

50 BEST DRUGS BOOKS

PART 1

BLAINE STOTHARD
DRUGLINK REVIEWS EDITOR

The first thing to say is many thanks to those in the field I approached to send in their own titles and comments. Responses are still coming in which bodes well for part two – and there will be fifty titles covered. But the big revelation for me was how much literature there is which practitioners, commentators and policy makers value. I was beginning to add titles to my own list – ‘Ceremonial Chemistry’ is one example, in my ‘to read’ pile for several months and mentioned by four contributors – but, inevitably for someone like myself with an education and prevention background, there have been many surprises, additions and revelations. Never too late to learn.

PRIMERS AND INTRODUCTIONS

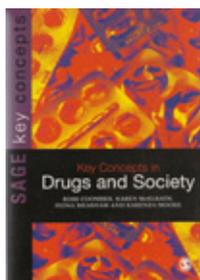


The media guide to drugs: key facts and figures on drugs for journalists and others

DrugScope, 2010.

This is an excellent and must read guide for everyone that is either interested in drugs or is dealing in some way with people who use substances. The guide provides lots of useful and relevant information and statistics on drugs from A-Z – what they look like, how they are used, what effects they have.

Lisa Luger, Visiting Lecturer Middlesex University; LLC Consultancy.



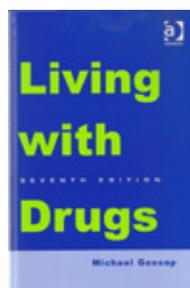
Key Concepts in drugs and society

Coomber, McElrath, Measham & Moore, Sage, 2013.

This volume seeks to bridge the gap between the many existing texts on drugs and current issues linked to drugs and drugs policy. It covers types of drugs, effects of drugs patterns of use, treatment, perceptions of drugs and drugs policy. It has an extensive and valuable collection of references in each

section. The content is comprehensive, the style calm and authoritative – I wish I had a copy years ago. I would like it to be on politicians’, civil servants’ and media commentators’ reading lists.

David MacKintosh, Policy Adviser, London Drug and Alcohol Policy Forum.



Living with drugs

Michael Gossop, 1982, Seventh edition, Ashgate, 2013.

In his chapter on cannabis Gossop perceptively writes “I am well aware that some readers will take exception to the things that I have written in this book.” This comment serves as a reflection on the continued UK failure and reluctance to accept some of the realities and evidence available to us about drugs and their use, and a political persistence – pushed by much of the media – on clinging to out-dated and disproven attitudes and practices in the drugs field. Gossop’s work – each edition has been updated to take account of new developments and evidence – patiently and thoroughly presents a carefully argued and presented account of drugs, drug use, drug policies and their impacts, and alternatives. It’s to his and the publisher’s credit that this

volume remains in print, to wider official discredit that so much of the evidence remains ignored or dismissed. For example, the longest section – still – is on tobacco. And Gossop's closing words continue to be highly relevant: "Drug taking is here to stay and one way or another we must all learn to live with drugs."

Blaine Stothard, Prevention specialist and DrugLink book reviews editor.

Drugs policy and the public good

Babor, Caulkins, Edwards et al., 2010, Oxford University Press.

An ambitious and highly readable exploration of the contribution that science can and should make to drug policy.

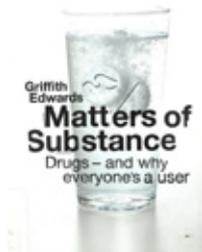
John McCracken, Programme Manager, Drugs, Department of Health.

Matters of substance: Drugs – and why everyone's a user

Griffith Edwards, Allen Lane, 2005.

The late Professor Griffith 'Griff' Edwards was a leading force in the treatment of drug and alcohol dependency. In *Matters of Substance* he attempts to review the relationship between a wide range of substances and those who use them. Rather than a taxonomy of the characteristics of drugs he includes the inter-relationship with the users' social and psychological aspects and how this affects outcomes. Overall he produces an interesting introduction to the understanding of the use of drugs and alcohol in society. His conclusions, regarding how to control the impact of this use, give the reader a basis from which to develop their own position. At a time of an increasingly politicised policy context, an awareness of the complexity of responding to drug and alcohol problems, this book offers interest to both the general reader and treatment worker.

Paul Wells, General Manager for Substance Misuse Services in Coventry and Warwickshire until 2011. He has contributed to UK Harm Reduction Alliance and Action on Hepatitis C.



Drugs 2.0: How the world gets high

Mike Power, Portobello Books, 2013.

Many traditional industries have been disrupted by the advent of the Internet and drug dealing is no exception. Mike Power explores how you can order drugs as easily as any other online impulse buy and how the Internet is behind the growth of novel psychoactive substances. Power brings journalistic writing skills combined with a researcher's rigour to produce an entertaining and enlightening book. Highly recommended.

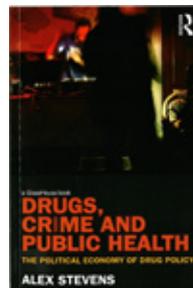
Russell Webster, Researcher, evaluator, writer, trainer in drugs, alcohol and crime. Blogs at www.russellwebster.com

Drugs crime and public health: the political economy of drug policy

Alex Stevens, Routledge, 2010.

Includes a critique of the evidence that crime reduction measures featuring coerced treatment for offenders have reduced overall crime levels in Britain and more generally of the use of evidence in policymaking, based partly on observations made while the author was a government adviser.

Mike Ashton, Drug and Alcohol Findings. Also submitted by Transform.



ALCOHOL

Alcohol: the ambiguous molecule

Griffith Edwards, Penguin, 2000.

Edwards was a prodigious researcher whose long career introduced 'alcohol dependence syndrome' in 1976. He later led on the writing of *Alcohol Policy and the Public Good* in 1994 – a book that transformed our understanding of the scientific basis for public health policy in relation to alcohol. *The ambiguous molecule* demonstrates another of his talents – the ability to communicate complex science to the general reader. The sweep of the book takes in: alcohol's chemistry; a social history of its use and drunkenness across the millennia; our progressive formulation and understanding of alcohol problems; accounts of major developments such as the evolution of the disease concept, the USA's experiment with alcohol prohibition, and Alcoholics Anonymous; the impact of alcohol on health; and,



future options for alcohol policy. Although some of the science has moved on, this remains an excellent primer. Its breadth and style mean that it is also a rewarding read for the more experienced 'alcoholologist'.

Neil Hunt, freelance researcher and trainer; Honorary Senior Research Associate, University of Kent; Honorary Research Fellow, Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Drunken comportment

MacAndrew and Edgerton, Percheron Press, 1969.

A marvellous cross-cultural and historical analysis with many memorable descriptions of how people drink and get drunk. The book attacks the disinhibition hypothesis that alcohol consumption determines behaviour and affects it for the worse. MacAndrew and Edgerton argue that how we drink and how we behave when drunk is influenced by cultural context. Alcohol is not always a 'disinhibitor.' My favourite is the description of the Mixe Indians who always go armed and who like to drink and get drunk. When drunk they challenge and fight. However when they begin to fight the first thing they do is to lay down their weapons and fight with their fists. Harm reduction! The "domestication" of drunkenness leads us to re-think the links between alcohol, boisterousness, violence, and sexual promiscuity.

Gerry Stimson, Director Knowledge-Action-Change; Emeritus Chair, Imperial College; Visiting Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The drinker

Hans Fallada, Originally published in Germany 1950, Melville House 2009.

Hans Fallada is best known for his work *Alone in Berlin*, but it is in *The Drinker* where he excels in his depiction of a man who loses everything, unable to end his relationship with "La Reine," his name for alcohol. Fallada himself drank excessively, and *The Drinker*, discovered only after his death, was written in code whilst he was being treated in a Nazi psychiatric asylum. The central character has a level of awareness about what it happening to him which makes the novel all the more poignant – not even

his intelligent insight can prevent his descent.

Sally Marlow, Addictions Department, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London.

Twenty thousand streets under the sky

Patrick Hamilton, 1929, Vintage Classic, 2004.

A semi-autobiographical trilogy set in the 1930s, this work explores the lives of three people whose lives cross in the Midnight Bell, a pub on the Euston Road. It is Hamilton's portrayal of Jenny, a prostitute who is dependent on alcohol, which makes this book worthy of inclusion in any book list on addiction: from the first taste she is gripped, and the life she might have had starts slipping away from her.

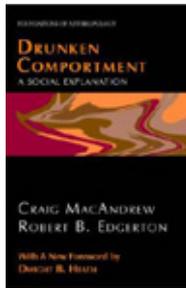
Sally Marlow, Addictions Department, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London.

Alcohol-related violence: prevention and treatment

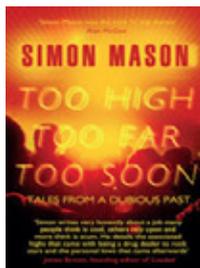
McMurrin, M (Ed) Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

This book highlights the relationship between alcohol consumption and violence and the harm which can emerge as a result. It is an essential must read book for all those who are interested in understanding and reducing alcohol-related interpersonal violence. The book draws on contributions from authors internationally and covers areas for the reader to get an understanding of the problem of alcohol related violence and its extent, but also provides examples of good practice for prevention and treatment.

Lisa Luger, Visiting Lecturer Middlesex University; LLC Consultancy.



MEMOIRS – ANTHROPOLOGY – TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

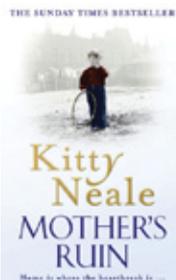


Too high too far too soon: tales from a dubious past

Simon Mason, Mainstream, 2013.

A fascinating account of a man who was at the rock 'n' roll heart of Britpop in the 90s, who fell into heroin addiction and petty crime to fund his addiction, but eventually managed to become clean after being 'rescued' by Banksy from a camper van in Spain. Why it's my choice: This is a cracking read that tells it like it is. The bleakness of addiction to drugs is laid bare and the enormous difficulties he faced overcoming his addiction. Ultimately it's a story of hope for all those who want to beat their addiction and to those struggling to help them.

Norman Baker M. P., Crime Prevention Minister at the Home Office.



Mother's ruin

Nicola Barry, Headline, 2008.

A memoir from a woman who grew up in a well-to-do Scottish family with a mother who drank. Nicola captures the secrecy, shame and neglect she felt as a young girl who was in effect her mother's carer, while her father wilfully ignored what was happening. Nicola's mother eventually drank herself to death, and afterwards Nicola had to deal with the hereditary aspects of addiction, and battle her own alcoholism.

Sally Marlow, Addictions Department, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London.



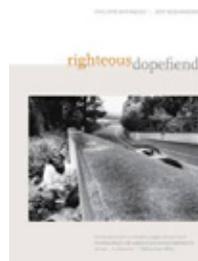
Junkie

William Burroughs, Ace Books, 1953.

William Burroughs's insider account of life with heroin. From a middle class, Mid-West family, he started using heroin during the Second World War. This noirish autobiography echoes 1950s crime novels: capers with minor criminals, Times Square characters, cheap lodging houses, brushes with corrupt police, encounters with doctors, and of course, scoring heroin and other drugs. A good eye for the urban landscape – 103rd and Broadway is junk territory – 'junk haunts the cafeteria, roams up and down the block...a ghost in daylight on a crowded street'.

Challenges ideas about intention and addiction. Full of memorable insights. No one sets out to be a junkie, he says – 'You don't wake up one morning and decide to be a drug addict': you drift into it, it takes time to become a junkie. 'One day you wake up sick and you're an addict.'

Gerry Stimson, Director Knowledge-Action-Change; Emeritus Chair, Imperial College; Visiting Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

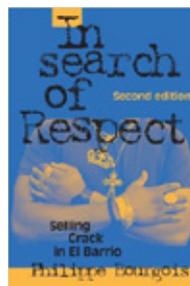


Righteous dopefiend

Philippe Bourgois, University of California Press, 2009.

This powerful study immerses the reader in the world of homelessness and drug addiction in the contemporary United States. For over a decade Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg followed a social network of two dozen heroin injectors and crack smokers on the streets of San Francisco, accompanying them as they scrambled to generate income through burglary, panhandling, recycling, and day labour. *Righteous dopefiend* interweaves stunning black-and-white photographs with vivid dialogue, detailed field notes, and critical theoretical analysis. Its gripping narrative develops a cast of characters around the themes of violence, race relations, sexuality, family trauma, embodied suffering, social inequality, and power relations. The result is a dispassionate chronicle of survival, loss, caring, and hope rooted in the addicts' determination to hang on for one more day and one more "fix" through a "moral economy of sharing" that precariously balances mutual solidarity and interpersonal betrayal.

Magdalena Harris, Faculty of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



In search of respect

Philippe Bourgois, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

This book has the sub-title 'selling crack in El Barrio', which is part of what makes it a "drugs book" I suppose. But it would be a disservice to this fine book to see it on only one dimension. It is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional study of a group of people, perhaps a community of "Nuyoricans" in East Harlem, New York. Based on immersion in the environment and close connection to the people he writes about, Bourgois provides both

an appreciative and critical perspective on their lives and situation. This book won the Margaret Mead Award when it was published and, nearly two decades on, it remains an important read on the dynamics of ethnicity, class and gender and their links to the drugs trade.

Karim Murji, Open University.

Also submitted by Alex Stevens, Professor in Criminal Justice, University of Kent, and Jim Orford, Emeritus Professor of Clinical and Community Psychology, Birmingham University.

TREATMENT AND WORKING WITH USERS

Helping drug users

Nicholas Dorn & Nigel South, Gower, 1985.

2014 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Blenheim Project, a notable achievement in itself. This book, long out of print but available second hand, is the product of research that looked at the way three London 'street agencies' – Blenheim, Community Drug Project and Hungerford – operated in the early 1980s. It is hard to imagine in today's current context of large national service providers that, at that time, London was served by about 10 to 12 drug workers. These projects were responsible for much innovative work, some of which underpins the services for drug users today, while others, such as the CDP injecting room, have not been replicated in 40 years. This book captures the different styles of working and offers an insight into understanding how the work with drug users has developed since the mid 1980s, following the rapid development of services.

Paul Wells, General Manager for Substance Misuse Services in Coventry and Warwickshire until 2011. He has contributed to the UK Harm Reduction Alliance and Action on Hepatitis C.

Motivational interviewing: preparing people for change

William R. Miller & Stephen Rollnick, Guilford Press, 2002.

Working with patients with drug and alcohol problems in general practice I soon realised 2 things 1) that they were the same as any other patient and 2)

I needed the same patient-centred skills. Early on I was fortunately to have a counsellor working with me and he introduced me to Motivational Interviewing. After a day's introduction course I realized that I was using some of the methods but I had so much to learn. I was recommended to read this book and I was smitten! It improved my communication with all patients and seemed to be particularly helpful with people who had any kind of addiction problems and allowed me to support their desire to change. Perhaps most importantly it took me away from usual doctor skills of wanting to fix things and control everybody and showed me how best to support, encourage and inspire someone you care about – to develop their own decisions.

Chris Ford, former London GP and co-founder of Substance Misuse Management in General Practice; founder of International Doctors for Healthier Drug Policies.

Drugs and addictive behaviour: a guide to treatment

A. H. Ghodse, Cambridge University Press, 4th edition, 2010.

Provides an excellent and accessible textbook on practical and evidence based approaches for all aspects of managing addiction and substance misuse. An invaluable text book for students of addiction, and for those working in clinical settings. It is written in a clear and objective manner. The promotion of their interests, and to distort and discredit researchers' findings which run counter to those interests.

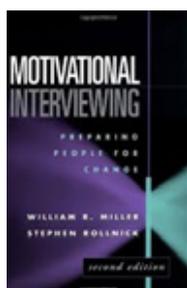
Christine Goodair, Programmes Coordinator (Substance Misuse) Population Health Research Institute, St. George's University of London.

The reduction of drug related harm

Pat O'Hare et. al. (eds.), Routledge, 1992.

There are now many books on harm reduction that bring together a range of authors to discuss theoretical issues and practical applications in relation to different drugs, used in different ways, within different settings. For a good contemporary example, the EMCDDA's 2010 monograph *Harm reduction: evidence, impacts and challenges* is a better resource to consult. Nevertheless, I retain a deep personal attachment to this early

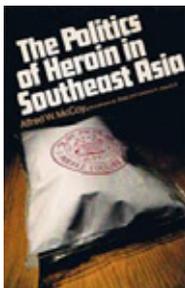
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book because it helped introduce me to many of the ideas that have been central to my work ever since. And quite a few of the people too. More than any other chapter, I value Russell Newcombe's 'conceptual framework for theory, practice and research' in which he sets out the arguments that radically transformed my understanding of drug policy. Beyond this, there are chapters on many topics that continue to resonate today: harm reduction and dance drugs/stimulant use; 'Smack in the Eye' and the controversy that can arise when developing user friendly information grounded in people's lived experience; the role and relationships with the police; reducing risks within sex work; drug consumption rooms; the effectiveness of different policies on regulation and control; and the impact of representations of the 'drug user'. Plus ça change...

Neil Hunt is a freelance researcher and trainer; Honorary Senior Research Associate at the University of Kent; Honorary Research Fellow with the Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

INTERNATIONAL



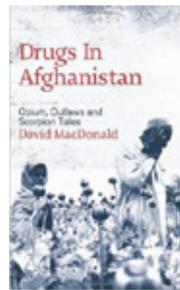
The politics of heroin: CIA complicity in the global drug trade

Alfred W McCoy, Lawrence Hill Books, 2003 (revised edition).

First published in 1972 and revised twice to update a continuing story, this book tracks through Sicily, Marseille, Vietnam, Hong Kong, the Golden Triangle, Afghanistan and Latin America. In the 20–30 years between the first and later editions, what had once been an obscure subject had spawned a huge literature. What began as a Cold War issue mutated into the US 'War on Drugs'. As other reviewers have said 'the appalling fact' is that McCoy's updates of his classic work remain as relevant as ever. As much reportage as analysis, and packed with direct observations and quotations, it is supported by extensive reference to documents. Today as voices critical of the War on Drugs grow in number, this book demonstrates the deep roots and formidable strength of the interests which sustain it.

Susanne MacGregor: Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Hygiene

and Tropical Medicine; Associate Editor of the International Journal of Drug Policy



Drugs in Afghanistan: opium, outlaws and scorpion tales

David Macdonald, Pluto Press, 2007.

Macdonald graphically shows us, if we needed to know, that 'supply countries' are not just grey shapes or targets on a map but seething, complex living worlds, made up of powerful, active, organised societies and people with cultures, interests and histories which need to be respected if we are to understand the phenomenon of the drug trade. His book should be required reading for politicians or commentators before they voice their opinions on Afghanistan or on the 'War on Drugs'. Based on many years intensive work as a drug demand reduction specialist in Afghanistan, Macdonald describes in detail the overlapping markets, supply routes, patterns of use and demand for a range of substances, from traditional medicines to modern pharmaceuticals, vodka and other alcohol, as well as conventionally defined illicit drugs like heroin. He shows how the war economy led to social destruction, warlord power, poppy cultivation, rule of the gun and breakdown of central government power. He is critical of the concentration of attention in current global drug policy on cultivation, production and trafficking and its neglect of the deep causes of demand for intoxicants. Drug consumption in Afghanistan is a way of coping with the pain of existence in an impoverished and war-wrecked land, and drug production is a necessary economic survival strategy.

Susanne MacGregor: Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Associate Editor of the International Journal of Drug Policy