

CHIEF RABBI, DR JONATHAN SACKS, OPENS ILFORD HOMES FOR IDS



The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, presided as guest of honour at the official opening of Abraham Cohen Court in Beehive Lane last month.

Abraham Cohen Court's 11 flats have been purpose-built for elderly Jewish residents on land adjacent to the Ilford Synagogue. The scheme replaces two properties, unused for many years, that were in a dilapidated state. A number of



the new tenants have moved from IDS's scheme at Nathaniel Court. By "downsizing" to a more manageable flat at Beehive Lane, these tenants have reduced their weekly outgoings, and freed up larger homes for families.

As well as the new residents and their families, a large number of guests and VIPs attended the opening ceremony. As part of the formalities, the Chief Rabbi affixed a Mezuzah to the entrance door of the property. The Mezuzah is a scroll of scripture in a small case, found on the doorposts of all Jewish homes, which serves as a constant reminder of the Creator's presence.

The Chief Rabbi quoted from the Bible in his praise for sheltered housing. He explained how at the beginning of the Bible, God speaks of His creation saying on several occasions that, "It was good". The first reference to something not being good was man living alone. "It is my hope that all who live at

Abraham Cohen Court will enjoy life together and be blessed together" said the Chief Rabbi.

To the rear of the property is a courtyard and shared garden area. This will also be used by the synagogue as its communal Succah (where an annual festival is celebrated). The Chief Rabbi commented that the Succah reminded Jewish people that they should have an appreciation of being homeless as they were once homeless in the desert.

Her Worshipful Councillor Vanessa Cole, Mayor of Redbridge, was also involved in the ceremony. She praised the work of IDS and stated that she looked forward to the Borough working together in partnership with IDS in the future. She also chatted with the new residents who will benefit from the spacious communal entrance hall with seating which enables them to enjoy a view of Beehive Lane whilst watching the world go by.

Steve Fairman Bleeds to Death for TV's The Bill

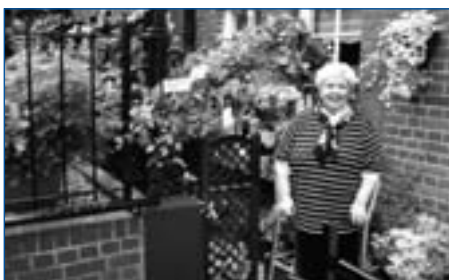
Estate Manager at Stepney Green Court, Steve Fairman, has paid the ultimate price for TV stardom – bleeding to death, having been repeatedly stabbed.

Steve does occasional acting work in his spare time and has had a number of small parts on TV, including The Bill. A few months ago, he played a Security Guard and, more recently, has reappeared, this time as a "Thug" who ends up being stabbed to death by his screen daughter's step-father.

Steve was working with Adam Faith on his last project before he (Adam Faith) died and says he often has tenants ringing him up to let him know which TV programme they have spotted him on. Steve's starring role in The Bill is due to be screened this summer.



All in a day's work - Stepney Green Court's Steve Fairman dying of stab wounds on The Bill



Mrs Barbara Treganowan, tenant at Stepney Green Court, in the beautiful garden she has created there

New Rent Card System

You should all by now have received your new rent card. The card has been designed to match our stationery with the light blue stripe down the side. Please do not use your old cards.

The new card allows you to pay your rent at all outlets displaying the Pay Point and Pay Zone signs as well as the Post Office.

You can also pay your rent by Direct Debit or even by credit card. If you wish to pay by Direct Debit, contact Head Office for a form to complete and return. If you wish to pay by credit card, you can telephone Allpay on

0870 243 6040. You will need to have your credit and rent payment card details to make a payment.

The new system allows us to replace lost or stolen rent cards much faster so, if you need a replacement card, please contact Head Office.



The new IDS rent card

Tax Credits and Housing Benefits

Many tenants will now be receiving, or hope to receive, the new Child Tax Credit and/or the Working Tax Credit. These credits are administered by the Inland Revenue and we would advise you to bear in mind the following information.

Tax credits are taken into

account as income with regard to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims. Please ensure that you take notification of your tax credits direct to your council as soon as they are being paid to you. The Inland Revenue DOES NOT pass this information on to your council and it is your responsibility to do so.

In the Development Pipeline

We are currently working on three developments in Hackney together with other housing associations.

At Rossington Street, Hackney, two four-bedroom homes, are being built on our behalf by New Islington & Hackney Housing Association. Each of the three-storey houses will provide a home for up to seven people. A provisional completion date is July 2004.

Southern Housing Group is building new homes on a site at

Lathams Yard. Twelve homes will be transferred to IDS over a three-year period.

Notting Hill Housing Group is partnering IDS again to provide three houses at Brooksby Walk. They are due for completion in September 2003 and consist of 4-bedroom accommodation suitable for seven people.

All of the above properties will have to be let to Hackney Council nominees.

Sports Days at Hackney Downs

Over 350 people visited Hackney Downs for a special sports day at the end of May.

The Hackney Downs Users Group had applied for funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Community Chest to finance the day. The weather was fantastic and a huge sound system helped to draw the crowds. IDS also contributed towards the costs.

The sports day offered something of interest for everyone including free coaching by experts, taster sessions for people to try out a new sport, games, competitions and awards.

Two further days are planned on Tuesday 5th and Wednesday 6th August. The days are open to anyone, with cricket, football, tennis and basketball all on offer.



Volunteers from Skinners School carrying out a survey at the Sports Day

Hackney Surfers

The UK Online Centre in Stoke Newington continues to attract interest from local residents with up to twenty visitors a day making use of the free internet access and computer facilities. To date, over 100 users have registered with Learndirect and taken the basic course on how to use computers and access the Internet.

We have recently received funding

from the New Opportunities Fund which will enable additional staff to be employed at the Centre on a part-time basis.

Members of the Tenants' Association assist as volunteer helpers for the Kids Computer Club. This meets every Tuesday afternoon from 4 to 6pm. A young Kurdish tenant has learnt how to type Arabic script which is very useful for producing posters and leaflets for minority ethnic groups.



Posters in Arabic created at the Stoke Newington UK Online Centre

Annette Henry in the Spotlight

Annette Henry is one of IDS' two Housing Welfare Managers. She provides a benefits and welfare support service for IDS' tenants in Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Navarino Mansions, as well as a number of properties owned by Hackney Council but managed by IDS.

The Housing Welfare Managers' roles are diverse and encompass:

- Checking and claiming welfare and benefits entitlements for tenants
- Debt counselling
- Liaison with social services and other agencies
- Dealing with domestic violence, antisocial behaviour

and other problems

- Providing cover when estate-based staff are away

A current focus is on the Government's Supporting People agenda. This is a new way of funding the support costs for tenants living in supported housing, such as sheltered housing schemes. Tenants living in supported housing are encouraged to have more input into how policies, procedures and services are devised and run.

Annette says, "My job is very interesting. It is extremely diverse, is really "hands-on" and has a great multi-cultural element too." She feels that one of the best things about the job is working with a housing management team that

support each other and understand how demanding the job is. One of the most challenging aspects is supporting tenants that are in geographically different areas of London. "I feel as if I am always in the car some days", says Annette.

It is rare for housing associations to have welfare managers. Part of the role is sometimes carried out by housing officers, but often tenants have to look elsewhere – such as Citizens Advice Bureaux for the specialist help and advice that IDS provides as an added benefit to its tenants.

For a more detailed perspective on Annette's role – see the article "A Day in the Life of" where Annette chronicles a typical day this June.

A Day in the Life of

I live in South London so have to get up really early - 6am usually - in order to take my son to nursery and then get to work on time.

Today started with a 9am visit to Tower Hamlets where I was seeing a tenant with a deteriorating medical condition who needed help completing his Disability Living Allowance form. The form is very complex and takes a long time to work through. Once this was done, I carried out a benefit calculation to ensure that the tenant is claiming all the benefits to which he is entitled.

10.45 saw me in Hackney where I visited a tenant whose husband has recently passed away. We completed a number of forms that will ensure his private pension will now be paid directly to her.

Whilst walking over to the estate's sheltered scheme, I saw another tenant who asked for some advice



**Annette Henry -
Housing Welfare Manager**

about her situation which sadly involves domestic violence. We had an initial chat about her options and made an appointment for a more detailed discussion.

At the sheltered scheme, I was checking that all was running smoothly with a fire alarm check. Whilst there, I saw a number of residents about a variety of issues -

progress on security following a break-in last year, the installation of Sky TV and outstanding rent arrears.

I picked up some lunch on my way back to the office and was able to spend most of the afternoon at my desk. Firstly, there were a number of emails and telephone messages to be returned. These are usually from tenants, colleagues, external agencies, social services and a variety of other organizations. As well as assisting work colleagues with a number of issues, I was able to catch up with paperwork arising from the morning's meetings - each visit has to be documented on the computer and put into the tenants' files.

I ended the day by writing this article with a little help from the newsletter editor. This job is certainly never boring and there is always so much more that I could do if only there were more hours in the day.

IDS in the Premier League

IDS recently took part in a six-a-side football tournament organised by Maccabi UK.

Early on Sunday 18 May, the lads turned up at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club along with 23 other teams. The nine-man 'squad' captained by Richard Hawkins, included Tajul Islam (goalie), Alan Finkel, Michael Rowan, Darren Pemble, Martin Crump, Stuart Cager, Rubait Hossain and, as a last-minute replacement, Scott Donavan (son of Merle and Dave). Providing tactical guidance and moral support on the sidelines

were Dave Donavan and Paul Westbrook.

It being the day after the FA Cup Final and with the season over, the teams played on the actual Spurs pitch. Perhaps it was the pressure of such a famous venue that

prevented our team from progressing into the semi-finals. We did, however, win one of our three matches - against the British WIZO ladies team, overcoming the two-goal start they had been given.

The aim of the tournament was to raise funds for Maccabi UK and other charities. The Maccabi Union is a worldwide organisation whose aims are to promote the active participation in sports and education of young Jewish men and women, in order to enhance their Jewish identity, values and commitment to the community.



Six-a-side football squad from IDS that took part in a charity tournament at White Hart Lane (Tottenham Hotspurs Ground) in May