

# Secret of a drugs 'cure'

## SCIENTOLOGY: THE INSIDE STORY



John Wood, UK president of Narconon: Drugs message

JOHN WOOD wants to tell your children the truth about drugs.

He is the UK president of an organisation which claims it has been educating young people about the dangers of addiction for 25 years.

It claims that message had been successful, and it claims it can also help those who have already fallen victim to drugs and drink.

In fact, Narconon makes rather a lot of claims, and the group has targeted Sussex with literature and glowing tributes from grateful "clients".

Even schools have been approached. One leaflet says: "We provide lectures which tell the truth about drugs."

Today the Evening Argus reveals the truth about Narconon. The group, part of a global network of drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres, is based in Tunbridge Wells.

It has nothing to do with Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous. But it does have something to do with the Church of Scientology.

Asked why people are not told about this, Mr Wood replied: "I know Narconon is organised and funded quite separately from that church and that Narconon is not part of it."

### He failed to mention:

Narconon is supported by ABLE (Association for Better Living and Education). This connection is spelled out on page 319 of the cult's handbook, What is Scientology?

The passage reads: "Scientology churches, through ABLE, have donated millions of dollars, as well as materials, furniture and supplies to Narconon programmes."

"And individual Scientologists have also enthusiastically contributed financially to support Narconon."

### Failed to mention:

The group is listed in the cult's worldwide directory of Scientology organisations.

### Failed to mention:

Some of Narconon's methods are also used in the cult.

Asked if it was simply a "front" organisation to recruit people into the cult, Mr Wood insisted: "I don't know of many organisations more up-front than the Church of Scientology."

"It seems to me to be very capable of taking care of itself and of making its own way in the world without the help of Narconon."

"I know beyond doubt that Narconon does not recruit for nor promote the Church of Scientology and I know that subject is not mentioned nor included in the Narconon syllabus."

He said "no Church of Scientology staff members work for Narconon".

A Narconon leaflet lists two names with telephone numbers.

One is Mr Wood. The other is Peter Mansell - public affairs officer at the national headquarters of Scientology at Saint Hill, East Grinstead.


In February, the county education department wrote to the heads of every secondary school in East Sussex about Narconon. The letter urged caution in dealing with any requests from the group to address pupils.

### The Bridge:

Narconon published a chart called the Technical Line-up, which listed the steps or courses on its programme. At least four of those steps also appear on another chart.

That one is produced by the Church of Scientology and is called the Bridge to Total Freedom.

Asked why people were not told about this, Mr Woods replied: "The



**by chief reporter PAUL BRACCHI**

short answer is because I believe that would be an untrue statement.

"Whilst I know little about the Scientology Bridge, I know for a fact that the church is not permitted by its policies to accept drug or alcohol addicts either on their staff or for training.

"This is the exact opposite of Narconon, where all our students are addicts and where a major portion of our staff are former addicts cured by Narconon."

### The Steps:

We have a copy of the Narconon Technical Line-Up, the final of which led straight to the doors of the cult.

The message on the chart reads: "Route to nearest Org (Scientology organisation) for further services if individual so desires."

The process is summed up in Narconon News. The headline and slogans speak for themselves:

"Narconon helps get people up Ron's (Hubbard) bridge to freedom (Scientology)."

"Narconon is freeing people from crime and drug abuse and starting them up Ron's bridge to total freedom. Who can you start across that bridge."

### The Claims:

The Narconon programme is a

**UNITED KINGDOM**  
 Association for Better Living and Education  
 United Kingdom Office  
 Saint Hill Manor  
 East Grinstead, West Sussex  
 England RH19 4JY

**EUROPE**

**ABLE: A link between Scientology and Narconon**

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combination of vigorous exercise, vitamin therapy, "counselling" and sauna sessions. It can cost more than £5,000 to complete an 18-week course.

But Mr Wood claims the group's methods are much more effective than other forms of treatment.

We asked Mr Woods to provide independent proof. He cited two Eighties studies which allegedly showed that:

In Sweden, 84.6 per cent of graduates from the Narconon programme no longer used drugs.

In Spain, 78.37 per cent were still drug-free a year after completing the Narconon programme.

Mr Wood does not reveal who carried out those studies in the statement he faxed to us. But coincidentally, the same studies are also quoted on page 317 of the cult's own handbook - What is Scientology?

The book does not shed any light on the source of these statistics either.

#### The Facts:

"There is substantial credible evidence that the Narconon programme is unsafe and ineffective."

This was the verdict of the Oklahoma Board of Mental Health in 1991. It refused to grant a licence to a Narconon drug and alcohol abuse centre in the state.

The board found:

- There was no scientific basis for the technique.
- The programme exposed patients to the risk of "delayed withdrawal phenomena such as seizures, delirium or hallucinations."
- Recovering addicts were allowed to administer medication to clients.
- Access to patients' families, lawyers and clergy was restricted.
- Patients with psychiatric problems were taken off their prescribed medication.

The report concluded the programme was not medically safe.

But Mr Woods pointed out: "The Oklahoma board withdrew all objections to Narconon having a licence to practise in that state."

In fact, Narconon was only allowed to continue after it was discovered that under state law, no licence was in fact required for the centre.

But board lawyer, Patric Ryan, stressed: "That's different from certifying them."

"The board has not ever, and did not by today's action, give a stamp of approval to Narconon."

#### Nor does:

Prof John Garrow,

head of human nutrition at St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School, London, one of Britain's leading experts in this field. He has studied a list of vitamin doses prescribed by Narconon.

Prof Garrow said: "Some of them were over the upper safe limits. "If I was a GP and someone came along and said can I have approval to do this course I would say no."

He added: "On the face of it on what I have seen I would not expect it (Narconon programme) to be effective."

"I think people, particularly parents and schools, should be made aware of any published research because a great deal of damage can be done by badly-designed treatment programmes."

#### Nor does:

Dr Anthony Farrington, consultant psychiatrist at Brighton's drug dependence clinic. He said: "So far as Narconon goes, I'm not aware of any published research in any reputable journal in the field which shows they have any expertise to offer which is not available already in well-established treatment programmes across this country."

#### Nor does:

Hugh Dufficy, deputy director of the Standing Conference on Drug Abuse based in London.

He said: "We have always been sceptical of Narconon, because of the link with Scientology and particularly because it does not make this clear."

"I have been getting calls from schools all over the South East which have been approached by Narconon. I don't think a one off visit can help children. Proper teachers should be trained so drug education can be ongoing."

#### Nor does:

Andrew Fraser, director of DAIS (Drug Advice and Information Service) in Brighton.

He said: "It is difficult to see anything unique or particularly commendable in the purification programme."

"I would personally feel uneasy referring vulnerable people with a low self-esteem to a programme whose hidden agenda was the recruitment into the ranks of Scientology."

#### Nor does:

THASP (Tower Hamlets Association of Alcohol Services and Problems).

The agency placed a client at the Narconon centre in Tunbridge Wells on behalf of the local authority.

But funding to continue the treatment was withdrawn after the cult connection came to light.

Aspokesman for Tower Hamlets Council said: "I think you can safely say we won't be using them again."

#### Nor do these American doctors, according to papers obtained by the Evening Argus:

Dr Mark Palmer, of Ponca City, Oklahoma, a former medical director of two alcohol and drug rehabilitation units; Dr Bruce Roe, professor of chemistry and biochemistry, University of Oklahoma; Dr Doug Spathelf, research director at central Michigan University; Dr Daniel Graf, research director at Wayne State University; Dr William B. Svoboda, a specialist in paediatric neurology; Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop; Dr Robert E. Geary, a former member of the Mental Health Board of Medina County, Ohio

#### The Truth:

One pamphlet claims: "Narconon has been saving lives and educating youth on the truth about drugs for over 25 years."

In September, it was anxious to tell the "truth" to Scouts.

An article, including an offer to visit groups, appeared in Scouting magazine, which did not know about Narconon's links with Scientology.

There were a number of complaints. One scout leader said: "There's not really a drug problem among Scouts."