



A Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year to all our readers

Planning matters

The Westcombe Society Environment Committee is particularly concerned with issues that affect the local area. We keep an eye on planning applications, respond where appropriate and attend planning committee meetings when necessary. Recently, we have been aware that the Planning Department of the Royal Borough of Greenwich has been severely over-stretched. Information to the public has been delayed, and there is a backlog of applications to be dealt with, and some errors have occurred.

The debacle over the failure to process the application for a mobile phone mast in Seibert Road is but one example. In that case, the Council failed to process the applications within the requisite 56 days, and, as a result, the development has gone through by default.

So it was with some interest that we noted a motion on this theme that was proposed by a group of councillors at the recent Full Council meeting. This, while acknowledging the hard work of officers, regretted 'recent planning errors' and delays that have been a result of large case-loads and 'an absence of performance management'.

It also noted the use of public funds to engage external consultants to help clear

the backlog. Greenwich's new assistant director for planning, Victoria Geoghegan, recently recommended that external consultants should be taken on to help out. Regional Enterprise Ltd will be providing "planning application services" at a cost stated to be up to £50,000 for six months. Many observers feel that this is likely to be money well spent.

The proposers called on the Council to implement a full review of 'what has gone wrong' in the planning department.

Maggie Gravelle

In response, the Deputy Leader of the Council recognised that there had been a backlog of applications but argued that in the period July to September 98% of 'non-major' planning applications had been processed on time. He told the meeting that the Regeneration and Scrutiny panel planned to conduct a review into the problems and that its findings would be made public.

Like other committee meetings, the Full Council is open to the public. Details, including the agenda and papers, can be found on the RBG website. Full Council meetings are also available through the webcast and can be accessed at <https://royalgreenwich.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. We welcome this additional route to public engagement.



PHOTO: Penny Player

Friday 25th November saw waves of people turning up at Blackheath High School for Girls in Mycenae Road for the Christmas Bazaar to enjoy the music, the colourful stalls and the festive atmosphere. Santa's Grotto was very popular, as was Punch & Judy. Tim Crane was the lucky winner of the Westcombe Hamper.

Many thanks to Westcombe Dry Cleaners 74 Westcombe Hill for providing the lovely Christmas Tree.



PHOTO: Sybil Whimster

Christmas Appeal

As everybody knows, Christmas is a time of giving. But here I'm writing about a different kind of present.

I have recently been working with the local charity appeal 'Penny for a Brick'. They've been running for over 11 years now and have taken donations from local people to support young children in Nepal. I visited the country in 2014 with the Boy Scouts, and wrote about it in the *WN* when we mounted a "Penny for a Brick" campaign to help improve schools.

I cannot begin to describe the majesty of its scenery, the diversity of its culture, and, more importantly, the kind-heartedness and hospitality of its people – despite levels of poverty we can only imagine. Sadly, many of the most vulnerable who live there are children with no chance at receiving the support they need.

'Penny for a Brick' is trying to sponsor even more children than before to ensure they receive a full education, safety at school and a decent meal each day. We can achieve this through the small donations from members of the public.

As we did following the 2015 earthquake, we are running a bag-packing event involving local Scouts at a nearby supermarket to raise funds and awareness for the children of Kathmandu. Please give what you can!

We are also appealing for local people to sponsor a deserving, desperately-in-need child. Please email me on benmountainmedia@gmail.com for more information if you would be interested in doing this.

I cannot stress enough the impact these sponsorships have upon young people's lives.

It was once said that "If you cannot feed a hundred people, then just feed one."

You can do so this Christmas and change a life forever.

Thank you all in advance – and have a very Merry Christmas!

Ben Mountain

The Bazaar

The Westcombe Society's return to Blackheath High for the annual Christmas Bazaar was a huge success," said the organiser Marilyn Little, "and we are very grateful to the Head and staff for their generous support."

Probably around 300+ adults and children came through the door – a steady stream throughout the day. Many of the children visited Santa and were very happy with their presents. Santa's Grotto was magnificent, and the Christmas Tree was much commented on. The Punch and Judy show, too, was, as always, a big draw.

The stall holders had set out their wares very attractively, which certainly added greatly to the ambience in the room.

Oliver Dimsdale, well-known for his appearance in *He knew he was right* and as the Prince of Wales in *Downton Abbey*, as well as appearing in *Grantchester* and *Mr Selfridge* amongst others, made a very welcoming opening address, and spent a long time around the stalls, also visiting



Oliver Dimsdale
PHOTO: Maureen Aune

Punch and Judy and Father Christmas. A very nice person and an excellent Fair opener!

We should all be very pleased with the day and obviously it would not be possible without everyone's help and good work before, during and after the event.

It's too early to say what the takings were, and we are still compiling our list of supporters from local traders to whom we owe so much: this information will go in our February issue. Meanwhile, many thanks to our main sponsors, Sue Clark, David Lloyd Kidbrooke & John Cockcroft, and to all who helped.

A Christmas message

The Royal Standard Business & Traders' Association wish to thank all our customers and neighbours for continuing to support your local shops and businesses throughout 2017.

We hope that both residents and visitors to Westcombe Park and Blackheath Standard enjoy the Christmas lights display. These lights have been provided through the generosity of the Traders' Association, together with donations from the Westcombe Society and the Langton Way Residents' Association.

Whilst the electricity is provided by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, the Traders' Association has to pay for the lights and associated costs. This year these amounted to just over £1,300.

Whilst we are just about able to fund

this annual cost from our membership, this leaves nothing left over to purchase additional lights or to replace old ones.

Without further donations, it is likely that there will be no lights. We would therefore be very grateful for any donation, large or small, which will enable us to continue to provide our contribution to Christmas in Westcombe Park.

If you would like to donate, there are collecting boxes in many of the local shops in Old Dover Road and on Westcombe Hill. Alternatively, if you would like to make a donation by cheque or bank transfer, please contact Joanne Lucas at Starkey Financial Planning, Co-Secretary of the Traders' Association, on 020 8858 7160 or at royalstandardbta@gmail.com.

Thank you, and Merry Christmas!

About your *WN*

The *Westcombe News* is delivered, free, to every home in the Westcombe Park area, as well as further afield, and as such is a valued community newspaper.

However, there are problems. First, Emily Norton, the distribution manager, is asking for more volunteers to help with distributing the *WN*, either to take on a regular delivery route of up to a hundred households, or to act as "substitutes" when regular deliverers are absent or ill.

To distribute the *WN* takes about half an hour a month, for ten months of the year; so one can feel doubly virtuous doing a healthy – and purposeful – walk!

Please ring Emily on 8853 2756.

Also, Neville Grant, the current editor, is on his travels a great deal in the coming year, and will find it hard to act as editor for several months: so a co-editor is urgently needed during parts of 2018.

The co-editor would receive an iMac, equipped with the easy-to-use Quark layout system, technical backing and training, as necessary, and support from Neville and Dave Mayes, our helpful printer.

Editorial material (ie. content), from many sources, including the current editor, will also be available.

"Producing the *WN* is great fun, and much easier than you might think," says Neville. "It's a great opportunity. There is absolutely no shortage of stuff to go in – in fact, there's usually too much! I'm sad to let it go, but after more than 15 years, it's time for a change. Do give me a ring to talk through possibilities, on 8858 8489."

The Live Nativity
comes to
The Blackheath Standard
Saturday 9th December
The journey begins at 3pm outside
St John's Church,
Stratheden Road, SE3 7TH

a street drama for all ages with
music and live animals

LOCAL NEWS



Quiz Night Time

In November, the Westcombe Society held yet another successful Quiz Night in Mycenae House. Ten teams competed with fierce good humour to find the answers to posers put by the question master J-J Aune. Many of the questions were quite challenging, ranging from Ancient Egypt to quotes from Shakespeare and the stars of horror films. The bar did a roaring trade, and the fish or chicken and chips were delicious.



PHOTOS: Neville Grant



All the best quizzes have the teams jostling for position, with only a few marks separating them as the results are counted, as happened this time.

Congratulations to the winning team (above - The 7NZs) and well done the runners-up, including 'The Strange Thong' (left, no, not a literal...) And of course many thanks to J-J and the other helpers who scored and cleared up.



Two lawyers from Westcombe Park, Tim Cave and Sue Hall, have set up a free legal advice clinic in the area.

Working with a third lawyer, Chibuzo Ubochi, the principal of Victory at Law Solicitors, they have launching the East Greenwich Legal Advice Clinic (EGLAC).

EGLAC operates from Christ Church, East Greenwich on Trafalgar Road. The clinic will hold fortnightly sessions on the 2nd and 4th. Wednesday evenings of the month. The first clinic session was held on Wednesday 22nd November.

Tim Cave told the *WN*: "There is a clear need for legal advice and assistance for the many people who cannot afford access to justice. We expect to receive requests for help with housing and welfare benefits issues and we hope it will become a valued



and established resource in the area."

Tim told the *WN* that there has already been a positive response to the pro bono initiative, with 12 lawyers and eight volunteers signing up to help run the appointment sessions. He added:

"We have seen how the community has responded positively to ventures such as the Greenwich Winter Night Shelter and Greenwich Foodbank. We hope EGLAC will also be a focus for community involvement and an opportunity to provide a much needed service to the public."

Interested in helping? Contact Tim on 07806 733341, or admin@eglac.org.uk

People's Parlour

Everyone using Blackwall Lane will have noticed the Byzantine domes of Rothbury Hall. The former Congregational Church has, for over 30 years, been the home of Emergency Exit Arts (EEA) best known locally for putting on the Bonfire Night fireworks on Blackheath.

But apart from some older residents of East Greenwich who remember using the cellar as an air raid shelter, not many local people have actually ventured into the building in recent years.

In an effort to reintroduce Rothbury Hall to the community, EEA, in conjunction with the East Greenwich Residents Association, have been working on a very popular project with older residents.

Every Thursday morning, EEA runs creative workshops ranging from metal-work to drawing, gardening to poetry – all fuelled by plenty of tea, cake and conversation.



As well as working on some much needed planting to improve the local streetscape, there will be a December lantern procession in conjunction with local schools. The project is currently funded by the Arts Council with a contribution from Greenwich Council. EEA and EGRA are now running a crowd-funding campaign so that this popular initiative can continue. **All contributions, big or small, will be gratefully received at <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/peoples-parlour>.**

The People's Parlour - every Thursday morning from 10.00 to 12.00. All over 60s welcome to come and try something new.

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



By popular request the Westcombe Society has produced a limited edition of *The Observatory in Winter* c. 1900 as a Christmas Card for 2017.

This larger-size card bearing the words 'Season's Greetings' is for sale at £4.50 per pack of five, or individually at £1.20 and uses a standard rate postage stamp. If you failed to purchase it at the Westcombe Society's Christmas Bazaar in November, you can still buy it from Caroline Owens at 0208 853 0948, but hurry before it sells out.

Charlton's New Skate Park



Free coaching sessions and a skate competition marked the opening of Charlton Park Skate Park in October.

Brownies and scouts were among the local residents who couldn't wait to try out the Royal Borough of Greenwich's latest state-of-the art facility.

The Skate Park incorporates a series of elevations and dips designed to suit fans of skating, cycling, and scooting no matter

what their age or ability.

Saturday's launch featured a competition for more advanced skaters, impressive demonstrations, free coaching for over eights and Dr Bike marking.

The Skate Park was designed following extensive consultation with focus groups including local residents, park users and skaters of all ages, and should appeal particularly to young people of all ages.

Campaign against bullying

How many of us were aware that November saw "anti-bullying week"? Anti-Bullying Week from 13th - 17th November had the theme 'All Different, All Equal'. Schools were encouraged to take the issues on board, and help children cope with this appalling trend.

A poll published by the Anti-Bullying Alliance based at the National Children's Bureau has shown that:

- 40% of children polled said they would hide aspects of themselves for fear of being bullied.
- 61% said they would hide or change how they look to avoid being bullied.
- 64% of children polled know someone being bullied for being 'different'
- 36% say that they don't learn enough about what to do if it happens to them.

Anti-Bullying Alliance patron Andy Day, with his band *Andy and the Odd Socks*, asked schools to celebrate what makes us all unique by asking children to wear odd socks to school on the first day of Anti-Bullying Week (13th Nov.) and celebrate 'Odd Socks Day'.

In November, 100 pupils from six Greenwich primary schools attended a day-long series of workshops designed to

boost the children's self-confidence, and put a stop to bullying.

Asked if John Roan School observed Anti-Bullying Week, a spokesperson for the school told the *WN*:

"We don't just have one week dealing with the issue: we take bullying very seriously where it occurs, and we have things going on about bullying all the time. For example, we had a library event in November in which the theme was "Don't judge a book by its cover" – the message being we shouldn't make snap judgements about other people because of how they look."

CHRISTMAS SERVICES at St George's, Glenluce Rd

Sunday 17th of December 6:00 pm - Christmas Carol Service (followed by hot mulled wine, drinks and mince pies)

Sunday, 24th. 4:00 pm – Crib Service 11:30 pm – Midnight Mass

Monday, 25th of December – 10:30 am – All Age Christmas Communion

Wed. Dec 6th. 7.30pm Dr Sam Moorhead of the British Museum talks on *From Nazareth to Bethlehem and back again: The history and archaeology of the Nativity.*

Contact: rtyeager@gmail.com Tel. 07804 614245

Well done, Zoe!

Zoe Laver from Blackheath High School has been crowned one of the winners of the national art competition 'Spirited Arts' held annually by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

'Spirited Arts', now its 14th year, aims to get people thinking about RE through Art, to produce work based on their own research. This year there were 1800 entrants.

Zoe, now in Year 8, created a painting about the Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc, who set himself on fire in 1963 to protest against the persecution of Buddhists.

Explaining her painting, Zoe said: "I find it truly inspirational that this holy man would sacrifice everything in this selfless act."

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FEATURES

Christmas food around the world

Pickled herring, Kentucky Fried Chicken - how would you fancy these for your Christmas dinner? You'd be surprised at what is seen as a Christmas Treat among some of our close neighbours, especially in the off-shore continent. Here the *WN* carries out a brief culinary survey . . .

France – The main Christmas meal in France is called *Réveillon* and is typically enjoyed late on Christmas Eve or early Christmas morning – often after people have returned from Midnight Mass.

The dish is usually roast turkey with chestnuts or roast goose along with oysters, foie gras, lobster, or venison – not forgetting a variety of cheeses and *un bûche de Noël* (a chocolate log cake). In some areas there is a celebration where 13 desserts are eaten, representing Jesus and his 12 apostles.

Germany – In Germany the usual dish is goose and cabbage (some people swap goose for carp – also common in Poland); pudding is a fruited yeast bread called *stollen*. It is said that those who don't eat well on Christmas Eve will be haunted by demons: any excuse is better than none.

Italy – On Christmas Eve many Italian families enjoy The Feast of Seven Fishes – seven fish-based dishes served before the Midnight mass service. Then it's home for a slice of cake – *Panettone* – and a cup of hot chocolate. No Prosecco, then.

Japan – Christmas in Japan is seen more as a time to spread happiness than a religious festival. The preferred meal for Christmas Eve is fried chicken which means that Christmas is the busiest day of the year for KFC as it often sees people queueing up outside the doors. Many place



Where are these a delicacy?

orders in advance to avoid disappointment.

Slovakia – Carp is the dish of choice. Many families buy the fish alive and keep it in the bath until Christmas Eve, so care should be taken when having a bath . . .

Iceland – In 1198, Iceland's National Assembly declared Thorlak Thorhallsson a saint, and he is now the patron saint of the country. He died on December 23rd, and so Christmas begins on 23rd December in Iceland. The dish of choice is boiled potatoes and fermented skate. Mmm, delicious ... ! But pity about the smell ...

Because of this, many people prefer to eat out in a restaurant to avoid the pungent smell. Christmas dinner might comprise roasted reindeer – or puffin.

Ed: Shome mishtake? Can that be right? Puffins are now an endangered species...

Sweden – It's Christmas Eve! The Christmas presents are under the tree, the candles are lit, and it's time for the *smorgasbord*. This includes an egg and anchovy mixture (*gubbröra*), ham, pork sausages, pickled herring, home-made liver pâté, wort-flavoured rye bread (*vörtbröd*), potatoes and an infamous fish dish, *lutfisk*: dried ling or sathe soaked in water and lye to swell before it is cooked. Do NOT try this at home. Garrison Keillor, in his novel *Pontoon*, famously described lutfisk as "Not edible by normal people."

Book review
Fallen Angel:
Good escapist reading

Fallen Angel is full of action, high-stakes races against time, and large, silver-screen style set-pieces. All this means hefty entertainment, sure, but as we know from the movies, explosions and fire fights only go so far.

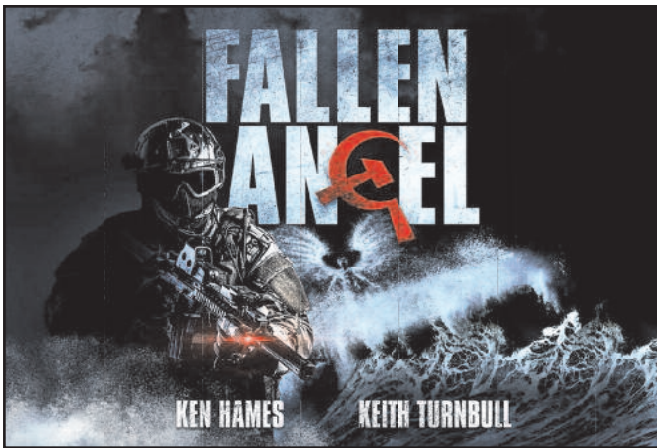
It's good then that *Fallen Angel* paces itself with an intricate and well-developed plot along with enjoyable and vibrant characters.

Of course, there has to be a nefarious organisation with some type of world-threatening weapon aimed at the heart of civilisation. And such menace can only be handled by the best. Meet Tom Selkirk!

He is the hero, a British Special Forces commando. Selkirk specialises in leading ultra-secret international operations. Acquiring teams of 'the best' from allied military the world over, Selkirk's ad hoc units are lethal, sneaky but very effective. So it's only for the most serious of situations that he is called in to respond.

However, all heroes need a little tension and conflict – Selkirk was nearly killed during his last mission and this was all down to a bad call by his superior, an admiral, who abandoned him at the critical moment.

After retiring to his home in Scotland,



Selkirk is called upon and reactivated for a new deniable mission.

In short, a good escapist read! The book launch is at Foyle's in central London on 13th December. A sequel is already on its way!

The authors are Major Ken Hames MBE, who rose from humble beginnings on a farm to reach the rank of Major in the SAS, commanding Britain's Anti-Terrorist Unit. He is one of the very few British officers to have worn the red beret of the Parachute Brigade, the green beret of the Royal Marines and the sand-coloured beret of the Special Air Service. A man of many talents, he holds an Honorary Doctorate in Business Administration.

Local co-author Keith Turnbull has a Masters degree in politics, and has forged a career in the defence sector; he has held a number of hush-hush positions in government.

Published by Melrose Books price £8.99; available from Amazon or (preferably) all good bookshops .

The future is becoming increasingly uncertain. Time to think again?

PETER GREAVES

reviews

How to Stop Brexit

by Nick Clegg

The author quotes John Maynard Keynes: "when the facts change, I change my mind", and, tellingly, David Davis in a speech on Europe in 2012: "If a democracy cannot change its mind, it ceases to be a democracy." Or to quote Churchill: "Those who never change their minds have no minds to change."

No, it's not too late to change course, Clegg claims. "This book," he says, "proposes a number of actions that all of us, in all walks of life, can take, if we want this country to alter course. If enough people were to take these actions and stick to them, then I am sure that Brexit could be stopped . . . You can help Britain be a leader in Europe, and the world, again . . . you can help make Britain great again."

For a thousand years or more Britain has often viewed Europe with a mixture of fear, suspicion and rivalry, leading to a sense of superiority and separateness. Britain was reluctant to join early attempts at European integration, but economic necessity drove us to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973.

Nevertheless, we soon became one of its most influential members. Thus Mrs Thatcher was pivotal in the creation of the Single Market. Ironically, it is the Brexit vote that is pushing EU governments to accept the need for change, so that the UK could be reintegrated into a reformed EU.

A compelling reason to revisit Brexit is that "voters were sold a dodgy promise on a false basis." The architect of the official Leave campaign has said that it is unlikely they would have won without the infamous £350m/NHS pledge.

Other reasons for reconsidering Brexit include the huge economic damage it will inflict. Most authorities believe that Brexit will increase prices, hit the pound even further, hit jobs, slow down investment, and endanger the peace process in Ireland.

Many Leavers wanted to "take back control." But the evidence so far suggests that Brexit is leading us towards greater enfeeblement. "Far from returning us to our heritage as a great and respected global power, Brexit risks making us an object of mockery and bewilderment around the

world." In fact, "by pooling our sovereignty we were extending our power and influence over the world around us."

Clegg reminds us that Theresa May as Home Secretary said much the same in a speech in April 2016; and since the Brexit referendum, the leaders of India and China have visited Europe – but not the UK.

A darker aspect of the Brexit vote is revealed by the fact that a small group of party donors, media barons, newspaper owners and opportunist hedge-fund managers have been driving the Brexit agenda, for their own ends . . . and Clegg names names, and positions. This Brexit elite share a vision for Britain of a low-tax, low regulation, nation.

The referendum result was particularly cruel for the young. More than 70% of voters aged 18 - 24 voted for Britain to remain in the EU, 62% for those aged 25-34, and 52% for 35 - 44 year-olds. Had they had the vote, 82% of 16 - 17 year-olds would have done the same.

The third chapter includes an insightful analysis of the current political situation, and contains detailed practical suggestions of what individuals can do to stop Brexit, inside and outside party politics. Finally, Clegg sets out his vision of how a joint UK-EU Convention could tackle, as a matter of urgency, the task of formalising a reformed EU of concentric circles, with Britain reintegrated at the appropriate level. He suggests it should be co-chaired by Sir John Major and Mr Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands.

Is it all done, bar the recriminations? Clegg insists not. Since this book was written, Lord Kerr has said – again – that Article 50, of which he was the chief drafter, is reversible: a statement of intent does not amount to a legal commitment.

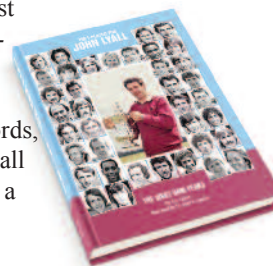
Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the EU Commission, said: "I don't like Brexit because I would like to be in the same boat as the British; the day will come when the British will re-enter the boat, I hope."

Undecided? This book will help to clarify the issues, and help one to decide for oneself. This could be the most important book to read in the whole of 2017.

New West Ham United book

Westcombe Hill resident Tim Crane has published his latest book on West Ham United. *They Played for John Lyall - The West Ham Years* preserves the memories of 77 Hammers who played for West Ham's most successful manager between 1974-89. With over 500 personal photographs and 200,000 words, the 376 page hardback book is a must-have Christmas gift for all West Ham fans. On sale for £25, why not drop by and pick up a signed copy from Tim himself at 183 Westcombe Hill?

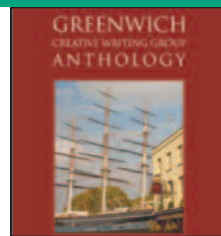
Alternatively, order your copy from Amazon or eBay.



Support local authors – and the food bank

Greenwich Creative Writing Group joined together to publish a paperback of their work to be sold this Christmas at Waterstones, price £4.99, all profit to Greenwich Foodbank.

In this lovely paperback you will find interesting tales of murder, romance, slices of life experience in the form of short stories, poems and short prose and flash fictions, something for everyone. A great Christmas present for a worthy cause. **Barbara Ward**



RIDE: BMX Glory

Ride is about the tough life lessons learned by Scottish superstar John Bultjens on his rise to BMX Glory

Escaping from his violent father's beatings, he was placed in a children's home and then adopted. He later turned his life around, and became one of BMX's biggest names.

As the global brand manager for the most famous BMX brand of them all, Haro, he now backs and sponsors riders across the globe, and his story has been turned into a great movie. **RIDE: Pitch Publishing Ltd. RRP £16.99**





WHAT'S ON



ARTS

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, University of Greenwich 11th Dec 2017: Late Antiquity in the Near East - Sam Moorehead

8th Jan 2018: Discovering MacDonald Gill: Architect, Artist & Mapmaker - Caroline Walker
Visitors welcome, please pay on the door
THE GREENWICH GALLERY

Linear House, Peyton Place SE10 8RS
Dec 8th - 22nd. Greenwich born cousins, artists Mark Cowland and John Baker, are returning to the Royal Borough to exhibit their work together for the first time.

BLACKHEATH HALLS
Until Tue 5th Dec.: 10:00am
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.

CHILDREN & FAMILY

GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL
8 Dec - 30 Dec 2017 11.00 am & other times
SNOW-POCALYPSE: FRIENDSHIP NEVER MELTS Two unlikely heroes create a wintery wonderland - in a world where anything can be made from the scraps left behind and magic and mayhem is around... **Performed by SHARKLEGS** Age 4+ **£13.50, Children £8.50**

COMEDY CLUB FOR KIDS - CHRISTMAS CRACKER! 23 Dec 11.00 am Christmas Cracker jokes, tinsel tomfoolery, festive funnies and even Santa doing stand-up! **Age: 6+ £13.50, Children £11**
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 crafts. 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
Fri. 8th Dec. 8.00pm KERRY GODLIMAN: STICK OR TWIST An incredibly talented comedian and a phenomenal actor, Kerry, a regular on Radio 4, is currently starring in the Sky 1 series *Carters Get Rich*. **Tickets: £15**

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
23rd January, Lindsey Collier on the Lea Valley Heritage Alliance at The Old Bakehouse, Age Exchange, Bennet Park. 7.30 pm
BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
Fri. Dec 15th 2018 7.45 AGM and Members' Evening with short talks given by members
Fri. Jan 19th 2018 Light, Sleep and Time - and how they interact Dr Russel Foster, Nuffield - Ophthalmology lectures at 7.45pm Mycenae House. Visitors welcome - donations £3 to the society.

IN-WORDS
WEST GREENWICH LIBRARY in association with in-words.co.uk (both events free):
Tues. Dec. 5th 7.00 for 7.30pm Chrissie Gittins will read from her short story collection "Between Here and Knitwear" and some of her children's poetry.
Tuesday January 16 at 7 for 7.30: Bright Scarf Poetry Group, aka Quentin Chowdry, Dominic James, Rosie Johnston, and Peter Pagnall.
Visit Irena Hill's website www.in-words.co.uk for more details..

COMMUNITY

THE BRIDGE, , The Pleasaunce
Dec 3rd 2 - 4.30 pm Lots of fun & games, and craft stalls, at the Bridge, organised in partnership with the Friends of Greenwich Pleasaunce; with festive singing by Halstow Community Choir at 3.00pm, and delicious refreshments throughout. Plus Santa's Grotto! Santa due to arrive at about 1.45pm and the Grotto will be open 2 - 4.30pm.

"Look forward to seeing you!" says Harriet.
MENTAL HEALTH ACTIVITY TRUST
Sat. 9th Dec. 7pm - 10pm FOURTH Special Annual Award Ceremony. Boys Brigade Hall, Reynolds Place. Tickets are first come first served. This event is free and there will be food, drink and plenty of entertainment To reserve a place, please ring 7564 3087 or (Shop) 3638 4712

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 UNION PUB (MEANTIME) First Wed. of each month. Read -Discuss-Share food at members homes. Contact: Barbara Ward ward.barbara@mac.com 07960 107578 Free
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon & Thurs 7.15pm and on Wed at 1.15pm. Tel. Ron 0208 319 1312

ST GEORGE'S CAROL SINGING
Thurs., 21st Dec. - 7:00 pm at Mycenae House (with the Blackheath Centre for Singing.
Pelton Arms Wed. 13th Dec. 7:30 for 8:00
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Tickets £8 available from James Kinsella on: 07989 740252 or 020 8854 0841

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Sat. 2nd Dec. .3.15 pm A FESTIVE FAMILY SING-A-LONG Sing favourite Christmas songs with the whole family, and then join in the procession to switch on the **Blackheath Christmas lights**
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NB Rescheduled from Friday 31 March 2017
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JANUARY 2018 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Sun 3rd Dec. 1.00 - 4.00pm NEW! SUNDAY AT SUNFIELDS at Sunfields Methodist Church
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DANCING

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MYCENAE HOUSE EVENTS: DEC. 2017/JAN 2018

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Fri 8th Dec 8.00pm - JazzNights. Candlit Live Jazz music event 'Christmas Curry special' hosted by Dave Silk. **£10.**
Thur 14th Dec 4.00pm Bach To Baby Classical Concert for families **£10**
Fri 15th Dec 1.00pm/4.00pm/6.00pm - The Nutcracker. Let's All Dance present this festive favourite family ballet. **£12/£10.**
Mon 18th Dec 7.00pm - Christmas Carols. With St George's Church & Blackheath Centre for Singing Choirs. Free entrance.
Wed 20th Dec 7.30pm - Global Fusion Christmas Shenanigans. Festive array of live music for a great night of fun. **£5.**
Fri 12th Jan 8.00pm - JazzNights. Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. **£10.**
Fri 26th Jan 8.00pm - Global Fusion Burns Night Ceilidh. Great night of dancing, singing, Bagpipes and lots of fun!

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



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FEATURES



In another of our occasional “Meet your neighbour” series, the *WN* interviewed **Ann Hill**, world famous nutritionist who has helped save the lives of millions of children worldwide

WN: Ann, first of all, congratulations on the award of the George MacDonald medal for your work that has led to improved health in tropical countries.

AH: Thank you.

WN: So, Ann, are you a Londoner?

AH: No, I started life in Lancashire, but the family moved to Scotland when I was 12, and I stayed there during my teenage years and took the Scottish Highers examinations.

WN: So when did you move down south?

AH: In the late fifties. I got a place at Queen Elizabeth College to do a degree in nutrition.

WN: A degree in nutrition? Unusual!

AH: Yes, it was the first university to offer the subject at degree level.

WN: And after that?

AH: I did a Ph.D and then went as Scientific Officer to the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit in Kingston, Jamaica, under the director John Waterlow.

WN: To do what?

AH: Most of my research centred on achieving rapid recovery of children with severe malnutrition. The Unit was funded by the UK Medical Research Council.

Amazingly, not only did I not have to apply for grants, I was given free rein to plan my own research. The Unit specialised in child malnutrition which was common in poor communities in Jamaica and the Caribbean at that time.

WN: Caused by?

AH: Very low rates of exclusive breast-feeding, with many infants being fed diluted cornmeal gruel sweetened with a little condensed milk, or over-diluted powdered milk, and the water was not always clean. So all this, combined with poor living conditions, led to very high rates of childhood diarrhoea and pneumonia, often fatal.

WN: Tragic.

AH: Tragic, yes, and unnecessary and avoidable. Even today, almost half of all deaths worldwide in children under 5 are associated with undernutrition. Severely malnourished children need very special care, as they easily die. Part of my work involved getting the correct treatment more widely known in order to improve child survival.

WN: Who were you educating?

AH: Doctors, nurses, and undergraduates. And parents of course. I helped to develop malnutrition treatment guidelines for the Caribbean which later became the basis for the World Health Organisation's 1981 malnutrition guidelines.

WN: How long were you in Jamaica?

A volunteer for the Westcombe Society, and a member of its Environment Committee, Ann is also much, much more . . .



AH: 13 years.

WN: And then you returned to the UK to work at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine?

AH: Yes, back with John Waterlow again.

That was in 1978, when we also moved into Westcombe Park; by this time I was married to a barrister, and had two children. They went to John Ball Primary School in Blackheath.

WN: And you became head of LSHTM's nutrition department?

AH: Yes, but not until 1992. Just after that, concerned about widespread poor hospital treatment of malnourished children and continuing high mortality, a colleague and I convened a workshop in London with WHO, UNICEF, Save the Children and others, to discuss why the 1981 WHO guidelines were not being widely implemented. And this led to the creation of a version of the guidelines, known as the “Ten Steps”.

WN: So the guidelines were changed?

AH: Not substantially, but we made them clearer, simpler, memorable, and more easily accessible.

WN: This made a huge difference?

AH: Yes. The ‘Ten Steps’ are used widely worldwide. In South Africa, for example, it is now national policy for hospitals to follow the Ten Steps, and deaths among children treated for severe malnutrition have halved.

I also helped WHO develop their 2003 training course and have trained doctors and nurses in Africa, Asia and South America. The next task is for treatment of severe malnu-

trition to be part of medical and nursing curricula.

WN: So Ann, you’ve now retired?

AH: In theory, yes! But I’m co-convenor of the International Malnutrition Task Force and I’ve been helping to develop a new interactive e-learning programme ‘Caring for Infants and Children with Acute Malnutrition’, which so far has enrolled 14,000 users in over 100 countries. Our research is showing that users of this course are able to apply the knowledge gained and so improve the survival of malnourished children in their care.

WN: Very impressive!

AH: And you know, it’s very difficult to retire when there is still so much to be done – in fact, I’ve just organised an international symposium in Buenos Aires, on building capacity to prevent and treat malnutrition.

WN: So the award of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene’s George Macdonald medal in recognition of your work is well deserved.

AH: I’ve been fortunate in having wonderful colleagues and opportunities to make a difference. I would not have been very effective working alone, so the medal reflects our collective contribution to improving child health.

WN: Professor Ann Ashworth Hill, thank you for talking to us.



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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

John Roan’s ‘A’ Team!



Recently, ten Year 7 students from John Roan School helped to complete a project in Greenwich Park. As reported in September’s *WN*, a number of the park’s mature Sweet Chestnut trees have started contracting a slow-debilitating disease, *Phytophthora Cambivora* or Sweet Chestnut Ink Disease.

This disease could eventually kill the Sweet Chestnuts by blocking the trees’ tiny roots – important because they are used to absorb moisture for the tree.

For two days, the students covered the

ground surrounding the Sweet Chestnut trees with woodchip mulch. This helps to organically stimulate the soil and increase the beneficial micro-organisms and fungi which help the trees to combat the disease.

The park staff were very complimentary. Michael Loughnane, who is the Assistant Park Manager, has even suggested another project involving the students planting bulbs and seeds in the Flower Garden. In the words of staff-member Eliot Duncan: “As we grow through the years at John Roan, so too would our flowers.”

Moose on the Loose



A rare white moose is seen in Gunnarskog, Varmland, Sweden July 31, 2017.

According to Swedish newspapers, this is the second white moose sighting that’s gone viral in Sweden this summer. In July, local resident Jessica Hemlin photographed a white moose that regularly visits her garden in Munkeda, which is also in western Sweden.

Sweden has an estimated 400,000 moose, most of which are brown or black, the newspaper reported. But according to the BBC, about 100 of them are mostly white. Some of them have albinism, in which the body doesn’t produce a lot of melanin pigment. But many more of the animals have a recessive gene that causes mostly white fur interspersed with bits of brown.

According to National Geographic, the white colouring may be a form of natural selection, as hunters choose not to shoot a white moose, thus in effect increasing their numbers. Moose in Sweden have no natural predators apart from humans.

Sign up for the organ donor register

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is urging residents to sign up to the organ donor register to help save more lives.

In October, a cross-party group of 15 councillors passed a motion to support the national “Yes I donate” campaign which aims to raise awareness of the importance of organ donation. They also pledged to back the introduction of a nationwide opt-out organ donation system. This would mean that everybody is assumed to give their consent for organ and tissue donation unless they specifically opt out – the opposite of the current system, where people have to opt in.

It comes just a few months before a private member’s bill to introduce a nationwide opt-out organ donation is set to be debated in the House of Commons. Similar schemes are being introduced in Wales and Scotland. England’s transplant consent rate is one of the lowest in Europe, as many people do not discuss or record their wishes with their families.

Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet

Member for Health and Adult Social Care, said: “Councillors felt that action should be taken to help those on the waiting list for a transplant, including the 17 people who are currently waiting in Greenwich.

“After all, if the soft opt-out system has been successful in Wales and is set to be introduced in Scotland – why shouldn’t this also be the case in England?

“We know that the gap between the number of organs donated and the number of people waiting for a transplant is just set to widen and we hope to help bridge that gap. I hope our motion will encourage the government to bring about this timely change nationally.”

Three people die every day in the UK while waiting for a transplant and many others lose their lives before they even get on to the transplant list. Just one donor can save the lives of several people, restore the sight of two others and improve the quality of life for many more.

To sign up to the organ donation register, visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Reducing pollution on our roads

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is taking part in a London-wide awareness raising campaign which involves local volunteers and council staff talking to drivers about idling engines and its impact on local air quality.

Vehicle Idling Action is a London-wide campaign that aims to reduce localised air pollution caused by motorists who leave their engines running when parked, or when waiting for traffic lights to change.

Working on reducing emissions and high levels of nitrogen dioxide air, along major roads in particular, is a key priority for the Council.

The Council’s Greener Greenwich Strategy, launched in 2016, outlines the actions the Council intends taking to tackle climate change and air pollution across the borough, which includes a number of

local projects such as the introduction of a Low Emission Neighbourhood in west Greenwich last year. Come along to the Woolwich Centre on Thursday 2nd. November, 9.30 - 11.30am to find out more and how you can get involved.

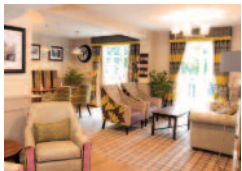
Volunteers are wanted to go out with Council and Transport for London staff to engage with motorists in Woolwich Town Centre about the benefits of turning their engines off. If you want to be a Vehicle Idling Action Champion, please email: greener@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Idling Action Events will also be taking place in 15 other local authority areas with teams of volunteers, local authority and project staff working to educate both motorists and pedestrians. The approach is to invite drivers to join the campaign and switch off their engines when parked.



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PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(See <http://www.westcombesociety.org>)

105 WESTCOMBE HILL ref 17/3247/F
Replace existing wooden windows with uPVC windows at front, sides and rear.. Replace rear door


TREE WORKS
15 GLENLUCE ROAD ref 17/3676/TC
Fell holly

2 BEACONSFIELD ROAD ref 17/3678/TC
Fell evergreen oak and re-pollard ash & 3 lime trees


68 BEACONSFIELD ROAD ref 17/3605/TC
Reduce hawthorn and plum by 30% in front garden

69 MYCENAE ROAD ref 17/3611/TC
In rear, prune overhanging sycamore branches from 27 Glenluce Road & branches from 67 Mycenae Rd

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WESTCOMBE NEWS

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Sub-editor: Annie Grey
Reporters: You!

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environment@westcombesociety.org

DISTRIBUTION Emily Norton and volunteers. To volunteer, 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.
Printed by: Trojan Press

Contact the Westcombe Society:
WestcombeNews@egroups.com
Publisher: The Westcombe Society
Chairman: Marilyn Little Tel. 020 8853 1312

ST LUKE'S PLAYERS with
WINNERS of "CHARLTON'S
GOT TALENT"

CHRISTMAS CRACKER

CABARET EVENING
FRIDAY 8th DEC. 2017

7pm for 7.30pm
ST RICHARD'S CHURCH CENTRE
Swallowfield Road, Charlton SE7 7NR
TICKETS: £13 (£7 Children)
to include **FISH & CHIP SUPPER**
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JOIN THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY!
Please send to: Christine Legg, 69
Mycenae Road, London, SE3 7SE

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Address.....

Tel.....

Email:

Please enclose payment as appropriate:

Family Membership	£12	[]
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COMMUNITY



The Westcombe Society's Christmas Bazaar



Many thanks to all those who took photographs of the Christmas Bazaar. Sorry that we couldn't include all of them! These photographs really succeeded in capturing the happy atmosphere of the occasion.

The *WN* welcomes photographs, so do please keep them coming in, if possible with suitable captions attached.

PHOTO: Chris Clark



PHOTO: Penny Player



PHOTO: Penny Player

HOST UK arranges for international students to enjoy a day, weekend or three-night stay with British hosts in the UK. We need volunteer hosts to offer this service over the Christmas period and show our international students what a warm British welcome can mean. If the prospect appeals to you please go to <http://visits/hostuk.org/Public/ApplyToBecomeAHost>
website: www.hostuk.org



Music, colour, jollity - what more could one want?



Christmas Nativity Walkabout

By popular demand, St John's Church are putting on their Christmas Nativity Walkabout again this year – it will be on Saturday 9th Dec starting at 3.00pm.

This is a real community event: two local school choirs are singing, local traders and residents are some of the actors, and we will have a live donkey plus three live sheep from Woodland's Farm in Shooters Hill.

We start outside St John's Church with the beginning of the Christmas story. Like the three wise men (or the three Kings) we then follow a 'star' to the British Oak Pub. As we arrive at the Oak, the landlady will come out to say there is no room in the inn, just as it occurred in Bethlehem.

We then proceed to Blackheath Library, as angels, shepherds and kings will appear above the shops. Finally, we go back to the church – and there, allelujah! is a stable, with Mary, Joseph and baby!

We see the whole event lasting around an hour. Children are warmly welcome to come dressed up as an angel, king, sheep etc. Our web address for further details: stjohnsblackheath.org.uk

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(Closed 27 & 28 November)

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also at

AGE EXCHANGE – 11 Blackheath Village

27 November – 9 December

11.00am – 5.00pm (NOT Sundays)

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WANTED!

More volunteers to help with Westcombe Society community events, & to distribute the *WN*, both “regulars” (half an hour ten times a year!) and “reserves”. Please phone 8853 2756 if you would like to help.



Letters

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

From: G. Bailey Westcombe Park Rd.

The only known contemporary picture of Jane Austen (*Right*) can be seen in the National Portrait Gallery. However, it bears very little resemblance to what appears on the new £10 note. Does this mean the £10 notes are forgeries? Or is the Treasury trying to “airbrush” Ms Austen, and reinforce stereotypical views of female beauty? At least Darwin looked like Darwin!



From: D Reed

I'm fed up with the remoaners like N Grant in the October edition of the *WN* completely ignoring the democratic vote by 17.5 million people, ignoring the

lies of the remain side.

I voted leave, anybody who thought that the politicians were going to give £350 million a week to the NHS was living in cloud cuckoo land, I only hope when we leave the EU a decent chunk of this money will go to the NHS. If we had another referendum, and leave won, would we have to have a third?

Ed: We welcome a rational discussion on this important national issue. Many consider that the real ‘moaners’ were those who voted for Brexit, but the fact is that name-calling by either side is really no substitute for rational argument. Please see the book review on p. 4.

From: Mary Mills Humber Road

In the November issue of the *WN* Malcolm Scott Hardy says in his interesting article on General Gordon that there is no memorial to him in Greenwich. However, - er - what about Woolwich's Gordon Square?

Mycenae House & Gardens

Friday 8 December 8pm

Jazz Nights

Legendary Jazz club featuring **Sarah Bolter** (sax)
plus **Earl Okin** (vox), Christmas Curry Available £10



Monday 18 December 7pm

Christmas Carols by Candlelight
featuring the choirs from Blackheath Centre for Singing & the St Georges Church FREE

Wednesday 20 December 7.30pm

The Christmas Shenanigans Live
from Global Fusion Arts and Mycenae House £5

Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, LONDON, SE3 7SE
020 8858 1749 www.mycenaehouse.co.uk