

## Diary of a heroin addict

**In the sixth and final part of his story, David Wright faces tough decisions, the pain of grief, the ultimate test of selfishness – and the realisation that he must make his journey count for something positive.**

So there I was, back to the only life I had known of heroin and alcohol, but this time it felt different. I had experienced six months of sobriety in the rehab and I liked that feeling better than this drug haze. So I decided I would go to my mom and dad, tell them everything and see if I could move back to South Wales. You see my parents were of the 1940s generation and did not know the difference between cannabis and heroin. So even though I had been in the rehab they thought it was for smoking joints!

After I told them everything, including my plans, they said they would support me. All the times I kicked sand in their face; the love of a parent runs so deep, as deep as deep can go. As I would find out.

So I arranged to stay in a hostel that the rehab owned in Cardiff. Scott my soulmate drove me there. I knew he did not want to because we would miss each other, but Scott had done a lot of things for me and we were as close as close can be.

At the hostel my first objective was to get a methadone script, which I did in the first week. Scott had given me a little to keep me well. Thanks again mate.

So here I was in my new life, and has luck would have it I met Murray (ex-rehab) who turned me on to selling *The Big Issue*. As I knew Newport from the rehab days, I was sent to sell there. Times were at their best, I had money in my pocket, I weaned myself off my methadone, met a girl. Things could not have been going better until a Newport council official came up to me and told me to ring the hostel in Cardiff. Chris had died.

I have had two soul mates in my life, Scott being one and Chris the other. If you have been following this story you will remember Chris was the

guy who drank a bottle of vodka a day, smoked loads of dope and took Df118s by the bucketful. I spent many of the happiest days of my life sat with Chris in his front room, sound system on full blast, buzzing off the dope and the DFs. I miss him so much. As I was carrying his coffin, back at the hostel in Cardiff my flat was done over and all



my music gear was nicked.

So I said goodbye to Gwyn who had moved into the hostel a few months before (I knew him from the rehab) and got a bedsit in Newport. I did an Access

course at university and my relationship with this girl was going well. I finished the Access course and on the enrolment day for my degree, my brother phoned me. Dad had died of a massive heart attack – that floored me. His funeral was a daze of opiates and brandy; the degree went down the tubes. Then to top it all, my partner became pregnant and on 10 November 1998 my son was born. On 5 February 2000 my daughter was born – but I'm afraid by then I had lost the ability to cope.

Opiates and alcohol came before my children. You may think what a selfish bastard – and you would be right. When you need a chemical to function, everything becomes second to that. Everything.

Even then the drugs stop working, so you end up in the cul-de-sac of despair. It was at this point someone gave me the helpline number of the Methadone Alliance.

It was a day when I was suffering

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from lack of heroin. The phone was answered by the wonderful Bill Nelles, founder of the Alliance. He told me I was sick and needed to see a doctor. So I did, and to my good fortune I came

across a doctor who prescribed methadone. To cut a long story short, I ended up with a GP who raised my script through the roof – up to 150ml. I was bombed out by the high dose and at the time could not understand what the doctor was up to. Then I had a hit of heroin and did not feel it. The amount of methadone had blocked all my opiate receptors so there was no room for the heroin. Clever doctor.

I kept in contact with Bill Nelles and he invited me to train as a drug advocate, representing the rights of drug users. I jumped at the chance and lived the hotel life in London on two separate occasions. I attended a few conferences... free champagne, fresh salmon... I was in dreamland.

But back in Wales, I had a lot – and still have a lot – of work to do, to give users a voice. I do this with a newsletter for drug users called *The Heroin Herald*, which is online. It was through the Heroin Herald that Maggs Lyons from Inroads Cardiff contacted me. I went for a talk with the boss Steve Lyons, to see how we could help each other. He did all the helping, giving me a workplace and a computer to work from. Inroads is an open access drop in/needle exchange. Go to [www.inroadswales.org](http://www.inroadswales.org) and check them out – that's where I am based now. If you do not live in Wales but feel you are being treated unfairly by the medical services go to [www.m-alliance.org.uk](http://www.m-alliance.org.uk) or phone the helpline Monday to Friday, between 12.00pm and 5.00pm on 020 7837 4379. Do it – you have rights.

I would like to pay respect to the people who I know that have died through drugs: Chris, Vanessa, Mickey, John, Phil, Benny, Gwyn, Ann, Keith. The list goes on.

Finally I pay tribute to the people who have supported me: Scott and Ann, Bill Nelles, Steve and Maggs Lyons, Dave Hiscox who helps me with my bills.

Taking drugs starts off a bit of fun and some people stop and 'settle down'. Others become dependant, and over half of those die young.

The rest of us have to have support, whether physical or psychological, or both. Because drugs don't just fuck your body up, they mess your head up. All in all they ruin your life. But with support you can make the best of a bad situation. And if you have a mother like mine, you're halfway there.