Seren Park: Crossed wires replaced with crossed fingers...  

It’s happened time after time: no sooner does the Council fix the gate and fence, than they are vandalised.

“You get children playing around our fence,” said another resident. “Not that I’m against children: but they shouldn’t be there. This is meant to be a quiet cul de sac for old people. Yet people wander through all the time – sometimes you even hear them going home in the small hours. And when you ask if they have seen the notices saying there is no right of way, you get a flea in your ear.”

Look at it from the point of view of residents of Seren Park: faced with a large hole in a fence, who could resist their curiosity? Especially if you are disabled, or pregnant, or pushing a pram.

As the most financially challenged Trust in the NHS, the SLHT, which ran the QEH in Woolwich, the Princess Royal University Hospital in Orpington, and Queen Mary’s in Sidcup, is being faced with radical cost-saving measures put forward by Matthew Kershaw, the Trust Special Administrator (TSA) brought in by the Government.

The proposed closure of Lewisham’s brand-new A&E department (which cost £22m) so that patients in Lewisham would have to go to QEH, is just one of a raft of money-saving measures put forward by the TSA. Other critical services at risk include the consultant-led maternity services for high-risk mothers at St Saviour’s.

The TSA’s draft recommendations are subject to a public consultation until the 13th of December, and can be found on www.tsa.nhs.uk. Along with proposed cuts in services, the report also calls for the Department of Health (DoH) to help bear some of the financial burden. It recommends that the DoH funds the ‘excess’ costs of the PFI buildings at QEH and the Princess Royal University Hospital, as well as writing off the debts accumulated by the SLHT Department of Health (DoH) to help bear some of the financial burden.

No decisions will be made until after the public consultation period has ended and Matthew Kershaw has submitted his final report to the Secretary of State for Health early in the New Year.

Cllr. Good Brights says: “Closing Lewisham A&E raises serious questions about capacity at QEH. Unmistakable sound of chickens coming home to roost thought! The SLHT is in the hands of the Special Administrator largely because of the minous terms of the Private Finance Initiative Agreement agreed under the last Labour Government.”

Echoing these comments, Cllr. Alex Wilson added: “One silver lining to this decision to close Lewisham A&E is that the PFI debts will be paid off, meaning QEH will be able to continue functioning and plan properly for the future.”

Westcombe NEWS

Est. 1973 Free to 3800 homes, and in libraries & some shops  December 2012 Issue 10

A community newspaper commended by the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies

Monthly newspaper of The Westcombe Society: fostering a sense of community

Seren Park: Crossed wires replaced with crossed fingers...  

T ask to anyone living in Seren Park, and the frustration is almost palpable. For years they have been waiting for what they were promised by the developer, Urban Solutions, when they bought into Seren Park – direct access to Maze Hill Station, the only alternative being a very long detour.

Their frustration is matched by those living in nearby Tom Smith Close, because people – no names no pack drill – have taken the law into their own hands, and created their own short cut through what was Tom Smith Close.

“It’s no longer a close,” said resident Angela Durham. “Because people living in Seren Park – and I think probably further afield too – regularly walk through the close as a short cut to the station, and the park; and they walk their dogs here as well. What was a peaceful close has become a public footpath.”

Close has become a public footpath.

Another resident complained of dog-fouling, and damaged cars.

The padlock and chain hang uselessly, the gate hangs open, and the wire fence has been cut and coiled back.

There is a gate – way between Seren Park and Tom Smith Close – intended for allotment owners only. But on numerous occasions the lock on the gate has been removed or destroyed; go there today, and you will find a bolt-cutter has been taken to the chain fastening the gate – and the wire fence separating the properties has been cut and coiled back.

“One on occasion, I saw a lock being fitted to the gate,” said Mrs Durham. “But a young man on the other side of the fence said ‘That won’t last a day!’ Sure enough, next day, it was gone.”

The original developer, Urban Solutions, which has gone bust.

So it is now hoped that RBS will be able to enter into an agreement over the railway access problem that has dogged residents for years.

A condition placed on the previous developer, and any new owner, was to fund the necessary infrastructure to temper the access point – including Oyster card validators, CCTV and lighting.

RBS is currently in dialogue with Network Rail and Southeastern to satisfy this requirement.

The Westcombe Society

Santa has agreed to help us raise funds for the Woodlands Farm Trust by making a few visits to homes in the area as a special treat for children.

If interested please contact Santa’s local agent: 

Caroline Owens: 020 8853 0948

NEWS BRIEFS

Season’s Greetings

Our local Olympian Gemma Gibbons, who won the Silver Medal for Judo, has been named the new patron for the Bedfont, London Youth Games. She follows in the footsteps of Paralympic gold medallist David Weir, and Commonwealth weightlifting medallist Zoe Smith (also from this borough.)

Gemma slightly hinted her copybook recently when invited to a reception at Buckingham Palace. She sneaked a photograph of a Royal Loo at the palace, published in the Telegraph. “Very posh,” she reported. History does not repeat itself –  regularly walk in Seren Park – and I think probably through the close as a short cut to the station, or a twenty-minute walk to the park? Especially if you are disabled, or pregnant, or pushing a pram.

A solution may be around the corner: A condition placed on the previous developer, and any new owner, was to fund the necessary infrastructure to temper the access point – including Oyster card validators, CCTV and lighting.

RBS is currently in dialogue with Network Rail and Southeastern to satisfy this requirement.

The Westcombe Society

Rent a Santa

We have engaged Santa to sing at Rents a Santa

Santa’s Christmas Carol singing this year is on December 17th. Meet-up at an agreement over the railway access problem that has dogged residents for years.

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The Westcombe Society is still recovering from yet another highly successful (and very enjoyable) Christmas Bazaar, raising money to assist the society’s Charity of the Year, Woodland Farm Trust on Shooters Hill. Marilyn Little, chairman of the society, writes: “I really appreciated the efforts of all our volunteers who did so much to make the event a success. It was hard work, but well worth the effort and strangely very enjoyable. New helpers are always very welcome, so do get in touch if you have a few hours to spare - you would be warmly received. We raised a substantial amount on the day which will fund the projects that Woodlands have in mind.” “I would particularly like to thank the headmistress of Blackheath Girls High School and local traders for their generous support.”

The Dickensian Christmas Bazaar

The Westcombe Society thanks all the advertisers in the Westcombe News for their support, and for all the following for their generous support of the Dickensian Christmas Bazaar:


Letters

Letters to the editor may be edited through lack of space. Any views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or the WNS.

From: Philip Binas Greenwich I note that in the November issue the WNS carried a piece about Henry, Prince of Wales: “Remembering Prince Henry”. It would be helpful in the next issue if you could highlight the excellent exhibition that is currently running at the National Portrait Gallery: “The Lost Prince: The Life and Death of Henry Stuart.”

The exhibition closes 13th January, 2013.

From: Emma King Meiniguito UK

We are asking your brave readers to run the Virgin London Marathon 2013 for Meiniguito UK to help us stamp out the deadly disease.

We were only allocated a few guaranteed places (Golden Bond) and are asking kind-hearted people with, or seeking, an independent place to take on the 26-mile challenge on April 21st for us. Full support will be given and everyone who participates will receive a free running vest or T-shirt, and a handy information pack including hints on how to prepare. If you would like to take part and help us achieve our vision, please contact Emma King on 0117 303 33 45.

From: Name & Address supplied I have recently become aware of a number of so-called tree surgeons in the area. A neighbour appears to have had quite drastic work done on two trees in the front garden. The work seems to have damaged the trees and, I suspect, was done without planning permission.

I hope readers are aware that planning permission is obligatory for all tree work in this conservation area.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!!

Tickets to your nearest Christmas Market are available from Westcombe News.

With the East and South East of London earmarked for half of all London’s population and employment growth over the next 20 years, increasing the number of river crossings between the East and South East of London is being described as “essential” by both local politicians and business leaders alike.

This sentiment is also echoed by over 90% of those who took part in Transport for London’s (TfL) ‘informal’ public consultation which ran until 1st February 2013. A series of public roadshows are being held across the areas affected, with locations including Woolwich Library and North Greenwich tube station.

If you are unable to attend one of these then log on to https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/riverscrossings/consultation to find out more, and to make your views known. A printed information leaflet can also be requested by calling 0843 222 1234.

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Blackwall Tunnel to fund new River Crossing? SARAH WINTERBOTTOM

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The Bugsby’s Group

OONA CHANTRELL

Greenwich, as seen through the eyes of its river-loving artists, is the theme of the Bugsby’s Group show at the Old Royal Naval College, throughout December until 6th January. The group was founded by sailing friends at Greenwich Yacht Club, bringing together an enthusiasm for the river Thames, sailing — and painting.

The name Bugsby comes from the reach near the Standard.

Nobody knows who Bugsby was, though of course the peninsular area was once called Bugsby’s Marsh, and there is today Bugsby Way.

It is called after the bugle-shaped mouth of a river, the name first known to the Romans. According to tradition, the river Thames, sailing – and painting.

The paintings, by these seven local artists, present a range of personal views of Greenwich as seen through many facets of time, space and style.

TOP: 
Waterman’s Arms Slipway by Steve Chantrell
LEFT: 
Deptford Lifting Bridge by Brynt Cooper
(Arabarchuphas, can you spot the spider? A touch of genius, though the B/W art critic..)
PHOTOS: ANNE MACCOMBE

The exhibition is open daily from 1st December to 4th January, 10.00 am — 5.00 pm in the Exhibition Gallery of the Discover Greenwich Centre, adjacent to the Cutty Sark.

Second Chance Choir

The Second Chance Choir will for the second year running be singing carols in Blackheath Village to raise funds for shelter, the charity for homeless people. 

Last year we raised £250.00, and many people said how much they enjoyed our singing. We had a wonderful time, too, singing our hearts out. On Thursday 13th December we shall be singing opposite the Woolwich Barrier where the yacht club has existed for more than 100 years.

However, the choir is not a church choir. We sing a huge range of music, including show tunes, popular jazz classics, folk songs from all over the world, as well as wonderful religious music written by Mozart, Vividal, Faure, and others.

We are always keen to swell our numbers, and new members will be given a warm welcome. There is no need to read music and there are no auditions.

TOURING: 
Friday 8th December — The Coombe Shelter, the charity for homeless people.
2nd year running be singing carols

The entertainment is varied, and one of the favourites is Vic Parker, the talented accordionist who provides an hour-long singalong of popular songs from every decade of the twentieth century! Vic also provides song books and anyone who wishes can purchase one after his performances.

The choir welcomes new members.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT SUGGESTION

For the man who has everything: This extremely rare veteran motor car built by Irish-born Walter Wilson, an inventor credited with the invention and development of the first tank ("Little Willie") in 1915, is going under the hammer at Bonhams, London. The 1904 Wilson-Pilcher four-seater is expected to fetch £180,000 - £220,000. A steal!

Westcombe Park Dental Practice

Treatments Available
Zoom Tooth Whitening
Invisalign
Smile Makeovers
Tooth Colouring Fillings
Anti-Wrinkle Treatments & Dermal Fillings


Douglas Adams

Douglas Adams, of Coleraine Road, died on 21st September 2012. Born in Devon, he arrived in Greenwich in the mid 1970s following a degree at Lancaster Polytechnic, now part of Coventry University.

He lived in the Westcombe Park area for most of his life and was a regular at many of the businesses in the area.

Most recently Doug worked as an energy management consultant with the Atkins group, following a career change in 1997 when he was awarded an MSc with distinction in Energy Engineering from London South Bank University.

His main interest outside work was English traditional music and dance, and he has led and played in bands throughout his time in London, most recently, the Pigeon English Band, a house band at the Musical Traditions Club at the King and Queen, in Folley Street, Greenwich.

His main instrument was melodeon and he played for several Morris teams in south east London as well as playing at English music sessions, including the Lord Hoof.

He joined Greenwich Morris Men in the 1980s, the playing the panaccomodant and then the melodeon. In the early 1980s, he joined Blackheath Morris Men who, in the early 1980s, revived the tradition of Fowlers Troop and the Deptford Jack in the Green for which Doug was musician on most May Days.

The tradition continues and Doug was out on with Fowlers Troop on May Day 2012. Doug also played for Fowlers Molly Dancers and the border Morris team Tylers Men. Most of these teams have performed in the Greenwich and Blackheath area. Doug underwent treatment for cancer in 1999 and June 2011. Unfortunately the cancer recurred in August 2012 and Doug died in Guy’s Hospital; his funeral was on 4th October in Devan. Doug leaves behind his brother Bruce and family, and many friends.

+Sarah Crofts

Westcombe Woodlands

The volunteer days in the woodlands continue to be a success with a good turnout of volunteers and a gratifying amount of work being completed. Our efforts are concentrated in the glade area towards the Maze Hill side and the level strip just inside the gates from Lasseter Place, off Yurunghill Road. We have created paths in both areas and continue to clear and tidy the glade area prior to planting meadow grass, bulbs and shrubs.

The Friends Committee is in the process of updating the Management Plan based on the one last year by Trees for Cities, the charity which helped us when we were starting up. We hope to create an orchard in the glade and possibly a pond.

There is no intention of over-managing the woodlands or of excess regular public access. But it is an exciting challenge to restore and open parts so as to encourage a diversity of flora and fauna, such as the Stag Beetle (pictured)

The Fourly Club

Lyn de Swarte

Vis plays Underneath the Sprouting Chestnut Tree while everyone joins in Trust, a charity that provides holidays for underprivileged children - and a soup ran for homeless youngsters.

The last meeting of the ‘Fourly Club’ this year is the Christmas Lunch on December 14th, with entertainment from The Shortland Singers who will be singing Christmas songs and Carols.

Westcombe Park Dental Practice

13 Station Crescent, Westcombe Park, London SE3 7EQ
Tel. 0208 553 3304 Fax: 0208 856 1784

The Friday Club

Photo by Steve Chantrell
CHRISTMAS CONCERT
All our local churches have special candlelit Christmas services, in addition to which:
Sun. Dec. 2nd. 6.30 - 8.00 pm THE GREENWICH & BEACON HILL COMMUNITY HOSPICE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION at the Old Royal Naval College. There will be famous readings and classic carols. The evening also includes a torch procession by the Hospice volunteers, and ends with a mulled wine & mince pies laid by the ORNC. Tickets £26 and £25.

consult any clip or tv guide and find more public events you may wish to attend. In addition you may wish to join up to book for any of the many courses, workshops and discussion groups the local community centres offer. The library in Blackheath also has a wide selection of books on the subject of meditation.

MUSIC

BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel: 020 8403 1010 Music and Dance, Film and Cultural Fundraisers

HANSON DUO - Harriet Mannery, violin & Alice Murray, cello. Thursday 3rd Dec. 7.30. GIAH XI TOYS - Toy orchestra plus string quartet. Friday 4th Dec. 7.30 at Sunningdale Methodist Church, Old Dover Road. £5. Casino ball to follow. Telephone/blackberry. SEEKING GROUPS for second Chancel Choir. Please telephone Thursday evening. Blackheath. info@zoom54321.fsnet.co.uk Bella@zoom54321.fsnet.co.uk 020 8083 7884 or press 0845 199 5525

PERFORMANCE AT THE MYCENAE HOUSE Every Monday evening. 7.00 pm ENGLISH FOLK & MATHS

6.00 pm Every Thursday at the Lord Hoad pub, Creek Road, Blackheath, every Thursday night.

CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARDS: If you didn’t manage to pick up the Dickensian Christmas, a wide range of cards and other products are on sale at St Alfege Church. BOURNEMOUTH’S NEW YEAR SHOE WIPED 161 Greenwich High Road SE10 9SA. 1st December. Monthly Cheese and Wine Tasting. £25 book online at www.mycenae.com/cheese and wine. CANCEER RESEARCH UK LUNCHEON club Thurs. 6th Dec at the Chartist Road, Montpelier Road, Blackheath. 12 noon - 2.30 pm, fine Italian lunch with choice of wine or soft drink - donation £40. All welcome. Prize draw, raffle and musical entertainment. If you book, ring Wendy on 020 8352 0335 or info@mycenae.com.

POWER OF THREE: The Borough Hall, Royal Hill SE10 8SG 020 8973 7941 blackheath@mycenae.com Sat Dec 8th. FAMILY CHRISTMAS CABARET 6.00 pm - 8.30 pm Cost £15 4-12 and £10 plus 1 adult. The perfect setting for an afternoon of socialising, live music and dancing. Tea and cake is included in the entry price. For more information contact Greenwich Dance on 020 8925 9740.

GREENWICH CIRCUS FESTIVAL Harrison Way, Near Thomas barrier

Dec. 14th. at 10.30 am. Three days packed with all sorts of shows, clowns, cabaret, workshops, food, dancing and drinking. Something for the whole family during the day, then party all night once the kids are in bed! Discounted tickets for Greenwich residents. http://www.greenwichcircusfestival.com

BLACKHEATH HOSPITAL GENERAL SOCIETY Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, 2nd Sat Dec. 8th 11.00 am - 1.00 pm Free entry. Blackheath Hospital Visitors are welcome, and requested to donate £2.50 per person. MUSICALS: BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB is welcoming all players to duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon. 24th Dec. Christmas Eve. 7.30 pm at Sunfields Methodist Church, Old Dover Road. £10, or £8 concs from 020 8974 7777. Glass of mulled wine & mince pie included.

www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk

THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich, SE10 8JA Tel: 020 8855 7878

SERIAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT 18th - 19th Jan. at 8.00pm. £10, or £8 concs from 020 8974 7777. Glass of mulled wine and mince pies included. For more information contact Greenwich Dance on 020 8925 9740.

CANCER RESEARCH UK LUNCHEON CLUB at 1.30 - 4.00 pm. Borough Hall in Blackheath SE10 8SG - the perfect setting for an afternoon of socialising, live music and dancing. Tea and cake is included in the entry price. For more information contact Greenwich Dance on 020 8925 9740.

THE SPACE 269 Westferry Road London E14 3RS 020 510 7599 www.searchlight.org.uk

Britten’s Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra, performed by the ORNC orchestra, under the direction of Ralph Allwood. Tickets available either online at www.community-hospice.org.uk, or ring 020 8919 5200.

SEVEN SONGS MEDITATION GROUP

www.stolaves.org.uk

ARTS

BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY Kent House, University of Greenwich, Blackheath, 4th Thursday of every month, 2.00 for 3.00. Nearest stn. Old Dover Road DLR.

www.artsinblackheath.org.uk or ring 83187550

www.deanmuseum.org.uk or ring 020 8851 7873. Non-governors £5, members £4.50, children £2.50.

THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

MARITIME MEMBERS: Members go free | Adults £7 | Cons £6 |

www.greathall.com

Kay-Williams

the UK Members go free | Adults £7 | Cons £6 |

www.deanmuseum.org.uk or ring 020 8851 7873. Non-governors £5, members £4.50, children £2.50.

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www.debormer.com/medievalmonsters.html

"Here be dragons...": Mediaeval Monsters

www.artsinblackheath.org.uk or ring 83187550

www.greathall.com

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What’s happening in the park?

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM reports

Greenwich Park

Stakeholders were reminded that, as with the construction process, the weather plays a significant part in the pace of the re-instatement work.

According to LOCOG, if all goes according to plan, returfing for the area will be immediately on cleared areas. Further remedial action will be taken as necessary.

More grass areas were discussed during the site visit, including protective strategies for large events such as the Marathon and the Easter funfair. Representatives from WSPEC and the Blackheath Society raised concerns about the potential ‘crass gender-laden observations’. As it happens, LOCOG is committed to the funding of statement work. According to LOCOG, if all goes according to plan, returfing for the area will be immediately on cleared areas. Further remedial action will be taken as necessary.

Additional measures for vulnerable areas were discussed during the site visit, including protective strategies for large events such as the Marathon and the Easter funfair. Representatives from WSPEC and the Blackheath Society raised concerns about the potential ‘crass gender-laden observations’. As it happens, LOCOG is committed to the funding of statement work.

To respond to the American blogger who asked: ‘Do men and women garden differently?’ The topic arose during a debate on the ethics of cutting flowers, but not all areas were discussed across the whole area of designing gardens or landscapes, and ways of combining plants.

Although plantwoman Beth Chatto has a background of flower arranging, as one woman describes designer Sarah Price’s planting style as ‘graceful feminine artistry’. Her Chelsea sponsors, the Telegraph, counter, though, that most avoid ‘crass gender-laden observations’. As it happens, LOCOG confirmed that this would also be dealt with.

Christopher Raven

Good news for cyclists

MARGARET GRAVELLE

Last summer the BYJ canvassed the views of local residents with regard to extending the permitted cycle routes through Greenwich Park.

Barbara Morris adds:

The rainfall experienced this spring was middling for many areas this year has meant that it was monitored and that the lack of wear and tear in some areas this year meant that it was possible to collect seeds for future use.

Work to restore the ground under the practice areas between the Avenue and the Arena will be left until the earth has had a better sightlines, because they have railings either side of the gateway.

To return to our original topic of the cut flower trade, it’s not keen to have anyone cutting flowers from the borders, and will always suggest a small ‘picking garden’ for flowers used in the other produce, if there’s space. A recent ad campaign showing shirtless ‘hunks’ proffering bouquets was specifically aimed at ‘boys’ who want more flowers.

Recent ad campaign showing shirtless ‘hunks’ proffering bouquets was specifically aimed at ‘boys’ who want more flowers. To respond to the American blogger who asked: ‘Do men and women garden differently?’

But if you don’t buy flowers, why aren’t they the target for advertising – or are they a lost cause? Speaking personally, I don’t like the assumption that any bunch of flowers I hold is for some ‘lucky girl’. I don’t like the assumption that any bunch of flowers I hold is for some ‘lucky girl’. To respond to the American blogger who asked: ‘Do men and women garden differently?’

To respond to the American blogger who asked: ‘Do men and women garden differently?’

Barbara Morris adds:
The Westcombe Society wishes all our readers and advertisers a very Happy Christmas, and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.

Woodlands Farm Trust stall [above], was one of many at the Westcombe Society’s Christmas Bazaar. Also on offer were Christmas cakes, fashion, music (Mary Andrews on piano, with singer Sian Tribe). We also welcomed the Mayor, Cllr. David Grant [Right] – and Santa!

CHRISTMAS FAIR
Saturday, 8 December, 2012  2.00 - 4.00 pm
Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice, 185 Bostall Hill, Abbey Wood, SE2 0GB
Admission: FREE & FREE parking
Everything you need for Christmas plus mulled wine & mince pies and a good old fashioned raffle!
Contact: 020 8319 9230, email info@gbch.org.uk or visit the website www.communityhospice.org.uk

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Woodlands Farm
Trust stall [above], was one of many at the Westcombe Society’s Christmas Bazaar. Also on offer were Christmas cakes, fashion, music (Mary Andrews on piano, with singer Sian Tribe). We also welcomed the Mayor, Cllr. David Grant [Right] – and Santa!