



Westcombe NEWS

40th year

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June 2013 Issue 5

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

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

Forty this month!

The Westcombe News is forty years old this month. To celebrate we reproduce page 1 of the very first edition – a two-sided A4 sheet that was produced on a Gestetner skin and then roneoed off.

We have come a long way since those days. There have been ups and downs – and the paper very nearly didn't come out at all on several occasions, as editors – all volunteers – came and went. In November 2002, the ball finally landed in the court of the current editor, Neville Grant, who gave a brief talk at the AGM of the Westcombe Society in May. (Please see page 2.)

It is surprising that there are not more Westcombe Newses in the world: the idea, developed over the years by imaginative and very community-minded members of the Westcombe Society, is rather brilliant.

Basically, a community newspaper is produced and distributed by volunteers, none of whom is paid. It is funded by advertising – this pays the printing bill.

The advertisers have a targeted local readership, and can be almost guaranteed that their ads will be read, rather than being tucked away, unread, on page 87 of

a huge newspaper – the fact that the paper is never larger than 8 pages is important from that point of view. The advertising rates are very reasonable, and many of our advertisers generate a significant portion of their business from ads in the *WN*.

No wonder so many advertise regularly in the *WN* – and of course we really appreciate the support of our advertisers.

The *WN* in fact makes a profit from the advertising, and the money raised goes to charity. Please see below a summary of the charitable donations made by the Society over the past year.

At the Westcombe Society AGM, the editor, Neville Grant said:

“The *WN* is YOUR newspaper. I would encourage all members of the community to claim ownership by writing for it, sending in news, features, photographs, articles, letters, you name it – and/or to help with its distribution or production.

“Our volunteer distributors are all highly valued members of the *WN* team!”

“It is important to note that the *WN* does not have a team of roving reporters and writers – the roving reporters are YOU, the readers!”

WN reporter

How it began Pat Dodson recalls the early 70s

In the early seventies, shortly after the newly-married Mary and Alan Mills moved to Humber Road, two young social workers, Trevor and Cathy Blakey, became concerned at the number of deaths of elderly people living alone during a recent hard winter.

They canvassed the residents of Humber Road to raise awareness that these events could occur in an area such as ours.

From the resulting small meeting, the Humber Road Neighbours (soon to become

the Westcombe Society) was formed. It was at this meeting that I first met Alan and Mary Mills.

Although we were a small group our enthusiasm was great and none more so than Alan's. Members visited people in hospital, and walked wheelchair-bound neighbours – and, above all, gardened. But always it was fun . . .

(Extracted from Pat Dodson's obituary to Alan Mills in the *WN*, September 2005)

Donations by the Westcombe Society

The Westcombe Society's activities are so diverse that the society does not fit into any of the categories laid down by the Charity Commissioners – and it was informed raising money for other charities does not qualify it to be a charity!

At the AGM in May, Marilyn Little reported that the WS's Charity of the Year, Woodlands Farm, was given £3000. The WS also made the following donations last year:

£800 Riding for the Disabled
£750 Clowns in the Sky
£500 South London Special League
£100 Blind Ind. Greenwich (a tandem)
£100 Guys & St Thomas's Hospitals
£100 Greenwich & Bexley Hospice (for bird boxes)
£250 Friends of Mycenae Gardens
£350 Macmillan Walk at Luddesdown
£770 Macmillan Coffee Morning

< < NEWS BRIEFS > >

Life begins at 40

The Westcombe Society's 40th birthday is being celebrated on June 15th, from 1.00 - 5.00 pm in Mycenae House and Gardens. It is hoped some of the founder members of the Westcombe Society will be joining us on the day.

Please turn to page 2 for more details.

River crossings

Greenwich and Newham Councils claim that a consultation by TfL shows strong local support for two new fixed river crossings. TfL confirm that there will be further consultations before the plans are advanced.

Measles

A number of cases have been reported in SE London.

Children need to be fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella with two doses of the MMR vaccine.

Beware the Cat-Flap-Burglar!

During the past few months there have been at least two occasions when a would-be burglar has pushed some kind of wire or rod through a cat flap. By this means he or she has managed to hook keys, and in a recent case, a wallet. In both incidents the burglar alarms were not activated. Beware!

Well done Ella

Local girl and Olympic Torch-Bearer Ella Statham, who goes to John Roan School, has just been re-elected to the Greenwich Young People's Council; Ella also represents Greenwich YPC on the countryside Youth Parliament. On May 28th she was invited on board the Cutty Sark to join the Duke of Edinburgh for tea. The Duke is chairman of the Cutty Sark Trust.

Charity of the Year

The South London Special League, providing sports facilities and events for disabled players, is the Westcombe Society's Charity of the year.

WESTCOMBE NEWS

JUNE 1973 NO 1

PEOPLE

INTRODUCING:

The Committee of the WESTCOMBE SOCIETY, which was elected at the first meeting on May 8th at Kidbrooke House, Mycenae Road.

CHAIRMAN	TOM CROWE	13 Vanbrugh Fields
TREASURER	ARTHUR MELLISH	19 Foyle Road
VICE CHAIRMAN	JOHN AYLING	Kidbrooke House
SECRETARY	Hilary Patrinos	81 Mycenae Road
CONSERVATION ORGANISERS	DEREK FREEMAN	71 Beaconsfield Road
	ANNA TOWNEND	2 Lynsdale Close
	ARTHUR ROLFE	55 Parkside
	ROGER RAMSEY	12 Coleraine Road
STREET WARDEN ORGANISERS	ALAN MILLS	24 Humber Road
	ERIC WILLS	1 Humber Road
	GRACE MORRIS	19 Vanbrugh Park
	MARGARET SMITH	12 Vanbrugh Hill
YOUTH ORGANISER		
VANBRUGH WARD COUNCILLORS (EX-OFFICIO)	Cathy Brook	49 Haddo House SE10
	Michael O'Toole	169 Griffin Road SE18
ENTERTAINMENT PRESS NEWSLETTER	BRENDA LE PAVOUX	27 Foyle Road
	PAT DODSON	99 Humber Road
	ANTHONY RENOUF	37 Coleraine Road

SPOTLIGHT ON

STREET WARDEN ORGANISERS

Street Wardens are people who agree to give a specified amount of time every week to some kind of activity along their street, and these 3 Westcombe Society Ctte members help to co-ordinate their time and effort:



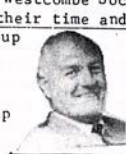
ALAN MILLS

Alan is a Computer Scientist, married, and has lived here 3 years; he is setting up the CAR OWNERS REGISTER, and leads the SW committee. (858 9482)



GRACE MORRIS

Grace is a Play-Group Leader, has 4 children & 8 grandchildren, and is setting up the HOUSEWIVES REGISTER. She has lived here over 20 years. (858 0986)



ERIC WILLS

Eric is a retired Local Government Officer, married, and has lived here over 30 years; he is setting up the VISITING ROTA for O.A.P.s (858 1900)

A step back in time . . .

The first issue of the *WN* (above) is quite revealing, and indicates how times have changed. Good to see many of those listed in 1973 are still with us . . .

In 1973, conservation loomed large on the agenda of the Westcombe Society, then as now, and listed among the team is Anna Townend, who has campaigned relentlessly on conservation issues ever since. These days, the Westcombe Society has a very active environment committee which keeps a close eye on planning applications and other local environment issues.

There is also a very stalwart team of graffiti bashers who help to clean up the worst excrescences.

It is interesting to see that Pat Dodson was the press officer – a position no longer in existence – while Anthony Renouf was in charge of the Newsletter, the first of a long line of editors.

Entertainment? Well, the Westcombe Society used to put on plays and shows; nowadays, however, the Westcombe Society has an events organiser and committee, organizing such events as Quiz Nights, tea parties for senior citizens, the Easter Egg Hunt, Members evenings, the Children's Nearly New Sales, and of course the Christmas Bazaar.

The role of street wardens is a bit of a

mystery – what kind of activity did they give “a specified amount of time to” in their street? I think we should be told!

One positive feature was the role of Youth Organiser . . . sadly, these days youth has other preoccupations . . .

Alan Mills (Mary Mills' husband, who sadly died in 2005) is down for setting up a car owners' register – what was that all about? Presumably, car ownership was only for a minority in those days . . .

Some of our older members will recall the Housewives Register, set up locally by Grace Morris. This organisation was founded in 1960 “for housebound housewives with liberal views”: it was renamed the National Women's Register in 1987, and still exists.

The first Honorary Life Member was Mary Stott, who lived in Blackheath, and who died, much mourned, in 2002.

Eric Wills set up a very well-meaning visiting rota for OAPs; this no longer exists, and we would like to believe that OAPs are visited not because they are on someone's rota, but because they are on local neighbours' radar – like Roden Tatham, mentioned in last month's *WN*.

Editor's footnote: The *WN* would be delighted to receive memoirs of past times from members and friends of the WS.

The Westcombe Society

Don't miss our 40th Birthday Party! Our annual Family Picnic is from 1.00 pm - 5.00 pm on Saturday June 15th in Mycenae Gardens: come and enjoy the BBQ, the Cake Stall, Cream Teas, Pimms Stall, live music, games and races for children, Punch & Judy (at 2.30pm and 4.00pm) and face-painting. The Westcombe Society stall will be selling books and local cards. And there will of course be a raffle.

Our Senior Citizens Tea Party is from 2.00 - 4.0 pm on the same day, in Mycenae House. It includes a free raffle, a quiz, and deLICious teas!

If you are not on our Tea Guest List already, please contact Caroline on 020 8853 0948 for an invitation.

COMMUNITY NEWS

WESTCOMBE NEWS

ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
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News Editor: Geoff Garvey

Environment Editor: Sarah Winterbottom

Reporters: Denise Scott-McDonald

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Emily Norton All queries and comments to: 020 8853 2756
The Planning and environment sub-committee: environment@westcombe-society.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

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Chairman: Marilyn Little
Tel. 020 8853 1312

The views expressed in the Westcombe News are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or of the Editor. We take all reasonable precautions to protect the inretests of our readers by ensuring as far as possible the bona fides of our advertisers but cannot accept any responsibility for them. Any complaints should be adressed to the advertiser.

*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:
peter Lewins, 221 Westcombe hill, se 3 7Dp

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Westcombe Society AGM

The Westcombe Society's AGM had that extra bit of fizz this year, as members were met with a glass of Prosecco to celebrate our Fortieth year!

Chairman of the Westcombe Society Marilyn Little welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in her report thanked the Executive Committee, and the Events and Environment Committees, for all the work they had done during the year.

Marilyn Little also expressed her deep appreciation for the volunteers, too many to name, who had helped out in numerous ways during the past year. She appealed for new volunteers to come forward – particularly from younger generations.

She thanked Gordon Baker, our ex-chairman, who was standing down from the committee, for all he had done for the society, and Dick Allard, who was standing down as chairman of the Environment Committee after many years service; and she also thanked Lawrence Smith, who had done so much to make the work of the environment committee so effective, and who was also standing down.

Joanne Lucas outlined the many events that the Events Committee had organised during the year, and again said that none of them would have been possible without the help of the volunteers.

Outgoing chair of the Environment Committee Dick Allard outlined some of the significant (and ongoing) issues that the community were confronted with during the year, including proposals for new river crossings, the restoration of the park and heath following the Olympics, and the difficulties facing railusers in the coming years. He was pleased that the WS had played an important role in setting up GLUG (the Greenwich Line Users Group).

Jean-Jacques Aune outlined proposals for charity support in the coming year (*see below, the Appeal for Sponsors*).

As members began to eye the wine and cheese laid out at the back, Neville Grant, the current editor of the *WN*, gave brief thanks to all who had helped to produce and distribute the *Westcombe News* during the year. He pointed out that working on the *WN* was enormously rewarding, and fun, and was ideal for two groups: retirees who wanted to visit pastures and activities new; and school and University leavers seeking to beef up their CVs with knowledge, experience and skills; and offered to train anyone interested in becoming more involved in producing the *WN*.

Members were asked to complete a questionnaire on the layout, content and design of the *WN*: results next month!

APPEAL FOR SPONSORS

Local traders are always most generous in supporting our main fund raiser, the Westcombe Society's Dickensian Christmas Bazaar, by donating items for the raffle, lucky hamper and silent auction. At our AGM it was unanimously decided to have the South London Special League as our charity of the year.

Our donation aims to fund a half term specialist sports camp for local young disabled players in seated volleyball, new age kurling, table cricket and bocchia. In addition we hope to be able to purchase new sails for the Ahoy Sailing Centre and make a donation to Willow Wildlife Rescue in Chislehurst.

If the public's generosity at our events allows, we will continue to support previous charities of the year, such as Charlton RDA and Clowns in the Sky.

We are therefore looking for sponsorship from local businesses to cover some Bazaar costs such as, advertising, hire of venue, Punch and Judy show and other entertainers.

Also if you have a service or product which could feature in our silent auction, again we would be very pleased to hear from you. Acknowledgement of sponsorship will feature prominently in the *Westcombe News* and in all publicity material.

If you are able to offer to help or would like more details, please contact Marilyn Little on 0208 853 1312 or marilyn.little@btinternet.com. *J-J Aune*

Letters to the editor

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

From: Patricia Slade-Baker Humber Rd

In spite of having three different applications turned down by a variety of councillors in Greenwich and by the appeal process in Bristol, and the developers assuring us that they would repair and upgrade the garages if they were turned down by the appeal in Bristol, we are still facing the same situation in Foyle Road: an unwanted development by would-be developers who continue to refuse to take no for an answer.

We do not need more housing, there is plenty being provided locally with Greenwich hospital site under development, another development at Blackwall Lane and developments in Deptford. We need more garages but of course, there is not enough money in renting garages which may explain why the developer wants to turn them into housing.

The actions of the developer is affecting the life and peace of mind of local people, some of whom appear to have been unjustly threatened with legal action.

It is time the law got tough and protected the community we all live in. We live in a conservation area, and should not have to worry about losing a piece of land of ecological importance, or seeing trees destroyed.

From: Dr Angela Burr (Chair, Greenwich Older Voices)

Anna Townend, a local resident now in her late seventies, has made a major contribution to environmental issues, both locally and nationally, over the last forty years. Anna rented from Greenwich Council, and managed, as a volunteer, the Queen's Orchard, formerly known as the Dwarf Orchard, for thirty years until 2008. When Anna took it on she turned it into a wildlife and ecological garden. She opened it once a month, mainly to local primary school

children, until travel insurance problems made it difficult for them to visit it.

I was a regular visitor to the Dwarf Orchard for several years until it was returned to the Council in 2008. The trees, the wood violets and bluebells I found magical, as did the many other people who visited it.

I am glad to see from your recent article that the Royal Parks have finally opened it again to the public. What surprises me is that in your feature Anna's major role in it is hardly mentioned - and not mentioned at all in *Greenwich Time* or in the feature in *Greenwich Visitor*.

Isn't it time that Anna Townend's forty-year contribution to local civic societies and local and national environmental issues, particularly now that she is in poor health, was recognized locally and rewarded? Perhaps local notables and the Council might like to nominate her for a gong rather than treat her in an ageist way and consign her to oblivion.

Ed: Many thanks Angela for helping to set the record straight.

From: Danielle Stevens Charlton Rd

I just would like to thank Greenwich Council for finally improving the area at the Blackheath Standard. The pavements are much easier to walk on and the crossing at the top of Westcombe hill is now a Godsend! Even more thanks for the new changes on the one way system around Batley Park. Money well spent!

From: Alex McWhirter

As a regular reader and fan of the *WN*, I was interested to read in the May issue about the relaunch of RBG's car club in conjunction with Zipcar.

As you may know, Zipcar is no longer independent. It was taken over by

Summertime!

The Westcombe Society's 40th Birthday Celebration Tea Party and Summer Picnic is from 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm on Saturday 15th June 2013

Please come and join us for this special community event in the gardens of Mycenae House.

We are combining this year with St George's Summer Fair, so there will be stalls from St George's, Christchurch and Holy Trinity, in addition to the traditional ones, Riding for the Disabled, Macmillan, Boys Brigade, Friends of Mycenae Gardens, Clowns in the Sky etc.

There will be a BBQ, Cake Stall, Cream Teas, Pimms Stall, live music, games and races for children, Punch and Judy (performances at 2.30pm and 4.00pm) and face-painting. The Westcombe Society stall will be selling books and local cards. And there will of course be a raffle. In fact, something for everyone.

If you prefer, however, you can find a quiet corner of the gardens and relax and enjoy a sunny summer's afternoon – good weather has been ordered!

Bring your own picnic or dine out from the BBQ, finished off with a delicious Cream Tea and a cup of tea – or something stronger. Mycenae House bar will be open and the ever popular Pimms Stall will be on hand. All of these activities will take place in the Gardens.

On the same day, inside in the main hall of Mycenae House (looking out on to the gardens) we are having a Senior Citizens Tea Party to celebrate the Westcombe Society's 40th Birthday.

This very popular event is by invitation only so if you are not on our Tea Guest List already, please contact Caroline on 020 8853 0948 for an invitation. Our guests will enjoy homemade cakes and sandwiches with their tea and there will as usual be a table quiz and raffle.

There will also be a 40th Birthday birthday cake to enjoy. Come dressed in red for our Ruby Anniversary!

We look forward to seeing you on the 15th June.

Avis earlier this year in a deal worth USD500 million.

The car club concept worldwide is popular. The problem is that none of these firms have a profitable business model.

Zipcar itself, which is a US firm, bought out three other similar car clubs before being taken over itself by Avis.

I wonder how this might affect the operation of this car club in the future ?

Ed: Does anyone know the answer?

STOP PRESS

The Blackheath Royal Standard Village Association' has just been started to raise the profile of our local area by advertising its important history. Many famous people have lived here and it was an important staging post between London and Kent. They also wish to generally improve its appearance. If you are interested in getting involved or have any information that may be useful to them please email brsvassn@gmail.com

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Cleaning up the Standard



The Royal Standard Business and Traders' Association (RSBTA) ran a clean-up campaign behind the shops in Stratheden Parade on a Saturday in April, in an area blighted by fly-tipping.

The clean-up event went really well with over 17 people helping out, including St John's Church parishioners, Garden Angels, residents of Stratheden Parade, RSBTA members, M&S Staff, Cllr Geoff Brighty, Cllr Alex Grant, John Sharp from Greenwich Council, and "two guys who were working on another project nearby and just helped on the off chance."

Some of the businesses that are not members of RSBTA also came out to clear up their yards at the back.

It was all hands on deck: Sunya provided the volunteers with drinks throughout the day, while Marnells & Standard DIY provided some equipment. Greenwich Council sent along a lorry to pick up all the fly-tipped items. The Royal Standard Pub provided the volunteers with a very welcome small buffet.

Tony Hale of the RSBTA said: "All-in-all it was it was a huge success. It was a great positive day, beautiful weather and a great set of people willing to take time out of their busy schedules to help out."



PHOTO: Tony Hale

The RSBTA Team at work!

"We know this area is a problem area and we want everyone to keep their eye out for the fly-tipping culprits, call 999 if they see them doing it, make sure they take down the vehicle numbers and any descriptions deemed necessary."

Visit the Bridge!

The Mayor of Greenwich officially opened "The Bridge" on 28 April, and those who attended much enjoyed the free entertainment, the stalls, and the children's Disco.

The Bridge is a new community centre, tucked away in the corner of a hidden, garden like park in East Greenwich. Run by volunteers, it is situated in Greenwich Pleasaunce, (just off Chevening Road and Halstow Road). There is a drop-in play centre for the under 5s during the week, as well as after-school clubs, classes for children and adults – and it is also an ideal venue for children's parties.

Come and see what the Bridge has to offer. There is limited free parking in local roads, and it is only a short walk from Westcombe Park railway station. The 129, 177, 386, 422 and 180 buses stop right outside at Chevening Road.

The Bridge can now be rented out to local businesses, hired out for birthday parties as well as increased play and stay sessions across mornings and afternoons for the under 5's.

All this has been achieved through volunteer's time and effort. The Bridge has over 400 friends, a team of over 30 volunteers and a great network building up to make a real difference in the community.

For further information look at their brand new website:
<http://www.thebridgegreenwich.co.uk>

Or contact the directors by Email:
thebridges10@gmail.com

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Wildlife Open Day SUE YATES



Visitors to Greenwich Park in late April were welcomed by the Friends of Greenwich Park and the Royal Parks to a very special Wildlife Open Day.

- This annual event offered
- * Guided walks through the nature trail to the Deer Hide
 - * Nature related craft activities (take home what you make)
 - * Planting of wild flower and vegetable seeds to take home
 - * Guided tree walks

The star attraction was a pair of Barn Owls, hand-reared by a husband and wife team from Sussex Owls, an outfit based in Alfriston, a very beautiful part of East Sussex.

The two beautiful owls, named Sundance and Cassidy, were rescued as chicks from a disreputable breeder in Hampshire. Licences to use the birds com-

mercially were obtained after the team had been vetted by DEFRA.

An unusual feature of Sussex Owls is a service they offer weddings: one of the owls has been trained to deliver the rings during the ceremony. Much more reliable than the best man, they say!

The team from Sussex owls explained the difficulties that barn owls are currently facing and gave visitors a wonderful opportunity to see these beautiful creatures close up. A great day out!

Sussex Owls 11 North Street, Alfriston East Sussex BN26 5UG
www.sussexowls.co.uk info@sussexowls.co.uk
Tel. 01323 871232 Mob: 07595678433
ED: Recent surveys indicate that there are between 3 - 4,000 pairs of barn owls in the UK, down from an estimated 12,000 in 1932. The decrease is due to many factors, including a decrease in the field vole population. The RSPB report a recent slight increase.

Emma Petrillo

We are very sad to report the untimely passing of Emma Petrillo, wife of Alex Petrillo of Gambardella's Cafe. The funeral took place on 16th May. She leaves two sons and a daughter, Michael, Jack and Louisa. We extend our deepest sympathy to the family.

Greenwich Festivals

The Royal Greenwich Festivals run until 22nd August. Over 200,000 people attended last year's events which included imaginative street performance, lots of music and invigorating dance performances.

The Children's Theatre Festival took place earlier this year, in late April, and involved an exciting two weeks of theatre, puppetry, and storytelling and interactive fun from leading UK children's theatre companies.

A festival of dance and movement in places and spaces across Royal Greenwich runs until 27th June. Greenwich Dance brings some of the UK's leading dance artists to our doorstep – in streets, parks, libraries, museums and more – many free.

Then from 21st - 29th June, we can enjoy the Greenwich+Docklands International Festival (GDIF). This is London's leading annual festival of free outdoor performing arts (theatre, dance, and street arts), and once again offers a wide range of free events.

Mycenae House community centre

".... one of London's best kept secrets"

Fri 14 June **Karl Charity & Paul Pace** - Jazz Nights 8pm
Sun 23 June **Brunch & Jazz** - Summer Jazz with Food 12.30pm
Fri 28 June **Bijou Choir & Orchestra** - Choral Music 7.30pm

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Welcome to Nihat! MARILYN LITTLE

We are pleased to welcome Nihat the new proprietor of Apples n Oranges. Nihat is from Turkey but has lived in the UK for over 10 years. The shop has been given a makeover, and is now self-service although the girls are there for help if needed.

All the produce is laid out very attractively, and features fruit and vegetables from around Europe and beyond, including a number of English versions!

Nihat is at the wholesale Market (where he was working when he heard the shop was available) every morning at 3.30am, so we are assured of the very best and freshest produce. He is also selling Olive Oil, delicacies from the Mediterranean including olives as well as spices, shelled nuts and pre-packed salads. He also sells eggs and some organic produce. A very welcome addition to Old Dover Road – we wish him well.



PHOTO: Marilyn Little

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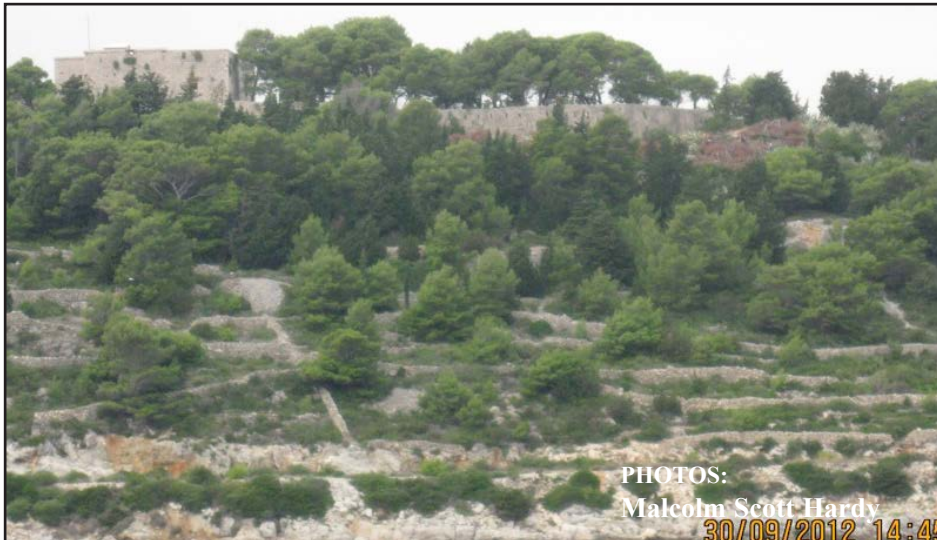
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FEATURES

Local author writes up ‘The Croatian Connection’



Dalmatia in Croatia – land of a hundred islands – has a long and fascinating history, squeezed as it was historically between the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the powerful Venetian Republic, to say nothing of run-ins at various times with the Italians, the Serbs – and Napoleon's France.

Croatia and Great Britain share some pages of this history. Most people are aware of this country's involvement with the then Yugoslavia during World war II; but local Greenwich resident and author Malcolm Hardy, ably assisted by his Croatian wife Vesna, has researched an earlier period, when Britain and France were jockeying for position along the strategically important Dalmatian Coast, and has published two books [see below].

Central to the story is the island of Vis or Lissa (the ancient Greek Issa): occupied by Croats in the 7th Century, it was taken over by the Venetians in 1420. In the French Revolutionary Wars it was acquired by Austria, which was soon obliged to cede it to France.

The French never effectively occupied it, leaving it open for ships of the Royal Navy to use it as a convenient base. They defeated an attempt by the French-Venetian navy to capture it from them in the 1811 battle of Vis.



In 1812 the island was occupied and fortified by the British army to give added protection to the British squadron based there. In 1815 it was returned to Austria; who held it until the First World War.

Vis was also occupied by the Italians in the Second World War. However, after the capitulation of Italy, it served as a safe haven for Tito's partisans, under the protection of the RAF and Royal Navy.

After the war it continued as a military base of Yugoslavia until demilitarised and opened up to foreign tourism in 1989.

Malcolm Hardy has researched the British presence in the Adriatic in the early years of the 19th century, particularly aspects of this that have not been thoroughly researched and written up.

Now work has begun on the restoration of the main British fortification on Vis by a Swedish businessman, a reserve naval officer and enthusiast. Fort George (Juraj) is being reconstructed to include a museum with displays largely based on Malcolm's research.



The fort has a splendid position on a headland with views of the Dalmatian coast. It should become an important tourist attraction on this very beautiful, relatively underdeveloped and unspoilt outer island, already enjoyed for its fine harbours, beaches, crystal clear blue sea and its wine and seafood.

Malcolm told the *WN*: “It is remarkably gratifying and fulfilling to have provided the inspiration for the reconstruction of the fort, and the material for the forthcoming museum.”

The British and Vis: War in the Adriatic 1805-15 by Malcolm Scott Hardy published by Archaeopress Oxford 2009
The British Navy, Rijeka and A. L. Adamic: War and Trade in the Adriatic 1800-25 by Malcolm Scott Hardy published by Archaeopress Oxford 2005

Education Group is Twenty Years Old

The PER group, which has been based at 3 Ingleside Grove, Westcombe Park since 1995, is now twenty years old. PER stands for Philosophy for Education Renewal, the ‘philosophy’ being of the commonsense, not the flummoxing, kind.

The Group was first mooted in June 1993 at a conference where the philosophers Brenda Almond and Antony Flew were the keynote speakers. Its first meeting was in November the same year.

One of the convenors of the Group was local resident Chris Ormell, who became – and has remained – its Hon. Secretary. The main aim of the Group has been to try to combat “managerialism” in education. This is the notion that crammable and modular exam results are the be-all and end-all of education.

The Group recognises that there is no golden age to which to return, but the best schools in the past did manage quite often to treat education as a process of almost mystical mental maturity, which had a unique importance in everyone's life.

This sense of the personal centrality of education has been all-but lost in today's over-organised, competitive, and essentially soulless, system. Schools are being treated like factories for turning out exam results. Crammable and modular exams do not necessarily show that a girl or boy has acquired judgement, seen the big picture, or gained classic insights.

In 1995 the Group launched its quarterly journal *Prospero*, which goes to twenty-two different countries. It is now printed in Blackheath by the Trojan Press who also print the *Westcombe News*. Among the contributors have been Richard Whitfield, Paul Hirst, Mary Midgley, Robin Barrow, Patricia White, Richard Pring in the UK, as well as leading educationalists in the USA, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Norway, Egypt and Brazil.

CHRIS ORMELL

Local full members of the group include Sheila Richards, Michael Smart, Robert Bunzl, Prof. Maurice Craft and Alma Craft. Robert Gomme, Michael Smart, Peter Greaves, Malcolm Levitt, Julian Crispin and Martin Revis have written in *Prospero*. Local figures such as Nicholas Clack, David Suttle, Fran Russell, Diana Schonberg and John Bendall have addressed the group. More than fifty local people have attended meetings of the group over the years.

Recently the Group assembled a list of eighty “renewal theses” which have been promoted at its meetings during the past twenty years. On March 9th, the Group voted on which of these “renewal theses” it considered to be the most important.

The top three came out as:
(1) Phase out managerialism across the board. Regard education as a process of preparation for life not for stereotypical examinations, placing much more emphasis on understanding rather than on the students' rote knowledge of facts.
(2) Re-emphasise the role of the arts.
(3) Encourage the imagination.

Partly as a result of the terrible failings of the NHS in Mid Staffordshire, managerialism is being increasingly criticised as an inadequate approach to public services across the board. The PER Group is in the forefront of the campaign to rid education of this misguided idea.

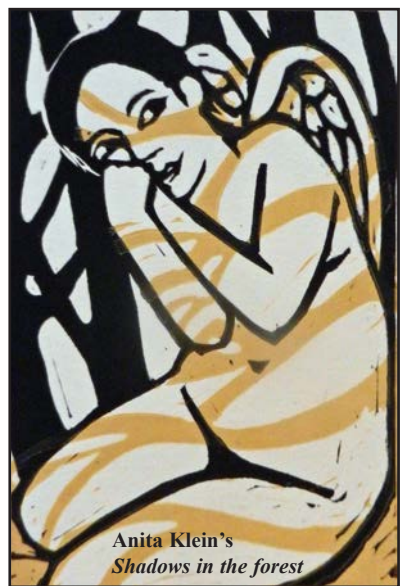
Schools should be led by those who can convey most effectively to students the priceless personal emancipation which education can bring – not by those who simply manipulate the teaching to get what look like the best overall paper “results”.
A complimentary copy of Prospero can be obtained from Chris Ormell on 8858 3364 or email chrisormell@aol.com. Our Anniversary Conference is at Conway Hall on Sat. 30th Nov. This free event is open to the public, please contact the writer.

Creekside Ahoy!

Westcombe Society member and local artist Sarah Durham is helping to organise a charity Postcard exhibition at Arthub Gallery in aid of the Ahoy Sailing Centre in Deptford. An open call to artists has attracted work from artists the UK as well as Austria, the Netherlands and Canada.

Pieces kindly donated by well known artists such as Anita Klein, Humphrey Ocean RA, Ray Richardson, Marli Morris RA and Miranda Argyle will be shown anonymously alongside local and international professional and amateur artists as well as students from Blackheath High School. All work is on sale by silent auction, so you can acquire an original art work and help raise funds for a very worthy local cause.

Sarah, who has a studio at Arthub says ‘We are pleased to be supporting our near neighbours the Ahoy in their important work with young people by hosting a show to showcase the diverse talents of the artistic community.’



Creekside Ahoy is at Arthub Gallery, Creekside, Deptford Fri 6th - Sun 9th June. 12 - 5.00 pm AHoy: ‘Changing people's lives through sailing and rowing’ More details at www.ahoy.org.uk

Art for our sake

With talk of the erection of a new statue of Margaret Thatcher in Parliament Square, there is renewed interest in public sculpture. Much of the response has been negative – the reasons being partly political, and partly aesthetic.

Many critics claim that, with notable exceptions, current public sculpture is of disappointing quality.

Such issues are discussed at forthcoming meetings in Blackheath and Greenwich: on 27th June, the Blackheath Decorative and Fine Arts Society hosts a lecture at St Mary's Church, Blackheath by Eric Shanes on “A

new Golden Age: Sculpture since 1945.”

Also in June the Greenwich Decorative & Fine Arts Society is hosting a lecture by Mary Yule entitled “A view from the Plinth: public sculpture today”. As usual the event takes place at King William Court, the University of Greenwich, and is at 8.00 pm on Monday 10th June.

This lecture gives a light-hearted yet critical review of the state of contemporary-public sculpture in Britain. It looks at what makes a successful public sculpture commission – and whether the public are getting the public sculpture it deserves.

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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: 27th June Eric Shanes on "A New Golden Age: Sculpture since 1945" 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 10th June 7.15 for 8.00 pm Mary Yule: "A view from the Plinth: A review of public sculpture today" Information: 020 8852 7873. Non-members £8.00
GREENWICH OPEN STUDIOS 15/16th and 22nd/23rd June. Greenwich Open Studios artists welcome visitors into their studios and homes over the weekends
BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY Blackheath Halls Exhibition 23 Lee Road Wednesday 5th – Friday 28th June Open Mon-Fri 10.00 am - 5.00 pm, and 1 hour before evening performances
THE GREENWICH GALLERY Linear House, Peyton Place, SE10 8RS
1st - 16th June 9.00 - 17.30 weekdays, 12.00 - 16.00 weekends; "So Now? Uncertain Futures, Urban and Near Urban, Photographed by Peter Luck" Dramatic photographs documenting the landscape of tidal Thames

CHILDREN

WOODLANDS FARM 331 Shooters Hill. Tel. 0208 319 8900 Every Thursday Toddler Club 10am - 12pm £2 per adult, children free
June 2nd BIG LUNCH June 9th Open Day
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 Road every Wednesday from 9:30 - 11:30am. Contact: · www.SELondonDads.org.uk or email: info@selondondads.org.uk

DAVY'S 161 Greenwich High Road, SE10 8JA
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Davy's Tastings in Greenwich.
Summer tasting and lunch – 10.30 am- 1.30pm, **Saturday 8th June** Tickets £47.95
Cheese and Wine – 7.00pm **Wednesday 12th June**, Tickets £25



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COMMUNITY

Westcombe Society
Dates for your diary:
Mycenae House &/or Garden
June 15th Summer Picnic 1.00 - 5.00 pm
and Senior Citizens Tea Party 2.00 - 4.00pm
Come to our 40th Birthday Party!
Sept 7th. Members' Evening, Main Hall,
Sep 27th Macmillan Coffee Morning
Sept 28th Nearly New Sale, Main Hall,
Oct 26th Quiz Night, Main Hall

BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
The next meeting is on **Tuesday 4th June** at the Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, Blackheath Village (opposite the station) when we welcome Vijay Mehta, Chair of UN Renewal, to talk about "The Economics of Killing" (How the West fuels poverty and war in the developing world) It will be accompanied by a short film "Changing the World". As usual we start with refreshments at 7.00 pm, and the meeting itself starts at 7.30.
All welcome. Information: Neville Grant 8858 8489
CANCER RESEARCH LUNCH The next fund-raising luncheon is on **Thursday 6th June** at the Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath from 12 noon to 2:30pm. The cost is £8.50. The Speaker will be HH Judge Christopher Kinch QC and the subject "A view from the bench" Lunches can be booked by phoning Wendy on 020 8265 0335 by Monday 3rd June.
WATER AID CONCERT at St Thomas Church, Woodland Terrace, Charlton Fri 7th June at 7.30 BBC singer Tommy Swaffield & his band perform folk, country & gospel music. £4.00 on the door
THE GREENWICH SOCIETY
9th June 11.00 am Piano Recital by Alison Wood at Crooms Hill for the Greenwich Society funds. Space is limited, so please ring 8858 1185
June 25th 6.00 pm Cricket Match vs The Blackheath Society Rangers Field
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BOOK SALE
Saturday 15th June: 9.00am - 5.00 pm Quality books at knock-down prices Church of the Ascension, Dartmouth Row, London SE10 8BF
FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK
13th June AGM 7.30 for 8 Theatre, Blackheath High School, 27 Vanburgh Park, SE3 7AG
16th June MIDSUMMER JAZZ CONCERT BYO picnic to Observatory Garden, Greenwich Park, at 1.00 pm on Sunday 16th June, for this family event, organised by the Friends. Gates open from noon. Tickets: £5 for adults (£6 on the gate). Youngsters under 16 free. Phone 020 8853 2150 or email cnbevan@hotmail.com.
THE CHARLTON SOCIETY
15th June Speaker Carol Kenna, Charlton Parks Reminiscence Project Charlton House 2.30 pm £1
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
18th June 7.30 pm - Terry Powley. On Eltham Park South. Age Exchange Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3 7.30 (at the back of Age Exchange Shop. There is no on-site parking – please do not park there, but use the station car park. Meetings start at 7.30 and non members £1.00
GLOBAL FUSION MUSIC & ARTS
June 20th 7pm In Refugee week. 'Celebration of Diversity' International Arts Festival: music from Congo, Kenya & Guinea Charlton House, Charlton Road SE7 8RE £7.00 on the door
SECOND CHANCE CHOIR
Thursday 27th June at 8.00 pm. Concert at the Sunfields Methodist Church, 95, Old Dover Road, Blackheath. The concert lasts about an hour, and there will be light refreshments available afterwards. No entrance charge, and everyone is welcome.
WOODLANDS FARM TRUST
Sunday 30th June 2013, 11.00 am - 5.00pm. The Woodlands Farm Trust Summer Show!
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 Third Friday of every month at 1.45 pm at Mycenae House

LOCAL COUNCILLORS

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.

Labour: Cllr. Alex Grant
Tel. 8855 7292 E-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.

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THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755
Sat 1st June 2.30 pm **DIDO QUEEN OF CARTHAGE** 7.30 pm **LEAR**
Sun 2nd June 7.00 pm George Orwell's 1984
Mon 3rd 8.00 pm **LINE UP**
Wed 5th - Thurs 6th **ELEPHANTS GRAVEYARD**
Sat 8th - Sun 9th June **SLAPDASH GALAXY**
Fri 7th - Sat 8th. **THAT IS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW** Celebrating Bletchley Park & Alan Turing
Mon 10th - Wed 12th 7.30 pm Wed Mat. 2.30 pm
WHODUNNIT: You'll never guess the ending!
Fri 14th - Mon 17th June 7.30 pm **THE DINNER PARTY** Broken marriages, – broken plates?
Wed 19th - Sat 22nd June 7.30 pm Sat matinee 2.30 pm **STEPPING OUT** Tap-dancing comedy
THE PRIORY PLAYERS
Thursday - Saturday 6th, 7th & 8th June 7.45 pm
Alan Ayckbourn's A WOMAN IN MIND will be performed by the Priory Players at the Progress Hall, Admiral Seymour Road, Eltham Box office : 07502 450983. Website www.theprioryplayers.com/ Tickets: £7.00 & £6.00 concessions

BLACKHEATH CHOIR

ROSSINI: Petite Messe Solonelle
FAURE: Cantique de Jean Racine

Sunday 23rd June at 7.30 pm

Blackheath Halls: Great Hall

Go to www.blackheathchoir.org.uk for start times or to book ring 0208 8852 9262

Tickets: £18 | £13

MUSIC

BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel 020 8463 0100
Wed 26th June - Sat 29th June 7.30 pm **OFFENBACH'S ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD**
Thu 13th June 7.30 pm Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra play Shostakovich Sympony No.10 & other works £12.00 | £8.00 conecs

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Tuesdays 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th June 1.05 pm **ORNC Chapel.**
Concert series
St Alfege Concert series:
Tues 4th June 1.05 pm
Thurs 6th June 1.10 pm
Thurs 20th June 1.10 pm
Thurs 27th June 1.05 pm

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FEATURES

Community cinema

bringing the big screen to the heart of Westcombe Park

DAVID
HALL



PHOTO:
David Hall

Mycenae Community Cinema is one of Westcombe Park's best-kept secrets, serving admission-free screenings at Mycenae House.

Launched by film buffs Terry Grant and Barbara Gill, the licensed community cinema is open to all. They offer a range of films to the heart of Westcombe Park on Tuesday nights, from blockbusters like Oscar-winning *Argo* and the latest Bond, *Skyfall*, to quirky foreign films (like *The Artist*, above), musicals and classics. Saturday shows for children have included *Ice Age 4* as well as older animation hits.

Admission is free although adults are invited to buy a raffle ticket, so one fan even gets a prize. "We're very much a not-for-profit outfit," points out Terry, a retired police officer. "We just want to share our love of film." Kids pay nothing.

Terry was inspired to start the cinema at a Mycenae House jazz night when he

realised the hall wall was exactly the right shape for most modern films. Reflective paint, known as "film goo," was applied to transform the wall into a screen that is larger than some commercial cinemas.

On Tuesday evenings Mycenae House bar's 'club' prices let fans enjoy the films with an inexpensive glass or two.

After a successful trial this spring screenings will be every Tuesday evening from 28 May except 18 June. Programme listings are displayed at Mycenae House. The terms of the licence preclude publicity outside the Community Centre but allow publicity by way of the website.

Fans who wish to be kept up-to-date on screenings can opt to join the weekly email list by emailing tg@pvr.co.uk. Forthcoming attractions are on the cinema's website pvr.co.uk/cinema as well as mycenaehouse.co.uk.

Greenwich Open Studios

Following their recent successful inaugural exhibition at the newly opened 'Gallery Space' at West Greenwich Library, the Greenwich Open Studios artists once again look forward to welcoming visitors into their studios and homes over the weekends of 15/16th and 22nd/23rd June.

Artists in the Westcombe Park area are Colin Boothman (Mycenae House), Jane Jones (Charlton Road), Maggie Learmonth (Hardy Road), Felicity Moss (Mycenae House) and Xavier White (Vanbrugh Park), all of whom will be showing new work

For full details and map please visit: www.greenwichopenstudios.co.uk
Leaflets are available in local libraries and other venues.

RIGHT: A collage of some of the work by local artists.

Maggie Learmonth



Avoid those loan sharks!

ALAN STEVENS

If you're looking for an alternative to high street banks and payday lenders, then look no further than your local credit union, argues Delacourt Road resident Matt Hartley

To say we live in difficult economic times is in danger of becoming a cliché. Whether you are a saver, or someone needing to borrow funds, personal finances are under great pressure.

Savers looking for a place for their hard-earned cash face record low interest rates on savings accounts from the high street banks and building societies.



At the same time, residents who are struggling to make ends meet are being bombarded with marketing from payday loan companies and other high-interest lenders whose products can make their situation much worse.

There is an alternative. Greenwich & Bexley Credit Union is a not-for-profit community organisation offering an easy and affordable way for local people to save and borrow. We have been operating since 1998 and have loaned nearly £20million to local people, and are fully authorised and regulated by the new Prudential Regulation and Financial Conduct Authorities.

As a member of the credit union, all we ask is that you save £2.50 a week or £10 a month in your account.

This year's dividend on adult savings was 1%, with 4% for junior savers - rates competitive with most of the current crop of savings account available on the high street, and in many cases far higher. All your savings are fully protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

After saving for three months, you can apply for an affordable loan at a fixed rate of 1% interest per month (12.68% APR). A loan of £1,000 repaid over one year will cost just £66 in interest, with no other hidden charges or fees.

Most importantly, we are not out to make a profit from anyone's financial situation. Our only purpose is to provide accessible financial services for the benefit of our members - helping to make a real and genuine difference to the community.

To find out more or to join the credit union, visit our new website www.gbcreditunion.com or call us on 020 8855 4344.

Matt Hartley is a Director of Greenwich & Bexley Credit Union

Blackheath Art Society

Ann
Dingsdale



ABOVE: *Sea Shore* by Christiana Angelini.

BELOW: *Killer Tomatoes* by Susie Johns

Blackheath Art Society returns once again to Blackheath Halls Bar with an exciting and inspiring exhibition of new paintings and drawings.

This talented group of committed local artists will intrigue with images covering an impressive range of subjects and styles. This lively Art Society held its first show in Tranquil Passage sixty-five years ago, and the annual exhibitions became a must-see event in the cultural life of 1950's Blackheath.

Now, with regular spring Open Studios and exhibitions throughout Greenwich, the current Society is still the one to watch!

Blackheath Halls Exhibition
Wednesday 5th – Friday 28th June
Open Mon-Fri 10-5, and 1 hour before evening performances
Blackheath Halls, 23 Lee Road, London SE3 9R. Contacts:
Ann Dingsdale 020 8853 2269
ann.dingsdale@talktalk.net
www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/blackheath-halls



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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

Using less plastic

Since 2011 Greenwich and Blackheath Eco-group has been running interactive awareness raising workshops in some local schools to educate children about the damaging impact of our excessive use of plastic bags and bottles, particularly on the marine environment.

This 'Live With Less Plastic' Project is being jointly run with Transition Westcombe following endorsement by the National Maritime Museum.

Irena Hill has run several workshops in local primary schools for years 5 and 6, linking them with what they have already studied regarding climate change, in order to build stronger links between climate change-related issues. Two secondary schools have also participated, involving different subjects such as Geography, Citizenship, Politics and Art.

IRENA HILL

The Eco-group fundraises in order to provide Fairtrade cotton bags to participatillases, and Irena gives them to the children at the time of the presentation/discussion to be decorated with their own logos, messages, slogans and pictures about resource management or biodiversity protection etc. The bag becomes a creative advertisement for eco-friendly behaviour as children take their bags home to share the message with their families and communities.

Alongside the workshop the group also runs a "sponsor a bag for a child" campaign which creates links between schools and the wider community with money for the Fairtrade cotton shopping bags being raised by community groups. One participating teacher said "The fact that a local initiative has supplied us with lots of resources and curriculum ideas launches our community cohesion programme with a bang."

Our group is looking for more schools to take part in the project, and more groups to sponsor bags for the schools.

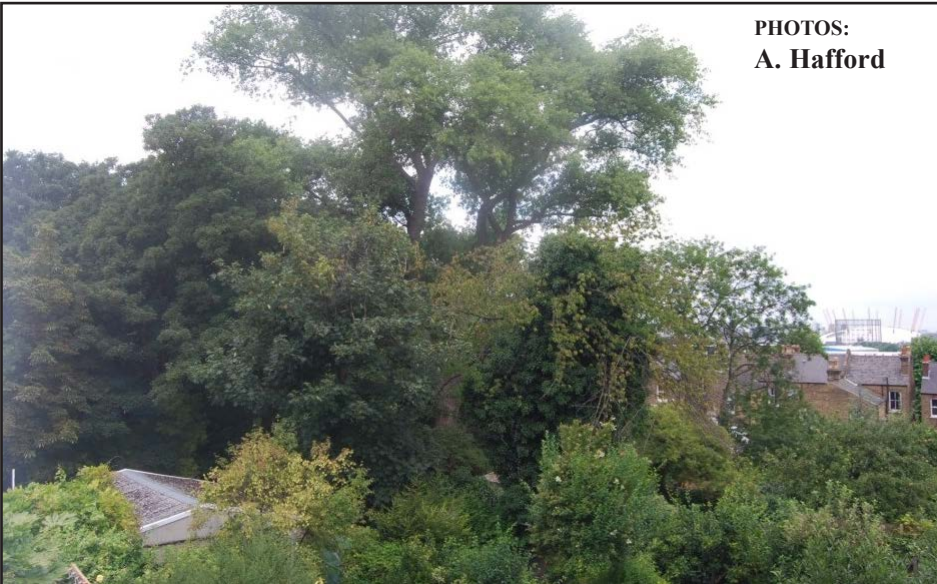
For more information, or for your school or community group to participate, please contact info@greenheath.org.uk

Foyle Road Garages: Bruce and the spider

GORDON BAKER reports

"If at first you don't succeed . . ."

Developers have had their plans to develop this green site turned down twice. Third time lucky? Worried neighbours wait to see what the developers have up their sleeves this time. . . .



PHOTOS:
A. Hafford

Neighbours fear that recent moves presage yet another attempt by developers to demolish the lock-up garages on wooded land between Foyle and Humber Roads and Vanbrugh Hill, and then replace them with houses.

Some of the garages have been partly demolished and a hawthorn tree removed. A tall fence has been erected, without prior consultation, blocking views and traditional access to the site by houses in Humber Road.

The developers' original planning application for the site, which was submitted as long ago as June 2011, was withdrawn following objections from numerous local residents as well as the Westcombe Society and other local amenity groups.

A revised application was lodged in February 2012. Once again it provoked overwhelming local opposition and Greenwich Council's Planning Board refused it in May 2012. The developers then appealed to the Government Planning Inspector who dismissed the appeal in January 2013.

The Inspector found that the proposed development would "radically change the character and appearance of the site".

He had no doubt that one of the planned houses "would have an unacceptably overbearing and oppressive proximity" to houses at 14 and 16 Humber Road.

He also accepted the contention of the Council and local residents that the site's "narrow and slightly tortuous" sole access lane, between 34 and 36 Foyle Road, was unsuitable for frequent use by

The narrow and slightly tortuous sole access lane defeated this lorry: one councillor noted that any rubbish collectors would have to walk two kilometres ...



vehicles larger than a medium-sized private car, and could be an unacceptable risk to traffic and pedestrian safety.

On balance, the Inspector took the view that the proposals need not lead to an unacceptable loss of protected trees. But planning conditions would have to imposed to ensure that a black poplar tree was retained, other trees would have to be managed to give them a better chance of long-term survival, and new trees planted in the proposed new garden areas.

He did not comment on the claim by some opponents of the scheme that the site was an integral part of an important and well-used bird corridor and a habitat for

bats and stag beetles. But he noted that local residents valued the site as a predominantly "green" open area with informal public access that had been used for communal activities and children's play.

The Inspector also concluded that it would be premature to allow demolition of the existing garages, which had been well-used in the past but more recently allowed to fall into a "generally neglected and dilapidated condition". He suggested that they might be refurbished and re-let if the demand proved to be economically viable.

Worried neighbours wait to see what the developers have up their sleeves this time. . .



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John Payne

johnpayne.com

The future of Eliot Pits Sarah Winterbottom

Proposals for an innocent sounding children's play area do not usually cause controversy, but Lewisham Council's plans for an unsupervised open play area in Eliot Pits is creating a storm of protest from local residents.

Plans to build the play area on what is, according to the Pit Stop campaign, the "last natural woodland fringe on the Heath, a paradise for wildlife and rare species and a protected UNESCO site," are supported by the local ward councillors.

Aside from the concerns that have been raised about building on the Heath and the way in which Lewisham Borough Council is seemingly pushing a building project forward in a semi-wild area, there are real worries surrounding security. The area currently has a significant crime rate: police records show 17 crimes were reported in neighbouring roads in January 2013 alone, worryingly including a number of cases of arson, anti-social behaviour and violent crime. Fences and lighting for the play area are absent from the plans – points which have been raised in letters to the Mayor of Lewisham, Steve Bullock, by worried local residents.

The original proposal for a play space on the Heath was, according to Cllr Chris Maines, put forward by All Saints School in 2012. It was unanimously supported by the Blackheath ward assembly who voted in

January to use their funding to support the development of a playground. In total some £130,000 has been secured from a number of sources including the assembly, the marathon trust, the Mayor's 'pocket park' scheme and section 106 funding.

The Blackheath Society and the Blackheath Joint Working Party, for their part, have focussed on ensuring that evaluating such a sensitive project follows all the relevant procedures, so that a fully informed decision can be openly made.

Lewisham Council has commissioned an ecological survey, to be followed by a consultation period when the views of local people will be sought, after which a firm proposal may (or may not) be put forward. The Council would then need to obtain planning permission and ministerial consent to build on an area of Metropolitan Open Land – protected by statute.

In an open letter Steve Bullock on the Eliot Pits blog, Lucy Stubbs makes the point that the RSPB and other organisations are running a campaign to 'enrich children's lives through nature... to give children from all backgrounds the opportunity to experience nature as an important part of their everyday lives' and asks if this proposal 'contravenes all that these organisations are hoping to achieve especially in a densely urban area like Lewisham'.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(See also <http://westcombe.blogspot.com/>)
38 HARDY ROAD ref 12/1770/F

Construct single storey rear extension loft conversion with window & three roof lights

34 DINSDALE ROAD ref 12/1665/F

2 rear dormer windows & two roof lights

22 COLERAINE ROAD ref 12/1558/F

Single storey rear and side infill extension

GARAGES TO REAR OF FOYLE ROAD

Appeal: File Reference 11/3003/F & Associated Ref. 11/3004/C.

Comments should be submitted to Catherine Evans of the Planning Inspectorate at 3/19, Temple Quay House, 2, The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS 1 6 PN by 12 September.

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