

Westcombe NEWS



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November 2019 No. 9

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

Silvertown Tunnel to be reviewed?

Greenwich Council has done a U-turn on the A102. More exactly, we should say on the Silvertown Tunnel plan. And we thought it was all over . . .

Cllr Danny Thorpe, the leader of the Council, has written to the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan requesting that work on the tunnel should pause while a full review is carried out of alternative ways of reducing pollution and congestion around the Blackwall Tunnel.

The decision follows expressions of public concern over environmental issues, as reported in October's issue of the *WN*.

Among the possibilities the Council suggests is a Dockland Light Railway extension to Thamesmead (already listed on the Council's Transport Strategy).

Other possibilities include an exploration of how pedestrians and cyclists can cross the River Thames more easily, and improving public transport links, such as a DLR extension to Eltham.

Among other suggestions are ways of reducing traffic volume through the Blackwall Tunnel, possibly including imposing a toll for an experimental period. (Toll charges were to be imposed in order to finance the new tunnel.)

In his letter, Cllr Thorpe suggests a wider discussion of the transport and infrastructure needs of the borough.

TfL has already commenced making some preliminary moves, notably a consideration of what kind of barrier should be erected to shield residents of Siebert Road and Westcombe Hill.

Victoria Rance, Coordinator of the Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition told the *WN*:

"It's great to hear that, in the light of the climate emergency and the local air quality crisis, Dan Thorpe and the Labour Group running Greenwich Council have decided to look again at the forecast effects of the Silvertown Tunnel, and have subsequently asked the Mayor to halt and review the scheme.

"This is a brilliant achievement by the cross-party group from Labour, the Green Party, the Lib Dems and the Womens's Equality Party.

"This coalition group have worked tirelessly with local climate activists from Extinction Rebellion, residents' groups from across the borough, and air quality campaigners to raise awareness across Greenwich about this eye-wateringly expensive new road.

"We are gravely concerned about the massive harm it will do to efforts to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

"We hope that now Greenwich have signalled their opposition to the scheme, adding to the overwhelming existing opposition from top climate, traffic, and environmental health experts, leaders of four other boroughs, active travel NGOs, cycle logistics businesses, and local residents' groups, the Mayor and TfL will take the opportunity to halt the scheme, look at the evidence, and think again."

See also Letters page 3.

Right:

Fighting for the cause in Trafalgar Square on October 15th: George Monbiot, Rupert Read & Victoria Rance.



PHOTO: Malcolm Hardy



The Viking Sun seen in Greenwich at sunset one Saturday in September before it left on the longest (245 day) round-the-world cruise. Cabins range from £193,000 to a modest £66,000, not including tips (10-20%?), and it's fully booked. Feel like selling the flat for when it comes round next time...?

Rectory Field under threat

It was heartening to read in September's *WN* that the Hervey Road playing field has been restored for the use of the community.

It makes an excellent venue for the Blackheath Mini rugby players on Sunday mornings and all the other community activities that are happening there. Well done to all those who helped to restore this sports ground.

It is very sad therefore to hear that during this season, 2019-2020, it is likely that no Blackheath rugby teams will be using Rectory Field in Charlton Road for the first time since 1883.

Blackheath F.C. is the world's oldest open rugby club, founded in 1858, and its traditional home ground, Rectory Field, in those past 136 years has been host to England International games, Varsity matches between Oxford and Cambridge and many other prestigious encounters.

Blackheath Rugby's senior sides no longer use Rectory Field and have moved to a ground share with the Millwall F.C. Soccer Academy at Well Hall, Eltham. However, Blackheath F.C. has only a relatively short term lease there.

Last season Rectory Field was used only by the Blackheath Women's Rugby section for games on Sundays, Junior rugby on Sunday mornings, and for midweek training and, occasionally, by the men's junior teams.

Blackheath Rugby has indicated that it wishes to reduce its costs to the Blackheath Sports Club (BSC), of which the rugby

club is a constituent member. The BSC is the body which manages Rectory Field; last season the Rugby Club offered only a drastically reduced amount as its share of ground maintenance for the season. This was very reluctantly accepted by the other three constituent sports clubs, Cricket,

Tennis and Squash, as being marginally better than receiving nothing. For this rugby season the two sides have been unable to reach any agreement on Blackheath Rugby's financial contribution.

With the Mini rugby players now using the Hervey Road facility and the Junior rugby section and the Millwall F.C. Soccer Academy using Well Hall on Sundays, the Women's Rugby section was left completely out on a limb, with nowhere to play, by the rugby club's hierarchy. The Sports Club refused to let any of the sections of the rugby club play at Rectory Field until it paid a satisfactory amount as its share of the upkeep of the ground. The Women's section was forced to look elsewhere for a ground to play their matches and train, and so it approached Charlton Park R.F.C. An agreement was reached for Blackheath Women to play their Championship South League fixtures at Charlton Park R.F.C.'s ground at Broad Walk, SE3 8NB.

So, if there are no longer any Blackheath Rugby sides playing on the historic pitches at Rectory Field, how long will it be before there is a need for a "Save Rectory Field Action Committee?"

P.J. Brown

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Newsbriefs

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Youth homelessness charity Depaul UK

is calling for people with spare rooms in their homes to volunteer to become Nightstop hosts – and be trained to accommodate and look after a young person for a night. Last year, 600 households across the UK gave up their spare rooms to help more than 1,200 young people who might otherwise have been out on the streets. To find out more about volunteering call 020 7939 1220 or visit www.nightstop.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer.

Roaming gangs

Greenwich has been experiencing gangs of roving marauders: parakeets. An article in last year's *WN* quoted the manager of a Greenwich Park as saying they were not currently a threat. But authorities in Madrid have had enough, and are to carry out a "humane cull."

A local resident said: "I do have some sympathy with Madrid. Greenwich Park is overrun by them sometimes." What do readers think?

Our MP's resignation

By now most residents will have had a letter from our MP for Greenwich & Woolwich Matt Pennycook explaining why he resigned from the Opposition frontbench as a Shadow Brexit Minister. He also gives reasons for his belief that the British people should have the final say on the issue, with the option of staying in the EU – an option he strongly favours.

Grungy round the edges?

Cancel your subscription to the *Financial Times* at once! The FT for Sept 28th/29th quoted a Hampton's International Land Registry report that Greenwich was facing a "lean, mean time."

Accepting that Maritime Greenwich is popular with buyers from the financial services sector (though "slightly grungy around the edges"), "the shine has come off the local property market."

In 2016, property prices in Greenwich were 8% higher than the London average. Now, the average

property price in Greenwich is £2,000 cheaper than the London average. This means a 5.4% slump in the last three years. But a one-bedroom flat near the Park may still cost you £450,000.

Ed: Readers please note: the suggestion is that Greenwich may be slightly grungy round the edges, No, not the financial services sector. Just in case that's what you inferred.....

St George's lecture series

The next lecture, by the Very Rvd Jeffrey John, Dean of St Albans Cathedral, is at 8.00pm on Thursday 28th November, and is entitled *Thank God for Equal Marriage*.

Whales in the Thames

Seen in the Thames at Woolwich: a humpback later killed after colliding with a ship. Ten days later, the body of a rare, 32-foot long fin whale was spotted near the pier at Gravesend. The Zoological Society of London is carrying out a post-mortem.

Wanted:

**A new co-editor!
The February edition of this popular local newspaper could be the last if we cannot find a new co-editor! If you have any interest in this rewarding job & would like to become part of a mutually supportive and friendly team please ring Neville on 8858 8489 to arrange an exploratory meeting to discuss what is involved.**

COMMUNITY

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r eporters: The community – that means you! Yes, you!

It's your community paper, and so you are all invited to contribute to it! Don't wait for a *WN* Staff Reporter to come along with an Official Photographer - the *WN* has neither!!! The best person to report on your event is YOU!

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Raising funds for Macmillan

Sunday 15th September was a perfect sunny day for our annual walk. Engineering works meant that we had to catch a bus to Charlton Station where we boarded the train to Erith.

From there, 17 intrepid walkers set out along the Green Chain Walk alongside the river towards Belevedere.

We turned inland at Riverside Resource Recovery, near Crossness Nature Reserve and had a welcome coffee/tea break at Starbucks in Thamesmead.

From there we walked through Bostal Woods, to Lesnes Abbey where we had a great view of Canary Wharf.

We enjoyed a sandwich lunch in the abbey ruins under the shade of the trees. Then some of us took the train from Abbey Wood back to Charlton. The rest of us continued onto Oxleas Woods and Shooters Hill, covering six miles in all. Our walk raised £421 for Macmillan. Many thanks to all who took part - and to those who sponsored the walkers.

Our Westcombe Society Macmillan Coffee Morning took place at Mycenae



The Mayor and Mrs Hayes enjoying a chat PHOTOS: Neville Grant

House on 27th September. As will be seen from the photos, it was very well attended. On offer: delicious sandwiches, and scones prepared with butter, jam and cream as well as a variety of homemade cakes. We were delighted to welcome the Mayor Cllr Mick Hayes and his wife Gillian.

Many people gave extra donations and our Coffee Morning made a record sum of £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Many thanks for all of you who came along and supported either one or both of our events, making a total donation of £1,421 to this very worthy cause.

And thanks too to all the volunteers who helped including Caroline and Robert Owens, Maureen & J-J Aune, June Baker, Tessa Cross, Jill Demilew, Christine Legg, Marilyn Little, Shirley Little, Joanne Lucas & Jenny O'Keefe



Letters

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

From: John Murphy Ormiston Road

In opposing the new Silvertown Tunnel (*WN*, October)), the Green Party once again show themselves as completely out of touch with ordinary Londoners who are trying to earn a living, house their families, and lead responsible lives.

Their alternative policies, set out in your lead story on the front page, show they have no idea how we ordinary people live.

Living less than a mile from the Blackwall Tunnel, daily I watch the traffic queuing along the Tunnel Approach on the A102 trying to struggle through the Victorian tunnel built in 1897. Well done to Greenwich Council and TfL for taking forward the new scheme which will provide some much-needed relief to the Blackwall Tunnel.

Having worked for a decade in the 1990s for the Highways Agency, which managed and maintained the Blackwall Tunnel, I can vouch for its vital importance to Londoners as an essential artery between north and south London.

Once built, the Silvertown Tunnel will ensure Londoners continue to travel safely and smoothly between both parts of our capital. Until then they will have to struggle daily to get through. No amount of unrealistic, impractical hand-wringing by the Greens will solve the daily problems which beset Londoners, trying to go about their daily lives.

From: Name and address supplied

I refer to the letter about Broadbridge Close in your September issue of the *WN*.

Surely, if the writer is so convinced that the trustees are making the changes in order to make more money, and therefore are removing residents so as to be able to rent out the flats commercially, and if the writer really think that the CEO is behaving badly towards the residents, isn't the correct place to take these concerns actually to the Charity Commission? Just a thought!

From: Christopher Peters Morden College

The slow moving traffic on Blackheath Hill is a public health disaster. The Blackheath Society would no doubt resist any road widening or on the sacred soil of the Heath. "Let them grind on" - to misquote Marie Antoinette.

From: Peter Greaves The Plantation

Aged 87, with a recent new hip, I went on the People's Vote march on Saturday.

At one point I was appropriately near the statue of Churchill at the corner of Parliament Square, and saw a man with a placard which read: "Never in the history of peacetime politics has so much damage been caused by so few to so many." Perhaps my favourite, carried by a little girl of about 10, was: "I am too young to vote, but I am not too young to care." Could be Greta!

I hope that now he is a back-bencher our MP will speak forcefully for a People's Vote.

(Another letter page 3 col 1.)

Drivers beware

Every Monday morning, the Mycenae House Local History Group group meets to hear talks on local history.

As they left at around midday on 23rd September, some members were startled by the ugly sound of a car turning round in Mycenae Road, and clattering off.

"It made an awful jarring noise!" said one eyewitness. "It sounded as though the exhaust pipe was falling off."

What happened on Mycenae Road that morning was an outrage: a silver Prius, a hybrid, had been parked in the road outside Mycenae House, and during the meeting, a gang of thieves had stolen the catalytic converter fitted to the exhaust.

Catalytic converters are fitted to all hybrid cars, including Toyota Prius and Lexus 400h, to break down harmful exhaust emissions such as hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides. Up to 80% of the gases are eliminated.

Exhaust fumes pass through a honeycomb of metal coated with precious metals rhodium and palladium. Thieves can make a killing by stealing the converters, and either selling them on, or extracting the precious metals – which are then sold back to the market.

On this occasion, the victim was a local resident who had been giving a talk on the history of the *Westcombe News* in Mycenae House.

"As soon as I started the engine and tried to move off, there was this awful noise," he said. "I knew at once what the trouble was."

The AA arrived an hour later and said the car was safe to drive the short distance home. According to the AA, thefts of catalytic converters are taking place over a very wide area.

The problem is increasing. *The Guardian* (September 21st) reported that last year there were 1,700 thefts. This year it has already risen to 3,000 and counting. As a result, there is a serious shortage of spare parts: many drivers face delays of weeks or months to have their vehicles repaired.

These thefts are pernicious, because drivers are in effect being punished for trying to mitigate vehicle pollution levels.

A gang typically consists of three people – a driver, a thief, and a minder who stands by to deter anyone from interfering. A theft can be effected in less than a minute.

So far, the *WN* has heard of two such thefts in the Westcombe Park area – and there may have been more.

So: watch out! There are thieves about

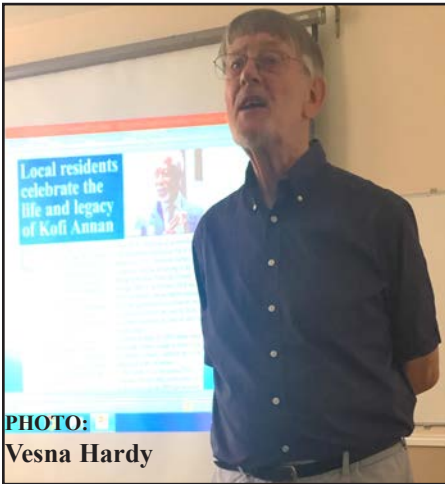


PHOTO:
Vesna Hardy

The victim giving his talk to the Mycenae House Local History Group

Correction

In Mary Mills' article on the Humber Road Neighbours in October's issue, an 'ongoing accumulator', should have been an 'orgone accumulator' – much more exotic, there are web pages about them. Apparently it's all down to Wilhelm Reich and energy. Sorry Mary - and Wilhelm.

LOCAL NEWS

BREXIT: ‘A Walk in the Park’

On September 26th, a number of local residents attended the book-launch of Stuart Wheeler’s *Winning Against the Odds: My Life in Gambling and Politics*. Readers may recall that Mr Wheeler is the millionaire who donated five million pounds to the Tory party before defecting to UKIP.

The book offers a fascinating glimpse into the gambling and champagne set.

The event, at the prestigious venue of 10, Carlton House Terrace, was attended by a large number of family, friends and figures in politics, including the Welsh UKIP MP Neil Hamilton, and Mr Johnson’s Special Adviser, Dominic Cummings.

**Quiller Publishing: £20.00*

The latter interviewed the author, who evinced his strong support for Brexit. About this, Mr Cummings produced his remark, much repeated on BBC News, that “finalising Brexit was like a walk in the park” compared with the referendum campaign which he master-minded.

The comment, cheered enthusiastically by many of those present, elicited one comment from a bystander: “If he doesn’t understand the complexity of leaving the EU, he shouldn’t be the Prime Minister’s special adviser.”

For those readers who enjoy a walk in the park, and who are VAT registered, we offer this guide (*below*) on getting ready for Brexit from HM Revenue and Customs.

‘Take Back Control’ The *WN*’s handy guide to business after Brexit; courtesy of HMRC

- * You should now have your **EORI** (Economic Registration and Identification) number that starts with “GB”.
- * Find out if you also need an **EU EORI** by reading our EORI mythbuster. Go to: **www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmrc-brexit-communications-resources**
- * Go online to find more step by step guides
 - for importers, go to **www.gov.uk/prepare-to-import-toUK-after-Brexit**. We recommend that you consider TSP (Transitional Simplified Procedures) to make your importing as easy as possible.
 - for exporters, go to **www.gov.uk/prepare-to-export-from-uk-after-brexit**. Focus on understanding what information you’ll need to give to the person you are selling to, so that they can complete the transaction
- * Keep up to date with the latest Brexit news including details of upcoming webinars we are running on importing and exporting with the EU after 31 October.
- * Register for your free email update service, go to www.gov.uk/hmrc/business-support and select “business help and education emails”, then select “Brexit”.

Easy-Peasy. Yes, a walk in the park is called for . . .

Don’t despair - help is at hand:

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Greenwich will be able to benefit from face-to-face Brexit preparation advice, on their doorstep, as Woolwich Centre Library was announced as one of the Mayor of London’s nine new London Growth Hub centres.

The Hubs offer advice and resources, and a series of events from Nov, 1st to help small business leaders prepare for the impact of Brexit on areas such as import

and export arrangements, EU staff, and changes to contracts and insurance.

Sign up to the Council’s business alert service to receive updates about workshops and drop-in sessions at: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/businessalerts
As the Brexit looms, businesses are bracing themselves for the possibility of a critical skills shortage. Morgan Jones, a Kent based recruitment firm is helping local businesses to prepare.

Letters (cont.)

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

From: Lystra Riches Lansdowne Lane
I hope I am not the only reader to be shocked by the contents of the open letter from an anonymous headteacher featured in October’s *WN*.

The author is entrusted with the responsibility for shaping very young minds but shows him/herself to be completely biased politically. All the instances of bad behaviour described – most of them pretty minor – were exhibited by MPs from the Conservative party. (Our headteacher needs to inform her charges that the term “Tory” is used as a term of abuse.)

No mention was made of the fact that the Labour Party at the moment is failing to deal with a shameful outbreak of antisemitism in its ranks – at least two Jewish MPs have been forced out of the party.

I think most people would consider this a bit more serious than Jacob Rees-Mogg lolling on a bench. The shadow chancellor, John McDonnell has publicly expressed a wish to go back in time and murder Margaret Thatcher – a bit more serious than criticising a style of dress which many people, including some Muslims, think emphasises the subjection of women.

More recently the same McDonnell recommended that the then Pensions Secretary, Esther McVeigh should “be lynched.” Not surprising sentiments, coming from someone who tells us that one of his heroes is history’s number one mass murderer: Chairman Mao – 60 million dead Chinese and counting. McDonnell even

urged MPs in the commons to read the Little Red Book.

And as far as lying is concerned, it has recently emerged that, while he was at the GLC, McDonnell lied so blatantly about fictitious “Tory cuts” that even “Red Ken” Livingstone had to sack him and stated that it made them “look like Goebbels.”

Headteacher, whoever you are, have the courage to identify yourself: If you’re intent on giving an unbalanced view of politics, brainwashing the children whose education you are responsible for, then the parents should be able to avoid your school.

Ed: The writer assured the *WN* that the comments were an exact reflection of what the children were saying. The letter was addressed to all politicians.

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Art Exhibition Althea Battams

The Blackheath Art Society are pleased to announce their next exhibition.

It will be held in the Upstairs Gallery at the Old Royal Naval College Visitor Centre, Cutty Sark Gardens, London SE10 9LW until Sunday 24th November, daily from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

The exhibition is free to enter and there will be a broad range of work including paintings, drawings, prints, jewellery and ceramics, all for sale at very reasonable prices.

Right: Greenwich Yacht Club Oil by Pat Colman



Rosie Kay’s New Ballet

Commonwealth Games Handover Ceremony choreographer Rosie Kay’s newest work takes ballet and tutus into the 21st century, using dance and science to create an exquisite performance of pleasure, beauty and finesse.

Rosie Kay’s *Fantasia* is at at Trinity Laban on Thursday 14th November at 7.30pm. Described by Sanjoy Roy in the *Guardian* as “a winning combination, cartoonishly full of skill, verve and vitality, and tickling your senses of both humour and wonder”, the performance breaks new ground.

The choreography is inspired by neuro-scientific research, and explores what it is that makes dance beautiful to watch and experience. Delve deeply into a soundtrack of Vivaldi, Purcell, Beethoven and Bach and revel in the vision of three bold female dancers as they discover love, emotion, loss and joy.

After the show, a Q & A session gives us the chance to learn more about Rosie Kay’s dance company, her artistic vision and the research behind the choreography.

Want to learn how to play bridge?

Bridge is a fascinating game, and once you start playing it, it is very easy to get “hooked”.

In a letter to a national newspaper, one correspondent wrote: “With reference to a recent letter about dealing with loneliness, I remember my mother saying that only the very brave enter their later years without being able to play bridge.”

Even better if you start young! Recently a 17-year-old joined the Blackheath Bridge Club, and is hooked already!

However, it’s never too late to learn, and luckily, there are opportunities for doing so here on our doorstep. Ivy McGeorge has been running Beginner’s classes on Tuesday evenings 7.30 - 9.30 in Mycenae House. These classes have started, but they would still be suitable for those seeking to refresh their memories of the game. Please ring Ivy on 8293 5354.

There is also a Refreshers’ Course starting at 10.00 am on Tuesday mornings in Mycenae House. Just drop in!

Fancy a game? See What’s On on p. 5 for the times of games on offer at Blackheath Bridge Club. Visitors welcome!

Mental health Suite closes

Pre-Admission Suite (PAS) at Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust has closed, following a Care Quality Commission focused inspection in August 2019.

Oxleas mental and community health trust’s PAS in Oxleas House, Woolwich was a waiting area for patients who had been assessed as requiring an inpatient admission but were not subject to the Mental Health Act. Patients stayed in a waiting area whilst staff tried to find a bed on a ward for them.

Patients were supposed to wait in the PAS no longer than 12 hours.

The CQC inspection expressed serious concerns about the PAS.

- The unit was intended for short stays of under 12 hours, but patients routinely stayed for longer – sometimes days longer, placing patients at risk of psychological harm. The facilities did not meet the needs of people waiting for long periods.
- Patients. privacy, dignity and comfort was compromised. The room only contained upright, non-reclining and armless chairs – no bedding was provided. There

were difficulties accessing food and drink.

- There was a lack of private space and limited access to shower facilities. There was no separation of male and female patients and no safe places for possessions.
- The PAS was a potentially overly restrictive environment for patients.

The PAS has now been closed. The *WN* has no information on what, if anything, will replace it.

The full report is on CQC’s website at: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/provider/RPG>

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FEATURES

The Success on our Doorstep *WN* Reporter



PHOTOS: Neville Grant

At the opening: The Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Mick Hayes, with the lady mayor, Gillian Hayes; Director Wendy Fidler, head teacher Rathi Bimal and a trustee Roger Patenall

On Tuesday October 1st, the Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Mike Hayes, came to cut the ceremonial ribbon to mark the official formal launch of the new MEfA Montessori Forest School/ Wellbeing Area on Westcombe Hill.

Montessori Education for Autism is a charity founded in 2009 to support children, young people and families with autism and special needs and to promote good mental health and well-being.

MEfA had a small “soft launch” for the local community in July to recognise the support received from the Neighbourhood Growth Fund. In attendance were Cllr Geoff Brighty, the chair of the Westcombe Society, and many past and present parents, children students – and teachers.

Also present were representatives of Mycenae House Community Centre, who have supported MEfA for many years and continues to host its successful conferences.

MEfA runs special classes for babies, toddlers and school-age children. It also supports parents and professionals in the community and internationally through the conferences and training programmes it organises.

In thanking the mayor, MEfA’s Director, Wendy Fidler, said: “Our approaches make a

positive impact, both locally and globally, by raising awareness about autism and other special needs. They also provide a range of tailored support and interventions which are otherwise not locally available.”

Contacts: Wendy Fidler MontDip (Hons)

FRSA MEWI MCMI MIOd AI DMS

MEfA Academic Director/Trustee.

Montessori Education for Autism (MEfA) is based on Montessori House, 135 Westcombe Hill, London SE3 7DP

Careline: + 44 (0) 208 305 2202

Wendy Direct: +44 (0) 7710 433 994



The centre is well-equipped with books and materials to suit all ages

What is autism?

Autism is a developmental delay characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication, and by challenges with imagination and behaviour. Parents usually notice signs during the first three years of their child's life. These signs often develop gradually, though some children with autism reach their developmental milestones at different stages.

For fuller information please visit the website of Montessori Education for Autism (MEfA)



Beautiful space available when needed

Jane’s Kitchen Stories: My favourite time of year



Autumn is here, decked out in its gaudy finery. This is my favourite time of year, inspiring me to cook warming soups, rich stews and cake filled with fruit and spice. It’s the kind of food you cook to nurture the people you love.

This morning was fine and clear, there was dew on the grass and a light mist hanging low on Blackheath. I was out early with the dog walkers and joggers, enjoying the riot of colour in the park. Returning home, I was ready for tea, sourdough toast and jam, but finding no jam in the house I embarked on making apple butter with the last of the fruit annually given by a friend. A sharp smell of apples poaching in juice and cider vinegar pervades the house as I sit down to plan what to cook for a Bonfire Night party. Something simple, seasonal and delicious is the order of the day – I want to cook ahead so that preparing supper doesn’t spoil an evening with friends.

It’s impossible to go wrong with great sausages, oven-cooked, served with crusty bread and an amazing salad you have an easy, crowd-pleasing supper. Go to a butcher for the best sausages, I use Drings where they make a fantastic selection with free range Blythburgh pork.

My best winter salad comes from a Leon book - roasted root vegetables

with a chermoula dressing. It’s easy to prepare and is packed with flavour and texture, a mainstay of many a party at mine.

These proportions are for 4 people, but it is easy to scale and left overs for your lunch box are always a pleasure. Take about a kilo of mixed winter vegetables, maybe carrots, pumpkin, celeriac and beetroot, but choose whatever you have in or like. Peel them, cut into chunks, then mix them in a bit of olive oil, salt and

Jane Bryan-Brown

pepper and roast for 40 minutes or until tender (pre heat your oven to 180C).

Meanwhile make your dressing, I usually tip all the ingredients into a clean jam jar and shake it to mix thoroughly.

Dry roast, then grind 2 teaspoons of cumin seeds, and a teaspoon each of fennel and coriander seeds, it only takes a minute or two in a frying pan.

Mix them with a finely chopped shallot, a red chilli (deseeded/ chopped), 3 tablespoons of olive oil, ½ lemon juiced, a tablespoon of red wine vinegar, a clove of crushed garlic, 2 teaspoons of smoked paprika, a teaspoon brown sugar and a pinch of cinnamon.

Season to taste, pour over the hot vegetables then leave them to cool, just before you serve them, mix in some salad leaves, add some crumbled feta and perhaps a few toasted seeds.

Fireworks may be fun – but not for pets . . .

With the fireworks season fast approaching, pet owners and animal keepers are being encouraged by vets to start preparing now to prevent possible injury and distress to their pets and livestock during traditional dates such as Bonfire Night, Diwali or New Year’s Eve.

At up to 150 decibels, fireworks can be as loud as a jet engine and, with many animals particularly sensitive to noise, this can be a traumatic and upsetting time of the year for them.

In a survey carried out by the British Veterinary Association (BVA) last December, around one in 14 vets across the country reported seeing animals with firework-related injuries in 2018.

Equine vets were significantly more likely to report such cases, with almost one in five last year seeing firework injuries to horses and ponies

By far the most commonly reported cases were self injuries caused by fireworks-related anxiety: for example, a dog who tried to escape from its kennel and in the process pulled out all of its front teeth, including the canines

In another case, a horse suffered a fractured splint bone as it bolted from its field.

The BVA is encouraging pet owners and livestock keepers to consult with their vet as far in advance as possible to discuss management and treatment options if their animals get severely distressed by fireworks or other noises.

A phobia of fireworks can be effectively treated with appropriate behaviour-modification techniques, which can achieve long-term success with professional input and owner commitment and patience.

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WHAT'S ON



Arts

THE ARTS SOCIETY, BLACKHEATH FROM GARBO TO GARLAND: THE MAGICAL ART OF HOLLYWOOD Dr Geri Parlbay Thursday 28 November Lights, camera, action! Inside stories of the art and artifice of the early decades of Hollywood. We follow the work of stills photographers, costumiers, publicists and the actors and movie moguls who made it all happen. 2.00pm. with tea and coffee, and lectures at 2.30. Venue is St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park Blackheath Visitors welcome, please pay on the door.

THE ARTS SOCIETY GREENWICH Mon. 11th Nov. Jo Banham talks on THE ROARING TWENTIES: ART, DESIGN AND HIGH SOCIETY : a loud and boisterous decade, marked by novelty, modernity and huge social, technological, and economic change following the dark days of the Great War. Wine available from 7.15pm. Lecture starts promptly at 7.45pm. Guests: £10 at the door – please contact nancybet-telley@hotmail.co.uk to reserve a place. Greenwich University, King William Court, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich SE10 9LS.

LIFE DRAWINGS at Mycenae House Every Thursday 7.00 - 9.00 pm £15.00 per session under the guidance of Jon. No. need to book. Info: Tel Jon on 07435 569963 **MYCENAE HOUSE Nov. - December THE RENAISSANCE WORKSHOP** Exhibition of a wide range of work by pupils from the Life Drawing classes held at Mycenae House by Jon Long. email: jonathancndlong@gmail.com

theatre

THE GREENWICH THEATRE, Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES Box Office: 8858 7755
Tues 29th Oct - Fri. 1st Nov.: SHAKESPEARE SCHOOLS FESTIVAL 7.00 pm £10.95/concs. £8
Sat 2nd -Sun 3rd Nov: GETTING THE THIRD DEGREE: the discrimination battle in football.
Sat 2nd Nov. 7.30 MATT PARKER: HUMBLE PI. Hilarious occasions when maths meets comedy . Hate maths? No more! £16.00 Concs. £13.50
Wed 6th - Fri 8th Nov. 7.30. Matinee Thurs. 2.30pm CURTAIN'D SLEEP Why do Ophelia and Lady Macbeth die off-stage? Stunning fusion of movement with Shakespeare's words combined with Seth Lakeman's atmospheric folk music.
Fri 8th - Sun 10th Nov. 7.30 Sat. Matinee 2.30pm LEST WE FORGET A unique take on WW1. £13.00



SLEEPING BEAUTY
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SUN 17th. Nov 10:30 - 4.45pm
BLACKHEATH CHRISTMAS FAIR
BLACKHEATH HALLS

The Friends of Age Exchange much loved fair is back for its seventh year, bringing together specially selected crafters and seasonal fun.

The fair is again in the beautifully refurbished Great Hall with 40 stallholders with a delightful range of gifts for all ages. Entrance is £3.50 but free to Friends of Age Exchange and children under 16.

coMMunitY

AGE EXCHANGE

Local artist Fiona Bell-Currie has generously donated her time and skill to create another beautiful Christmas card for Age Exchange. Available in packs of five at the Exchange from October.

Christmas Raffle in aid of Age Exchange: many wonderful prizes! Tickets on sale from Fri. 1st Nov. **Christmas Lunch** Wed 3rd December 12.30-3.30 pm at the Clarendon Hotel. Book before 27th Nov! **BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE** Meets first Wednesday of every month, doors open at 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Sunfields Methodist Church on Old Dover Road **BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB** duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon & Thurs 7.15pm and on Wed at 1.15pm. Newcomers welcome.

Would you like to learn this fascinating game? Bridge lessons Tuesday evenings 7.30 to 9.30 at Mycenae House, Mycenae Road. For more details, please contact Ivy McGeorge on 020 8293 5354 or ivymcgeorge@hotmail.co.uk

CHARLTON HOUSE www.charltonhouse
0208 856 3001 Mulberry Tea Rooms
Jacobean Entrance Hall Mon-Fri 9am- 4pm
Lunchtime concert every Friday 1.00pm – 2.00pm
SUNDAYS AT SUNFIELDS at Sunfields Methodist Church 95 Old Dover Road, Blackheath SE3 8SJ
1.00 - 4.00 pm First Sunday of each month. ALL older people and their carers are welcome to join us for lunch and lighthearted activities, including reminiscence, arts and music. We are experienced in supporting those who may have extra needs due to health conditions like arthritis, dementia or strokes etc. Carers also invited. Sundays at Sunfields is provided free; please do just come along – there is no need to book. FREE

GLOBAL FUSION MUSIC & ARTS
Events at the Earl of Chatham Pub, Woolwich
Sun Nov 3rd Blues Night 7.30 - 10.00pm Free
Thurs 19th Nov. Poetry, Spoken Word & Music Night 7.30 - 10.00pm Free

spoKen Word

BLACKHEATH HALLS

Nov. 4th Rob Beckett & Romesh Ranganathan and friends perform for a special night in aid of the Matt Palmer Trust, a mental health charity
POETRY EVENING WED 13 NOV 8.00pm
Blake Morrison and Graham High and other local poets present a selection of their poetry. £12.00 including glass of wine
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
12th November Pieter Van der Merwe A GREAT LIGHT INN THE EAST (END): GAS AND THE ROYALTY THEATRE, STEPNEY 1816 This will be held in the Studio in Age Exchange
MYCENAE HOUSE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP
Meeting every Monday morning at 10.00am. For membership enquiries, please ring 8313 3384 or 8852 6821
BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
November 15th SEEING WITH ATOMS - SOME TECHNIQUES IN MICROSCOPY Prof Paul Dastoor, Cavendish Laboratory
FRIDAY LECTURES AT 7.45pm usually on the THIRD FRIDAY of every month from September to May, unless otherwise indicated, in Mycenae House Visitors are welcome at all meetings, and are requested to donate £3 to the Society.

WANTED!

More volunteers to distribute the *WN* – and to help with the Westcombe Society's community events. We have recently lost two of our wonderful *WN* deliverers, who have moved away, so more volunteers are more than welcome. Please phone 8853 2756 if you would like to help.

MYcenAe House live events: noveMber

MYCENAE HOUSE, 90 Mycenae Road SE3 7SE
Fri 1st Nov 7.30pm - Clive Carroll. Acoustic guitar phenomenon performing live with friends. £16.
Fri 8th Nov 8pm - JazzNights. Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.
Thurs 14th Nov 4pm - Bach To Baby. Classical Concert for families. £10.
Fri 22nd Nov 7.30pm - Southern Aces. Sonic Promotions presents good time Soul & R&B. £10.
Thurs 28th Nov 2-4pm - Daytime Disco for people with disabilities. Dance the afternoon away with live DJ's playing great tunes! £2/carers free.
Fri 29th Nov 7.30pm - Cajun Night. Global Fusion Music & Arts present cajun live music, dance and food. £12.
Fri 6th Dec 7.30pm - Robert Vincent. One of the UK's top Americana artists, supported by The Kimberleys. £16..
For further information visit www.mycenaehouse.co.uk

MID-SUMMER OPERA

Fri. Nov 22nd 7.00pm & Sun. Nov. 24th at 5.30 pm SE London-based Midsummer Opera presents semi-staged performances of Poulenc's
DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES
sung in French at St John's Waterloo SE1 8TY. Soloists Sophie Boyer, Marie Elizabeth Seager and Zoe South and the Chorus & Orchestra of Midsummer Opera will be conducted by David Roblou.
Tickets in advance £24 (£22 concs) from 020 7652 0070 or online at Midsummer Opera: Performance Diary

MUSIC AT THE HALLS

Box Office 020 8463 0100
FRI 01 NOV 7.30pm AHMED DICKINSON CARDENAS GUITAR Award winning Cuban guitarist Ahmed Dickinson Cardenas
Sun 3rd Nov. 2.30pm BLACKHEATH HALLS ORCHESTRA COURSE Come and join our impressive Blackheath Halls Orchestra
SUN 3rd Nov. 3.00pm KATHLEEN FERRIER: WHATTALIFE! A new one-woman play with music. The story of the great English contralto.
Mon 4th Nov 10.00am MATTHEW TAYLOR'S APPRECIATION COURSE: DVORAK
MON 4th NOV 13:10h RECITAL: ANNA SZALUCKA PIANO: a prize-winning Polish pianist. Free, retiring collection for the Halls.
TUE 12 Nov 13:30h AUTUMN TEA DANCES
Come and spend a magical afternoon in the friendly atmosphere of a Blackheath Halls tea dance. £7.00 inc light refreshment
TUE 12 Nov 7.30pm BEATS IN THE BAR
Featuring guest artists alongside student bands
MON 04 NOV 7.30pm BLACKHEATH GOES GOSPEL 2019: COURSE continues
THU 14 NOV 19:00h TRINITY LABAN CHORUS PRESENTS: A NIGHT AT THE OPERA
Classics from the opera repertoire. £5.00
SAT 16 NOV 7.30pm BLACKHEATH HALLS ORCHESTRA: wonderful classical pieces £13 | £11 conc. | £7 under 12s
Mon 18th Nov, Tues 19th & Wed 20th 6.30pm ROYAL GREENWICH INSTRUMENTAL GALA
The Royal Greenwich Music Hub offers a spectacular showcase of the wealth of musical talent within the Borough. £7 | £6 conc. | £5 under 12s
MON 25 NOV 1.10pm LUNCHTIME RECITAL: NATASHA SACHSENMEIER VIOLIN & ALISSA FIRSOVA PIANO Free, but a retiring collection for Blackheath Halls
MON 25 NOV 19:30h CHRISTMAS CHORUS COURSE Come and join us to sing some Musical Theatre classics at our Blackheath Halls Christmas concert. £60 | £54 (concs)
TUE 26 Nov 7.30pm BEATS IN THE BAR
SAT 30 Nov 3.00pm A FESTIVE FAMILY SING-A-LONG An afternoon of festive singing for the whole family to join in and enjoy! £9 adult | £6 under 16s

THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF EARLY MUSIC BLACKHEATH HALLS

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Sat 23 Nov. 3.00pm CARDBOARD CARNIVAL
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FEATURES

Simon Black of English Heritage looks at **Eltham Palace: The Courtaulds**

“Eltham has been done up by the Stephen Courtaulds who received me. The house is quite a modern one built by them, but the old Hall dating from the 14th century [sic] has been restored beautifully. We went all over the house and the moat garden and had tea in the Hall. A charming visit.” – Queen Mary, writing about a visit to Eltham Palace on 8th June 1938

But if Queen Mary had visited Eltham Palace just a few years earlier, she would have found a very different scene. As we discovered in Part 1 (*WN*, Sept.), the once magnificent royal palace complex and hunting lodge favoured by medieval and Tudor monarchs had declined into a sad and neglected ruin, overlooked by the shell of the 15th century Great Hall.

Fortunately for Queen Mary and all of us, the site was rediscovered in 1933 by the wealthy society couple Stephen and Virginia (‘Ginie’) Courtauld. They wanted a substantial semi-rural property within easy reach of central London.

Two young architects – John Seeley and Paul Paget – were appointed to design a new house boasting an ultra-modern design and the latest technology, adjoining a sympathetically restored Great Hall. Between 1933 and 1936, Seeley and Paget set about their commission, appointing leading craftsmen and interior designers from around the world to create a range of lavish art-deco inspired interiors and outstanding garden landscapes.

Stephen’s considerable fortune came

from the family firm – the Courtaulds textiles and chemicals company. By nature, Stephen was quiet, reserved and cautious. Deeply affected by his experiences as an officer in World War I, he was described as ‘thinking much and saying little’.

His great passion was art – his private collection included works by Bellini, Tintoretto, Veronese and Mantegna. He was also a director of Ealing Studios in the era of the classic Ealing Comedies: studio boss Michael Balcon called Stephen his ‘Rock of Gibraltar’.

The attraction of opposites

Stephen’s marriage to Ginie was by all accounts an attraction of opposites. She is reputed to have had a lively Italian temperament: vivacious, unconventional, impulsive, extrovert and chic. She also had a snake tattoo running up her right leg, supposedly the result of a teenage dare.

The Courtaulds moved into Eltham Palace in 1936, although they always called it Eltham Hall to avoid their mail being sent to the local Palace cinema. The new house included 11 bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms – at the time a new and luxurious concept. Weekend parties were lavish affairs for a glamorous set drawn from the worlds of film, music and politics. When guests crowded into the restored Great Hall for dancing, the musicians in the Minstrel’s Gallery came from the best dance bands of the era, such as Ambrose and Lew Stone.

The Courtaulds did not have children, but they adopted and brought up two of Ginie’s nephews: Peter and Paul. Animals also played a big part in their lives, and the most famous animal resident at Eltham was undoubtedly Mah-Jongg the Madagascan ring-tailed lemur. Bought from Harrods as a wedding gift from Stephen to Ginie in 1923, ‘Jonggy’ lived with the family for the next 15 years.

Much loved by the Courtaulds, he was less popular with guests due to his habit of biting them under the dinner table.

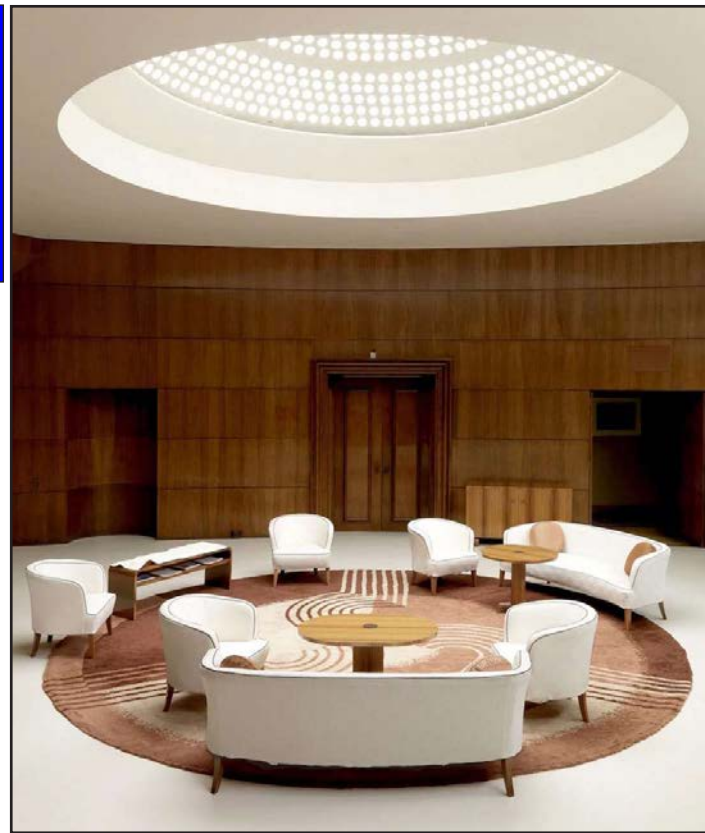
World War II

The Courtaulds moved into their new home in 1936, but their time at Eltham was dominated first by the threat and then the reality of a world at war. Ginie was a stalwart of the local Women’s Voluntary Service, while Stephen served with the Civil Defence. In September 1940, he fought to extinguish fires caused by incendiary bombs lodged in the roof of the Great Hall. Running such a complex house in wartime without staff was difficult, and Ginie was deeply affected by the death of one of their nephews serving in the Far East. As a result, the Courtaulds left Eltham in 1944 and never returned. They lived briefly in Scotland before settling in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Stephen died in 1967 and Ginie in 1972.

From 1945 to 1992, Eltham Palace became the home of the Royal Army Education Corps.

English Heritage

When the army moved out, English Heritage took over and restored Eltham



The impressive Entrance Hall: A step back in time

Palace to its 1930s glory. Visitors today can imagine they are guests of the Courtaulds, stepping into the breathtaking Swedish-designed Entrance Hall which has appeared in films and TV series from *Poirot* and *Marple* to *The Crown*.

Other highlights include the stunning art-deco dining room with its shimmering ceiling of brushed aluminium leaf, and Ginie’s outrageous bathroom featuring gold mosaic tiles, onyx fittings and a gold lion’s head tap.

The Courtaulds were also very keen gardeners, and visitors can enjoy walking around one of London’s finest 1930s gardens, including a rock garden, a moat walk, formal rose garden and a progression of garden rooms similar to contemporary designs at Sissinghurst and Great Dixter.

Today’s Eltham Palace is a really extraordinary site – a time-travelling synthesis of medieval majesty and art-deco elegance. After all, where else in the world can you step from the 1470’s into the 1930’s and back again?

Please visit the English Heritage website for times, prices and information to help plan your visit.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/eltham-palace-and-gardens

This stunning art-deco dining room has often been featured in films and TV series such as *Poirot*, and *The Crown*



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ENVIRONMENT



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

Climate crisis: The Lie of the Land



Tim Jackson, Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Surrey and Director of the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity, has made a public statement about the way we have been using land contributes to climate change. He said:

“Our future depends on the land: our own health and that of the land are inextricably intertwined. So the recent special report from the IPCC on climate change and land ought to be a profound wake-up call for somnambulant politicians.

“It documents the enormous impacts that human activity and climate change has had on the land in recent decades: soil erosion, water scarcity, desertification, declining yields and wildfire damage. The outcome is very alarming: the real risk of serious and worsening food insecurity.

“As our work on the RSA’s Food, Farming and Countryside Commission recently revealed, society’s relationship with the land has been profoundly broken

in the last 70 years. Driven by poor policy and perverse incentives, the farming and food system has become one of the main drivers of human and ecosystem crisis.

“The food and agriculture system accounts for a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions overall. None of this is inevitable. Our recommendations for the UK included a ten-year transition plan for sustainable farming, a comprehensive land-use strategy and a National Agro-ecology Development Bank to facilitate investment in our most vital natural asset: the land that nourishes and sustains us.”

The impact on wildlife is also serious. More than a quarter of mammals are facing extinction, according to a detailed and devastating report on the state of the natural world in the UK: the causes: climate heating, and agricultural practices. The report also said one in seven species are threatened with extinction, and 41% of species studied have experienced decline since 1970.



PHOTO: Anne Raynsford

One of our readers in Lewisham, Anne Raynsford, sent in this photo asking “Do they normally harvest hay on Blackheath?” Good to see the heath being put to productive use as well as being a local treasure.

The Real Point of Education

The point of trying to get educated is to cultivate mental grip. We all need this urgently today because the total environment is getting more and more complicated by the minute. ‘Grip’ means having the basics of keen observation, avoiding bias, cool abstraction, and awareness of the pitfalls of partial knowledge. These disciplines are not motivated by a thirst to know more, or to get more marks in a memory test. They are about a determination to sort it out, so that the whole “makes sense” and provides a source of confidence. Today schools on the whole are not doing this, or even trying to do this: they are mostly trying to maximise marks in a test or exam. So children urgently need to be helped at home to get this get this kind of approach and grip.

See: www.philosophyforeducation.moonfruit.com



Keep Wildlife In The Wild

International wildlife charity Born Free has announced the launch of its new educational ‘Great Debate’ initiative and is now calling out to schools across the UK to get involved.

Born Free’s Great Debate is designed to provide teachers with the tools to engage their students in meaningful debates about key wildlife or environmental topics that will affect their future. It will not only allow students to gain knowledge about the debate topic, but also offer them skills that will help them to research, frame and deliver an argument while becoming responsible citizens, reducing their impact on biodiversity and the environment.

“Future generations will have the tremendous responsibility of protecting our planet from a catastrophic decline in wildlife from which our ecosystem may never recover,” explains Laura Gosset, Head of Education at Born Free.”

Each academic year Born Free’s Great Debate will focus on different topics, with 2019’s launch topic the uses and abuses of

plastic.

Science and Wildlife TV Presenter Liz Bonnin, who is backing Born Free’s Great Debate, said:

“The full impact of plastics on our environment is only just beginning to be realised. I have seen Shearwater chicks bringing up plastics from their stomachs, and seals entangled in fishing nets. I have also seen how corals are dying because plastic is delivering toxic loads of bacteria to an already stressed ecosystem, damaged by toxic chemicals. The more I learn about the scale of this problem the more I know that it’s important to act now, before it’s too late.”

Born Free’s education team is providing schools with five FREE one-hour lesson plans, activities and resources, with key curriculum links for KS2, KS3 and KS4. **For more information or to download the resources, schools should visit www.born-free.org.uk/great-debate, email the education team at greatdebate@bornfree.org.uk or call Laura Gosset, on 01403 240170.**

Did you know . . . ? Ann Hill

Did you know that there is now a Workshop at the Recycling Centre in Nathan Way in Thamesmead to bring old items back to life?

This timely initiative is organised by Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice in collaboration with the Royal Borough of Greenwich. It’s run by a fantastic team (mainly volunteers) who give visitors to the Recycling Centre the opportunity to donate items for ‘repurposing’.

The team processes a huge range of items.... unwanted furniture, fireplaces, doors, flooring, timber, pallets, tools, bikes, lighting ... a seemingly endless list. However, sofas are accepted only if they have a fire retardant tag.

The team then get to work until they end up with something they are really proud of that they either put on display at the Repurpose shop at the Recycling

Centre or at one of the Hospice’s shops ready for sale, such as at their shop in the Blackheath Standard. This raises money for the Hospice.

If you would like to get involved in mending, painting, wiring, sanding, lifting, moving, sewing, driving, tea making, laughing, chatting, and generally being helpful, then why not call 020 8311 6680, or contact repurposethat.org.

And if you want to develop your own up-cycling skills there are training workshops so you too can learn the skills needed to produce your own creations.

Recent workshops include furniture painting and up-cycling lamps.

All materials and equipment are provided and the sessions are held at the Repurpose Workshop. You never know...you may become the next ‘Money for Nothing’ celebrity!

Travel notes by Christopher Peters

One thing the travelling public really depend on is reliable information. Not available on Deptford station, however, where both sets of timetable boards at concourse level are in the wrong order. This has happened at Blackheath station too, sometimes, so it may be the same elsewhere too. The booking clerk showed no interest in getting them switched.

On the bright side, London Bridge station has won an architectural award and today looks fine! The directors of the old London and Greenwich Railway must be looking down with some pride.

The electric charging point in Blackheath Post Office car park is

“empty” – yet again. It can’t be seen from the Village so in view of the importance of cleaner engines, it needs to be more clearly sign-posted – and, of course, sorted.

Every day, residents, and drivers, have to put up with very slow traffic on the A2 on Blackheath Hill A2 compounded by converging traffic from side roads converging side roads.

Do the Department of Transport or the GLA have any desire to improve matters in the light of the costs generated in terms of pollution for local residents and economic loss? A problem replicated elsewhere, including of course on the Blackwall Tunnel approach roads.

MARKET PLACE

please send ads for the Market place with pay-
ment by the 10th day of the preceding month to:
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