



# Welcome to the 100<sup>th</sup> issue of Simon Star



Welcome to the 100th edition of Simon Star; The Simon Community has been publishing this newsletter for over 20 years now and some of you have even been reading it for that long!

The occasion of our 100th issue has given us cause for reflection on the early days of Simon so we took the opportunity to have a chat with people who have been involved with us for a long time and spoke with Simon patron MT Gibson-Watt and ex-resident George Watt, who lived with Simon in the '70s. You can read their interviews on pages 8 and 11. If you turn to page 9 you can also read Andy Shields' piece on how volunteering with Simon led him to a role with St Mungo's charity. We also looked back over old issues of Simon Star and have included extracts from these and some photos from the past decades on pages 10 & 11.

But this issue isn't just about looking back; it is a very exciting time for the Community right now and we bring you news of present projects, new staff and volunteers, current issues affecting people who are street homeless, as well as our hopes and aims for the future.

All that remains is to say thank you very much to you, our readers, for caring about what happens to people who are experiencing homelessness and for your ongoing interest in our work. Your generous support over the years has helped us to remain inde-

pendent from government funding, thus ensuring that we can continue to deliver innovative and compassionate responses to homelessness.

I hope you enjoy reading our 100th issue and though we thought about celebrating with a colour version we knew you'd rather we used our precious resources buying more bread for the soup run!

## *A Word from The Chair*



This 100th edition of the Simon Star is an important milestone in the ongoing development of The Simon Community

As Chair of The Simon Community Management Committee, I can see Simon at work and be party to its longer term aspirations. The homeless

sector has gone through particularly traumatic times in recent years and a number of other prominent homeless charities in London which have failed to adapt have not survived. Indeed, Simon has had its share of difficulties in dealing with a world that has changed so much in the 40 years since it was founded.

We were nearly closed down a few years ago because we struggled to meet Government and insurance regulations. This justifiable external pressure for modern standards on key issues such as health and safety have meant that we have had to support the core work of our volunteers with professional, paid staff. This change has caused us much soul searching and indeed, still causes much internal debate.

Looking at Simon as a whole, however, the community concept is a powerful force enabling volunteers, staff, homeless and rootless people to live and work together. This core philosophy is why I am convinced that there will be a two hundredth edition of the

### The SIMON STAR is published by The Simon Community

*Living and working with London's street homeless*

#### Simon Star 100 - Autumn 2005

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*A Word  
from The Chair*



*continued...*

Simon Star. Simon will still be there offering its unique brand of hospitality and support. The trustees will do their part to ensure that Simon's values and unique character are maintained, the community operates efficiently and that it continues to speak with an independent and authoritative voice on behalf of the homeless and rootless.

And where do you, our supporters fit in to our future? Well, where you always have been as an integral part of Simon. Whilst the words may be a little dated the sentiments expressed by Anton Wallich-Clifford our founder, in the following extract from *Caring on Skid Row* written in 1976, sum up your importance so well:

"We must never forget in our struggle to establish a caring community and to promote person-to-person concern on skidrow we are a fourfold movement: the residents, the workers, the part-time helpers and the subscribers. We are all important and none of us can do without the others".

There are many exciting things happening in Simon. As many homeless charities are now financially dependent on Government money, our hard-earned financial independence enables us to campaign with an independent voice.

I hope we can continue to count on your support going forward.

**Martin Kelly**  
*Chair of Trustees*

*Westminster switches to  
building based services*



July 1st saw the introduction of Westminster Council's new "Building Based Services" (BBS) scheme. The new system has been billed as a natural and necessary progression from the "Rapid Intervention" outreach teams that have been working with rough-sleepers on the streets of Westminster since October 2003. In theory, BBS means that all rough-sleepers in the borough are "sign-posted" by either the Police or council staff, including "City Guardians", to one of four local day-centres, where they can receive round-the-clock assistance in finding accommodation. However, despite BBS being contracted to commence at the beginning of July, evidence of its existence is scarce, with many homeless people unsure about how they should obtain assistance in finding accommodation. Jeremy Gray, the co-ordinator of BBS explained, "The service has been up and running since the beginning of July, but the bombs of July 7th have meant less police have been available than intended [for signposting]", he added that services had been "working with Westminster to adapt to these circumstances" and that "we still have members of staff [from the day-centres] going onto the streets to advise people as best we can." He was keen to stress that this additional street cover was "not outreach", and all assessments of rough-sleepers were taking place at the day-centres as intended.

Street outreach teams have been decimated, with only Thames Reach

Bondway contracted to provide traditional outreach support to those on the street, through its "street rescue" service. This pan-Westminster service works with a list of about sixty of the borough's most entrenched rough-sleepers, mainly consisting of those unable or unwilling to attend day-centres to access services.

At this early stage it remains unclear as to whether the systems initial failings are due to the temporary shortfall in personnel or a more fundamental flaw with the system's design. The idea for BBS came from a recommendation in Vantagepoint's 2003 report, which itself was largely based on a US study of homelessness in Philadelphia where a similar building based system was employed, and numbers of rough-sleepers fell dramatically. There are a number of social and economic differences between the homeless situation in the UK and the States, and unfortunately, success across the Atlantic won't necessarily mean results here. A shift into line with US policy, which has notoriously followed a more hard-line authoritarian agenda in the past, is an indication that Westminster's approach to the homeless "problem" is moving to the right politically, and towards enforcement and away from care.

As other homeless services retreat inside, the role of The Simon Community's outreach teams has never been more important.

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## Westminster switches to building based services



*continued...* Traditionally, the four big homeless agencies have provided care and support throughout Westminster for hundreds of rough-sleepers. However, Westminster's move to BBS is a clear change of political tack, leaving a big gap in provision. The Simon Community hopes to try and fill some of the gap. We have been engaged in homeless outreach ever since we began, back in 1963, and will continue to meet people on the streets for as long as people remain there. We are currently in the process of reorganising our street outreach teams, and re-examining the work we do, so that we might more ably support and assist those living on the streets.

The word outreach suggests many things, and encompasses a number of different activities, all of which essentially involve exactly what the name implies: reaching out to those on the street; the poor; the hungry; the unloved; or simply those in need of a chat and a cup of tea. This outreach work can take the form of tea or soup "runs", where food and drinks are dispatched, along with a great deal of chat, from the back of a van at a number of different stops across London. Over recent years it has become a fashionable "truth" that tea and soup runs simply perpetuate street-homelessness, and that they encourage those that might otherwise be inside to remain rough sleeping. However, to unthinkingly repeat this idea is to profoundly miss the point of the work we do. Although we often carry sandwiches and coffee, offer tobacco, and - when necessary - maybe provide a blanket to those rough-sleeping, these

meetings are not about the mere distribution of things, the simple despatch of food. In visiting people, we are giving them something far more valuable than physical things: we are giving people our time. To simply stop for a while, to listen, to offer a sympathetic ear, to give someone a chance to tell his or her story: this is the essence of outreach. And thanks to your kind donations in the past we have recently been able to open Simon House, a new project for up to 11 residents in North London. This new Community house allows us offer some of the people we meet during our outreach work a home, and the space and time to stop, rest and reorganise, before setting off afresh with new impetus.

Opponents of tea and soup runs also claim that many of the people using this service are not actually homeless, but folk who leave their hostels to meet us on the tea-run, to eat our sandwiches and drink our tea. Now this is a problem if it means the real rough-sleepers, those really in need of some food and a chat are not catered for due to an oversubscribed service. However, provided that the needs of the most vulnerable are met, and the hungry are fed, who is to decide whether someone is worthy or not of our time?

The wider homeless community has been gradually dispersed over the last decade with the closure of all the big rough-sleeping sites in London, namely Shellmex near Embankment, and The Bullring in Waterloo. In the face of such disbandment, the loss of a

peer group, is it any wonder that with the prospect of a placement into a damp council flat, or a sterile hostel room that people still choose to meet or congregate on the street and talk? The final point in all this is obviously, "and so what if they do?" What is so particularly offensive about a group of homeless (and formerly homeless people, perhaps) gathering to talk and drink tea? If the answer to that question is that former homeless people feel drawn back onto the streets because of "handouts", we should ask ourselves why. What are they seeking in these meetings that society does not currently provide? And once we have established what it is that is missing, perhaps we might go about trying to fill that gap. With the advent of BBS and the resulting conversion of day-centres from places of social gatherings to outcome based projects designed to process applications for housing, homeless people have lost yet another part of their community.

In addition to our tea-runs, we intend - as far as is humanly possible - to have outreach teams walking the streets of London 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It will take a little organisation, but we have a small, committed group of residents and co-workers who help make this possible.

Simon's founder Anton Wallich-Clifford, as usual, sums up what I am trying to say so much better in his book "Caring on Skidrow". He writes, "So often in the past useful opportunities for working with the most rejected and rejecting have been lost because we..." *continued over...*

*Westminster switches to building based services* ★

*continued...* the social and welfare workers generally are still too conditioned into believing that we must cure and rehabilitate if we are to justify our existence. We are talking about human beings who have a problem now... Someone, somewhere, has got to accept responsibility without question and without motive."

I like to think that The Simon Community takes on this responsibility with each and every tea-run and street outreach shift. It is not an easy task, but we realise from our daily experiences on the streets of London and from the reactions we receive from those still sleeping out, that this work is essential and it must continue.

**By Steve Barnes**

For a first hand view of Building Based Services turn to Mike's account of homelessness on page 13.

*News... News... News...* ★

**Soup Boils Over Again**

Westminster County Council's Soup Run Summit on 12 September 2005 has reopened the debate about the value of soup runs in London. Westminster sees a need for more coordination of soup runs delivered by the many voluntary organisations and asserts that soup runs may in fact encourage people to stay on the streets.

Members of The Simon Community attended the Soup Run Summit and argued that soup runs are not just about supplying food - that in a way is coincidental. What matters is the opportunity that the sharing of food presents to establish an enduring, non threatening means of reaching out and contacting the street homeless on their home ground; the streets.

The Simon Community, through Unleash ([www.unleash.org.uk](http://www.unleash.org.uk)), is part

of a recently developed forum looking at how soup runs can be coordinated. The first meeting of the Soup Run Forum will take place on Wednesday 23 November, 7.00pm at The American Church, 79a Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4TD. UNLEASH is encouraging all Soup Run groups (large and small) to take part in the Forum. Please contact Alastair Murray at UNLEASH for more information. Telephone: 020 7723 8874 (Mon/Wed/Friday) 078 7581 0216 (mobile)

**Simon's Search for a winter shelter**

Simon Community is rightly proud of its tradition of running shelters that provide a short period of respite, rest and recuperation for the street homeless. We are running two houses currently but they are offering longer stays for people.

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**NOTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SIMON COMMUNITY**

**SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2005 • 2.00 PM**

**AT: QUEEN'S CRESCENT COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**45 ASHDOWN CRESCENT**

**KENTISH TOWN**

**LONDON NW5 4QE**

THE SIMON COMMUNITY INVITES YOU TO ST JOSEPH'S HOUSE,  
129 MALDEN ROAD, KENTISH TOWN AFTER THE MEETING  
FOR REFRESHMENTS AND/OR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

THE SIMON COMMUNITY, PO Box 1187, LONDON NW5 4HW  
OFFICE: 129 MALDEN ROAD, KENTISH TOWN, LONDON NW5 4HS  
TEL: 020 7485 6639 FAX: 020 7482 6305

REGISTERED CHARITY No: 283938  
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE No 16021161

THE  
*Simon*  
COMMUNITY

# News... News... News...



We would very much like to be able to run a small, short stay shelter in the coming months but without a suitable building we cannot even make a start. This is where you can help us; if you have a suitable building you could make available to us then you would be making a valuable contribution towards meeting the needs of London's homeless. An ideal building would be one that is already used as housing such as a hotel or a care home and is empty perhaps waiting refurbishment or change of use. Alternatively if we had access to a community hall, that also might make a good temporary shelter. We are contacting various housing associations to see if they have any empty buildings, but other suggestions are welcome. Please call the office on tel: 020 7485 6639 if you can help.



Celebrating 10 Years of Street Café

## New Volunteers

The Simon Community would like to welcome the following fulltime volunteers who recently joined Community: Steve, Jasper, Malte, Benjamin, Jenny, Paul, Britta, Sophie, Chris and Gillian.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Min who was with us for six months and

has now returned to Korea to resume studying. We thank him for all his hard work. We are also very grateful to Noreen who worked tirelessly as a fulltime volunteer based at Simon House until August. She is no longer a fulltime volunteer, however we are very happy to report that Noreen has decided to continue as a co-worker.

## Call for Co-Workers

Do you live in London? Fancy volunteering with The Simon Community? We need more Co-Workers (part-time volunteers) to help out with activities such as driving the mini-bus on the soup runs/early morning tea runs, streetwork, joining the visits team to provide support for ex-homeless people in their own homes and making soup and sandwiches. We are also particularly in need of people to help cover the 24 hour rota of shifts at Simon House. Appropriate training for all roles is provided. There is no minimum time commitment, we are just looking for people who can provide regular help, even if it is only once a month.

If you would like to know more and for details of shifts please call the office on 020 7485 6639. We can send you an application form or you can download one from our website - [www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk)

## Celebrating 10 years of Street Café

On 27 June Simon celebrated 10 years of hosting Street Café at the church of St Mary Le Strand in central London. Over 80 people including homeless, ex-homeless, Simon Community workers and trustees enjoyed a buffet dinner in the church courtyard, and

Pam Matthews of North London made and generously donated a wonderful celebration cake.

Street Café takes place for several hours every Monday evening and Wednesday morning and forms part of Simon's regular outreach work. We provide tea, coffee, biscuits and newspapers. Many of the people who come are regulars and it is an opportunity to socialise in a welcoming and familiar setting. Outreach work is also about getting to know people who may be newly homeless and need our help and Street Café provides the ideal opportunity to get to know people and gain their trust.

We are very grateful to the church of St Mary Le Strand for giving Simon such an ideal location to host Street Café over the years and for its continued generous support of our work.

## Fundraising News

### Dion Committee awards grant for fourth year running

For the fourth year running the Dion Committee has awarded The Simon Community a grant as salary support for the post of fundraiser so that Simon can continue to raise funds from other sources. The Dion Committee (from the Irish word for 'shelter') is an advisory committee to the Government of Ireland on the Irish community in Britain. It was set up in 1984 in response to concerns about the situation of Irish emigrants in Britain. Its mission is to promote the continued contribution of Irish people in Britain to British society and to support those voluntary agencies which facilitate access to welfare and statutory services for members

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# News... News... News...



*continued...* of the Irish community. Dion has awarded the grant to Simon in recognition of its services to Irish homeless people.

## Annual trip to County Mayo

The Simon Community's annual trip to County Mayo took place from 10 - 18 September. The trip is for homeless and formerly homeless Irish people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to visit Ireland. For some people it is a chance to keep in touch or regain contact with friends and family. Once again The Simon Community is very grateful to the Mayo branch of the Irish Emigrant Liaison Committee for helping to organise and fund the trip.

## Drop-in services at 129 set for a spruce-up

CRASH - the construction and property industry charity for the homeless - is helping Simon to refurbish its drop-in premises at 129 Malden Road, North London. CRASH brings professionals and companies from the construction and property industries together to help homelessness charities to improve their premises. Simon is receiving financial and practical assistance to re-do the kitchen in-line with health & safety requirements, fix the bathroom facilities, create a new training and meeting room and generally improve the decoration of the communal areas so that we can provide a more welcoming environment. Once the kitchen is approved by health & safety we can apply for food donations through the FareShare scheme. We also plan to extend our drop-in facilities to include more evening activities. Hopefully this project will be completed over the next couple of months and we will provide

an update in the next issue of Simon Star.

## Top quality linens donated by hotel

The Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, London has very kindly donated a great quantity of bed linen and towels for use in our residential projects. The quality of the items exceeds anything we would ever be able to buy for ourselves and we are very grateful to the hotel for being proactive and finding a use for these items which they were unable to use themselves.

## Back on the road

The Simon Community is very grateful to Mr & Mrs Mark Thomas, from Surrey, who recently donated a V.W. Passat car to replace the Community's old car which was damaged in an accident. We had been without a car for several months and this was hampering our ability to carry out some of our outreach work. This generous donation has saved us a significant amount of money and we are very lucky to have received a car in such wonderful condition.

## Wish List

The Simon Community is very reliant on the donation of goods such as those given to us by the Great Eastern Hotel and it is an excellent way for companies and individuals to avoid wastage. Good quality donations of the following sort of items are always welcome:

- Furniture (household & office)
- Computers (Pentium II or above)
- Vehicles
- Food
- Toiletries

We would also like to remind you that

your unwanted mobile phones can be turned into cash donations for The Simon Community. We have partnered with mobile phone recycling company, Greener Solutions, to help raise money for Simon. All you have to do is send your old mobile phone (don't forget to remove the SIM card) to the FREEPOST address below. Please include a note saying you are donating your phone on behalf of The Simon Community.

**Greener Solutions**  
**FREEPOST**  
**LON17592**  
**Mitcham**  
**CR4 3UZ**

We receive £3 for every phone donated! So please tell friends and family or collect old mobile phones at your work place on our behalf. There is no end date to the scheme so please keep a note of the FREEPOST address for future reference.

## Congratulations

### Roger & Judith White!

In July The Simon Community received a lovely letter from long-standing Simon supporter Roger White to say that he had recently got married and instead of accepting wedding presents, he and his wife Judith had asked guests to make a donation toward either of their chosen charities. This generous gesture raised £150 on Simon's behalf and the money will go toward Simon House. The Simon Community is very grateful to Roger and Judith and wishes them all the best for the future. Our thank you is also extended to their friends for their donations.

# Q & A with M.T. Gibson-Watt



SS: You have been involved with The Simon Community since 1967, most recently as a patron, so you must have seen a lot of changes and yet much of our work remains firmly rooted in the founding principles. In your opinion what are the most important principles behind Simon's work?

MT: *The Simon Community aims to work with those people who are most damaged, which means working with people who may never have known love. Therefore one of the most important principles informing our work is acceptance of people as they are - acceptance of the fact that people may not be easy to work with. This is the bedrock of all that we do.*

*It is also the reason why we don't have more than three basic rules: no drink, no drugs, no violence. To be accepting we need to be flexible, blanket rules won't work. We have to provide an environment in which people can learn how to live with other people in a way they may never have known before. Our use of the word "acceptance" is active not passive and by that I mean we try to bring compassionate intelligence to our work. It is akin to the Buddhist concept of mindfulness.*

SS: What does your role as patron involve and what keeps you motivated about working with The Simon Community?

MT: *I see that my role as Patron is to be available to the Community as a source of information doing everything possible to alleviate the problems of long term homelessness and loneliness and to help with the overview. I still believe The Simon Community offers one of the best approaches to combating these problems.*

SS: You recently took part in our review of what community means to

Simon and how it informs our work with people who are homeless. What does community mean to you?

MT: *The idea of Community is that we try to work to create an environment in which people can experience, perhaps for the first time, the structured caring day to day life that happens in loving families. Partly we do this by bringing young people without preconceptions to live and work with our residents. Living as a community group helps people to begin to understand relationships. As in a loving family environment, the same daily interactions create a therapeutic process which is repeated over and over again and helps people to learn new ways of interacting and being with others.*

*If it is going to be The Simon Community, it has to work that way, otherwise it would become a different organisation entirely.*

SS: Why is independence so important to Simon?

MT: *There are two reasons: Firstly Simon has always tried to be innovative, to bring a fresh approach to the changing faces of homelessness; and secondly Simon has always tried to be a voice for the silent homeless. Their homelessness is often caused by an inability to speak for themselves. Our community of homeless people, volunteers and other people of good will can make sure that those voices are heard at every level of society. To do that, we need to be independent of financial and political control. The unseen parts of the Community are all friends who share our vision and all those who have supported Simon financially over the years. They have been absolutely crucial in helping us to retain this incredibly precious status.*

SS: Will there ever be an end to homelessness and rootlessness?

MT: *A quote from John 12:8 comes to mind: 'The poor you always have with you... but you do not always have me'. I don't see how there will be an end to homelessness and rootlessness in an imperfect world which is ever more concerned with consumerism and control. We cannot change human nature and there will always be people who are lonely, isolated, fundamentally hurt. There will always be people who don't fit in, who find it difficult to deal with bureaucracy, other people and complexity. For these people the hoops which society asks us to jump through are too high. I ask myself "is Simon the answer for these people?" I think it can be, but people with these problems will always be with us.*

SS: What are your hopes for The Simon Community's future?

MT: *Whatever Simon sets out to achieve it must be done from a solid grounding in the philosophy which underpins the Community's methods. As volunteers, staff and residents come and go everyone will require training in Simon's philosophy and methods. In the near future some of Simon's methods require revisiting. In the longer term I hope that Simon will be in a position to expand its residential projects and take in more people. We also need to use all the experience we have gained as an organisation over the last forty years to look for new and better solutions as different homeless problems arise. We need to look into the problems and actively engage in research to understand why people become homeless and continue to help them to learn how to love and be loved..*

# A Blast From The Past



*When I was a child one of my earliest memories is that of seeing a homeless person in the street and being shocked that someone should not have a warm dry home and people that cared for them. This memory stuck with me and shaped my future life to a much more significant extent than I would ever have realised.*

*When I was 18 I was lucky enough to get a place at University College London and it was whilst I was at college I came into contact with The Simon Community. I became a Co-worker and would spend*

*around 1 night a week at the community's night shelter (which was 50 St. Pancras Way back in the mid 80's) doing a waking night. I got a great deal from this work as it meant that I could do something practical which clearly met a homeless persons immediate need. More importantly however, I got to meet individuals and hear their stories and understand their difficulties, this offered me quite an education and has stood me in good stead since.*

*As a result of my Co-working I decided that I would rather like to be a full time*

*worker at The Simon Community and I spent the summer of 1985 doing just that. I became the house leader at 2 Hurdwick Place and spent 6 days a week living with around 10 Community Members. It was a steep learning curve for me making the change from a Co-Worker to worker but one of the beauties of The Simon Community is that it is a community and every member of that community had responsibilities that they were expected to take. This meant that if I did not know something someone else would and could help me find out how to do whatever it was. I have always been taken by how well the community works albeit in its own unusual way.*

## News... News... News...



### **Simon is charity of choice for local business woman**

The Simon Community is partnering with Croydon business woman Charlotte Braden to raise funds for Simon House. Charlotte is a distributor of Forever Living products which includes a range of Aloe Vera skin care and juices, and also a range of vitamins. Charlotte contacted The Simon Community with the idea of raising funds through a donation of a proportion of the profit generated by the products she sells. Charlotte will be selling small sample packs of Aloe Vera products for £1 each and is donating 50p to The Simon Community for every pack sold.

If you are interested in the Aloe Vera products, vitamins, or purchasing a sample pack, and helping Simon to raise money at the same time, Charlotte can be contacted on tel: 0800 093 5418, or email: charlotte-braden@hotmail.com

Don't forget to mention you heard about the products through The Simon Community so that you can help to raise funds on our behalf.

### **Making a difference to the lives of homeless people in the future**

It is not an exaggeration to say that without the generosity of people who have remembered Simon's work by leaving a legacy in their will, we would not be here to continue our work today. Legacies are therefore hugely important to us in maintaining and developing our work and continue to make a difference to the lives of homeless people for years to come.

Legacies have helped us to house hundreds of people, bring food to those on the streets, support individuals as they take steps toward independent living and provide many other small, but important services along the way.

If you have already decided to leave a legacy to The Simon Community we thank you for supporting our work in this most special and personal way. If you would like to know more about leaving a legacy to Simon please contact us on tel: 020 7485 6639 or write to us at The Simon Community, PO Box 1187, London, NW5 4HW.

*I had a wonderful summer, I worked hard and gave a lot but I gained a lot too; experience, knowledge, friendship and a sense of personal worth. All good things though come to an end and I had to leave to return to complete my studies. I kept in touch with The Simon Community for a year or two but then I drifted away because of work commitments.*

*A few years later, in 1990, I decided that I should try and get a job working for a homeless organisation so I joined St. Mungo's (a large homelessness organisation) as a Hostel Worker and they employed me primarily because of the experience I had gained at The Simon Community. 15 years later I still work for St. Mungo's, I have been a hostel worker, a street outreach worker, I have managed around half a dozen large hostels and I am now St. Mungo's Director of Work and Learning managing a large programme of employment and training projects for homeless people. Many of the values and approaches that I hold and follow today I can trace back to The Simon Community who helped me find my vocation.*

**Andy Shields**  
August 2005

# The Mission To The Misfit



*Dear Readers,*

The 100th issue of Simon Star has put us in a reflective mood so we have been re-reading earlier editions of the first incarnation of the Star from the '60s, the decade in which we were founded. For those of you who have known The Simon Community for a long time and for those of you who have recently become supporters, volunteers or readers of this newsletter we thought we would share some of these extracts with you: they serve to remind us where we came from and of the people we are here to care for.

**An extract from Anton Wallich-Clifford's column On the Road, Simon Star September 1965, written when The Simon Community was only two years old. Anton responds to critics and asks for understanding and support for this new organization which is making advances in a field "hitherto so neglected and unrecognized"...**

We are a Community of misfits - how often must we repeat this before it is recognized - yet let one member leave, break down or relapse, one house undergo an uneven period, one administrative mistake be made and the critics round and snarl and demand of us standards efficiency and organization hard to maintain even in square, committee ridden salaried hostels. We are making the grade in our way but we need time, tolerance and understanding - we must be seen for what we are and not confused with the usual set-ups: in this alone rests our claim to be making a break-through and on this alone rests our claim to call for support - a support charitably, freely given, to enable our Community experiment in care to get off the ground.

**The April 1967 issue of Simon Star featured a column calling for more volunteer workers. The Simon Community has always been impressed by the dedication and commitment shown by our volunteers and we are very grateful that many people continue to show an interest in joining Community; it is quite inspiring when you think what volunteers must endure, as this extract from '67 shows. Would you sign up?...**

Be a fool

Who would work for £1 a week (with a small allowance of roll-up tobacco thrown in), endure long hours, get little sleep and no thanks? All Worker-Simons do. If you are 18 or over, of good health, have a firm sense of purpose, the non-conformity of a beatnik and the discipline of a commando, adaptability, patience, humour, energy and boundless enthusiasm; if you can type, drive, nurse, paint, write, speak or account; if you are a social worker, a doctor, a teacher, or a minister, you are very welcome to join in the work of Simon. If none of these

things - still try!

**And in the June issue from 1967 a student from Canada shared her experiences of volunteering with The Simon Community for three weeks at St Joseph's House of Hospitality...** Last summer I made a new friend. We met often for long talks and I found we felt in common, the failures of communication with parents, anxieties about the wild tricks of our brothers, and questions about our own future lives.

She had been a patient in various institutions for eleven years; I was a university student and volunteer visitor. Her mother had little money and thirteen children; I came from a small comfortable middle class family.

At the time it amazed me that someone from such a different background could share some of the problems and needs I had. Implicit in my upbringing had been the attitude that if a person was less "successful" than I it was largely their own fault; that these...

*continued over...*



*The Mission  
to The Misfit*



*Q & A with George Watt*



*continued...* people are to be looked down on, not spoken to in the street; that they had a smaller value as human beings than I had.

But after meeting her I saw it was only by chance that I had been born with intelligence and money and a home.

This girl awoke a new concern in me. I knew that the large mental hospital wasn't doing her much good; she didn't seem more "sick" or unstable than I was. The problem was that there was simply nowhere else for her to go.

Simon's St. Joseph's house, where I worked for two and a half weeks at Easter, is the beginning of an answer for someone who has nowhere to go.

People not able to participate in society outside the community are encouraged to take an active part within it, in whatever way they can best contribute.

This may be driving the community van or painting the walls or just by helping wash up. Conflicts and complaints are aired at a house meeting held twice a week after a meal.

Tolerance towards other people's annoying habits is needed in large amounts. The distinction between caring and cared for is not emphasized; we love and communicate and learn from both.

**If you have any memories of The Simon Community to share please write to us at: The Simon Community, PO Box 1187, London, NW5 4HW, or email: [info@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:info@simoncommunity.org.uk)**

For this 100th anniversary issue of Simon Star we spoke to former Simon Community resident George Watt. George remains actively involved with Simon through our visits scheme and is also a committed donor.

SS: When and how did you first come across The Simon Community? Tell us a little bit about the early years: what stuck in your memory?

GW: *I have known The Simon Community from the word go. I first met Anton Wallich-Clifford, Simon's founder, at Bow Magistrates Court where I had been given a conditional discharge for some minor misdemeanour. At that time The Simon Community was not in existence, but I stayed in and out of touch with Anton and the next time we met up the Community was running the house at 129 Malden Road. I stayed there on and off throughout the late 60s and early 70s.*

*I did a lot of cooking during my time at The Simon Community. Every resident had to do a stint of cooking at some point. A qualified chef, who had also been street homeless, was staying at 129 while I was there and he taught me how to cook, he was my kitchen porter! I remember that Anton offered me a job cooking for a house in Ramsgate, which was a Simon Community project for homeless families. We had a young reporter from The Evening Standard come to do a story on us and she asked for a bowl of the soup I was cooking. She liked it so much she came back for a second bowl and asked me for the recipe, but I wasn't much in a mood for talking and I refused. She told Anton that I wasn't being very helpful and would he give her the recipe, but he just said "you don't want to know what goes into that soup!" You see we used to go round the markets after they had packed up and look*

*for any stray vegetables left lying around, and that's how we made soup. I only lasted a few months at the house in Ramsgate as at that point I still wasn't ready to settle.*

SS: In your opinion do people become homeless today for the same reasons as they did when you experienced homelessness?

GW: *The homeless will always be with us because there are many different reasons behind homelessness and these don't go away. It is not easy to understand but some people even choose to remain homeless because they like their independence from what they see as the system. It is Simon's job to show people that they can have their independence yet also enjoy a better quality of life by moving away from homelessness.*

*What concerns me most is that social stereotypes of homeless people continue to exist. Yes, there are drug addicts and alcoholics, but there are also people who are homeless because of family breakdowns, divorce, bereavement, or because they have been institutionalised through the armed forces or spent time in prison, both of which make it difficult to survive in the 'normal' world outside. We need to get rid of the myth that homeless people are just a bunch of wasters who won't help themselves. I would like to see Simon do more campaigning on this.*

SS: George, it is more than 25 years since you were a resident with The Simon Community, but you are still actively involved with Simon - what has kept you connected to Simon all these years?

GW: *In a way it is gratitude for the help, love and...* *continued over...*

## Q & A with George Watt

*continued... tolerance I was given in the early days: I don't want to sound trite but Simon did help me a lot. I run hot and cold about paid workers and in a way I'm a bit like an old dinosaur because I don't like change, but I suppose I'm getting used to the idea and I realise with all the bureaucracy - health and safety, charity commission rules, housing benefit etc - that it is essential to have continuity in the way Simon works and that's what paid workers provide. Also, twenty people sleeping in the living room is not conducive to modern living!*

*These days I enjoy talking to new volunteers about the founding principles of The Simon Community and I was also on the Management Committee for a while*

**SS:** When you were re-housed how important was it to continue to receive support from The Simon Community?

*GW: Simon lets people develop at their own pace. There is no pressure to progress to independent living before people are ready. For me, it was important that the doors of Simon were always open and when I moved into my own flat I was told that I could come back anytime if it didn't work out. That was like a safety net that gave me the courage to at least try. So I moved into my flat but I still spent a lot of time with Community. However, I also made new friends and found new interests outside of The Simon Community and this helped me to grow and develop as a person. I needed support from Simon but I also needed to find my own way. It is important to have a balance of both.*

**SS:** What makes Simon different from the other organisations?

*GW: I think one of the main things is the fact that volunteers live side-by-side with*

*residents. It is a bit different from my day with Simon though; the conditions are more civilised now with washing machines!*

*Also, what I like about Simon is its independence from government. This means Simon is able to try different ways of working and is freer to experiment and find the best way of doing things. Like any family though Simon needs guidelines and standards for living together. We need to know that we are all working towards the same aims and that includes everyone from paid staff to volunteers and residents.*

**SS:** What are your hopes for The Simon Community's future?

*GW: Although there have been a lot of changes I have to accept these, but I don't want to see Simon just becoming another provider of hostel accommodation, the house concept is very important: when I moved into my own flat it took me a year to realise this was a home and live in it like one. I had been in and out of various institutions and I lived like I was still in one. For example, I would go to bed at 10.00pm even if there was a good movie and get up early because that was what I was used to. I would like to see Simon increase the number of its houses, so that we can help more people off the streets.*

*Lastly, I realise we have to evolve into the 21st Century and be able to cope with bureaucracy and even though we have had to move on from some of the original concepts the founding principles behind Simon remain the same.*

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THE  
*Simon*  
COMMUNITY

# A Personal Story of Homelessness



## MIKE'S STORY

June 15 2001 - At 11.00 am I was putting the finishing touches to a bedsit that I had occupied for the last six years. Finishing touches means last minute cleaning of the premises: I was no longer in a position to pay the rent. I wasn't in arrears, and neither was I prepared to allow the situation I was in to get any worse. It was time to go. I had already exhausted all the possibilities that might have given me hope - to no avail.

"Sign on the sick" I was advised by a worker at the job centre, but I was not prepared to become a liar to defraud the benefits system. My tenancy agreement required me to give four weeks notice of cancellation of tenancy. I wrote a letter of explanation to my landlord and suggested that a deposit that was being held by him since I took up residence should be used in lieu of notice.

1.00 pm - I was now homeless. The keys to the bedsit were posted along with the letter I had written to the landlord (albeit his agent). With a small holdall of clothing I made my way to Bristol coach station to get a coach to London Victoria. The fare was £12, I was left with approximately £20. I arrived at London Victoria early in the evening, about 7pm. I had no idea what to expect, this was a whole new experience to me. The life I had left behind me in a small Somerset town included a twenty-two year marriage that had ended in divorce, the break up and eventual selling of our semi-detached house for the divorce settlement, and a head full of mixed memories, some sour, some other.

I had seen homeless people before. I was no stranger to London. I had

been many times for many reasons, but now I was to become one of this group of people that until recently I never gave any thought to. Where was I going to eat? Where was I going to sleep? I walked for a couple of hours aimlessly. Eventually I found myself in Trafalgar Square - my first homeless contact, "alright mate?" - a greeting from some passing guy who sat on the bench beside me. We talked for a while, he too was homeless. He explained that I could sleep on a bench on the Embankment in front of the Ministry of Defence, which I did. No sleeping bag, no blanket, just what I wore. There were (since gone) about twenty five benches in a line all occupied by homeless people. This was to be my sleeping quarters for the next eighteen months.

It was in those very early days by the Ministry of Defence that I began to acquire the information that was essential to my wellbeing: where to eat and shower etc. It was also during this period that I came into contact with The Simon Community. An evening soup run to an area by the Ministry of Defence twice a week introduced me to some very genuine people: tea, coffee, soup, sandwiches - and very importantly then - "a blanket, is one enough? Are you sure...? Have another one if you want!" Although it was June and the days were sunny and warm the nights were quite cold.

That was over four years ago and I am still homeless and still living on London streets. Why? The reasons are very complex, but answers offered by the various organisations to my situation are not suitable in my case. I do not drink alcohol, or 'do drugs', I

do not beg or steal, and I do not claim welfare benefits. I refuse hostel accommodation - the reality of hostel life is 'dumbed down', all sorts of individuals with all sorts of personal problems including alcohol/drug dependency, or mental health problems cramped together under on e roof. Spare me from this 'sub-human' existence. I refer of course to Local Authority sponsored hostels and I do not include The Simon Community Project in this statement.

What's the difference between Local Authority services and the Simon Community service? Anything that is run by the Local Authority, albeit through an agency, is propelled by cold blooded political ideology. The Simon Community are driven by something totally different: compassion, a genuine concern in all they do and provide.

This cannot be faked. This, in my opinion, puts Simon right into the centre of the London street homeless situation, reaching the parts of the homeless population that state sponsored organisations cannot penetrate. Simon is non-political, non-judgemental, and treat all of the street homeless people with courtesy and respect. Even though at times the workers on the soup run are subject to verbal abuse themselves, from the very people they are helping. Fortunately these incidents are rare.

The Simon Community are, in my opinion, a very special mixture of individuals who, for some reason that I can't really understand, generate an air of enthusiasm in everything they do. This is unique to Simon and is not found in state sponsored...

*continued over...*

# Projects Update



## SIMON HOUSE UPDATE

In less than a few months time - on the 14th October to be precise - The Simon Community will have been the

owners of SIMON HOUSE (SH), London NW10 for one year. A great deal has happened in that time, not all of which I am in a position to

elaborate on first-hand as I was only appointed project manager as of the 13th June this year. Starting as I did on that date meant that I was able to meet and hear from the volunteer workers who were approaching the end of their time working with the community at the end of June. Since their departure we have had five new workers move into SH. We are expecting the arrival of a further two workers Mid-September, although we are also sad to lose Noreen on the 24th August and possibly Zoltan soon after that; both of whom have been workers with Simon for around a year. The silver lining to these losses is that Noreen is keen to attain "co-worker" status, something we as a house wholeheartedly support, and will continue to associate with our house, covering a regular week day shift as well other involvement in the life of the wider community. Given the above adjustments we are anticipating come our one year "birthday" to have a worker team resident at SH made up of three females and six males.

## A Personal Story...



*continued...* organisations or Building Based Services (BBS) as we know them. The BBS system - whether it is a hostel or day centre - if sponsored by Local Authority or Central Government (often a mixture of both) is a different atmosphere entirely. These are contracted out services and manned by paid staff (or jobs worth as I prefer to call them). These staff members must be politically correct in everything they do or say. Being paid for by tax payers money means they must pursue the political objectives of the bureaucrats who pay their wages.

The BBS system as far as I can identify them are the 'dustbins' of society where homeless people are stored awaiting processing. Violence, drugs and alcohol abuse is common place. This must be witnessed to be believed.

There is a homeless problem in London - more so in central London. No one who visits the central area could deny it, but to suggest that soup runs encourage people to remain homeless, or street sleepers is ridiculous. That sort of comment can only come from someone who has no real insight to the street situation. The BBS plan is an attempt to blackmail street people into a political idealism. Remember how they tried to eradicate pigeons in Trafalgar Square?

Let the politicians get on with the politics of homelessness by all means, but

let us leave room for some compassion in the system. Compassion that The Simon Community provides so naturally. Their objectives are similar - to get people off the streets and into homes of their own - but unlike the political approach Simon does not attempt to bully its message or 'wave the big stick' mentality that the authorities are perceived to be doing.

Also worthy of notice is that many street homeless people are in their fifties and sixties and ageism is a factor to these people, myself included. No one is going to employ me on a worthwhile wage. That is supposing that I got to an interview situation in the first place. Low income, poor accommodation equals poverty and squalor. Not for me thanks. The downside is that I do not claim welfare benefits. I prefer to remain honest and not another burden to the tax payer. When, in the not too distant future I reach retirement age my options will be more favourable and open for consideration. I have always been a 'slogger' and never a sponger. Is that a crime?

In the meantime, a very big thank you to The Simon Community - may God bless you all in what you do for the street homeless scene - and of course the same message applies to all the generous people out there who make it possible.

**Mike.**

Since we last updated STAR readers about SH a great deal of hard work and effort has gone into getting the house off the ground and our first batch of residents moved in. Something we had anticipated might have happened by the time the Winter Edition of the STAR had hit your letterbox. Alas the task was slightly harder to accomplish than first anticipated! However, thanks to the effort of the worker team, the wider community, my predecessors Mariesia and in particular Basil - a veteran with long experience of homelessness and the care sector who succumbed to the persuasive powers of...

*continued over...*

# Projects Update



*continued...* Ian Lock and made a comeback from the comforts of retirement (spanish lessons, pottery classes and chasing grandchildren) - we have inherited in SH a project where much of the basic systems of running the house, supporting the residents and maintaining the property are already in place. To everyone who has contributed by giving time, resources, skills, help, food and finance - a very BIG THANK YOU!

We accepted our first permanent resident into SH just before the end of April 2005. The landmark event occurred almost exactly ten weeks after we first offered emergency accommodation to someone who was in danger of rough sleeping in the freezing temperatures of Mid-February. Since then twenty-four people have been booked in the house: six of that twenty-four have stayed in our Emergency Bed for three nights or less. The other eighteen, nine of whom are currently resident, all came with the intention of staying for the maximum eight weeks. Of the fifteen who were accommodated at SH we know that five have successfully secured other accommodation, one has resumed rough sleeping, one went to stay with a friend, another with family and of the other seven I have no definite information. Over the course of what remains in 2005 we expect to accommodate several scores of other people in the Emergency Bed and around another fifteen - twenty for up to eight weeks. This latter figure will vary depending on a variety of factors two of which are: how successfully we are at moving people on from SH to other appropriate accommodation and how the family of SH, both residents and workers, in the context

of the wider Simon Community, behaves and patterns day-to-day life in a manner than catalyses, supports and facilitates personal change.

As a newcomer to Simon I have paid close attention to our in-house rhetoric about our being an example of a "Therapeutic Community". Indeed elsewhere in the sector I have encountered an expectation that Simon has been and is a guardian of this particular model of living and working with people "in community". What is apparent, from my own personal experience of community and of my time thus far with Simon, is that functional community is far easier to wax lyrical about than it is to nurture, grow and enjoy together. A friend recently recalled an experience he had whilst travelling in North America where his hosts, themselves involved in community, had made a commitment in their shared life together to ensure that they put the fun back into dysfunctional! It seems from my perspective that Simon has gone through a pretty tough few years. However, the last twelve months seem to have been marked by some significant turning points - not least the employment of paid staff like myself - which represents the creation of some fresh space for us to renegotiate together who we are as a community and how we are obligated to contribute, in the context of an ever changing sector, in ways that remain distinctively Simon and yet compassionately customised to the experience of people who are street homeless again tonight.

At SH we as a team intend to have some fun whilst developing a community house, that is distinctively Simon, in ways that are both historically

coherent and radically engaged in the here and now of our wider story. On a personal note I have thoroughly enjoyed my baptism into working as part of the Simon Community and I look forward to some really good living and working together in the months ahead. If you would like more information about SH, what we do or how you could be involved or you would like to arrange to visit please get in touch with me directly by phone or email.

Matt Scrimgeour  
Project Manager  
020 89657371  
m.scrimgeour@simoncommunity.org.uk

## MOVE-ON HOUSE UPDATE

In the previous issue of Simon Star we wrote about our urgent need for Move-on accommodation and our plans to re-open the house at Anton Street. Thanks to your generous support the house has been up and running as Move-on accommodation for 3 months now and we currently have three residents staying with us.

One resident was referred directly from Simon House and the other two residents had been sleeping rough because they were not able to find suitable emergency access accommodation.

Move-on accommodation is about helping people to prepare for living a more independent, settled life and so residents are encouraged to take part in the running of the house. At first there was some scepticism about the way the sharing of chores would work and understandably during the first week or so the priorities of the two residents... *continued over...*

# Projects Update



**MOVE-ON HOUSE UPDATE**  
*continued...* who had been sleeping rough were regular meals and catching up on sleep. It is important to remember that sharing accommodation in this manner is not always easy; often very different characters are thrown together and there are bound to be some conflicts while everyone learns to live as a community. However, one of my priorities as a volunteer living with the residents is to facilitate the house meetings and help them build a rapport and encourage communication for the smooth running of the house.

After discussing what needed to be done on a day-to-day basis we all agreed to draw up a chore sheet and since then things have been going well. The residents have proved just as important as the volunteers in helping to run the house; in particular I feel strongly aware that residents are working hard and they are also aware of the need to conserve resources and use them wisely.

Residents have also been helping to deliver The Simon Community's other services, such as volunteering for the early morning tea runs and helping out with the visits service for our elderly ex-homeless community members, by offering to do their shopping and cleaning.

Feedback from the house meetings is very important. They provide a chance for problems to be aired and it helps us to work towards living and thinking as a community and not just meeting individual needs. In the words of one of our residents, "It is important that everyone respects one another."

I would like to finish by saying thank

you to everyone who responded to the Move-on House appeal and leave you with a comment from another of the residents: "To me, Anton Street is a sanctuary. Refuge from the cold, the wet, the hunger of the street. A place where I don't have to lift a heavy back-

pack 24 hours a day. A place where there is always a friendly voice, a smiling face. Truly a refuge from a dark and unfriendly world. A place I feel safe. God Bless"

**Isabel Khng,**

*Full-time volunteer, Move-on House.*



Photo by David Wheatley

*Anton St.*

# There's More To Me Than Homelessness



This is a new column which I hope readers enjoy because I would like it to become a regular feature of Simon Star. It was inspired by Mike (you can read his story of homelessness on page 13), who reminded me that there is a need to always acknowledge the individual behind his or her homelessness; The Simon Community calls itself a homeless charity because we need a way of easily summing up what broad problem in society or which group of people we aim to provide care for. Yet this summing up has a tendency to lump everyone together and obscure the individual. The fact that a person is homeless actually tells us very little about them - - despite society's love of stereotypes, and I know that I would not want to be known simply as a 'homeless person.' This column is about getting to know the person behind their homelessness and hopefully to remind us that we all have things in common. So, you will see that the questions are about anything but homelessness!

As always, your comments on editorial are welcome. Please write to the PO Box address on the page 2 or email:  
s.cahill@simoncommunity.org.uk

## What makes you laugh?

*My humour is unorthodox - that is to say I don't mock laughter. A good (clean) joke sometimes makes me laugh, but more often a situation that presents itself in a humorous way and how individuals respond is often funny.*

## If you could live anywhere in the world where would it be?

*In London.*

## What characteristic(s) do you most admire in people?

*Sincerity, humour, intelligence, ability to be honest and truthful, genuine.*

## What characteristic(s) do you least like?

*Hypocrisy, pretence, dishonesty, boastfulness.*

## Do you have a favourite book or film?

*I don't read many books - I find in most cases my concentration drifts. The last book I read was 'Forgotten Voices', soldiers' accounts of World War I. The last film I saw was Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy - this made me laugh!*

## Where is your favourite place in London?

*Difficult one this, probably Regents Park. If I want to be alone and away from London noise and pollution this is my place. But there are many other places I visit regularly on my travels.*

## Who or what do you admire?

*I admire no one. As to what I admire I couldn't say, but I would know it if I saw it.*

## What makes you angry?

*I don't suffer mood swings and seldom feel anger; a difficult question for me to answer.*

## Describe your perfect day...

*Probably the most common answer to this would be 'pay day' but in my case that is*

*not so. I have no expectations thus I incur no disappointments, maybe I should be happy to leave it at that.*

## What is your favourite sport?

*I am not a great football fan, I don't follow club games but I do watch/listen to international games. And I'm looking forward to the World Cup Series. I also like cricket; more so the England v Australia one day matches.*

## And lastly, what music do you like to listen to?

*Most sorts from the classical through Jazz and into pop music. My favourites are probably Pet Shop Boys, Dire Straits, Bee Gees and many others.*

Answers by Mike  
Interview by S. Cahill

# Outreach Fundraising Appeal



Organisers of soup runs in central London are being challenged to question the value of this work by Westminster Council. Whilst The Simon Community is giving this matter careful consideration we have no plans to stop this aspect of our outreach work at present. The Simon Community's aim when it started soup runs 42 years ago was to have a means of regular contact with homeless people on the streets. That remains our aim today and our two evening soup runs, two early morning tea runs, plus a Street Café twice a week provide us with the opportunity to do just that.

On any given soup run we speak to anything from 40 to 100 people a night across London, the early morning tea runs meet between 50 and 100 people each morning, and Street Café usually caters for approximately 30 -50 people each week. The regularity of this outreach work helps us to build up a long term supportive dialogue with those we meet. Street homelessness is a complex and potentially lonely existence. The people on the street are all individuals and didn't set out in life to be homeless and the very complexity of the factors that lead to homelessness mean a one-size-fits-all approach, as favoured by Westminster Council, will neither command the attention of the homeless or be likely to succeed.

What Simon offers is a friendly word, support, advice, a genuine feeling that we care and recognition of a homeless person as an individual rather than a statistic. Contrary to Westminster Council's theory that soup runs are

creating 'incentives for homeless people to maintain a street-based lifestyle', The Simon Community's experience of this type of outreach work is that in many cases it can help to get people off the streets. Whether it is through a place in a Simon Community house or another provider, we are often able to sign-post street sleepers into accommodation through our outreach work. This was the experience of Anthony,

who is now a resident at Simon House:

"I had been staying in St. Martin's night Shelter and not knowing anything about soup runs, only what I read and heard about through television and radio. After about two weeks I heard about Simon's early morning tea run on a Sunday and on my first... *continued...*



Photo by David Wheatley

# Outreach Fundraising Appeal



Photo by David Wheatley

encounter I was surprised to be met by a bunch of openly friendly people, who gave you tea coffee, sandwiches and a fag. They also talked to you and listened; I was surprised and looked forward to their runs. Through the help I had from Brian at St. Martin's and my meeting Noreen from Simon's at the Street Café in the Strand I now live in Simon House and help to make the sandwiches that I was so grateful for". Anthony.

Anthony is one of many members of the The Simon Community who spend time every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon before the evening run to help prepare sandwiches to accompany the soup. The Simon Community is very grateful to

everyone who helps out.

If you agree that our outreach work is important and you would like to see it continue please consider making a donation toward the costs:

- Soup runs - it costs approximately £15 to provide a hot drink, a cup of soup and a sandwich to over 100 people
- Early morning tea runs - the tea run van goes to the spots where we know that people sleep rough so that we can provide them with a hot drink first thing in the morning. During the winter people who sleep rough are at risk from hypothermia and just £5 per month would go a long way toward providing them with hot drinks and extra blankets or clothing.

- Street Café - the open air café is set up in the courtyard of St Mary Le Strand and provides a welcoming, informal gathering: tea, coffee, newspapers and biscuits are provided. A regular donation of £12 per month would cover the costs of one street café session each month.

In addition, just keeping our mini-bus on the road costs over £6,000 per year and last month we had to replace the engine which cost an extra £6,500.

If you would like to make a donation please see the form on the back page of this newsletter.

**We are eternally grateful for your support.**

# Ways Of Giving

THE  
*Simon*  
COMMUNITY

**Please complete this form and return it with your donation to:  
The Simon Community, PO Box 1187, London NW5 4HW**

★ *Alternatively you can make a secure donation online via our website, why not visit us at:  
[www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk)*

*giftaid it*

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give we get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation to go further.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make a donation to The Simon Community of £

I enclose a cheque/ postal order made payable to The Simon Community

**Please treat this and all donations I've made since April 2000 and all donations I make in the future as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*In order for us to be able to reclaim the tax you have paid on your donations, you must have paid income or capital gains tax in the UK, equal to the tax that will be reclaimed (currently 28p for each £1 you give)

Please notify us if you change your name or address, or if your circumstances change and you no longer pay sufficient income tax and/or capital gains tax.

You may cancel this arrangement at any time simply by notifying the Simon Community.

Please tick if no acknowledgement is required

**I would like more information on:**

- Making regular donations through standing order
- Making regular donations through direct debit
- Including Simon in my will

I would prefer to receive Simon Star by email  My email address is \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

THE SIMON COMMUNITY IS A REGISTERED CHARITY, NUMBER 283938