



Westcombe NEWS



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June 2015 Issue 5

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

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

London's Wake-up Call

ANNE ROBBINS

On Wednesday 29th April, London – and all our cities – received a wake-up call, when our Supreme Court ruled that the UK government must take immediate steps to cut air pollution.

The case was brought by environmental lawyers Client Earth, who pursued the government for five years through UK and European courts. The UK's air pollution problem has been in breach of EU limits for years and is linked to thousands of premature deaths each year. London is among several British cities that have failed to meet EU standards on nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels since 2010.

It is thought that more than 4,000 Londoners die prematurely each year because of long-term exposure to air pollution. In February this year, the *W/N* highlighted the problem – pointing out that the last government passed laws making local boroughs liable for any fines: ensuring that our national politicians are off the hook.

Diesel pollution

No longer! This ruling has implications for politicians at all levels. As the *W/N* has warned repeatedly, one of the main problems is diesel engines. The Supreme court's ruling forces the government to urgently clean up pollution from diesel vehicles, the main source of illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide found in our cities. The mayor of London, Boris Johnson, urged some years ago that there should be a vehicle scrappage scheme for diesel vehicles.

The call will not be popular with drivers of diesel vehicles (more than 11 million in number – including London's taxi drivers.) One cabbie complained: "We were encouraged to invest in diesel-fuelled vehicles. Now we're told we've gotta get rid of them. Talk about moving the goal posts ..."

Announcing the Supreme Court's ruling Lord Carnwath said: "The new government, whatever its political complexion, should be left in no doubt as to the need for immediate action to address this issue."

Local issues

Local campaigners will be relieved at the court's ruling. Greenwich, as a borough, has implemented an Air Quality Action Plan, though its latest published report, covering 2013, suggests it's making slow progress. The Woolwich flyover remains one of the worst spots for emissions in the borough. And with more traffic expected, due to the proposed Ikea development and the nearly-open new M&S and Sainsbury's, air quality remains an issue.

And it will be even more so if TfL builds the Silvertown Tunnel. The plans could put an additional 20% – or more – traffic onto the A102, including heavy HGVs.

The No to Silvertown Tunnel Campaign is

claiming a victory. Speaking for the campaign, Darryl Chamberlain said:

"This is a wake-up call for politicians at all levels, from possible Prime Ministers to our local councillors. For too long now, we've had politicians at all levels – from the central government to local boroughs – who have ignored air pollution and backed road-building schemes that will make it worse.

"Greenwich and Newham councils must face up to their public health responsibilities and challenge TfL's toxic tunnel, instead of meekly going along with a scheme that will damage the lives of thousands of local people."

In 2013 and 2014, No to Silvertown Tunnel Campaign carried out air pollution studies of nitrogen dioxide particles in east and south east London, which show illegal levels in areas where people live, work, and attend school. The results are on their website: <http://www.silvertowntunnel.co.uk/our-study/2014-silvertown-tunnel-pollution-study-results/>

The Westcombe Society's research

With the help of the Network for Clean Air, this spring Westcombe Society's Environment Committee carried out similar research, attaching small tubes to lamp posts in the area.

The tests show a number of local roads have unacceptably high levels of NO2 – nitrogen dioxide. NO2 is produced by diesel engines in particular, and it has been shown to affect children's lung development, as well as adult heart and lung capacity, and more. The EU has set limits to this dangerous contaminant of 40 parts per million, but the Westcombe Park area has several sites that exceed this.

The map shows the 12 sites tested using diffusion tubes, based on DEFRA's standard approach. The aim was to include all the local schools, the A102 corridor, and a couple of spots where good air quality was expected.

The worst result, 68 ppm, in Shooter's Hill Road, is just outside a school playground. Siebert Road, near the Bramshot Avenue pedestrian tunnel under the A102, scored 54ppm. And the A102 is indeed a source of air pollution, as is Westcombe Park Road. But even the greenery of Angerstein Lane doesn't make for clean air: the level of 34ppm measured at its junction with St John's Park can only be called moderate, not good.

The Westcombe Society would like to carry on monitoring air pollution levels, and to carry out further tests. Perhaps our readers would be interested in sponsoring diffusion tubes, which cost about £10 each including the lab work. We would also welcome school scientists taking an interest – an ideal project to bring together many strands of the curriculum.

To lend support, or learn more, please visit environment@westcombesociety.org.



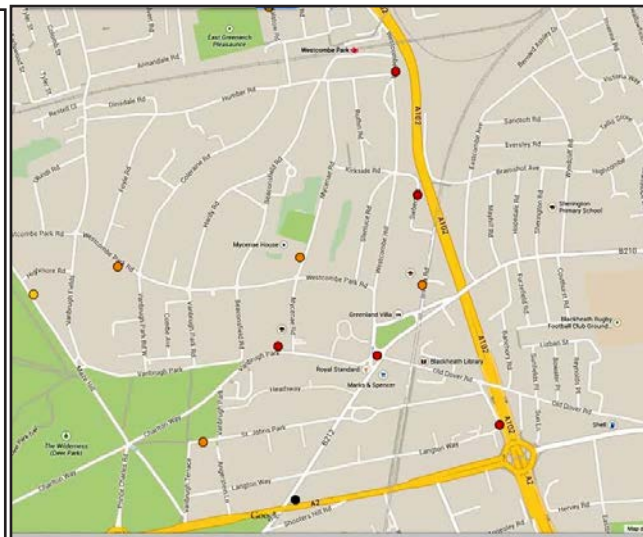
PHOTO: Joanne Delap

Lovely day for a walk in the park . . . But this was not just any old walk.

A monthly walk in Greenwich Park by parents of children with special needs and disabilities was chosen as the first subject of a new series of the Radio 4 programme "Ramblings", in which presenter Clare Balding joins interesting or notable people on a walk in the countryside. See page 3 for the full story.

Measurements were taken at 11 sites. Results are in ppm = particles per million. EU limit: 40 ppm

Shooters Hill Rd 68ppm
Siebert Rd 54 ppm
Sun in the Sands/
Langton Way 47 ppm
The Standard 47 ppm
Vanbrugh Park/
BGHS 45 ppm
Westcombe Hill 43 ppm
Invicta Rd 38 ppm
John Roan Lower Sch/
West. Pk. Road 36 ppm
Angerstein Lane /
St John's Pk 34 ppm
Halstow School 33 ppm
MycenaeRd/
Steiner School 31 ppm
John Roan Upper School/
Maze Hill 31 ppm



This map shows where the Environment Committee positioned Air Quality Testing Tubes. Very high (60+ ppm) High (40-59 ppm.) Moderate (30-39 ppm) EU legal limits 40 ppm. Six of the eleven sites chosen exceeded the EU limits.

QUIZ

How well do you know our constituency – Greenwich and Woolwich?

No one likes to be confused by the facts! Now the dust has settled after the election, the *W/N* somewhat belatedly conducts a Quiz about the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency. (Source: BBC) Answers on page 8

- 1 What is the name of our new Member of Parliament?
- 2 How many candidates were there for this constituency in the 2015 election?
A 6 B 5 C 4
- 3 What percentage of those in this constituency who could vote voted in the 2015 election?
A 39.7% B 57.7% C 63.7%
- 4 What percentage of those in this constituency who could vote voted in the 2010 election?
A 49.9% B 52.9% C 62.9%
- 5 What is the average age in this constituency?
A 35 B 41 C 52
- 6 What percentage of people living in this constituency were born outside the UK?
A 21% B 29% C 36%
- 7 What percentage of people aged 16 and over have a degree in this constituency?
A 40% B 31% C 27%
- 8 What percentage of working-age adults here are on job-seekers allowance in this constituency?
A 3% B 6% C 9%
- 9 What percentage of people in this constituency describe their health as good or very good?
A 35% B 65% C 84%
- 10 What is the average weekly full-time earning for residents in this constituency?
A £430 B £587 C £610
- 11 What percentage of people in employment here work in the public sector?
A 18% B 25% C 30%
- 12 What is the average property price in this constituency?
A £325,000 B £345,000 C £365,000

Free ParkFest Music Extravaganza

Two events for your diary! The first is Sunday 7th June from 12 noon to 5.00pm at the Greenwich Pleasaunce: see page 7.

The second – a Music Extravaganza – is in Mycenae Gardens on Sunday 28th June 12 noon to 7.00pm. Following last year's fabulous Summer Sunday Extravaganza, Mycenae House and Gardens have decided to do it all again, but even bigger and better. This free music, arts, food and fun festival is part of the borough-wide ParksFest series.

The Mycenae Gardens programme is packed full of family-friendly and community

activities to enjoy, take part in and experience. Children's workshops, cinema, live music, singing, funky dance, exhibitions and wildlife trails; also great food, a bar, wide range of stalls and all in the fabulous surroundings of one of the most atmospheric parks in London.

Thanks once again to the generous support from the Greenwich Festivals and ParksFest we are able to present the event with the Friends of Mycenae Gardens, The Greenwich Steiner School, the Icarus Club, Jazz Nights and many of the groups from Mycenae House.

For more details visit: www.mycenahouse.co.uk

The Westcombe Society

Sat 27th June 7.30 pm - 10.00 pm
Members evening: "Bring-a-Dish!"

Invitations are on their way to members. (Guests may attend - £5.00)
When answering the invitation please specify what you will be bringing.
Free drinks! Musical entertainment provided.
If you don't get an invitation, please ring 8853 0948



THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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Chairman of the Society **MARILYN LITTLE** reports at the AGM

Thanks to you all!

I have to thank all those volunteers who support the Society. I also want to thank, again, the Executive committee who oversee the running of the Society and help in so many ways. All those involved set aside their time to assist the society.

The Environment Committee

The Environment Committee has worked hard this year protecting our environment and assisting the community in many different ways. The formation of a working party to liaise with John Roan school, contractors and RBG has taken much of Emily's time over the last year and other members of the Environment Committee have been working hard with planning applications, Air Quality and more recently assisting the Friends of Mycenae Gardens.

We also maintain links with HACAN, the London Forum and most importantly The Greenwich Line User Group. All these links help to protect and improve the area in which we live. We have also been working even more closely with other local societies, jointly supporting initiatives to assess the impact of IKEA and other developments which are happening in the area and on and around the Penninsula – including the proposed Silvertown Tunnel.

We provide input and assistance to other groups such as the BJWP and the Royal Parks and have assisted in protecting the Heath and surrounding areas. We are also represented on the Safety Neighbourhood Panel, the Safer Parks Panel, and enjoy the support of our Ward councillors on many local issues.

The Events Committee

I also have to thank the Events Committee

who have a very full calendar of social events providing entertainment for young and old. Most of the events are held at Mycenae House or in the Gardens and are well supported. We are reliant on a host of other volunteers in the form of Cake and sandwich makers and tea pourers etc.

The Events committee also have links with many local charities and we are happy to help whenever we can. Joanne Lucas, the chairman of the Events committee, will add details in our next issue.

The committees are only part of the story. We have many volunteers who help in all sorts of ways, and we are very appreciative of their help at events, delivering the Westcombe News, graffiti busting and helping at the Bazaar, which is our main fund raising event of the year.

This year, our Charity of the Year has been the 999Club and we raised money to purchase an industrial-sized Washer and Drier to help with their ever-increasing laundry requirements.

It is probably appropriate to mention at this point that we will not be holding the Dickensian Bazaar this year as we do not have access to the BHS facilities. We also felt that we were due a year off and could come back re-vitalised. Because of this decision, we will not have a charity of the year this year. Instead we will be making smaller donations to local charities.

We are always looking for new volunteers: there are many different opportunities for helping. Helping out is fun - and not too onerous! At present as we say a sad goodbye to Jan, we have a vacancy for a minutes secretary who takes notes at the Exec meetings (once a month). Thanks for all your help, Jan!

Letters to the editor

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

From: Tony Othen The Greenwich Gallery

Many of you will remember the exhibitions of Peter Kent's work that The Greenwich Gallery has been proud to present over several years. As a backup to this remarkable artist we have been collaborating with him in the production of his blog. Today his 120th article has been posted on www.riverwatchreturns.com, containing a remarkable set of observations, drawings, comments and campaigns, centered around the Thames and waterways in general.

As he embarks on a major project to record and highlight developments on the Penninsular and within Canary Wharf this blog will prepare the ground for major exhibitions later in the year. Following this blog is easy (and free) just click on the 'FOLLOW' button on the opening page and you will be notified each time there is a new post. Happy reading!

From: Andrew Donkin The Charlton Society

Charlton residents are getting together to demand that transport bosses restore their bus link to central London. Since January, route 53, which goes from Plumstead to Whitehall, has been running short to Lambeth North, forcing local workers to continue their journeys on foot or pay extra to take a second bus.

Now the Charlton Society, which campaigns for the improvement of Charlton and its local facilities – has launched a petition to demand TfL restores the 53 to its full route.

“The 53's an important link used by Charlton people from all walks of life, as well as people from neighbouring areas,” the society's Roden Richardson says.

The petition can be found at <https://www.change.org/p/transport-for-london-reinstate-the-53-bus-to-whitehall>

Raising money for Nepal

Last year the *WN* published an article about an expedition to Nepal by the Lewisham North Scout Troop, among whom was local resident Ben Mountain.

A year later, much of the country has been struck by a massive earthquake, causing much damage and loss of life in a country that simply cannot handle it.

Ben decided that he had to do something about it: the scouts had developed an emotional connection with Nepal, and felt it was their place to help to raise funds. In the heart of Kathmandu there is a school largely established thanks to work done by Lewisham North Scouts.

So in early May Ben arranged a day of bag-packing at our local M&S to help to generate much-needed funds to be sent to Nepal. The aim: to raise £500.00.

"We were hoping that the money we

earned would be delivered there to aid rebuilding and to offer shelter to local children," said Ben. "On top of work done by individuals, we work with two charities: EPHC (Education, Protection & Help for Children) and the Penny for a Brick Appeal."

The PfaB was set up a while ago by the leader of his scout troop and has raised several thousand pounds in coppers and 5 pence coins alone.

The bag-packing day would, he hoped, increase the PfaB fund (which at present stood at £400) by another £500/ £600.

Unbelievably, Ben and his fellow scouts raised not £600, but £2,000! And what's more, a local businessman said that he would match the sum raised. So that means they raised £4,000 for Nepal!

WELL DONE, Ben!

AND ...

**We all
thank
you, too,
Marilyn!**



Not forgetting . . .

I also have to thank Neville Grant for producing the Westcombe News so well and seemingly so effortlessly. It continues to be a popular publication and is much looked forward to. We distribute 4,000 copies 10 times a year covering issues both local and national that affect our area.

It is always 'out on time' whilst still providing informative and interesting content. But without Myles and his team of counters and deliverers it would not be enjoyed by our residents. However, Myles has decided that it is time to hand over this task and we are now urgently seeking someone to take on this job.

Thanks also to Peter Lewins, our Membership Secretary, for all he does, and special thanks, too, to Michael Helm for yet again inspecting the accounts.

I am very well aware that without you all, and the time and effort that you expend on the Society's behalf, we would not be able to enjoy the benefits that the Society bring to our area.

We very much welcome new volunteers and I am very happy to speak to anyone who would like more information after the business of the meeting.

Finally, we are fortunate to have Joe Beale with us today who will present his wild life findings in and around Mycenae Gardens and the dell.

From the Editor

The WN is YOUR paper. So why not write for it? All contributions – not just letters – are welcome.

And don't forget, one picture is worth a thousand words! Photos of recent events – or publicising future events – are always appreciated. Please send as jpegs if possible.

I am sometimes phoned and asked "Could you send someone along to write a report/ take a photograph of a forthcoming event?" There is no call for this – the WN does not have staff-members who can attend all local events and cover them for the paper.

The person ringing up can do it, or find someone in attendance to do it: all members of the community are on the staff as reporters, photographers, volunteers! That's what being a community newspaper is all about. Much better if it comes from you rather than me, or A N Other!

SOS! For many years, Myles Dove, ably assisted by Barbara and other volunteers, has organised the distribution of the *WN*, street by street, bagging up the papers, and giving them to our sterling band of street-deliverers. But the time is coming for Myles to take a well-earned rest: so we urgently need a new Volunteer Distribution Manager. If you think you can help, please give Myles a ring on 8853 3740 to find out more about what is involved.



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LOCAL NEWS

Foster-care Fortnight

It is a sad fact that there is an increasing number of children coming into care in this country. 8,370 new foster families are needed across the UK in 2015 alone, to give loving and supportive homes to these children.

In particular, fostering services are looking for more foster families for teenagers, children with disabilities and sibling groups.

Foster Care Fortnight™, the UK's biggest foster care awareness and recruitment campaign, takes place between Monday 1st – Sunday 14th June.

Local authority and independent fostering services from across the UK will be actively taking part.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich's

Fostering service holds regular information events for people who are interested in finding out more about fostering. At the events you will meet foster-carers and social workers who are involved in fostering for the Royal Borough.

Meetings are held at The Woolwich Centre, normally: Wellington Street, Woolwich SE18 6HQ The next two events are on the following dates:
Sat. 13th June 2015 - 10.00am to 12.00pm
Thurs. 16th July 2015 - 7.00pm to 9.00pm

For more information about fostering in Greenwich please call 0800 052 1499 or email fostering@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fostering

Ros Sharman 1940 - 2015

Tributes from many friends and family poured in following the death of Ros Sharman, a much loved wife, mother, grandmother, friend and teacher, who died earlier this year.

Ros Sharman was born in Liverpool but grew up in Lee-on-Solent, near Portsmouth, close to the sea and life-boats – she remained a strong supporter of the RNLI.

Ros had an interesting and varied working and social life, making significant lasting friendships along the way. She had a thirst for knowledge and always worked hard for her family and for her own self-improvement.

Ros started her working life as a librarian and moved to Islington in her twenties. After marrying, she settled in Greenwich, a place she loved dearly and where she had her daughters Marina and Caroline.

As a single mother in the 1970s, Ros studied at Goldsmiths College and gained a BEd Hons Degree. She taught at Plumcroft Primary School for 12 years, specialising in teaching English as a second language, then went on to teach adults. Ros then trained as a Counsellor with the Adlerian Society and went into private practice as a Counsellor, whilst simultaneously working at the College of Law as a Counsellor.

Keen to help others, Ros supported many charities and was always there to offer her gentle wisdom and support to family, friends and everyone who crossed her path.

Her many interests and activities brought her great pleasure. She was part of a gallery group, an art therapy group and a walking group, meeting regularly and sharing her experiences with great friends – and always with great humour.

Ros enjoyed making her own unique jewellery, taking part in craft fairs such as the Westcombe Society's Christmas Bazaar, and later organising local craft fairs herself. One of her favourite mottos was "seize the day", which she always did.

Much of her time was spent with friends at Christ Church, East Greenwich, where she was very committed to her work as a Church Warden and greatly respected.

Ros Sharman was a truly exceptional person: she will always be remembered with great affection for her sensitivity, wisdom and intelligence, her capacity for warm friendship, her lovely smile, warm personality, and not least, "the twinkle in her eye, and a great sense of humour and fun."

She will be greatly missed, not just by her family, but by a very wide circle of friends, a huge number of whom attended her funeral.



Giving parents a voice

VIVIEN DAVIES

Parents from the local organisation Greenwich Parent Voice were joined in April by Clare Balding and the Radio 4's "Ramblings" team for their monthly walk through Greenwich Park. The programme was on radio 4 in May.

A monthly walk in Greenwich Park by parents of children with special needs and disabilities was chosen as the first subject of a new series of the Radio 4 programme "Ramblings", in which presenter Clare Balding joins interesting or notable people on a walk in the countryside.

The recording took place on a perfect spring day in April. Presenter Clare Balding chatted with parents about what life is like caring for a disabled child. Parents described how this monthly walk in a place of great natural beauty provides respite, companionship, gentle exercise and moments of calm.

Clare Balding and producer Karen Gregor chose the Greenwich Park Voice walk as the first in the new series because of the uniquely interesting stories of the parents and the gorgeous scenery in the park itself.

The walkers followed a route starting at Blackheath Gate, crossing the ancient Saxon barrows and across the formal landscape in front of the National Maritime Museum. They rambled up through avenues of horse chestnuts to the ancient Queen Elizabeth Oak tree and finally made a steep climb to see the spectacular views across London from One Tree Hill.

Joanne Delap, Parent Director of GPV said: "We had great fun with Clare and the Radio 4 team. This walk is just one of the many ways in which we bring parents together for support. The park is a very beautiful location and offers a chance to escape the worries of daily life with other carers who understand."

"Everyone is welcome, and we are planning more GPV rambles in green spaces across the borough in future, so that every parent can enjoy a walk near them." The programme on Thurs. 21st May can be heard on the BBC i-Player.



About Greenwich Parent Voice

We are an independent group of parents in Greenwich. All of us have a child with special educational needs or a disability.

We know that children's needs and circumstances can be very different. We are committed to giving a voice to all parents and carers in government including foster carers. We do this through listening to parents and giving their opinions to decision makers in the local authority and NHS trusts.

We publish information that empowers parents in all media.

We hold free events, large and small, where parents can come together and be informed. We provide communication channels through which parents can connect with and support each other. Greenwich Parent Voice is managed by Parent Directors Joanne Delap and Vivien Davies. It is funded by the Department of Education and supported and monitored by the charity Contact-A-Family.

Links: www.greenwichparentvoice.com@GPVinfohttps://twitter.com/GPVinfowww.cafamily.org.uk contact: Vivien Davies email: info@greenwichparentvoice.com

Art Deco in Rangers House



In May, some of Blackheath High's Senior and Junior School students were invited by English Heritage to display their impressive Art Deco-inspired design and art work at the Rangers House in Greenwich, the lovely Georgian mansion on the edge of Greenwich Park and Blackheath.

The display included jewellery, ceramic plates and clay portrait sculptures based on ancient societies, inspired by Frederick Leighton.

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The Big Lunch

Remember the Big Lunch? It is a national event, and Seibert Road was one of a number of local streets that took part last year. Beccy Ham, of Seibert Road, reminds us that June 7th is "Big Lunch Day", and suggests that we should go for it this year, too. "It brings people together," said Beccy.

Describing last year's event, Beccy told the *WN*: "Every neighbour came through with ideas, food and drink, reflecting the cultural heritage of the residents . . .

"It was an amazing day for each of us, meeting old friends and neighbours we

hadn't said hello to before. There was plenty of food, drink and merriment and the children were free to play openly and safely in the street. The sun shone, so we could get the sprinkler out and even have a water slide. We now truly feel we are a community."

It was such a success last year that there's going to be a repeat performance in Seibert Road this year. Let's hope the idea catches on, and more people hold street parties.

It doesn't have to be June 7th!

Ed: Please note that if you want to hold a street party, you need to get clearance from the Council, as there are traffic implications.

Friends of Mycenae Gardens present as part of

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FEATURES

Meet your neighbour: David Alexander

This month, the WN interviewed David, who will shortly celebrate his ninety-first birthday.

WN: David, if it isn't a rude question, when were you born?

DA: I was born on July 8th, 1924 in Hammersmith General Hospital.

WN: A North Londoner, then

DA: Only for about six months! My father worked in the Borough of Hammersmith's Engineers Department, but within a few months transferred to Camberwell as an Assistant Engineer, and we moved to a Council House – 14 Sunray Avenue in North Dulwich. Some years later we moved to Alison Grove.

WN: How much do you remember of those days?

DA: We were an extremely happy family – my two brothers, younger sister and I were very fortunate in our parents. But it was a different era then: the milkman called every day in his horse-drawn milk float, the knife grinder would turn up with his cart from time to time, and every evening the lamplighter turned up to pull the hanging chains of the gas lamps in our street. In winter, the muffin man turned up every Sunday, carrying on his head a tray of muffins covered with a green baize cloth. And to this day I can still smell the tar used by the road menders.

WN: Where did you go to school?

DA: Alleyns. I started off my schooling there in the "Tin-Tab" – a leaky corrugated iron structure that had been erected as temporary accommodation during WW1. I was never a high flier, but I did manage to get my School Cert. in 1939.

WN: Though your time there was interrupted by the Second World War?

DA: Correct. The school was evacuated to Maidstone, and it was there I caught my first glimpse of what war was like, as trainloads of exhausted and wounded soldiers passed by, after Dunkirk.

WN: Was Maidstone considered safe?

DA: Well it was thought to be much safer than London, even though German bombers passed almost directly overhead. Kent was the setting for much of the Battle of Britain, and I well remember watching the dog-fights in the sky, and biking out to collect souvenirs when a plane came down. We once came across a wounded German pilot lying in a quarry: we took one look at the pistol in his belt, and rode off pretty quickly, I can tell you! Later on it was decided that Kent was too close to Germany for comfort, and we relocated to Rossall on the Northwest coast.

WN: So, after school?

DA: I volunteered for the army on April Fools Day, 1943, and followed my father's advice and opted to join the Royal Engineers.

WN: And were eventually commissioned?

DA: Yes. In May 1944 I went home on leave to Alison Grove very proud of the single pip on each shoulder. I was posted to Chatham, where I saw the first V1 Doodlebugs passing by overhead, one of which demolished our family home in Dulwich.

WN: And then you were posted to India?

DA: Off I went to Bombay on the P&O troopship *SS Mooltan*, and after an uneventful voyage, dodging U-boats, I found myself posted to the main Transit Camp in Deolali where we all went bonkers with boredom (hence the idiom "to go Doolally").

WN: And you were posted to the Bengal Engineers?

DA: To be precise, the King George V's Own Bengal Sappers and Miners, located about a hundred miles north of Delhi, where I found myself in the training battalion.

WN: And you had to learn Bengali?

DA: Well, no: despite its name, the men were Sikhs, Hindus or Mussulman, and the universal language I had to learn was Urdu. Working with these men was quite an education, I can tell you, and I shall never forget the insights I had from working within several different cultures.

WN: But you went to Europe?

DA: Yes, I was posted to the Fourth Indian Division, which was based in Italy. Soon afterwards it went on to Greek Macedonia, by which time the war had ended.

WN: But there was a civil war in Greece?

DA: We didn't see much of that. Our job was mainly repairing roads and bridges for nine months before returning to India to command my company, and then apply for early release to go to University.

WN: Oxford?

DA: Yes, Brasenose College, to study English language and literature. Like many ex-servicemen, I found it hard to go back to studying, and I fear that I was by no means a brilliant student. I took the shortened two-year course available to ex-servicemen, at that time as a result of the war, and this meant that the course was much more packed than if it had been a normal three-year course. I enjoyed Oxford, and retain a great deal of affection for my old college, but I was quite glad to escape into the real world again.

WN: So David, what next?

DA: I was lucky enough to get a job with the Union Castle line, which ran mail ships – liners, in fact, between the UK and Africa, as well as some cargo vessels. Unfortunately I never really received much management training there, and had to learn as I went along. One of my jobs for a time was as a time-and-motion man, and I used to go on trips seeing how long it took staff to iron napkins or whatever: pretty useless!

But I was very lucky with the freebies – the trips I did were very enjoyable, visits in particular to Mombasa, and Zanzibar – at that time ruled by a Sultan, to be displaced by a revolution in 1964. And although I was mainly based in London, I did spend two years in offices in Cape Town, Jo'burg, Durban and Mombasa. Particularly enjoyable was the time I spent in a bachelor flat in South Kensington, a pretty sybaritic period in my life. But the writing was on the wall: air travel was having an impact on passenger liners even then, and when the UCL was taken over by the Cayzer family and the Clan Line, it became clear there was not much future for UCL managers, as senior positions were occupied by the new management protégés.

I left in 1960, and spent a period doing this and that, with no clear game plan except to enjoy life, and play a bit of cricket, with the Nomads.

WN: The Nomads? Where were they based?

DA: As the name suggests, nowhere! But we played everywhere or almost, anyway: Spain, Corfu, France, even India, as well as villages around England. Funnily enough cricket was one of the things I had in common with my future wife Gina, who herself was a mean bowler in her school team. She certainly bowled me over!

WN: Where did you meet?

DA: At a party in Essex: it so happened we were the only two unattached people at the party, and we soon became highly attached! In short we got married, and I realized, as time passed, with child number one on the way (our son Greg) that drifting wasn't good enough, I would have to face up to responsibilities. I needed a career!

WN: As ...?

DA: I decided on the law, and had four pretty tough years at the Guildford Law School and in articles. I abandoned my old stamping ground in Kensington, and we moved first to Dulwich again, and then, in 1965, to Westcombe Park. At this time, Gina was a wonderful support to me – she went back to work as an occupational therapist, and I was lucky enough to be offered a post as office manager by the City firm of Rowe and Maw, who kindly allowed me time off to attend to my studies and exams in Guildford.



WN: Which you passed?

DA: Yes, rather to my amazement . . . It was extremely hard work, but in the end I gradually accumulated the necessary passes, and I got a job in the city with Norton Rose Botterell & Roche who were recruiting for their Shipping Finance Department. Probably my years with the Union Castle Line helped me on my way at this time. I was made a partner in 1971.

Soon after this, after our second son, Tristram, arrived, Gina decided she did not want to go back to her job in OT, and retrained in Education and English at the Rachel Macmillan College in Elephant and Castle, and became a teacher.

It was now the late sixties, and shipping was booming, I became heavily involved in negotiating contracts with shipping companies and ship-building companies such as Harland and Wolff, and companies from Brazil to Sweden arranging mortgages, that sort of thing. I had to get well-acquainted with maritime law, and registering vessels under Liberian, Panamanian, Greek and Cypriot, as well as English, law.

WN: Was this another opportunity to travel?

DA: Oh yes! I had to go to a number of agreeable place round the world, though no longer by sea. I even made a couple of flights on Concorde to Rio and Singapore before it was confined to transatlantic flights. On one memorable occasion, Aristotle Onassis flew me on his private Lear jet for a meeting on a Greek island, where I was housed in the villa that had been occupied by Jackie Onassis.

WN: What was all that about?

DA: He had ordered two tankers from Harland and Wolff, and he was trying to interpret a particular clause to get out of the contract. It was my job to say that, legally the clause he was citing did not provide grounds for cancelling the contract. We had a somewhat uncomfortable discussion before we each retired to think what next.

WN: A concrete foot-bath? Cement shoes?

DA: Oh no! There were no grudges: that evening, he pushed the boat out, and we had a wonderfully relaxed social evening, the wine flowing like water, and he did not mention business at all. I later learnt that he sacked his lawyer, and thought about hiring me!

WN: Were you tempted?

DA: No, thank heaven. By this time, we were deeply embedded in our house in Coleraine Road, and I had no urge to run hither and yon at the beck and call of Onassis. But my work in the firm became more diversified, and I was increasingly involved in admin rather than contract work. The time was coming for me to retire, which I did as my 65th birthday approached. I left with a generous golden handshake and a two year consultancy.

WN: So how did you feel after, what, 20-odd years in the law?

DA: 24 to be precise. Well, I look back on those years with much affection, and indeed gratitude. I also retained some sense of achievement.

LEFT:
David on temple steps at Hampi, Karnataka, claiming to be "at the end of his tether"

RIGHT:
Gina

PHOTOS:
Gina & David



WN: The question now then facing you and many others in similar shoes: what next?

DA: It was a bit of a shock to the system, and for a while I drove Gina mad; I put the word around that I was retired, and was happy to join in some form of charitable activity – and then I had yet another stroke of luck: I discovered that Maj. Gen. Sir David Thorne had just taken over as Director General of the Royal Commonwealth Society and was looking for some help.

I soon found myself helping to save the RCS from extinction. Its problems were common to many charitable organisations, including parlous finances, and ageing membership, compounded by having to run huge premises in Northumberland Avenue. For the next twelve years or so we were fully occupied with trying to turn things round.

We found a home for the wonderful Commonwealth Library in Cambridge University, sold off most of the premises (very expensive to run), leasing back part of them at a peppercorn rent. These we turned into modern facilities and well-equipped conference rooms. All went well for a few years; and I became Deputy Chairman.

WN: But then you moved on?

DA: You have to know when it's time to make room for others, and yes, I moved on; I wanted more time for family and friends, and I had several other interests, apart from travel (Gina and I travelled a great deal after I retired, including some 22 visits to India.) and I also helped out with a small education trust for Africa. And of course we were among the first members of the Westcombe Society.

I also became involved as Secretary of the old Officers Association for my old regiment, the Bengal Sappers and Miners. One year we organised a trip back to India to visit the old regiment, and I can't tell you what a welcome we were given by the Bengal Engineers, now, of course, wholly staffed by Indians.

WN: David, you haven't mentioned one thing you did in your retirement – you wrote a memoir which I believe you had privately published? I found it a fascinating read. What are your thoughts on that?

DA: Well, I wrote it for my family, really, and I would encourage anyone to do the same. It doesn't have to be published, as such, but one can never underestimate the interest that people have in their forbears and family history.

WN: David Alexander, thank you!

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WHAT'S ON

ARTS

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
THE QUEEN'S HOUSE
UNSEEN: THE LIVES OF LOOKING BY DRYDEN GOODWIN Until 26th July. This acclaimed contemporary artist creates his first full length feature film; plus his drawings. Free.
4th & 11th June 11.00 - 1300. Lectures on the Mauretania, Lusitania & Aquitanea. £8.00 per lecture
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 25th June Imogen Corrigan
An introduction to illuminated manuscripts from Anglo-Saxon times to the post conquest period. Non-members £5
GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich Mon. 8th June 8.00pm: Splendour of Yemen's Architecture by Sarah Searight 020 8852 7873 Non-members £8.00. Annual membership £60.
MADE IN GREENWICH GALLERY 8293 9823 www.madeingreenwich.co.uk 324 Creek Rd SE10. Mon 15th June. PRESS LAUNCH OF *QUARTET*
To mark ten years of publishing Cinnamon Press launches an anthology of writings by Jennifer Bailey, Helen Holmes, Jez Noond and our very own Jane McLaughlin. 7.00 pm **FREE**
Tues. 23rd June T.S. Eliot with Graham Fawcett 6.45 for a 7pm start as always. Advance booking to info@madeingreenwich.co.uk or 020 82939823. £10 to include drinks and a light buffet.
GREENWICH GALLERY Peyton Place SE10 8RS
June 8th - June 21st Romeo photos
Mon-Friday 9.30-5.30 weekends 12-4pm. Free.
BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY SUMMER EXHIBITION at Blackheath Halls 23 Lee Road, Blackheath Thursday 4th to Monday 29th June Mon to Fri 10am-5pm and one hour before evening performances. 0208 3189758 www.trinitylaban.co.uk

CHILDREN & FAMILY

GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL, LONDON SE10 8ES BOX OFFICE 8858 7755
Thur 4th & Fri 5th June 8.00 pm SO IT GOES
Hannah has always wanted to talk about her Dad. But in the seven years since he died, she hasn't quite managed it. £16.00 | concs. £13.50
Sat 6th June KID CARPET AND THE NOISY NEIGHBOURS This funny and moving new show uses music, puppetry and projection to look at what it's like to move into a new house in the city and find your place there. "Great melodies and infectious pop hooks... if only all pop music could be this fun."
Times: 2.00 pm & 5.00 pm £13.50 (Children £8.50) Until 8th June THE LOST ROOM
Immersive Theatre! Art Of Disappearing invite you to lead a partner through a curious landscape where your imagination takes flight. Suitable for ages 8+. Tickets £11.00 | concs. £8.50
Sat 13th & Sun 14th June SHADOW BOXING
The son of a boxer who couldn't win, Flynn is determined not to end up like his father. Ages 15+ Tickets £16.00 Children £13.50
NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
Until 31st August AGAINST CAPTAIN'S ORDERS Exciting new show for 6 - 12 year olds. Advance booking essential on rmg.co.uk/tickets!
SHERINGTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE
DADS STAY AND PLAY session every Wednesday 9.30-11.30 Sherington Childrens Centre, all Home Dads welcome. Address: 14 Sherington Road, Charlton SE7 7JW (0208 853 0900). Continues even in school holidays and half-term. **Contact Dan Hall on daniel.hall1985@hotmail.co.uk for more details. www.selondondads.org.uk**



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John Payne

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THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Sat 27th June 7.00 - 10.00 pm Members' Evening
Sat 18th July 2.00 - 4.30 pm Family Fun day in Mycenae Gardens Games and crafts for children, face painter, jazz band and a variety of stalls. Further details will be in the July/August issue
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. 4th June at The Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Row, Blackheath Prize draw & Raffle. To book, call Wendy on 8265 0335 by **Mon. 1st June.** £8.50.
MYCENAE HOUSE
Fri 12th June JAZZ NIGHTS featuring Sid Gould (trumpet) plus Dave Silk's JazzNights Allstars and guests. Candlelit musical event occurring on the second Friday each month during 2015. Backed by the Phil Mead Trio hosted by Dave Silk. For info contact Dave on: 01689875683 or visit www.jazznights.co.uk
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
16th June Ian Bull 'The Standard Gauge railways of the Royal Arsenal' Meeting at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3. Please use the station car park. Non members £1.
BLACKHEATH FLOWER ARRANGING SOCIETY Meets third Friday of the month in Mycenae House. Next meeting: **June 19th Jane Patterson - TIMES, THEY ARE A CHANGING**
Contact: Siân - siancaroline@googlemail.com.
WESTCOMBE WOODLANDS There is much to do! Next volunteer day is **Sun. 21st June.**
STEINBERG DUO VANBRUGH HILL
Steinberg Studio 137 Vanbrugh Hill SE10 9HP
One day every month the Steinberg Duo welcome a small audience to an intimate recital followed by refreshments. The Studio is at the bottom of Vanbrugh Hill in the Plaza building just next to the bus stop.
Tickets £10. Book online in advance: http://www.steinbergduo.com/events/categories/greenwich/
Saturday 27 June 6.00pm Violin & Piano Recital: Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Kreisler
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
GLOBAL FUSION MUSIC & ARTS
Sat. 20th June. Refugee Day 12 - 5pm celebration of diversity with highly diverse events! - please see website for all details.
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 DanceInfo: 020 8858 9497
ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC 9.00pm
every Tuesday at the Lord pub, Creek Road; jazz



ONBLACKHEATH CONSULTATION

The *W/N* has been notified by the organisers of OnBlackheath that a public consultation meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th June at the Greenwich Hotel, Catherine Grove from 7.00-8.00pm. All members of the public are welcome to attend.

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
Thu 4 & Fri 5 June SO IT GOES Hannah has always wanted to talk about her Dad. But in the seven years since he died, she hasn't quite managed it.
Wed 10 & Thu 11 June REDUCED SHAKE-SPEARE COMPANY IN THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (abridged) [revised] All 37 Plays in 97 Minutes! An irreverent, fast-paced romp through the Bard's plays, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) was London's longest-running comedy – nine years at the Criterion Theatre!
Thu 25 - Sat 27 June 7.30 pm ABSENT FRIENDS Summer 1974. A well-intentioned tea party descends into chaos in Alan Ayckbourn's painfully funny play
Thu 2nd July 7.30 pm GERMAINE GREER: THE DISAPPEARING WOMAN
Controversial agenda-setting author, acclaimed academic, outspoken broadcaster, feminist icon and public figure, this event gives the audience the unique chance to ask all those burning questions they have been longing to throw at her – serious or light-hearted.

THE GEOFFREY WHITWORTH THEATRE
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LONDON THEATRE 443 New Cross Road, Outer London, SE14 6TA (Near New Cross Station)
Box office 0208 694 1888 Tues 9th to Sunday 14th June 8pm (Sun 5pm) £15 (members £5 Tues only)
Anton Chekhov's UNCLE VANYA
Tues 30th - July 5th MEDEA

THE SPACE
Email: info@space.org.ukTel: 020 7515 7799
269 Westferry Road, London E14 3RS
3rd-13th June, 7:45 pm Ibsen's A DOLL'S HOUSE £14/£10 Nora's secret, and the man who keeps it.
16th - 18th June 7.30 pm Becoming Mohammed £14/£10 Two siblings, reunited live on TV visit their past and discover their futures ...
23rd - 27th June 7.45 pmAnonymous Anonymous £10/£8 The collision of our online and offline lives – a play for anyone who has found themselves lost on the internet.

TRINITY LABAN JUNE 2015

MUSICAL THEATRE SUMMER SHOWS

Blackheath Halls:
4th - 6th JUNE: The Pirates of Penzance
Our first year students present a fresh take on Gilbert and Sullivan's classic comedy opera at Blackheath Halls FREE
Stratford Circus:
Two hilarious musical comedies £10 | £5.00
11th - 13th JUNE: Spend, Spend, Spend
19th - 21st JUN: Lucky Stiff
INSIDE OUT JAZZ FESTIVAL 2015
MON 22 - THU 25 JUNE Annual summer jazz festival: check website for venues.
TUE 23 JUN 19.30h TRINITY LABAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Mahler's magnificent Symphony No 5 and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No 1, soloist Naufal Mukumi at Cadogan Hall.
TUE 30 JUN 13:05h SIDE BY SIDE
Trinity Laban students & staff perform Mendelssohn's Octet & Schubert's Octet (1st movement.) ORNC Chapel. Free
WED 1st - SAT 4th JULY BRITTEN: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
Great Hall, Blackheath Halls

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MUSIC

BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel. 8463 0100
MON 1 JUN 19:30h CORINNA HENTSCHEL, VIOLIN POLISH HEARTH CLUB Programme includes music by Mozart and Korngold.
TUE 02 JUN 13:05h TRINITY LABAN VIOLAS CONCERT at the ORNC Chapel Original music for massed violas by Ken Paige, Quim Miracle, Benjamin Dale and Simone Spagnolo. Free
THU 04 JUN 13:05h ORLANDO SHAMLOU & GUY SHEPHERD, PIANOS Play Beethoven's Piano Sonata No 7 and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No 11 at St Alfege Church. Free.
FRI 05 JUN 13:05h NAOMI QUANT, SOPRANO, AND LAURENCE PANTER, TENOR sing Finzi's A Young Man's Exhortation, and arias from operas by Britten at ORNC CHAPEL Free
TUE 09 JUN 13:05h STEPHANIE CHEUNG, PIANO, AND PABLO DELGADO, play Liebermann's Gargoyles, Op 29, and De Falla's Fantasia Bética at the ORNC CHAPEL Free.
THU 11 JUN 13:05h ZARA JEALOUS, FLUTE play CPE Bach's Hamburger Sonata in G major, & Jesús Guridi's Tirana Free St Alfege Church
FRI 12 JUN 13:00h EDGAR CARDOSO, PIANO play Chopin, de Falla and García Abril in Charlton House. Free.
FRI 12 JUN 13:05h ASHLEY BLASSE, GUITAR plays Villa-Lobos, Ferdinand Rebay, et al. ORNC Chapel FreeFree Chapel Concert Series
FRI 12 JUN 13:10h KODO STRING QUARTET play Mendelssohn String Quartet No 6 & Haydn's String Quartet No 61 at St James's Church Picadilly £10 | £5



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FEATURES

Educational renewal

PER stands for “Philosophy for Educational Renewal”. The Secretary of the PER group is local resident Chris Ormell, a specialist in Maths education. Chris worked at one time as a senior lecturer at the University of East Anglia.

Membership includes educators from around the world, including the US, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Brazil, Norway and Egypt – as well as a strong cohort from the UK, including a number of local residents.

The group produces the journal *Prospero* which comes out four times a year. The aims are to encourage new thinking in education; among its concerns is to lead children to understand and value the enduring culture of society.

A particular target is the culture of “managerialism” in education, whereby managers {ministers?} put too much pressure on students, as a result impoverishing and undervaluing teachers.

The group holds regular meetings; at the most recent of these, freelance educa-

tional writer Neville Grant gave a very insightful, and entertaining, look at the process of writing English textbooks for overseas. Much of his experience was in East, West and Southern Africa.

He has written many books that are in use in Africa, China and the Caribbean. For some years he was heavily involved in developing an English textbook project for the People’s Republic of China, under the auspices of the UN Development Programme. Through this UNDP project China acquired its first generation of communicative English textbooks.

In a series of case studies drawn from his experiences in many different parts of the world, he showed how textbooks can engage the interests of young learners, and play an important part in developing communication skills, and stimulating thought, activity and creativity.

Chris Ormell

Interested in the PER group? Please contact Sheila Richards at P.E.R., 3 Ingleside Grove, Blackheath, SE3 7PH

World Music Day 5th June 2014

The Royal Borough and Global Fusion Music & Arts have come together to produce a stunning event for World Music Day on Friday 5th June in General Gordon’s Square Woolwich.

This event will run from 12 o’clock to 2.00 pm and will have an amazing line-up of artists from around the world.

Chinese Master musician Cheng Yu will be playing her four-stringed lute the Pipa accompanied by Chen Dacan on the Erhu, the Chinese fiddle.

International Tabla player Hanif Khan will be joined by Indian Sarangi player Amirudin, who has travelled all the way from India and is currently touring the UK.

A GFMA regular, Mosi Conde the Kora Player from Guinea, will be bringing some of his Griot songs with his beautiful voice and virtuoso Kora playing.

Local Nepalese band Crash 18 will make their debut at this event and there will be fundraising for the people of Nepal.

The Architecture of Yemen

June’s Greenwich Decorative and Fine Arts Society lecture is on “The splendour of Yemen’s Architecture”, given by Sarah Searight on June 8th in King William Court, University of Greenwich.

Yemen is a country of extraordinary beauty with its varied scenery reflected in its architecture – a strong decorative sense characterises both its people and their buildings. Well-watered by monsoon rains, Yemen was once famous as Arabia Felix, land of frankincense and myrrh. Yemen was the subject of a British Museum exhibition in summer 2002. One can only hope that the country and its beautiful architecture survives the wars that have engulfed it.

Sarah Searight is a historian and journalist who has a special interest in the Middle East, and has published many books and articles on this subject.

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Maryon Park

Following our news story on page 1 last month, the *WN* stands corrected by CAROL KENDALL

Maryon Wilson Animal Park LTD (MWAP) is a company limited by guarantee, Registered Charity 1149051.

It was way back in 2010 that the council announced they were withdrawing funding from the animal park. But after a petition of over 7000 they decided that something had to be done, and in 2012 set up a company limited by guarantee for volunteers from the community to run.

It is taking a long time to create MWAP’s business plan, a service level agreement, and most importantly, an agreed Lease: but there is light at the end of the tunnel on this count.

Our pony Tiny
Tim is very popular with visitors - and with the young people who ride him with Riding for the Disabled (RDA). He also helps out in the park, too.

PHOTOS:
Mike Shaw



Whilst the finer details are sorted out the council are continuing to fund all aspects of the animal park.

So volunteers are not in fact doing the animal management although the horses owned by the Riding for the Disabled are looked after fed and cared for by their volunteers, as has always been the case.

MWAP Ltd are NOT in financial straits and have purchased 4 Ryland sheep for the park using money donated by Durkan. We already have a wide range of animals including ponies, deer, pigs, to say nothing of rabbits and guinea pigs! We have also provided the paint and arranged for community payback to smarten the place up, and all wooden buildings and fences have been painted a uniform brown.

We are about to pay for and replace perimeter fencing of the small animal enclosure which is long overdue. Also we arranged for a HUGE amount of dumped household rubbish to be removed.

We have been holding events such as an

Easter egg hunt, dog days and a summer festival as well as a really

good Hallowe’en event – not for the faint hearted! All these events are very well attended (even in the rain) and are family-affordable and have made money for the park and also raised awareness that the animal park even exists.

I personally have worked in the park on a voluntary basis for 25 years now and have never seen the footfall so great. We will hope to be running MWAP tours later



Luvva Duck!

Jan’s last show

Congratulations to our out-going Hon Sec of the Westcombe Society, who is mounting her last art exhibition, featuring new work entitled *Reflections*.

Jan is exhibiting her work at The Gallery, Ruby & Norm, 266 Lee High Road London SE 13 5PL until 11th June.

Jan writes: “This exhibition is called *Reflections*, mostly on my interpretation of the landscape genre, with hard edge structures and softer nature side by side.



“It is also about how light and weather conditions affect the the colour around us.

“There is an element, too, of seaside architecture (something I rather like). There will be some portraiture, and still life. (No cats this time)! Also an element of seaside architecture (something I rather like). No cats this time!”

Two of Jan’s paintings have been short-listed for the RA Summer Exhibition. Jan has had a total of five paintings shortlisted in seven years. So fingers crossed . . .

Last exhibition, did we say? Well, this is perhaps her last show, locally, as sadly, we are soon to say good bye to Jan as she starts her new life in Bexhill-on-Sea.

We shall miss her. Thanks, Jan, for all the work you have done for the Westcombe Society.

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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

Developments too far – or rather, too near . . .

says **MARILYN LITTLE**

A new planning application has recently been lodged with Royal Borough of Greenwich on behalf of Knight Dragon Developments Limited for further construction work on the peninsula.

This application increases the density of dwellings and proposes taller (very high) buildings but gives very little information on the provision of family and affordable dwellings. Permission is also sought to build retail units, including restaurants and bars as well as a hotel, 'education and healthcare facilities' and a film studio.

There is no doubt that the Westcombe Park area will be affected by the continuing development of the Greenwich Peninsula. The Westcombe Society has supported the objections of the Greenwich Society and the concerns of the No to Silvertown Tunnel group particularly with regard to the traffic and transport implications of such an increase in residential numbers.

The Westcombe Society has major concerns about the traffic implications of this development especially when considered alongside new residential units already under construction (and additional ones planned) together with other commercial developments in and around this area.

A larger Sainsburys is to open on Woolwich Road in June, and the new Marks and Spencers will follow soon after. These together with a large IKEA on the old Sainsbury's site, and possibly shops in and around the O2, will all have a significant effect on the Peninsula and the surrounding areas.

Westcombe Park residents already suffer congestion and pollution from the 102M and other routes and it seems that this could get worse. The front page story in this month's *Westcombe News* provides convincing evidence that air pollution even in our leafy area is a serious cause for concern – and this issue is certain to be exacerbated by the amount of development envisaged.



The Greenwich Society points out that the existing road infrastructure is far from adequate, and is already under significant pressure. Coupled with an already stretched public transport system, crowded buses and a very overcrowded North Greenwich station in the rush hour periods, investigation is needed before additional users are added.

We also have concerns as to how the Silvertown Tunnel will affect our area, particularly with regard to south-bound traffic emerging from the two tunnels, and the likelihood that if a toll is introduced, many drivers will seek rat runs across SE London to avoid the tunnel.

The Westcombe Society is urging the council to re-assure residents by providing an overarching Traffic/Transport plan to consider the combined impact of all this development. We would like to have an indication of any mitigating action they are considering before they agree any further planning applications. This plan should also take into account the implications of further traffic increase should the Silvertown Tunnel be constructed.

What do our readers think?

More transparency on housing

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is consulting on a new planning policy to make affordable housing viability studies more transparent.

The council is introducing a new planning policy which will mean developers who put in residential planning applications that don't meet the borough's affordable housing target will have to supply a fully public viability study.

Developers are required to include at least 35% of affordable housing in new residential developments in the borough of more than ten new homes.

At the moment, developers who say their development isn't economically viable with this level of affordable housing have to supply a viability study, which they can request stays confidential.



Blackheath High School Redevelopment - Update

Since the inaugural meeting of the School and Residents Forum, held at the school in February and where lines of communication were established, a great deal of work has been taking place in the background.

A number of major Contractors have submitted their tenders for the works, and they are currently being verified.

The next stage in the redevelopment will not take place until July 2015. At that time, installation of temporary classrooms and office units will take place to the rear of the school.

This phase of work will take about 10 weeks. It is possible that one or two parking bays adjacent to the rear school entrance will have to be suspended for short periods of time while the units are being delivered. Dates will of course be promulgated once known.

Anyone requiring further information should contact the Director of Finance and Operations (t.sutherland@bla.gdst.net)

The next meeting will take place in the school, hopefully at the end of June and possible dates will be sent out once they are known.

St George's Church Flower Festival Sat. 27th June



This event is open to everyone. If you wish to display a flower arrangement the theme is: London. The flower arrangement can be of any size or shape. Please register with Tracey Brito before 20th June. Her details are: traceybrito@btinternet.com or 07810 193 971 Otherwise come along at 2.00 on the day...!

The timetable for the day is:

10.00 – 12.00: Church open to drop off and/or create your display
12.00 – 2.00: Church closed for Judging
2.00 – 4.00: Church open for public viewing - cream teas available!

Parties in the parks

SUE GAY



Local band the Les Zoings put on an act for the children

Westcombe Park residents are in for a treat this month as they can enjoy two afternoons of free entertainment thanks to our local Friends of the Parks groups and the Royal borough of Greenwich.

The first will be held on Sunday 7th June from 12 noon to 5pm at the Greenwich Pleasaunce and the second at Mycenae Gardens on Sunday 28th June 12 noon to 7pm.

Both events are just two of 16 events which will run during June and July in the royal borough under the PARKSfest banner. This works with the 'Friends' of the various parks forming the Parks Forum, which is chaired by Terry Powley. As reported in May's *WN*, Terry was honoured with a Civic Awards last month. PARKSfest can then promote all the various events, share equipment and marquees – and enjoy the backing of the borough.

The Summer Festival at the Greenwich Pleasaunce on the 7th June has a packed afternoon planned. There will be a great selection of live music and dance all afternoon on the stage and around the park and a great Art Exhibition where you can see the work of local artists and maybe pick up a bargain.

There will be Children's entertainment at the Bridge, the centre in the South West corner of the park. This will range from craft sessions, put on by our local Churches, music and dance for children and story telling. There will be various kinds of sporting events, too.

Stalls run by local groups plus the usual monthly Sunday Market will also add to the enjoyment. Refreshments include home made cakes, hot and cold drinks plus a bar. And Pistachios in the Park, the local popular cafe has lots of specials on offer, (or BYO picnic!)

Then on June 28th there is a Summer Musical Extravaganza at Mycenae Gardens (please see pages 1 and 3 for the details). Put the dates in your diary or look up www.parksfest.org for more information of what's on this summer sue_gay@msn.com Tel: 88585193 (See www.fegp.org for more information)



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QUIZ ANSWERS (UK figures in brackets)

- 1 Matthew Pennycook
- 2 A 6
- 3 C 63.7% (UK 66%)
- 4 C 63% (UK 65%)
- 5 B 41 (UK 39%)
- 6 C 36 (UK 13%)
- 7 A 40% (UK 27%)
- 8 A 3% (UK 2%)
- 9 C 84% (UK 81%)
- 10 B £587 (UK £518)
- 11 B 25% (UK 19%)
- 12 A £325,000 (UK £210.000)

SCORES:
0 - 3: You need to get out more!
4 - 7: Not bad.
8 - 10: Good.
11 - 12: Why don't you stand for office at the next election!