



Westcombe NEWS

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September 2017 No. 7



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

Phone mast drama in Siebert Road *WN* reporter

Local residents in Blackheath are up in arms after Greenwich Council admitted making a planning blunder that means they may get a mobile phone mast erected at the end of their gardens – and a short distance from no fewer than three schools. All this despite Greenwich Council planners refusing permission for the mast.

In September 2016, Vodafone and O2 had applied for permission to build the mast on land off Siebert Road, next to the foot tunnel from Eastcombe Avenue that goes under the Blackwall Tunnel Southern Approach. The land sits between homes on Westcombe Hill and the dual carriageway.

The council was sent a huge volume of protests, including a huge on-line petition, when the plan was mooted. As a result the Council planners refused the application last November.

Residents breathed a sigh of relief; but were shocked when, at the end of July, workmen turned up with a digger to start work on erecting the mast. Householders in Siebert Road and Westcombe Hill had to persuade them to stop work until a council employee advised that the land owner had not given permission and work could not proceed.

Appalling mistake

Local resident Nathalie Golden comments: 'It is appalling that a mistake by the Royal Borough of Greenwich has, potentially, allowed a large telco such as Vodafone to run roughshod over the wishes of not only local residents and schools but also, ironically, the council itself. Permission was refused by the council but here we are fighting to stop it being erected despite everyone agreeing it should not be sited here. It is devastating for residents, especially when this isn't the first such error made by Greenwich council.'

The problem was what? Under planning law, a council has to respond within 56 days to prevent this type of application. Apparently, the council

took too long to respond with their refusal – just a day late. This meant that by default, the company that runs Vodafone and O2's networks, Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Ltd (CTIL), had permission to erect the mast – as long as the property owner agrees. Observers say that there has been a series of similar errors: in an incident in May, a mast was erected at Foxfield Primary School in Woolwich, after the council failed to object in time.

Land Registry documents do not indicate who owns the land in question – although it is maintained by Greenwich council. Transport for London (TfL) is responsible for the nearby Blackwall Tunnel approach road and the underpass. There are continuing investigations to establish ownership.

Rebecca Moore, a resident of Siebert Road, said 'We already have to live with the noise and pollution from the A102 – and now we have the threat of this mast.'

What the Council said

In a letter seen by the *WN*, the council's senior planning officer Victoria Geoghegan has written to the residents saying:

'Regretfully and due to a systems error, the application wasn't determined within the 56-day period which means it is deemed to be consented to and the mast can now be installed provided all other permissions are obtained.

'It is extremely unfortunate that the application wasn't determined in 56 days given that representations objecting to the scheme were made. I can assure you that



PHOTO: Rebecca Moore



In July, the historic state helmets and breastplates of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment were replaced for two weeks by the iconic full dress jacket and busby of The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, which is based in Greenwich. So the neat tough Irish Draught horses, ranging in colour from light bay to almost black, took over from the giant black cavalry chargers ridden by the Blues and Royals.

the system now been corrected to ensure that this will not happen again.'

Government guidance states that nearby schools must be consulted before an application is submitted. None of the three schools near the Siebert Road site were consulted: Invicta Primary School, MEFA Montessori for Autism, and the Kirkside Road site of Greenwich Steiner School. A Council spokesperson stated: 'We are committed to doing the very best that we can to listen, record and act on residents' views for each and every planning application. We have apologised to residents where mistakes have been made and are working hard to make sure that such errors do not happen in the future.'

The Council has meanwhile halted the works in Siebert Road and confirmed that a street-works permit will not be issued until the land ownership/highways status has been resolved. Cllr Geoff Brighty commented: 'This is really frustrating for residents. The Council's failure to meet the planning decision deadline has given

Vodafone another chance to put up a mast that nobody wants. It's a mess that shouldn't have happened.'

Residents supported by the Westcombe Society and other groups are now anxious that the investigations and actions being undertaken by the council will ensure that the application is again refused.

Vodafone and O2's statement

A spokesperson for Vodafone said: 'Vodafone and O2 customers expect to be able to use their mobiles and devices where they live, work and travel. Base stations are low-powered devices which cover approximately half a mile in radius, therefore we have to put base stations close to our customers.'

'Vodafone and O2 identified that they need to improve the coverage to their customers in Blackheath and we now have consent for a base station on Siebert Road.'

'We have received a query on the land ownership at the proposed location and are currently investigating this point.'

This is the age of the train . . .

Under plans that are now out for consultation, Greenwich, Maze Hill, Westcombe Park and Charlton could get direct trains to Luton Airport via a new line, Thameslink Metro Route TL10

Trains would go every half-hour, seven days a week from Luton to Rainham, Kent, via Blackfriars, London Bridge, Greenwich and Dartford. During peak hours on weekdays, the trains would be more frequent.

A stop at London Bridge will be welcome to open up links to north London and beyond when the Thameslink works are completed in 2018. It will give passengers at Deptford, Greenwich, Maze Hill and Westcombe Park – who currently rely on trains to Cannon Street – a choice of London terminals. Irritatingly, trains to Charing Cross ended in January 2015.

The new lines through London Bridge to

Blackfriars will go between those to Charing Cross and Cannon Street, thus impeding the old connection between Greenwich and the Charing Cross lines. Trains can still run to Charing Cross in emergencies.

Trains would also stop at Charlton, Woolwich Arsenal, Plumstead, Abbey Wood and Dartford, but not at Belvedere, Erith – or Woolwich Dockyard. There is some concern that trains to Cannon Street might run less frequently in consequence.

Matt Pennycook MP for Greenwich and Woolwich has been pressing government ministers on the state of Southeastern with little success. Asked if he backed plans to devolve SE London's rail services to Tf, transport secretary Chris Grayling was non-committal, saying he wanted to see proposals from mayor Sadiq Khan first.

< < Newsbriefs > >

OnBlackheath

Dates are now fixed for the 9th and 10th September: it features among others the American hip-hop trio De La Soul, Metronomy and Travis, (whose classic album is *The Man Who*.) The Libertines perform on the Sunday, appropriately enough, along with Seasick Steve, Jake Bugg, and KT Tunstall. For details: www.londonnewsonline.co.uk

The Blackheath Society is hosting an open post-event meeting in the Studio, Age Exchange from 7.00 - 8.00 pm on Thurs. 21st Sept.

Grant cut

The Arts Council has withdrawn its annual grant to Greenwich Dance, which has done invaluable work in the community, and has built up a brilliant artistic reputation. The Arts Council has decided to allocate more of its budget to arts organisations outside London.

People

We are very sorry to announce the deaths of Ann Braithwaite, Isobel Shepherd, Lynda Stillwell, Norman Truscott and Neil MacFadyen. We send our condolences to their families.

Knife crime

Council trading standards teams report that nearly one in four shops are breaking the law on under-age knife sales in some areas, with blades sold to children as young as 13. In separate test purchases undertaken by the Royal Borough's Trading Standards and the police, four shops, including a major supermarket chain, sold either razor blades or craft knives to young teenagers.

Free child care

The Royal Borough reminds parents and carers that from this

month they may be eligible for more free childcare each week. At present all families with 3 or 4-year olds can get 15 hours per week of free childcare over 38 weeks of the year. Now, some will be able to get an extra 15 hours a week on top of that. For more information about Free Early Learning Royal Greenwich, email fis@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or call 0208921 6921

Congratulations

... to Mycenae House for a highly successful Parkfest event in Mycenae Gardens. See p.2

The Westcombe Society

The annual Macmillan Walk is on Sun. 17th Sept. starting at 9.00 am at Westcombe Park Station (Station Crescent)

See page 2. Please ring Caroline on 0208 853 0948

The Annual Macmillan Coffee Morning is on Fri. 29th Sept. 10.00am - 2.00pm

Volunteers are needed to make cakes and sandwiches, and to help on the day. Please ring Caroline on 8853 0948

COMMUNITY

WESTCOMBE NEWS

HELP NEEDED!

We are looking for someone with a car who would collect bags of papers from an address in Coleraine Road ten times a year and deliver them to the homes of those who deliver them street by street.

We also welcome occasional help for when deliverers are away.
For further information please email environment@westcombesociety.org or telephone 8853 1312

ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for the October issue: 10th September
Env. Editor Maggie Gravelle
Reporters: The community – 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!

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

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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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www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/
Westcombe Society's Blog:
<http://westcombe.blogspot.com>

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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

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Address.....

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Please enclose payment as appropriate:

Family Membership	£12	[]
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Memories of summer:

Parkfest Mycenae Gardens July 25th

This free "Summer Extravaganza" included something for everyone: Live Music (including guest star Tavia), Dance, Theatre, Workshops, Face Painting, Stalls, scrumptious food and of course, a bar.

Great fun was had by all!



PHOTOS: Di Blackwell



Charity walk for Macmillan

Di Blackwell

There are 2 terrific reasons to join the Macmillan Cancer Support fundraising walk on Sunday, Sept. 17th, organised by The Westcombe Society.

The most important reason is the opportunity to help a truly life changing cause. Macmillan Cancer Support provides patients with practical, medical and financial support, and pushes for better cancer care.

The other reason is to take in the many delights of our local area during the walk which is about 10 km in length and

takes approximately 2 1/2 hours at a leisurely relaxed pace.

You may discover local sites you didn't know existed. The walk takes in some of the Green Chain Walk but is really a bespoke trail especially mapped out by Westcombe Society enthusiasts. It passes through a landscaped park, a mini zoo, grand buildings, AND pretty parks with fabulous views over London, Kent, and Essex, ending at ancient Oxleas Woods, a very special place that is at least 8000 years old.

Please do join us at the north side of Westcombe Park railway station at 9.00am. You will receive a free bottle of water before we set off - but do bring anything else you might want to eat or drink on the walk.

As you walk through Maryon Wilson Park, you feel very much that you're in the country - no city noises, just birds, rustling leaves and the occasional farm sounds of ducks, geese, chickens, goats and pigs in the park's small animal park. There's also a deer enclosure.

The walk also takes in Charlton Park, with beautiful Charlton House - which is one of the finest remaining examples of Jacobean architecture; around the house is the

sensory garden, with plants that can be appreciated by people with visual or other disabilities.

We pass by Commonwealth war graves in Charlton cemetery and the Royal Artillery Barracks, and on to Plumstead Common and Shrewsbury Park.

Before you know it we're at Oxleas Woods, and enjoying the splendour of oak, silver birch, hornbeam and coppice hazel. The café at the top of the hill is a popular meeting place with breathtaking views. This is where the walk officially ends.

At this point you can take the 89 bus home - or walk on to Severndroog Castle.

Please register in advance - there's a £10.00 registration fee. To register, pl. ring Caroline on 88530948. Neither the Westcombe Society nor Macmillan can accept responsibility for those walking, who do so at their own risk.



Letters Letters to the editor may be shortened for space reasons.

From: Rebecca Lord Maze Hill
Although I am in favour of keeping interesting buildings from the past, I find the gas holder on the Peninsula ugly and think it would be better to get rid of it.

From: Arnie Lord
I read with interest the letter from Mr Allman regarding his views on the Conservative DUP arrangement and his inference that this in some way indicates that the Conservative Party supports terrorist organizations.

Whats sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander: we should probably ask every Labour Councillor and indeed our MP to declare their own position on which of the various terrorist organizations that have for years been supported by Mr Corbyn.

Frankly I don't even know why I am even responding to this sort of inane tripe but felt perhaps a bit of tripe in return would not go amiss.

From: Rebecca Lord Maze Hill
Impressive though it was to see the big, grey warship, *The Argus*, moored in Greenwich, the constant roar of its engines spoil the usual tranquillity of the river walk, as well as reducing the air-quality. By not investing in an onshore power source for visiting ships,

Greenwich Council is throwing away the advantages our location on the river brings, with regard to noise and air pollution, and is undermining its green credentials. As a Greenwich resident, I call for this investment to be made, and would be willing to accept a temporary rise in council tax to pay for it.

From: Martin Guha Ruthin Road
I wonder if any of the readers who were attracted by the advert on the back page of the July/August 2017 issue for the Pointer School noticed the news item on the front page - Our Toxic Air - which reported that the air pollution on the corner outside the school was the highest in the surver, over twice the EU legal limit!

St George's, Glenluce Rd.

Sundays: 11.00am Children's Church
11:00 a.m. Holy Communion (All Age service 1st Sunday of each month)
Wednesdays: 8:30am. Morning Prayer
12:30 p.m. Soup Lunch Fellowship
4th Sunday each month: Taize Service Christ Church, Trafalgar Road
Septics Group meets at 89 Westcombe Park Road) 1st & 3rd Sunday each month
Wed. Sept. 15th 7.30 at St George's:
Spiritual Film Night: Whale rider
A Maori girl fights for her rights
Contact: Revd Tim Yeager
rtyeager@gmail.com Tel. 07804 614245

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LOCAL NEWS

New political map? See also: bce2018.org.uk

The Boundary Commission (BC) is considering feedback received last year, and during the spring of this year, on its initial proposals, on changes to constituency boundaries: our proposed new constituency is Greenwich and Deptford, detached from Woolwich - itself split into two, as is Thamesmead. You can view the initial proposals on the map below. The BC is now considering all the views received during both consultation periods and will decide whether to revise the proposals. If they are again revised, the BC will consult on the revisions yet again, probably towards the end of 2017. The aim? to reduce the number of MPs, and to try to make each constituency more even in terms of numbers.



Local councils face a crisis

The *Economist* recently reported that in the government's attempt to slash spending, hardest hit has been the Department for Communities and Local Government, which provides councils with most of their funding. As a result, their spending on public services this year will be 22% lower than in 2010. Some services have been pared down drastically.

At this year's Local Government Association's annual conference in Birmingham, the Chairman Lord Porter called on the government to secure the financial sustainability of councils.

By 2020, local government in England will have lost 75 pence out of every £1 of core central government funding it had to spend in 2015 - this is money used to pay for essential local services: rises in Council tax will not solve the problem

The *Economist* warns some authorities may soon be unable to meet their statutory obligations. Councils face an overall £5.8 billion funding gap by 2020.

The LGA is therefore calling for:

- * Local government to be allowed to keep all of the business rates it collects locally
- * A fairer system of funding councils
- * Council tax limits should be abolished.

A new LGA report, *Growing Places* sets out how councils can - with fairer funding and freedom from Westminster - build desperately-needed affordable homes, create jobs and school places, and provide the dignified care for the elderly and disabled.

What impact will these cuts have on

Greenwich? The main problem here is that the borough is capital rich - but revenue poor. The good news is that the Royal Borough has drawn up a Financial Efficiency Plan to balance its budget for the medium term future. The Leader of the Council Cllr. Denise Hyland promises the council will continue 'to deliver effective & efficient services to the community.'

Postscript: Councils received €10.5 billion (£8.4 billion) of EU funding. They await details of how the government will fulfil its pledge to replace EU funding after Brexit.

The Alexandra Players

Due to objections from the church on the grounds that it was against their family ethos and denigrating to women, we are sad to announce that we are unable to go ahead with our planned production of *Up Pompeii!* in October.

We are all extremely sad that after 60 years of affiliation and friendship with the church and so many unchallenged and entertaining productions, we have had to postpone this production until a more suitable venue can be found.

The play was chosen to celebrate the 100th birthday of Frankie Howerd, who was born in Eltham. We apologise for any disappointment this may cause. It has now been decided to put on Alan Ayckbourn's farce *Season's Greetings* instead.

Save our Gas Holder! WN reporter



PHOTO: Neville Grant

As reported in August's *WN*, the council has been running a consultation on the future of the East Greenwich Gasholder No. 1 on the peninsula.

This assumes it will be demolished - but local resident Mary Mills reports that an increasing number of locals are beginning to object. Twitter and facebook pages were set up in June asking residents to vote and comment - and Mary says that they are getting "massive support."

"The holder is exceptional," said Mary. "It is very very big (one of the biggest ever built), and it is dramatically sited as a local landmark. It was constructed with quite revolutionary engineering and kept deliberately plain, like modern movement buildings."

We reported on this issue in the last edition of the *WN*. The *WN* has now learnt that the holder has been refused listing and is scheduled to be removed. The council's draft report implies that all evidence of this monumental landmark - an important reminder of Greenwich's industrial heritage - will be obliterated.

The end date of the consultation period was 17th July 2017, and "the Planning Brief is anticipated to be formally adopted by the Royal Borough in late July 2017".

This suggests that the Council is trying to fast-track the whole exercise. It is well-known that consultation exercises launched over holiday periods - such as the summer, and Christmas - often get an easier ride because so many people are away during

these periods. So by the time you read this, it is possible that the Council hopes that the whole project will be done and dusted.

The draft report being consulted can be found on this link:

<https://consultations.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/KMS/dmart.aspx?strTab=PublicDMart&pageType=item&DMartId=895>.

The consultation end date was 17th July, but it may still be worth making your views known.

Mary Mills told the *WN* that the Greenwich Industrial History Society has published a blog page on the background to the site and also mentions what is done with defunct gas holders world-wide. The society is known for its campaigns to save historical sites celebrating Greenwich's industrial heritage. The link is:

<http://greenwichindustrialhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2017/06/the-east-greenwich-gasholder-biggest.html>



A creative solution: the old gas holder in Dublin. How about it, Greenwich?

Heath under threat? Mike & Emily Norton

The Blackheath Joint Working Party (BJWP) proposed that the number of days where there are events somewhere on the heath during the April to October period should not exceed 90.

This has now been changed to 90 days per council per year, including set up and set down, and not including the London Marathon event, which uses parts of the heath managed by both councils.

Our concern is that this could allow for a possible number of event days on Blackheath of 180 plus about seven for the Marathon, most of which would be likely to occur in the April to October period.

In 2017 there will have been 94 event days during the April to October period. Although Council Officers assure us that they will not use the full 90 days plus that the Council proposed in the final draft Events Policy, there are no guarantees about this.

We are reminded of the relatively recent RBG Circus Field licence application which caused a great deal of disquiet and an unprecedented response from many residents, mainly triggered by a clause that allowed for the possibility of a large number of events on the Greenwich side of the heath in the future.

We imagine local residents will feel the same if there is even a remote possibility that the number of event days on

Blackheath could increase from around 90 in the summer months, as at present, to up to 180 plus in the future. All the amenity societies have agreed that Blackheath should not be allowed to become mainly an event site: it should remain principally an open space. Do you feel the same?

Some feel that the current use of the heath is probably already higher than the heath can sustain on a long term basis. There is a recently published grassland survey that suggests some deterioration over the last 14 years when compared with that in the 2003 Wilkie report. This is regrettable given the status of the heath as a Site of Metropolitan Interest for Nature Conservation. Whether or not this is due to the use of the heath as an Event space, it raises a serious question: are the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the London Borough of Lewisham fulfilling their responsibility to protect the heath and its fragile ecosystem?

If you have views on this we would like to hear them; and you could write to Janine Whittaker (Janine.Whittaker@royalgreenwich.gov.uk), Kevin Sheehan (Kevin.Sheehan@lewisham.gov.uk), Kevin Bonavia (Kevin.Bonavia@lewisham.gov.uk), Gemma Buttell (gemma.buttell@glendale-services.co.uk) and your local Councillors.

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FEATURES

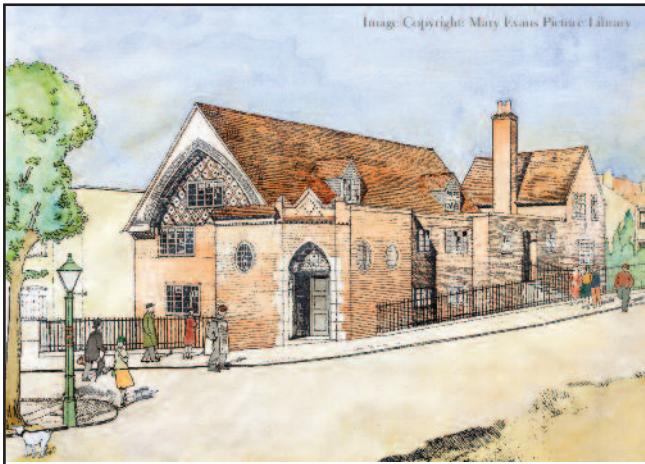
A quiet presence in Tranquil Vale GILL STOKER

The Mary Evans Picture Library has been a presence in Blackheath ever since the company was founded by local residents Mary and Hilary Evans in 1964. Since then it has been supplying images to publishers of books, magazines and newspapers as well as for films, TV programmes and other media throughout the world.

The first office, with a small staff, was based in a building next to Blackheath station. By the late 1980s the company was growing apace and needed larger premises. Around the same time, All Saints Parish Hall at the top of Tranquil Vale, opposite The Crown pub, was found by church authorities to be surplus to requirements. The Mary Evans Picture Library was lucky enough to be chosen as the most suitable (and quiet!) organisation to become its new resident.

The hall was built in 1928 in Arts & Crafts style, for use by All Saints Church and local community groups.

It's on Lewisham Council's local heritage list, and falls within the Blackheath Conservation Area. Here is the official description:



"Former parish hall. Detached. 1927-8. By Charles Canning Winmill. Brick in Flemish bond with stone dressings and plain clay tiles. Between one and two-and-a-half storeys. Pitched roofs. Flat arched windows. Oculus windows to one-storey element. Leaded lights. One storey entrance porch has double doors in pointed arch doorway in chamfered stone surround beneath dentil eaves. Principal gable (surmounting three storey element) has central flat arched rectangular window. Gable has diamond pattern comprised of red clay and rough-cast render. This set into deep pointed-arch reveal edged with roundel/flower motif. Reveal springs from brick corbelling."

The site of the building was previously occupied by a set of six shops dating back to the late 1830s, but these were destroyed during an overnight Zeppelin raid in August 1916. In the early 1920s the site was donated to All Saints Church by the 6th Earl of Dartmouth, and a few years of intensive fundraising followed. The foundation stone – halfway up the building! – was laid in March 1928, the hall was blessed by the Bishop of Woolwich in September, and the formal opening in November was a royal one, with Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein (one of Queen Victoria's granddaughters) officiating. By May Day 1930 the buildings costs had been fully paid off.

Over the years, from 1928 through to the 1980s, the hall was used for church meetings, fundraising events, youth clubs, local school activities, dancing classes, local exhibitions, sports activities such as badminton, and health clinics.

During the Second World War the London County Council requisitioned it for use as a British Restaurant, a government-led scheme providing low-cost hot meals. This scheme continued for ten years after the war ended; the building was finally handed back for church use in 1955.

The Mary Evans move took place over the Christmas and New Year holidays of 1988/1989, ably and efficiently organised

by Mary Evans herself, and the company has been there ever since. Mary and Hilary Evans have both sadly passed away in the last few years, but their daughter Valentine has taken over, and it continues to run in the manner they would wish, preserving history with consideration and integrity.

Since then, the building has been included in the Open House London scheme, attracting over 200 enthusiastic and fascinated visitors in September 2016. It will be open to the public again this year, on Saturday 16th September, with guided tours available at regular intervals throughout the day, and a team of Mary Evans staff ready and willing to chat to visitors about the building and the company.

The business continues to thrive, taking on new collections, many of them digital, and it is now possible for clients to license images from a wide variety of contributors including The London Fire Brigade, The National Archives, Historic England, The Metropolitan Police Association and the Natural History Museum, as well as the wonderful images from Mary and Hilary's own collection.

One of the remits of the library has been to make history accessible, and in recent years digitisation of the collection has meant that images are no longer restricted to commercial clients, but can be purchased as personal prints by anyone through Mary Evans Picture Library's print website at www.prints-online.com where the most popular print amongst the general public is consistently "Goodbye Old Man" by Fortunino Matania.

Open House London, Sat. 16th Sept. 10.00am - 4.30pm Mary Evans Picture Library, 59 Tranquil Vale, SE3 0BS www.openhouselondon.org.uk. See also: the website: www.maryevans.com

Tackling Greenwich's housing crisis

Just who can afford "affordable" housing?

JIM WINTOUR

Jim Wintour is a former housing officer in Greenwich

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has much to be proud of. Greenwich is doing more to tackle London's housing shortage than any other London borough bar one on some measures. It has given planning permission for 27,745 homes, which are now under construction or not yet started, a massive pipeline. In addition, 2843 new homes have already been built in the Royal Borough over the last three years.

However, as the *WN* pointed out in its last edition, one home in eight that has been built in Greenwich recently has been sold to foreign investors.

Furthermore, the Council's record on the number of affordable homes built – and the number demolished – can be questioned.

Should more affordable homes be built?

Over the last three years Greenwich has delivered 1,052 affordable homes, 37% of the total homes built in the borough. Affordable housing is broadly defined and includes homes rentable at 80% of market rent, and is therefore unaffordable for many Greenwich residents.

Many commentators therefore focus on genuinely affordable social rented homes. A total of 719 of these were built in Greenwich over the last three years. This is a good performance compared to many other London boroughs, according to the latest London Plan monitor.

However, the developer most active in Greenwich, the Berkeley Group, made a stonking profit of £812 million last year, 30% of its turnover. The usual argument that building more affordable housing will wipe out the developer's profit simply does not stack up. There may well be scope to deliver more genuinely affordable housing in Greenwich.

Should fewer affordable homes be bulldozed?

Greenwich's programme to knock down council house estates and replace them with new homes is

reducing the amount of genuinely affordable housing. For example, the Woolwich estate regeneration involves knocking down 1064 existing council homes and replacing them with 1530 new homes of which only 536 will be "affordable".

Furthermore, only some of these "affordable" homes will be genuinely affordable social rented housing like the homes that they are meant to replace. At a cost of immense disruption to local residents, the amount of genuinely affordable social rented housing is thus being reduced.

It is hardly surprising that the pendulum is swinging against demolishing council estates. For example, Greenwich resident Yasser Ahmad told the *WN* that the redevelopment of residential areas in Rotherham involved upgrading existing properties, and providing better infrastructure - schools, etc – rather than demolition. The Mayor of London, in his 2016 draft Guide to Estate Regeneration, states that, "demolition should only be followed, where it does not result in a loss of social housing, or where all other options have been exhausted".

So, Greenwich is doing a great job. However, the Council could and should deliver more genuinely affordable homes. And the Council could stop new council estate demolition schemes that reduce the amount of social rented housing.

Des. Res:
Frances St.

But there are still 15,000 people on housing waiting lists in Greenwich

PHOTO:
Jim Wintour



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WHAT'S ON



ARTS

THE ARTS SOCIETY, BLACKHEATH (formerly the Blackheath Decorative and 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 - 2pm for 2.30pm
28th Sep Christopher Garibaldi Treasure of the turf - the fine and decorative arts of horseracing
Non-members may pay on the door
GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, University of Greenwich Mon. 11th Sep 2017: **Renoir and Fashion** Visitors may pay on the door
THE OLD ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE
Visitors can mount a special observation deck for a close-up of the baroque masterpiece that is Sir James Thornhill's Painted Ceiling, currently being restored. **Open daily 10.00 am - 5.00pm £10.00 for adults, £5.00 for children.**

SKETCHBOOK TO STUDIO, ORIGINAL PAINTINGS AND PRINTS BY PAMELA WRIGHT, 21st August to 23rd Sept, West Greenwich Library, 146 Greenwich High Road, SE10 8NN. Tel. 020 8858 4289

CHILDREN & FAMILY

BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd. Blackheath SE3 9RQ 0208 463 0100 www.trinitylaban.ac.uk
SAT 9th Sept. 11:00am & 3:00pm THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS Recital Room From the peaceful river bank to the Wild Wood, join Mole and Ratty on their marvellous adventures. A beautiful new adaptation, featuring handmade puppets and a charming original score. Ages 5 - 11. £8.50
GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL London SE10 8ES 8858 7755

Sun 10th Dec. 7.30pm A SUPER HAPPY STORY (about feeling super sad) Hilarious cabaret musical about depression Tickets £11.00
Mon 18th Sept. 2.00 & 7.00pm TWIST A new take on Dickens' novel Tickets £16 | £13.50
Sun 24th Sept. 2.00pm THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK \$16.00 | Concs. £13.50 Children £11.
Modern adaptation of Alice in W-land. Ages 4+
Sun 1st Oct. 3.00 pm THE SANDMAN Fabulous contemporary ballet. £13.50 | Concs. £11.00 Children £8.50 Ages 7+

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

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THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Sun. 17th Sept. The annual Macmillan Walk starts at 9.00 am at Westcombe Park Station (Station Crescent) *Pl. ring Caroline on 0208 853 0948 if you want to take part.*

Fri. 29th Sept. 10.00a - 2.00pm Macmillan Coffee Morning. Volunteers wanted!
Sat 21st Oct. 2.00- 4.00pm Chrysanthemum Tea for senior citizens

Fri 3rd Nov. 7.30 for 8.00pm Autumn Quiz.
Sat. 25th November Christmas Bazaar at Blackheath High School for Girls
A few spaces for stalls are still available.
If you want to book a stall please ring Marilyn Little on 8853 1312.

The Westcombe Society really needs more volunteers to help out at these events. If you are interested, please ring Joanne on 07709 571777.

COMMUNITY

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
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon & Thurs 7.15pm and on Wed at 1.15pm. Want to learn bridge? See page 8!

GREENWICH PARK
Sunday 1 October 2017 - 11am to 4pm
Harvest Festival in the Queen's Orchard, in the NE corner of the Park, close to the Playground: see a display of the vegetables that have been grown there and the heritage fruit trees planted in the wild-flower meadow. Experts talk on bees etc. + candle-making, honey tasting and pond dipping.
WOODLANDS FARM
331 Shooters Hill Welling, Kent DA16 3RP
Telephone: 020 8319 8900 Buses: 486 and 89
20th Anniversary Family Fun Day Sun 10th Sept. 11am-3pm. Free, but donations welcome
FAN MUSEUM Crooms Hill SE10 8ER
Visit our two exhibitions - one permanent, and until Sept 16th, a unique collection of fans featuring **All Creatures Great and Small**. All this + tea in a Japanese garden!

GLOBAL FUSION MUSIC & ARTS

Globalfusionarts.co.uk Tel 0208 858 9497
Frid. 15th Sept. - Africa Night at Thamesmead Link: Bantu Arts (Ugandan drumming and dance group), Eben Oke and the Yoruba Soul-Jazz (Nigerian Afrobeat and Highlife) and Nigerian DJ Deoba Authentic. Admission Free 7.00-11.00pm
Frid. 22nd Sept. Folk Legend Julie Felix at Mycenae House 7.00-10.30 admission £10 on the door or £8 online at wegottickets.com
Sat. 23rd Sept. - Barn Dance at The Ladywell Centre, 148 Dressington Avenue, Brockley, SE4 1JF. Admission £6 on the door £5 online at wegottickets.com 7.30 to 10.30pm
Sun. 24th Sept. - Blues Night at The Guard House, No Street, Woolwich Arsenal, SE18 6GH. Admission FREE 6.00-9.00pm
Friday 29th Sept. World Cinema Night at Charlton House, Film starts at 7.30 £3 donation
Sat. 30th Sept. - Botswana Independence at The Stables, 76 Hornfair Road, Charlton, SE7 7BD. With Masego Woki and the Kalahari Band, £10 on the door or £8 online at wegottickets.com.

At the Albany

Paradiso: Man's Enduring Search for Perfection can be found, improbably perhaps, at 2.30pm on Sat. 2nd Sept. at Deptford Market Yard, Deptford Inspired by the final part of Dante's Divine Comedy, this 40-minute dance is a production by Akademi, one of the South Asian leading dance companies in the UK. All ages - and Free!

If you think Paradise can only be won by force of arms, go to Teatro Vivo and Ice and Fire's production of #Armingtheworld at 1.00, 3.30 & 6.00 pm on Wed. 13th Sept., which takes a look at the secrets lurking at the UK's largest Arms Fair. Take a selfie with a fighter jet, and learn a bit more about how we trade weapons with the rest of the world. Again, all ages - and (unlike the arms) it's free...

Then on 29th (6pm, 7pm & 8pm and 30th Sept. (1.30pm, 2.30pm & 3.30pm). **Chorus** By Ray Lee is on in Giffin Square, Deptford: a huge installation of giant kinetic and musical sculptures... Also on Sat. 30 Sept. 2.30pm is **Silencer** - a silent march ending with an installation in Deptford. Lots of local people taking part! Free: all ages. Just turn up.

THEATRE

THE GREENWICH THEATRE, Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES Box Office: 8858 7755
Mon 4th - Wed 6th Set. Eves 7.30, Wed Matinee 3.00 pm ALL OR NOTHING The ultimate Mod Musical Tickets £21 | Concs. £18.00
Wed 9th Sept 7.30pm THE WRIGHT BROTHERS
Mon 18th Sept. 2.00 & 7.00 pm TWIST Retelling a Victorian masterpiece
Tues. 19th - Sat 23rd Sept. Eves 7.30 pm Wed Matinee 2.30 pm Noel Coward's **PRIVATE LIVES** Popular stage comedy £21 | Concs. £18.50
19th Sept: All tickets £13.50
Wed. 27th - Sat 30th Sept. 7.30pm Shakespeare's **THE TEMPEST** Tickets £18.50 Concs. £16.00
School & Groups rates available

MUSIC

BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Road SE3 9RQ 0208 463 0100 www.trinitylaban.ac.uk
SAT 16 Sept. 20:00h THE LONDON LASSES AND CHRIS O'MALLEY IN CONCERT in the Recital Room This international renowned band deliver a wealth of traditional material from all over Ireland and their latest album 'The One I Loved the Best'

SPOKEN WORD

BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd. Blackheath SE3 9RQ Box Office: 0208 463 0100
GLOBAL FUSION
Thurs. 27th Sept. Poetry & Spoken Word Night at the Guard House, No Street, Woolwich Arsenal, SE18 6GH. Admission FREE 7.30-10.00pm
IN-WORDS
Tuesday September 28 7.30 pm at West Greenwich Library: a party for National Poetry Day with Tamsin Hopkins and four other published poets
Visit Irena Hill's website in-words.co.uk for details of these and other upcoming events.

MYCENAE HOUSE SEPTEMBER 2017

Every Thursday 1-4.00pm - New Drop-In Cafe for Seniors at Mycenae House. Carers & Family welcome. Tea & Cake £1. 020 8858 1749

Fri 8th Sept 8.00pm - JazzNights. Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk featuring Barbara Snow plus JazzNights Allstars. £10.

Mon. 11th Sept 9am-12.00pm + 12.30-3.30pm Launch of Bo Peeps Pre School at Mycenae House. New Pre-school Nursery for children 2-4 years. Contact Kathryn on 07935 373239 or kathryn.algar@btinternet.com

Thurs 14th Sept 4.00pm - Bach To Baby. Classical Concert for families. £10.

Fri 15th Sept 7.30pm - Pamper Evening. In aid of local charity MumsAid, booking in advance essential. £10.

Fri 22nd Sept 7.00pm - Julie Felix. Global Fusion Music & Arts host the Legendary Folk singer. £8.

Thurs 28th Sept 1-4.00pm - Tea, Cake 'n Talk. Drop-in Advice & Information Fair for seniors, families & carers. FREE.

For further information about all Mycenae House events visit www.mycenaehouse.co.uk 020 8858 1749

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Tel: 0203 870 4844

Visit: www.cinnamoncc.com

*Dementia care provided at Leah Lodge

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FEATURES

Calling all community businesses!



Get up to £10,000 and a learning programme to help you grow . . . You might start small (LEFT) but look RIGHT – the sky's the limit! This programme could change your life.



Community businesses are the organisations that put their local area at the very heart of what they do: the restaurants, energy companies, bakeries, sports clubs and pubs that are run by and for local people (to mention just a few!).

So we're delighted to announce that applications are open from Thursday 13th July for a new support programme just for them: the Community Business Trade Up Programme, run by School for Social Entrepreneurs, in partnership with Power to Change.

The programme supports the leaders of early-stage community businesses with:

- a fully funded learning programme (consisting of 12 learning days spread over six months)
- a grant of up to £10,000

The focus of the programme is to grow community business' impact by increasing their sales and trading income. The learning programme runs from January to July 2018 and will support 100 community business leaders across England. They will learn in groups of 10 peers at eight locations: York, Liverpool, Midlands, Ipswich, London, Hampshire, Devon and Cornwall.

Alastair Wilson, CEO of School for Social Entrepreneurs, said:

"We're delighted to partner with Power to Change to support the learning of community business leaders, people who commit themselves to improving their local areas and nurturing local vibrancy. School for Social Entrepreneurs has 20 years' experience in helping leaders of social change develop the confidence,

skills and networks to grow organisations that help people to improve communities."

Mark Gordon, Power to Change's Director of Communications,

"Community business is all about exploring new ways to help local areas grow and thrive: a great opportunity for new entrepreneurs to look at new ways of doing business and doing good."

The first phase of the programme, which started in May and ends in October, is already supporting 30 community business leaders in London and Liverpool. It will support 130 leaders in total.

The second phase of the programme will support a further 100 community business leaders across England via School for Social Entrepreneurs' eight Schools based in England. It will run from January to July 2018. Applications for the second phase open on 13th July 2017 and close on 11th October 2017.

You can find out more and register your interest in the programme at: <https://www.the-sse.org/courses/community-business/>

For example: Greenwich Bus Tours provides a unique opportunity for locals and visitors to explore hidden gems across the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Contact: 020 3040 2267/6
info@visitgreenwich.org.uk



Blackheath Halls Opera *Der Freischütz* (The Enchanted Bullets) is yet another milestone in the Halls wonderful venture into performance by and for the local community. This is the eleventh Community opera put on in the Halls, and following *Carmen* last year, and other notable productions, it did not disappoint.

The opera, by Carl Maria Von Weber, was first performed in 1821, and has been a favourite part of the repertoire in Germany ever since, though it is rarely performed in this country.

Make no mistake: community opera is a real challenge, and it gives great pleasure to see so many people new to opera – both performers and audience – exploring and enjoying the possibilities.

A great deal of credit goes to Rose Ballantyne, the Halls Community Engagement Manager and Project Manager, and Director Oliver Platt and his gifted production team. Indeed, teamwork is the name of the game: the teamwork involved in opera – between orchestra (Blackheath Halls Orchestra under director Nicholas Jenkins who was both conductor and chorus master) and the numerous other players – the soloists, Blackheath Halls Opera Chorus, Royal Greenwich and Blackheath Halls Youth Choir, Lewisham Youth Choir, (both involved for the first time this year), and pupils from

Greenvale School and Charlton Park Academy, presented huge logistical demands. Though there were times when the space was so crowded with extras that key moments in the action were obscured.

It is true there are special problems in performing opera "in the round": yet the result was yet another performance of strikingly high quality, doing full justice to Weber's tuneful score. The soloists gave particular pleasure: invidious to name names, but this writer was especially impressed by Adrian Dwyer's Max, Samantha Crawford's Agathe, Kirsty Mclean's Annie, and Njabulo Madlala's Caspar. All the soloists in this opera are of international standing, and it does great credit to them that they can find time to perform in our wonderful local community opera, and do their bit towards bringing opera to new audiences.

We wish the new director of Blackheath Halls, Gemma Okell, well; but on a sad note we are sorry to say goodbye to Nicholas Jenkins, who after this, his eighth community opera, takes up a new position at Glyndebourne. N.G.

Autumn Dance Event for Ages 60 and Over

Join us this autumn for Trinity Laban's first ever September Series – with two weeks of inspiring and energising workshops for all abilities for the over-sixties.

Dance sessions at Trinity Laban are exhilarating, exciting and friendly. No prior dance experience is necessary. The over 60's Intergenerational Project is on Mon 4th, Tues 5th & Wed 6th Sept. There are other workshops too on Mon. 11th - Wed 13th September.

The 60's intergenerational project bring people of different ages together to embark on a creative journey through dance and collaboration. This project is open to all ages (10+) and abilities. Free lunches, too!

For more details, please contact Laban Box Office on 020 8463 0100



Can you - sing? dance? juggle? play an instrument? Are you in a Group? etc THEN

Come to 'Charlton's Got Talent' on SUNDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2017

3pm

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If you would like to come along and feel you can impress our Judges, then please ring 8856 7373 or email stlukesplayers46@gmail.com for an application form which must be returned by the closing date of

15th September 2017

St Luke's Players, who have been proudly running for 70 years, regularly put on entertainment at St Richard's Church to large audiences, with local fish and chips in the interval. Performances in The Assembly Rooms, The Village, Charlton, etc., etc.

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Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Library on the lower ground floor of the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington St. They may also be viewed on www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning

Woodlands Farm's 20th anniversary

MAGGIE JONES



Our parks in Greenwich originate for the most part from the historical good fortune of having wealthy landowners (including royalty) keeping them green until other interests took them over.

Then there are the commons: Blackheath has been encroached upon, but is still a significant space, while the good people of Plumstead fought pitched battles to keep theirs in the nineteenth century.

Just on the north of Shooters Hill, but still mostly in Greenwich, is another significant remnant of a rural past. This is the 89 acres of Woodlands Farm (sadly only a part of the much larger, original farm) just across the road from Oxleas Wood.

Saved by the local campaign

Woodlands Farm was saved from having a dual carriageway thundering through it by campaigners who worked to stop the East London River Crossing from being built. The struggle went on for years through public enquiries, campaigns and rallies, and even a High Court Challenge against the Compulsory Purchase orders on Oxleas until John Major's government ran out of money and the project was dropped.

In the sigh of relief that followed, the Trust was formed. With help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, backing from our local Co-op Party, and Greenwich Council, the Trust gained a 999 year lease from the Co-operative Society (as was) as long as our charitable aims – conservation and education – were retained.

Creating a working farm

So over the years that followed the fields were cleared of burnt out cars and much rubbish. Toxic weeds were cleared by hand, sheep came and did their part and WFT gained Higher Level Stewardship status (and funding) on a third of the fields and Entry Level Stewardship on others, from Natural England.

Now every year we grow hay to feed our own stock and have a surplus to sell: all natural meadow hay without pesticides or fertilisers. A small, but dedicated, hedging team have planted 600m of new hedgerow to add to the other hedgerows on the farm.

We have a thriving herd of sheep, all native and some rare breeds (come and see our Manx Loughtans), as well as keeping pigs (Gloucester Old Spot), ducks and chickens. We have an orchard which has nearly 100 trees of mainly Kentish and local provenance.



Children enjoying last year's haymaking on the farm

But this would not have happened without the work of volunteers led by the Trustees, raising money to fund a professional farm manager, a volunteer organiser and an education officer. Many of those volunteers and others have also learned farming skills, hedging, ditching and even 4000 primary school children are introduced to the farming world by our lambing. We've assisted many young people towards land-based careers, some into veterinary work. There are also allotments for individuals and school consortia.

And the future?

Well, we've just been extending our cowshed as we need more space for the stock during the winter months. We're also just

starting a Young Farmers' Saturday Club aimed at those who want to come along, learn, work under supervision and hopefully enjoy themselves.

It's been hard work, but all worthwhile. We've survived for 20 years and that is worth celebrating. We're grateful for the support of our local friends, including the Westcombe Society as well as national organisations. There's much more to do and, in common with all charities, money is always on our minds and help is always needed. Sometimes we wonder why our 89 acre heaven in South East London is not more widely celebrated.

Perhaps we should shout a bit louder!

Green Fingers get Results!

Many thanks to Christine, Maggie and Patricia for creating this splendid display at the Standard. We fed the soil and put in nearly 100 plants, supplied by Greenwich Park. They were well mulched and watered in. We hope some of the locals will water it when needed. PHOTO: Marilyn Little



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

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London Councils help for worthy projects

Organisations tackling a variety of social problems are among those set to receive a financial boost from London Councils. The 2017-21 programme will see £6,173,133 split between 14 different projects tackling some of the most serious issues that face the capital.

Applicants to the programme must be non-profit organisations that are able to work across more than one borough and able to demonstrate they provide services in at least one of these priorities areas:

- Homelessness – support to prevent people from becoming homeless, and targeted intervention for those who have become homeless, including rough sleepers.
- Sexual and domestic violence – helping people at risk of harm as well as those who have been subjected to violence.

Successful projects include Shelter, Women's Aid, and the Asian Women's Resource Centre, aimed at tackling Female Genital Mutilation among other issues. All 32 London boroughs and the City of London support the programme which aims to meet key areas of need in the capital

Air Quality Action Plan

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has published a landmark strategy for delivering a cleaner and greener environment. The Royal Borough's Air Quality Action Plan details some ambitious but realistic policies to manage the impact of future growth. Key policies include:

- Expansion of electric vehicle charging points across the borough .
- Trialling an electric refuse vehicle
- More Car Free Days in Greenwich
- Reducing pollution caused by building
- Investigating a revolutionary water source heat pump to power a district heating network in Greenwich.
- Providing eleven or more Air Quality Monitoring Stations – more than any other local authority in London.

For more information, please visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenergreenwich & www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/airquality

News from the Park

The Queen's Orchard in the NE corner of Greenwich Park will be open to volunteers from 1.30 - 4.30 pm on Wed. 6th and Wed 20th September.

The aim is to create a garden with educational value, to show people how to grow a wide range of vegetables and also to grow older varieties of fruit trees to reflect the historic nature of the site.

Beehives have now been added to the orchard. If you are interested in volunteering in the Orchard please come along. Dorothy Love, the guardian of the Orchard will be there regularly until October. Please check the website for times.

Harvest festival: See page 5.

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ACCOMMODATION

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