



# Westcombe NEWS

Free to 3800 homes, & in libraries & some shops

November 2017 No. 9



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

## Greenwich: London's capital of culture?

The Royal Borough of Greenwich and the renowned Greenwich+Docklands Festivals (GDF) have teamed up in a bid to become London's Borough of Culture in either 2019 or 2020.

The public campaign and official bid was launched in September to coincide with the Woolwich Carnival.

Inspired by the success of Hull's year as UK City of Culture, the Mayor of London announced a competition for London boroughs to apply for funding to become the London Borough of Culture.

The bid represents an opportunity to put Woolwich, Thamesmead and the east of the borough on an equal footing to historic Maritime Greenwich.

Once the beating industrial heart of pre-war London, the Woolwich Arsenal and the surrounding areas of Charlton and Thamesmead have changed beyond all recognition over the last 60 years. Our bid to be London's Borough of Culture represents a bold vision to use the transformative effect of Arts and Culture to spearhead an economic and cultural renewal of the local area by:

- Providing more opportunities for local people to get involved in the cultural life of the borough
- Involving young people in the social and cultural life of the Borough
- Making sure that the borough is properly recognised as the rich, vibrant, multi-cultural place that it is with its own unique offers in Arts and Culture.
- Celebrating the wide array of interesting places and spaces which residents are rightly proud of across all the

borough from Eltham to Thamesmead.

Cllr Denise Hyland, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, said:

"We want to work harder than ever to establish the Royal Borough as the definitive cultural destination not just for London but for the nation... and show the whole world why we deserve to be London's Borough of Culture."

**WN reporter**

Residents are being urged to share their views on the bid by emailing

[culture@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:culture@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

It is vital that Greenwich residents, businesses and organisations from across the borough get involved with the bid to put Royal Greenwich in the running for the £1.1m prize. Winning this prize would allow the borough to run a show-stopping cultural programme.

Already residents young and old have shared their love and thoughts about the areas they live in for the bid. In answer to the question "Why do you love where you live?" views expressed in Woolwich included praise for "its friendly people", "closeness to the river" and "fabulous multi-cultural community". What would be your answer?

In Thamesmead, residents said they loved their area "because it's cool", "the people are great and the town is unique"; "it has beautiful lakes and meadows". Those taking part backed the bid by saying they would like to see more community events, activities and venues. Winning this bid would achieve just that.

For more information visit [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/boroughofculture](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/boroughofculture)



Will Greenwich succeed in its bid to be London's Borough of Culture?

## A good start for Christmas

Hooray, the popular Westcombe Society Christmas Bazaar this year returns to Blackheath Girls High School after two years away due to building work at the school.

The Christmas cheer begins at 11.30am on November 25th and the fun rolls on till 4.00pm.

**Di Blackwell**

There'll be a twinkly Christmas tree, traditional carols, decorations and all those other wonderful yuletide treats like mulled wine, roasted chestnuts and mince pies.

As always, the Christmas Bazaar is raising money for local charities. This year the charities are MumsAid and Montessori Education for Autism (MEFA).

Bazaar magic includes exciting items galore to buy as Christmas gifts includ-

ing handmade ceramics, jewellery, decorative glasswork, toys, Advent calendars, skin care products, books, Christmas cards and calendars, framed embroidery, dog accessories and much more, together with cakes, olive oil and many other delicacies.

Santa will be visiting, of course, based in his grotto where children can visit for a chat and (if they are good!) to receive a present.

There's something for everyone .... from face painting and a free Punch and Judy show to tombolas, raffles with fabulous prizes, including a much sought-after hamper full of Christmas goodies.

If you need a break from the festive fun, there'll be tea, coffee, sandwiches, and light lunches available.

### << Newsbriefs >>

#### Warning! Dog-nappers at work?

A local woman reports that her dog disappeared into the undergrowth in Greenwich Park – and never reappeared. She searched for a long time, in vain. She is convinced that someone stole her dog, a small terrier.

#### Congratulations

to Carol Rudyard, Myles Dove's sister, whose 95th birthday is on 18th November. She has just written a new book for children, *Kauki the Crab*, a story of the Gilbert Islands, published in Australia. Never too late – and Happy Birthday!

#### Hate crime

The Royal Borough of Greenwich launched a week in October as part of national Hate Crime Awareness Week.

The week highlighted the Royal Borough's work with partners to engage with and support victims of hate crime after an incident.

Hate crimes can take many forms: they are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's race, ethnic origin, nationality or national origins, religion, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. For help and guidance, please visit: [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/hatecrime](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/hatecrime)

#### Pollution comparisons

According to the World Health Organisation, pollution is a greater global threat than Ebola and HIV. But London only ranked 1,389th out of the nearly 3,000 cities and towns around the world monitored in the WHO's database of annual air pollution readings. On occasion, London was more heavily polluted than Beijing.

#### The Greenwich Housing Society

For well over 50 years, the Society has offered pleasant and affordable, one-bedroom flats to those of pensionable age and who have a connection with Greenwich.

The Management Committee responsible for the Society has always been made up of volunteers. Currently we have six Committee members but are wanting to recruit one or two more. If you have an interest in people, live locally, have a concern for decent housing and feel you might be able to spare some time to support the Society, we would be glad to hear from you. Our Committee Meetings are held in Mycenae House and on average we meet eight times a year, always in the evening.

If you would like to learn more, contact: Dorothy Martin on 020 8850 3991 or write to The Greenwich Housing Society, 12 Glenluce Road, London SE3 7SB.

#### Outrage

Greenwich residents have expressed outrage after an irreplaceable pond and ecosystem was bulldozed to make space for IKEA's new car park on the Greenwich Peninsula.

The pond, located near Bugsby's Way, was an important habitat for newts, specialised plants, invertebrates and migratory birds.

#### Killed by a drone

Greenwich-born former punk rocker Sally Jones, "the White Widow," a Daesh terrorist who was involved in at least 12 terror plots, was reportedly killed in a US drone strike near the Syrian town of Raqqa.

THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY'S CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR ENJOYABLE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AND CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT

Saturday 25th November

11.30 – 4.00



RETURNING TO Blackheath High School for Girls in Vanbrugh Park (entrance in Mycenae Road)

CELEBRITY OPENING

FREE SHOWS FOR CHILDREN

12.15 & 2.30 Traditional Punch & Judy Show

Craft and Charity Stalls, Roasted Chestnuts, Mulled Wine, Christmas Music, Santa's Grotto, Face Painting

Adults £2, 12-16s £1, under 12s free, Members £1

Proceeds to MumsAid and Montessori Education for Autism

# COMMUNITY

## WESTCOMBE NEWS

### ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

**Neville Grant**, The Editor  
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### ALL MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:

wnews@westcombesociety.org  
**Deadline for the December/January issue:** 16th November  
**Environment Editor:** Maggie Gravelle  
**Sub-Editor:** Annie Grey  
**Reporters:** The community – that means you!

### ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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

### DISTRIBUTION Emily Norton and volunteers.

Volunteer distributors please phone 020 8853 2756, 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**.  
**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  
**Publisher:** The Westcombe Society  
**Chair:** Marilyn Little Tel. 020 8853 1312

The views expressed in the Westcombe News are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or of the Editor. We take all reasonable precautions to protect the 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

**WANTED! More volunteers to distribute the WN.** For example our distributor for Vanbrugh Park North has moved away. Please phone 8853 2756 if you would like to help.

### WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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

Name.....

Address.....

Tel.....

Email: .....

Please enclose payment as appropriate:

Family Membership	£12	[ ]
Individual Membership	£8	[ ]
Senior Citizens/unwaged	£4	[ ]

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## Open Day at the Westcombe Woodlands



PHOTO: Myles Dove

The woods on our doorstep were once again open to the public on Sunday October 8th – and the sun came out to celebrate!

The Westcombe Woodlands Open Day has become a popular day out for many locals. This time, one of the highlights was an account of how the beehives were set up, with an explanation of exactly what is involved in apiculture (bee-keeping to the lay person).

Those visiting the woodlands found there was something for everyone, including woodcraft activities, pond-dipping and story telling – as well as delicious refreshments.

The Westcombe Woodlands always welcomes volunteers, for these woods don't look after themselves – they have to be managed – and those who turn up to help out find that the work involved is extremely satisfying. Come along and find out for yourselves!

## Time for a cuppa and a chat!

Friday 29th September again saw the Westcombe Society's participation in The World's Biggest Coffee Morning in aid of Macmillan at Mycenae House.

Through the generosity of our volunteers the tables were heaving with delicious cakes and sandwiches when we opened to the public at 10.00am. Throughout the day we had a steady stream of people coming in for coffee, cake and a chat, or for a sandwich lunch. The Mayor was unable to join us this year as he was busy climbing the O2 for his own charity! Many thanks to Maureen Aune and Tessa Cross and all those who made the cakes and sandwiches, and to Shirley Little who donned rubber gloves to spend the whole day washing up!

We raised £587.60 at the Coffee Morning; which, with the £460 raised from the Macmillan Walk earlier (see October's WN) meant that the total raised amounted to £1,047.60 – enough to pay for a Macmillan Nurse for almost a week.

On October 21st the Westcombe Society hosted yet another tea-party, this time for senior citizens. Many thanks to the stalwart team of volunteers who served up the delicious sandwiches and cakes with those always popular "nice cups of tea." And thanks to J-J for yet again producing another stimulating quiz.

These events take place twice a year – the Daffodil Tea in the Spring, and the Chrysanthemum Tea in the Autumn, and all senior citizens living in the area are welcome to come along. All seniors living locally are invited, so if you are not on the list, please ring Caroline Owens on 8853 0948, and we will make sure that you get an invitation next time.

It seems that these events involve almost always the same group of volunteers: please contact Caroline if you would like to help out on future community events such as these.

Oh, and drivers are often needed, too.



## Letters

Any views expressed are not necessarily those of either the Westcombe Society, or the Westcombe News.

### From: Rebecca Moore Siebert Rd

I feel I should clarify that the comment regarding mast-sharing in October's WN not being an option didn't come from me. I believe that came directly from the Council. It's always nice to be asked about a quote if it's going to be put in the paper! Ed: Apologies, Rebecca.

### From: Cllr Geoff Brighty

Peter Dempsey (WN, October 2017) rightly raises the issue of the increased use of Blackheath. A new joint events policy for the Heath between Greenwich and Lewisham Councils allows 90 days use per Council each year – so potentially 180 days a year for events including setting up and clearing away days. Each Council benefits from the fees it collects, and the Heath does have a long-standing tradition of hosting fairs, circuses and other events, but a balance has to be struck between generating income and the exploitation of this much loved open space. It is not clear that balance has been achieved with this new policy.

The OnBlackheath music festival, loved by some loathed by others, has been a cause of complaint in each year since Lewisham Council first gave it the go ahead. There is a level of noise disturbance some residents do not find acceptable. I will continue to pursue this issue with the event organisers and the local authority.

Mr Dempsey also refers to noise from motor

bikes. The police are responsible for enforcement and the advice from our local police is to let them know about this kind of anti-social behaviour by contacting them at Blackheath. Westcombe.SNT@met.police.uk or to report dangerous and anti-social riding on 999 or 101.

### From: Trevor Allman Coleraine Road

In response to the question asked of me by Mr Andrew Graham (October's WN), as one who supports Irish republicanism, I accept the re-assembly of the Northern Ireland Executive before the establishment of a 32-County Irish Republic.

Mr Graham's states that the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has no interest in promoting terrorism; but the DUP is the political wing of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), which is a terrorist organisation that has neither disbanded nor disarmed, and is still active, and has links with other neo-fascist organisations on this island. It is shameful that the Conservative Party should want the support of a right-wing party like the DUP so badly that it would offer a £1 billion bribe.

Tiocefaidh ar la!

## Rail travel over Christmas and New Year

Emily Norton

SouthEastern have now announced changes to rail services over the Christmas/New Year period – from Dec. 23rd to Jan. 1st inclusive.

The changes are summarised below:

- No trains on the rail network will run on 25th/26th December
- Southeastern services will not run to or from Cannon Street, Charing Cross, Waterloo East, London Bridge, Deptford, Greenwich, Maze Hill, Westcombe Park, New Cross and St Johns for the entire period of 23rd Dec. to 1st Jan. inclusive
- Blackheath will have trains to and from Victoria only, though London Bridge will be reachable by changing at Peckham Rye
- A reduced timetable will run between Victoria and Gatwick from 27th Dec. to 1st Jan. inclusive, with no trains at all on Christmas Day or Boxing Day, although a replacement bus service will be available on Boxing Day
- There will be significant disruption on other lines so check before you travel by train over the period.

TfL haven't published their Christmas/New Year timetable yet, but it currently looks as though there is nothing major planned on the Jubilee Line or DLR apart from the normal Christmas Day closure. Our advice is to check tube/DLR plans nearer the time.

More details of changes can be found on the Westcombe Society website.

### St George's, Glenluce Rd.

**Sundays: 11.00am** Children's Church  
**11.00 am.** Holy Communion (All Age service 1st Sunday of each month)  
**Wednesdays: 8:30 am** Morning Prayer  
**12.30 p.m. Soup Lunch** Fellowship  
**6.00 pm Taize Service** - Christ Church, Trafalgar Road (4th Sunday of each month)  
**Sceptics Group** meets at 89 Westcombe Pk Road) 1st & 3rd Sunday each month

### Special Events in November

**Thurs. 2nd Nov. 7.00pm Multi-Faith Prayer Space Launch Aperture Building, Greenwich Peninsula.**  
**Wed. Nov. 15th 7.30 at St George's: Spiritual Film Night: The Eagle Huntress** (2016). 13-year-old Aisholpan trains to become the first female of her Kazakh family to be an eagle huntress  
**The Christmas Journey Mon 27th-Wed 29th** in school hours at Christchurch  
**Contact: Rev'd Tim Yeager**  
rtyeager@gmail.com Tel. 07804 614245

Sonic Promotions present

'Stunning' Mojo  
'Total Mastery of just about every guitar technique imaginable' Guitar Technique

The master craftsman returns

## Clive Carroll

Friday 1 December  
Doors 7.30pm £15/ concession £13  
Tickets at wegotickets.com/event/393352

**Mycenae House & Gardens**  
90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 7SE 0208 858 1749  
www.mycenae.co.uk 400m Westcombe Pk Stn, Free Parking, Bar

# LOCAL NEWS

## OnBlackheath: the verdict

The Westcombe Society was well represented at the meeting arranged by OnBlackheath to discuss feedback from the festival. Overall the organisers said that the event was a success, despite a few complaints

The organisers gave information about the target audience (families and the 25-55 age group) and the numbers attending. They reported that reaction to improvements to the children's programme and to the food area had been positive.

They also explained the process of discussion and scrutiny around the event, a year-long process, and talked about the considerable financial support given to local charities as a result of the festival.

There was some positive feedback from the meeting but a number of concerns were raised. A question was asked about the timing of the event and whether it could be moved to the summer holidays when children did not have to be ready for school the following day. It was suggested

that it should finish earlier in the evening. There was also comment about the extra traffic congestion that resulted in the closure of part of Hare and Billet Road. But the main criticisms concerned the noise in the Westcombe Park area.

The organisers agreed that this had been a particular problem this year – with all the complaints coming from north of the heath

**Maggie Gravelle**

(even St Johns Park East) They agreed to monitor the area more rigorously and to discuss the issue with their consultants, Vanguardia.

They acknowledged that the bass volume, while within the limits allowed by the licence, was disturbing for some people.

They also recognised that information about timing and the complaints procedure had been inadequate on the Greenwich side and said that this would be improved next year, including sending the information to the Westcombe News in time for the July/August edition. In addition they agreed to consult on ways to improve the traffic flow during the festival.

## Wood-turners against torture

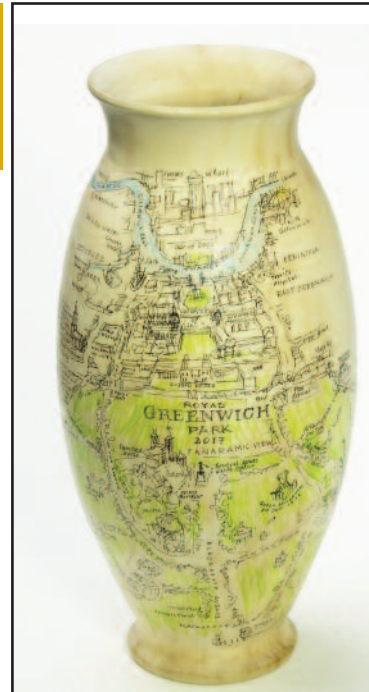
At 7.30pm on, Friday 17th November some 15 of this country's most accomplished wood turners have been invited to create, and donate for auction, a work from felled trees in Greenwich Park. A further 15 such turnings will be donated by Blackheath wood turner, Michael Maisey.

The venue will be The Trafalgar Tavern, Park Row, Greenwich, London SE10 9NW.

This is an opportunity to acquire a unique piece of Greenwich Park. Already a wide variety of beautifully turned pieces have been created, including a horse chestnut urn decorated in great detail by Greenwich artist, Peter Kent, in his inimitable style.

Also on display at the auction will be A2 framed photographs by Vivienne Davies of trees in Greenwich Park.

In addition, there will be a chance to see (and bid for) the items before at The Greenwich Gallery, Peyton Place from Oct 30th to Tues Nov 7th, weekdays 9:30-5:30, weekends 12:00-4:00, and online.



Urn by Peter Kent

Proceeds go to Freedom from Torture

Contact:

Tony Othen - 07956 456647. email: hameaude@gmail.com  
http://www.thegreenwichgallery.com  
https://www.freedomfromtorture.org

## Art Exhibition

The Blackheath Art Society are happy to be exhibiting their work in a new venue this year: Greenwich West Community Arts Centre 141, Greenwich High Road London SE10 8JA. Open: Sat 25th Nov. to Fri 8th Dec. Mondays to Saturdays 12 to 7.30pm [Right: Corner plant by Althea Battams]



## Skill-boosting

It's never too late to learn something new and Greenwich offers a range of free and subsidised adult learning courses.

On offer are many courses at venues across the borough, including: fashion, bricklaying, interview training, digital skills, food safety, English for speakers of other languages, business start-ups, car maintenance – the list goes on and on.

Signing up to a course might help open doors to your future career or help you find a new hobby and make friends.

For a full list of courses & to sign up visit [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwichlearns](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwichlearns)

## Awards for children

The incredible achievements of children in care and care leavers were recognised at the Royal Borough's annual Looked After Children Awards in Charlton Athletic's North Stand on 5th October at which 60 young people received awards.

Guests included foster carers, families and nominators such as social workers. Six special awards were given out for outstanding achievement including 22-year-old Leena Gurung, who recently achieved a first class honours degree in computer networks at the University of London despite many personal challenges.

## In remembrance

Rectory Court and Mycenae House would like to bring our community together to recreate the determination of WW1 volunteers. The aim of the project is to produce an installation to be unveiled on Armistice Day 2017.

The curtain of poppies will include knitted, textile and crochet poppies, to commemorate the servicemen and women who died serving their country.

We estimate we need about 200-300 to make an impact. The installation will spring up overnight to surprise, inspire and enthral the local community but most

importantly serve as a prompt to reflect too.

Help us make poppies at Mycenae House every Thursday until Armistice Day 1-4pm at our Pop in Cafe for seniors. Rectory Court will hold a coffee morning in October for all volunteers in the project to gather and socialise and be updated on the project. Please also drop into the Cafe for seniors to make new friends and have a chat every Thursday 1-4pm.

For more information contact Sue Dawber on 07702 910 973 email: [rectory.haa@cinnamoncc.com](mailto:rectory.haa@cinnamoncc.com) or [enaoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:enaoutreach@gmail.com)

## The arts: for everyone

Recently I have come to know of Royal Greenwich's forthcoming bid to be the London Borough of Culture of 2019 or 2020.

At first I felt somewhat suspicious of the word 'Culture': perhaps more of the 'high end' aspects (concerts, fine-art exhibitions, opera – there can never be too many).

But No. On reading the Borough's ideas it is an application which recognises the other aspects of Culture and 'cultures' in our Borough. So, unexpectedly, I feel it is well worth supporting.

This is as long as it does showcase our amazing talents in Greenwich, which include the spoken word, dance, music

at its most diverse and creative, vibrant fashion, innovative jewellery, photography and film making. 'Open Studios', for example, has over 650 new studios for a great variety of artists in Charlton riverside.

The Borough is fortunate also in having many consistent, outstanding grassroots organisers and providers of the Arts across our communities – though often handicapped by a shortage of funds.

So I feel that we should take advantage of this bid, give it our full support, and ensure that it brings with it stunning chances for people to develop and take part in even more Arts activities for the people of Royal Greenwich.

**Janet Higgs**

## What's happening at St George's

It is a busy autumn at St George's Church, Westcombe Park's parish church. Thanks to generous grants from the Westcombe Society and the Greenwich Winter Night Shelter, a new shower facility is being installed at the church.

This will provide an extra service to the homeless guests who lodge at the church on Tuesday nights in January through March. The new shower and toilet facilities should be ready by mid-December.

The Spiritual Film Festival is in full swing, with feature films shown on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30. Drinks and popcorn are provided, and a short discussion period follows. Open and free to all members of the community. In November, film night is on the 15th November.

The Christmas Journey on 27th - 29th November dramatically presents the Nativity story to local school children, and volunteers are needed to help out.

The music programme has also taken a boost, with a greater role for the choir and the creation of a band. If you like to sing or you play an instrument, and you would like to be a part of a friendly group of fellow singers and musicians, contact the Director of Music, Joe Graves at [choir.stgeorges.westcombe.park@gmail.com](mailto:choir.stgeorges.westcombe.park@gmail.com).

Finally we are hosting a presentation by Dr Sam Moorhead of the British Museum entitled, *From Nazareth to*

*Bethlehem and back again: The history and archaeology of the Nativity.* The event is on Wednesday, December 6th at 7:30pm.

Sam Moorhead has worked as an archaeologist in Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan, and is a past Chairman of the Palestine Exploration Fund and council member of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society. Sam and his family are also members of St George's.

Open to the public. For information, contact Rev'd Tim Yeager at 07804 614245 or [ryeager@gmail.com](mailto:ryeager@gmail.com)



**From Nazareth to Bethlehem and back again**

*The history and archaeology of the Nativity*

Dr Sam Moorhead FSA (British Museum)

Sam Moorhead has worked as an archaeologist in Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan, and is a past Chairman of the Palestine Exploration Fund and council member of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society. This lecture will attempt to provide some insights into numerous complex issues surrounding the nature of The Nativity.

Sam and his family are members of St George's Church. Come and learn! Refreshments provided. Free and open to the public.

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> of December - 7:30 pm

**STGEORGE'S**  
WESTCOMBE PARK  
Glenluce Road, Blackheath SE3 7SD  
[www.stgeorgeswestcombepark.org.uk](http://www.stgeorgeswestcombepark.org.uk)  
Rev'd Tim Yeager, Team Vicar 07804 614245 [ryeager@gmail.com](mailto:ryeager@gmail.com)

## Is education happening?

Yes. Michael Oakeshott famously said that education was a conversation between generations. In recent times a considerable gap has opened up, because children see a different world with different emphases and fashions.

This makes education very difficult. Parents need to do everything they can to "talk the same language as their children".

Schools need to do everything they can to win the trust of pupils. Without these moves much teacher talk in classrooms is a waste of time.

The P E R Group's new website: [www.perprospero.co.uk](http://www.perprospero.co.uk)

# FEATURES

## Gordon of Khartoum and Greenwich

MALCOLM SCOTT HARDY explores the links



I have long been intrigued by references to General Charles Gordon, otherwise known as "Chinese Gordon" or Gordon of Khartoum, having links with Greenwich and Woolwich.

This interest was reinforced when I found that his mother was an Enderby of the whaling and rope manufacturing family that gave its name to Enderby Wharf on Greenwich Peninsula, now controversial because of the cruise-liner development.

Despite the Charlton Heston film of 1966 and remakes of *The Four Feathers*, (one filmed in Greenwich) Gordon seems to have been deliberately sidelined as being too controversial, despite the relevance of his story to the resurgence today of Islamic fundamentalism.

A latter-day Victorian Christian hero *par excellence*, and a fanatical opponent of slavery, he was nevertheless rubbished by Lytton Strachey in *Eminent Victorians* in 1918 and there has been no shortage of other more recent detractors.

I can trace no blue plaque for anywhere he lived, and was surprised to see that his statue in Trafalgar Square, there before the Second World War, was removed in 1943 (it was eventually relocated on Westminster Embankment in 1953).

While other memorials survive – there's one at Gravesend – I know of none in Greenwich. Gordon has perhaps been an early victim of political correctness; though a white Christian imperialist, one could say he was far less deserving of execration than Messrs Colston, Rhodes or General Lee; in his time, he was widely regarded as a national hero, and many still remember him as such.

### Gordon's family background

His father, General Henry William Gordon, 1786-1865, married Elizabeth Enderby, born 1792, in St. Alphege Church in 1817. Elizabeth was a member of the whaling, shipping and manufacturing dynasty founded by the first Samuel Enderby 1718-97, and lived on Crooms Hill. They had 11 children, five sons and six daughters between 1818 and 1837. Most of the births were registered in St. Alphege.

As an officer of the Royal Engineers, Henry William had a long association with Woolwich, broken by periods of overseas service. In 1830, he took a house on Woolwich Common but it was too small and about March 1832 he moved to a newly-built house on the corner of Jackson's Lane numbered 1 Kemp'ts Terrace, since redeveloped and screened off by much later housing.

It was here that Charles Gordon was

born in January 1833.

In 1840, promoted Lieutenant-Colonel, Henry William was posted to Corfu in the Ionian Islands with his entire family.

### His education

In 1843 Charles's mother brought him back to England to put him into a school in Taunton. During the summer holidays, he used to visit his grandmother on the Woolwich Road in Charlton – a house that no longer survives. Charles's grandparents were both buried at St Alphege's, where you can see this tablet set in the floor:

*"In a vault under this Church are deposited the Remains of Samuel Enderby Esq. of Crooms Hill House in this parish who died October 24th 1829 aged 74 also of Mary, his wife who died at Old Charlton February 25th 1846 aged 78"*

Two years later, Henry William returned to Woolwich, and the family occupied officers' quarters in the Royal Artillery Barracks.

Charles left Taunton and was sent to the crammer school on Shooters Hill to prepare him for entrance in 1848 to the Royal Academy Woolwich which trained officers for the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers.

In January 1847 William Henry was appointed Inspector of the Royal Gun Carriage Factory in the Woolwich Royal Arsenal and he and the family moved into the Inspector's House next to the Commandant's House. In the 1851 census he can be found in the Royal Arsenal (listed with Major-General Richard Lacy) in Government House.

Could this be Building 11 or Officers Quarters on Dial Square just south of the Gun Carriage Factory? This is the building that has recently escaped demolition by the developers to make space for a taxi rank for the new Crossrail station.

In the same 1851 census Charles Gordon aged 18, "Gentleman Cadet" was in the Cadet Barracks on Woolwich Common. At this time the family attended the newly-built (1833) Holy Trinity Church on Beresford Square in Woolwich (demolished in 1974). Charles Gordon graduated from the Royal Academy in June 1852 with a commission in the Royal Engineers. After this the Greenwich-Woolwich links are broken, with Henry William Gordon being sent to Gibraltar in 1853, promoted to Major-General in 1854 and then retiring with his wife Elizabeth to Southampton.

### The Death of Gordon

In 1851 Charles Gordon started an extraordinary career that took him first to the Crimea, the borders of the Russian empire with the Ottoman empire on the Danube and Armenia, China, Egypt and the Sudan, and, rather less romantically, in Gravesend.

In 1883 he was sent to Khartoum with an uncertain brief; the intention was to rescue remnants of the Egyptian administration from an uprising by the Mahdi.

Gordon chose to stay; but far from offering a solution, he became part of the problem. No doubt he hoped that by staying in the city, he would force the British to send an expeditionary force to rescue him, and thereby defeat the Mahdi. It was not to be: the relief force was sent too late, and Gordon and most of the occupants of the city were massacred.



## The Fate of Local News

Journalist & broadcaster Jon Snow has written about "the virtual collapse of local journalism." The *WN* looks at the evidence.

The London Assembly report on the provision of local news in the capital has warned of a "democratic deficit" if coverage continues to be scaled back through paper closures and staff cuts.

The recently published Economy Committee report, entitled: *"The fate of local news – read all about it"*, shows that the circulation figures for five of London's paid-for local papers fell by more than half from 2005 to 2016; advertising fell by 17% between 2014 and 2016 – the internet is of course to blame. The result: a string of local closures, with more under threat.

According to the London Assembly report, three of the titles under threat are owned by Archant – *Romford Recorder*, *Barking & Dagenham Post*, and *Hackney Gazette*. Archant has described the first half of 2017 as "arguably one of the most difficult starts to the year for almost ten years..." due to "continued decline in print display advertising."

This summer 17 weekly and one daily newspaper closed down. One casualty was the *Enfield Gazette* one of whose reporters told the *Observer*:

"It is so devastating what is happening to local news – the reporters and the photographers on that patch know the area like the back of their hands . . . you lose so much local knowledge when papers like these close . . . a huge loss."

Linda Quinn, editor of the *Brixton Bugle*, told the committee there was "the real potential for a democratic deficit as a result of a lack of local community reporting. If people do not know what is happening in their name, it is very hard to hold the council to account."

Nearer home, these days a number of local newspapers in South London are a great deal thinner than they used to be.

Another problem: research by *Press Gazette* has found that 17 per cent of London's local newspapers are not based in the community they serve, and about half have only one reporter for each borough. Five newspapers have just one reporter covering several boroughs.

The *South London Press* has one reporter covering six boroughs, while its sister title the *Mercury* covers Greenwich and Lewisham with only one reporter.

Not surprising then that as circulations dwindle and newsrooms shift focus to online, there is "evidence of less 'on-the-ground' news reporting or investigative

journalism" as a result.

Trinity Mirror has said it was reviewing the future of *The Wharf* paper, covering Canary Wharf and Docklands. The *Mercury* is London's oldest paper; in July, *The Greenwich Mercury* and *South London Press* were sold after the company that owned them went into administration. We must just hope these papers can survive. Capital Media, based in Penge, has also gone into administration.

Attempts to publish "hyper-local" papers have failed, though *Greenwich Visitor* has shown what can be done, as has on a very small scale the *Westcombe News*.

The report said: "London needs a strong and credible local press. Without addressing the challenges the industry is facing, and finding solutions, we are at risk of losing one of our most important democratic functions."

Fiona Twycross, author of the report, said: "Having an active local news force is essential to ensure we are able to hold to account Government, local councils and other organisations that have huge responsibilities to Londoners."

Asked if more resources were needed for the *WN*, the Editor replied: "We are all volunteers, so really the possibilities of investigative reporting are limited. What is really needed is a new editor."

**Stop Press:** The 167-year-old *Oldham Chronicle*, which closed in the summer, has been saved by a local radio station.

### Westcombe News Readers Survey

We would like to canvass readers' views on the following questions:

- 1 Amount of coverage of local news  
A Good B OK C Insufficient
- 2 Quality of coverage of local news  
A Good B OK C Inadequate
- 3 Amount of coverage of local issues  
A Good B OK C Insufficient
- 4 Quality of coverage of local issues  
A Good B OK C Poor
- 5 Features of general interest:  
A Good B About right C Too much/little
- 6 Any other comments: .....

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# WHAT'S ON



## ARTS

**BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY**, St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath www.artsinblackheath.org  
All meetings are on the 4th Thursday of each month except August and December- 2.00pm for 2.30pm  
**Thurs. 23rd Nov 2.00 for 2.30 Malcolm Kenwood on ART HEAT: all about art crime** Non-members may pay on the door  
**GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY** King William Court, University of Greenwich 13th Nov. 7.15 for 7.45 LINDA COLLINS on **THE ROYAL COLLECTION OF ART.** Visitors welcome, please pay on the door  
**BLACKHEATH HALLS**  
From Thurs. 2nd NOV 10:00am  
**ART EXHIBITION: REBECCA WALKS**  
Using the traditional art technique of pen and ink, Rebecca Walks' work explores and presents her inner responses to the world in the form of a visual tableau.  
**THE BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY ANNUAL EXHIBITION** Sat 25th Nov. - Fri 8th Dec. Mondays- Saturdays 12 - 5.30 pm at the West Greenwich Community Arts Centre 141, Greenwich High Road London SE10 8JA. All the items are quite small and for sale at affordable prices. Ideal Christmas presents!

## CHILDREN & FAMILY

**BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd. Blackheath** SE3 9RQ 0208 463 0100 www.trinitylaban.ac.uk  
Sat 18th Nov. 11.30 am and 3.00 pm **ALADDIN** Recital Room £8.50  
Sat 25th Nov. 1.30 & 3.45 pm Recital Room **THE NUTCRACKER** £14 adults | £10 children **MYCENAE HOUSE**  
Sat 4th Nov. 1.00 & 3.00pm **THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT** Let's All Dance present this charming, original family ballet. £9/£8.  
**SHERINGTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE**, Tel. 0208 - 3053140 - 14, Sherington Road SE7 7JW  
**DAD'S STAY AND PLAY** session every Wednesday, 1.00pm - 2.30pm - free drop in Sherington Children's Centre, all home dads welcome Each 2nd Saturday of the month - 10.00am - 11.30am - free brunch/arts and craft Contact Daniel.hall1985@hotmail.co.uk for more details, www.selondondads.org.uk

## SPOKEN WORD

**BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd. Blackheath** SE3 9RQ Box Office: 0208 463 0100  
Wed Nov 1st. 20:00h Recital Room **LU SPINNEY** talks on **BEYOND THE HIGH BLUE AIR: A MEMOIR.** A passionate, urgent account of the years following her son Miles' snowboarding accident.  
Thu 23rd Nov 8.00 pm **GERMAINE GREER: WOMEN FOR LIFE ON EARTH** £15.00  
Sat 25th Nov. 8.00pm **NATHAN CATON: PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS TOUR 2017**  
Enjoy his witty dissection of modern life  
**INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
14th Nov. Rob Cummings: Windmills of NW Kent and Kentish London, A New Perspective at The Old Bakehouse, Age Exchange, Bennet Park. 7.30 pm  
**BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY**  
Friday lectures at 7.45pm Mycenae House.  
Nov 17th - **FUEL CELLS & ELECTROLYSERS** by Dr Enrique Ruiz Trejo, Imperial College  
Visitors welcome - donations £3 to the society.  
**IN-WORDS**  
Wednesday Nov. 1st at 6.45 for 7 at the Crypt, St Margaret's Church, Lee Terrace, Blackheath SE13 5DL (entrance in Brandram Road, fully accessible) **WH AUDEN**, lecture/ performance by Graham Fawcett. £12.50 online or on the door.  
Nov. 21st West Greenwich Library: launch of two new thrillers by Cinnamon Press), **FREE.**  
Dec. 5th Short stories and children's poetry by award-winning author **Chrissie Gittins.**  
Visit [in-words.co.uk](http://in-words.co.uk) for more information.  
**CHARLTON AND BLACKHEATH AMATEUR HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY (CABAHS)**  
Mon. Nov. 20th 7.45 Tim Anderson speaks on Maryon Park - the Hidden Garden at Charlton House. Visitors welcome (£2) <https://cabahs.wordpress.com/>

## THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

**Fri. 3rd Nov. 7.30 for 8.00pm Autumn Quiz**  
Mycenae House  
**Sat. 25th Nov. Christmas Bazaar** at Blackheath High School for Girls  
**The Westcombe Society really needs more volunteers to help out at these events.**  
If you are interested, please ring Joanne on 07709 571777.

## COMMUNITY

**DOCKLANDS HISTORY GROUP**  
Museum of London Docklands, West India Docks Wed..1st Nov. **EVENING TALK: BLOCKADE RUNNING IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** with special Reference to London-Built Ships By Edward Sargent our Chairman.. www.docklandshistorygroup.org.uk  
**BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE** Meets first Wednesday of every month, doors open at 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Sunfields Methodist Church on Old Dover Road  
**GREENWICH WATERSTONES WRITING GROUP** will be selling the book they have produced at the Christmas Bazaar, all profit to the Greenwich foodbank - cost £4.99. Book launch at Waterstones Greenwich on Nov. 29th 5.00pm-7.00pm  
**THE WOODLANDS FARM TRUST CHRISTMAS FAIR** Sunday 3 December 11am-3pm All welcome. Father Christmas, mulled wine whilst browsing stalls for Christmas presents. Entry is free, but donations are welcome - all money raised helps us to care for our animals. A great family day out! No parking - please use public transport  
**BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION**  
Wed 7th Nov. 7.00 for 7.30 pm in the Old Bakehouse, Age Exchange, Bennet Park: Annual General Meeting, Reports, Elections, and **THINK-TANK TIME:** What are our priority policy issues? Members & Supporters welcome. Info: 8858 8489  
**ST JOHN'S CHURCH, St Johns Park**  
Remembrance Day Saturday 11th November... We will have our church open from 10am until 1pm for people to come in, light a candle in memory of someone who has died, enjoy the peace and take time to reflect. We will also do the Act of Remembrance with a 2 minutes silence at 11.00am  
**GREENWICH & BEXLEY COMMUNITY HOSPICE** 185 Bostal Hill, Abbey Wood SE2 0GB  
Christmas Fair Sat 25th Nov. starting 1.00 pm followed by Light up a Life Service at 4.30

## THEATRE

**THE GREENWICH THEATRE**, Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES Box Office: 8858 7755 [greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://greenwichtheatre.org.uk)  
Oct 31st - Nov. 3rd. **SHAKESPEARE SCHOOLS FESTIVAL**  
17th Nov - 7th January **CINDERELLA**  
27th Nov. **GET THERAPY (Studio)**

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Sat 4th Nov 1pm + 3pm - **The Owl & The Pussycat.**  
Thurs 9th Nov 4pm and Thurs. 30th Nov. - **Back To Baby.** Classical concert for families for families. £10.  
Fri 10th Nov 8pm - **Jazz Nights.** Candlit Jazz hosted by Dave Silk with special guests plus JazzNights Allstars. £10.  
Sat 11th Nov 11am - **Baby Broadway.** Sing-along concert of familiar showtunes for all the family. £10.  
Fri 17th Nov 7.30pm - **Roger McGough & LITTLE MACHiNe.** 'The Patron Saint of Poetry' joins us for an evening of famous poems set to music. £22.50. Wed  
Fri 24th Nov 7pm - **Global Fusion Music & Arts.** Ceilidh and Acoustic Night, hosted by Morriegan plus guest artist. £6.  
For further information visit [www.mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://www.mycenaehouse.co.uk)

Lewisham Choral Society presents  
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Mozart: *Coronation Mass*  
Piano Concerto No 20  
Forest Philharmonic Orchestra  
Conductor:  
Dan Ludford-Thomas  
Piano:  
Nico de Villiers  
Saturday 18 November at 7.30 pm  
Great Hall, Goldsmiths College SE14 6NW  
Tickets £15, £13 (concessions), £5 (students), £2 (16 & under) from [lewishamchoralsociety.org.uk](http://lewishamchoralsociety.org.uk) or on the door

## EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Thurs 9th Nov - Sat 11th Nov.  
Tickets & info: [www.earlymusicfestival.com](http://www.earlymusicfestival.com)  
**THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY CHOIR** with **ORCHESTRA OF THE SIXTEEN** cond/ Eamonn Dougan perform **MONTEVERDI VESPER**s of 1610 with Nicholas Mulroy, tenor  
Sat 11th Nov. 7.45pm **Alfege Church**, Greenwich  
Tickets £20, £14.00 online or on the door [www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts)

## MUSIC

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Thurs. 9th Nov - Sat 11th **ROYAL GREENWICH INTERNATIONAL EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITION 2017** Great Hall £10 | £8  
Mon 13th Nov. **LUNCHTIME RECITAL** James Kirby piano plays Schubert Free  
Thurs 16th Nov. 7.30pm **TRINITY LABAN CHORUS** perform **SEVEN BLAKE SONGS** £5.00  
Fri 17th Nov. 7.30 pm **TRINITY LABAN STRING ENSEMBLE** £5.00  
Mon 20th Nov. Rehearsal of the **MESSIAH.** Come and sing!  
Fri. 24th Nov. 7.30pm **TRINITY LABAN WIND ORCHESTRA & SINFONIA WIND** £5.00  
Sun 17th Dec. 7.30 pm **BLACKHEATH CHRISTMAS CONCERT** with performance of **Handel's MESSIAH** from many of our community groups. All this, AND:  
**BLACKHEATH GOES GOSPEL**  
Sat 18th Nov. Come and hear our magical, marvellous Gospel Choirs sing alongside pupils from St Margaret's Lee Primary School at this uplifting concert. Fun for all the family.  
**JETTE PARKER YOUNG ARTISTS: OPERA**  
Wed 22nd Nov. 3.00pm **MASTERCLASS: FREE**  
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# FEATURES

## The Politics of Breastfeeding

PETER GREAVES reviews *Why the Politics of Breastfeeding Matter* by Gabrielle Palmer Pinter & Martin Ltd 2016 £7.99

Those of a certain age may remember the Nestlé Boycott, and wonder whether it is still operating. Younger people may not have heard of it. Well, it is still operating, and it is still relevant, and this little booklet explains why.

The author, who co-directed the International Breastfeeding Practice and Policy Course at the Institute of Child Health in London, distils the essence of her earlier books and adds later material.

Despite evidence to the contrary, it is still commonly thought that poor, underfed women cannot provide enough milk for their babies. The more a baby suckles, the more breastmilk is stimulated from the mother, whatever her nutritional status. Introducing other milks – such as Nestlé’s powdered milk products, or restricting breastfeeding reduces this stimulus and the problem of “insufficient milk” arises.

Women should not blame themselves for perceived inability to make milk – they cannot do so without the stimulus provided by their babies’ suckling; the danger is that they become the dupes of the predators who push the expensive substitutes.

In 1981, the World Health Organization adopted by an overwhelming majority the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. The code sets out to protect both mothers and babies from misleading marketing practices.

At Nestlé’s 2016 AGM, the CEO of the company repeated the mantra: “Ever since the Code was established Nestlé has respected it.”

The author comments: “Part of the art of marketing is to repeat a lie so often that it becomes perceived as truth.”

Nestlé continues to market powdered milk – offering free samples, and claiming huge health benefits. This is particularly damaging in developing countries, where the water required to dilute the milk often comes from unsafe sources, damaging the health of the babies.

### The boycott

A boycott against Nestlé products (chosen because it was the market leader) started in 1977, but was suspended in 1984 when the company promised that it would abide by the Code. However, the boycott was re-launched in 1988 when it was evident that companies – including Nestlé – still promoted free supplies of infant formula to hospitals, a dream-marketing tactic.

In her book, Gabrielle Palmer explains that the Code is about marketing; it’s not saying you can’t give a baby anything other than breastmilk.

“It is saying that companies must not push their products at you, tell lies about infant feeding or

withhold vital information... most companies still do all three... Unethical marketing of baby milk is still happening and it’s far more sophisticated than in the era of the 1970s when saleswomen were disguised as ‘milk nurses. It entices and manipulates health professionals and their institutions, politicians and some aid agencies.”

“The interests of the companies’ profits are in conflict with the public good. Do we want unelected companies to control the decisions, policies, and actions of our elected governments and the UN? What impresses me is the courage of individuals who risk so much, even their lives, to do the right thing.”

### The Church of England

In 1991 the Church of England endorsed the Nestlé boycott, but in 1994 the Church Synod narrowly voted to conditionally suspend the boycott after a massive PR blitz by Nestlé, and at the 1997 Synod in York top executives flew in with executive staff from all over the world and pledged to keep to the Code and all subsequent relevant resolutions of the World Health Assembly.

In consequence, the Church of England boycott was dropped completely. That year Nestlé gave £100,000 to the York Council of Churches. IBFAN’s 1998 monitoring report, covering 39 countries, showed that Nestlé’s promotion of infant feeding products had not changed.

Research in Scotland has shown that as long as babies were suckled at least 6 times a day, amounting to 65 minutes in total, including some night feeding, the mothers did not ovulate. This can be an effective method of birth control as long as breastfeeding remains exclusive and frequent.

Thus the activities of milk companies have inadvertently contributed to the population explosion, increasing the number of their potential customers . . . They have also contributed to the pandemic of obesity, which starts in infancy. The UK government’s 2016 Childhood Obesity Plan makes no mention of breastfeeding.

This slender little book is important for all those concerned with big issues of children’s and women’s rights, inequalities, antibiotic resistance, mass migration, and climate change.

*(Those wishing to know more about the boycott, and the conditions set for its ending, should access [www.babymilkaction.org](http://www.babymilkaction.org))*

### STOP PRESS

The latest report from IBFAN – The International Baby Food Action Network – states, in summary:

*Our 2017 report shows how companies persist in the promotion of baby foods. Now that the Code has regained some of its shine of the past, commercial promotion is increasingly subtle and insidious, but no less effective. Only enforceable laws, properly monitored, can level the playing field in support of breast-feeding. Thirty-six years on, since the adoption of the Code, we find ourselves still fighting that Old battle in a New world.*

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Tel. 0208 852 3047 or 07837 859763

## The Queen returns to the NMM



Following one of the most successful fundraising campaigns ever seen for a work of art, the incredible Armada Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I was saved for the nation.

It will soon be returning to display in the Queen’s House following a major conservation project. Our films take you behind the scenes of our conservation studio or you can join us to see the newly restored painting for yourself. The Queen’s House is free entry. Above: Detail of the Armada Portrait

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# ENVIRONMENT



Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Library on the lower ground floor of the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street. They may also be viewed on [www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning)

## Save our trees! Adam Thomas

A few weeks ago, the giant poplar tree that sits in the former garage site between Foyle Road, Humber Road and Vanbrugh Hill was subjected to some fairly extreme surgery. Many residents were concerned at the way this drastic action had changed a large, healthy canopy into a scrawny-looking skeleton.

Two large houses are being constructed on the site, and during the various planning applications and objections, the potential damage to this tree and its roots was raised many times. Final permission was granted on the condition that the basements were reduced to avoid excessive incursion into the root-protection zone.

Before the works, the tree looked a bit stressed, probably due to the builders' trafficking over the roots, and the long dry spell at the time. The pruning should mitigate the water stress by reducing the amount of foliage that transpires water. The tree officer has also asked for more protection to be installed over the roots.

The branches of these poplar trees sometimes rot from the centre, and can suddenly drop. Where this is suspected, and with houses being built underneath, it would be important to remove these branches. Luckily, there seem to have been no major roots damage, which would have seriously compromised the tree.

The main detrimental effect of the works is on the habitat in this area. In previous

years, we have seen many bats flying through our garden which backs on to this space, but these have been absent this year.

We also used to hear woodpeckers drumming and have seen pied and green species in our garden, but this year these are absent. This is not just as a result of works to the poplar tree, but also the removal of smaller trees (mainly self-seeded sycamores) as well as undergrowth, which provided homes and food for insects, birds and small mammals. For instance the rot creating hollows that makes branches drop can give homes to woodpeckers or bats for many years. It is an obvious conflict.

The poplar tree should recover, though it appears rather less imposing than before, and has a better chance of long-term survival due to these works, which will make it a 'better neighbour' to any residents of the new homes.

The plans for the site included planting many new trees, and it is hoped that these will be allowed to grow to maturity and enrich the appearance and wildlife of the area.

**Ed.:** "Since this article was written excavations have begun on the site. Local residents have raised concerns about the protection of the roots of the large black poplar and have urged the Tree Officer to ensure that all regulations are being complied with."

## Thinking of getting a wood burner?

Sales of wood-burning stoves are soaring and an estimated 16% of families in London now have one. They are the fashionable 'must-have' focal point for homes on chilly evenings. Part of the appeal of wood burners lies in their supposed green credentials. Wood fuel is often described as 'carbon neutral' because it releases the same amount of carbon dioxide as the tree absorbed as it grew. But this ignores the many processes that go into making wood fuel, such as kiln-drying and transport. And what about the air pollution they create?

Scientists at King's College London have found that burning wood generates the type of small-sized particulates that are most hazardous to health. These are particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5) which are so small they can penetrate deep into the lungs and even into the bloodstream and can lead to heart attacks, lung cancer, and respiratory problems including asthma.

The other pollutant of major concern to public health in London is nitrogen dioxide (NO2), half of which emanates from road traffic, and particularly from diesel cars. PM2.5 pollution from domestic wood burning is more than twice that from traffic. Dr Gary Fuller, an air pollution expert says small-sized particulate pollution levels surge in the evening, especially at weekends. "One clear factor we could see through our measurements was that high levels of pollution were coming from wood-burning stoves," he said. "They produce particulates that have a distinctive colour and spectroscopic signature that we can pick up very accurately in our machines".

According to statistics from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), wood burning stoves are the UK's main source of small-sized particulate matter emissions (PM2.5). Even modern stoves that are described as 'low emission' are highly polluting. Tests by the Danish Ecological Council found 500 times more particles per cubic centimetre in the 'smokeless' fumes from the chimney of an 'eco-friendly' wood burner compared with the exhaust fumes from a modern truck. The wood burner tested met Nordic emission standards, which are much stricter than those for wood burners in the UK.

As well as the hazards of particulate matter, there are other harmful substances in wood smoke, including benzene, formaldehyde, acrolein, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

It is an offence to burn wood in an open fire in a smokeless zone, but it can be burned in wood burners approved by Defra. But, as with the scandal of diesel engine emission tests, the level of pollution in approved burners measured in laboratory tests does not necessarily reflect the home situation. In

**Ann Hill**

Tasmania, for example, researchers found almost four times as much PM2.5 pollution emitted under real life conditions compared with controlled tests.

"People should think twice about wood burning stoves because the particle emissions are much higher than using gas or electricity" says Professor Martin Williams of Kings College Londo

## Farewell, Philip – and thanks

The Greenwich Conservation Group meets once a month in the Town Hall in order to scrutinise planning applications that are brought forward by amenity societies from all the local conservation areas, and identify proposals about which they are concerned.

These are then discussed and comments passed on to the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The Group has been ably convened by Philip Binns who not only manages the meetings but also circulates minutes and makes representations to the Council.

The Westcombe Society wish to thank Philip whose advice and guidance have been invaluable over many years: he has been a wonderful support for local amenity societies. We wish Philip all the best in his 'retirement'. Our loss is St George's Garrison Church's gain...

## Better to travel than to arrive?

Campaigners in Blackheath have been petitioning the Mayor of London for a new bus route to connect North Greenwich and Kidbrooke Village.

The move would free up capacity on crowded local bus routes such as the 108, 132 and 422, thus reducing demand on overstretched Southeastern trains at Kidbrooke station, by providing residents of the new Kidbrooke Village with a direct connection to the Jubilee Line.

Campaigners argue that buses such as the 132 and 422, which run from North Greenwich to Blackheath and beyond, fill up from the first stop and the answer needs to be a new bus route designed to relieve the pressure.

Cllr Geoff Brighty (Blackheath Westcombe) said: "There is not enough

capacity on buses connecting North Greenwich and our area, and Blackheath Westcombe loses out from being stuck in the middle. If you are a Blackheath or Westcombe Park commuter on SE trains then you cannot find a seat on the train, and if you want to get the Jubilee line then the 108, 132 and 422 are full before they reach your stop. A new bus route to connect North Greenwich and Kidbrooke Village would alleviate the problem."

Meanwhile, good news from SE Trains: on Jan 2nd there is a new timetable, and Cannon Street trains will resume calling at London Bridge so passengers will at last be able to reach Waterloo and Charing Cross by changing at London Bridge.

**For a summary of SE trains timetable over the Christmas period, see page 2.**

## Silvertown Update

The recommendation report for the proposed Silvertown Tunnel was submitted to the Secretary of State (SoS) for Transport on 11 July. After receipt, the SoS then had three months in which to decide whether or not to grant development consent.

The deadline for this decision was 11th October. Maggie Gravelle reports that the decision has been delayed by a month so that Chris Grayling can consider the air quality implications.

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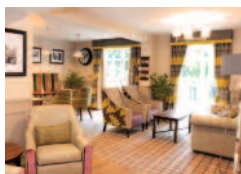
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