

LIFELINE PUBLICATIONS PRESENT

THE LADS GO MAD IN

AMSTERDAM



THE ENGLISH LET LOOSE IN SIN CITY

THE LADS GO MAD IN AMSTERDAM

Welcome to Lifeline's invasion of Europe. What with the Channel Tunnel and easier travel across boundaries and all that, Peanut Pete and friends decided it was time to have a look at our continental cousins. And where better to start than good old Amsterdam. Trips to (and 'in!') the Dam are very popular with Brits in search of a busman's holiday of drugs and sex.

A lot of Brits are confused about drug policies in Holland and Amsterdam. They think anything goes and everything is legal – WRONG! They also think that the Dutch are a nation of liberal old hippies who think drugs are great – WRONG! There are a lot of Dutch people who are opposed to their government's policies and would like to see them 'tightened up' to stop the likes of Peanut Pete being attracted to their country. In fact, the Dutch are quite conservative people. They like to keep themselves to themselves. But, as long as they don't have to dodge past too many stoned and puking foreigners they tend to tolerate the situation. On the whole it is the case that they 'tolerate' as opposed to 'welcome' the drugs and sex tourists.

The only difference between the Dutch drug laws and the British drug laws is that the Dutch authorities see locking people up for using drugs as a waste of time and a waste of public money. Having said that, the Dutch police come down just as heavy as the British police on people who sell hard drugs. In short, the Dutch police are concerned with people who are real criminals and who are involved in making serious money out of selling seriously dangerous drugs. They are less concerned with people who use drugs personally as part of their R'n'R (rest and recreation).

The Dutch see little point in trying to police moral issues. As an adult it is your decision whether or not you want to take drugs or pay for sexual favours. These are seen as issues of private morality and as long as other people are not unduly inconvenienced the authorities will not intervene. This does not make them liberals ('soft' on drugs). To be accurate their policies are best described as 'pragmatic'. There is a big difference between being a 'liberal' and a 'pragmatist' (someone who is realistic).

In Amsterdam they treat cannabis (weed, draw, puff etc. etc.) as a 'soft' drug. Other drugs such as heroin, cocaine/crack, ecstasy, LSD and amphetamines (whizz, speed) are seen as 'harder' drugs. So when they say 'soft' drugs they basically mean cannabis. Across Holland, and in Amsterdam particularly, there are licensed 'coffee shops'. These are places that sell soft drinks (some sell alcohol as well) and cannabis. You can find them listed in a booklet called 'Mellow Pages – A Smokers Guide to Holland'.

If you are caught in possession of less than 30 grams of cannabis it is like being caught parking on double yellow lines in England. In Amsterdam the police will rarely even bother to give you the equivalent of a parking ticket. Outside Amsterdam they may be a bit heavier about it. So take extra care outside of Amsterdam. Even in Amsterdam it is best to be discreet about things – nobody likes to see a knobhead showing off – be cool about it.

NEVER BUY ANYTHING FROM THE STREET HUSTLERS AROUND CENTRAL STATION AND DAM SQUARE. Just say NO to street hustlers they are all rip off merchants and con artists.

One way to make yourself really unpopular and even get yourself a couple of slaps is to ask the coffee shop workers for anything other than cannabis. The coffee shops are allowed to operate providing they only sell cannabis. As far as they know you could be working for the police. So expect to be asked to leave if you ask for anything other than cannabis in a coffee shop. Amsterdam is a great place for a visit. there are lots of things to do and see besides drugs and sex. But you know what Pete and Reg are like...

THE LADS GO MAD IN AMSTERDAM

-LINNELL 93-

PETE AND REG ARE ON A WEEKEND TRIP TO AMSTERDAM TO MEET THEIR DUTCH FRIEND BETSY. ARRIVING AT CENTRAL STATION THEY DECIDE NOT TO WASTE MONEY ON A HOTEL. BUT STAY AWAKE ALL WEEKEND, SAVING THEIR VALUABLE GUILDERS FOR A TASTE OF DUTCH CULTURE.

RIGHT! IT'S BREAKFAST TIME, WE DON'T MEET BETSY TILL NOON. LET'S MAKE A START ON ONE OF THESE COFFEE SHOPS WHICH WAY REG?

WITH PEANUT PETE

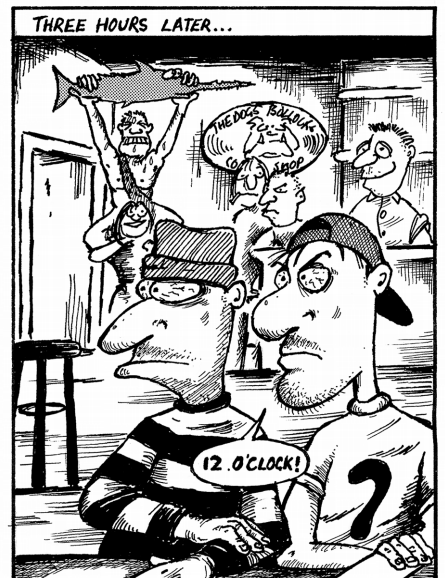
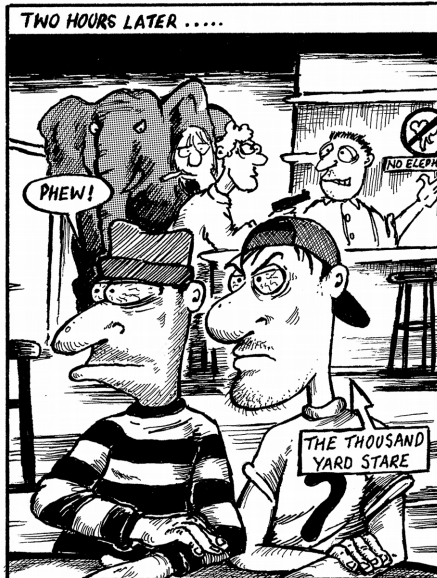
THIS GUIDE BOOK'S SHIT, IT'S FULL OF MUSEUMS AND RESTAURANTS I'LL JUST HAVE TO USE MY NOSE..... SNIFF, SNIFF!

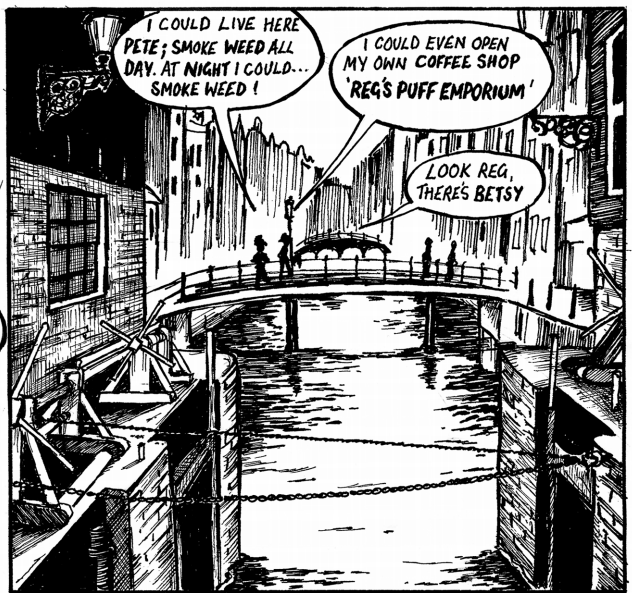
CANNABIS THAT WAY.

IM LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS WEEKEND PETE. THINK OF ALL THE THINGS THERE IS TO DO IN THE DAM... SMOKE CANNABIS.. AND..... ERM..... ERM..... ?

C, MON REG IT'S NEARLY 8-30 AND WE ARE BOTH STILL STRAIGHT. LET'S GET 'SKUNKING'!







CANNABIS & COFFEE SHOPS

Most coffee shops will have a menu and/or a house dealer displaying lists of what they have available. It's not unusual for a coffee shop to sell more than 20 different varieties (or *brands*) of cannabis or hashish. Varieties of weed are generally split into 3 groups 1) mostly Indica 2) mostly Sativa and 3) Indica/Sativa hybrids. Put very simply, Indica weed creates a 'heavy' high whilst Sativa weed gives a more 'speedy' or 'psychedelic' experience. Indica/sativa hybrids fall somewhere between the two extremes. Hashish is usually defined by type (blonde/dark etc.) and origin (Nepalese, Moroccan, Dutch etc.).

Price is often as good a guide as any to the strength and quality of coffee shop cannabis. Weed and hash are generally sold in fixed price bags (usually for about £10). As a generalisation, the less you get for your money – the stronger the cannabis.

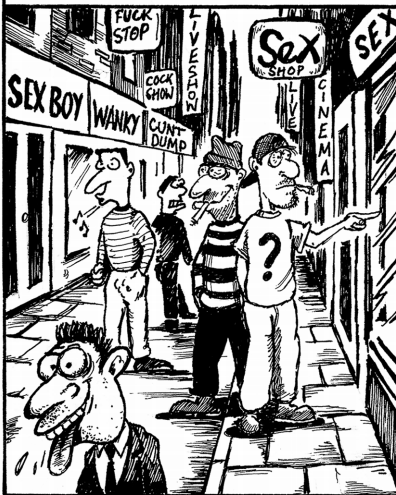
Now listen CAREFULLY! The Dutch have cannabis cultivation honed to a fine art. For the average Brit raised on bog standard moroccan hash or straggly homegrown skunk, the effects of the finest Dutch grown 'super weed' can come as somewhat of a shock. The universal advice is to TAKE IT EASY. The effects of a strong joint can take up to fifteen minutes to fully 'creep' up on you and can last for hours. Try smoking just a *little*, chill for a while and THEN decide whether or not you want some more. If the effects get 'on top' – or you begin to feel anxious or paranoid – get some fresh air; find yourself a safe, quiet place; calm down and consider a lesson learnt.

Combining alcohol with strong cannabis is often a very bad idea. Many a fresh-faced young Brit has turned a milky shade of lime green as they rush to throw up the belly full of lager on top of which they have put several tokes of particularly 'pokey' cannabis. In fact, amongst the Dutch, we are famous for it. Keep a shred of dignity, if you must drink and smoke, leave the beer till AFTER your joint, never before.

Coffee shops also sell 'Space Cakes' – cakes or cookies baked with cannabis. Space cakes deserve A LOT OF RESPECT. Eating cannabis gives a more powerful high than smoking and the effects last far longer. Many tourists come a 'cropper' with space cakes because of the delay between eating and the onset of effects (often up to an hour). The classic mistake is to eat a second cake thinking the first hasn't worked only for the first to 'kick in' half an hour later closely followed by the second. A space cake 'overdose' can be highly, highly unpleasant and might mark an early end to your evening. Once again, the advice is TAKE IT EASY. Try half a piece of cake, wait an hour, then decide whether or not you fancy the other half.



BETSY HAS GONE OFF TO HER LECTURE, LEAVING THE LADS FREE FOR AN AFTERNOON STROLL IN THE RED LIGHT DISTRICT

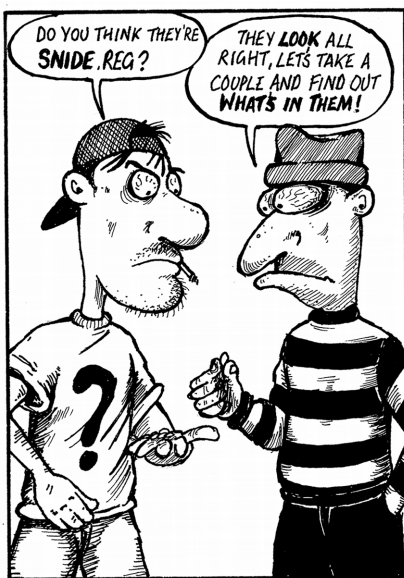


THE LADS GO IN THEIR PRIVATE BOOTHS TO WATCH A VIDEO



TWO JOINTS LATER AND THE LADS ARE BACK IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST





SEX!!

For a lot of tourists heading to Amsterdam, drugs and sex are the main attractions. The situation in Amsterdam brings into sharp focus what goes on in people's lives or (thoughts!) every weekend. Amsterdam is something of a Mecca for those hedonists, gay or straight alike, who enjoy nothing more than getting out of their heads and getting into some part of somebody else's body.

Contrary to popular images having sex with a worker in the 'regulated' parts of Amsterdam's sex industry is pretty safe as they will almost always insist that condoms are used in any act where bodily fluids might be exchanged. Having said that it is always a good idea to take a good supply of your own condoms and lubricants as well. This is especially true if you are planning on any 'back door action' (anal sex) during your stay.

Always practise safer sex if all you want to bring back from Amsterdam is good memories of a great time. There is nothing worse than waking up in the morning with a hangover and the thought that you might have caught something that could kill you. The following weeks or months of worry soon cancel out any pleasure that you might have experienced at the time. Drugs and alcohol play a large part in unsafe sex. Some people feel really sexy when they smoke cannabis and drink alcohol or take other drugs like amphetamines, ecstasy and cocaine.

When you get smashed your best intentions can go flying out of the window along with your inhibitions. Always prepare for safer sex. And never forget the masturbation option. If you feel yourself getting all hot and bothered and feel yourself getting completely out of control consider nipping to the loo or back to your room for a bit of self relief. If there's one thing in Amsterdam it's enough wanking material to make a nun weep with naughty thoughts. And the sex shops have got enough sex aids to help her see them through in the privacy of her own company. Remember: wanking is as safe as sex can get and it can be great fun with no regrets!



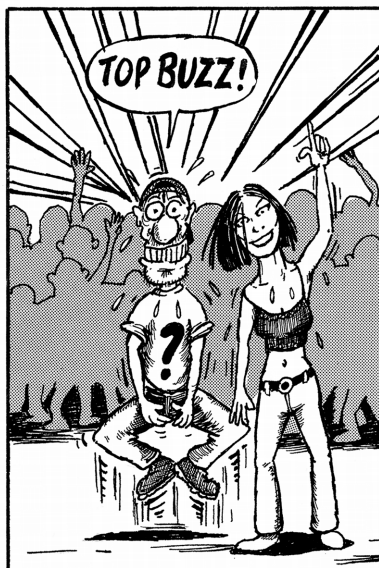
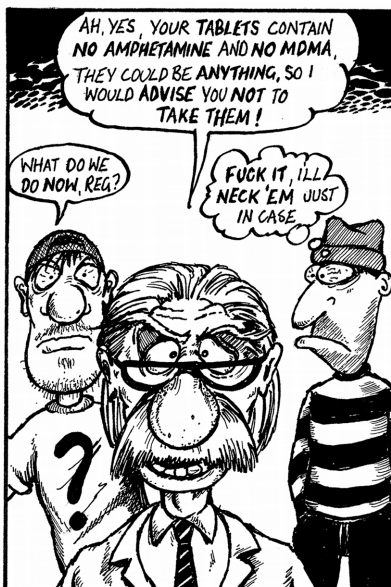
IT IS LATE. SOME TOURISTS AFTER A HARD DAY SIGHTSEEING ARE ENJOYING AMSTERDAM'S CHOICE OF INTERNATIONAL CUISINE AT ONE OF ITS MANY RESTAURANTS.....



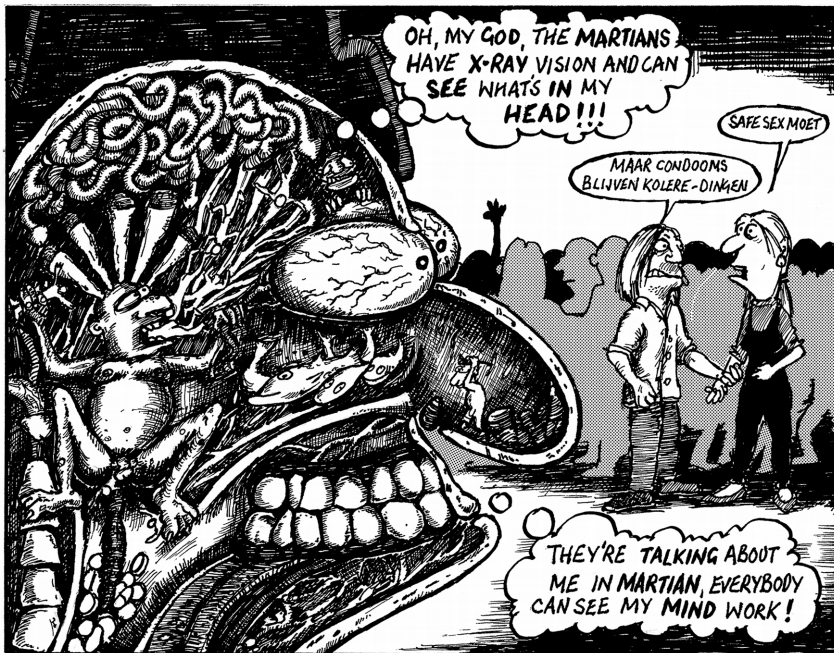
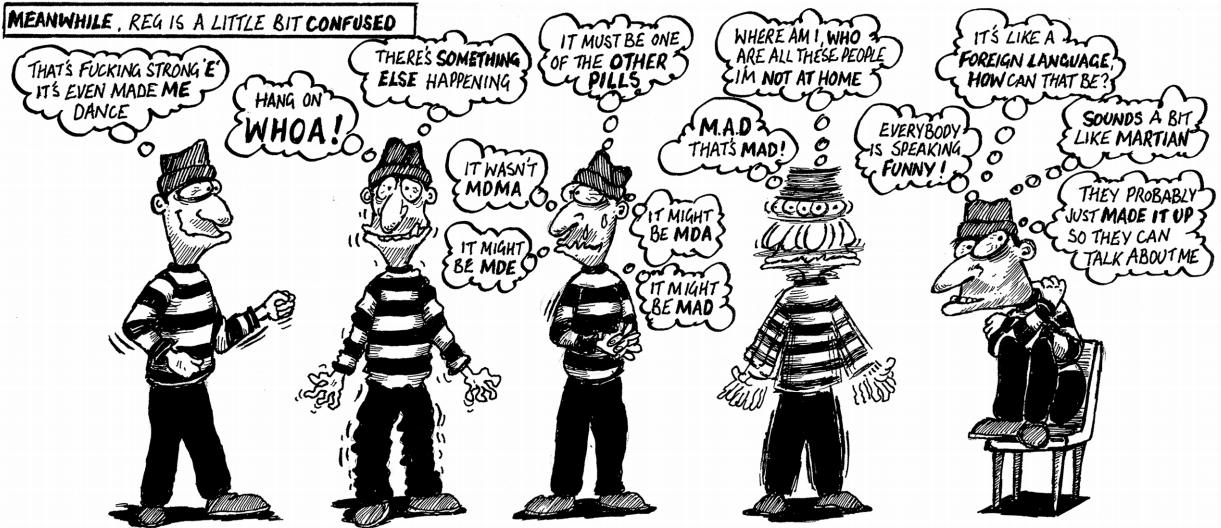
... OTHERS ARE NOT.



PETE AND REG FINALLY MAKE IT TO THE CLUB..



MEANWHILE, REG IS A LITTLE BIT CONFUSED



ECSTASY & THE OTHER DRUGS

When it comes to buying ecstasy, cocaine, speed, LSD and heroin then Amsterdam is not that much different from anywhere else. What you end up with is usually down to how much you can rely on the place or the person you get it from. So don't buy from street hustlers.

In some Dutch clubs you will find 'The Safe House'. This is a service where, for the price of a pint, you can have your tablet tested. They scrape a tiny bit off the tablet and drop some chemicals on it and depending on the reaction you have an idea what is in the tablet. You can then decide whether to take the tablet or to throw it away.

There are no controls over what is sold as 'E' and, in any case, most ecstasy deaths arise from the use of 'normal' ecstasy pills so the following rules are very important:

- 1) Sip water regularly (about a pint an hour) and take plenty of time to chill out.
- 2) Avoid developing 'tolerance' and risking brain damage by only taking 'E's on special occasions.
- 3) If the 'E' you bought doesn't work, put it down to experience and don't buy another in the hope that that one will work.

The Dutch look at people like Reg with a mixture of bemusement and sympathy. In their eyes our desire to swallow as much of anything as possible is not clever – it's just plain stupid; a waste of brain cells and a waste of money. Perhaps the Dutch can teach us all a lesson about drugs – that goes for the policy makers and the users alike. Such a lot to think about and so little time...

'SMART' SHOPS

In the last few years, several Smart Shops selling legal 'highs' have opened in Amsterdam. Originally introduced to 'enhance' mental performance, most 'smart' drugs are now seen as just another (legal) way of getting off your face. Smart Shops stock a bewildering array of potions, pills, powders, teas and drinks – all of which claim to alter your consciousness in one way or another. The supposed benefits of some of these products should be taken with a big fat pinch of salt. Reputable smart shops should have experienced and knowledgeable staff. Always ask for (and expect) good advice and if you don't get it – go elsewhere.

The highs on offer in the Smart Shops range from harmless energy drinks through to several different varieties of highly potent magic mushrooms which can be legally sold over the counter. If you are tempted by the mushrooms: TAKE GREAT CARE. A strange foreign city buzzing with killer trams, kamikaze cyclists and shady street hustlers is unlikely to be the best setting for a full-blown, six hour psychedelic experience. Expert 'shroomers' advise a quiet natural environment or your own home as the ONLY places to take magic mushrooms.

REG IS LOST AND ALONE AND COMING DOWN FROM THE EFFECT OF THE PILLS



GOTTA TAKE THE EDGE OFF THIS, I NEED SOMETHING TO TAKE ME DOWN GENTLY

I'VE NO IDEA WHERE I AM!



IT'S A BIT SPOOKY HERE, I'VE STARTED TALKING TO MYSELF AS WELL

I FEEL LIKE I'VE HAD MY HEAD UP A GORILLA'S ARSE!

WHAT'S THAT?



IT'S THE METHADONE BUS YOU GET YOUR DRUGS AND NEEDLES FOR FREE!

FREE DRUGS - METHADONE, THAT'S LIKE HEROIN - THAT WOULD TAKE THE EDGE OFF

WOW WHAT A COUNTRY!



MEANWHILE PETE AND BETSY ARE LOOKING FOR REG.

I THINK HE WAS HEADING THIS WAY

YES, WHERE ALL THE JUNKIES HANG OUT.

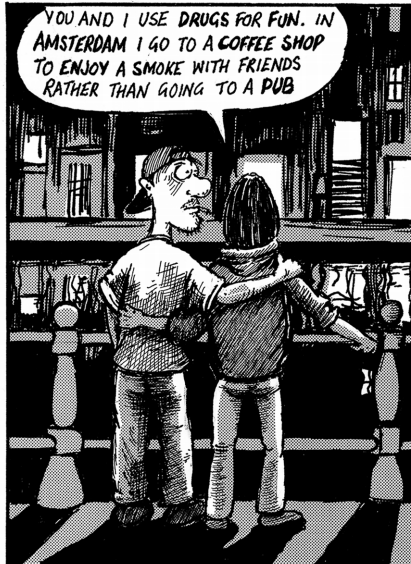


WHAT A COUNTRY. YOU CAN TAKE WHATEVER DRUG YOU LIKE AND NOBODY BOTHERS!

IT'S NOT LIKE THAT JUNKIES ARE AS UNPOPULAR HERE AS THEY ARE IN ENGLAND.

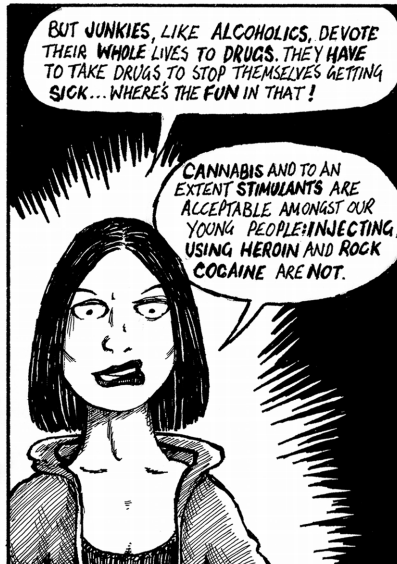


YOU AND I USE DRUGS FOR FUN. IN AMSTERDAM I GO TO A COFFEE SHOP TO ENJOY A SMOKE WITH FRIENDS RATHER THAN GOING TO A PUB



BUT JUNKIES, LIKE ALCOHOLICS, DEVOTE THEIR WHOLE LIVES TO DRUGS. THEY HAVE TO TAKE DRUGS TO STOP THEMSELVES GETTING SICK... WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT!

CANNABIS AND TO AN EXTENT STIMULANTS ARE ACCEPTABLE AMONGST OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. INJECTING, USING HEROIN AND ROCK COCAINE ARE NOT.



MEANWHILE, REG IS UNSUCCESSFUL

IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THE COMEDOWN: DON'T DO THE DRUG. METHADONE IS FOR JUNKIES. STAY AWAY FROM JUNKIES AND METHADONE!

COME WITH ME ENGLISH, I'LL SORT YOU OUT WITH SOMETHING.



REG HAS GONE BACK TO THE DUTCH JUNKIE'S SQUAT



LUCKILY THE JUNKIE NODS OFF BEFORE HE HAS THE CHANCE TO MUG REG.

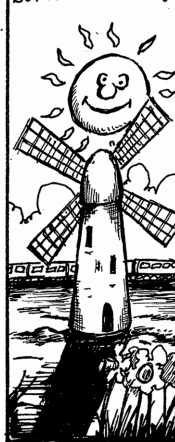


MEANWHILE: PETE AND BETSY ARE BOOZY IN A BACK ALLEY CEMENTING ANGLO-DUTCH RELATIONS.



MORNING.

AS THE TULIPS OPEN THEIR PETALS TO THE SUN PETE MAKES HIS WAY TO THE AIRPORT.... BUT WHERE IS REG?



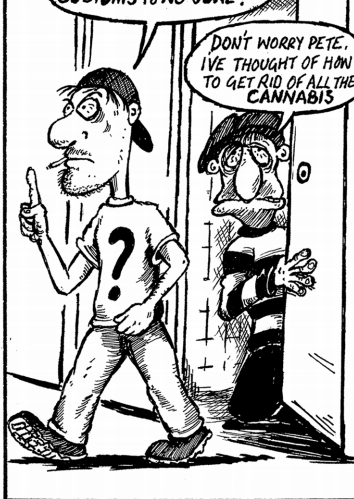
FUCK ME THE FLIGHT LEAVES IN AN HOUR, AND NO SIGN OF REG



REG HAS SPENT THE NIGHT IN THE AIRPORT TOILET



NOW DON'T FORGET. WE CAN'T TAKE OUR DRUGS BACK TO BRITAIN. BEING BUSTED BY CUSTOMS IS NO JOKE!



GOT A LIGHT?



BACK TO BLIGHTY...

Smoking yourself into oblivion in a Dutch coffee shop and getting completely Balearic in Ibiza have become 'rites of passage' for many young British holidaymakers. After all, it would be letting the side down if we didn't get more drunk and take far more drugs than any 'Johnny foreigner'. The health risks associated with cannabis are negligible, certainly when compared to any other drugs, but that is not to say you can't overdo it, you can with any drug (we are British don't you know). Overdoing it on holiday is one thing, as long as you don't think you can carry on drinking and smoking that much when you get back to Blighty. You can't! Well actually you can, but it will all go a bit arse shaped if you did.

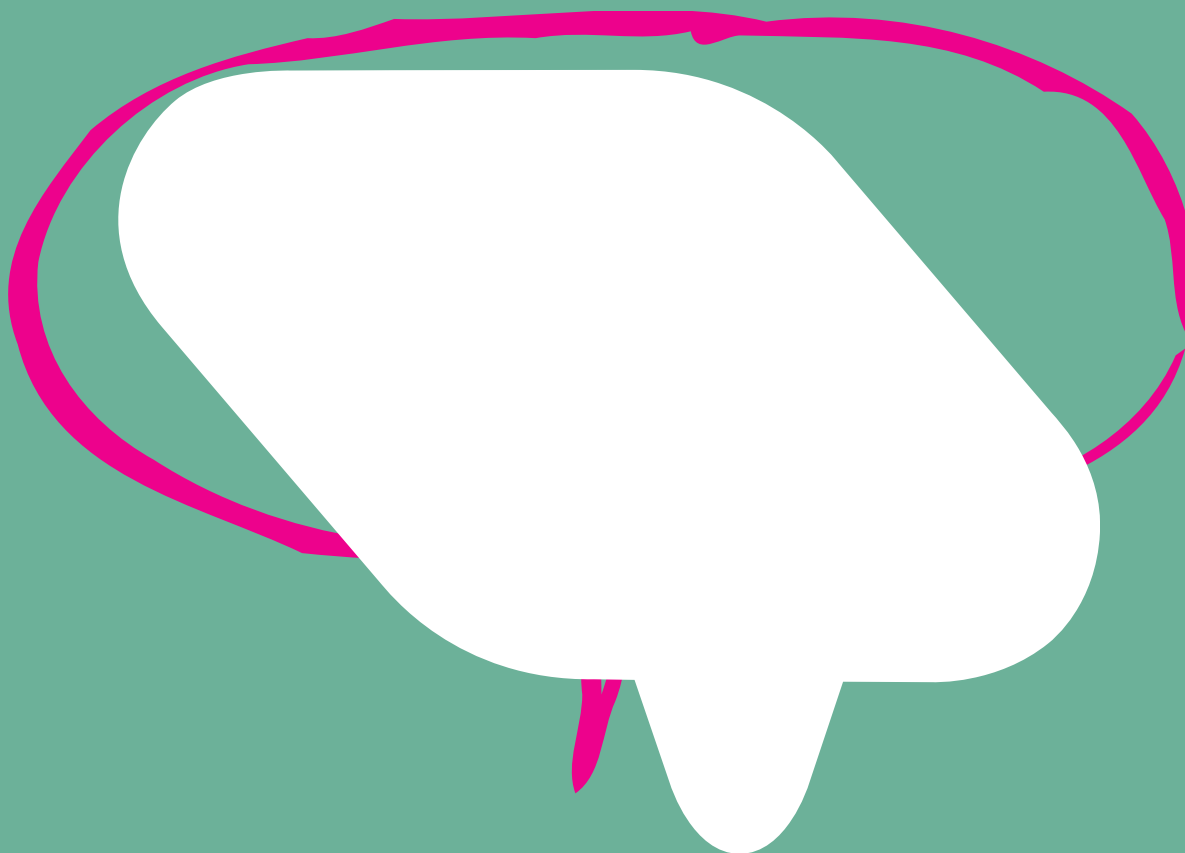
Some people's whole lives revolve around drugs; from the moment they wake up (before they put on their make-up) to the moment they sleep. If they are heroin users, they usually end up injecting and addicted. If they are rock cocaine users they can end up using heroin just to give their lives some stability. There are lots of ways to describe people like this, from 'the chemically challenged' to 'bag heads'. Dutch heroin users describe themselves as 'junkies' and even have a drug users union called 'Junkie Bondens'. As we said at the start of this booklet: the Dutch are not a bunch of 'liberal old hippies'; there's as much stigma about being a heroin user in Amsterdam as there is in any British city; you can even see signs on the doors of coffee shops 'Junkies not welcome'. Some people prefer to live as full time heroin users, most just kinda end up that way without ever planning it. But you're not like that are you?

You know you'd never try heroin, not even if somebody says it's a good way of coming down from a weekend of stimulant use. You'd never try smoking a bit of brown or a stone just to see what it's like? You might neck a few pills and do a line of charlie when you can afford it, you might try a line of ketamine and wash all of your drugs down with a gallon or two of lager, but your drug use is fun, it's under control. Thankfully, for most people this is true, but don't get lulled into a false sense of security. There are problems and risks involved in any type of drug use. To keep your drug use from becoming a 'full-time job' rather than a leisure activity try and follow some simple rules:

Be honest with yourself; if your drug use is becoming a problem, getting out of hand or you've just plain caned so much you're knackered; ease off. Try sticking to just using at week-ends (which by the way do not start Thursday and end Tuesday morning). If it really gets on top, ring up your local drug service for a bit of

The very least you should do is NEVER try heroin or Rock. If you have just started using heroin or rock cocaine, stop while you can. If you can't stop, you're a junkie.





to get help or find out more

[P9] lifeline | publication guidelines
04/09

[>] **aims**
To provide information for young adults on a range of health issues for those contemplating a weekend of drug use in Amsterdam. It includes information about cannabis strength, ecstasy and heatstroke, sex and prostitution and the dangers associated with drug dependence.

[>] **audience**
Young adults engaged in the recreational use of drugs.

[v] **content**
Some swearing. Scenes of drug taking and explicit sexual imagery.

[£] **funding**
Self-financed.

