



Westcombe NEWS

40th YEAR

Est. 1973 Free to 3800 homes, and in libraries & some shops March 2013 Issue 2

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

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

A fair cop?

WN reporter

For the last 180 years, there has been a Police Station in Greenwich town centre – but not for much longer, if the Mayor of London has his way.

Boris Johnson's draft proposals on the future of policing in London – including Greenwich – were unveiled at a meeting in January at the University of Greenwich, presided over by Deputy Mayor Stephen Greenhalgh, and Borough Commander Richard Wood. On the face of it, some of the plans made sense, with (so it was claimed) more police on the streets, and fewer senior managers and supervisors.

However, Boris Johnson's proposals for police station closures will hit Greenwich hard. Under the new draft plans, unveiled in late January, the police stations in Greenwich, Woolwich and Thamesmead will be closed and sold off, leaving Eltham and Plumstead as the only functioning police stations in the whole of the Royal Borough. This means there would be no police stations at all in SE10 or SE7.

The closest police building to Greenwich town centre would be the "patrol base" on Warspite Road in Woolwich, which has no public access.

There is also our own tiny police office on Old Dover Road, above Marks and Spencer's, where the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) for Blackheath Westcombe and Kidbrooke Hornfair wards are based. There is a similar office on Springfield Grove in Charlton.

So far there are no plans to close the police office on Old Dover Road.

Changing patterns of crime reporting

Representatives from the Met pointed out that the way people report crime has been changing: more and more, crimes are reported by email or phone, so it is true that the need for public counters in police stations may have decreased.

Figures released in February by the think tank Reform indicate that most police stations in London are visited by fewer than two people an hour: police stations in Greenwich had one of the lowest figures – an average of 1.6 visitors per hour.

However, it is not at all clear how the Met could police a busy town centre like Greenwich, which is often full of tourists, without a police building there of some kind. There is talk of "Borough



PHOTO: Neville Grant

Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, became Police and Crime Commissioner for the capital in May last year. A key part of the Mayor's role is to produce a Police and Crime Plan, which sets out the crime reduction strategy for London for the next four years, and explains what the Met, and other agencies should be doing to tackle crime in the capital.

From January, The Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) will be consulting with anyone who lives, travels or works in London, and has already drawn up a draft plan.

The final Police and Crime Plan will be published by April 2013. Quoting from the Mayor's mission statement: "With your help, we want to produce a plan that will:

- * Improve crime prevention
- * Hold the police to account for cutting crime & boosting public confidence, whilst giving Londoners better value for money
- * Ensure other agencies work better to deliver effective justice, better service for victims and improved resettlement to cut re-offending."

Tasking teams" – which some observers fear may mean more centralisation, less neighbourhood policing, and officers who would be increasingly remote from the communities they serve.

Police numbers

Those present at the meeting were quite surprised to hear Mr Greenhalgh claim that overall police officer numbers would be increased by 65 in Greenwich, with

officers in SNTs going up from 50 to 128 – though he added that PCSO numbers would be cut further – from 60 to 34. (In 2010, there were 120 PCSOs).

Cllr Alex Grant, who was present at the meeting, said:

"Claims that police numbers will increase are misleading, as they compare 2011 figures with the projected number for 2015: conveniently forgetting that there was an earlier round of cuts in 2010.

"An examination of the figures for 2010 shows that police numbers are actually falling and are set to fall still further – from a total of 693 officers in Greenwich in 2010 to a "promise" of 615 officers in 2015.

"The numbers of officers in each Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) may be reduced from six (one sergeant, two PCs and three PCSOs) to a minimum of just two (a sergeant and a PC).

"In fact these cuts have already started: Blackheath Westcombe ward shares a Sergeant with the neighbouring Kidbrooke Hornfair ward – so one sergeant has to cover an area stretching from Maze Hill station to the South Circular Road."

The attenuation of SNTs

The proposal to reduce the SNTs to a minimum – one sergeant and one PC – came as a shock to many people at the meeting.

Those in attendance expressed incomprehension about the plans: there were strong reservations about the reduction in police stations, and the attenuation of SNTs. Cllr Maureen O'Mara (also present) denounced the plans as "rubbish"!

It was argued that Greenwich Police Station on Burney Street has a key role as the home to the SNTs for two wards (Greenwich West and Peninsula) – and there is currently no plan for an alternative base for them – though that could change.

However, if the new plans are adopted, this long history of a police presence in the centre of Greenwich could be about to end.

The draft plan being consulted on is at <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-and-crime/community-engagement>. The consultation runs from 7 January 2013 – 4 March 2013. Town hall meetings in every London borough were run throughout January and February. Readers' views welcome.

Slightly foxed



PHOTO: Angela Durham

A rare albino fox, sighted to the north of the Westcombe Woodlands.

With news of another fox attack – on a baby – in Lewisham, some local residents expressed concern about what might seem to some a growing menace.

The *WN* approached the Royal Borough of Greenwich for comment, and received the following from a spokesman:

"The best way to reduce the number of foxes throughout the Royal Borough is to minimise the amount of refuse and other available food sources. Residents can do their part by ensuring bins are securely shut, not leaving rubbish sacks beside wheelie bins, and **never feeding foxes**.

"Residents are also encouraged to fill gaps under sheds as foxes can squeeze under a 10cm or 4-inch gap; to leave food for birds only in dispensers; to use sturdy hutches to protect small pets like rabbits; and to keep gardens as tidy as possible.

"Foxes are not generally considered a health hazard. It is acknowledged that their activities can cause a nuisance and they may also carry diseases. But this is the same with many other forms of wildlife and in some cases domestic animals.

"Foxes can be legally culled using trapping, shooting and snaring. Culling should only be carried out by professional pest control technicians who have knowledge of the current legislation. This will avoid any breach of legislation, inhumane treatment of animals and the accidental death of non-target species."

The Westcombe Society

Forthcoming events:

March 9th Daffodil Tea – 2.00 pm
Teas served from 2.15.

Invites went out in February but if you did not receive one, or are new to Westcombe Park and would like one, then please ring Caroline on 020 8853 0948.

March 16th Children's Nearly New Sale Mycenae House 2.00 – 4.00 pm

Tables and rails can be booked from Joanne – please ring or text 07709 571777 or ring 020 8293 3429 for details

March 30th Easter Saturday Egg Hunt 2.00 – 4.00pm

Two hours of fun hunting for eggs in Mycenae House Gardens

*Entrance £2.00 (non-members £2.50)
Adults go free (unless they want to hunt!)
Everyone wins a prize! Unlimited orange squash for eggs-hausted hunters!
Cake stall and raffle. Prize for best Easter Bonnet and best Easter Egg basket*

April 20th. Quiz Night Mycenae House

Why not get up your team (of six) ready for this popular event? You can reserve a table by calling Caroline on 8853 0948.

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NEWS BRIEFS

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Westcombe Society Party

Turn to page 2 for a report on the Westcombe Society's annual party for volunteers. Some new residents were also welcomed to the area, and several donations were made to local charities.

Park road closure

As reported in February's *WN*, the road works in Greenwich park will continue until 28th March, and the through route will be closed to all vehicles, and cyclists. *See p.7*

Bus lane to go

Lewisham Council has at last completed evaluation of the bus lane scheme in Blackheath Village. The bus lane is to be permanently removed. Not too soon ...

Council Leader to stand down

In a surprise move, Cllr Chris Roberts has announced that he will not be seeking another term as leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich following the 2014 local government elections. By then, he will have been leader of the Council for fourteen years.

Cash points danger warning

Our Safer Neighbourhood Team have recently become aware of some suspicious activity around the Standard. There have been requests to borrow money by someone claiming to have broken down on a red route; in another incident, someone was taken to a cash point to withdraw money. There have also been a number of other inci-

dents. The police are currently considering 'Privacy Zones' marked around the ATMs.

Third Tunnel "by 2020"

Following Boris Johnson's comments on LBC that a 3rd Blackwall Tunnel "will" be built by 2020, No To Silvertown Tunnel campaigners have responded angrily:

"Boris Johnson's comments show he isn't interested in the health or wellbeing of some of the poorest communities in London.

"Just a couple of days ago he talked about cutting pollution in central London. Yet he thinks dumping pollution in Greenwich and Tower Hamlets boroughs is acceptable."

See also page 7.

Police to have tasers

Greenwich will have 40 police officers trained to use tasers. Tasers can incapacitate potentially dangerous offenders before they do harm.

Seren Park: End in sight?

The Royal Bank of Scotland owns 78 apartments in Seren Park. James Rowney, of RBS, has written to Cllr Alex Grant accepting that there was a planning condition requiring the delivery of access directly to Maze Hill station; and indicating that the RBS wishes to engage with the council (which owns the section of land that forms the pathway between Network Rail platform and Seren Park) so access rights can be obtained.

COMMUNITY NEWS

WESTCOMBE NEWS

ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
Neville Grant, The Editor
westcombenews@yahoo.co.uk
Tel. 0208 858 8489

ALL MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:
WestcombeNews@yahoo.co.uk

Deadline for April: 13th March
NOTE: Early this month!

News Editor: Geoff Garvey
Environment Editor: Sarah Winterbottom
Reporters: Denise Scott-McDonald

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Dick Allard All queries and comments to: 020 8858 7305
Please note the new email address: environment@westcombesociety.org
<http://westcombe.gold.ac.uk>

DISTRIBUTION

Myles Dove & Barbara Henley
Jean-Jacques and Maureen Aune
Volunteer distributors please phone 8853 3740, we need your help!

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Marilyn Little, 163 Westcombe Hill, SE3 7DP 020 8853 1312 (email:marilyn.little@btinternet.com)

All advertisements payable in advance by cheque to **The Westcombe Society**. **Costs:**
DISPLAY: Single column 6cm x 6cm: One - four issues £35, five-plus issues £30 each. Other sizes: please inquire.
Classified Ads (Market Place) 30p per word (A telephone number = one word. An email/web address = 3 words.) Deadline for all adverts is 10th day of the preceding month

Printed by: Trojan Press
Contact the Westcombe Society: WestcombeNews@egroups.com
Publisher: The Westcombe Society
Chairman: Marilyn Little Tel. 8853 1312

The views expressed in the Westcombe News are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or of the Editor.

*Back-numbers (in colour) can be accessed on: <http://westcombe.gold.ac.uk/westnews.html>
Westcombe Society's Blog: <http://westcombe.blogspot.com>*

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Please send this membership form to:
Mrs Margaret Ellis, 4 Ingleside Grove London SE3 7PH

Name.....

Address.....

Tel.....

Email:

Please enclose payment as appropriate:

Family Membership	£12	[]
Individual Membership	£8	[]
Senior Citizens/unwaged	£4	[]

To and From Greenwich

An exhibition of photographs by Mike Curry



The Greenwich Gallery, Linear House, Peyton Place, Greenwich, London SE10 8RS

Saturday 2nd March 2013 to Sunday 31st March 2013

Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.30pm Saturday/Sunday 12 - 4pm

<http://www.thegreenwichgallery.com>

Westcombe Society Party

We were happy to see many of our volunteers at our party in February despite the cold snap. Marilyn Little, the Chairman, warmly thanked them for their contributions to the Society's work, and urged them to involve neighbours and friends in the work that they do. A number of new residents to the area were also warmly welcomed.

It was a truly happy event and we were very pleased to see a number of displays by local charities. At the end of the evening Marilyn Little thanked the events committee for organising the event so efficiently – as usual!



PHOTOS: Denise Scott-McDonald

[LEFT] Barry Gray of our Charity of the Year (Woodlands Farm Trust) received a cheque for £3,000 from Marilyn Little (Chairman of the Westcombe Society). At the party, the Trust showed a presentation about their work which illustrated the good use they would make of our donation.

[RIGHT] Jean Jacques Aune (Deputy Chairman) presented a cheque to Charlton Park Riding for the Disabled: these funds will provide a saddle for their newest pony, Tiny Tim. They now have four ponies and are able to take even more children with special needs at the centre.

[BELOW, LEFT] Joanne Lucas (Chair of the Events Committee) presented a cheque to Richard and Lynn Weston, Founders & Trustees of Clowns in the Sky. The money will be used to restock the entertainment trolleys that they provide for children with brain tumours at Queen Elizabeth and Kings Hospitals.



[RIGHT] A Bicycle made for Two: a surprise gift of a tandem to Blind Independence Greenwich! B.I.G were delighted by this donation from Gill & Andy Musselbrook. The tandem was serviced by the Society and presented to Henry Bufford by Marilyn Little.



Letters

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

From: Juliet Cairns Corner Green

I really must respond to Ivy McGeorge's letter in your February issue. First, a tree of 60-70 cm girth has an actual diameter of between 4 and 5 cm - the trunk is less than three fingers across. This can hardly be called substantial.

Secondly, although trees don't like being transplanted, the younger tree should indeed live longer. But if Mrs McGeorge planted some conkers they might live longer still.

The objectors' point was surely that generations of children won't be able to enjoy the very real benefits of the mature tree in their school grounds. And we all know that children love conker trees above all.

Thirdly, to blame local residents for the weaknesses of the original design is simply ludicrous.

From: Emma King Meningitis UK

We are urgently appealing to people to lace up their trainers to take on this year's prestigious Bupa London 10k.

Full support will be given, our runners will receive a free running vest or T-shirt, and a handy information pack including tips on how to prepare for the event on Monday, May 27.

We have several Golden Bond places, which guarantee people a place for the charity, and encourage people to sign up for one. Anyone who has secured an independent place can choose to run for us and we would love them to join our Meningitis Musketeers team.

Meningitis UK has a single focus - to find a vaccine to wipe out all forms of meningitis. Tragically, both meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia continue to affect thousands of people in the UK every year, and kill more children under five than any other infectious disease.

To take part and help us achieve our vision, please contact Emma King on 0117 303 3345 or email emmaking@meningitisUK.org for a sponsorship pack.

From: Helena Herklots Carers UK

New Carers UK research has found widespread anxiety, shared by young and old, over the cost of caring for older, ill and disabled relatives.

Recent news coverage has focused attention on the costs of residential social care for older people, but we must not forget the millions who care and will care, unpaid for relatives within their own homes. There are over 6.4 million carers in the UK today and latest Census figures showed an 11% increase in the numbers caring for loved ones since 2001.

If any of your readers are caring for older or disabled loved ones we want to know how it has affected them. They can complete our survey at www.carersuk.org.

Mark Thomas

It is with the deepest sadness that we announce that Mark Thomas, who was manager of Mycenae House for twelve years between 1999 and 2011, passed away on the 31st January. He had been ill for some time.

Mark Thomas, who was interviewed in the December 2011 issue of the *WN*, was a man of many parts: he had worked in the commercial sector – in the printing trade – before transferring to the voluntary sector. He had also managed bingo halls, a snooker club, and had even worked as a DJ in a chain of night clubs. He very much enjoyed his time at Mycenae House.

His funeral took place on the 15th February at the The Friary Church in Crawley, Sussex. Mycenae House are collecting donations for Guys & St Thomas's Hospital (Richard Bright Ward) where Mark received long term treatment.

Come and join us!

The Westcombe Society Environment Committee is a small, non-political group made up of volunteers of differing backgrounds who work together with the broad aim to maintain and enhance the local environment and Conservation Area. At present the team consists of eight people, chaired by Dick Allard.

If you have an interest in the Westcombe Park environment, or in planning issues, and are interested in finding out more, our new email address is environment@westcombesociety.org – we'd love to hear from you.

What do we do?

We scrutinise planning applications both big (e.g. the Olympics and the John Roan School) and small and sometimes submit comments. In some cases we attend planning meetings and address the Council to support residents' concerns or put forward our own views.

We also help organise working parties for large developments, e.g. John Roan, to facilitate dialogue between all parties involved. We also comment and lobby for improvements to transport and parking. We work closely with a number of other organisations such as the Greenwich Society and the Blackheath Society.

With the redevelopment of London Bridge, we are currently helping to set up a local Rail Users' Group. (See page 7)

Our opinions are sought by the Council with regard to local planning strategy and we have good working relations with all our Ward Councillors.

We help to promote and protect green areas and trees, and actively monitor and comment on proposals for large events (e.g. the London marathon and our annual firework display), local developments and other applications that affect residents.

We also manage the Westcombe Society Blogspot.

Westcombe Park's Public Spaces

Mycenae Gardens and Woodlands Dell, both in Mycenae Road, are there for the enjoyment of all, and are much-loved local green spaces. However, the Friends of Mycenae Gardens has concluded that the sites need some help to cope with the needs of local residents.

The Friends of Mycenae Gardens, whose annual general meeting on Thursday 14 March is open to all, have been working up a management plan to help develop the area in line with its heritage and taking into account the needs of its varied users, from children playing games and dog owners to parents and prams, and people just enjoying the quiet open air, as well as the wildlife.

Current demands on Mycenae Gardens have led to serious wear on the open grass which last year's re-seeding hasn't fully addressed. At the same time the Dell, which in the memory of residents was a delightful play area for nearby children, is hardly used at all, except by a few dog walkers eager to allow their pets some quick relief.

The Friends Committee has been assessing options as it develops a plan to propose to the Council for finding ways of containing the wear and tear – without jeopardising the character of the sites.

To find out more or to put forward ideas, come to the AGM at Greenwich Steiner School, Woodlands, 90 Mycenae Road SE3 7SE at 8.00 pm on 14 March 2013. All are welcome but only members can vote. Membership is free via www.mycenaegardens.org.uk/Friends/

LOCAL NEWS

Singing: Opportunity Knocks!

Singers here are spoilt for choice. Blackheath Centre for Singing offers several different choices; and the Second Chance Choir (see the box below) is another good option.

Nearly a year has passed since Blackheath Centre for Singing started meeting at Mycenae House, and its choirs are as busy as ever. A hub of community music making in Blackheath, it offers three choirs and individual tuition to adults of all musical abilities – from the complete beginner to the advanced singer.

Its Finding Your Voice choir is ideal for newcomers to singing, offering the opportunity to sing in a relaxed environment without the need to read music. The repertoire ranges from Jazz and Folk, through to music of the Renaissance.

In addition, the Singing for Pleasure choir (intermediate singers) and Chamber Choir (advanced singers) present both formal and informal concerts every term, usually focusing on a single, large work for choir, such as a recent exciting performance of *Carmina Burana* in Greenwich.

Blackheath Centre for Singing has a number of highlights on the horizon, including a performance of Brahms' German Requiem at 7.30pm on 9 March at St. Alfege's, Greenwich. Tickets for this concert are available in advance (contact details below) or on the door.

New members are always welcome in each of our choirs, and free taster sessions are available on request. Blackheath Centre for Singing will soon offer singing opportunities for younger musicians too. Details of these courses are also available on request.

Rehearsals take place weekly at Mycenae House, SE3 7SE.

More information can be found at:

www.BlackheathCentreForSinging.com

Further details:

info@BlackheathCentreForSinging.com

Tel: 07986 5828 44

Calling all start-up entrepreneurs

NEVILLE GRANT



Lorraine Turton (right) recently invited Jackie Groundsell, founder of 1230 The Women's Company, to give a presentation and workshop on "Effective Networking for Effective Business people". Even in the world of websites and social media sites, 75% of successful business contacts come through "word-of-mouth" and net-working, so the associated skills can be vital, said Jackie.

PHOTO: Clive Seymour

Following on from the success of its Jobhunters Club, social enterprise, Lorraine Turton, founder of the Greenwich Communication Centre, and Chairwoman of the East Greenwich Business Association, launched the Greenwich Enterprise Club (the GEC) in September last year.

The Greenwich Enterprise Club is a free support and networking group which helps budding entrepreneurs to get started in running their own businesses.

The GEC will provide the opportunity for enterprising individuals to network in a co-operative and relaxed environment, and complements the support offered through the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA).

"For people who are eager to start their own businesses, the time has never been better," says Lorraine Turton, founder and trustee at Greenwich Communication Centre.

"The Greenwich Enterprise Club is our latest initiative to help people who are out-of-work and are planning on a future

where they will run their own business.

"The weekly support meetings will enable business-inspired individuals to meet to discuss ideas, network with fellow entrepreneurs, collaborate with possible partners and receive support from experienced entrepreneurs and advice from business advisors.

"In addition, our business centre has excellent facilities to support start-up businesses including IT Support, access to mac and windows computers and a wi-fi lounge with superfast broadband."

All those who are keen to start their own business are invited to join the group and participate in the meetings which take place twice a month.

For further information, to become a member, or to reserve a place at one of their upcoming meetings, or even present if you are a skilled speaker, visit <http://www.meetup.com/The-Greenwich-Enterprise-Club> or email: enterprise-club@greenwichcc.com

Ca s'écrit comment?

On 5th February, six girls from Blackheath High School will go head-to-head with pupils from other Girls' Day School Trust schools (GDST) in the regional semi-finals of the GDST Foreign Language Spelling Bee.

This regional heat will be taking place by video conference and is one of four taking place across the country, involving 21 schools and over 370 pupils.

Pupils will be tested on the spelling and pronunciation of 90 words, in rounds, in five different languages – French, German, Spanish, Latin and Mandarin.

Those in the regional heat have already won a round at their schools, where they were tested on 40 words. Since then they have received 50 new words to learn for the semi-final competition.

The winning teams will go through to the final at Howell's School in Cardiff on 5th. March, where they will be tested on 140 words in each language.

The competition is one of a series of activities to mark the Girls' Day School Trust's 140th Anniversary which is being celebrated this year.

Corrie-Jane Rafferty

The Second Chance Choir

The Second Chance Choir has organized a workshop entitled "Introduction to singing". If you have been thinking about joining a choir, but have been concerned about doing an audition, or being unable to read music, or not sure whether you can even sing, then this workshop may be just about perfect for you.

Jessie Maryon Davies will lead the workshop on Saturday the 9th March, at 2.00 -5.00 at Sunfields Methodist Church, Old Dover Road, Blackheath (near the Standard).

Jessie is an experienced and lively musician who directs the Clapham Community Choir, and has directed various musical events around London.

The workshop will consist of warming up, singing games, lots of songs, and of course refreshments.

The Second Chance Choir was set up about 10 years ago to encourage people to learn to sing in a supportive group.

New singers, or those returning to singing after a break are all very welcome. If you are unable to attend the workshop, come along for a taster session at one of our regular sessions on Thursday evenings.

SHEILA ARMSTRONG

To register for the workshop with the Second Chance Choir, at a cost of £10.00 (including refreshments) contact Susanna Gadd at:-

email susannagadd@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 0203645 7596

If you would like to know more about the Second Chance Choir visit our website at www.secondchancechoir.co.uk or speak to Jean Valsler at 0208 852 7548 or David Sprackling at 07956857661.

Artful dodgers

Police in Greenwich have recovered an original Banksy artwork after being alerted of a fraud by an Essex art dealer.

The artwork - the original of 'Wrong War' and a signed print of 'No Ball Games' - were purchased by a customer in Plumstead for a total of £12,990 in January this year.

Two weeks later, the art dealer was told that the cards used did not have the authorisation of the cardholders and therefore both payments were being cancelled.

The dealer reported the matter to the Met. Greenwich CID investigated and on Feb.8th arrested a 25-year-old man in Plumstead. Officers searched an address in Charlton where they recovered 'Wrong War'. The artwork 'No Ball Games' was also recovered after a member of the public was suspicious.

One of the cards used in the transaction is registered to a card holder in Arizona.

Free Will Week

Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice in Abbey Wood, SE London has teamed up with 11 solicitors across the region to offer their services free of charge to make or update a standard Will, if you leave a gift in your Will to Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice.

All you have to do is make an appointment with one of the participating solicitors to have your will written during Free Will Week (4th - 8th March, 2013).

Free Will Week provides an opportunity to get your affairs in order, have your Will written or amended at no cost, and at the same time help to secure the future of the Hospice.

For further information call 020 8319 9244, email legacies@gbch.org.uk or visit www.communityhospice.org.uk

Live Jazz Gem in Mycenae Road

Once a month some world class live jazz occurs at Mycenae House in the main hall.

Fri 8th March, distinguished Portobello musician **Earl Okin** is featured, along with local top-line jazz guitarist **Dominic Ashworth**.

8pm. £8 door. Bar. Food avail.

www.jazznights.co.uk



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FEATURES

Memories are made of this . . . CAROL KENNA



Country Dancing in Maryon Park 1956

The Charlton Parks Reminiscence Project (CPRP) has been exploring local history by talking to people about their memories of the parks (which were once part of the Maryon-Wilson Family Estate), researching their history and topography, and collecting stories and reminiscences about each one: Hornfair, Charlton, Maryon Wilson and Maryon Parks, Gilberts Pit and Barrier Park.

These parks have been given by or purchased from the Maryon-Wilson Estate, and are maintained for the people of the Royal Borough of Greenwich by the Parks and Open Spaces Department of the Borough.

After two years in the making, *The Charlton Parks Reminiscence Project* is now complete and can be visited online at www.charltonparks.co.uk.

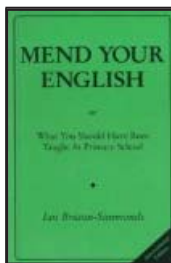
There you will find stories and photo-

graphs looking at the history of the parks and their importance to local people over the past hundred years. You can listen to scores of interviews, with people talking about everything from wartime jazz at Maryon Park bandstand to looking after the deer and other animals in Maryon Wilson Park. There are memories of swimming at Hornfair lido to clambering around Gilbert's Pit plus many more stories featuring Hornfair, Charlton, Maryon Wilson, and Maryon Parks, Gilberts Pit and Barrier Gardens Parks, all featured on the website.

To accompany the website a CPRP Book has been produced including extracts from each person contributing to the project, together with wonderful photographs of the parks. The book has been available FREE from borough libraries, Greenwich Heritage Centre and Charlton House since late January 2013.



Charlton Park School Children 1937



MEND YOUR ENGLISH

What you should have been taught at Primary School

by
Ian Bruton-Simmonds

Focuses on the BBC

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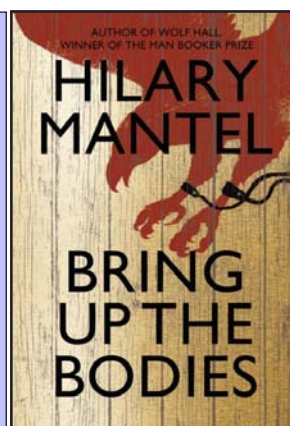
13 Station Crescent,
Westcombe Park, London SE3 7EQ Tel. 0208 853 3304 Fax: 0208 858 1784

Last month, the *WN* published an article by Michael Goldman on book clubs. Here is a review of a book recently discussed in a local book club.

Bring up the Bodies

by Hilary Mantel

DAVID ALEXANDER reviews the second in Hilary Mantel's Tudor trilogy



Bring up the bodies was the order actually issued to have prisoners delivered to Westminster Hall for trial. Anne Boleyn's alleged lovers were all tried at Westminster; only Anne Boleyn and her brother, George, were examined before peers in the Tower. The order seems to indicate that the accused were already seen as bodies that were about to be executed.

Tudor politics and their bloody punctuation have for many years been a fascination for British people – "let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings".

It is therefore small wonder that Hilary Mantel's fictional representation of Anne Boleyn's fall has had such a resonance with British readers, and should have a special appeal to those of us who live in Greenwich, so steeped in Tudor history and where Henry VIII was born and spent so much of his life.

What makes the book so outstanding is the clarity of the complicated narrative, the plausible portrayal of the characters, the clever display of their cunning, duplicity and human frailty, and the quality of the research. The tension is maintained even though the final act – the execution of Anne Boleyn – is known from the outset.

The novel is an outstanding and very beautifully written achievement. Are there episodes not so easy to believe? Are there gaps in the historical record that ask to be filled? I am sure this is so – but one must recognize the author's most difficult task in selecting from all the material available what to include and what to omit.

Fear of betrayal, fear of downfall, fear

of the unfettered power in the hands of the monarch and his lieutenant, Thomas Cromwell, to bring about sudden arrest and execution – all these are ever present in the narrative and serve to heighten the horror of the events as they unfold.

It is also true to say that Hilary Mantel has the capacity to draw the reader into the heart of the conflict of power so that we do not just sit outside the action but almost feel that we are a part of the story, and we shudder ourselves in fear of the bloody consequences that inevitably ensue.

Was Mantel right to choose the fictional form rather than the cooler narration of history? To my mind undoubtedly so, as it enables us to take part, and become involved, in a way that many historians are unable to achieve.

It also makes possible an understanding of how these historic events resonate with the actions of tyrants and the misuse of power which still prevail in our own times.

This book, like its predecessor *Wolf Hall*, is a deserved winner of the Man Booker prize. It is an altogether brilliant achievement thoroughly to be recommended. Bring on volume three of the promised trilogy – I can't wait!

Apologies and corrections

In the last issue of the *WN* a book review stated that Daniel Persson is the 'founding father of Meantime Breweries'.

We apologise to Alistair Hook, the real founding father, who set up the Meantime Brewery in Charlton in 1990. Daniel Persson joined Meantime in 2009.

Anita Strasser's book, *Royal Hill*, costs £13.00, not £12.00 as stated.

DIY Gilbert & Sullivan

PAT HAMMODI tells how you can become a singing star!



The Centenary Company has been wowing audiences with its productions of Gilbert & Sullivan operas since 1995, and each year, as a fundraiser for its major staged production, invites singers to 'come and sing' in a from-scratch concert performance of one of the G & S operas.

This year it's that old favourite *The Pirates of Penzance*. Singers can be assured of a fun-filled musical experience – Music Director, Elinor Corp, will put participants through their paces during the afternoon rehearsal, in preparation for the evening concert performance.

So, whether you've sung this recently, 50 years ago, or not at all (but can sight read a bit or follow the person next to you!), do come and join us in the chorus! It is great fun.

To take part in the concert, singers need to pre-register on 020 8778 8088, or by visiting centenarycompany@gmail.com no later than Friday 8th. March.

Cost for singers: £12 (£10 concessions). Scores will be available for hire on the day. The funds raised will be for the Company's next staged production.

The Pirates of Penzance In a Day – a concert performance from scratch Sat. 16th March – concert at 7pm Kingswood Hall, Kingswood Place, (opposite The Dacre Arms), Blackheath, London SE13 3BU
Cost for singers: £12 (£10 concessions) – registration and payment in advance: no later than 8 March – 020 8778 8088 or centenarycompany@gmail.com
Tickets for audience: £10 (concs £8)
On the door or book: 0208 778 8088 or centenarycompany@gmail.com

Concert for Africa

Friday March 15th. 7.30 pm

Singers from the Royal Opera House perform at

St Mary's Hall Cresswell Park
All proceeds go to CAFOD
Tickets £10 | £8.concs.

WHAT'S ON

ARTS

BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY, St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath 4th Thursday of every month, 2.00 for 2.30. Next meeting: **28th March Susie Harries on "Pevsner in Blackheath"** Non-members £5 on the door. www.artsinblackheath.org.uk or ring 83187550

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich **NEXT LECTURE: Monday 11th March 8.00 pm "Silver and Social Custom"** by Ian Pickford. 020 8852 7873. Non-members £8.00

ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH Until **28th April: ANSELM ADAMS: PHOTOGRAPHY** from the MOUNTAINS to the SEA **ROYAL OBSERVATORY GREENWICH** Until **August: Alien Revolution:** exploring our thinking about aliens in science & culture, from Copernicus to the detection of alien worlds orbiting the stars. Part of the Royal Observatory's Alien Season.

CHILDREN

WOODLANDS FARM
331 Shooters Hill. Tel. 0208 319 8900
Every Thursday Toddler Club 10.00am - 12 noon
£2 per adult, children free
Meet the animals, enjoy some crafts or just play.

GREENWICH HERITAGE CENTRE
Artillery Square, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich SE18 4DX 020 8854 2452 FREE Saturday mornings: 10.30am to 12 noon. Free art and craft activities for 5 to 12 year olds. Under fives must be accompanied by an adult. Please wear suitable clothes

SE LONDON DADS GROUP: DADS ALERT:
Regular stay-and-play for dads and children under five @ Sherington Children's Centre, 14 Sherington Rd every Wed. from 9:30 - 11:30am.
Contact: - www.SELondonDads.org.uk or email: info@selondondads.org.uk



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COMMUNITY

CANCER RESEARCH LUNCH
The next fund-raising luncheon is on **Thursday 7th March** at the Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath from 12 noon to 2:30pm. The cost is £8.50. The Speaker will be Sarah Crossman of Active Health, NHS Greenwich and the subject will be "Get moving and get active". Lunches can be booked by telephoning Wendy on 020 8265 0335 by **Monday 4th March 2013**.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
Fri. March 8th. 7.30 - 10.00 pm Charlton House: **Global Fusion Music and Arts** are promoting a concert with legendary folk singer and Women's Rights activist, Julie Felix. There will also be a Tai Chi demonstration, a performance from Tamil Academy Dance Group and Nigerian High Life Music.
Ticket price £7 (£6 for Greenwich card holders).
Info: 020 858 9497 – 07976 941 435
Email: globalfusionarts@yahoo.com
Tickets at: www.wegotickets.com

BLACKHEATH HIGH JUNIOR SCHOOL'S EASTER FAIR, SAT. 9th March 2013: 11.00am - 3.00 pm, Wemyss Road, Blackheath (Entrance via Paragon Place). A great day out for the whole family: an enormous bouncy castle and slide, owl display, face painting, nail bar, craft activities, Easter eggs, tombolas, raffles, lucky dips, loads of toys to win and buy plus entertainment for children of all ages. Plus a fabulous craft market, clothes boutique, DVDs, books, bar, big screen TV, PLUS fabulous (and affordable) Mother's Day flowers, presents & cards. A great day out for the whole family - well worth a visit!

FRIENDS OF MYCENAE GARDENS
The Friends of Mycenae Gardens AGM is at Greenwich Steiner School, Woodlands, 90 Mycenae Road SE3 7SE at 8.00 pm on **Thursday 14th March 2013**. All those who care about and enjoy Mycenae Gardens are welcome (but only members vote!)
BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road SE3 7SE
March 15th 7.45 pm The Nature of Bats
Talk by Ms Huma Pearce of The London Bat Group Visitors are welcome, and are requested to donate £ 3.00 to Society funds.

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
19th March 7.30 pm - Andrew Wells, On Wells Shipbuilders – Deptford and elsewhere Meeting are held at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3. There is no on site parking – please do not park there, but use the car park behind the station. Meetings start at 7.30 and non members are charged £1.
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB welcomes all players to duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon. & Thurs. 7.15 pm & on Wed. at 1.15 Tel. 8851 2609
WESTCOMBE WRITERS' CIRCLE 1st. Thursday each month, 2.30-4.30 at Mycenae House. Ring Joan Paice on 8305 1652 or Rosemary Gill on 8858 5088
BLACKHEATH FLOWER CLUB Meets third Friday of every month at 1.45 pm at Mycenae House
BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE: First Wednesday of every month at 7.30 pm at Sunfields Methodist Church, Old Dover Road, SE3 8SJ eileenflanagan194@btinternet.com

WORSHIP

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH Glenlue Rd.
Friday 1st March Women's World Day of Prayer - a service prepared by Christian women in France:
10.30 am St. James', Kidbrooke
7.30pm St. George's, Glenlue Road All welcome
Sat 2nd March Fairtrade Coffee morning and sale
10.00am - 12 noon St George's
Sun 3rd March Parish Communion with Children's Activities 11.00 am
Mothering Sun 10th March 11.00 am Family Communion
Sunday 17th March Parish Communion with Children's Activities 11am
Palm Sunday 24th March 11.00 am - parish communion with children's activities and procession with palms
Thurs 28th March Maundy Thursday 7.00 pm Re-enactment of the Last Supper 7.00pm
Fri 29th March Good Friday 12noon - 1.00pm Church open for private prayer and reflection
1.00pm - 2.25pm At the Cross - readings, prayer, hymns and reflections
2.30pm - 3.00pm The story of Good Friday for all ages followed by hot cross buns and building the Easter garden
Sunday 31st March Easter Day Parish Communion for all ages to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.

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THEATRE & OPERA

THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755
Tue 19th - Sat 23rd March 67.30 pm Fri Matinee 1.30, Sat matinee 2.30 pm POUNDTOWN by Ben Hales: a gruesome story of poverty, opportunity – and revenge £12.50 | £7.50 concs.
Sun 24th March 7.30 pm ARTHUR SMITH – EXPOSED! An evening of laughter
THE SPACE 269 Westferry Road London E14 3RS 0207 515 7799 / www.space.org.uk
Nearest stn: Mudchute (DLR) Buses: D3, D7, 135
7th – 9th March 8:00pm Merchant: new abridged adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* – in a modern day setting. £11 | £9 concs.
12th March 2013–30th March 2013, 7.30pm
The Suicide by Nikolai Erdman Semyonovich is unemployed, fed-up and hungry for liverwurst. Word spread like wildfire and now everyone wants him to commit suicide on their behalf. A madcap, black comedy... £14 | £10 (concessions)

MUSIC

ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC 9.00 pm every Tuesday at the Lord Hood pub, Creek Road; mainstream jazz every Thursday.
PERFORMANCE JAZZ IN MYCENAE HOUSE Every Monday evening. £5.00. Bar!
SECOND CHANCE CHOIR We rehearse Thursday evenings during term time, in Blackheath. New members welcome, contact Margery Nzerem 8858 3544 gery@nzerem.bbmax.co.uk.

BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel 020 8463 0100
BLACKHEATH SUNDAYS 11.00 am Great Hall:
Sun 10th March Schulhoff Quartet play Haydn, Schulhoff & Mendelssohn
Sun 24th March Tim Lowe cello & James Baillieu piano play Beethoven, Kodaly, Sibelius
MONDAY LUNCHTIME RECITALS
Mon 4th March A selection of solos and duets
Mon. 11th March Stadler Ensemble play Mozart's clarinet quintet and other works
Friday 8th March 8.00 pm ICARUS CLUB
Tickets: £10.00
Sun 10th March 6.30 pm Blackheath Halls
Orchestra play Mozart & Tchaikovsky
Tickets: £10 | £8 concs.
STEPHEN MONTAGUE AT 70
Thurs. 28th March 7.30 pm A birthday celebration
Great Hall: Montague's Requiem plus Copeland and Prokofiev Tickets £12 | £8 concs.

BLACKHEATH CHOIR
with ELTHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

HANDEL: *ISRAEL IN EGYPT*

Sunday 17th March at 7.30 pm

Blackheath Halls: Great Hall

Go to
www.blackheathchoir.org.uk
for start times or to book ring
0208 852 9262

Tickets: £18 | £13

LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Labour:
Cllr Alex Grant Tel. 8855 7292E-mail Alex.grant@greenwich.gov.uk
Surgeries: 1st. Friday of each month, 7.00 - 8.00 pm, Mycenae House; 3rd. Saturday of each month, 3.30-4.30 pm, St James Church Hall, Kidbrooke Park Rd.
Conservative:
Cllr Geoff Brighty Tel. 8921 5663 (Town Hall) or 8858 9731 (Home) geoffrey.brighty@greenwich.gov.uk
Cllr Alex Wilson Tel. 07783 611607 Email: alex.wilson@greenwich.gov.uk
Surgery: 1st Monday of the month 6 - 7.00 pm Blackheath Library, Old Dover Rd.



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FEATURES

Bringing History to life

Last month, the *WN* reported that the Blackheath Society was awarded a grant of £7,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for its exciting project to develop a new digital archive called ‘The Story of the Heath.’

The images in the archive, which is led by volunteers from the local community, focus on the use and development of the Heath next to Blackheath Village since the 19th century. The project will also enhance the Society’s growing digital archive and could lead to national publicity on BBC television.

The Blackheath Society is asking its members, and the general public, to search their attics for any interesting photographs of the Heath which could supplement the images it already owns.

The plan is to create mobile exhibitions of the images of the Heath to be shown in

local schools and churches, at the library in the newly re-opened Age Exchange in the Village, and at the Blackheath Concert Halls.

Other plans include using the project to update and reprint local historian Neil Rhind’s Heath trail guide and putting a rotating selection of the images on the Society’s website.

The grant brings the Society’s 75th anniversary year to a fitting end. Commenting on the award, the Society’s Chair Howard Shields said:

“We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and are confident the project will encourage Blackheath people to become more involved in their local heritage. The grant will also greatly enhance our archive of local photographs.”



Thanks to the Blackheath Society for supplying this image from their wonderful archive. *Pony-Racing on the Heath 1853* by John Leach (1817 - 1864). It is thought that this drawing by the Victorian caricaturist and political cartoonist John Leach was first featured in the *Illustrated London News* in May 1853. Sadly, this has largely become a spectator sport these days, and the nearest most of us get to a horse race is in one of the innumerable bookmakers in the area . . .

A woodland glade – on our doorstep!

FRANK SMITH

The Friends of Westcombe Woodlands have certainly not been hibernating in the winter months! We now have formal recognition from HM Revenue & Customs as a charity, so we can claim Gift Aid on the donations, grants and subscriptions we receive.

This enabled us to finalise and print our membership leaflet (below) giving information about us and the woodlands and with a form for people to fill in to become members. We have started putting the leaflet through letterboxes locally.

We have also launched our website (www.westcombewoodlands.org) which contains more information

The website also includes a brief and fascinating history of the site, written by Alex Grant (with advice from our local historian Neil Rhind) and news. By the time you read this, our calendar of events for 2013 should have been posted.

We have updated our Management Plan, building on that developed by Trees for Cities, the environmental charity which gave us invaluable help when we were starting up.

We held our first Volunteer Day of the year on Sunday 2nd February, when we prepared the ground to plant some fruit trees (apples and pears) – in the past there were orchards on the site.

Responding to comments from our volunteers, our Volunteer Days will this year be on the first weekend of each month



PHOTO: Frank Smith
A brief coffee-break. Those who volunteer say how satisfying and invigorating it is!

up to and including November. We are alternating between Saturday and Sunday, hoping more people will be able to come.

The next volunteer day is on Sunday 3rd March from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm when we will plant the fruit trees. If you email westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk, we will arrange for you to receive details of that and future volunteering events.

We hope lots of *WN* readers will now sign up as Friends. We welcome both active volunteers and well-wishing but less active supporters who are keen to help a worthwhile local project. As an encouragement, if you sign up before the end of April 2013 you will be invited to a private drinks reception on Saturday 8 June!

Subscription rates:

Annual subscription	£10.00
Annual sub. (2+ in one household)	£15.00
Junior sub. (17 & under)	£5.00
Annual corporate membership	£25.00
Life membership	£100.00
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Please notify Friends of Westcombe Woodlands if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
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Our Objectives

- To secure the preservation, protection and improvement of the Westcombe Woodlands
- To educate the public in the history, natural history, ecology and biodiversity of the woodlands and to promote the work of volunteers to achieve those objectives
- To promote high standards of conservation in the woodlands

Why join and What are the benefits?

- Your subscription will advance the practical work of the Friends
- You will have the opportunity for volunteering in the woodlands and for limited visits
- You can join in our bird and bat surveys
- You can contribute ideas for the protection of the woodlands and their improvement, while maintaining their unique ‘wild’ quality
- You will receive email updates and newsletters
- You will be involved in local community activity with an environmental purpose

Friends of Westcombe Woodlands



Come and join us

westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk
www.westcombewoodlands.org



Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Library on the lower ground floor of the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington St. They may also be viewed on www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning

At what cost, Silvertown?

SARAH WINTERBOTTOM reports

Reduce congestion? Speed up journey times? Stimulate economic growth? All laudable reasons to support the proposals to build new river crossings in the area – including a new tunnel to Silvertown. However at a recent public meeting, hosted by the Friends of the Earth, expert speakers gave a very different view.

Air pollution expert, Dr Ian Mudway of Kings College London was joined by transport expert, John Elliott a transport consultant and civil engineer who worked for the GLC at the time when they were considering proposals for the Thames Gateway East London river crossing.

“New roads create new traffic”

Elliott presented evidence which clearly demonstrated that rather than easing congestion, new roads create new traffic. And with the Blackwall Tunnel carrying some 3,000 cars per hour each way during peak times, it has been estimated that a new tunnel would bring with it an additional 2,000 vehicles per lane. The implications for the A102 which would also feed the new Silvertown tunnel are significant. He then went on to show how tolls are ineffective in reducing traffic over the medium term.

The pollution problem

Dr Mudway’s presentation was potentially more troubling. Currently involved in a project in Tower Hamlets, his team is looking at the relationship between traffic-related air pollution and retarded lung growth in infants in this, the most deprived area in the UK.

His research makes grim reading. Air pollution caused by traffic, particularly by fumes from diesel engines, has a negative impact on both lung growth in infants and lung function in older children and adults. Dr Mudway displayed slides which showed microscopic particles of metals, including lead from diesel fumes, embedded into human lungs.

Attendees, including several Greenwich councillors, were reminded that London is non-compliant with the EU recommended levels of NO2. Many roads in the Greenwich area, including the Woolwich Flyover, are already air quality black spots.

Dr Mudway went on to talk about the economics of poor air quality both in terms of the health costs associated with chronic and acute respiratory illnesses as well as the cost in terms of lost working days due to poor health.

Traffic related air pollution has been shown to increase mortality rates and we were reminded of the Great Smog in 1952 which saw florists run out of flowers and undertakers run out of coffins with 4,500 people dying in just one week. Those most affected were babies under 12 months and adults aged between 45 and 75.

Their conclusion?

Based on the evidence, a new tunnel will, if nothing else, deliver increased traffic and congestion and increased traffic-related air pollution which has serious health implications – and is at odds with the RBG’s published commitment to measures to improve air quality in the Borough.

Sainsbury’s on the move

Plans approved by the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) will see Sainsbury’s up sticks and move 400m down the road to a larger site on Gallion’s Road – taking the place of Dreams, and the now closed Wickes superstores. The new supermarket, due to open later this year, will be three times the size of the current store.

Opened in 1999 by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver with its very own wind turbine and solar panels, the Bugsby’s Way store’s carbon footprint was smaller than most. Indeed it won the Royal Institute of British Architects’ Sustainability Award for its use of multiple energy-saving technologies.

According to Jamie Baker, Sainsbury’s regional property development head, the new site is set to be “another flagship environmental store” with green credentials which will be, at a minimum, on a par with those of its predecessor. It is unclear what will happen to both the old Sainsbury’s building.

It is however certain that traffic levels will increase on what is already a very congested road system. But try catching a bus: it needs a minimum of two changes via bus for most of our readers to reach the new site. So it may be advisable to make use of the internet delivery service which is also set to move to the same site. **Sarah Winterbottom**



Estate agents & surveyors, established in 1975. Branches in Westcombe Park, Blackheath, Greenwich & Lee, alongside dedicated branches for Lettings & Commercial. Contact the Westcombe Park branch on 020 8858 6101

John Payne

johnpayne.com

Rail-users unite – nothing to lose but your trains!

Over the next few years all trips by train to and from London on the Greenwich line are due to suffer severe disruption while London Bridge station undergoes major redevelopment to accommodate the multi-million-pound Thameslink upgrade.

Things are set to get very much more complicated than simply changing at London Bridge to get to your destination. In fact, many trains are not scheduled to stop at London Bridge – at all – while the works are carried out.

In 2015/16, Charing Cross trains will be passing through London Bridge station without stopping. Furthermore, during 2017, Cannon Street trains will not be stopping at London Bridge. Thus for the whole of the three year period, Greenwich line passengers will have no rail access to Charing Cross.

The problems won’t stop once the all-new London Bridge station is completed: under current plans, there will be no more direct trains to Charing Cross on the Greenwich line at all. None!

“While 2015 may sound like a long way off, we need to get organised now,” says Dick Allard, chair of the Westcombe Society’s Environment Committee (WSENV). He continues:

“Forming a group is absolutely essential if our voices are to be heard during this time of significant upheaval, and beyond.”

And so WSENV is now joining forces with the Greenwich Society, whose members’ journeys will also be adversely affected, to promote the formation of a Greenwich Line Rail Users’ Group (GLUG).

All rail users and other interested parties are therefore being asked to attend a meeting to discuss the needs of Greenwich Line users, and to set up a Greenwich Line Users’ Group at 7.00 pm on 26th March in the downstairs bar at Davy’s Wine Bar, 161 - 5, Greenwich High Road, SE10 8JA.

Guest speakers at the first meeting will include xxx, founding member of the Charlton Rail Users’ Group (CRUG) – an already established group. CRUG has already been successful in lobbying Network Rail, the train operators South Eastern, as well as the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

From the Olympics to the removal of rubbish in the station, CRUG can claim many successes to date. Also speaking is Dick Allard, the WSENV Chair.

Keen to help protect our train service? Then contact WSENV on wsenv@gmail.com for more information.

Park springs back to life

Wrapped up warm on a freezing day in January, the Westcombe Society’s chair, Marilyn Little, joined a group of stakeholders invited by the Royal Parks to see just how the reinstatement work post-Olympics is shaping up.

Royal Parks manager, Graham Dear, explained that in total some 35,350 square meters of turf from Romney Marshes are in the process of being laid.

While the main equestrian arena was on stilts, due to the archaeological importance of the site, the grass underneath had died, so after aerating the ground, removing the dead grass, and treating the surface with a harrow, the soil was raked by hand before laying the turf. The turf should have been laid by the end of February.

Areas of acid grass (a rarity in London) fenced off during the Games, e.g. Crooms Hill, have prospered and attracted more wildlife including butterflies. However,



PHOTO: Marilyn Little

the slope leading down from the General Wolfe statue, arguably the “best sledging site in East London”, shows signs of wear and tear following January’s snowfall! Seeding plans are in place.

The Park’s paths, roads and gates are also getting a makeover (see February’s *WN*). Through traffic and cycles are due to be able to use the Park once again at the end of this month

For more information read Graham Dear’s blog entry on the Royal Parks blog: <http://www.royalparks.org.uk/blog>

Site for sore eyes

Construction of the Greenwich Centre on the old District Hospital site on Trafalgar Road is well underway.

Excavation for the 7 metre deep basement – which will house a new swimming pool and gymnasium – has commenced and is now almost completed. Work on the structural concrete frame on block 1 on the northern boundary of the site was completed by the end of February. The structure, including the roof, is seven floors high. Further works to this structure will commence in May.

The retaining wall to support the new internal road to the south of the site has been completed.

The footpath at the foot of Vanbrugh Hill will be reopened as soon as work in that corner of the site has been completed.

Local jobs for local people

The building company, Hadley Mace is working with Greenwich Local Labour and Business to offer employment and training opportunities on site for local people.

Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) has a team of experienced and qualified employment support advisors who provide tailored one-to-one support to a broad range of jobseekers.

Employment Development Officer. Jo Fender is the first contact for The Heart of Greenwich Development. She is based at GLLaB’s Work & Learn Centre, 3 Green Place, SE10 0PE Jo Fender can be reached on 0208 305 5301 or email: johanna.fender@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

A dog’s life

Under plans aimed at cutting the growing number of strays, all dog owners in England will have to microchip their animal by April 2016. Tiny microchips with a code containing the contact details of the owners will be fitted to dogs.

Owners who fail to comply with changes to the Animal Welfare Act could face fines of up to £500. The government is also considering closing a legal loophole, so that owners could be prosecuted if their dog attacks on private land.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(See also <http://westcombe.blogspot.com/> 57 FOYLE ROAD ref 13/0187/RT Loft conversion: renewal of permission.

5A HIGHMORE ROAD ref 13/0116/F Construct single storey rear extension

2 LASSETER PLACE ref 13/0122/CP Construct single storey rear extension

79 HUMBER ROAD ref 12/3111F Retention of house with basement flat

TREE WORKS 229 WESTCOMBE HILL ref 13/0230/TC Fell 2 limes and repollard two other limes

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