

# Emmaus South Lambeth



The Newsletter of Emmaus South Lambeth Issue 2/2008

## Lumley raises the roof in West Norwood



**Pointedly funny: Joanna Lumley has people in stitches during her wildly successful visit to Emmaus South Lambeth**

Film and TV star Joanna Lumley swept into West Norwood to officially open the new accommodation block of Emmaus South Lambeth making it a fun-filled day for adults and children.

Joanna was joined by Emmaus UK President Terry Waite earlier this year to cut the ribbon at the doors of Bobby Vincent House, where the Emmaus South Lambeth Companions live. They then went on to perform a great double act in the

auction raising over £1,000 for the charity.

Staff, volunteers and trustees welcomed nearly 500 local residents to the grand opening, which featured an eclectic line up including a bouncy castle, stilt walking, face painting and rickshaws. Thank you very much to all who came along to help us celebrate this proud occasion!

**For a Companion's view and picture special see pages 4 and 5.**

### Issue highlights

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## West Norwood Second-hand Superstore

Beds from £25  
TVs from £10

Wardrobes from £20  
3 piece suites from £50

Chest of drawers from £15  
Display cabinets from £20

**1 Knight's Hill Square, SE27 0HP** see page 8 for details

# Chairs swap seat



**No looking back: Nick (left) hands over to new chair, Alex**

2008 has not only seen the official opening of the Emmaus South Lambeth Community, but the passing of another important milestone as longstanding Chair Nick Kittoe stood down. His own journey illustrates the immense energy it has taken to bring the Community to life.

“Leading the effort to bring Emmaus to South Lambeth has taken up much of the energy of 10 years of my life,” says Nick. “I tried at first to escape by giving a little money to help start Emmaus Cambridge, but all that did was awaken my dissatisfaction with the state of social exclusion and most traditional attempts to address it.”

For many it takes a first hand experience of inequality to get involved in the running of a charity, but for Nick there were still personal issues he had to overcome. “I am not a ‘charitable’ person – at least not in the conventional sense” he continues, “I’ve never felt any individual action of mine can really change even one human relationship. I see charity as something much harder, of truly opening yourself up to social engagement and the responsibility that brings – not simply trying to avoid it with hand-outs.”

“Giving away one’s wealth or time is not in itself significant, the commitment has to be personal, to be able to say ‘I am here for you, whoever you are, on fully human terms’.” And though his personal circumstances have moved on, that commitment is set to remain. “Apart from my family I feel it’s the best thing I’ve done. I hope that others can now build on the opportunity created by many hard-working South Londoners over the past decade,” Nick concludes. “Life took me from Lambeth to the North country, far from Emmaus South Lambeth but never from Emmaus.”

In contrast incoming Chair Alex Murdock is relatively new to Emmaus South Lambeth, “And I’m still learning!” he confesses. A Professor at the

London South Bank University by day, Alex is realistic about the challenges ahead. “I feel that there is a lot to do in terms of taking the Community to its next stage of development. We need to build up the business and move forward with our plans for the new building (to increase the capacity of the warehouse).”

To do this, Alex is keen to draw on the skills of local people, to help embed Emmaus South Lambeth into the West Norwood community. “We strongly welcome and value the volunteers and staff we have here. There is also a committed body of trustees who are actively involved. All of these people are critical to the success of all Emmaus

Communities. However, there is always room for those with the right skills and commitment to help take the Community to the next level.”

But to Alex, most important of all however are the Companions themselves. “They are the reason we are all here and we need to keep focused on them and their needs.” He says, “The group is taking shape and I hope I have now got to know them. In a planned fashion, we now need to bring in more Companions and foster greater recognition within the local community.”

**“ I am not a ‘charitable’ person – at least not in the conventional sense ”**



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If you would like to talk about volunteering opportunities within ESL, please contact us on **020 8761 4276** or email **info@emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk**

# Turbulent journey leads new Community Leader to Emmaus South Lambeth

**In August ESL welcomed its new Community Leader. We caught up with him three weeks into his post.**

Mike O'Meara, whose silent 'e' gives away his Irish heritage far better than his broad English accent, has come a long way to join Emmaus South Lambeth.

"Dublin, Coventry, central London, Clapham, Bayswater, Westminster, Northampton, Lincolnshire..." lists Mike as he recounts a 25-year CV, mostly working in hostels and homelessness services.

"After my father died I was homeless for two years. I was living in Dublin, very unwell, a typical stereotype of a homeless person. Beard, dirty, that was me. Through a soup-run I found a place in a hostel run by the Salvation Army. They helped me find my pride and dignity and eventually I joined the SA and became a Minister, spending 15 years working for them."

This work took him all over Britain, his personal experience giving him the empathy to connect with others in similar circumstances. Eventually however it was a posting back to Ireland that proved one of his biggest challenges.

"I was running a night shelter in Dublin, based in an old geriatric ward and sur-

## ESL and the scented garden in Norwood Park



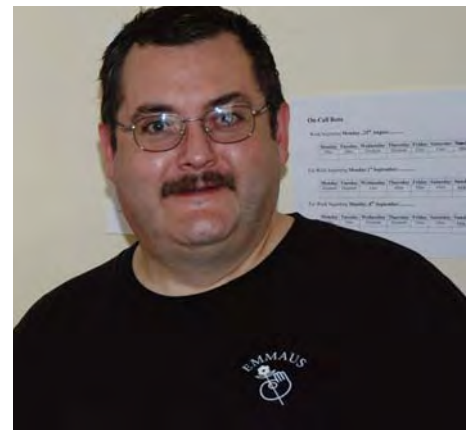
Fragrant find: Companions are now involved in the restoration and maintenance of the 'garden' in Norwood Park. Once a school room, the friends of Norwood Park have created this unique space for the benefit of all park users and local schools for the study of flora and fauna.

rounded by lots of other hostels, for victims of domestic abuse and other issues. There was a huge steel door you had to pass through. The place was steeped in local folklore and stigma, no-one liked going there. But we turned it around and eventually, people actually came to us asking to stay."

So what brought Mike to South London? "I spent four years as Community Leader for Emmaus Village Carlton (Bedfordshire) and felt it was time for a new challenge. There's so much opportunity here, a new Community with a great infrastructure – Bobby Vincent House, the shop and the warehouse. The foundations have been laid."

Having worked in two quite different Communities (Village Carlton is very rural), we asked Mike how local people react to the work of Emmaus. "Some people can be a bit 'NIMBY' (not in my back yard). They expect ex-offenders. But when we tell them what Emmaus is all about, our ethos of giving homeless people work, a purpose, a

**“ We're here to invest in the Companions, to get their lives back on track ”**



**Community Leader: Mike O'Meara**

routine, they usually change their minds and become very positive."

So what are Mike's aspirations for Emmaus South Lambeth? "I'm very keen to integrate ESL into the local community. We need more activities involving the local community, bringing people into Bobby Vincent House and changing those stereotypes about homeless people."

Reflecting on 'those stereotypes' and his personal experiences, Mike ends our interview by looking to the future: "We're here to invest in the Companions, to get their lives back on track and hopefully help them move on to live independently. The people here aren't homeless. They used to be but now this is their home. To look at our guys and gals, you wouldn't have thought they were homeless at all."

## Venture proved just capital

**“ I have recently taken part in a unique venture for Emmaus South Lambeth: becoming a leaflet distributor which earned money for the Community, writes Companion Jason.**

A volunteer arranged for two Companions to hand out leaflets for Tesco's new store in the high street. Kevin and me were dispatched to Tesco at 9am where we met the manager. He said the idea was that as this Tesco Express store was set a few feet back from the High Street near St Luke's Church many people might not be aware of its existence.

After finding our designated spot, Kevin crossed the road and started outside Iceland opposite me. We distributed 600 flyers between us after

three and a half hours. On Wednesday we arrived at Tesco bright and early to collect the rest of the leaflets and continued were we had left off to almost complete our allotted time.

I believe that it was a successful endeavour which I don't mind doing again and Kevin feels the same way. The project got us off site and made money for the Community. ”



**Companion Jason: leafletting for Tesco to earn money for the Community**



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## Official opening of Emmaus South Lambeth

# Scenes of a day that proved pure theatre

Well, after months of planning, weeks of organising and hours of agonising about the weather, the Day of the Opening dawned with a clear blue sky and a smile of relief on my face. The next few hours are mostly a blur, but I know I laughed a lot, met loads of lovely people – and obviously talked too much because I was hoarse the next day! Most importantly, I witnessed Joanna Lumley cut the ribbon and officially open Bobby Vincent House (and it's a great relief to us all not to have to climb in through the windows anymore!), writes Companion Elizabeth.

For those of you who came, thank you, and I hope you enjoyed it every bit as much as I did; to all others, bad luck – you missed many treats, a lot of fun – and easily the best face-painting I have ever seen.

Joanna made a lovely speech before cutting the ribbon and I wasn't the only Companion with a lump in their throats and extra determination to help make Emmaus South Lambeth a Golden Success Story.

I was nominally on the refreshments stall, but had to abandon my post from time to time fetching this or finding that or rounding up the other... so my thanks to my extremely capable colleagues for staying on post during my absences, through hail, wind and even a little bit of sun!

All too soon it was over, and many thanks to all who helped with the clearing up.

Read Elizabeth's blog on:

[www.emmaus.blog.com](http://www.emmaus.blog.com)



Three cheers: Terry and Joanna celebrate after cutting the ribbon



**Companionship: Joanna links arms with two Companions called Mark in front of our superstore**



**Hair apparent: stilt walker promoting the opening**



**What am I bid: Joanna raises lots with assistance from Companion Harry (right)**



**Crowd pleaser: a day enjoyed by all**



**What a cheek: face-painting was popular**

## The plot thickens

The Community allotment in Upper Norwood is now showing healthy growth and provides beans, spinach, potatoes and onions for the Companions. Elizabeth (pictured below) promotes healthy recipes, see right.



**Pick of the crop: Elizabeth working in the allotment**

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# Popeye's Pizzas

**This is a particular treat for those who are allergic to tomato, as it has a spinach base instead.**

**For two plate-sized pizzas, preparation time is around 30 minutes (excluding the time the dough takes to rise), and cooking time is 30-35 minutes at 230°C, 450°F, Gas Mark 8.**

## FOR BASE

**INGREDIENTS:** 175g strong white (bread) flour, 1 level teaspoon dried yeast, 1/2 teaspoon caster sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 tablespoon olive oil, 120ml hand-hot water

**METHOD:** Add the sugar and yeast to the water; mix the salt and olive oil into the flour, adding the yeast when it has risen to the surface. Knead the dough for up to 5 minutes (it should be quite springy and shiny) then return to bowl and cover with damp cloth for 20-30 minutes until doubled in size. Set oven to heat up and prepare topping.

## FOR TOPPING

**INGREDIENTS:** 150 g frozen spinach blocks, defrosted, 1 large onion, peeled and thinly sliced, 1 large red pepper; stem taken off and seeds and walls extracted, then thickly sliced into rings, 2 teaspoons each finely chopped marjoram and basil, a selection from 10 medium sized mushrooms/50g sweetcorn/100g ham, diced/2 rings pineapples, cut into chunks/2 teaspoons pine kernals/1/2 tin of tuna in oil or brine/4 anchovy fillets/12 stoned olives/3 teaspoons mixed seeds etc, etc, 200g mozzarella, cut into cubes, 1 tablespoon olive oil

**METHOD:** Gently fry the onions, peppers and mushrooms (if used) in the olive oil for 5-7 minutes whilst gathering the other ingredients. Roll out the dough, grease a medium-sized roasting tin then dust it in a little flour, line it with the dough, then spread the spinach evenly over it. Add the onions, peppers and your choice of toppings evenly over the spinach, then sprinkle the herbs over, finally adding the mozzarella and sprinkling the olive oil. Cook for 30-35 minutes as above.

**ENJOY!**



## Emmaus Companions become euro stars

Two of our local Companions spread their wings to visit Emmaus Communities in Germany and Holland. Ian and Mark travelled by coach on 10 August to join the Emmaus International Summer Camp.

Says Mark: "It was my first time out of the UK with Emmaus. We worked on a children's farm in Krefeld, Germany setting up an assault course for horses and their riders." Ian and Mark lived and worked with other Emmaus Companions from Germany, France, Poland and Holland. They also visited Emmaus Feniks in Tegelen, Holland for



**Mark (right) sitting next to Ian, during a break**

a day. Both were shown around and learnt how the Community operated. Reflecting on the stay Mark said he experienced some language difficulties but coped because all had "a common link and goal." He recommended the Summer Camp to other Emmaus Companions.

# Having a clearout?



Our business relies on quality donations from the public. Items that are especially useful are beds, wardrobes, TVs with remote and chests of drawers.

We offer a free furniture collection service from properties in most SW and SE postcodes as well as Croydon, Thornton Heath and Mitcham. You can also bring items directly to our superstore at 1 Knight's Hill Square or to the Emmaus container on Lambeth's Recycling Centre in Vale Street.

Unfortunately we have to say 'no thank you' to items if they are broken, dirty, incomplete or not easily saleable. Unfortunately we do not have the facilities to refurbish items.

**Please call us on 020 8761 4276 or email [donation@emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk](mailto:donation@emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk) to arrange a collection. For details on items we accept visit: [www.emmaus.org.uk/south-lambeth](http://www.emmaus.org.uk/south-lambeth) and click on donations.**



## Customer Comments...

“I just wanted to express the kindness in service of Emmaus South Lambeth. It is an excellent service provided to the community. I will definitely come back. Regards, Joana Filipe”

“I was happy to donate to Emmaus as their cause is very worthwhile. My dealings with the Lambeth branch were a pleasure. The staff were courteous, friendly and efficient, they came to collect when they said they would, and they took care when removing the items. Yasmin Hashmi”

**We are delighted to hear from our customers. You can either leave feedback on [www.emmaus.org.uk](http://www.emmaus.org.uk) or email us at [info@emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk](mailto:info@emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk)**



*"I can see it in the dining room - but we'll need five more!!"*

# Band's donation plea is music to our ears



In tune with Emmaus: Anti-Flag making the most of their London appearance.

American band Anti-Flag asked their fans to donate unwanted clothes to Emmaus at their gigs in Colchester and Central London.

Known for banging the drum for topical social issues, Anti-Flag are always keen to give something back to the communities where they play. When they discovered how Emmaus Communities offer a way back from homelessness through working and living in a supportive environment, they recognised the effectiveness of the approach and asked their

promoters to get in touch with Emmaus South Lambeth.

Community Leader Mike O'Meara went along to the gig at the University of London Union with a Companion. They had an Emmaus stand at the venue where donated clothes were collected from fans. Lowlife, a producer of music inspired fashion, also plan to donate items. Although we do not sell clothes in our shops in West Norwood, Companions were able to pick some items for personal use.

## Key features of an Emmaus Community

- Independent of primary state benefits
- Full-time work for all Companions who have joined
- Alcohol, drug and violence-free environment
- Needs met plus spending money
- Everyone has their own room and lives as part of a Community



## Did you know...?

A **genuine Rembrandt** etching was discovered in a box of bric-a-brac at Emmaus Village Carlton.

Emmaus Communities generate savings in public spending **in excess of £800,000** each year, according to research carried out this year at Emmaus Village Carlton in Bedfordshire by a team from Cambridge University.

The Emmaus logo was designed by a Companion **in South America**. It represents the dove of peace, the hand of work and the flower of recycling.

**6,000** copies of this newsletter are distributed by our Companions to houses in West Norwood and Dulwich.

You can sign up to our free **mailing list** by emailing your details to [info@emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk](mailto:info@emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk)

## Where to find bargain buys !

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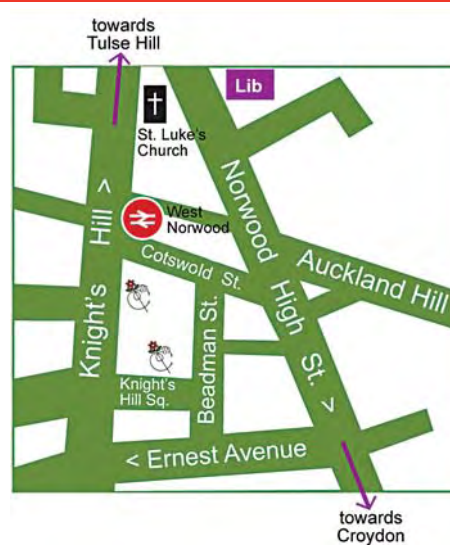
### Emmaus shops

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