



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

Brexit – what next?

The *WN* asked our MP to give us his take on the state we are in - and what happens next . . .

On November 17th, Matt Pennycook MP presented his views on where we are at in the Brexit process – and how to get out of what is currently, at the time of writing, a chaotic situation.

Here, *WN Reporter* attempts a summary of what was a very long speech:

Mr Pennycook made clear we have now entered the most critical phase in the Brexit process. As he put it: “The next few weeks will determine whether or not Parliament endorses the withdrawal agreement that has been struck, or, if not, what happens next.

All the signs are that the deal is “inadequate”, to say the least, and will not get through Parliament.

He warned that the potential for a serious rupture in relations with our European friends is still very real, as is the potential for a political and constitutional crisis here at home.

His argument on the day was that a sensible deal was achievable, albeit one that was never going to be as good as EU membership, that the government have failed to secure such a deal because of the way it chose to approach Brexit, that the deal that Mrs May has struck is not good enough and that even at this late stage, a range of options are still open.

He was clear throughout that the deal that the Prime Minister has struck with the EU is “inadequate” and that he intends to vote against it in the forthcoming ‘meaningful vote’ in Parliament.

He went on to argue that Parliament must resist the argument being made by Mrs May, namely that the choice before MPs is her deal or no deal and made clear his belief that, if MPs do resist that false choice “Parliament can secure the chance to decisively shape what happens next”.

If, having examined the withdrawal agreement put before them, MPs vote the deal down, Mr Pennycook argued forcefully that all options must be on the table. In his view, those options include:

- Instructing the government to go back and renegotiate the deal.
- A General Election.
- Another public vote.

A negotiation mishandled?

Mr Pennycook was open about the fact that the process of separating ourselves from the UK after nearly half a century was always going to be fantastically complex, that the process of leaving was always going to be divisive because the referendum



Santa seemed totally unfazed by Brexit at the Westcombe Society's Christmas Craft Fair. Perhaps his grotto had diplomatic immunity.

in no way resolved how we would leave and what our future relationship with the EU27 would be, and whether no deal would be better than membership.

However, he argued that the choices the government made in the wake of the referendum, not least adopting, in his words, “the most extreme interpretation of the referendum result” by setting out red lines that swept a customs union and any means of participating in the single market off the table, along with any future role for the European Court of Justice, had brought us to where we now are.

He agreed with Jo Johnson (The brother of Boris): the last 19 months represent a spectacular failure of British statecraft. Many mistakes had been made throughout the talks: the government was ill-prepared and ill-informed too: the admission by Mr Raab that “he hadn’t quite understood” the importance of the Dover-Calais crossing to UK trade was extraordinary and suggested, he argued, that “even the most prominent of Brexiteers are clearly still learning, even at this late stage.”

Perhaps the most important mistake was following a path designed to placate the extreme wing of her party. Instead Mrs May should have squared with the British people, and made clear that a sensible deal would inevitably involve compromises – and on that basis forge a broad consensus in Parliament and across the country. If Mrs May, he argued, had reached out, embraced Parliament and sought to

respond to the referendum by forging consensus, we may have ended up in a very different place. Instead, he said, the whole approach to the negotiations has been premised on what Theresa May can get through her cabinet and her divided party, rather than what is in the national interest.

Where next?

Mr Pennycook made it clear that the procedure surrounding the forthcoming ‘meaningful vote’ was still to be determined and that there would be a fight in Parliament over it. However, he assured his audience that, in his view, whatever the outcome, this Parliament would not allow this government to crash us out of the EU without a deal.

Why?

Because the vast majority of MPs know that exiting the EU without a deal would be a catastrophe. He also said that the government’s talk of a “No-Deal” is a bluff – and a crude one at that. Mr Pennycook claimed that the UK is simply not prepared to exit the EU on 29th March next year without a deal. He said the flimsy ‘No deal’ guidance issued over recent months proves that beyond a shadow of a doubt. On that basis, he said that MPs of all parties need to accept that the choice they face in Parliament is not merely a binary one between the deal on offer and no deal at all, as Mrs May has continually insisted.

Mr Pennycook then set out what he believed can, and in his view must happen

Although the *WN* is a-political, at this time of national crisis, we have a right to know what our MP thinks.

Just as our readers have a right to express their views!

Please send in your brief comments for the next issue of the *WN*. The full text of Matt Pennycook’s speech is at <https://www.matthewpennycook.com/portfolio/brexit-what-next/>

if the draft withdrawal deal is voted down, arguing that all options must be on the table.

Those options include instructing the government to go back to Brussels to renegotiate. An improved deal would then keep us closely aligned to the EU over the long-term, and minimise the disruption to trade, to supply chains and to business in general that would be created by a hard Brexit. In short, to insist the red lines be abandoned, to soften the definition of what Brexit can mean so that it’s acceptable to the sensible majority in Parliament.

He said: “Keir Starmer and I were last in Brussels only 10 days ago meeting EU officials and Parliamentarians and they remain receptive to a deal of that kind, just as they remain open to an extension of the Article 50 process if required.”

Those options also include a general election that would give a new government the opportunity to pick up the negotiations on the basis of different priorities.

And, if neither of these options prove to be possible, the option of campaigning for a public vote. And given, he stated, that a choice between the deal Parliament had already voted down, and no deal at all, could not seriously be the proposition put before the British people in such a vote, it follows that “Remain” must be on the table as an option.

However, Mr Pennycook was honest about his serious and longstanding concerns about both the desirability and practicality of holding a second referendum, for he argued that it involves serious risks that need to be given serious consideration.

He said: “Even if we set aside the very real issues around the timing of any public vote and what the questions would be on the ballot paper, it is beholden on everyone to think long and hard about all the implications and the risks involved.

“We find ourselves in this mess because a former Prime Minister played fast and loose with a referendum – believing this would solve a party management issue, to meet the challenge of a rising UKIP and to put Labour, unwilling to risk our European future on a public vote, on the back foot.

“In so doing, Cameron turned an issue that wasn’t poisoning our politics to any significant degree into one that has polarised the country top to bottom and risks fracturing our precious union.

(Continued on page 6)



Newsbriefs



Bem-vindos

We are sorry we got the date of the visiting Portuguese choir wrong. The Vox Soul Choir Concert is in fact at 6.00 pm on Sat. 1st Dec. at St George’s. Refreshments will be provided after the concert, and a retiring collection will go to the Greenwich Night Shelter.

Sherington School

... has reversed plans to become an academy.

Station Skipping

Have you been left standing at Maze Hill or Westcombe Park? Between October and December Southeastern have been operating

their autumn timetable. This has meant that some weeks trains have not stopped at Westcombe Park or Maze Hill. The ‘justification’ is that trains need to catch up time in bad weather and during the autumn leaf fall! The Greenwich Line Users Group (GLUG), the Westcombe Society, Councillors and our MP have all objected to this but so far our complaints have fallen on deaf ears. If you have been affected the Westcombe Society Environment Committee would like to hear from you. Our contact details are on page 2. We would also encourage you to write to Southeastern. An email address you could use is George.Paterson@southeasternrailway.co.uk.

Mums Aid

... based on Westcombe Hill, won an award from the Big Lottery in October. MumsAid was the Westcombe Society’s Charity of the year in 2017. It has now won another award - see page 2.

Sadly, Greenwich is one of only two London boroughs that are rated as inadequate on the map of Perinatal mental health services.

Cruise Liner Terminal

Morgan Stanley have confirmed their revised plans for Enderby Wharf do not include a cruise liner terminal. Marilyn Little said: “This is incredible news after everyone’s tireless campaigning over the past three years.”

The Live Nativity comes to

The Blackheath Standard

Saturday 15th December

The journey begins at 3pm outside
St John's Church,
Stratheden Road, SE3 7TH

free

a street drama for all ages with
music and live animals



Westcombe News

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DISTRIBUTION Emily Norton and volunteers.

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Westcombe Society's Blog:
http://westcombe.blogspot.com

WANTED! More volunteers to distribute the *WN* – and to help with Westcombe Society's community events. Please phone 8853 2756 if you would like to help.

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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London, SE3 7SE

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Well done, MumsAid

MumsAid have won the Royal Society of Public Health award for services to parents, families and the community.

MumsAid is a non-profit organisation providing free counselling for women experiencing mental or emotional difficulties during pregnancy or after having a baby. “We are committed to removing the barriers which often prevent women seeking help by challenging the stigma that surrounds postnatal depression (pnd) and by raising awareness about the symptoms, impact and treatment.” *For information, please go to <https://mums-aid.org>*



Jessica Svejdar, Miriam Donaghy & Anila Destani



The Westcombe Society Christmas Card this year is 'Greenwich Park - Lodge in Winter' reproduced from an original card of c.1900. The large size card (A5) is available to purchase individually at a cost of £4.95 for a pack of 5 cards, or individually at £1.35. It was on sale at The Westcombe Society Christmas Craft market on Saturday, 17th November, at Blackheath High School, but can still be purchased from Caroline Owens on 0208 853 0948



Letters

Views expressed are not necessarily those of either the Westcombe Society, or the *Westcombe News*.

From: Anneli Harrison, a John Roan Parent

I felt compelled to respond to the letter printed in your November issue, from ‘A John Roan Parent’ which contains numerous inaccuracies.

Firstly, the ‘Parent’ states ‘the teachers’ union got some legal advice . . . a crowd-funding attempt didn’t raise enough’. Wrong: our crowd-funding ‘attempt’ raised sufficient money to initiate a consultation with Leigh Day solicitors.

The legal challenge (to Ofsted against the inadequate judgement and the lack of appeal process) was taken up by the Parents for John Roan, myself being one. The National Education Union backed the challenge and their legal team were prepared to pay costs if the Local Authority (LA) also backed the challenge.

This legal challenge stalled only because the LA found themselves in a rather tricky situation; if they backed our legal challenge they would be seen to be going against their own employee; Head of the school, Cath Smith, who, with her Governors had agreed the Ofsted report. Contrary to what the parent’s letter claimed, we raised enough money for further investigations and legal challenges and will pursue every avenue open to us.

The parent then goes on to say a larger proportion of parents do not support strike action than do. I would like to see the evidence to prove this.

As an administrator for Parents for John Roan I am inundated with emails from parents, community members, carers, grandparents, prospective parents supporting our campaign, backing the strike action and seeking information regarding the UST, and academisation in general. We have over 300 signatures added to our most recent letter to the new stand-in vice chair of the governors. Over 1,000 people, at the last count, have signed our petition against the academisation of John Roan.

Finally the parent says s/he wishes to remain anonymous because of fears of abuse. Throughout my involvement in this campaign I have never witnessed any abuse by any members of the John Roan campaign.

This is a complete misrepresentation of the parents I love and respect. All the parents involved in fighting against this academy order have one common goal and that is to beat it, overturn it and keep the John Roan a community school. We are united and determined and will not be deterred by unsubstantiated smear tactics.

I appeal for unity. If we all come together; got behind the staff of John Roan that are fighting for our kids’ future, our school, their livelihoods, we could win.

Save our school, join our campaign!

From: C. Frost

SE7

I was disappointed by the recent article on the proposed site of Leigh Academy on Old Dover Road.

While contributors to the *WN* are entitled to put forward their views, I feel that this piece was very one-sided, and an unfair representation of all local residents’ opinions. I wonder, did Ms Hill speak to any parents or any local residents who are in favour of the new school premises? If so, this would have resulted in a more balanced argument.

The article also questioned the need for a new academy. On the contrary, many local people believe there is a pressing need for an excellent new secondary school and this will only increase as a result of the continued high-density residential development in the area. The current need has been proven by the full first-year cohort of Leigh Academy Blackheath students on the temporary site on Shooters Hill Road.

I’m sure Ms Hill read the Consultation Report, which was published in January this year, and I’m sure that anyone lambasting the plans for the school would not have attended the public consultation evening held at Sherington School earlier this year, speaking to the developers and taking a close look at the plans and reports. As such, it seems unfair to ignore the 100% positive feedback from those who attended the consultation.

As a local resident and parent of secondary-age children myself, I feel very strongly that we should be nurturing our young people and providing first-class, comprehensive education that is close to home, embedded in the local community and which places a strong focus on respect, scholarship and ambition. Due to shrinking catchment areas a growing population and decreasing local provision, many local children currently attend schools some distance away from home. We should all actively support another much-needed community secondary school, rather than creating obstacles and delaying its opening.

From: Dr Sarah Wollaston MP

Devon

Everyone deserves a chance to change their mind when they’ve looked at the evidence. I’d like to imagine Brexit as an operation. The type of Brexit was not on the ballot paper, which is like a surgeon asking their patient to consent to an amputation in two years’ time without either of them knowing whether this would involve a few toes or their whole leg.

Just imagine you’re heading for the hospital: the surgeons have been arguing among themselves so there’s been a bit of a delay. In fact they don’t even know who’s properly in charge. It turns out that

Threat to Pub Garden

Tom Stansworth

Patrons of The Vanbrugh pub in East Greenwich are braced for further attempts from the pub’s freeholder to build a house at the rear of the pub buildings, including on part of its beer garden.

Planning permission for a 3 bedroom house fronting Vanbrugh Hill was refused by the Council in July, after objections from The Westcombe Society, local residents, and Peninsula ward councillors, as well as objections from local Greenwich & Woolwich MP Matthew Pennycook and 279 members of the public.

The scheme was unanimously rejected on the basis of its design and appearance making it an “incongruous development”, an insufficient level of private amenity space and a poor living environment due to the adjacent beer garden. However, the freeholder Wakaf Ltd appear set to pursue development plans via an appeal and/or an alternative planning application.

Meanwhile, East Greenwich Residents Association (EGRA) are leading efforts to have The Vanbrugh listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) by Greenwich Council, with support from The Westcombe and Greenwich Societies.

ACV status can act as a level of protection from development as the listed status of a pub can be used by a local authority as a material consideration in a planning application. It also means that if the pub’s freeholder decided to sell it off, its listed status can give the community valuable time to put together a suitable bid.

As part of its ACV nomination, EGRA is currently gathering evidence to show that The Vanbrugh furthers the social well-being of the local community.

Pub customers can help by completing a short questionnaire – please email tomstanworth@hotmail.com by Monday 10th December.

when they’ve made up their mind about the operation it’s nothing like the one you were promised – it’s far more risky, with far-reaching complications and few benefits. So you’ve decided to look at the evidence and you’ve changed your mind.

But picture this. You’re being wheeled into the operating theatre because someone’s filed a consent form you signed two years ago. In fact its worse, for young people, you didn’t even sign it yourself, your parents signed it for you two years ago. It’s the stuff of nightmares, and it shouldn’t happen because it wouldn’t be informed consent. For I would say Brexit is major constitutional economic and social surgery

We deserve a chance to look at the evidence, to weigh up the pros and cons, not a fantasy Brexit, but Brexit reality, and we deserve a people’s vote because without it there is no informed consent; so we were all that day in London in October in our hundreds of thousands, demanding a people’s vote.

From A. T. Riley

St John’s Park

Your report (in October’s *WN*) about the plan to build a new academy by the Leigh Academy Trust on the site of the former Blackheath Bluecoats School in Old Dover Road makes for unsettling reading. Why has there not been a proper consultation with *all* local residents affected? This needs to be rectified as a matter of urgency.

The proposal raises a number of important issues, principal among them the seeming over-development of a constricted site. The plan allows for 1,150 students, 20% more than at Bluecoats. As anyone who drives along Old Dover Road knows, there is already a traffic bottleneck here – this plan will only make that worse. It will increase traffic congestion, and overcrowding on the 386 bus.

It will also have a significant adverse affect on air quality. Levels of nitrogen dioxide are already well above EU limits on Shooters Hill Road, at the Sun in the Sands roundabout and at the Standard itself, as an air quality survey by local residents proved last year (see *Our Toxic Air* on page 1 of the August 2017 issue of the *WN*; also *London’s Toxic Air* on page 1 of the *WN* for Feb. 2017. **Ed:** The new school has been given conditional approval by the council despite the unsuitability of the site.

From: Len Phelps

Ulundi Road

The Westcombe Society’s Community Bookshelf in Westcombe Park Station is a lovely idea. Thanks and congratulations to all concerned.

With regard to the imaginative alternative use of an existing building; what about using the waiting area of Maze Hill Station as a wind tunnel?

LOCAL NEWS



Outrage at ORNC name change

The Greenwich Society, the Blackheath Society, and the Westcombe Society are protesting against the Greenwich Foundations's proposal to change the name of the Old Royal Naval College to Royal Palace and Greenwich Hospital.

At the heart of Greenwich and its UNESCO Maritime World Heritage Site is the Old Royal Naval College which has been administered by the Greenwich Foundation (GF) since 1997.

A letter opposing the name change from the chairs of the Westcombe Society, the Greenwich Society and the Blackheath Society appeared in the *The Times* on Saturday Nov. 24th, along with a short article about the proposal.

The three societies applaud the GF's custodianship of the site, and note that since the University of Greenwich and Trinity/Laban have occupied the four courts, the site has been re-invigorated and is thronged with students, visitors and locals alike.

However, they express profound dismay at the Foundation's current proposal to change the name from the Old Royal

Naval College to "Royal Palace and Greenwich Hospital."

No remains of Henry VIII's Palace of Placentia are extant today, its foundations buried under the Wren buildings which for three hundred years until 1997 served as a Hospital for Seamen and then as the Royal Naval College. The new title ignores the naval and maritime history of the buildings where Nelson lay in state, and is both misleading and inaccurate.

Many local people are shocked at the very inadequate public consultation and are urging the Foundation to think again.

We all want many more visitors to visit Maritime Greenwich and marvel at the splendours wrought by Wren – but not to be misled into thinking they are visiting a Royal Palace.

Ed: This change of name might possibly compromise Greenwich's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Letters of objection (or support) should be sent to: Mr Tony Hales, Chairman of Trustees for the Greenwich Foundation of the Old Royal Naval College 2 Cutty Sark Gardens London SE10 9HT

Quiz Night



The Westcombe Society's Quiz Night in November was a huge success, with more tables and teams than ever.

Congratulations to Tessa's team, with a very creditable score. Thanks to J-J and Maureen, and to Joanne, Patricia and Caroline; and also Fishermans Inn for the excellent Fish'n Chips.

Greenwich Performs TIM BARNES

We hope that the first fortnight in October will increasingly become associated with Greenwich Performs, the revived Greenwich Festival which had its debut this year. It is certainly our intention to organise a similar event next year.

The fortnight started with fireworks and the performance by the Rock Choir on The Point. Other highlights: the performance by Canticum at the Quens House, and the vegan Oktoberfest in Greenwich Market, which provided an oompah band and a great variety of vegan cooking. Many also enjoyed the concert of concert of Rossini arias and duets at The Fan Museum.

Very different was the week-end of activities at Rothbury Hall under the title Fun Palace. Many also attended the Open Day of Westcombe Woodlands.

The question and answer session with Michael Frayn in the Greenwich theatre was entertaining and amusing, although the same perhaps could not be said about the play *Here*. Many people also enjoyed the recollections of life in SE London by our local author and poet, Blake Morrison.

The fortnight ended with a brilliant modern dance at the Greenwich Theatre called "Dracula-Welcome to D's" by the Chantry Dance Company.

We have already made contact with the University of Greenwich School of Business Management about involvement in next year's festival. If any members of the Westcombe Society have ideas on how to make the festival even better, do get in touch with me on tim@ttbarnes.com.

Roan Theatre Co. performs

The Roan Theatre Company will again be performing at the Greenwich Theatre in January. Following their sell-out production of Alan Bennett's "Single Spies" earlier this year they will now be producing two linked plays by Woolwich writer Stuart Mitchell-Smith.

"The Dinosaur Jacket" opens with a conflict between two famous American paleontologists. It won awards when it was first performed at Rochester last year.

"Carriages & Correspondents" features Mary Anning, famous for her collection of fossils. Reverend Buckley is played by Westcombe Hill actor Richard Rickson.

The plays will be on at the Greenwich Theatre Studio from Wednesday January 16th to Saturday January 19th.

The Christmas Nativity

For the last 5 years, St John's Church has mounted a Christmas Nativity with around 400 members of the local community either taking part or coming along to watch.

By popular demand, we are putting it on again this year – and it will be on Saturday 15th Dec starting at 3.00pm.

We see it very much as an event for the local community and one that will involve them too. 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 at 3.00 pm 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.

The choirs will sing at each 'stop'.

As we arrive at the Oak, the current Landlady will come from her balcony to let us know there is no room in the inn, just as it occurred in Bethlehem.

We then depart briefly from the Christmas story to process to Blackheath Library in Old Dover Road, and tell more of the story, as angels, shepherds and kings appear on the balconies above the shops.

Finally, we process back to the church – and there, allelujah! is a stable scene with a live Mary, Joseph and baby!

This hour-long event is a wonderful way of ushering in the Christmas season.

Children are warmly welcome to come dressed up as an angel, king, sheep etc. Our web address for further details:

stjohnsblackheath.org.uk

Jane Beswetherick

Leigh Academy: Short-sited?

Consideration of the application to demolish the existing school buildings on Old Dover Road and to build a new 1150 place school was deferred on October 2nd until a site visit could take place. The amended proposal was considered by the Planning Board on November 6th.

A number of concerns were addressed. These included: whether there was a demand for such a large school, the amount of open space, the sports facilities, and transport and congestion, particularly at the start and end of the day.

The School Travel Plan includes the level of staffing at school gates when pupils arrive and leave. Congestion at bus

stops and on local buses, particularly the 386, will be checked and the Headteacher explained how she and the staff would communicate with parents and pupils in order to maintain considerate behaviour.

After discussion the application was approved by the Planning Board subject to a number of conditions. Assurances were required about monitoring and maintaining the Travel Plan and how local residents and businesses would be able to contact the school if there were concerns.

Worries remain that the siting of an enlarged school at a notorious bottle-neck is ill-judged and is asking for trouble, and will lead to congestion and air pollution.

A new social drop-in group

Shh...Don't Be Lonely

Fortnightly on Tuesdays 7.30-9pm

Starting 20 November

Need time out from a busy schedule?

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No family or friends?

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90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, SE3 7SE

Have new changes in your life contributed to you feeling lonely? Maybe you are new to the area and would like to make friends? Feeling isolated and unsure how to change this? What about family - are you alone? Or do they live far away or have grown distant? Some of your friends might be in relationships or living busy lives. Loneliness is growing across the UK and it's not just the older generation. All of us, at some point in our lives, will be affected! A study by The Co-op and the British Red Cross reveals over 9 million people in the UK across all adult ages – more than the population of London – are either always or often lonely.

Why not come and join us for an evening every fortnight - Step outside your comfort zone, be brave, come along and feel welcome in a comforting environment where you can meet people who are living in similar situations.

Grab a drink, socialise and from time-to-time hear from guest speakers helping to address the concerns we all face regarding loneliness. There will be other people to meet so let's get together, take it slowly and make meaningful friendships to support each other.

Mycenae House
Reach Out
Projects

www.mycenaehouse.co.uk mycenaeoutreach@gmail.com
Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath Standard, London, SE3 7SE



JOHN ROAN SCHOOL

Some parents speak out

104 parents of pupils at John Roan School wrote *An Open Letter for the attention of:*

Cath Smith (Headteacher, The John Roan)
David Skinner (Interim Chair of Governors)
Councillor David Gardner (Deputy Leader, Royal Borough of Greenwich)
Matthew Pennycook (MP, Greenwich and Woolwich)
Kirstie Paton & Jane Simms (NEU Reps at The John Roan)
Tim Woodcock (NEU Divisional Secretary)
GMB Union (London Regional Office)
'Parents for John Roan' campaign group

We are parents of students at The John Roan who wish to express our support for the school in the midst of the turbulence that has arisen since the publication of the Ofsted report in June 2018 and subsequent Academy Order. Whilst we have differing views and strength of convictions regarding the Government policy to require Local Authority schools with an Inadequate Ofsted rating to join Academy Trusts, we are agreed on the following:

1. The 'Parents for John Roan' campaign does not speak for all parents' views and is not representative of the diverse community of parents across the school.

It is often reported or written that the formerly named 'John Roan Resists' campaign group "has the support of the parents in the school" but with no qualification as to how many parents have actually offered this support and agree with the campaign's approach to the issues at hand. There are alternative views amongst many parents in the school that are not voiced by the rhetoric of the campaign group.

2. The appropriate context for campaigning against an Academy Order is at a national political level or within a legal framework, and not within the local school it affects.

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Shenanigans Theatre Company

The views expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect the views of the *WN*.

Open letter to the chair of governors

We understand that neither the Governing Body, School Leadership or Local Authority are in a position to resist the enforcement of the Order or reverse it, but all have a legal requirement to comply with the process of conversion to the named sponsor, even if it is not what many parents or staff want to see happen.

3. The industrial action that took place in the summer term was disruptive to the students' education and destabilising for the school community as a whole.

The six days of strike action damaged staff and student morale and caused unnecessary additional stress for students facing their end of year 11 and 13 exams, as well as sending a message to the wider community that the school was in chaos. It did not alter (and indeed could never have altered) the position the school is in regarding the enforced conversion to an Academy.

4. We believe in and want to express our support for the robust Improvement Plan that has been agreed between the Headteacher, Governing Body and Local Authority.

We have witnessed changes brought in by strong leadership of the school over the summer term and more notably the first five weeks of the 2018-2019 year. We are pleased with progress in areas such as staff recruitment, fewer supply teachers, improved behaviour management and increased communication with parents.

5. We are strongly opposed to further industrial action in the school.

We believe it will be counter-productive: such action will not achieve the aim of changing the implementation of the Academy Order, and it will be detrimental both to the current school community and those in our local area who are considering whether to choose The John Roan for their children's education in the future.

Strike days and the disruption they cause will undermine the hard work being done by those who are focusing on the priority issue currently facing the school, that of ongoing rapid improvement and the eradication of the 'serious weaknesses' noted in the Ofsted report.

We are signing this letter to give a collective voice to the views we share as parents, in the hope it will enable all those involved in decision making at this critical time for the John Roan school, its pupils and staff, to be accurately informed of a wider range of views than are currently being expressed.

Parents of John Roan (PJR) claim that Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) are renowned for making promises and then breaking them. They argue: "Once we have lost our school there is very little accountability and scrutiny. Our school can be re-brokered and we have no say. That is why we can't stand by and not speak out. We must fight to save our school. For this reason they have written an open letter to the new chair of John Roan Governors, Mr David Skinner, raising serious questions."

The *WN* here summarises the concerns raised in the letter.

As parents the writers say that they will continue to oppose the academisation of our school and state why they believe that the University Schools Trust (UST) should withdraw sponsorship. They express deep disappointment that Mr Skinner has written to parents in support of the UST without subjecting the organisation to independent scrutiny.[the trustees of a charity or trust such as the John Roan Foundation are by law required to exercise "due diligence" when handing over assets.]

The writers express concerns about the governance of UST. They claim the UST reports pension liabilities of £1.3m. They also note that Heads' salaries in the UST are more than Local Authorities salaries for Headteachers. The Highest salary for LA Heads for a large Inner London school is approximately £116,000. It is claimed that Senior Leadership expenditure in the UST went from £280,000 to £1,470,000 in one year. They also raise other concerns:

- The accounts for 2017-18 have not been filed in Companies House [though it has to be said that Companies House provides for a nine months' grace period.]
- Grahame Price, CEO of UST, became head of Wilmington Enterprise College in 2006 when it was rated "good". During this period, serious financial irregularities resulted in the departure of the finance officer. In 2008 it was put into "special measures" and was closed. It reopened as part of the Leighs Academy Trust MAT in 2010 and is now Wilmington Academy.

Mr Price's time as Head of St Paul's Way Community school should also be considered: in 2009 it was judged as 'inadequate'. It became an Academy as part of the UST in 2016. The staff were required to reapply for their jobs when their contracts were transferred; the next year 38 staff left the school. This gives the staff at John Roan serious cause for concern. * Christine Whatford was appointed as chair of Governors of The John Roan School in August 2016, despite being a consultant of the UST; in Sept. 2014 she appointed the UST to work in the school to offer 'support' in September 2017. The UST 'support' did not improve the school.

The writers suggest that the 'expertise' these individuals have is in turning Local Authority schools into academies.

By a strange coincidence, Ms Whatford was a close personal friend of the chair of the Ofsted panel that inspected the school, and there are concerns about possible conflicts of interest. (The school was rated inadequate, after an inspection lasting only two days; many considered this unfair, as it did not take into account the intake of the school, nor its troubled past history.)

There are also other causes for concern. Local Authorities have the power to support school deficits and access to funds to do so. There are fears that the UST might use John Roan's funds to run their company, resulting in less funding for educating the pupils. The writers are very concerned that public money may be diverted into the salaries of management; and raise doubts about the danger of asset-stripping of the school.

They ask Mr Skinner to look carefully at their research and to re-consider his support for the UST. The Local Authority (which is publicly accountable) has a good track record in support of the school. Could the UST provide comparable support and resources?

They request that Mr Skinner contact Ofsted and ask that they visit the school to see the improvements already made. The academy order was issued on the basis of an inspection in March 2018, that many know was not a true reflection of the school. They also cite the alleged possible conflict of interest (noted above.)

Finally, they request that Mr Skinner should write to the Regional Schools Commissioner, Dominic Herrington, pointing out their concerns about UST, and ask that the RSC revoke the order as has been done in 16 other schools. This is within the remit of the DfE. They write:

"We believe it is in the interests of our children and the future of the John Roan that we can remain an inclusive, caring comprehensive school, accountable as a public service to our community."
STOP PRESS: The Local Authority has deferred its decision to hand over the school until December, "for further due diligence."

A spokesperson for the UST said:

"The Trust is committed to helping The John Roan School to make the necessary improvements, now and into the future. Pupil outcomes are currently far below expectations and the school has been failing its children for a number of years.

We are currently working with the governing body and leadership at the school to improve the quality of teaching and the outcomes for pupils."

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WHAT'S ON



ARTS

THE ARTS SOCIETY, GREENWICH
King William Court, Univ. of Greenwich
All lectures are at 7:45pm, with wine served from 7:15pm. Visitors welcome, please pay at the door
10th Dec. IN THE KINGDOM OF THE SWEETS (all about The Nutcracker) presented by Nigel Bates, heavily involved with the Royal Opera House and the Royal Ballet. Fully illustrated with audio and performance video clips.
Monday 14 January: CONSTABLE - THE FATHER OF MODERN PAINTING Sarah Cove, recognised authority on Constable, looks at his Great Landscapes including some of his most famous and iconic paintings: The White Horse, The Haywain and Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows.
THE ARTS SOCIETY, BLACKHEATH
Thurs. 24th Jan 2019. 2.00 pm Refreshments
Followed at 2.30 by Judy Rudoe FSA on CARTIER: JEWELLER OF GENIUS Venue is St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park. Visitors welcome.

CHILDREN & FAMILY

BLACKHEATH HALLS
Sat 1st Dec. 11.1m FAMILY DAY
3.00pm FESTIVE FAMILY SING-A-LONG
All ages. £8 | £6 under 16s
Sun 2nd Dec. PALISANDER RECORDER REVOLUTION £8.50 Ages 5+
Sat 15th Dec. 3.30 & 3.45 pm Great Hall
SLEEPING BEAUTY £15.00 All ages.
GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL
KNITMAN: A WINTER YARN Dec 4th - 30th.
Longsleeves is a jumper: the story of an unwanted Christmas present. Very funny show from Sharklegs Theatre Company. Ages 4+. £13.50 Children £8.50
FRIENDS OF WESTCOMBE WOODLANDS
Volunteer workday on Sat 8th Dec. at Vanbrugh Pits from 10am-1pm. Meet at the area bordered by Vanburgh Park, Maze Hill and Charlton Way. Bring stout footwear, warm clothes, and gardening gloves if you have them! Aim: habitat enhancement for wildlife.

SPOKEN WORD

Thurs. 6th Dec. 8:00 pm - "Io Saturnalia -The Pagan Roots of Christmas Traditions" - Sam Moorhead will give an illustrated talk on how earlier pagan and Roman traditions were adopted as part of the Christmas celebration
IN-WORDS.co.uk
Dec. 4 at West Greenwich Library, 146 Greenwich High Road SE10 8NN: Cinnamon Press 'Three Poets', Kay Syrad, Maria Jastrzebska and Patricia Helen Wooldridge.7 for 7.30, FREE. Refreshments, Donations.
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
15th Jan. 7.30 pm Richard Albanese talks on **SMALL SHIPS AND BOATS AT TRINITY BUOY WHARF** Meeting in the old Bakehouse, behind Age Exchange. Please park in station car park.
BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
7.45pm Mycenae House, 3rd Friday in the month.
Dec. 14th 2018: AGM and talks by Members
January 18th 2019: THE RECOVERY OF THE TIDAL THAMES AND ITS FISHERIES: Steve Colclough FIFM, C.Env. Visitors welcome £3.00



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ROBINSON CRUSOE 23 Nov 2018 - 13 Jan 2019
Set sail to Greenwich Theatre this Christmas for our swashbuckling panto - Robinson Crusoe. Starring panto favourite, Andrew Pollard
DINOSAUR PIECES 16 Jan - 19 Jan 2019 7.30
Two one-act plays: palaeontology meets scandal. Presented by The Roan Theatre Company
ORESTEIA 21 Jan 2019 4.30 and 7.00pm
An epic, tale of family, history, vengeance and honour in a story nearly as old as theatre. Aeschylus's classic trilogy condensed into an hour £13.50 | £11.50
GLYPT: GREENWICH & LEWISHAM YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE present **SNOW WHITE** A Perfect, Family, Festive Show at the Tramshed Theatre, Woolwich. 2.00pm and 5.00pm on the following dates: Dec 8/9, 15th and 16th December, 22nd and 23rd December Tickets: Adults £10.00, Concs/under 18 & Grps. of 5 or more £8.00

WOODLANDS FARM

331 Shooters Hill, Welling DA16 3RP
No parking on site – please use public transport.
Sunday 2 December 11am-3pm Our Christmas Fair. Come and meet Father Christmas, sip mulled wine, produce and crafts stalls; children's crafts and games. A great Festive day out for all the family. Entry is £1 adult and 50p children – all money raised helps us to care for our animals. A great family day out!
Sat 8th Dec 10:00 - 12:30 A Stick Man Christmas Watch the full Stick Man film before heading off round the farm on The Stick Man Activity Trail. Find everything on the trail before heading off to Santa's grotto to be given your special certificate and your own Stick Man toy from Father Christmas himself. £7.50 per child. Sessions start at 10am and 11am. Booking is essential. To book go to www.thewoodlands-farmtrust.org. Please arrive 10 minutes before the time of your booking as the film will be starting on the hour.

DANCE



Sat 8th Dec. 7.30pm HAVEN'T STOPPED DANCING YET 18+ A dance-tastic night of 70s and 80s soul, funk & disco. £15.00 in advance £18.00 on the door. In aid of Cancer Research UK
Tues. 18th Dec. CHRISTMAS TEA DANCE 1.30 pm Great Hall £7.00 inc light refreshments

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MYCENAE HOUSE DECEMBER & JANUARY

Fri 7th Dec 7.30pm - KT Bush Band. A striking homage to one of the most exciting and original talents of the '70s and '80s UK music scene, from musicians who were there with Kate Bush at the very beginning. £16/14.
Thurs 13th Dec 4pm - Bach To Baby. A family concert of Classical Music. £10.
Fri 14th Dec 8pm - JazzNights. Legendary annual candle-lit Christmas Curry Special event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.
Thurs 20th Dec 7pm - A Choral Christmas Cracker. Seasonal singing with choirs from St George's Church Westcombe Park and Blackheath Centre for Singing. Free entrance.
Fri 21st Dec 4pm - Baby Broadway. Singalong showtunes for all the family. £10.
Fri 21st Dec 7.30pm - A Live Xmas Shenanigan. GFMA, Mycenae House + Sonic Promotions present live music from favourite local musicians. £5.
Fri 11th Jan 8pm - JazzNights. Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.
Thurs 24th Jan 4.00pm - Bach To Baby. A family concert of Classical Music. £10.
Fri 25th Jan 7.30pm - Global Fusion Burns Night Ceilidh. Great night of dancing, singing, Bagpipes and lots of fun!
Thurs 7th Feb 7.30pm - Steve Knightly. Roadworks Tour 2019 - more songs & stories from the road. £18.

For further information visit www.mycenaehouse.co.uk

MUSIC

St GEORGE'S CHURCH, Glenluce Road
Sat., 1st Dec. 6:00 pm - VOX SOUL Choir
Concert - A youth choir from Lisbon, Portugal will give a free concert at St George's. Refreshments, and retiring collection will be taken for the Greenwich Winter Night Shelter.
BLACKHEATH HALLS
Sun 2nd Dec. 11.00am - 1.00pm
A YULETYDE EVE The recorder ensemble **PALISANDER** perform festive music of the Renaissance £14 | £12
TURNING OF THE YEAR
Mon 3rd Dec. 6.30 pm Keystage 1
Tues 4th Dec. & Wed 5th Dec. 7pm Keystage 2
Thurs 6th Dec. 7.0pm Keystage 3 £6.00
Fri 7th Dec 7.30 pm TRINITY LABAN SYMPHONY ORHESTRA concert, including Janacek & Stravinski (Firebird Suite) £25 | £23
Fri 14th Dec. 8.00pm Great guitarist **GLENN TILBROOK** £25 | £23
Sat 15th Dec. 6.00pm THE ICARUS CLUB
Great performers play acoustic music £12.00
Sun. 16th Dec. 7.30pm BLACKHEATH CHRISTMAS CONCERT: BERNSTEIN's Chichester Psalms, and FESTIVE SONGS/CAROLS £16 | £14 Under 12s £6.00
Mon 17th Dec 1.10 pm BRANDENBURG ENSEMBLE: Bach. Christmas baroque music 7.30pm Free, with retiring donation
Sat 12th Jan 2019 7.30 pm Great Hall THE FIRST WALTZ Gala evening with the best in Viennese music, with EMMA JOHNSON, and Classic FM's JOHN SUCHET £40.00

COMMUNITY

THE BRIDGE AND FRIENDS OF EAST GREENWICH PLEASAUNCE
Annual Christmas Party on Sunday 9th December 12pm - 3pm. Father Christmas arrives 12.45, visit him FREE iun his grotto. Plus refreshments, stalls music, games and a raffle. An event for the whole community. The Bridge Community Centre, East Greenwich Pleasaunce, Off Chevening Road, Greenwich, SE10 0L
SUNDAYS AT SUNFIELDS at Sunfields Methodist Church 95 Old Dover Road, Blackheath SE3 8SJ
Lunch! 1.00 - 4.00 pm First Sunday every month.
MYCENAE HOUSE: Become a Dementia Friend! Fri 14th Dec. 2.30 pm Free interactive information session: how to make a difference. All ages welcome. Two hours including chat & coffee. Sorry, no wheelchair access. Please register your interest: contact Deborah Fitzpatrick on 0208 858 1749 or email: mycenaeoutreach@gmail.com
St Luke with Holy Trinity's Community Carol Service at The Village, Charlton. 7.00pm 19th Dec. Carol singing + Mulled wine. All welcome.

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ISSUES



Matt Pennycook MP on BREXIT

(cont. from page 1) “It’s because I have always believed that referendums are blunt and divisive tools by which to try resolve profound questions of this nature, and because I fear that another vote could entrench the divisions in our country and reinforce the culturally divided nature of our politics, that I have always harboured deep reservations about another one.

“But while another referendum would be fraught with risk, including the real risk that a ‘no deal’ option is on the ballot paper and that the public votes for it, at the point that Parliament has voted down the deal, any option is fraught with risk and at that stage the risks entailed by a public vote would pale in comparison to the risks of leaving the EU without a deal.

“And that is why I have always believed that the option of another referendum must be kept open.”

In short: “If the deal is voted down, if the Prime Minister will not abandon her red lines and return to the negotiating table to get a better deal, if a general election can’t be secured, and if the alternative is crashing out of the EU without a deal, then I would have no hesitation in supporting another referendum.”

The decision as to what MPs will do if the withdrawal agreement is voted down is not yet upon parliamentarians, but it soon will be.

Mr Pennycook concluded his speech with these words:

“What I hope you will take away from my remarks today is that we have arrived at this moment because of political choices that were made by our government, that different choices could have been made along the way and a different outcome secured, and, most importantly, as I said at the outset, even as Brexit enters its eleventh hour, we still have choices. “

He added: “In confronting those choices over the next few weeks, the response of parliamentarians must be guided, not by short-term party political considerations or the particular electoral dynamics of any given constituency, heavily leave or heavily remain, but by what will protect and advance our long-term national interest and by what option holds out the best prospect of healing the divisions of the referendum and bringing the country back together again.”

Matt Pennycook on Trade issues

Our local MP made it clear that he regarded a “No Deal” Brexit would be a catastrophe:

“One of the central claims made by those who campaigned to leave was that leaving the EU would free the UK to strike a range of preferential trade deals with countries around the world. That vision was always a fantasy: future free trade agreements could never compensate for a hard Brexit.

“The EU currently constitutes 44% of our exports and 53% of our imports. Increases in trade from new trade deals with the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand combined would be worth less than 3% of our current trade in goods and services with the EU.

“New trade deals with the BRIC countries, Brazil, Russia, India and China, would be worth just over 2%.

“Meanwhile as an EU Member State, the UK can currently freely trade bilaterally with any country it wishes and we also currently benefit from 61 EU negotiated favourable trade agreements encompassing nearly half of the world’s states.

“To put all that at risk in pursuit of a hard Brexit would be, to quote the former permanent secretary at the Department of International Trade, Sir Martin Donnelly, like giving up a three-course meal for the promise of a packet of crisps in the future.

“That is why Labour has been calling for a renegotiation that includes a new, comprehensive UK-EU customs union, one that would allow us continue on current arrangements, to be part of those 61 EU trade agreements and give us a say on any future deals the EU negotiates.”

Hills and Vales

Cllr Geoff Brighty has told the *WN* that Greenwich Council is looking at introducing measures that would see roads like Hyde Vale, Crooms Hill and West Grove closed to through traffic.

A reduction in rat-running between the A2 and Greenwich, particularly during the evening peak would certainly be attractive to some local residents.

But Geoff suggests that pressing ahead without taking into account the knock-on effects such closures would have on other already busy roads would be misguided.

There has been no consultation outside the West Greenwich area so far, but a spokesman for the council said that any closures would be for an experimental period. Although it seems unlikely that any decision will be made in the near future, the Westcombe Society is keeping an eye on all such proposals.

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This Conservation Area

Maggie Gravelle

Much of Westcombe Park lies in the Conservation Area, but what exactly does this mean? How is conservation area designation assigned? What are the associated benefits and duties? Who is responsible for checking that the designation is retained? What is an Article 4 directive?

Local authorities, with guidance from Historic England, can designate part of their area for conservation if it is an area 'of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

A conservation area (CA) not only covers architectural heritage but can also include open spaces, transport links, street furniture and surfaces, vistas and trees and green features. A CA applies to a neighbourhood rather than to individual buildings.

In order to secure CA status, the local authority must produce a Character Appraisal setting out those features which it deems of importance. Westcombe Park Conservation Character Appraisal, found on the RBG website, was adopted in 2010. It sets out those aspects of the area which it deems worthy of protection.

There are many two or three storey late-Victorian or Edwardian houses and the area includes nationally and locally Listed buildings. The character of the area is described as 'rich and distinctive' with leafy streets and 'generous' gardens, green spaces, trees and vistas between buildings.

As well as the Character Appraisal, the

council had to produce a Management plan outlining how the area would be maintained. This discusses and itemises some of the threats to the area such as unsympathetic housing design, including roof extensions and the replacement of original windows and doors. A concern is the replacement of front gardens and boundaries with hard standing.

In order to maintain the character of the CA the council has greater powers to scrutinise and control some developments such as demolition, infilling, changing roof lines or boundaries or felling trees.

So, some changes which would otherwise be 'permitted development' require planning permission in a CA. The council provides guidance on conservation matters and when planning permission needs to be sought.

In the 2010 CA Management Strategy the council argued that some additional powers were needed 'prevent disfiguring changes to the surviving historic fabric and further erosion to the character and appearance of the area'.

Recently the CA had been identified as 'at risk', strengthening the need for these additional powers. The Westcombe Society is working with the Royal Borough of Greenwich in order to apply for an Article 4 Direction which would give the council the additional powers needed to reinforce the planning process and thus enable us to maintain the attractiveness and appeal of Westcombe Park.

Have your say about transport in Greenwich: you have until Dec. 14th!

The Council has launched a consultation with residents on its vision for transport in the borough and an investment plan for the next three years.

The Local Implementation Plan for Transport sets out the Council's ambitious plans for making the borough greener, healthier and more connected – with a particular focus on how walking, cycling and public transport can be improved.

Tackling poor air quality and making streets safer for walking and cycling are key objectives for the Council, and it has already been trialling schemes such as Car Free Day and School Streets across the borough.

The Local Implementation Plan builds on the success of this existing work and includes proposals to improve bus priority, install better pedestrian crossings and create safer cycling routes.

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Transport, said:

“Transport is a vital part of everyday life for everyone. We want to make sure that the journeys residents make in Royal Greenwich are safer, cleaner and more

joined-up.” She added:

“We are also committed to reducing the harmful pollution from vehicles, and cleaning up the air across the borough, which will undoubtedly benefit both residents and our visitors and so help to safeguard their health.

“We want local people to help us to shape our plans and be able to have their say on the future of this borough, so I am encouraging all residents to respond to the consultation.”

The Council will work in partnership with Transport for London (TfL) and others to deliver the Local Implementation Plan, which will contribute to the wider transport vision for London set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Residents can have their say at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/haveyoursay or by calling 0208 921 6000 to request a paper copy of the consultation.

The consultation ends on 14th December.

**A short video can be found online:
<https://youtu.be/T4BtfgGEVQg>**

A Day Conference, December 8th PHILOSOPHY for EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL

So called ‘education’ was quietly morphed in the 1980s into training for individualistic ‘empowerment’. Now training is targeting getting students maximum marks, by gaming formulaic exams. This is deeply anti-educational.

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1 Hopefulness, 2 Reviving the Zeitgeist 3 Building problem-solving confidence & skills

4 Imagination –the vital forward-envisioning everyone needs in a rapidly changing society.

The speakers include Richard Pring and Chris Ormell.

Date: Saturday Dec. 8th at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square WC1R 4RL. 10.45 – 16.00

Book your ticket now! Send your Name/Address to PER, Box 16916, London SE3 7WS with a cheque for £16 (payable PER) or two books of 12 first class stamps. (Or pay £20 at the door.) www.philosophyforeducation.co.uk

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

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THE CHRISTMAS FAIR

The Christmas Fair on November 17th was a great success, although the numbers were down a bit this year. It was attended by some 200 people, plus children. A big draw for the children was the Punch and Judy Show, and Santa's Grotto.

A full list of the local traders and companies who donated items for the raffle, and helped in other ways, is still being finalised, and will appear in our next issue.

Meanwhile, our thanks are due to all our volunteers, including the Action Team from GoodGym, the folk from St George's Church, and to all those who provided musical entertainment, spreading Christmas cheer.

Thanks also to Sue Clark for sponsoring the Christmas tree, to Felicity Lord for the banners, and to David Lloyd Kidbrooke, Sue Clark and Burn it Fitness for donating items for the silent auction.

Congratulations to Ann Cochran who won the Christmas Hamper with her Lucky Number, and all the Raffle Prize winners. We should all thank Marilyn for master-minding the whole operation.

Happy Christmas, Marilyn!



Above: Children's craft activities were very popular.



Left: One lucky Raffle Prize winner won this bunch of flowers from Passionflower. Prizes galore, thanks to our generous donors!

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PHOTO: Penny Player
The Fair was opened by the Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Christine May. She was welcomed by Marilyn Little, Chair of the Westcombe Society, and Nadine Fulmer from Greenwich Volunteer Centre, the WS Charity of the Year 2019.



The Mock Tudor Band used authentic instruments to play some 16C and 17C period music. Must keep up with the times!



Dave Silk turned up – and won a case of wine!

The Westcombe News: Your paper

The Westcombe News is a community paper produced and distributed by the community; we hope our readers find it a worthwhile read. We have an army of wonderful helpers who put the paper together, sort it into over 60 paper rounds for distribution, and then distribute it.

This all happens ten times a year but is not arduous if the load is well spread. However, we can't all go on forever: people move, people get sick, people get older, or their lives simply change, so we always need new helpers.

In particular our editor celebrated his 80th birthday recently and would like to retire sometime but doesn't want to leave the paper without an editor. We also need help with deliveries.

Right now we really need the following:

- A volunteer or volunteers to help the Editor.
- Volunteers to take on rounds of up to 70 papers, there is urgent need in the St Johns Park area at the moment but other rounds come up on a regular basis.
- Volunteers who can take on rounds occasionally when someone is unable to do theirs on a temporary basis
- Volunteers to help distribute the papers to those who then put it through all our letter boxes.

If you can help please contact us, contact details on page 2.



GoodGym Greenwich regulars congregated at Blackheath High School to help set up the annual Westcombe Society Christmas fundraising Christmas Fair, armed with good intentions, smiles, and a healthy dose of Christmas cheer (which, as we all know, is best spread by singing loudly for all to hear).



BCS Blackheath Centre for Singing

Bach Christmas Oratorio

Conductor: Joel Thomas

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