



# Westcombe NEWS

Season's Greetings

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 . . .

By WN reporter

Talk 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.”

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

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 flats,” 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 going through it to save a twelve minute walk 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: the WN has heard that Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) is expected to take over ownership of Seren Park soon from the

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



PHOTO: Neville Grant

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.

“On one 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.”

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 operate the access point – including Oyster card validators, CCTV and lighting.

RBS is currently in dialogue with Network Rail and Southeastern to satisfy this requirement. (cont. on page 3)

“God bless us, every one!”



PHOTO: Neville Grant

Two of the many colourful stalls at the Westcombe Society’s annual Dickensian Christmas Bazaar on 17th November, raising money for the society’s Charity of the Year, Woodlands Farm Trust. More picture and story on pages 2 and 8.

## Threat to our A&E services

With Lewisham Hospital’s A&E department currently under threat, waiting times at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) are set to get even longer. With a target waiting time of less than four hours (four hours!) for patients to be dealt with, official figures show that South London Healthcare Trust’s (SLHT) is only just missing its goal by 4%.

However, the WN has been contacted by readers who have had to wait well over the target time in an overcrowded and dirty reception area, packed full of vending machines selling unhealthy snacks and fizzy drinks, to receive a service which at best could be described as unsatisfactory and at worst a “complete waste of time”.

As ‘the most financially challenged Trust in the NHS’, the SLHT, which ran the QEH in Woolwich, the Princess Royal 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 Lewisham.

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](http://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 deficits – estimated to reach £207m by March next year. Feelings are running very high – demonstrations are planned against the proposed closures and an online petition has been set up on [www.savelewishamhospital.com](http://www.savelewishamhospital.com).

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. Geoff Brighty says: “Closing Lewisham A&E raises serious questions about capacity at QEH. Unmistakable sound of chickens coming home to roost though! The SLHT is in the hands of the Special Administrator largely because of the ruinous terms of the Private Finance Initiative 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.”

Sarah Winterbottom



The Westcombe Society

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News Flash.....

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## NEWS BRIEFS



### Putting Charlton on the map

Our local Olympian Gemma Gibbons, who won the Silver Medal for Judo, has been named the new patron for the Balfour Beatty 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 blotted 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 record whether H.M. was amused. Will Gemma be invited back, one wonders?

### Carol singing

The Westcombe Society’s Christmas carol singing this year is on December 17th. Meet-up is at Mycenae House at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start. Musicians with instruments are particularly welcome. If you can’t make the start, and want to catch up, the mobile number to ring is 07709 571 777.

### Good news of Father Thames

Angler Rick Dodson caught a 9lb cod near Gravesend. Mr Dodson was winner of the City of London Corporation’s annual angling competition. Other fish caught included two pouting, three dab, and 520 whiting. (No points awarded for tyres, shopping trolleys or traffic cones.)



# COMMUNITY NEWS



## WESTCOMBE NEWS

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**Reporters:** Denise Scott-McDonald

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*The views expressed in the Westcombe News are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or of the Editor.*

Back-numbers (in colour) can be accessed on:

<http://westcombe.gold.ac.uk/westnews.html>

Westcombe Society's Blog:

<http://westcombe.blogspot.com>

### WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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## The Dickensian Christmas Bazaar



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."

### Christmas fun at the bazaar



Great fun was had by all. The children enjoyed Punch n Judy, and other activities - and a scrummy lunch provided by our jolly cooks!



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:

**Sponsors:** Westcombe Dry Cleaners, Multivoice

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## 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 WN.

**From: Philip Binns Greenwich**

I note that in the November issue the WN 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 Meningitis UK**

We are asking your brave readers to run the Virgin London Marathon 2013 for Meningitis 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 chal-

lenge 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 some 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.

The Westcombe Society's 2012 Christmas Card: an image taken 112 years ago. They are A5 size and are available in packs of five cards with envelopes at £4.90 or individually at £1.30. To order, please ring Caroline Owens on 0208 8530948.



PHOTOS: Neville Grant

In celebration of the 200th birthday of Charles Dickens, the Westcombe Society was delighted to welcome Mr Charles Dickens, United Kingdom's most prolific, adored, and influential author, to open the 2012 Dickensian Christmas Bazaar.

At enormous expense, the Westcombe Society is proud to present to our esteemed readership this photographic image [above] of the occasion, in which one can clearly discern Ms Marilyn Little, Chair of the society, and Mr Charles Dickens, aka Mr Adam Smethurst, a local actor.

In the words of Tiny Tim, immortal creation of Mr Dickens:

"God bless us every one!"

**From the Editor:**

Dear readers, please remember this is YOUR newspaper. So make it yours by writing for it, sending in news, features, articles, letters, photographs . . .

Suggestions are always welcome. But don't ask "Why doesn't the WN ....?"

Instead, do it yourself, and send it in! We don't have a team of roving reporters.

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# LOCAL NEWS



## Blackwall Tunnel to fund new River Crossing?

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM

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 took place earlier this year (see the May issue of *WN*).

The consultation also revealed that despite overwhelming support for new crossings there are real concerns over increased congestion in the Blackwall area, and funding.

With a price tag of £600m for the Silvertown Tunnel and £150m for the Gallion's Reach Ferry, these two main infrastructure projects as set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy do not come cheap, and TfL has made it clear that there is a significant funding gap. One option is the proposed introduction of a £2 toll for cars using the Blackwall Tunnel.

Paul Watters from the AA feels this will not be well received by drivers: "We need another crossing, but this will put more pressure on hard-pressed drivers who are already dealing with high fuel prices."

"In practical terms I think London's businesses and regular car users are probably not in the mood to pay for Blackwall."

The A102 will serve as the main feeder road to the new tunnel – already an infamous traffic hot spot leading up to the Blackwall Tunnel. The Westcombe Society wonders what effect the

Silvertown tunnel will have in the Greenwich / Blackheath area. Will the inevitable disruption during construction, followed by the additional traffic generated by the new tunnel, cause significant extra traffic on the A102?

The fear is that the A102 in its present form will not be able to cope and the resulting increased congestion will have a knock-on effect on local roads.

Dick Allard, chair of the Westcombe Society's Planning & Environment Committee raised the issue at a recent transport scrutiny meeting organised by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

In response to his question as to whether any analysis had been undertaken of the likely impact on congestion levels on the feeder roads to the Silvertown tunnel, Colin Mann, representing TfL, revealed that some computer simulation work had been done. It was requested that this work should be made public in good time before the end of the second phase of consultation (launched last month).

### Have your say

This second, statutory public consultation by TfL on these major proposals is set to run until 1st February 2013. A series of public roadshows are being held across the areas affected, and locations include 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/rivercrossings/consultation> to find out more, and to make your views known. A printed information leaflet can also be requested by calling 0843 222 1234.

## Seren Park

(Cont. from page 1)

Once ownership of Seren Park has transferred to RBS and subject to the legal agreement and infrastructure being finalised, this should enable the platform access to be opened for the use of Seren Park residents.

Our local councillors have been much exercised over the current situation. Cllr Alex Grant said:

"I hope that now the development has been taken over by RBS they will move quickly to open up the direct access to the station for Seren Park residents, so Tom Smith Close is no longer used as a cut-through. Residents of both places have had enough of being given the run-around."

Cllr Geoff Brighty adds: "This has been a long standing bone of contention for Seren Park residents and has also become an issue for those in neighbouring Tom Smith Close which has become an unofficial cut through to the station."

"That there is already, I understand, a

dialogue between RBS and Network Rail and Southeastern is the most positive sign yet that Seren Park residents might, at last, get the direct access to Maze Hill platform they were promised when they moved in. It is also a hopeful sign that the real concerns of Tom Smith Close residents can be resolved."

Unfortunately, no time scale has yet been established as to when the access is likely to be opened. A spokesman for Network Rail said:

"Network Rail appreciates that it has been the residents of Seren Park who have suffered the consequences of the lack of regulated platform access and we are now pleased to be able to take action with the prospective new owner of Seren Park to reach a solution in the near future."

It cannot come too soon for their neighbours in Tom Smith Close. For one thing is sure: good fences make, or ought to make, good neighbours.

## Ladies exercise group LOUISE WHYTE

We're a group of ladies who meet in East Greenwich Pleasance on a Monday morning at 9.30am and Saturday mornings at 10.00 am for a fun workout suitable for all abilities.

We continue throughout the winter no matter the weather. We'd love some more ladies to join us for a great exercise class and local gossip. We also have a

group of joggers who meet at 8.00 am on a Saturday morning for a jog round our beautiful locality – we've been known to take in Blackheath Village, the Isle of Dogs, & The Peninsular.

Ring Louise on 07787 432230 or email her on [info@penelopefitstar.com](mailto:info@penelopefitstar.com) for more info and prices.

## Good news for Greenwich

The Cutty Sark has been named the best new tourism project in the UK at the 2012 British Guild of Travel writers' awards.

Meanwhile, in November,

the Heritage Lottery fund awarded £350,000 to the Old Royal Naval College for work renovating the baroque masterpieces on the West Wall of the Painted Hall.

## JO BURNAND reports on the South London Special League

### A league of their own

With South London Healthcare NHS Trust in administration, and social care budgets being severely cut, the work Sharon Brokenshire, MBE, does with the South London Special League is now hugely significant especially in the South East where poverty and disability often go hand-in-hand.

When working in special needs in Greenwich, Sharon saw at first-hand how children with learning difficulties were outside of the school day largely excluded from the culture of sport. Taking football as her focus, she used the Millennium to secure funding to stage a festival which she describes as, "a turning point. A big upwards learning curve which set my mind on feeling this was the way forward."

Spending the next three years pulling at the heart strings of all and sundry in education and associated charities Sharon was able to launch the South London Special League in 2004.

From its beginning as a one team division for children with severe learning disabilities, the organisation now encompasses a youth league, two clubs for girls aged over 16, the Greenwich Wanderers and Long Lane Terriers and 'A league of their own' for adults.

Many of the children come from schools in some of the poorest areas in South East London while most of the adults are referred by NHS Oxleas. 3000 players currently take part annually in around 50 small-sided football tournaments.



With the large majority of women with mild to severe learning disabilities dropping out of sport after school Sharon is particularly proud of the standard charter achieved by the Terriers and is hoping for similar success with 'A league of their own'.

Taking advantage of the 2012 London Olympic Games, Sharon has now set up 'Special League Sport in the Community' which opens up sport to children with physical disabilities while offering work experience to a range of ages of people with special needs.

Beside sports such as 'Table top cricket', instead of running with the ball, players now manoeuvre it with a joystick on their wheelchairs.

Use of a donated minibus allows Sharon greater access to those with physical disabilities who are unable to travel, but funding is now a worry. While other revenue streams have come in the lead up to and following London 2012, Sharon says much hangs on a decision from the National Lottery to renew funding this year. The outcome could make downsizing an inevitability.



## Architecture lecture

Joanna van HEYNINGEN, of the award-winning van Heyningen and Haward Architects, is giving the next Friends of Blackheath Halls Annual Architecture lecture.

In the lecture, she will be looking back over 35 years in practice at what motivated and influenced her and her colleagues in the early days, and how their thinking changed over the years.

Joanna van Heyningen has taught and lectured widely and was a Stirling Prize judge in 2012. She was profiled in the

January 2012 issue of Architects Journal, about her life as a successful woman architect in what is still largely a man's world.

**The Friends' Annual Architecture Lecture is Wednesday 6 February 2013 at 8.00 pm: JOANNA VAN HEYNINGEN on Advancing Traditions Tickets: £12 (£10 seniors, £6 students) Information on [www.blackheathhalls.com](http://www.blackheathhalls.com), or box office 020 8463 0100**



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# FEATURES



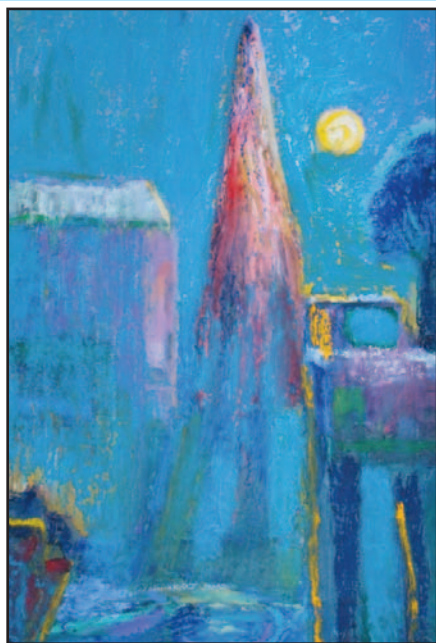
## The Bugsby's Group

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 on the Thames between the O2 and the Woolwich Barrier where the yacht club has existed for more than 100 years.

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



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 Kyria Connor  
(Arachnaphobes, can you spot the spider? A touch of genius, thought the *WN* art critic ...)  
PHOTOS: ANNIE MCCOMBE

The exhibition is open daily from 1st December to 6th 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 Blackheath Station at 6.30pm for an hour.

The choir has changed its practice venue this term, and we are now established at the beautiful new Sunfield Methodist Church at 95, Old Dover Road, near the Standard.

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, Vivaldi, 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.

**More information can be found on**  
[www.secondchancechoir.co.uk.html](http://www.secondchancechoir.co.uk.html)

**OR contact Jean Vaisler on 0208852 7548 or email**

[brookjean@btinternet.com](mailto:brookjean@btinternet.com)

**Or David Sprackling on 07956 857661**

**or email [davidsprackling@btconnect.com](mailto:davidsprackling@btconnect.com)**

## 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 snip!



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## 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 Vanbrugh Hill. 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 allowing 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 next volunteer day is on Sunday 2 December from 10am to 2pm and it would be good to see some new faces. If you send an email we will arrange for you to get details of future volunteering events.

We have produced our first newsletter –

email us if you would like to receive a copy at [westcombe-woodlands@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:westcombe-woodlands@hotmail.co.uk). We hope in the next few weeks to obtain final clearance from HMRC which will enable us to benefit from Gift Aid on subs.

and donations. We will then formally invite people to sign up as Friends.

If you have any questions about the Friends organisation or this special green space generally, please email as above or call Tim Barnes on 8858 1185 or Frank Smith on 8852 6390. **Frank Smith**



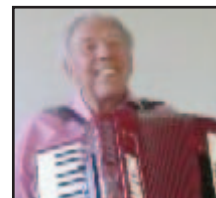
## The Friday Club

Lyn de Swarte

The Senior Citizens' Social Club, known as 'The Friday Club' by its members, has been meeting on the second and last Friday of the month at Mycenae House, Mycenae Road, Blackheath SE3 7SE.

Organised by volunteers Revs Cathy Gibb and Lyn de Swarte, those attending, from 2pm til 4pm, have an afternoon of entertainment, tea and biscuits and 'Bingo'.

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 which are all in aid of the Coombe



**Vic plays Underneath the Spreading Chestnut Tree while everyone joins in**

Trust, a charity that provides holidays for underprivileged children - and a soup run for homeless youngsters.

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

## Douglas Adams

Douglas Adams, of Coleraine Road, died on 21st September 2012. Born in Devon, he arrived in Greenwich in the mid 1970s following his Applied Physics degree at Lanchester 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 Foley Street, Fitzrovia. His main instrument was melodeon and he played for several Morris teams in south

east London as well playing at English music sessions, including the Lord Hood.

He joined Greenwich Morris Men in the 1970s, playing the pianoaccordion 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 Devon. Doug leaves behind his brother Bruce and family, and many friends.

+Sarah Crofts



# WHAT'S ON



## ARTS

**BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY**, St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath 4th Thursday of every month, 2.00 for 2.30. Next meeting: 4 Jan 2013 Imogen Corrigan "Here be dragons...": Mediaeval Monsters Non-members £5 on the door. See [www.artsinblackheath.org.uk](http://www.artsinblackheath.org.uk) or ring 83187550

**GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY** King William Court, the University of Greenwich NEXT LECTURES:  
**Monday 10th Dec 2012 MASKS – a history of a universal phenomenon - Dr Libby Horner**  
**Monday 14th Jan 2013 Imperial Purple Denim Blue: The colourful history of textiles - Dr Susan Kay-Williams** 020 8852 7873. Non-members £8.00

**THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM**  
**Until 28 April 2013 ANSEL ADAMS' PHOTOGRAPHS: From the Mountains to the Sea.** You don't have to go to the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, to see these amazing photographs: this is a rare chance to see Adams's photography in the UK! Members go free | Adults £7 | Cons £6 | Children £2 – includes a voluntary donation

**ART AT THE CONSERVATOIRE**  
 Westcombe Society's Hon. Sec. Jan Barnett's Solo Exhibition of her still life paintings continues at the Conservatoire in Blackheath until Friday 7th December.

**MYCENAE HOUSE**  
 Your community centre will close at 1.00 pm on Sat 22nd Dec., reopening Sat 5th Jan. at 9.00 am.

## CHILDREN

**GREENWICH THEATRE**  
**Until Sun. 6th Jan. PANTO TIME!**  
 Andrew Pollard's **ROBIN HOOD** £19 £25 Concs. £16 & £23. Children half price.

**WOODLANDS FARM**  
 331 Shooters Hill. Tel. 0208 319 8900  
 Every Thursday Toddler Club 10am - 12pm £2 per adult, children free

**Sun. Dec 2nd 11.00 - 3.0 pm CHRISTMAS FAIR**  
**GREENWICH HERITAGE CENTRE**  
 Artillery Square, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich SE18 4DX 020 8854 2452 FREE Saturday mornings: 10.30am to 12 noon. Free art and craft activities for 5 to 12 year olds. Under fives must be accompanied by an adult. Please wear suitable clothes.

**SE LONDON DADS GROUP**  
**DADS ALERT:** Regular stay-and-play for dads and children under five @ Sherington Children's Centre, 14 Sherington Road every Wednesday from 9.30 - 11.30 am. Contact: [www.SELondonDads.org.uk](http://www.SELondonDads.org.uk) or email: [info@selondondads.org.uk](mailto:info@selondondads.org.uk)

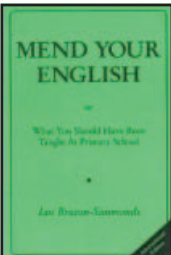


### FREE Christmas Event in East Greenwich Pleasaunce

**Sunday 2nd December**  
 at 1.30 - 4.00 pm  
 Christmas Carols sung by Halstow Community Choir, Father Christmas visiting from 2.00 - 4.00pm  
 Mulled Wine, mince pies & other goodies.

Entrances in Chevening Road and Halstow Road, Greenwich SE10

See the website: <http://fegp.typepad.com>  
 Email: [pleasauncefriends@hotmail.com](mailto:pleasauncefriends@hotmail.com)



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## COMMUNITY

**CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARDS:**  
 If you didn't stock up during the Dickensian Christmas Bazaar, a wide range of cards and other goods are on sale at St Alfege's Church, Greenwich.

**DAVY'S WINE SHOP** 161 Greenwich High Road SE10 8JA 5th December Monthly Cheese and Wine Tasting £25 Book online at [www.davy.co.uk/events](http://www.davy.co.uk/events) or call 020 8858 9147.

**CANCER RESEARCH UK LUNCHEON CLUB**  
**Thurs. 6th Dec, at the Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Road, Blackheath** 12 noon - 2.30 pm. Sit down buffet lunch with glass of wine or soft drink - donation £8.40. All welcome. Prize draw, raffle and musical entertainment. To book, ring Wendy on 8265 0335 by 3rd Dec.

**GREENWICH DANCE**  
**The Borough Hall, Royal Hill SE10 020 8293 9741** [info@greenwichdance.org.uk](mailto:info@greenwichdance.org.uk)  
**Sat 8th Dec. FAMILY CHRISTMAS CABARET** 5.00 pm Doors open 4.30 pm £10 / £7.50  
**Sat 8th Dec. CHRISTMAS CABARET** Doors open 7.30 Start time 8.00 pm. £15 / £10.  
 Group deals for table bookings. BYO food. Bar.

**TEA DANCE Dec 15th 2.00 - 4.30 pm Borough Hall in Royal Hill SE10 8RE** - 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 8293 9741 £8 (£6 concessions)

**GREENWICH CIRCUS FESTIVAL**  
**Harrington Way, Near Thames barrier**  
**Dec. 14th, 15th & 16th.** Three days jam-packed with all things circus. Shows, cabarets, workshops, food, drinking and dancing. 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.org/>

**BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY**  
 Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, Dec 21st AGM and Members Evening  
**Jan 19th 2013 Damascus Steel** Mr Owen Bush Visitors are welcome, and requested to donate £ 3.00 to Society funds.

**BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB** welcomes all players to duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon. & Thurs. 7.15 pm & on Wed. at 1.15 Tel. 8851 2609

**WESTCOMBE WRITERS' CIRCLE** 1st. Thursday each month, 2.30-4.30 at Mycenae House. Ring Joan Paice on 8305 1652 or Rosemary Gill on 8858 5088

**BLACKHEATH FLOWER CLUB** Meets third Friday of every month at 1.45 pm at Mycenae House

**BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE:** First Wednesday of every month at 7.30 pm at Sunfields Methodist Church, Old Dover Road, SE3 8SJ [eileenflanagan194@btinternet.com](mailto:eileenflanagan194@btinternet.com)

**SECOND CHANCE CHOIR** We rehearse Thursday evenings during term time, in Blackheath. New members welcome, contact Margery Nzerem 0208 858 3544 [gery@nzerem.bbmax.co.uk](mailto:gery@nzerem.bbmax.co.uk).

**PERFORMANCE JAZZ IN MYCENAE HOUSE**  
 Every Monday evening. £5.00. Bar!  
**ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC**  
 9.00 pm every Tuesday at the Lord Hood pub, Creek Road; mainstream jazz every Thursday.

## MUSIC

**BLACKHEATH HALLS** Tel 020 8463 0100  
**Mon 3 Dec 13.10h CLASSICAL FUNDRAISERS:**  
**HANSON DUO** Harriet Murray, violin & Alice Murray, cello Free  
**Thurs. 6 Dec 19.30h GREAT HALL TRINITY LABAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** plays Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Mahler and John Gardner £12 & £8  
**Mon 10 Dec 13.10 CLASSICAL FUNDRAISERS:**  
**HELEN BAILEY, SOPRANO** Free  
**Mon 31st Dec. CHICAGO THEMED NIGHT!**  
 Great costumes, great jazz, great fun this New Year's Eve at Blackheath Halls! £22 until Fri. 7th. Dec.; £25 until 6pm on Mon. 31st. Dec.; £30 from 6pm on the night. Group discounts.

**CELEBRATE ROYAL GREENWICH**  
 Wed Dec 5th. 1.00 (£2) & 7.00 pm (£5) Great Hall Showcasing the wealth of musical talent among young people in the Royal Borough.

### BLACKHEATH CHOIR Christmas Concert with St Paul's Sinfonia:

**Sunday 9th Dec. 7.30 pm**  
 St Margaret's Church, Lee

Bach: *Magnificat*

Corelli: *Christmas Concerto*  
 Respighi: *Lauda per la nativita del Signore*

Tickets from: 8852 9263

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## CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

All our local churches have special candle-lit Christmas services, in addition to which are:  
**Sun. Dec. 2nd: 6.30 - 9.00pm THE GREENWICH & BEXLEY COMMUNITY HOSPICE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION** at the Old Royal Naval College. This will feature readings and classic carols. The evening also includes a torch-lit procession by the sea cadets, and carols led by the ORNC Choir. **Tickets £20 and £25. Glass of mulled wine & mince pie included.. Tickets available either online [www.community-hospice.org.uk](http://www.community-hospice.org.uk) , or ring 020 8319 9230.**

**5th December, from 7.00 - 8.00 pm ACTION AGAINST HUNGER CONCERT** at St Alfege Church, Greenwich, with live performances and readings plus all your favourite carols. Free with complimentary mulled wine and mince pies.

**Sunday Dec. 9th, 7.00 pm SAVE THE CHILDREN CHRISTMAS CONCERT** at the ORNC. With the ORNC choir, James Grainger (Organ) and Brass directed by Ralph Allwood. Readers include Christopher Godwin, and Illona Linthwaite. Box Office 8463 0100, and cost £20.00, £18.00, or £15.00. Some tickets may be available on the door, (payment by cash or cheque only please).

**Fri. 14th Dec. 7.30pm BLACKHEATH HALLS CHRISTMAS CONCERT:** Vivaldi Gloria, Festive music Carols for all. With the Trinity Laban World Choir. Tickets £14 ( £12 concs) £5 under 12s Includes a glass of mulled wine (over 18s only) and mince pie

## THEATRE & OPERA

**THE GREENWICH THEATRE** Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755  
**Until 6th January ROBIN HOOD** - another ANDREW POLLARD PANTO  
 020 8858 7755 [www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk)  
**THE SPACE** 269 Westferry Road London E14 3RS 0207 515 7799 / [www.space.org.uk](http://www.space.org.uk)  
 Nearest stn: Mudchute (DLR) Buses: D3, D7, 135  
**FULFIL ME FULLY, PHIL** Until 15th December 7:30pm £14/£10 -A play with songs Suffering a minor existential crisis, Phil creates man. From that moment on, Phil hasn't got a moment's peace. CAPITAL THEATRE COMPANY presents *The Country* by Martin Crimp at St Margaret's Crypt, Lee on 18th- 19th Jan. at 8.00pm. £10, or £8 concs from the box office 020 8852 3258 or e-mail: [msmith51@supanet.com](mailto:msmith51@supanet.com)

## WORSHIP

**St George's, Glenluce Road**  
 Every Sunday at 11.00am Parish Communion with Sunday Special for children age 3 and up.  
**Sunday 2nd Dec. 11.00 am**  
 Family Communion  
**Sunday 23rd Dec. 6pm** Carol Service of lessons and carols  
**Mon. 24th Dec. Christmas Eve** 2.30 pm, repeated at 4.00pm Crib Building with carols - the story of the first Christmas for all ages  
**11.30pm Midnight Eucharist**  
**Tues. 25th Dec. Christmas Day** 10.30am Family Communion  
**Jan. 6th 11.00am Epiphany** - a family communion service; followed by refreshments  
**Sat. Jan.12th Jumble Sale 11.00 - 1pm** The church will be open on Wed. 9th 2 - 4pm, Thurs. 10th & Fri. 11th 7 - 9pm for donations. If you are able to help with collection or on the day please ring Julie on 020 8858 7756,  
**Saturday January 26th 11.00am - 1.00 pm Clearance Sale**

## LOCAL COUNCILLORS

**Labour:** Cllr. Alex Grant Tel. 8855 7292 E-mail [Alex.grant@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Alex.grant@greenwich.gov.uk) **Surgeries:** 1st. Friday of each month, 7.00 - 8.00 pm, Mycenae House; 3rd. Saturday of each month, 3.30-4.30 pm, St James Church Hall, Kidbrooke Park Rd.  
**Conservative:** Cllr. Geoff Brighty Tel. 8921 5663 (Town Hall) or 8858 9731 (Home) [geoffrey.brighty@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:geoffrey.brighty@greenwich.gov.uk)  
 Cllr. Alex Wilson Tel. 07783 611607 Email: [alex.wilson@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:alex.wilson@greenwich.gov.uk)  
**Surgery:** 1st Monday of the month 6 - 7.00 pm Blackheath Library, Old Dover Rd.

### "Made in Greenwich" Gallery

324 Creek Rd, SE10 9SW  
**Poetry Readings**  
 £4 | £3 conss. inc. Glass of wine

**Tues. 4th Dec. 7.30 pm**

Greenwich poets, including Mick Delap, & Westcombe Park's answer to Wendy Cope, Lorraine Mariner

<https://www.facebook.com/events/16394325744431/>



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# ENVIRONMENT



Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Library on the lower ground floor of the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington St. They may also be viewed on [www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning)

## What's happening in the park?

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM reports



PHOTOS:  
EMILY NORTON

With memories of London's summer of sport fading fast, the Westcombe Society's Planning and Environment Committee (WSPEC) was invited by LOCOG to take part in a stakeholders' walkabout in Greenwich Park and the Circus Field to view progress and reinstatement work.

### Greenwich Park

Stakeholders were reminded that, as with the construction process, the weather plays a significant part in the pace of the reinstatement work. According to LOCOG, if all goes according to plan, returfing the area covered by the main arena is due to start in December. Grass is still growing in the areas that had been covered up and the soil, which was described as being in a good condition, is already being worked on by staff from the Royal Parks. Returfing is also in progress on the National Maritime Museum grounds. Areas close to the cricket pitch and bandstand have been reseeded.

An unexpected benefit of the Park being closed over much of the summer is that there has been significantly less wear and tear and as a result at-risk acid grassland areas seem generally to be doing well.

In places affected by the cross country course rye grass had been sown and we could see signs of recovery.

The Rye grass will be removed in the spring using selective weedkiller, which has been approved by various bodies including Natural England. We were told that all acid grassland areas are being monitored and that the lack of wear and tear in some areas this year has 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 chance to dry out a little.

The rainfall experienced this spring was exceptional and this area, which housed a number of significant structures, looks the most damaged although there are signs of grass beginning to grow again.

### Circus Field

Situated outside the Park, but an integral

part to the Park as a venue, the Circus Field has been cleared and has its own reinstatement programme managed by a specialist Suffolk-based sport and amenity surfaces consultancy, Agrostis.

Reinstatement of the bunds (embankments) was in evidence at the end of October and soil previously removed has now been returned and reseeded with wildflowers and grasses.

The phased reinstatement of the grass, with seeding and returfing is due to start 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 fun fair. Representatives from WSPEC and the Blackheath Society raised concerns that the newly reinstated grassed areas will be too fragile to cope with April's heavy-duty use, particularly from the fair.

"We also raised concerns over damage to the Heath caused by the footbridge," said Shirley Broughton from WSPEC, "LOCOG confirmed that this would also be dealt with."

LOCOG is committed to the funding restoration work until 2015.



## Good news for cyclists

MARGARET GRAVELLE

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

It was suggested that Bower Avenue, which is the wide path that runs alongside the flower gardens diagonally from Blackheath Gate towards Maze Hill, should be open to cyclists as far as the permitted cycle path from Vanbrugh Gate to Great Cross Avenue.

Following discussions with the Park Manager, Graham Dear, and the Greenwich Safer Parks Panel, it was agreed that this would be implemented for a trial period.

Preparations for the Olympics have delayed the trial, but as the Park returns to normal there are now plans to begin the experiment and to monitor its impact.

Although no date has yet been set, this will be welcome news to the many resident cyclists who responded enthusiastically to the original proposal – with only one comment in opposition.

## Christopher's column

### Gender trouble

Do men and women garden differently? The topic arose from a debate on the ethics of cut flowers, but applies across the whole area of designing gardens or landscapes, and ways of combining plants.

Although plantswoman Beth Chatto has a background of flower arranging, no-one would describe her style as feminine, but one writer describes designer Sarah Price planting style as 'graceful feminine airiness.'

Her Chelsea sponsors, the *Telegraph*, counter, though, that most avoid 'crass gender-laden observations'. As it happens no-one of any gender has asked me for a garden using pastel colours, but that's because dark plummy tones or clashing colours are 'on trend'.

It's not a new issue – historically, images of women 'gardening' often show them cutting flowers for the house or doing a little watering in the conservatory (an extension of the home). In the 1950s women were shown working in the garden using lightweight lawnmowers which (even) they could use.

But modern gardening 'kit' (leaf blowers, shredders), seems like 'boys toys' with obligatory noise and bits to tinker with ('adjust'). American academics are on the topic, inevitably, even suggesting that 'regardless of sexual orientation' you can see designers as nester or hunter (guess which is more feminine).

The (male) Sheffield team designing pictorial meadows are scientific boffins, as well as visually acute, so on this scale are the middling nester-hunters.

### Barbara Morris adds:

There is a problem with the Vanbrugh Gate: no-one – whether on foot or on a bicycle – can see who is coming in the opposite direction until they are right in the gateway. Nearly all the other gates into the Park have better sightlines, because they have railings either side of the gateway. But Vanbrugh Gate is set into the wall at its full height.

Recently, I was once again faced by a cyclist blocking the way in to the park as I entered through Vanbrugh Gate, I stopped and asked him to get off his bike to allow me to enter. He courteously did so, and saw the point of it when two small children suddenly appeared in the gateway too, more or less under the wheels of his bike.

### BUY LOCAL!

The Royal Standard Business and Traders association is mounting a series of events at the Standard throughout December, including a procession with Santa, buskers, and donkeys dressed as reindeer.

Also listen out for the Boys Brigade Band, Carol Singers, and Les Zoings Band. Many special Christmas bargains are also on offer!

To return to our original topic of the cut flower trade, I'm not keen to have anyone cutting flowers from the borders, and will always suggest a small 'picking garden' for flowers and other produce, if there's space. A recent ad campaign showing shirtless 'hunks' proffering bouquets was specifically aimed at getting women to buy (even) more flowers.

But if men 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'. To respond to the American blogger who pondered loudly 'why can't a dude like flowers?' – no reason at all, but they should be growing their own.

Christopher Raven



### PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(See also <http://westcombe.blogspot.com/>)

JOHN ROAN SCHOOL, MAZE HILL ref 12/2516/F and 12/2517/L  
Construct mini-substation to rear of gym block

57A MYCENAE ROAD ref 12/2588/F  
Install 3 replacement timber windows

TREE WORKS  
46 HARDY ROAD ref 12/2785/TC  
Fell hawthorn at rear and crown reduce oak by 30%

71 BEACONSFIELD ROAD ref 12/2724/TC  
Fell magnolia grandiflora by side of house.

JOHN ROAN TREE APPLICATION 12/2629/TC  
An application has been submitted by the Council to fell the Flowering Horse Chestnut (T5) at the junction of Vanbrugh Park Road West and Westcombe Park Road. In its application in 2011, the Council gave specific assurances that this tree would be retained.

The Westcombe and Blackheath Societies have written to oppose the application, as have a number of local residents. Objections can be made by letter or online.

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# MARKET PLACE

Please send ads for the Market Place with payment by the 10th day of the preceding month to:  
 Marilyn Little, 163 Westcombe Hill, SE3 7DP  
 0208853 1312 email: marilyn.little@btinternet.com  
 ALL classified adverts 30p per word. Please make cheques payable to The Westcombe Society

## ACCOMMODATION

**GOOD RELIABLE HOST FAMILIES** wanted for foreign students. For more info. please contact Lynne on 01732 822649 or email sesgreenwich@aol.com  
**FUNCTION ROOM FOR HIRE** Blackheath area, up to 150 people, Bar, disabled access. Tel 07940 296290

## GARDENING

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**GOOD GARDENING** . . . For hands-on gardening, practical advice, or low-maintenance planting designed for you & your garden, call Christopher Raven 020 8691 2240  
**GARDEN MAINTENANCE:** mowing, weeding, pruning, communal garden contracts, fruit and vegetables, gardening tuition, RHS qualified, also domestic cleaning. Call John and Rachel 0208 316 0990 / 07746 121510

## HOLIDAYS

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**NORFOLK HIDEAWAY** Traditional cottage in rural hamlet - sleeps 5/6. Easy access to coast, Burnham Market, Holt. Great location for walking, cycling, bird watching visiting castles and stately homes. Tel 020 8858 1515 / 07768 340477  
 www.baileycottage.co.uk  
**NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS**  
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**The Westcombe Society wishes all our readers  
and advertisers a very Happy Christmas,  
and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.**



PHOTOS: Neville Grant



PHOTO: Marilyn Little

Here, Blackheath Pet Supplies reminds us that pets like to enjoy Christmas too; as long as they aren't pet turkeys ...



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!



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Blackheath Arts & Craft Fair

Wednesday 12 December - 7.00pm  
Blackheath Centre for Singing - Carol Concert

Friday 14 December - 1.00pm  
Senior Citizens Club Concert

Friday 14 December - 8.00pm  
Dave Silk's Jazz Nights Ensemble

Saturday 15 December - 11.00am  
Diddi Dance Christmas Party

Monday 17 December - 7pm  
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