



Westcombe NEWS

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March 2012 Issue 2

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

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

Reach for the sky – but at what cost?

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM reports on London's
airport controversies – and local implications

First there were 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 fourth airport unfold. Many are particularly concerned about the possible noise impact of a fourth airport.

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

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

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 regeneration of that part of the UK, and we would cement London's lead as the commercial capital of the world."

In contrast, Ken Livingstone's key transport initiative is firmly based in the realm of public transport. Mr Livingstone has made it clear that he is against another airport on environmental grounds.

Meanwhile, in a volte face, the prime minister, David Cameron, commissioned a feasibility study to examine whether a new multi-runway hub airport should be built (despite having "no plans" to build an airport in the Estuary in December 2010).

Critics include fellow members of Parliament, environmental groups including the RSPB, who are keen to protect globally significant wildlife area. Birds aside, parts of the shores and marshland are an area of outstanding natural beauty and several historic buildings would also be at risk.

Local campaigners from HACAN are already concerned about the noise levels created by planes from Heathrow and London City Airport over South East London. (The Isle of Grain site is about the same distance from us as Heathrow.)

HACAN's chair, John Stewart says: "The question is not whether new capacity is required but whether we are making the most intelligent use of existing capacity."

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.

Environmentalists 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 take to the sky with Boris's £50 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, rumours are that it will open on 1st May. 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.

< News briefs >

Council consulting over parking

Following our report on parking in Old Dover Road, in February's *WN*, the Council is now carrying out further consultations. Make sure that YOUR views are known to the Council

Can this be true?

A report in the *Daily Telegraph* of January 26th reads as follows: "London 2012 Olympic officials have purchased a Crown Estate lease on a pocket of land called Circus Field adjacent to the controversial Greenwich equestrian site after negotiations with three Government agencies."

"But such is the confidential nature of the new agreement that the local Greenwich councillors will not be given a copy of the lease and the lease will not be registered with the Land Registry.... it needs to be enclosed, which is forbidden by the relevant Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866 and the Supplemental Act for Blackheath of 1871."

Pavement hogs

The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) have been receiving a number of complaints about cyclists using the pavements. This practice is endangering pedestrians. Currently the SNT are giving out warnings but persistent offenders will be issued with a fixed penalty notice (£20).

Boris's Tunnel - Latest

A consultation on the proposed Silvertown link ends on March 5th. The tunnel joins the A102 immediately south of the Blackwall Tunnel. See tfl.gov.uk/rivercrossing; and page 7.



Royal Greenwich: "Vivat!"

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 February 3rd, 4th and 5th. The park was kept open on the evening of Sunday Feb. 5th so that local residents could witness the fireworks display above Greenwich – as George Frideric Handel's Coronation anthem "Zadok the Priest" wafted 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, 163 Westcombe Hill, SE3 7DP email: marilyn.little@btinternet.com

Honey's new saddle



PHOTO: Pat Alwyn

Last year, the Westcombe Society donated money to Riding for the Disabled Charlton Park to buy a new saddle for Honey (right); and at last, in February, the specially designed saddle arrived.

In the picture above is Afi Wall (right), and (on Honey) her daughter, who won the Tom Warren Award for the most proficient rider of the year. Also pictured left to right: John Furlonger (Chairman of RDA Charlton Park), Leigh Warren, and Ben Warren (modestly hiding behind Honey.)



The Westcombe Society

Sat. 10th March Children's Nearly 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!

If you are not on the list, or need a lift, please phone Caroline on 0208 853 0948. We need volunteers to give lifts, and make cakes and sandwiches! Please ring Caroline.

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!

COMMUNITY NEWS

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<http://westcombe.gold.ac.uk/westnews.html>

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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 Glenluc Road bedsit. Even then the attractions of Mycenae House were obvious to him.

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 a £2.4 million lottery grant, and seeing the building through to completion.

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

He is impressed by all the activity in Mycenae House. "There is already a lot of music-making here, with jazz night as well as choirs and dancing," 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 everyone nearby."



He looks forward to welcoming new faces at the centre, and encouraging new users and a broader cross-section of the community. "I'm really open to fresh ideas. We have opportunities, particularly in the afternoons, for new groups and regular activities. I'm also keen to expand our room hire for private and business use."

Mark is already improving the coffee bar to encourage visitors to drop in, arrive early for activities – and linger afterwards.

He says that he relishes the challenge of implementing the ambitious management plan for the centre, raising funds to install a lift, restore the kitchen, and develop the entrance of Mycenae House so it is even more welcoming. "It won't be easy, but I hope Greenwich Council will be able to give us the fair wind we need," Mark says.

Mark now lives off Shooters Hill Road. He's enjoying the chance to work on his home patch and have more time with his two daughters, aged two and four. They have already come to enjoy the outdoor attractions of Mycenae Gardens.

In his spare time Mark remains an active musician and songwriter, playing weekly with old friends and performing occasional acoustic gigs.

Farewell party



Mycenae House Friday Club had a party to say goodbye and thank you to Cyril and Doreen Neary for running the club, and to welcome Lyn de Swarte and Cathy Gibbs who have taken over. Not forgetting Monday's Bingo Club, now run by Doreen Buckingham! All are welcome to both.



Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor may be edited through lack of space. Any views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or the *WN*.

From: P. Dempsey, Greenwich

Congratulations to Greenwich Council for ensuring a riverscape that 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 be Royal: the nearest building to the Cutty Sark, when viewed from the river will be... Nando's. Now that is what I call tasteful development. Well done Greenwich.

From: Cllr. Alex Grant (Lab.) Blackheath Westcombe Ward

The author of your story in February's issue of the *WN*, which claimed a "cold wind is 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 run along co-operative lines. It is well-regarded for the way it has run leisure centres in Greenwich and other boroughs since it started as a spin-off from the council in the 1990s. The council's decision of February 14th to transfer the operation of Greenwich's libraries to GLL is intended to stop any "massacre" of libraries – common in other London boroughs including Lewisham – from taking place here.

The deal allows the council to make savings without having to close libraries or cut their book stocks or opening hours: for example, if libraries are run by an outside body the council no longer has to pay business rates on their buildings. The council will still be in charge and GLL will not be able to make any major changes to the service without the council's say-so. The council refurbished Blackheath 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 Whimster 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 and if you look at old photos you can see a parade of shops with delivery vehicles, babies parked outside in prams and busy shoppers. Delacourt Rd was very much a part of the scene in those days.

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, a physiotherapy office, a Curtain and Interiors shop with an international reputation, a Barbers, a cab office, a Spa and beauty shop and Delacourt Motors which many of us use to service our cars. Not forgetting Michael Handcock's Estate Agency, and the marine office above it.

ED: Thanks, Sue. It has to be said that strictly speaking, Delacourt Rd is a little outside our area; but it is very good to be reminded of what it has to offer. We plan to cover other shopping areas in our neck of the woods in subsequent issues – including other businesses in Old Dover Road. The women of Old Dover Rd got there first, perhaps because of their crucial role in forming a Traders' Association.

From: Edward Hill

Foyle Road

Last week the brick stanchions of the Grade II listed Blackheath Gate to Greenwich Park were cynically smashed up and skipped away. It can no longer be doubted that LOCOG and their partners are disingenuous, because it is known that the Royal Parks want wider gates permanently for big truck access to Greenwich Park, so it can be hired out frequently for large commercial events.

1. LOCOG have misled the public about a number of issues, including the scale of the disruption to local people and the local economy – and refuse to answer questions.

2. LOCOG simply ignore inconvenient laws and regulations. For instance they are irresponsibly risking 60,000 people in Greenwich Park when the Fire Regulations stipulate a maximum of 15,000.

3. LOCOG have also ignored independent experts on World Heritage Sites, as well as the tree experts from the National Trust and Ancient Tree Forum experts, and internationally renowned archaeological experts like Harvey Sheldon. LOCOG's 'Advisory Group' are not independent. Most local people want the Olympic Equestrian Event moved from Greenwich Park. There is still no difficulty about transferring the event to a purpose-built 3-Day Event course like Bury Farm Estate, and this has happened to the equestrian event at four recent Olympics.

There is now a greater resolve than ever to get this to happen; please check www.nogoe2012.com

See p. 7 for a response to this from the Chairman of the Westcombe Society.

From: R Owens

Beaconsfield Road.

The article in this month's *WN* regarding an extension to the DLR from Silvertown to Falconwood is interesting. But it ignores one basic problem with the DLR which is that the majority of people use it to commute either to Canary Wharf or Bank.

Unfortunately, Bank station does not have the capacity to take any more traffic. There is only one track in and out, and it suffers from serious overcrowding: it often shuts down for safety reasons, 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 traffic over that period. It was very civilized, with seats normally available from Cutty Sark station, but is now as crowded as the Northern Line.

The introduction of three-car trains gave a temporary respite but after a year it was back to standing room only. SE London seriously needs another rapid transit system in some form as it is the only part of London without any underground lines.

The Jubilee line can be discounted as North Greenwich is too remote from the main population areas of Greenwich (what a missed opportunity!) and the bus service to it is insufficient and unreliable. Tinkering around the edges is not going to solve the problem. It is time for some serious strategic thinking from 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.

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LOCAL NEWS

Local Businesses support our troops



1310 Flight is the UK Chinook Support Helicopter Force unit of Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) based at Bastion, in Helmand Province.

It is staffed by aircrew and engineers from RAF Odiham in Hampshire, and is manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is commanded by a squadron leader.

In Afghanistan, the Chinook Force performs a number of routine roles, including logistics and support. One of the most critical elements is the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT).

A full crew stays on hand ready to pick up casualties in the field at any time, day or night. Usually launched within 10 minutes of the call, the MERT consists of a 4 person Chinook crew, 4 RAF Regiment soldiers, and 4 medics.

On uncountable occasions since 2006, MERT has saved the lives of wounded soldiers since 2006, and MERT personnel have received many awards and citations for professionalism and bravery.

Apart from these medical missions, 1310 Flight, and JHF(A) as a whole provide not only essential supplies to the troops in the field, but also the comforts and small luxuries donated by generous individuals and charities. JFH(A) are seen as the link between isolated troops and

their families.

Local charity 'Home Comforts', run by Margaret Melrose, in turn provides home comforts to the air and support crew of Flight 1310 in the field. A wide assortment of household items that we take for granted at home are sent: Mountain bikes, four sofas, a fridge, a freezer, toasters, kettles, irons, ironing boards and many other electrical items. These are donated by local businesses as well as individual people in Blackheath and Surrey.

Two local businesses helped out, free of charge. All the items were PAT (portable appliance tested) by Roger Tester of RMT Electrics Blackheath, and to get them to RAF Odiham, local family firm James Removals based in Old Post Office Lane, Blackheath supplied the labour and transport. Both companies have been exceedingly generous with their help.

After the first round of deliveries were sent out last October, these home comforts have been much appreciated by Flight 1310. Installed in what they call the "Rec. Tent", they have helped each individual to find a small slice of home or peace amid the mayhem of Helmand.

Want to help? Please contact Margaret Melrose at melrosemargaret6@gmail.com

Come and sing!

Every year, the Centenary Company invites singers to 'come and sing' in a 'from scratch' concert performance of one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. This year it's *The Mikado*.

These 'from scratch' performances are a fundraiser for its major production. Singers can be assured of a fun-filled musical experience – with an afternoon rehearsal, ready for the evening concert performance in front of an audience.

So, whether you've sung recently, 50 years ago, or not at all, come and join us in the chorus on 10th March!

The funds raised will be for the Company's November production at Greenwich Theatre of *Utopia Limited* (rehearsals start for this in early May).

To take part in the concert, singers need to pre-register on 07970 866034 – or centenarycompany@googlemail.com no later than Friday 2nd March. Cost for singers: £10 (£8 concessions). Scores

will be available for hire on the day.

The Mikado In a Day will be performed on Saturday 10th March at 7.30pm at Kingswood Hall, Kingswood Place, (opposite The Dacre Arms), Blackheath, London SE13 3BU

Tickets : £10 (£8 concs) available in advance (and on the door): 07970 866034 or centenarycompany@googlemail.com

Also tuning up . . .

Khadija Jajue, 14, of The John Roan School has reached the semi-finals of "Live and Unsigned" – the UK's largest music competition for unsigned solo acts and bands. The young talent will sing live at the Town Gate Theatre, Basildon, Essex, on Saturday 17th March, where she will be representing South East London.

The event will be show-cased, live, on television. Good luck, Khadija!

Derin Oduyungbo (John Roan School)

How Blackheath made rugby history

GRAHAM COX



Earlier this season, while the rugby world was focussed 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 H Moore, Campbell was Blackheath FC's representative when a series of meetings with eleven other clubs was held at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, WC2 in late 1863 to form an association with 'the purpose of settling a code of rules for the regulation of the game of football'.

A draft set of rules (the 'Cambridge Rules') were proposed in November, but Campbell objected to the proposal to remove hacking (the tripping up or shinning of an opponent) as he felt it removed the integrity of the game.

As a result, Blackheath withdrew from the new Football Association, preferring to play under its own 'Rugby Rules', and the irrevocable schism meant the game of football 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 yesteryear 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.



Des Brett & his sculpture WK Photography

Away from rugby, Desmond is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art (Sculpture) at Hull School of Art and Design, and was commissioned to make the 3' high figurine, made from resin and fibreglass with steel armature, two years ago.

"I'm very pleased with the finished sculpture and I hope that it is something that the Club will be proud of," he said.

"I wasn't aware that there was much sculpture relating to rugby, but I've since discovered quite a lot, including one of Prince Alexander Obolensky (in Ipswich town centre) who scored that famous try against New Zealand in the 1930s."

Unfortunately, England didn't re-live that experience in the World Cup this year, but when NZ Captain Richie McCaw raised the Webb Ellis Trophy in triumph this year, just think: that trophy may be named after the man who, legend has it, picked up the ball at Rugby School, but next time you visit Blackheath Club, look at the corner of the bar and raise a toast to the true inventor of the union game.



PHOTOS: Warren King Photography

Des Brett [centre] in action, playing against Coventry last year. The next home matches are at 3.00 pm on: March 3rd, March 24th, April 15th, April 28th, at the Rectory Field, Charlton Road. All new players are welcome – just turn up at a training session at the club at Well Hall, Eltham or ring 8850 0201

Theatre's last Curtain call?

The Greenwich Playhouse is to close its doors on the 10th April after twenty years.

Local theatre-goers are shocked that the theatre's landlords - Beds and Bars - have decided not to renew the lease in order to exploit commercial opportunities offered by the Olympics.

Beds and Bars offer cheap bunk-bed facilities for backpackers. The company's artistic director, Alice de Sousa, said the decision is "extremely short-sighted."

The Playhouse is now in active negotiation with the council in an attempt to find an alternative site.



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John Payne

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FEATURES



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



PHOTO: Neville Grant

Even now, a thousand years after the event, it still has the power to shock: an elderly man, weakened by seven winter months spent as a hostage, is killed by a drunken Viking army which has kept him on the edge of the Greenwich marshes.

First they batter him, throwing heavy ox bones at him, then finally one of them strikes him on the head with the handle of an axe, perhaps one of the double-bladed battle axes they find so effective in battle. Even worse: this is no ordinary man, but Aelfheare, Archbishop of Canterbury, the leading churchman of Britain and a key advisor to the Anglo-Saxon king.

April 19th 2012 marks the millenium of this death, and it is being commemorated with a full programme of events on the site in Greenwich where Alphege – as his name was modernised – was killed.

Already, the events have begun, starting with a lecture given in January by John Sabapathy, a lecturer in medieval history at University College London.

He reminded the audience that our sources of evidence are quite slim, and that some of them were intended to emphasise the validity of his sainthood. He also described what the English nations were up against at the time.

The first raids

Raiding war bands from Denmark and Norway were nothing new. In 787 three Danish ships raided Dorset. In 793, Norsemen (possibly Norwegians) raided a monastery at Lindisfarne. In 851, a group had wintered on the Isle of Sheppey, and many shiploads of fiercely armed men arrived to plunder and enslave. Yet more settled, particularly in the North.

The English kingdoms were politically at odds and unable to combine to fight back, especially against the hit and run tactics of the Vikings.

But from the year 1000, the raids became much worse, particularly in southern England. From Kent to Buckinghamshire

and Dorset, Norse raiders harried throughout every year.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a collection of accounts of key events, put it very eloquently. In 1006, the year Alphege was appointed as Archbishop, it says, 'And then after midsummer the Danish fleet came to Sandwich, and did all just as they were accustomed: raided and burned and killed as they travelled.'

The Anglo-Saxon armies could do little, 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 church, took capture many priests and nuns, a leading official of the king, a bishop, the abbot of St Augustine's – and the archbishop himself. The populace was decimated, their homes looted and burned. Eventually, the Danes loaded Alphege onto a ship, and brought him to Greenwich.

The archbishop's capture sent a shock wave over the battered country, but negotiations for his release did not go well. The Vikings demanded general tribute of

£48,000, 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 impiety; 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 into London, and he was buried at St Paul's Cathedral. As a martyr for his beliefs – the pagan 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 through 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, giving access to London and the west, Kent and Essex, and of course acting as an escape route should they be attacked.

This should remind us that the history of the area did not begin with royal palaces on the parkland: the earliest archaeological remains in the area are to do with humans on the water, whether they were building docks or oak walkways into marshland.

The story of Alphege should encourage us to take a long view of history: the events of his lifetime resonate now, we are not so very distant from them.

Sources: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Ed.

& Trans. Michael Swanton (London, Phoenix, 1990).

The Early History of the Church at Canterbury Nicholas Brooks, (Leicester University Press, 1996).



In Memoriam

In 2012 we will be reflecting on the core values that characterise Alphege's life, which are all still relevant today.

Thursday 19th April 2012

There will be a Service of Welcome at Southwark Cathedral, followed by pilgrimage either on foot, or by bicycle, public transport or specially chartered Thames Clipper to St Alphege Church, Greenwich. This will be followed by celebrations in St Alphege Park featuring a re-creation of Anglo Saxon village life. Educational activities will also be launched and will continue during the year.

The Millennium Service will be held in St Alphege at 4.30pm, when the Most Revd Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, will preach.

Friday 20th April 2012

A three-day cycle pilgrimage from Canterbury Cathedral will begin, arriving at St Alphege's on Sunday afternoon.

Sunday 22nd April 2012

We will keep the Patronal Festival of St Alphege with a Parish Eucharist at midday, followed by a picnic and arts event in St Alphege Park. All welcome to join in!

Blackheath Halls

Elgar's King Olaf

SUNDAY 1st APRIL, 7.30pm

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WHERE: Blackheath High Junior School Wemyss Road, SE3 0TF

TIME: 11am to 3pm

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WHAT'S ON

THE ARTS

BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY, St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, 4th Thursday of every month, 2.00 for 2.30. Next meeting: 22nd March Rosalind Whyte on An Illustrated Dickens Non-members £5 on the door. See www.artsinblackheath.org.uk or ring 83187550

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich Mon. 12th. Mar. Charles Dickens The Man, His Life and His Characters - Bicentenary of his birth 2012 - Bertie Pearce see www.gdfas.org or ring 020 8852 6248 Non-members £8.00

BLACKHEATH HALLS: Until April 1st: Eltham Art Group exhibition

PAUL McPHERSON GALLERY 77 Lassell Street SE10 9PJ Until March 10th: "Park Life": Paintings by Mark Titman inspired by walks in Greenwich Park.

FRIENDS OF CHARLTON HOUSE 4th Art Exhibition for CHART, Charlton House Art Project, on 9th - 11th March. Reception on Fri. 9th March at 7pm, tickets £5. Exhibition open all day Sat. and Sun. pm Local artists. Info. Felicity 020 8319 24567

CHILDREN

GREENWICH THEATRE
Sun 18 March 11.00 am THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY Ages 4 - 104

BLACKHEATH HALLS
CHILDREN'S THEATRE: ALICE AND THE WHITE RABBIT Sat 10th Mar 3.00 pm

MUSIC

BLACKHEATH HALLS
Friday 9 March, 7pm CELEBRATE ROYAL GREENWICH Young music makers in the Royal Borough perform. If you know a group who would like to perform, pl. contact Rose Ballanytne on R.Ballanytne@trinitylaban.ac.uk. £6 | £5 concessions

Sat 10th March 7.30 pm (& Sun. at 2.30pm) Tchaikovsky & Mendelssohn

Blackheath Sundays Wihan Quartet 11.00 am

Sun. 11th March; and March 25th.

Thursday 15 March, 7.30pm Trinity Laban Sinfonia Orchestra perform Bax, Ravel and Vaughan Williams Symphony No. 2

Tickets: £10 (£5 concessions)

Tuesday 13 March, 7pm LIVE AT THE HALLS: annual concert given by young musicians in Lewisham. £6/£5 cones

Fri 16 Mar. 6.00 pm Trinity Music PHILIP JONES BRASS ENSEMBLE COMPETITION

GODSPELL Trinity Laban Music Theatre

Thurs 22nd - Sat. 24th March, 7.30pm

Tues 27th - Wed. 28th Blackheath Halls: Musical SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE by Sondheim



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COMMUNITY

The Westcombe Society

10th March – Children's Nearly New Sale
17th. March – Daffodil Tea
7th April – Easter Egg Hunt
21st April – Quiz
6th May Macmillan Sponsored walk, Cobham, Surrey. Details next month. Please ring Caroline on 020 8853 0948 if you are intersted in either taking part in, or sponsoring, a team.
20th May – AGM
16th June – Jubilee Tea for Senior Citizens
July – Summer Picnic – date to be confirmed
22nd Sep – Members' Evening
28th Sep – Macmillan Coffee Morning
29th Sep – Children's Nearly New Sale
17th November – Christmas Bazaar

BLIND INDEPENDENCE GREENWICH
9th March 7.30 pm CONCERT The Students of Blind Independence Greenwich's musical work-shop perform at The Forum, Trafalgar Road. £5 per ticket. For more information 020 8853 2474

15th March 6.00 - 10.00 pm CASINO NIGHT London Gaming College, The Valley, Floyd Road SE7 8BL £5.00 inc. gaming chips. Pay bar.

BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
Fri. March 16th. 7.45 Mycenae House "Ways to Teach Reading to Improve Dyslexic Behaviour" to be given by Mrs Doris Lugsden

OTTIE AND THE BEA, OLD DOVER ROAD
Sun 25th March 3.00 pm Local author Rachael Mortimer launches her new book *Red Riding Hood and the Sweet Little Wolf*. Book signing, face painting, cakes, competition. All welcome.

WESTCOMBE WRITERS' CIRCLE 1st. Thursday each month, 2.30-4.30 at Mycenae House. Ring Joan Paice on 8305 1652

BLACKHEATH FLOWER CLUB Meets third Friday every month at 1.45 pm at Mycenae House

WOODLANDS FARM, Shooters Hill The farm is open every day except Mondays from 9.30 - 4.30 pm. FREE. **Toddler Club** Thursdays 10 - 12

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

SECOND CHANCE CHOIR We rehearse Thursday evenings during term time in Blackheath. New members welcome, contact Margery Nzerem 0208 858 3544 margery@nzerem.bbmax.co.uk

BLACKHEATH HALLS Wed 14th March 8.00 om Claire Tomalin: Charles Dickens: A Life

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

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HORNIMAN MUSEUM
Until Sept 9th: MUMMERS, MAYPOLES & MILKMAIDS: The English Ritual Year

ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE TASTING 7pm, Wed. 28th March at Davy's Wineshop, 161 Greenwich High Rd, SE10 8JATicket: £15 redeemable on a 12 bottle purchase Call 020 8858 9147 or buy online www.davy.co.uk/events

Opera Gala Night

Sun. 25th. March 6.30pm

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Tickets include a glass of fizz on arrival and a light supper.
To book, contact Helma Zebregs tel: 020 8318 9758
Tickets: £30 per person or £275 for table of 10

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THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755
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Thurs. 8th - Fri 9 March 7.00 pm THE PHOENIX AND THE CARPET Based on E.E Nesbit's book
Sat 10th March SHOWSTOPPER musical
Sun 11th March MUSICALL
Tues 13th - Sat 17th March BELLEVILLE RENDEZVOUS
Thurs. 22nd March HELENA JACKMAN sings her way on a JOURNEY TO THE PAST
Fri 23rd March THE FITZROVIA RADIO HOUR Ripping satire on the Beeb as it used to be
Mon 26- Sat 31 March OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD by Timberlake Wertenbaker. Australia, 1788.
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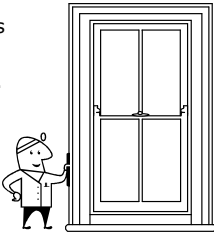
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FEATURES



International Year of

COOPERATIVES 2012

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 p.m. 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 Pairing Officer can usually find you a partner. On Wednesdays and Thursdays there is no disabled access.

Most of us play simple systems, (4 card and 5 card majors) though no systems are excluded. Usually, we play duplicate bridge with match point scoring but please see our calendar for variations.

Novices and improvers are particularly welcome at Monday sessions.

For more details including fees, transport and facilities, please visit our website: www.bridgewebs.com/blackheath



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There must be a better way ...

In Fairtrade Fortnight, we asked local resident ED MAYO to give us his take on how we can stop the world being run by rich people for the benefit of rich people

As we embark on Fairtrade Fortnight in Greenwich, and across the country, in the 2012 UN International Year of Co-operatives, it is a good time to ask ourselves questions about how the world is organised.

In today's economy, we hear a lot about competition and shares, but a lot less about co-operation and sharing. Can we build a co-operative economy?

In a fair economy, trade is between equals – each needs the other. Fairtrade is about reintroducing this kind of co-operation. It allows us to do more together - we shop, get what we need, and the obstacles that face producers and their families drop.

At least, that is the idea.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it was a co-operative in Mexico that launched the world's first certified fair trade product. Coffee farmers in Oaxaca, Mexico were the producers in a co-operative that launched the first-ever certified fair trade product, sold in the Netherlands under the label of Max Havelaar.

Inspired by this, around twenty years ago, a team of people in the UK, (including a somewhat younger version of myself!) started work on the idea of a wider mark, which is now the global FAIRTRADE Mark.

So what are co-ops? Co-operatives are member-owned businesses, run on democratic lines, on the basis of 'one member, one vote' rather than the investor-led model of 'one share, one vote': what has been called the "John Lewis" model.

It is a flexible model, but one that has enormous reach around the world. In Africa, one in thirteen people is a member of a co-operative – and it is worth adding, there are six times as many people who are co-owners of co-operative owners as there are people who have conventional shares.

The advantages of co-operating are that you can do things together that you can't do alone. The members may be farmers who have come together, they may be the workers in a business or the consumers, or a mix of these. Co-ops include credit unions, housing and telecoms co-ops.

Co-operatives are a part of the Fairtrade success story. 75% of all Fairtrade now comes from small-holder co-operatives.



Ed Mayo is Secretary General of Co-operatives UK. He is the former Chief Executive of the British National Consumer Council and was CEO of the NCC's successor, Consumer Focus. He was Director of the New Economics Foundation from 1992 - 2003.

Co-op shops here have typically been first to stock fairtrade. The Co-op Group has pledged to ensure by 2013 that for all the basic commodities, not just tea, cocoa and bananas, if it can be Fairtrade, it will be.

But equally, Fairtrade at its best is part of a wider co-operative movement – one that operates here at home – including here, in Greenwich – as well as abroad.

In Scotland, in response to the power of the big supermarkets, three out of four farmers now belong to a co-operative thus benefitting farmers and rural communities.

In the energy sector, where six big companies set the prices high and take the profits, Co-operative Energy has recently started as a new national provider, offering a simple tariff, fair prices and a share of any profits. It already has fifteen thousand members, from a standing start.

In banking, you can watch out for a new campaign that is emerging that will call on UK consumers to move their money from the banks that caused the credit crunch to co-operative and mutual providers.

With the way the economy is going, it is urgent that we share economic activity in a co-operative way, to narrow the gap between rich and poor. It is not that every penny needs to be spent with a co-operative. But for a fairer, global economy, we can at least ask every business we give our money to, to be more co-operative.

Fairtrade Fortnight this year is particularly significant because 2012 is the UN's International Year of Co-operatives. During Fairtrade Fortnight, February 27th – March 12th, shoppers are urged to "Buy Fairtrade" – and continue throughout year!

Fairtrade Fortnight events include:

Sat. 3rd March 11.00 am - 4.00 pm

UN International Year of Co-operatives celebrations Town Hall Wellington Street Thurs. March 8th 7.00 - 10. pm

International Women's Day in Charlton House 7.00 pm with JULIE FELIX

Information accurate at the time of going to press. For more details, please check www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fairtrade

Buy local too - if you can

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

Which is why people are so upset by Lewisham Council's decision to transfer 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 Apcoa are currently 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 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 Kevin Bonavia and local MP Heidi Alexander. They have launched a petition calling on Network Rail to stop the price hikes, which will hurt local businesses and residents. Please help by signing the petition at: <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/blackheath-station-car-park-charges.html> Apcoa Parking's Tel. no: 0845 077 4224

PETER GREAVES 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 macroeconomist 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: "How can capitalism in the twenty-first century best deliver the three overarching 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 at *our* cost?

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Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at Strategic Planning, Peggy Middleton House, 50 Woolwich New Road. They may also be viewed on www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning



Olympic transport plans queried

February's issue of the *WN* 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 a future 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 better 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 it will turn out to be a shambles causing serious damage to the reputation of the Games and those responsible for planning it as well as severe hardship

to those of us who live or work in the Westcombe Park area.

"Ensuring that Greenwich Council gets to grips with the Transport Plan and takes more account of local interests is our top priority. We are continuing to work closely with the Greenwich and Blackheath societies on this critical aspect."

Many are concerned about how access to the area by carers and medical workers can be ensured. One possibility is that the "Zil" lanes used by Olympic officials could also be used for such workers.

Police news

At their latest meeting, the Blackheath Westcombe Safer Neighbourhood panel said a grateful goodbye to police Sgt Crackles and thanked him for all his good work over the last three and a half years.

The panel also welcomed his replacement, Sgt Derek Banfield, who introduced the new on-line community messaging service, Neighbourhood Link.

This enables residents to receive up to date messages from our local Safer Neighbourhood team, borough police, or, in the event of a major incident affecting the whole of London, from other Metropolitan Police teams.

If you want to find out about local policing activities, crime prevention as well as more significant incidents which may affect you, register free on www.neighbourhoodlink.met.police.uk

Numbers to call:

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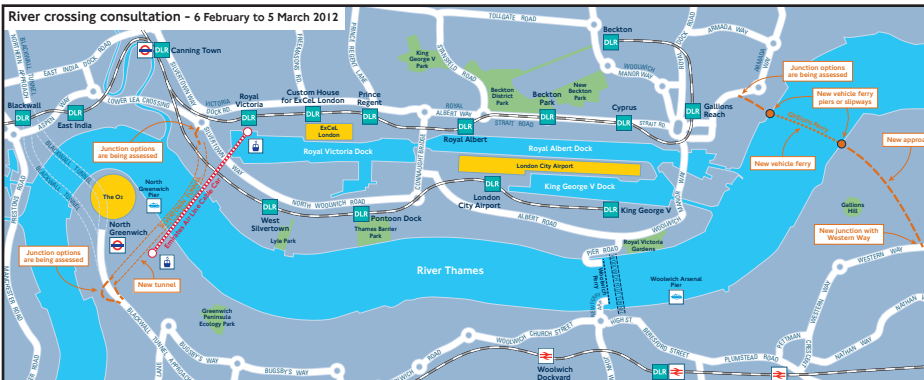
For information and advice, or to report suspicious activity that does not amount to an emergency, ring 101.

To contact the SNT: 020 8721 2635

If there is no answer, ring the office: 020 7161 8420

New river crossing proposals

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM reports



With the South East and East of London earmarked for significant development, common sense tells us that the already oversubscribed river crossing points 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 vehicle ferry 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.

AA 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 over or 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 and more pollution."

Chairman of the Westcombe Society Planning & Environment Committee Dick Allard 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 tfl.gov.uk/rivercrossings for more information and to register your views (closing date 5th March).

In response to Ed Hill's letter

Dear Edward Hill

I, of course, respect your right to express your views within the law. But, as always, I think these developments need to be viewed in perspective and with objectivity.

It should have come as no surprise to you to see some of the Blackheath Gate pillars being removed last week. LOCOG and the Royal Parks announced long ago that they planning to remove part of the Gate temporarily and replace it.

That should have been well-known to all those who follow the Olympic plans closely. The final plans followed extensive discussions about the new design with the Westcombe Society and other amenity societies. They were cleared by Royal Parks and English Heritage, accepted by the Blackheath Society and the Friends of Greenwich Park, and formed part of the LOCOG planning application approved by last month's Planning Board meeting, which you attended.

I am not qualified to comment on what you say about the way the work is being done. Nor can I comment on the conclusions you draw, except to note that you impute dishonourable motives to LOCOG and Royal Parks which I regard as unsubstantiated.

As you should know from what I said at the last Planning Board meeting and recent reports in Westcombe News, the Society is very concerned about the lack of adequate

consultation, communication and co-ordination over the Transport Plan for the Olympics. We are concentrating on pressing hard for local interests to be taken fully into account over this and it will be important to ensure that the Park and Circus Field, as well as Blackheath Gate, are properly restored once the Games are over. But it is our policy to strive to keep an objective, analytical and reasoned approach to the Olympic plans, and not to dissipate our energies or devalue our currency by raising objections where they do not seem to be warranted. **Gordon Baker**

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(See also <http://westcombe.blogspot.com/>)

34 FOYLE RD refs 11/3003/F & 11/3004/C
At rear: demolish 18 garages and build 4 houses

94 HUMBER RD ref 12/0081/F
Replace rear extension with single storey extension. Alter front porch

35 GLENLUCE RD ref 12/0150/F
Construct rear conservatory (resubmission)

6 CHARLTON RD Flat B ref 12/0040/F
Replace rear balcony & steps

14 VANBRUGH HILL Flat 1 ref 12/0018/F
Construct 2-storey rear extension

TREE WORKS

FERNDAL COURT,
WESTCOMBE Pk Rd ref 12/0234/TP
Fell acer. Raise crown of sycamore and horse chestnut

20 VANBRUGH PARK ref 12/0227/TC
Fell 2 lime trees in front garden

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