF		
Glasgow	Dennistoun		7.00-9.00pm	BEGINNERS 6.15-6.50PM
		Garthamlock & Craigend Church, 46 Porchester Street G33 5DB		
Glasgow	Garthamlock		7.15-9.15pm	BEGINNERS 7.15PM to 8.15PM
		Partick South Parish Church, 259 Dumbarton Road, G11 6AB		
Glasgow	Partick		6.30-7.30pm	STEPS MEETING
		Whitehill Community Centre, Whitehill, Hamilton, ML3 0LH		
Hamilton	Hamilton		7.15-9.15pm	
		Isa Money Community Centre, Muirhouse Road, ML1 2LT		
Motherwell	Motherwell		7.00-9.30pm	
		Ralston Community Centre, Allanton Avenue PA1 3BN		
Paisley	Paisley		7.30-9.30pm	BEGINNERS GAM-ANON 7.30-9.30PM (every 2nd Tues)
		Trinity Church of Nazarene, York Place, PH2 8EH		
Perth	Perth		7.30-9.30pm	GAM-ANON 7.30-9.30PM BEGINNERS 7.30-8.15PM Entrance & car park @

				rear of church on Milne St RED DOOR
Peterhead	Peterhead	The Peterhead Rescue Hall, 25 Princess St AB42 1QE	7.30-9.30pm	
Rutherglen	Rutherglen	Rutherglen URC Church, 69 Johnstone Drive G73 2QA	7.00-9.00pm	
WEDNESDAY				
Aberdeen	Aberdeen	Ruthrieston Community Centre, 532-536 Holborn Street, AB10 1LL	7.30-9.30pm	GAM-ANON 7.30- 9.30PM
Edinburgh	Wester Hailes	Wester Hailes Healthy Living Centre, 30 Harvesters Way, Edinburgh, EH14 3JF	12.30-2pm	
Forfar	Forfar	St Fergus Church, 94 Glengoil Terrace, DD8 1NG	7.15-9.15pm	
Glasgow	Blackhill	St Philomena's R C Church, 1255 Royston Road, Glasgow, G33 1EH	7.00-9.00pm	
Glasgow	Craigend	St Dominic's Catholic Church, Mossvale Road G33 5QS	6.10-8.00pm	
Glasgow	Daisy St	Govanhill Neighbourhood Centre, 6 Daisy Street, G42 8JL	7.00-9.00pm	GAM-ANON 7.00- 8.50PM
Glasgow	Maryhill	The Ledgowan Hall, 1 Ledgowan Place, G20 0JZ	7.15-9.15 pm	
Glasgow	Parkhead	Parkhead Congregational Church, 77 Westmuir Street G31 5EW	5.00-6.30pm	

Glasgow	Partick	St Peter's Catholic Church, 45 Hyndland Street G11 5PS	1-3pm	Enter at Chancellor St
Kilmarnock	Kilmarnock	Kay Parish Church, London Road KA3 7AA	7.30-9.30pm	
Kirkcaldy	Kirkcaldy	Saint Brycedale Kirk, Saint Brycedale Avenue KY1 1ET	7.30-9.30pm	
Renfrewshire	Paisley	The Wynd Centre, 6 School Wynd, Paisley, PA1 2DB	7.15-9.00pm	STEPS MEETING
West Lothian	Whitburn	St Joseph's Parish Centre, 49 Raeburn Crescent, Whitburn EH47 8HQ	7.30-9.30pm	
THURSDAY				
Ayr	Ayr	Castlehill Parish Church, 1 Old Hillfoot Road KA7 3LW	7.30-9.30pm	BEGINNERS 6.30-7.15PM
Cumbernauld	Cumbernauld	Abronhill Community Centre, 2 Larch Road G67 3AZ	7.00 -9.00pm	
Dundee	Dundee	St Peter & Pauls Church Hall, Milton St DD3 6QN	7.15-9.30pm	GAM-ANON 7.30-10.00PM
East Kilbride	East Kilbride	East Mains Baptist Church, Maxwell Drive G74 4HG	7.30-10pm	BEGINNERS 7.30PM GAM-ANON 7.30-9PM
Edinburgh	Edinburgh	The Baillie Room Greyfriars Charteris Centre, 138/140 The Pleasance, Edinburgh, EH8 9RR	7-9pm	GAM-ANON 7-9PM

Erskine	Erskine	Bargarran Community Centre, 8 Bargarran Road PA8 6BS	7.00-9.00pm	
Falkirk	Larbert	Salvation Army Main Street, Larbert FK5 4AB	7.30-9.30pm	BEGINNERS 7-7.30PM
Glasgow	Maryhill	Community Central Halls, 292-316 Maryhill Road G20 7YE	7.30-9.00pm	GAM-ANON 7.30-9.45PM
Glasgow	Parkhead	Parkhead Congregational Church, 77 Westmuir St G31 5EW	2-3.45pm	Enter Ravel Row Side
Glasgow	Shawlands	Methodist Church, 74 Shawholm Crescent G43 1LH	7.15-9.30pm	BEGINNERS 7.15-8.15PM
Glasgow	Toryglen	Oatlands Community Hub, 2 Wolseley Terrace, G5 0LS	7-9pm	
Greenock	Greenock	Crown Care Centre, 29 King Street, Greenock, PA15 1NL	7.15-9.30pm	
Hamilton	Hamilton	The Burnbank Centre, Hamilton, ML3 0NA	7.30-9.30pm	
Kelso	Kelso	The Parish of Kelso North and Edna, 42 Bowmont Street TD5 7JH	7.30-9.30pm	Access Through Bowmont St
Kirkintilloch	Kirkintilloch	AR Centre, 29 Townhead G66 1NG	8.00-9.30pm	
Rutherglen	Rutherglen	St Columbkille's Church Hall, 2 Kirkwood St G73 2SL	7.00-9.00pm	

West Lothian	Livingston	St Andrews Church, 126 Victoria Street, Craigshill EH54 5BJ	7.30-9.30pm	HYBRID
FRIDAY				
Coatbridge	Coatbridge	St Andrews School, Sports Community Centre ML5 5EA	7.30-9.30pm	
Dumfries	Dumfries	Dumfries ARC, Burns Street, DG1 2PS	7-9pm	
Dundee	Dundee	St Andrews Parish Church Halls, 2 King St DD1 2JB	6.30-8.30pm	JOINT STEPS
Edinburgh	Edinburgh	St John the Baptist Church, 37 St Ninian's Road, Corstorphine, EH12 8AL	6.30-8.30pm	
Glasgow	Anderson	Salvation Army Halls, 1 Houldsworth Street, G3 8DU	7.30-9.30pm	BEGINNERS 2nd HALF 8.45-9.30PM
Glasgow	Bath Street	St Stephen's Church, 260 Bath St G2 4JP	7.30-9.30pm	BEGINNERS 6.45 GAM-ANON 7.30-9.30PM
Glasgow	Parkhead	Parkhead Congregational Church, 77 Westmuir St G31 5EW	10.00-11.45am	Enter Ravel Row BEGINNERS 9.30-10 AM
Irvine	Irvine	Fullarton Parish Church (Harbourside Room) Connexions Centre, Church St KA12 8PE	7.15-9.20pm	BEGINNERS 6.30-7.05PM
Perth	Perth	Perth Methodist Church, Scott Street PH2 8JN	7.15-9pm	Use Side Entrance

SATURDAY				
Aberdeen	Aberdeen	Ruthrieston Community Centre, 532-536 Holborn St AB10 1LL	9.45- 11.45am	
Glasgow	Dennistoun	Dennistoun New Parish Church, 9 Armadale St, G31 2UU	9-11am	
Hamilton	Hamilton	Ferniegair Hall, 120 Carlisle Road ML3 7TX	10-12	
Kirkcaldy	Kirkcaldy	Pathhead Parish Church, 38 Harriet St KY1 2AB	10-12	HYBRID
Rutherglen	Rutherglen	Reuther Hall, Victoria Street G73 1DS	10-12	BEGINNERS 9-9.50AM GAM-ANON Salvation Army Hall, King St, 10-12PM
Uddingston	Viewpark	Burnhead Parish Church, 92-94 Laburnum Road, G71 5DB	10-12	BEGINNERS MEETING 9.15-9.45AM
SUNDAY				
Edinburgh	Edinburgh	Leith St Andrews Church, 410-412 Easter Road, Edinburgh EH6 8HT	7-9pm	JOINT STEPS HYBRID
Inverness	Inverness	Trinity Church, 5 Huntly Place IV3 8HA	1.30-3pm	
Rutherglen	Rutherglen	St Columbkille's Church Hall, 2 Kirkwood Street G73 2SL	7.15-8.30pm	STEPS

Please keep an eye on the website for up-to-date information for meetings over the Christmas and New Year Period as meetings may be off, moved or on different times.

God Grant me the Serenity

**To Accept the Things I Cannot
Change**

**Courage to Change The Things I Can
And the Wisdom to Know the
Difference**

24 HOUR HELPLINE

0370 050 8881

www.gascotland.org

Contact the office Tel. 0141 647 4673

(10am-4pm)

