O ur local traders on Old Dover Road continue to contest what has happened to the parking review which was promised for last autumn. Is the Council cooking up a cunning plan? The news is this: not so much a cunning plan as "a draft parking strategy" that will be due course, with "overarching principles", rather than "specific schemes". The traders of Old Dover Road will have to wait as the problem is kicked into the long grass.

What is taking so long? The problem has been going on for years, but it was not until October 2011 that the WN reported that the traders had organised a petition calling on the Council to restrict parking in Old Dover Road.

"There are people parking all day," said one trader. "Some are commuters - you see them walking away with their briefcases. A lot of them work at M&S."

The petition asked the Council to prevent anyone from parking for longer than two hours - no return within three hours. In response, Greenwich Council announced, in February 2012, that it was "consulting" on a plan to make people pay for their parking by mobile phone. This would have had the advantage of doing away with the need to maintain pay-and-display machines.

However, there was a predictable outcry against this idea: many of those who drive up to Old Dover Road are elderly, and tend not to have mobile phones.

The result: another petition – this time signed by over 1,000 people – with a number of Labour Councillors, including Cllr Alex Grant, against the plan, and the number of Labour Councillors, including Cllr Alex Grant, against this idea: many of those who drive down Old Dover Road by occupying spaces that would be available to would-be shoppers – and there is no doubt he certainly wants to flog those cars.

It seems there is an intractable problem of enforcement, but it is one, supposes at least, by partly, the fact that enforcement costs money. Meanwhile local traders continue to ask what has happened.

Cllr Geoff Brighty raised the issue, once again, at full Council on 26th January this year with Cllr Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills, and reported.

"The gist of her reply was that work on a draft parking strategy is 'bearing down'. Local traders will be considered in a future round of consultation'."

Commented Cllr Brighty: "This is clearly not going to happen for some time and almost certainly not until after the elections in May.

Cllr Brighty has arranged a further meeting with Cllr Hyland to discuss Old Dover Road, and the long outstanding matter of parking in Mycenae Road: don’t hold your breath! It appears very likely that the parking issue has been kicked down where no cars can ever park – into the long grass.

Cllr Brighty is hopeful for an earlier initiative on parking in Mycenae Road. So we will have to wait for that cunning plan . . .

Council's parking plans on hold

Westcombe Hill

The Inbetweeners; originally Sid flashed at drivers coming up the hill, downhill are going faster.

When the lights were out in St John's Park, Film crews again in Greenwich - incidentally, the arc lamps were out in St John's Park, planning to do a round of consultation'.

The Inbetweeners; originally Sid flashed at drivers coming up the hill, downhill are going faster.

April 4th Quiz Night

Main Hall of Mycenae House at 7.30 for 8.00 pm. Teams of 6. Get a team together or come on your own and help make up a team. Please book in advance, £5.00 entry per person for Members and £6.00 for Non-Members.

Fish 'n' chip suppers or simple chips can be ordered too. Please ring Caroline on 8853 0948 to book your place/table and a meal if required. Prices - a Raffle! Please note: bookings for this popular event end on 29th March!
The Westcombe Society

T he Helpers and Newcomers’ party at Mycmae House in February was most enjoyable. Marilyn Little thanked all our volunteers and said how grateful we were for their support in whatever capacity. She reiterated how much she valued everyone’s efforts and the spread the word amongst neighbours and friends. She added that volunteers had a lot of fun helping at the various events, and the effort was not unnoticed. We were also delighted to welcome a number of newcomers to the area.

Marilyn then went on to say that the Executive Committee had unanimously agreed to nominate Myrtha Dove for an RBBG Civic Award for the year she had worked on the Environment Committee, with the past together with his ongoing leadership of the graffiti busting facilities and with our help of his partner, Barbara, his role as the organiser of the delivery of the BN throughout our area. Congratulations Myrtha!

We were fortunate in having representatives of the AHoy! Westcombe committee in attendance with the evening. They had given us a tour of the Society’s earlier this year which enabled them to purchase some new sails. We were also very grateful for the provision of facilities for disadvantaged and disabled youngsters and adults in the South East.

The question arises as to whether Greenwich Park is safe in the hands of Royal Parks. I think we need to create a community land trust to protect it as a matter of urgency.

From: Gordon Baker and Mary Eade

From: Sophie & Michael Howard

We were fortunate in having available any views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the WN or the Westcombe Society.

Comments to: 020 8853 2756
Maggie Neville Grant

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.

Maggie Neville Grant

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.
A local resident has been targeted by an ongoing scam reported in the MYV in 2012 and August 2013. This involves a phone-call supposedly from your Bank saying that your card has been compromised/charged and that they will be sending a courier to collect it.

The caller invites you to call the number on the reverse of your card — but they keep the line open so that in fact you are speaking to one of their colleagues. They ask you for your security details before arranging to pick up your cards.

This will never be the approach your Bank would take. Never give out any security details such as your PIN number.

The other scam that has been in the news is stickers on your letter-box. This is thought to be the way a gang will identify properties suitable for break-in within an area. If you find a sticker, remove it and inform the police on 101.

Better news, however, is that burglaries in the area are down. According to our outgoing Borough Commander, Greenwich is among the safest boroughs in London.

Call to 0300 123 2040.
Learning is fun
St Olave’s is a Prep School in New Eltham for boys and girls aged 3-11 years
- Broad, child-centred curriculum
- Excellent results in the 11+ selection
- Clubs, outings and residential trips
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- Small classes
- Specialist staff for PE, IT, Music, Drama and French
- Sibling fee reduction
- Before and after school care
Tel: 020 8294 8930  www.stolaves.org.uk

Our local children’s centre
WND reporter
Hidden away the bottom of Invicta School’s playground is one of Westcombe Park’s most valuable resources: Invicta Children’s Centre. Located in what was once the school’s caretaker’s house, the Centre is a Mecca for young Mums and their pre-school children (and some Dads too!) This is where the under-fives come to have fun – and to learn to socialise; and where Mums and Dads also come, to get the kind of help and support that we all need when coping with young children. The Centre is a fully Integral part of Invicta Primary School which is led and managed by the Schools Governing Body with Marie Corbett as Head of Centre, and the day to day coordination of family services is led by Sue Spinks as Family Support Worker. Sue is supported by a play worker, Karen Thomas, and the Early Years Team, Support Worker. and the Inclusion Team at the school, with Karen Thomas, and the Early Years Team, Support Worker.

Sue is supported by a play worker, Karen Thomas, and the Early Years Team, Support Worker. and the day to day coordination of family services is led by Sue Spinks as Family Support Worker. Sue Spinks is a trained nursery nurse with a very well-informed insight into what makes children and families – sick; and many of the problems, some of them quite serious, which young parents face, particularly in these days of changes in the welfare system. One young Mum said: “Sue isn’t just the day-to-day co-ordinator; she is a true friend, someone you can confide in.”

We are lucky in Greenwich which has thirteen of these Sure Start child centres round the borough – and despite the cuts, all remain open. In (Bromley the cuts have meant only three left). One reason for this is that so many of the Mums help out as volunteers, thus making the children’s time even more community effort.

So what goes on? An amazing range of activities, including days for Mums and Babies, “Stay & Play” or Learn Together sessions for 3-4 year olds, World Book Day on March 7th, and the “Giant Wiggle” for under fives organised by Action for Children on 19th March. (Includes a “Big Munch” lots of food). £3.00 per child, the money going to the charity.

There are also education visits by health visitors, sessions on oral health, and coping with baby “emergencies”.

Sue also runs courses for parents, these include “Positive Parenting”, and “Education for Boys”. And much, much more. Want to find out how much more? Contact: Sue Spinks, Family Worker, at Invicta Children’s Centre Invicta Road, Blackheath, SE3 7HE. Tel: 020 8294 8930 “We are in the Blue Bungalow at the bottom of the school Playground. Come and find us soon!” says Sue.

Who is Gladys E. Reed?
The National Maritime Museum is asking us to help to solve the mystery of this WWII Wren artist. The upcoming War Artists at Sea exhibition at The Queen’s House, featuring Gladys E Reed’s evocative sketches of WRNS (Women’s Royal Naval Service or Wrens) at work, might be the key to unveiling more information about who she is and her life story.

The sense of shared experience is very evident in these evocative drawings, which show the skill of a trained artist as well as the bond between Gladys and her fellow Wrens. Often drawn under difficult conditions, the drawings show a compelling spontaneity.

Not much is known about Gladys E Reed and her life story, though we know she joined the Wrens in 1943, and went on to present her work to the National Maritime Museum in 1947, receiving 10 guineas honorarium.

Unbelievably, The Museum cannot access her service records, held by the Ministry of Defence, because these are accessible only to next of kin – or on presentation of a death certificate.

This is part of the limited information we know about Gladys E Reed. If you have any information, or similar drawings within your family collections, please contact collections@rmg.co.uk to aid us in solving this mystery.

“War Artists at Sea” opens in the Queen’s House on the 15th February. The works of Gladys E Reed will be on display from 15th March.

Remembering Bob Dylan
A treat for us all in Mycenae House on Friday 21st March. The Bob Dylan experience (pictures) perform the music of Bob Dylan. The performance features the songs that have made Bob Dylan a legend over his 50-year career. From his earliest to his latest recordings, the group play the classic songs that have inspired countless fans and musicians alike across the world. Check it out on: www.thebobdylanexperience.co.uk

Why not host the Marathon?
“Bed and breakfast is offered to the runners at £50 for a single or £75 for a double and this is given directly to the CF Trust. (In fact, many of the runners do not want breakfast, as they have a special food that they bring with them.)”

“The date of the London Marathon this year is Sunday 13th April so runners would be staying on the night of Saturday 12th April. If you think you would be willing to join in and offer a bed we would be really delighted, so please let us know. Last year all of our basis and runners told us that they really enjoyed the experience.”

Contact: Carolyn Bosworth-Davies
Tel No 020-8318-3078
Mobile 07585 705230 and 07802 183638

WWW.WESTCOUNTRYNEWS.COM  MARCH 2014
**THE ART HUB at Bermondsey Project Space**

Until Mar 8th, every day except Wed and Sun.

**THE ART HUB at Bermondsey Project Space**

Fatally Birds Sat 15 Mar 2014 – 2.00 – 4.00 pm
Children’s Nearly New Sat 25 Mar Qute
Fri 21 Mar 2014 – 7.00 pm Evening, note half Easter Egg Hunt Sat 19 Apr
AGM – Friday 1st May 2014
Summer Picnic – Saturday 21st May

**STEM WESTGREEN LIBRARY, Greenwich, High Road**

Penny Mavrikakis’s 3rd exhibition of paintings celebrating runners, mothers and chicks

**GREAT HALL**

Blackheath and Greenwich Council: Newcomers’ Evening, Monday 3rd March 2014 (Cf 46)

**BUCHEM TRHENEN: CHRYSTHEMOS Saturday 25 October**

**THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY**

Cancer Research Lunch Thursday 6th March at The Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Road, Blackheath SE3 8HE. Akin Kant and Osman’s Four play The Rat Pack to book lunch-cats with Wendy Yeoman at 858251027 by Monday 3rd March (Cf 46)

**BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY**

Monday 3rd March Cost £8.50.

**ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC**

9.00 pm every Tuesday in the south end of the Lake in the Flower Gardens. and email: info@selondondads.org.uk

**SE LONDON DADS GROUP DADS ALERT:**

**BERRYNARROW**

Meetings start at 7.30 and non members £1.

**THE ART HUB at Bermondsey Project Space**

26th September – AGM – Friday 16th May

**FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH – 6PM – EVENING SURGERY:**

**TROJAN PRESS**

Print from your ideas or artwork. WE CAN PRINT AT A RUSH, WITH BUSINESS CARDS.

**BLACKHEATH HALLS**

Sat family ticket £48 | All Wed tickets £13

**GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY**

Brochure Duckham (Blackheath resident) and the Millwall Club, (rehearsals are Thursday evenings during term time), 1st. Thursday of each month, 2.30-4.30 at Mycenae House. 8858 5088

**FRIENDS OF BLACKHEATH HALLS**

Mon 3 Mar 1.30 pm.

**THEATRE & OPERA**

The Greenwich Theatre

**THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY**

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**Better information, better care**

*Your choice: over to you!*

There are laws strictly prohibiting obtaining personal data, but there are doubts about enforcing safe-guards in this post-Snowden era, especially if TTIP (see below) impacts on our health service.

What the professionals think?

So far, both the BMA (British Medical Association) and Royal College of GPs have remained largely supportive, but a recent survey of 400 doctors by the GP magazine *Pulse* found nearly half were unhappy about the plans. This is because GPs will be handing over the raw data, which includes NHS numbers, dates of birth, postcodes, as well as other personal information such as gender and ethnic origin. This would be the first time ever that such records have been released from the safety of a GP surgery, but the NHS has given assurances that it would be anonymised.

However, as one doctor in *Pulse* put it, “the principle of confidentiality between doctor and patient is sacred; it is important that it should not be breached.” Who wants the intimate histories of their mental and physical health revealed?

Others take a different view. Dr Clare Gerada, former chair of the Royal College of GPs, says that there is a lot of scare-mongering going on, speaking on the BBC *Newsnight* programme in February, she said that hospitals had stored such data for years, and none of it was likely to be given out except for bona fide research reasons.

If you are concerned about such issues, then you may contact your doctor and “opt out” and your file will remain inviolate in your doctor’s surgery. But the danger is that if enough people opt out, it could thwart what many see as an important programme in February, she said that hospitals had stored such data for years, and none of it was likely to be given out except for bona fide research reasons.

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**TTIP or Treat?**

Waiting to be signed up to by the EU (pre-empting whatever our own Parliament may have to say) is the proposed EU-US ‘TTIP’ the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which is currently being negotiated by Brussels. There are serious concerns about its implications for the NHS: the danger is that TTIP could give permanent legal backing to the competition-based regime introduced by the coalition.

As Benedict Cooper wrote recently in the *New Statesman*, a key element of the TTIP is ‘harmonisation’ between EU and US regulation. The coalition government’s Health and Social Care Act has been prepared in the same vein – to ‘harmonise’ the UK with the US health system.

Cooper argues: “This will open the floodgates for private healthcare providers that have made dizzying levels of profits from healthcare in the United States, while lobbying furiously against any attempts by President Obama to provide free care for people living in poverty. With the help of the Conservative government, and soon the EU, these companies will soon be let loose, freed to do the same in Britain...”

**QEH: a sign of the times?**

Staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich are concerned for their jobs as Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group (Greenwich CCG) puts the Phlebotomy Department and Anti-Coagulation Department out to tender.

The GMB union, the union for staff in the NHS, has issued a statement requesting assurances from NHS Trust that staff currently running the service will keep their jobs – whether that is in the hospital or in the community, and that their terms and conditions will be protected.

Greenwich CCG

Greenwich CCG is the body responsible for commissioning health care services in the borough of Greenwich. For the bidding Greenwich CCG is using the “Any Qualified Provider” model. This means that any organisation that fits the criteria to provide the service can make a bid for it.

The website of NHS Greenwich CCG states that it is responsible for securing safe, high quality and effective healthcare services for the population of Greenwich.

Procurement is one of a range of mechanisms for securing safe services that meet the needs of the population whilst improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities. Greenwich CCG wants to ensure the new service up and running by April, with bids being welcomed until the middle of February 2014. The wording seems hardly hasty: what’s this rush?

Nadine Houghton, GMB Regional Organiser, said: "Greenwich CCG has said that they want to improve the service and that more funding is being made available to do this. GMB absolutely welcome this and our members in the department completely agree that waiting times are too long, and patients very often have too far to travel. GMB also agree with the CCG that a more community focused model will provide a better service.”

**Volunteers wanted**

CSSV are a registered charity organisation seeking to recruit volunteers from the Greenwich borough to support families who are currently involved with child protection (CP) and children in need plans (CIN). All the families will have an active social worker. We work in partnership with the Greenwich Local Authority and we are funded by the Department for Education. Volunteers will help in various ways. They can help families to connect with services and activities within the community and in general provide a listening ear and non-judgmental shoulder.

Find out more at www.cssv.org.uk
Sun-in-the-Sands roundabout

Despite objections from the Westcombe Society, other local amenity societies, some councillors and residents, the proposed large illuminated advertising sign at the Sun-in-the-Sands has been given the go-ahead.

The original application to RBG was turned down last year on the grounds of safety and environmental impact.

However, TFL took the decision to appeal and the inspector has granted the application. The inspector imposed some restrictions concerning the brightness of the advertising and the frequency of the image changes. However, he took the view that because accidents were currently low on this stretch of road, the sign would not create a hazard.

Consequently, we can expect a large, bright, 12mx3m, electronic advertising panel on the A102 before too long. Drivers, keep your eyes on the road . . .

What exactly is acid grassland?

BARBARA MORRIS explains

Acid grassland is the product of soil and the processes that occur between the plants and the soil flora and fauna specific to the location.

Lowland Dry Acid Grassland meadows is a scarce ecological habitat these days. It is a habitat that is adapted to many forms of wildlife, including a unique range of plants and insects such as the Thames Terrace lystem. It has priority conservation status from Natural England and the EU.

Acid grassland is a very fragile environment which is easily damaged by over-use. There currently seems to be no proven method for restoring it once it has been damaged. It benefits from minimal mowing – and when mown, should not be cut short. When removed, it needs more time to get established.

In Blackheath, acid grassland can be recognised by fine, wiry grasses at some times of year, grasses with feathery heads. It sustains harebells and, a range of rare and uncommon clovers, with a unique range of insects, which in turn attract butterflies.

Ed: The WN has learnt that the findings from two trial plots on Crooms Hill in Greenwich Park will inform an ongoing programme of works in 2014/15 to improve the acid grass in that area. More details in future issues of the WN.

Massive disruption

is about to ensue for rail travellers on the North Kent Line during the redevelopment of London Bridge Station. EMILY NORTON outlines below the response of the Westcombe Society’s Environment Committee.

As reported in February’s WN, this disruption will take place from January next year.

You have been warned!

The consultation document is not clear on what the hours of operation will be for Cannon Street station, both mainline and underground. Cannon Street underground station also needs to stay open at all times that the mainline station is open.

It is vital that services on the Greenwich Line are maintained at least at the level they are today – including early morning, late evening and weekend services.

Finally, looking ahead to the period when Greenwich Line trains will not be able to stop at London Bridge we would like to remind Southeastern that arrangements need to be made for passengers to access the London Bridge area throughout the rebuild so that access to the hospitals in the area is maintained. This is particularly important as many of these passengers have limited mobility, and medical needs.

A fuller response, submitted by GLUG (Greenwich Line Users Group) can be found on the Westcombe Society website www.westcombeociety.org.uk. Contact Mike Sparham: greenwichline@outlook.com. Or you could contact: Mike Gibbons, Public Affairs Manager Southeastern, 3rd Floor, Friars Bridge Court 41-45 Blackfriars Road, SE1P SNZ 0207 820 5418 | 07768 293 651

Estate agents & surveyors. established in 1975. Branches in Westcombe Park, Blackheath, Greenwich & Lee, alongside dedicated branches for Lettings & Commercial. Contact the Westcombe Park branch on 020 8858 6101

Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Library on the lower level of the Woolwich Library Centre, 35 Wellington St. They may also be viewed on www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning

John Payne johnpayne@westcombegardens.org.uk

Quince Caterers

Simple food for any occasion

Serving London since 1982

Best food I have ever tasted! I wouldn't change it for the world! The kitchen staff do a fantastic job and the food keeps us coming back.

Mike Gibbons, Westcombe Society

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