



Westcombe NEWS

Free to 3800 homes, in libraries and some shops

March 2018 No. 2



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

Threat to local democracy?

WN Reporter

The row in Haringey should give us all pause for thought

Labour's National Executive Committee unanimously called on the party's councillors in the London Borough of Haringey to halt a controversial housing project involving the developer Lendlease. The project is opposed by many local people, and the pressure group Momentum. In response, the leaders of over 70 councils from across the country (13 of them in London, including Greenwich and Lewisham) signed a letter of protest at the Labour Party's NEC (on which Momentum and Corbyn activists now hold a majority) interfering in local government issues. An edited version of the letter appeared in the *Sunday Times*, under the heading *Labour executive wrong to meddle*.

It was also signed by numerous other local Labour groups not in power.

The issue is of significance to us all, because some argue it could lead to the erosion of local democracy. The full text of the letter appears below.

“It is a vital and long-standing rule of the Labour Party that individual Labour Groups, consisting of democratically elected Labour councillors, are sovereign bodies. As such, they have the ability, within available resources, party rules, and the law, to determine the most appropriate policies to serve their local communities.

Labour Local Government wishes to make it clear to all members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) that they have no right or justification to interfere in or influence the legitimate actions of locally elected representatives. Such actions are not just outside of the party's rules, but an affront to the basic principles of democracy.

We are extremely disappointed at the circumstances in which an issue in Haringey was brought forward and discussed by the NEC. Haringey Labour Group was not informed that such a discussion would take place, no advance notice was given, and no papers were produced, meaning the NEC discussion took place based on opinion and speculation rather than facts.

This sets a dangerous and alarming precedent and we ask the NEC for categorical assurances that such circumstances will not arise again in relation to this or any other Labour Group.

Labour councillors around the country

are deeply concerned that, in seeking to mitigate Tory austerity by proposing radical new solutions, we face calls for disciplinary action against us. Such calls are uncomradely, disrespectful, and willfully ignore the difficult and challenging role that we play in doing our best to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

Cllr Claire Kober has an outstanding record of improving the lives of residents in Haringey. Claire became the leader of Haringey Council in 2008 at the age of 30, assuming the immense personal responsibility of leading a council in crisis following the appalling public service failures that led to the death of Peter Connelly ('Baby P').

Under her inspirational leadership, and despite suffering funding cuts of over 40% since 2010, the Haringey Labour Group has delivered the fastest improving schools in the country and generated billions of pounds of investment in the borough, and in 2017 the council won the Children's Services of the Year award.

We believe that the Labour Party owes her a huge debt of gratitude for turning around a failing authority and as a result protecting thousands of the most vulnerable children and adults.”

Signed by the Leaders of 71 Councils across England



Gotham City? Not really – and there is certainly no Batman figure. This is Greenwich Peninsula as it will look in the foreseeable future, as the Spanish architect Calatrava gets to work with the developers: it's anyone's guess how much genuinely affordable or social housing there will be. Watch this space.

What are the issues?

Momentum claims that the Public Private Partnership scheme called the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) in Haringey would lead to “social cleansing.” But the *WN* has learnt that opposition was fuelled not merely by left-wing politicians, but by residents in fear of losing their homes: they feared no return ticket for those whose flats were demolished. Opponents of the plan include local LibDems and moderate MPs David Lammy and Catherine West.

As the experience of Northamptonshire and Surrey indicates, many local councils are under huge financial pressure. They have had their budgets slashed by 40% since 2010, there is a cap on Council Tax, and local councils are not allowed to borrow to build houses.

Councils are trying to improve the local economy as well as meeting their statutory obligations; and are also wrestling with the epic housing problem.

Without enough funds, they seek partnerships with developers: but the latter claim that huge hikes in land prices makes it hard for them to allow for enough affordable and social housing in new developments – and councils often have limited bargaining powers. *Claire Kober has resigned in the face of “sexism” and “bullying.” She said the NEC's move against an independent council was “legally dubious” and “democratically unsound.”*

Road closures: the Big Half Marathon

This event takes place on Sunday 4th March. Residents and businesses in Creek Road and north of Creek Road will be affected as the route approaches the Finish Line at Cutty Sark. Road closures will operate as follows:

Evelyn Street 0700 - 1400
Creek Road 0700 - 1500
King William Walk 0700 - 1500
Nelson Road 0700- 1500
Greenwich South Street 0700 - 1500
Greenwich High Road 0700 -1500
Romney Road 0700 - 1500
Trafalgar Road 0700 - 1500

It would be best to avoid the Tower Bridge and Rotherhithe areas that day. Vehicular crossing points on Creek Road that day are as follows:

* Creekside - Gonson Street
* Norman Road - Norway Street
Restricted access from 0925 - 1350
Greenwich Town Centre is closed to traffic from 0700 - 1500. The A2 and A102 will remain open as usual.

Westcombe Society

Easter Egg Hunt

Sat 31st March 1.30-3.30pm

Two hours of fun hunting for eggs in Mycenae Gardens.
£2.50 per child (£2.00 for members)
Prizes for best Easter hat & basket.
Face Painting, too!
Toilets & bar open in Mycenae House.

Queen Elizabeth's Birthday Tea for Senior Citizens

Sat 14th April 2.00 - 4.00 pm

If you haven't received an invitation, and would like to come, please ring Caroline on 8853 0948

Congratulations
Competing against Year 11 and 12 students, Miriam Kenedy a Year 10 student from Blackheath High School has won the prestigious national music prize, GDST Young Musician of the Year. Well done!

< < Newsbriefs > >

Petition about the Natwest Bank closure

Campaigners in Blackheath are petitioning NatWest Bank not to go ahead with the planned closure of the Blackheath and Westcombe Park Branch on Old Dover Road. The campaign, being led by the Conservatives, has so far attracted close to 200 signatures with residents using the comments section to express their disappointment at the decision. Customers are being advised that they will have to travel to Woolwich, Lewisham or Greenwich if they need to use a branch, a move which could harm local businesses and disadvantage those who are not as mobile. Residents wanting to support the petition have until Fri. 30th March, and can do so at [ipetitions.com/petition/keep-Blackheath-and-westcombe-park-NatWest-open](https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/keep-Blackheath-and-westcombe-park-NatWest-open). It will be submitted to NatWest in early April.

Culling grey squirrels

Leading animal protection organisations have thoroughly condemned ministers' support for a cull of grey squirrels. Comments in favour of culling were made to the Lords select committee on the natural environment; it was suggested

that squirrels could threaten the UK's 'treescapes' for future generations.

Animal Aid, the League Against Cruel Sports, PETA, Urban Squirrels and Viva! have written an open letter to Environment Secretary Michael Gove, in which they warn of the huge public opposition to any cull of this kind.

The letter claims the impact of grey squirrel damage is hugely exaggerated, especially when compared to the large-scale human destruction of forests and trees. However, they do not go so far as to suggest that humans should be culled.

The *WN* has learnt that in Greenwich Park, it is a fact that grey squirrels seem to do more damage to trees than humans do.

Please support these projects

Cllr Cherry Parker reports that six proposals for this area have been shortlisted for grants from the Greenwich Growth Fund including: Equipment upgrade at Blackheath Westcombe Autism support project, Montessori Education for Autism (£6,123)
Reach Out Digital Inclusion Project at Mycenae House, Vanbrugh Community Assoc. (£20,330)

@westcombesociety

Do you follow us on Tweet @Westcombe Society? If you do, you will have learnt that the Greenwich section of The Tideway Tunnel boring machine building London's new sewer is named after Greenwich Observatory's very first female scientist. No, she wasn't boring! She was Annie Scott Dill Russell.

Another machine – for the Battersea section – has been named after suffragist leader Dame Millicent Fawcett, who campaigned for the women's vote from the 1860s to 1928.

The new Controlled Parking Zone

The delays in implementing the Controlled Parking Zone are a result of staff shortages. It is to be hoped by the time you read this, the information will already have been distributed.

Congratulations to the Horniman Museum

The *New York Times* has named the Horniman Museum and Gardens as one of the ten coolest museums for kids in the world. The museum is at 100 London Road, London, SE23, and is well-known as a family-friendly attraction.

LOCAL NEWS

Speak Truth to Power

Speaking Truth to Power is what we are all urged to do in Al Gore's second film on climate change, *An Inconvenient Sequel*. The issue is becoming increasingly urgent: despite the 2017 Paris Climate Change Conference, a climate change-denying President of the United States is trying to wreck efforts by the US to combat climate change; here in the UK, a potential Prime Minister is also in denial.

Climate change is already having visible results: in California, forest fires rage; abnormally strong and frequent tornadoes sweep though the US; in Cape Town, they are running out of water; the ice is melting alarmingly in the Arctic, as sea levels rise. Temperatures are rising, with dire effects

on food production in the south: and major coastal cities are threatened by flooding.

Blackheath and Greenwich United Nations Association are co-hosting an event with the Green Party to view parts of Gore's second film, to start a discussion on the three key questions:

- * Must we act? The reasons are obvious.
- * Can we act? So what can we do?
- * Will we act? Do we have the will to act?

The meeting focuses on what we can do as responsible citizens of the world to influence events.

**Put in your diaries: Mycenae House, Mycenae Road, SE3
Tuesday March 27th at 7.15, for a 7.30start. FREE. Info: 8858 8489**

Calling all smokers

Was your New Year Resolution to stop smoking? Broken it yet? If you need help the Greenwich Stop Smoking Service roadshow is currently touring the Borough – and it can provide the help you need to quit smoking for good. On offer are free lung age tests, carbon monoxide readings and one-to-one support, all from a team of friendly stop smoking advisors.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is delivering the annual Quit Smoking Roadshow, which visits high footfall areas such as high streets and supermarkets, working in partnership with Charlton Athletic Community Trust.

The roadshow will be visiting the following locations until mid March:

Tuesdays – Sainsbury's Charlton, 10-5pm
Wednesdays – Asda Charlton, 10am-5pm
Thursdays – Woolwich Market, 10am-5pm
Fridays – Passey Place, Eltham, 10am-5pm
Saturdays – General Gordon Square, Woolwich, 11am-5pm.

Over 1,100 smokers kicked the habit with support from Greenwich's Stop Smoking Service in 2016-17 alone.

Pregnant women and new mums will be

signposted to Children's Centre drop-in sessions and Greenwich Stop Smoking Service's specialist stop smoking clinics based at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Cllr David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, said:

"Although the number of smokers in the Borough is reducing, smoking is still responsible for five deaths in Greenwich every week which is five deaths too many.

"There's never been a better time to kick the habit and the Greenwich Stop Smoking Service can help, whether you choose to opt for drop-in centre sessions, stop smoking medications or e-cigarettes."

Deborah Browne at Charlton Athletic Community Trust, said: "We have been helping residents in Greenwich quit smoking since 2007. It doesn't matter how many times you've tried to stop before, we will continue to help you to stop smoking."

You can get support online via Twitter: Follow @KTH_CACT on Twitter and use #QuitYourWay; or visit www.facebook.com/charltonathleticcommunitytrust. For more information about dates and locations, visit www.livewellgreenwich.org.uk or www.greenwichstopsmoking.org.uk

Out of care, out of mind

A recent Barnardo's study reveals that two thirds of care leavers have mental health needs and are not receiving any help from a statutory service. In response, Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People Board, said:

"Children come into care in the most difficult circumstances, and giving them the best opportunities to overcome these and get a good start in life is a major focus for councils. This is particularly true as they move from care into adulthood.

"Whilst this research rightly highlights that care leavers are more likely to experience poorer mental health than the general population, we must do more to ensure that all children and young people are able to access emotional health and wellbeing support whenever they need it. With one in 10

children and young people affected by mental health issues, councils are working hard to help those that need care and support to receive it.

"Government must support this vital work by ensuring that the promised £250 million for mental health and wellbeing services is released in full, with greater transparency in how mental health funding is spent.

"Urgent action is also needed to plug the growing funding gap for wider children's services, projected to reach £2 billion by 2020. Mental health needs are often associated with other factors in a child or young person's life, and it's important that councils have the funding available to support families with any other issues that may be impacting upon a child's wellbeing."

Is education happening?

Yes. But not with the intensity needed today. Schooling is stuck in a rut which seemed to make sense in the 1980s, but now everything is twenty times more complicated, and the system is not responding. Parents need to help their children – using the internet – to see the big picture in every area of the curriculum. This easily gets lost in the constant pressure to cram for exams. Children need to work, and seek help, to really understand their topics, not simply swallow them to get by.

The P E R Group's website: www.perprospero.co.uk

What's to be done about this?

You may have noticed this building, which lies to the North of the A2, close to Greenwich Park's Blackheath Gate and to the west of the Folly Pond.

It was built as a toilet block but was closed by Greenwich Council in 1992; it has been boarded up for the last 25 years.

It has become very dilapidated and is an eyesore on the boundary of the Greenwich World Heritage Site in one of the most beautiful areas of London.

The Blackheath Society has written to the Crown Estate, which owns the land, to obtain their advice regarding the future of the building.

They stated that although the management responsibility for the property rests with the Royal Borough of Greenwich, they would be happy to consider any proposals from either RBG or the Society.

As freeholder, the Crown Estate would need to be consulted to ensure that any transaction is legal and achieves best value as per the Crown Estate Act 1961.

They suggest that the next step would be



PHOTO: Mike Norton

to approach the Royal Borough of Greenwich with any proposals for the property. Once agreed such proposals should be submitted to the Crown Estate to ensure that all parties' responsibilities and objectives are achieved.

The Blackheath Society believes very strongly that the building should either be brought back into use or demolished.

It could perhaps offer a commercial opportunity by recognising the investment needed to repair it through initially letting at a peppercorn rent.

With the help of Cllr Geoffrey Brighty, a meeting has now been arranged with Council officers to discuss what options the Royal Borough is prepared to consider.

The Westcombe Society looks forward to a successful resolution for the future of this site and would welcome imaginative and appropriate suggestions. We thank the Blackheath Society for taking this forward.

Marilyn Little & Helen Reeves

Don't leave - we need you!

Open Britain, the leading group campaigning against a hard Brexit, took part in an NHS Action Day in February in order to highlight the risks Brexit poses to our health service.

Activists took to the streets in Greenwich and across the country, pointing to the impact Brexit is already having on our NHS, with a 96 per cent fall in the number of European nurses applying to work in the NHS, and a fifth of European doctors working in the UK making plans to leave..

Michael Hilton, local Open Britain activist said:

"Our NHS Action Day celebrates the vital role played by the thousands of Europeans working within our national health service.

"Without them, our NHS would be on its knees. And that's why it's so important to highlight the risks posed to the NHS by Brexit. Already, we've seen a massive

fall in the number of nurses from Europe coming to work here, and a huge increase in the number of European NHS staff making plans to leave.

"We were promised hundreds of millions in extra cash for our health service by voting to leave the EU, but the reality is that Brexit could break the NHS. As new facts like these emerge, people have the right to keep an open mind about our future relationship with Europe."

The NHS is currently short of some 40,000 nurses, and there has been a huge drop in applications to do nurse training in the UK. In addition, the devaluation of the pound makes working in the UK less attractive.



The Westcombe Society supports MumsAid

MumsAid is a local non-profit organisation providing free counselling for women experiencing mental or emotional difficulties during pregnancy or after having a baby.

Postnatal depression is a type of depression some women experience after they have had a baby. It usually develops in the first four to six weeks after childbirth, although in some cases it may not develop for several months.

There are many symptoms of postnatal depression, such as low mood, feeling unable to cope and difficulty sleeping, but many women are not aware they have the condition.

It's common to experience mood changes, irritability and episodes of tearfulness after birth – the so-called baby blues. These normally clear up within a few weeks. But if a woman experiences persistent symptoms, it could well be the

result of postnatal depression.

It is estimated that 1 in 10 new mothers will experience postnatal depression. Health visitors have estimated that up to 60 mothers a week are referred with post or ante-natal depression

Based in Westcombe Park, MumsAid is committed to removing the barriers which often prevent women seeking help by challenging the stigma that surrounds postnatal depression by raising awareness about the symptoms, impact and treatment.

Like many small charities, MumsAid is very short of funds, and the recent grant from the Westcombe Society is very much appreciated.

It also provides consultancy, clinical supervision and training to professionals on all aspects of perinatal mental health as well as support on providing non-stigmatising services. **Contact: 07758 763908 info@mums-aid.org**

FEATURES

Talk about Art

New show about Art and Social Change

John Bartram

Talk about Art (TAA) launches its 2018 season in March with an exhibition which explores the Arts & Crafts Movement that restored traditional crafts in the 19th century, turning everyday items into objects of beauty.

Talk about...Art & Social Change runs in partnership with the Tidemill Academy from March 5th to 25th at the Deptford Lounge in Giffin Street. It examines the art movement's reaction to mechanisation and factory production techniques spawned by the industrial revolution, with nine stands depicting its history and main characters. All have interactive features.

In the wake of the industrial revolution, Britain was no longer a collection of isolated market towns and rural communities. It was now a world leader in mechanisation and mass production. But the traditional crafts and working methods that had been the lifeblood of regional areas for centuries were getting trampled underfoot.

This exhibition looks at the origins of the Arts & Crafts Movement, how its influence redressed the balance of social change, particularly for women artists, and



Moorcroft Ceramic Pot

how it promoted an ideal that spread across the world, and still has an influence on contemporary art and design. TAA aims to promote the visual arts across the Borough of Lewisham, particularly amongst children and teenagers, by involving local schools closely in its work.

The exhibition is free and is open weekdays from 8.00am to 10.00pm, on Saturdays 9.00am to 5.00pm and Sundays 10.00am to 5.00pm. Visitors can explore augmented reality footage and access additional information through QR codes.

Nine fun workshops for schools, led by TAA artists, will be offered free of charge under the title 'Hands Make Crafty Work'. They will explore the concept of handmade products inspired by the movement and take place every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the exhibition at 10.00am. ***This is the fifth exhibition run by TAA. Upcoming shows this year will be Talk about...Art & Victorian Rebellion in April at Downham Health & Leisure Centre and Talk about...Art Connecting Cultures in June at Lewisham Central Library.***

Book review

Leaderless Revolution by Carne Ross reviewed by Neville Grant

Many of us may remember the Ross family who lived in Blackheath. Sadly Paddy is no longer with us. So it was with redoubled local interest that Blackheath Halls hosted a packed meeting in January to welcome his son, Carne, to give a talk on *The Leaderless Revolution*.

In 2004, Ross courageously resigned from the Foreign Office, greatly disillusioned by the dishonesty and incompetence of our government particularly over Iraq – first the cruel sanctions that hit ordinary people more than the government, which Ross was ordered to preside over; and then the grotesque invasion by Bush and Blair.

Ross believes that governments around the world have little or no control over events, and their capacity to impose any order on the world is extremely limited.

His gradual disillusionment, and final break, with the FCO, was documented in a BBC film *Accidental Anarchist: Life without Government*, which occupied most of the evening. His disillusionment with government is widely shared in the world.

His film, and book, offers a dystopian vision of the world: of extreme violence; of unbridled inequality; of vast, expensive conferences that do little to deal with world problems such as global warming; of huge corporations riding roughshod over nation states; of supposed regulation that fails to regulate; of hydra-headed terrorism. States fiddle, the world burns.

The film left little time for a rigorous discussion of his anarchist solutions. His argument begins with this proposition:

“It is comforting to believe that governments can provide for us, and protect us. Governments want us to believe it; and we want to believe them. . . Unfortunately, it is ever more evident that this comfortable pact between us rests

upon weak foundations indeed.”

He argues that because regulations and rules have failed to deliver, particularly with regard to international capitalism, we are much better off in “a world without institutions”. Individuals, powered by the internet, can do the job better. One of his “nine principles” for action is: “... what makes you angry?... That may be the thing you should take up arms against. It was for me, and anger puts fuel in your tank.”

His solution – lots of grassroots activity: the people organising themselves, fuelled by anger – but without leaders. Or at least only community leaders. Here the waters get muddy. Anger is indeed fuelling a number of populist movements round the world, notably in the UK and the US, leading, in George Monbiot's words to “the pursuit of simplistic solutions to complex problems, ... with the dismantling of the protective state.” So, populism rules, right? But the protective state hardly exists in parts of Mexico (for example) – and murderous drug cartels have moved in.

It is very difficult to see how anarchic localism, fuelled by anger, can solve global issues. Ross's solutions, no doubt well-intentioned, make exactly the same error he accuses governments of making: that is, of making promises that cannot be kept.

Anger is no substitute for rationality. Yes, the formation of local co-operatives, sharing ownership with the workers and encouraging grassroots decision-making – all these things can and do have a role. But they also depend on the rule of law, and all the countless mundane tasks that those wicked institutions he condemns provide. The solution has to be to reform them. Politics like nature abhors a vacuum.

The Leaderless Revolution is available at Waterstones Bookshop, Blackheath.

Buzzing with activity says

Mark Johnson-Brown

For once, the strap line of Mycenae House says it all: “Buzzing with activity”.

Mycenae House is packed from day to day with great things to do. We have more than 55 groups which meet regularly and operate from Mycenae House.

In an average week there are over 120 sessions on offer to take part in, from yoga to local history, from pre-school playgroups to ballet, from jazz music to drama, from painting to weight control. It's also a great place to hang out with a cafe/bar which is open all day and evening, and the staff could not be more friendly.

Men in Sheds

AgeUK Bromley & Greenwich Men In Sheds is an inspirational community project that gives men over 50 years of age somewhere to go that is safe, comfortable and a social environment.

Running From 7th February until Easter Cost £1 inc Tea & Biscuits

If you are a man of 50 or more years then please come along. If you know someone who might benefit then they would be a welcome addition to the group. It is £1 including Tea & Biscuits and you don't have to be an expert wood-worker, you simply need an interest, we will help you with the rest.

For more information about the overall project please visit meninshedsageuk.org.uk

Mycenae House & Gardens

90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 7SE 0208 858 1749 www.mycenaehouse.co.uk

Other activities include wine-tasting, theatre and cinema, and bridge. There is something for people of all ages from young mums with babies to senior citizens.

Deborah Fitzpatrick, the Project Outreach Worker focusing on seniors at Mycenae House told the *WN*:

“We are developing projects to engage seniors in activities to reduce social isolation. One comment: ‘Men in sheds has given me a new lease of life.’ Women in Sheds too aims to help women of 50+ to meet and learn or share skills, offer help to the community or just have a chat over a cup of tea.”

And on Thursday afternoons there is a knitting circle in the Drop In Cafe. Thanks to Sewingtime Greenwich for donations of wool.

STOP PRESS: Please vote for funding from the Greenwich Growth Fund to support our new Digital Inclusion Project. (See page 1)

Women in Sheds

As a response to numerous requests, we are running a trial of 'Women in Sheds' which aims to help women 50+ to meet and learn or share skills, help the community or just have a chat over a cup of tea

We are pleased to offer this from Wednesday 7 February 2018 until Easter.

When: Wednesdays 10.30 am - 13.00 pm
Cost: £1 per day including Tea & Biscuits.

Mycenae House & Gardens

90 Mycenae Road, London, SE3 7SE
020 8858 1749 www.mycenaehouse.co.uk

Collin Denny, Project Coordinator, Age UK Bromley & Greenwich, T: 020 8294 3012 E: meninshedsinfo@ageukbandg.org.uk
www.ageukbromleyandgreenwich.org.uk

“Why can't women join Men in Sheds?”

Repairs Café @ Mycenae House

“Don't throw it away, bring it to the Repairs Café and see if it can be repaired”

The 'Men in Sheds' project supported by Age UK Bromley & Greenwich are piloting a session where anyone can bring along items to be assessed and hopefully repaired FREE.

Freecycle, Recycle, Upcycle, Re-purpose, Re-something, just don't take it to the Tip!

What: Furniture, Small electric appliances, bicycles, crockery, toys, phones, computers, gadgets and anything else that does not present a risk during or after repair*.

When: Wednesday 21st March 2018 10.30 am - 3.30 pm

Cost: Free (You can of course make donations to our charity and help support the great work of Men in Sheds in your community)

Just turn up and join the queue or call / email below to make a timed appointment with one of our team and *check what you are bringing is acceptable.

The fantastic Café at Mycenae House will be open throughout so you can enjoy their selection of great food and beverages (including licenced bar).



WHAT'S ON



ARTS

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, University of Greenwich 12 Mar. 7.15pm The Guggenheims - a Dynasty of Art Collectors Prof. Andrew Hopkins FSA Visitors welcome, please pay on the door
THE ARTS SOCIETY BLACKHEATH 22nd Mar 2.00pm Dr Lois Oliver Love and Loss: the story of Orpheus and Euridice in Art and Music Meetings start 2.00pm. with tea and coffee, and lectures at 2.30. Venue is St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park Blackheath Visitors welcome.
BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY's annual Art Exhibition at the Blackheath Halls from 1 March until 3rd April. It is free and can be viewed from 10 -5, Monday to Friday, and after all performances.

CHILDREN & FAMILY

BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd. Blackheath SE3 9RQ 0208 463 0100 www.trinitylaban.ac.uk
Sat 3rd March 3.00pm A REAL MERMAID'S TALE £8.50 Ages 3+ (50 minutes)
Sat 17th March 11.0 am & 3.00pm LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD £8.50 Ages 4 - 8 years (Running time 45 minutes)
GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL
Sun 4th March 2.00pm THE LITTLE MOCHI MAN with origami puppets. Tickets £11.00 concs. £8.50 Ages 4+
Sun 18th March 12.00pm & 3.00pm RED RIDING HOOD AND THE WOLF £13.50 concs. £11. Children £8.50 Ages 7+
Sun. 25th March 2.00 pm CAPTAIN FLINN AND THE PIRATE DINOSAURS 2: THE MAGIC CUTLASS £13.50 concs. £11 Children £8.50

SPOKEN WORD

FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK
Annual lecture Wed 7th March 2018 7.30 for 8.00 pm: OUR WORLD HERITAGE: A UK AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE - Speaker: Peter Marsden Greenwich World J Heritage Site Co-ordinator at the King William Building, University of Greenwich at the ORNC. Tickets £10.00 inc. glass of wine.
Write to Friends of Greenwich Park 42 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 9LT Tel. 020 8853 2150
BLACKHEATH HALLS 23, Lee Rd. Blackheath SE3 9RQ Box Office: 0208 463 0100
Wed 7th March 8.00pm **BLAKE MORRISON** talks about his latest novel *The Executor*.
Fri. 9 March 8.00pm **IVO GRAHAM: Educated Guess**. Ivo is a regular fixture in the clubs and theatres of the UK's circuit. TICKETS: £12
Thurs. 29th March 8.00pm **TIFF STEVENSON | Bombshell** The critically acclaimed stand-up comedian brings her new show to SE London. £15 [Comedy Hour: 20% off drinks 6.30 - 7.30pm at all comedy events]
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
13th March Katherine Riggs, on the Thames Vision, Port of London Authority at The Old Bakehouse, Age Exchange, Bennet Park 7.30 pm
BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
Mar 16th. 7.45 pm MRI - Imaging & 3D Modelling Prior to Surgery Dr David Nordsletten, Kings College. Visitors welcome - donations £3
IN-WORDS West Greenwich Library
March 6th 7.30 **WORLD'S WORDS**, a celebration of languages & cultures through poetry & storytelling. Part of the BBC's Civilisations Festival, March 2-11 in Museums, Galleries and Libraries nationwide. 50 years after Kenneth Clark's Civilisation TV series, the BBC is focussing on civilisations, language and languages. With Mick Delap and Lorraine Mariner, and introducing to Greenwich poet and translator Stephen Watts, Iraqi poet Adnan al-Sayegh, Bangladeshi poets Shamim Azad and Farah Naz and Greek poet Kostya Tsolakis. FREE

THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Sat 31st March - Easter Egg Hunt (gardens, 2.00-4.00pm, plus use of toilets; bar open
Sat 14th April Queen Elizabeth's Birthday Tea for Senior Citizens
Friday, May 11th AGM
Sat June 30th Summer Picnic
Fri 28th September - MacMillan Coffee Morning
Fri 16th November - Quiz 7.30-10.30pm Main Hall, Mycenae House
We need more volunteers to help out at community events being planned for 2018. 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
CHARLTON & BLACKHEATH AMATEUR HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY We meet at Charlton House Old Library, 7.45pm third Monday of the month. 19th March talk is "Flower Villages of Alsace & Lorraine" Visitors are £2
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon & Thurs 7.15pm and on Wed at 1.15pm. Lessons Tuesdays. Ron 0208 319 1312
S.E. LONDON BASED MIDSUMMER OPERA is presenting two semi-staged performances of VERDI's neglected masterpiece "Luisa Miller" in March at St John's Waterloo SE1 8TY. Shows take place at 7pm on Friday 23rd March and 5pm on Sunday 25th March. With professional cast & full Symphony Orchestra Tickets £23/£25 from 020 7652 0070 and at www.wegotickets.com.

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Fri 9th Mar 8pm - JazzNights. Candlelit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk featuring Greenwich Mean Time Sax Quartet. £10.
Fri 16th Mar 7.30pm - Evening of Chopin Performed by Rob Bartlitz. An atmospheric evening with a serious message about Chopin's music. £17.50
Sat 17th Mar 7pm - Global Fusion's St Patrick's Day celebration. A great night of Irish music, dance, poetry and food. £11
Thurs 22nd Mar 4pm - Bach To Baby. Classical Concert for families. £10.
Sat 24th Mar 11am - Baby Broadway. A family concert of sing-along show tunes. £10
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Fri 6th Apr 7pm - Global Fusion Music & Arts. An evening of music, theatre and poetry to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King. £7

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FEATURES

Blackheath Halls improvement programme

The Halls are due for an overhaul – and they need our support, writes NEVILLE GRANT

Blackheath Halls is your Halls. They were founded in 1895 by William Webster, and this beautiful building has been an important part of the cultural scene for over 120 years, bringing our community together across all ages and abilities.

Many of our readers have witnessed the challenges the Halls has faced over the decades and will have gone the extra mile to support the building and the programmes run here.

“For this we are sincerely grateful,” says Gemma Okell, director of the Halls.

An historic and much-loved Grade II-listed building, the Halls is part of the oldest-surviving, purpose-built cultural complex in the city, and an important cultural hub in South-East London.

The Halls can also claim to be home to the stars of the future, in the shape of music students from Trinity Laban.

Meeting future needs

Special buildings like the Halls require care and attention, so that they can meet the needs of 21st-century artists and audiences.

Gemma Okell told the *WN*:

“We recognise that many people have supported our efforts over the years as we upgrade, most recently as part of the Elevate and Renovate campaign to improve access to the first floor of the building.

“We also thank Trinity Laban, Viridor Credits and the Friends of Blackheath Halls for their recent donations, which have enabled us to repair the roof.

“Today, we are asking you to support works that will transform Blackheath Halls into a more flexible performing arts centre, attracting the best of both international and home-grown talent, and encouraging the artistic discovery of professionals, students and community members alike.”

The Great Hall

At the heart of the Blackheath Halls complex is the stunning Great Hall. This wonderful space hosts a wide variety of cultural events including orchestral concerts and operatic events, including the very popular community opera.



Backstage

The hitherto neglected backstage area at the Halls will undergo an upgrade to offer improved spaces and facilities to the stars who walk through our doors – whether they be professionals, students or community performers.

The dividing wall between two of the existing rooms will be removed to allow for a single Large Dressing Room, which can be divided by a curtain as needed.

A separate Artists’ Dressing Room will be created in order to give the conductor or principal artists a more private preparation space.

The carpet, ceiling and lighting will be upgraded, new sinks installed and the existing WCs refurbished.

Our help needed

To date, the Halls have raised, or received grants, amounting to £2, 470,000, but a further million pounds to complete the work that has been planned.

So we are being asked to become supporters or patrons by donating generously, so that future generations – both audiences and performers – can enjoy events at the Halls. To be part of this next stage in its history, and to join the ever-increasing Blackheath Halls family, please get in touch.

Gemma Okell, Director of Blackheath Halls at G.Okell@blackheathhalls.com or Isobel Turner, Development Manager

E: i.turner@trinitylaban.ac.uk

Or telephone for a private conversation to find out more: 020 8318 9758.

Celebrating votes for women



Maureen Corcoran

In February, Blackheath Halls mounted an event-packed weekend with the title *Breaking Barriers* to mark the centenary of women getting the vote.

Some women, that is: only women over 30 and with property, got the vote in 1918. The rest had to wait until 1928.

The weekend included talks by prominent women in their fields, including Harriet Harman, and music and theatre performances and film screenings.

On Sunday 4th., Blackheath Society member and local Blue Badge Guide Maureen Corcoran led a 90 minute walk around the sites where suffragettes and others walked, talked and protested.

Greenwich, and in particular Blackheath, played an important role in the campaign. John Stuart Mill, who lived in Blackheath, presented a petition signed by over 1400 women to Parliament in 1867. Emily Wilding Davison, arguably the most famous suffragette, who died at the Epsom Derby when she stepped into the path of the King's horse, was born in Blackheath. Millicent Fawcett, who went to Miss Browning's School in Blackheath, was the suffragist leader who never gave up, and her statue is to be unveiled in Parliament Square in April. She was recently voted “Woman of the Century” by Radio 4 listeners, and is the subject of a book by local author Jane Grant.

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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

Our Low Emissions Neighbourhood

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has been awarded funding to create a 'Low Emission Neighbourhood', a scheme that focuses on improving air quality in Greenwich West and Peninsula Wards.

The Neighbourhood area includes the Westcombe Woodlands - the woodland glade south of Tom Smith Close.

The scheme will use a mixture of 'smart technology' and tried-and-tested techniques to reduce transport emissions and make the area a more people-friendly neighbourhood.

Further information is available at: http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/article/726/low_emission_neighbourhood_to_be_created_in_greenwich

Part of the council's proposals focus on the creation of pocket parks, which involves greening small spaces adjacent to Trafalgar Road.



PHOTO: Frank Smith

Volunteers creating a green space in the Westcombe Woodlands

This is something Don Albrecht (of the Friends of Westcombe Woodlands) has been involved with in his work as a Landscape Architect.

Greenwich Council organised a series of consultation events in late February on "Trafalgar Road Pocket Parks" to engage and seek feedback on the initial proposals. A number of local residents attended to give their views, which we understand, as we go to press, were broadly positive.

It's spring - go Green!

Spring is a great time to check out the numerous community-run "Green Spaces" which offer opportunities to dig, plant, prune and tend or simply spend some time enjoying nature in a landscape increasingly dominated by tall buildings and degraded air quality.

Within Greenwich Park there is a well hidden Wildlife Centre in the Flower Garden where volunteers are welcome to help at open days, training provided, from 1.00pm on the last Saturday of the month.

Beside Maze Hill station with the access gate in the car park of Seren Park, Westcombe Woodlands run monthly work-parties on Sats/Suns from 10.00am. Next days are Sat 3rd March and Sunday 8th April. The site is a mature woodland with a pond and

Rich Sylvester

has diverse wildlife. A sparrowhawk and UK's smallest bird the goldcrest were amongst the 18 species of bird spotted in the 2018 survey. If you want to wander and view the Bluebells come along to an open day on 29th April.

If gardening is more your thing then Maze Hill Gardeners do a seasonal blitz of the beds on the approach path to platform 2 at the Station. And Pip! manage a small orchard in the East Greenwich Pleasaunce.

For more regular opportunities, Christchurch School on Blackwall Lane has a new project which aims to create an inter-generational outside space to grow food, improve biodiversity, share knowledge and learn from each other. Absolute beginners welcome. Open to volunteers and visitors every Friday with more access when new gates are installed. See the website for more details at www.koinoniafederation.com/Community-garden.

EGRA – the East Greenwich Residents

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(See <http://www.westcombesociety.org>)
8 CHARLTON ROAD, FLAT A
ref 18/0278/F
Construct single storey rear extension at lower ground floor level
27 VANBRUGH HILL FLAT 4
ref 18/0246/F
Install roof light to front elevation
49 RUTHIN ROAD ref 17/4067/HD
Construct 2-storey side extension and single storey rear extension (revised description)

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Westcombe Woodlands: one of many green spaces that welcomes volunteers

Association – has an active group which engages in occasional planting (eg the bed by The Vanburgh). They also run clean-ups of the Thames Path, one planned for March 3rd, and will work with local residents to tackle neglected green spaces.

On Sat. 3rd March from 2.00 - 4.00pm you can join Friends of Mycenae Gardens to help with a tidy up and spring planting. The group manage the Gardens and Dell throughout the year.

No prior knowledge of gardening is required – only a willingness to help and to meet with other volunteers.

Also Mycenae House offers supportive sessions for the over 50's on practical tool use "Women in Sheds" is Wednesdays 10.30 till 1:00pm followed by a session for "Men in sheds" which runs from 1.00 till about 4.00pm.

Useful Contacts

Christchurch - ccscommunitygarden@gmail.com
EGRA - info@egra.london
Friends of Greenwich Park - sueyates@ntl-world.com
Maze Hill - mazehillgardeners@gmail.com
Mycenae Gardens - <https://mycenaegardens.org/>
Westcombe Woodlands - www.westcombe-woodlands.org/
Women / Men in Sheds – meninshedsinfo@ageukbandg.org.uk



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Is there a need for more bus routes? asks EMILY NORTON

The Westcombe Society has been told that one option for a new TfL bus route from Kidbrooke to North Greenwich would see buses travelling via Blackheath Standard, Charlton Church Lane and the retail parks on Bugsby Way.

This sounds like a good idea: if it goes ahead it would provide a very useful bus link from the Standard to Sainsburys, Asda and Aldi. Many residents have asked for such a link since Sainsburys relocated a few years ago.

Some residents have also been asking for even longer for a bus link from Westcombe Park Road to North Greenwich and Bugsby Way via Vanbrugh Hill. Residents in the western part of our area who don't have cars, especially those who have difficulties with walking or hills find accessing the peninsula extremely difficult as it involves using the 386 and then changing bus in locations where the relevant stops are far apart on different sides of busy roads.

Now that new routes are being talked about we wonder how residents feel about this, what bus routes would you like to

see? We also wonder if more choice of bus routes to the peninsula in particular would mean that car users would use their cars less. Please let us know your views by calling 020 8853 2756 or emailing environment@westcombesociety.org

Meanwhile, Chariot, a new privately-run rush-hour only commuter service has been launched by the car giant Ford. The new service links Shooters Hill and Kidbrooke with North Greenwich station.

Seats are booked using an app - similar to booking an Uber. Similar bus-like mini-vans already run in some cities in the US such as New York.

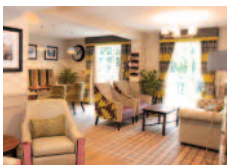
Many commuters describe the service as a "Godsend", and say the extra fare is well worth it. (The Oyster card is not accepted). One commuter commented: "It takes half an hour off my travel time each morning."

Westcombe Hill residents are very relieved that their objections (supported by the Council) have resulted in TfL refusing the use of Westcombe Hill by Chariot: residents there already have to put up with speeding traffic, HGVs and commuter coaches – as well as 24 TfL buses an hour.



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