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Greenwich is not alone: four leaders of the Local Government Association (the LGA) – Tory, Labour, Lib Dem, and Independent – have all signed a letter of protest in the Observer. (April 3rd.)

The benefits

There are compelling arguments for some form of educational reform. In 2010, in January the OECD published a report that put England at the bottom of the league table for advanced countries in maths and literacy. The figures for the 16 – 19 year olds put England in 23rd place in the list of advanced countries for literacy, and in 22nd place for numeracy, beating only the US. (The top performing countries are Finland.)

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Mike Sparham of GLUG told the WN it has been announced that Arriva are the preferred bidder for London Overground. This will mean that the present government is currently operating the concession. Arriva is a private company and the transport for London will continue to be run by a privatized setting of different companies marketing the services, and will retain revenue from ticket sales, advertising, retail and car parking. The operator will be responsible for ticket retailing and revenue protection, as well as operating the service.

In March, teachers from Greenwich including some from John Roan took part in a demonstration in Westminster against the government’s proposals on academies.

The Daffodil Tea

This is a great social occasion, said one guest at the Westcombe Society’s Daffodil Tea for Senior Citizens in March, and ‘very much looked forward to’, said another.

The Daffodil tea was well under way and it was wonderful to get such positive comments from the guests who all wanted their thanks passed on to anyone involved in making it happen.

Several commented on the beautiful cakes and delicious sandwiches which are all made by our local volunteers. One aspect of the tea, which was valued, was the opportunity to meet the local community and make new and like-minded friends. The level of conversation certainly indicated a buzzing event.

This time we were very pleased to welcome a number of new people as well as catching up with those who attend regularly. As ever there was a table quiz that always helps to get people chatting. Many prizes were available for the free raffle due to the generosity of those who support our bi-annual teas. We hope all our new friends will soon become regulars and we look forward to seeing them all again in the Autumn.

Maureen Anue

The Westcombe Society

The Annual General Meeting of the Westcombe Society takes place at 7pm on Friday, May 13th, at the Steiner School, Mycenae Road (next door to Mycenae House). All paid-up members of the society are invited to attend.

The Agenda:
1. Minutes of last AGM
2. Matters arising
3. Reports
4. Elections
5. Any other Business

Jane Wilson (Hon. Sec.)
After the meeting, wine and cheese will be served.

Newspapers

Congratulations

There were three winners of the arts and entertainment awards in the Council’s Civic Awards ceremony in March, and Global Fusion Music Festival which supported them. Particular mention should be made of Louise Le Mansard for the energy and creativity she has brought to this outstanding project.

Congratulations too to Mrs Jean Seymour on her Ninetieth Birthday; and to the winners of the Westcombe Society Quiz in April – and thanks to J-J and Maureen Anue for their help in organising yet another very jolly event.

Departures

We are very sorry to announce the death of Judith Gillespie: an obituary appears on page 3. We also mourn the death of Monica Cloke, both were members of the Westcombe Society.

Monica was buried on the 21st April. The funeral was at The Chapel, Plumstead Cemetery, at 10:00am on 21st April then on to Woolwich Cemetery for the burial. No bouquets but donations can be made to the PBC Foundation or justcaring@monicascloke.com. There were refreshments afterwards at the Tuskegee Tavern, Greenwich.

The Westcombe School: plot thickens

MANY government politicians including Jeremy Hunt, have admitted that Lansley’s attempted reforms of the NHS were ‘unsuccessful’ and ‘in crisis’.

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The government’s plans envisage eight Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) and at least one for England and S. London. The RSC for SE England and S. London is Dominic Herrington. He started his role on 1 July 2014. Before this he had been Director of the Academies Group at the Department for Education. Earlier in his career he had also led a range of policies at the Department for Education including specialist schools, school improvement, 14 to 19 reform and education legislation. He also worked for a leading management consultancy. Leaders of the LGA say the RSCs will be ‘unelected and remote’.

And of course above the RSCs there will have to be another layer, to ensure they are doing their job . . . They will not be democratically elected, and there are concerns about accountability. No one knows what the outcomes will be any better – or cheaper – than the LEAs.

Other causes for concern

Forget the financial costs: there are many other causes for concern:

• the lack of representation on school boards by parents or locally elected councillors

• the fact that they do not have to hire professionally-trained teachers

• the fact that academies do not have to keep to agreements with unions on terms and conditions of service

• the fact that exclusion rate is five times higher at academies than in state-run schools (there are cases where pupils who have been excluded have to take exams privately.)

• the fact that they do not need to follow the National Curriculum.

This is a point picked up by local specialist in education Chris Orwell, who is secretary of the locally-based international organisation Partnership for Educational Reform (PER). In last month’s WN he observed “when the National Curriculum was introduced . . . it listed all those things every pupil has a right to know. Has this ceased to be their ‘right’?”

The government hopes that “sponsors” will play an important part in running the MATs – the Multi-Academy Trusts, but it is not clear where all these sponsors will come from; and they are unlikely to want to be involved with those schools that have poor records – or that have big PFI debts: who will pay these off?

As the government’s austerity plans are extended, fears have been expressed that as academies run out of funds, they may even begin to charge fees.

Strikes looming?

There may be trouble ahead: teachers have threatened to strike. Union leaders assert the academies plan threatens teachers’ pay, conditions and job security; the treasurer of the NUT, Ian Murch, described it as a step towards the privatisation of schools. There are concerns that academisation involves a huge shift in wealth, as publicly-owned land, buildings and resources are handed over to charitable trusts.

At the NUT’s annual conference at the end of March, delegates overwhelmingly passed a proposal to hold a strike ballot. If it passes, it is probable that the strike will take place in July, to avoid disrupting examinations.

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The Westcombe Society

The Westcombe Society: fostering a sense of community

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

Free to 3800 homes, and in libraries & some shops May 2016 Issue 4

A community newspaper commended by the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies
Congratulations from the Queen!

Tudor Grange pushed the boat out to celebrate Les and Jean Seymour’s 70th Wedding Anniversary. Exactly seventy years ago, on April 6th, 1946, Les and Jean got married: and they are still enjoying life to the full! Champagne flowed, and delicious food was served, as all the inhabitants of Tudor Grange gathered round to enjoy the celebration, and admire the personally-signed card of congratulation from HM The Queen.

Les and Jean met during the war when Les was in the RAF, working with Coastal Command in an Air Sea Rescue Unit, based at one time in the Shetlands. (ASRU’s saved over 13,000 lives in the war). Four months before being demobilised Les managed to wangle a leave pass to get married. After the war he got a job first with a fire-fighter company, and then with the GPO. Jean meanwhile combined motherhood with several jobs. Ninety this April, Jean said she has three children, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

“We’ve lived in Greenwich for forty years,” said Jean. “Before that we were in Deptford. Now we’re very happy in Tudor Grange: the staff are wonderful!”

Letters

Any views expressed are personal, and are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or the WN. Please give address & telephone number; these will not be printed.

From: Rosemary Gill
Headway

Sadie is the Westcombe Writers’ Circle finished in April after 27 years. I dedicate this last poem to the WN, with thanks for all the free publicity.

Paper round by Rosemary Gill

From a long dormant winter. Dark, damp and bleak.
I watched spring arrive
Within a short week
From bare silhouettes
In a matter of days
I saw twigs and branches
Become clothed in a haze
Of light green, and new buds unfold.
And the lane turned into this cempedal world
There are swathes of celandine
Rich sparkling and gold
Close by, bluebells
And the vioas unfold.
Small patches of daisies
Are scattered about
I see clumps of Bluebells
Waiting to come out
Creepers and climbers
Escape garden walls
The Clematis will soon be
A pink waterfall

You may ask where I get such pastoral views?
Down our Lane, when delivering the Westcombe News.

From: Lucy Cuthbertson
(Head of Drama at Corelli College.)

As some of you will remember our production of Just by Ali Smith was offered the top venue, the Assembly Rooms, at the Edinburgh Festival last summer, but unfortunately our headteacher pulled the project, even though we have a long track record of taking shows.

This summer, we have been offered the same space for the same show again. The head has now allowed it to go ahead but it is not prepared to fund it all so we have to raise all the money or it will be cancelled. We have to raise £33K so the large cast can be accommodated in a hostel for a week.

We know the experience of going to Edinburgh for our young people is one they will never forget - life-changing, in fact. That will be intensified by the prestige of performing at the Assembly Rooms, normally the preserve of experienced professionals and unprecented for a student show.

Sadly, with the Arts being cut and devalued in state schools, this kind of opportunity is fast becoming something only for students who go to independent schools. We are very grateful for the support given by Greenwich Theatre but we now need wider public support.

Can I ask your readers to contribute to our crowdfunding effort if they can, and then to share this with anyone else they know who might be prepared to help fund it. It’s off to a good start but we need an awful lot more if we are going to make it.

http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/just-by-ali-smith

Ed: Lucy was the Director of the play Boys will be Boys last month.

St George’s Church

Weekly services:

Sundays
11:00 a.m. Holy Communion (All age service on the 1st Sunday of each month)
10:00 a.m. “Scupitc” Discussion Group (1st and 3rd Sundays at the Vicarage - 89 Westcombe Park Road SE3 TRZ)

Wednesdays
8.30 a.m. Morning Prayer 12.30 p.m. Lunch and Fellowship (Soup, bread, fruit and cheese)

Revd Robert T. “Tim” Yeager
Team Vicar
07804 014145
ryeager@gmail.com

Westcombe Society Quiz Night

The Spring quiz was held on April 15th at Mycenae House. We had a slightly lower turnout than usual, but 6 full tables provided us with a range of topics from TV detectives to Books and Authors.

As usual we enjoyed Chippy suppers provided by Fisher’s Inn on Trfalgard Rd which arrived hot and on time, and Mycenae House’s bar did brisk business.

Only 12 points separated the winners from the losers which indicates a closely contested evening, and there was a tie break for second place. Congratulations go to the Soda Streamers from Beaconsfield Road and High Standards who came second. And for the losers: the consolation prize of a tin of baked beans?

It was a most enjoyable community event and we look forward to hosting another Quiz evening on October 21st.

J Aane

Maryon Park Community Garden Open Day

Maryon Park Community Garden had a ‘Drop-in & Open Day’ on Saturday 16th April organised by the Friends of Maryon Park. The Garden is a not-for-profit voluntary community project in the former council plant nursery in Maryon Park.

Visitors learnt more about the Community Garden, which provides organic growing plots for local people, a Forest School for local schools and volunteering opportunities for individuals and corporate groups as well as educational visits for special schools.

Visitors were also able to sign up on the waiting list for growing beds.

Janet and Colin were prodigious and generous hosts. Their ‘themed’ parties were astonishing in their phenomenal application to detail. And such fun!

Janet was a valued member of the Westcombe Society, as well as a local Poetry group – she could do a pretty fair Amy. Nothing was too much trouble for Janet: she was always ready to offer support where needed, and those of us privileged to have been her friends will sorely miss her.

Janet and Colin were able to indulge in their joint interest in foreign travel but there was still time for other passion, her garden, which remains as a testament to her love of gardening.

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Maryon Park Community Garden Open Day

Tim Anderson

Janet and Colin had a medical background, not only as the wife of Colin, for many years a local GP, but also a nurse, District Midwife and latterly in domiciliary Family Planning. This no doubt explained her encyclopedic knowledge of routes and roads not only in the immediate area but also further afield.

Janet was a walking A-Z.

After retirement she and Colin were able to indulge in their joint interest in foreign travel but there was still time for other passion, her garden, which remains as a testament to her love of gardening.

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Blackheath High School’s winners in the 3D Design Challenge for Wateraid:

Blanca Cole, Karen Whitely, Sophie Waite, Ella Watts
Elena Zöven & Lily Yue.

On Thursday 10 March, students from Blackheath High School took part in the final of the first ever Girls’ Day School Trust (GDSST) 3D Design Challenge. Working in teams of no more than five, students from across the GDSST were asked to design a 3D printable product to support the work of the international charity, WaterAid. Mary Aspden, Head of Creative Arts at Blackheath High School was delighted that both of her Year 8 teams won prizes in the challenge.

The charity works to improve access to clean water and improved sanitation in some of the world’s poorest countries, where many women and girls have no choice but to walk many miles every day to collect water for their families, leaving little time for education.

Students aged twelve and thirteen from Blackheath High School submitted designs to a distinguished band of industry experts. The designs included a shower operated by a foot pump and a collapsible barrel on wheels that could be used to transport water from waterhole to village.

The challenge helped students develop new skills, confidence and knowledge of the career options available within the broad field of computer-aided design and digital technology.
Launch of a Women’s World War One Project

Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust has launched a new project that celebrates the lives and contributions of women in Greenwich during the First World War.

The Trust has been awarded a grant of £58,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for an exciting project, Here Comes the Girls - Women in Wartime, 1914-18 a Touring Museum Project. Awarded through the Heritage Lottery’s Our Heritage programme, the project will explore the lives and contributions of women in Greenwich during the First World War.

The project focuses on the women that worked at the Royal Arsenal, the nurses and Voluntary Aid Detachments, working in the borough’s large hospitals and temporary auxiliary hospitals such as Charlton House and the families living on the Progress Estate, Eltham.

The Royal Borough played a vital role during the Great War, not only did the borough provide nurses who tended the wounded at hospitals such as the Royal Herbert and Brook Hospitals, but the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich provided vital munitions for the war effort. The Borough itself also grew with new housing estates such as that at Well Hall Estate in Eltham and new workforces – over 30,000 women at the Arsenal.

From April 2016, as part of the Trust’s Centenary celebrations, Here Come the Girls will see three portable exhibitions facilitated by actors go on a tour across the Royal Borough to share the stories of women at work during the First World War. A new blog page will also tell the stories of Greenwich Women at War.

Stuart Hobley, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said, “The First World War transformed the role of women in early 20th century British society by drafting them into a wide range of employment, including, at Woolwich, some of the most hazardous jobs on the home front. Thanks to National Lottery players, we are able to support this excellent project so that their inspirational story can be told.”

Tracy Stringfellow, Chief Executive Officer of Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust told the W: “We are very excited to have been awarded a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to support this local women’s project.

“The role of women in the Royal Borough during the First World War was vital to the war effort and this project allows us to explore their role in much greater detail with our local community. With touring interactive performances and an online blog, families will get the chance to explore the lives and contribution of Greenwich Women at War.”

The project, including interactive performances, runs from April to September.

The causes of sea-level change

In a talk in April organised by Blackheath Science Society, Mr Tom Armitage of the Earth Sciences Dept, University College, London gave a talk about changes in sea-level.

In his talk, he discussed why, and by fundamental things such as variations in the Earth’s gravity, rotation and terrestrial ice distribution, and more local effects such as tides and stormsurges.

Blackheath Scientific Society meets in Mycenae House, Mycenae Road SE3. Visitors are welcome, and are asked to donate £3.00. The next meeting is on Thursday 26th May at 8.00 pm. Sir Tim, the Astronomer Royal to the nation, will be speaking on the subject of China: Bright Stars. The entry is £4.00 and £3.00 for members. If you want to join or find out more, please go to www.bss.org.uk

St George’s Church on Shirley lane is holding a Fete on Sunday, 16th June from 12-4. Entrance is £1.00. All welcome to take part. Telephone 020 8853 3304 or email stgeorges@christchurch-greenwich.org.uk

The Trust has been awarded a grant of £70,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to support this project.

The causes of sea-level change

The book is also an international survey of how cities and states as diverse as Maryland, Utrecht, Bogota, Vagina, Woking and Manchester are innovating with entrepreneurial approaches to public services’ needs, income, renewable energy companies, iPhone apps and even municipal clowns: all in all, a tall order for 140 pages.

Simon Parker recognises an old term – The Commons – as the name for the territory these projects inhabit. In the future, he argues, successful public services will not be delivered by the state to the public but by a mutual partnership: the state will be more “like a DJ, deciding what music gets played” rather than playing the music itself.

I know and admire Simon – director of the New Local Government network, Blackheath resident and husband of Cherry Parker – Director of Westcombe Park, London SE3 7EQ

Tooth Coloured Fillings

Zoom Tooth Whitening

Smile Makeovers

Power Back

We will know when we have succeeded when people start handing over to mark the demolition of old hospital buildings that are no longer necessary,” argues Simon Parker in Taking Power Back.

This book is a persuasive account of how we have reached “peak state” and how the only solution to the policy problems Britain faces in the 21st-century – shrinking resources, growing public expectations, robotic technology and increased life expectancy – is for the state to decentralise and devolve power back to communities.

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Smile Makeovers

Power Back

Westcombe Park Dental Practice

Treatments Available

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Anti-Wrinkle Treatments & Dermal Fillings

Contact Details

13 Station Crescent, Westcombe Park, London SE3 7EQ

Tel: 0208 8533304
Fax: 0208 8551784
ARTS

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM
Visit the NMM, NAVAL ACADEMY FREE. A National Hero: discover a man who was brave and un-conventional.

ARTS IN THE WEST CONSERVATIVE FINE ARTS SOCIETY 4th Thursday of every month at St Mary’s Church Greenwich, St Mary’s Church Greenwich. www.artsinblackheath.org.uk - 4th Thursday of every month.-

Thu 26th May 7.20pm for a 7.30pm ‘Nut Just Smoke and Misread Nicholas Richards’ held at the Bank, The Art of Camouflage in Wartime’ Held at the Professional- collection held at the Bank. Non-members may pay on the door.

GUNNEE DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS King William College, 33-35 Greenwich All lectures 8.00pm - 9.30pm. Mon-May 9th John Optata –The Man And the Music' Charles Bunbury explores the life and music of England’s greatest pianist. Non-members may pay on the door.

MADE IN GREENWICH GALLERY in Shades of Grey’- Graham Smith & ‘Canned Heat’- Beauclerk explores the life and music of England’s King William Court, University of Greenwich All lectures 8.00pm Mon 9th May. Non-members may pay on the door.

Contact daniel.hall1985@hotmail.co.uk for more details.

Charlton SE7 7JW (0208 853 0900). Continues every 2nd Wednesday from 1.30pm - 3.30pm at Sherington Children’s Centre, all Home.

9.30-11.30 Sherington Childrens Centre, all Home.

BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd, Blackheath SE3 9RQ Box Office: 020 8463 9100 www.trinitylaban.ac.uk

2nd Thursday May 12th

THEATRE

THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crosses Hill, Greenwich, London SE8 8DS 020 808 7755 Circa Studio Theatres on board. www.rmg.co.uk SPECIAL EVENT - Cutty Sark's first ever Edinburgh Comedy Festival warm up running from 24th July-3rd August Canes with Deserted and Katherine Ryan perform new material for their Edinburgh performances.

BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd, Blackheath SE3 9RQ Box Office: 020 8463 9100 www.trinitylaban.ac.uk Thursday May 12th 4.30pm - 5.00pm - A New free group for under 65’s living with young- 

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Global Fusion Music & Arts - *Civic Award winners* First Wednesday of every month - 7.30pm at Sunfolds, Old Dover Rd, SE3 5JZ GlobalFusionmusic.co.uk.

Thurs 12th May -7.30pm Writers Group -55, Gordon Rd, Charlton SE7 TRP Fri 20th May - 7.30pm World Cinema Night - ‘The Grand Salon, Charlton House £1 donation: ‘Life Above All' (South Africa) Fri 27th August-Night-Bare Dance Venue - Mycenean House Live music and dance, collards, DJs, 6pm, Carl St, Special guest – Annie Woki and friends from Botswana

Free workshops Fortnightly Tuesday and Friday community workshops at 2pm at Mascul Meeting Room off Victoria Way, Charlton SE7 6HJ Thur, Sat, Sun Closed, Special Guest- Annie Woki and friends from Botswana

MYCENAE HOUSE LIVE EVENTS: MAY

Thurs 12th May 4pm - Bach To Baby, Classical Concert for Baby and You, £2
Fri 13th May 8pm - Jazz/Nights, Candle Live music event hosted by Dave Z, £12
Fri 20th May 6.30pm TRINITY LABAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA are joined by members of the Welsh National Opera Orchestra as they perform Elgar’s ‘Enigma Variations’ FREE. Sun 8th May 6.30pm -Blackheath Hall Orchestra joins the Dulwich Symphony Orchestra and the Voice of the Storytellers, ‘Eugene Onegin’ and ‘The Lady of the Flowers’ FREE. Mon, 16th May 1.00pm GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA ‘ENSEMBLE AT THE INSTITUTE’ FREE, Stone, harpsichord, perform John Blow’s ‘VENUS AND ADONIS: Earliest surviving English opera written in about 1610 for court of James I. A light lunch is provided prior to the recital. Recital Room, Blackheath Hall. Company presents Sat, 21st May 6pm KATHRYN ROBERTS AND SEAN LAMKANE (South Africa) £12. Sun 22nd May 10.30AM NAVAL MUKMUNI piano recital - Blackheath Hall, Blackheath Hall TICKETS: £14 (4 tickets £50) 5.15pm – Gala Recital. The Hurricane Party and members of The Full English. SAT 18th JUN 8pm FAY HIELD - With The CANTATA ENSEMBLE Dir. JAMES JOHN - STONE, harpsichord, perform John Blow’s ‘VENUS AND ADONIS: Earliest surviving English opera written in about 1610 for court of James I. A light lunch is provided prior to the recital. Recital Room, Blackheath Hall. Company presents Sat, 21st May 6pm KATHRYN ROBERTS AND SEAN LAMKANE (South Africa) £12. Sun 22nd May 10.30AM NAVAL MUKMUNI piano recital - Blackheath Hall, Blackheath Hall TICKETS: £14 (4 tickets £50) 5.15pm – Gala Recital. The Hurricane Party and members of The Full English. SAT 18th JUN 8pm FAY HIELD - With The CANTATA ENSEMBLE Dir. JAMES JOHN - STONE, harpsichord, perform John Blow’s ‘VENUS AND ADONIS: Earliest surviving English opera written in about 1610 for court of James I. A light lunch is provided prior to the recital. Recital Room, Blackheath Hall. Company presents Sat, 21st May 6pm KATHRYN ROBERTS AND SEAN LAMKANE (South Africa) £12. Sun 22nd May 10.30AM NAVAL MUKMUNI piano recital - Blackheath Hall, Blackheath Hall TICKETS: £14 (4 tickets £50) 5.15pm – Gala Recital. The Hurricane Party and members of The Full English. SAT 18th JUN 8pm FAY HIELD - With The CANTATA ENSEMBLE Dir. JAMES JOHN - STONE, harpsichord, perform John Blow’s ‘VENUS AND ADONIS: Earliest surviving English opera written in about 1610 for court of James I. A light lunch is provided prior to the recital. Recital Room, Blackheath Hall. Company presents Sat, 21st May 6pm KATHRYN ROBERTS AND SEAN LAMKANE (South Africa) £12. Sun 22nd May 10.30AM NAVAL MUKMUNI piano recital - Blackheath Hall, Blackheath Hall TICKETS: £14 (4 tickets £50) 5.15pm – Gala Recital. The Hurricane Party and members of The Full English.
Cycling in remembrance

This is an ideal opportunity to raise money for an appropriate charity and we will be working with SSAFA - the longest serving national tri-service military charity. For 130 years, they have provided lifelong support to those who are serving or have ever served in our Armed Forces. Their support covers both Regulars and Reservists in the British Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force and their families, including National Servicemen. They are all entitled to lifelong support from SSAFA, which supports 50,000 people.

We are liaising closely with both the Imperial War Museum London and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Letter from the Front

Private John Lansam of the Army Cycle Corps, wrote home on 15th October 1915 from France about some terrible scenes that he had witnessed. He began politely with thanks:

"Your welcome parcel received today — The cakes were in excellent condition, and you can depend they were enjoyed, more as we just returned from the trenches this morning about one o’clock, where we had had some hard times. Since last Saturday we have been continually on the go, biking here, marching there, back to the bikes, then off again to some other part of the line, for a few hours there, then off again to some other part, and so the time has gone in, with hardly a warm meal, very little sleep, until today we have left to ourselves.

"Indeed, it has not been much of a rest, as we have all our clothing, equipment, rffe and bicycle to clean, but we don’t take that into account, and just smile through it all. By the time this reaches you I suppose you will be reading some details of the battle of the Somme which I have seen hundreds in these last three days. The scenes were awful, too ghastly for description, but they will remain forever stamped on the mind."

Make sure you visit the fan museum!

Barbara Ward

Don’t miss this wonderful and visually delightful exhibition celebrating the museum’s twenty fifth anniversary and showcasing the rarest and most remarkable fans within it’s collection. Greenwich is fortunate to have this ‘undiscovered gem’ of a museum, the UK’s only museum dedicated to the history of fans. This beautiful museum, first opened in 1991, and was founded through the vision and passion of its Director, Helene Barbier and Salvador Dalí, and a modern feathered fan by the Paris fan designer Sylvain Le Guen. In addition one marvellous at the beautiful décor throughout the building.

If you book in advance you can also enjoy a leisurely afternoon tea downstairs in the café that overlooks the garden. You can even book yourself onto a fan-making workshop!
What’s next for the Silvertown Tunnel?

R

emember the Silvertown Tunnel? The proposed road tunnel that would cross the Thames from the Greenwich Peninsula to the Royal Victoria Docks, roughly under the Emirate Airways. There were user charges for both the new tunnel and for the Blackwall Tunnel; these would rise and fall according to demand and would remain in place once the new tunnel has been paid for.

Transport for London argues that the tunnel would relieve the traffic to the Blackwall Tunnel, and increase reliability for drivers. TfL says that charges are needed to pay for the work and also keep traffic at current levels.

But local users, particularly from the south side of the Thames, have complained that any charges are discriminatory, when crossings further west are likely to remain free of charge. And critics also argue that any new roads encourage more people to drive, and that this scheme would lead to bottlenecks and congestion through the area, which already suffers from heavy traffic and poor air quality.

The tunnel would carry heavy HGVs that cannot use the Blackwall Tunnel, adding to pressure and pollution. Instead, critics say, lorries should be kept away from central London roads, and TfL should instead invest in public transport for south-east London.

The statutory consultation for the Silvertown Tunnel closed in December 2015, and it’s waiting for the full analysis from TfL. But there’s still plenty to report:

Public opinion

Public support for the scheme has fallen markedly since the previous consultation. Positive responses were 55% down from 83% in the previous consultation. And of those who were in favour, many expressed unhappiness about the location of the tunnel in Greenwich.

Greenwich is now the only council that supports the plan, though it would also like to see improved public transport.

Lewisham and Hackney Councils both passed motions against the Silvertown Tunnel. Newham, Southwark, , Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets all expressed doubts about a likely increase in local traffic and the environmental impacts of the proposals.

TfL has offered to install noise and pollution barriers to protect residents in...