



Westcombe NEWS



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October 2015 Issue 8



EHIR Long May She Reign



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

Hope for Siebert Road?

September's *WN* briefly mentioned the problems facing the residents of Siebert Road from the A102.

ANNE ROBBINS describes how they set about dealing with them.

Along one edge of the Westcombe Park area runs a major road - the A102. Virtually a motorway, it carries a heavy load of vehicles between Kent and Essex, with plenty of local users too. And while the A102 is of course hugely convenient for drivers, those living nearby are all too familiar with the constant noise generated by its traffic.

For one group, after two years of hard campaigning, some relief may be at hand. Transport for London has agreed to undertake a noise survey of Siebert Road, and to run a feasibility study of installing a noise barrier between the houses and the A102.

It's been a real struggle to get this far. The neighbours have always had strong friendships. They babysit each others' kids and have street picnics and parties. It's only natural.

Siebert Road and the bottom of Invicta Road seem a little isolated, with the garages at the rear of Westcombe Hill on one side and the A102 to the other. But it's also a main pedestrian route for parents taking children to Invicta and Sherington Schools using the Charlton underpass.

Air quality

In 2013 an air quality survey by the No to Silvertown Tunnel Campaign revealed a nitrogen dioxide reading of 52 – the EU legal limit is 40 - in Bramshot Avenue, just on the other side of the underpass. The Siebert Road residents were shocked. They knew that Greenwich has high rates of asthma in children – and that exhaust from cars and lorries can cause respiratory and heart problems in adults, too. And they started to act.

The residents' group, including Becky Ham, Amanda Bradley, Vicky Rubery, Eve Oldham and Rebecca Moore, have sent

hundreds of emails. From standing and prospective ward councillors to the then Managing Director of Transport for London, Michele Dix, the neighbours approached everyone they could think of.

Petition

Their letters led them to politicians and civil servants at local and national levels. They also raised a petition, leafleted both locally, and across other areas that back onto the A102, and became experts in noise and air pollution mitigation measures. In that time, the problem hasn't diminished. The Westcombe Society air quality survey of this year shows that local air pollution levels remain too high, with a reading for NO₂ of 54 in Siebert Road.

Ward councillors Cherry Parker helped facilitate the petition and Paul Morrissey brought TfL into discussions with senior officers at Royal Borough of Greenwich. New local MP Matt Pennycook insisted on a meeting with TfL once he took his seat following the election in May. And this seems to have been what finally pushed TfL to look seriously at the problem.

The hope is that TfL will eventually install special barriers that would direct noise vibrations and air flow carrying vehicle emissions upwards, away from the back gardens where children play and their parents try to enjoy their green spaces.

It's still not a sure thing. TfL will need to find funding, either as part of the Silvertown Tunnel development or within other project work. And TfL may also decide that barriers would be ineffective.

But when faced with what sometimes seems an unapproachable bureaucracy, reaching this point is a testament to what a well-organised, tenacious group of neighbours can achieve.



JUST TIME TO VOTE!
www.greenflagaward.org
Select London on the map, find "Greenwich Park" & click "Vote for this site" button.
BUT voting ends noon Sept. 30th!

There's something very special about an Indian Summer in Greenwich Park. Not surprising that the park has been awarded a prestigious Green Flag award. Now the hunt is on for which of the nation's green spaces is the People's Choice for the best green space in the country. Vote now for Greenwich Park! But you'll have to be quick – voting ends Sept 30th.

PHOTO: NG

Refugee crisis: Help!

Bishop Christopher of Southwark has issued a statement saying: "There is a real and urgent need to act locally in the face of a global challenge, and respond to the UN's plea for resettlement. This would be in keeping with the finest Christian and British traditions of championing human dignity and offering sanctuary to those fleeing persecution."

As the refugee crisis deepens, not just in Calais but across Europe, the Bishop has appointed Mr Peter Haddock, a Reader in the Morden Team Ministry, as his interim Chaplain to coordinate responses to the refugee crisis from within the Diocese. "We can help with money, with offers of lodging, and with many other forms of assistance."*

Local churches are getting on board. Rev. Tim Yeager of St George's in Glenluce Road has offered to put up one family, and urges those who can to do something similar. In September, members of St George's Church, and other local churches from different denominations, took part in a rally in central London calling for solidarity with the refugees.

So what else is happening locally? Many people are donating to charities working with refugees, both in this country and abroad. Age Exchange in Blackheath Village is accepting donations such as

warm clothes, sleeping bags, tents, and shoes, from 9.00am - 6.00pm on weekdays and 10.00am - 5.00 pm on Saturdays.

Blackheath and Greenwich United Nations Association is holding another of its International Art Auctions in Mycenae House, on November 14th in aid of the work of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. More details in November. The number to ring is 0208 858 8489.

Greenwich Council has indicated that it expects the Government to meet any of the "unavoidable costs" of housing refugees.

Meanwhile a petition is circulating calling on Greenwich Council to "offer home to 50 refugee families in our Borough. Many years ago we welcomed and supported the Vietnamese Boat People and now their families are part of the fabric of our region. We can find space to share with those refugees now in dire straits. After all if we had to flee war, terror and torture wouldn't we hope to be given refuge?"

The petition can be found on: <http://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/refugees-welcome-in-greenwich-14>

Similar petitions sponsored by 38 degrees are going to other councils around the country.

* *Enquiries to Peter Haddock at the Diocesan office: 0207 939 9400*

Greenwich comes top

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has been recognised as the most successful council in the country for preventing homelessness after receiving the Gold Standard award for tackling and preventing homelessness.

Achievements include taking action against rogue landlords, preventing residents from becoming homeless and

reducing the need for housing people in temporary accommodation.

The number of households in temporary accommodation was reduced by almost 60 per cent between 2008 and 2013.

Among many other achievements, last year the council prevented 1800 households from becoming homeless through their casework and support.

< < Newsbriefs > >

Calling all Council tenants

The Council reminds its tenants that if they sign up to direct debit payments before October 30th., they will be entered for a draw. The prize: £1,000 worth of shopping vouchers. **For details visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housingpayments**

Speed restrictions

The Royal Borough is introducing 20mph speed limits in residential streets across the borough to make our streets even safer.

The speed restrictions in Westcombe Park are not always observed, but they have had a definite calming effect. Recent figures show that the borough has seen the biggest reduction in serious road casualties of all London boroughs.

The borough is trying to improve this

record even further, and bringing in lower speed limits is an important part of that work, alongside awareness-raising about road safety. The three new 20mph zones are in Thamesmead, Woolwich, and Kidbrooke. New traffic calming road humps are to be built on Westcombe Hill.

Howdy, Heidi!

Spotted during the OnBlackheath events in September: local MP Heidi Alexander, now Shadow Health Secretary.

Those who went to the event seemed to have a very good time – though some of those who didn't thought the noise was "excessive." It was heard in Humber Road; one resident in Strathden Road said that the low frequency base beats pounding in the background competed with the last night of the proms. *See our letters page.*

Air quality test "flawed"

Environmental lawyer Alan Andrews, of ClientEarth, says that the proposal to add another runway at Heathrow faces a legal challenge: it is claimed that the Airport Commission's findings on air quality are flawed.

Buying a new car?

London is introducing an Ultra-Low Emission Zone from September 2020, with drivers of cars falling below pollution standards forced to pay a £12.50 charge to enter the city. It is claimed that new diesel technology in the U.S. has virtually eliminated particulate (soot) emissions from new diesel-fuelled vehicles.

However, there are warnings that the UK is dangerously dependent on imported diesel fuel.

Westcombe Society

The Chrysanthemum Tea for senior citizens

on 10th October 2.00-4.00 pm at Mycenae House.
Invites will be going out from 21st September. If you don't get an invite or are new to the area and would like to attend, please contact Caroline Owens on 020 8853 0948.

Quiz Night 23rd October 7.30pm for 8.00pm start at Mycenae House.

Please book your team of 6, or your place on a team, by calling Caroline Owens on 020 8853 0948.

Chicken/fish 'n chips may also be ordered

Cost: Members: £5 - Quiz only £11 - Fish and Chips £6.50 - Chips only £10 - Chicken & Chips
Non-Members: add £1.00 to the above price list
Prizes galore! Bar. Please book by Tuesday 20th.

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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http://westcombe.blogspot.com*

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Please send this membership form to:
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Westcombe Woodlands Open Day Tim Barnes

The Westcombe Woodlands is a steep wooded area of around 4 acres almost completely surrounded by residential property. It lies between Maze Hill and Vanbrugh Hill just south of Maze Hill Station – very near Greenwich Park.

On Sunday Oct. 4th between 10am and 4pm an open day, hosted by the Friends, will give you the opportunity of visiting the woodlands. Our new MP, Matt Pennycook, has agreed to ‘open’ the new gate into the Westcombe Woodlands at 10.30, at the end of Seren Car Park.

It is hoped that members of the Westcombe Society, and others, will take the opportunity of exploring the woodlands and seeing what has been achieved there in recent months by volunteers.

The ownership of the Woodlands is now vested in the Woodland Trust and the Trust has entered into a lease with the Friends who will have the continuing responsibility of caring for and improving the area.

Volunteers have been working month by month to improve the woodlands while maintaining their essential wildness. We recently paid for the installation of a gate in the perimeter fence at the end of the Seren Park Car Park, behind Maze Hill Station, to allow access. (This car park is for residents only, and visitors are invited to come on foot or by public transport.)

Because of the nature of the terrain and the wildness of the woods, public access will be limited to 2/3 occasions a year, although volunteers on the monthly work days will see the woods at all seasons. We are creating steps, (using surplus railway sleepers) to lead up from that entry point to the mound and the path to the glade.

The woodlands are on a steep slope and good walking shoes or boots are recommended. It is hoped that visitors may be able to access the “top” part of the woodlands from Lasseter Place. We have done a lot of work there too, clearing a path and planting tree whips and clusters of bluebells leading up to a vantage point looking out over the woods.

It would be great if we had a good turnout on October 4th and we were able to recruit more volunteers and enroll additional Friends. But first and foremost it is an opportunity for local people to see and enjoy a unique and largely unknown place.

Come and see for yourself on Oct 4th!

The next volunteer days: October 4th, November 7th and December 8th.

Why not become a friend?

westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk
www.westcombewoodlands.org

Tim Barnes is Chair of the Friends of Westcombe Woodlands

Your local paper – brought to you by the BBC

Last month, the BBC put forward plans to offer staff and content to local newspapers. Among his proposals for a new "Open BBC", Lord Hall revealed plans for a new multi-million pound partnership with local news groups to provide a network of 100 public service reporters.

The News Media Association, which represents the national and regional press, has criticised the BBC's plans. The NMA accused the BBC of further "expansion" into local news provision as a way of recruiting more BBC local journalists "through the back door".

In a statement, NMA vice chairman and Johnston Press chief executive Ashley Highfield responded: "The BBC's latest proposals are welcome recognition of the need to cooperate and not colonise."

He added: "There are many aspects of the report to be commended . . .

"But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the BBC's proposal - to create a network of 100 local public service reporters for towns and cities 'run by the BBC' and with the BBC itself able to 'compete to win the contract' – are anything other than BBC expansion into local news provision and recruitment of more BBC local journalists through the back door.

"The local newspaper sector already employs thousands of journalists and is the only reliable source of independent and trusted local news across the UK."

The Editor of the *WN* said "As far as the *WN* is concerned, what is needed is not professional journalists muscling in on local papers: what is really needed is much more community involvement.

"The *WN* would welcome more contributions of news and features from local members of the community."

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: Andrew Graham Vanbrugh Hill

I refer to September's issue of the WN, which deals with the Royal Borough of Greenwich's turning a blind eye to pollution issues with regard to the new liner terminal at Enderby Wharf.

The behaviour of planners is at best absurd. The cost of electrical supply to Enderby Wharf would be recovered from charges – and in any case is irrelevant to the legal issues. The failure to uphold EU 2012/33 on controlling air pollution also constitutes a breach of the General Agreement on Tariffs, as it gives London an unfair trading advantage.

The same planning officers also breached numerous regulations when they permitted a development between Foyle Road and Vanbrugh Hill. Thankfully, all the committee vetoed the proposal, and an appeal was refused.

Very serious questions are raised by the failure of planners to engage sufficiently with local public benefit. PS Congratulations to Matt Pennycook MP for standing up for the law. If only Parliament did the same – especially on international issues ...

From: Emily Norton Coleraine Road

Those who attended the OnBlackheath event found it most enjoyable and well organised. But some residents were disturbed by the noise. It was heard in Humber Road, and in Stratheden Road it accompanied Last Night of the Proms.

The Environment Committee of the Westcombe Society would like residents to let them know how they feel about this. Even if you didn't find the noise a problem we would like to know so that we can get a balanced view.

Some residents may have received a letter from the council giving advance information, and giving the numbers to ring for further information or to report noise disturbance. Greenwich Council Noise Team's number was in theory manned throughout the event.

If you did not get through please do try again or fill in the online form at https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/site/xfp/scripts/xforms_form.php?formID=240&language=en.

And let us know, too, please! The Blackheath Society is conducting a survey. To respond, please visit <http://bit.ly/1JvoWUi>. The survey closes on Sunday 27th October.

Open air cinema



Is the East Greenwich Pleasaunce off Halstow Road haunted? Who knows. But just in case, we bring you the outdoor cinema experience – Ghostbusters – on Friday 25th Sept. and E.T. 26th Sept..

To book, see below. Don't say that we don't do anything for you, our wonderful customers!

It should be lovely and warm like the other years . . . but to make sure you stay snug, bring chairs, sleeping bags, blankets and woolly jumpers. Book your tickets for this event here: <https://www.popupscreens.co.uk/tickets/events/view/95>

With love and good news from Lizzie at the cafe in the Pleasaunce:

Pistachios in the Park

East Greenwich Pleasaunce

Chevening Road, Greenwich SE10 0LB



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CORRECTION: Sorry Cllr Cherry Parker, yes, we know your name isn't Cherie. Apologies for spelling your name wrong in September's issue of the *WN*.

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LOCAL NEWS

Knight Dragon gets the go-ahead

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Planning Board has approved a landmark planning application for what is said to be the largest single regeneration project ever given approval in London.

In September the board granted outline planning permission to developers Knight Dragon. The development will create more than 12,000 new jobs.

Overall, subject to agreement by the Mayor of London, the Council has given the go-ahead at Greenwich Peninsula for:

- 13,000 new homes, meaning a total of nearly 16,000 new homes, of which almost 4,000 are affordable
 - The demolition and complete rebuild of the North Greenwich tube and bus station allowing for more bus capacity
 - A new 40,000 sqm film studio creating 1,500 new jobs
 - 60,000 sqm of new business space
 - 24,000 sqm of retail/food/drink space
 - One or potentially two new hotels
 - Two new schools (1 primary, 1 'through school')
 - A new 20,000 sqm visitor attraction
 - A new ferry jetty terminal
 - A new 5k running track round the site
 - New healthcare facility
 - Expansion of Ravensbourn College
- Agreement of the planning application also secures £110-£115 million funding for

community benefits through the Section 106 agreement and the Community Infrastructure Levy. The site at Greenwich Peninsula is identified in the London Plan as an opportunity area delivering considerable numbers of new homes and jobs.

Significant and lengthy consultation was carried out as part of the planning process. Cllr Denise Hyland, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich said:

"This is an historic day for Greenwich Peninsula . . . This scheme will bring the long-term regeneration of Greenwich Peninsula to fruition, cementing what is a whole new district for London providing housing and jobs for tens of thousands of people and landmark new facilities and buildings."

The Westcombe Society and other local groups continue to have reservations about this scheme and other residential and retail developments on the peninsula. There are serious concerns about traffic, transport and pollution in particular. The Council has been asked for their proposals on these issues, and a reply is still awaited.

There are concerns too about the density of new residential units, and the provision of affordable and social housing. ***A fuller response can be found in our next issue; readers' comments are welcome.***

October on the farm

Woodlands Farm has a busy October! On October 18th we celebrate Apple Day from 11am to 4pm: your chance to discover, and buy, different types of traditional British apples; with music by Skinners Rats, Kettle Bridge Concertinas, food from our Café, and lots of activities. And it's free!

Hibernation Trail

Join us on Wednesday 28th Oct. (1-3.00pm) to see how all the animals are getting ready

for the winter and finding somewhere to hibernate and sleep through the coldest part of the year. Tickets £1.00. No need to book. For information call 020 8319 8900.

Horrible Hallowe'en 30th & 31st Oct.

Come along to a spooky evening on the farm. Wear fancy dress as we explore the farm by night as well as make a spooky craft to take home. (6.00 - 8.00pm) Tickets £4 per child. To book go to our website: www.thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org

Robert Gomme CB

It is sad to relate that Robert Gomme died on June 21st aged 84. He attended our PER* group meetings and local Ingleside Grove meetings whenever he could.

He addressed the PER Group with a scholarly paper on the occasion of the centenary of Tolstoy's death in November 2010, and he contributed a number of articles and reviews to *Prospero*, including a review of the Hannah Arendt film.

Prior to that he had a distinguished career, part of which was in the Department of the Environment, and part in the Cabinet Office. The highlight was probably when he was sent out by HMG to decide how to build up the airport at Port Stanley after the Falklands War.

He was for a number of years on the committee of the London Library and he wrote a scholarly biography of George Herbert Perris 1866-1930 *The Life and Times of a Radical* (Peter Lang 2003). It was received with acclaim by scholars of the period. He also wrote articles for the Dictionary of National Biography.

* *Philosophy for Educational Renewal*

Robert was a humanist and probably qualified as a Tolstoyan, though he did not follow Tolstoy quite as far as becoming a pacifist and wearing peasant gear. He visited Tolstoy's home and he quotes with approval Perris' account of Tolstoy's philosophy as based on the twin pillars of Reason and Love.

His entry in *Who's Who* does not list his interests, but they undoubtedly included writing, reading, walking, poetry and music. He was also a long-time member of the Westcombe Society.

As a companion he couldn't be bettered: he was always cheerful, open to ideas, interested in all aspects of culture and politics, and well informed. He was particularly proud that he "sat at the feet" of Michael Oakshott for two years as an undergraduate in politics at the LSE after the war. He will be greatly missed.

Chris Ormell *Chris Ormell is the Hon Sec of the Philosophy for Educational Renewal Group, and edits its magazine Prospero. This obituary appeared originally in the PER newsletter.*

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Tree boughs to its fate



This was the scene in Vanbrugh Park in August when a Portakabin-type building on its way to Blackheath High School smashed into overhanging branches of a tree at 61 Vanbrugh Park, ripping a section of branch off altogether. Another branch dangled down into the road and a third large branch was badly damaged.

Local resident Roger Allen phoned 101 (the Police non-emergency line) and soon the police arrived, as did a Transport for London Incident Response vehicle.

Finally, two tree-surgeons were summoned and the damaged branch was cut away. At least the tree did not suffer the fate of its sister further along the road, which had to be cut down last year. . .

Peace in the Pleasaunce

Sue
Gay

On Sunday 18th October, it will be 75 years since a Blitz bomb landed on East Greenwich Pleasaunce and a free event is being organised to remember it, and to celebrate 75 Years of Peace in the Pleasaunce, all starting at 2.00pm.

In 1940, a bomb landed near the Bridge Community Centre, in the SE corner, along with several others in the area. At 3.00pm local Blitz expert Steve Hunnisett will give a talk about the Blitz experience in Greenwich. Did you know for example that Halstow School was turned into a fire station and that the playground was full of sand for locals to fill up their sand bags? The children that weren't evacuated called it the beach and used to play there.

Starting at 2.00pm there are displays, games, music and children's activities around the cafe area and at 4.00pm there will be a Wartime Tea (including Spam sandwiches!) Two or three older residents will be on hand to talk to you about their experiences including the sky lighting up when bombs landed on the docks.

The Halstow Community Choir and the Rachel Jenkins Trio will provide us with music from the time, and you can find out how Greenwich helped in the "Dig for Victory" campaign.

Entrances to the Pleasaunce are in both Halstow and Chevening Road.
Keep Calm and Come Along!

Blitz Event at East Greenwich Pleasaunce

On Sunday 18th October it will be 75 years since a Blitz bomb landed on East Greenwich Pleasaunce. An event is being organised to remember that and celebrate 75 Years of Peace in the Pleasaunce.

It will be held at the Pleasaunce café, starting at 2pm.

2pm - Displays, games and children's activities.
3pm - talk by local Blitz expert Steve Hunnisett who will talk about Greenwich's Blitz (and the Pleasaunce).
4pm - Wartime Tea, involving food of the time.

Free to attend so KEEP CALM AND COME ALONG.



Remembering Trafalgar's heroes

A Trafalgar Day Act of Remembrance will take place at 12 noon on Saturday 24th October at the memorial in the East Greenwich Pleasaunce to which all are welcome.

The remains of some of those who died in the battle of Trafalgar 210 years ago are buried in the East Greenwich Pleasaunce so it is a highly appropriate place to hold this event. A salvation army band will provide the music and the Church of England East Greenwich Ministry Team will preside over the Act of Remembrance.

There will be standard bearers from the Royal Naval Association and the Deptford and Greenwich Sea cadets will parade.

Wreaths will be laid by the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, the deputy Lord Lieutenant and representatives from the WRNS and other local organisations.

The Greenwich branch of the Royal Naval Association will be attending the event together with residents from Trafalgar Quarters. The event is supported by the Friends of East Greenwich Pleasaunce.

The Revd Margaret Cave, Team Rector said, "We are delighted that this Act of Remembrance will continue despite the sad death earlier this year of ex-naval serviceman Terry Stacey who organised the event for many years."

Congratulations to all those chosen to give presentations at the Mycenae Soup event. Results next month!

St George's GLENLUCEROAD

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Revd Robert T (Tim) Yeager,
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FEATURES

Part of our heritage

Neville Grant

Twenty-one pubs across England have just been granted listed status by Historic England. All of those listed were built between the end of the 1920s and middle of the 1930s. They seem to have been selected as examples of a reaction against "modernism".

Some exhibit characteristics that could be described as an almost Disneyfied version of Tudor England, with phony beams and oriel lattice windows: like some of those stockbroker houses one sees in Bromley or Woking.

In his 1946 essay *Moon Under Water*, writer George Orwell described his ideal pub: it would be "uncompromisingly Victorian", offering "no glass-topped tables or other modern miseries... no sham roof-beams, inglenooks or plastic panels masquerading as oak"; it would be a place where people "go for conversation as much as for the beer" and should be "family gathering places."

The nearest pub to us of those listed is the beautiful Daylight Inn in Petts Wood. Built in 1935, it was so-named because of local resident William Willett's campaign for daylight saving.

Although many pub-goers may feel outraged at how invidious this new list is, it is good news that these pubs have been recognised in this way. They join a long list of many other historic pubs, including England's oldest, Ye Olde Fighting Cocks in St Albans, Hertfordshire.

So what about our own local pubs? –

According to *Closing Time*, a report by Christopher Snowden published by the Institute of Economic Affairs in Dec. 2014, the UK has closed 21,000 pubs since 1980 – half of these since 2006. Among the reasons cited are the alcohol duty escalator, regulation, the recent decline in disposable incomes, the smoking ban, and long-term "cultural changes".

"... when you have lost your Inns, drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England."

Hilaire Belloc (1912)

among them: the Cutty Sark in Greenwich, with its wonderful upstairs view of the Thames; and The Trafalgar Tavern, in Park Row, once frequented by Gladstone, and writers such as Thackeray and Dickens, notable for its splendid Regency architecture as well as its riverside views.

But even mentioning these two is invidious: here in Greenwich we are truly spoilt for choice: among the best (according to voters on the LONDONIST) are The Greenwich Union, The Gipsy Moth, The Plume of Feathers, The Pelton Arms, The Old Brewery, The Admiral Hardy, The Richard 1, and of course, nearer home, the Vanbrugh. Nearer home, too, the British Oak has its own devoted supporters.

The Royal Standard

Nor should we forget two grand Victorian-built hostelrys nearby: The Angerstein, and the Royal Standard. The latter was built for £2000 at what was then called Myrtle Place by William Wynn and was opened in September 1848.

According to local historian Neil Rhind*, the name of the pub was chosen for political reasons: at the time, the Chartists (nineteenth century Corbyns supporters!) were holding mass meetings on Blackheath, and the owner wanted to demonstrate his loyalty to the Crown. The pub had a bowling green and Quoits Ground, and also sponsored a cricket team.

The Royal Standard became a Courage House early on in the Twentieth century,

... though this plaque giving the history of the pub was removed by a previous owner ...



by which time, Rhind notes, its name was being used to identify the immediate locality (Batley Green) as "The Standard" – a practice which continues to this day..

In 2014, Mitchells and Butler (MAB) acquired most of the outlets owned by Orchid Group including the Royal Standard (MAB also owns the Princess of Wales in Blackheath). The pub opened up in May this year, newly refurbished, under the friendly management of Ian Cullen. The pub describes itself as "an elegant yet cosy pub to enjoy craft beers, seasonal pub food and a friendly atmosphere."

The Royal Standard holds the Cask Marque Award for serving great quality



PHOTOS: NG

real ale. A good time to visit includes Thursdays – when the pub offers 3 small plates and a bottle of wine for £20 – and a Quiz Night. The TV screens have gone as well – they seldom made for the lively conversation Orwell would hope for.

It is also a good place for a Sunday roast – and an evening meal. The only other place you can regularly have an evening meal in the area is the legendary Sun Ya Restaurant directly opposite.

Contact Info: 020 8858 1533

44 Vanbrugh Park, Blackheath, SE3 7JQ

* Blackheath Village and Environs, 1790 - 1970 Wicklemarsh and the Cator Estate, Kidbrooke, Westcombe and St Johns Park. by Neil Rhind 1987

Science meets Art

An exhibition of botanical paintings by Lindsey Malin is being held at the Blackheath Halls from November 3rd – 29th 2015.

The Society of Botanical Artists offers a two year distance learning diploma course, made up of twelve assignments and three final pieces of 'diploma work'.

Local resident Lindsey Malin decided to enrol for the course beginning in January 2013. There were two opportunities during this time to attend demonstrations and meet the tutors.

The choice of subjects was wide, and some flowers and plants were bought from Lewisham market, fruit and vegetables during the weekly shop and sometimes



flower heads or leaves from the garden (or someone else's garden!) The course is quite seasonal.

One of the assignments was a composition of wild flowers in a habitat. Lindsey settled on the uneven verge alongside the A2 on the heath. It was windy and noisy but after two or three days all the studies were finished and she had enough information to compose the page at home. The work paid off in the high mark she received for this assignment.

She was awarded the diploma in March 2015 and is showing all the finished course work at the exhibition as well as a sketchbook and some earlier botanical pictures.

She can be contacted on lindseymalin@gmail.com.

50 years of Thomas Tallis

This year the Thomas Tallis Society ("TTS") celebrates its 50th anniversary. TTS was founded in 1965 by Philip Simms who remained Musical Director of the choir from its formation until 2006.

Stephen Dagg, Director of Music at St Alfege to the present day, took over from Philip in 2006 as the second Musical Director of TTS. In 2014 TTS appointed Eamonn Dougan as its third Musical Director to take us into our 50th year.

We are celebrating with a concert on 17th October at 7.00pm, in which all three Musical Directors will take part, both playing/singing and conducting, together with the Thomas Tallis Society Orchestra, led by Simon Standage.

Eamonn Dougan will conduct Haydn's *Missa Brevis Sancti Johannis de Deo*, known as the Little Organ Mass, with Stephen Dagg playing the organ.

The mass will be interspersed with motets, including the first performance of a new commission by Roderick Williams composed for this TTS 50th anniversary concert.

Stephen Dagg will conduct Tallis's 40 part motet *Spem in Alium*, a popular part of the TTS repertoire. The first performance of *Spem in Alium* by TTS was in 1966; this will be TTS's 7th performance, the previous performance being part of the memorable celebration of the Millennium of St Alfege in 2012.

In the second half, Philip Simms will conduct Fauré's *Requiem*, first performed by TTS in its very first concert in 1965. Eamonn Dougan will sing the baritone solo, Stephen Dagg will play the organ and alumni members of TTS will join the present choir. The concert concludes with *The Trumpet shall Sound* and the last chorus from Handel's *Messiah*. **The concert is at St Alfege's at 7.00 pm on Saturday 17th October. All concert attendees are invited to the post-concert party in the church hall, with entry £2.50. Tickets for the concert are available now online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/50years £18 for allocated pew seat, £14 unallocated seats.**

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WHAT'S ON

ARTS

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 23rd July Mrs Beaton by Dr. Annie Gray Non-members £5

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich Mon. 12th Oct : Fakes and Forgeries by Lalcolm Kenwood 020 8852 7873 Non-members £8.00. Annual membership £60.

MADE IN GREENWICH GALLERY 8293 9823 www.madeingreenwich.co.uk 324 Creek Rd SE10. @Hillrena A changing display of local artworks, cards and poetry books

October 9-18: Prints by Kethi Copeland and Anna Portisch. The artists will run workshops for children within the "Big Draw" project.

Oct. 23-Nov. 1 "A Time to Gather Stones Together, works by Isobel Jane Kimberley, Sue Dudman, Westergaard and Jenny Wiggins & Esther Smith. **GREENWICH GALLERY** Peyton Place SE10 8RS **Oct.:** Photographs by Tony Othen: **Britain 1967 Oct 19th - Nov. 1st.** Anita Strasser & Others **Mon-Friday 9.30-5.30** weekends 12-4pm. Free.

THE BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY are pleased to be holding their Autumn Exhibition at the **Paul McPherson Gallery**, 77 Lassell Street, SE10 9PJ, 20th - 30th Oct. 12pm to 5pm Mondays to Fridays, 10am to 2.30 pm Saturdays. Free.

GREENWICH HERITAGE CENTRE Artillery Square Royal Arsenal 13th Oct - 12th. March 2016 **WATERCOLOURS:** a sense of place

CHILDREN & FAMILY

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Mon 5th Oct. THE SCARECROW's WEDDING Harry and Betty look for their wedding outfits ...

Sun. 18th Oct. ROSIE'S MAGIC HORSE A new musical adaptation of the classic children's story receives its UK Premiere in Greenwich

Sun 26th Oct. THE KING OF TINY THINGS Age 3+ £11. Children £8.50

Tue 27th - Thurs. 29th Oct. THE SNOW DRAGON Tue 2.00 pm Wed & Thurs. 11.00 am & 2.00 pm £11.00 Children £8.50

Sat 31st Oct. 8.00 - Nov. 1st Sat 11.00 am, 2.00 pm & 5.00pm Sun 11.00 am & 2.00 pm THE LOST THINGS £11.00

BLACKHEATH HALLS Children's Theatre

Sat 10th Oct 3.00pm Recital Room, LEAPING FROG Adventures of a frog £7.00

Sat 24th Oct 3.00 pm Recital Room

BIG GOLDOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS PLUS... A comical retelling of the story £7.00

THE ALBANY, DEPTFORD

Sun. 11 Oct., 1pm & 3pm. Tutti Frutti Productions And York Theatre Royal Present **SNOW CHILD** By Emma Reeve. Inspired by Arthur Ransome's adaptation of The Little Daughter of the Snow. Tickets £7, £24 family ticket. Ages 3+

Thurs, 15th - Fri 16 Oct., 10am, 11.30am & 2pm

Sun 18th Oct. 1.00 & 3.0 pm World premier of 16 SINGERS by Kate Morley. For babies up to 18 months (accompanied) NO older children. £12 for an adult and baby pair, £7 for additional tickets.

Sun. 18th Oct., 1 & 3pm. Open Sky Productions Presents **THE MIGHTY PRINCE AND OTHER FABULOUS FABLES** £7 £24 family Ages 3+

Mon. 26th & Tues. 27th Oct. 12 & 2pm. **WHEN KING GOGO MET THE CHAMELEON** Magical African dance theatre production. Tickets £7 / £24 family ticket. Ages 4 NB At 9 Giffin St, SE8 4RJ.

Thurs. 29th & Fri. 30th Oct. 11.00am & 2.00pm. **BEDTIME STORIES** £9 / £7 concs. Ages 5+



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THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

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

EAST GREENWICH PLEASAUNCE Chevening Road. Family 'BEES & BUGS' event, to be held on **Sun. 11th Oct. 1-4.00pm** - a celebration of all things wild in the newly-improved Green Zone. Free entertainment includes:

- Forest school sessions and bug hunts
- Bug hotel and wormery activities
- Bug and Bee arts and crafts
- Outdoor storytelling
- Mud kitchen and den-making fun

MYCENAE HOUSE

Fri 9th. Oct 8.00pm JAZZ NIGHTS featuring **SARAH BOLTER** (sax, flute, clarinet + Karen Newby piano/vocal + guests. For info contact Dave on: 01689875683 or visit www.jazznights.co.uk

Tues. Oct 27th. BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION: PUBLIC MEETING The next UN conference on Climate change is taking place in Paris in December. While governments dither, local groups (and councils) are taking up the challenge. **"What can local councils do to combat climate change?"** Cllr Khan of Greenwich Council will lead a discussion, followed by Q & A. 7.45 - 9.00 pm (Following AGM of UNA at 7.00 pm) All welcome (Mycenae House)

Fri 30th Oct. ICARUS CLUB: IAN DEARLOVE Band 8.00 pm Tickets £10.00

TEA DANCES 1.45 - 3.45pm 1st and 3rd Thursday £3.00 Call Harold 8551 4272

BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon. & Thurs. 7.15 pm & on Wed. at 1.15 Tel. Ron on 0208-319-1312

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

SPOKEN WORD

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY

13th October John King on Sir Francis Joseph, the forgotten industrialist Meeting at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3. Please use the station car park. Non members £1.

BLACKHEATH FLOWER ARRANGING SOCIETY Next meeting: **Oct 16th** Christine Brazier – Around the world in 80 minutes Contact: siancaroline@googlemail.com

BLACKHEATH HALLS

Fri 16th Oct. The BBC's JEREMY HARDY 2015 TOUR His 4th decade in stand-up. £14.00 | £5.00 (job-seekers, unwaged)

THU 22 OCT 20:00h RECITAL ROOM

MYCENAE COMEDY CLUB, Mycenae House

Fri 16th Oct. 8.00 pm DANA ALEXANDER and friends : a taste of Jamaica! £10.00

BLACKHEATH HALLS

FRI 23rd Oct 8.00 pm Great Hall AUDIENCE WITH WILL SELF £18.00 |£16.00

Wed 28th October: 6.30 pm Recital Room, Blackheath Halls **NEIL RHIND** MBE, FSA: 200 years of entertainment in Blackheath. Meet up with friends over a glass of wine & visit the exhibition.

AGE EXCHANGE Blackheath Village

Wed. 7th Oct. Local poet LYNNE NESBIT gives a free poetry reading in the studio 2.00 - 3.00 pm

Fri 16th Oct. 1.00 - 3.00 pm FRED PIPER talks on **Cryptography: from Black Art to Popular Science** £5.00 on the door, free to members

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

Tues 6th - Sat 10th Oct. THE GREAT GATSBY Based on F Scott Fitzgerald's novel

Sun 11th Oct 7.30 pm PYGMALION £16 £13.50

Tue. 20th - Sat 24th Oct 8.00 pm OTHELLO Spectacular performance by all-female cast £15 | £10

Sat 17th Oct. AN EVENING WITH JAMES RHODES the maverick pianist **£18.50 | £16.50**

Sun. 18th Oct YOU BRING ME JOY

Reading of Adrian Drew's controversial new play

Thurs. 29th Oct. 7.30 pm DAVID STARKEY on MAGNA CARTA £17.00 | £15.00

BLACKHEATH HALLS

Wed 7th Oct. OCT 6.00 pm

SPONSOR ME AWARDS SHOW FOR EMERGING FASHION DESIGNERS Great Hall Blackheath Halls. £25 | £20 | £11

THE ALEXANDRA PLAYERS:

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Wed 28th to Sat 31st Oct WYRD SISTERS

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07867 627 987 or alexandraplayers@gmail.com

THE SPACE 239 Westferry Road E14

6th - 10th Oct. 7.30 THE MAN WHO FOUND HIS FREEDOM Life from a wheelchair £14 | £10

27th - 30th Oct. 7.30 CLASSIFIED Four Plays for Hallowe'en £12 | £10

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Fri 2nd Oct. 7.30 pm Charlton House

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Wed. 14th Oct. 7.30 pm Greenwich Theatre The Women of Kampala mark Ugandan Independence Day with Congolese & traditional Uganda songs with Eben Oke and the Yoruba Soul-Jazz. Tickets £16 (Concs) £13.50 Info 020 8858 9497

BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel. 8463 0100

Fri 2nd Oct 6.00 pm Great Hall

TRINITY LABAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, SIDE BY SIDE Members of the Philharmonia Orchestra perform with Trinity Laban students, with some of Prokofiev's ballet music. Free.

Sun 4th. Oct 11:00 am Recital Room

FERIO SAXOPHONE QUARTET perform works by Bach, Nyman and Pärt. £14.00 | £12.00

Mon 5th. Oct 1.10 pm Recital Room Fenella Humphreys, Violin & Nathan Williamson, piano perform works by Pitfield et al. Free

Wed 14th Oct 7.30pm Recital Room **BEATS IN THE BAR:** Trinity Laban jazz combos and visitors from Saint Louis College of Music, Rome. Free

Thu 15th Oct 7.30 pm RUBYTHROAT AND SHAPESHIFTER Début of two Trinity Laban ensembles, Rubythroat and Shapeshifter £5.00

Sun 18th Oct 7.00pm Raphael Wallfisch (cello) & Michael Boehmann (violin) play great duos. £16.00

Mon 19th Oct 1.10 pm Recital Room

ADELISSA CASTELLANETA, GUITAR performs Classical Spanish guitar music Free

Tue 20th, Wed 21st Oct 7.30 pm Recital Room

BEATS IN THE BAR Free

Sat 24th Oct 8.00 pm Great Hall

THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC: ABBA! The ultimate tribute to ABBA. £22 | £20

Sun 25th OCT 11:00am Recital Room

SOUTHBANK SINFONIA £14 | £12

Thu 29th Oct 7.30 pm Great Hall **TRINITY LABAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** To celebrate Diego Masson 80th birthday. £12.00 | £7.00

Fri 30th Oct 8.00pm Recital Room **OPERA** SCENES Final year students perform scenes from Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*. Free

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ISSUES

Education: Are we getting it wrong? The *WN* interviews Jun Wang-Williams

IN August the BBC showed three films in which five Chinese teachers were pitted against their British counterparts in a school in Hampshire, The films were called *Are our kids tough enough?* - Chinese School. Though one might have thought *Are the teachers tough enough* would also have been an apt title.

The BBC required the Chinese teachers to teach one group using traditional Chinese approaches: features of this approach included the “lock-step” teaching of large undifferentiated classes, very tight discipline, teacher-led instruction, with lots of what used to be called “chalk and talk” while students take notes, tough testing, long hours – a twelve-hour day – followed

NG: Jun, where did you come from?

JY: The ancient city of Xian, the only city in China with its walls still intact. I graduated there in bio-chemistry, and worked as both a teacher and researcher in China.

NG: How long have you lived in Britain?

JY: I came here in 1997 to do a PGCE at the University of Surrey.

NG: And then taught here?

JY: Yes first at the newly opened Academy at Thamesmead. and then later, for ten years, at Townley Grammar School for Girls in Bexleyheath.

NG: How did you get involved with the BBC programmes?

JY: I'm not sure: they tried to recruit teachers from China, but for some reason only managed to recruit two – a Maths Teacher, and the Mandarin teacher. The other teachers, like me, were living or working in England.

NG: What are your thoughts on the two contrasting approaches to education?

JY: I think the way Chinese education was supposed to be depicted was misleading: the traditional Chinese way of teaching now barely exists. In 2001 the Chinese government introduced a National Curriculum Reforms which embodied many aspects – the best aspects you could say – of western education, including a more participatory activity based approach; but in such a huge country there is great variation in how the curriculum is implemented.

As for the western style of teaching, the same thing applies: when Ofsted isn't

by two hours of homework. The class was unselected, and sat in rows of desks facing the front.

The British teachers had a more student-centred approach with their group: the students sat in groups, in smaller classes that were "set" in terms of ability; the teacher was a facilitator and helper, and the emphasis was on their students "learning actively", as independently as possible, rather than being taught.

At the end of a month, both groups of students were tested. Subjects learnt/taught were Maths, Science, English, Mandarin, and, in the case of the Chinese-taught group, PE. (Every Chinese student has to pass a PE test to progress through

around enforcing a doctrinaire version of student-centred learning, many teachers do indeed actually teach, in teacher-led sessions. You will find this common by the way in grammar schools and indeed public schools (combined of course with a participatory approach), which achieve the best academic results! It was interesting to note that the higher achieving students in our class were the ones who liked our direct teaching approach best.

NG: It is often suggested that Chinese approaches reward things more easily quantifiable, eg. retention of facts, or knowledge, but don't measure or value less quantifiable things like creativity and imagination. What are your views on this?

JY: I think there may be a lot of truth in that. On my last visit to China I was very impressed by the technical skill of many students in art classes: but I did not feel that they were very imaginative or creative; the opposite is probably true in many British schools.

NG: Did you find it hard to teach in a traditional Chinese way, given the experience you have had in Britain?

JY: Yes! I had to remember the way I was taught, when I had to play the BBC game. But there were many times during the course of the month when I departed from that stereotyped model: in effect, I mixed and matched. For example, I rearranged the classroom furniture, and had the pupils seated in groups, so that they could co-operate in doing experiments. In one experiment, I wanted the pupils to observe

the system, regardless of his or her academic achievement)

The tests showed the students in the class taught by the Chinese achieved up to 10% better results; this despite very serious disciplinary problems in the first two weeks, as students rebelled against the tough regime. Their behaviour was so bad that the headteacher had to move in to read the riot act.

One of the teacher was Jun Yang-Williams, well-known to some *WN* readers as someone offering private tuition in Science in our Marketplace columns. Your editor, who has long experience of Chinese education, interviewed her (below).

Science teacher Jun-Yang-Williams – one of the stars of the BBC series!



a beam of light, so had to switch off the lights, and darken the room by closing the curtains. Then a BBC man came in and complained that the cameras could not see the pupils' faces! So I said, yes, but we need them to see the beam of light!

NG: So how do you explain the results?

JY: To tell you the truth I was surprised; before the results were announced my colleagues and I were very nervous – and of course we were very pleased when the results showed our students did better.

But the experiment is not really very conclusive: our methods varied, though it is true that the classes were much more teacher-dominated, it is also the case that we had far more class time, and much more homework: so you could say we should have done better, even though our teachers were parachuted in with alien approaches!

NG: Thanks Jun. Well, the series certainly provided plenty of food for thought - and in closing I do need to say how impressed I was by all the teachers in both groups.

In May the biggest ever global school rankings were published by the OECD, with East Asian countries in the top five places, with Britain in 20th place.

So are we getting it all wrong?

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Book review

Steve Tongue has lived in this area since 1975, working as a sports journalist for LBC, the BBC and the *Independent* among others – and now he's written a book: *David Beckham: Fifty Defining Fixtures*.

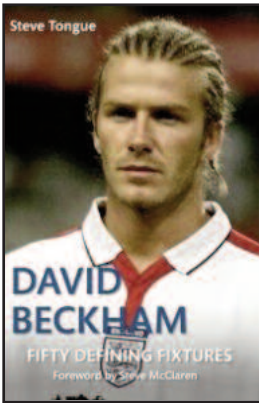
Hour after hour of practice in the park close to his East London home set David Beckham on the road to becoming one of the world's best-known sportsmen, renowned throughout the world, from Chile to China.

An integral part of Manchester United's Class of '92 and Treble-winning team of 1999, he reluctantly left the club for Real Madrid after falling out with manager Sir Alex Ferguson, then played for LA Galaxy, AC Milan and Paris Saint-Germain. Twice runner-up as World Player of the Year, he is the only Englishman to win the league title in four

different countries.

In his book *David Beckham: Fifty Defining Fixtures*, Steve Tongue traces the key matches for club and country among the highs and lows of Beckham's extraordinary career. Former England manager Steve McClaren contributes a foreword defining his qualities as a player and a person.

See more at: <https://www.amberley-books.com/david-beckham-fifty-defining-fixtures>. The book is published (in paperback) by Amberley Publishing. Price £11.69.



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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

Green is better than grey Ann Hill

Paving over front gardens is becoming increasingly common, and today one in four front gardens is completely paved over*. In London this is equivalent to paving over 22 Hyde Parks. Although paving front gardens may seem a logical solution to car-parking problems, these extra hard surfaces and loss of greenery have considerable adverse consequences, including the following:

Increased Air Pollution: Loss of vegetation leads to higher levels of nitrogen dioxide and traffic pollutants that can cause conditions such as asthma. Trees, bushes and greenery improve the air we breathe by giving off oxygen and filtering out injurious pollutants.

Hotter summer temperatures: Paving absorbs heat during the day and radiates it at night making ‘urban heat islands’. Trees can reduce summer air temperature by as much as 10 degrees, and the temperature difference is especially noticeable at night.

Flooding: Paving, especially if non-porous, increases rainwater run-off, which collects pollutants on its way. London’s run-off goes into the sewers, which can become overloaded during heavy rain and the excess is diverted into the Thames. Last year 55 million tonnes of untreated sewage and rainwater were jettisoned into the river. Porous paving helps to reduce this problem.

Subsidence: Paving can lead to subsidence and cracking of garden paths and walls because the ground may shrink if rainfall is prevented from getting into the soil.



Loss of wildlife: Removing trees and vegetation leads to loss of habitat for birds, insects and other creatures.

Searching for solutions With a little imagination we can have an attractive front garden AND space for the car. After all, who wants to look out of their window at a lot of concrete? This year’s winner of the BBC2 Great Chelsea Garden Challenge, Sean Murray, designed a lovely front garden with an abundance of plants which he combined with practical off-street parking.

Possible plants to consider:

Trees: holly, magnolia, crab apple, Japanese flowering cherry, silver birch

Shrubs: camellia, lavender, skimmia, Mexican orange blossom, mahonia, spotted laurel

Hedges: berberis, hornbeam, yew, beech

Climbers: pyracantha, clematis, climbing hydrangea, ceanothus, honeysuckle, ivy

Perennials: lady’s mantle (Alchemilla), Japanese anemone, catmint, geraniums, heuchera, flax lily, stipa and other grasses

Dry shade: elephant ears (Bergenia), cyclamen, spindle (Euonymus), deadnettle, great woodrush, Japanese spurge.



ABOVE: Grass is good.



RIGHT: It doesn’t have to be solid concrete

The Royal Horticultural Society has launched its Greening Grey Britain campaign which is a call to action to transform hard grey spaces into green beautiful places to enrich lives and benefit the environment. Some suggestions are listed below:

- These pictures show what can be done.
- LEFT: Courtesy of the RHS.
- **Keep paving to a minimum.** Porous paving is best. Just two paved tracks may be all that is needed. Low-growing plants like creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) and bugle (*Ajuga reptans*) tolerate being parked over, and can be planted in pockets in the paving or gravel.
 - **Place shrubs near the house and grow climbers up the wall.** These plants will help to insulate the building in winter and also provide cooling in hot weather.
 - **Plant a hedge to filter out dust and fumes.** It also provides a home for wildlife.
 - **Fill corners and borders with garden plants, and trees.** These will intercept heavy rain, slowing run off and reducing pressure on drains. Trees with a slender trunk take up little space.
 - **Place pots and containers where there is no soil.** They provide colour all year round and make the space more appealing.
 - **Where possible plant berry-bearing trees and shrubs.** They provide food and shelter for birds – and of course flowers produce pollen and nectar for bees and other insects.

Even the smallest space can be greened and made beautiful while still providing room for a car. Lovely front gardens and leafy streets provide pleasure and increase the value of homes, as well as improving the environment. Front gardens provide many remarkable benefits – so let’s keep the green in Greenwich.

* More suggestions and advice can be found of the RHS website: www.rhs.org.uk/communities/pdf/Greener-Streets/greening-grey-britain-report

“If at first you don’t succeed . . .”

Try, try, try again”, is the usual mantra, but one could just say “Push your luck.” Local residents have received a notice from the Royal Borough of Greenwich’s Directorate of Enterprise, Regeneration & Skills that the developers have yet again appealed to the Planning Inspectorate over their scheme to build on the semi-derelict lock-up garage site behind 34, Foyle Road. This saga has been going on for years. Plans to build on this site have already been rejected, twice by the local planners, and once on appeal, although the current scaled-down plan for two houses may be rather more aesthetically acceptable than the original plan to squeeze in three dwellings. However, local householders have raised strong objections including:

- * the narrow and twisted access path would create

chaos during the building phase and present serious difficulties, and potential damage to neighbouring properties

- * very difficult access for emergency and refuse vehicles and larger service trucks and delivery vans;
- * the loss of a peaceful green space which is part of an important corridor for birds and a habitat for stag beetles would be regrettable
- * access to the site would mean that Foyle Road – where there are already parking problems, would come under even more pressure, as access to the narrow lane would have to be widened.

As the Inspector commented, it ought to be possible to replace the existing run-down garages economically with good quality lock-ups which would be a significant asset in an area that is desperately short of off-street parking. A case of foiled again? Watch this space.

Fish survey

Good news for anglers – and river-watchers! A fisheries survey by the Environment Agency has revealed a huge variety of fish in the River Thames. The survey found Dace, Smelt and Common Bream, as well as marine species such as Sea Bass and Flounder. A variety of invertebrates, which are an important food source, and several rare and unexpected fish, such as Seahorses and Pogges, were also discovered. Since the 1960s, specialist fisheries teams have surveyed fish populations at 8 locations on the tidal Thames, between Gravesend and Richmond, and identified 17 different species in total.

These surveys are supported by volunteers from Zoological Society of London (ZSL). The work involved netting off small sections of the river and counting the amount of fish in each section. Peter Gray, Environment Agency Fisheries Officer, comments: “These surveys provide a valuable snap shot of what species are living in the river – and the freshwater and marine juveniles that use the estuary as a valuable nursery area.” Joe Pecorelli, Citizen Science Project Manager at ZSL, said: “These surveys have enabled us to better protect species such as the European eel, allowing us to identify barriers to their migration and build eel passes.



Pogge: *Agonus cataphractus*
Also known as: Armoured Bullhead. Size: Up to 20cm. Its body is covered in hard, bony plates and so it has a protected, but stiff and inflexible body. On the back of the fish there are short and blunt spines. Not something you would find wrapped in the W/N in your local chipper!

“Thanks to this partnership, the volunteers have become an even greater asset to ZSL’s mission to make the capital’s rivers a better place for wildlife and people.”

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