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## Addiction

by Miriam Silver

We, his father and mother used to call it enthusiasms, that was what he was like enthusiastic about everything, creating a wash in his wake. We loved all of it of course, being liberal parents, “let them discover it all, give them their head, must find out for themselves.”

At a very early age he was obsessed with The Wombles. He, Jamie, collected, read and imitated all of them, at seven making his way to Wimbledon.

Born in 1973 ‘Listen with mother’ became an early favourite, although I noticed his attention was far greater than any of the other children. At Nursery he immediately adopted His toy he was not a good sharer, that’s how I rationalised his behaviour.

He learnt to read early, devoting hours to acquiring the skills, becoming possessed by characters in Enid Blyton’s Famous Five, desperate to be allowed to use the dingy we kept on the shore, learning to swim to prove he’d be safe on his own.

At primary school school his teachers tried very hard to integrate him calling him ‘a special little boy’. We suspect they were relieved when he moved on to secondary school.

At th local comprehensive he was friendless, bullied and lost. He became aggressive, forcing us to find an alternative. Eventually he boarded at a school where the policy was, ‘children find out and learn if they are left to choose’.

The teachers there were understanding and recognised his needs, he settled down with their routine. Morning activity had to be academic and as long as he did this he could then develop his own choice, which by the time he was 15, was horses, but racing became his focus. In fact his obsessions now became equal to addiction, the teachers could not deal with his rages when they tried to deflect his attention.

He left school, we thought he’d ‘grow out of it’ and let him spend all day at the local stables, owned by friends, sometimes not returning home for days, it a least we knew where he was.

What we didn't know was that he was riding their biggest and strongest animals whenever he could. He wanted to ride in races and even managed, we learnt later, to practice jumping on the animal they were hoping would compete in the National.

He was found one morning, when this horse appeared, riderless, Jamie had been killed by falling under it when attempting to jump a too high fence.

We are still grieving, we will miss him forever, never able to forgive ourselves, he was addicted, he was an addict, we should have recognised that. We know now that there are many and varied addictions. I hope that one day we can or will accept that loving him, indulging him made him leave us, all we wanted was for him to be happy.