

Mighty Quinn in warning to students over drinking

by Iain Lundy

IN the 1980s Michael Quinn was one of the top chefs in the world and boasted appearances on the Parkinson and Wogan TV shows.

As head chef at the Ritz in London he prepared meals for the Queen and other world heads of state and was awarded the MBE.

But within a few years the man known as "The Mighty Quinn" was a homeless drunk, sleeping rough under bridges and in Salvation Army hostels.

Now recovered, he tours the world warning of the "secret dangers" of drink among the hospitality industry.

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Michael Quinn went from head chef at the Ritz to a homeless drunk in just a few years

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This week Michael, 62, was taking the message to catering students at Motherwell College at what he said was a particularly dangerous time of year.

He said: "People who work behind the bar are just as vulnerable to becoming alcoholics as the people they are serving. In the hospitality industry you are surrounded by the stuff."

He said some people in the industry turn to drugs like cannabis or cocaine but the vast majority who develop problems become addicted on a combination of alcohol and nicotine.

He added: "Chefs often get a couple of cases of wine delivered to the kitchen and there is always a supply of drink

there. I was one of the lucky ones because I got myself to Alcoholics Anonymous."

Eight years ago Michael, originally from Leeds, set up the Ark Foundation to help people in the hospitality industry avoid the pitfalls of drink.

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