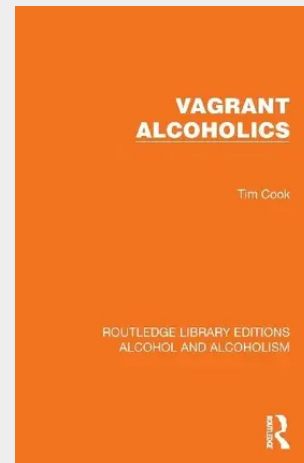


Vagrant Alcoholics

In the 1970s the vagrant alcoholic was not a new problem, and for the previous two hundred years people had asked: What can be done to help them? Why not lock them up? Why don't they get jobs? Tim Cook had worked for many years with homeless men and in this book, originally published in 1975, he describes the problems of vagrant alcoholics and the way in which one voluntary organization, the Alcoholics Recovery Project, based in South London, responded to these problems. The response had in essence been one of experimentation beginning with the first hostel in 1966, the development of non-residential shop fronts in 1970, and the employment of a team of recovered alcoholics in 1974. The Project sought to break down the mistrust surrounding the problem on all sides and to rediscover the potential of the so-called 'hopeless' skid row alcoholic. Tim Cook places the Project's work in the wider context of social work and social responsibility, and shows that its methods had relevance for other agencies. He also examines the persistent failure of successive governments to take any positive action to tackle the problems of vagrant alcoholics. Throughout the book the views of the alcoholics themselves are integrated with the attitudes and experiences of the Project workers. The author offers an assessment of the Project's work, and an outline of its limitations, stressing that no easy answer exists to this problem. But, he believed, the Project had made valuable progress towards a greater understanding of the vagrant alcoholic and his milieu.

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