

Winter 2012

ISSUE 120



THE  
*Simon*  
STAR



[www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk)

A large, dark shadow of a person's head and shoulders is cast onto a light-colored brick wall. The shadow is positioned on the left side of the frame, suggesting the person is standing to the left of the wall. The bricks are arranged in a standard running bond pattern. At the bottom of the wall, there is a concrete path with some small green weeds growing between the cracks.

# LOOKING AT THE PAST, LOOKING AT THE FUTURE

Read Peter's story on [page 8 & 9...](#)



www.simoncommunity.org.uk  
info@simoncommunity.org.uk  
020 7485 6639



**Editor**

Rachel Cullen

**Contributors**

MT Gibson-Watt  
Bob Baker  
Philip Hole  
Karen Barker  
Peter Edwards  
Mike Coleman  
Steve Barnes

**Design**

Sam Peacock

**Photography**

Ely Epperlein  
Bob Baker  
Rachel Cullen  
Women's Group

**Thank You's**

Tikun  
Neil Cohen - for help preparing the audit

Pret A Manger for their continual supply of sandwiches

Dermot at Kingdom Catering  
Dave Ahern  
Hands on London  
Damart for the thermals  
All the carol singers  
People who sponsored Rachel for the Liverpool Marathon

Waldorf Hotel (Strand) and Boundary Hotel (Liverpool Street) for donations of toiletries

# WELCOME

What is Christmas?

Snow and Santa and reindeer. Presents and turkey and crackers. Lots of family. Trees and toys. Old films on TV. Excitement and high expectations.

But we all know, that underneath the advertising and tinsel, this is a story about the birth of a child, in a stable, to parents far from home, dependent on the kindness of strangers. For us in the Community, we aim to be those kind strangers, to the hundreds of lost and homeless living on the streets of London today.

As you know, many of our most reliable volunteers are people who were once homeless themselves. They are acutely aware of what it feels like to be outside at this most family focussed time of the year. They spend the weeks leading up to Christmas and New Year working even harder than usual to make sure that every last lonely soul will find a warm welcome with us.

We would like to be able to provide that welcome all year round but, like most people, we have limited resources so we do the best we can. Christmas comes at the turn of the year as we slowly leave the darkness behind and move into the light.

On behalf of the many hundreds of people whom you help us to help every year I wish you all light in your life and a very happy and peaceful Christmas. Thank you.

MT Gibson-Watt, Chair of Trustees

## CONTENTS

### Cover story

New Trustee Peter Edwards shares his experiences of the community so far...  
pages 8 & 9

News	Updates	Other
Working Together page 4	News From The Front Line page 12	Bill Moore page 5
Street work page 6	Women's Group Outing page 10	Legacies page 7

# VOLUNTEER FOR SIMON

## FULL TIME VOLUNTEERS

We are currently looking for full time volunteers to join the Community to live and work with homeless people in London.

The working week of a full time volunteer is busy and varied. Our volunteers work at all our outreach services and are on hand to support residents at home. Living and working with the homeless is not without challenges, but the experience is unique.

Often volunteers apply because they are interested in working with people experiencing homelessness but they lack the experience they need to get a job. One of our full time volunteers said recently:

"I have always been interested in working with homeless people and thought that volunteering full time would be a good way to get that experience. You learn a lot very quickly, living and working with residents immerses you into the culture of the community. I think it would have taken me a long time to learn this much in a 9-5 job!"

In the last issue of the Simon Star Mike told us that what he had learned from his experience of living and volunteering at the Simon Community had left him better able to pursue a career in Social Care. That was certainly true as shortly after leaving, Mike got a job in the homelessness field. This is also the case for three other volunteers who have left recently.

**"I leave the community  
better able to pursue a career  
in Social Care"**

Though this is unpaid voluntary work, all living expenses (board, food & travel) are provided and all bills paid in Central London accommodation. Volunteers are entitled to time off away from the residential setting in a house that is specifically for this purpose. This is a good opportunity for



someone who would like to live in London, gain experience in the Social Care or Homelessness field or just for someone who wants to spend a gap year doing something meaningful that will challenge them and bring them new experiences.

If you are interested in finding out more, or you know someone who may want to volunteer full time, please have a look at our website [www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk) for further information.

## PART TIME VOLUNTEERS

You don't have to live in to be a volunteer at Simon. There is plenty to do in the evening or at weekends. On page 15 you will see a list of services that will show you all the outreach work that part time volunteers can join in with.

Everyone attends an induction evening before they start volunteering with the Community, this is held in our day centre.

Existing volunteers and residents provide a warm welcome and tell you about the Community and what you can do to help. Each week the rota is emailed out to all part time volunteers and you can sign up for whatever suits your timetable.

If you have time to spare and would like to join us please email [admin@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:admin@simoncommunity.org.uk) or ring **0207 485 6639** to get an application form and find out the date for the next induction evening.

# WORKING TOGETHER

## **Director Bob Baker, reports on the Simon Community's work with other organisations in London**

This year has seen a significant increase in the Simon Community working well with other organisations in and outside the field of homelessness.

We continue our good relationships with among others, St Martin's church, St Giles in the Fields church, St Mark's church, Bloomsbury Baptist church, London Catholic Worker, Housing Justice, Tikun, Streetlytes, SockMob and many others. Talks to schools, churches and other organisations have continued.

In the past year we have worked with new partners St. Mungo's, Queen Mary's Hostel, Marylebone Women's Project, the Refugee Council, West London Mission, King George's Hostel, Westminster City Council, the Mayor's office, Emmaus, Thames Reach, the Passage, Housing Justice, Voluntary Action Camden, The Pavement magazine, local safer streets and police and more.

We have been closely involved in setting up the Federation of Simon and Cyrenians and through that have worked with Cyrenians in London, Bradford, Newcastle and Cambridge, the Simon Communities of Ireland and the Rochdale Petrus among others.

We have also taken the lead in setting up a new forum for chief executives of homelessness charities in London.

We are now widely known as a respected campaigning organisation and have initiated and participated in various campaigns often representing the many members of the Soup Run Forum. Our work in this area has brought positive support from a surprisingly wide range of people and organisations in the field – including

the Housing Minister; Head of Rough Sleeping in Westminster City Council; many groups doing soup runs; and many other homelessness agencies. We are working with the Sheila McKechnie Foundation and the Trust for London to improve our campaigning capabilities.

We have a strong voice at the Housing Justice Winter Shelter Forum and the Soup Run Forum, and are respected by other grassroots campaigning groups such as the campaign to defend council housing.

The women's group continues to enhance our reputation. At a time when many services are closing the development of this innovative and very successful project has brought a lot of very positive attention from a wide range of people and organisations – not least the women volunteers and the women experiencing homelessness who use the service. A volunteer said to me recently: "I love the women's group".

**“This has been a great success, with around 80 guests attending three days per week.”**

Working with St Mungo's has brought us our day centre in Islington. This has been a great success and we are currently seeing eighty or so people each day. Having this facility opens up the opportunity for working with other organisations such as the Open Cinema and providers of health, drugs and alcohol services. We have also had media attention throughout the year with letters and articles in local and national publications.

We are more outward looking as an organisation and our reputation has increased locally and nationally. Nourishing old and forging new and better relationships outside the Community has been a significant part of our work this year. It is extremely gratifying to be able to locate the work of the Simon Community in the wider context of provision in London and to see our work respected and acknowledged as part of the network of support available in the capital.

**Bob Baker**

# BILL MOORE

**Ex full time volunteer and long term community member Steve Barnes remembers Bill Moore who sadly passed away in August this year.**

Bill Moore was the first person I ever met at the Simon Community. He opened the door of St. Joe's, showed me around the house and then cooked me dinner. Of course, it later became apparent that this was a formative experience that many new arrivals shared. Bill Moore was everything to the Simon Community, and at different times he starred in every role: a volunteer, a trustee, a guest, a fundraiser; a member of the Simon family – or in his own words, “part of the furniture”.

Next year would have been Bill's 20th year volunteering with the Simon Community. In a way it still will be. Bill's presence can be seen everywhere; his contribution woven deeply into the Simon tapestry. I can still see him at the desk at St. Joseph's House, patiently tapping in the tea-run statistics – a cup of tea (no sugar) to his left – reading glasses on the end of his nose, quiet and undemonstrative. Whether through the connections he established for the talks programme with schools and churches - which continue to bring in funds - or in the lives of the rough-sleepers he met and supported through the tea-runs and street-work, Bill's volunteering goes on.

**“Bill has gone now, but something of his gentle presence lives on in every gesture of hospitality”**

Bill came to the community prepared to work, whether it was organising the annual walk or arranging another school talk. In every sense, he talked the talk and walked the walk. Bill thought that we should provide a reliable service to those on the street, so he attended morning tea-runs, street cafes and undertook late night street-work to reach out to the wider homeless community. More than once when the van failed us, I remember him going through the dark, by bus, laden



with flasks and sandwiches to meet rough-sleepers, and explain to them why the service that day was restricted. I think Bill's deep concern for homeless people came from the understanding he gained during his own time rough-sleeping.

At the heart of Bill's compassion was great pain of his own, and he would periodically disappear from the Community as he struggled to deal with his own difficult past. In this respect, Bill could be two very different characters – sturdy, reliable and self-contained while in the Community, but often inconsolably troubled with his own life when he returned home. Bill made many good friends with the Community's volunteers who would listen, share a cup of tea, offer support and encouragement. After a while, the light returning, Bill would quietly arrive back at 129 and continue his work. Bill moved out of his flat in Seven Sisters, and into sheltered accommodation for the last 18 months of his life. The day before he died he had taken delivery of furniture and a comfy new bed. He had made good friends amongst both the residents and staff. Warm and cared for Bill passed away, aged 67. Bill has gone now, but something of his gentle presence lives on in every gesture of hospitality at Simon's new day-centre, each cup of tea dispatched at the street café - in every act where the boundaries between the helper and the helped slowly merge.

**Steve Barnes**

# STREET WORK

## **Trustee Mike Coleman shares his experiences of volunteering for Street Work with the Simon Community**

For just over a year, Tuesday nights have taken on a very different feel to the rest of my week. Ordinarily I'm on the typical treadmill of household chores, catching up on emails and a brief catatonic vigil before the TV. But on that day each week I have a very different routine – I make up two enormous flasks of tea, check the temperature outside to see what to wear, and then set out for Chalk Farm to prepare to go out on streetwork, usually with Mark, Paul and our recent additions to the team, Tanya and Jonathan. Armed with sandwiches lovingly prepared at 129, we set out on the bus for Covent Garden, bundled up with bags full of polystyrene cups, food and hot drinks. It attracts a few quizzical looks, as if we're well provisioned refugees on the march. We have sometimes been mistaken for those we are out to help – I had a couple of quid dropped into my bag one night, which paid for teabags in the coming weeks!

**“Our role is simple - we offer a hot drink, a sandwich and a chat”**

We have a well worked route, which Mark and Cynthia developed over time: St Martin's Lane, Floral Street, round Bow Street Magistrates' Court, down to the Transport Museum, then into Covent Garden itself.

Typically we see 30 people in a night, which is as many as we can provide drinks and food for. Many are long term homeless, and may have been meeting up with our volunteers for years. Our role is simple – offer a hot drink, a sandwich and a chat. There is often a wonderful change in people's initial reserve when you say “we're from the Simon Community”, because most then know there is no hard sell to follow, and no officialdom



looking over our shoulder. Some chat with you openly about their experience, whether today or a decade ago, and will ask advice. Others retain their privacy at all costs, and I hope they appreciate that we don't pry. Generally we are welcomed and thanked profusely, with the exceptions being few and far between (and rarely any more than someone letting off steam, so nothing personal). We get to hear about the utterly pointless police activity, backed by the local council, moving people on from where they are sleeping as if they were detritus to be swept out of sight, not human beings. What anyone expects to achieve by doing this is an utter mystery. But we also hear about the acts of unsolicited kindness too, from passers-by or those who work in the area, who make no judgement other than that a need exists and they have the means to provide.

It might sound a simplistic way to offer help, offering some of your time for a chat over a cup of tea, but it is often the first stage in reaching out to those experiencing homelessness. We provide a chance to interact on equal terms that might otherwise be missing, treating people with respect, and no hidden agenda. If that leads to homeless people having more involvement in the Simon Community, that's a good outcome, but isn't a defining aim. Far better that we build some trust, and allow people a little space to relax, albeit briefly, in the midst of an otherwise mostly hostile environment. That's a good use of a Tuesday evening in my book, but we can always use more help if you have a few hours to spare.

**Mike Coleman**

# LEGACIES: A GIFT FOR THE FUTURE

**Simon Community Fundraiser, Karen Barker, answers some questions about remembering Simon in your Will**

The term "legacy" simply means a gift you leave to a charity or person in your Will. A legacy to the Simon Community, no matter how small, will mean that the important work of our charity can continue. Many people simply do not realise how important legacies left by "ordinary" people are to charities, thinking legacies are the domain of the very wealthy. Currently, only 7% of the UK population leave legacies. Remember A Charity, a group of charities who encourage legacy giving, has estimated that if 4% more of the population would leave a legacy, this would generate an additional £1 billion for UK Charities. There is no reason why anyone can't leave a legacy to a cause they love. Here are some things to keep in mind about legacies:

## Can I make my own Will?

In order to ensure that your Will is done correctly, it is advisable to consult a solicitor when writing a Will. This will ensure your property is divided exactly as you want it to be.

## What kinds of legacies are there?

There are three main types of legacies. Leaving a specific sum of money is called a pecuniary legacy. A pecuniary legacy can be for any amount you wish. Many people think there is no point leaving a pecuniary legacy unless it is a large amount of money, but any amount of money, even a comparatively small amount, makes a difference to us. If you wish to leave a physical object, such as a painting, piece of jewellery, or property, this is known as a specific legacy. It's important to remember that legacies do not have to be money, and men's clothes donations are always especially welcome at the Simon Community.

The third type of legacy is known as a residuary. The residuary estate is what remains of the donor's estate after funeral costs, debts, and other parts of the will, such as pecuniary and

specific legacies, have been paid. A legacy to the Simon Community could be left for a portion, or all, of the residuary of your estate after such claims have been fulfilled.

## What information do I need from the Simon Community to leave a legacy?

If you wish to leave a legacy to the Simon Community, be sure to include us, by name, in your will. Include our address and registered charity number, so there can be no mistake which charity you mean: **The Simon Community, 129 Malden Road, London NW5 4HS, Registered Charity No. 283938**

## What if I want to leave a legacy, but already have a Will?

A simple legal document called a codicil can be used to make changes to an existing Will. A solicitor will be able to advise you on doing this.

## Will the Simon Community have to pay inheritance tax on my legacy?

No. Legacies given to charities are exempt from inheritance tax.

Karen Barker

## HELP US REACH FURTHER...

We would like to thank you, all our readers and donors, who donate to The Simon Community after every issue of the Simon Star. As you know we do not receive any government funding whatsoever and so rely on donations like yours and legacies left to us by Simon supporters.

We are appealing to you, our supporters, to help us spread the word and increase our list of supporters by recommending to your friends to subscribe to the Simon Star. They can do this electronically by emailing the office at [admin@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:admin@simoncommunity.org.uk) or if they would rather be put on the mailing list for a paper copy they can phone the office on **0207 485 6639** - Many, many thanks.

# LOOKING AT THE PAST AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

**New trustee, Peter Edwards, tells us about his Simon Community experience so far and talks about plans for the 50th anniversary**

When I first thought about joining the Simon Community earlier this year I knew it was a fantastic charity that put food in the stomachs of the poor and the homeless.

By the time I actually began to play a part in community life, I had learnt about the sheer number of people it had fed, clothed, housed and supported over the half century since flower power had blossomed, England had won a World Cup and recessions had come, gone and come back again.

So it meant all the more to me to begin work as a trustee and part-time volunteer. I was joining not just a charity, but a tradition; a way of working but also a way of life.

**“ I learned about the sheer number of people that the community had fed, clothed, housed and supported ”**

This long and sometimes tumultuous history will be marked next year when Simon celebrates its golden anniversary. The passing of such a milestone could imply Simon has become part of the Establishment but the charity remains at street level in its ethos and activities and true to the vision created by Anton Wallich Clifford in 1963.

So next year we will mark not just the longevity of the community, but also the pioneering vision



Peter Edwards

of Anton, a probation officer who called himself a “bum”, who wanted to help people who had dropped out of society – often because they were meths drinkers, homosexual (which was then a crime) or who had suffered from abuse or family breakdown,

**“Members of the community have been busy thinking up ways to fundraise and celebrate the 50th anniversary of Simon”**

At the heart of these celebrations will be a series of events to recognise the work of all those people who have worked with Simon over the last 50 years, as well as all those supporters who have put their hands in their pockets during that time. Last month we used the annual community day at

the Hill Drop Road centre to start producing ideas. We hope to bring together as many as possible of those people who have been part of the community – whether as residents, volunteers, staff or trustees past and present.

We are also considering holding a conference. The details are still being worked out but it could be designed as an event where experts, representatives of other homeless charities and some of our corporate supporters could join members of the community to look at the environment in which homeless people live – as government inflicts spending cuts on public services and grant-making bodies – and how their needs have changed.

Trustees also plan to approach high-profile supporters who have helped Simon in the past, such as comedian Alexei Sayle, our patron, and Stewart Lee, the waspish stand-up performer and writer, who headlined a fundraising show at The Grand Union in Kentish Town last year.

Members of the community also came up with a series of other ideas, such as holding a fashion show, putting on talks in local schools and churches, and collaborating on newspaper articles, all in an attempt to increase our profile and boost the amount of money coming in. Frank Dobson, the Holborn and St Pancras Labour MP and former health secretary, has offered his support.

**“ The books seem a particularly important part of his [Anton’s] legacy - we hope to have them reprinted next year ”**

The contribution of Anton should also be recognised amid the celebrations. Anton, who died in 1978, set up Simon after witnessing the plight of the homeless in his work at Bow Street Magistrates’ Court in the 1960s. As he described in *No Fixed Abode*, he was one of a “handful of enthusiasts with vision and a blind faith in divine providence” who spent countless hours alongside people sleeping rough in London.

We are considering the best way to mark Anton’s

work, which began before some members of the community were even born. I am sorry I never got the chance to meet Anton but, having read his books and watched a recording of him being interviewed by Bernard Levin, I feel I have begun to get to know him.

To me the books seem a particularly important part of his legacy, which is why we hope to have them re-printed next year. They provide an insight into his personality, practical approach and non-judgemental attitude and deserve to be taken to a new audience, who may never have visited the community but who could be inspired to volunteer or to donate. Of course Anton’s widow, MT Gibson-Watt, is the Chair of the board of trustees today. For me, as a new trustee, the community day was a chance to learn more about Anton and to hear MT speak at length about the spirit of Simon over the last 50 years.

As we stand on the brink of 2013, I am excited about Simon reaching its 50th anniversary (even though I only feature in the latest chapter). I hope you are also enthusiastic about passing this milestone – it will be a chance to get more involved, get a better understanding of what the community stands for and to ensure Simon is around to celebrate its centenary.

## JOIN THE BOARD

The Board of Trustees are currently looking for people to join them who have experience in fundraising, HR or psychology.

If you have been inspired by Peter’s story and have skills in the above areas that you would like to share please get in touch with us at [admin@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:admin@simoncommunity.org.uk) You can see full details of our Trustee advert on our website at:

[www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk)

# HIGH TEA ON THE HIGH SEAS!

Our women's group meets on a Thursday evening and provides a safe welcoming space for women guests and volunteers to meet, cook and eat together. Our guests are women who are homeless or who live in a hostel who don't have access to simple domestic environments.

At the end of the day many of us go home to our own kitchens, prepare a meal with our families or housemates and chat over the day's events. This is something we might take for granted, but imagine not being able to go into your own kitchen when you want or have friends round for dinner. This is the situation facing many women who, while they may not be street homeless, are restricted by the limitations of hostel life.

At our women's group our full time volunteers go shopping for ingredients for a meal that is suggested by a guest the week before. The women's group have a weekly shopping budget to buy the ingredients for the meal; each week they have a few pounds change that they put towards craft supplies or save up for an outing.

During a discussion at the women's group about what to do on the next outing, the guests were keen to go on a boat trip on the Thames, something they had not done before.

We booked an afternoon tea cruise on the Thames, on a Sunday that turned out to be bright and sunny! A group of guests were joined by three volunteers and there was time before the boat set sail to have a look around Tower Bridge pier. We were lucky to get a table at the front where



we could see all around as the cruise took us up to Greenwich. The women were pointing out landmarks they knew and commented that it was lovely to see London in this way. Once we all got used to the motion of the boat everyone relaxed and really enjoyed themselves.

We were served a full afternoon tea with sandwiches, scones with cream and jam and some very fancy cakes, some of the group took photos of the view as we passed under Tower Bridge, we took photos of each other and even of the cakes!

**“something as simple as  
afternoon tea is such a treat  
for people who would not be  
able to go on their own”**

When we got back to the pier a volunteer collected us in the minibus and we took everyone back to the hostel. The group all said what a good time they had and how the trip exceeded their expectations. It is touching to see how such a simple thing such as afternoon tea can be such a treat for people who wouldn't be able to go on their own.

If you are interested in getting involved in the Women's Group (you don't have to commit to every week, people just come when they can) then please get in touch with the office on **0207 485 6639** or email [admin@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:admin@simoncommunity.org.uk)

# HOSPITALITY IN TODAY'S COMMUNITY

With the 50th anniversary coming up we have found ourselves reflecting on the history of the community lately. The history and ideology of the community, the changes in society during the life of the community and how we have adapted and continue to provide a service have been topics discussed at trustee meetings, community day and at volunteer training sessions.

One big change in recent times has been moving the hospitality from 129 Malden Rd to the Day Centre. Long term members of the Simon Community have many tales to tell about the lively chaotic house that threw its doors open three times a week to entertain homeless people as their guests.

Last week at the day centre I spoke to some of the guests to see what they thought of our hospitality as it is provided today. "It's great! It suits my needs anyway," Cathy told me as we sat outside having a cup of tea. She said that she has been using the day centre since it opened and she heard about it through the other guests.

Cathy showed me her trousers and told me about her trainers that she got from the clothing store; she also said that she has used the washing machines a few times. As lunchtime drew nearer we were distracted by the smell of sausages wafting out the door every time someone came in or out. "Smells nice doesn't it?" Cathy grinned and told me that she particularly appreciates the hot food provided on a Monday and Friday.

When we went back inside the volunteers were

servicing up a choice of sausage or vegetarian pasta that one of our residents had cooked. There was plenty to go around and many people were coming back for seconds. There are people involved in pockets of activity everywhere, a group watching TV in the corner, people sitting at computers or at tables reading newspapers, a pair playing chess or just quietly chatting. Other people are doing their washing or waiting for their turn to get a shower. Although the centre is quite full with around 70 guests, the atmosphere is calm. I spoke to guest Emile who seemed to agree.

"Of all the homeless services I know, this seems to be the one that meets our needs," he told me. "You guys seem to understand our different priorities and needs, that's why people are contended here". Emile told me that he had been coming to the day centre for a few months. He has used the washing machines and enjoyed the food but said that the main reason he comes to the day centre is to relax. Emile explained to me that unlike some street homeless people, he doesn't carry a lot of stuff so he enjoys the walk from central London up to Islington then has 4 hours to just read the paper, talk to people and relax rather than having to constantly move around.

It is reassuring to hear about positive experiences from guests and get the feeling that though hospitality has relocated and we have seen changes in the groups that use the service; the Simon Community still provides a welcoming, helpful space for those that need it most.



# NEWS FROM THE FRONT LINE

**News from the front line, a report from our Services Coordinator, Phil**



As it gets colder we find the needs of our guests changing. We have received generous harvest festival food donations that we are making good use of at the house and at the day centre. The cold weather does make things much harder for homeless people. The one positive aspect of winter for us is that it seems to inspire people to volunteer part time to join us on soup runs, tea runs, street work, street cafe, at the women's group and at the day centre. If you are interested in joining us there are many activities to help with, please have a look on our website [www.simoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.simoncommunity.org.uk) or you can call us on 0207 485 6639.

All our outreach services remain busy. The tea runs have been very busy lately and we are seeing people from many different backgrounds. The street cafe is going well and we are providing a more varied menu now with healthier food and vegetarian options where possible.

I have had several meetings with Rev Chris Brice from St Martin's church in Kentish Town where we have had our winter night shelter in the past. Both St Martin's and The Simon Community are keen to open the doors again this winter to guests. Residents from 129 and the vicarage will be working with members of the St Martin's congregation to provide food and shelter to homeless people from January.

The house at 129 Malden Rd has undergone significant change and is looking great. We have recently brought new residents into the house and we are looking forward to welcoming more.

Jessie from Clubhouse came to a meeting at the day centre to see what we do and talk about how we might work together. Clubhouse is a charity supporting people with mental health issues. Also Stacy Dix from CASA which is an alcohol service came and spent an afternoon at the day centre to get to know the guests and get an understanding of how the day centre works. CASA are interested in working with The Simon Community with a view to setting up an alcohol intervention service and providing direct referral routes to their services.

Lastly thank you to all our supporters and especially to our outgoing full time volunteers for all their efforts. We are encouraged to hear that they all seem to be moving into paid employment in the homelessness sector and are glad that we have had the opportunity to assist in preparing them for the world of work. I wish them luck for the future.

**Philip Hole**

## Hands On: London's Massive Coat Donation!

Thank you to Hands On London who organised the Wrap Up London project and brought 200 donated coats to our day centre to give out to homeless men and women this winter.

# CHANGES AT SIMON

**We catch up on the comings and goings of the Simon Community since the last edition of the Simon Star**

## HELLO...

Since the last Simon Star we have welcomed three new full time volunteers into the Community.

Our house has taken on quite an international feel as our new intake have come from far and wide to join us! Elly has come from Berlin to live and work with us until next February, we were delighted to learn that she is keen on photography and were quick to ask her to take some photographs for this Simon Star! Rosina was in Vienna on a music course when she came to London to meet us (she is a keen violinist). When she finishes her time at the Simon Community, she will return to Rochester New York (where she is from) and go to university there. Though Tim hasn't travelled quite as far to get here (he is from Dorset!) we are sure he has far to go as he plans to join the Navy. All three of our new volunteers are very helpful, energetic and vibrant additions to the community; we are enjoying their company and benefitting greatly from their contributions.



Elly, Tim and Rosina outside St Joseph's House



Simon driving the van

## ...GOODBYE & GOOD LUCK

The Simon Community says goodbye and good luck to long term volunteer Simon who has been with us since 2008. Simon has made a great contribution to the Community and has helped many people.

The Community wishes Simon all the best for the future. The Community also recently said goodbye to full time volunteers Tom, Kevin and Lydia. We thank them for all the effort they put into working with vulnerable homeless people.

**“Simon has made a great contribution and has helped many people. ”**

They will all be missed by the people that they helped and visited while they were with us.

We have also seen a few changes with the residents The Simon Community has recently helped one resident move to the coast for health reasons. He now has a flat with a sea view!

We have also welcomed another resident into 129 Malden Road who is settling in well to Community life.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Jim West

With great sadness I need to inform you of the death of Jim West.

Jim worked at Simon in the late 70's and was kind, hardworking, honest, humorous and philosophical (in the sense of thinking deeply about people and the community). After Simon he travelled, ran a hostel for the homeless in Barnstaple and was a volunteer at a hospital in Lancashire.

Jim married and returned to work in the legal profession but always retained the 'Simon' respect for people, an interest in them and a wish to be helpful.

I am sure that anyone who knew Jim will be saddened by his death and will remember him with affection.

Yours sincerely,

**Steve Jones**

## Bill Moore

I remember Bill fondly from my time at The Simon Community (1990 and 1998). I remember that he was a gentle but serious man who always did his best to live with integrity. Whilst it was sad to know he had passed away it is good to know that he will now be with his wife, Nora.

With many condolences and with many good wishes,

**Sarah House**

**If you have news to share with the Community, please write to us at The Simon Community, 129 Malden Road, London NW5 4HS**

# THANK YOU

The generous donations of food that we receive from at Harvest Festival sustain our houses throughout the winter and provide nourishing meals for homeless people at our day centre and street cafe.

Thank you to the following organisations for remembering us this year:

**St Paul's in Covent Garden  
St Clement Danes School  
St Mary Le Strand  
Rosslyn Hill Chapel  
St Martin's Kentish Town  
Luther Tyndale Memorial Church  
Grange Park Prep School  
Golders Hill School  
Hampstead Parish Church  
St Luke's, Harlow  
St Marks, Regents Park**

Thank you to **Dermot** for his ongoing support in providing the Christmas Dinner. His catering company, **Kingdom Catering**, have been providing and preparing the dinner for our guests for the last 10 years, Dermot tells us that this is his way of giving something back. We are very grateful for all his effort.

Thanks also to all the carol singers who joined us to raise spirits (and money!) this year.



# LIST OF SERVICES

**Here at the Simon Community when we talk about 'services' and 'outreach services' we are talking about the work that our volunteers do and what we can offer to homeless people:**

## Tea Run

This is an early morning service where we take hot drinks and pastries / sandwiches out to people who are sleeping on the streets.

We go to Maltravers Street, Covent Garden and The Strand. The tea run goes out on Sunday and Monday, we leave the house at 6.45 and our first stop is at 7.15.

## Soup Run

Soup Runs go out on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The first stop is at Hinde Street at 8.15pm, we go on to Maltravers Street at 9.10 and finish at Waterloo behind the National Theatre at 10pm.

We take big urns of vegetable soup that is freshly made that day, we also take tea, coffee and bread rolls. During the soup run we stop off to meet the Pret a Manger delivery man who gives us generous amounts of sandwiches to give away.

## Street Cafe

Street Cafe takes place on Saturday and Sunday in the courtyard at St Giles in the Fields Church. This is a static cafe where we serve hot food and drinks. Guests have the chance to relax and enjoy their food, chat to each other and to the volunteers.

## Women's Group

Our women's group meet once a week on a Thursday evening in Victoria. This is a place for homeless women to cook a meal, have a chat and do various activities in a safe friendly environment. See page 11 for more on the women's group.

## Hospitality

During our hospitality sessions guests are welcomed at our day centre in Hilldrop Road.

There is the opportunity for homeless people to use washing machines and dryers, have a shower, a meal and use the computers. There are volunteers on hand to offer advice or help wherever possible. All our clothing donations are taken to the day centre and we operate a clothing store where people can take what they need.

## Street Work

Street work is where we go out in pairs and talk to homeless people who we find on the streets of London. We take flasks and sandwiches so that we have something to offer, but this service is really about getting to know people and being a friendly face on the street. We leave from St Joseph's house on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and usually stay out for a couple of hours.

## Winter Night Shelter

The night shelter will open at the beginning of January for 3 months in St Martin's Church in Kentish Town. Two volunteers sleep at the church with seven guests who enjoy a meal cooked by the parishioners of the church and Simon volunteers.

We see hundreds of people every week. All our services are provided completely free of charge thanks to our generous supporters.

## FUNDRAISING

If you have any ideas for fundraising events, or would like to hold your own event or take part in a sponsored activity - please contact our fundraiser at:

[fundraiser@simoncommunity.org.uk](mailto:fundraiser@simoncommunity.org.uk)



*giftaid it*

## PLEASE GIFT AID YOUR DONATION

If you pay tax you can increase your donation at no extra cost to you.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

'I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCS) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008'

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Please treat:

- The enclosed gift of £ \_\_\_\_\_ as a Gift Aid donation; OR
- All gifts of money that I make today and in the future as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise; OR
- 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.

**Please complete this form and return it with your donation to: The Simon Community, Issue 120, 129 Malden Road, London, NW5 4HS. 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)**

