Property bubble now hitting Greenwich

“We lived in Westcombe Park for more than seven years; for the first five years our landlord did nothing with our rent. Then two years ago he raised it £70, last year he raised it £50, and this year he wanted an extra £200. At that point, we knew it was getting ridiculous and we had to move;” a young mother told the WN.

Well, you know why, now: the Royal Borough is being hit by the London housing bubble. According to Halifax, the UK’s largest mortgage lender, Greenwich now tops the list of towns and cities recording the largest increase in house prices in 2014. The average house price in Greenwich rose from £263,183 to £328,044 in the 12 months to last November. That increase, of 24.6%, was almost three times the 8.5% rise recorded across the UK as a whole.

We used to think that it was only prices in central London that were being hiked by rich foreigners seeking a lucrative investment, but now they are on our doorsteps; or rather, we are on their doorsteps.

“No social housing”

For example, new homes built in Abbey Wood were being marketed to wealthy investors from Asia as containing “no social housing.”

Down in Woolwich, the £450m Cross Quarter Scheme had an “exclusive launch” in the luxury Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong; and investors were told that it is “a fully private block with no social housing.”

The cheapest properties sold in Abbey Tower is £528k. Britain’s biggest housebuilding companies are marketing properties where you works in a local beauty salon, near the Abbey Tower, development, said: “I would love to buy an apartment – but there’s no way that I can afford one. The homes should be for locals.”

Questions are being asked about what controls are being exercised by local authority planners: surely, any large building development should be required to include both social and affordable housing?

Well, no: as part of its Gateway Regeneration Project, the Royal Borough of Lewisham has approved 362 new homes: none of them have any affordable units. Apparently, affordable housing in the two new tower blocks is “not viable.”

Broken guidelines

Even the developers say current government policy is “deeply flawed” and “wreaks social mix.” Planning regulations require developers to contribute funds for local amenities (such as schools, affordable housing or roads) from their 10% 06 payments – yet the housing minister, Brandon Lewis allows developers to avoid or drastically reduce such payments: in effect, the company profits above people’s needs. John Walker, director of planning in Tory-controlled Westminster Council described the policy as “insane.”

“Public land was given to profit-making private interests in exchange for being allowed to rent back a slice of public space. It’s privatization by another name.” Nancy Taffee

Helen Mercer from Lewisham People Before Profit, said: “The Gateway development has nothing for local people. It brings more residents without providing any additional schools, medical care, trains, or buses.”

To be fair, things are not being made easy for local councils. For example, take Hutchison Whampoa’s Convoys Wharf scheme. Lewisham Council’s concerns about the size of the planned towers, the number of affordable homes, and serious road traffic congestion from the 3,000 new homes built in the Peninsula, the council rolls over and lets big builders get away with it.

Homes – or investments?

Are we going the same way here in Greenwich? Kidbrooke Village will have more units than the old Ferrier Estate it replaced – but with little or no extra provision for schools, clinics, or public transport. The WN has been unable to find out how many of the units have been sold to foreigners as an investment and will, like so many others around London, stand empty.

But one cynical local resident commented: “I just hope that that is what’s happened. Otherwise, our road networks could be under serious pressure.”

As Matthew Pennycook points out on page 6, councils’ negotiations with developers are often fraught. It will be interesting to view documents relating to the negotiations between Greenwich and Knight Dragon in 2012 over the peninsula development following the court order that they be released.

Housing is seldom mentioned in party manifestos – but it should be: there are complaints about houses becoming unaffordable for ordinary people, but no. investment tool, and local authorities such as Wandsworth which have a duty to house homeless people, are carrying out what is being called “social cleansing.”

Across London, poor people are being evicted, which is that the estates can be re-developed “viably.”

And then there is the running sore of sky-high rents – people are paying to pay for accommodation little bigger than a box-room. Many tenants are now having to share rooms, often with complete strangers.

Signs of hope?

In Greenwich, the Council has now launched a Hidden Homes and Extensions scheme, costing £1.7m, to convert and extend empty properties and other types of buildings into new homes. But Cllr Chris Kirby, RGB’s cabinet member for housing, admits: “Available land we could use for building new homes is at a premium in this borough.”

Is that because so much of the land has been sold to private developers? In the longer term, things may be looking more hopeful: there are plans to build thousands of new homes on the Peninsula. Of these, 25% will be categorised as affordable, and are to include student housing and special needs housing. There’s also a shared ownership or leasehold scheme?

Let’s hope that these plans remain “viable”...

On our doorstep... The Fan Museum is putting on an exhibition to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo which saw the final defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. Waterloo: Life and Times runs from May 10th - September 20th and features items made to commemorate other military events.

Happy Easter... No Southeastern services will operate to or from Cannon Street, Elephant & Castle, Bridge, Charing Cross or Waterloo East over Easter; so, no service to these stations from April 3rd - April 6th. Visit www.westcombeborough.org.uk for details.

20 mph speed limit Lewisham Council are to introduce a borough-wide speed limit of 20 mph from January 2016. March for Homes Public anger over housing issues spilled over onto the streets in February. A number of local residents took part in a march on City Hall to demand Mayor Boris Johnson deliver solutions to London’s deepening housing crisis. A typical slogan was “Social Housing, not Social Cleansing”.

General Election 2015 Members of the Westcombe Community Centre and Blackheath & Greenwich United Nations Association are organising a hustings meeting at Mycenae House Community Centre, Mycenae Road, Blackheath SE3 on Wednesday 15th April 7.30 - 9.00. Come along to hear, and question, your candidates! Info: 0208 858 8489

The original scheme in Abbey Wood envisaged an 81,000 sq. ft. Sainsbury’s foodstore, 5,000 sq. ft. of retail and 142 “affordable housing” units, including some affordable units. The latter are out of reach for most local people. The scheme is attractive to investors, because once Crossrail is complete, this development will have easy access to Canary Wharf and the City.

* 1.4 million families are on council waiting lists.
* Only one new public house is built for every 21 sold to tenants.
* “Affordable housing” is a relative term: it means costing only 80% of the median salary, i.e. only affordable by a select few.
* “Affordable” should not equal unaffordable: it means affordable by a select few.
* Britain’s ten biggest housebuilding companies have seen their profits climb to £2.1 billion in 2014 – 34% up on 2013. Much of the profit is from London, up 50% in 2014.
* Still, according to the Office for National Statistics, only 1 in 4 homes sold to tenants.
* As Matthew Pennycook points out on page 6, councils’ negotiations with developers are often fraught. It will be interesting to view documents relating to the negotiations between Greenwich and Knight Dragon in 2012 over the peninsula development following the court order that they be released.

Comments:

"Many people are struggling to pay their rent. I will fight to ensure the council builds more council homes and drives a harder bargain with developers. I will also do everything I can to help families at risk of being forced out of this ward by the Tories’ Bed-sitter tax."

Cherry Parker (Labour Councillor) "Labour councillors like to talk a good game on affordable housing, but they simply don’t deliver. Instead, as we have seen on the Peninsula, the council rolls over and lets big developers get their way. It’s time for the Labour-run council to stand up to the developers and make sure Greenwich gets the affordable housing it needs."

Matt Hartley Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Greenwich & Woolwich

The Westcombe Society

Daffodil Tea Sat 7th March 2.00 - 4.00 pm Sat 7th March.
"Daffodil Tea" is held annually at Mycenae House in order to raise funds to support local community organisations. This year's proceeds will be donated to the Westcombe Society. Come along to enjoy a traditional afternoon tea of cakes and sandwiches, a quiz, a free raffle – who wouldn't want to come?""""

Nearly New Sale Sat 21st March
Children's Clothes, Toys & Equipment - bargains galore. Councilors' negotiations with developers are often fraught. It will be interesting to view documents relating to the negotiations between Greenwich and Knight Dragon in 2012 over the peninsula development following the court order that they be released. A typical slogan was: “Social Housing, not Social Cleansing”.

Comments:

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Letters to the editor

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

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Please send this membership form to: The Secretary, 31 Westcombe Park Rd, SE3 7Dr
Name: ........................................
Address: ..................................................
t: ...........................................................
e: ..............................................................
Please enclose payment as appropriate:
Family membership £12 [ ]
Individual membership £8 [ ]
senior citizen/unsung £4 [ ]

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http://westcombe blogspot.com

From: Patricia Gillard, Chair BRSVA
Have you ever been stopped by a driver or pedestrian, near Old Dover Road or Shooters Hill Road, who requested directions to Greenwich, Woolwich, Charlton, Blackheath Village or Shooters Hill etc?
Have you noticed that there is nothing to tell you where you are in this part of Royal Greenwich? Well, there used to be a directional wooden fingerprint which stood on the green outside The Royal Standard public House. It was made of wood and some people remember it, but when it started to crumble it was never replaced. It is mentioned in old books of Greenwich.
We, the Blackheath Royal Standard Village Association (BRSVA), a group of local people which includes members of The Westcombe Society, local councillors, local residents, Church ministers and Traders’ Association, intend to replace it to help local businesses, visitors and others, and in a small way, put this ancient part of Royal Greenwich on the map.
Raising the funds to buy the materials and make the post is in progress and we hope that it will be up this spring. If you would like to come along to our planning group then you would be very welcome.
Contact: pattygilbard@yahoo.co.uk

From: Trevor Allman Coleraine Road
As a concerned resident & Left Unity supporter, I attended the “No Silvertown Tunnel” Jam at the Mycenae House in January, and heard an informative speech by Christian Woolmar. Given the dire environmental impact that the proposed tunnel could have, with increased pollution and traffic congestion, and the close proximity of the next General Election, there was a notable absence of any Labour, Conservative, UKIP or Green Party parliamentary candidates for the Greenwich & Woolwich constituency (I don’t believe the Liberal Democrats have selected a candidate yet).
What is especially reprehensible, given the Green Party’s alleged concern for the environment, is that both their candidates for this constituency, and Ethel, were in the room above the “No Silvertown Tunnel” meeting, and even though their meeting ended early, neither bothered to look in to give even their token support for the campaign to stop the Silvertown Tunnel.
It seems it is only “Through People Power” that is going to prevent the development of this area with pollution, as neither the current main political parties nor the council seem to give a hoot about their health and welfare.

From: Name and address supplied
In January, I received a Police Staff alerting Vanbrugh Hall dwellers to incidents of burglary. This came as a shock as I believe of which we can all do to help with the problem. Though we are reminded to cancel milk and newspapers during an absence, protruding papers from a letter box are also a give-away sign. The majority of these are unsolicited and include Freebie newspapers, and information about takeaways. But it will not be long before they are joined by electioneering leaflets which after the General Election campaign gets underway.
Those responsible for delivering this material should ensure it does not protrude from the letter box I suggest householders should contact the police, outlining any interest or support would be given unless remedied.
Those who deliver the WN on a regular basis do so in a manner of public spirit and in accordance with the rules. Next time, perhaps the Police might add this to the police public notices.

From: David Rolleston BRC P
In reply to Malcolm Hardy, the Freedom Pass renewal process was straightforward in my case. However I do not remember having to scan documents but instead just entering some data online.
Ed: Me too!

From: Vivian Davies Old Dover Road
I am co-director of a local Parent Group supporting parents and carers of children with disabilities and special needs. We have been engaging with members of the London Assembly and local councillors, to tell them about the issues we need help with and finding out what they can do to help.
I had a good response from local councillors including Cllr Matthew Penycrosse and Cllr John Fahy (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children’s Services).
We are a small completely voluntary group of parents working hard on a really tiny grant to give parents of children like ours a voice. If you are a parent or carer of a child with special needs or disabilities, do come and join us.
Contact: www.greenwichparentvoice.org
Email: info@greenwichparentvoice.org
Twitter: @GPVinfo

From: Peter Greaves The Plantation
My wife and I got separate emails reminding us that our Freedom Passes were due for renewal and inviting us to do it online.
It was extremely simple. All we had to do was to type in the number on our existing pass in the indicated box and send it in. No need to scan anything – and we received our new pass in the post, using our original photos. Brilliant!

From: Patricia Jeffs, Chair BRSVA
In reply to Malcolm Hardy, the Freedom Pass renewal process was straightforward in my case. However I do not remember having to scan documents but instead just entering some data online.
Ed: Me too!

From: Yanno Patrinios
Yanno was born in 1939 and spent his early youth in Athens. When aged six an accident with a buoyy trapped bomb nearly killed him – and left him blind. After long time to hospital, his mother brought him on a nightmare journey across was-damaged Europe for treatment at Melissa Ely Eye Hospital. After a rather unhappy period at a primary boarding school in Athens, he went to Westminster College for the Blind, where he was much happier, in due course becoming chess captain and, finally, head of fund-raising for the 999 Club.
Yanno loved sport, and played ‘vicious’ rugby, basketball and hockey through his school’s team. One of his greatest joys was to find somewhere quiet on a summer’s day to listen to Test Match Special.
Yanno’s last years were marred by illness, and he had to struggle to maintain his humble business. But he remained at home until the very last. He died on 21st January. Our deepest sympathies to Hilary and all the family.

Dick Allard

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Every year the Westcombe Society holds a party to thank all those who volunteer during the year. Also invited: new-comers to the area, and of course, would-be members planning to join! This year, the party was on Feb. 21st, and a good time was had by all.
Many thanks to the Events Committee for organising a great party.

About: Two flautists, Catherine and Catherine, were a delight to listen to.

Above: Our chairman Marilyn Little presents a cheque to Dr Rhys Mitchell, head of fund-raising for the 999 Club, which runs a shelter for homeless people in Deptford, and Louise, a local volunteer with the 999 Club.

The money has already been spent on a much-needed industrial washing machine, so that guests can come in, have a shower, and get the towels washed. Andrew said it had made a huge difference, and thanked the Society for its support.

BIRTH: Happy Birthday Myles! 88 already?

LEFT & BELOW: Carpe diem!

“What a swell party it was!” [from the film High Society]

Eggs (order by March 15th please). All include

To mark Fairtrade Fortnight, we are having a

stall in the church on March 1st. This would be

a good way of ordering your Fair Trade Easter

Eggs (order by March 15th please). All include

a booklet giving the Real meaning of Easter.
Council’s parking plans ‘on hold’

Editing the WN is getting easier – we just need to repeat the same old stories.

Our local traders on Old Dover Road continue to ask what has happened to the parking review which was promised for autumn 2013. Is the Council cooking up a cunning plan?

Do these words have a familiar ring? Well, they should have: this was the report in the WN in March 2014, and it continued: “The news is this: not so much a cunning plan as “a draft parking strategy” that will, in due course, with “overarching principles”, rather than “specific schemes”. “So the traders of Old Dover Road will have to wait at the problem is very long grass. What is taking so long? The problem has been going on for years, but it was not until October 2013, that the WN reported that the traders had organized a petition calling on the Council to restrict parking in Old Dover Road. “There are people picking all day,” said one trader. “Some are commuters – you see them walking in with their briefcases. A lot of them work at M&S.”

“The petition asked the Council to prevent anyone from parking for longer than two hours – no return within three hours. “In response, Greenwich Council announced, in February 2012, that it was “consulting” on a plan to make parking pay for their customers. “Readers will recall there was a very predictable outcry against this idea – and another petition resulted. Back to the drawing board . . . That was all in 2014. Forward to the present: like Clr Brighty (February’s WN), Cllr Paul Morrissey also contacted the council with the same old queries . . . and got this result from Tom Jackson. In part, the letter reads: You might know that the Council has a programme of installing new, and reviewing existing, control parking zones (CPZ’s) during 2014/15 so we have prioritised work in the east and south of the Borough.

However, Mr Jackson said he had been contacted by residents in Coleraine & Mycenae Road questioning the boundary between the free bays and the permit bays. He had also heard concerns about parking in the Standard and Old Dover Road. He goes on: “I am writing to you all to let you know that it is very likely that a review of the Westcombe CPZ will be included in the 2015/16 work plan. “This is on the agenda to start until late May/June at the earliest. I am writing to your ward member colleague in the same vein . . . If you have any queries on this please contact me. Yours Tim Jackson

But please don’t blame Mr Jackson. It’s not his fault. All we know is that the WN is this: traders are still asking, after at least 7 years: “What’s happening about parking in Old Dover Road?”

Westcombe Woodlands

Our next Volunteer Day will be on Saturday 7th March from 10 am until 1 pm. Our meeting point will be in the car park just off Westcombe Hill Road. If you bring your own tools, we suggest that you mark your name on them. Gloves and boots also recommended.

Please note that access to the site is not suitable for children or for people with mobility problems. Coffee, tea, fruit squashes and biscuits will be provided. Please note there are no toilet facilities on site. Please call Frank Smith on 8852 0690 or 07999 445 143 if you have any queries you may have, or email: westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk. Frank Smith

Support Cystic Fibrosis Trust

The London Marathon has become hugely popular, with many thousands of participants – and millions of spectators and volunteers. It’s also a great way of raising money for a wide range of charities, as we at the Greenwich and Blackheath Cystic Fibrosis Trust have discovered.

Cystic fibrosis is a life-shortening inherited disease, affecting over 10,000 people in the UK. You can’t catch or develop cystic fibrosis, it’s something you’re born with and most cases in the UK are now diagnosed soon after birth.

Each year one of our very successful fundraising schemes is to offer bed and breakfast to London Marathon runners with friends in this area. This is not intended to be professional B & B but an enterprise to raise money for a very special charity and at the same time offer a friendly local home to a runner before their huge challenge. The runners we accommodate are taking part in the marathon to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, and both runners and hosts from previous years have told us that they really enjoyed the experience.

Bed and breakfast is offered at £50 for a single or £75 for a double and this is donated directly by runners to the CF Trust, so hosts do not need to deal with any payments. (Many of the runners do not actually want breakfast as they have a special food that they bring with them.)

The date of the London Marathon this year is Sunday 26th April so guests would be staying on the night of Saturday 25th April. If you think you might be willing to take part this year or have any questions please do get in touch with me. Many thanks!

Sacha Bright Greenwich and Blackheath Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Sachabright@hotmail.com

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Seminars on Inheritance Tax

If you missed local wealth manager Daren Wallbank’s free seminar on Inheritance Tax planning at Mycenae House last November, there’s a second chance to find out how to leave more of your money to your loved ones and less to the tax man.

Daren is holding more free seminars at Mycenae House in Westcombe Park on Saturday 19th March and at the Quaker Meeting House in Blackheath on Thursday 26th March, at 3 pm and 7.00 pm.

Attending this event could save you £500,000 in tax! Here’s what a local resident said about the seminar: “I was aware that I had an inheritance tax liability before I went along to Daren’s seminar. But I was shocked when he explained just how much of my estate would go to the tax man unless I acted now!” Fortunately, Daren has proved a mine of expert knowledge on how to legally reduce your liabilities. His advice has fundamentally changed my husband’s and my thinking on how we look at our estate. He’s come up with some really clever strategies that are helping us move from years of accumulating wealth towards making sure it benefits our family now and in the future. I’d urge anyone who is thinking about estate planning to get in touch with Daren now.” Jacqueline, Westcombe Park

Places are limited so please contact Daren by phone or email to book your place.

Daren Wallbank

Ginkgo Financial

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Join us for a new yoga class at Mycenae House

Tuesdays 18.30 – 19.45

All Levels Vinyoga

Contact Isley

Lisa@LifeTreeYoga.co.uk

Life Tree Yoga on Facebook

Westcombe News March 2015

3
**FEATURES: THE ARTS**

Rumpus on the campus

Following the Charlie Hebdo debacle, the western media have been full of articles asserting the value and importance of freedom of speech, but we now have our own cause célèbre, at Goldsmiths.

The feminist stand-up comedian Kate Smurthwaite was planning to put on a comedy show at Goldsmiths University; well done, Goldsmiths, for landing this world-renowned comedian who has performed internationally, and has featured many times on the BBC – as much as a regular commentator as a comedian. (She appeared on BBC TV's “Question Time” in 2011.)

So why was her show pulled by the College's comedy society after reports of campaigners threatening to picket the event? The College's faculty and managers have decided whether the show should go on, and 70% said that it should, but a minority threatened to picket the event.

Let Kate take up the story: “I was booked to do a show at Goldsmiths College, in south London. I’ve performed there many times before. The show was a joint event for the Comedy Society and the Feminist Society – members of which, I would suggest, could come for free – and we then agreed they would put up a ticket price for anyone else: such as local residents who fancied coming, and as a way to cover costs.

“The day before the show I was getting a lot of hassle on Twitter because I had dared to suggest that cutting the opening hours of Spearmint Rhino strip club was a good thing. From the get-go I’d started hours of discussion that was going on. But I did get to see messages like this one from the LSE Students' Union Feminists: “... we could contact the Goldsmiths Feminists to see if they want to protest”. Kate thought it only fair to let the organisers know there was a risk of a protest of people disrupting the show.

**NT’s Connections**

In March, Connections celebrates great new writing for the stage – and the energy, commitment, and talent of young theatre-maker. 5,000 or so people from 260 youth companies present 10 new plays commissioned by the National Theatre in 27 partner theatres around the country.

The National Theatre supports the drama companies as they bring their performances to the stage at Greenwich Theatre. Included in the programme is a play put on by John Roan School on 20 March. The young performers participating at the Greenwich Theatre are:

**Schedule**
- Wed. 18 March 6pm: Craft Work Theatre Company - *The Accused*  
- Thurs. 19 March 6:00pm - Woolwich Polytechnic School - *Blood* (again)  
- 8.00pm - Thomas Tallis School - *The Accused*  
- Fri. 20 March 6.00pm - South London Theatre Youth Group - *Raw by Rumpus*  
- Sun. 22 March 6.00pm - BRIT MT Collective  
- Hospital Food by Eugene O’Hare  
- Sun. 29 March 8:45pm - South London Theatre Youth Group - *Remote*  
- Sat. 21 March 7:00pm - Montage Theatre Arts - *The Edinburgh Production*  
- Sat. 21 March 8:45pm - South London Theatre Youth Group - *Raw by Rumpus*  
- Sun. 22 March 6:00pm - BRIT MT Collective  
- Hospital Food by Eugene O’Hare

**Immersion at the NMM**

Many people go to the theatre to be transported into another world. In “immersive theatre”, the audience are not merely passive bystanders. They are part of the story, however small their role, and they will find themselves in the middle of the action, either as a witness, or an actual character.

It is thinking like this that inspired the Punchdrunk Enrench theatre company to mount their show “Against Captain's Orders... A Journey into the Uncharted” being put on at the National Maritime Museum. The show is for children aged 6 - 12 - no adult admitted unless accompanied by a child. The children are transported into an exciting world of maritime history, daring-do and adventure in this new family exhibition.

Children will be active throughout the experience. The performance takes the children on the adventure of a lifetime - theatrical journey through the Museum, the like of which has never been seen before: exploring the National Maritime Museum's extraordinary collection of maritime artefacts, each one with a story to tell.

The trip is exciting, enlightening, and, perhaps, just a tiny bit dangerous . . .

**The Pointer School**

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**Je Suis Kate Smurthwaite?**

This dramatic poster advertised Connecticut Opera’s production of Tosca in 2007 - 2008. See it in colour on our website!

**Tosca**

Midsummer Opera in the Spring - Why not? Opera is good at any time! Midsummer Opera is much loved in our neck of the woods - a high percentage of Midsummer Opera's performers live in SE3, SE10 and SE1. All the more reason for going to their performance of Giacomo Puccini's Tosca at St John's Waterloo in March.

The performance will be sung in the original Italian and will be semi-staged; most unusually, the famous Te Deum at the end of the first Act features the church's organ.

The cast includes Deborah Stoddart as Tosca, John Upton as Cavadorossi and Stephen Holloway as Scarpia.

The Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of Midsummer Opera will be joined by a chil- dren's choir from St Dunstan's College, Catford and the whole ensemble will be conducted by MO's Artistic Director, David Robines. Tosca will be performed at St John's Church, 73 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8TV on Sun. 22nd March (4.30), Fri. 27th March (7.00pm) & Sun. 29th March (4.30pm) Tickets: £22 ($19 concs) in advance or £26/£23 on the door. Box office: 020 7652 0760 or online: wwwтекетика.рс

Puccini's Tosca

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**NT's Connections**

In March, Connections celebrates great new writing for the stage – and the energy, commitment, and talent of young theatre-maker. 5,000 or so people from 260 youth companies present 10 new plays commissioned by the National Theatre in 27 partner theatres around the country.

The National Theatre supports the drama companies as they bring their performances to the stage at Greenwich Theatre. Included in the programme is a play put on by John Roan School on 20 March. The young performers participating at the Greenwich Theatre are:

**Schedule**
- Wed. 18 March 6pm: Craft Work Theatre Company - *The Accused*  
- Thurs. 19 March 6:00pm - Woolwich Polytechnic School - *Blood* (again)  
- 8.00pm - Thomas Tallis School - *The Accused*  
- Fri. 20 March 6.00pm - South London Theatre Youth Group - *Raw by Rumpus*  
- Sun. 22 March 6:00pm - BRIT MT Collective  
- Hospital Food by Eugene O’Hare  
- Sun. 29 March 8:45pm - South London Theatre Youth Group - *Remote*  
- Sat. 21 March 7:00pm - Montage Theatre Arts - *The Edinburgh Production*  
- Sat. 21 March 8:45pm - South London Theatre Youth Group - *Raw by Rumpus*  
- Sun. 22 March 6:00pm - BRIT MT Collective  
- Hospital Food by Eugene O’Hare

**Immersion at the NMM**

Many people go to the theatre to be transported into another world. In “immersive theatre”, the audience are not merely passive bystanders. They are part of the story, however small their role, and they will find themselves in the middle of the action, either as a witness, or an actual character.

It is thinking like this that inspired the Punchdrunk Enrench theatre company to mount their show “Against Captain's Orders... A Journey into the Uncharted” being put on at the National Maritime Museum. The show is for children aged 6 - 12 - no adult admitted unless accompanied by a child. The children are transported into an exciting world of maritime history, daring-do and adventure in this new family exhibition.

Children will be active throughout the experience. The performance takes
Deprived of a property ladder, many people are going for shared ownership schemes, which are provided through housing associations. Shared ownership schemes allow people on limited incomes to get on the property ladder by buying a stake in a house or flat which they can later increase when they can afford it. Usually, buyers start with a 25% or 50% share, and pay rent to a housing association for the remainder of the property. You can only buy up to 75% of your home, but once you own 75%, you don’t have to pay rent on the remaining share. You’ll need to take out a mortgage to pay for your share of the home’s purchase price. Shared ownership properties are always leasehold.

Eligibility
You can buy a home through shared ownership if:
* your household earns £60,000 a year or less (or £60,000 a year or less in London for a 1 or 2 bedroom property, or £80,000 a year or less in London for a 3 or more bedroom property)
* you’re a first-time buyer (or you used to own a home but can’t afford one now)
* you rent a council or housing association property

What’s available
You need to contact London’s Help to Buy Agent.* Some sample prices include:
- Love Lane, central Woolwich: three bedroom apartment £141K; one bedroom apartment: £273K

Locked in for life?
Outside London, under new government proposals, people in shared ownership homes will be allowed to sell them on the open market, rather than as at present, giving the housing association first refusal. That will still be the case in London: if you want to sell, the housing association has up to eight weeks to find a buyer, but all sorts of delays can then occur.
* http://www.help2buy.londonco.uk/property-search/property-listing

To mark the UN’s International Women’s Day
All are invited to a public meeting on what the UN is doing for women (and what it should be doing)
Illustrated talk by Jane Grant followed by discussion
7.30pm Monday March 16th at The Old Bake House Bennett Park (behind Age Exchange)
(Refreshments 7.00 pm) Info: 0208 858 8489

What price regeneration?
Enveloped on three sides by the lower Thames, the Greenwich Peninsula is probably most familiar to Londoners as the home of the O2 arena. It is also the site of one of the capital’s largest regeneration schemes with up to 10,010 new homes and 325,000 square metres of commercial floor space earmarked for construction over a 25-year period.

Once home to a vast complex of heavy industry, this barren and heavily contami- nated wasteland was selected in the late 1990s as the site for a flagship sustainable community. Decontaminated and remedi- ated by English Partnerships, the original Peninsula vision was for a brand new London district – a stable, sustainable, integrated community linked to central London by the new Jubilee Line extension that would, once completed, stand as a town centre.

The current model – a fine example of what a well-designed twenty-first century mixed community could be.

A decade and a half on, it’s unclear whether that original vision can still be realised. After a long period of inactivity when, along with numerous other schemes in London, development on the Peninsula stalled, the earthmovers are once again churning up the soil.

Yet they’re doing so in a very different context than the one in which the original Peninsula vision was conceived. The tremendous rise of house prices in the area, the steady influx of international capital, the Coalition Government’s decision to cut the affordable housing grant by 60 per cent in 2010, the introduction of the “Affordable Rent” regime and a Mayor that has made it a priority to ensure that new homes are affordable, have little chance of ever living in.

As a corporate developer Knight Dragon exists to maximise profit. Like other developers in the capital, they are simply responding to signals from its insatiable property market – and a Mayor intent on achieving his London-wide target of 42,000 new units per year even if it means forgetting about affordability and breach- ing his own density guidelines (for exam- ple, Boris Johnson’s intervention over Lewisham’s call for a greater proportion of affordable homes).

Can any of these proposals simply be dismissed out of hand. In a global city that is facing an acute housing shortage – currently, Greenwich has over 14,000 people on our housing waiting list – there may well be some justification for an increase in homes, height and density, and Knight Dragon is right to argue that much has changed since the original Greenwich Peninsula development framework was approved.

However, will these proposals be of benefit to the local area and the local community, not just overseas investors and company profit margins?

In the negotiations that surround Knight Dragon’s proposed revision of the 2004 masterplan compromises may be inevitable but any bargain made must be hard struck. The developers’ assessments of viability must be approached with a critical eye and any proposed improvements to local infra- structure must be scrutinised carefully to ensure that they are sufficient to accommo- date a significant increase in population.

Social integration
Most importantly, a commitment to creat- ing a socially integrated community must be maintained vigorously. Regeneration of the Greenwich Peninsula cannot come at any price: London is not Manhattan or Hong Kong and the local community will not tolerate the place they love being carpeted with scores of high-rise towers containing flats that their family members have little chance of ever living in.

Under the prevailing approach to regeneration in our capital even the most successful development project involves complex trade-offs but it’s more important than ever that we hold onto the principles contained in the original Greenwich Peninsula vision – of a socially inclusive, stable and environmentally sustainable community that would be respectful of our common heritage and would create thou- sands of jobs, first-class social and com- munity infrastructure and a vibrant public realm. In short, a development that benefits Londoners, not just overseas investors.

Clive Matthew Pennycook represents the Greenwich West Ward on Greenwich Council and is Labour’s Parliamentary Candidate for the Greenwich & Woolwich constituency. This article is an edited version of his blog that first appeared on Jan 26th on blogs.greenwich.co.uk

FEATURES
Air Quality Survey

Anne Robbins Outlines a New Westcombe Society Initiative Designed to Measure Air Quality in Our Area.

In February, the WV raised serious concerns about air quality on our streets. Readers may be glad to hear that the Westcombe Society is now undertaking tests to determine levels of NO2 (nitrogen dioxide) in the atmosphere in the area.

Some of you may have spotted people up ladders, fixing little tubes to lampposts with cable ties. These tubes look simple, but they are a great tool for collecting one particular type of pollutant: NO2.

NO2 is emitted by vehicle engines. It is invisible, but the particles can lodge deep in the lungs and affect the development of children, as well as adult health.

The Westcombe Society has organized teams of volunteers to put the tubes up, and take them down again at the end of the month-long study. Sites include local schools, busy road junctions, and, for purposes of comparison, baseline points where the air might be of good quality.

The tubes will be sent to Oxford for analysis, under the eye of the Network for Clean Air. Results will be available later this year. Watch this space!

Local Planning Issues

Anne Robbins Reports

A number of issues have come up in meetings of the Westcombe Society Environment Committee, including:

- **Foyl Road Garages** – A strong objection is being submitted against the proposed back land development to replace the garages with two houses.
- **Basements Applications** – Applications to excavate land under homes for basements have again refused. 'Temporary fencing' is affixed to the road, although they have been effective, many residents are concerned.

Meanwhile, it will be possible to contact IKEA through the consultants (Sara Price, Corporate Reputation Consulting, 86 Great Suffolk St, London SE1 0BE; T: 020 7401 4840, M: 07961 801 204, www.crccommunications.co.uk).

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- **FOYLE ROAD ref 15/0405/TC**
  - Construct single storey side extension and loft conversion with 2 dormers

- **48 HARDY ROAD ref 15/0427/TC**
  - Construct 2-storey side extension, single storey rear extension, and left conversion with 2 dormers

- **3 VANBRUGH TERRACE ref 15/0314/TC**
  - Full curtilage in front garden

- **4 HARDY ROAD ref 15/0406/TC**
  - Full curtilage in front garden

- **83 COLEMAN ROAD ref 15/0422/TC**
  - Full curtilage in front garden

IKEA Update

Maggie Gravelle Reports

There are a number of issues that will need to be considered in the planning permission process. IKEA itself has provided some key information about the project, including a traffic assessment conducted by the Control of Aircraft Noise (CANN) study, which was approved by the Council.

The extension of the Peninsula development and the possibility of the Silvertown Tunnel – could have the unintended effect of increasing traffic on local roads. We will be able to show current levels of air pollution at particularly busy traffic areas, as well as at calmer points. Some places may exceed permitted levels of air pollution already. Future testing will show how that has changed, for worse or better, and we can use this information to ask for improvements. Anyone interested in finding out more or taking part should contact the Westcombe Society's Environment Committee, at environment@westcombesociety.org.uk, or the Network for Clean Air, at http://www.networkforcleanair.org.uk/index.html/clean-air.html.

Enjoysing the View of the A102!

In February, local residents were startled to see work had suddenly begun on the parapets on the hedge over the A102 in Charlton Road.

Many readers have complained about these temporary parapets erected by Transport for London (TFL) in 2014. What TFL calls “temporary fencing” is affixed to ugly concrete slabs.

These structures were put in place – without warning – for safety reasons, and although they have been effective, many considered them an anachronism, obstructing a splendid view over north Greenwich, Canary Wharf and towards the City. For many months, officers from Greenwich Council have been pressing TFL to implement a permanent solution.

Cllr Morrissey told the WV, “According to Malcolm Smith, Principal Engineer Structures & Major Works in the Highways Department, the new parapets will be almost like-for-like in appearance both in form and colour to the old parapets (without the high mesh fencing) but will be almost a foot higher to provide additional safety, enabling pedestrians to enjoy the views without compromising safety.”

Residents are worried that this will limit night work. Some footway closures on one side of the road or the other will be necessary. In addition, temporary traffic lights will be required, at least during the daytime.