Reach for the sky – but at what cost? 
SARAH WINTERBOTTOM reports on London’s airport controversies – and local implications

It won’t be Boris Bikes, then talk of Boris Tunnel (Silvertown Link), then came the Boris Cable Car and now Boris Island – a proposed 4th London airport, capable of handling 150 million passengers a year, offering an alternative to a 3rd runway at Heathrow – and the most expensive of the mayor’s initiatives to date, with an estimated price tag of £70 billion.

The residents of Greenwich are watching closely as the controversies over London’s 4th airport unfold. Many are particularly concerned about the possible noise impact of a 4th airport.

In his New Year’s speech in January, the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, officially launched the idea of a new airport build either on the Isle of Grain or on reclaimed land in the Thames Estuary.

Described as one of the first electoral address of the forthcoming mayoral elections in May, Boris clearly laid out his transport vision to a timetable apart from his main rival Ken Livingstone.

“London needs a 4th airport,” said Boris. “We need to solve our aviation problems; if we went for the Thames Estuary, as some have been suggesting, we would create an incredible engine for the commercial capital of the world.”

The 4th airport would create an incredible engine for the commercial capital of the world.

In a related report, Too Dirty for Business? HACAN argues that the crucial factor in retaining London’s pre-eminence as an international business location is improving the quality of life – by reducing pollution, noise and congestion – rather than providing yet more air links.

Critics have questioned the choice of location as birds’ natural habitats would have to be sacrificed. There is also the problem of ‘bird strikes’ which, according to a Government-commissioned report in 2003 would be the highest in the UK (compared to 10 other UK airports).

There’s still a long way to go before Boris Island becomes a reality. Meanwhile, we can look to the sky with Boris’s £500 million cable car from the peninsula to the Royal Docks in East London.

Construction is well on its way and is clearly visible at the O2. While no official commitment has been made, rumour suggests that it will open on 1st May. As always at London’s major transport initiatives, watch this space (and adjust your seat belts!)

Welcome to Royal Greenwich!

On Tuesday 7th February The Royal Borough of Greenwich welcomed the King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery as they rode through the streets of Greenwich to their new home, in Napier Lines – a purpose-built equestrian training facility and accommodation centre in Woolwich Garrison in Repository Road.

Residents in Charlton were the first to enjoy a spectacular view of the entire troop, in full regalia, with six magnificent horses pulling First World War 13-pounder field guns.

With the borough’s long history of links with the military, the event had additional poignancy, as those guns were returning to the home of the Royal Arsenal – where they were built – and of the Royal Artillery – for whom they were made.

Royal Greenwich: “Viva!”

Despite the snow, thousands of people turned out to celebrate Greenwich’s new status.

Spectacular fireworks in Woolwich, Eltham and Greenwich marked the occasion on the weekend of 4-5th February. The spectacular display above Greenwich – as George Frederic Handel’s Coronation anthems “Zadok the Priest” waltzed across the cold night air.

Calling all local charities! The Westcombe Society will soon be choosing which local charity to support in the coming year. Please send applications, giving specific details of how the money would be spent, to Marilyn Little, 161 Westcombe Hill, SE3 7DP. Email: marilyn.little@btinternet.com

The Westcombe Society
Sat. 10th March Children’s Nearby New Sale 2.00 – 4.00 pm Mycenae House
Come early to get the best bargains – children’s clothes, toys & equipment.

Daffodil Tea for Senior Citizens Sat 17th March 2.00 – 4.00 pm Invitations are on their way!

Easter Egg Hunt Sat. 7th, April 2.00 pm. Come to Mycenae House Gardens for an Eggcellent Hunt! No adults allowed unless accompanied by children!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MAY 20th.

The Society needs to elect its new committee and Chairman, as Gordon Baker is retiring this year.

We urge members to come forward and stand. We would welcome some new faces and fresh ideas, so that we can continue to evolve – a Membership Secretary needed in particular!
**WESTCOMBE NEWS**

**New manager tunes up at Mycenae House**

**DAVID HALL**

Mark Johnson-Brown, who is the new manager of Mycenae House Community Centre, first knew Westcombe Park as a young musician almost 25 years ago, living in a Glenlucie Road bedsit.

He also made the shift from professional drummer to event and venue management. He ran the programme at Blackheath Halls, and was inaugural director of the Mick Jagger Centre, in Dartford, helping to raise, in the words of the original grant, and seeing the building through to completion.

With the Arts Council he headed a regional development group, helping arts centres and theatres from Milton Keynes to Canterbury collaborate and streamline their programme of work and marketing. He also worked with MK Dons Football Club, and a comedy festival in Cheltenham.

He is looking forward to being the activity coordinator in Mycenae House. “There is already a lot of music-making here, with jazz night as well as choirs and brass bands,” he says. “I would like to see more performances at Mycenae House, and more audiences, but I also appreciate we need to be good neighbours to nearby people.”

Some of the older residents remember it as it was then. But better still, look at Delacourt Rd as it is now: there is a very efficiently run mini-market and off-licence run by the Desai family, shop with an international reputation, a Barbers, court Motors which many of us use to service our cars. Not forgetting Michael Handcock’s Estate Agency, and the marine office above it: Elfin Thanks, Sue. It has to be said that strictly speaking, Delacourt Rd is little more than a little lane, but it is very good to be reminded of what it has to offer. We plan to cover other shopping areas in our week on the road in subsequent issues – including other businesses in the Delacourt Road. The Westcombe Society’s Blog got there first, perhaps because of their crucial role in forming a Traders’ Association.

**Farewell party**

From: R Owen
Bramstone Road.

The article in this month’s WN refers to the Olympic Games and their impact on the local area. It is interesting. But it ignores one basic problem with the Olympics, which is that the majority of people use it to commute either to Canary Wharf or Bank. There is only one rapid transit system in some form as it is the only way to deal with the capacity to take any more traffic. There is only one temporary respite but after a year it was back to stand-by seats normally available from Cutty Sark station, with DLR trains diverted to Tower Gateway. I commuted into Bank station on the DLR for seven years and I witnessed the huge growth in the traffic over that period. It was very civic, with severe normal availability from Cutty Sark station, but it was as crowded as the Northern Line. The introduction of three-car trains gave a temporary reprieve but after a year it was back to stand-by seats. It is not a sensible or long term strategy for TfL and politicians.

It is a great pity that the DLR was never taken seriously as a major part of London’s transport infrastructure when it was originally conceived as it could have been so much better.

**Letters to the editor**

Letters to the editor may be edited through lack of space. All correspondence is treated as confidential. Letters are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or the WN.

**From: F. Dunsnap, Greenwich**

Congratulations to Greenwich Council for ensuring that the Olympic legacy will be so fitting for the history of the area.

Along the riverfront we will now have: the Old Royal Naval College, the beautifully restored Cutty Sark and foot tunnel entrance, and, surely, the crowning glory for a borough fit to beRoyal: the nearest to the building to the Cutty Sark, the theme of which was thrown into Nando’s. Now that is what I call tasteful development. Well done Greenwich.

**From: Cllr. Alex Grant (Lab.), Westcombe Ward**

The author of your story in February’s issue of the WN says Delacourt Rd is a “cold wind blowing through the library service” in Greenwich, and a “Valentine’s Day massacre” is being planned, seems to have spent too much time reading Agatha Christie from the Fiction section.

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) is not any old “private company” – it is a not-for-profit social enterprise set up as a co-operative organisation. It is well-endowed for the way it has run leisure services. As the article states: “The council refurbished Blackthorn Library on Old Dover Road and extended its opening hours. I hope that GLL will be able to make further improvements.”

In an ideal world it would be great to keep everything in house, but the council has to make savings of £63m over the next four years thanks to cuts from the Government.

**From: Sue Whistmer, Westcombe Park**

The item about Old Dover Road was very interesting – but what about Delacourt Road?

Once, before the motorway, Old Dover Rd was the most important thoroughfare in the area. But as old photos you can see a parade of shops with delivery vehicles, babies passing outside in prams, and people looking at the world through the dusty glass windows.

There is now a great deal more of interest than ever to get to this happen, please check www.mogus2012.com

See p.7 for a response to this from the Chairman of the Westcombe Society.
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How Blackheath made rugby history

GRAHAM COX

Earlier this season, while the rugby world was focused on its premier tournament in New Zealand, a small ceremony was taking place in a corner of the clubhouse bar of Blackheath Rugby Club. Blackheath captain Tom Bason unveiled a sculpture of former player Francis Maule Campbell, created by another rugby player. The son of a wine merchant, Campbell, born in 1844, was educated at the Blackheath Proprietary School and, along with many old boys, joined the fledgling Blackheath Football Club in 1859.

Along with the captain F W Moore, Campbell was Blackheath FC’s representa- tive when a series of meetings with eleven other clubs was held at the Freemason’s Tavern, Great Queen Street, WC2 in late 1863 to form an association with ‘the pur- pose of settling a code of rules for the reg- ulation of the game of football’. A draft set of rules (the ‘Cambridge Rules’) were proposed to all members, but Campbell objected to the proposal to remove hacking (the tripping up or shin- ning of an opponent) as he felt it removed the integrity of the game.

As a result, Blackheath, withdrew from the new association preferring to play under its own ‘Rugby Rules’, and the irrevocable schism meant the game of foot- ball was split forever.

Ironically, following an abandoned match with Richmond three years later, both clubs decided to outlaw hacking from rugby and, understanding the need for a code of conduct within their own game, Blackheath became a founder member of the Rugby Football Union in 1871.

Campbell thus had the unique distinction of being one of the founders of both the Football Association and the RFU.

Fitting then, that this tribute to a Blackheath icon of rugby should be created by a local player of a more recent vintage. Desmond Brett, a Cambridge Blue, has made no less than 183 First XV appearances in the Club front-row.
The story of St Alphege

A thousand years after St Alphege's martyrdom, ANNE ROBBINS looks at his life and times - and his brutal death

£49,000, which was paid, but Alphege refused to allow ransom to be paid for him. Exasperated, the Vikings held an assembly, and though not all agreed with the decision, they killed Alphege. A Christian minority was distressed at the impurity; others seem to have thought it a waste of a valuable bargaining chip. In any case, the Vikings began to step back from their strategy of slash and burn. Alphege's body was taken almost at once to London, and he was buried at St Paul's Cathedral. As a martyr for his beliefs – the paganism identity of most of the Vikings still remained strong – Alphege was venerated, and his tomb became a focus for anti-Viking resistance. This continued into the reign of Canute, himself Danish, who had the remains taken to Canterbury and placed there by the high altar with great reverence. There, the cult of the saint was encouraged, and churches dedicated to him are scattered throughout Kent and far beyond.

Strategic importance of Greenwich

It is no coincidence that the Vikings chose Greenwich as winter quarters. As sea raiders, the Thames was crucial to them, and indeed they depleted local food supplies and seemed almost as much of a burden. That winter, the Anglo-Saxon kings decided to negotiate, and offered to pay tribute, to persuade the Vikings to go. The following spring, they paid £30,000 - a huge sum. But this payment only encouraged the Vikings. In 1009, the Danish army did not return home, but spent the winter by the Thames, raiding Essex, London and Canterbury.

More tribute payments were offered, but the raiding continued. Oxford, Cambridge, and other towns were burned; southern England was overrun; and the English rulers could not coordinate their strategies. The Chronicle argues that payments to the Danes were agreed too late: "And nonetheless for all this truce and peace and tax, they travelled everywhere in bands and raided and roped up and killed our wretched people."

The attack on Canterbury

In 1010, the Vikings attacked Canterbury. In September, they burnt the Archbishop's altar with great reverence. There, the cult of the saint was encouraged, and churches dedicated to him are scattered throughout Kent and far beyond.

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THE ARTS

COMMUNITY
THE Westcombe Society 16th March – Children’s Newly New Sale 17th March – Dubuffet 14th April – 8th Art Fair 21st April – Quiz 22nd April – Macmillan Sponsored walk, Cobham, Surrey. Details next month. Please ring Caroline on 020 8354 9548 or you are interested in either taking part in, or sponsoring, a team. 22nd May – MoA 16th June – Jubilee Tea for Senior Citizens July – Summer Picnic – date to be confirmed 29th Sep. – Macmillan Coffee Morning 29th Sep. – Children’s Newly New Sale 17th November – Christmas Bazaar

BLIND INDEPENDENCE GREENWICH March 30th CONCERT The Stuendos of Blind Independence Greenwich’s musical work- shop performs at The Forum, Trafalgar Road, 145 per ticket. For more information 020 8953 2474 15th March 6.30 – 9.00 pm CASINO NIGHT London Gaming Centre, The Valley, Floyd Road SE7 1HL. £5.00 inc. gaming prizes. Pay bar!

BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY Fri 16th March, 7.45 Mycenaean House “Ways to Teach Reading to Inpatients Dyslexic Behaviour” to be given by Mrs Derek Logan OTTIE AND THE RED, OLD DOVER ROAD Sun 25th March 3.00 pm Local author Rachael Martin launches her book Red Riding and the Street and the Little Wolf. Book signing, face painting, cake, competition. All welcome. WESTCIBE WRITERS’ CIRCLE 1st. Thursday each month, 2.00-4.30 at Mycenaean House. Ring Jean Pope on 020 8301 1872

BLACKHEATH FLOWER CLUB Thurs 8th, 15th, 29th March, 12th, 19th April, 3rd, 10th May, 14th, 21st June, 19th July, 16th August, 13th September, 11th, 18th October. £3 non members £2 members. Contact Mrs Jenny Tidmarsh 07834 197 054 morris@nortonlibrary.co.uk

BLACKHEATH, 1st April 1640 – 200th Anniversary We commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of William Blackheath. New members welcome, contact Margery Nargroge on 020 8964 7428

BLACKHEATH FEMALE LAWYERS’ INSTITUTE: First Wednesday of every month at 7.30 at Sixteenth Century Museum, Old Church Road. SE10 9JR exclamation mark 94@bnet.com SECHNEE CIRCLE – June, 2nd at Mycenaean House. We rebuffer and lunch. Contact 020 8752 2072. Blackheath Free. New members welcome. Contact Marjory Nargroge on 020 8964 7428

THE Clarendon Goffes Afternoon Tea 26th March, 2-4pm. Hotel is ideally located for taking afternoon tea or fine dining. The Clarendon Goffers Afternoon Tea is served in beautiful surroundings. Our traditional afternoon tea served from a selection of the finest ingredients. Our afternoon tea is perfectly complemented by a glass of chilled Prosecco. Included in your choice is a selection of traditional afternoon tea cakes, pastries, sandwiches, mini sandwiches, scones with Devon Clotted Cream, Strawberry Preserve, The Clarendon Goffers Afternoon Tea Served with a Selection of Cheshire Malted Barley Tea and a glass of chilled Prosecco. £12.90

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Food for the brain!

The weather out there might be a bit chilly at the moment, but there’s always a warm welcome to newcomers at Blackheath Bridge Club.

We meet at Mycenae House, near the Royal Standard, on Monday and Thursday at 7.30 pm and on Wednesday at 1.15 pm. Sessions last for about three hours.

The Club is affiliated to the English Bridge Union and Master Points are awarded. We have a HOST for players who come along alone on almost all Mondays, and those Thursdays when there is no special event, and on some Wednesdays, so you can always be sure of a partner on these days.

Dates when there is no host is shown on the calendar. Even when there is no host, our Partner Officer can usually find you a partner. On Wednesdays and Thursdays there is no allowed access.

Most of us play simple systems, (4 card and 5 card majors) though no systems are always a warm welcome to newcomers at Blackheath Bridge Club.

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Buy local too - if you can

Fairtrade Fortnight is not just about buying fair-trade products from overseas. The idea can and should also be applied locally, and the Co-operative has its "Buy Local" column going for years.

Which is why people are so upset by Lewisham Council’s decision to turn the running of the car park at Blackheath Station to Apcoa Parking Ltd – Network Rail’s national operator, with resultant big price hikes – including Sundays! This is bound to have a bad affect on the highly successful Farmers’ Market.

The recycling station will remain in the current location, but apparently, meeting with the London Farmers’ Market to agree terms for the continuation of the local Farmers’ Market on Sundays.

"This will have quite an impact on the Farmers’ Market, which gets quite a lot of its customers coming by car, in order to cart home a week’s worth of veg and so on," said the local resident Anne Robbins. "I’m one of them, and I’m not happy about this change."

The Blackheath Society has objected, supported by Lewisham councillor Ken Borinov and local MP Heidi Alexander. They have launched a petition calling on Network Rail to stop its price hikes, which will hurt local businesses and residents. Please help by signing the petition http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/black -heath-station-car-park-charges.html

Apcoa Parking Ltd. Tel: 020 8515 4724

PETER GREGGES reviews a book by Jeffrey Sachs, American economist and director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

The Price of Civilization:
Economics & Ethics after the Fall by Jeffrey Sachs
Bodley Head 2011

The first half of this timely book by a distinguished economist claims that at the root of America’s economic crisis lies a moral crisis: the decline of civic virtue among America’s political and economic elite.

The second half addresses the global and urgent question: What is the world capitalism in the twenty-first century best deliver the three overarchings goals sought by societies around the world: economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and social justice?"

The key he suggests is to create a mindful, society, one that promotes the personal virtues of compassion for others and the ability to cooperate across the divides of class, religion, race and geography.

While he is addressing specifically the situation in the United States, his analysis and proposals are relevant to the UK and elsewhere. He puts his faith in the younger generation, and in social networking and IT technologies to bring about needed change.

The Arab Spring opened our eyes to this potential, and we can see it today at St Paul’s, Wall Street – which Sachs recently visited – and many cities around the world: a "viral protest" that as the FT argued last October “politicians ignore at their cost.” Or should that be our cost?"
February’s issue of the 
Westcombe News reported that consideration of LOCOG’s applications to lift the conditions imposed on the Greenwich Park Olympics by Greenwich Planning Board in March 2010 had been postponed, but the application was re-instated for the Planning Board meeting on 26th January. Despite Westcombe Society objections that more should be done to reduce the impact of the Olympic events on access by pedestrians and cyclists to and through the Park, LOCOG’s applications were approved by an overwhelming majority.

In addition, the revised plans for Blackheath Gate, supported by both the Friends of Greenwich Park and the Blackheath Society, were also approved. LOCOG has subsequently declined the society’s request for more informal dialogue on pedestrian and cycle restrictions. Consideration of the vital and complex Olympic Transport Plan was postponed until the next meeting. The date had not been fixed at the time of going to press.

Westcombe Society Chairman Gordon Baker said: “Greenwich Council has failed to set up the integrated Transport Group envisaged by the March 2010 Planning Decision. Repeated requests by the Greenwich, Blackheath and Westcombe societies for a local consultation and a joined-up approach to transport planning have been ignored.”

“Transport plans have been issued late, piecemeal, incomplete and without proper prior consultation with local residents and businesses. It is still not clear to us who is in charge of the Transport Plan or how it is supposed to work in practice.

“We fear that it will turn out to be a sham – careless causing serious damage to the reputation of the Games and those responsible for planning it as well as severe hardship supposed to work in practice.

“Prior consultation with local residents and businesses have been ignored.

“A joined-up approach to transport planning envisaged by the March 2010 Planning Decision has not been established.

“Despite Westcombe Society objections that more should be done to reduce the impact of the Olympic events on access by pedestrians and cyclists to and through the Park, LOCOG’s applications were approved by an overwhelming majority.

“The Gloucester Road junction options are unlikely to be able to cope with additional levels of traffic.

“Congestion in the Blackwall and Rotherhithe tunnels (both of which have been in operation for more than 100 years) and on the Woolwich Ferry may be eased with Transport for London’s proposed introduction of two new river crossings for the east and southeast London.

*Silvertown Tunnel: a new road tunnel connecting Greenwich Peninsula with the Royal Docks, with a projected completion date of 2021, would have a capacity of 2,400 cars per hour in each direction. The Silvertown Tunnel was originally cut in 1880 to carry passenger trains under the connecting channel between the existing Royal Victoria Dock and the newly-built Royal Albert Dock.

* Gallions Reach Ferry: a new ferry vehicle taking traffic between Beckton and Thamesmead, due to be completed by 2017, could carry up to 600 vehicles every hour. It could replace the Woolwich Ferry, which has been running since 1963.

“A president Edmund King says: “The Thames is a barrier to mobility, employment and enterprise in east London. The Seine in Paris has almost twice as many river crossings as we have or over under the Thames.”

“However, friends of the Earth’s London campaigner, Jenny Bates, says: “A new road tunnel and car ferry will bring misery to Londoners by creating more noise, more traffic congestion and more pollution.”

“Chairman of the Westcombe Society Planning & Environment Committee Dick Oddy has similar reservations. The Westcombe Society is requesting further details on the impact the crossings would have on the local area, particularly where the new tunnel would join the A102.

“Log on to tlfl.gov.uk/rivercrossings for more information and to register your views (closing date 5th March).

In response to Ed Hill’s letter

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New river crossings proposed

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM

In response to Ed Hill’s letter

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New river crossings planned

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM

Dear Edward Hill,

I, of course, respect your right to express your views about the Olympic plans closely. It should have come as no surprise to you that consideration of LOCOG’s applications to lift the conditions imposed on the Greenwich Park Olympics by Greenwich Planning Board in March 2010 had been postponed, but the application was re-instated for the Planning Board meeting on 26th January.

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