

the Pavement

Issue 8

The paper for The Homeless (London edition)

Free

Homeless hidden

Another street count raises more questions

An official headcount of rough sleepers within Westminster recorded an increase in the number of homeless in the area, amid allegations of tactics designed to reduce the figure.

A total of 156 rough sleepers were counted in the borough on the evening of Wednesday 23rd November, compared to 146 for the previous year. A headcount in September 2005 put the number at 160.

The Simon Community undertook its own street headcount at the end of October, and found 247 people sleeping rough in the City of Westminster, almost one hundred more than official figures now state.

And both The Simon Community and some of our readers are claiming that diversionary tactics were put in place in the days before the street count took place.

A number of readers say they were offered travel warrants by Police and community officers, in an attempt to transfer them out of the area. Mark Smith, a homeless man, was offered a travel warrant a few days prior to the headcount. He declined it but knows one rough sleeper who took up the offer of a warrant and left the city temporarily.

In a BBC report on the issue of

travel warrants being handed out, the Metropolitan Police denied the allegation that they were shifting people out of the area, saying that they regularly issue travel warrants for homeless people, particularly during the winter months.

Allegations have also been made that local authorities exerted harsh measures against homeless people, according to The Simon Community. They received information about a group of homeless people being physically moved out of the Victoria Street area by Police. Similarly there are accusations of doorways used to bed down

in were hosed by cleaners to make them unusable.

There are claims that charities were also instructed to make beds available in their hostels ahead of the count, and emergency accommodation was opened up on the week the count took place.

The Simon Community has observed a decline in the numbers of street homeless in recent weeks, which it welcomes, but it is concerned at the reasons behind the dip in rough numbers.

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“Tell me Egor, where did you find such a delightfully happy and cheerful head for our experiment?”

Westminster homeless conference

On Monday 7th November, a summit of all major homeless organisations in Westminster was held to debate the issue of homelessness.

Entitled “Points of View: Solutions to homelessness in Westminster” and organised by Unleash and Housing Justice, the conference attracted many of the more prominent organisations, including Homeless Link, the Simon Community, Hope Worldwide and, of course, *The Pavement*.

Janet Haddington, of Westminster City Council’s Rough Sleeping Team, admitted that no one in the room would consider themselves “best friends with Westminster Council” and defended the recent shift in council policy from street-based to the new Building Based Services (BBS). The purpose of this policy, she explained, was to ensure that “the balance between social care and enforcement is maintained” within Westminster.

Colin Glover, director of the Connections at St Martins, also spoke, stating that in addition to services provided once a person is already on the streets, all organisations should work together to decrease the number of homeless people by tackling their issues before they even decide to come to London.

Throughout the evening, there were also calls for...

Continued page 4

News

OBITUARY

Margaret Keily

Margaret Keily (known to some as Margaret Reilly) collapsed and died Sunday 13th November on the Strand. She was attended by paramedics and taken to St Thomas'. A memorial service is planned.

Remembrance service

St Martin's service lists the dead

On 10th November the annual service was held at St Martin's, to remember those homeless who have died in the last year. This service takes place on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday and provides the chance for friends to pay their respects at a tribute which seeks to commemorate those who have died.

The idea to hold this kind of

service came about fifteen years ago after the head verger, hosting a memorial for a Royal Navy servicemen, remarked "how little we do in that way for the countless homeless people who spend much of their lives in and around St Martin's and then die unnoticed".

As with other remembrance services held at this time of year, it was structured around the reading of the names of those who are known to have died. This year over 80 names were read out.

Although the service is a time for mourning, there was also a muted sense of celebration. The service featured a moving performance from Streetwise Opera and a poem written by an ex-rough sleeper, John Sheehy, was also read out. Organiser Roger Shaljean summed it up during the service saying, "we particularly commend those who have struggled in difficult circumstances, and yet have found the strength, against the odds, to survive".

'EC'

The Soup Runs Strike Back!

Decisions made at soup run forum

The first meeting of the London Soup Run Forum took place on 23rd November, bringing together volunteers and professionals involved in bringing hot food, drinks and provisions to the streets.

Organised by Alastair Murray of Unleash, it was attended by key volunteers from a selection of London runs, representatives from the homeless community, a member of the police's Homeless Person's Unit, Inspector Malcolm Barnard ('Barney' to most readers), and Westminster residents. It aimed to examine the future of the runs, especially against Westminster Council's perceived anti-outreach stance and a recent spate of bad publicity in the mainstream media.

The need to establish better communications between organisations was discussed, to prevent some areas of the city being saturated whilst

others are overlooked. Chris Peacock of ASLAN said, "we [the soup runs] need to get our house in order, or we play into the hands of the media and Westminster Council". It was also agreed that, in order to ensure the most effective service was provided, it was important for the runs to get feedback from the homeless.



There was substantial debate over exactly what function the soup runs should fulfil, whether they should limit their services to rough sleepers or allow others who, for reasons of poverty or social exclusion, currently take advantage of

the provisions on offer by the volunteers. One homeless representative pointed out that the actions of those non-homeless who use the soup runs cause the majority of trouble and present a negative image of the homeless, stating "the media blame the homeless for the social problems at soup runs, but they're being wrongly

The forum has now helped to establish communication with some of different organisations that arrange soup runs, however it was agreed that for it to be effective more needed to get involved. Fears were voiced that producing details of runs would give councils the information required to target some runs and that some may prefer to remain incognito. Still, there are hopes that in future a more coordinated schedule for the runs will emerge as a result of the forum meetings, as well as a 'Code of Practice', with simple points such as cleaning up rubbish after their Runs.

Hopefully as a result of these moves Westminster Council and the public as a whole will be left with no scope to criticise the valuable efforts of the runs. Far from a bleak outlook, the soup runs may just rid themselves of the accusations of littering and nuisance and be seen as volunteer organisations with high ideals fulfilling an important role.

'VG'

News

Continued from front page

Mark Palframan, services manager for The Simon Community, said, "we are very pleased to see this fall in the numbers this week and the extra accommodation which is being made available. However, we would like to remind both central and local government that the [Simon Community] headcount found a higher number of people sleeping rough compared to last year and longer term solutions are needed – particularly the provision of more move-on accommodation."

Local government has used diversionary tactics in the past to massage the number of rough sleepers downwards. Charities in the homeless sector remember being asked to allow double the amount of rough sleepers through their doors on the nights when the count was taking place, and there are anecdotes of parties being organised to which rough sleepers were invited on the night of the count.

While many of the allegations of tactics to reduce rough sleeping in the Westminster area cannot be substantiated, The Simon Community believes it has amassed enough evidence to suggest that some tactics were in place to keep the numbers of homeless as low as possible, and help Westminster Council hit its targets in reducing the number of rough sleepers on its turf.

The City of Westminster has one of the highest homeless populations in the UK, and its Council has put in place initiatives that rely on targets to assess the success of policy; targets upon which many organisations find their funding dependent.

'HECTOR'



I'm a celebrity...let me sleep out here

Celebrities working for a charity is a common event, but it is rare that a stunt is as misconceived as one recently held by Chris Tarrant.

As an ambassador for Centrepunt, Tarrant was joined

by Jeremy Beadle in "sleeping rough" for a night "to help raise awareness of the problems of youth homelessness". An interesting idea, except for their definition of sleeping rough...

Accompanied by designer luggage and a steady supply of coffee and croissants, Tarrant

and pals slept under one of the roofed parts of Covent Garden with a security guard present. On the other side of the security fence, the regular rough sleepers of Covent Garden could only watch as the celebs bedded down with pillows and thick sleeping bags.

'RN'

NLDC will not reopen

Rumours of North Lambeth Day Centre closure prove true

The North Lambeth Day Centre (NLDC), at St John's, which has been recently closed for refurbishment will not re-open in December, or, sadly, ever again.

Previously, St Mungo's, which managed the centre, said that it needed to be revamped to offer better facilities and easier access. Rumours abounded that it would not reopen, or that it would open up with a radically changed function and ethos. But Lambeth Council has now

confirmed that the center will be permanently closed. The reasons for the closure have not been revealed.

Richard Cunningham, street population coordinator at Lambeth, said, "as it stands at the moment, it is true that the centre will be closing, though the exact details around that are still to be confirmed."

About fifty people used the centre's services every day, but Cunningham pointed out that there is another centre, the Waterloo Christian Mission (listed page 14), that, although not directly funded by Lambeth, will continue to provide services to those who

had used NLDC. "We have in Lambeth a comprehensive portfolio of services for rough sleepers, and a commitment to continue to develop strategy and services to help get people off the streets and into housing and, where necessary, treatment," he said.

Despite claims that Lambeth has a wide range of facilities for rough sleepers, the loss of a drop-in day centre in this area will be felt by many.

St Mungo's was not available for comment, but still have NLDC listed on the website as an active project.

'Ana'

News



Continued from front page

...the introduction of more specialist services for those with addictions. Concern was shown that such services may mean that, although each individual will be dealt with for their individual needs, reference processes may become more rigorous and many people may be unable to access services in the Westminster area.



Photograph: Unleash

The discussion also covered the proposed provision of cheap housing and dedicated services, offering low and high level support tailored to the needs of each person on

a long-term basis. Tenancy support is considered essential in these plans.

This returned the talk to the old problem of funding. At present, the majority of services are run by charities and churches who rely on donations. The Council were challenged to find more funding to enable care to be given where it is needed most. The last important factor raised was whether or not homeless people themselves were being asked about their future. The current answer is, er, well, not really.

At present, the result of the summit is unsure, but the diversity of organisations present was positive. Janet Haddington (pictured left) did, however, make it clear that Building Based Services (BBS) will continue, despite outreach workers being back out working on the street, and that an independent review of it will be held early in the new year.

'RN'

A penny for 'em

A new use as been found for an old WC

It is notoriously difficult to find a toilet in central London – many of them have been closed and those remaining often extremely squalid – but for one ex-toilet there is the possibility of a new life as a needle exchange.

Camden Council is planning to transform a former toilet, in a subway on the Charing Cross Road, into a state-of-the-art centre, which will serve as a needle exchange and treatment gateway for drug users. Support workers will be on hand to register drug users, assess their needs and channel them into treatment programmes. At the same time, they will be able to swap used needles for new, sterile, ones. This will not only prevent the spread of infection amongst users but also reduce discarded needles on the street.

The new facility will replace a van under Centrepont (listed page 15) and Camden's drug action team is now busy trying to get a planning application for the new site.

"A disused toilet might sound like an inappropriate venue," said Rob Larkman, drug action team chair, "but the way we intend to manage it makes it a suitable and appropriate location. We searched high

and low for a good place. This venue is away from residential areas and security can be well managed. We can block off this part of the subway, install CCTV and bring in Street Warden patrols to manage security". Larkman added that this will be a vast improvement on the van, often parked up in a busy pedestrian area.

The centre is only a low cost short-term solution until the drugs action team can find a more permanent solution. Councillor Anna Stewart, executive member for community safety at Camden, said that the numbers of drug users have reduced by 40% since last year but are still too high.

A full consultation with the local community has already taken place and some residents have voiced their support. Jamie Taylor, a local Bloomsbury resident, said: "Drug addicts deserve help but the problem needs managing and this is what a needle exchange and treatment gateway will help to do. Before the needle exchange van there were huge problems with needles lying around everywhere." However, the move isn't without controversy, and has caused a back-bench rebellion within the Labour council. Other sites are still being considered.

'Ana'

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News

Capital Volunteering offers an aid to coping with mental illness

A Camden man is overcoming the stigma of mental ill-health by showing how he has battled chronic depression through volunteering. Vander Peter is now helping to promote the scheme by The Capital Volunteering project which offered this opportunity.

Through this project Peter used volunteering in his recovery from mental illness. Diagnosed with chronic depression in 1989 he began volunteering in 1990 after a suicide attempt. Since then he has helped at a hospital radio station London. "It's rewarding when you see how pleased some of the patients are to see you," he said.

Peter supports The Capital Volunteering ethos that giving his time up to others "makes me less selfish and also balances my mind because I am not always thinking about me."

Capital Volunteering operates in 11 London boroughs. Details can be found at its website www.capitalvolunteering.org.uk

'Cobbett'

• There are more than 26,000 admissions to psychiatric hospitals in London every year.

Correction

In last issue we misquoted Philip Burke in 'Ghetto Culture.' He actually said, "there are a number of people within the homelessness sector with corporate power and with egos that would at best dwarf the Thames Gateway." We are happy to correct that here.

Crossing the 'digital divide'

Following up on a story on the internet - we consider if internet access is a useful tool if you're homeless?

The move by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to ensure the homeless have internet access, reported in last issue, has been welcomed by many homeless organisations throughout the UK as a useful step towards helping people help themselves. But is this really the golden ticket it is made out to be?

Jamie, for example, found himself jobless after his previous contract with a large corporation ended and his fortunes took a downturn until he had no option but to turn to the streets. His search for accommodation took him to Jimmy's Night Shelter in Cambridge, where he found a

warm bed and, importantly for him, an internet connection. We asked Jamie what his thoughts were on the latest move from the ODPM.

"I think it's a positive move, definitely. Without the internet, I would have found it impossible to turn my situation around; all the jobs are advertised online and the fact that I could be made aware of job opportunities as soon as they came up has really helped."

It has taken Jamie eight months to really turn his fortunes around; he has had several interviews now and is confident he will have found work by Christmas.

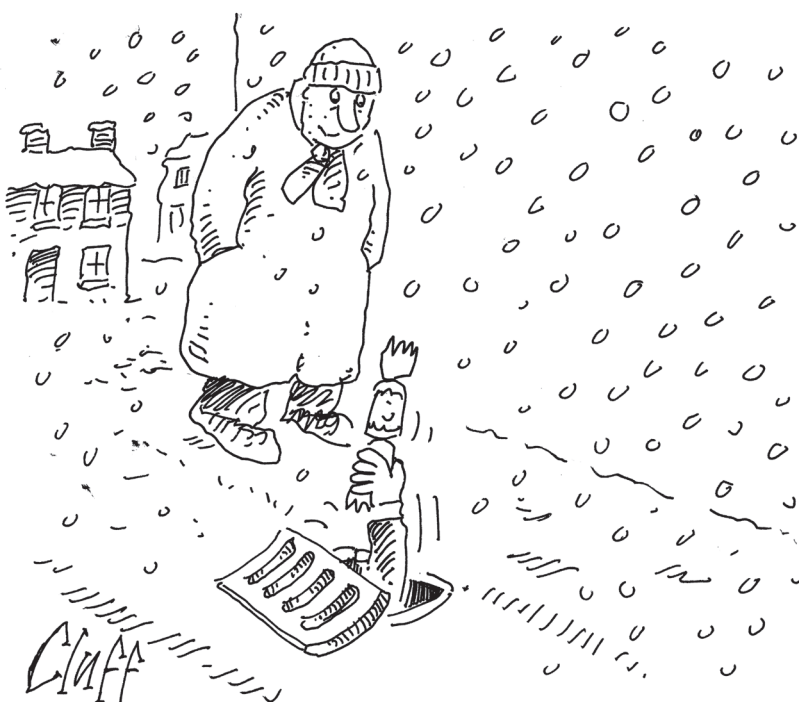
Although this success story would seem to back the view of the ODPM it must be put in context: Jamie is well qualified in IT, and has 15 years of management experience behind him. He accepts that

his success in finding work so quickly whilst being homeless is an exception rather than the rule and agrees that having access to the internet is not a sure way of relieving the problems of homelessness.

"It isn't just about having access to the internet; it is about wanting to use it in the right way. I have seen many people using the internet at Jimmy's [the night shelter Jamie is in], but the majority prefer to use it for games and downloading the latest pop music. I really am an isolated case."

Although the ODPM move for access to the internet for the homeless is welcome, there is a fundamental need to understand that just possessing the tools to better a person's access to work and housing is no guarantee that they know how to use them.

'DD'



News

New Survey lists
homeless woes

St Mungo's released the results of their biggest survey of the homeless in November, and listed their problems, particular amongst more mature rough sleepers. The survey is their response to forecasts of a severe Winter.

Amongst the statistics specified in the report are the facts that 50% of London's homeless have been so for more than two years, with around 30% being homeless for more than 5 years. Physically, 50% surveyed had health problems ranging from mental illness and alcohol abuse to the many cases of easily treatable diseases such as bronchitis, pneumonia and trench foot.

'Cobbett'

Polskie strony

Wskrzesić pasję

Do mojego dość nienagannie na codzień wykorzystywanego języka polskiego już dawno temu wkładło się charakterystyczne słowo 'jo'. Słowo to od razu zdradza mnie, z jakiego rejonu Polski pochodzę. – Z Pomorza jesteś – słyszę często. Tylko raz zadałem pytanie – Skąd wiesz? – No przecież mówisz 'jo', usłyszałem. Często potem na pożegnanie słyszę – no to cześć Krzyżak! (Pomorze było głównym terytorium zamieszkiwanym przez Krzyżaków). Wówczas uzmysławiam sobie, jakim wspinałem, pełnym pasji narodem jesteśmy my Polacy. Siedem wieków minęło a

wciąż pamiętamy!

Ci, którzy znają najnowszą historię Polski z pewnością nie zaprzeczą, że wiemy kiedy powstać, kiedy dokonać szaleńczego zrywu i kiedy się zjednoczyć. Całkiem niedawno cały świat przecierał oczy z niedowierzaniem patrząc na białe marsze upamiętniające życie Karola Wojtyły. Jedność, solidarność i pasja. Oto moja krótka definicja polskości. Z pewnością niejedną powie, że to nieco monochromatyczne spojrzenie. Wiem, że powinienem wspomnieć też o chorej dumie, złorzeczeniu i kłótności. Szczerze jednak wierzę, że owe wcześniej wspomniane trzy przymioty zdecydowanie przyćmiewają te ostatnie.

Nieprzypadkowo poruszam tu wątek pasji.

Chciałbym przeżyć pozytywne powstanie nas Polaków żyjących tu w Wielkiej Brytanii w celu pomocy tym, którym jak dotychczas się nie udało, którzy znaleźli się na ulicy. Sytuacja, gdzie tak wielu rodaków wraz z innymi ludźmi z krajów tzw. A8 żyje na ulicy, jest sytuacją chorą. Można to jednak zmienić. Nie! My możemy to zmienić! Wierzę, że nadszedł czas, by popisać się naszą umiejętnością do przystosowywania się do 'niesprzyjających warunków'. Znanie jest powiedzenie: – Nie możesz czegoś załatwić? Zawołaj Polaka! Niektórzy nazywają to cwaniactwem, ja nazywam to zaradnością. A skoro jesteśmy zostawieni na lodzie i nie możemy ubiegać się o żadną pomoc gdy powinie się nam noga (przez te pierwsze trudne dwanaście

miesiące, zanim nabywamy wszelkich unijnych praw), musimy pomóc sobie sami.

Ta nieznacząca, praktyczna pomoc, o której mówię, wydawać się może drobna i nic nieznacząca. To zaledwie travelcard, buty do pracy czy jakiegokolwiek informacje o jakimś miejscu pracy. Każdy przecież coś gdzieś słyszał... Ta drobna praktyczna pomoc może oznaczać, że ktoś jutro pójdzie do pracy i skończy swoją uliczną tułaczkę.

Ten krótki artykuł ma na celu wzbudzenie świadomości, że istnieje wielki problem. Problem, o którym niewielu chce rozmawiać. Tym problemem okazują się być ludzie, których wszyscy się boją. Boją się, bo ich nie znają. Tym problemem jesteśmy my, ludzie ze wschodniego, postkomunistycznego bloku, ludzie z własną kulturą, tradycją, językiem. A przecież wiadomo, że wystarczy poznać, by przestać się bać się... Pierwsza dłoń została wyciągnięta przez Salvation Army, gdzie pracuję. Czekamy na kolejne.

Mirosław Polanowski

• We're pleased to welcome the return of our Polish column which will be a regular feature. This has been driven by the number of Polish amongst our readership. Similarly we are working on providing our service listings in several languages (initially polish and russian - because we can get the translations) which we hope to have available on our website soon.

Editor



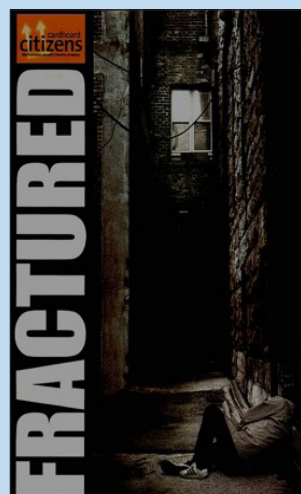
"He's waiting for a poor man to come in sight"

Focus

What's on in London

In this section we cover events coming up in the next couple of months:

- Start the New Year with some cultural endeavour - Cardboard Citizens (poster below), a theatre company whose work will be known to many readers, is holding workshops teaching acting. Held at Crisis Skylight every Wednesday at 6.15pm, call 020 7247 7747 for full details.



- Capital Art still has space for its trip on 3-4pm 20 Dec to the National Gallery. To book a place text or call 07985 411 458 or e-mail Jennifer at capitalarts@aol.com

Last month's sudoku solution:

5	6	3	1	9	4	2	8	7
9	8	1	3	2	7	4	5	6
7	4	2	6	5	8	1	9	3
2	3	6	9	1	5	8	7	4
8	5	7	4	6	2	9	3	1
1	9	4	7	8	3	5	6	2
6	1	8	2	7	9	3	4	5
3	7	9	5	4	1	6	2	8
4	2	5	8	3	6	7	1	9

A hostel Christmas

This issue we welcome a new columnist, 'Insider,' who will give the view from inside hostels

It's cold outside, there's nothing on the telly, so it must mean that Christmas isn't too far away. Never an easy time. If you're in a hostel, you may be thinking it'll be better this year, the staff will sort everything out and you won't have to trek across London to get to Crisis. If you are old enough to remember the rash promises of Cliff Richard, you're probably expecting mistletoe and wine, maybe even 'children singing Christian rhyme.'

Well, I know hostels, and have spent quite a few Christmases in them. Too many. But, however jaded and biased I might be, I'm still better qualified to tell you what to expect from a hostel Christmas than Cliff.

Starting with the staff. There are two types; the first type are those permanent members of staff who have been at the hostel for over a year and are only there because they are being paid double-time and had Christmas off last year. These will spend the day scowling, reminding everyone they see that they have given up a perfect family Christmas to be there. With you.

The second type are more pleasant, but can be harder to deal with. They are comprised of the voluntary or new staff who are keen that everyone has a good day, and will spend the entire 25th with a strained

rictus across their face, and a zany Christmas hat on. They will have a never-ending supply of crackers which they will continually thrust at anyone who crosses their path. They will be expecting their attitude to be instrumental in curing homelessness and could easily become utterly distraught if it fails to do so or if they catch any resident operating at less than 100% festivity.

The good news is you will almost definitely receive a present from the hostel. Presents from hostels never, ever, exceed weird aunty present levels (at best). It will be bought by your key worker on 24th December and probably be either socks, deodorant or tobacco; designed to be useful, but too cheap in case you try to sell it for crack (doesn't matter if you're a user or not - "it's policy"). Socks are probably the worst thing to get as it means there is a high chance you are going to get kicked out in the first week in January and the staff don't want you to catch pneumonia within a month of leaving their hostel. Deodorant just means they think you should shower more. Tobacco means that by the time they got round to buying your present the only shop still open was the Costcutter across the street.

It just wouldn't be Christmas without an extensive and varied programme of entertainment, and this will undoubtedly be provided. By which I mean the TV will be switched on, an old and incomplete connect four set will be found and put on a table covered with a wipe clean festive tablecloth, and, if you have been a very good

boy or girl this year, there will be an exciting game of bingo where you could win some thrilling prizes (usually socks, deodorant or tobacco).

There will be a meal. Unfortunately. If there's a cook where you live, and they have been offered a good enough bribe to work on Christmas day, it will be the usual competent warming of frozen factory food that you are used to. If there is no cook the meal will be cooked by the newest or least popular member of staff. The chemistry of their brain will be so altered by the experience that by the time they've finished anything you say to them will be heard as "what is this vile mess". Nothing you say, however complimentary, will keep them from spending the rest of the day as a walking definition of passive aggression. The only sensible course of action is to arrive late, only open your mouth to eat and eat fast at that, then leave early.

Obviously this article has been heavily laced with some seasonal cynicism and although I'd argue that it bears a fair amount of relation to reality, it is true that Christmas in a hostel, like so many things in life, is what you make of it. Every hostel is now compelled to consult their residents about almost every decision they make, just get your suggestions in as soon as possible and remember that regardless of what you say, the staff will be miserable/insane, the food will be repulsive and your present will be rubbish.

Merry Christmas.

'Insider'

Letters

Dear Editor,

Being homeless at the moment, and wanting a T-shirt, I am writing in.

I came to England about a month ago, to sort out my financial problems and quickly found myself homeless. I was so hungry that I accepted a crisis loan which has to be repaid by my pension which is so small it would not feed one person for one week in central London. I was interested to read in one of the many social security handouts that under no circumstances should homeless people be encouraged to or allowed to run into debt. My question to the loan organisers is why didn't you just give me some money to buy food with then? I now have insufficient funds to feed myself between the hours of 6.45am and 11pm, keep myself warm and well, as the dhs have already dipped into my hard earned pension and my private bank account. I now sell the Big Issue in the freezing cold to keep me in the odd coffee and doughnut. I realise that there are vans generously handing out tea and sympathy but dragging ones luggage about late at night is exhausting.

Still perhaps we ask too much; a clean bed, shower, privacy and our own money to buy food for ourselves. What about a job to put something aside and buy some warm clothes rather than someone's castoffs? The odd bit of dentistry and a doctor who isn't interested in drugs or mental health? The chance to build up ones life, not to sit and watch organisations take away our freedom of choice and our money, oh, and our health.

Rosemary
Homeless of Westminster
By e-mail

The Editor replies:

Rosemary, yours is a common complaint, but the simple answer we got was that a crisis loan is not a debt, but an advance on benefits due. I know of some readers who will not accept hostel life as they see claiming benefits as trapping them into a lifestyle from which is difficult to break out. If you have any specific difficulty with benefits/pension shop around for good advice - either from the benefits agency or an independent advisor (see service listings on pages 13 -15 for where to find them).

Dear Editor,

On the 18th November in Jason Court W1. A policeman and another male ripped open my sleeping box, first having banged on it and announced "police". I arose to find two plain-clothed officers who are known to me, demanding to know who I was. I put my head back down and said "you know who I am and I know who you are," having been on the streets over four years in this area.

The fact that I object to is that I was on private property, a large doorway, with permission of the occupier, in a secluded lane.

I said I had the permission of the occupier, but they said that they'd had a complaint from the public. They said, "No, you haven't permission, and this is a fire exit". (There is no one dwelling in the shop, and it is empty between 6.30pm and 7am.) They went on to say, "if you don't move we will find a way to move you!" After they left, I packed my things and moved off.

This police visit followed on from a visit the morning before

by some outreach workers, known to me, who work the area, and I assume they called them in.

These [police] are exactly the same people who promised Marylebone Church, in November 2004, that they would find places for those occupying that site nightly. They stood next to the council workers who moved the rough-sleepers' sleeping gear from the Marylebone Church property, not once but twice, after intervention by outreach workers.

Working together with the Outreach workers they have regularly harassed rough sleepers, particularly when these who didn't choose to communicate with the outreach workers. These workers locate the rough sleepers and report who and where regularly to the police for further harassment.

Marylebone Joe
By e-mail

p.s. There are still the occasional itinerate rough sleepers in Marylebone - The principles 100 years of sanctuary and care by the church are not extinguished by the actions of a few.

The Editor replies:

Joe, sorry you feel harassed, and I believe some of your experiences are, unfortunately, fairly common. However, we've checked with a couple of people in the Westminster area and they are in no doubt that the outreach workers would NOT have called the police. Indeed the only times they would call them would be on a rough sleeper's behalf or to report a crime themselves.

It is likely that the police

appearing is coincidental, and not surprising sometimes if they are on patrol whilst outreach workers are out. On your legal stance I refer you to an expert.

The Pavement's legal eagle replies:

Joe, if you were on private property with the permission of the land owner then there should not really be any reason for the police to ask you to move. You could certainly argue that you weren't blocking a fire exit - if there was a fire you would just get out of the way.

Perhaps you could ask the shop owner for a short letter confirming that they give you permission to stay in the doorway on the understanding that you keep it tidy and cause no disturbance. You can wave this next time as the police try to move you on from there.

Legal trivia: Any sign that you see saying 'trespassers will be prosecuted' is complete nonsense. Trespassers can't be prosecuted - you can only be prosecuted for a criminal offence and trespassing on somebody else's private property is not a criminal offence. Trespassers can be sued, however, but you don't often see signs saying 'Trespassers will be sued' - just isn't catchy.

'Young Bailey'

Contacting us:

Drop *The Pavement* a line, and win a T-shirt, at -

The Pavement
PO Box 43675
London
SE22 8YL

editor@thepavement.org.uk

Health

Dear Flo..

Got a question on health care? Then ask The Pavement's own nurse, Florence

I have received a letter that tells a common story. A gentleman in Southwark asked for antibiotics and was refused them (they weren't appropriate in his case), but he was quite irate about this and asked me, "surely antibiotics would help?"

Well, not necessarily. Sore throats, coughs, and general aches and pains are often felt to merit the panacea of modern medicine - a dose of penicillin. But there's more to it than that. Antibiotics are only effective against bacterial illnesses and there's the crux - differentiating between a viral and a bacterial illness; at least 70% of sore throats are caused by viruses and thus not suitable for antibiotic therapy.

Research also shows that antibiotics, when used for some bacterial infections only shorten the illness episode by a few days at most. So, you may ask, "but if they help by even a few days isn't that better than nothing?"

No. Again there's more to it than that.

It's really important that we don't use antibiotics more than we need as bacteria are developing resistance to antibiotics, so that where once penicillin (the green mould in the back of the fridge stuff) worked we're having to develop new drugs to beat the infections. And, producing new medicines costs approximately £300 million per medicine, with a shelf life of, on average, 10 years before bacteria develop resistance to it.

Antibiotic resistance occurs because bacteria pass on the resistance that they acquire to

neighbouring bacteria.

So what can we do? Well, there's an increasing emphasis on vaccinations and general preventative measures - such as washing hands. But we must make sure that we prevent, as much as possible, unnecessary

use of antibiotics that will aid resistance to it passing from bacterium to bacterium.

Good health,
'Flo'

I can be contacted at
flo@thepavement.co.uk



Foot care

Festive feet with Toe Slayer

Although Santa Claus is a familiar figure to people all over the world the old fellow is of comparative recent origin. Giving gifts during the festive season is an old and treasured custom, but modern Santa is a mixture of many historical and cultural traditions.

The most ancient Santa was St Nicholas of Myria and he lived about 280 AD in Patara (now Turkey). St Nicholas was the patron saint of sailors and

merchants but was thought to endanger travellers and farmers. St Nicholas Day is on the 6th December.

One of his most gracious deeds was to give gold to a poor man with three daughters in need of dowries. St Nicholas wanted to remain anonymous so he threw three bags of gold down the chimney. The gifts landed in the girl's stockings and henceforth we hang up Christmas stocking on Christmas Eve.

Modern Santa probably came

from North America (via Holland). He first appeared in 1822 in the famous children's poem, when Clement Clarke Moore wrote, "T'was the night before Christmas..." and introduced Americans to the fictitious character, Sintaklass. He was a Dutch mythical character with a friendly disposition. Pictures of Santa Clause (a variant of Sintaklass) appeared in Harper's Weekly in the 1860s and the rest, as they say, is history. In France Santa is known as Pere Noel (Father Christmas) but he does not fill the

children's stockings. French children lay out their shoes (traditionally sabots which were clogs) in the anticipation he will be kind to them. In Belgium children get their presents on the 6th December, St Nicholas Day and only small gifts are exchanged on Christmas Day.

In Spain, Christmas is traditionally a religious festival and the Spanish still do not recognise Santa. Children do however look...

Continued on page 10

Health

Foot Care

Continued from page 9

...forward to gifts during the season. One Spanish tradition is to leave their shoes on the windowsill full of straw, carrots, and barley to feed the horse and donkeys of the Three Wise Men. The wiseman Balthazar is a welcome visitor for it is he who is the Spanish Santa and by morning the children's shoes are filled with gifts. A similar ritual is observed in Portugal with the added tradition of setting a place at the table for the souls of the dead.

The Italian Santa is a woman called La Befansa. She is an old lady who did not offer help and food to the wise men on their journey to the baby Jesus. The women now search in vain with gifts and give them to well behaved children, instead. Naughty children get ashes in their stockings.

In Denmark you need to take care to avoid Julnissers at Christmas. These are elves that live outside but come indoors during the festivities. Apart from wearing woollen clothes with red caps, and long red stockings and wooden clogs, they are not easy to spot. Sometimes only the family cat can see them. Julnissers become practical jokers at Christmas and do mischievous things like hide shoes, or blow out candles.

Superstitious people will never give shoes for Christmas gifts. An old wives tale is if you give a friend a new pair of shoes then they are sure to walk away from you. Probably best then to stick to socks as gifts this Festive Season.

Treat yourself this Christmas and visit a podiatrist (at a regular surgery or at Crisis). Take care of the pair and Merry Christmas.

'ToeSlayer'

Podiatrist and Shoe Historian

Correction

In last issue we published the cartoon below with a typo in the tagline - sorry. I think you'll agree it's a lot funnier with the cartoonist's intended punchline.

Editor



"that's your limescale problem sorted"

SOUP RUNS*

All Souls' Local Action Network (ASLAN)

4 Pavement Slabs

Sat 5.30-8.30am - Covent Garden, Milford Lane, Surrey Street, Strand, and Waterloo.

Hare Krishna Food for Life

The Hare Krishna food run provides vegetarian meals from Monday to Saturday all year round.

Islip Road (Kentish Town) 12.30pm; Arlington Road (Camden) 1.30pm; York Way (King's Cross) 2.30pm; Lincoln's Inn Fields 7.15pm (Mon, Wed, Thurs); finish at Temple if there's food left.

House of Bread -The Vision

3 Pavement Slabs

Second and fourth Sunday in the month (6.45am onwards) - Hot food; but a full cooked breakfast only on the fourth Sunday. On the Strand (at the Charing X end, opposite McDonald's, outside Coutt's).

- We're in touch with Jenny whose run covers the first and second Sundays in this pitch, and will have details soon.

Imperial College

Sunday evenings (8-9.30pm) at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Serving sandwiches and hot beverages.

New Life Assembly

Have a soup run in Hendon, but come to the West End once a month - no specific dates.

The Salvation Army

Suspended

The Salvation Army tea run (with sandwiches) that used to run down into Victoria has been suspended due to the duplication of provision on their pitches. They will assess the situation for the future, and are participating with the soup run forum coordinated by Unleash to rectify this.

Sai Baba

Mon and Wed (we think) 7.30pm: Lincoln's Inn Fields - Curry
This group provide several food services, both in buildings and on the streets.

Simon Community

4 Pavement Slabs

Tea Run: Sun and Mon (6-9.30am): Hinde Street, Milford Lane, Strand, Exeter Street, Covent Garden, Army and Navy, Waterloo, Lincoln's Inn. Wed and Thurs (8-10.30pm) Milford Lane, Chaplin Walk (Waterloo), Army and Navy, Marylebone Church, Hinde Street.

Street Cafe: Mon (4.30-7.30pm) and Wed (9.30am-1.30pm): St Mary-le-Strand Church (Strand).

Soup Runs

Good Soup Guide

No. 5: SW London Vineyard

The South West London Vineyard is another of London's church-based soup runs, but regardless of your religious convictions you'll find their stew a blessing.

Started in 1990 this church have been preparing and distributing hot food and drink to their "neighbours" (their words) who are homeless in Central London ever since. Running with two teams, one cooking and one delivering, they come out every Sunday with five hay-boxes of food.

The run itself is called The King's Table, and the food's a right royal treat.

Ian McLean, who manages the run with his wife Christine, told *The Pavement* that they have some regular foods, such as potatoes, but rotate recipes for the stews for which they



Photograph: The King's Table

are famous. There are ten separate meals in all, everyone of them stew variant. The delicious stews, mostly mince based, are a hit with all their diners, but we, as a gourmet guide, specially recommend the 'Atlas Mountain Stew.'

But it's not all stew and potatoes, although you'll find that enough; bread is provided, as well as fresh fruit and biscuits, all washed down with

hot tea or coffee.

And, for those who will not partake of the flesh of animals, they always have a vegetarian option.

No serious food critic would fail to look at the chefs responsible for the food, and The King's Table were quick to oblige with a view of the kitchens. Pictured above are Pete Sunderland, Lars Lis and Chris McTernan

working on the stews on a Sunday morning.

With a cold winter upon us hot stew takes on a new aspect, but this run thoroughly deserves its three slabs whatever the weather.

'Gourmand'

Rating:



Soup Run: Wed and Thurs (8-9.20pm): Hinde Street, Milford Lane, National Theatre, Army and Navy (Victoria).

Silver Lady Fund 4 Pavement Slabs

Hot pies, pasties, and sausage rolls from Mick's van (It's white with 'Silver Lady Fund' written on the side); each day 6.30-6.45am on Upper Ground, next to the Royal Festival Hall.

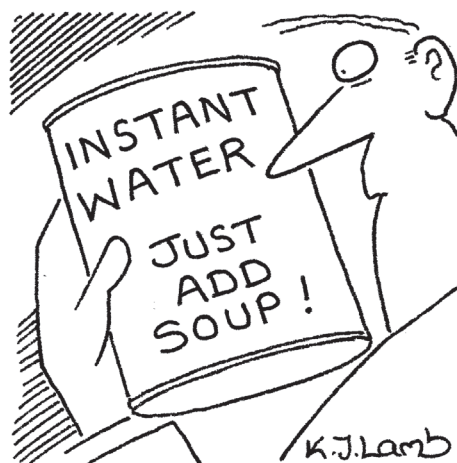
SW London Vineyard - The King's Table 3 Pavement Slabs

Sun 2.30-4.30pm beneath Waterloo Bridge (Embankment) - hot stew and potatoes, bread, fruit, and tea & coffee.

Temple

This location has a long history of soup runs and still has several operating there - we will keep trying to get details.

*Please note, soup kitchens are listed on page 11.



Christmas services at Crisis

It's Christmas, and many readers are heading for Crisis

More than 1,300 homeless and vulnerably housed people are expected to flock to one of the six Crisis Open Christmas (COC) shelters between 23rd and 30th December. Some 800 people will descend upon the London Arena, Isle of Dogs, this year's chosen location for the largest of the 6 shelters. Typically, the main arena will be the epicenter of festivities, hosting a vast and varied array of services. The remaining Christmas clients will retreat to the more specialised satellite venues around the city.

Minibus pick-ups are scheduled to be leaving Victoria, Kings Cross, Temple and Spitalfields Market from the 23rd December. Hostels will be notified of exact details in the weeks leading up to the 23rd and flyers will be handed out throughout the capital. For those preferring

for referral to the female only COC centre, and a 'wet' shelter will be available for up to 100 people - while alcohol will be permitted on the premises, it will not be served.

In COC's 35 year history, the longest running service of this kind, the emphasis has moved towards re-integrate people back into the community through addressing individual needs, be that educational requirements or addiction problems. COC will be running workshops, taster courses and an advice service throughout the eight day period. Mick Bateman, the event's chief coordinator explained that, "having people for a concentrated period with such comprehensive services at our disposal enables us to negotiate a plan specific to the needs of that individual - giving them a good start to the New Year. We don't promise to solve anyone's problems in this short time but we can provide services and facilities to get them on the right track."

Cafe [a centre with access to workshops and information] and at this instance, 10% of those enrolled have graduated into permanent employment".

a-side football tournament on 27th. Live bands and DJs will be playing in the main hall over the Christmas week. A smaller hall will be dedicated to the



Photograph: Crisis

However, in the past Crisis Open Christmas has faced criticism from London hostels as the temporary accommodation they offer is abandoned for the merriment at venue. Although this is not something they actively encourage, Bateman agreed that this does happen, "this is one of our biggest issues. We appreciate that it can be particularly lonely for those without a home or family and naturally people seek companionship, they want to be with their friends at this time of year". This is something he says that they have started to address. "We ask our visitors to notify their respective hostels if they plan to be away, not least to prevent them losing their beds."

more impromptu performances by the aspiring Sinatras and Madonnas amongst the audience.

An operation on this scale would not be possible without the help of the 4000 volunteers that will be involved in the set-up and execution of COC 2005. Typically, the number of volunteer's peak on Christmas day. In the past COC has managed to attract a surplus 500 hundred happy helpers, and comments such as "that was the best Christmas I ever had" encapsulate the spirit at this Christmas camp and keep them coming back for more. Bateman told us, "it's one week of the year where residents feel truly settled. Together we manage to create a really integrated atmosphere - it's like one big happy family."

'Bez'

• Details of the full services available at COC can be seen on page 15, along with the transport available to get you there - free minibus pick-up sites are included.



Photograph: Crisis

to stay away from the hub of the London Arena, a referral service will be in place; the more vulnerable clients can request refuge at one of the two 'quiet shelters'. Women too will have the opportunity

Each year boasts an ever increasing list of facilities which seems to be paying dividends, Bateman said. "Off the back off last year's Open Christmas, 30 people went on to become members of Skylight

For those readers heading for the Isle of Dogs over the Christmas period, key events to enter into the remaining page of your 2005 diary include; Midnight Mass delivered by the Bishop of Southwark on Christmas Eve (all religious denominations welcome), Christmas dinner with all the trimmings on the 25th and a 5-

Christmas services in London

Alcohol workers – A
Art classes – AC
Benefits advice – B
Barber – BA
Bathroom/showers – BS
Counselling – C
Careers advice – CA

Clothing – CL
Drugs workers – D
Dentist – DT
Education/training – ET
Food – F
Free food – FF
Foot care – FC

Housing advice – H
Internet access – IT
Laundry – L
Luggage stowage – LS
Music classes – MC
Mental health – MH
Medical services – MS

Outreach workers – OB
Outreach worker links – OL
Pavement stockists – P
Sexual health advice – SH
Safe keeping – SK
SSAFA – SS
Tenancy support – TS

We've covered the services open over Christmas, particularly for those wanting to avoid the crowds at Crisis. Individual services' seasonal openings are marked by •

DAY CENTRES

Ace of Clubs (16+)
St Alphonsus Rd, Clapham
020 7622 3196
Sun, Mon, Tues: 2pm-6pm;
Wed, Thurs: 12 noon-2pm; Fri,
Sat: 12 noon-6pm
BS, DT, F, FC, H, IT, L, MS, OB

Acton Homeless Concern
Emmaus House
1 Berrymead Gardens, Acton
Call for opening times:
020 8992 5768
A, B, BA, CL, D, DT, ET, F, FC

Aldgate Advice Centre
Aldgate High Street, Aldgate
020 7283 1950
Mon-Fri: 9.15am-11.30am
for rough sleepers; 1.30pm-
3.30pm: appointments and
activities; Fri: 3pm-4pm for
rough sleepers
A, B, BS, CL, D, ET, F, H, L, MH, MS, P
• Closing for 26 - 27
Dec and 02 Dec 06.

Broadway Day Centre
Market Lane, Shepherds Bush
020 8735 5810
Mon-Fri: 9.30am-2.30pm
(drop-in); 8.30am-4.30pm
(breakfast for rough sleepers)
CL, ET, F, FC, H, MS, P

Choral Hall Lifeskills Centre
310 Barking Road, Plaistow
020 7511 8377
Mon-Fri: 10am-2pm
A, B, BS, C, CL, D, F, FC, L, MS

Cricklewood Homeless Concern
60 Ashford Road, Cricklewood
020 8208 1608
Housing drop-in: Mon, Wed,
Fri: 10am-11am (for advice
please be at front door at 9am
for ticket). Day services: Mon,
Wed, Fri: 10am-3.30pm (10am-
12.30pm for advice; 1pm-
3.30pm basic services)
AC, B, BS, H, IT, L, MS, OL

Crisis Skylight
66 Commercial Street, E1
020 7426 5661
Mon-Thurs 2pm-9.30pm
AC, ET, IT, P
• Closed on Christmas
and Boxing Day, and open
between then and New Year
11am-5pm during the week.

Deptford Churches Centre
Speedwell Street, Deptford
020 8692 6548
Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri:
9am - 3.30 pm
BS, ET, F, H, L

Finsbury Park
Street Drinkers Initiative
91 Tollington Way
020 7263 4140
Mon-Thurs: 8.30am-3pm
A, BS, D, F, H, L, OL

Hanbury Community Project (S.C.T.)
22a Hanbury Street
Spitalfields, E1
020 7377 2497
Wed -Thurs 10.00am-4.00pm
AC, B, C, ET, IT, P
• Shut for Christmas 23
Dec 05 until 03 Jan 06.

Holy Cross Centre
The Crypt, Holy Cross Church
Cromer Street, WC1
020 7278 8687
Mon: 2pm-5pm;

Tues: 6.30pm-9pm; Thurs:
5-8pm (Italian speakers
session); Wed: 12-2.30pm and
Fri: 12-3pm (refugees and
asylum seekers session).
FF, H, MH, P
• Back at Cromer Street
and open as usual over the
festive season.

London City Mission
- see Waterloo Christian
Centre

Manna Day Centre
6 Melior Street, SE1
020 7403 1931
Mon-Sun: 8.30am-1.30pm
B, BS, CL, DT, FF, FC, H, MH, MS, P
• Paddy tells us that
they'll be closed from Fri 23
- Thurs 29 Dec 05. He reopens
at 8.30am on Fri 30 Dec.

North Lambeth Day Centre
St John's Crypt,
• Sadly, it will not
reopen - see article page 3.

North London Action for the Homeless (NLAH)
Church Hall
24-30 Bouverie Road, N16
020 8802 1600
Tue: 12pm-1.30pm (drop-in);
Thurs 7-8.30pm
B, BS, CL, FF, P

Rochester Row Day Centre
97 Rochester Row, SW1
020 7233 9862
Mon and Fri: 5.30pm-8pm
(appointments only); Tues
2pm-4.30pm (art workshop);
Wed and Thurs: 5.30pm-8pm
(drop-in session); Thurs 1pm-
5pm (Benefits); Thurs and Fri
2pm-4pm (English classes)
AC, B, BS, CL, ET, FF, P
• Open normal hours
over the festive period.

Shoreditch Community Project (S.C.T.)

St Leonard's Church
Shoreditch High Street, E1
020 7613 3232
Mon, Wed, Fri: 9.30am-
12.30pm; Tues: 2.00pm-
4.00pm
FF, B, OL, P
• Closed 24 - 27 Dec,
then open again on 28 - 30th.
Closed again 31 - 03 Jan 06.
Normal service resumes Mon
04 Jan 06

Simon Community
House of Hospitality, 129
Malden Road, Kentish Town
Mon-Fri: 9am-5.30pm
• Refurbished (with
a new kitchen) and open as
usual over Christmas.

Spectrum Centre
6 Greenland Street, NW1
020 7267 4937
Mon: 10am-12pm (advice),
2pm-4pm (drop-in); Tues:
10am-12pm (advice),
2pm-4pm (women only); Wed:
2pm-4pm (advice); Thurs:
10am-2pm (advice);
Fri: 10am-2pm (advice); 2pm-
4pm (advice)
A, BS, C, CL, D, FC, H, L, LS, MH, MS, TS

Spires Centre
8 Tooting Bec Gardens
020 8696 0943
Tues and Thurs: 9-10.30am
(rough sleepers only),
10.30am-2pm (drop in); Wed:
10am-12pm (rough sleepers),
10am-1pm (adult learning
centre); Fri: 10am-1pm
(women only); Sun: 11.30am-
3pm (drop-in)
A, B, CL, D, ET, FF, FC, H, MC, MH, MS, P

Continued on page 14

Christmas services continued

Continued from page 13

Spires Centre

- Irregular hours as follows: 22 Dec: 9-10.30am (rough sleepers only); 10.30am-2pm (drop in); 23 Dec: Closed; 24 Dec: 10am-1pm; 25-26 Dec: 10-11.30am (rough sleepers only); 11.30am-3pm (drop in); 27 - 31 Dec 05: Closed. Opening again Sun 01 Jan 06; 10-11.30am (rough sleepers only); 11.30am-3pm (drop in).

Spitalfield's Crypt Trust
see Hanbury and Shoreditch Community Projects

St Christopher's Fellowship

Lime Grove Resource Centre
47 Lime Grove, W12
Please call for opening times:
020 8740 9182

AC, BS, CA, ET, FC, IT, L, MS

St Cuthbert's Centre

The Philbeach Hall
51 Philbeach Gdns, Earls Court
020 7835 1389

Mon-Fri: 11.30pm-3.45pm
AC, BS, C, CL, F, H, IT, L, OL, P

- Xmas lunch on 18 Dec (over 60s), and 25 Dec: served at 1pm. The centre will be closed on 26 - 27 Dec 05 and on 02 Jan 06. Other times open as usual.

St John's at Hackney

Community Space Centre
Lower Clapton Road, E5
020 8985 6707

Mon-Thurs: 10am-12.30pm;
2pm-4.30pm; Wed: 10am-12.30pm

B, BS, CL, ET, F, H, IT, MS

St Stephen's Church

The Manna

17 Canonbury Rd, N1 2DF
020 7226 5369

Tues: 7pm-9pm (drop-in);
Weds: 1-3pm (drop-in: B and FC); Fri: 10am-1pm (drop-in)
BS, CL, FC, FF, L, P

- Open as normal over Xmas.

The Connection at St Martin's (Social Care Unit)

12 Adelaide Street, WC2
020 7766 5544

Daily 9am-12.30pm drop-in with some afternoon sessions. On the weekends the service is mixed (16+) from 9am-1pm (no entry after 10.30). There are also drop-in sessions on Tues and Thurs 4.30pm-7.30pm (26+ only).

Social Care Unit (age 26+)
A, AC, B, BS, CA, CL, D, ET, F, H, IT, MC, MH, MS, P, SK, SS

- Closed 28 Dec 05 - 02 Jan 06, with normal service from 03 Jan. Opened for a Christmas meal for all ages on 25 Dec - for all ages (16+).

The Passage (25+)

St Vincent's Centre,
Carlisle Place, SW1P
020 7592 1850

Mon-Fri: 7am-11am for rough sleepers. Appointments only beyond this time

A, B, CA, CL, D, ET, F, FC, H, IT, L, MH, MS, TS

Upper Room, St Saviour's

Cobbold Road, W12
020 8740 5688

Mon-Thur: 5.30pm-6.45pm;
Tue: 9.30am-11.45am; Sat-Sun: 12.30 pm-1.30pm

A, BA, C, CA, D, ET, FC, FF, H

Waterloo Christian Centre

6 - 8 Webber Street
SE1 8QA
020 7928 1677

Mon-Fri: 9am-12noon
B, BA, BS, CL, FF, H

West London Day Centre

134-136 Seymour Place, W1H
020 7569 5900

Mon-Fri: 8.45am-10.30am for rough sleepers only; 2pm-4pm (drop in) with TS and light refreshments

AC, B, BS, C, CL, F, IT, L, LS, MS, OL, P, SK, TS

Whitechapel Mission

212 Whitechapel Road, E1
020 7247 8280

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun:

6am-11am (cooked breakfast)
BS, CL, FF, MS, OL

SOUP KITCHENS

American Church

(entrance in Whitefield Street)
79a Tottenham Court Rd, W1T
020 7580 2791

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 10am-12pm. Serving hot meals, soup and bread, and/or sandwiches

ASLAN

All Souls Church - Clubhouse
Langham Place, W1
020 7580 3522

Sat: by invitation

MEDICAL SERVICES

Great Chapel Street Medical Centre

13 Great Chapel Street, W1
020 7437 9360

Mon-Fri: 2pm-4pm; Mon, Tues, Thurs: 11am-12.30pm

A, B, C, D, DT, FC, H, MH, MS, P, SH

- Closed on 26 - 27 Dec, the afternoon of 30 Dec, and on 02 Jan 06. Otherwise open as usual. for you to get your flu jabs

Dr. Hickey's - Cardinal Hume Centre

Arneway Street, SW1
020 72228593

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 10am-12.30pm & 2pm-4pm.

Wed: 10am-12.30pm

A, B, C, D, DT, FC, H, MH, MS, P, SH

- Festive hours as follow: Open 22 - 23 Dec: 9am - 1.30pm; Closed 24 - 27 Dec. Open again 28 Dec: 10am - 12.30pm; 29 - 30 Dec: 10am - 2.00pm; Closed again 31 Dec 05 - 02 Jan 06; reopens 03 Jan.

King's Cross Primary Care Centre

264 Pentonville Rd, N1
020 7530 3444

B, BS, CL, DT, FC, H, MH, MS, P, SH

- Closed 26 - 27 Dec and 02 Jan 05. They also have a new weekly session at this address Weds 2 - 4pm.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES

The Hungerford Drug Project (Turning Point)

32a Wardour Street



"It must be cold out -
the penguin's come in"

London
W1D 6QR
Mon - Fri 2-5pm (drop in)
020 7287 8743
A, C, D, MH, P

- The Wardour Street Service will be closed over Christmas until 03 Jan 06.

The Needle Exchange Van
Centrepont
London
Mon - Fri 4-7pm

- Service suspended from 23 Dec 05 - 03 Jan 06; except it will be operating on 29 - 30 Dec (normal times).

ADVICE SERVICES

Borderline (Scottish)
7-9 Belgrave Road
SW1V 1QB
0845 456 2344 (advice line)
Mon-Fri: 9.30 - 10.30am (drop-in advice service); 9.30am-4.30am (appointments)
Closed Wed pm
A, B, C, CL, D, H, MH, P
• Closed from Fri (pm) 23 Dec 05 - 03 Jan 06.

London Irish Centre
50-52 Camden Square
London
NW1 9XB
020 7916 2222
Ring for specific service times
A, B, C, CL, D, ET, H, MC

Notre Dame Refugee Centre
5 Leceister Place
London
WC2H 7BX
020 7434 1619
Mon and Thurs: 11am - 4pm (drop in)
Service primarily for French speaking refugees and asylum seekers
B, C, CA, FF, H

St Giles Trust
64-68 Camberwell Church St, SE5
020 7703 7000
Mon-Fri: 9.30am-12.30pm
A, B, BS, D, ET, H, L, MH, MS, P, TS
• Their full range of services will be unavailable from 23 Dec - 03 Jan 06. There will be a skeleton service from

28-30 Dec for existing clients. Clients are advised to go to Crisis Open Christmas and come after 03 Jan 06.

BENEFITS AGENCY

SOUTHWARK HOMELESS UNIT
Wedge House
36-40 Blackfriars Road
SE1 8PB
020 7902 8600

SPECIALIST SERVICES

Quaker Mobile Library
Mon (every second): North Lambeth Day Centre (Waterloo), The Christian Centre in Webber St (behind the Old Vic), and The Manna Centre (the busiest stop).
Sat (every): am, The Passage and St Martin's.

EX-FORCES

SSAFA Forces Help are available across London and listed above as SS.

Ex-Service Fellowship Centre
40 Buckingham Palace Road.
Victoria
Offers an excellent service.
Tel: 020 7828 2468.

AWOL? Call the 'reclaim your life' scheme from SSAFA on 01380 738137 (9am-10am Mon-Fri).

TELEPHONE SERVICES

Shelter, housing info and advice: 0808 800 44 44 (everyday, 8am-12am)

Message Home Helpline: 0800 700 740 (everyday, 24 hrs)

Runaway Helpline 0808 800 7070. Free line for u18s who've left home

Get Connected: 0808 808 4994. Free advice for young people (1pm-7pm, 7 days)

National Debtline: 0808 808 4000

COLD-WEATHER/NIGHT SHELTERS

Camden and Clerkenwell
Various churches
07908 131518
01 Jan - 31 Mar 06: 24hrs
Beds for 12
Local referral only (Dry)

Hackney Winter Night Shelter

Various Churches
07985 977 751
01 Jan - 31 Mar 06: 8pm to 8am (7pm Sun). Last entry 10pm (9pm Sun)
Beds for at least 20
Open Access (Dry)

Islington Cold Weather Shelter

Various Churches
07960 491151
01 Jan - 31 Mar 06: 7.30pm to 8.30am
Beds for 12 - 15
Entry by booking ahead (Dry)

Quaker Homeless Action Open Christmas

Whitechapel Mission
Cavel St, E1 1BJ
020 7033 3585
23 - 30 Dec: 24 hrs
No beds, but sleeps 120
Open Access (Dry)

Redbridge Night Shelter

16 York Rd, Ilford,
IG1 3AD
020 8514 8958
Open year 'round
18 Beds (16 male/2 female)
Open Access (Dry)

St Martin's Night Centre

Social Care Unit
St Martin's-in-the-field
Open year 'round: 10pm-7.30am
Space for 40 (no beds)
Referral only (Dry)
• Closed 24 - 28 Dec - during COC.

Turnaround (Newham)

Choral Hall
020 7511 8377
Open year 'round 7.30pm to 7.30am
25 beds
Referral from Choral Hall Day Centre (Dry)

CRISIS OPEN CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

London Arena

Limeharbour
Isle of Dogs
E14 9TH
0870 011 3335
23 - 30 Dec: 24 hrs
Open Access (over 18s). Access to 5 other sites (wet shelter, women's shelter et cetera) by referral from this site only.

Services: Football and volleyball pitches are being built as we go to press, but there's a lot more: Showers; dental treatment; medical service (doctors and nurses); barber/hairdresser; drug and alcohol dependency services; clothing stores; Skylight café; Mary Ward Centre will be present - they're an adult education centre based in Bloomsbury; Community Service Volunteers will be represented for those looking for non-profit employment (see article on volunteering on page 5); Streetleague - the organisers of the Homeless World Cup are putting together a 5-a-side football tournament; aerobics; yoga; massage; alternative therapy; there's also a dog creche.

Transport:

Underground - Crossharbour & London Arena (DLR)

Trains - Limehouse, Greenwich

Bus - Bethnal Green D3, Hackney D6, Mile End D7, Stratford D8, Highbury & Islington 277, Trafalgar Square N50

Free minibuses -

Free Crisis minibuses run from four central London pick-up points to the main shelter. Four will leave the main shelter at approximately 10am, 4pm and 8.30pm every day to collect guests from Kings Cross (York Way), Victoria station (outside the Apollo theatre), Spitalfields market and Temple underground station. Exact pick-up times will be posted at these points.

Missing persons

Matt, 30, rang Message Home late one night wanting to pass a message to his mother. They had not spoken for six years following an argument, but Matt was now keen to make contact. He didn't have her phone number but Message Home agreed to write to Matt's mum at her last known address asking her to phone us. She rang two days later and we passed the following message from

Matt: 'Mum, I am safe and well and would like to make contact'. He also gave his mobile number. Matt rang us the next day to thank us; his mother had made contact and they had arranged to meet.

The Message Home Helpline, part of the National Missing Persons Helpline (NMPH), is a national 24 hour freefone line for over 18s. We are confidential and can pass a message to a family member to let them know you are safe. We understand that everyone has their own reasons for being away, and we never make judgements. We pass the message that the caller wants passed, without telling the caller what to do. In some cases callers ask for extra support, and we will try to refer them to help. We only ever make referrals with the caller's consent and we have no ability to trace calls or locate a caller.

We also have the facility for 3way calls. This gives our callers the option of speaking to a family member or police without having to make the call themselves, and without it being traced.

We know how hard it can be to make take that first step in ringing that person you've lost touch with. By passing a simple 'safe and well' message it can sometimes open the lines of communication or in some cases, just let your family know you are still alive without having to speak to them.

Message Home is free from all payphones, landlines and some mobiles, and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you would like to send a message to your family this Christmas, call the Message Home Helpline 0800 700 740

Sophie Woodforde
NMPH

Jonathan Marks



Age at Disappearance: 30

Jonathan has been missing from Hospital in Harrow, Middlesex since 24th March 2005. He went for a walk but failed to return.

There is growing concern for Jonathan as he was unwell at the time of his disappearance. We are anxious to find out that Jonathan is safe and well and urge anyone with any information to come forward. We just want to hear that Jonathan is safe and well.

Jonathan has brown hair and blue eyes. When he was last seen, Jonathan was wearing a black jacket, a light blue shirt and brown boots.

If you have seen Jonathan or have any news that may help us get in contact with him, please contact the National Missing Persons Helpline on 0500 700 700. All calls are free and confidential. Alternatively you can use e-mail to pass on information, again confidentially: sightings@missingpersons.org

Michelle Jarvis



Age at Disappearance: 31

It has now been more than four years since Michelle went missing. She was last seen on 1st December 2001 leaving a hospital in the Fulham area of London. Though there is little known of Michelle's whereabouts since; it is thought that she may have stayed in a hostel in Hammersmith at one point. There is great concern for Michelle. Her mother is extremely anxious to know that Michelle is okay, and would dearly love to hear from her.

Michelle can call the Message Home Helpline on 0800 700 740 where she can leave a confidential message letting her loved ones know that she is safe and well. Michelle doesn't have to say where she is, just that she is alright.

Michelle is now 35 years old, though she looks younger. She is 5'8" tall, of slim build with long blond hair and blue eyes.

If you have seen Michelle, please call the NMPH on Freephone 0500 700 700.

James Harmon



Age at disappearance: 30

Belfast born James was last seen on 24th January 1998, when he left his girlfriend's house to meet a friend in Rainham, Essex. His car was later found abandoned.

James (originally from Northern Ireland) is from Romford in Essex and has relatives in Dagenham, and contacts in Ilford and Barking. He worked part time as a doorman at the Robin Hood pub in Longbridge Road and also worked as a mechanic.

His mother, Jean, who lives in Manchester is desperate to hear from her son. She says it is very out of character for James to be out of contact for so long. "James was very fond of his family and children. I am pleading for information - someone out there must know something."

James is 5'7" tall, of stocky build with very short light brown hair and hazel eyes.

If you have seen James, please call the NMPH on Freephone 0500 700 700.