

Summer 2022

ISSUE 143



THE
Simon
STAR



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THANK YOU

Bloomsbury Baptist Church
 Noel Younger
 MT Gibson-Watt
 Maggie for the coats
 Munday Cruising for cups & filing cabinet
 Wenzels
 Mick Carroll
 Nudge PR for potatoes and cups

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Thank you for reading this summer edition of the Simon Star and for supporting the Community. We use this newsletter to let you know what is going on and invite you to share your stories.

If you would like to update, edit or remove your contact details then please get in touch.

You can email us on admin@simoncommunity.org.uk or call the office on 07442306000

WELCOME TO THE SIMON STAR

We hope that this summer newsletter finds you all well.

It has been a bit of a mixed bag here, we have had more covid, but like last time it was contained and all the outreach still got out.

Numbers have been higher than before - but we have still been able to get what we need out on the streets thanks to the dedication of all our volunteers.

We have been planning things for next year - we have put details of some dates to remember on page 5 in preparation for the 60th.

Sadly we have lost a few people recently, MT has written about Tony Miles who died in April. Tony was a founder member of the community and was remembered as a significant and colourful character.

We also remember Tim Younger who was a volunteer in the 90s, we heard recently that he had passed away.

However, our exciting news this month is that we have a new resident join us this June which is the first since the start of the pandemic. Mantas is settling in well and doing a great job on streetwork.



If you would like to volunteer with us and come out on street work, please get in touch with us on 07442306000

Goodbye Tony Miles

A Founding Member

Tony was born in 1939 and spent his childhood in a variety of childrens' homes, his early years complicated by the country being at war. Anton met Tony through his work as a probation officer in Bow Street in the early 1960s.

Anton began to understand that Tony, like many other people who ended up in court, needed more than 6 months in a halfway house to help them overcome the complex problems they had. That understanding was crucial to the idea of Simon.

So Tony was involved from the very beginning and quickly adopted Anton as 'Dad'. Tony was enthusiastic and energetic and pitched in in all the various Simon projects that he stayed in.

He also sometimes stayed at the Wallich-Clifford Community in Cardiff where the founder said 'What a wonderful contribution he made to so many people's lives during his. I was always so pleased to see him when he arrived, and unsurprised, but saddened when, suddenly, he wasn't there anymore and



Community life, though maybe calmer, was certainly less joyous and exciting without him.'

After Anton died, Tony moved on from the Community, working as a doorman in the theatre and then in the Royal parks, where he met the Queen.

He met his wife Maureen during this time and moved to St Leonards-on-Sea where he was actively involved in his local community, supporting and campaigning on various issues. Fishing and music gave him enormous pleasure.

The patience and love of his life with Maureen and her extended family gave him the stability he had missed and that he deeply appreciated.

MT Gibson-Watt

Anniversary Plans & Dates to Remember

All the meetings - at the Board, the Community meeting and at the house - have been planning things for this year and next year for the 60th anniversary.

This year we are having a picnic in Russell Square on Friday 5th August. The last one we had was three years ago because the pandemic and we are keen to get people together. We wanted to do something in the summer when a lot of other services take their break.

The last community meeting this year will be on Monday 19th December, which will also be a Christmas get together .

Next year the 27th July marks what would have been Anton's 100th birthday. We are celebrating this with a guest picnic - more details about times and venues nearer the time.

The main reunion party to celebrate the 60th Anniversary will be on Saturday 2nd September 2023. We hope to see many of you there.



The last picnic before the pandemic

RIP Tim Younger

We are sorry to bring the news of another loss that we have heard about recently.

Tim Younger who was a live in volunteer in the late nineties has recently passed away.

Tim's Dad, Noel, got in touch with us recently to let us know. Our thoughts are with Tim's family and friends.

Simon Community

AGM

Saturday 20th August
Bloomsbury Baptist Church
Shaftsbuty Avenue
11am

WHAT'S GOING ON...

Out on street work we have seen the numbers go up in the last few months. To give an example, in May last year we went out 13 times and saw 521 people. This year we went out the same number of times and saw 810. We do see the same people regularly so these numbers reflect our interactions rather than individuals - but it is a worrying increase none the less. We are seeing a lot of new faces too and speaking to people that are in accommodation but are isolated and lonely.

Things are going well at the house. We said goodbye and good luck to Stella in the usual fashion last month as we waved her off to her new adventure of working on a strawberry farm before she returns to university. Our new live in volunteer James joined us in May and we are enjoying getting to know him.

We had an away day with the new Board members and following on from this at the Community meeting we started making plans for the 60th Anniversary next year. This is going to include a big reunion party in September 2023

so keep an eye out here for more news of that. It would be lovely to have as many people possible at this get together to celebrate our anniversary.

Poor Alan gave us quite a fright at the end of April when he took seriously ill with an infection and was in hospital for weeks. We are pleased to tell you he is very much better and is happy to be home.

And finally... Katie finished the scarf that she started when the pandemic knitting group began. Knitting teacher Michael is pleased with her progress and we are all glad that she will have a warm scarf just in time for summer!



Stella reflects on her volunteer experience

What a wild eight months it's been! I joined the community as a Liv last August as part of my placement module for my degree. I study Clinical and Health Psychology at Bangor University, so the move from the quiet North Wales to the colourful London was quite a change!

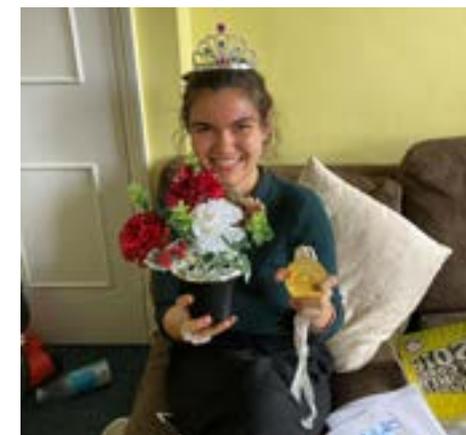
I didn't know a lot about homelessness before moving into the community, which was one of the main things that drew me to the role in the first place. My specialism within psych is trauma, so I was interested in exploring how it manifested within the homeless community.

The residential community was also really exciting for me as I was a resident in a few therapeutic communities when I was a teenager, so I was curious in what it would feel like to go back to one and almost give something back.

My time here has been so enlightening and really opened my eyes both to the wider systemic issues surrounding homelessness, but also the humility of the guests themselves.

It's been such a privilege to have been welcomed into the community and see the guests start to trust you. I've made some incredible memories here; from the streetworks to the beautiful moments from 129, to insightful conversations and drag shows!

I'm excited to take on what I've learned going forward and will be forever grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of this community. I've learned a lot about myself in my time here and it has given me the space to reflect. I'm truly going to miss living within the community and I thank everyone who made me feel so welcomed and accepted.





giftaid it

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- 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.

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