



Westcombe NEWS



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MARCH 2016 Issue 2

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

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

Time running out for Greenwich Time

It has been announced that Greenwich Council has agreed to stop publishing *Greenwich Time*, its weekly newspaper. So the last weekly issue will be in June.

Although some people may rejoice at the news, the *WN* mourns the loss of any newspaper; and whatever its defects, real or imagined, *Greenwich Time* did provide a useful source of information on planning, housing and other issues.

That's because, every week, the paper reached the vast majority of local homes – a task that should not be underestimated, a fact that all those involved in distributing the *WN* can vouch for.

The government said that the paper was in breach of the Publicity Code laid down by the Department of Communities and Local Government. Greenwich Council had planned to go to court to defend the paper. However, Greenwich has now decided to settle out of court, and has agreed to comply with the code, which restricts local authority publications to four times a year.

A Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) spokesman said: "We have agreed that the Royal Borough of Greenwich will be fully compliant with the Publicity Code from the end of June 2016, settling the matter without having to go to court."

Need for regular communication

A Greenwich Council spokesperson said: "We are pleased that the Department has accepted the Royal Borough's need to continue to produce regular and frequent communications for residents, in order to keep them up to date on Council services, job opportunities and other important information."

So it seems that the Council will still be allowed to produce "regular and frequent

communication of information" to those residents who choose to receive it in whatever format, so long as it does not look like a newspaper, news-sheet or similar.

The council has consistently argued that a weekly *Greenwich Time* saves money – last December, Cllr Denise Hyland told a Council meeting that it saved £21,000 a month. It was claimed that without it, the council would have to pay one of the local newspaper groups to carry its public notices. These would include items such as advertising planning applications, road works, and other formal announcements. The problem is that no local newspaper achieves anything like the coverage of *Greenwich Time*.

In March last year, Eric Pickles, the former communities secretary, announced plans to take legal action against the council: the argument was that public funds were being spent on a propaganda tool. Critics have claimed that the paper contained a lot of material, such as features on the Council and community items, that were designed to show the council in a positive light.

Greenwich Council will now have to rethink its communication strategies, and it is possible it will follow the example of Lewisham: there, the Council made its *Lewisham Life* magazine a quarterly some years ago. In addition, it sends out weekly emails with information about council and community services.

If Greenwich follows suit, a lot of local people who are not regular users of email will obviously lose out. Some observers have suggested that papers such as *News Shopper* and *Greenwich Mercury* may get a much-needed injection of advertising revenue from the council, but that remains to be seen.



PHOTO: Neville Grant

Early spring in Greenwich Park. General Wolfe looks thoughtful . . .

Local democracy in action

Important local decisions, such as the rise in council tax this coming April, can now be viewed as they are made.

Starting from Wednesday February 24th, all full council meetings in Royal Greenwich will be streamed live via the council's website. This means that anyone with internet access will be able to watch as their local councillors discuss crucial issues. The webcasts are also easily viewed on a mobile phone or tablet.

People will be able to see elected members from all political sides in action as they debate and vote on major current issues. The meetings at Woolwich Town Hall start at 7.00pm every Wednesday. To view the proceedings, go to

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/webcast
Council leader Denise Hyland said, "I

am delighted that we are able to use technology to open up the democratic process to more local people, and to make our decision-making more open to everyone in the borough. It is the latest step in using technology to improve council services."

Cllr Maureen O'Mara, the Council's Cabinet Member for Online Services, said, "We are fast developing the council's website to enable greater access to services at a time and place that suits our residents, and streaming live evening webcasts from the council chamber is our latest technical improvement."

One observer says: "This is very good news. Let's hope the sound quality is up to scratch: the last time I went to a Council meeting in Woolwich, the discussions were almost totally inaudible."

All change for London's Trains?

The Department for Transport (DfT), which is currently responsible for awarding rail franchises, and Transport for London, responsible for Tube services, have issued a joint consultation document which proposes switching oversight of London's urban train services to TfL.

If the proposals are adopted, the switch will come into effect as existing rail franchises expire, starting with Southeastern in 2018 (by which time the redevelopment of London Bridge should with luck have been completed – so we may actually be back to regular Sunday services!)

The most obvious impact will be on the fare structure, with the introduction of a common structure for all services under TfL oversight – so eventually for all rail fares within London.

Currently, starting from Westcombe Park, a season ticket to London Bridge or Cannon Street (both zone 1) is considerably cheaper than a season ticket through

to an underground station in zone 1, but after the change-over these would become identical. Thus while it makes obvious sense to have a common structure, there are likely to be winners and losers.

On frequency, whilst the proposals state that there will be no reduction in frequency of longer distance services, there's no such commitment for local services. Given the lack of spare capacity on lines to Cannon Street, there is therefore no prospect of any increase in service frequency, certainly during peak hours. In fact we might even see a reduced frequency.

You can see the consultation document at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/rail-passenger-services-in-london-and-the-south-east-a-new-approach>.

The document sets six questions as part of the consultation process and the deadline for responding is 18th March. So it's over to you!

Dick Allard

Blackwall Tunnel Closures



TfL are installing a new management and control system in the Blackwall Tunnel to allow incidents to be identified and resolved more quickly. These closures are in addition to the regular closures:

Southbound

Tues 15th March 00.01 - 0500
Wed 16th March 00.01 - 0500

Northbound

Sunday 6th March 01.00 - 0800
Thursday 17th March 00.01 - 0500
Friday 18th March 00.01 - 0500
Sunday 20th March 01.00 - 0800
Thursday 24th March 00.01 - 0500

Details of the additional closures in February arrived too late for our February issue . . .



Newsbriefs



Congratulations

Michael Goldman, a former distinguished editor of the *Westcombe News*, married Susan de Picarda on 17th February 2016. Michael and Susan met through U3A (University of Third Age). No, it is not a dating agency!

Apologies

Apologies (on behalf of the Blackheath Joint Working party) for the change in the date of their meeting: it was advertised in the *WN* (and other publications) to take place on 16th February but

was then changed to 23rd February. Emily Norton of the Westcombe Society's Environment Committee said: "We did ask that the date of this meeting should not be changed when we were first told of the change. Our apologies to anyone who was inconvenienced."

Well done

GRACE (Greenwich Refugee Aid Clothing Essentials) is a local charity that has partnered with national charity groups to collect, pack, and distribute donations urgently needed in

Greece and other locations hit by the refugee crisis. *See p.3.*

Well done, too, the dozens of volunteers at St George's Church in Glenluce Road for taking part in the Greenwich Night Shelter Scheme over the winter months to help people who are homeless.

And to Louis Court, old boy of Invicta and Sherington Schools, who has repeatedly gone to Calais to help out with the refugees stuck in "The Jungle". His next move is as a volunteer in Ghana, before going on to the University of Leeds.

The Westcombe Society

Daffodil Tea Sat 19th March 2.00 - 4.00 pm

The Daffodil Tea for Senior Citizens is by invitation; however anyone who doesn't receive an invitation and who would like to come, please ring Caroline on 020 8853 0948.

Easter Egg Hunt - Sat 26th March 1.30 to 3.30 pm

Two hours of fun hunting for eggs in Mycenae House Gardens £2.50 per child. (£2 members) Prizes for best Easter hat and basket. Face painting.

Quiz Night Friday 15th April 7.30 for 8.00 start.

Tables to be booked by ringing Caroline on 0208 8530948 - bring a team or come on your own - chippy suppers must be booked in advance

The Westcombe Society

WESTCOMBE NEWS

ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
Neville Grant, The Editor
wnews@westcombesociety.org
Tel. 020 8858 8489

ALL MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:
wnews@westcombesociety.org
Deadline for the April issue: 12th March.

Environment Editor: Maggie Gravelle

What's On page: Barbara Ward

Reporters: The community - that means you!

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Emily Norton All queries and comments to: 020 8853 2756
environment@westcombesociety.org

DISTRIBUTION Emily Norton, Shirley Broughton, Brian Carroll, Roger Kidley, Joanne Lucas, and Patricia Slade-Baker.
Volunteer distributors please phone 020 8853 3740, we need your help!

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Marilyn Little, 163 Westcombe Hill, SE3 7DP 020 8853 1312
Advertising@westcombesociety.org

All adverts 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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Contact the Westcombe Society:
WestcombeNews@egroups.com
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Tel. 020 8853 1312

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We take all reasonable precautions to protect the interests 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 addressed to the advertiser.

To access back-numbers (in colour) go to:
www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/
Westcombe Society's Blog:
<http://westcombe.blogspot.com>

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Please send this membership form to:
Christine Legg, 69 Mycenae Road,
London, SE3 7SE

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Address.....

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Tel.....

Email:

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Senior Citizens/unwaged	£4	[]

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Our "Thank you" evening for volunteers

Marilyn Little

Volunteering can take many forms: there are so many people of goodwill in our area, it would be invidious to single out any of them here, though a good many appear in the various features and news-stories contained in this issue and others.

This page pays tribute to those who volunteer for the Westcombe Society in so many different ways.

What do they do? Everything from necessary committee work – for example our environment committee – to organising and helping out at numerous events, such as children's Nearly New sales, or teas for seniors. Then there are those upon

whom we are dependent for help to produce and also – very importantly – to distribute the *Westcombe News*.

Yes, the Society has many committed volunteers who enjoy supporting our activities but we would always welcome more. In the main this is largely enjoyable work with like-minded residents who are anxious to preserve our local community. We are always grateful for new volunteers and as our Christmas Bazaar will be held again this November we would welcome anyone wishing to assist. In the meantime, this page – and the evening it documents – is our way of saying "Thanks, everyone!"



It was a very enjoyable party: and when Marilyn spoke in praise of Myles and Barbara for the 23 years they had spent in charge of distributing the *WN*, everyone warmly applauded. Gifts of appreciation included a mimosa tree, garden vouchers and a bouquet. (Thanks, Passion Flower)



PHOTOS: Neville Grant



Letters to the editor

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

From: G. Bailey Westcombe Park Road

I am sure that many of your readers will join you in lamenting the threat to intellectual enquiry on our university campuses (When a "safe space" becomes "unsafe", *WN* Feb 2016). In the February issue of Prospect magazine, Prof Frank Furedi suggests that it is all the parents' fault for "infantilising" our young people.

I take a different view: we need to take responsibility for our own actions – the first rule of being an adult. Those students who cannot handle intellectual and civilised debate on controversial issues should perhaps not be at university at all. I think the article in the *WN* last month provides a strong argument for raising the voting age....

From: James Scotton Milwaukeee

The "safe place" controversy on university campuses is familiar this side of the pond. Here at Marquette University in Milwaukee we have had the same discussion.

Fortunately, students and the university rejected the idea. I even asked my students in class about it, and the notion that instructors should avoid "trigger" words that could upset some students. My students very strongly rejected that notion.

In my law classes I usually put Gloria Steinem's words up on Power Point: "The Truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off!"

From: Malcolm Hardy St John's Park

I wonder if your readers have explored the new borough website. It is very sophisticated with seemingly endless multiple choice options and, inevitably a client satisfaction questionnaire including the usual questions on ethnicity etc. and one on the usefulness of the information provided even before the enquiry has been sent.

Having sent an enquiry one is given no enquiry number to help track it, and my enquiry (on the relatively unimportant question of the removal from St. John's Park of a bench) remains unanswered after two weeks, as well as the same enquiry addressed with a chaser to my ward councillor.

Is everyone in the council so overstretched that only the most urgent communications deserve attention?

From: Concerned resident

For many years a beautiful magnolia has given pleasure to all who saw it – except, it seems to the present owner of the property in Hardy Road where it stood until it was brutally cut down, in full flower, early one morning at the beginning of February.

The front garden is now being paved - *nil points* on both counts. Perhaps it is time to remind readers that tree work in this area requires permission from the Council. It would be interesting to know if approval was sought in this case.

Editor: We understand that failure to obtain planning permission when required can incur a fine of up to £20,000.

From: Maggie Gravelle

The Council is encouraging residents to become environmental champions. This is a voluntary neighbourhood scheme designed to improve the appearance and cleanliness of the local area.

The idea is to encourage anyone who is concerned about littering, dog mess, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and graffiti to consider becoming an environment champion, and report it to the council. It is all about local people and the council working together to make Royal Greenwich a better place.

If you are interested in becoming an environment champion, call 020 8921 5618 or email community-environment@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

St George's HOLY WEEK

WESTCOMBE PARK

PALM SUNDAY – 20th March
11:00 am Palm Sunday Eucharist with Festive Procession

MAUNDY THURSDAY – 24 March
7:00 pm Re-enactment of Last Supper (Seder meal with lamb)

GOOD FRIDAY – 25 March
12 - 2:00 pm Quiet Time for Prayer and Reflection
2.00 - 3.00 Good Friday Service with building of Easter garden
3.00 Tea with hot cross buns

HOLY SATURDAY – 26 March
9:00 pm Easter Vigil (at Christ Church, Trafalgar Rd.)

EASTER DAY – 27 March
11:00 am Holy Communion with Choir

Your neighbourhood church on Glenluce Road
<http://www.stgeorgeswestcombepark.org.uk/>

Revd Tim Yeager, Team Vicar 07804 614245 tyeager@gmail.com

We believe in inclusive Church - church which does not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. We believe in Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

Jonathan Dove: our most prolific composer

Jonathan Dove, who grew up in our area and went to local schools, must be one of contemporary music's most prolific, and gifted, composers. He has written over twenty operas (*Tobias and the Angel*, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, the list goes on and on ...), and numerous other works, both choral and instrumental.

His latest piece, *Arion and the Dolphin*, (with words by Alasdair Middleton), receives its premiere on the 12th March 2016 with a performance by Dulwich Choral Society, at All Saints Church, West Dulwich, with further performances at numerous other locations, including in London, Ely and Portsmouth.

Jonathan will be flying to Indianapolis immediately after the Dulwich performance for a production of his opera *Mansfield Park*.

Arion and the Dolphin was conceived as a companion piece for *Carmina Burana* though it can also be performed as a stand-alone piece.

Arion and the Dolphin is but one among several huge successes. Most of our readers will recall his witty – and at times poignant – opera *Flight*, commissioned by Glyndebourne in 1998. The opera was inspired by the true-life story of an Iranian refugee who lived at Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris, for 18 years. The opera was most recently performed by Operas Holland Park, but it is frequently

performed all over the world.

However, there have been many other works since. For example, His community opera *The Monster in the Maze*, jointly commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra and Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, received its world premiere in June 2015 with the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, to be followed by performances in London and Provence.

The opera tells a simplified version of the story of the Minotaur, with a libretto by

his frequent collaborator Alasdair Middleton – and translated into both French and German.

The London Mozart Players have

recently raised funds to pay for the first recording of Jonathan Dove's *For an Unknown Soldier*, commissioned to mark the centenary of the First World War, and recorded at Blackheath Halls in 2015.

The work uses texts drawn from a variety of writers and poets working at that time. Scored for tenor soloist, children's and adult choruses and large orchestra, this ambitious and poignant work has already been performed three times in the UK by the London Mozart Players.



Image: Andrew Palmer

“Not since Benjamin Britten has a British composer succeeded in writing operas which communicate with such clarity and coherence as those by Jonathan Dove”
The Gramophone

Good news for EEA

Emergency Exit Arts (EEA) based in East Greenwich, have been awarded an Arts Council England (ACE) small capital grant to develop their current home of 25 years, Rothbury Hall, into the Greenwich Making Space.

It will be a 21st century art-making and training centre for creative practitioners, especially those working in outdoor arts. It will provide state of the art equipment to over 150 emerging and mid-career artists. to enable them to deliver more high quality work and links with their local community.

Over 700,000 people each year around the country see EEA's amazing menagerie of mechanical creatures, participatory events and spectacular shows including 2015's Blackheath Fireworks display. Artistic Director, Deb Mullins said:

“We are delighted that Arts Council England have supported us with such a

generous grant. It will really help us to continue to engage communities, and astonish audiences throughout the UK with work created at our home in Greenwich.”

Joyce Wilson, Area Director, London, Arts Council England, said: “EEA delivers high quality outdoor arts work and long-term youth engagement programmes among some of the hardest to reach areas in London and across the country. We are pleased to be match-funding this project, with additional support from the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Charlton Athletic Community Trust.”

Ed: In 2015, EEA delivered 68 different projects to more than 750,000 across the country, with over 18,000 participants.

Pictured above: Rothbury Hall



New arts centre

The Royal Borough has just entered into a new partnership with one of the UK's top arts organisations, Dash Arts, to develop an exciting new cultural quarter based in the outgoing Firepower Royal Artillery Museum (*see p.6*).

Dash Arts creates artistic experiences that change the way we see the world. Founded in 2005 by Artistic Directors, Josephine Burton and Tim Supple, Dash Arts has rapidly emerged as a unique international creative force, producing new theatre, dance, music and art events in collaboration with exceptional artists from abroad. Dash Arts travels across continents to shed new light on great cultures and creates work through intensive periods of Research and Development.

Perfect, then, for a multi-cultural borough like Greenwich.

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, cabinet member for culture and creative industries, said: “We are so thrilled to have Dash Arts



Left to right: Tim Supple, Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald and Josephine Burton

as our first signed partner for the cultural quarter. It's about putting Woolwich on the map as a leading cultural destination. Dash Arts reaches large audiences across the world – and as result of this agreement will be based here in Greenwich.”

Josephine Burton of Dash said: “The extraordinary historic buildings in the Royal Arsenal will house a new kind of performing arts theatre in which theatre, music, dance, art, film and food can be enjoyed in the same programme.”

Burns Night

Barbara Ward

A splendid Burns' night celebration was held at Greenwich Theatre on Monday 25th January, the anniversary of the poet's birthday. The event was ably hosted by Live Canon's Eva Traynor, Leon Scott, James Scott and Simon Muller plus Director Helen Eastman.

The audience had the combined treat of Scottish music and Burns' poetry beautifully performed from memory as well as delightful, readings of eclectic poetry inspired by Burns, supplied by the audience.

Live Canon really know how to entertain: all the normal Burns' Night festivities were observed with reverence, humour, love and buckets of enthusiasm from the cast. Of course, it was of local Greenwich interest that 'Tam o'Shanter' revealed what a cutty sark actually is. The audience were issued with whisky and shortbread for the Burns' Night toasts. Eva Traynor led the joyful 'Address to the Lassies' and 'Reply to the Laddies' audience toasts with a nod to the women. The Haggis dramatically emerged from the back of the audience, through the throng with drumroll and fanfare and was finally skewered on stage. Well played Live Canon ! A brilliant evening enjoyed by all.



PHOTO: John Watts

Live Canon's wee lassie Eva Traynor addresses “the lassies”. The laddies had to wait.

*** Live Canon are an ensemble that specialise in performing poetry (from memory), and perform all over the UK**

David Lloyd's £3m refurbishment

David Lloyd is Europe's premier health, sports and leisure group, and its club in Kidbrooke has begun a £3m refurbishment. The plans will result in a significant upgrading of its facilities for cyclists, swimmers, tennis players, gym bunnies, workers, yogis, spa-lovers, parents and children alike.

This is one of David Lloyd's biggest investment in a single club and will result in a transformed club with unrivalled facilities. The ambitious project in the club includes the creation of dedicated group cycling and an upgraded High Impact fitness studio.

A brand new dedicated cycling studio will provide members with a full timetable of both instructor-led and virtual classes, including the exclusive class 'The Sufferfest', a highly acclaimed video-based indoor cycling programme that is followed by enthusiasts across the world.

The high intensity interval training programme (HIIT) has been developed by world-class cycling coaches and is driven by synchronised soundtracks, creative story lines and officially licensed footage from the world's biggest races, including the Tour de France, Giro d'Italia, the UCI World Championships and Paris-Roubaix.

From the moment members step into the gym, they will enter a very high-quality designated exercise zone catering for all needs. The gym features a number of key partners such as Life Fitness, Octane Fitness, Watt Bike and Woodway, amongst other top-class suppliers.

Other changes in the club will include an entirely refurbished DLicious cafe/bar, which will enable members to relax, work or enjoy a meal in modern, stylish and relaxing surroundings. A great range of healthy options will be available and will include an adults-only area and a business hub where one can catch up on emails.

The club is also providing three new seasonal covered tennis courts with flood-lighting – and there will also be a brand new 25 metre outdoor pool, and spa services, with fully refurbished shower and locker room areas.

In addition, the club will be offering exceptional facilities to the whole family for the first time, with the introduction of bespoke kids' facilities, including a DL Kids area with activity rooms, a crèche and family changing rooms.

For further information, please visit www.davidlloyd.co.uk/club-finder/Kidbrooke

Trees Please

The residents of Vanbrugh Road and Highmore Road have at last seen an improvement to their street scene as long-awaited street trees have now been planted. Some trees are still missing but the overall planting should improve the area for generations to come.

Thanks should go to all local Councillors and the Royal Borough of Greenwich for their continued involvement with residents in working towards the mitigation of the effects of the recent redevelopments at John Roan School in Maze Hill.

A Plea from the Editor
All those who advertise or send in material for the W/V are asked to send in their material in good time. Anything submitted after the 16th of the month may not be included.

Permission for works to trees: Greenwich Council

We want to protect our trees, which are an important part of the natural environment and open space. Work to trees will need special permission:

- * if the tree is in a conservation area
- * if it has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) attached to it
- * or if the tree is protected by a planning condition.

If you're not sure if a tree falls into these categories, contact the tree officer at: **Planning Department, Fifth Floor, The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington St., Woolwich, London SE18 6HQ Tel. 020 8921 5661**

Mycenae

House & Gardens

February - July 2016

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FEATURES

The Housing and Planning Bill

and its effects in Greenwich

Our MP MATT PENNYCOOK writes

On 12th January the Housing and Planning Bill passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons. It now makes its way to the House of Lords for further scrutiny. The Bill includes the following measures:

- Provision for a statutory framework for the delivery of new “Starter Homes”
- Extension of the Right to Buy (RTB) discount levels to housing association tenants
- Provision for a levy on local authorities to fund the RTB extension, by means of the forced sale of the most valuable vacant public homes
- A requirement for high income social tenants (over £40,000 in London and over £30,000 outside London) to pay market rate, or near market rate, rents
- Further de-regulation of the post-war planning framework, including a ‘permission in principle’ on land allocated for development
- Increased powers for the Secretary of State to intervene if local plans are not effectively delivered.

Redefining “affordable housing”

In addition, Government Ministers also snuck in more than 60 pages of new legislation immediately prior to Third Reading, including redefining ‘affordable housing’ to include homes for sale costing up to £450,000 and handing local planning over to outsourced private companies.

This is an entirely pernicious piece of legislation that I am convinced will exacerbate the housing affordability crisis across our city. Its centrepiece, new “Starter Homes”, will be out of reach for many families because house prices are now so wildly out of kilter with normal earnings.

Average-earning families will be priced out of these new “affordable” homes in

58% of local authorities by 2020, while families earning George Osborne’s new enhanced minimum wage will be priced out in 98% of the country.

In our local area here in Greenwich, one would need an income of over £75,000 to even contemplate buying one. In addition, the starter homes policy will also result in cannibalising genuinely affordable homes, because it is to be funded by cutting back affordable housing obligations on private developers.

Even if some middle earning families do benefit from the scheme, they’re likely to be stretching themselves to the limit by taking on big mortgages or Help to Buy debts. This is a ticking time bomb in view of the increasing likelihood of interest rates rises. Multiple re-possession are certain to occur.

Other sections of the Bill simply do not add up financially. Take one of the Bill’s core measures: the extension of the Right to Buy to 1.3 million housing association tenants in England. The National Housing Federation has estimated that this will cost just over £11 billion, yet the disposal of vacant ‘high-value’ public homes will only raise an estimated £4.5 billion.

Death-knell for social housing

Either the Government is set to break its promise to the vast majority of those 1.3 million housing association tenants, many



Kidbrooke Village

of whom genuinely desire to own their own homes, or it will have to borrow significant sums to fund its giveaway. That’s why the IFS (Institute for Fiscal Studies) has warned that the policy could cost ‘billions of pounds’ over the next parliament, and ‘worsen the UK’s

underlying public finance position’.

And the Bill sounds the death knell for social housing and for meaningful local involvement in the planning process.

Shelter predict that the Bill will lead to 180,000 fewer affordable homes to rent and to buy over the next five years. During our deliberations a number of Conservative backbenchers expressed concerns about what the legislation, particularly new provisions that facilitate the granting of planning ‘permission in principle’, will mean for the capacity of communities to influence planning decisions in their local areas.

Constituents write to me to express their concerns about many different issues but two of the most common complaints I receive are that local people cannot afford to rent or buy the homes being built as part of the new developments springing up in the constituency, and that local planning decisions are difficult to influence.

This Bill will exacerbate both of those concerns and I will therefore be working hard over the next few months as a member of the Shadow Housing Team to assist the Lords in scrutinising the flaws in this Bill and to mobilise opposition to it outside Parliament.

Ed: Readers’ views welcome

Greenwich Housing

Fact File compiled by Jim Wintour



PHOTOS: Neville Grant

“Available”: a relative term

- The population of Greenwich is projected to increase from 270,000 in 2015 to 300,000 in 2025. <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/2014-round-population-projections>
- Over the same period the number of house holds in Greenwich is projected to increase from 110,000 to 135,000, or 2,500 a year. <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/2014-round-household-projections>
- The number of new dwellings started in Greenwich in 2014/15 was only 900. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-house-building>
- The number of households on Greenwich’s council waiting list in 2015 was 11,000 and the number of council houses was 22,000. <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/households-local-authority-waiting-list-borough/resource/dac0e8c2-94af-4c5e-b9b9-ef294bfc3915>
- The average house price in Greenwich has increased by 400% since 1995. <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/hpi/preview>
- The average house price in Greenwich was £385,000 in December 2015. <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/hpi/preview>

Have your say on future development

Local people are asked to help shape future development in the Royal Borough by sharing their ideas and views in a new consultation. The council will use the consultation to identify those sites in the borough that could be developed in the future.

The council has proposed some sites that could be included as part of the site allocations local plan. It welcomes views on these sites as well as suggestions for other sites that could be developed.

Drop-in sessions have been arranged: the next one takes place on February 27th between 2.00pm and 5.00 pm at the Greenwich Centre; and at the Woolwich Centre between 4.00pm and 7.00pm on March 3rd. The consultation closes at 5.00pm on March 29th.

Cllr Danny Thorpe, the Council’s Cabinet Member for Regeneration said:

“The consultation for the site allocations

local plan is an ideal way for residents to have their say on future developments and help shape what the Royal Borough will look like in the next decade and beyond.

“A number of proposals have already been outlined as part of the plan and local people can tell us what they think about the sites and what the land should be used for. They can also let the council know if there is a site near them that might be suitable for development – or in need of protection.”

If you can’t get to one of the Drop-in sessions, you can still take part in the consultation, and make your views known. Residents can also get further information and view an interactive map of all of the proposed sites at: www.royal-greenwich.gov.uk/siteallocations

There are also online questionnaires where residents can leave their views on the proposals and suggestions.

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Greenwich Refugee Aid

Blackheath & Greenwich United Nations Association did its bit by raising £1,200 for UNHCR with the International Art Auction held late last year. It also helped refugees in Greenwich feel more at home with its local initiative Greenwich Social Network, run largely by Wendy Higgs of the local UNA.

Now, new imperatives have emerged – and well done, GRACE (Greenwich Refugee Action Clothes Essentials) for organising a large container of desperately needed supplies for refugees from the Syrian war.

In mid-February, Sherington School in

Charlton generously gave GRACE the use of their hall for three days for packing goods in a container.

Claire Papazidis said: “Devastated and saddened by new reports of refugees and the Syrian war, I set up GRACE to bring people in the community together to send aid and essential supplies to people fleeing for safety. There are 6.5 million Syrians internally displaced, and the humanitarian situation is worsening.”

For information on how you can help, call 07971 690203, and visit <https://www.facebook.com/Greenwichrefugeeaid/>

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WHAT'S ON

ARTS

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
SAMUEL PEPYS: plague, fire, revolution
Open daily until 28th March. Explore the turbulent history of Stuart London : the largest ever exhibition about the great diarist, socialite and naval mastermind. will also be discussed and performed on the night
BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY St Mary's Church, Cresswell Park
4th Thursday of every month, Thurs 24th March 2pm for 2.30pm William Lunn – ‘Behind the scenes at the Art Gallery’ Non-members £5.00 www.artsinblackheath.org
GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, University of Greenwich Mon 9th May 8pm,: John Ogden- The Man & the Music Member society: gdfas.org
MADE IN GREENWICH GALLERY, 324, Creek Rd SE10 Tues-Sun until Bank Holiday 11-5.30pm (Until April 6th, an exciting mixed exhibition entitled ‘Texture and Text
Wed March 16, 7.30pm: Cinnamon Press presents - latest offering in poetry and prose. Free
Tues April 5, 7.30pm Greenwich University Poets-competition prize giving, plus other local poets.
FAN MUSEUM, 12,Crooms Hill
Sat 16th Jan – Sat 5th June 10am-5pm
‘Treasures of the Fan Museum’ Exhibition
UK's only museum dedicated to fans
Celebrating the museum's twenty fifth anniversary

CHILDREN & FAMILY

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
rmg.co.ukSammy Ofer wing Play Tuesdays – term-time 10.30 11.30 13.00 14.00
GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL, London SE10 8ES BOX OFFICE 8858 7755
Fri 25 March - 2.00pm The Marvellous Imaginary Menagerie Fantastic for Families ‘Les Enfants Terribles tour with their silliest, funniest and most entertaining family show, suitable for big kids and small grown-ups !£13.50 / £11 children
Mon 28 (1.00pm, 3.30pm) & Tues 29 (11.00am, 2.00pm) March Leaper- Fantastic for Families Using their signature blend of beautiful puppetry and mesmeric music. A Fish Tale follows one fish's magical quest against monsters in the sea.’
Thurs 31 March - 2pm
Comedy Club 4 Kids - Fantastic For Families Stand up & sketch acts for children & their families £11/ Children £8.50
BLACKHEATH HALLS Children's Theatre, 22, Lee Rd, London SE3 9RQ
Sat 5 Mar - 3pm Recital Room
The Magic Beanstalk- Fun for Families (suitable for 5+) Hand-carved puppets, illusion and amazing experiments retell the classic story. £7
Sat 12 Mar -3pm How Koala Learnt to Hug A charming new musical about the magic of family - (Suitable for ages 3+) £7
SHERINGTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE, 14, Sherington Road, Charlton SE7 7JW
DAD'S STAY AND PLAY session every Wednesday, 9.30-1£161.30am Sherington Children's Centre, all home dads ‘ welcome. Continues even in school holidays and half term.
Contact Dan Hall
–Daniel.hall1985@hotmail.co.uk for more details, www.selondondads.org.uk

THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

All in Mycenae House unless otherwise stated:

Daffodil Tea Sat 19th March (The Daffodil Tea is by invitation; however anyone who doesn't receive an invitation and who would like to come, please ring Caroline on 020 8853 0948.)
Easter Egg Hunt - Sat 26th March 1.30 to 3.30. Mycenae Gardens. (The toilets and bar open)
Spring Quiz - Fri 15th April
Chidren's Nearly New Sale Sat 23rd April 2.00 to 4pm in conjunction with Charlton Toy Library, Sat 23rd April, 2pm - 4pm. To book a table please contact Laura on charltontoylibrary@gmail
AGM May 13th 7.00 - 9.00 pm Steiner School,
Members' Evening - Fri 17th June
Summer Picnic Sat 25th June Mycenae Gardens
Macmillan Coffee Morning - Fri 23rd Sept.
Autumn Nearly New Sale - Sat 24th September
Chrysanthemum Tea - Sat 15th October
Autumn Quiz - Friday 4th November

COMMUNITY

WESTCOMBE WOODLANDS
The next volunteer day is on Sat. 5th March.
www.westcombewoodlands.org
WESTCOMBE WRITER'S GROUP Thursday monthly – 2.30-4.30pm Mycenae House, Contact: Rosemary Gill 0208 858 5088 Carlo's Café
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon & Thurs 7.15pm & on Wed at 1.15pm .Tel Ron 0208 319 1312
BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE First Wednesday of every month - 7.30pm at Sunfields, Old Dover Rd, SE3 8SJ
Next meeting: **Wed 2 March –7.30-9.30 Shoreditch Street Art** eileenflanagan194@btinternet.com
GLOBAL FUSION MUSIC & ARTS
Sat 12 March 8-11pm Carlo's Cafe A new play for International Women's Day by Louisa Le Marchand (Doors open at 7.30pm) At Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Rd SE3 7SE £6.00 | £4.00 Conc.
Free workshops Fortnightly Tuesdays & Fridays 7.30-8.30pm at Mascalls Meeting Room off Victoria Way, Charlton SE7 7TT Tai Chi, Singing, drumming, Writer's Group, African Dance Info 0208 858 9497
GREENWICH MORRISMEN Meet every Thursday at 8.00pm in Mycenae House. Newcomers welcome.
FRIENDS OF MYCENAE GARDENS AGM on **Tues. 8th March**, at 7.30pm in Greenwich Steiner School, 90 Mycenae Road, SE3.All welcome _ Joe Beale, a local naturalist, is our guest speaker.
<http://mycenaegardens.org.uk/news>

SPOKEN WORD

BLACKHEATH FLOWER ARRANGING SOCIETY 3rd Friday of each month Mycenae House
18th March Fri-2.00pm Jane Patterson – Happy Days
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Wed 16 March –6.30PM Gold Refining in London – Michael Blagg 75, Cowcross Street Non-members £1
Greenwichindustrialhistory.blogspot.co.uk
BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
Fri. March 18th 7.45 pm Cellular Mechanisms and Disease by Dr Einat Schnur 7.45pm Mycenae House. Visitors welcome at all meetings and are requested to donate £3 to the society.
BLACKHEATH HALLS 12, Lee Rd. SE3 9RQ
Tues 29th March – 7.30pm ROBERT WINSTON Modifying Humans: Where Does Genetics Stop? Recital Room £18.50 |Concs 16.00
Wed. 9th March 8.00pm TOM MCCARTHY on **Satin Island**: his new novel shortlisted for the Man Booker prize £10 (inc glass of wine)

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THEATRE

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Tues 1- Sat 5 March- 7.30pm, Sat (Mat) 2.30pm
Three Generations Of Women £16 - Concs £13.50
Sun 6th March RED: Women's Theatre Awards
Rehearsed readings. Presented by Effie Samara
www.redwomenstheatreawards.com
Tues 8-Sat 12 March -8pm RUN Four investment bank interns chase a career un the city’ £16 | Concs 13.50)
Tues 15th. Sun 20 March Every year the NT commissions new plays. (Performance details: ticketing.greenwichtheatre.org.uk) £7 | Concs £6
Tues 22-Thurs 24 March 8.00pm Titania Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream as you have never seen it before
Wed 30 March - 7.30pm Tinned Goods
‘In this tight knit town, miners’ wives move centre-stage ‘ £16 | Children £13.50

MUSIC

THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY
Sat 5 Mar – 7.30pm St Alfeges Church Thomas Tallis Society Bach Motets; a family affair £14
BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd SE3 9RQ
BOX OFFICE 8 846 0100
Mon 7 Mar 1.10pm Lunchtime Recitals: Opera, arias and duets Free with retiring collection
Fri 4 March 6pm Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra- Side by Side Great Hall Free
Thu 17th Mar -7.30pm Trinity Laban Wind Orchestra Great Hall £5
Mon 21 Mar 7.30pm Musical Theatre Showcase Great Hall Free
Wed 30 March- 7.30pm Jette Parker Young Artists Recitals Rising stars of The Royal Opera House Recital Room £7/5 students
STEINBERG MUSIC STUDIO137, Vanburgh Hill, London SE 10 9HP Sun 20th March – 6.00pm
Piano Quartets by Mozart & Strauss £10.00
OLD ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE
Fri. 18th March- 7.30pm University of Greenwich Choir: perform Vivaldi, Rachmaninov Brahms, and Haydn. £10 | Conc. £8 Children £6
BLACKHEATH INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL 9th-25th April Tickets via Eventbrite with further discounts until 31st March 2016 <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/blackheath-international-chamber-music-festival-654631869>

MYCENAE HOUSE LIVE EVENTS: MARCH

Fri 4th March 8.00pm - Miranda Sykes & Rex Preston. This rare fusion of double bass & mandolin makes for one of the most exciting new pairings on the acoustic roots scene. £12.
Thurs 10th March 4.00pm - Bach To Baby. Classical Concert for Baby and You. £10.
Fri 11th March 8.00pm - JazzNights. Candlelit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.
Sat 12th March 7.00pm - A play for International Womens Day. Hosted by Global Fusion Music & Arts. £8.
Fri 18th March 8.00pm - Mycenae Comedy Club. Stand-up comedy from rising stars of the circuit. £10.

For further information about all Mycenae House events and to buy tickets visit www.mycenaehouse.co.uk

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Sun. 20th March Spring Equinox walk
Sun. 17th April Young shoots and New Lambs walk

Meet in the green Education Building at 10.00 am

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Sun 6th March 10am-2pm – Sunday Table Sale –A selection of goods for sale from local makers & artists
Sat 12th March11am-4pm – Belly Dancing: fun, sociable group of ladies. £7.00
Fri 18th March 1-3pm – Mudlarking on the Thames-Friends Friday Meeting, Sarah Ladbroke Hutt, Free for friend, £5.00 on the door
Weekly Events: A selection of weekly events, including pilates, art class, knitting group, Tai Chi: www.age-exchange.org.uk



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FEATURES

In search of God's Tree

Maurice Ben Rose

As far back as I can remember trees have always intrigued me. Here I must own to being a secret tree-hugger. After I got married I took my five year old son Aaron to hug his first tree in Queen's Park in West London; it was a tall handsome London Plane.

God's Tree came much later. One day, fifty years ago when Aaron was a teenager and we were out walking on Hampstead Heath he took me to see it; one of those special moments; the two of us together and God's Tree. You won't find it in the Garden of Eden. It grows somewhere on the Heath beside one of the ponds; the only one of its kind in the area.

Since then many trees have caught and held my attention – as sign-posts, landmarks reminding me of a place, or a time, in my life; the Gingko, the worlds oldest tree with its small fan shaped leaves which grew outside Phoenix School in the East End where I used to teach; the dark cypresses I saw in Tuscany; a glade of silver birches in a wood of bluebells; the weeping willow beside the little pond in Prince of Wales Road Blackheath; the majestic eucalyptus in the front garden of number 77 Old Dover Road, the walnut tree outside Sun Garden Cottages opposite the British Oak pub; the sweet chestnuts I painted in Greenwich Park; the gorgeous mulberry tree that once stood in Greenwich Pleasance' its juicy mulberries as big as a thumb joint; the laburnum with its golden chains of blossom which I remember as a child in Hampstead; the sycamore I climbed as a boy; the tree with the tree-house in the Adventure Playground.

But there's one tree, God's Tree; you won't find anywhere, because you see that was Aaron's name for it.

Things fade, the years pass all too quickly. After a messy divorce I met Nancy and went to live for a time with her in a Half-way house on Green Lanes in Stoke



Is the author in search of a real tree? Or something else? If so, what could it be . . .

Newington; across the road lay Clissold Park with many fine horse chestnuts which I plundered with her little boy Jay. When we parted she moved to the country, I remained in the area, renting a small room near the park.

Whilst there I was woken up one night, in the early hours, by a policeman with the dreadful news that my son Aaron had committed suicide.

My world went dead. Since then the image of God's Tree has always been in my mind.

Twenty five years ago I met Marie Claire and came South of the river to live in Blackheath; and, when no one's looking I still go to hug the odd tree in Greenwich Park; remembering Aaron and God's Tree. The longer I live the more ephemeral it becomes. Time plays tricks on the mind; sweeping things under the carpet.

In retrospect I feel I could have given my son a different name, Aaron suggests an ethereal being. Once upon a time he thought he could fly like Superman; and he did, for one brief moment . . .

I live in Blackheath now and love the area; the Old Dover Road and the Standard in particular. They comprise my little

world. Recently, a week before Christmas I rediscovered God's Tree right here in the Standard. I couldn't believe my eyes. For a decade I'd been travelling back and forth, speeding beneath those wide-spread branches without realizing it. Yet once you've seen this unique tree you never forget it. Where exactly is this very special tree? I hear you ask. Well, that is my secret. But for anyone curious as to its whereabouts, my message to you is 'Go seek and you will find.'

The following is an extract from a poem I wrote entitled 'God's Tree'

'This is it Dad 'God's Tree' 'Oh' I said
'It's a secret promise you'll tell no-one.'
I promised, innocently lying
God's Tree, our secret
A love bond between us

He began to climb deftly
I at his heels ascending
Up into the canopy of leaves
A trapdoor to the sky
Emerging onto a green eiderdown
The sky was blue the sun warm
Maybe it was the time for confidences

For a while neither of us spoke
We lay quiet, flesh of my flesh
'You like it Dad?', 'yes, yes' I replied
Reaching over I touched his arm.

That was God's Tree he and his mates
Would lie up there on a Summer's day
Sharing the odd spliff
Talking music girls and gigs

That was a long time ago
All in the past, many times
Whilst walking on the Heath
I've gone in search of God's Tree'
Knowing the direction and location
But never finding it, you see
I need you, Aaron, to guide me.

The Marathon: Raising money without running! Sacha Bright

Would you like to join in the London Marathon without enduring the 26 mile run? For the past 5 years local supporters of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust have organised a fantastic fundraising B&B scheme.

The idea is that local residents host a brave charity runner the night before the start. The runner donates a sum directly to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust in exchange for a bed for the night. Last year the scheme raised £2,000.

Hosts have so much fun meeting the runners and cheering them on. This really is a wonderful way to participate in this world famous Marathon and help a brilliant charity too. Runners appreciate the support given and waking up near the start line. Last year one runner proposed to his girlfriend – and invited their host to the wedding!

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust works tirelessly to find new



Local supporter Margaret Drummond has enjoyed hosting runners for the Trust for 5 years

treatments for young people affected by this condition, and advances are being made all the time but more funds are needed to continue development. This year the marathon takes place on Sunday 24th April and we are looking for more friendly local homes to take part and offer a bed for the night before (Saturday 23rd April) so please get in touch with local organiser Sacha Bright.

Contact: Sacha on 07768 030833
sachabright@hotmail.com

A sad goodbye

The Chairman of Firepower Royal Artillery Museum, Brig, Iain Harrison, has announced that Firepower will move from its current site by the end of 2016. The leases are to be handed over to Greenwich Council, and capital receipts from this arrangement will be re-invested in the development of a proposed new purpose-built heritage centre for the Royal Artillery Collection at Larkhill, close to Stonehenge.

The move is likely to be complicated, and specialist removal contractors will be required. To allow time for the move, the museum will finally close its doors to the public on Friday July 8th 2016.

"This will allow us to contribute to the Royal Artillery's Tercentenary on 26th May 2016 and the hundredth anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme on 1st

July 2015," said Brig. Harrison.

In preparation for the closure, the reading room is now only open on Wednesdays (by appointment) and places are very limited. You may need to book at least a month in advance.

To maintain the Regiment's links with Woolwich, the contract with the Royal Borough includes creating a permanent exhibition in the Greenwich Heritage Centre in Woolwich Arsenal covering the Royal Artillery's 300 year history. This will open later this year. During transition, a virtual museum on line is also planned. Other plans are also being considered.

Brig, Harrison thanked the Friends of the Museum for their support, and also the staff who have continued to provide a first class museum operation despite the significant uncertainty of the last 24 months.

What next for the site? See p.3.



New books

Greenwich seems to be full of writers! Simon Parker's new book *Taking Power Back* is coming out this month. It shows how councils, communities and individuals across the world are stepping in where big central states have failed.

The book shows how Britain came to be the most centralised country in the western world, and details how top-down social policy has failed to make us more equal and more prosperous. It argues that grassroots social action is needed to create a vibrant civic commons. Fighting words from the husband of one of our local councillors, Cherry Parker . . .

Simon will be discussing the book with a senior figure from the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The event is free. Monday, 29th Feb. 2016 5.00pm - 7pm at: 6 Mitre Passage SE10 0ER GB For details & free tickets visit: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/taking-power-back-tickets-20607108416>

Former resident Thomas Grant has written a best seller - *Jeremy Hutchinson's Case Histories*. The paperback version has just come out. Jeremy Hutchinson, QC was involved with a number of very high profile court cases, including that of the book *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Christine Keeler and George Blake.

Jeremy Hutchinson – now over a hundred – has been declared Oldie of the Year by *The Oldie* magazine. In appearances at literary events around the country, he receives standing ovations not just for his longevity, and skill as an advocate, but also for his eloquent denunciation of the government's assault on England's criminal justice system.

Jane Grant is to launch her new book in March. *In the Steps of Exceptional Women* is the story of the Fawcett Society, and of its long campaign to get women the vote, and secure equal rights. Suffragist Millicent Fawcett was campaigning with local resident J.S. Mill to get women the vote in the 1860s (many local women signed a petition at that time); remarkably, she lived to see final success in 1928.

As Shirley Williams observed: "The suffragettes got the publicity; the suffragists got the result."

Copies available from: Francis Boutle Publishers, 272 Alexandra Park Road London N22 7BG Tel. 020 8889 7744

Naval historians, and enthusiasts will enjoy *Cutty Sark - 1938 - 1954*, edited by Trevor Pollitt, which came out last year. Trevor's book will be reviewed in next month's *WN*.

ED: The *WN* welcomes book reviews by local residents.

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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

Re-Elming the Woodlands
Nigel Duncan

Readers will recall the sad time in the 1960s and 1970s when the UK elm population was largely destroyed by Dutch elm disease. Friends of Westcombe Woodlands are now joining in a project of the Conservation Foundation in the hope that we may be able to return mature elms to our countryside.

In fact, there are elms in the Woodlands already. However, since the disease (which is a fungus carried by the elm bark beetle) struck, elms only grow to a limited height before the disease strikes and they die back, preventing them from growing into the majestic trees we once saw. On the right is a picture to help you to identify an elm – specifically *ulmus minor*.

The Conservation Foundation has been taking cuttings from parent trees that appear to have resisted Dutch elm disease for 60 years. There is therefore every hope that the cuttings will be disease-resistant, although, given that this is an experiment, this cannot be guaranteed.

We have been given five saplings, currently only around a metre tall, and have planted them around the Woodlands



in spots where they should do well. Our elms are *ulmus procera* and *ulmus minor*. One is planted near the bottom of the Mound, not far from the wild cherries, there are two at each end of the Glade, and two are planted on the Lasseter Place side of the Woodlands. We will be monitoring their progress as we are participating in the Conservation Foundation's experiment.

If you are interested, go to www.conservaionfoundation.co.uk/elms. westcombewoodlands@hotmail.org

New link between Kent & Essex?

To relieve pressure on the Dartford Crossing, Highways England (HE) is proposing a new Lower Thames Crossing to connect Kent and Essex. A new tunnel under the Thames located east of Gravesend and Tilbury is proposed.

Three possible route options north of the river have been identified, and two south of the river, which would connect to the new crossing.

HE have now started public consultation on the proposed new route options. The public consultation closes on Thursday 24th March 2016.

To find out more:

- * visit www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk for information about our proposals
- * keep up-to-date and subscribe to our Lower Thames Crossing email alerts service
- * follow updates on Twitter @LowerThames

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PLANNING APPLICATIONS

See also <http://www.westcombesociety.org/>
68 BEACONSFIELD ROAD ref 16/0260/F
New submission to construct first floor side extension over garage

32 ULUNDI ROAD ref 16/0194/F
Construct single storey side extension

79 WESTCOMBE PARK RD ref 16/0197/F
Loft conversion with side and rear dormer windows, front roof light, and change to roof line

TREE WORKS
57A WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD
ref/16/0414/TC
Fell leylandii in rear garden

Unveiling in the dell
Ann Hill



On Sunday afternoon, January 24th, Cllr Norman Adams, Mayor of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, unveiled a wildlife display board in The Dell, Mycenae Road.

The board, by local graphic designer Yu-Hsuan Lin, features birds, flowers and insects photographed by her husband Joe Beale during monthly observations in spring and summer last year.

In his address, The Mayor emphasised the value of green spaces within urban areas and their increasing vulnerability and praised the Friends of Mycenae Gardens and volunteers for their work in protecting the Dell and increasing its bio-diversity.

After the ceremony the Mayor and Mayoress talked with Joe Beale and others involved in the display board and joined guests in refreshments before taking a walk

through the Dell to see the work done by volunteers with support from the Mayor of London's Capital Clean-up Community Grant.


The event was well attended and all were impressed by the beauty of the display board and the quality of its oak stand, made by Greenwich Men in Sheds, a voluntary group within AGE UK. Particular care has been taken to position the display board at a height suited for viewing by children and wheelchair users.

If you would like to find out more about the Friends of Mycenae Gardens please visit the website for updates and information about how to become a member of the friends group <http://mycenaegardens.org.uk>.

Pictured from Right to Left:
The Mayor Cllr. Norman Adams and Mrs Adams, Ann Hill, Joe Beale, Eileen Bell (Chair of the Friends of Mycenae Gardens), and Nora Miller.




PHOTO: Martin Coceres



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