

**‘People who have degraded their home communities by stealing, begging, even attacking for money to feed a habit give up their Western “rights” in order to take a vow. The declaration of faith is in effect to themselves and to retrieving their own healing powers.’**

**Personal experiences of ‘Extreme Measures’ (DDN 24 January)**

In response to Extreme Measures, (DDN, 24 January) and subsequent comments on the treatment: I have had two sons at Thamkrabok Monastery. One son recently returned after a year and the other has decided since going in August to commit himself to a full year as a monk during 2005.

The point of the treatment is that it gives hope to the demotivated, returns strength of character to the victim mentality, remedies depression and obsession. People who have degraded their home communities by stealing, begging, even attacking for money to feed a habit give up their Western ‘rights’ in order to take a vow. The declaration of faith is in effect to themselves and to retrieving their own healing powers. The mechanism is Buddhism. Here is a community whose communal vows of poverty take on a daunting variety of addicts and alcoholics in a tough love regime that kick-starts those ‘lost souls’ back into

society, friends and family.

I have recently been helping Mike Sarson, who runs the charity East-West Detox, with his campaign for funding the expansion of a western treatment centre within the Monastery. We are targeting the county DATS who have had clients use the service to begin with, and will widen the net once further successful outcomes have been reached. At the same time, Mike and his trustees are looking at the possibility of a halfway house in UK, for the preparation and stabilisation of clients before treatment and for a post-detoxification re-introduction to independent working/life/training environments.

The charity cannot live without funding support, and nor can the Monastery absorb an increasing number of Westerners. The scheme needs two full-time workers in Thailand and funding for a halfway house for eight people in UK. My son would not be alive today without the help of this organisation.

**Name and address supplied**

I am very aware of the East-West Detox programme for UK addicts at Wat Thamkrabok in Thailand and personally know of several people that have benefited from the programme and have remained drug free long term from a whole range of substances including opiates, stimulants, alcohol and tobacco. I therefore feel that it is a very viable choice of treatment for British addicts.

Hopefully more public awareness will encourage the necessary funding into further research of this innovative method of treating the world wide problem of drug dependency.

**Paul Holloway, by email**

**And on aftercare...**

We have always been very aware that follow up and aftercare support for those returning to the UK is very important. All our clients are given a choice of residential spiritual environments, with which we have links in order to continue their recovery and receive support on their new path.

These include the Samye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Monastery in Scotland, Winford Manor Retreat near Bristol, Boscence Farm Cornwall and Amber Foundation, Devon. We also link people into a 12 Step fellowship like Narcotics Anonymous if they choose.

**Mike Sarson, East-West Detox**

**No compromise implied on criminal justice**

I have become a regular reader of Drink and Drugs News – Congratulations on a

useful addition to the field.

Unfortunately, I am writing with a slight grumble. While I sympathise with anyone who has to synthesise one of my long-winded speeches into a short summary, I’m not sure that your piece ‘Ex-deputy drug czar gives insight on tolerance’ accurately portrays my main points.

What I was trying to say at the Release ‘University’ was that, while most of the profession seems to assume that there is an inexorable march towards more tolerant policies, this is not always reflected in international decision making. For every decriminalisation or reclassification, there are plenty of strengthened laws and new offences.

Some of the examples you include in your piece have become mixed up – in particular, I am sure that I didn’t say that the UK now has ‘less of a criminal justice approach’. Unfortunately, the one direct quote – ‘not one Minister was interested in public health and drugs’ – is correct and seems to remain true today.

**Mike Trace, Beckley Foundation Drug Policy Programme, [www.internationaldrugpolicy.net](http://www.internationaldrugpolicy.net)**

*To clarify, our article said ‘Many European countries, including the UK, had introduced policies that aimed to be more balanced, with less of a criminal justice approach’. This was not intended to imply that this approach has been applied to all government policies – which is obviously not the case. Apologies to Mr Trace for any confusion. **Editor***

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