Blackheath: fireworks for local residents

This very popular event will take place at 8.30 pm on 3rd November. As usual there will be road closures on and around the Heath. Those affected by the road closures are mainly the roads between Westcombe Park Road and the Heath. Residents in the affected area will receive a letter from Lewisham Council explaining the closures and methods of access. But they will also be affected by Prince Charles Road south of the A2 roundabout from noon till 9.30pm.

As a result of the closures there will be a number of bus divestions the first being for the 53, 202, 380 & 386 services which use Prince Charles Road. This road will be closed from noon and the buses diverted via the Sun in the Sands roundabout and Prince of Wales Road until 6.00pm.

From 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm the above diversion will change, and buses 53, 89, and 108 will also be diverted as routes across the heath will be closed. 386 buses will terminate at Lewisham bus station, avoiding Blackheath and Blackheath Village altogether.

For further information please see http://westcombe.blogspot.com blog. The number on the website is 07834 145801.
COMMUNITY NEWS

WESTCOTE NEWS

ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO: Neville Grant, The Editor westcote@yaho.co.uk Tel: 0208 858 8489
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Environment Editor: Sarah Winterbottom
Reporters: Denise Scott-McDonald
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Dick Allard: All queries and comments; 020 8858 7305
The Plan: Environment and environment sub-committee: westspes@gmail.com
http://westcombe.gold.ac.uk
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The Biggest Coffee Morning in the world

It’s early on, and delicious cakes and sandwiches have been piled up ready to be sold. The queue went like, well, like hot cakes!

On the last Saturday of September, members of the Westcombe Society held a Coffee Morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support (part of their annual Biggest Coffee Morning in the World).

The event raised an impressive £770, and our thanks go to all who made cakes and sandwiches, served the refreshments and washed up on day, provided raffle prizes – and last but definitely not least those who supported us on the day, including the Mayor of Greenwich Cllr David Grant. Of the total, £181 was raised by the raffle, for the Vanbrugh Community Association and the Westcombe Society provided the major prices of £50 cash and a £50 Voucher for Blackheath Cooks. The winners (Green 680 and Blue 612) have claimed.

Marilyn Little adds: A big cheer for Jean, Maureen, Patricia and Maggie for organising and running the Quiz on 20th October. A very enjoyable evening was had by all and initial estimates are that around £200 was raised to help with the bird boxes for Greenwich and Bexley Hospital.

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 WNS.

Letters

From: Robert Owens
Broomfield Road
The Cutty Sark restoration has been a great disappointment because in my view the ship has second place to what became an over-designed and over-engineered building project. Instead of the ship’s hull being more visible it is now less so as a result of the crude and ugly glass skirt which surrounds it which, incidentally, bears no relationship to the artist’s impressions published beforehand.

The fact that the underside of the hull is now visible is no consolation for the sacrifices made to accommodate the other major being the huge steel and glass tower adjacent to the ship which has destroyed the historic view from King William Walk to the river.

It is claimed that this is necessary to provide disabled lift access to the ship though its primary purpose is to house ventilation plant for the enclosed space under the ship. If you want to see how small and unambitious a lift tower can be, look at the one in the inner courtyard of the Royal Academy!

The reasoning behind raising the ship was to take the weight off the keel but the reality is that it has only been raised a few inches to achieve this. It is now in a completely unnatural relationship to the quay side and does not sit comfortably within the townscape of Greenwich as it did before.

Raising the ship by 3 metres has also involved a large amount of modern steelwork being installed within the hull which inevitably affects its historic integrity.

Compromise against compromise has been made in order to raise the ship so that people can see the underside of the hull. Is that really what they want to see?

Finally, I believe that there are considerable risks in ending up part of the ship’s hull whilst leaving the upper part exposed to the elements.

Richard Baglin, the chairman of the Greenwich Society, writes: It is about a year ago that we put in our submission, along with others, arguing that Greenwich should not be split into two communities with Greenwich West and Blackheath going into “Deptford and Greenwich” and East Greenwich going into Woolwich.

Proposed revisions have now been published and the changes are significant.

The Commissioners have been persuaded of the case not to split Greenwich town although they have not accepted the Nick Raynsford alternative.

Instead they have made a radical revision with East Greenwich (Peninsular ward), West Greenwich, Westcombe, Blackheath all going into a new constituency called Greenwich and Lewisham Central including Lee Green Catford and central Lewisham.

It is quite a long thin north/south wedge. No doubt it will cause local political ructions although it does solve the big issue for us, not splitting up Greenwich.

There is now a short consultation until 12th December but I imagine that no further changes will be made. Whether or not the changes recommended in 2013 is of course up in the air. Still it is nice to think that we played a part in getting one important issue changed.

For more details, visit: http://www.boundarycommissionforengland.land.independent.gov.uk/
SE Trains: All change

The Department for Transport (DfT) – still smarting over the recent west coast mainline franchise debacle – is due to award the new franchise for South East Trains at the end of 2013. As part of this process public opinion has been actively sought, both from passengers and stakeholders, one of whom is the Westcombe Society. According to the DfT’s original press release, these opinions will help ‘shape’ the final spec against which interested applicants will be asked to bid.

Those shortlisted will then be invited to tender, with the final decision due to be announced at the end of next year, with the new contract set to start in April 2014. Perhaps the most important question for passengers is: how will this affect my journey to and from London? The answer is, no matter which company is awarded the franchise, all our journeys are likely to be extensively disrupted due to the ongoing major redevelopments of London Bridge station as well as the realisation of the Crossrail and Thameslink multi-million pound projects.

Whether you are looking to get off at London Bridge, or maybe catch a train to Greenwich for your holiday, the implications of the London Bridge redevelopment project are significant for those using the Greenwich line.

Those who use the overland to get into town should note that Charing Cross trains will not stop at London Bridge in 2015/16, and in 2017/18, it will be the turn of Cannon Street trains to pass through without stopping. And once London Bridge station is completed, there will be no direct train services to Charing Cross at any time of day.

Since becoming aware of the full implications of the London Bridge project earlier this summer, the Westcombe Society’s Planning and Environment Committee (WSPEC), in conjunction with the Greenwich Society, has taken steps to make sure local rail users’ views are heard. This includes the formation of a Local Rail Users’ Group (based on the Charlton Rail Users’ Group experience). If you’re interested in finding out more or want to make sure your views are heard, please contact WSPEC on westpress@gmail.com or call chairman Dick Allard on 8588 7365.

You have discovered the Oxford bookshop in Greenwich yet?
The shop opened just under a year ago, but it seems that many people are not aware of its existence. It is at 2 College Approach, next to the Spanish Galilee pub in the centre of Greenwich.

This should be an excellent position, but because of crossing points the shop is less visible than it should be. It is a bright and friendly shop, very well-stocked with good-quality books, DVDs and music of all kinds (including records for your treasured turntable); there is an excellent selection of modern fiction for all age groups at very fair prices, as well as classics, lots of non-fiction and rarer books. Donations of books in good condition are also very much appreciated.

New vision for Greenwich GEOFF GARVEY

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is leading the way in London in its fund-raising activities, is one of three local societies leading the scheme, including the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBD) and RNIB. Around 5700 people in Greenwich are estimated to have some level of visual impairment. Across the UK the number of people with serious sight loss is estimated at 2 million; but this figure is expected to double by 2050.

STOP PRESS: Colin Brown adds: ‘Many thanks to all who attended and donated to the Clare Langman Concert in Stone House, Lewisham. (Thanks for your very generous hospitality, Jonathan and Yvonne) What a night it turned out to be! Clare and her accompanist Maria King gave a stunning performance with a very comprehensive repertoire of both classical and recent music. A total of £200 was raised for BILG.

Contact: Colin Brown on 020 8553 2474 or cborndesign@btinternet.com

Investors conned by wine merchant

A local man has been jailed for three years for selling phony wine invest-
ments. Keith Milton, 42, a former wine merchant who lived in Mycenae Road, was sentenced after a trial at the Old Bailey. Milton befriended his victims and offered them the chance to invest in wines from the Bordeaux and Burgundy regions of France.

The investors were told that the wine was being held in a bonded warehouse, and that it would be sold on their behalf after they accrued in value. The trouble was, the wines simply did not exist.

Twenty investors were defrauded of some £30,000. In 2008 he had got the investors to part with large amounts of money to invest in the property. The trouble was, the investors were told that the wine was being held in a bonded warehouse, and that it would be sold on their behalf after they accrued in value. The trouble was, the wines simply did not exist.

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The worst journey in the world

Winston Churchill called it “the worst journey in the world”. During World War II there were 42 eastbound convoy transports for the Soviet military. Conditions for these brave men were appalling – even the walls of the cabins were covered in two inches of ice – and the chances of death high.

In all, 3000 personnel lost their lives, over half from merchant ships. For many years survivors of the convoys lobbied British governments to issue a special Arctic Medal to mark their service. Their lives have fallen on deaf ears, on the grounds that The Atlantic Star Medal covered their service. Only some 200 surviving veterans remain. David Cameron ordered a review into the issue last year, but MoD rules say that medals should not be awarded more than five years after a campaign. To mark the 70th anniversary of the first Allied convoy to Russia, the National Maritime Museum has put on a display called “Arctic Convoy”. Admission free. REMEMBRANCE DAY is on Sunday November 11th.

Trinity Laban’s free concerts

We are very lucky to have so much good music on our doorstep - and tuning in need not break the bank! A quick look at Trinity Laban’s calendar of events tells you all you need to know about these concerts. Examples of free events include:

Fri 2nd Nov Postgraduate recitals at the Old Royal Naval College Chapel 3.0 pm
Sat 3rd Nov Junior Trinity Open Day
King Charles Court (Free, but prior registration required) from 10.00 am

OneSpace opens in Kidbrooke Village

The Centenary Company presents

Skullduggery in the South Seas

Governement corruption, media intrusion, wholesale privatization, royal scandals, rampant personal debt — no, it’s not the Daily Mail. Welcome to Utopia (Limited). Utterly lampooning cultural imperialism and Victorian values, Gilbert and Sullivan’s last great political satire follows the laid-back inhabitants of a seemingly idyllic South Sea island as they willingly undergo Anglicisation. But a government of English technocrats soon provokes rioting in the streets.....

The Centenary Company returns to Greenwich Theatre for a seventh year to present this unenviably prescient musical comedy: It’s sure to bring a smile to your still upper lip!

Directed by Jerry Pinel, with Elinor Corp as Music Director, this is the same creative team responsible for a number of inventive stagings of Gilbert and Sullivan operas at Greenwich. Theatre-goers can expect a treat: past shows such as (Paining, 2010); Raddcliffe (2011) received rave reviews.

Formed in 1995, the Centenary Company is a Greenwich-based community group specialising in the shows of Gilbert and Sullivan. Following a long association with Blackheath Halls, the Company has presented annual productions at Greenwich Theatre since 2006.

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The Dickensian Christmas Fayre Sat November 17th at Blackheath High School for Girls

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FEES

“Nature ... rede in tooth and claw” TESSA CROSS on Ashley Gravess' pictures “Cruel Nature” at the Paul McPherson Gallery

A rainy evening in October found my colleagues and I hurrying through the back streets of Greenwich to the delightful Paul McPherson Gallery for the Private View of Ashley Gravess’ ‘Cruel Nature’ exhibition, entitled ‘Cruel Nature’, a collection of somewhat challenging paintings. We entered the gallery and went downstairs to the bar for a chat with the owner and some Dutch courage.

Feeling thus emboldened, we went upstairs to confront the paintings and chat with the artist, Ashley Gravess.

He explained that he feels “...com- pelled to go down what some may say is the ugly path...” which leads him to ask more questions about prescribed ideas of beauty, happiness and gratification, thus inviting viewers to re-evaluate what they are trying to achieve in their lives and to question whether they are searching in all the wrong places.

Ashley asserted “...all art arises from error...” and he uses the grotesque nature of his figures and settings to acknowledge this. He said the challenge is in knowing how to exploit it. Far from

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Westcombe News November 2012

Ghosts and Chilling Tales of Old Greenwich

A Special Halloween Tour led by the Greenwich Tour Guides Association

Saturday 3rd November

Other dates available for Group Bookings

Join us if you dare on this special tour to discover the darker side to the history of Greenwich. Hear tales of Ghosts, Murders and Sinister Events.

The walk starts at 7.30 pm. Adults £7. Pre booking is essential. For more information and to purchase email pauline@greenwichtour.co.uk or 07977772298

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Fees

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**New music centre opens**

ANNE ROBBINS

I f you walk past the old cinema at the bottom of Vanburgh Hill, you faintly hear classical music, don’t think that you are imagining it. Louise Stonehill and Nicholas Burns have recently set up a wonderful, intimate studio and recital space in a disused shop and installed a glistening piano. It’s a good example of the phenomenon of artists making use of unusual spaces.

Louise and Nick arrived in Greenwich as post-graduate students at Trinity. Now married, they have lived in the Westcombe Park area for several years. She plays the violin; he’s the pianist. They play together as the Steinberg Duo, as well as in other ensembles. And both give lessons to child and adult learners at all grades. But they were feeling the pressure of trying to prac-
tice on different instruments in one flat, when they realised that the empty shop was a great opportunity.

The space itself is small: there’s room for an audience of around 20. Nick says, ‘you can feel every note vibrating.’ Both love the intensity this lends the music, and the fact that an audience can see how much the music affects the players, emotionally.

Studio concerts

For their first studio concert, the Duo played a Beethoven Sonata for piano and violin, and a violin sonata by Strauss. It was an ideal test run for the first of a series of concerts they are playing in central London, highlighting the way com-
posers build on earlier works. More studio concerts are planned, and details of these and their other recitals are on their website.

Equally, the studio is a well-proportioned practice space for other chamber music groups, such as the Academy of St Martins in the Fields. Nick and Louise plan to let it hourly or daily, and can install basic recording equipment which won’t give professional results, but “you would be amazed how much musicians learn from hearing themselves in playback.”

Louise says the studio is also wonderful for teaching as it provides ‘a more resonant space than their own home’. They are both enthusiastic teachers, and they say that people can learn to play music at any age – as long as they practise regularly!

A community of learners

Nick and Louise aim to build a community of learners who will encourage each other as they perform. Already, they hold twice-yearly pupils’ concerts at St Alfege’s Church in Greenwich, with the next planned for November.

Their sense of belonging within a com-

**Fund-raiser for Demelza**

L ocal musician Ben Golding has been organising Open mic/ music events in Greenwich for several years as well as teaching/writing/recording music in the area. Along with some of the great musicians who play at the open mic nights, Ben has organized a fund raising music event on Saturday November 10th with The Demelza House Charity.

The show will be in Oliver’s Music Bar in Nevada St, Greenwich and will feature acoustic music from some fantastic musi-
cians. There will also be some great CDs on sale as well! All money raised from the night will go to Demelza.

**Remembering Prince Henry**

N ovember marks the 400th anniversary of the death of Henry Frederick Stuart, Prince of Wales, eldest son of King James I (James VI of Scotland) and Anne of Denmark. Born in Stirling Castle in 1594, the prince moved to England after James became King of England in 1603.

Prince Henry was popular and witty, with an engaging personality and a keen interest in sport. He was outstanding in maths and science, and was interested in naval and national issues. He was a great admirer of Sir Walter Raleigh.

The prince spent much of his time in Greenwich, where his father had the Queen’s House built for his wife. Many people believe that he would have become an excellent king. Sadly, he died of typhus in November 1612, at eighteen.

One can only speculate how history might have changed if he had ascended the throne instead of Charles I. Might our country have been spared the horrors of the Civil War? Prince Henry’s name lives on in Charlton, where a road is named after him.

On Friday 16th Nov, at 1.00pm Trinity Laban are putting on a concert at Charlton House: its title is Weep Britons Weep.

This is a concert of English music for well-marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Prince Henry.
**Deadlock at Seren Park**

**Julian Blane**

"...and invites you to visit their stall at the Christmas Bazaar!"

**Columnist’s column**

Faded glamour

I’ve written here before about our dank Autumnus and Winters denying us those crisp frost-rimmed mornings and landscapes beloved of garden photographers.

But we can have a little of that, given that we grow the plants which leave sub-stantial seedheads. Probably the best is Phlomis russeliana whose grey leaves hug the ground all year, with odd yellow flowers leaving a stem of seedheads which is hard to beat (and which looks much better in winter). A fashionably hybrid form ‘Anoazur’ is more elegant but also leaves a good silhouette.

A few grasses stand winter really well—Molinia ‘Transparent’ seems delicate but keeps its shape—whereas grasses with fluffy heads become sodden straw (Calamagrostis). Alliums clumsily exceed the seed-heads and dry stems of crocosmia (mont-bretia) and agapanthus are fugitive last well. So do some asters and members of the sunflower family. If you have Chelsea chives (chopped out growing tips), you will have sturdier stems, and it’s often the stem which fails the seedheads.

The dependable persicaria flower for months, right up to the frosts they turn mushy, and fit well amongst drying seed-heads. Apart from phlomis, the most robust herbaceous grass, tends to form an attractive vege-tum (mullein).

If you can grow it, the fluffly agastache lasts a long time, as do seedheads of some scabious types (including euphorbia and sceuraria), till the birds get them. You might have some thistles still standing but you should have cut back cardoons and artichokes to ensure fresh new foliage in Autumn, hastening through to Spring.

If you are planning ahead, it’s time to buy some cheap bare rooted shrubs to pro-vide cutins in late Winter – hazels, birch-es, willows and alders – but also consider species which flower on bare wood before the leaves appear.

These include primus varieties, cherries especially, and the old good forsythia (if you can bear it), both of which can be coated to flower in a vase if you cut them around now. I’m about to embark on a project to devise a Winter cutting garden, so I shall probably revisit this subject again.

Christopher Raven

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**Framed Image**

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