



Westcombe NEWS



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May 2015 Issue 4

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

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

The Mad Hatter meets the Mental Health Trust

PHOTOS:
NG Photo Agency



Among those who sportingly dressed up for the Mad Hatters Tea Party were Toni Hale (the Queen of Hearts) who was joined by Alice, the Cheshire Cat, and the White Rabbit. Of course, too, no party could be complete without a Mad Hatter!

The Mental Health Activity Trust set up by Tony Hale celebrated their shop's first birthday in March with a Mad Hatters Tea Party at the shop in Delacourt Road. The shop sells quality clothes and homeware.

Shop staff and volunteers dressed up as characters from the surreal Alice in Wonderland movie by Tim Burton, based on the original novel by Lewis Carroll, and invited those attending to talk openly about mental health. There were lots of activities for children and adults alike, and everyone enjoyed the fantastic costumes.

"It was a great day out full of entertainment and great activities enjoyed by all, everyone looked great in their costumes too. There was lots of laughter, just what we needed. More importantly it raises awareness about mental ill health in its fight to stop stigma and discrimination."

Visitors enjoyed many activities, a pets' corner, and lots of food and drink. Visitors were tempted by "Eat Me" cakes and "Drink me" drinks, though there is no record of anyone growing huge or tiny!

The idea was to raise funds – and to raise the profile of the MHA. Everyone much enjoyed identifying the different characters – the make-up was skilfully created by Stefanie Cayless. The costumes worn were created by volunteers entirely

On sale were lots of yummie biscuits and cakes, many bearing the tempting message "Eat me" and "Drink me".

The Jack of Hearts was also around somewhere, too, but typical male, totally failed to make any tarts. See also p. 4.



An eggcellent time was had by all

Despite a cloudy day, a good time was had by all at the Westcombe Society's Annual Easter Egg Hunt in Mycenae Gardens. We had nearly a hundred intrepid hunters and many mini - eggs and creme eggs were exchanged for those found in the gardens. There were some lovely entries for the best Easter Basket – the winner won a tin of sweets. The winner of the best Easter bonnet also won an Easter Egg full of jellies. There was a cake stall and a tombola as well as craft activities. Many thanks to Emily, Jody and Laura for organising the event.



PHOTOS: Simon Nicholls

Winners of civic awards

The Royal Borough of Greenwich identified no fewer than 42 people representing all aspects of life in the borough as worthy winners in this year's Civic Awards. They were publicly honoured in the Civic Awards ceremony in March 2015 with presentations made by the mayor, Cllr Mick Hayes.

While it is invidious to single out any of the very worthy winners, the *WN* would like to congratulate in particular:

* Terry Powley, Chair of the Greenwich Parks Forum for his work in helping to safeguard the future of Greenwich's much-valued parks and open spaces.

* Royal Museums Greenwich and Dr Kevin Fewster for their contribution to Economic Prosperity with their commitment to offering jobs and work trials placement to unemployed people.

* South East London Community Energy, for setting up a cooperatively-owned energy company, which was highlighted in April's *WN*.

* Severndroog Castle Building Preservation Trust, for restoring the Grade II listed building.

* The Best Beginnings Midwifery Team, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The Westcombe Society

The Annual General Meeting of the Westcombe Society is at 7.30 pm on Friday May 22nd, at Blackheath High School for Girls (entrance from Vanbrugh Park.) All paid-up members of the society are invited to attend.

After the meeting, wine and cheese will be served.

The Agenda:

1. Minutes of last AGM
2. Matters arising.
3. Reports
4. Elections.
- 5 Any Other business
- 6 Talk by Joe Beale on local wildlife in the Westcombe Park area.

Jan Barnett
Hon. Sec.



Election news



Hustings

Leaflets announcing election hustings have been circulating widely in our area. In case the word is unfamiliar:

"Hustings, n. A place where political campaign speeches are made" Invariably, they involve candidates having to answer questions from the audience.

Nine of these events took place in Greenwich during April, most of them in and around our area.

The first took place on 15th April, in Mycenae House, organised by Mycenae House and Blackheath & Greenwich United Nations Association. The candidates in attendance



PHOTO: Mark Johnson-Brown

were: Ryan Acty (UKIP), Abbey Akinoshun (Green Party) Lynne Chamberlain (Trade Unionist & Socialist Coalition), Matt Hartley (Conservative) and Matthew Pennycook (Labour). Tim Holder (Lib. Dem) was not able to be present, and Simon Waddington, a candidate for Eltham, stood in for him. Neville Grant of UNA chaired the meeting, which was very

lively, and very well-attended. Questions ranged from local issues – the NHS, education, housing, transport, and pollution, to wider issues – the renewal of Trident, human rights, defence, climate change, & trade (TTIP).

Dogged campaigning

Two local councillors had their fingers burnt, or rather bitten, by dogs, while on the campaign trail. On April 1st., Cllr John Hills, was leafleting in support of Spencer Drury, when he was bitten quite badly by a Jack Russell. Cllr John Fahy was also bitten. He commented: "Maybe I should carry a tin of Pal around with me."

COMMUNITY NEWS

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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Palm Sunday at St George's



PHOTO
Judith Easthaugh

Local residents listening to the Archers on the morning of Palm Sunday were startled by the sound of bagpipes. Was this part of the Scottish Nationalists' election campaign? No, it was the congregation of St George's on a brief walkabout, led by the new vicar Tim Yeager (featured in April's *W/N*), who impressed all by his musical skills playing the processional hymn. The walkabout in Kirkside Road and Glenluce Road commemorated the entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

It's a dog's life...

ED MAYO

RIGHT: Liza Long won the 'Owner-Dog Look-Alike' Prize



PHOTOS:
Ed Mayo

At your heart out, Crufts! Dogs and dog owners from across the neighbourhood converged on the East Greenwich Pleasaunce on Sunday March 22nd for a local Crufts-style Dog Show.

The Pleasaunce is a public park and a naval cemetery along the north side of the railway line between Maze Hill and Westcombe Park: a welcome green haven of rest and peace.

There, also, is a very popular cafe, Pistachios in the Park, which helps with the Friends of East Greenwich Pleasaunce to organise a regular programme of community events.

Alongside the congregation of terriers, hounds, poodles and pooches for the Dog Show, around fifty strong, was also a set of stalls. These included a wide variety of 'good jumble', including high quality second-hand clothes. For the children, there were two Easter Egg hunts for children under and over five.

The categories for the dog winners ranged from 'best dressed dog' to 'best tricks' and 'biggest smile'.

The entries included Stewie, a Yorkie-poo, who is the star of the recent BBC series 'Six Puppies and Us' and the only

dog present with his own social media Twitter feed. A pop-up stall from the Blackheath Veterinary Service helped to keep the interest of all the dogs with complimentary treats.

For one Sunday at least, a dog's life in East Greenwich appeared to be a very happy one.

BELOW: Lily Plank picks up a prize in the 'Best Legs' category



Letters to the editor

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

From: Richard Feeney Hardy Road

In March's *W/N*, you report that the project to expand London City Airport was given the go-ahead, despite more than 1,000 objections.

It was implied that aircraft heard overhead at 5am was due to London City airport. However:

* aircraft to/from City Airport don't fly over Westcombe Park

* in the morning, the first departures from/

arrivals to City Airport aren't until 6.30am

* the project to expand City Airport hasn't happened – and in any case:

* the expansion project has recently been turned down by the Mayor of London.

I believe, as P M Rogers observes in April's issue, that the aircraft heard overhead at 5.00am would have been landing at Heathrow airport. The first planes of the day land at 4.30 am and would be flying over Westcombe Park a few minutes earlier.

ED: Thanks for this correction, Richard. The information that we had was correct at the time of printing. So we have to thank Boris for vetoing the City Airport plans.

From: Trevor Allman Coleraine Road

I read with interest the vacuous platitudes from Abbey Akinoshun (Green Party Candidate for Greenwich & Woolwich) regarding the "No Silvertown Tunnel" campaign (*Westcombe News*, April Edition).

Given neither he nor James Parker (Green Party candidate for Eltham) have been involved in any activity pertaining to the campaign in the two years it has been running, I am not sure how Mr Akinoshun thinks he is placed to pass any comments on how it has been organised, for better or for worse. He doesn't have a great record of political campaigning.

As a Greenwich Green Party activist for 11 years I know we had never heard of him before, as he had never attended a Greenwich Green Party meeting, had a zero record of any Green Party activity and seemingly no interest in green concerns before becoming a candidate.

Also in the April edition of the *Westcombe News* was a letter from Matt Hartley. Whilst the local Labour Party, who control Greenwich

Council, are very easy targets for criticism, I think it was a bit ripe for him to criticise Labour Party candidate Matt Pennycook, regarding the Council's record on standing up to the rampant and seemingly uncontrolled developments in the borough and the lack of affordable housing.

Isn't it Mr Hartley's party that has passed legislation to stack the cards so much in favour of developers that even if a council opposes a development, they are odds-on to lose any appeal made to the Secretary of State?

And as for "affordable housing", we have to ask "affordable for whom?" What we urgently need is rented social housing for working class people, now that Thatcher's "Property owning democracy" rhetoric has been totally exposed as the myth that many of us always knew it was.

From: Terry Scales Greenwich

Quite rightly the housing crisis has become a major public concern but this problem is really insoluble. The more houses you build, in any city, the more people outside flood in. There is also the expanding birth rate encouraged by grant incentives to produce larger families.

There is however one modest answer for smaller families and single people. In every high street all over the country there are millions of empty rooms above shops. The government should encourage shop-owners to turn these spaces into liveable units – rather than threatening greenfield sites. This could be a simple but easily realised solution.

From: R. G. Marston Coleraine Road

Some years ago, three local residents started to enliven the platform for trains to town at Westcombe Park Station by doing some guerilla gardening on the long flower bed on the south side of the platform.

Due to an unfortunate combination of circumstances – two left the area, and old age and arthritis is taking its toll – a new injection of enthusiasts is urgently required.

No bureaucracy or expense is required, so if anyone is interested please ring R.G. Marston on 020 8858 0720 for more information and/or suggestions.

From: Janet Sweet

In April's *Westcombe News* you ask whether we should spend our money on a tall Ships Festival, Maryon Park and its animals, or helping low income families cope with Council tax.

My vote is for the animals. The Tall Ships Festival is for only a short while, one year's spend on this would keep the Maryon Wilson Animal Park open and thriving for years. When the animal park is safe, then maybe think about a regatta next year.

Tony Eriksson

Mary Andrews writes: Tony Eriksson, who was my cousin, died on March 11th. He had been ill for some time, and I have been visiting him in hospital. I knew him well as a child, less well recently, and only now am discovering how much he contributed to his local area. Here are a few details about his life.

He was born in Greenwich on 24th August 1935. His mother had grown up in the family house in Humber Road, and in fact, Tony himself lived most of his life there. He was out of London during the war, enjoying rural tranquility in Berkshire until about 1946. He then lived with his parents in 110 Humber Road. He was a creative artist from very early on, attended Camberwell School of Art, and became an art director and an illustrator, also a great landscape painter in both water colour and oils.

After a brief stay in a London flat, he moved back into Humber Road and stayed there for the rest of his life, caring for his mother. He loved this area – Greenwich Park, Westcombe Park and the Thames towpath, all of which were his cycling haunts. He contributed to the *W/N* about local developments and any animal adventures. He was a huge lover of all animals. He was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable member of the local community of Humber Road and Westcombe Park, and a warm and welcoming neighbour.

He suffered a stroke just before Christmas and spent most of the time since then in hospital. He died peacefully on 11th March.



All go in the park

May is a busy time in Greenwich Park. On the 16th there is the Battle of the Boroughs - a 10 kilometre run. Then on 24th there is the Royal Mail 10 kilometre run. Not forgetting the Run for Diabetes on 13th June.

If you are tired of running you might with luck hitch a lift on the London to Brighton Classic Car event, which starts in Greenwich Park on May 31st. Oh joy, 300 classic cars! Motorists beware.

Look out for the real treat in store: the Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band is back in the Observatory Garden, Greenwich Park, at 1pm on Sunday 21 June, for their mid-summer jazz concert. This is a marvellous event for all the family, organised by the



Friends of the Park. Gates open from noon. Good idea to bring a picnic! But there is also a bar, run by Davy's of Greenwich, and the Pavilion Cafe is running a stall serving ice cream, food and soft drinks. **Tickets: £5 for adults (£7 on the gate). Under 16s free. Send cheques to "Friends of Greenwich Park", 52 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 9LT. For further information, phone 020 8853 2150 or email cnbevan@hotmail.com.**

Blackheath High Girls Turn 'CSI' Detectives

CORRIE-JANE RAFFERTY

Year 5 pupils from Blackheath High School's Junior School spent a whole morning immersed in a taster session of science at the Senior School, in an exciting 'CSI' (Crime Scene Investigators) themed experience, designed to develop their understanding of science and test their problem-solving skills.

On arrival at Blackheath High's Senior School, the girls were told that a serious robbery had taken place, and that they would be required as Crime Scene Investigators to help solve the crime...

Throughout the morning, the girls took part in Biology, Chemistry and Physics

sessions, facilitated by the Senior School's Science Department staff, to deduce clues, determine details and draw conclusions from their investigations.

Their activities included using microscopes to analyse materials and fibres; analysing unknown powders; testing for elements to identify substances; using UV light, analysing footprints and assessing the reliability of eyewitness statements.

At the end of the morning, the pupils compared their evidence, and discussed their findings. The event was deemed a great success – a real eye -opener for how exciting science can be!

Beware of rogue traders

Ever had someone turn up on your door step offering to put "spare" gravel on your drive, at a "cut price." They often say things like "I've been doing a job, and I've got some gravel left over, so I can let you have it really cheap."

Another ploy is to say that they noticed that your roof is badly in need of repair, and they can fix it, cheap . . . Unsolicited visits of this kind can be 'doggy, squire' ...

Royal Greenwich Trading Standards operate a Neighbourhood Response Team. Two Trading Standards Officers will come out to investigate concerns or information from residents about people calling door to door or possible rogue builders.

If you see anyone in your neighbourhood who is working on a property about whom you have concerns, please contact the borough Trading Standards team on 0208 921 8223.

Similarly, if you think that the work looks substandard or the workers have vans with no trader details on them or residents are being encouraged to pay in cash.

Many of the rogue traders visiting our area are part of organised gangs who prey on the most vulnerable residents; they often also return to visit these residents again and again.

The council are part of a What Trader? scheme run by Siteon, a software company, which designs and hosts a number of sites concerned with business and trade. One of these is the Trader Register. Traders who register on the scheme have been vetted by Trading Standards. Participating traders benefit as it gives them the opportunity to have the quality of their work recognised as it is based on customer feedback.

Rather like Tripadvisor, feedback is sought from clients about the standards of work and the punctuality and reliability of traders on the scheme and they are given a star-rating. The scheme applies to all domestic building works and related home improvement services carried out in Royal Borough of Greenwich.

For details of traders on the scheme please contact us on 0208 921 8223.

Need a reliable trader? Visit Royal Greenwich's 'What Trader' Scheme: www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/reliabletrader website

MAY 2015

Mycenae House and Gardens

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What We Should Have Been Taught At Primary School

Ian Bruton-Simmonds

Revised International Edition

Meet the man who loves animals . . . (even those that aren't very lovable)

Local resident Ray O'Neill is a man with a mission. In his view, all animals are lovable – but at present society thinks that some are more lovable than others.

To prove his point, wearing his Spider-man Vest, he brought along to Toni Hart's Mad Hatters Tea Party at the MHA shop a selection of his favourite pets, including two beautiful black rabbits (very cuddly), a bearded dragon, (rather less cuddly), and, least cuddly of all, two huge hairy spiders from Chile.

Bearded dragons originate from central Australia. Ray's dragon is called Puff (as in Puff the Magic Dragon, remember him?) and is largely vegetarian, though he does love crickets. Ray brought some along with him in a see-through box. ("When you hold that, people on buses quickly move seats!" he grinned.)

He calls the spiders Tara and Katara – huge hairy, but wholly harmless, he said.



To prove how harmless they are, Ray invited people to give the lovely furry creatures a little cuddle. The Queen of Hearts seemed totally unfazed by them!

Hervey Road site saved

The Friends of Hervey Road have long been campaigning to preserve the London Marathon Playing Field in Hervey Road – and their efforts have at last paid off.

London Marathon Playing Field in Hervey Road is now protected for ever through national charity Fields in Trust, and The Royal Borough of Greenwich, in partnership with the Friends of Hervey Road. Plans to restore the playing field by the summer of 2016 are in train.

Fields in Trust is a national charity that works to protect and improve outdoor recreational spaces in partnership with local owners. Spaces are protected by a legal document which means the site is protected in perpetuity.

The much-loved site in Hervey Road

St George's

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has been used since 1890 by the local community for various sports activities, including tennis, football, rugby, athletics, cricket, hockey and bowls.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich and its partners have delivered investment across a variety of outdoor facilities including Sutcliffe Park which is currently undergoing a significant transformation with a bid to make it into a top-class athletics facility. After a £4 million investment, Hornfair Park is now a multi-sports park with Charlton Lido, new changing facilities, a top-grade BMX race track and tennis facilities. Maryon Park next?

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FEATURES

Fine prints on show in the Halls

A big treat in Blackheath Halls in May, when two artists are exhibiting their work. Not to be missed!

Jane Lydbury, a long-time resident of Westcombe Park, trained at Camberwell in the University of the Arts in London. She has worked as a printmaker and is much respected as a book illustrator (she has done a lot of work for the Folio Society.)

Her inspiration is English and European literature, both contemporary and ancient and is under-pinned by an interest in the workings of the unconscious as expressed in myth and legend.

Jane Daniell is an artist printmaker based in London. Her work tends to be fantastical and she is influenced by her childhood reading, particularly illustrators such as Arthur Rackham, Aubrey Beardsley and Edmund Dulac.



Jane Lydbury's print *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*. 12 x 9 cm.

Jane explains that the print, above, is “deliberately ambiguous”, and was inspired by the poem by Andrew Marvell, “Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax” to give it its full title, written in about 1651.

Jane Lydbury and Jane Daniell's work is on show in the Cafe Bar in the Halls 10.00 - 5.00 from May 7th - May 31st.

Songs and sounds of praise at St George's

TIM YEAGER

If you live near St George's Church, at the corner of Glenluce and Kirkside, you may have been hearing some new sounds emanating from the church.

And it isn't just the bagpipes played by the vicar, Tim Yeager, mentioned on page 2 of this issue!

The church has also hired Trinity Laban graduate Joe Graves as its new Music Director. Joe has his degree in organ performance and choral music, and he has gone immediately to work organizing a new multi-age choir at St George's.

On Easter Sunday, the choir had its premier performance during the Easter liturgy, singing *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*, by J.S. Bach. This performance got rave reviews by the congregation.

The choir is open to all members of our Westcombe Park community. You do not have to be a member of St George's to sing

with us. Rehearsals are at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday, and the choir sings at the 11:00 a.m. service.

The organ postlude on Easter Sunday was equally uplifting, as the new Music Director performed a spirited voluntary by French Romantic composer Eugene Gigout.

Many in the neighbourhood will not be aware that the organ at St George's had originally been installed in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft at the Houses of Parliament. It was acquired by St George's when the chapel in Westminster installed a newer instrument in 1999.

So Sunday worshippers can expect to have their worship enhanced by a wide variety of new music in weeks to come!

If you are interested in singing with the choir, please contact Joe Graves at: joegraves@icloud.com



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John Payne

johnpayne.com

150 years of Alice in Wonderland



The Mental Health Trust's Mad Hatters' Tea Party in Delacourt Road featured on page 1 came out at an historic moment: 2015 sees the 150th Anniversary of the publication of *Alice in Wonderland*.

It was on a 'golden afternoon' in July 1862 that the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson told a fantastical tale to the young Alice Liddell and her sisters. The complete tale was not published until 1865 under Dodgson's now famous pen name: Lewis Carroll.

In the 150 years since then, his masterpiece has proved itself to be a truly timeless classic. It has been filmed several times – including Tim Burton's version that came out in 2010. It also featured in the Greenwich + Docklands International Festival in 2013.

Alice in Wonderland has appeared many times in a stage version. Last year, Sell-a-Door put on a production at Greenwich Theatre featuring Alice as a stropky teenager. Sample dialogue: “whatsapp: are you coming to the party tonight? Hashtag: who's coming, Facebook status: no I haven't been invited on the event page, Whatapp: sad face.”

But the production on the whole remained true to the original, the comedy achieved by anachronistic 21st Century urban argot.

Also in March, Greenwich Community College had an Open day during which the English department held an Alice-themed English class.*

The latest production to regail local audiences was in April this year in Blackheath Halls, when Booster Cushion Theatre presented an experimental version for four year-olds. This comical children's performance shows the fun to be had from playing with traditional tales and joining them together. The audience follow Alan as he tries to rescue his sister who has got stuck at a tea party. Alice has eaten so much that she's grown into a troll and is eating everything. Yes, purists would hate it – but the children loved it!

The Royal Mint is celebrating the anniversary with a spectacular stamp and medal cover, produced in conjunction with The Royal Mail. The *Alice in Wonderland* medal cover was issued on 5 March 2015, in time for World Book Day, and includes the Alice in Wonderland special stamps and a specially struck medal from The Royal Mint. Price: £14.95.

Nearer home, the Cutty Sark shop is selling a beautifully-crafted oval-shaped pocket watch necklace featuring a stunning illustration from *Alice in Wonderland*. A snip at £15.00. You'll never be late for tea again!

*** Greenwich Community College is participating in Adult Learners' Week in May, for more information, see /www.gcc.ac.uk/news-events/**

Greenwich Book Festival

The inaugural Greenwich Book Festival, organised by Dr Alex Pheby of the University of Greenwich with support from the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Old Royal Naval College, is happening amidst the baroque grandeur of the Greenwich world heritage site this May.

Victoria Hislop, Jon Ronson and the university's writer-in-residence Paul Ewen are amongst a host of writers to speak at the festival which runs from Friday 22nd – Sunday 24th May.

Family events, creative writing workshops, a dedicated festival shop and food stalls means there will be something for everyone at this river-side festival.

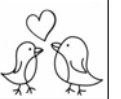
Local primary children will meet top author-illustrators including Axel Scheffler of *Gruffalo* fame and Sophy Henn, author of *Where, Bear?* during the borough-sponsored 'Schools' Day' and After-School Club on the Friday.

A full children's programme running through the weekend includes activity workshops, book-themed performances (spme curated by our own Ootie and the Bean) and events with authors including Kate Saunders (*Five Children on the Western Front*), and Pip Jones (*Squishy McFluff*) who will lead a workshop on imaginary pets.

Throughout the festival, University of Greenwich authors Alex Pheby, Emily Critchley and Cherry Smyth will be showcasing the creative work of the university's staff and students, and offering writing workshops for all ages.

For full programme details and booking go to: greenwichbookfest.com

The Essence of Love



Janet Sweet of the Alexandra Players told the *WN*: “Our February production was very popular, sold out for two of the performances and nearly sold out for the others, boosted by the very nice preview in the *WN* – our great local paper.

The next production is from May 27th – 29th and is Philip Ayckbourn's *The Essence of Love*.

No, not Sir Alan. It's a very jolly comedy, about a father and son and a mother and daughter, holidaying in Marrakech. They experiment with a love potion from a street trader, with interesting and not always intended results.

The author, a son of Sir Alan, is taking great interest in the production. He has sent his biography for inclusion in the programme and he hopes to be able to come if he can be in the area at the time.

The Essence of Love is on from Wed. May 27th to Saturday May 30th at the Alexandra Hall, Bramshot Avenue, SE7 at 8.00 pm
Tickets £9 (Concessions £8)
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WHAT'S ON

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THE ART AND SCIENCE OF EXPLORATION 1768 - 1780 In The Queen's House. See the Stubbs Kangaroo (and Dingo) saved by the public, and work of artists from all three of Captain Cook's voyages
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 28th May** **Theodora Clarke** - art historian and critic **Kandinsky** and the rise of abstraction Non-members £5
GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich **NEXT LECTURE: 11th. May** **Art and the Napoleonic Wars** : complementing a major exhibition to be held at the Royal Academy in Autumn 2015 marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 020 8852 7873 Non-members £8.00
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CHILDREN & FAMILY

BLACKHEATH HALLS
Sat 9th May 3.00 pm : RUMPELSTILTSKIN
Sat 30th May 3.00 pm A REAL MERMAID'S TALE
GREENWICH THEATRE
Tuesday, 12th - Sun 24th May AVENUE Q
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Monday, 25 - Wed 27th May THE CAT IN THE HAT Based on the much-loved book by Dr Seuss, this is a lively and engaging first theatre experience for young children.
Times: Mon, 1pm & 3pm Tue & Wed, 11am & 1pm Tickets: £13.50 Concessions: £8.50
Thu 28 May 2015 2.00 pm LITTLE HOWARD'S BIG SHOW FOR KIDS (The best kids' show we've seen at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival") Little Howard is the world's only live interactive animation. He's won so many awards and fantastic reviews and he's only just celebrated his 6th birthday (for the tenth year in a row)! Ticket prices: £13.50, Children £8.50



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THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Fri 22nd. May: AGM: 7.00 - 10.00 pm in the Centenary Room, Blackheath High School for Girls (Main entrance)
Sat 27th June Members' Evening
Fri 25th Sept Macmillan Biggest Coffee Morning
Sat 26th Sept Nearly New Sale
Sat 10th Oct. Chrysanthemum Tea
Fri 23rd Oct. Quiz Night
Please ring Joanne on 07709 571777 if you would like to help out on any of these events!

COMMUNITY

CANCER RESEARCH LUNCH
Thurs. May 7th. at The Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Row, Blackheath Prize draw & Raffle. To book, call Wendy on 8265 0335 by **Mon. 4th May.** £8.50.
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
12th May Anthony Cross. The Rise and Fall of Robert Cocking. Experimental Parachutist
Meeting at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3. Please use the station car park. Non members £1.
BLACKHEATH HALLS Box office 8463 0100
TEA DANCES: Sun 3rd. May 2.00 pm GREAT HALL Come and spend a magical afternoon in the friendly atmosphere of Blackheath Halls
Beats in the Bar Tues 5th & 1th May, Thursday 7th & 15th. by Trinity Laban students.
Spoken word events (inc a glass of wine):
Mon 11th May 7.30 ARNOLD WHITTALL on Britten's A Midsummer Nights's Dream £10.00
Wed 13th May 7.30 pm ESTHER CAVETT on Mozart's Idomeneo £10.00
Thurs 21st May 8.00 pm The LAUGHING BOY COMEDY CLUB
Wed 27th May 8.00 om Recital Room
KEN FOLLETT talks on his latest book in the Century Trilogy *The Edge of Eternity* Tickets: £10.00
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BARN DANCES Woodlands Farm is organising two Barn Dances this year, on Saturday 30 May and Saturday 20 June, 7.30 - 11.00pm. Live country music by Skinners Rats. Please bring your own food, drinks and glasses. Tickets £12 each. To book either event call the Farm Office on **020 8319 8900**
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon. & Thurs. 7.15 pm & on Wed. at 1.15 Tel. 8851 2609
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
GREENWICH MERIDIAN CHOIR If you are interested in joining the choir as a regular member, (rehearsals are Thursday evenings during term time), contact **Jean Valsler on 0208 8527548** or email brookjean@btinternet.com
GLOBAL FUSION MUSIC & ARTS Free workshops Fortnightly Tuesday & Friday evenings 7.30 - 8.30 at Mascalls Meeting Rooms off Victoria Way Charlton SE7 7TT: Tai Chi. Singing, Drumming, Writers' Group, African Dance! Info: 020 8858 9497
THE CLARENDON HOTEL, Montpelier Row, Blackheath Tel. 8318 4321 Jazz at the Row very Wednesday from 7.00 pm in the bar.
BLACKHEATH FLOWER ARRANGING SOCIETY Meets third Friday of the month in Mycenae House. In May an away day is planned. For information, please contact Siân Tribe: siancaroline@googlemail.com

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

AGE EXCHANGE

BOOK SALES: on the second Saturday every month (except August & December) 10.00 am - 4.00 pm.
LUNCHTIME CONCERTS: the last Wednesday of every month by Trinity Laban students. Free, but there is a retiring collection in aid of Age Exchange & Blackheath Village Library.

THEATRE

THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755
28th April - 2nd May Shakespeare's **TITUS ANDRONICUS**
Tues 5th - Wed 6th May **SPRING AWAKENING** [presented by the University of Greenwich]
Considered too shocking to be performed when it was first written in 1891, Spring Awakening shows what happens to young people when their parents & society conspire to keep them in the dark about sex.
Wed 6th May **LIVE CANON: Election Special**
On the eve of the election, join Live Canon for two thousand years of poetry exploring democracy in all its forms. With ballot-box poetry, suffragette verse and some newly penned poems written in the build up to the 2015 election, this is a celebration of what it means to vote.
Thurs. 7th - Sat 9th. May **SHOOTING WITH LIGHT** In 1934 a young German refugee flees to Paris and discovers the genius of photography...
Fri. 29th - Sun 31st May **THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY** Fresh from a West End run of The Trials of Oscar Wilde, European Arts Company returns with a new adaptation of the play

LONDON THEATRE 443 New Cross Road, Outer London, SE14 6TA (Near New Cross Station)
Box office 0208 694 1888
Tues 12th May to Sun 17th May 8pm (5pm Sun) £13 (members £5 for Tuesday performance)
Ibsen's A DOLLS HOUSE Nora has a secret that she needs to keep from her perfect family life ... This well known classic is a must see for theatre lovers.
Tues 26th - Fri 29th May 8pm **The South London Players** present **THE OVERCOAT** by Gogol
The 'Buster Keaton' version which was used to prove that a silent movie star could do serious acting will be performed live followed by a reading of the original short story by the cast Tickets **£10.50 (members £5)**
Weds 3rd June to Thurs 4th June 7.00pm - 10.00 pm & Sat 6th June 10am - 1pm
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3rd May, 3pm Tickets: £12/£8 "I've come to you Father, in faith, in unwavering faith that you will help me. I don't expect you to say anything. I only pray that you will show me the way."
12th - 30th May, 7:30 pm Henrik Ibsen's When We Dead Awaken "When we dead awaken.... We see that we have never lived." Written at the dawn of the 20th C, Ibsen's final play stares out at us with the feverishness of an artist looking death in the ...

BLACKHEATH HALLS
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FOLK FESTIVAL
Fri 15th May **EMILY SMITH** and her "new Scottish sound" performs in the recital room **£17.00 | £15.00 concs.**

Sat 17th May 8.00 pm **ALTAN** Old Irish songs, and reels and jigs **£18.00 | £16.00 concs.**
Sun. 17th May Folk Funday for all the family: folk from around the world **£5.00 - £25.00**
Further details from blackheathhalls.com

Sat 30th May 8.00 pm in the Great Hall:
THE MANFREDS Tickets: **£22.00**

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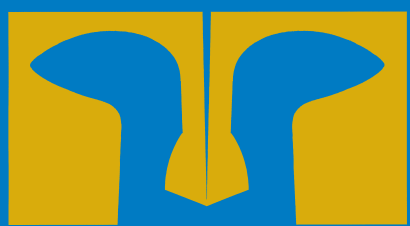
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MUSIC

BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel. 8463 0100
Fri 1st May 6.00 pm Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra play **R Strauss. Free, but ticketed.**
Fri 8th May **Mozart's THE MAGIC FLUTE** by Puzzlepiece Opera. Student-led opera company condenses work into 50 minute productions with piano. Great fun. **£8.00 | £5.00 concs.**
Sun 10th May. Blackheath Halls Orchestra end their fairy tale weekend with Rachmaninov's piano concerto 2. **£8.00 | £6.00 concs. £5.00 under 12s.:**
Sun. 10th May 11.00 am **Michael Bochmann, Deniz Gelenbe & Kirsty McClean (soprano)** perform **Mozart Brahms & Britten. £14.00 | £12.00**

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OPINION PAGE

Water – or money? – under the bridge . . .

I find it hard to avoid the feeling that in an age of austerity we have developed a very odd set of priorities: in this category I would place Trident, and HS2, though not everyone would agree with me.

But one vanity project stands out for those of us living in SE London: the Garden Bridge project linking Lambeth with Westminster.



The proposals put forward by an outfit called the Garden Bridge Trust for a garden bridge over the Thames – “a snip” at £60 million – has run into an outburst of anger and outrage. Two months ago the WN reported that the scheme has now been approved by both councils involved – Lambeth and Westminster Councils.

The project now faces a legal challenge in the high court mounted by Michael Ball, sometime head of the Waterloo Community Development Group, who claims that Lambeth Council wrongly granted planning consent.

What are his chances?

The bridge, the brainchild of designer Thomas Heatherwick and Joanna Lumley, was originally presented as a £60m project to be entirely funded by the private sector. However, the goal-posts have changed: it now has a budget of £175m and requires £60m of public funding (which George Osborn has already agreed to). Critics say that this is a misuse of public funds – and the money could have been spent on much-needed crossings in less privileged parts of the Thames – like Greenwich, for instance.

“A walk through woodlands”

Joanna Lumley claims that the bridge would improve the capital’s health by encouraging more people to walk from Waterloo to Temple, and on to Covent Garden and Fleet Street. She describes the project as “a chance to walk through woodlands”. Critics say this would involve felling 30 mature trees, and digging up the green space in Temple Gardens. So green space is being destroyed to make room for green space.

More details have slowly emerged: the estimated annual maintenance costs have gone from £2.5m to £3.5m, which neither Lambeth nor Westminster Councils have any interest in, or budget for, paying. Apparently, they are to be paid for by “pop-up type events” and “a discreet range of merchandise” and a fund-raising programme aimed at corporate members.

However, there are serious doubts about how sustainable such strategies will be in the long term. The world of corporate giving can be fickle. Critics argue that it is more than likely that public funds will end up footing the bill.

Messres Lumley and Heatherwick and the Garden Bridge Trust call the bridge a

place to “linger and enjoy the river and all of its attributes in a peaceful and tranquil environment” – but wait a moment: it also envisages 7.1 million visitors every year – these to be serviced by a very low LQ (Loo Quotient). In fact, the initial plans allow for no public loos.

Transport for London estimate that the football match-size crowds each end of the bridge could have a “pedestrian comfort level” of D – the second worst category meaning “very uncomfortable”.

“Thousands of local residents,” according to objectors, “will have their lives blighted.” Critics say there could be dangerous crowd pressures on the south side of the Thames, already very crowded.

No public right of way

The bridge is supposed to be “a new public park space”, but it has since emerged that groups larger than eight will have to book in advance. Picnics are prohibited, cycling is banned. There will be no public right of way across it, and it will close at midnight.

Twelve times a year it will be closed for money-earning events (mainly in the summer, presumably the time when most people will want to have access to it.) But it is pointed out that most museums and galleries and parks have regular private functions as an important source of income.

“Uncertainty of income stream”

Critics believe it is arguably unlawful to grant permission when there are so many uncertainties about crucial issues, such as funding – one reason why the whole project now faces a high court challenge.

Among many other reasons: it is claimed that the project will blight views of Somerset House and St Paul’s.

The bridge’s designer, Thomas Heatherwick, is a man of many talents – but he also has a track record: his disastrous sculpture in Manchester, from which bits fell off; his Blue Carpet in Newcastle was late and over budget – and within a few years became fifty shades of grey. Will his bridge be more successful?

According to Rowan Moore of the *Sunday Observer*, “By any reasonable interpretation of the relevant planning policies, the bridge should be refused.”

What do readers think?

New ideas needed on Transport & pollution

TOM HOLDER argues for new policies for Greenwich.
Tom Holder is the Lib-Dem Party’s Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Greenwich & Woolwich in the forthcoming General Election

Greenwich council is putting the health of its residents at risk with its misguided pursuit of the Silvertown Tunnel. Air quality measurements of the areas at either end of the proposed tunnel register nitrogen dioxide levels more than one and a half times the EU’s legal annual average limit (of 40µg/m³).

What does the council think will happen to air quality if a new tunnel is built? Tens of thousands of additional cars and lorries will increase an already congested area to a standstill. Public Health England estimate that 119 deaths per year in Greenwich are attributable to pollution in the borough – how much higher are we willing to see that number climb?

New roads and crossings do not relieve congestion; they create it. The M25 filled up almost as soon as it was built, as it does every time the lanes are widened. The second Blackwall Tunnel doubled the traffic at the crossing within a year and jammed the roads at either end within a decade.

So why are there so many vehicles in Greenwich? I call on TfL to come up with a comprehensive plan to bring Greenwich’s public transport system in line with neighbouring boroughs. Our smaller neighbour, Lewisham, has almost 50% more train stations (including DLR, overground and underground), so it should come as no surprise that we are more congested than

many other areas of London.

With many of the train stations losing direct access to Charing Cross we believe the New Cross branch of the Overground should be extended into Greenwich and Woolwich.

Around the corner, Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat MP, has fought and won in his battle to get extra stops for the jubilee line within Bermondsey, and he is now on the cusp of extending the Bakerloo line into the southern reaches of his constituency. On the other hand our outgoing Labour MP, Nick Raynsford, has failed to provide an adequate transport system to meet the needs of our growing population. Something needs to change.

Even without building new infrastructure there are ways of moving people from roads to buses. The Liberal Democrats support the one hour bus ticket, which would allow people to switch buses within one hour of getting on the first bus without paying twice. This would help tens of thousands of people across London and put us in line with the system used in many other large international cities.

If we do not address the rising congestion and poor transport, Greenwich and Woolwich will suffer economically. If we continue to push ahead with the Silvertown tunnel, Greenwich and Woolwich residents will suffer medically!

Blackheath Art Society Open Studios

For two weekends this month twenty artists, all members of Blackheath Art Society, show their work at 8 venues in the area.

Paintings, drawings, prints, ceramics, sculptures, textiles, jewellery, photography, tideline art and combinations of all of these can be seen and enjoyed – free. This is an exciting opportunity to talk to the artists and watch some of them at work.

There are many highlights this year. Julia Godsiff’s mostly bronze sculptures are on show at 29 Foxes Dale SE3 9BH, while Nicola White creates glass from the flotsam and jetsam on the Thames Foreshore at 10 Hardy Road SE3 7NP.

Althea Battams’ exciting and detailed paintings capture light and shadow in a fresh way. She is one of four artists showing at 40 Reynolds Place SE3 8SX.

At 64 Shooters Hill Road SE3 7BG two fine painters, Pat Colman and Wendy Russell, share their love of colour with visitors.

This year the Open Studios are clustered around Blackheath Village and

Blackheath Standard creating the opportunity for an enjoyable (and culture-filled) walk and day out!

A map and list of venues is available at www.blackheathartsociety.org.uk or from 020 8853 2269.

A taster exhibition of the work of some Open Studio artists is at the Greenwich Picture House upstairs Bar from 1st-18th May. More members of Blackheath Art Society will be showing their work at the Summer Exhibition at Blackheath Halls SE3 9RQ 4th-29th June and at the Paul Mc Pherson Gallery 19th-30th October 2015. Blackheath Art Society Open Studios 9-10th and 16-17th May 12-6pm. Free.

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

Welcome to the Greenwich Centre



PHOTO:
NG Photo Agency

Even in its unfinished state, the Greenwich Centre makes a dramatic statement at the foot of Vanbrugh Hill, even if at present the stitching is still visible.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has announced the brand new Greenwich Centre is now just weeks away from completion. The gym is being fitted out with more than a hundred pieces of equipment, and the new swimming pools are being filled. When open, the Greenwich Centre will offer local residents a brand new state of the art leisure centre and a bigger, better new library.

A short walk from Greenwich Town, the Greenwich Centre is the third and final new Royal Borough Centre to be constructed. It is an iconic building which will house first class community facilities including a health facility, crèche and cafe. All, almost literally, on our doorstep.

The new leisure centre will be run by Greenwich Leisure Ltd. with brand new facilities that mirror what are currently provided at the Arches centre. The centre will have a new six lane main pool and shallower learner pool, both with double shallow ends to maximise the pool space for people learning to swim.

Those who have learnt to swim will have to go further afield – to the heated outdoor pool in Charlton Lido (highly recommended by those who use it), or Eltham.

The days of the Arches are therefore sadly numbered, and the same, alas, applies to East Greenwich Library in

Woolwich Road.

The new library will be the third largest in the borough. It will have longer opening hours, doubling the hours of operation currently available at East Greenwich, and the new library will also have significantly more books and new computers for users.

The library is designed for the 21st Century: it has been designed as a ‘digital hub’ to include 48 new PCs, and will also have a children’s area, with dedicated tablets for children to use. Staff will be on hand to help customers make the most of the new IT suite, where they will find it easy and more efficient to access council services online.

The new Greenwich Centre will also contain a new NHS health centre which will offer a range of health services to local people.

Cllr. Denise Hyland, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich said:

“It’s brilliant news for the residents of Greenwich and the borough as a whole ...

“This is a superb building: it completes our long term vision of delivering new, modern and more efficient services to residents by building our three new local centres and bringing facilities under one roof. We’re so proud to be delivering new state of the art leisure and library facilities at a time when other areas are seeing such services close.

“This is a cost-effective strategy which means our residents are getting brand new community facilities – while we’re able to continue to freeze council tax for them too.”

Focus on Energy

And now: Lagoon Power

In a welcome move to create renewable sources of energy in this country, plans to

generate electricity from the world's first series of tidal lagoons have been unveiled in the UK.

The six lagoons – four in Wales and one each in Somerset and Cumbria – will capture incoming and outgoing tides behind giant sea walls, and use the weight of the water to power turbines. The £1bn Swansea scheme, said to be able to produce energy for 155,000 homes, is already in the planning system.

The hope is that tidal power round our coasts will produce huge amounts of low-cost, low carbon energy – though anglers worry about endangering fish stocks if fish are chopped up by the turbines.

The structures have strong aesthetic appeal (unlike the wind turbines?) – were they perhaps created by the sculptor Maggie Hamblin, whose sea shell adorns the shingle at Aldeburgh in Suffolk?



Friends of Mycenae Gardens

ANN HILL

There was excellent attendance at the AGM of the Friends of Mycenae Gardens on March 24th. Members enjoyed an impressive presentation by Tim Hoe describing the Spring Planting event which took place earlier in the month in a glade on the west side of the Gardens.

In addition to ‘before’ and ‘after’ scenes, Tim showed colourful photos of the new shrubs (Guelder rose, wayfaring tree, dogwood, spindleberry and sweet box). These native plants are beneficial to insects and birds, as well as beautiful.

Snowdrops and bluebells have also been planted and further plantings of bulbs and woodland plants will take place soon.

In a wide ranging report, Eileen Bell, the Chair of the Friends of Mycenae Gardens Committee, said that the Royal Borough of Greenwich, who own the Gardens and Dell, have responded favourably to the draft Management Plan prepared by the Friends. Greenwich Parks Department had commenting particularly on its quality and content.

The Plan gives the interesting history of the Gardens as well as plans for future maintenance and responsibilities.

Eileen Bell reported that during his first one hour of observation in February, Joe counted 17 species (woodpigeon, stock dove, dunnoek, wren, robin, song thrush, blackbird, redwing, great tit, blue tit, jay, ring-necked parakeet, magpie, carrion crow, chaffinch, goldfinch and greenfinch).

Quite an impressive list in one hour! Since then, a great spotted woodpecker and a long-tailed tit have also been seen.

Observations will be continued for six months. Many of these birds will be nesting in the dense and relatively undisturbed vegetation, and three nest boxes were installed in March.

The Friends hope to expand the audit to other aspects of wildlife in the Dell, thus helping our understanding of why this area is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. We shall provide an update later in the year.

Next volunteer days: 9th May & 7th June
Following last year’s successful ParksFest, a similar joint event with Mycenae House is planned for June 28th.
For further information about the Friends and/or the AGM, visit www.mycenaegardens.org.uk

Facelift for the Royal Standard

The Royal Standard is currently being refurbished, having been taken over by Castle (Mitchells & Butlers).

The pub’s history started in 1848 when William Wynn built it for the princely sum of £2000.

At one time it had a reputation as being a great centre of sports: it had its own Bowling Green and Quoits ground, quoted as being the “Biggest in all of Kent”. It was also a Courage pub for many years.

Mitchells & Butler’s website states: “We’re the largest operator of restaurants, pubs and bars in the UK, providing a wide choice of eating and drinking-out experiences through our well known brands and delivering great service, quality and value

for money to our guests.”

M&B operates more than 1,700 restaurants and pubs around the UK, including the popular All Bar One and O’Neill’s chains.

The Royal Standard, a long established landmark pub by a large roundabout, has given its name to the locality and has, in the past, been used on bus destination blinds. The current refurbishment is due to be completed in mid-May. Local customers are watching developments with keen interest; one local man, Kevin Barry, expressed concerns that it might be “poshed up” and lose some of its local clientele.

We’ll believe it if we see it!

Please send ads for the Market Place with payment by the 10th day of the preceding month to:
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