Transport for London has now launched yet another new consultation – this time on proposals for a new Silvertown Tunnel to ease traffic flows across the river. If you want a copy of the consultation leaflet, ring 0343 222 1234. The consultation runs until 19th December.

The argument for another tunnel seems very compelling. On a normal day, it can take half an hour or even more to get through the Blackwall Tunnel during peak times. If there is hold up, such as an accident, or a lorry that is too high, the result can be disastrous, with huge knock-on effects for the whole area. TfL claims that in one recent year alone, there have been 1100 such incidents, causing significant disruption, from Stratford to Eltham, sometimes lasting for hours.

A second tunnel would help to mitigate the results of such situations. And, with the projected increase in road traffic – and the ever-increasing population of London – TfL reckon that the current situation will certainly get worse unless some action is taken.

A no-brainer then?

Well, no, not at least, not according to a local campaigning group. None to the Silvertown Tunnel (NOST) which is certainly against the scheme.

"Once again, Transport for London is pushing its toxic tunnel with no evidence to back up its wild claims that it will reduce traffic congestion or boost the economy," says NOST's Darryl Chamberlain. "TfL and the mayor think this is a done deal: well fight this mad plan all the way."

Traffic charges

The cost of the scheme (£765 million) would be funded by a toll – to use either of the tunnels. The cost of passing through the tunnels would be about the same as those for the Dartford crossing. However, toll charges might deter drivers from using the tunnels, so that traffic on both sides of the river would then experience much heavier traffic.

Congestion

Darryl Chamberlain argues also that TfL claims that the A102 are horrendous in rush hours. There is already plenty of evidence to show that the A102 – an accident, and a worse queue, and worse congestion – would make life miserable for residents on both sides of the Thames.

Air pollution

"Air pollution is a killer north and south of the river," argues Darryl. The problem of air pollution is serious. TfL warned that London is facing fines from the EU for exceeding air pollution limits, and pointed out that legislation dating back to 2011 made London boroughs – not the government – responsible for any fines that would be imposed.

STOP PRESS:
The Westcombe Society is hosting a Public Meeting at 7.30 pm on Wed Dec 3rd in Mycenae House to discuss the issues.

Christmas Nativity

Last year, St John’s Church mounted a Christmas Nativity with over 700 members of the local community either taking part or watching. By popular demand, we are putting it on again this year – on Sat 13th Dec at 3.00pm. It’s very much an event for the local community. Three local school choirs are singing, local traders and residents are some of the actors, and we even have a real donkey plus three sheep from Woodland’s Farm in Shooters Hill...

We start at 3.00pm outside St John’s church with the beginning of the Christmas story. Like the three wise men (or the three Kings) we then follow a “star” to the British Pub. The choir will sing at each stop.

As we arrive at the Oak, the current landlord will come out to let us know there is no room in the inn, just as it occurred in Bethlehem. We then process to the Blackheath Library, and tell more of the story, as angels, shepherds and kings appear on the balconies above the shops.

Finally, we process back to the church – and there, alleluia! – is a stable scene with a live Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus...

The whole event lasts about an hour: a wonderful way of ushering in the Christmas season. Children especially are warmly welcome to come dressed up as an angel, king, sheep etc.

Jane Beesewitherick
Letters to the editor

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

From: Marilyn Little
Westcombe Hill
Our editor asked me about my own experience of the Tall Ships festival, which I attended with a friend. [See also page 6.]

We noted that until you were close to the entrance there was little evidence of the event in terms of noise, although the World Wide Stage rose in full swing. We were there, and I have to confess I was wondering what we were going to do till the time the Main Stage came into action at 3.30pm but I wasn’t worried. After a quick tour of the site which included a very popular Fan Factory for children, it was obvious that this was a day of fun.

There were many young families who were enjoying the various activities together. We decided on a cookery demo and were delighted and access to the many Health and Well Being agencies that maintain a presence in our centre.

Our centre is funded by Greenwich, with more than those that access our services. Since 2009, residents of Greenwich have been volunteering in our night shelter and cooking and delivering the evening meal. At first, the cooks were members of the congregation of St Alfege’s, but now other volunteers such as St John’s Blackheath and Greenwich Vineyard are involved, as well as residents of other faiths or for no religious reasons.

A team of about 20 volunteers cooks for the night shelter. They welcome guests in the evening, as well as St John’s, and the facility has recently been purchased by Woolwich Mission to help to extend our volunteer co-ordinator’s role throughout the year.

Many people in Greenwich donate to us, or work as volunteers or fund-raisers. For example, our current Westcombe Park team were living in Greenwich when we first started up the project. They were very well received by their fans.

Many supporters live in Westcombe Park, as does our Dorset Centre Manager. We have recently rechargeable batteries which can be exchanged for the latest technology.

This Westcombe Society Christmas Card, measuring 8" x 6" (A5) has been reprinted by popular demand. Profits from the sale will be donated to charity. The price of the card is £4.90 for a pack of 5 large cards, with envelopes, bearing the message “With Season’s Greetings”.

The Westcombe News Readers’ Committee
The Westcombe News

The Westcombe News

Westcombe News December 2014/January 2015

The Westcombe Society’s Charity Card

On behalf of the many Health and Well Being agencies that

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December 3rd saw the official opening of both sites of the newly re-built and refurbished John Roan School, already heralded in the BNY in October this year. The ribbon at the Maze Hill site – a Grade II listed building – was cut by 90-year-old Alan Weir, who first went to the school in 1937.

The plaque celebrating the opening was unveiled by Baroness Estelle Morris, the former Labour government’s Education Secretary. Also in attendance were Nick Raynsford MP, and the Chair of the Old Roan Association, Hilary Haslan.

Among some distinguished old boys of the school present were broadcasters Steve Rider and Asad Ahmad, who, along with Alan Weir, buried a time capsule – not to be opened until the year 2077, the 400th anniversary of the school.

The headmaster Des Malone, said it was a landmark moment for the school, with outstanding buildings fit for the 21st century. “We are all immensely proud to be part of the continuing history of our very special school.”

Both sites have wireless technology for computer-aided learning, the attendance were Nick Raynsford MP, the Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Mick Hayes, and the Chair of the Old Roan Association, Hilary Haslan. Among some distinguished old boys of the school present were broadcasters Steve Rider and Asad Ahmad, who, along with Alan Weir, buried a time capsule – not to be opened until the year 2077, the 400th anniversary of the school.

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A recent farewell party, Age Exchange said goodbye, and thank you, to Sir Ian Mills, OBE, the outgoing Chair of Age Exchange, the UK’s leading reminiscence charity. The charity uses memories and arts to bring people together, to make their lives better, to learn from and value each other and to build stronger families and communities.

It provides training to help NHS staff transform the treatment of older people, particularly Alzheimer’s and dementia sufferers. It was originally founded by Pam Schweitzer, MBE. Under Sir Ian’s leadership, it has also become a public library operated mostly by volunteers, and a thriving community hub in Blackheath Village.

In a final address, Sir Steve Bullock praised Sir Ian Mills for his dedication and energy, and his “can do” approach. He had demonstrated great powers of leadership, and astonishing fund-raising skills.

In his farewell speech, Sir Ian thanked all the staff at Age Exchange, particularly Suzanne Lockett, and the many friends of Age Exchange who had done so much to support the project. He wished his successor, Sir kunah, Jacob, and Rebecca Powell well as they carried the operation forward.

**Silvertown Tunnel Consultation (cont from page 1)**

Many readers may have felt bemused by the campaign to “Keep the Green” in Creek Road spearheaded by Edward Hill. Surely, a sound hope?

It now appears that the alley from Creek Road was “inadvertently included in Land Title 929946.” The BNY now learns that, after a detailed investigation by the Land Registry, and on the basis of legal advice from Planning Aid For London, “Keep the Green” has now inserted a hoarding access door to Greenwich Green. This is to enable the public to enter where a strip of land across the site is not owned by Family Mosaic. A big headache for Family Mosaic, which plans to build on the site, including affordable housing.

You can visit Made In Greenwich (324 Creek Road) to check the latest situation, and to pick up the key if you want to use the door to the Commons.

In November, five black sheep were placed in a pen at the site in a gesture of protest. Activist Edward Hill tweeted: “City Farm on Greenwich Green? Last week 5 beautiful Hebrides sheep Graeme & 4 lambs. All safe & back home now” @edhill85

**Train timetable changes**

Train services were not supposed to be changed radically until 15th January. As it turns out, Southeastern now tell us that some alterations are taking place in December. From December 22nd - 24th, evening peak trains to Charing Cross will not stop at London Bridge between 07.54 and 09.01.
Giving a book for Christmas? Here are some suggestions.

Grey Daggers and Minotaurs in Greenwich Park - Memoirs of a London Schoolboy
Naturalist in the 1940s by John F Burton
Grey Daggers and Minotaurs is based on extracts from the author’s diaries he wrote as a schoolboy in the 1940s. Although Greenwich Park features strongly, there are numerous accounts of other sites he visited in South London. John Burton’s observations of nature (particularly birds, plants, and butterflies) form the bulk of the book, but there’s plenty for other readers, such as those who are interested in Charlton Athletic’s heyday.

Anybody interested in life in the 1940s is also well-served. For example, there is a hair-raising account of the author’s narrow escape from a Nazi bomb in Greenwich Park, and the tragic loss of his friend in Charlton who sadly wasn’t so lucky. These reports are all the more poignant to readers who know well the places he refers to.

He also gives his account of conversations with German prisoners of war who knew well the places he refers to.

There’s also a strong account of an escape from a Nazi bomb in Greenwich Park and an account of one of the luckier groups of POWs in that area, even befriending one man and surreptitiously passing him chocolate bars!

Burton uses the military in the forties, and the author recounts how this actually helped wildlife to survive, as the trampling feet of casual visitors were much reduced. Back then several pairs of Skylarks, Yellow Wagtails and even Wheatears nested on the open Heath, something difficult to imagine these days.

The author’s passion for wildlife comes across vividly, enhanced by his own diary illustrations and grainy photographs. Burton gives lively descriptions of other sights that seem incredible to those of us who know the area today - a Sand Martin colony in Charlton, Tree Sparrows in Greenwich Park and Redshanks and Lapwings nesting on Plumstead Marshes (lost when Thamesmead was created). Burton also comments about our increasing disconnection from nature, but suggests that Greenwich Park is in many ways better for wildlife today – as is the Thames which holds more wetland birds and fish than for a very long time indeed.

...we will never see another like him ...

The level of research in this book is a vital piece of the Bobby Moore story. Also featured are other notable Hammers – Brookings, Lyall, Peters, Redknapp, Best... the list goes on.

When I set out on the journey,’ says Tim, ‘I knew that Bobby Moore’s 89 West Ham team mates were out there somewhere but it has been quite a challenge finding and interviewing them.”

A real labour of love ...

available at a discounted price of £20 (opr £25) to readers of the WN. Tim welcomes anyone to collect in person on 11th December at Westcombe Hill Blackheath, London SE3 7EH. Or, send a cheque to Tim Crane include £3 UK p&p. Paypal/ credit card payments can be made via www.bobbymoore89.co.uk

The Inspection team commented that the governance was also excellent and that the school has itself won over the surrounding of Wimbledon than with the buzzing neighbourhoods of Greenwich.

Yet if you head towards the edge of Blackheath you’ll be assailed by this colour scheme as it makes up the uniform of one of London’s most successful Primary schools.

The Pointer School in Stratheden Road was visited by a team from the Independent Schools Inspectorate just as the children got back to work this Autumn. A team of four carried out a vigorous scrutiny of everything that goes on in the school, and awarded top marks in every single category.

As one of the team members who had to work through the four days of investigations, I can confirm that it can be a daunting prospect. And once it was over many staff felt like half term couldn’t come soon enough!

The inspectors split themselves between the two impressive buildings as they travelled through a mountain of paperwork, visited a host of lessons and interviewed staff, pupils and parents to find out what we all thought of the school. Exam results were checked and student’s work was examined.

The inspection team commented that pupils’ achievement in class and activities at Pointers is excellent; attainment is

The Spectacular Tale of Peter Rabbit

Emma Thompson and Peter Rabbit, the nation’s favourite actress and rabbit, are back in an adventure of SPECTACULAR proportions ...

It was high summer in the local village, and a travelling fun-fair had arrived ...

Peter Rabbit and Benjamin were forbidden to attend. But even the best-behaved rabbit can’t keep away from a fun-fair, and Peter is far from being the best-behaved rabbit. With Benjamin at his side, Peter sneaks into the fair where a roller-coaster ride of an adventure begins ...

Amid the crowds, Peter finds himself scooped up by a rather grumpy little girl and, separated from his cousin, he is helpless and very afraid. It takes the determined bravery of Benjamin to rescue Peter from the frightening hurly-burly of shouting stall-holders and whirling rides. The book is beautifully illustrated by Eleni Taylor.

Discover Emma Thompson’s other Peter Rabbit adventures: The Further Tale of Peter Rabbit and The Christmas Tale of Peter Rabbit

In another issue on local schools, STEVE GARVEY looks at The Pointer School

The Pointer School in Stratheden Road was established in 1950 and comprises 341 pupils from age 3 to 11.

The school ... it can be a daunting prospect. And once it was over many staff felt like half term couldn’t come soon enough!

The inspection team commented that pupils’ achievement in class and activities at Pointers is excellent; attainment is

...just the place to let off high spirits. But how did that hula-hoop get up that tree?

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FOCUS ON GREENWICH

Music and Painting

We are spoilt for choice this winter! GSFAS’s sister organisation, the Blackheath Decorative and Fine Arts Society is hosting another very interesting event on January 22nd. Peter Medhurst’s lecture, Paintings Inspired by Music and Music Inspired by Painting spans centuries of cross fertilisation in the arts, bringing together the music of Martini with the frescoes of Piero della Francesca and even Mondrian’s Broadway Boogie Woogie with the piano playing of Albert Ammons.

Peter Medhurst’s work as singer, pianist and lecturer-curatorial has taken him all over the world: in the last few years he has toured New Zealand, Australia (twice) and South Africa (four times), and made frequent tours in Europe with performances in Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, Salzburg.

The lecture on British Architecture Now

Greenwich Decorative and Fine Arts Society held meetings at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich on the second Monday evening of every month at 8.00 pm (except in April and August). On December 9th, Anthea Streeter gives a talk on the state of British architecture today. Architecture has been experiencing an unprecedented period of vibrancy and international recognition. The variety of new buildings designed by British architects in the UK and abroad is putting the country at the forefront of architectural innovation.

The lecture on British Architecture Now is at 8.00 pm on Monday Dec. 8th at the Old Royal Naval College.

Did OnBlackheath pull it off?

As part of the licence conditions, a meeting took place to review the OnBlackheath event. MARILYN LITTLE summarises proceedings

The meeting was attended by three members of the production team, Clr Kevin Bonavia, and around 25 residents. The organisation were happy with the event. Their target of 25,000 a year was met and the majority of the tickets had been sold to people living in SE postcodes. Most attending had either walked to the event or taken public transport. 13,000 attended on Saturday and 8,000 on Sunday.

A review with Lewisham Council, stakeholders and the emergency services had revealed no issues or incidents. All the conditions imposed were met. There was no visible damage to the health and safety; there were no contingency plans had the weather been wet.

The Concert has been nominated in five categories of UK Festivals and the organis- ers had supported the Beyond Blackheath Beach at the Conservatoire (16,000 users) and the Trestle Food (banks). The main issues addressed at the meeting were noise, transport and sitting.

There had been no issues with the Main Stage. Organisers had noted that complaints made in respect of Stage 2 were a result of the speakers facing back- wards. This would be corrected for 2015. A number of residents from the Orchard area were very concerned about the noise and asked if the siting of the venue could be changed to the centre of the huth.

There were also concerns expressed regarding the removal of the bus service. The bus service had to be re-routed for health and safety reasons due to the nature of the construction. A replacement shuttle service had been in operation but not many people were aware of it. The organisation also recognise the need for a footpath towards Lewisham and this will be facilitated next year.

The organisations admitted that their communication to local groups and residents was late and their website was not up to speed, mainly due to unexpected conditions being raised. This will be addressed in time for next year’s event.

The current Licensing Act licence that OnBlackheath have relates to the siting (near the TA building) and timing of the event (not on a Sunday in September). There have to be compelling reasons for revoking this licence and one of the reasons for the site chosen was its proximity to Lewisham station.

LBC decide permission for the event to be held and is guided by the Events Policy and advice from the BWJP (Blackheath Joint Working Party). For instance the number of members of the event operation was both reduced for this year’s concert.

The meeting finished with a question and answer session chaired by Kevin Bonavia. One question could not be answered by those present, and that was about the finances of the event.

The Blackheath Society has carried out a survey and recorded ‘overall satisfaction but strong local opposition.’ It can be read on their website www.blackheath.org

The December Show in The Greenwich Gallery is a bumper display both of original art works and prints by Peter Kent – including his unique depictions of both past and present celebratory events. Peter is a much acclaimed marine and topographical artist whose work is immediately recognisable. Peter’s artistic approach and style is unique to him: his pen drawings are full of historical and personal anecdotal content, with details packed out in colour wash. The whole is often viewed from a specific aerial angle for maximum effect and detail. You can meet the artist: Linear House, Peaton Place, SE3 8RR 4th - 20th Dec. 09.00 - 17.30. Weekend: 12.00 - 16.00 Tel 020 8465 5986

British Architecture Now
Scenes from the Christmas Bazaar

The Grove Singers added Christmas cheer as they sang under the Christmas Tree. We are grateful to Westcombe and Collins Cleaners for their continued sponsorship of the Christmas Tree.

The Christmas Bazaar was a great success, though thanks to the weather we didn’t have quite the same numbers as last year. Our stall-holders reported that they did well – no surprises there, as this was the perfect time for buying Christmas gifts. Many thanks, as always, to all those who helped out in so many different ways. We will be sending a big fat cheque to our Charity of the Year, the 999 Club.

Many thanks to the stalwart team of volunteers who added culinary delights to the proceedings. Mmm! That soup looks (and smells!) DEE-ILIC-ious!

The Pointer School (Blackheath)

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- Christian Evangelical in ethos
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- Large variety of outdoor and PE activities
- The Brazilian Kickers – teaching football the Brazilian way
- Holiday Club (Christmas, Easter, Summer and half-term)

The Pointer School
(Blackheath)

ABOVE: The stalls did a roaring trade. Meanwhile, children were kept busy while they waited for the Punch & Judy show.

ABOVE: Face-painting was very popular.

LEFT: But some chose to do their own thing.

ABOVE: Volunteers helped out with some Ho-Hoing with Santa!

PHOTOS: Neville Grant

The Grove Singers added Christmas cheer as they sang under the Christmas Tree. We are grateful to Westcombe and Collins Cleaners for their continued sponsorship of the Christmas Tree.

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