

SimonStar



Living and working with London's street homeless

Welcome to our 2011 Christmas edition of the Simon Star! Last edition saw the launch of the new layout, and thanks to your comments and suggestions; we are improving the layout and design even more with a new star and new features.

As always, your comments are very welcome and please send them to info@simoncommunity.org.uk, phone, tweet or write to us.



A message from the Chair

Christmas is a time for families to come together, with all the joys and sorrows that can bring. For many of those outside it can be almost unbearable. A symbol of everything they have lost or never found. It is a time of great activity in the Community. We all want to make sure that no one is left alone and lonely at this most evocative time. Our residents and ex-resident volunteers are the hardest working as they still remember only too keenly what is was like to be out then. Wondering if their own families are celebrating together somewhere, thinking of them and not knowing if they are alive or dead. Even though we and many other individuals and organisations work hard over Christmas to provide extra care, what is much harder to provide is the long-term loving care and compassion that reaches the bleakest places in the hearts of those lost to themselves as well as to others.

This is what we try to do. It is not easy. It is deeply frustrating to know that we don't have enough space to take someone back with us at midnight at the end of a soup run. That we are sometimes so caught up in the endless cycle of looking after the very real material needs of hungry people who have nothing, that we don't always have enough time and space to sit down quietly and really listen. But we keep on trying

You will see from other articles in this edition that we are really pulling the stops out over the long holiday period and we do have a great time as we hope you all will too. Wishing you all a peaceful and happy Christmas.

MT Gibson-Watt, *Chair of the board of trustees*



Hats off to the homeless!

On Saturday December 10th, the Community is organising a charity walk to raise money for the new day centre. Members and supporters of the Community will be walking around Hampstead Heath in North London for an hour in style with an array of crazy hats to add a little holiday cheer and shed some pounds before the holiday feasts begin. To take part in the walk it simple. All you need is:

1. A Hat
2. A big smile
3. A donation of £20 to go towards the new day centre.

If you can't make it to Hampstead Heath, but would still like to be a part of the fundraiser you can sponsor a resident, volunteer or friend of the Community. If you have any hats you would like to donate for the enthusiastic walkers please do send them in.

For more details on how to get involved or sponsor a walker, please get in touch with Rosie in the office and help us walk in style for the homeless and raise money for our new day centre.

Trips Out



A full time volunteer at the Koestler exhibition

Since the last Simon Star, the Community has enjoyed a number of fun trips out for volunteers, guests and residents. So far we have had two successful trips to the Prince Charles cinema in Central London with four guests attending the last trip. Guests are invited who attend our hospitality service and they all really enjoyed the opportunity to go the cinema which is something many of us take for granted. Volunteers also enjoyed a day out to an art exhibition hosted by the Koestler Trust which featured art by offenders in prisons and mental health institutions. Trips such as these are made possible by your generous donations, so thank you very much.

Words from Ruth Cram, former trustee

"It was a privilege to have been a trustee, I met many inspirational people, and they remain in my heart and mind. It has been an encouragement to see the work that The Simon Community is doing, and to realise how this is built on the founding principles. Being a full time volunteer in 1969-70 was a formative experience which confirmed my values and faith, and has been a foundation for me ever since. I wish all involved with Simon all the very best."

Trekking for Simon

With my rucksack packed and after months of training to feel as fit as possible, I was rather nervous on the way to the Machu Picchu trek with the Charity Challenge team. After a 24 hour journey we landed in Cusco, Peru on October 15th. At 11,000 feet above sea level, it takes a day or two to acclimatise and altitude sickness can affect anyone, however fit you are.

We set off on our trek at 3am in the morning. Crossing the treacherous Lares Valley pass we found ourselves watching dawn rise on hair pin bends as our coach wound up the mountains. The views were out of this world. Then we set off for our four day camping trek, accompanied by Sherpas and 'emergency horses'.

Climbing to 14,800 feet, we all found ourselves out of breath as we battled with the lack of oxygen. A doctor accompanied us on the trip, giving the girl I shared a tent with an injection at one point to avoid a collapsed lung! Every night in the wilderness of Andes, we snuggled into sleeping bags as temperatures dropped down to minus 15 at night. By day we walked past Inca homes, untouched by 21st century living. Made from mud, without electricity or running water they were full of laughing families dressed in colourful traditional costumes, all looking bemused at our hiking boots and wet weather gear.

We finally reached the infamous Inca site on day seven. As a finale we climbed Wayana Picchu, the big mountain which stands behind most tourist snaps. Scrambling up the face, holding onto ropes and balancing on precarious steps we truly felt like explorers from another era. As the clouds parted beneath us to reveal Machhu Picchu, it felt like a scene from an Indiana Jones movie, albeit a little more emotional!

I arrived home, exhausted, jetlagged, aching but with a thousand memories and £1,300 in the bank for the Simon Community. One expedition I'll never forget and thank you very much for everyone who contributed.

Community Day

report



The Simon Community's 2011 Community Day was a great success! The day allowed us to have creative discussions, debates and exciting conversations about the past year and the future of the Community in the stimulating space of the new day centre. Having the day in the new day centre was a great opportunity for us to envisage how we want to use the space to enable us to expand out outreach and vital support services.

The day started with a welcome from Bob Baker, Director and Colin Robinson who kindly facilitated the day. Colin has a long history of working with homeless people and over 30 years experience in community issues as a front-line worker, manager and researcher. MT Gibson Watt, Chair of the board of trustees then reflected on the Community achievements of the last twelve months including the women's' group, trips out and that the reputation of the Community is increasingly growing.

We then broke out into discussion groups and discussed themes such as the uniqueness of the Community, how we can be effective campaigners and how the Community can respond to changes such as Government cuts to homeless services and increases in Eastern European guests. There were some great suggestions to steer the Community over the coming year, for example that our campaigns should be lead by the voices of the homeless people who use our services and that we

should use our experiences and knowledge of issues facing homeless people more. Interesting discussions were also had on our strengths and weaknesses including that we are all proud that we are flexible and welcoming but that we feel constrained by our lack of referral rights and properties.

We also discussed collaborations in that the group felt positive collaborations could be a great benefit to the Community as long as we do not compromise our values or lose our identity.

Following a tasty buffet made by one of our part time volunteers Stuart, we watched an old documentary from 1976 made for the BBC about the Community. It was very interesting to see how the Community has evolved since the seventies and how we have kept true to our founding principles.

The second half of the day saw groups discuss the future of the Community in terms of fundraising, campaigning, events and communications. Again, some great concrete suggestions were made including scripts for talks in churches and schools, a dedicated group to start organising for the Community's 50th Anniversary, fresh approaches to volunteer recruitment, external assistance for fundraising and reintroducing head counts as a part of a new action research strategy.

A big thank you to Dr. Martens

As you know, the Community heavily relies on donations and the kindness of others. We would like especially to thank Fiona Mitchell and the Dr. Marten team for their very generous donations of over 100 pairs of Dr. Marten shoes and boots. Dr. Martens are especially brilliant for our guests as they are very sturdy and waterproof shoes which are just what the (real) doctor ordered! So from all of us in the Community, thank you very much Fiona and Dr. Martens!



Andy, a resident, volunteer and ex trustee enjoys a tour with Fiona from Dr. Marten

Community News



Director Bob Baker outlines some of the exciting new developments in the community.

Development

We are very grateful to St Mungo's who have kindly agreed to give us the use of a great day centre in Islington. This allows us to move food storage, food preparation and hospitality sessions out of St Joe's which means that it can return to its use as a residential house. Existing services will continue and we have the opportunity to provide a wide range of new services. Keen volunteers are at work to clean, decorate and equip the place.

The Simon Community group for homeless women in Westminster is going from strength to strength. This is run by women volunteers who provide a very informal and safe social space for homeless women.

We are making progress on the shop and flat we are keen to buy on nearby Queen's Crescent.

We have had a survey done and are putting together a budget for fundraising for purchase and refurbishment.

have the Federation running as an independent charity by the end of the year. This is a very significant development which will bring benefits to all who join. Earlier in the year the Community in collaboration with Housing Justice organised a high level debate among homelessness agencies, government representatives and other stakeholders on the problem of homelessness – known as the Indaba.

We are planning another similar event for February, a year on, to look at solutions to homelessness.

We have set up a new Development Committee to work on fundraising which we hope will bring significant improvements to the Simon Community's fundraising activities. We are keen to make a big impact in 2013 – our 50th anniversary.

Campaigning

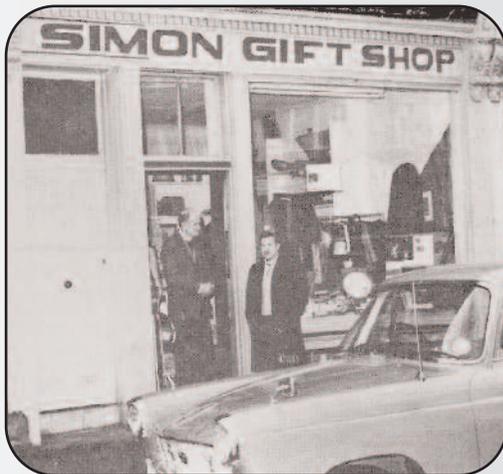
Campaigning has always been important and work continues on a variety of fronts. It is our responsibility to provide a voice for homeless people and this also raises the profile of the Community. The Simon Community has continued to play a significant role in the campaign against Westminster City Council's proposal to ban sleeping out and the free distribution of food in Victoria. These proposals have now been dropped thanks to the ~ campaigning and negotiating work of a small group which worked with the Council to find a positive way forward. We have been active in the Soup Run Forum convened by Housing Justice.

We have campaigned against the government's plans to criminalise squatting. Our influence has been wide in recent months and we have been busy improving communication including our website, the social media (Twitter and Facebook) and the traditional media, for example, having three letters published in the Guardian.

It is really gratifying to be able to report progress in these various areas of activity. A great deal of work goes into projects behind the scenes with seemingly little tangible change. Then often all of a sudden there is a breakthrough and all that work starts to pay off.

If you are interested in keeping in touch with developments and campaigns do check the relevant sections on the website.

Bob Baker, Director



Excerpt from an old Simon Star edition in 1967 of the Community's old shop

A prospectus outlining the advantages of the plan to bring together the many organisations in Britain which have developed from the Simon Community over the years has been published and we hope to

Christmas in the Community



The Simon Community at Christmas is a hive of activity where all of our volunteers and residents come together to work as one for our busiest time of year. Christmas is a time where people think about turkey, presents and family, but to many homeless people it is a very lonely and cold time. That is why we at the Community really value the quality time we spend with our guests over Christmas and increase our services. Over the holiday season we do our tea run service 15 days in a row, increase street work, have a slap up Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and we provide a winter shelter which you can read more about on page 9. This year, for the first time we will be singing our hearts out in Trafalgar Square to

raise money for the Community. Under a big festive tree in the heart of London, residents and volunteers have a one hour slot from 8pm until 9pm on Thursday the 22nd of December to sing all the classic Christmas carols. If you are interested in coming along, please contact the office for more details.



Simon Star drawing from 1966

We are very proud to open our doors during Christmas to the neediest and wish all of our supporters a very merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

Interviews



This month's interview is with Emma, the Community's latest addition to the board of trustees.

Q) Why were you drawn to the Simon Community and why do you think we are unique?

A) Simon really interested me for a number of reasons - its community spirit, the fact that everyone is accepted for who they are, the role that Simon has played in the evolution of homeless charities throughout the UK and the fact that everyone can be as involved in as many aspects of the community and its work as they'd like to be, including the trustees.

Q) When did you join as a trustee?

A) I was invited to join a trustee meeting on 19 January 2011 and then formally appointed at the AGM on 19th February 2011.

Q) What has been rewarding and challenging about the role

A) I think one of the most rewarding aspects of my role is feeling that we've made good progress on improving the systems and initiatives and information that we have to monitor the financial

position and levels of expenditure within Simon. I also really enjoy the times when I meet members of the community and have time to chat. I'd like to have time for more work within the community, I'd love to join the women's group and help with street work or one of the other services on a regular basis, I hope to manage this properly in the very near future!

Q) What does your role as Treasurer involve?

A) As Treasurer my main responsibility is to ensure that Simon's financial governance and reporting is robust and informative, allowing the trustees and the community to make informed decisions about Simon's financial position and the future. I work closely with Rosie on the day-to-day financial transactions and with Bob and the trustees on the use of our resources and evaluating any planned investments.

Q) What are your hopes for the future of the Simon Community?

A) I hope that the Community continues to have a positive impact on so many people's lives, increases its profile as a campaigning voice for the homeless and continues to evolve and grow in whatever direction the future takes us.

Campaigning News:



Protest & Survive

As well as being a supporter and Trustee of the Simon Community I work for the national Christian housing and homelessness campaigning charity Housing Justice. Our offices are on Finsbury Square. It was an interesting day when some new tenants at Finsbury Square, the second Occupy camp, set up when the St Paul's camp was still under threat of eviction from the Cathedral.

The Finsbury Square camp has been here a couple of weeks. And along with I imagine most friends of the Simon Community I am a supporter. I was at St Paul's on the first weekend, and on the Saturday evening when the demonstrators were being kettled on the Cathedral steps it seemed to me the Police were getting ready to wade in and arrest everyone. I could have kissed the Rev Giles Fraser when he told the Police to let them stay! For me this was a hugely significant moment. Like many Christians I know who are active and committed on homelessness and similar issues, the voice of the church is all too often divided or on the sidelines when it comes to taking a collective position. While the occupy agenda is, in some senses, still being worked out, they - along with Occupy Wall Street, "Los Indignados" in southern Europe, and others like UK Uncut - are drawing our attention to the growing injustices in the world, and the growing inequality between the comfortable and the marginalised. As George Monbiot wrote recently, The City of London is the world's most powerful and unaccountable local authority. And it is UK law which supports the international web of tax avoiding havens like Jersey and the Cayman Islands, and thwarts international attempts at corporate tax reform.

Why are people still homeless today? Why are the poorest bearing the hardest burden in cuts to local services and the welfare safety net? Why the rushed and controversial reforms to housing tenancies and benefits in the localism and welfare reform bills being forced through parliament with minimal debate? Why criminalise squatting, penalising people because they don't have a home? The Simon Community is in this, giving comfort and

practical support to people on the streets. And this is right and good. But we are also here to draw attention to the deep injustice of homelessness. We, with our homeless colleagues, have common ground with those in the occupy camps, and not just in the temporary nature of their housing. I for one am encouraged by what they are doing, and pleased to recognise this solidarity and join with their efforts to build a more just and inclusive society.

Alastair Murray, *Trustee*

Simon Says, get social!

Social networking is a new internet based way of communicating, and the Simon Community has joined millions of other on sites such as Facebook and Twitter to get information at the click of the button. The Simon Community's Facebook page allows people to get instant updates about the Community and issues relating to homelessness. We launched our new site last month and already have over 100 online fans. We can upload photos, create events and share information with other organisations such as Housing Justice and the Cyrenians very easily. Our Twitter account allows us to get quick messages out to hundreds of followers in the form of 'tweets'. For more information on how you can use social media to get regular updates on the Community and homeless related news, call the office or email: info@simoncommunity.org.uk, or tweet us @SimComLondon.



No second night out



Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, has made a commitment to end rough sleeping in London by the end of 2012.

The idea is that anyone sleeping out on the streets for the first time will not sleep out for a second night. To ensure his commitment, Boris set up the London Delivery Board (LDB) which is a strategic partnership specifically to implement this policy. Apart from the Mayor, the board comprises representatives from central government, the London boroughs, voluntary sector homeless services providers and other key stakeholders.

The LDB set up the pilot scheme No Second Night Out (NSNO) to provide a swift response to the needs of new rough sleepers, and NSNO aims to offer a viable alternative so that no one has to sleep out for a second night.

The pilot started in April 2011 focussing on Camden, City of London, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Brent and Southwark. The pilot was designed to last six months but has subsequently been extended. Current government thinking is that NSNO should be rolled out across the whole country.

The pilot scheme works through outreach work and a new Assessment Hub in Islington which is open twenty four hours a day and seven days a week. Anyone can call the telephone helpline (0870 3833333) or make an online referral <http://www.nosecondnightout.org.uk/>. Unless it can be established that the person has a genuine



No Second Night Out advert
<http://www.nosecondnightout.org.uk>

local link, the offer of help will be to return them to their home area and reconnect them with family and support networks. An alternative area can be offered if the person would be in danger should they return home. Certainly this service is not relevant for the majority of the people the Simon Community sees, but it will be very useful for anyone we come across who fits the criteria and who wants to go back to where they came from.

For the significant number of rough sleepers in London who have little or no access to public funds, for example many foreign nationals, the pilot works with existing services which specialise in supporting people from abroad to return home to appropriate accommodation. It also works closely with the United Kingdom Border Agency. It is important for us in the Simon Community to have a good grasp of what services are out there. We need to be able to tell people we meet on the streets about any organisations that might be able to provide support to them. Many people can be helped by one or more of the statutory or voluntary sector services and we want to be able to put them in touch with each other.

The 12 donations of Christmas

If you would like to donate specific things to the Community over the festive season, here is a list of things of the things we particularly need in the tune everyone's favourite carol the 12 days of Christmas.



On the twelfth day of Christmas, our supporters gave to the Community....

**Twelve sleeping bags,
Eleven jars of coffee,
Ten woolly hats,
Nine waterproof jackets,**

**Eight pints of milk,
Seven snugly scarves,
Six thick gloves,
FIVE BREAD ROLLS!
Four winter coats,
Three Christmas puddings,
Two Christmas crackers
And a turkey (or 3) to eat
with the Community!**



Since the last Simon Star, we have had some exciting new developments with securing the new day centre at the top of the list. As you read from Bob's report. This is an exciting time and has created some great opportunities for collaborations with other organisations including St. Mungo's and the Manna Day Centre in North London. The Director and I visited the Manna Day Centre and met with Anne Cartwright, the Treasurer and bounced potential ideas around about working together. Lidija from Sock Mob also paid us a visit to look at what we do in the Community and was very impressed with our work. This led to some of the Community's part time volunteers doing some voluntary work with the Sock Mob and gaining another perspective on service delivery. Once again it was that time of year for the Harvest Festival and school talks. This year was a great success and we would like to thank Andy for all his work organising the talks and

collections. Street works has now increased and we are averaging three to four times a week which is excellent. This also gives us the opportunity to engage in a more personal way with people on the streets and is helping us reach out to women about our new women's group which you can read about in Bob's report. We have bought new flasks that we are taking out on street work as well as snacks and cakes which are much appreciated. I have been busy ordering a structural survey for a local shop and full time volunteer flat we have also reformatted our part time volunteer inductions and advertisements.

We would like to welcome new full time volunteers Chris, Lydia and Kevin to the team and would like to thank John who volunteered with the community for 2 years.

Phil Hole, Services Coordinator.

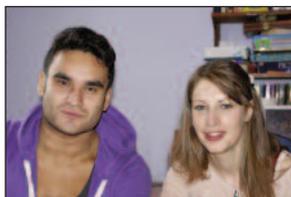
A new face in a Big House

New FTV Chris tells us about his first impressions of the Community and why he is here to stay!

I don't remember much about my first few days in the Community. This may seem strange despite it being only a few weeks ago, however that was the feeling I had. It was only upon reflection as I tried to process the Community, when I realised that the first few days seemed a bit of a blur.

What I do remember is the feeling of walking up Malden Road a bit flustered, nervous and lost. Then in the corner of my eye I happened to see three men chatting, smoking and laughing and I remember thinking to myself that they looked happy and I hoped that's where I was heading.

Luckily it was! At first it seemed strange to me when entering the Community that everyone was welcoming and everyone's opinion was valued and valid. I'd never been in an environment where everyone's opinion counts in some form, and that people were encouraged to be individuals. As I



New full time volunteers Chris and Lydia

began to feel my way around, I realised that in the Simon Community, being an individual made you special. Only in this Community would you find a man singing Dean Martin every night and when he doesn't you kind of miss it. Or where two people continually swap insults with each other over a meal, only to figure that they are good friends and roommates and are never without smiles on their faces.

Before I walked in the door I made a promise to myself that all I wanted to do was fit in. It wasn't until I spent time here that I realised that the only way to do that was to be myself. I've spoken to other members of the Community who have known the Community in different ways for different amounts of time and the reason why I was here became clear.

We are all here to help homeless people pure and simple, anything else is just a bonus.

Chris, Full-time volunteer

Silent Night



New full time volunteer Chris interviews long term resident Andy to find out what the Community night shelter is all about.

One of the highlights of the Simon Community calendar for us volunteers has been to help with the night shelter, and this year will be no different. Andy O'Brien a resident in the Community who has co-ordinated the night shelter for the last two years has been working within St. Martin's a local church with the help of Reverend Chris Brice. The shelter lasts over the winter period and creates a community feeling that we obviously have here in Simon. This year we will be able to offer places to a record number of people and we will work individually with each guest encouraging development in there day to day living. As Andy explains, "The aim is to give respite in what would otherwise be very difficult conditions for the homeless people in the most severe weather, and to treat them as human beings". This year's night shelter runs from 1st December and we will update you on how it is going in the next edition of the Simon Star.

Subscribe Electronically

To save money on postage, we are asking supporters to sign up to receive the Simon Star by email. If you want to receive your wonderful Simon Star via email and not post, please subscribe on the website on 'Join the Simon Star mailing list' and get in touch with Rosie in the office to say that you want your postal address to be taken off the mailing list. Thank you to everyone who has made the switch so far, and remember to email the Simon Star to your friends and family.

Congratulations from the Community



The happy couple on their wedding day

The Simon Community would like to congratulate Mikey Goddard, one of the Community's ex full time volunteers, who married his long-term girlfriend Tabby, at Holy Trinity Church in Tarleton near their home in Preston on the 22nd of October.

Mikey's dad, the Bishop of Burnley John Goddard, was the celebrant and preacher at the ceremony, which was attended by the couple's friends and family.

Among the guests were other former Community Volunteers including Maria Nilsson and Anna Levin who flew from Sweden for the event. Michelle O'Donohue, John Cooper and current volunteer Martin also attended.

The wedding was a great day all round and a lovely occasion to catch up with old Simon volunteers as a mini reunion. During the ceremony, Mikey's dad mentioned how proud he was of the newly married couple for thinking of others and asking for donations rather than wedding presents to mark their wedding day.

Mikey and Tabby asked guests not to offer presents, but instead to make donations to two charities.

One of the two charities chosen by the couple was the Simon Community, for whom Mikey volunteered for over a decade ago. A significant sum was raised for the Community by Mikey and Tabby's generous actions and thoughts for others on their special day.

A reception was held later that evening in St Walburge's Hall in Preston where good times were had by all, and old friends from the Simon Community took the opportunity to catch up with each other.

Everyone at the Simon Community offers their heartiest congratulations to Mikey and Tabby. We also send our warmest thanks to the young couple for their generosity and the example that they set. John Cooper, former full time volunteer



A Thank You

I would like commend Cynthia Jameson, who is a part time volunteer and also co-vice chair of the trustees. Cynthia is an asset to the Community and has been for the last 3-4 years. She does street work, drives for the soup run, attends meetings and has managed to salvage the garden in St. Joseph's. I have been in the community for a few years and I have not seen a more dedicated member of the Community. She has time for everyone and when it comes to the Community, nothing is too much for her. Cynthia works 5 days a week managing a factory where she has been working for a few years and she is retiring shortly. She has been an asset on the trustee board and long may her help continue. As it is coming up to Christmas we have extra outreach services and we are always short of drivers for the early morning tea run. Yet she is the first to say she is free to help out. She not only loves outreach work but is great at it! She loves to stop and have a conversation with homeless people and if she is not there she is greatly missed by all. She is a glowing example of a person who loves to help people less fortunate than herself.

Yours sincerely, **Alan Cole**

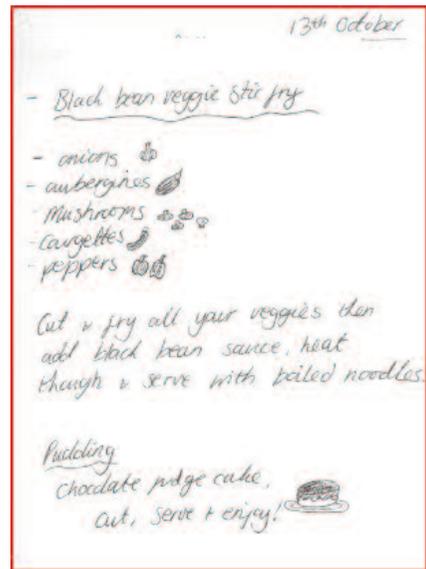
A fresh look to the Simon Star

Overall, its ace. I like that it not only talks about the work of the Community but that the new developments are genuinely exciting. I really get the feeling from the articles that the Community is evolving. It's great to see campaigning issues covered, and references and excerpts from old issues of the Simon Star are good links to the past. Also, the front cover is a million times better than the non-descript swirly font I remember from before. Great stuff, I hope the issue brings in a bumper load of donations!

Love, **Steve Barnes**

Women's Group Recipe

As a new feature, we are including a recipe from the women's group, this month's recipe is veg stir fru which we whipped up in October for 4 guests and 2 volunteers.



Thank You's

In this edition, we would like to thank Andrew Thornton from Budgen's for his ongoing support, Fabia Stocken from Bloomberg for her very generous donation, all of the people who donated food and treats for the harvest festival, JC for helping out with school talks, the Mitzvah Day team at South Hampstead Synagogue, all the Tikun volunteers and Henry Ellis-Paul for his help with the Simon Star. We would also like to thank David B and Chelsea for all their hard work at hospitality and Sam Peacock for his help with the website. Lastly we would like to thank Ruth who recently stepped down as a trustee. Ruth was a trustee for 5 years and an asset to the Community.

Christmas Appeal



For this Christmas edition of the Simon Star, we are appealing for your support to help us ensure that we can run our vital services over the holiday period. As well as increasing our services throughout winter, as you have read we are also developing the Community in lots

of ways including the day centre and potential shop. These developments can only be made possible with your support. It is great news about our new developments, but they all need funding and as you know we are heavily reliant on our supporters because we do not accept government funding. As well as donations, the Community needs to increase our supporter base so please do tell your friends and family about the Simon Community, forward the newsletter to everyone you know to help Simon thrive. As always, thank you very much for your ongoing support and have a very happy and peaceful holiday and New Year.

Running for a reason

Since I started running again back in the spring of this year, I already knew what it was that I was aiming to achieve. I ran the London marathon almost 6 years ago when I was 20 and raised £5000 for charity. Although I found the training hard and time consuming, the feeling of crossing the line made it all worthwhile. It's a unique combination of feelings consisting of relief, pride and an overwhelming sense of satisfaction. I've always believed that the achievement of running a marathon isn't in completing the 26 miles but the months and months of early mornings, late nights, aching limbs and stiff muscles that are endured on a daily basis throughout the training. Bear in mind that the majority of people undertake this challenge on top of a full time job and it soon becomes clear what a commitment it is to compete in such a race.

My training to run the Paris Marathon in April next year is currently going well. Only yesterday I completed my first 15 mile run and although today my legs are stiff and the idea of ascending a flight of stairs presents a bigger challenge than it should to a healthy 26 year old, I will be running again within a couple of days. Up to now the majority of the training has been enjoyable due to the weather being reasonably mild but now that winter descends on us I am bracing myself for tougher times. These are times in which my motivation may waiver on looking out of the window and being confronted with darkness, rain, frost and even the



Henry in training for the marathon

occasional snowstorm.

There are only a few thoughts that really spur me on in such moments of weakness. One is the thought that there are now only 5

months of training to go until it will be over. The second is for me to remember that I'm not just running for my self but for the Simon Community and for the people to whom they give a helping hand. Furthermore, by doing each run I am helping to secure greatly needed sponsorship money to go towards the development of their new day centre. When I'm not running and not at work I can usually be found on the Thursday night soup run, the guys I serve are great people. They are always friendly and appreciative – not the stereotype that is so often given to such people. I'm pleased I'm able to help and I hope you will all support me in my bid to raise money for them.

This article will be read by about 4000 people, if you can all spare even just £1 then it would result in a huge £4000 donation that can go towards the development of the new day centre that will help many people now and in the future. Thank you.

You can sponsor me via:

www.justgiving.com/henry-ellis-paul or by texting **IPJG76** followed by the amount you would like to give (ie IPJG76 £1) to 70070.

Alternatively contact the Simon Community directly on 0207 4853602

Henry Ellis-Paul, Part-time Volunteer

Please complete this form and return it with your donation to:

The Simon Community
Department 116
P.O 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

giftaid it

The Gift Aid scheme is for gifts of money by individuals who pay income tax. Basic rate tax is 20 per cent, so this means that if you give £10 using Gift Aid, it's worth £12.50 to the charity. For donations between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2011 the charity or CASC will also get a separate government supplement of three pence on every pound you give.

Title: _____ **Initial:** _____ **Surname:** _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____

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Please treat:

- All gifts of money that I have made in the past 6 years and all future gifts of money that I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise; OR
- All gifts of money that I make today and in the future as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise; OR
- The enclosed gift of £ _____ as a Gift Aid donation.

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

Telephone: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Email: _____

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.

Please tick the appropriate box(es).

I would like:

- further information on including Simon in my will;
- I would like further information on volunteering as a
 - trustee full-time volunteer OR part-time volunteer
- I would like to receive Simon Star by email OR post.

I enclose:

- a cheque/postal order made payable to "The Simon Community".