London’s Wake-up Call

by 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 ClientEarth, 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 showing no signs of abating. 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 JV highlighted the problem – pointing out that the last government has passed laws to make 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 JV 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, Sadiq Khan, has confirmed that he died 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 cabby complained: “We were encouraged to invest in diesel-fuelled vehicles. Now we’re told we’ve got to get rid of them. Talk about moving the goal posts…” The test shows 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 Westbourne 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 tests show a number of local roads have unacceptably high levels of pollution. Levels of NO2 are measured at its junction with St John’s Road, and the North Circular Road, is just outside a school playground. Siebert Road, near the Bramshott pedestrian tunnel under the A102, scored 54ppm. And the A102 is indeed a source of air pollution, as is Westbourne Park Road. But even the greenery of Augusteins 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 with its programme to educate residents on the dangers of air pollution, as well as to encourage more tree planting and good air quality is expected.

The Woodside flyover was completed, as a borough, has implemented Air Quality Action Plan, though its latest published report, covering 2013, suggests it’s making slow progress. The Woodside flyover remains one of the worst spots for emissions in the borough. And with more traffic expected, due to the proposed Ikea Greenwich Pleasaunce: see page 7.

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

No one is likely to be confused by the fact that the dust has settled after the election, the JV somewhat belatedly conducts a Quiz about the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency.

1 What is the name of our new Member of Parliament?

A Tim Farron B Sadiq Khan C David Lammy

2 How many candidates were there for this constituency in the 2015 election?

A 4 B 5 C 6

3 What percentage of those in this constituency who could vote voted in the 2010 election?

A 49.9% B 52.9% C 62.9%

4 What is the average age in this constituency?

A 35 B 41 C 52

5 What is the average age in this constituency?

A 50 B 31 C 27

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 50% B 51% C 52%

8 What percentage of working-age adults here are on job-seekers allowance in this constituency?

A 1% B 6% C 9%

9 What percentage of people in this constituency describe their health as good or very good?

A 41% B 42% C 54%

10 What is the average weekly full-time earning for residents in this constituency?

A £340 B £387 C £610

11 What percentage of people in employment here work in the public sector?

A 11% B 32% C 50%

12 What is the average property price in this constituency?

A £255,000 B £345,000 C £365,000
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 Ollen The Greenwich Gallery Many of you will remember the exhibitions of Peter Kent’s work that The Greenwich Gallery has been presenting 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.riverwalkartnana.com, containing a remarkable collection of cartoons, drawings, paintings and campaigns, centered around the Thames and waterways in general.

Any comments should be addressed to:

The editor

To: Marilyn Little

The Westcombe Society Chair

Chairman of the Society MARILYN LITTLE reports at the AGM

Thanks to you all!

We 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. As a good example of this is a recent event being held at the Brickenden Centre, 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 Dryer to help with their ever-increasing laundry requirements.

It is probably appropriate to mention at this point that we will be holding the Dickensian Bazaar this year as we do not have access to the BHS facilities. We also feel that we were due a proper school fair which could come back revitalised. 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.

For many years, Myles has been running a bus route from Plumstead to Whitehall, which goes from Plumstead to Whitehall, has been running short to Lambeth North, forcing local workers to commute their journey on foot or pay extra to take a second bus.

Now the Charlotte School campaigns for the improvement of Charlotte and its local facilities – has launched a petition to demand transport bosses restore the 53 to its link to central London. Since January, route 53, has been running short to Lambeth North, forcing local workers to commute their journey on foot or pay extra to take a second bus.

The 53’s an important link used by Charlton people for work and leisure – and for their children.

We are NICEIC approved and a member of the BASEC GREENWICH ELECTRICAL ASSOCIATION. If you need any help, you can contact us on 020 8316 3085. For more information please visit our website www.vikingpower.co.uk.
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 from 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-careers 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@greenwich.gov.uk or visit www.nyal-greenwich.gov.uk/fostering

Giving parents a voice

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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.

www.greenwichparentvoice.com

Art Deco in Rangers House

In May, some of Blackheath High’s Senior Land 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 pieces included jewelled, ceramic plates and clay portrait sculptures based on ancient societies, inspired by Frederick Leighton.

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Tel. 020 8318 2530

St George’s Westcombe Park

Your neighbourhood church on Ulcombe Road. Regular Worship Times
Sunday 11.00am Holy Eucharist
Wednesdays at 12.30pm: Soup lunch and fellowship
Flower Festival Sat. 27th June 2.00- 4.00pm

This is open to everyone. If you wish to display a flower arrangement (any size or shape) the theme is: London. See也就in St George’s Parade register with Tracey Brity before 20th June: traceybrity@btinternet.com or 07810 195 971

Rev’d Robert 1 (Tim) Young 0870 814 4245
tim.young@gmail.com or http://www.st-georges-westcombe-park.org.uk/

Its focus on the BBC is unique

www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/CHLest2013.html

£9.99 from the British Library Bookshop or other good bookshops.
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Westcombe News June 2015

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Meet your neighbour: David Alexander

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

David, if it isn’t a rude question, when were you born?

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

 WN: A North Londoner, then?
 DA: Only for the last forty years. 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 Sunny Avenue in North Dulwich. Some years later we moved to Allsion 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, the dustman came once every Sunday, and there was a man on a tricycle who sold us our newspapers.

WN: Several different cultures.

DA: Yes. In May 1944 I went home on leave to France, where I saw the first V1 Doodlebugs passing overhead, one of which demolished our house in the Somme. I was never a high flyer, but I did manage to get my School Cert. in 1939.

WN: But your time in the army was interrupted by the Second World War?

DA: We were 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. We were relocated to Rossal on the Northwest coast.

WN: Where did you go to school?

DA: I volunteered for the army on April Fool’s 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 Allsion Grove very proud of the single pin 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 to Bombay on the P&O troopship SS Mohul and, after an uneventful passage, were posted to the main Transit Camp in Deolali where I broke both my legs the second day, and had to sit around for ten months before returning to India to continue my company, and then apply for early release to go to University.

WN: Oxford?

DA: Yes, Brunnscohere, to study English language and literature. Like many of my contemporaries, 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 practical than 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: Are you a regular cricket fan?

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 had the opportunity to put my skills to work as my management training there, and had to learn as I went along. One of my jobs for a time was as a communications officer, and I used to go trips seeing how long it took to staff an iron ship or whatever: pretty useless!

DA: I was posted to the triangles - the trips I did were very enjoyable, visits in Corfu, France, even India, as well as Spain, Portugal and Zanzibar. Quite often the time ruled by a Salazar, 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, Jurburg, Durban and Shobamba. Particularly enjoyable was the time I spent in a bachelor flat in South Kensington, a pretty arty period in my life. But the writing was on the wall: air travel was on the up and impact on passenger liners even then, and when the UCL was sold off to another company and the Clan Line, it became clear there was not much future for UCL managers, as senior positions were bolting, and I had to look for new management opportunities.

DA: I was 32, and spent a period during this and, 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, Curie, France, even as well, as villages around England. Family 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 unattached people at the party, and we soon became highly attracted! In less than six months, and I repeat, six months, we were married, with child number one on the way (our son Greg that wasn’t going well enough, I would have to face up to responsibilities. I needed a career.

DA: I decided on the law, and had four pretty tough years at the Guildford Law School. Several months after graduating, in 1965, to Westminster Park. At this time, Gina was a wonderful support to me – she went back to work as an emotional therapist and was lucky enough to be offered a post as office manager by the City firm of Rowe and Mass, who kindly allowed me time off to attend to my studies and exams in Guildford.

WN: Were you tempted?

DA: No, thank heaven. By this time, we were deeply embedded in our house in Colerne Road, and I had no urge to run hinter and you at the beck and call of Omnis. But my work in the firm became more diversified, and I was increasingly involved in admiralty rather than contract work. The time was coming when I thought I should step aside, as 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: Yes, rather to my amazement ... It was extremely hard work, but in the end gradually accumulated the necessary passes, and I got a job in the city with Norton Rose Botterill & 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.

WN: Which country do you feel closest to?

DA: Australia. It is where I was born, and I have a permanent visa. I became heavily involved in negotiating contracts with shipping companies, and shipping companies was my area of expertise. So for a while I managed to escape from UK litigation. I had to get well-acquainted with maritime law, and registering vessels under Liberian, Panamanian, Greek and Cyprus, 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 not much further than the sea. I even made a couple of flights to Concorde to Rio and Singapore, and Onassis flew me on his private Lear jet for a meeting on a Greek island, where I was once again asked to do something for Jackie Onassis.

WN: What was 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 the he cing was not providing grounds for cancelling the contract. We had a somewhat uncomfortable discussion before we each retired to think what next.

WN: A concrete foot-halt? Cement shoes?

DA: Oh no! There were no nudges: 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 hunting me!

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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 achievement. I also retained some sense of achievement.

WN: The question now then facing you and many others in similar situations: 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 Mag. Gina. Sir David Thames was the President of the Royal General of the Commonwealtsh Society and was looking for some help. I soon found myself helping to save the RCS from extinction. Its problems were common to many charity organisations, including parfois 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.

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

DA: 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 (with Gina). I retired, including some 22 visits to India.)

DA: And I also helped out a small education trust that was set up by a fellow who was among the first members of the Westminster Society.

DA: 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. 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 importance of keeping records, and for family history.

DA: David Alexander, thank you!
ARTS

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
THE QUEEN'S HOUSE
ENNOR: THE LIVES OF LOOKING
BY DRYDEN GOODWIN
Until 26th July. This acclaimed contemporary artist captures his first full-length feature film, plus his drawings. Free. 11:00 – 18:00 JUN 13th - 16th.

NEWSEUM
601 F Street NW.
Washington DC 20004
Mon - Fri 9:30am - 5:30pm

Charlton SE7 7JW (0208 853 0900). Continues even Dads welcome. Address: 14 Sherington Road,
Until 31st August AGAINST CAPTAIN'S mined not to end up like his father. Ages 15+

WHAT'S ON

SOCIETY King William Court, the University of
GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS
Non-members £5

2.30. Lectures on the
length feature film; plus his drawings. Free.
DRYDEN GOODWIN Until 26th July.
UNSEEN: THE LIVES OF LOOKING BY
Helen Holmes, Jez Noond and our very own Jane
launches an anthology of writings by Jennifer Bailey,
and a variety of stalls. Further information please call 020 8852 7575.
www.trinitylaban.co.uk
Mon to Fri 10am-5pm and one hour before evening
EXHIBITION
Blackheath & Greenwich Women’s
Mon 15th June. PRESS LAUNCH OF
7.00 pm FREE
at Blackheath Halls 23 Lee Road,

he can't afford to lose his way. An intense,
filtering through the clouds. SKYLAB

FLUIDITY
Mon, Wed, Thu 13:05h
SHADOW BOXING
Charlton House. Free.

BLACKHEATH FLOWER ARRANGING
SHADOW BOXING
The collision of our online and offline lives –
first-4th JULY

BRITTEN: Hymn to St Stephen
Nov 18th - 30th 7.00pm

THE QUEEN'S HOUSE
VENICE AGAINST THE TIDE
Candida Hoopes, a leading partner through a curious landscape where your

LEDGERSTATION: NEW VIEW)

THE GREENWICH THEATRE
The collision of our online and offline lives –
old-fashioned and a little on the serious side.

BLACKHEATH FLOWER ARRANGING
SHADOW BOXING
OnBlackheath that a public consultation meeting

Take either a classical comedy or a modern

In the seven years since he died, she hasn't quite man-

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS
Non-members £5

GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL,
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu 13:05h
ASHLEY BLASSE, GUITAR
play Chopin, de Falla and García Abril in
FRI 12 JUN 13:00h EDGAR CARDOSO, PIANO
play CPE Bach's Hamburger Sonata in G major, &
GUY SHEPHERD, PIANOS Play Beethoven's
Mendelssohn, and Korngold.

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play CPE Bach's Hamburger Sonata in G major, &
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Mendelssohn, and Korngold.

THE QUEEN'S HOUSE
VENICE AGAINST THE TIDE
Candida Hoopes, a leading partner through a curious landscape where your

LEDGERSTATION: NEW VIEW)

THE GREENWICH THEATRE
The collision of our online and offline lives –
old-fashioned and a little on the serious side.

BLACKHEATH FLOWER ARRANGING
SHADOW BOXING
OnBlackheath that a public consultation meeting

Take either a classical comedy or a modern

In the seven years since he died, she hasn't quite man-

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS
Non-members £5

GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL,
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu 13:05h
ASHLEY BLASSE, GUITAR
play Chopin, de Falla and García Abril in
FRI 12 JUN 13:00h EDGAR CARDOSO, PIANO
play CPE Bach's Hamburger Sonata in G major, &
GUY SHEPHERD, PIANOS Play Beethoven's
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LEDGERSTATION: NEW VIEW)
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 Prospects 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 ministers put too much pressure in education textbooks for overseas. Much of this was in East, West and Southern Africa.

He has written many books that are in use in Asia, China and the Caribbean. For some years he was heavily involved in developing an English textbook project for the University of China, under the auspices of the UN Development Programme. Through this UNDP project China acquired in 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 PER.E., 3 Inglewood Grove, Blackheath, SE3 7PH.

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 pouty 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,

WHILE 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 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 real good Halloween 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 this year at the weekends and while these will be free people can donate on the tours.

We have a website that is very good and was gifted to us by Draw by Day, so that people can see what is going on and donate or adopt an animal; and we are also on Facebook and twitter with I have to say a good following.

We cannot yet approach companies for corporate sponsorship as we do not hold a lease: companies will not sponsor the council and as we do not hold the lease that means the council is still holding the ownership of the animal park. So it is not the case that MWAP Ltd has approached the council to take back ownership.

ED: Carol Kendall is the chair of MWAP. Thanks Carol, for putting us right on MWAP, a splendid outfit which deserves public support: and we apologise for the misleading story in May’s WN which was based on the information obtainable at the time. Visit their website to find out more: www.maryonwilsonanimalpark.org.uk/.

Greenwich Open Studios

This Year’s Greenwich Open Studios Weekends is 13/14 and 20 /21 June. 1.00-6pm Started in 1977 this is one of London’s most successful open studio events. Local artist Janey Jones will be taking part this year, showing her paper collage work and vitrines, Kora playing.

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

A GFMA regular, Mus 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

Jane’s Greenwich Decorative and Fine Arts Society lecture is on “The splendour of Yemen’s Architecture”, given by Sarah Searight from the University of 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 East, West and Southern Africa.

Jan’s last show

Congratulations to our outgoing 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 & Noir, 266 Lee High Road London SE 13 3PL 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 colours around us. This is an element, too, of seaside architecture (something I rather like). There will be some portmanteau, 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 shortlisted 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, she is about to go good bye to Jan as she starts her new life in Bish-ill-on-Sea.

We shall miss her. Thanks, Jan, for all the work you have done for the Westcombe Society.
A new planning application has recently been lodged with the Royal Borough of Greenwich on behalf of Knight Dragon Development 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. Those 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 proposes that air pollution even in our leafy area is a serious cause for concern.

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.

The first will be held on Sunday 7th June from 12 noon to 5pm at the Greenwich Pleasance and the second at Mycenae Gardens on Sunday 28th June from 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 Posley. 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 help in the funding of the borough.

The Summer Festival at the Greenwich Pleasance 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. Sunday 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 poplar 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@btinternet.com Tel: 85551919 (See www.pgp.org for more information)

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 (s.terry@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.

The Pointer School (Blackheath)

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.

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