Celebrating 60 years of service

Lighting the Jubilee Beacon

A small number of people gathered on the hill to witness the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon – one of 4000 plus Beacons around the UK and the Commonwealth. It was lit by Allen Gillham MB EBS at 10:00 pm on Monday 4th June to celebrate the Jubilee and to commemorate the Home Guard Blackheath Anti-aircraft rocket Gunners of WW II. The Beacon chain was used to warn of approaching invaders from the 15th to the 18th Century eg the Spanish Armada in 1588.

The official emblem for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee is the winning design following a national competition for children aged 6 to 14. It was drawn by 10-year-old Katherine Dewar, from Chester.

The Queen once said “I have to be seen to be believed.” In that case, the million people who turned out to cheer her at the Royal Pageant on the Thames must have made her even more believable.

“Unbelievable” more readily comes to the mind of most of her loyal subjects, as they consider their luck in having such a monarch. Though not so, according to the small group of anti-monarchists who staged a protest at City Hall. “Don’t Jubilee’s it!” said one placard. Graham Smith, of the protest group Republic, declared “We shall win this campaign.” “No, you bloody win’t!” was the retort of one woman, clad in red, white and blue, as she passed by. And such was the overwhelming sentiment of the vast crowds that turned out.

Not forgetting those stalwarts who demonstrated their loyalty by padding or rowing the course, for hours, over five miles, much of it in the rain. Many thanks to all those who made it all such fun.

Monday 4th June saw 260 or so local residents join together to celebrate the diamond jubilee on Westcombe Park Road.

Thanks to Jess McCann a street party, fun for all, was organized with a DJ, Sumo wrestling suits and a Bouncy Castle. Partygoers described the event as “a truly memorable event” and “a wonderful chance to meet new neighbours.”

After a great success it has been suggested that we should have a street party every summer! It was lovely to see everybody out in such high spirits and the street decorated in red, white and blue.

Lighting the Jubilee Beacon

< < NEWS BRIEFS > >

Got a ticket for the Olympics? The Olympic and Paralympic Games ran from 27th July to 9th September. LOCOG reminds us: “If you are coming to a sports event or ceremony, please bring as little as possible with you. You’ll need to go through security checks when you arrive at a venue, and the more you bring, the longer it will take to go through security. There are strict rules on what can be brought into venues. In most cases you can bring one soft-sided bag into venues. It should fit under your seat or on your lap.”

Locals take to the sky The good news is that you will soon be able to fly across the Thames on the UK’s first Cable Car. The trip, lasting 5 minutes, costs £1.20 for adults, and £1.00 for children. The bad news? You can also walk across the dome, for a mere £2.00. A bit steep, you might think ...

Olympics Live Sites London will have a 7.6m x 4.8m screen showing live BBC coverage of the London 2012 Games. It will be located on Blackheath from 27th July to 12th August. There will also be a beautifully decorative, mirrored Spiegelgarten, which will offer food, a bar and entertainment. Big screens are also on show at the O2, and General Gordon Square in Woolwich.

Westcombe Society

Members’ Party Sat 22nd September Invitations will be sent out in August

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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July/August 2012 Issue 6

A monthly newspaper of The Westcombe Society: fostering a sense of community
COMMUNITY NEWS

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Letters
Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society or of the Westcombe Society, and may be edited for reasons of space.

WELL DONE, WESTCOMBE!

In a message to all those who helped out at Jules’s Fabulous Garden and Tea party, Marilyn Little, Chair of the Westcombe Society writes:

“I’ve wanted you to know how much the society valued the time and effort put into making our Jubilee events in June so successful and, more importantly, enjoyable.

Thank you to all contributors to this amazing day and all those who supported us by volunteering.

Without volunteers like yourselves, where would we be? Such a lot of hard work was put in and the result was a never-to-be forgotten experience that was definitely Red, White and Blue. It was very much appreciated by all who attended the event, and...at least it didn’t rain!

The wind was challenging to say the least, but that didn’t stop the festivities one jot.

You were all told to give the community a day to remember. Thank you!”

Letters of appreciation for the Senior Citizens’ party came from Vera Dacklow and Joan and Alan Apps.

Thank you, John Roan!

A big BIG thank you to John Roan School for Riding for the Disabled! John Roan’s Librarian Tracy Brown and the year 7 & 8 pupils chose the “Walk For Tom” to use as their subject focus in their Literacy lessons with Tracy. Not only did they raise awareness with the pupils about Riding for the Disabled Association, this also sparked the pupils’ curiosity and a going to raise £174.84 in memory of Tom for Charlton Park Riding for the Disabled. They made posters and gave up their breaks and lunchtimes to collect donations, and Tracy and some of the pupils followed the汤 up sign up to take part in the walk this year. Charlton Park RDA really appreciated these amazing efforts. Those who didn’t get to take part in the walk may still like to support RDA with a donation. Go to this page:
http://www.justgiving.com/walkfortom

PROTECTING THE HEATH

Maggie Gravelle & Barbara Morris

M yth loved and used by local people, Blackheath is a historic heartland about 100 hectares in size and one of London’s most famous open spaces. The A2 to Dover runs across Blackheath and responsibility for the Heath is split, with the London Borough of Lewisham looking after the Heath to the south of the A2 and the Royal Borough of Greenwich to the north. The Blackheath Joint Working Party (the BJWP) was set up to bring together all those interested and a point of view on how Blackheath is used and run. The group represents signatures from both the local authorities, London Borough of Greenwich, Glendale (which is the company appointed to manage Lewisham’s side of the Heath), and members of local amenity societies and residents’ groups. The BJWP aims to ensure a balance is kept between the Heath’s everyday role as an informal open space integrated in a residential area, much valued for its quietness and its ecology: and as a site for a few large, high profile events each year, which have so far been community events or inclusive sporting events which fund-raise for charity.

A major concern for the BJWP is the physical impact of large events which bring with them thousands of people. Apart from problems of noise and litter, the sheer footfall at this type of event inevitably causes damage to both plants and grass and even erosion of the Heath’s fragile soil surface.

The Westcombe Society, through the BJWP, contributed to the Blackheath Events Policy which outlines a standard approach to events management on both sides of the Heath and which was adopted by both Councils at the end of 2011. The Westcombe Society has also asked the Councils to rationalize their approach to handling complaints, ideally with a single, well-publicised number to call.

One number will help in a proper evaluation of complaints which then feeds into decisions made about the shape and frequency of future events.

For example, if no complaints are received about noise, the future level of permitted noise may be raised. Lewisham Council, however, proposes a different phone number for each major event so that callers can speak directly to the on-site organiser.

It’s not too late to improve for the Heath in 2012 and if you have a view on what type of events should or should not take place on the Heath’s greensward and experienced nuisance from events, please email the Westcombe Society’s Planning & Environment Committee (westspec@gmail.com) and make your views known.

Complaints about smaller events (e.g. fairs and circuses) can be made directly to Glendale on 020 8313 5996 (the A2) or (north of the A2) Greenwhich Council’s Parks and Open Spaces Team on 020 8921 6885.

The halls’ Community Opera

The Community Opera mounted by Blackheath Hall has become a regular feature of music lovers’ diaries in South East London. For the sixth summer in a row, Blackheath Hall is presenting its popular community opera - this year, it’s a magical charming opera Cinderella. Members of the community perform alongside professional, local school children, and local musicians from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in this exciting and vibrant production.

The event has an amazing reputation among opera-lovers. In her round-up of 2011’s opera productions in the UK, Anna Pickering phone number for each major event so that callers can speak directly to the on-site organiser.

Is this you?

If you are a graphic, web or digital designer, a film maker or illustrator who is working from home or presenting your work remotely to clients, we are interested in connecting with you.

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Call 020 8309 2990 for more info and a chat.

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Westcombe News July/Aug 2012

Is this you?

Japanse Peace Boat

People were thrilled when a group of Japanese drummers and dancers began to perform beside the Cutty Sark one Thursday evening in June. The performers came from the Japanese Peace Boat which is sailing around the world promoting peace, global equality and sustainable development and respect for the environment. The boat was invited to visit by Greenwich and Lewisham Councils. The drummers and dancers were accompanied by two Nagasaki survivors, new in their seventies. Their message was simple: “Never Again!”

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Call 020 8309 2990 for more info and a chat.
LOCAL NEWS

BHSG Maths Challenge Success

Pupils at Blackheath High School achieved 3 Gold, 11 Silver and 13 Bronze certifici-
tes in this year’s UK Mathematics Trust Junior Maths Challenge – Over 240,000
pupils from across the UK at the Junior Maths Challenge with roughly the top 6%
receiving a Gold certificate; 13% a Silver and 21% a Bronze.
Blackheath High Junior School had won a place in the Jaguar Cars Maths in
Motion™ Challenge (JCMIM) National Final, beating off stiff competition from
1,000 schools across the country!
To get to the final, the children School children aged 9-16 had to set up a virtual
racing car to compete on a circuit against
other schools, using all their mathematical expertise to accurately measure the length
of the track, the angles of the bends and consider other factors such as fuel load,
tyres and speeds. The data was entered into computer simulation software, and all
the challengers eventually raced against each other.
Less than 15% were invited to take part
in the final stage. Sue O’Hanlon, Head
d of Maths, said, “The girls have done well in the Junior Maths Challenge this year with
22% being awarded a certificate.”

Woodlands Farm wins grant

The Woodlands Farm Trust is delighted to have received £38,000 from the Heritage
Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting new Farms Conservation project in the
Woodlands Farm Trust is the Westmoresland Society’s Charity of the Year. It
works with local communities and volunteers to increase awareness of the farm’s biodiver-
sity and local volunteering opportunities, and to inspire local people to become actively
involved in biodiversity conservation.
This will include a survey of the farm’s biodiversity, and a long-term conservation
management plan. The Trust will also be inviting local community groups to take part
in wildlife and conservation activities at the farm, and will hold a series of public walks
and talks on the wildlife found at the farm.
Commenting on the award, Barry Gray, Woodlands Farm Trust of Trustees, said, “We are
delighted to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund.”

Don’t be caught out . . .

Bank customers are falling victim to a new and sophisticated type of credit
card fraud which is increasingly common. Victims are being new to fraudsters
and duped into revealing their PIN and then handing over their bank card to a
counter in a new form of crime, Blackheath.

Blackheath, it provides

spacious, attractive and affordable ensuite accommodation;

delivering high quality nursing & personal care for elderly

people.

With a range of treatments and facilities provided to

the Residents in our Care Home, they are also able to enjoy

our own private Chapel, Library, Clubhouse & Restaurant.

Culmwell Church is able to accommodate a certain number

of private events and has also a small number

of permanent private residents.

For further information please contact:
Mrs Sharon Herd (Matron/Registered Manager)
on 0208 463 8399

The Westmoresland Society had great music at the Jubilee Summer Party, including
the South London Jazz Orchestra, and, (above) the Second Chance Choir. You can hear
the choir again at their end-of-term concert on 12th July, 8.00 pm, at St John’s
Church Strathearn Road (near the Standard). Do you fancy joining it? No experience or
training necessary! Contact: Jean Vaidler at brookjans@btinternet.com Tel. 0852 7548

Upcoming events

At Greenwich Community Festivals have unleashed their ‘Get involved!’
campaign for this summer’s celebrations. See the ad on page 5 column 4.
Contact: Lorraine Tartan www.lt-marketing.
k.co.uk Email: lorraine@lt-marketing.
.co.uk/Mobile: 07919055450

Mycenea Gardens goes to the dogs
The Friends of Mycenea Gardens (FOMG) are planning an afternoon of canine
carriers – activities and fun for dog owners and their pets – on Sunday 2nd September
in the Gardens. The Friends will be inviting entries for most handsome dog, pretti-
est bitch, best veteran, best tricks, dogs that look most like their owners, waggiest
tail, best groomed and the dog with the best outfit. For humans there will be a
best homemade dog biscuit competition. See www.mycenaegardens.org.uk/capers
for more information.

FOMG are also launching a competition to celebrate this glorious year in photos. There
are three age categories for entrants: up to 11, 11-16, and 17 or above; the clos-
ing date for entries is 3rd August.
The entry details are at http://www.
mycenaegardens.org.uk/PhotoComp/

Chickens coming home to roost

In June, a twenty-year-old woman was
sentenced to two years imprisonment for offences relating to the disorder in
Greenwich in August 2011, after a lengthy investigation by detectives in Greenwich.
In the early hours of the 9th August 2011, Laura Johnson, 20 a student, from Sheep
Cot Lane, Orpington, was stopped in a car by police officers in the Greenwich Peninsula
Retail Park, SE10. The car was loaded with electrical goods which had been
stolen from local retail parks. Laura Johnson was found guilty of burg-

lary at Comet on Greenwich Peninsula and

selling stolen goods from Currys on Stone

Lake Retail Park, Charlton. She was

sentenced to two years imprisonment for
each count, to run concurrently.

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24/7 Open

The Blackheath Sway Orchestra will present the final of a
successful season on Sunday 29th July, 2:30 pm in St John’s
Church, Blackheath. The programme includes: Beethoven: Pastoral; Elgar: Mass in
A; and Sibelius: Valse Triste. Tickets £15 on the door, or ring 8955 5507.

The glass shop

MULVILHALL ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE

Erin Dancers classes for adults and children from aged 4+ under the tutu-
ion of Riverdance member Rachel Mulvihill.

 begins, CBR Checked

and First Aid Qualified.

The all new adult dance class is the

perfect way to socialise, keep fit and tone

up. A fun exercise class for all abilities, come and join the fun every Monday from
7.15 – 8.45am at The Blackheath Newbridge Function Hall.

No experience necessary.

Full details available at www.mulvihillirishdance.com or call Rachel on 07770100521

Morden College Care Home – Culmwell Church

Culmwell Church is an exceptional Care Home with a CSCI’s 3* Star Rating. Situated in the
peace & tranquillity of the award-

winning grounds of Morden Hall, Blackheath, it provides

spacious, attractive and affordable ensuite accommodation;

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people.

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the Residents in our Care Home, they are also able to enjoy

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www.the-glass-shop.biz
Art for our sake

Local residents Ed and Fiona Hill's new Made in Greenwich Gallery is a revelation. Called both a gallery and a meeting place, it is situated at 324 Creek Road – a stone's throw from the Cutty Sark.

Leave the busy tourist-ridden streets of Greenwich town, and you enter a haven of art and peace. The gallery features an incredibly varied display of art and crafts by local artists.

Of course there are pictures – by both established artists like Terry Seales and Basia Burrrough, but also by many other perhaps less well-known artists: they vary from traditional oils and watercolours to lino-cuts, etchings, and even wire-art.

Not forgetting Ed's famous photo-spheres, which are both on sale, and also part of the décor (make sure you pay attention to the ceiling!). What they have in common is they are of very high quality: looking at them, one wonders how much time and money went into their creation.

Not just pictures, though. Also on display are ceramics, jewellery, and even recycled art – I was particularly drawn to wall-fishes made of coloured glass fragments rescued from the Thames foreshore, their jagged edges smoothed by countless Thames-tides; as well as wood made from driftwood like this DriftwoodQUEST®?

There are even works on embroidered silk.

Ed and Fiona plan a whole series of exhibitions, both of work by particular artists and of other events and themed exhibitions, book launch, as well as meetings, films-shows, poetry-readings ...

Throughout the summer, there will be a constantly changing exhibition of books and one particular date for your diary should be noted: on 7th July (11.30 - 7.00 pm) they are mounting a book launch of Paul Tempel's lovely book Greenwich and the London River.

During the day they plan in future to get people to exchange their views on issues relating to the river, including the New London Sewer – soakaway alternatives; the riverside in Charlton – the threats to local business and commerce; and the future of the Thames Barrier.

Yes, not just an art gallery!

Made in Greenwich is open Thursday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 15 - 5.30, Friday and Saturday 11.00 am - 7.00 pm www.madeingreenwich.co.uk

Conspiracy of secrets

Michael Goldman

Conspiracy of Secrets, by Bobbie Neate, published by John Blake at £17.99. The many friends of Bobbie Neate, who lived in Marl Hill back in the eighties, will be amazed when they read it (as they certainly should) her new book. We all knew Bobbie was an enigmatic, sport-loving teacher and expert on children's reading but never would have suspected the incompleteness of her autobiography and the revelations about her stepfather and his antecedents.

Recently, however, Bobbie told Louis Stanley, her abusive but charismatic stepfather, had many secrets and she began to investigate the truth of those years and that of her beloved mother in 2003. Conspiracy of Secrets tells in page-turning detail of her nine years of painstaking and sometimes disturbing researches. She uncovered even more secrets than she had ever envisaged, including one of historical importance:

It has always been known that Herbert Asquith, who was Prime Minister during the first part of the First World War, had a romantic attachment to the aristocratic Vereya Stanely, who was thirty years his junior. It was generally accepted that the relationship was platonic. Far from it – and the result of their liaison was Bobbie's stepfather, born in 1912. The exact date, like so much else in this story of intrigue and deceit, is still shrouded in mystery.

Bobbie has published extensively in the educational field for some years and she has now written a book of very general interest. Conspiracy of Secrets is an absorbing, sometimes very moving, often shocking personal narrative which deserves to be a best-seller.

Greenwich and the London River, by Paul Tempel; with drawings by Peter Kent, and photographs by Stephen Tempest.

This gem of a book is full of wonderful illustrations, information, and quotations – from Samuel Pepys to Boris Johnson, with many others including Sir Christopher Wren, Charles Dickens, John Mayfield, Wilton Owen and T S. Eliot. This pantheon of luminaries includes the story of how central Greenwich and the river has been to our island story. Subtitled Royal Olympic, Past Present and Always, it contains numerous colour photographs by Stephen Tempest (the author’s son), and coloured drawings of great skill and beauty by Peter Kent. Dickens was rather rude about Greenwich – “If the parks be the lungs of London, we wonder what Greenwich Fair is – a periodical breaking out, we suppose, a sort of spring rash.”

Oh dear! That’s not what this book is about: with the red blemens proclaiming the new Royal Borough of Greenwich, for “rush” we should perhaps read “scarlet fever” but of course even if that isn’t right.

Greenwich today is a pleasant place not just of history, but incident: any day of the week one can see streets full of visitors from all over the world, flocking to see the Cutty Sark, the Park (currently marred by preparations for the Olympics), the National Maritime Museum, and the other historic buildings of Maritime Greenwich – where dozens of films have been made, from Pirates of the Caribbean to Dunkirk.

And all the time, the Thames flows by, a joy to behold, a pleasure to travel on, or just sit by and think of the memories of Viking (and more recently Dutch) raiders, Tudor shipyards, pubs frequented by char- acters like the Great Fire's John Tradescant, great factories warehouses and docks, grim memories of the blitz, visiting men-of-war ancient and modern, and, most recently, the Diamond Jubilee Royal Pageant. This is a book to be dipped into, and enjoyed, a great celebration of Greenwich and the river that flows past it.

A bargain at £9.95, Greenwich and the London River, by Paul Tempel; with drawings by Peter Kent, and photographs by Stephen Tempest, contains 190 pages and numerous illustrations; published by Medina Publishing Ltd. 81 Ewell Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4AH. ISBN 978-0-9576813-9-3 available from Made in Greenwich Gallery, 324 Creek Road, and all good bookshops.

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July 10

Westcombe News

July/Aug 2012

Summer reading

Neville Grant

The Paragon and South Row by Neil Rhind

When people mention Greenwich, sooner or later they invariably start talking about the Old Royal Naval College, and “the Victoria of London.”

Too easily forgotten is that other star in Royal Greenwich’s crown – the Paragon in Blackheath. Local historian Neil Rhind’s new book The Paragon and South Row, reminds us that the Paragon ranks, with the Royal Crescent in Bath, Park Crescent at Regent’s Park and the Crescent at Buxton, in the top rank of outstanding Georgian buildings.

Just published, this “companion volume to the author’s Blackheath Village and Environs” is a work of great scholarship – and enormous local interest. The Paragon – a Grade I listed crescent – was designed by the local architect and surveyor Michael Searle (1751-1813) and was built in 1793-4.

It was very badly damaged during the blitz. Threatened with demolition after the war, it was saved by Charles Bernard Brown (1916-1990), who was determined that the badly damaged crescent should be reconstructed to its original appearance. With what success? No one would guess which parts of it were nearly destroyed, and the crescent today is a joy to behold. Want to know which four numbers were virtually destroyed? Who lived there, and when? Read the book to find out!
**ARMS**

**BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS MANSION House’s Chanellors Hall, Committee House, Blackheath Village, Thursday of every month, 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm**
**Next meeting: Thursday 4th of July, 2013**

**COMMUNITY**

**PARKIN2012 - SHOWCASE OF MUSIC & DANCE**
**Harvay Rd Sports Field**
**Sat 7th July**

A Summer Fair to celebrate an era for local talent: Blackheath School of Dance, Greenwich Mums, Dolphins School Choir. The Angelos Saxophone Quartet. Also a Circus Skills Workshop, children’s workshops & more. 

**BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB**
welcomes all players to its monthly evening in Mycenae House, Min Road, Blackheath. Info: 020 8856 7527.

**BLACKHEATH FLOWER CLUB**
meeting third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at St Mark’s Church, Middle Park.

**BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH’S INSTITUTE**
Free Wednesday of every week at 7:30 pm at St Mark’s Church, Middle Park.

**THEATRE & OPERA**

**BLACKHEATH HALLS**
**Wed 4th - Sat 7th July 7.30 pm Trinity Laban Opera: Stephen McNeff’s THE SECRET GARDEN, UK Premiere. This production goes on to the Barbican Festival from 28th July - 4th August. 020 8506 4000**

**THE GREENWICH THEATRE**
**Cromwell Rd, London SE10 8AS. 020 8856 7527**

**Covent Garden Opera**
**Saturday 22nd June at 2pm and 7.30pm**

**Wednesday 26th July THE TRENCH**
**The SPACE 200 Westferry Road E14 8SP 020 7527 5159 7799@space.org.uk**

**Saturday 17th July SAPRIO, IN FRAMMENTS**
**20th & 21st July 2013 KNIVES IN BONES**
**Wed 25th July THE TRENCH**
**THE SPACE 200 Westferry Road E14 8SP 020 7527 5159 7799@space.org.uk**

**Saturday 17th July, 7.30pm BEETHOVEN’S 5TH Symphony.**

**Sunday 1st August 7.30pm Mozart’s opera LA CLEMENZA DI TITO. 0141 398 Debut performances by German Opera.**

**MUSIC**

**BLACKHEath HALLS**
**COMMUNITY OPERA: Mozart’s COSI FAN TUTTE, 17th – 20th of June. 7.30 pm Sun. 22nd July, 7.30 pm (£14.00 each)**

**Main 23rd July Mountain Jazz**
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**WASTE FOR YOUR BARREL**
**Macmillan Coffee Morning Auction**
**2:30 pm Friday 28th August at Mycenae House. Offers of help or to provide cakes please ring Caroline on 0853-0941.**

**Children’s Nearby New Sale – 25th July 2 – 4pm Mycenae House – clothes, toys and equipment at bargain prices.**

**If you are interested in having a table or rail please contact Joanne on 07799757717.**

**Westcombe News July/Aug 2012**
ENVIRONMENT

A shallow decision

Sarah Winterbottom

A shiny new state-of-the-art purpose-built sports centre in the Temple of Green is a civic poster child of regeneration plans for the old Hospital site. Great news maybe for those of you that go to the much loved (but sadly neglected) facilities at the Arches leisure centre at the bottom of Maze Hill. Not so if you are serious about swimming.

Following six years of consultation with ‘stakeholders’ including Greenwich Swimming Club, the Council is now having to defend its plans to build a fitness pool with two shallow ends, as a result rendering it unsuitable for both galas and training. With a moveable pool floor seemingly ruled out, for reasons that are unclear, the planned, double shallow ended facility has been dubbed an “advanced paddling pool” by Tory opposition leader, Cllr Spencer Drury. The Royal Borough of Greenwich says that young swimmers should travel to Eltham or Charlton lido (once it is refurbished) where there are suitable facilities. It is worth noting that in Lewisham, the new flagship sports and leisure centre, the Glass Mill, houses a ‘competition pool’ with eight lanes and a moveable floor at the deep end.

Greenwich Swimming Club are furious. The Club has been training youngsters for 80 years and club secretary, Chris Evans, has doubts about finding a suitable slot at Eltham which has its own swimming club. “It’s going to be madness. A new swimming facility should tick all the boxes of what is needed – otherwise it’s a backward step,” Dickie Davis, Chairman of the club says. “We have been terraced out and changed. There is no spectator area in the main pool, so our parents can’t watch their children swim. We have no club office either, but we’re told we might get to share a storage cupboard. And this is a borough claiming to take pride in its Olympic status!”

According to a spokesman for the Royal Borough of Greenwich’s the “new Greenwich Centre,... is being delivered at zero-cost to the tax payer as it’s being funded entirely by the disposal of Royal Borough of Greenwich assets.”

Does this mean that we have no choice over what we are given?

An online petition has been set up if you would like to protest. Go to www.petition.ccmil/launch-the-new-greenwich-swimming-pool-1-on-at-the-deep-end/comment-pages-1/8 comments/16978

Parking during the Olympics

Residents in the Westcombe Park area have been informed by the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) that they need to ensure that they have a valid parking permit in time for the Olympics to ensure that they don’t get a stiff fine or worse, their vehicle towed away.

Temporary parking controls are set to be introduced across all areas within 30 minutes walking distance of Greenwich Park and will come into force on 27th July and remain in place until 9th September.

The following changes are to take effect:

- Existing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) will have restriction hours and days extended to 0830 to 1000h, 7 days a week.
- All ‘free parking’ bays in the CPZ will become parking bays allowing up to two hours parking free or without a permit.
- Current all-day and 4-hour visitor vouchers will not be valid.
- All correspondence sent to residents by the RBG in June, if you already have a CPZ permit, this will remain valid and will cover you for the extended hours and days.
- If you don’t have a permit you can apply for a temporary one so that you can park on the street and continue to use the ‘free’ bays, which will be converted during the Games period. These permits are free.
- Residents can apply for permits to cover as many vehicles as belong to those living at a given address. Businesses can apply for up to ten business parking permits.
- Existing visitor permits will be supersed ed by special ‘Games time’ vouchers which are also free, and all local residents, whether or not they are permit holders, will be entitled to a maximum of two reissueable visitor vouchers.
- For those who receive regular visits – for example, from carers, nannies or tradesmen, ‘temporary visitor’ permits are available. If you have special requirements, the RBG urges you to contact them on 020 8921 2012 for more information.
- Two-hour free parking is being introduced in the areas where there is currently no CPZ.
- More information, and details on how to apply for permits and vouchers, is available by calling 0800 111 2012, or go to: www.2012gamesparkingpermits.com

VAT threat

In a move widely considered to favour developers, the Chancellor last month Finance Bill lays out plans to remove the current zero VAT on alterations to listed and historic buildings subject to effect from October 2012. New builds will continue to benefit from this significant tax incentive.

For an area like Blackheath and Greenwich, where there are many historic and listed buildings – including our very own Mycenae House – this is a cause for concern.

Alterations and improvements that previously benefited from zero per cent VAT will now incur the full 20% tax. According to Stephen Thornton, head of external affairs at the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, “this increase will create further barriers to the improvement of this stock and stifle innovation.”

Prior to 1984, work on all buildings was zero rated. The Government of the time then introduced VAT but unilaterally raised the rate for all but exempted listed building and scheduled ancient monuments.

Austerity measures bite

Foraging for “wild food” is basically picking stuff from fields, hedgerows and riverbanks (if you have any nearby). Whole books workshops & courses are devoted to raiding your local green space for edibles (even Boots have online advice). It’s a curiously eratic business, though – and much foraging apparently involves trespassing.

As a teenager, I occasionally went ‘scrump ing’ for apples, but where is the difference between foraging and taking plants from the wild (can offence under the Wildlifte & Countryside Act 1981). If you leave the root behind it is foraging rather than theft?

One urban forager cites Richmond Park and Highbury Roundabout as good sources of produce, though visiting two such disparate locations must involve a lot of time and fuel.

There are health issues. Rats may have contaminated plants, so washing them in running water is recommended, and making sure diluted vinegar or sterilizing fluid. Elsewhere, I read that “foraging can be fun but... fatal.” Followed by advice from the Food Standards Agency, Health Protection Agency and the National Poisons Information Service.

The most commonly ‘foraged’ foods, blackberries, are safe of picked from high up and washed thoroughly. You can cut any number of wild plants provided you know what they are, but that’s no easy and most of them are bland. A wild food’ recipe recommends ‘delicious’ hogweed - however, you should wash gloves to pick (and presumably prepare) it and it is toxic until cooked! Mushrooms are probably the riskiest of all, but the general FSA advice is to keep a sample of what you have eaten just in case you poison yourself.

It’s safer to grow a patch of ‘wild food’ in your own patch... garlic, dandelions, chickweed are easy to find. If you are very enterprising you might even sack the gardener and charge inexperienced foragers to come and remove weeds from your own patch (just prepare yourself on how vitamin rich foods are and you’ll away).

Christopher Raven

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Westcombe News July/Aug 2012

Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Central Library on the lower ground floor of the Woolwich Centre, 3 Wellington Street. They may also be viewed on www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning

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Christopher’s column
**JUBIL-INSPIRATION**

**ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** The shop in the award-winning Visuear Centre Discover Greenwich managed to combine the Jubilee with the Olympics in their display.

**CENTRE:** Blackheath Cooks in Old Dover Road highlighted the best of British recipes.

**BELOW LEFT:** The Cat Protection League in Old Dover Road here seems to be the Corgic Protection League.

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** butcher's on Old Dover Road hit some royal themes - but didn’t forget Fathers’ Day!**

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**ABOVE:** Not to be left out, Poisters School flew the flags, too, and had a right royal celebration.

**RIGHT:** Oriie and the Bear’s shop window in Old Dover Road.

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**Jubilee window-shopping with the WN**

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