Following years of work by volunteer enthusiasts, Severndroog Castle opened to the public in July. “London’s Greatest Folly” is a unique 18th Century Grade II listed tower set in beautiful Orleas Woods. Climb the 86 steps of its spiral staircase, and you get an amazing view of London—and, on a fine day, seven counties.

The building was closed to the public in 1983, and became almost derelict. But thanks to the Severndroog Building Preservation Trust, which was set up by local group in 2001, it has been lovingly restored, with the help of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The contractors were Hilton Allen (which is situated at the foot of Westcombe Hill).

The castle was originally built in 1784 in memory of Commander Sir William James by his widow. In April 1755, he attacked and destroyed the island fortress of Savantadurg (rendered in English as “Severndroog”) of the Maratha Empire on the west coast of India, between Goa and Muscat. Sir William died in 1783. It was eventually bought by London County Council, (later the GLC), but when the GLC was abolished in 1986, it fell into the hands of Greenwich Council, who could not afford to maintain it.

The castle is open every Thursday, Friday and Sunday, entrance adults £2.50 (£2.00 children and concessions). The tea room is open every day except Monday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

OnBlackheath

O nBlackheath is on September 13th - 15th, and some 15,000 people are expected each day on Dartmouth Field (the western part of Blackheath). It starts with Massive Attack on 13th. – Sleeping Souls are on the Sunday …

Apart from the music, there’s also a whole host of fun and games for kids (and adults) of all ages: hoola hooping with the Majorettes; musical clowns; you can even re-mix Massive Attack tracks, learn beat-boxing and do graffiti t-shirt design.

Expect some traffic disruption: the 380 bus may be rerouted, and Hurst & Billit Road will be closed two days before, and one day after, the event. The RV gathers that build-up for the event will start on 8th and ‘load-out’ will be from 15th-18th Sept. On all these days work finishes by 8.00pm. During the event, the complaints/ information hotline is 0794 3824 229

Discounted tickets for locals are available from The Blackheath Conservatoire or the Greenwich Merceau Hotel – for the Sunday. You need to take ID with you.

Pyjama party

Fancy a moonlit walk in your jin-jams with a jolly bunch of female nurses? Sorry, fellows, you aren’t invited. Yes, it’s for women only.

A group of nurses from Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice have signed up for this September’s Moonlit Walk to raise funds for a Specialist Nurse for a whole year for the Hospice. The Hospice wants to see local ladies joining in, too.

“We’ve got so much going on,” says Community Fundraiser, Megan Boyle. “We’ve got jokes from our special guest comedienne Jo Brand at the start, live music from the Rock Choir, flashing bunny ears, pit stops and cup cakes . . . It’s going to be great fun.”

Entrants under 16 must be accompanied by a registered adult. Registration costs £15 in advance or £25 on the night per person; it includes a sash and a medal for every walker.

To join the walk you can register online www.communityhospice.org.uk, by email info@gch.org.uk or call 020 8319 9200.

Bicycle thieves

There is another opportunity to get your bike marked and registered on 20th Sept 11.00 am - 3.00 pm opposite the Vanbrugh Estate, seven counties.

Keep a record of the frame number of your bike and register it on the website: www.bikeregister.com

For more information, and contact details visit: http://enderbywharf.wordpress.com/

The site developers appear to have little interest in preserving the historic building and equipment of the Development plc is already demolishing the existing property on the site – also part of Allent-historic’s cable factory. More than 160 years after the first cables were made there, a factory behind Enderby’s Wharf still makes vital equipment for underwater cables to connect the world’s internet services.

A local group has recently been formed to work with Greenwich Council and the site developer towards the preservation of Enderby House and the wharf.

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The Family Summer Picnic

T he sun shone on the Westcombe Society’s summer picnic, and great fun was had by all... These pictures show what it was all about: relaxing on the grass, the children having fun, with games, and a tug of war and yummy food... as well as charity stalls, a drop of Pimms and a cake or two – and Dave Silk’s trio.

Chairman of the Westcombe Society, Marilyn Little commented: “Well, what a lovely day. We were so lucky with the weather which couldn’t have been better.”

“Everyone worked tremendously hard to make the event a success and I know it was really appreciated by those attending. I spoke to a number of families who were really having a good time, some of whom had not visited the gardens before. “We hold this event for the enjoyment of the community and raising money is not the aim but... we took over well over £400 in takings which should cover our outgoings. A fantastic effort.”

“Very well done everyone and thank you all very much for all your efforts. Not forgetting Ben from Mycenae House. We really do enjoy putting on our events and we know they are well received but we could do with a little more help – particularly setting up and taking down. We transport much of our equipment from a garage in Siebert Road and help is always welcome. “If you came along to the picnic and enjoyed your day please think about helping out for an hour or so. It is enjoyable and the more of us there are the quicker it takes.”

“We now have some very active young families who are getting involved in our events so come and join them and influence our future.”

Ed: The average age profile of those who volunteer is increasing, and it’s a fact that healthy communities need people from all generations to be involved if they are to be sustainable. All we might need is an hour or so before and after an event like this, so if you are interested, please contact Marilyn on 8853 1312.

Below: Happiness is a bunch of balloons. Happiness squared has lots of teddies, too! Also below: The stalls did a roaring trade.
Letters

Views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the WN or the Westcombe Society.

From: Philip Conn The RAC Foundation Ministers should consider introducing a new scrapping scheme aimed at taking the oldest and most polluting diesel cars off the road.

Over the past two decades consumers have increasingly been buying diesels, which emit lower CO2 emissions than petrol driven cars. This shift in buying habits means that there are over 10 million diesel-fuelled cars on the road. In 1994 there were just 1.6 million diesels. However diesel cars emit significantly more particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) than petrol cars. It is estimated that in the UK poor air quality currently halves average life expectancy at birth by six months.

Ed: Please see above page.

From: Sarah Sutton Westcombe Hill Readers may or may not know that the 286 bus route has recently changed its ownership as it now belongs to New Cross Bus Garage and the Go-Ahead company.

At the beginning of July, when the traffic changed, brand new buses were put on the route. The noise from these buses is atrocious. My petunia, Petes, works as a New Cross and drives the 108s.

I mentioned it to him to see if what could be done and also a few of our neighbours too. He saw the traffic manager who asked him to write it in a report. This week, the garage engineer manager explained that they have looked into it and that they also called someone from head office and the manufacturer of the buses to travel around on the route.

We are happy to say that they found the problem and have found a way to rectify the noise and hopefully in the next few weeks, the 286 buses should be less noisy.

From: Mary Mills Humber Road The Endeavour Wharf/Greenwich Telecoms Heritage campaign continues and is attracting an amazing amount of support. Thank you to everyone who has been involved and offered help. We are all working really hard – contacting other projects and museums which might be helpful or want to contribute, liaising with English Heritage and archaeologists likely to be working on the site soon – and getting the word out as many as possible.

We are always grateful to hear from people who may have any information – and it would also be good to hear from locals who worked on the site and could give us a first-hand account of what was totalled unfunded so any professional help would be welcome, but would need to be free. www.enderby.org.uk facebook.com/groups/enderby twitter.com/EnderbyWharf

From: Gahi Martin Caterine Road Much as I admire and appreciate the WN – its content, the quality of print, paper and photo-grapher is one aspect which I find increasingly enervating – in every issue. This is the excuse of the editor to me.

In my view (and I hope Lynne Trus would agree) they should only be used sparingly and as a last resort. Their frequent use suggests that the writer lacks a sufficiently wide vocabulary to adequately make his point. As I am sure this is not the case with contributors to the WN, please, start a call of exclamation marks.

Ed: Max Culpa, Gahi! Seriously, we agree with you, and will ruthlessly wielding the red pen in future.

Westcombe News September 2014

LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS NOW BEFORE CHRISTMAS

If you think you might have any images – either personal and representative of Westcombe Park, please could you let us have them for consideration by Sept.20th.

We don't offer any financial reward if we use the design but we will of course give the artist credit and some free packs of cards. Design can be emailed (as jpeg or pdfs) to: r.c.owens@btinternet.com, or delivered or sent to me at 84 Beaufort Road, SE3, Nuey, we can’t undertake to return entries.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

A hundred people attended the farewell lunch and service for Malcolm Terry in July, who is leaving after 18 years in the parish. For a long time a much-loved and respected vicar of St George’s, he has worked in recent years as the co-ordinating chaplain of the Greenwich Peninsula Chaplaincy, and Vicar of Holy Trinity Church on the Greenwich Peninsula.

St George’s laid on its usual sumptuous meal, and Malcolm and Rebecca were presented with numerous farewell presents. All were load in their praise for Malcolm and his wife and family.

Malcolm said they were very sad to be leaving and had many happy memories, but it was time to move on. He paid tribute to all those he had worked with, especially Cynthia Finney, for her work at St George’s.

In a farewell address, Esther Whittingale Reed, a Reader in the parish, said that Malcolm had had a very varied career, having worked for the Department of Health and Social Security for two years, and also having spent a period as an industrial chaplain. He brought many gifts to his ministry, including honesty, sincerity, and a great intellect, as seen in many his books.

He had used his intellect to open the minds and eyes of many parishioners to the word of God. His books dealt with the governance and organisation of the church, and welfare issues – he is director of the Citizen’s Income Trust; and she wished him well in his next work at the London School of Economics.

PETERM N SEIBERT ROAD

There is a deadly issue which is allowing all of us in Seibert Road and many other areas adjoining the A102. The problem is pollution. The garden backs on to the A102 and suffers from intrusive noise and massive pollution. A recent environmental study has found that pollution levels in our neighbourbord are 2.5 times higher than EU limits. We have organised a petition urging the government to ensure road and pollution barriers are installed along all residential areas of the A102, as well as reducing tree leaves. The health of our children is paramount and with two schools nearby this affects us more than just our families.

To sign this petition, please go to: https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/179704

From: Terry Scales Greenwich It was good to see your editor at our lively private view back in August. Thank you for mentioning Christiana Angelini’s and my art exhibition in the WN. What a gem of a paper it is, good layout, and lively reading. I note the paragraph on eating dungeon bees as recommended by the UN, and can’t wait to try one.

From: Ben Parfode Ruthton Road My grandmother grew up at no: 39 Ruthton Road which was destroyed during the war. I wonder if anyone has pro-war photographs of the road which may show her house.

On 4th August a huge hole suddenly appeared in Mycenae Road just south of the mini-roundabout. There were holes within the hole – one 3 metres deep . . . maybe an old well, thought Roger. The Council were observed looking into it.

“A HOY is a sailing and rowing charity that works with disabled people, and disadvantaged and at-risk young people. www.aho.org.uk

Eight teams took part in the race – St John’s entered three boats, each with a crew of six rowers plus a cox to pilot the boat. They were rowing Thames Waterman Cutters – 34ft fixed seat rowing boats based on the traditional boats which were used on the Thames in the 17th century for ferry passengers across the river. Here (LEFT) is one of the teams in action, speeding past the Houses of Parliament.

Keep it up, fellers. “In, out, in, out, . . .”

Phew! Well done, they raised £4,500. Too tired, for a moment, to raise their oars for a big cheer for Nathan Medhurst, for the patience, good humour & superb organisation skills he has demonstrated over the past few months. Hip hip – HOORAY!" NO: A HOY is a sailing and rowing charity that works with disabled people, and disadvantaged and at-risk young people. www.aho.org.uk

Messing about with the river?

I need to say at the start that we all have a passionate interest in the theme of ‘Messing about with the river’ and the Port of London Authority (PLA) was considering changing the name Bugsby’s Reach to Waterman’s Reach in commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the 1514 Act of Parliament regulating watermen, wherrymen and bargemen.

The consultation carried out by the PLA revealed that ten favoured the proposal as a “fitting commemoration of the river’s past, present and future working life.” However, 34 were against because ‘historic names should be left alone.’

The PLA said that following a consultation, they had decided not to proceed with the proposal to rename Bugsby’s Reach. Local historian Dr Mary Mills notes in a recent article* that the identity of Bugsby seems to be a report in the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ of March 1733 to ‘William the pirate being hung in chains at Bugsby’s Hole’. (Hole being an ancient name for Anchorage). She also notes that, mysteriously, there are a number of “Bugby Holes” around the world, including one in St Helena.

* To read more of Mary’s article, visit: http://onthethames.net/2014/02/14/

LOCAL NEWS

PHOTOS: Neville Grant

When the weather is fine then you know it’s a sign ‘For messing about on the river.’

ANDREW RILEY

RILEY
Following Mrs. Lisa Laws’ retirement in August, Blackheath High School welcomes a new Head: Mrs. Carol Chandler-Thompson.

Under Mrs. Laws’ leadership, Blackheath High has grown and academic standards have gone from strength to strength, developing an outstanding reputation.

Mrs. Chandler-Thompson has returned from South Korea, where she was ‘Head of the Girls’ School’ at a new up-start independent boarding school: North London Collegiate School, Jnns.

Mrs. Chandler-Thompson is a firm believer in single sex education and attended an all-girls’ school herself. She is committed to the values and ethos of Blackheath High School, which ensure that excellent pastoral care buttresses academic success and that girls are inspired and encouraged through skillful, innovative teaching.

She is delighted to be joining the school at such an important juncture in its history with the school just having received a superb report following the recent inspection by the Independent School’s Inspectorate; saying: “It is a fitting tribute to Mrs. Laws and the teaching staff that our exceptional school has just received such a glowing ISI inspection report on the outstanding educational provision throughout the Junior and Senior schools.

“It is a privilege to lead Blackheath High into the next phase of its development and I am looking forward to working closely with the staff, students and parents in taking the school forward and building on these achievements.”

The report rated the school “excellent in all areas, which covered pupils achievements and learning; curricular and extra-curricular provision; teaching; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils; pastoral care; welfare, health and safety; the quality of governance and the quality of leadership and management. The ISI comments that “pupil achievement in their work and activities is excellent throughout the school and they are very well educated, fully in line with the school’s aim to promote academic excellence.”

“High achievement is strongly supported by the pupils’ excellent attitude towards learning, which richly fulfils the school’s aim to nurture a love of learning and develop independent and enquiring minds.”

The school is proud to deliver an education that also provides opportunities to develop skills, to gain knowledge and to strengthen character. In order to achieve this, teaching and learning are supported by unique ‘Pillars of Learning’.

These ‘Pillars of Learning’ support the school’s aim to equip pupils with the confidence they need to see opportunities not boundaries, challenges not obstacles, and believe they have an important contribution to make to their school, to their community and beyond.

These ‘Pillars’ are nurtured, as part of the school’s culture, during lessons, assemblies and forms times. For example, to help instil ‘Resilience’, girls are encouraged to take risks in their lessons and to learn the importance of being brave to bounce back from failure.

Even the youngest nursery pupils of three years old, have a mantra “be brave and strong, when little things go wrong” and, throughout their school lives the girls are taught to face challenges designed to nudge them out of comfort zones. All the girls participate in outward bound adventure trips and activities such as debating, public speaking and sport, through which they build confidence and self-esteem.

Similarly, ‘Enterprise’ is taught through supporting and guiding pupils to plan, organise and manage initiatives such as fundraising and employing a wealth of ideas and creative skills with great enthusiasm!

The girls learn to use their initiative, to research products and ideas, and to apply their academic knowledge to ‘real life’ situations; therefore developing resourcefulness and the ability to make informed decisions.

With an emphasis on all round development, each pupil is inspired to aim high in all that they do, academically and beyond.

The school is understandably proud of the students’ excellent academic success, and appreciates that it is also personal qualities and skills that will help their students to climb the ladder of success in a globalised, competitive work place.

As the ISI report states, “the curriculum is broad and balanced and goes beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum.”

“Throughout the school, curricular provision inspires excellent learning and provides opportunities to develop thinking skills and to enrich personal development, giving pupils the chance to value their education in wider terms than qualifications alone.”

Indeed, the curriculum is broad, innovative and is enhanced by an enrichment of a programme of extra-curricular activities.

All girls study at least one modern language, even in the Nursery where they start French. Mandarin is introduced from Y7 and all pupils study two modern languages, plus Latin.

They also study Philosophy and learn to cook. Pupils are prepared for the three separate sciences at GCSE and most sixth formers include either maths, or at least one science subject, in the four subjects that they study at Advanced level.

Another aspect of the education offered at Blackheath High that makes it stand out from other schools is the focus on the individual and her talents and potential. BHS is not a school where girls are forced into a particular mould. Students are encouraged to discover and nurture their own passions, not follow the crowd.

They are challenged to exceed their own expectations and therefore achieve more than they might have initially thought possible. The alumnae boast careers as diverse as environmental engineering, law at the international criminal court and fashion design.

Our girls (aged nine to 17) relished the challenge of interviewing the UN Assistant Secretary General and other important international figures from their digital radio station to mark the United Nations International Women’s Day. They covered a wide range of subjects including conflict, famine and gender equality.

**Features**

**The girls achieve excellent A level grades in all subjects including sciences and maths**

The second in our occasional series on local schools.

**‘Excellent in All Areas’**

Blackheath High School receives a glowing inspection report and welcomes a new Headteacher. CORRIE-JANE RAFFERTY reports

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Our girls (aged nine to 17) relished the challenge of interviewing the UN Assistant Secretary General and other important international figures from their digital radio station to mark the United Nations International Women’s Day. They covered a wide range of subjects including conflict, famine and gender equality.
Meet your neighbour. JANE GRANT talks to
Margaret Cave

The Revd. Margaret Cave, who now lives in Westcombe Park, has worked in industry, in the financial sector, and also as a primary school teacher, and in the voluntary sector, meanwhile becoming the mother of four sons. Now, she works for God, as a Church of England priest and is the first women to be inducted on 9th September 2013. I feel it was a logical next step to go and train to be a priest. I was ordained at Southwark Cathedral in 2000. I had always felt as a young woman that I would become a vicar – even before it was possible for women to become vicars so, it was a logical next step to go and train for ordained ministry and I had a strong sense of vocation to the role of the priest. I was ordained at Southwark Cathedral in July 2010 and served my title post at St. James, Kidbrooke.

Is that when you started the one Space Youth Club? Yes. It was an amazing project setting up a new youth and community centre in Kidbrooke Village and a real privilege to be involved in it. I was the Director of OneSpace and also chaplain to OneSpace and Kidbrooke Village.

Then moved to East Greenwich? That’s right. I was appointed to my present job in May last year and was instituted and inducted on 9th September 2013. I feel it was a matter of ‘right place at the right time’ and I feel very privileged to be serving in my present post especially as Southwark Diocese is a very popular place to work in, so much so that it is a net exporter of clergy. It is very easy to work in an area of enormous diversity and rapid change. I am very much enjoying working in a team ministry and am just finishing an MA thesis on ‘Can, and if so how, does a team ministry work in The Church of England?’ How do you feel you have managed to do that? I have no regrets about doing so as it will be a lasting benefit and I feel very privileged to be involved in it. Perhaps I was the first Director of Youth Club?

I was ordained at Southwark Cathedral in 2000. I had always felt as a young woman that I would become a vicar – even before it was possible for women to become vicars so, it was a logical next step to go and train for ordained ministry and I had a strong sense of vocation to the role of the priest. I was ordained at Southwark Cathedral in July 2010 and served my title post at St. James, Kidbrooke.

Are you involved in any other community projects? I am a trustee of the Forum@Greenwich, church leaders, for example, I am a trustee of the Greenwich women’s chaplaincy. I am delighted that we have a relationship with the community schools in our parish - our local deanery cluster of churches, which is just what it is like in our parish. I am committed to working together with other churches locally and also to building up good relationships with other faiths. Working in partnership is very important and I am enjoying building up our relationships locally with the Forum@Greenwich, other churches, local leaders and other faith leaders, for example, I am a trustee of the multi-faith Greenwich Peninsula Chaplaincy. I am delighted that we have a Church of England primary school in our parish and I am committed to my role as a school governor there as well as taking school assemblies. I am also enjoying working with the community schools in our parish - our local deanery cluster of churches took an Easter play out to our local schools this year and will be inviting all the Year Two children in our local schools into our churches to experience The Christmas Journey in early November.

Finally, what do you feel about the appointment of women as bishops? When the last vote failed in 2012 it was awful, as if one was rejected as a woman priest, but now I feel as if the Church will come back stronger as a result. It is turned down now it will be a real impudence, but I am quietly confident that won’t happen. Thank you, Margaret, and pray that you come back stronger as a result. If it is turned down now it will be a real impudence, but I am quietly confident that won’t happen. Thank you, Margaret, and pray that you come back stronger as a result.

The Tall Ships Festival

Royal Greenwich will be the final port for the prestigious Tall Ships Regatta in September. From Friday 6th to Tuesday 9th there will be five days of exciting activities over five different locations: Royal Arsenal Woolwich, West India Dock, Emirates Airline, Cutty Sark, Victoria Deepwater Dock, and Maritime Greenwich. The Crew Parade is on Sept. 6th. by ship, the crews, many in uniform or fancy dress, will pass through Greenwich Park, around Greenwich Town Centre and into the National Maritime Museum. The parade is expected to be a kilometre in length. That day, the Greenwich gryantry system will be closed from mid-morning. Residents and businesses in Westcombe Park should note that parking restrictions will apply on the Sunday as well as other days: they don’t need to do anything. A new controlled parking zone from Charlton to Woolwich Dockyard will also be in place for the five days.

For info: www.sailroyalgreenwich.co.uk/
For queries about transport plans email: tim.jackson@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Fancy a Tall Ship Cruise?

The following are on offer. Discounts apply for children, students, & seniors (65+). To book, visit www.sailroyalgreenwich.co.uk/ths/sailroyalgreenwich

THAMES TALL SHIP CRUISE
You will embark at Royal Arsenal Pier, Woolwich, and proceed to the Thames Barrier, past the O2 Arena, Queen Elizabeth II Line, Canary Wharf, Queens House and The Royal Observatory, Greenwich. The Cutty Sark, the ship will return to Royal Arsenal. Tickets: adults: £39.90

THAMES TALL SHIP CRUISE + FIREWORKS (EVENING CRUISES)
Sailing route of this cruise will be the same as the regular cruise, and includes Fireworks. You will watch the Fireworks, set off on the river, on board. Tickets: £79.90

VIP THAMES TALL SHIP CRUISE - TOWER BRIDGE + FIREWORKS enjoy a full day or night river cruise. The cruise departs daily at 6.30pm, and in the reception area you will receive a welcome drink, snacks, and a delicious buffet dinner. There is a cashbar available. In the evening there is a special fireworks display. Tickets adults: £119.90 (daytime) / £139.90 evening

LOCAL RESIDENTS’ SPECIAL OFFER
Local residents are being offered a unique chance to experience the magic of a music concert on board the Shantard for a two-hour trip just £15 per person.

The offer is available for just four visits on Sat. 7th and Sun. 8th Sept. You get a fire drink in the departure lounge, before being escorted onto the ship by a traditional piper.

For tickets please call: 020 8921 6269

Autumn at the Albany

The Albany arts and activity centre, based in Douglas Way, Deptford SE8 4AG, has become a vibrant new cultural hub. The Albany’s new season is one of its biggest and boldest to date.

There’s a lot going on this autumn: you can discover the hidden rivers of London, go hunting for fairytales, participate in a nationwide celebration of culture, or learn about the history of South Africa.

The Bold Festival (Monday 15th - Saturday 27th Sept.), provokes audiences to think about age ing differently, including Home Sweethome (Tuesday 23rd - Saturday 27 September), a new play by Emma Adams based on the true stories of 200 older people. The Bold Festival also includes Ira Brand’s A Care for Ageing (Thursday 25th - Sat 27th September). The internationally renowned Belarus Free Theatre stages the world premiere of Price of Money, (Tues. 16th - Sat 20th September), an exploration of how theatre has depicted money through the ages. This production marks the beginning of a long term relationship between the Albany and the company, which will see several projects taking place over the next three years.

The Albany is proud to be the home of the national Fun Palaces 2014 project

Call the Albany’s box office on 020 8921 6269 or email info@albany-co.org.uk for more information.
Wind turbines

Maurice Rose

No doubt many readers will have noticed the two wind turbines outside Sainsbury’s. I am told that, together with some solar panels, they generate all the energy needed for Sainsbury’s.

Then one day I saw the turbines were not working and enquired the reason for this. I was told that they do not need to operate all the time because the supply is more than enough for the needs of the store, and that the surplus energy is fed back to the national Grid.

This particular type of wind turbine is a Swedish design, more suited for urban environments, with a smaller vertical spiral propeller type which rely on wind from a single direction. The spiral type function whatever the wind direction.

I can envisage at least two dozen more spaced along the shopping complex car park. Think how much energy they would generate. They take up very little space and are not an eyesore. Indeed from an aesthetic point of view they are quite attractive – certainly more so than the hideous propeller type. They could be installed in all supermarkets and car parks and shopping complexes. I can see these little wind turbines all over the borough. An ideal site for these turbines would be a large area of grasping land near Plumstead. This space alone could house hundreds of small spiral turbines. One could have them all along the motorways, on railway lines etc. One could visualise them all over the country. Maybe this vision of mine is not feasible. Perhaps some of your readers can enlighten me.

Comment from Anne Robbins of the Westcombe Society Environment Committee

From my limited reading (google ‘vertical axis wind turbines vs horizontal’), this type of turbine is more expensive to build and less efficient in using wind, while also requiring more maintenance than the more common bladed horizontal turbines. They are better for birds and bat life, more aesthetically pleasing, and a little quieter. At first glance they do look a better option, but they have basic engineering problems that lead to maintenance difficulties, which is why they cannot be built tall enough to access steadier wind currents.

However, I haven’t seen the Sainsbury’s turbines being used for over a year. On any of my visits there, and I suspect they have basically been decommissioned due to maintenance costs, though I doubt Sainsbury’s would wish to admit to this. If surplus production of energy can be fed back into the grid, why would Sainsbury’s not keep the turbines running at all times? So I would query their response to Mr Rose.

Of course there could be more wind turbines throughout the car park, which is owned and operated by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. I am sure that there are all sorts of reasons why Plumstead Common is not a suitable site for turbines, though, such as protection of habitats and land ownership issues. It would be great to insist on high levels of renewable energy production, and energy efficiency, for all residential developments, and for office or manufacturing sites too. In many sites, though, turbines aren’t appropriate, and can’t be attached to buildings due to vibration damage and noise. That tree at the Elephant and Castle is an example: the turbine built into the top can’t be used because of noise. Much more appropriate are solar panels, and the regulations for new buildings encourage these. But we have quite a long way to go, to catch up with Germany or the Scandinavian countries.

Fly-tipping

One evening in July Austin Howard aged 9 noticed a large canister had been dumped in Hurlingham Road. From it flowed a wicked-looking substance. The canister was at once placed upright to prevent further leakage, and the police were phoned. They turned up with four cars and immediately sealed off the area.

The next day the council arrived and placed some absorbent substance over the mess – whatever it was – and it appears to have worked.

“I still don’t know what it was,” said local councillor Michael Howard, “but thankfully the authorities acted quickly.”

The council website states: “Dumping rubbish on the streets is unhygienic, dangerous and unacceptable. We work with the police, the Environment Agency and surrounding boroughs to prevent this practice. If the offenders are identified we prosecute them.”

The Council asks that incidents should be reported promptly, with as much detail as possible, including any information about the perpetrators.

The Council’s website continues: “We will remove all small flytips (equivalent to a small van-load) within 24 hours and, if possible, take action against those responsible. Large flytips (more than a van-load) will be dealt with by our contractors within four working days on a priority basis.”

London’s air quality

W N reporter

In 2011, the Localism Bill allowed government departments to pass on EU fines to London boroughs for missing air quality targets. How such fines should be apportioned remains a big question: for example, what percentage of traffic pollution in Greenwich is caused by traffic from other boroughs – and from outside London?

The powers that boroughs have to improve London’s air quality are very limited. In July, in an ‘Air Quality Manifesto’, London Councils joined the Mayor of London’s calls for more powers, and funding, to improve London’s air quality. London Councils believe the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs should not pass on EU fines to London boroughs.

Cllr Julian Bell, Chair of London Councils’ Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) said: “Boroughs need the money and the power to make changes without their efforts being undermined by government or the looming threat of multi-million-pound fines.”

The proposal to impose a surcharge on diesel-powered vehicles in a new Ultra Low Emissions Zone is one such initiative.

In Greenwich, there are fears that Greenwich Council is heading for a large fine, hell-bent as it has been on development, willy-nilly, regardless of the environmental consequences. This is the likely outcome of the huge developments being approved by the Council, for example, along Trafalgar and Woolwich Roads, and elsewhere, where air pollution is already known to be well above EU limits.

River crossings

Till would like your views on options for new river crossings in east and south east London that will help improve connectivity across the River Thames. This is following a consultation which ended in February 2013. The options for new river crossings are as follows:

- A bridge at Barking
- A bridge at Gallions Reach
- A new ferry at Woolwich
- A bridge at Belvedere

For full details and to have your say, including a list of roadblocks where you can speak to a member of staff, please visit http://tfl.gov.uk/new-river-crossings

The consultation closes on Fri. 12th Sept.

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