



Westcombe NEWS

Happy New Year

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February 2014 Issue 1

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

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

Storms blight the New Year

George Martin, a 14-year-old student at Colfe's, reports



The A2 roundabout on Blackheath
PHOTO: George Martin

Unprecedented storms have surged through England over the past months. More than 130,000 people in southern England alone were unable to enjoy Christmas 2013, as they were left without power on Christmas Eve.

Some roofs collapsed and many homes were evacuated as rivers burst their banks, and sea surges overwhelmed coastal defences. The high-powered winds ripped through the country. A 109 mph gust of wind was recorded in north Wales.

Thanks to the Thames Barrier, which had to close a record number of times in January, most of Thameside London escaped flooding. A map on the Thames Barrier Information Centre website shows that without the barrier, large swathes of land would have been flooded, including much of Greenwich, and the peninsula.

However, our own area did not escape unscathed: many homes lost tiles and slates in the strong winds, including four tower blocks in Woolwich, while blocked drains in Eltham on Christmas Eve caused at least 23 homes to be flooded in Westthorne Avenue; and in Lewisham, the Quaggy flooded homes.

Across the whole area, trees and heavy branches came down, including several eucalyptus trees like this one (right) in Westcombe Park Road. The Westcombe Woodlands also lost some trees.

The environment agency had dozens of flood warnings in place; in December, England's east coast experienced the worst tidal surge in 60 years, but in January it was the turn of Western Scotland, Wales, and the South and South-west coasts of England to suffer; in North Wales residents had to

be rescued by lifeboat crews.

So far the death toll has gone up to 7, and sadly this figure is likely to rise. Very sadly, one of the casualties was Henry Martin, 18, a student of film and TV at Greenwich University, who left his home in Membland, Newton Ferrers, near Plymouth, to take pictures of the storm.

The question in many people's minds is how far this weather is the result of climate change. John Beddington, former Chief Scientific Adviser to the government, is in no doubt. He warns that there will be "an increasing frequency of extreme weather events" such as flooding in the future.

Weather forecaster Emma Compton of the Met Office in Exeter asserts that there is nothing particularly unusual in these weather conditions, which she said are to be expected as part of a longer-term "natural variability" in our weather: there are many who will find that hard to believe.

Editor: The Thames Barrier closed 4 times in the 80s, 35 times in the 90s and 80 times since 2000. As the year turned, it closed 11 times in 2 weeks.

Additional reporting by WN reporter.



PHOTO:
Emily Norton

Westcombe Park Road. By a miracle, the Westcombe Society's Christmas Tree at the Standard survived.



PHOTO:
Neville Grant

Memories of summer 2013 – to cheer us up. Doubts are being cast, still, on how healthy the park is after the Olympics. (See Letters, page 2.) It looks fine to us!

The Eagle has landed – or disappeared

WN
reporter

The Spread Eagle is – was – a very popular restaurant in Greenwich, renowned both for its excellent food, and unique atmosphere. When Foyle Road resident Gordon Baker went there last month, he promised his guest that they would be lunching surrounded by one of the best private collections of maritime paintings in London – and was mortified to find the walls completely bare. All the pictures had disappeared. Asked where they were a waiter shrugged and replied "The British government has got them."

Somewhat mystified, Mr Baker got on with his *hors d'oeuvres*. And as for the oeuvres missing from its walls, which included a Gainsborough and two paintings by John Bratby (who once lived in Hardy Road) a partial explanation perhaps lies with the fact that the parent company of the Spread Eagle, Greenwich Inc, is now in administration, with debts, reportedly, of up to £9 million.

The Spread Eagle closed on Dec. 12th., and Inc's American owner, Frank Dowling (aka "Frank the Yank" in Greenwich street argot) and two of his colleagues are being questioned over a suspected underpayment of six million pounds in VAT and PAYE.

There are hopes that the administrators – Griffins – will be able to save jobs, and sell the group's businesses, most of which it says appear viable. They include the Trafalgar Tavern, the Cricketers, The Admiral Hardy, the Greenwich Park Bar and Grill, and many other bars and restaurants.

To the relief of many, one casualty is likely to be Mr Dowling's proposed plan to redevelop the area behind the Trafalgar Tavern with a 6-storey, 96 bedroom hotel.

Meanwhile, art-lovers will be interested to find out who those wonderful pictures really belong to – to say nothing of the 2005 bronze statue by Lesley Povey of Horatio Nelson which once stood proudly outside the Trafalgar Tavern, and which has also disappeared.

Lawyers for Mr Dowling have denied any wrong-doing, and say that he is "co-operating fully" with HMRC.

The *Evening Standard* newspaper quotes them as saying:

"The investigation, as we understand it, primarily relates to a VAT issue which is complex as it involves different entities within the business structure. The structure is entirely legitimate."

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News briefs

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The Bazaar

Our bazaar supremo and society treasurer, Marilyn Little, told the *WN* that last year's Christmas bazaar raised over £3000. A cheque for £3000.00 is to be presented to Sharon Brokenshire of the South London Special League (the Westcombe Society's Charity of the Year) at the Helpers' and Newcomers' Party in February.

Thirty minute Shakespeare

Congratulations to John Roan pupils who staged Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* in a breathtaking thirty-minute production directed by Matthew Trearty in the Greenwich Theatre.

Theatre has always been one of John Roan's strong points, largely thanks to Hilary Stallard, the drama teacher who retired last year after 38 years of teaching. Among the productions she staged were *The Crucible* and *Kes*.

Invicta School

Invicta School, which recently expanded to two forms of entry, is still waiting for new buildings that it was promised last year.

The school, which has been rated outstanding by Ofsted, currently uses buildings that were built in the fifties, and which were never intended to be permanent.

Chinese New Year

The Chinese year 4712 began on Jan. 31st, 2014. Did you miss it already? No worries. You still have time to celebrate the Year of the Horse. See page 4.

Local actors in action!

Peter Hamilton-Dyer is acting in *Twelfth Night* on Broadway (to rave reviews), while Christopher Godwin is starring in a timely play, *Versailles*, at the Donmar Warehouse from February 20th.

In search of the Holy Trail

Pauline Brierley reports that an innovative project has united the church with children and the arts. The first church trail devised by members of Blackheath and Greenwich Fine Arts Societies was launched at All Saints Church, Blackheath at a carol service in December. Children from Heath House Preparatory School, Blackheath, stood at the front of the church to tell the congregation how much they had enjoyed tracking down the trail's clues and learning about the church's artefacts.

The Inn Crowd

Many greatly enjoyed this Christmas musical by Roger Jones at St George's, Glenluce Road. All the proceeds went to the '999 club', a charity that supports the homeless, desperate and lonely.

Nevada Street Poets

The group launched their pamphlet *Pocket Horizon* at the Made in Greenwich Gallery on Wednesday 29th January. The poems are illustrated by Cassie Herschel-Shorland.

New Year's Resolutions

It is estimated that some 14.5 million UK adults made a New Year's Resolution to lose weight. About one in five have resolved to exercise and improve their fitness. Meanwhile, a laudable 12% of adults have resolved to educate themselves or learn a new skill. However, research in the US indicates that just 8% of people achieve their New Year's goals. Does that make you feel better?

Fostering events

Interested in fostering? Phone 0800 0521499 to book a place at an information event at the Woolwich Centre on Tues. Feb. 25th 7.- 9.00 pm.

Changes at the Westcombe News

We are very sorry to say goodbye to Sarah Winterbottom, our able environment editor; but are pleased to welcome Maggie Gravelle in her place.

Meanwhile, our commiserations to Geoff Garvey, who has been out of action for several months. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Westcombe Society

Helpers' & Newcomers' Party Sat 22nd Feb,

invites will be going out shortly but if you don't receive one and would like to come, please contact Joanne on 07709 571777.

Daffodil Tea Sat 15th March for Senior Citizens. Invites will be going out but if you don't receive one and would like to come, please contact Caroline on 020 8853 0948.

Nearly New Sale Sat 29th March

Children's Clothes, Toys and Equipment at bargain prices. 2.00pm to 3.30pm. Entrance 50p. If you would like to book a table or rail, please contact Joanne on 07709 571777.

COMMUNITY NEWS

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Letters to the editor

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

From: Ed Hill Foyle Road
The November issue of the *WN* is mis-informing and misleading the community by endorsing the official spin that 'Greenwich Park is looking better than ever' after the Olympics.

The truth is that 10,000 cubic metres of acid grassland have been destroyed, there is unquantified long-term damage to trees and wildlife, the tesserae pavement at the Romano-Celtic Temple has gone, and there is increased ill-health consequent on 2 million fewer visits to the Park.

We would be most unwise to ignore the corporate threat behind Rupert Murdoch's recent editorial in *The Times*, which brazenly stated that "The choice of Greenwich Park for the Olympics was inspired, let's do it again soon."

The Park must never be commercialized. A new community group for the World Heritage Site has now been formed called the Friends of Maritime Greenwich, with a website at: www.friendsofmaritimegreenwich.org.uk
Friends of Maritime Greenwich, c/o Made In Greenwich, 324 Creek Road SE10 9SW
The WN would welcome the sources to support the figures given above. There is an update on the Park on page 7. Ed.

From: Liz Coyle Friends of Greenwich Park
"Misinforming and misleading" aptly sums up the above letter. Edward Hill really should check out his facts more carefully before making such wild and unsubstantiated allegations.

Few readers, I'm sure, would disagree with the view that the Park is now in a much better condition than before the Olympics – due in no small part to the dedicated care and attention applied to all the remedial landscaping work by the Park management and their contractors.

From: Cllr Alex Grant
Reading Dr David Senior's letter about welfare reform in your December issue, I was reminded of that nasty Victorian myth about the potato famine of the 1840s, which claimed that the Irish people "brought it on themselves" by marrying too early and having too many children.

Dr Senior claims that the welfare system is an incentive for people "to produce children they cannot support" and that families in receipt of free school meals "have produced offspring they cannot afford to feed". These children, he adds, are "more likely to become clients of the criminal justice system" if they benefit from the welfare state. As a lazy and muddled argument, this takes some beating.

Almost a quarter of Invicta Primary School's pupils qualify for free school meals. Perhaps Dr Senior would care to meet with their parents to find out what they think of his views?

Blaming the poor for their own predicament is a lame old trick. Condemning people for having had children, and demonising those children as soon as they are born, hits a new low. I am sure most local people, whatever their political views, will have no truck with such nonsense.

From: M A Qavi Parkside
Two illuminating items distinguished the Dec./Jan issue of the *WN*. Lawrence Smith who lived a few doors down the road from me I came to know well for his humanity and commitment in supporting the cause of justice for Palestinians particularly those in Gaza – a place he knew well from his days as IMF's point man in Occupied Palestine. His absence from our neighbourhood is deeply felt.

At the other end of the spectrum, in your Letters section, is Dr Senior's learned discourse on the advisability of continued welfare and housing support for those who have allegedly chosen 'a socially destructive' life style.

A life style is not always a matter of choice. Economic and social disadvantages and cultural prejudices play a great part in where one ends up. Since last March I have been helping at a soup kitchen under the shadow of the Shard at London Bridge where 150 - 200 young and old people are given a breakfast and a cooked hot dinner 7 days a week.

The diversity of people who walk in at the Centre is varied, but none of them could be labelled as having chosen 'a socially destructive' life style. It is well to remember that our civility is dependent on how we treat others less fortunate than us. *[Edwina Currie, take note... Ed.]*

From: Trevor Allman Coleraine Road
I would like to sympathise with some of the views expressed by Dr David Frank Senior (*Westcombe News* Dec. 2013/Jan.2014).

I too do not see why tax-payers should have to pay for feckless families who haven't worked for generations, who refuse to pay market rates for housing and pop children out ad-nauseam, expecting the tax-payer to pay for them.

Let us take the Windsor for example. They have numerous homes and countless spare rooms, yet they live in these free at the expense of the tax-payer and do not pay the Spare Room



Subsidy ("Bedroom Tax"). Why shouldn't they downsize to one residency, or take in lodgers, as H.M. Government tells other people reliant on the state to do?

Then of course the Windsors breed at will, acting in a "socially destructive" way to quote Dr Senior, all the while expecting us to pay for their offspring.

During 2013, Elizabeth Windsor had an increase of £5 million in her payments, which is surely a massive insult to those who have been made homeless because of welfare benefit cuts.

This despite the massive wealth that the British Monarchy has, and which has been plundered from our pockets down the ages by their ancestors. To quote Dr Senior again, "This pattern is self perpetuating from generation to generation".

If elected as a Green Party Councillor for Blackheath Westcombe Ward on 22nd May 2014, I pledge to do all I can to ensure no more council tax-payers money is spent on lauding over the unelected head-of-state, and to call for a reverse of the royal borough vanity project enacted by Councillor Chris Roberts.

From: Jon Latham Assistant Director of Marketing NHS Blood and Transplant
I'm sure that your readers are thinking about their New Year's resolutions for 2014.

Instead of giving something up, we're asking them to give blood. Donating blood saves lives.

It's an easy resolution to keep and is easy to get started.

During 2013, blood donors across England and North Wales helped save and transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of patients within the NHS and we are grateful to each and every one of them for taking the time to donate. We're looking forward to welcoming them again into our donation sessions in 2014 as they continue to save lives.

But there will be lots of your readers who haven't donated before, or haven't done so for a while, and we're asking them to come forward and register as a blood donor.

Becoming a blood donor is easy. All people need to do is visit www.blood.co.uk, register and book an appointment at a local session.

So go on, please encourage your readers to make an important resolution this year. To save lives as a blood donor.

From: Uwe Renke Seren Park
Building Bulletin 93 (BB93) may have been superseded, but the principle remains: our children need acoustic protection.

Our children are our future, making sure they develop their abilities to the best, keeping them safe and happy, these are our aims. To succeed in our challenging world, children have to be able to use all their intelligence every day.

Children cannot shut their ears. Noise has a very negative effect on the development of their young brains, as a number of research studies have shown. The noise from a building site will cost them some of their abilities, forever.

Making a building site noise neutral would most likely cost too much, but a lot more is possible. Noise blocking walls around a school, dribble glazed windows, air conditioning to allow windows to be kept closed; these are some examples of actions that would make a difference to the noise levels.

The current building project around the St. Joseph's Primary school will generate close to fifty million pounds in revenue, and profit close to ten million pounds is a realistic guess. How much is the well-being of 190 children worth in our society; how much of their future do we trade off?

The site, as most others, operates within local legal requirements, regulated in BS5228, but these rules are very easy on the developers. Even the government has usually much higher requirements for schools regarding noise, reflected in Building Bulletin 93, a set of rules for school buildings.

In this document, the government acknowledges the negative effect of noise and requests four times lower noise levels than it would ask a developer for. If you believe that something should change, than support my petition, online at <https://www.change.org/petitions/use-bb93>

In that petition I ask our government to review all school buildings within impact area of building sites towards their own Building Bulletin 93.

I further ask to do everything to come close to BB93 noise levels, spending only up to 1% of the projected revenue power of the new development. Developers are important because they shape the future. Our children are the future. 1% for our future, that's all I ask for!

Editor: The September 2012 update document "Acoustic performance standards for the priority schools building programme" should be used in place of Section 1 of the Building Bulletin 93 as the acoustic performance standards for the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP)

However, our information is that any departure from BB93 needs to be approved by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). It is unclear whether the EFA has any enforcement powers over building developments adjacent to school buildings.

From: G Bailey Westcombe Park Road
Typically, the Council launched a consultation with virtually no notice and certainly negligible publicity for a new scheme which could double the number of cycling casualties in London: a cycle lane giving cyclists a short cut from Vanbrugh Park Road to Old Dover Road.

Greenwich Council seems to specialise in shooting from the hip with consultations that do not allow enough time or space for proper consultations. This idea emerged just before Christmas – and consultation ended on 10th January.

It seems that this particular idea came from Greenwich Cyclists, who understandably don't like having to circumnavigate the Standard.

So why don't they do what pedestrians have to do - use the zebra crossings? Why can't cyclists dismount (horrors!) at the Barclays Bank zebra crossing, wheel their bikes across the island, cross the Charlton Rd zebra crossing, and resume their journey peacefully down Old Dover Road? That's the safe way of dealing with the issue.

The suggested contraflow lane cutting straight across the B210 (Charlton Road, twice) to Old Dover Road is the dangerous way of dealing with the issue. It looks like a short-cut to mayhem, and a recipe for serious accidents.

From: Joanne Lucas The Westcombe Society
On a very wet Monday evening, 16th December, a small group of carollers brought festive cheer to some of the streets and restaurant diners of Westcombe Park.

The money raised, £140.81, will go to our Charity of the Year South London Special League. Thanks to Tessa for the wonderful and very welcome hospitality at the end of the evening. Thanks too to our junior choir member, Hattie, for her solos which were much enjoyed.



Personal and celebrity portraits from photographs from £350. Bespoke paintings in Oil on Canvas and Watercolour by Dulwich artist Richard Stone. 07821499776 stonesplodge@gmail.com http://www.richardstoneimages.co.uk

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LOCAL NEWS

Ahoy there!

Every Wednesday, young adults with learning difficulties meet at the Ahoy Centre to help out, and learn to sail and row. Twelve young people started as apprentices last September, six boat building and six on a Leadership course.

“We hope that they will soon go on to become Assistant Sailing Instructors,” said Liz Chowienczyk.

Ahoy's old sails had become so tatty and worn that it was not possible for the young people to hoist the sails themselves nor learn how to set them correctly. The Westcombe Society generously donated new crisp white sails which can be easily pulled up the mast and set beautifully.

Tom was asked what he liked best about 2013 at the Ahoy and he said: “The new sails, they meant I could sail properly for the first time.”



PHOTO:
Lionel Bridgman

**New sails can make all the difference.
But we could do with new jibs, said Liz.**

How old was Queen Elizabeth's Oak?

On Wednesday Feb. 5th, Jane Sidell, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments for London, will speak about a dendrochronology project on the remains of Queen Elizabeth's Oak in Greenwich Park.

The current interpretation panel states it dates back to c1200, which is unlikely for an oak tree; and so in conjunction with The Royal Parks the tree was sampled to estimate more precisely how old it was when it died. So did Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn cavort beneath its branches? Come to the Friends' Annual Lecture to find out!



PHOTO:
Liz Coyle

The lecture is on Wednesday 5th February 2014 - 7.30pm for 8.00pm at the King William Building, ORNC, Greenwich. Tickets are £10 (to include a glass of wine) from Liz Coyle, Friends of Greenwich Park, 3 Orchard Drive, London SE3 0QP. Tel: 020 8852 8831. Cheques are payable to Friends of Greenwich Park, please enclose a sae. Tickets are also available on the door.

Target: Westcombe ATMs

Criminals are targetting cash machines at the NatWest Bank on Stratheden Parade. Reports have recently increased of cards being stuck, and of suspicious items being found on and around the ATMs – three in one week alone!

Fraudsters are becoming more and more sophisticated in attempts to take your money. What are they doing?

PS Thomas Button

‘Looping’

Thieves are using external devices to confiscate your card. In this scam, a device is inserted into the card slot of the machine and unwittingly, you place your card into the machine and enter your PIN. All the while, nearby someone could be watching you enter your PIN number.

‘Skimming’

Skimmers are devices that can read the information off the magnetic strip on the back of your card. They could ‘copy’ the card and use it to take money from your bank account. What can you do?

- * Always cover your pin!
- * Always cover the keypad when entering your PIN. This is a must! By not disclosing your PIN number, you will prevent criminals from using your card if it is trapped.
- * Be suspicious! Examine the ATM carefully for devices. Card or cash trapping devices need to be glued or taped to the card reader or cash dispenser. Look out for cheap plastics or obviously raised surfaces.

fully for devices. Card or cash trapping devices need to be glued or taped to the card reader or cash dispenser. Look out for cheap plastics or obviously raised surfaces.

* Never rely on the help of strangers to retrieve a confiscated card, and don't be afraid of asking anyone to step away from you whilst you are using the machine.

* If you see something odd on the machine tell the bank immediately and consider calling the police.

* Above all, trust your instinct. If you are at all concerned about the people near you, walk away and come back later or use a different machine.

It's not all bad news. The Blackheath Westcombe Safer Neighbourhood Team in partnership with the Council and NatWest are increasing the security features around the ATMs.

On Friday January 10th, two men were arrested for possession of articles for fraud after they were seen tampering with a cash point in Stratheden Parade. I will keep you all informed of the results of the investigation.

For further advice please see www.action-fraud.police.uk – or contact me directly, PS Tom Button on 0208 721 2635.

The WI's brilliant new cookbook

Blackheath & Greenwich Women's Institute has produced a beautifully produced and illustrated recipe book, *A London Village Cookbook*. It is full of delicious recipes, and was sponsored by several local businesses. A lot of research went into it – Eileen Flanagan, Secretary of the local Women's Institute, said:

“As we are always sharing recipes, it seemed like a great idea to create our own cookery book of members' favourite dishes.

We had a hugely enjoyable evening sampling each other's recipes.”

Very practical, it is spiral-bound for ease of use, and has lovely wipe clean pages for those, like your editor, much given to scattering random drops of gravy. **Costing an affordable £8.50, it is on sale at Blackheath Cooks, Mara, and other local outlets. Many congratulations to the very talented chefs, and the W.I. Committee who lovingly tried and tested the recipes:**

Carol Singleton, Cathy Rousham, Annalina Taylor, Emma Homent, Betty Lee, Irene Ilett, Jane Ringwood & Alizon Holt

N.G.



Go Do Go See 2014

New Sessions for 2014

- Number Tots (Numeracy for U5's)
- Line Dancing (Adult Classes)
- Spanish for Adults (Beginners)
- Fitsteps (Ballroom & Latin class)
- Baby Picasso's (Messy Art for U5's)
- V Fusion Dance (Street to Indian)
- Street Dance (Childrens classes)
- Contemporary Dance (Adult)

Things to See

- Icarus Club (Acoustic Music) Last Friday of each month. 8pm
- Jazz Nights (Jazz Club) Second Friday of each month 8pm
- Bach to Baby (Concerts for Babies) Second Thursday of each month 3.30pm
- Family Concert (in a relaxed setting) Sat Mar 15 5pm
- The Bob Dylan Experience (band) Fri Mar 21 8pm

& Check Out Our Full Programme Online
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Comedian **ALAN DAVIES** performs Fri. 14 Feb. £18 15+
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FEATURES

500 years of maritime service

PETER KENT celebrated The Quincentenary of Trinity House with his exhibition at the Greenwich Gallery

NEVILLE GRANT reports

This year, the Corporation of Trinity House celebrates its 500th anniversary. The safety of shipping, and the well-being of seafarers, have been its prime concerns ever since Trinity House was granted a Royal Charter by Henry VIII in 1514. Generations of seafarers have enjoyed the safety of our coastal waters as a result.

Today, Trinity House has three distinct functions:

The Trinity House Lighthouse Service
Trinity House (TH) is the General Lighthouse Authority (GLA) for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar. Its remit is to provide Aids to Navigation to assist the safe passage of a huge variety of vessels through some of the busiest searoutes in the world.

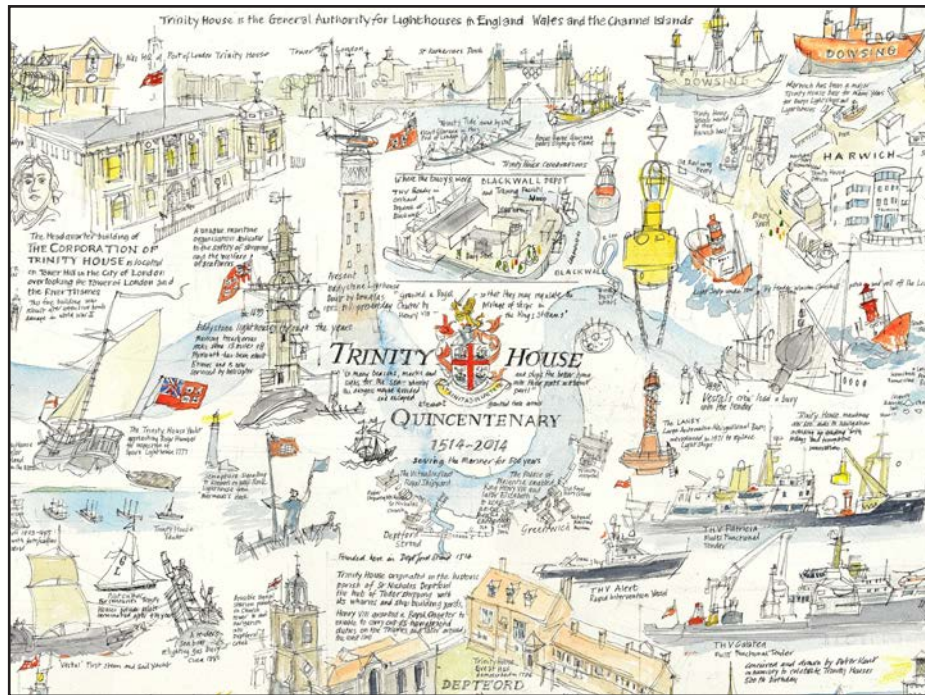
Regular traffic ranges from nimble dinghies to mighty super tankers, which have stopping distances running to miles and turning circles to match. TH deploys an impressive array of more than 600 aids to navigation, ranging from lighthouses to a satellite navigation service.

The responsibilities of TH also include the annual inspection and auditing of over 10,000 Aids to Navigation provided by local port and harbour authorities and those provided on offshore structures such as production platforms or wind farms. Trinity House is also responsible for marking, and dispersing, wrecks which are a danger to navigation.

Deep Sea Pilotage

Trinity House are a Deep Sea Pilotage Authority providing expert navigators for ships trading in Northern European waters.

It is authorised by the government to licence Deep Sea Pilots. Although it is not compulsory to carry a Deep Sea Pilot, many ship's masters unfamiliar with Northern European waters like to employ



This detail of local artist Peter Kent's celebratory centre-piece of his exhibition at the Greenwich Gallery in Peyton Place does little justice to the original . . .

their professional expertise to assist their bridge team.

Charitable Organisation

TH is also a charitable organisation that is concerned with the safety, welfare and training of mariners.

Art exhibition

An exhibition of new work by Greenwich topographical artist Peter Kent celebrating the Quincentenary of Trinity House took place at the The Greenwich Gallery, Peyton Place, SE10 8RS in January – sadly, too late for publicity in our December/January issue.

However, if you missed it, his unique artwork is still available, at reasonable prices, either via the Greenwich Gallery, or by visiting Peter Kent's website,

www.peterkentgreenwich.co.uk

Peter Kent is well known for his distinctive style, and his passionate interest in the river, and all things maritime, and this has resulted in a strong following among his admirers. In this exhibition, he visually explored the lighthouses and lightships and other structures that have formed the essential services provided by Trinity House to maritime users for 500 years.

Peter has drawn many of the lighthouses and lightships that have served to aid sailors around our shores for hundreds of years. His pictorial centrepiece (detail, above) reveals the history and extent of Trinity House activities.

To get a flavour of the man and his work, visit peterkentgreenwich.co.uk and explore his blog: <http://riverwatchreturns.com>

A new light on architecture

The annual Richard Grierson Architecture this year, organised by the Friends of Blackheath Halls, will be given by Mark Major.

Architect and lighting designer Mark Major, a founding partner of lighting designers Speirs and Major, will speak about 'light architecture'.

The Lecture is on Wed 5th February at 8.00 pm at Blackheath Halls.

Tickets: £12.00 (Concs. £10.00, Students £6.00) Box office: 8463 0100

Ruth Le Guen

Monday Lunchtime Recitals

The Friends of Blackheath Halls bring you a series of fundraising recitals for the winter. All concerts are in the Recital Room and start at 13.10h. A lunch is available prior to the recital. Please ask at the bar for the day's special. Admission is free with a retiring donation to Blackheath Halls.

MON 27 JAN EVGENIA STARTSEVA piano
MON 3 FEB PEYEE CHEN soprano
MON 24 FEB MORICOSTA STRING TRIO
MON 3 MAR AUBERT TRIO

CHINESE NEW YEAR OF THE HORSE

At the National Maritime Museum



Apparently, if you were born in these years, you tend to be sporty, sociable - & uncomfortable around the opposite sex. Don't let it get to you!
1930 - 1931, 1942 - 1943, 1954 - 1955 1966 - 1967, 1978 - 1979, 1990 - 1991, 2002 - 2003

Better late than never!

Sat 15th 11.00 am - 4.00 pm Celebrate the Year of the Horse!

Sat 15th, 11.30 and 2.0 pm Kids Lantern lights: Chinese New Year fun at the Cutty Sark

Mon. 17th Feb - Friday 21st Feb. National Maritime Museum: Chinese New Year fun 11.30 & 2.00 pm; & at the Cutty Sark: 11.30 & 2.00 pm

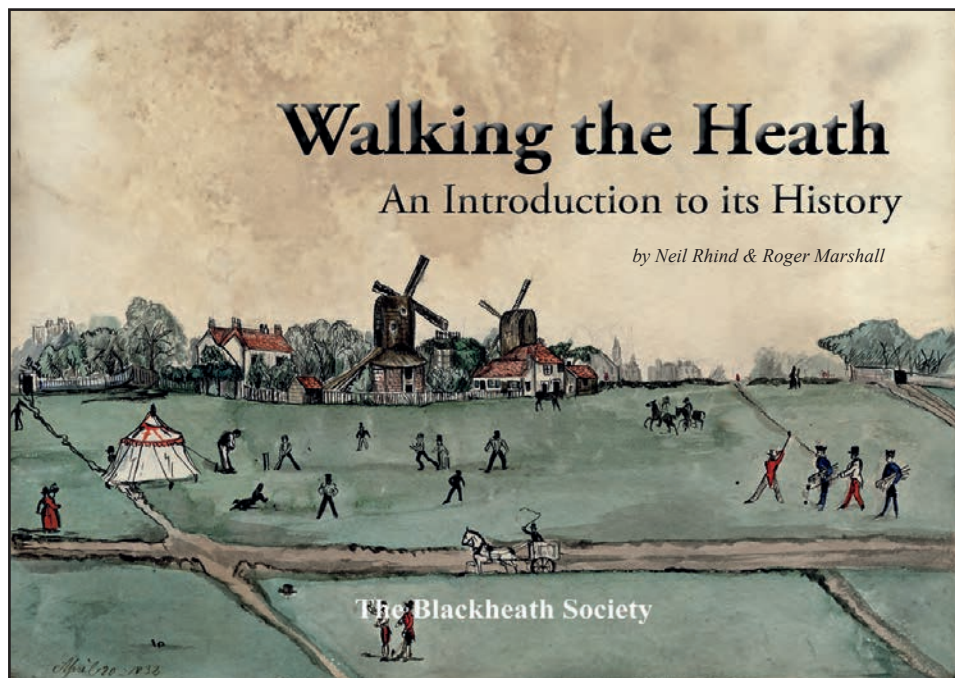


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Walking the Heath is a new illustrated guide to Blackheath. Written by our local historian Neil Rhind, partnered by Roger Marshall, it offers three guided walks across and around the Heath. It identifies all the places of interest, from the Vanbrugh Pits, the Paragon, the Village, Eliot Place, Whitefield's Mount, the Eliot Pits and Dartmouth Terrace, the Point, and the Park Wall from Rangers House to the Maze Hill War Memorial. The guide provides details of many of Blackheath's historic houses.

The Heath, along with Greenwich Park (once part of Blackheath until 1433) is one of London's most popular resorts for visitors and

local residents alike. Its 1,000 plus years of recorded history will be found in the Timeline, a supplement to Walking the Heath, and the Blackheath Society wishes all users a good read, whether they be walking briskly, strolling nonchalantly or sitting in their armchairs.

Walking the Heath by Neil Rhind & Roger Marshall: c84 pages (A5 landscape), more than 60 illustrations, many rare and unusual and some in colour, handy pocket size. Copies at £7.50 can be had from local bookshops or direct from the Blackheath Society Chapman House, 10 Blackheath Village, SE3 9LE.

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Mark Major BA Dip Arch RIBA FRAS IALD RDI
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Blackheath Halls
Tickets £12 (£10, Students £6)
020-8463-0100 www.blackheathhalls.com

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 27 February Dr Caroline Shenton: The Day Parliament Burnt Down 27 March Caroline Rayman The Mistress in History: the influence of royal favourites from the 12th to 20th centuries Non-members £5 on the door. www.artsinblackheath.org.uk or ring 83187550

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich NEXT LECTURES: 10 Feb 2014: Brothers of the Brush - Artist Monks in 15th Century Florence by Sian Waters 10th Mar 2014: The City of Kyoto and the Cult of Beauty 8852 7873 Non-members £8.00

Buggy Mothers and Other Runners Penny Matheson, of the Greenwich Open Studios: paintings celebrating runners and the mothers who exercise with their babies and buggies weekly in Greenwich Park. Also some of her pictures of hens. The show will be open in the Gallery Space, West Greenwich Library, Greenwich High Road, from Feb 3 to Mar 8, every day except Wed and Sun.

GREENWICH OPEN STUDIOS GROUP SHOW at Discover Greenwich Gallery, Old Royal Naval College. 31st Jan.-23rd March. 10am -5pm daily.. Superb variety of art work in different media by Greenwich Artists. greenwichopenstudios.co.uk

CHILDREN

GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich Box office: 020 8858 7755.

THE CAT IN THE HAT Wed 19-Sun 23 February 2014 Based on the much-loved book by Dr Seuss, The Cat In The Hat is a lively and engaging first theatre experience for young children.

TOMTEN Sun 2 Mar 2014 When all is quiet on the farm, when everyone is asleep, when the snow covers the ground and stars twinkle in the frosty sky – that's when Tomten wakes up. He watches over everyone on the farm without them ever knowing. But sometimes you can see his footprints in the snow, so you know he is real. Age 3+

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 - 11:30am. Contact: www.SELondonDads.org.uk or email: info@selondondads.org.uk

WORSHIP

St George's Church, Glenluce Road Every Sunday 11am Parish Communion with Children's Activities

PARISH OF EAST GREENWICH, (Christ Church, St George's, Holy Trinity) are hosting a STUDY DAY on Sat. 15th Feb.: Leading Christian thinkers and authors Andy Angel & Jonathan Macy lead a debate on angels at Christchurch, Trafalgar Road, East Greenwich on Sat 15th Feb. 10.0am - 3.00 pm Book places for children's activities & creche in advance at www.eastgreenwichparish.org.uk

Lunch: soup & filled rolls for a donation



ANGELS

Whispers Of Another World: Yesterday, Today & For Heaven

Saturday 15th February 2014
10am to 3pm
at Christ Church, East Greenwich
Trafalgar Road, London SE10 9EQ
www.christchurcheastgreenwich.org.uk

THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Helpers' & Newcomers' Party Sat 22nd Feb – evening, main hall

Daffodil Tea Sat 15th March – afternoon, main hall

Children's Nearly New Sale Sat 29th March – afternoon, main hall

Quiz – Friday 4th April – evening, main hall

Easter Egg Hunt Sat 19th April – afternoon, gardens (building will be closed)

AGM – Friday 16th May – evening, main hall

Summer Picnic – Saturday 12th July, afternoon, main hall and gardens

Macmillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning Friday 26th September - 10.00am to 2.00pm, main hall

Children's Nearly New Sale Saturday 27th Sept.

Members' Evening – Saturday 11th October – Chrysanthemum Tea Saturday 25th October

Quiz Friday 7th November – evening, main hall

This proposed calendar of events is dependent upon helpers. Please ring Joanne on 07709 571777 if you would like to help out on any of these events!

COMMUNITY

CANCER RESEARCH LUNCH Thursday 6th February 12 noon - 2.30 pm at The Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Row, Blackheath SE3 0RW No speaker this time, so good chance to meet and chat! Cost £8.50. To book lunches telephone Wendy on 020 8265 0335 by Monday 3rd Feb.

BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road. Meetings begin at 7.45pm. Visitors are welcome.

Feb 21 Mr Darryl Clifton-Dey talks on Eels and the Thames: Where have they gone?

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY 18th February Anthony Durham on Greenwich Underground – more interesting than on top Meeting at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3, Please use the car park behind the station. Meetings start at 7.30 and non members are charged £1.

BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB 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 Rosemary Gill on 8858 5088

BLACKHEATH FLOWER CLUB 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

BLACKHEATH - NOW AND THEN: Saturday 22 Feb. St Margaret's Church SE13 5EA, drinks in the Crypt at 7pm, concert at 7.45pm with Simon and Jenny Standage. Organised by the Friends of Age Exchange. Tickets: £12 to include pre-concert drink. Book at www.friends-of-ageexchange.org.uk or leave contact details on 020-8852-5354.

BLACKHEATH QUAKERS: 50 YEARS FREE TALK Quaker Meeting House Lawn Terrace, SE39LL To book ring 07582 729185 or email: blackheathquakers@googlemail.com Light refreshments available from 7.00 pm; talk starts at 7.30 pm

Fri. 27th Feb. Tackling Climate Change: if not now, when? If not us, who? Dr Robin Stott explains that climate change is a serious health issue



Harriet Stubbs

Schumann Sonata in G minor opus 22
Beethoven Sonata in E major opus 109
Chopin Scherzo no. 2 opus 31

4.30pm on Saturday
1st February 2014
Christ Church, East Greenwich
Trafalgar Road, London SE10 9EQ

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Conservative:
Cllr. Geoff Brighty Tel. 8921 5663 (Town Hall) or 8858 9731 (Home) geoffrey.brighty@greenwich.gov.uk
Cllr. Alex Wilson Tel. 07783 611607 alex.wilson@greenwich.gov.uk
Surgery: 1st Mon. of the month 6 - 7.00 pm Blackheath Library, Old Dover Road.

THEATRE & OPERA

THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755

HIS FOOT IN HIS MOUTH Wed 5 - Sat 8 February 2014 A hilarious one man show about saying the wrong thing, based on the novella by Saul Bellow.

THIRSTY Why do we drink? Wed 12 & Thu 13 Feb. Award-winning company The Paper Birds make their Greenwich debut with this revival of their critically acclaimed, sell out show.

BABYLON by Alexander Wright Fri 14th & Sat 15th Feb. 7.30 pm A show about kings and queens and revolutions.

THE ROBBERS Tue 25 & Thu 27 Feb, Sat 1 March An overnight sensation at its premiere, The Robbers is the debut play that propelled Friedrich Schiller (Don Carlos, Mary Stuart) to stardom.

HAMLET by William Shakespeare Wed 26 & Fri 28 Feb The King is dead. The Queen has now married his brother. Prince Hamlet is in mourning...

THEBES by Sophocles & Aeschylus Wed 26 February & Sat 1 March From Oedipus to Antigone, the story of Thebes remains a fascinating exploration of fate, morality and chaos, two and a half thousand years after the saga was originally written.

THE SPACE 269 Westferry Road London E14 3RS 0207 515 7799 / www.space.org.uk
Nearest stn: Mudchute (DLR) Buses: D3, D7, 135 HAM 4th-15th February, 7:30pm £12/£8 Please note: If you book tickets to Static (playing at 9pm) you receive tickets for both shows for £16/£13 Meet Ham. He's a shepherd, he's technically your distant uncle, and right now he's your only hope.

STATIC 4th-15th February, 9pm £12/8 Please note: If you book tickets to Ham (playing at 7:30pm) you receive tickets for both shows for £16/£13

"Imagine someone told you a story, a story so real, so detailed, that that story became yours ...

THE TRUNK 25th February – 1st March, 8pm 1st March, 2pm £14/10 Sometimes, you find yourself a fascinating case. Inspired by Chekhov's short stories, The Trunk paints a blackly comic portrait of our everyday introspections.

PANTO TIME - STILL! NEVER too late for a pantomime!
The Alexandra Players present

SLEEPING BEAUTY Thursday to Saturday February 20th to 22nd at the Alexandra Hall, Bramshot Avenue, SE7 performances Feb 20, 21at 8 pm Feb 22 at 2 pm and 6.30 pm Tickets £8 adults, £7 Concessions, accompanied children £5, Family Ticket (2+2) £20 Box Office 07867 627 987 or at www.alexandraplayers.org.uk



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Is your NY's resolution to play that instrument more? Join our thriving and friendly orchestra. You will rehearse with Leigh O'Hara throughout January through March: two performances, one in Blackheath Halls' Great Hall, the other at St John's Smith Square with Edward Gardner OBE. There may still be room for more string and brass players in the orchestra. Subscription: £65 | £57

For information on this project email Rose Ballantyne: r.ballantyne@trinitylaban.ac.uk

Use Your Voice: Romance Through Song

This term, this inclusive group sings music with a romantic theme from the 1950s onwards, including the musical West Side Story and jazz classics such as Misty and Fever.

Led by Miriam Coe. Suitable for everyone who loves to sing – from beginners right through to highly experienced choral singers.

Course fee: £57 | £51 concessions

Dates: SUN 26th JAN, 2, 9, 23 FEB, SAT 8 MAR, SUN 23 MAR 14.00h - 17.00h

LIVE JAZZ - AT MYCENAE HOUSE

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See <http://www.jazznights.co.uk/>

ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC 9.00 pm every Tuesday at the Lord Hood pub, Creek Road; mainstream jazz every Thursday

GREENWICH MERIDIAN CHOIR If you are interested in joining the choir as a regular member, (rehearsals are Thursday evenings during term time), contact **Jean Valsler on 0208 8527548** or email brookjean@btinternet.com

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FEATURES

The Genius of JMW Turner

Neville Grant



If you see nothing else this year, visit the National Maritime Museum’s superb exhibition of the sea paintings of JMW Turner in the Sammy Ofer Wing.

Turner and the Sea is a huge coup for the NMM – this is the first comprehensive exhibition of the sea paintings of this great man, and museums and galleries from all over the world have been persuaded to lend work from their holdings. No need to go to Amsterdam, Birmingham, Lisbon Southampton, Florence, Washington or Kansas – they are all here.

Not just Turner, either: the exhibition places Turner within his historical context, so you can compare his work with many other artists, including, notably, Willem van de Velde the Elder, the Norwich artist John Cotman, and even Constable and Gainsborough.

Among the first to catch the eye are his *The Wreck of a Transport Ship* (1849, Gulbenkian, Lisbon) which is overwhelm-

ing in its drama – no wonder a seasoned admiral is reported to have said “No ship or boat could live in such a sea.”

Among the highlights are the sketch-books that he left to the nation in “the Turner Bequest”, which give an insight into his artistic processes.

Above all is the masterpiece voted the nations’s favourite painting, *The Fighting Temeraire*. As the sun sets on this white ghost of a sailing ship being towed to its grave by a maritime version of one of Blake’s “dark satanic mills” – the ugly tug with its plume of black smoke – the painting still moves, with its poignant evocation of loss of the great age of sail. **Turner and the Sea is at the National Maritime Museum until April 21st.**

ED: Not all sailing ships were towed to their graves: by the time you read this, the City of Adelaide (See January’s WN) will have been safely conveyed to her new home in Adelaide. More in our March issue.

Beethoven – A Guided Tour Around the Concertos

Is there a better way of spending a Monday morning than with Matthew Taylor? Matthew Taylor has been the Composer in Residence at Blackheath Halls, and is a prolific pianist, composer and conductor. His lectures take the form of anecdotal history and musical illustration. He demonstrates whole scores at the piano – and then we listen to the CD.

Over the years there have been numerous subjects, including Prokofiev, Berlioz and Stravinsky, as well as Beethoven’s symphonies and Mozart’s concertos.

These lectures are devised so that one doesn’t need technical knowledge whilst at the same time the experienced aficionado always finds something new to learn.

Lectures are from 10.00 am to midday

on a Monday with an interval. It is a place where friendships are made or extended.

These lectures attract not only retired people but also those still at work. For some they act as a panacea to avoid Monday morning blues. They also suit those parents who would welcome cultural distraction after off-loading children.

The current series started in January, but it is not too late to sign up: Mondays 3, 10, 17, 24 February, and 3 & 10 March. Matthew is also planning a live performance with a guest violinist playing with him the two romances for violin.

The complete course of 10 Lectures costs £80. Special arrangements can be made if you missed January! To book, please contact Lionel Lewis on 020 8297 1075.

Art for our sake

Last month, some of you will have seen Jan Barnett’s art exhibition at the Gallery, Ruby and Norm’s, 266 Lee High Road SE 13 – a very good place to pop in for a cup of coffee and a snack.

Many of our readers will know Jan as the Hon Sec of the Westcombe Society - but she is perhaps better and more widely known for her art. Jan graduated from Camberwell School of Art with a degree in Textiles after an eclectic selection of jobs coupled with various design projects, including unique enamelled buckles, silver jewellery and leather handbags.

Jan then changed direction and worked in media sales, working on a number of new media launches including Channel 4 and the famed national radio station Atlantic 252. However, Jan continued to draw, paint and design. She designed and hand-made original greetings cards that were sold in many outlets including the Royal Festival Hall. She also undertook commissions, creating personalised artworks and illustrations.

Her passion is now painting. Three of her paintings have been shortlisted for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, one in 2012 and two in 2013.

“I’m inspired by tangible objects, such as fabrics, flowers and plants,” she says. She loves to juxtapose various organic and non-organic objects in terms of colour, tone, form and texture.



She paints at her home in Blackheath, Mycenae House and The Conservatoire.

Her influences come from Henri Matisse, Georgio Morandi, Edouard Manet, Andre Derain, Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin among others. Jan enjoyed successful solo exhibitions in 2012 and 2013. The one that has just ended featured landscapes, nudes, and still lifes.

Jan volunteers as the secretary and a cake baker to the Westcombe Society – and has turned cake-making into an art form! Her efforts included the huge Jubilee picnic cake in 2012, the Westcombe Society 40th Anniversary Cake at the summer party in 2013 and 98 cup cakes for the last Macmillan Coffee Morning. You might also see her delivering *The Westcombe News* in Langton Way.

ED: Many congratulations on your art, Jan, keep it up!

Philosophy for Educational Renewal last year celebrated its twentieth anniversary. CHRIS ORMELL reminds us what it is all about.

Time to revive our education system

Traditionally, the idea of education was to transmit the best bits of the core of the culture of the society to the youth. Done well, the young would acquire questing minds, problem-solving skills and pride in their society’s culture.

Oh dear, all this sounds over-the-top today. We have lost that early sense that education is the route to enjoying rich, rewarding meaning – involving learning new things, solving problems and getting onside with new people.

In the 1960s there was an ill-fated attempt to brighten education up. But the enthusiasts made elementary mistakes. They decided they wouldn’t try to “transmit” anything, because modern society was a burnt out case (they thought).

They decided not to provoke youngsters to inquire: any curiosity had to come from the youngsters themselves (they thought). They were dead-against setting children hard problems, because some would fail and become downhearted. (But not if the problems had been screened for do-ability, and the “hardness” was matched to each child’s powers).

They didn’t teach much pride in the society’s culture, because being proud of your culture was something only right wing people did (they thought).

That was fifty years ago and now is now. We can learn from the mistakes of the 1960s and start asking for a livelier kind of education than the memorise-memorise-memorise pressure children are under today, led by the Mr Gradgrinds of this world.

Forcing the mind is not a way to get a good response. Trying to teach children “adult-useful” things when they are 7 or 14 is a recipe for boredom: and also a prompt to forget. So when these things finally become relevant they have long since dropped out of mind – which is hardly very “adult-useful.”

The PER* Group’s aim is to brighten education up – by thinking deeply (commonsense philosophy) about what is both interesting to children and important in the long run.

PER = Philosophy for Educational Renewal. We are based in Westcombe Park at Ingleside Grove. All our meetings are free and open to all.

Contact Chris Ormell on 8858 3364 or email philosophyper@aol.com.

Ed: Chris Ormell, formerly of the University of East Anglia, is the executive editor of Prospero, A Journal of New Thinking in Philosophy for Education. Volume 19 came out in December 2013.

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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

The view from the park

by Park Manager Graham Dear

2013 left the park with a bit of a bang as gales swept across the country on 28th October, St. Judes Day, and again on Christmas Eve. Both storms left tree damage in their wake and forced a temporary closure to the park for safety reasons.

The St. Judes storm did its worst in a tract across the Deer Park and Flower Garden where several old oak and sweet chestnut trees lost their tops.

The lovely cedars which usually suffer damage in the snow also shed several large limbs. On Christmas Eve we didn't expect it to be as bad as there were no leaves on the trees and the earlier storm had cleaned out the weaker subjects. Surprisingly this time several trees blew over completely, including a large beech on One Tree Hill.

Looking forward, the successful project to remove tarmac from the root zone of the trees along Bower Avenue will continue along its full length towards the top of Lovers Walk. On the dry sand and gravel soils in the park many trees suffer drought

stress and anything we can do to improve the health of the trees useful. I hope everyone would agree that the avenue is much improved too.

The grade II listed, St. Mary's Lodge, formerly the Cow and Coffee Bean, is due for refurbishment in spring, by our new catering concessionaire, Creative Taste. It will re-open as the Whitehouse Bakery.

In February, 'The Friends of Greenwich Park', are hosting their annual lecture, featuring Dr. Jane Sidell of English Heritage. Jane will present the results of new research into the history of the Queen Elizabeth Oak. Common knowledge would have it that the fallen hollow trunk of this ancient tree is erroneously named an oak when it is in fact a sweet chestnut.

It is surprising then, that my predecessor as park manager, Mr. A.D. Webster, the author of the definitive history, *Greenwich Park its history & associations 1902*, should describe it as an oak. Which is it? All will be revealed in the lecture.

What's to be done about the Tunnel?

Most of us have been there, gnashing our teeth at the holdups leading to the tunnel; and others have been here too, on foot, choking on the traffic fumes . . .

So it was that, in spite of cold and unremitting rain, a group of volunteers has started a new Citizens' Science project for South-East London, to test levels of air pollution from exhaust fumes.

Early in January, they put up about 100 tubes which will collect particulate matter, including vehicle emissions, from the air. These will be in place for a month, and then analysed. If successful, they should give a good picture, along with results from about 150 local authority air testing sites, of where air pollution is densest.

This follows from a study in 2013, which was smaller and only followed the Blackwall Tunnel approach routes. The new sample will also include areas like Deptford, Rotherhithe and Catford, often used by drivers to avoid snarl-ups at the tunnel and the Woolwich ferry.

The reason for all this work? The proposed Silvertown Tunnel, announced by Mayor Boris Johnson as the solution to the traffic tangles at the Blackwall Tunnel. This development, along with the plans put forward to close the Woolwich Ferry and open a new ferry crossing downstream, is likely to have considerable effects on local traffic levels.

Its proponents argue that by improving traffic flow, it will alleviate the problem of fumes from cars, vans and lorries which run their engines even at a standstill. They also suggest that it will not lead to more traffic, as there should be tolls in place to discourage casual use.

Opponents, though, point to the historic patterns of road use, which show that as soon as a new road is open, traffic levels climb, often far more than was estimated. And yet levels of air pollution in many parts of the Royal Borough of Greenwich are already in excess of World Health Organisation guidelines and European Commission legal limits. (See the *WN*,

November 2013) for more details on this and on the health effects of breathing in particulates.)

The tolls, they believe, are likely to lead people to use local roads to find cheaper ways of crossing the river, just as drivers do now when the Blackwall Tunnel is blocked. Rather, the No to Silvertown Tunnel Campaign argues, investment should be made to improvements to public transport and to cycle routes and pedestrian safety.

As a Nationally Significant Infra-structure Project, the proposed tunnel has been the subject of a pre-application consultation, but it has not yet been formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, which will examine the application and make its recommendations to the relevant Secretary of State. The Inspectorate will need to make a full consultation, and this should take current and projected levels of air pollution into account.

The No to Silvertown Tunnel Campaign has now set up a formal structure, and readers may like to follow its work using www.silvertowntunnel.co.uk or on Twitter using @NoSilvertownTnl.

The Campaign is accepting members, and is setting up future meetings. Finance for the experiment was raised from the Clean Air in London Campaign and from private individuals: the tubes (including processing in the lab) cost around £7 each.

The collection tubes may show a more nuanced pattern of levels of particulate matter, and add weight to the argument that air pollution is already too high. Other places have used citizen studies in the same way, for instance Putney.

There's an added benefit: by getting lots of people involved in finding out more about the natural world and how to assess it, interest in learning generally is being given a boost. Science can affect us all. It's not just for boffins!



A volunteer putting up a collecting tube, courtesy of Crossfields.blogspot.co.uk.

Anne Robbins

On your bikes!

Maggie Gravelle

In November the Royal Borough of Greenwich issued its Draft Cycling Strategy which aims to improve the extent of cycling in the borough under the banner 'more cycling, more often and even more safely.'

It aims to do this by providing two levels of cycle routes in the area. The Primary Cycle Networks are principally on main roads and would, wherever possible, separate cyclists from motorised traffic. Quietways will be on smaller, residential roads and 'shared use' pathways and are intended largely for leisure cyclists and those who are less confident. In this way it is hoped that an integrated network will be created and that more people will be encouraged to use their bicycles. The plan includes increasing the number of training opportunities for cyclists.

The Westcombe Society has largely welcomed the proposals but has identified several aspects which need to be more adequately addressed. We have seen far too

many accidents, several of them fatal, on the so-called Super Highways and insist that cycle routes on main roads should separate motorised traffic from bicycles.

The strategy focuses mainly on increasing the number of journeys to work and we hope that facilities would also encourage people to use their bicycles for leisure, shopping and going to school. This should include safe and dry parking for cycles at key locations including transport hubs.

Finally we think that greater consideration should be given to a fully integrated network which links existing cycle routes, including the missing link at the Blackheath Standard.

Unfortunately the consultation period for the strategy has ended but the documents can still be viewed at <https://consultations.greenwich.gov.uk/KMS/dmart.aspx> **The council is awaiting a decision on a further bid for £1,022,000 from TfL to spend on promoting cycling in the borough.**

The age of the strain

The £6 billion government-funded Thameslink Programme has entered the final construction phase. This involves a complete rebuild of London Bridge station, as well as new track layout and signalling. As reported in October's *WN*, from January 2015 there will be significant changes to the Southeastern network.

The final decision will be made by the Department for Transport, but feedback on the latest proposals received by February 7th will be considered before they are finalised.

To ensure a smooth transition, the May - December 2014 timetable will be extended by a month to January 2015, when the new timetable will take effect.

This consultation covers the timetable in operation across the Southeastern network from January 2015 to August 2016; during which time Charing Cross services will no longer be able to call at London Bridge due to platform closures associated with the station rebuild. From August 2016, Charing Cross services will again be able to call at London Bridge, however Cannon Street services will not.

Emily Norton of the Westcombe Society Environment Committee says: "The document seems to tell us very little

more than we already know, it only seems to aspire to opening Cannon Street station later in the evening, and at weekends, with no confirmation that the tube station will be open for longer hours. It also says nothing about what is happening to Blackheath services: will some of their Charing Cross services be among those diverted to Cannon St or Blackfriars?"

The proposals for the period August 2016 - December 2017 are to be worked through in greater detail; therefore in due course there will be another consultation with respect to that period, and the subsequent time-table from January 2018.

Written feedback to be sent to: Mike Gibson, Public Affairs Manager Southeastern, Friars Bridge Court 41-45 Blackfriars Road, SE1 8PG
Or email: mike.gibson@southeasternrailway.co.uk

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