Was it worth it?

The partying is almost over as slowly we recover from the hangover following the Olympic extravaganza. As we consider the impact on our lives of the Olympics over the last several months, many of us are asking “Well, how was it for you?”

The WH has been asking the same question, and we report below a representative sample of the answers we got.

No one could fail to be impressed by so many aspects of the Olympics and Paralympics. We should take our hats off to all the athletes in particular - not just the medal winners, but all the athletes who worked so hard to make it possible.

Take Rebecca Adlington: since the age of six, she has spent over 12,000 hours in the water, and has sworn some 25,000 miles around the world!

Marilyn Little reports: “We had a fantasa day in the Park at the Cross Country. It was a terrific venue. Getting into the Park via the Blackheath Bridge was no problem and once inside movement was very easy. We managed to get a good view of a number of the jumps and finished off in the Arena. The cross-country course was really beautiful and very imaginative.”

Marilyn added: “What a terrific venue Greenwich Park has been! All the people I spoke to on Cross Country day were blown away with the jumps, the course and the brilliant views.”

“I know there are a few wrinkles, - for example the reinstatement of the park is taking longer than we thought it would - but given the scale of the event that was to be expected.”

Local resident Anne Raynolds also emailed in a report on page 6. It was not just the festivities in the park; the heath was a huge attraction, too. “The screen on Blackheath and the area around the church were very popular on Sunday afternoon.”

Geoff Bailey commented: “no one doubts that the Olympics were a sporting triumph and a huge economic boom, and the equestrian events, also saw it as an aesthetic triumph. But it also needs to be pointed out that a sporting triumph it was; to organise so many events in so many locations, so smoothly, greatly redounds to the credit of LOCOG.”

And Sandra Barnes, writing from Philadelphia in the US, writes: ‘We’ve been watching your Olympic spectacle! I had to say the British games have been monumentally exciting - and so well organized and presented. The pictures of London and our transmissions are simply gorgeous.”

Nothing can detract from the successes of our athletes in the Olympic Games or from those of the thousands of ordinary people who worked, paid or unpaid, to make the Olympics an event to be remembered for the rest of our lives. However, it will be remembered by some for all the wrong reasons. Some local shopkeepers and traders reported a down turn in business.

Central London was uncannily quiet, with business as usual not in evidence. Restaurants suffered, and hotels were reportedly slashing room prices. However, one bright spot was the Soho area, which is a milling mass of people on most days.

Local traders

Nearer home, traders gave a mixed reaction. The wave of spectators passing through Blackheath on the way to Greenwich park had little effect on shop takings. The stall holders in Greenwich Market had particular cause for complaint because barriers erected by LOCOG on the route from Greenwich Station to the Equestrian Olympics in the park ensured that potential shoppers were prevented from entering the market.

The owner of the independent antique shop through the Junk Shop, Toby Moy, tried in vain to draw custom by displaying some of his wares from behind the barrier by putting stock on the pavement outside, and was threatened with a £5,000 fine.

Fortunately, the Council intervened, and the barriers were eventually modified to allow the expected influx of customers from the market to materialize.

On Old Dover Road, Blackheath Cooks tried to celebrate with a small Hamlet display, and were warned they could face a £300,000 fine. The message to local traders was that a part of the national celebration, and if you aren’t a major sponsor from a Multi-national, get lost!”

While many had their hearts in the right place, it is disappointing the stress on the economy and the aesthetic impact.

The Special Administrator has been named as Matthew Kendrew, who said: “My priority is to work with staff, patients, the public and all those involved in healthcare services in the south-east London area to maintain high quality effective services during the running of the Un sustainable Provider Regime.”

“Together we will need to think differently, and accept that change needs to happen. The status quo is not sustainable.”

This is the first time an NHS trust has been put into administration. The trust was created by merging three hospitals - the Queen Elizabeth in Woolwich, Queen Mary’s in Sidcup, and the Princess Royal in Orpington – and serves more than one million people. Last year, on a turnover of £244m it finished £69m in deficit.

Much of the deficit is as a result of an inept Private Finance Initiative: the interest is still being paid on a building that no longer exists – the vast white elephant that was Greenwich District Hospital.

Although the trust has some of the longest waiting times for operations, and longer-than-average wait times in A&E, it has low infection and death rates. If it decided to break up the trust, it would not necessarily mean the closure of all services, but one of the hospitals might go...

One of the beautifully-designed cross-country jumps in Greenwich Park.

Photos: Emily Norton

A glimpse of the Stadium at sunset

South London NHS in trouble

The announcement by the government that South London Healthcare NHS Trust is to be put into administration after it ran into financial trouble has caused consternation among NHS watchers.

The Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has appointed a special administrator to take over. “Past efforts have not succeeded in putting the South London Healthcare Trust on a sustainable path,” he said.

Since its creation in 2009, the trust has run up deficits of over £20m per year.

The Special Administrator has been named as Matthew Kendrew, who said: “My priority is to work with staff, patients, the public and all those involved in healthcare services in the south-east London area to maintain high quality effective services during the running of the Un sustainable Provider Regime.”

“Together we will need to think differently, and accept that change needs to happen. The status quo is not sustainable.”

This is the first time an NHS trust has been put into administration. The trust was created by merging three hospitals - the Queen Elizabeth in Woolwich, Queen Mary’s in Sidcup, and the Princess Royal in Orpington – and serves more than one million people. Last year, on a turnover of £244m it finished £69m in deficit.

Much of the deficit is as a result of an inept Private Finance Initiative: the interest is still being paid on a building that no longer exists – the vast white elephant that was Greenwich District Hospital.

Although the trust has some of the longest waiting times for operations, and longer-than-average wait times in A&E, it has low infection and death rates. If it decided to break up the trust, it would not necessarily mean the closure of all services, but one of the hospitals might go ...

See also our report on page 6.

South London NHS in trouble

The announcement by the government that South London Healthcare NHS Trust is to be put into administration after it ran into financial trouble has caused consternation among NHS watchers.

The Health Secretary Andrew Lansley has appointed a special administrator to take over. “Past efforts have not succeeded in putting the South London Healthcare Trust on a sustainable path,” he said.

Since its creation in 2009, the trust has run up deficits of over £20m per year.

The Special Administrator has been named as Matthew Kendrew, who said: “My priority is to work with staff, patients, the public and all those involved in healthcare services in the south-east London area to maintain high quality effective services during the running of the Un sustainable Provider Regime.”

“Together we will need to think differently, and accept that change needs to happen. The status quo is not sustainable.”

This is the first time an NHS trust has been put into administration. The trust was created by merging three hospitals - the Queen Elizabeth in Woolwich, Queen Mary’s in Sidcup, and the Princess Royal in Orpington – and serves more than one million people. Last year, on a turnover of £244m it finished £69m in deficit.

Much of the deficit is as a result of an inept Private Finance Initiative: the interest is still being paid on a building that no longer exists – the vast white elephant that was Greenwich District Hospital.

Although the trust has some of the longest waiting times for operations, and longer-than-average wait times in A&E, it has low infection and death rates. If it decided to break up the trust, it would not necessarily mean the closure of all services, but one of the hospitals might go ...

See also our report on page 6.
Proudly carrying the torch

Justine Curry carries the torch along Stratheden Road - and Vikram Jaisingh manages to snatch a quick photograph with her as she passes!

Letters

From: Trevor Allen Greenwich Green Party

To: "Community News"

Subject: Olympic Torch Relay

Dear Editor,

I have been following the Olympic Torch Relay with great interest. As a member of Greenwich Green Party, I am particularly interested in the role of the local community in hosting this event. Greenwich is a diverse and vibrant borough, with a rich history and a strong sense of community spirit. I believe that the Olympic Torch Relay is an excellent opportunity to bring people together and celebrate our town's achievements.

I have been involved in a number of initiatives to promote community engagement and social inclusion in Greenwich. One of the most successful projects was the Greenwich Greenways initiative, which involved residents in creating a network of walking and cycling routes throughout the borough. The project has helped to improve health and wellbeing, while also promoting environmental sustainability.

Another initiative that I have been involved in is the Greenwich Community Green Network, which aims to create a network of community gardens and green spaces across the borough. This project has helped to create a sense of community ownership and pride in our local environment.

I believe that the Olympic Torch Relay can be a powerful symbol of unity and hope. As the torch makes its way through Greenwich, I hope that it will inspire people to come together and celebrate our town's strengths.

Sincerely,

Trevor Allen
Greenwich Green Party
Under the Arches

Frank Smith says: “Many thanks to those who came along to Lasseter Place on what turned out to be a glorious summer’s day in July.

“The volunteers – 11 adults and 6 children – ‘reclaimed’ the winding path and the clearing created last year as part of the Trees for Cities project. An area at the side of the path was also cleared in preparation for bulb-planting later in the year.”

The last time Britain hosted the Olympic Games was in 1948. Because everything was in short supply after the war, they were called the Austerity Games, so, here in London, the games were a bit of an improvised affair. (nothing has changed, then … only joking!)

So it was that the East Greenwich Community Association decided to build an improvised village made of cardboard for its 1948 Village Fete. Well known local artist and architect Mark Timman was asked to help Theo Luck and Michael Aygeman with a 15m long 5m wide stage-like cardboard village located in The Pleasance, based on the plans of buildings in the Greenwich of 1948. The idea was to have a maze running through it for the children (and adults) to explore.

Children helped to build the cardboard houses, which included iconic buildings like the Queen’s House and Naval College. Julia Marsen of Ottie and the Bea was also asked to help. Julia takes up the story:

“When I was asked to be involved, I was thrilled,” said Julia. “Finally, I had the chance to do the big cardboard box build! I’d always wanted to do, using Makedo’s clips.”

“While the plans were taking shape, the cardboard collecting began. Many thanks are owed to the traders at the Blackheath Standard for their boxes.”

“The build day finally came – unfortunately so did the rain. We refused to allow rain to stop play, but we had to modify the plan slightly. However, on Sunday we utilised two marques to give the village cover, and thanks to lots of wonderful young helpers we did it. Once built, the village was decorated with stickers and stencils and Olympic-coloured paints. Our build was able to be brought out into the late afternoon sunshine for all to enjoy. A big thank you to all involved with the planning of the community events and of course to the friends of the East Greenwich Pleasance for letting us all share their wonderful secret garden.”

*Editor’s note: Makedo is a connector system that enables materials including cardboard, plastic and fabric to easily join together to form new objects or structures. When you’re done playing, simply pull it apart to reuse over and over again. An ideal aid to creative play! A full range of Makedo is available at Ottie and the Bea.

The ceremonial foundation stone of the Arches shows it was built in 1927 as a municipal baths. It housed first and second class baths, slipper baths and a man of house and was updated in the 1950s to provide Russian and Turkish steam baths.

Today, the Arches Leisure Centre, remains popular and is much used by the local community. The East Greenwich Hospital redevelopment provides a replacement including a new 25m pool (with 1m deep ends, maximum depth 1.5m) and a smaller ‘learners’ pool.

Greenwich Council now tells us that a shallow pool is needed to provide for a bulge in the numbers of 5 to 9 years old between now and 2015. We ask what facilities this Olympic borough are proposing for those children when they are aged 10 to 14?

We therefore still question the suitability of such a shallow pool which will force serious and club swimmers to travel to Eltham or further afield should they wish to dive – or learn to dive.

We also ask what will happen to the Arches? The Arches takes its name from its decorative archways and is identified in the Council’s 2010 East Greenwich Conservation Area Appraisal. As a ‘key listed building’ of ‘special interest’, which is a ‘well modelled Italianate building from the interwar period, noteworthy for its careful detailing’.

Even so listed building status, requested by the Greenwich Society, has been declined because ‘some of the original internal features are missing’, even though the centre’s own website, talks about an “internal fabric (which) still shows signs of a varied history”.

The decision seems to ignore the original Second Class Bath Hall, currently a fitness pool, which remains virtually unchanged from the date of completion. It also underestimates the importance of the external design as a key part of the street-scape. The Arches’ exterior is an unusually elaborate example of Victorian Roman domestic and administrative architecture and refers to the past presence of Roman buildings in the Greenwich area and en route to Dover. It also echoes the use of brick in a ‘classical’ style at the William building of the Old Naval College and is typical of many public buildings in south east London at the time.

The four-square, low-rise form of the Arches is a significant landmark forming a cornerstone of the East Greenwich Conservation Area that is sympathetic to the setting of lines and buildings of Tradefalgar House and respects the character of the minor roads on its flanks.

Buildings which have been identified as positively contributing to the ‘character or appearance’ of a conservation area gives them some protection against demolition and should, in theory, oblige the Council to promote repair where there are signs of neglect and decay. Even so, without listed status, The Arches’ future is uncertain. Listed building status gives the best protection against demolition or radical redevelopment.

With or without listed status, the Arches deserves to be preserved. The hard-working residents of 1920s Greenwich contributed to its construction through their rates yet today’s Council is planning to sell it off. As a listed building it is likely to be less attractive to developers and so one can only assume that the Royal Borough of Greenwich is looking at the short-term gain, i.e. a quick sale.

Yet the exterior, and the original features of the interior, could be preserved with the building being converted for a new use. Although a listed building may pose problems for developers, the unique style of the Arches would go a long way to compensate for this. Hopefully the Arches can be saved to ensure it remains as a monument to the aspirations of a previous generation of Greenwich residents.

Congratulations

Many congratulations to the choirs of Blackheath Girls High School, who have recorded a truly delightful anthology of songs ranging from The Ugly Duckling and the Seal Song to Palestine’s Sicit Corsus, Handel’s Zadok the Priest, and Villa Lobos and Cesar Franck. The recording was made in March this year at All Saints Church, Blackheath. The CD is a pleasure to listen to, and was very skilfully recorded (under one imagines less than ideal conditions) by Neil Luckett.

The glass shop

• 25th glass repairs
• timber & upvc windows
• shutter glass_Repair
• glass blocks
• glass table tops
• stained and fused glass
• glass & mirrors cut to size
• traditional leaded lights
• glass & mirrors engraving
• picture framing

call or text: 07588 502699 or 0797 8800740
Email us at our new shop: theglassshop.blackheath@gmail.com

Mycenae House community centre

...at the heart of your community

020 8858 1749 www.mycenaehouse.co.uk
50 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, SE13 7ED (Developed by Royal Greenwich)

The Way to Modern Living

Residential Refurbishments • Kitchens • Bathrooms • Interior Design Service • Loft Conversions • Custom Cabins • Fitted Bedrooms • Joinery • Building Extensions & Refurbishments. High Class Construction

Call or text: 07939 520300 or 07708 482706
email: tfxbqps@gmail.com

My secret to new life

A & A LANDSCAPES Landscape Specialists

Free advice & estimates

Qualified Horticulturist

All aspects of soft & hard landscaping

Free maintenance visits

Fencing • Patios • Brickwork

Tel. 020 8318 2530
Wonderful? Yes, but ... Neville Grant queries the IOC’s sponsorship policies

The Equestrian events in our lovely park has exceeded all expectations! Such historic buildings framing such excellent horseriding made the event even more spectacular. And didn’t the park look amazing in the cross country event?

Two other events made this week very special for me. First was peeing into the park through the gate on Crooms Hill and seeing some members of the Equestrian team already at tables, relaxing in the duped sunlight beneath the trees, with their beautiful horses near them manning the grills. It looked calming and peaceful, and I felt that Greenwich had provided them with a perfect place to relax after the stresses of competition.

The day after the cross country, early in the morning, I saw two mounted policemen galloping their horses over the heath yelling with delight and joy, so - I think they were imagining they were about to compete in an event! The excitement of the event had got to them as well. I missed being able to go to the park very much as I am sure to many people did, but I am so glad it provided such an excepional venue for the Equestrian events of our Olympic Games.

Will the park ever recover? was the question posed by those who were against the use of Greenwich Park for the Olympics.

GORDON BAKER gives us an interim report

The re-opening of the Park got off to a rather shaky start for a few days. Not all of LOCOG’s optimistic promises were met, but the situation is evolving and getting better day-by-day.

After the first week of Olympic events in August, I and representatives of the other local amenity societies, Councillor Dick Quebell and Royal Borough of Greenwich officials were shown by the Royal Parks Authority how well the grass has recovered in the area adjacent to the cricket pitch where the Cross-Country started. The rest of that area, which can be reached from the Heath via the gates at the top of Croons Hill, is also in generally good nick.

However, some areas are still cordoned off, awaiting the removal of temporary structures and equipment, and the tennis court area will remain closed because it will be wanted as a practice area for horses taking part in the Paralympics. Where enclosures are dismantled, any patches caused by temporary structures will have to be screened off by the Royal Parks Authority to enable the grass to recover.

On the whole, park manager Graham Dear reported that little damage has been done by horses and spectators. He seems to have a good grasp of what will have to be done where temporary buildings and other structures are removed and to protect sensitive areas like the acid grasslands and archaeological remains.

We were told that the area under the Arena platform will probably be re-turfed rather than re-seeded, but a decision will not be made until the ground is inspected once the platform has been removed. LOCOG sub-contractors will be closely monitored by Royal Parks. English Heritage and Natural England will also continue to have a watching brief on the restoration work.

The Flower Garden is now open, as is a dog-walking area; and the Observatory, a (somewhat constrained) cross-park route and the Bandstand field reopened on 14th August – rather later than planned.

However, some areas of the park remain closed off. We were told this is partly due to the need to protect pedestrians from the dismantling process. But there are apparently also security concerns about visitors who are not ticketed and who have not been through the screening process mingling with those who have.

Royal Parks have promised to meet us again in September, once the Paralympics are over, to review progress.

The re-opening of the Park got off to a rather shaky start for a few days. Not all of LOCOG’s optimistic promises were met, but the situation is evolving and getting better day-by-day.

After the first week of Olympic events in August, I and representatives of the other local amenity societies, Councillor Dick Quebell and Royal Borough of Greenwich officials were shown by the Royal Parks Authority how well the grass has recovered in the area adjacent to the cricket pitch where the Cross-Country started. The rest of that area, which can be reached from the Heath via the gates at the top of Croons Hill, is also in generally good nick.

However, some areas are still cordoned off, awaiting the removal of temporary structures and equipment, and the tennis court area will remain closed because it will be wanted as a practice area for horses taking part in the Paralympics. Where enclosures are dismantled, any patches caused by temporary structures will have to be screened off by the Royal Parks Authority to enable the grass to recover.

On the whole, park manager Graham Dear reported that little damage has been done by horses and spectators. He seems to have a good grasp of what will have to be done where temporary buildings and other structures are removed and to protect sensitive areas like the acid grasslands and archaeological remains.

We were told that the area under the Arena platform will probably be re-turfed rather than re-seeded, but a decision will not be made until the ground is inspected once the platform has been removed. LOCOG sub-contractors will be closely monitored by Royal Parks. English Heritage and Natural England will also continue to have a watching brief on the restoration work.

The Flower Garden is now open, as is a dog-walking area; and the Observatory, a (somewhat constrained) cross-park route and the Bandstand field reopened on 14th August – rather later than planned.

However, some areas of the park remain closed off. We were told this is partly due to the need to protect pedestrians from the dismantling process. But there are apparently also security concerns about visitors who are not ticketed and who have not been through the screening process mingling with those who have.

Royal Parks have promised to meet us again in September, once the Paralympics are over, to review progress.

A surreal view of the Olympics

If you haven’t already had more than enough of the Olympics, you have a chance for a surreal perspective, viewing them through the eyes of The Stephen Lawrence Gallery’s artist in residence. Terence Birch is the Gallery’s artist in residence during the Equestrian Events at Greenwich Park. His residency project will it is claimed “reveal a synchronicity between the route taken by the horse trials in Greenwich Park, and the route taken by visitors around an exhibition.”

A graduate from the Royal College of Art, Terence Birch “works with associations to investigate the language through which things are presented (whether horse trials or exhibitions).” Birch has already brought into play this kind of associative pun or joke by work inspired by the building we love to call the

Westcombe Park Dental Practice

Treatments Available
Zoom Tooth Whitening
Dental Implants
Invisalign
Smile Makeovers
Tooth Colouring Fillings
Anti-Wrinkle Treatments & Dermal Fillings

13 Station Crescent, Westcombe Park, London SE3 7EO
Tel: 0208 853 3304 Fax: 0208 858 1784

Gordon Baker

The Equestrian events in our lovely park has exceeded all expectations! Such historic buildings framing such excellent horseriding made the event even more spectacular. And didn’t the park look amazing in the cross country event?

Two other events made this week very special for me. First was peeing into the park through the gate on Crooms Hill and seeing some members of the Equestrian team already at tables, relaxing in the duped sunlight beneath the trees, with their beautiful horses near them manning the grills. It looked calming and peaceful, and I felt that Greenwich had provided them with a perfect place to relax after the stresses of competition.

The day after the cross country, early in the morning, I saw two mounted policemen galloping their horses over the heath yelling with delight and joy, so - I think they were imagining they were about to compete in an event! The excitement of the event had got to them as well. I missed being able to go to the park very much as I am sure to many people did, but I am so glad it provided such an excepional venue for the Equestrian events of our Olympic Games.

Will the park ever recover? was the question posed by those who were against the use of Greenwich Park for the Olympics.

GORDON BAKER gives us an interim report

The re-opening of the Park got off to a rather shaky start for a few days. Not all of LOCOG’s optimistic promises were met, but the situation is evolving and getting better day-by-day.

After the first week of Olympic events in August, I and representatives of the other local amenity societies, Councillor Dick Quebell and Royal Borough of Greenwich officials were shown by the Royal Parks Authority how well the grass has recovered in the area adjacent to the cricket pitch where the Cross-Country started. The rest of that area, which can be reached from the Heath via the gates at the top of Croons Hill, is also in generally good nick.

However, some areas are still cordoned off, awaiting the removal of temporary structures and equipment, and the tennis court area will remain closed because it will be wanted as a practice area for horses taking part in the Paralympics. Where enclosures are dismantled, any patches caused by temporary structures will have to be screened off by the Royal Parks Authority to enable the grass to recover.

On the whole, park manager Graham Dear reported that little damage has been done by horses and spectators. He seems to have a good grasp of what will have to be done where temporary buildings and other structures are removed and to protect sensitive areas like the acid grasslands and archaeological remains.

We were told that the area under the Arena platform will probably be re-turfed rather than re-seeded, but a decision will not be made until the ground is inspected once the platform has been removed. LOCOG sub-contractors will be closely monitored by Royal Parks. English Heritage and Natural England will also continue to have a watching brief on the restoration work.

The Flower Garden is now open, as is a dog-walking area; and the Observatory, a (somewhat constrained) cross-park route and the Bandstand field reopened on 14th August – rather later than planned.

However, some areas of the park remain closed off. We were told this is partly due to the need to protect pedestrians from the dismantling process. But there are apparently also security concerns about visitors who are not ticketed and who have not been through the screening process mingling with those who have.

Royal Parks have promised to meet us again in September, once the Paralympics are over, to review progress.

A surreal view of the Olympics

If you haven’t already had more than enough of the Olympics, you have a chance for a surreal perspective, viewing them through the eyes of The Stephen Lawrence Gallery’s artist in residence. Terence Birch is the Gallery’s artist in residence during the Equestrian Events at Greenwich Park. His residency project will it is claimed “reveal a synchronicity between the route taken by the horse trials in Greenwich Park, and the route taken by visitors around an exhibition.”

A graduate from the Royal College of Art, Terence Birch “works with associations to investigate the language through which things are presented (whether horse trials or exhibitions).” Birch has already brought into play this kind of associative pun or joke by work inspired by the building we love to call the

Westcombe Park Dental Practice

Treatments Available
Zoom Tooth Whitening
Dental Implants
Invisalign
Smile Makeovers
Tooth Colouring Fillings
Anti-Wrinkle Treatments & Dermal Fillings

13 Station Crescent, Westcombe Park, London SE3 7EO
Tel: 0208 853 3304 Fax: 0208 858 1784
Our local health service: in need of a transfusion

SLH has been declared bankrupt. The Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, has declared South London Healthcare Trust (SLHT) an ‘unsustainable provider’ and appointed a Trust Special Administrator (TSA) to determine its future. There are serious worries that in the administration process the TSA can ignore any existing strategic planning, and will create his own plan for future local healthcare, bringing in private providers and closing departments as he sees fit.

If there is one topic which raises the interest of the public more than another it is the state of our health service. It is therefore small wonder that there was a full attendance at Charlton House on the evening of 19 July to discuss the present situation of the South London Healthcare Trust (SLHT) which is at present in administration under Matthew Kershaw as Trust Special Administrator (TSA).

The meeting was called by John Galloway, the Co-ordinator of We Love the NHS and was supported amongst others by Dr Wendy Savage of Keep Our NHS Public, Laura Perks of Unison and Nick Rayford MP for Greenwich & Woolwich.

Bedevilled by the PFI
All three speakers expressed their concern that under the Health and Social Care Act it appeared that the Government was not willing to attempt to renegotiate the terms of the Private Finance Initiative which governs the finances of our three local hospitals. Indeed it was claimed that it was not at present inclined even to consider properly consulting the public on any alternatives which might be available.

All speakers and commentators from the floor were at pains to make clear that, in their view, the quality of the service and care in all our hospitals in the SLHT (particularly Queen Elizabeth Woolwich, Queen Mary’s Sidcup and Princess Royal Bromley) could not be criticised.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the staff it was of the highest standard. The failure lay in the impossible task of servicing the debt imposed on the SLHT by the badly drafted PFI contracts entered into.

It was also made clear that the time scale imposed on the Administrator was far too short. The TSA was obliged to publish his recommendations by October with final decisions to be taken by the Secretary of State for Health in February 2013. It was felt that this timescale was far too short for full consultation with staff and public.

The four threats
To impose decisions in so short a time threatens our three hospitals in at least four ways – privatisation, closures, mergers or the selling off of services, to the detriment of the excellent services at present offered and the morale of the staff.

It was suggested that the views of the speakers were not made from a party political standpoint (all parties had to share the blame for the current state of affairs) and any initiatives in opposition to the present proposals should be made in a spirit of co-operation by all interests concerned.

Local MP Nick Rayford promised to continue his strong representations to the TSA and to the Secretary of State for Health, particularly to press him to agree to the renegotiation of the PFI contracts.

The obvious anxieties of the public could best be expressed by supporting the Greenwich People’s NHS Charter being promoted by the We Love the NHS campaign (www.iloveothens.org.uk) or by joining the demonstration to be held on Saturday 15 September at 1.00 pm in General Gordon Square, Woolwich.

Lessons from Auschwitz
a personal memoir by FRANKIE MAYO

Recently a group of students from South London were taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland for a long day trip, organised by the Holocaust Education Trust. Every year this trip takes two classes of students from a number of schools in different areas from all over the country, and this was South London’s turn. And along with a friend I was one of the two from Thomas Tallis School.

The whole course was really well organised, consisting of 2 seminars, one before and one after the visit. On the day we were accompanied by Rabbi Barry Marcus, the man who pioneered the idea of these visits, and has been to this site many times as part of the ongoing education programme.

A brilliant and engaging public speaker, he shepherded us through the tours, along with our exceptional guides.

We were taken to two sites. Auschwitz 1 is the transformed barracks and consists of tall prison buildings. It was here we visited the rooms of the directions, the piles of suitcases with people’s names on them, and shoes behind glass walls. And, most upsetting of all, the room of human hair; this great volume of hair is shocking and overwhelming as your eyes trace over the individual lighter tufts that stand out from the rest, and where it was cut off from the person’s head clearly visible.

Auschwitz-Birkenau is the second site; this was not transformed but a purpose built death camp, into which runs the railroad. Specifically built near the town of Oswiecim – a town named after a small Polish city – the camp was over 50% Jewish – it is far larger than the barracks at Auschwitz 1. It is industrially large, it stretches on and on. The housing cells stretched along the wall and are cordonned off with large barbed-wire fences.

Standing in the tower at the entrance one can see everything, the buildings, the wire, the place where the victims would get off the trains in the centre, the gas chambers and the sites of the crematoria. It was worse than I’d expected: I didn’t think we’d stand in the gas chamber, nor in the cramped dormitories, nor the toilets or the guard chamber. We were immersed in the activities of the death camp. Yet it is impossible to say one knows how it must have felt. How does it feel to have your humanity taken away, to have your reasons for living removed and hope destroyed, to be punished for being different?

The survival stories are desperately important; they remove all arguments denying the Holocaust and give us a much clearer understanding of the horror.

However it is equally important not to forget the millions of individuals, just like you and me and our families and friends, that died in Nazi camps: Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah witnesses, Christians, Soviet prisoners, homosexuals, intellectuals, many Poles, Hungarians, and disabled persons.

Remembering those involved as individuals, that was the lesson to be learned: statistics – while important – take away from the individuality of those involved. So we need to remember the victims, by-standers, and perpetrators as individuals.

One of the most emotional rooms for me was a collection of the photographs the victims had brought with them and buried or had confiscated. These all were smiling families; on their wedding days, or birth- days, or days out. These were the memories that these people had brought with them to a terrible fate, the memories that made them who they were, and the most important ones that they were carried with them. I remember many of the faces in those treasured photographs and hope I never forget.

It support
or all your home & business needs
Call now for FREE advice
020 8858 2002
www.theheadstart.com

Learning is fun
St Olave’s is a Prep School in New Eltham for boys and girls aged 3-11 years
■ Broad, child-centred curriculum
■ Excellent results in the 11+ selection
■ Clubs, outings and residential trips
■ Small classes
■ Specialist staff for PE, IT, Music, French and Drama
■ Smoking free reduction
■ Before and after school care
Tel: 020 8294 8930
www.stolaves.org.uk

The Clarendon Hotel
ITM 15 DEprevent fire damage, instal smoke alarms, residential alarm systems, commercial alarm systems, security systems. (020) 8588 6101

Learning is fun
St Olave’s is a Prep School in New Eltham for boys and girls aged 3-11 years
■ Broad, child-centred curriculum
■ Excellent results in the 11+ selection
■ Clubs, outings and residential trips
■ Small classes
■ Specialist staff for PE, IT, Music, French and Drama
■ Smoking free reduction
■ Before and after school care
Tel: 020 8294 8930
www.stolaves.org.uk

St Olave’s

We Love the NHS campaign (www.iloveothens.org.uk)
Join the demonstration to be held on Saturday 15th September at 1.00 pm in General Gordon Square, Woolwich.

The Clarendon Hotel
IN THE BAR
THURSDAYS IN SEPTEMBER
RICHARD ROCZE
THAI GRILL (southern)
EMMA FINLAY
TAHIS 13th SEP (vocal)
LOUISE DODDS
TAHIS 20th SEP (vocal)
LAURA JANE RATCLIFFE
TAHIS 27th SEP (vocal)

St Olave’s

St Olave’s

The Clarendon Hotel
IN THE BAR
THURSDAYS IN SEPTEMBER
RICHARD ROCZE
THAI GRILL (southern)
EMMA FINLAY
TAHIS 13th SEP (vocal)
LOUISE DODDS
TAHIS 20th SEP (vocal)
LAURA JANE RATCLIFFE
TAHIS 27th SEP (vocal)

St Olave’s

St Olave’s

St Olave’s
Heathland flora in Greenwood Park

Members of the environment committee have been peering intently at the grass in Greenwood Park. No, they were not looking for a lost contact lens! They were learning about dry heath and acid grassland flora, and how to identify buck’s horn plantain (tiny rosettes of narrow leaves) and sheep’s sorrel (easy to spot, as masses of tiny flower stems create rust-coloured patches). However, harder to find are speedwell and bedstraw, which are also typical of acid grassland.

Conservation of native dry heath and acid grassland is a top priority for wildlife conservation nationally. A distinctive community of insects and spiders enjoy our acid grasslands. Collectively these are known as the ‘Thames Terrace Invertebrates’ and are rather special. They include many solitary bees and wasps. Conserving the acid-loving flora is also important because without their fine network of roots the soil could wash away, exposing millions of little pebbles. Not a comfortable picnic prospect!

In preparation for the Cross Country Event, the areas of acid grassland were helpfully mapped by LOCCOG. The soil of acid grassland is typically low in nutrients, so the grasses and flowers grow slowly and remain small. Bare patches were visible in the Park even before the Olympics, so now it is important to check to what extent these areas have suffered from the thousands of spectators’ feet that have trodden over them.

The Westcombe Society will welcome any restorative work that may be needed. This might include removing the grass quite so low, or as frequently, to give the plants a chance to re-establish themselves. There are specialist firms that provide seeds of acid grassland plants. Having seen the wonderful display of poppies, daisies and cornflowers along the bunds of the Heath, it is clear that dramatic changes can be achieved from a few seeds.

(Download a map from http://www.royalparks.org.uk/...documents/main/docs/park_maps/greenwood-park_english_map.pdf)

The bunds – those small banks lining the heath – have at last come into their own this year. However, the flowers on the bunds are annuals, and must be reseeded every year. Sadly, local observers doubt if the London Borough of Lewisham intends to reseed this bund in future years. It’s more likely that the display of wild flowers will disappear in a year or so as the bunds compact.

It’s a frog’s life!

The Royal Parks and national wildlife charity, Froglife, have partnered to bring dragonflies, toads, frogs, nests and other wildlife back to an important lake in Greenwood Park. The project was made possible with contributions from Froglife and The Friends of Greenwood Park and a £50,000 grant from Biffa Award. The project aims to improve standing water habitats and enhance biodiversity in Greenwood Park and to rejuvenate the Flower Garden Lake.

The Flower Garden Lake dates back to the 17th century, but the high numbers of wildfowl and the sterile nature of the concrete pond liner have led to an increase in the nutrient levels and algae in the water. It is hoped that new floating rafts supporting a rich variety of aquatic plants in the pond, will encourage wildlife back to the area.

Graham Dear, Greenwich Park Manager, said: “The project provides an exciting opportunity to significantly increase biodiversity within the park in addition to creating a special place for visitors, local residents and children to enjoy and learn about nature.”

A new wildlife pond has also been created in the nearby deer park, receiving clean water run-off from a nearby building. Park staff and volunteers helped plant the pond with aquatic plants.

During the planting work three species of dragonfly were seen breeding in the pond and laying eggs on plants that had only been in the pond for a few minutes! Alex Draper, Conservation Officer at Froglife, said: “We are creating over five hundred square metres of new pond planting around the Flower Garden Lake, with a colourful range of aquatic plants such as BrachyuraBur-Reed, Flowering Rush and Yellow Fringed Lily. These will provide homes for zooplankton, invertebrates as well as amphibians.”

Watchout! There’s a fixed penalty about!

Greenwich Park has announced that fixed penalty notices (FPNs) now apply to 3 additional offences in the park – unauthorised cycling, littering and dog fouling. There is still some debate, however, about how the regulations are to be implemented. For example, will one or two warnings be issued first? Will the fines be proportionate to the offence?

There are cyclists who seem surprised that they are not allowed to cycle on the paths, some of which are quite wide. However, as one local resident said, “There are a lot of elderly people, as well as children and mothers with babies who use the park. The last thing they expect is a cyclist to come flying down the path and having to move out of way in time.”

Plan your future

In order to plan your future, you will need to consider a number of factors such as your financial situation, career aspirations, and personal goals. Once you have identified your priorities, you can start making informed decisions about where to invest your time and resources.

规划未来

规划未来需要考虑许多因素，如财务状况、职业目标和个人目标。一旦你确定了优先事项，就可以开始做出明智的决定，关于如何投资你的时间和资源。

South Eastern Trains Update

The Westcombe Society has learnt that the long-term plan is that all Greenwich Line trains will go to Cannon Street. No rush hour service to Charing Cross will be provided.

If you wish to give your response to this proposal, the South Eastern Franchise Consultation runs until 13th September (http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-29/). Residents are encouraged to respond. For more information contact westpes@gmail.com or 020 8855 7305 especially if you are interested in a rail users group should one be formed.

Update on John Roan Redevelopment

Demolition is now underway at the Westcombe Park Road site of John Roan School. Residents are warned that a concrete crusher will be on site for about three weeks.

We have been assured that noise will be kept to within specified limits, and there will be no pile driving.

An electricity sub-station is to be installed during September, but no build work is scheduled on the Maze Hill site until after Christmas. The Westcombe Society and resident representatives meet regularly with the school and developers.

For more information contact westpes@gmail.com or 020 8855 2756

Greenroom Landscaping

Greenroom Landscaping offer a complete design and build service using the latest technology and working techniques. Projects range from small domestic gardens to major country houses. We are qualified to BS EN 12961. We are happy to give any advice you may require.

Greenroom Landscaping

Greenroom Landscaping offer a complete design and build service using the latest technology and working techniques. Projects range from small domestic gardens to major country houses. We are qualified to BS EN 12961. We are happy to give any advice you may require.

Greenroom Landscaping

Greenroom Landscaping offer a complete design and build service using the latest technology and working techniques. Projects range from small domestic gardens to major country houses. We are qualified to BS EN 12961. We are happy to give any advice you may require.

Greenroom Landscaping

Greenroom Landscaping offer a complete design and build service using the latest technology and working techniques. Projects range from small domestic gardens to major country houses. We are qualified to BS EN 12961. We are happy to give any advice you may require.

Greenroom Landscaping

Greenroom Landscaping offer a complete design and build service using the latest technology and working techniques. Projects range from small domestic gardens to major country houses. We are qualified to BS EN 12961. We are happy to give any advice you may require.

Greenroom Landscaping

Greenroom Landscaping offer a complete design and build service using the latest technology and working techniques. Projects range from small domestic gardens to major country houses. We are qualified to BS EN 12961. We are happy to give any advice you may require.

Greenroom Landscaping

Greenroom Landscaping offer a complete design and build service using the latest technology and working techniques. Projects range from small domestic gardens to major country houses. We are qualified to BS EN 12961. We are happy to give any advice you may require.