Support our charities

Over the years, the Westcombe Society has donated over £100,000 pounds to local charities, on the basis that charity begins at home – but doesn’t end there! This year the Westcombe Society is proud to support the South London Special League as its Charity of the Year, and the Dickensian Christmas Bazaar is a big part of the Society’s fund-raising efforts.

“Fund-raising? Yes, and fun-raising too!” says organiser Marilyn Little. “We are very pleased by the amount of public support that our bazaar receives every year, and pleased too that many of our stall-holders come back every year. It is also very good to see how many people come to help out before, during and after the bazaar. It makes it a genuine community effort. We are also very grateful to all the local businesses and traders who donated prizes, and to Mrs. Lisa Laws, for allowing us to use Blackheath High School for our venue.”

The charity this year is the South London Special League, a successful community-based project that enables young players with disabilities to take part in sport. Since 2004 for example, over a thousand boys and girls have experienced the fun of playing football. The project is run by Sharon Brokenshire and has won awards for excellence. The SLSL recently received an award at Buckingham Palace. (See page 3)

Preparations for the Christmas bazaar on Friday evening were in full swing: getting the tree up was a major exercise. INSET: Oops! Nearly fell over! Dave saves the day! We’ve heard of tree-huggers but this is ridiculous . . .!

ABOVE: Simon sets up the roasted chestnuts ready for the start. ABOVE, RIGHT: Dominic Coleman opens the bazaar. BELOW: Santa goes walkabout with Mr and Mrs Pilgrim and their lovely pipe organ.

LEFT: The children had a great time – Punch and Judy, Santa’s Grotto, face painting, art work – and were fascinated by Geoff Felix’s dancing puppet. Great music from Clanjamfray & the Grove Choir. BELOW, LEFT: The stalls were full of the Christmas spirit – especially the bottle tombola!

Many thanks for their donations:

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Firgus Noone
Sewing Time
Passion Flower
Royal Nepalese restaurant
Mamelle
Clarendon Hotel
Go West

Above: The Mayor and her consort do some shopping. Below: The stalls did a roaring trade.
**Letters to the editor**

Any views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society.

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**From: Aan Dijkhuizen**

I was delighted to see the article in the WN this month about Blackheath High School in the mid 1930s, and with its much deserved mention of Mary Stone and Jane Grant.

I don’t know if you realise that in fact the very beginning of the campaign for the vote had its birth in Blackheath. The petition collected then was presented to Parliament by J S Mill, MP living in Blackheath Park, and was delivered to him in the House of Commons by Elizabeth Garrett (went to school in Blackheath) and Emily Davies (who was a student at the Greenwich School in 1870) and 17 inter- esting women signed in the area. At this time the idea of women’s suffrage was controversial, so they were very brave. Since 1990, I have been researching all the 1,499 women who signed (for my PhD and beyond). The women supportsin this area range from a jobbing builder to a skip owner’s wife. One family in the area is closely connected with the architect of buildings in Vanbrugh Park, and there are other families, like the Locneys, broadly in the area ‘Westcombe’. There are some good stories to be had in both of these families.

Helen Taylor, John Stuart Mill’s step daughter lived in Blackheath Park, was subsequently invited to stand as a parliamentary candidate long before the vote was won.

Also the Headmistress and several teachers at Blackheath High School made a public contribution in the support of the campaign in 1895.

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**From: Dr David Frank Senior Parkside**

I refer to the article in last month’s WN by Clr Grant. The red line, which is drawn everywhere by those who are unable, or do not wish to pay, a market rate for their housing. This was true but how much ‘affordable’ housing was built?

My understanding is that welfare is there to provide support for people who are too ill or too disabled, or suffer mental health problems. This is not the same as providing housing for everyone, through not fault of their own.

In terms of the Council’s decision on alternative income to those who make socially destructive decisions. I note that the Council claims there is a literal-supply of Rolls Royces and Ferraris. Citizens who are unable to afford or are quite happy to drive a second-hand car are not a problem about it. But when it comes to housing, the concept of entitlement is ever-present.

‘Everybody is entitled to a roof over their head’ irrespective of their income. But what they choose to make of it is another story. Many choose to have a spare room in their house. I am happy to pay for it. I do expect any one also to pay for it.

The welfare system provides a series of perverse incentives to people to make socially destructive decisions. This is a real issue. The main one is to produce children they cannot support. Free school meals is a signal for the parents that they have produced offspring they cannot afford to feed.

I benefit from a good state education and am happy to pay taxes to educate children. I am less enthusiastic about having to pay to feed them. The main one is to produce children they cannot support. Free school meals is a signal for the parents that they have produced offspring they cannot afford to feed. I am less enthusiastic about having to pay to feed them. I am also less enthusiastic about having to pay to feed them.

The main issue is overabundance of people wishing to live here many more years without being clients of the NHS and the Criminal Justice System. They are also less likely to trouble the welfare system.

I would like to say how informative Sarah Winterbottom’s article in November’s WN was on the ‘Day to No Tariff’ proposal. I also attended the meeting in my capacity as Green Party candidate for Blackheath West Ward in 2014 (The Green Party are opposed to the tunnel, along with Greenwich Liberal Democrats, and a resident of Caledon Road for 60 years, who wishes to live here many more years without suffering a premature death due to respiratory disease. Aspointed out, we already have some of the highest air pollution levels in London without attracting even more traffic. Having lived with an asthma sufferer (my late mother) and having experienced it, I know only too well how debilitating respiratory disease can be.

As well as the air pollution, Blackheath West Ward has already occasionally reached 1.1 million people living in the country illegally were removed. This is the most successful solution but the election this was not possible because we do not know where they live.

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**new social enterprise**

Tom Hale is working for the Mental Health Activity Trust, Greenwich, a new social enterprise in Greenwich set up to help people with a mental illness get back into paid employment. There are over 2000 people in Greenwich unemployed due to mental illness.

Tom told the *WN*: “We will still work next year, after which we will be opening another 39 shops in the borough to help people get back into work.”

“This does not just stop at helping people who suffer with a mental illness but this is the community, local businesses and stops this shutter syndrome, where businesses are closing down and left empty for long periods. The aim is to help people to have a sense of self worth and give back to society while helping our economy.”

*Present the Trust has funded three people through University, and placed 7 people in employment with other organisations who have agreed to work with us as long as we provide the support. These are career jobs where people can reach Director if they so wish.*

The MHA Trust are having their first annual fundraiser event on Dec 6th at 7.45pm at a Turkish Band, & belly dancer, at the Sun In The Sands Pub, 123 Shooters Hill Road SE3 7UQ.

The tickets cost £20 each: this entitles you to as much Turkish food you can eat, a complimentary drink on arrival plus a chance to win £100 on the night.

**The day the fly-tippers came**

Residents of Tamber Road were greeted by an ugly sight when they woke up one morning to find a vast fly tip in the road — it was the length of about 6 houses.

The good news, said Cllr Mary Mills, was that the Council staff came within an hour of it being reported. They photographed it in the hope of tracking down the perpetrators, and then removed it — they had to come back twice with the truck!

Sharon and Steve at the Palace

In October, Sharon Brookes and John Bolland, a member of the South London Special League went to celebrate the FA’S 150th anniversary at Buckingham Palace.

“It was a great day!” said Sharon who runs the SLSL, the Westcombe Society’s Charity of the Year. “The President of the FA, Greg Dyke, and Prince William made presentations to 150 organisations who have made a positive difference to Grass Roots Football: Grass Roots Heroes.

“We then watched a football match between the two oldest teams in London, the Chelsea and the Fulham. We then watched the local team Wardian XI. A unique experience. Never before has a football match been played in the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

“I was able to talk to Greg Dyke and invited him to our Tenth Anniversary celebrations next year; The Special Cup 2014, to be held at London Marathon Playing Fields, Shooters Hill Rd on Thursday May 22nd.”

**John Bolland 1942-2013**

Born in 1942, the eldest of five children, John came to Greenwich when he was seven years old. There he met Daphne, who was in the same class at Christ Church Primary school.

Going their separate ways to secondary school, John spotted Daphne at the bus stop, and told himself, “One day, I’m going to marry her.” And so he did, eventually, in 1962.

Above all, John was a family man. As a child, each time another sibling was expected, he would gather his toys together to share with his younger brother. However, only four sisters arrived, and, perhaps feeling the need for some male company, he joined the army. For twelve years he served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers before returning to live in Greenwich. The love of all mechanical things still interested him, but jobs as a tank mechanic were hard to come by, so he worked with the Met Police, tinkering with their transport. He loved gadgets of any kind: he was the first to have a home computer, one of the first to have not one but two video recorders, one Betamax and one VHS.

John also enjoyed travel and used to take the family on camping trips — including two disastrous trips to the Peak District, where he managed to get hopelessly lost.

John loved his music and rarely missed Friday Night is Music Night on the radio. He also had a thirst for knowledge, and he usually had a book or two on the go. He loved a good argument, and always had a story to tell, like how he cooked eggs on the engine of a tank, or how when towing a tank he nearly took out a bridge in Salisbury.

Every time he told one of his stories, you had to pretend you had never heard it before! For many years, John and Daphne delivered 200 copies of the *Westcombe News*, and everyone loved and respected him.

We offer deepest condolences to Daphne and all the family.

**Lawrence Smith OBE 1939-2013**

Lawrence Smith, who died on 15th October, did not merely “Think Globally and Act Locally”, as the phrase goes: he thought, and acted, like a local institution: combining all this with a very full and loving family life.

Locally, Lawrence was the leading light in the Local History Group, and, since 2004, played a key role on the Westcombe Society’s Environment Committee. He played a major role over a range of issues affecting the local community, seeking to preserve and enhance the local environment. Lawrence demonstrating a range of characteristits which made him very effective. They included his encyclopaedic knowledge of relevant rules and regulations, and of the detailed history of the issue being dealt with.

He was extraordinarily thorough, and also displayed a willingness to accept trenchant criticism, and even sometimes unpopularity, if that was the cost of sticking to the committee’s agreed policies. In this he gave the Society some real backbone.

Lawrence also had a unique sense of humour, as seen by his thank you card for the presentation he received from the Westcombe Society on his resignation this summer — Rembrandt’s The Anatomy Lesson, which he said represented the Westcombe Society examining a dead Council policy!

Lawrence was a modest man, and not many local people were aware of his very distinguished international career: after Cambridge (where he was known as ‘Leftie’) he worked at the Bank of England, where he met Judith.

With periods on loan to the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC and later to the British Embassy in Tokyo, together with his years as Bank of England Senior Adviser on Eastern Europe and then the Middle East, Lawrence travelled the world as a consummate financial diplomat, giving outstanding service to his country.

A man of commitment and principle, as seen for example by his support for the Palestinian cause, and by his membership of the United Nations Association: a true world citizen, in fact, Lawrence will be much missed. We send our deepest condolences to Judith and the rest of the family.

**Keeping children safe**

Young people in the Royal Borough of Greenwich have helped to devise a new website which helps children at risk get expert help and advice.

The information-packed website — launched in October at www.greenwich-safeguardingchildren — is aimed at both parents/guardians and children. It tells people what to do if they think a child is at risk, and includes advice for individual young people on many issues.

It encourages young people in the borough to speak out about any problems they may be experiencing, from bullying and sexual abuse to alcohol and drug misuse. Advice specifically for children and young people includes ballooning, forced marriage, e-safety, running away and going missing, violence at home, abuse, drugs and alcohol, gangs, guns and knives, racism, and sexual exploitation. There is information for parents and carers, too.

The website lists contact numbers for the borough’s children’s services team for anyone concerned about a child’s safety or well-being. They are 020 8921 3172 during office hours, and 020 8854 8888 for emergencies. But if a child is in immediate danger, people should always call the police on 999.

**Follow the star**

*John’s Church is putting on the December 14th ‘Live Nativity’ event advertised on page 1 of this issue.*

Lawrence was an ardent member of the United Nations Association: a true world citizen, in fact. Lawrence will be much missed. We send our deepest condolences to Judith and the rest of the family.

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FEATURES

ANNE ROBBINS looks at . . .

Some Christmas Treats . . . on our doorstep

With the holiday season fast approaching, shopping for presents starts to look like a chore. But there are plenty of shopping choices within the Westcombe Park area. With no less effort than going online or up and down the market, we have a great supply of gifts locally, from stocking fillers to big purchases. There are plenty of possibilities, including gift vouchers from a number of shops, including the hair and nail salons; and a gift card from Apples ‘n’ Oranges, to help make your shopping easy.

Don’t forget local pharmacies, which stock plenty of beauty and grooming aids. Shopping on our doorstep has an added bonus: by supporting smaller independent shops and local makers, you will help the area’s economy and the money we spend will continue to circulate nearer home.

Here is a brief survey of some of the items that caught my eye – and that can bring plenty of cheer from page one of Christmas, to help make your shopping easy.

Starting in the Old Dover Road, Passion Flower is more than a florist. For gardeners, it has a wide range of hand creams, including Gardener’s Hack Wax, an intensive repair aid for cracked skin (£9.95). Remember summer? You can bring it back with glycerine soaps scented with carrot, cucumber, and tomato leaf (£2.99). Wooden dibbers, to help planting, will bring thoughts of the coming spring (£3.50).

There’s plenty for indoors, as well. The shop has lots of choice in tea-light holders, for instance, including seasonal ones with images of snowflakes or winter stage. There’s a choice of very pretty jewellery, too, featuring semi-precious stones in silver and gold-plated settings. A cheerful bouquet of blue beads featuring a red heart-shaped charm (£10); amber and silver pieces look sophisticated and include earrings (£25) and more. Passion Flower is also a great place to find ribbons, to add that extra something when wrapping gifts.

Ottie and the Bea is a treasure trove of presents for children. From hair grips to temporary tattoos, bubble makers in novel shapes to beading kits, card games to books, you can find all you need to keep kids happy and occupied over the holiday. There are colourful badges (80p), clever rubber stamps that children can personalise with their own images of snowflakes or winter stage. Ottie and the Bea has plenty of gifty ideas.

The Blackheath Pet Supplies has plenty to keep any animals, wild and domestic, from feeling left out of celebrations. What dog could resist Christmas packages (£1.60) and feature sausages disguised as a Christmas pudding (£3.50)?

Even more enticing are the doggie Christmas tarts, mince pies and carob Yule logs (from £2.75). They look for all the world like human food but contain nothing that could harm pets: remember that chocolate does dogs no good at all.

For cats, Dreamsies treats come in Christmas packages (£1.60) and feature turkey or salmon flavours. And there are ready-made present bags for both cats and dogs, with treats and toys like a squeaky ball disguised as a Christmas pudding (£3.50). For wild birds in your garden, a bright red peanut feeder looks very festive (£2.99), and the shop also stocks plenty of food treats to help them through the cold weather.

For keen cooks and less-experienced ones, Blackheath Cooks has a range of china embossed with words using old type-setting fonts, including cute milk jugs (£9) and much more. Any cook needs something to wipe their hands on: Blackheath Cooks has a range of aprons based Made by Marianne. In chef-style, evoke pictures of the area, perfect for sending to friends to remind them to visit. Notebooks and diaries feature covers based on historical book bindings or pretty Art Nouveau designs (from £5.99), while bejewelled jotting pads have glamour (£29.99). Pegga-Stores has soft toys, based on favourite children’s books such as Eric Carle’s Little Grey Caterpillar (£3.99). Ottie also carries Woods of Windsor room fragrances and eau de toilette in classic scents such as lavender and lily of the valley (from £6.99). The shop is also a useful place to find wrapping paper and ribbons to suit any taste, and has plenty of cards to accompany presents. It’s a great place to find thank you notes, too.

The Blackheath History Society and the History Society have items of home decor, including patchwork accent cushions, carefully patched up from vintage blankets. The shop has beautiful evocative pictures of the area, perfect for people flock to try to communicate with their lost loved ones. There are all sorts of twists and turns to the plot. At points both spooky and funny, it also has some sharp observations of human nature and the vagaries of local life.

The London Federation of Small Businesses is running a Keep Trade Local competition from 30th November to 7th December across London. All you need to do is purchase one or more items from a local small business, and register your purchase either online or by completing an application form. You will be in with a chance of winning either a first price of £500, a second price of £300 or a third prize of £200.

More information about the competition can be found at http://www.fsb.org.uk/london/keeps-trade-local/challenge.

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For a few days in mid-October an unusual craft could be seen anchored on the river Thames downstream from Greenwich Pier. A long wooden hull stood upright, cradled in supporting struts on the deck of a floating barge. The battered hull you can see above is part of a clipper ship built in Sunderland: the City of Adelaide. Five years older than the Cutty Sark, after many years at sea and in docks, she had been brought down from Scotland for a special re-naming ceremony. And for a short time the last two clipper ships remaining in the world lay, like old comrades, within hailing distance of each other.

The City of Adelaide was first launched in 1864. She was specially fitted out with cabins to take emigrants across the oceans to South Australia, then a convict-free-colony of settlers. She was a fast ship: on one run, she took on passengers as well as copper ore, wheat and wool. She made 23 of these voyages, there and back, before the end of 1887.

As steam began to replace sail power, her role changed. The City of Adelaide became a hospital ship first, and then, in the 1920s, she was bought by the Clyde Division and her name was changed to (Clyde Division) and her name was Water up to Scotland for use by the RNVR. Eventually, in dock in Glasgow in 1991 her role changed. The City of Adelaide became a hospital ship first, and then, in the 1920s, she was bought by the Clyde Division and her name was changed to (Clyde Division) and her name was changed to HMS Carrick.

Eventually, in dock in Glasgow in 1991 she was accidently submerged for nearly a year. Then, transferred to a slipway in the Scottish Maritime Museum, she was in danger of being broken up. The ship was saved by CSCOAL (Clipper Ship City of Adelaide Ltd) and its supporters. This group of volunteers in South Australia has been able to arrange the transfer of the ship’s hull to Port Adelaide. There she will be restored in the years ahead to her former glory, with masts, rigging and decks.

Over the years, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh has given active support to this project, and on the afternoon of 18th October he came to Greenwich to attend the re-naming ceremony. By tradition among mariners, going back thousands of years, this ceremony had to include the purging of the previous name and the appeasing of the gods of the sea and the four winds.

Led by marine engineer Andrew Chapmans, one of whose forbears had sailed on the City of Adelaide, a piece of paper bearing the word CARRICK was torn up and scattered on the Thames, thus removing its name from the Ledger of the Deep and from Neptune’s memory. In turn, each of the four winds (given classical names) had a glass of champagne poured out as a libation, to be cast in the water as an offering. Invited guests (including royalty!) included the purging of the previous name and the appeasing of the gods of the sea and the four winds.

The freshly hewn wood needs to be rested for several months to dry, and then to relax into its new shape. After these further months of shelf storage he will inspect the wood always has the last word. The wood always has the last word. The picture above shows the extent of the devastation. One local resident who survived the blast said the street – Victorian terrace dwellings facing each other on either side – became a sea of mud.

Today, there is a green space punctuated by trees where the houses once stood, and new housing has replaced the ruins of the old street. But memories linger on: and last year, one of the trees, the brainchild of local campaigner Toni Hale, was specially planted as a memorial to the nineteen local people who lost their lives 69 years ago. The picture above shows the extent of the devastation. One local resident who survived the blast said the streetside – Victorian terrace dwellings facing each other on either side – became a sea of mud.

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- for all ages by Michele j.k.jpg
- For more information on michelej@gcc.ac.uk

**Greenwich**
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**In the dog-house**
- The RV’s in the dog-house category, this idea follows for Batley Green instead of Batley Road
- The Royal Borough of Greenwich website has this entry: “Batley Park comprises the Royal Standard roundabout and a larger piece of land adjoining it. Mature trees grow around the entrances, offering shoppers a stable place to stop.” So, Batley Park it is. Ed
Seasonal greetings to one and all!

PHOTO: Warren King

Luke Striffler as Sam, Alim Jayda as Puss, and Kate Malyon as Princess Petit Filou in the Greenwich Theatre’s production of Puss in Boots.

See page 5, What’s On.

Christmas at The House
Mycenae House
community centre

Nov 29
The Al Jolson Show

Nov 30
25 Sleeps to Christmas Party

Dec 9
Blackheath Centre for Singing Concert
plus Scrooge

Dec 13
Friday Club Concert & Lunch
featuring Maureen’s Music

Dec 13
Jazz & Curry Special
featuring Luluk Purwanto, Bob McKay, and Paul Taylor

Dec 14
Diddi Dance Christmas Party

Dec 16
Becky Dell Music Academy
Christmas Concert

02088581749 www.mycenashouse.co.uk
90 Mycenae Rd, Blackheath, SE3 7SE
15 min walk to Westcombe Park Train Station.
Free Parking, Bar & Cafe

Mycenae House & Gardens is a community hub committed to serving the communities of Westcombe, Blackheath & Greenwich.

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Contact the Westcombe Park branch on 020 8858 6101

John Payne
johnpayne.com