

# SENIOR NEWSLETTER

gateway  
housing association  
Diverse communities – one vision

March 2009 - Issue 1

## Well done Larry!

Larry Evans of Edith Ramsay House meets Prime Minister Gordon Brown in October 2008. Larry collected £9,000 for the 2007 Poppy Appeal. Well done Larry!

Name this  
newsletter!  
**WIN £20**  
see page 2

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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# Welcome



A new year and a new newsletter for Gateway's older residents. There's quite enough gloom from the newsrooms so hopefully this newsletter will brighten your day.

You'll still get Gateway's residents' newsletter, "Open Door", but we hope that this newsletter will keep our older residents informed about issues that affect you.

The newsletter editorial team is made up of residents and staff, and consists of me from Appian Court, David Barras of Edith Ramsay House, Marie Higginson of Hugh Platt House and Rabia Wadiwalla of Mosque Tower, with help from Jo Lambert (Communications Officer) and Maxine Sharp (Sheltered Housing Manager).

We have been continually impressed by the stories people of all backgrounds have to tell and which we all think others would enjoy too. Some of us have contributed items – Dave contributed the 'Memories' poem and Marie tells us about her experience in the Bethnal Green tube disaster on page 3 - and we would love other stories and articles from you!

If you want to send something in for our newsletter, please forward it to

Jo Lambert  
Communications Officer  
Gateway  
409-413 Mile End Road  
London E3 4PB

or [jo.lambert@gatewayhousing.org.uk](mailto:jo.lambert@gatewayhousing.org.uk).  
Or if you want to join the editorial team, please contact Jo or Maxine.

Happy reading (and contributing).

**Roger Bardet of Appian Court**

## Introducing Deesha

Many people who have settled in London from overseas are not able to write or sign their own name in English, either because they never learnt to write at all, or because the Roman (English) alphabet is not the script of their language.

Mosque Tower residents are working with the Deesha project from Toynbee Hall. Those taking part are developing their own personal signatures and learning to print their names.

Deesha also help with language needs (explaining in Bengali and Urdu, and possibly Somali and Arabic) or helping out with practical needs. This will give Deesha volunteers experience of working with supported housing to put on their CV.

We are hoping to work with the Deesha Project in other sheltered schemes and we are investigating a textiles project.



Your chance to  
name this brand  
new newsletter!



Welcome to the first edition of our brand new newsletter for our older residents. As well as our 17 sheltered schemes, we have many residents in general needs accommodation who are over 60, and this newsletter is for you too!

So first up we need to find a name for this newsletter! So far we have had suggested Open Door +60, Open Door Senior, Open Door Sheltered or Pensioners' Open Door.

Do you think you can find a better one? If your suggestion is picked, you could win a £20 voucher!

Send your suggestions to Jo Lambert, Gateway, 409-413 Mile End Road, London E3 4PB, 020 8709 4361 or [jo.lambert@gatewayhousing.org.uk](mailto:jo.lambert@gatewayhousing.org.uk).

# Bethnal Green tube disaster

Marie Higginson remembers...

On 3 March 1943, me, my mum and mum's sister went to the Excelsior cinema on Bethnal Green Road. I was 13. While we were watching the film, a message flashed up on the screen: 'the sirens have just gone'.

Mum decided we should leave and we headed out to get a bus (we lived in Bow). But when we got to the tube station mum said that it was going to be a bad night and we should go down the tube instead. There were people already going in, they went there a lot so they had their bedding bundles with them.

Once we were in the tube station, I remember my mum telling people not to push. People were keen to get inside, you see. It was very crowded.

We started down the stairs. As we got nearer to the bottom, I lost hold of mum's hand. I turned around and saw

a big bundle of blankets rolling down over the top of people – someone must have dropped it.

About six steps up from the bottom, I lost my footing and fell. Mum pushed through the crowd and picked me up, I was really frightened. When we got to the bottom we realised something was very wrong – people were starting to fall. They were screaming and panicking, we didn't know what to do.

We got onto the tube platform and waited there – we weren't hurt. No one knew what was happening or why, they were saying 'what's causing it?' Mum said she heard someone say 'the bombs are dropping,' she thought that must be why people were panicking. They caused a stampede and that's why people were killed.

A man came running in and gave my mum a baby to hold. He couldn't find his wife.



Mum held that little baby for over three hours but he didn't come back. She had to give it to an ARP warden in the end.

I remember the bodies – they put the dead on one platform and the injured on the other. We were down there a long time; they wouldn't let us out until morning. There were lots of people helping; soldiers and American GIs too. It was only the next morning when we came out we realised the scale of what had happened.

173 people died and no bombs fell on Bethnal Green that night, it was the army firing rocket batteries from Victoria Park. I don't like to think what would have happened if we'd have left the cinema a couple of minutes later.

## 3 March 1943

## Beware of muggings

We have recently heard of a couple of older residents being mugged when they cash in their pension Giro at the Post Office.

**Remember to take care when taking out money from banks and the Post Office.**

- Always put your money away straight away;
- Make sure people cannot see how much money you have or where you are putting it;
- Either put it in a secure pocket in your

handbag, an inside pocket that can be zipped up or in a money belt (these can be bought quite cheaply from most Boots);

- Go to collect your pension with someone else if possible – there's safety in numbers.

To save having large amounts of money on you at any time, you can get your pension paid directly either to your bank account by Direct Debit or set up a Post Office card account. For more information or to get a Post Office card application form, please call the Pension Service on 0845 60 60 265.

## What is Telecare?

All Gateway sheltered schemes are linked to Tower Hamlets Telecare when your scheme manager is not on site. They are linked through the pull-cords in your flat or your pendent, as well as the door entry system from outside and communal call-points in your scheme.



Telecare helps provide safety, security and wellbeing by helping people to live independently in their own homes. The service is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

When you press your pendant or use the pull-cord, it automatically connects to an operator at the Telecare response centre. They will be able to access your personal details and will speak to you to find out what you need. This could be to contact a doctor or the emergency services, or send someone from Telecare to help you at home.

The main entrance's warden call button will also divert to Telecare when the scheme manager is off duty.

## What's in a name?

As many of you know, Jill Hasler is working with Gateway and Tower Hamlets Council to improve sheltered housing in the area. Some of you have attended focus groups in the schemes – thank you very much for your input.

Jill is looking at how we define and describe sheltered housing – does it reflect what sheltered housing is like now?

A lot of people don't know about sheltered housing and for them the name often conjures up ideas of old-fashioned old peoples' homes. So should we change the name?

Some suggestions that have been made are 'Housing Plus' and 'Independence Plus Housing'. Others feel 'sheltered housing' is a good name and there's no point changing it. Let us know what you think at the next **Sheltered Housing Forum on 15th April 2009**, by emailing [Jill.Hasler@gatewayhousing.org.uk](mailto:Jill.Hasler@gatewayhousing.org.uk) or contacting the sheltered housing team on 020 8709 4369.

## The world at our fingertips

Last year, over 50 older residents learnt how to use a computer and how to access to the internet.

The project took place at Vic Johnson House, Lawrence Close, Regency Court, John Tucker House and Rochester Court. Each scheme was given two refurbished computers and a printer. They also had access to broadband for 10 months.

Gateway and UKOnline jointly funded the project and a really big thanks goes to Diye at Digibridge who carried out the training.

### What happens next?

We hope to provide more computers and internet access to our sheltered schemes over the coming year.

### Why was the project successful?

Having access to the internet and email has opened up a whole new world to people – they now can communicate with friends and family across the world and shop online!



*“Learning how to use computers gave me the confidence to produce this newsletter. We feel that the project really has opened up a whole new world and empowered us.”*

Roger Bardet – ICT Champion

SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) helps those (and their families) who have a connection to the Armed Forces. These include the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. They can provide free and confidential financial, practical and emotional help and advice if:

- you have served one paid day's service in any of the Armed Forces;
- you have completed one year's service in the Reserve Forces, one day's service on operations or you have done National Service;
- you served one paid day in the Mercantile Marines including the Korea, Suez, Falklands and Gulf operations;
- you have completed one year's service in the Association's Nursing and Welfare Service;
- as a UK citizen, you have received one day's pay whilst stationed overseas as part of the Armed Forces and for a period ending no more than six months after your return to the UK.

SSAFA will also help dependants of those with a service connection, including husbands, wives, former spouses, widows, widowers, children and partners.

If you think that you're not eligible for help, you can still call. SSAFA are happy to advise you and can give you guidance on who else you could approach.

### For more information, contact:

SSAFA Forces Help Office  
(office hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9.30am–5pm)

c/o T.A.

52-56 Davies Street,  
London, W1K 5HR

Phone: 020 7491 1355

Email: London.Central@ssafa.org.uk

# Ho ho ho – what a merry Christmas!

David Barras tells us about the events he attended over the festive season.

26  
NOV

**Edith Ramsay House open day.** The open day a great success, it was attended by over 60 people who saw demos and stalls plus craft works, a pianist, yoga and keep fit.

28  
NOV

**St Andrew's Day at John Tucker House.** Great party attended by about 50 residents and guests. Buffet of Scottish fare and a really hot lamb curry plus a disco and numerous raffle prizes. We all enjoyed a very good afternoon out.

03  
DEC

**Christmas party at Rochester Court.** Top-notch party with a wonderful guitar singing duo. Terrific atmosphere and a lovely buffet, all combined to make it a very friendly and delightful afternoon – I did not want it to end.

12  
DEC

**Christmas party at Edith Ramsay House.** A great night was had by all - a full house actually. Good raffle prizes and an excellent buffet plus fantastic music and plenty of dancing and fun.

17  
DEC

**Christmas dinner at Edith Ramsay House.**

Traditional fare was enjoyed by the 23 residents who sat down

to turkey and all the trimmings followed by Christmas pudding with custard, mince pies and plenty of wine and crackers. It was a very good evening.



**Appian Court / Regency Court.**

Unfortunately I couldn't attend as these two events clashed with the one at Edith Ramsay House.

25  
DEC

**Christmas Day.** Those at Edith Ramsay House on Christmas day were treated to Christmas lunch by Agit and her family. What a wonderful surprise!

31  
DEC

**New Year's Eve party at Edith Ramsay House.**

Around 30 residents enjoyed a traditional New Year's Eve with caviar and champagne at midnight, followed by a fireworks display. Well done to all those involved.

12  
JAN

**Belated Christmas party at Hugh Platt House.**

Sorry, unable to attend.

Thanks to all who put time and effort into making these events a big success – and for inviting me!

# Linkage Plus

LinkAge Plus centres in Tower Hamlets are open to people over 50. You don't need a referral, just drop in to your nearest centre.

They offer a range of social and health-related activities.

They also do outreach work for people who may feel isolated and need housing or benefit advice, or information about health and social care.

The centres offer help and support and provide activities, such as exercise and dance classes, health projects, IT classes and welfare advice sessions. They also run social events such as coffee mornings and knitting groups.

Gateway is working in partnership with LinkAge Plus to set up a new programme of activities for residents. We have asked residents what type of activities they want - LinkAge Plus will help us to set these up.

## Sundial Centre

11 Shipton Street, E2.

Tel: 020 7021 4137.

Email: [Shahina.Begum@peabody.org.uk](mailto:Shahina.Begum@peabody.org.uk)

## Toynbee Hall

28 Commercial Street, E1.

Tel: 020 7392 2951

Email: [Zeki.Du'ale@toynbeehall.org.uk](mailto:Zeki.Du'ale@toynbeehall.org.uk)

## Sonali Gardens

79 Tarling Street, E1.

Tel: 020 7265 9292

Email: [Rahima.Rahman@sthildas.org.uk](mailto:Rahima.Rahman@sthildas.org.uk)

## Age Concern Tower Hamlets

Appian Court, 87 Parnell Road, E3.

Tel: 020 8981 7124

Email: [Rahima.Rahman@acth.org.uk](mailto:Rahima.Rahman@acth.org.uk)

## Neighbours in Poplar

St. Matthias Community Centre

113 Poplar High Street, E14.

Tel: 020 7987 0257

Email: [nip65@msn.com](mailto:nip65@msn.com)

## Memories

We met, we married a long time ago,  
he worked long hours, the wages were low.  
No telly, no radio, no bath – times were hard.  
Just a cold water tap and a walk up the yard.

No holidays abroad, no carpets on floors.

We had coal on the fire,  
and we never locked the doors.

Our children arrived, no pills in those days,  
but we brought them up without State aids.

No valium, no drugs, no LSD,  
we cured our pains with a nice cup of tea.  
If you were sick you were treated at once,  
not fill in a form and 'come back next month'.  
No vandals, no savings, we had nout to rob,  
in fact you were rich with a couple of bob.

People were happier in those far off days,  
kinder, more caring, in so many ways.

Milkmen and paper-boys would whistle and sing,  
and a night at the 'flicks' was a wonderful thing.

Oh, we had our troubles, we had our strife,  
but we just had to face them – that was life.

But now I'm alone, I look back through the years,  
don't think of the bad times, the troubles and tears.  
I remember blessings, our home, our kids and love,  
we shared them together, and I thank God above.

*Author unknown*

## Expert Patient programme

We are running an Expert Patient programme at various sheltered schemes for people with long-term health problems, starting in April. This is in partnership with LinkAge Plus.

The six-week course covers relaxation techniques and exercises and issues such as healthy-eating, dealing with pain and tiredness and coping with depression. You will be shown how to manage living with an ongoing health problem, as well as how to keep active.

Anyone with a long-term health condition can self-refer themselves. If you are interested and want to find out more, please let your Scheme Manager know or contact us on 020 8709 4369. You do not have to be a resident of our sheltered schemes to come along.

## Somali residents get help from local services

Residents at Bustaan Radaa sheltered scheme for Somali elders in Bethnal Green have been using local services for advice.

The Whitechapel Law Centre provides legal advice and help on a range of issues, including housing, immigration, welfare benefits and education. Its services are mostly used by people of Bengali, Punjabi, Somali, and Urdu backgrounds and the centre provides access to wide-ranging interpreters.

The Advice & Advocacy team at Oxford House primarily helps the Somali community with immigration casework and other issues. They also offer ESOL classes and their diverse workforce provide interpretation services.

A tenant who has been using the services for the last three years summed up how Bustaan Radaa's tenants view



the services: "These organisations have been wonderful to us, helping us to get our rights and we are grateful to them. We can easily access interpreters which makes them a very friendly service to use. Their staff are all experts and very helpful".

### Contacts

Whitechapel Law Centre  
020 7247 8998

Oxford House 020 7739 9001

## Come to the Sheltered Housing Forum

The Sheltered Housing Forum is open to all residents who live in our sheltered housing schemes.

### The Sheltered Housing Forum aims to:

- improve services provided to sheltered residents;
- help arrange joint social activities;
- share information between schemes, highlighting areas for improvement; and
- provide information and advice for all residents.

The next meeting is on **15 April 2009** at **Edith Ramsay House, Duckett Street, E1, at 12 noon.**

Please contact the Sheltered Housing team on 020 8709 4369 to be put on the mailing list.

## Be Dignify'd



The Dignify project at Toynbee Hall works with older people and professionals to raise awareness of elder abuse. They give informal talks and workshops to help older people to develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- their rights and responsibilities;
- what elder abuse is and who abuses;
- helping older people to stay safe; and
- how to access elder abuse support and services.

Dignify has so far held two successful workshops at St Thomas House and Appian Court.

We are arranging further workshops for the spring at other sheltered schemes. If you would like to join a workshop, please ring us on 020 8709 4369 to register your interest. Please tell us your name, address and telephone number so we can send you details of the workshop.

These workshops are open to all older Gateway residents, not just those who live in sheltered housing.

# Sheltered Housing Team

## Sheltered Housing Manager

Maxine Sharp. Tel: 020 8709 4368

## Sheltered Housing Administrator

Rachel Magee. Tel: 020 8709 4369

## Housing Officers

Karl Clayden. Tel: 020 8709 4367

Vic Johnson House, Appian Court, Lawrence Close, Ruth Court, William Guy Gardens, Mosque Tower, Hugh Platt House, Regency Court.

Pauline Hughes. Tel: 020 8709 4341

St John's House, Edith Ramsay House, John Tucker House, St Thomas House, Bustaan Radaa, Mandela House, Rochester Court, Ted Roberts House, Crosby House, Peter Best House.

## Team Leaders

Sue Flemming. Tel: 020 8980 0330

Scheme Manager at Regency Court

Responsible for supervising Scheme Managers at Vic Johnson House, Appian Court, John Bond House, Lawrence Close, Ruth Court, Ted Robert House.

Nicky Golding. Tel: 020 7987 1324

Scheme Manager at St John's House

Responsible for supervising Scheme Managers at John Tucker House, Edith Ramsay House, St Thomas House, William Guy Gardens, Mobile Scheme Manager.

Siraj Salekin. Tel: 020 7247 2435

Scheme Manager at Mosque Tower

Responsible for supervising Scheme Managers at Bustaan Radaa, Mandela House, Rochester Court, Hugh Platt House.



Fun for the over 50s at York Hall's Young@Heart fitness programme. Maureen Jackson (second left) from Ted Roberts House enjoys a Line Dancing class. For more information, call York Hall on 020 8980 2243.

## Contacting Gateway



Customer services  
020 8709 4300

Maintenance Freephone  
0800 052 9922

Emergency Maintenance  
out-of-hours Freephone  
0800 085 6064

Sheltered housing team  
020 8709 4369

You can ask for this information in **large print**, in Braille, on audio tape or in your language. We will also provide an interpretation service. Please contact us on 020 8709 4300 to arrange this.

আপনি এই লেখাটি বড় ছাপায়, অডিও টেপে, ব্রায়েল লেখায় বা আপনার ভাষায় পেতে পারেন। এ ছাড়াও আমরা অনুবাদ সেবা প্রদান করি। এই সেবার জন্য দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন ০২০ ৮৭০৯ ৪৩০০ নম্বরে। [Bengali]

Waxaad dalban kartaa macluumaadkan oo ku daabacan farta waawayn, ama ku daabacan farta loogu talagalay dadka indhaha la, ama ku duuban cajeladaha maqalka ama ku qoran luqaddaada. Waxa kale oo aannu kuu fidin karnaa adeeg ah tarjamad. Fadlan nagala soo xidhiidh 020 8709 4300 si aannu kuugu qabanqaabinno. [Somali]

Quý vị có thể xin cấp thông tin này bằng bản in chữ to, Braille (dành cho người mù), trên băng ghi âm hoặc bằng tiếng nói của quý vị. Chúng tôi cũng cung cấp dịch vụ thông dịch. Xin liên lạc với chúng tôi theo điện thoại số 020 8709 4300 để thu xếp việc này. [Vietnamese]

你可索取這份資訊的大字印刷體、盲文、錄音帶或你的語言譯本。同時，我們也提供傳譯服務，請致電 020 8709 4300 與我們聯絡安排。 [Chinese]