



Westcombe NEWS



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July/August 2014 Issue 6

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

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

We Still Remember Them

Neville Grant

World War 1 started on August 4th 1914, when almost exactly a hundred years ago Great Britain declared war on Germany. This tragic anniversary is being commemorated not just in this country, but all over the world

Commemorated, but not celebrated, for historians all agree that the war was a tragedy for European civilization (even if they disagree on causes, and who if anyone was to blame – and even how necessary, or avoidable, the war was.)

In this spirit of commemoration, and sad reflection, the *WN* remembers all those, on all sides, who took part, in one way or another; and especially those who died, or who were wounded, or bereaved.

The war of course saw millions of men (and women) in uniform, in the army, navy and the fledgling air force, but they were not the only ones who contributed to the war effort. The latter included factory workers making munitions and uniforms etc (largely women – very dangerous work for the munitions workers of Woolwich and Silvertown...), medical workers, the Women's Land Army, dockers, miners, and the men of the Royal Defence Corps (precursors to the Home Guard in WW2).

Attention inevitably focuses on the armed forces, and, in Greenwich, we remember the many who fought so heroically. Among them are four local Victoria Cross winners:

* **Captain Walter Napleton Stone VC**, who lived in Blackheath: he won the VC for conspicuous bravery when in command of a rearguard action in Bournon Wood, in November, 1917. He is commemorated in Greenwich Cemetery, together with his brother Lt Col Arthur Stone DSO, who was also killed, in October 1918.

* **Rear Admiral Eric Gascoigne Robinson VC, OBE** who went ashore and single-handedly destroyed a Turkish naval gun battery during the Gallipoli campaign.

Later, he went on to destroy a stranded British submarine while under intensive fire from Turkish shore artillery.

* **The Sewell family**. When war broke out, Harry Sewell a solicitor who lived at 26 Crooms Hill, Greenwich, enlisted (then aged 51) in the RAMC. Harry survived the war, and his funeral was at St Alphege's in Greenwich; he is buried in Charlton.

All five of his sons also enlisted: two of them – Frank and Leonard – survived; Harry, Henry and Cecil – all John Roan boys – died. 2nd. Lt Henry Sewell's body was never found, and he is commemorated at Thiepval Memorial; Lt. Harry Sewell was invalided home from Mesopotamia and died in August 1917.

Lt. Cecil Sewell VC, the youngest son, serving in 3rd Light Tank Battalion, was killed a year later, saving men from a stranded Whippet Tank at Frémicourt, near Bapaume, France, on August 29th, 1918.

* **John George Pattison, VC**; born in Woolwich, he went to Clifton Hill County School in Deptford. He served in the Canadian infantry, and was killed in action at Vimy Ridge in 1917, when he single-handedly destroyed an enemy machine gun detachment.

In the words of the Edith Cavell Monument in London "Patriotism is not enough." Courage, unimaginable courage was also required; and courage of different kinds was also displayed – for example, the women who campaigned for peace – such as the brave women who risked their lives crossing the channel to a big Peace Conference at the Hague in 1915, trying to stop the war; there was also the courage of those who refused to fight on conscientious grounds, including the father of local resident Roger Marshall. Roger comments:

"My father was a conscientious objector at the age of eighteen in 1916, but served as a driver with the Friends' Ambulance Unit and a stretcher-bearer for a year and a half mainly behind the Ypres front. He was reticent about this when I was very young and later admitted he was frightened I might be ashamed of him. I hope that this would not have been the case; certainly I am now very proud of his courage."



The War Memorial at the top of Maze Hill commemorating the over 1600 Greenwich residents killed in World War 1, and the casualties of World War 2. The One Hundredth Anniversary of the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914 is being commemorated in ceremonies all over Europe and beyond.

The words of the prophet Micah come to mind:
" . . . And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Family Stories of World War 1

Earlier this year, the Greenwich Heritage Centre was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund to fund a WW1 Project entitled, 'Family Stories of the Great War: Family Histories from War Memorials'. The centre was also awarded funding by the Military Covenant Fund.

To date, along with a team of volunteers, the centre has been researching some of the names on war memorials in Charlton, Eltham and Woolwich.

The centre has also been researching the role of Charlton House during the war, and will be producing school packs, an app and a travelling exhibition which it is hoped will open 30th July (tbc).

Contact: Carolyn Ayers, Heritage Project Officer Greenwich Heritage Centre, Royal Borough of Greenwich Artillery Square, Royal Arsenal, London SE18 4DX Tel. 020 8854 2452 www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/heritagecentre

Carry on Dowling!

The administrator, Griffins, has sold part of the chain of bars and restaurants owned by Frank Dowling, the Greenwich tycoon, to pay off outstanding debts that included a reported £6 million in unpaid tax and PAYE. (*See WN, February 2014*)

Mr Dowling and his fellow respondents "are co-operating fully with the liquidator's and administrator's enquiries"; the agreement was "fair", and "offers a clean

break". Mr Dowling and his colleagues "look forward to moving ahead with business opportunities and continuing to run successful bars in London and elsewhere."

The *WN* understands that the missing Spread Eagle art collection was included in the settlement. But history does not as yet record whether diners will ever again enjoy those splendid pictures while dining in the Spread Eagle ...

News briefs

Firepower
Sadly, Firepower, the nearby Royal Artillery Museum, which has been in Woolwich since 1738, is to close. A small display about its history, and role in Woolwich, will be placed in the Greenwich Heritage Centre. The GHC is at Artillery Square, SE18 6ST

The First World War at Sea
A free exhibition exploring the maritime dimensions of the First World War opens on August 2nd at the National Maritime Museum. Drawing on the NMM's collection, it will open up the personal stories of those who took part in naval conflict, using a wide range of objects including medals, weapons, photos and ship models.

Keep the Green
In a bid to keep Greenwich Green green, campaigners are asking readers of the *WN* to donate plants and saplings from their gardens, to be planted on Greenwich Green, a grassy area south of Creek Road, very near the centre of Greenwich.
Ed Hill says: "We are inviting those who support the keeping of the green to add their plant with a personal message, waterproof if

possible."
Every Saturday from 12 – 5pm, at 262-298 Creek Road, SE10 9SW (ie. on the green) there is "Greenwich Green Fair". You can also see ATM's amazing GIANT thrush mural, pick up an upcycled bag, – and taste delicious vegan food. (*See Page 7 for the full story.*)

IKEA Update
Daniel Brown has submitted a 30-page report to the National Planning Casework Unit. The report calculates that traffic levels could be up to 14 times those predicted by IKEA. Sophie Howard has also asked the Secretary of State to evaluate the proposal with a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

In Memoriam
There is to be a memorial for Fusilier Lee Rigby to be erected near the scene of his murder last year.

Farewell
We are very sad to report that two of our leading educators - Lisa Laws at Blackheath High School, and Mary Whitehead of Halstow, are standing down. We thank them

for their services to education, and wish them well in the future.

Gentlemen - and crows - prefer blonds
Blonde joggers in Eltham Park South have been attacked by crows that swoop down and peck at their hair. A very unpleasant experience. The British Ornithological Trust said: "Crows have very good memories. It is possible that at some time in the past they were attacked or disturbed by a fair-haired animal, such as a labrador."

Hungry? Try an insect!
A UN report suggests that more people should eat insects including caterpillars, grasshoppers and dung beetles, as a way to combat malnutrition. Your editor once tried "Mopane worms" in South Africa, pronouncing them "delicious and crunchy."

Town Hall
Cllr Denise Hyland is the new Council Leader, the first woman ever to hold this post. Cllr. Geoff Brighty remains on the Planning Committee. Cllr Paul Morrissey is our representative on the Blackheath Joint Working Party.

The Westcombe Society
in conjunction with St George's Church/Parish of East Greenwich

Summer Picnic

Sat. 12th July 1.00 to 4.00pm

Mycenae Gardens

Entrance - FREE!

Bring a picnic or enjoy a ploughman's lunch and a cream tea.
Licensed bar,
live music with Dave Silk's
Jazz Band, home-made cakes, charity stalls, raffle, children's activities and traditional races

Come and spend a few hours in the lovely grounds of Mycenae House and join in this family community event

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The Westcombe Society is joining with St George's Church for its annual Summer picnic in the gardens of Mycenae House on Sat. 12th July, 1.00- 4.00 pm.

Good weather is on order and we look forward to welcoming local friends and neighbours to a relaxing, fun and free afternoon in Mycenae House gardens.

There will be something for everyone.
For the children – face painting, traditional races such as egg 'n spoon and sack race, hook a duck and much more.

For everyone – listen to summery jazz sounds from Dave Silk and his ensemble whilst enjoying your own picnic. If you want to really relax, don't worry about packing a picnic, there will be delicious ploughman's lunches (cheese, ham or pate) on sale to be followed by a scrumptious cream tea with homemade scones and real clotted cream. Enjoy a cooling drink from the Mycenae House bar or a glass of Pimms in the garden.

Among the stalls you'll find homemade cakes and preserves, toiletries, books and cards, a raffle and more besides.

See you there! **Joanne Lucas**

From: Diane Thomas **Westcombe Park**
Firstly, many thanks for continuing to produce
such a useful local paper.

I read with interest your lead article on recent air pollution studies in the area. I would really appreciate further details regarding the source of the statistics as they would help with a project I am writing.

ED: Thanks for your enquiry. We really had intended to include a reference at the end of the article to the sources, the campaign group No to Silvertown Tunnel is where the thanks should really go! There are many sources to be found by Googling "Air Pollution Tunnel", but the one used by the WN was:
<http://www.silvertowntunnel.co.uk/our-study/2014-silvertown-tunnel-pollution-study-results/> - you can zoom into a map and see that readings were recently taken at many locations all over London.

STOP PRESS Darryl Chamberlain and Stewart Christie, from the No to Silvertown Tunnel campaign, have won Clean Air in Cities awards in recognition of the group's work in studying air pollution in areas which would be affected by the planned road link between Greenwich and the Royal Docks.

From: Chris Peters **SE3**
The article in your excellent June edition highlights the pollution issues facing those living near the Blackwall Tunnel.

However much one wishes more people would use public transport, a significant change is unlikely. This means that the pollution caused by the existing slow moving traffic on the A102 in peak times is not likely to moderate.

The reluctant solution is another crossing to raise traffic speeds to less polluting levels. The traffic planners must work out where this should be, and without too much more delay.

The 108 bus (Lewisham to Stratford) fulfils a strategic need, and with another tunnel there would be scope to wean car users onto another (hopefully hybrid) bus route from, say, Eltham to West Ham (rail tube DLR connection).

PS *The TFL website confuses West Ham with West Hampstead.*

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We are blessed to live in Siebert Road, an extraordinary street with a group of extraordinary people and that's where the beginnings of our 'Big Lunch' began.

A couple of us were aware the 'Big Lunch' was a national event and we had discussed the possibility of Siebert Road holding its own a few times. With the deadline for applications looming I decided to apply and just wait and see what would happen. What happened was more than any of us could ever have hoped and dreamed for.

Every neighbour came through with ideas, food & drink, reflecting the cultural heritage of the residents, and lots of love for this special event.



It was an amazing day for each of us, meeting old friends – and neighbours we hadn't said hello to before. There was an abundance of food, drink and merriment and the children were free to play openly and safely in the street. The sun shone, meaning we could get the sprinkler out, and even have a water slide.

We now truly feel we are a community and we are already thinking about what we can do next. I would encourage more streets to take part in The Big Lunch* as it brings people together and helps build a strong and safe community for everyone.

*** Brainchild of the Eden Project:**
<http://www.thebiglunch.com/about/>

From: R.G. Marston Coleraine Road
Walking from the bus stop today I counted fourteen white vans - ie. plumbers, builders, etc. between the junction of Westcombe Park Road down to Webb Road, halfway down the former.

They have recently become a familiar part of the street scene - in considerable numbers. Is this a symptom of increasing affluence, keeping up with the Joneses? Or pride in and respect for our attractive houses? Or a combination of all three? Readers comments welcome.

From: Richard Tacagni Vanbrugh Hill
I recently noticed what I think are new parking
restriction signs along the right hand side of
Restell Close leading from the junction with
Vanbrugh Hill, where we live.

The signs, affixed to alternate lamp posts, say you will get a PCN for £100 if you don't display a valid permit or ticket whilst '...parked fully in the confines of a marked bay'.

This seems very confusing and probably not enforceable as there are no parking bays or other road markings on either side of Restell Close near the junction with Vanbrugh Hill.

My concern is that people may well miss the 'Private Road' signs on the entrance to Restell Close, and as there are no road markings, may assume parking is unrestricted. Is this something you are aware of and do you know if anyone has spoken to Seren Park or the Council about this? It might also be worth a quick mention in *WN* so people don't get caught out – it's an excellent paper!

From: David Mallen Kirkside Road
First may I congratulate the three successful candidates for our ward in the recent RB Greenwich Council elections. I hope they have four years after which they can look back and say that they made a significant contribution to the development of our area.

And that brings me to the main reason I am writing: at this election, Alex Grant decided not to stand again. Like many others of all parties and none, I found this a sad, albeit understandable, decision. He has served our ward with great distinction. Whether it was the personal need of a particular constituent or a need to take a stand on some issue that affects us all, Alex Grant has served us fantastically for sixteen years. We are all (whether we know it or not) much better off for having had him as our representative.

Thank you Alex. Whatever you are going on to do, we wish you well. You have been a great public servant! All best wishes to you for the future.

From: Sarah **Friends of the Earth**
This summer we're conducting the first ever Great British Bee Count. If you see a bee in your garden, while you're out in the countryside or even buzzing down the road, we'd love you to tell us about it.

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LOCAL NEWS

Community Day

Police Community fun day will be held in Greenwich Park by the bandstand on Saturday 19th July 2014 from 12.00pm to 4.00pm.

This year's event promises to be the biggest and best yet. Live music on the bandstand will be performed by the Gay Symphonic Orchestra, and, back by popular demand from last year, The Richtones.

British Military fitness will be providing fun activities for the whole family, and you will also be able to enjoy historic Police vehicles and Police Horses. You can also meet police cadets, including PCSO Steve, and members of the London Fire Brigade.



There will also be Children's face painting, and the local Dog Society are putting on a dog show and competitions. There will also be refreshment stalls, and many local charities will also have their stalls. A good day out for all!

AHOY carries the baton

On Sat. 6th June, The Queen's Row Barge 'Gloriana' carried the Queen's Baton as part of the Relay for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

The rowing crew were youngsters from The Ahoy Centre who embarked in St. Katherine Docks at 0630! The barge went upstream to the London Fire Brigade Pier, Lambeth where the Queen's Baton Relay Team came aboard. The crew then rowed them downstream to the Millennium Bridge,



where they saluted the Relay by tossing oars, and gave three rousing cheers. At the Bankside Pier the Relay Team stepped ashore for more events on the bridge. The Ahoy crew then rowed the Royal Barge on downstream under Tower Bridge and back to St. Katherine Docks.

An event to remember – well done, to all the rowers from Ahoy!



The youngest AHOY rower was Hamilton Scott-McDonald

Red Alert!

At 2030 hrs on Thursday 28th May, a suspect vessel moved into a secure zone on Greenwich Reach, and failed to respond to police radio calls to identify itself, or to move away. It quickly became a "Red Alert" situation.

A police launch sent to investigate came under fire from the suspect vessel and Royal Marines from a visiting Royal Naval ship *HMS Bulwark* were sent in to deal with the situation. They were supported by helicopters and the mother ship.

Jaws dropped in amazement among casual observer watching the operation from Island Gardens, before they realised that this was a demonstration mounted by the Royal Marines and the Met Police.

Once the suspect vessel was made secure, there followed a sail- and fly-past by the participating vessels.



The Royal Marines to the rescue!

HMS Bulwark is an Albion-class assault ship and the flagship of the Royal Navy; she was in London as part of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Marines. Formed in 1664, Marines have taken part in more battles on land and sea around the world than any other branch of the British Armed Forces. Their motto? "Per mare, per terram."

Farewell, Bugsby?

In commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Act of Parliament for regulating watermen, wherryman and bargemen in 1513, when King Henry VIII granted Royal Assent, the Port of London Authority intends to rename *Bugsby's Reach* as *Waterman's Reach* on Sept. 18th.

As far as is known, Bugsby's Reach was so named originally because Mr Bugsby, a market gardener in the mid-1800s, owned land which touched the river bank where the stream turns to the north-west. However, Mr Bugsby's overall contribution to the River Thames since the mid-1800s is markedly less than that given by watermen, wherryman and bargemen over the past 500 years and more.

River-users will take no time at all to become accustomed to the new name, particularly as most Boat Skippers on the Thames continue to be watermen, wherryman and bargemen, plying their trade as they have over the past 500 years.

The consultation document can be found at: <http://www.pla.co.uk/assets/bugsbysreachaswatermansreachconsultationnotice.pdf>

In the Meantime . . .

Why not visit our local award-winning working brewery? The Old Brewery started in the Pepys Building, The Old Royal Naval College – right on our doorstep, but has since moved the brewery and visitor centre to the Lawrence Trading Estate, Blackwall Lane, London SE10 0AR.

It was founded in 2000 by Alistair Hooke, and brews a range of beers and ales. Guided tours start from £15.00, and the Meantime's expert brewers will talk you through the Meantime's special brewing process – which is very different from other breweries. You can then, (of course!) try it out for yourself in a sampling session. Mr Bugsby would have loved it!

The Meantime shop stocks a full range of Meantime beers and other merchandise.

Tours on Thurs. & Fris at 7.00 pm; Sats from midday; Suns at 2.00 pm. 8293 1111 or email brewerytours@meantimebrewing.com



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FEATURES

Three weeks in Nepal

In March, BEN MOUNTAIN described his preparations for a trip to Nepal with his scout troop. We are glad to report that they all returned safely! Here is Ben's account of the trip.

I can't begin to count the number of times people – parents, teachers, Nan, friends – told me how fortunate I am and how wonderful our 3 weeks in Nepal in April were going to be. It was hard to appreciate what they were saying at the time, though.

Now, however, I can. Because Nepal couldn't have been a greater experience. From marvelling at the awe-inspiring mountains that tower above you in the Himalayas to watching the joy the local children get from a few sticks or empty Coke cans – Nepal was rewarding, challenging and unique.

The country couldn't be more diverse. We started our adventure in the bustling streets of Kathmandu, so far from the relative calm and order of Westcombe Hill. While walking down the road, one man might be trying to sell you a fidgety looking mini chess set and another almost trying to run you over in his rickshaw.

Shops are packed like sardines at the side of the road – selling beautifully coloured pashminas or Buddhist paintings, or prayer wheels. Opportunists walk the streets trying to flog their necklaces, and taxis bomb through the swathes of people. Power lines hang precariously by your head as you dodge an on-coming motor bike and stray dogs bathe in the dust.

The nerve-racking anarchy of the roads seems to accelerate as you wind up steadily through the foothills of the Himalay – specially for those with vertigo or travel sickness... The loudest horn generally decides which ten tonne lorry gives way to the next. Blind corners next to fifty foot drops don't seem to worry the locals as speed is of paramount importance when compared to something as insignificant as your life...

When (or if) you reach your destination in the mountains; you're instantly charmed by the beauty of the lower hills

The mighty Himalayas; Not a doddle, even for the scouts of the Lewisham North District scout troop ...

PHOTO: Ben Mountain

For us, the Himalayas meant ten days of solid trekking through magical woods and relentless snow. Every day brought about a new sight and with each footstep, the scenery became more and more dramatic. During our trek, we managed to reach 2 peaks – Kyang Ri (4500m) and Tsergo Ri (4983m). Both were challenging climbs but produced the most beautiful views imaginable. Our route took us through the Langtang Valley; from Trishuli to Kensing Gompa and down to Dunche.

Whilst trekking, our incredible team of mountain guides and porters set up tents whilst a small kitchen crew cooked throughout the day. Their dedication to us was incredible, a genuine Ghurkha spirit. On the last night, our Nepalese entourage held a cultural show; dancing and singing. How they could dance after trekking for ten days with our bags on their backs amazes me!

Halfway through our expedition, we returned to Kathmandu – another nail-biting journey on the treacherous roads – and a hotel bed was just what we needed.. But our second stay was soon over however, as we set off to the Trisuli River to attempt the rapids that crash through the lower Himalayas. The white-water swirls furiously around fierce looking rocks. We bombed our way along in our little 6-man rafts, however and after about a day's worth of rafting, we just about scraped our way through alive...



The following night was incredible. With a roaring fire going on the beach and a warm wind blowing gently over the now calm river. These serene and almost magical moments are just another one of Nepal's charms.

The next day took us away from the river and towards the Royal Chitwan National Park on the very Southern border of Nepal. With its one-horned rhinos, sloth bears, Bengal Tigers, marsh crocodiles and various types of deer, Chitwan is one of the world's greatest national parks. Armed with cameras and binoculars, we set off on the backs of surprisingly graceful elephants.

One thing that really hits you about this part of Nepal is the unrelenting heat and unbearably dry air. Still, the scenery and wildlife was a good enough distraction. The next day, we rose early to glide along one of the many rivers in Chitwan to dice with death and stare a ten-foot plus Mugger crocodile in its eery eyes. Just visible above the surface of the murky water, you can see the bumps of one of these majestic beasts. We finished our dug-out canoe tour, with a visit to a nearby elephant sanctuary.

Back in Kathmandu again, we visited a local school and charity: Education, Protection and Health for Children (EPHC). They had been funded by previous expeditions run by the Lewisham scouts and the charity Penny for a Brick Appeal. (five pence buys a brick in Nepa). Our morning at the school was wonderfully rewarding. The thousand pounds raised by the Penny-a-Brick Appeal has been turned into a kitchen so the children can have proper school meals. We handed out toys and books and met sponsored children. It was a truly delightful morning.

Nepal 2014 was a unique and rewarding experience that I'll never forget. By the end of it, I really could appreciate just how fortunate I was and how wonderful the 3 weeks were. I guess my parents, teachers, Nan and friends knew what they were talking about after all...



PHOTO: Patrick Thescira

BOOK REVIEW

‘Greenwich Revealed’

For nearly 300 years panoramic sketches of Greenwich town lay in Wiltshire's County Records Office. They were the property of the Earls of Pembroke whose country seat is Wilton House near Salisbury. No one knows quite how they got there.

It was only when photocopies were discovered in the Royal Institute of British Architects library that local historian Neil Rhind realised that they were drawings of Greenwich townscape circa 1710.

They depicted all the main buildings of Greenwich in the early 18th Century – as well as some of the humbler dwellings that no one usually thinks worth recording. Years of research followed, carried out by Neil Rhind, and Julian Watson, who was for 34 years Local History Librarian of the London Borough of Greenwich.

One question arose immediately: who drew them and why? It is likely that they were done by Nicholas Hawksmoore, but no one can be certain. What is certain is that they give a unique insight into what an English town looked like at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

And they are now available, with the publication of *Greenwich Revealed* by Rhind and Watson, subtitled *An investigation into some early 18th century line drawings of Greenwich*.

Sadly, few of the buildings in the drawings have survived, but some of them can be compared with buildings that still exist. They are architectural sketches, not works of art, but they are still an invaluable pictorial record.

Among the most interesting are the drawings of St. Alfege's Church – done just before its nave collapsed in 1710 – the only detailed images of the medieval church to survive.

Greenwich Revealed reproduces the drawings, and juxtaposes them with later images, and photographs of some of those buildings that have survived, and drawings by local artist Peter Kent. This is an essential book for anyone interested in local history in Greenwich and the authors are to be congratulated on producing a work of scholarship that is also accessible to the general reader.

‘Greenwich Revealed’ is on sale at Warwick Leadlay Gallery 1-2 Nelson Arcade, Greenwich, SE10 9J. Copies are just £10.00 each (plus £5.00 P&P - Inland UK). Copies may also be obtained from Sabo Newsagents, Stockwell Street and at Maritime Books in Royal Hill. N.G.

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WHAT'S ON

ARTS

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
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Until Nov. 16th: 10.00 am - 5.00 pm Free.
Rozanne Hawksley's work examines remembrance, representation and memory in the fitting setting of the Queen's House, once part of the Royal Hospital School which cared for and educated the orphan children of seamen. It features new work alongside pieces from throughout Hawksley's acclaimed career – including her iconic wreath **Pale Armistice**.
ALSO in the QUEEN'S HOUSE:
WAR ARTISTS AT SEA Until February 2015 A new display showcasing the very best of the museum's collection of First & Second World War art
Continuing: GUIDING LIGHTS: marking the 500th anniversary of Trinity House
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: 24th July** David J Evans talks on **Harold and Laura Knight, a Partnership of Painters** Non-members £5 on the door.
GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich **NEXT LECTURE: 14th July:** Barry Venning talks on **A Child of Six Could Do It - Cartoonists on Modern Art** 020 8852 7873 Non-members £8.00
MADE IN GREENWICH GALLERY
www.madeingreenwich.co.uk 324 Creek Rd SE10 July 1st at 7pm: Ted Hughes with Graham Fawcett (£10 include drinks and light buffet).
July 5th - 19th **FINAL PRINT 3** Photography by Greenwich Community College Students.

CHILDREN & FAMILY

GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich Box office: 020 8858 7755.
SUPERHERO SNAIL BOY
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SE LONDON DADS GROUP DADS ALERT:
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Summer Picnic – Saturday 12th July,
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
Christmas Bazaar Sat. 22nd November at Blackheath High School, Mycenae Road
Please ring Joanne on 07709 571777 if you would like to help out on any of these events!

COMMUNITY

WOODLANDS FARM
BARN DANCE! Woodlands Farm is holding its second Barn Dance on Sat. 5 July, 7.30-11.00pm. Live country music by Skinners Rats. Please bring your own food, drinks and glasses. Tickets £12 each. To book please ring 020 8319 8900.
CANCER RESEARCH LUNCH
Thurs. 3rd July at The Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Row, Blackheath SE3 0RW Talk: **Music & Dance in SE London: the Contribution of Trinity Laban** by Mirella Bartrip Prize draw & Raffle. To book, call Wendy on 8265 0335 by **Mon. 30th June** £8.50.
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
15th July Sarah Palmer, **Running the River Thames** Meeting at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3, Please use the car park behind the station. Meetings start at 7.30: non members £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
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ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC 9.00 pm every Tuesday at the Lord Hood pub, Creek Road; jazz Thursdays



WORSHIP

St George's Church
Glenluce Road:
11am Parish Communion with Children's Church for ages 3 and up. First Sunday in the month is an all-age service
Sunday 27th July 1.00 pm Farewell lunch and short service to say goodbye to Malcolm and Rebecca Torry after 18 years in the parish.

THEATRE

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LAMDA SUMMER SEASON 2014
LOVE AND A BOTTLE by George Farquahar Wed 9, Sat 12 & Mon 14 July
Wild Irish playwright George Roebuck arrives in London in 1698 with nothing in his pockets but his first play. His mission: to be the toast of Drury Lane, to seduce as many fine ladies as he can procure and then – can he find that heiress?
SOMETHING CLOUDY, SOMETHING CLEAR Thu 10th, Sat 12th, and Tues 15 thJuly
It's the summer of 1940, Cape Cod, New England. Fledgling playwright, August, is battling with penny-pinching producers on his Broadway debut, when sexually ambiguous Kip catches his eye.
ATTEMPTS ON HER LIFE Fri 11th, Mon 14th, Tue 15th July Who is Anne? An urban terrorist? A fun-loving holiday rep? A porn star? Or, perhaps, an artist obsessed with her own suicide attempts?
KITTY KELLY'S MUSIC HALL
On Sunday July 20th at 7.30, fun, laughter and song will sweep through Greenwich Theatre with the return of Kitty Kelly's acclaimed Music Hall.
BROKE Fri 25th July 2 Following their smash hit production of Thirsty, multi award-winners The Paper Birds return to Greenwich with a new verbatim production exploring the debt of a nation
RED TAP/BLUE TIGER Sat 26th July
Norton was 21 today. His mother revealed his abusive Dad is not his biological father. Norton flew into a rage,... Now he's on the run...
THE LITTLE SOLDIERS Thu 31st July & Fri 1st August Amidst the wonders of the circus, an impossible dream appears and two brothers fight over a beautiful tightrope walker...
KEEPING UP WITH THE JOANS Tue 26 - Sat 30th August Bitter sweet comedy about failing memory, friendship and mimicking martyrs ...
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CHRISTOPHER & HIS KIND 1st - 5th July 8.00 pm (Isherwood's uncensored autobiography)
EDINBURGH PREVIEW SEASON
6th - 20th July Lucy Frederick
MEASURE FOR MEASURE July 10th-12th 7.30
AN INNOCENT MAN & WHODUNNIT July 15th - 19th 7.3- pm (Double bill)
TIMON OF ATHENS 29th July - 2nd August
Classic story transposed to modern-day London . . .
INSTRUCTIONALLY INVITED Aug. 4th - 13th
BUTTONS August 19th - 23rd 7.30 pm
ANNA WEISS Hypnotherapist reveals “lost” memories . . . 26th August - 13th Sept, 7.30 pm
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by Joan Littlewood and Charles Chilton et al
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THEATRE OF HORROR 25th - 26th July 8.0 pm (Over 18 only)
LIMBO -THE MUSICAL Aug 5th - 10th. 8.00 pm (Sun. at 5.00 pm)
CLUB CLASS (an aviation comedy) Aug 12th- 17th.

DANCE

BLACKHEATH HALLS
TEA DANCE Sun 27th July 2.00 pm
CANCER RESEARCH keep fit & in shape plus Line Dancing at Kingswood Hall, Kingswood Place, off Dacre Park SE13 Donation £5.00 for Cancer Research Every Wed. 10.00 - 12 noon
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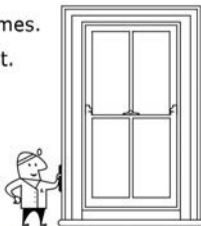
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The annual BP Big Screens series returns to General Gordon Square in Woolwich this summer with a free live screening from the Royal Opera House

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FEATURES

NHS update

A survey carried out earlier this year by UNISON shows a typical ‘day in the life’ of the NHS. The majority (60%) felt that low staffing levels resulted in a lower standard of care.

Despite the many recent investigations into the NHS, the survey report – *Running on Empty* – exposes clear failings to improve staffing levels. The impact on patients was plain to see. A worrying 48% of respondents described their organisation as either being at risk of a similar situation to Mid Staffs, or stated that it was already happening in parts, or across their hospital.

UNISON’s report cites independent evidence showing that nursing cutbacks are directly linked to higher patient death rates in hospitals.

Shocking statistics

Also shocking were statistics showing that 45% of nurses were caring for 8 or more patients: when a nurse or healthcare assistant is responsible for eight or more patients, harm is occurring.

- Among the key findings were:
- * Three quarters of all midwives and 71% of all nurses (general and mental health) said they did not have adequate time with each patient.
 - * 59% of all nurses on a night shift said there were elements of care they were unable to give.
 - * 92% supported minimum staffing levels,

- with 65% supporting a legally enforceable minimum.
- * 45% of staff were looking after 8 or more patients during their shift, this increased to 53% on night duty.
 - * Just over half (51%) were not confident about raising concerns locally, which, in a post Francis era, is worrying.

Experience at QEH

The *WN* interviewed one local resident on her recent experience of QEH in Woolwich. She said that she was very impressed by the dedication and efficiency of the staff, but it was clear that they were severely stretched. This was particularly evident in A&E.

“On the ward I was later transferred to, again, I felt proud of our NHS, as manifested in the hard work and attitudes of all the staff – nurses, doctors and consultants. They never seemed to stop.

“One thing I noticed was that there also appears to be a shortage of equipment: quite apart from a struggle for beds, nurses competed to get drip stands (for saline drips), and queued to use blood pressure machines, some of which did not work. It is clear that the hospital is really trying hard to economise.”

Gail Adams, UNISON Head of Nursing, said: “One of the most damaging findings of this survey is how little has changed since last year.



“Despite all the Government rhetoric, despite the Francis, Keogh and Cavendish reports, the spectre of another Mid-Staffs still looms large. Progress on safe staffing levels has been glacial and that means poorer care and patients still at risk.

“It’s clear that despite nurses working through breaks and beyond their hours, they simply do not have enough time to give patients. The Coalition Government needs to introduce legally enforceable nurse-to-patient ratios.”

The over-use of bank and agency staff is also exposed in the survey with 45% of staff reporting that they worked alongside one or more agency/bank workers. UNISON has always supported their use to cover holidays or unexpected gaps, but the regular use of these staff is not cost effective or in the best interests of patients.

There are signs that things will be getting better: Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust recently reported a big recruitment campaign for more nurses. The trust has already recruited 44 nurses from Portugal, Spain and Italy where, it says, there is a surplus of “good nurses”.

Stretched to breaking point

There are fears that the NHS has become “stretched to breaking point”. A recent study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development found that Britain has fewer hospital beds per person than almost any country in the Western world. The OECD figures show that in the UK there are now 2.95 beds per 1,000 people, compared with 6.37 in France, 7.65 in Austria and 8.27 in Germany.

Despite a rapidly ageing population, more than 50,000 NHS hospital beds have been lost in England alone.

The report also indicated that levels of overcrowding in hospitals have repeatedly breached recommended safety limits. Experts advise that bed occupancy should not rise higher than 85 per cent. This is because of an increased risk of superbugs when there is not enough time to clean beds properly between patients.

The chief executive of the Foundation Trust, Chris Hopson, which represents NHS hospitals, said: “These figures show that NHS hospitals are operating at near full capacity all the time. There is no slack in the system and trusts are constantly juggling their resources to meet patient demand.”

Many are now saying that we have a health service that we cannot afford, and there needs to be new ways of financing it. The government’s default position is to put services out to tender, hoping to reduce costs, but how this can be done without impacting on quality is a problem yet to be solved. Others argue for a different approach: raise taxes, and lower costs for white elephants such as Trident. ..

On May 22nd Alex Grant stood down after 16 years as a Labour councillor in Blackheath and Westcombe Park. The *WN* asked him about his time as a councillor.

Is there life after Greenwich Council?

WN: How do you feel about stepping down after 16 years as a local councillor?
I have mixed feelings – but having just turned 40, and with a young family, I feel it's time to move on.

WN: What do you think you achieved?
Rather than just go on about what I have done personally, I'd prefer to reflect on how Blackheath Westcombe ward has changed since I was first elected in 1998 and the future challenges it faces.

WN: What's it like being a councillor for the area?
I've always felt more comfortable on the doorsteps than in the Town Hall to be honest. I was first elected for the old Vanbrugh ward in 1998, but boundary changes in 2002 meant that Vanbrugh was absorbed into a new ultra-marginal ward, Blackheath Westcombe ward. This changed the composition of the electorate, and Blackheath Westcombe is unique in London as it has always been split between labour and the Conservatives. From 2006 onwards I was the only Labour councillor for the ward, with the other two seats held by the Conservatives Geoff Brighty and Alex Wilson, and generally we co-operated well. It's been hard work but very rewarding!

WN: So how would you characterise the electorate?
Blackheath Westcombe ward's knife-edge election results reflected – still reflect – how mixed the area is, with wealth sitting alongside pockets of poverty. Since 1998, property prices have risen dramatically and it could be argued that the ward has got more gentrified.

But as the 2011 census showed, these changes have not benefitted everyone: levels of home ownership have actually fallen, due to the rise of buy-to-let, and less than

half of the ward's residents now live in homes that they own.

The stereotype of Blackheath and Westcombe Park residents is middle-class, white owner-occupiers in well-paid jobs and tuned permanently to Radio Four. But like most stereotypes this is wide of the mark. While 57% of Blackheath Westcombe ward's adult residents have degrees, less than 70% define their ethnic background as "White UK" and more than a third of households do not own a car. 24% of the ward's residents now live in private rented accommodation, up from 16% in 2001. Another quarter - much more than many people think - rent their homes from the council or housing associations.

WN: Do think that Greenwich has improved during the past 16 years?
Public buildings that were crumbling in 1998 are now refurbished or rebuilt, there has been lots of new development and the council has done much to make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and improve public transport.

Blackheath Library on Old Dover Road has been refurbished and a new library and leisure centre are now being built on the old hospital site at the bottom of Vanbrugh Hill.

However, the council still needs to communicate, consult and listen more effectively: I've spoken out against bullying and I've argued strongly for more transparent decision-making. I know that Cherry Parker and Paul Morrissey (the new Labour councillors for the ward) will continue to do so.

WN: What about education?
John Roan and Thomas Tallis schools have flourished, with improving results and excellent headteachers. Tallis has been rebuilt and Roan is now being partly



rebuilt, partly renovated. It finally looks like Invicta will be rebuilt, though the budget that Michael Gove has allocated for its new building is tight.

WN: And policing? Is this a safe area to live in in your view?
Back in 1998 there was just one police officer dedicated to Blackheath, who in practice was often called away.

Blackheath Westcombe ward now has a great community police team, based upstairs from Marks and Spencers at the Standard. Having five or six police officers or PCSOs dedicated to the area has made a huge difference and I just hope the team survives the Met police's ongoing shake-up of neighbourhood policing.

WN: What is the most important issue facing the ward today?
Housing is, and will remain, the most pressing challenge. I've done what I can to argue for more investment in council homes, many of which are Victorian and Edwardian houses rather than post-war estates, and a more careful approach to disposals of properties that the council no longer needs.

But for too many residents life is insecure, with rising private sector rents, a cost of living crisis and little chance of getting a step on the property ladder. The Bedroom Tax and Housing Benefit caps are forcing some hardworking people to move out of areas like Blackheath and Westcombe Park, and the council's success in getting affordable homes built has been hampered by cuts in funding from the Coalition Government.

WN: Weren't you in charge of planning, though, at some stage?
Yes, I was chair of the council's planning board from 2006 to 2010 and I saw many developments given planning permission, only for their developers to then seek a reduction in affordable housing after the 2010 election. However, I'm pleased that many hundreds of council homes in Blackheath and Westcombe Park have been given new roofs, windows, entry-phones, bathrooms and kitchens in the last few years, though there's still more to do.

WN: What are your plans for the future?
Fluid, I would say. Watch this space!

Farewell to the Bluecoats

August will see the closure of the Blackheath Bluecoat School, the only Church of England Secondary School in Greenwich – after over 300 years.

Greenwich Council Cabinet decided to close the school in January 2012 in spite of a public consultation in which over 90% of the responses opposed closure.

An event marking the closure of the school took place on 21st June, at which there was a service conducted by the Bishop of Woolwich, The Rt Revd. Dr Michael Ipgrave OBE.

ENVIRONMENT



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



PHOTO:
Roger Marshall

The new bund on the Heath alongside Charlton Way in full flower: the field here was used for Olympic Logistics, but after campaigning from the local amenity societies LOCOG removed the earth from the existing bunds, stored it for a year and returned it with new top seeding in 2013 after they had relinquished the site. A job well done.

Where's muck, there's grass!

What do you do when a dump truck deposits a huge pile of a thick brown substance on your doorstep?

Well, call in the cavalry, of course – or rather, in this case, volunteers from the Westcombe Woodlands. And fortunately, the “substance” is not what you might have thought it was: no, it was mulch, courtesy of Greenwich Council, who had it delivered free of charge.

The aim was to spread it round the base of some saplings that were planted by



Their only reward: pleasure in a job well done with affable co-workers – and, of course, coffee, fruit squash and biscuits. (Don't forget the biscuits, Frank!)

If you have any queries about helping out, ring Frank on 07989 445057 or email westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk. And if you haven't already done so, don't forget to sign up to become a Friend of Westcombe Woodlands! You can find a form on www.westcombewoodlands.org. **The next volunteer days are: Sun. 6th July, Sat. 2nd August Sun. 7th Sept., Sat. 4th Oct, & Sun. 23rd Nov.**



PHOTOS:
Frank Smith

volunteers beside the path near Lassiter Place. In case you're asking, yes, the weeding round the saplings had already been done, and so it was left to a sturdy band of volunteers to get busy with shovels and wheelbarrows.

And here they are (*below*).



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

John Payne

johnpayne.com

Keep the Green! WN reporter

The first thing you see is a giant mistlethrush, painted on a wall. Lovely. Then you see another piece of artwork, also rather beautiful, a tree, and its roots, and then, below it, what to look at on your app: www.keepthegreen.org

The green? Yes, of course, there it is: a strip of grass just south of Creek Road, near the centre of Greenwich, with a sprinkling of healthy young saplings.

The penny drops: this is all part of a campaign to keep the grass green – to prevent the building of a six-storey block of flats by a company called Family Mosaic.

The Creek Road project was approved by Greenwich Council planning board in September last year. Work was to have begun earlier this year.

Until very recently, there were healthy, mature trees here: only the odd tree stump, and some bare patches, remain. Further back from the road, next to Bardley Lane, there was, once, a row of small businesses, including a car-wash: all closed down, now, awaiting demolition.

There are fears that the new development will also encroach on St Alfege Park (known locally as “the rec.”) and disturb some of the historic gravestones. But Family Mosaic envisage a new wall adjacent to the graveyard, replacing the current ramshackle fencing. *[See photo, below]*

The idea of the “Keep-the-Green” campaigners is to create such a vibrant, green community space that the developers will



From the archive, deja vu: *WN* circa 2010

Parking in Mycenae Road

When the Council asked residents of Mycenae Road in 2006 if they wanted parking controls, the majority said they wanted permit controls introduced – on both sides of the road, including in front of Mycenae House. But the Council decided to continue to allow commuters to use these bays without restriction, thereby displacing local residents and their visitors, and users of Mycenae House from access to them (the Council has provided virtually no cycle parking at 90 Mycenae Road for either pupils of the school or users of Mycenae House).

At the Greenwich Area Planning and Environment Committee meeting in January 2007, a number of councillors expressed particular concern about the problems of commuter parking in Mycenae Road and the difficulties this caused for users of Mycenae House. Councillors agreed to a trial only on condition that the arrangements in Mycenae Road were reviewed after six months.

More than three years have now passed and the promised review has still not taken place. Council officers appear simply to

be shamed out of doing what the Council has given them a green light for: a block of flats that will take away the trees, blot out the sun, and act as a trap for traffic fumes – just opposite is St Alfege with St Peters' Church of England Primary School.

As reported in last month's *WN*, air pollution is a big problem in Greenwich.

Local residents are now being asked to sponsor a tree – a silver birch sapling costs a mere £5.00. Thirty of them are already sprouting – many planted by local residents Anna Townend and John Franklin.

Campaign spokesman Ed Hill, says: “Our Community Green must not be sold off, its wildlife must not be destroyed, and air pollution levels must not become even more illegal, all for the profit of a few.”

Another day, then, another campaign: let the battle commence – those who say “we need more houses”, and those who say “we desperately need more breathing space for the people of Greenwich.”

So readers, what do YOU think?

www.gopetition.com/petitions/keep-the-green.html

LEFT: Architects impressions of the new development. RIGHT: Wall poster. A forlorn hope? BELOW: The school



have ignored the condition, notwithstanding repeated requests by the Westcombe Society and councillors. Commuters continue to displace residents and users of Mycenae House with impunity...

Since this article was written in 2010, a small number of disabled parking spaces have appeared in front of Mycenae House; and though one side of the road now has restricted parking, the other side gets very crowded – often being used by commuters.

Watch this space but don't hold your breath! Residents of Mycenae Road and users of Mycenae House are still holding their breath – after eight years . . .

On Blackheath is On

On Blackheath is to take place on Dartmouth Field, Blackheath, on the weekend of Sept. 13th - 14th. with a crowd of around 15,000 each day. Massive Attack is the headline act on the 13th, leading appropriately enough to Sleeping Souls on the Sunday.

Chance would be a fine thing!

MARKET PLACE

Please send ads for the Market Place with payment by the 10th day of the preceding month to:
Marilyn Little, 163, Westcombe Hill, SE3 7DP
020 8853 1312 marilyn.little@btinternet.com
ALL classified adverts 30p per word. Please make cheques payable to The Westcombe Society

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After-school Nurture group (4-12 years) 3.30-5.30 at Mycenae House

Wednesdays: Preschool 9.30 -11.30 (2-6 years)
Baby Montessori 1.30-2.30 (pregnant -1 year)

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