

# Westcombe NEWS

Free to 3800 homes, in libraries and some shops

March 2020 No.2



*‘Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see’ -Mark Twain*

## GREENWICH PARK REVEALED



As reported in the February issue of the Westcombe News the Royal Parks charity has secured a £4.5m grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund for the above project. Made possible by National Lottery players, it will help to protect and future-proof the incomparable heritage site, which is eroding under the pressure of a growing population.

The Royal Parks and other funding partners will also contribute to this project, equating to a total investment of £10.5 million.

A World Heritage site, 590-year old Greenwich Park receives millions of visitors a year and this is set to increase dramatically by 2026. Much of the new housing around the borough will only have limited access to green space, making the park even more of a crucial asset in the heart of the city.

The park covers 183 acres and is the oldest enclosed Royal park. The Grade I listed landscape is a unique mix of stunning gardens, historic buildings and monuments, and is a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation with an abundant array of wildlife.

There are several challenges currently facing the park, including the increase in visitor footfall, which is eroding the

landscape. This is particularly true of the area around the famous General Wolfe statue next to the Royal Observatory. The park also faces new tree pests and diseases, which are damaging the historic tree avenues, and inadequate public facilities need urgent attention.

‘Greenwich Park Revealed’ will cater for a growing and diverse local population and will future-proof the ancient park for generations to come. It will:

- Return the park’s eroded historic landscape to its 17th century glory. This includes reinstating The Grand Ascent and parterre banks which frame the dramatic view from the Queens House, and replanting diseased and dying sections of the magnificent historic tree avenues.

- Build a state-of the art, eco-friendly Learning Centre in an underused service yard, generating completely new green space for public use, overlooking the historic deer park. The Learning Centre will provide a new community hub, offering learning and wellbeing experiences through training, learning, volunteering, events and activities, with paid horticulture pre-apprenticeships and work experience for local students. It will incorporate a new café, inclusive public toilets, a meeting place and an information point for park users.

- Provide better access across the park for people with disabilities, including investment in a mobility scheme to help people visit different areas of the park.

- Enhance the park for wildlife by improving the Old Wilderness with better views of the deer and a new wildlife pond, and by planting scrub for nesting birds and conserving wild grasslands.

- Enhance the Flower Garden with wildlife-friendly planting in keeping with its formal, Edwardian design, improving the lake and adding natural play features for children.

- Improve sustainability through increased recycling, reconnecting historic fountains with drinking water to discourage bottled water use, and using ground water to irrigate trees and improve water quality in the lakes.

- Create new interpretation to unveil the dramatic story of London's most historic park.

Graham Dear, Park Manager, said: “Greenwich Park’s incredible history and stunning natural environment is right on the doorstep for millions of people. The much-loved park provides a tranquil green oasis where people can relax, get away from the hustle and bustle of densely populated South East London and delve into the park’s rich history.

## ITS BEEN A PLEASURE...

...and a great privilege to have acted as editor of the Westcombe News for over 18 years. I am so thankful for the many good people of Westcombe Park - and beyond - who have given their help and support.

I would single out particularly Marilyn Little, tireless chair of the Westcombe Society, and Myles Dove, distribution manager for so many years, and Emily Norton, who took over from Myles, and has offered technical support; and also to Dave Mayes, our ever- helpful printer.

I should also mention other members of the team - Maggie Gravelle, environment editor, Gavin Hose, our new advertising manager, Annie Grey, our meticulous proof reader, and our countless street-deliverers.

Not forgetting my daughter Tara, who helped me out at my very nervous beginning, and my wife Jane, who has stood in as a very supportive



Neville Grant, the outgoing WN Editor

PA. But so many others - contributors, advertisers, and of course, readers. Yes, thank you for reading it, if you are. I shall miss the WN of course, and am suffering from withdrawal symptoms; but I hope to write the occasional scurrilous, and possibly libellous, piece from time to time, if the new editor dares publish it!

\*\*\*\*\*

Neville has been editor for over 18 years, devoting a great deal of his time to the production of the paper. He has been instrumental in achieving the Walter Bor media award for local papers, twice, against very strong competition from the London area.

He provided content on both national and local issues which are of interest or importance to our community and has never been afraid of putting forward a controversial view. Always well-informed, he set a high journalistic standard and I feel sure that he will continue to supply the paper with articles and features.

On behalf of the Westcombe Society and all our Readers, Advertisers and contributors ‘Thank You Neville’. -Marilyn Little

A huge thankyou to Neville for making the paper so interesting for so many years. I personally would also like to thank him for his part in the distribution of the paper. As well as being an editor who is helpful to others such as myself and the WS Environment committee in what he put in the paper for us he also helps distribute the paper and will continue to do so. His contribution is much appreciated.

-Emily Norton Westcombe Society Environment Committee

\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you Neville for your many years as Editor of the Westcombe News. It’s a super paper and I read it from cover to cover. What dedication and skill to produce a monthly gem for our community.....and unpaid! We have been very fortunate to have you in our midst, beaver away filling eight large pages to tight deadlines -Ann Hill, Beaconsfield Road

## FANZONE UPDATE and LICENSING APPLICATION

The Planning Board 12/2/20 was well attended. Objections were heard from Amenity Societies and groups and residents. Concerns and issues were raised regarding the disruption and overcrowding such large numbers could cause on the Town Centre and surrounding areas, parking and the ability of public transport to cope. Many of these concerns were

shared by Board members and planning conditions had been raised to ensure they were addressed. Despite this lack of detail the Planning Board approved the plans for the FanZone by nine votes to one feeling that the benefits to the residents of the borough as a whole outweighed the concerns.

The Westcombe Society has also objected to the Licensing Application for the

event in similar terms to the Planning Application. This will be heard by the Licensing Sub Committee on Friday 6th March 2020 at 11am.

Further details are available on the Westcombe Society website at [www.westcombesociety.org](http://www.westcombesociety.org)  
- Marilyn Little

## < < Newsbriefs > >

### Another convenience closing...

Lloyds Bank, Blackheath branch will be closing on 14 May due to ‘the changing ways customers choose to bank with us’.

### Painted Hall turns blue...

History was created at the Painted Hall in Greenwich when Prime Minister Johnson outlined his government's policies on trade before a distinguished group of ambassadors and the press. The WN was not invited in order to minimise difficult questions.

### Spoiler Alert...

January, local residents were horrified to see offensive graffiti in the Standard area, and also in Charlton. Well done, the Council, for very promptly cleaning it off. If you see any graffiti which is offensive to groups within our community please report via CrimeStoppers, 101 (999 if actually happening) or to the Council direct via <https://fix.royalgreenwich.gov.uk> with the postcode of the street if possible.

### Looking after our own...

The Royal Parks, the charity which manages the 5,000 acres of London’s eight Royal Parks, including Greenwich Park are delighted to announce that their Mission: Invertebrate project has received funding for a fourth year for 2020.

### Victims Remembered...

On 27th January, many people attended a ceremony of remembrance at Woolwich Town Hall to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-

Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp, and the 25th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia.

In addition to remembering the millions of victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, the event provided an opportunity to remember the victims of the subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur.

The free event was open to all Royal Greenwich residents and included a moving range of readings and contributions by pupils from local schools.



# COMMUNITY

## WESTCOMBE NEWS

### ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

**Anne Williams**, Editor  
wnews@westcombesociety.org

### ALL MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:

**wnews@westcombesociety.org**

**Deadline for the April issue:** 14th March 2020

**Environment Editor:** Maggie Gravelle

**Sub-editor:** Annie Grey

**Roving reporter:** Vivienne Raper

**Reporters:** The community – that means you!

### ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**Emily Norton** All queries and comments to: 020 8853 2756  
environment@westcombesociety.org

**DISTRIBUTION Emily Norton and volunteers.** More volunteer distributors needed, please phone 020 8853 2756

### ADVERTISING MANAGER

**Gavin Hose**, 26 Webb Road, SE3 7PL

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**Contact the Westcombe Society:**

**WestcombeNews@egroups.com**

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**To access back-numbers (in colour) go to:** [www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/](http://www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/) **Westcombe Society's Blog:** <http://westcombe.blogspot.com>

*Front page quote by - Doug Larson*

**Do you have a Fitbit?**

**Are you keen to 'up' your step count?**

**Why not take on a Westcombe News delivery? Some rounds even have steps!**

**Only around half an hour 10 times a year I'm afraid, but you are doing your 'bit' for the community at a time that suits you!**

**Call 020 8853 2756 for more info**

### WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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

**Name**.....

**Address**.....

.....

**Tel**.....

**Email:** .....

*Please enclose payment as appropriate:*

<b>Family Membership</b>	<b>£12</b>	<b>[ ]</b>
<b>Individual Membership</b>	<b>£8</b>	<b>[ ]</b>
<b>Senior Citizens/unwaged</b>	<b>£4</b>	<b>[ ]</b>

### Membership cards

**A membership card is only issued at the time you join the Westcombe Society, and should be retained.**

**Should you require a replacement card, please contact the Membership Secretary, as above.**



**F**riends of Mycenae Gardens would like to invite you to their next Annual General Meeting on 25 March 2020 at 7.30pm at the Greenwich Steiner School (the first building on the right, as you approach the gardens of Mycenae House from Mycenae Road).

If you are not already a member, you can join on the day or online at mycenae-gardens.org.uk. New members bring new ideas and new perspectives, which are always welcome. For example:

-How should we balance use of the gardens with conservation?

-What more should we do to encourage wildlife, and to enable people to observe and appreciate it?

-Should we support the proposal to introduce beehives? Or play equipment?

An illustrated talk by Rich Sylvester (<http://richstories.mayfirst.org>) ends the evening. Rich will cast the lights and shadows of history and folklore to illuminate our understanding of the gardens, and will draw on a range of experiences elsewhere in the borough to suggest practical ways for people of all ages to engage with the preservation and enhancement of Mycenae Gardens and the Dell.

## MARCH EVENTS AT ST GEORGE'S

**Thurs 5 March 8:00 pm COMMUNITY LECTURE SERIES 'The Palestine Exploration Fund: Mapping, Exploring, and Digging the Holy Land in the 19th and 20th centuries.** Talk given by Ms Felicity Cobbing, Chief Executive & Curator of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The event is free and open to the public. Refreshments served. A voluntary retiring collection will be taken.

**Thurs, 19 March 7:30 pm SPIRITUAL FILM NIGHT - Dead Poets Society (1989)** Robin Williams stars as a teacher of literature in a boys' school, who instils in his students a love of poetry and more. Wine, popcorn and non-alcoholic drinks available served by the Social Committee. There is discussion afterwards. Free and open to the public.



Team Rector Margaret Cave receives charity cheque for our Chairman

## THANK YOU, PARTY STYLE

**V**olunteers and members are the beating heart of The Westcombe Society; without their consistent giving of time, talent and enthusiasm, the Society couldn't be such a vibrant presence in the local community. This year's party to celebrate their unflagging spirit was a lively affair at Mycenae House with Cecilia the harpist adding her musical magic to the fun.

Chairman Marilyn Little also had pleasure in presenting a cheque for £1300 to Team Rector Margaret Cave on behalf of the Greenwich Winter Night shelter, the Westcombe Society's charity of 2019. If you'd like to get involved we'd love to hear from you. Maybe you like organising events, or contributing to the local paper, or raising money for charities in the area. There's plenty to do and new friends to make. Call the Westcombe Society on 020 8853 1312.

*-Diane Blackwell*

The Westcombe Society is still open to receiving applications for their charity of the year 2020.

Applications should be made by the end of March for the Society to consider. The Charity of the Year is then ratified by members at the AGM in May.

**Send your application stating how any funds would be spent to [info@westcombesociety.org](mailto:info@westcombesociety.org).**



## Letters

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

**From: Pat Preston, The Keep, Blackheath**

I often read the WN in Age Exchange here in Blackheath. Thank you for a good read all these years.

The planning and setting up of the UEFA 2020 Fanzone in Greenwich Park would take up to a month, making the Queen's Field unavailable to ordinary park users. What is the justification for this?

The plan would lead to congestion on the roads and trains. Surely it is entirely possible to watch these matches on TV without disturbing the peace and quiet of the park.

The park was not established to cater for such sporting events. I recently tried to walk across Trafalgar Square during a screening of a football match – on a Sunday! It was almost impossible to make your way across to the National Gallery because of the crowds watching the match.

I ask the organisers to think again. And I call on residents to make their voices heard!

**From Chris Hoffman, St John's Park**

Dear Sir

I'm sorry to say this but your

newsbrief short opinion piece on the new cycle lane in Jamaica Road (issue February 2020; asking if it may increase pollution levels by slowing traffic) belongs to another century. It presents a strawman argument. As so eloquently summarised by Chris Boardman on Question Time recently, increasing cycling levels will lead to a more active, happier population, decrease the burden on the NHS, and reduce climate change. Schemes such as this should be a no brainer. And if you really only want to fixate on pollution levels from vehicles, electric cars are coming. Yours faithfully

**From: E. Jenkins, Humber Road**  
So pleased to see that the Extinction Rebellion sailing boat "anchored" outside the National Maritime Museum (featured on the front page of the WN last year) is named Polly Higgins.

Polly, who died before her time in April 2019, was a Scottish barrister, who campaigned to "Stop Ecocide". She argued eloquently for international laws to protect the planet from abuses by corporations, and, who knows, one day, states. As Brazil destroys its rain

forests, and the President of the US encourages the fossil fuel industries, and China commissions more coal-fired power stations, Stop Ecocide is more needed than ever today. Polly's campaign appears now to be spearheaded by a Swedish schoolgirl: the voice of the next generation.

**From Esther Brown, Westcombe Pk Rd**

While sympathetic to the aims of Extinction Rebellion, their activities can be counter-productive. Climbing on top of tube trains during rush hour is but one example of their disruptive behaviour. On our doorstep last December, the famous Coca-Cola Christmas truck's visit to the O2 was cancelled because of safety fears: ER wanted to protest against Coca Cola's Plastic pollution with "a battalion of elves."

This year, Coca-Cola pledged to give 10 pence to the homeless charity Crisis for every can placed in their recycling bins on their UK tour.

**Mark Etherington, Dinsdale Rd, (delivering copies of the Westcombe News since 2006!)**

I was disappointed to read the negative coverage of Cycleway 4 in

**The Westcombe Society celebrates Springtime with its annual Daffodil Tea for the local community's senior citizens.**

**21 March 2-4 p.m**  
**at the usual venue,**  
**Mycenae House.**

**This is the time to catch up with friends over cake and a cuppa, and also a great opportunity to make new acquaintances.**

**The Daffodil Tea is by invitation, but if you didn't get one and would like to come, please call Caroline on 020 8853 0948**

## KEITH VINCENT TOWNEND

### IN MEMORIAM

**K**eith Vincent Townend Des. R.C.A. F.SIA died suddenly but peacefully in his sleep on Wednesday the 15th January 2020, aged 89. Following National Service in the Royal Army Service Corps, Keith trained at the Royal College of Art in South Kensington as an interior and furniture designer, and went on to establish his own practice. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers in 1976, and was a visiting tutor at Kingston School of Art. Keith was a local resident in Westcombe Park since 1965, and he greatly loved Blackheath and Greenwich. With his wife, Anna he was involved in voluntary work to preserve the local environment, green space and woodlands such as Oxleas Woods; and in particular establishing a wildlife and schools' ecology garden at the former Dwarf Orchard at Park Vista, before campaigning to re-unite this with Greenwich Park (now known as the 'Queen's Orchard'). Recently Keith and Anna moved up to Shooter's Hill to be close to Oxleas Woods, an area of ancient woodland, which they also campaigned to save from destruction by the proposed East London River Crossing. He is survived by Anna, their two sons, Bruce and Alexander and five grandchildren in both London and Oxford.



# LOCAL NEWS

## LET’S BEAT LONELINESS

The John Roan School are launching a ‘Let’s Beat Loneliness Lunch Club’ for local senior citizens. Every Monday during term time, local senior citizens will be able to have a two course lunch with our lovely students at our Maze Hill site from 12:15pm. We are hoping that this new club will give local senior citizens a chance to

do something different, as well as giving different generations a chance to socialise together.

There are limited spaces available, so please contact Jenny Allen on 020 8516 7537 or [Jennifer.allen@thejohnroanschool.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.allen@thejohnroanschool.org.uk) to reserve your space.

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER

The work of the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch involves recording the local birds that are seen or heard within a garden or site during one hour. In the three acre Westcombe Woodlands, a keen group of



members met up with local ecologist Joe Beale at the end of January and recorded 18 species including a Firecrest - a pretty rare visitor. Goldcrest and great spotted woodpeckers were also present. Tawny Owls, not recorded



but are heard regularly by residents, it seems likely they were ‘sleeping’ when the survey took place at 9am.

The next Volunteer mornings in the woods start at 10am on Sat 7th March and Sun 5th April. See <http://www.westcombewoodlands.uk/> or search facebook group Westcombe Woodlands.

## VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

### Learn A New Skill

The Talking Newspaper forms a nationwide network of some 300 local groups, one of which being Greenwich (GTN). The idea is to render a digest of local news to our blind and partially-sighted listeners. Using local press, news is edited or compiled into categories aimed to be of interest, and then recorded. The memory sticks are sent by post for playing on the GTN-supplied devices.

We are always keen for new blind listeners; likewise, new volunteers for compiling or reading the copy, or engineering the recordings, to boost our roster. It is a pleasure to join the mixture of voices to produce a lively, varied rendition.



GTN reader Charlton House; Mixing-desk Engineer

Personally, I began as a reader, and then learning to compile the copy was a real benefit.

Learning digital recording and production would need several training or support

sessions. As desk engineer, about 21/2 hours at Charlton House in the evening is required, roughly monthly.

For anyone interested in receiving Greenwich Talking Newspaper recordings, or in helping produce them, please contact: Margaret Taylor: (020)-8850-9450 Marion Kennet: (020)-8859-5671

### Meet Others

The Bridge in East Greenwich is looking for volunteers! Are you looking to boost your CV? Are you retraining and need experience? Are you at home with your under 5s and would like to meet people? Are you retired and looking for a hobby? We offer back-to-work advice, first aid training, social events, friendship and a chance to give back to your community. Contact [www.thebridgegreenwich.co.uk/](http://www.thebridgegreenwich.co.uk/) Facebook & Insta: @TheBridgeSE10

### Join a Community Gardening Initiative

A new initiative, led by members of Westcombe Woodlands and Planting in the Pleasaunce, is developing a series of skill share events for community garden teams and local Friends of Parks groups. The aim is to build a network for mutual support, and involve more people from every background in gardening and supporting wildlife. Interested? Contact Rich Sylvester, [richstories123@gmail.com](mailto:richstories123@gmail.com), for information.

## HAVE YOUR SAY WHAT AND WHEN YOU THROW AWAY

Royal Borough of Greenwich set to move Towards Zero Waste

The three alternative bin collection proposals are:

1. Reduce the frequency of when rubbish (black top) bins are collected to every two weeks. This could increase our recycling rate by around 5% and save the Council £460,000 per year.
2. Collect your rubbish every week but the bin is smaller. This could increase our recycling rate by around 2.5% and save the Council £150,000 per year.
3. Reduce the size of rubbish bins and collect them every two weeks. This could increase our recycling rate by around 7% and save the Council £612,000 per year.

If we reduced the frequency of the bin collections we’d be in good company. The majority of UK boroughs have switched to

fortnightly collections and they have all seen an increase in recycling rates.

We’d also like your views on how we can make it easier for you to reduce waste and recycle more. Working with residents is key to the success of the ambitious goal, so on Monday 3rd February a major online consultation asking for residents’ views on proposed changes to their rubbish bin collections was launched. These potential changes could make recycling second nature to residents, encouraging everyone to stop and think about whether recycling or reusing, should replace throwing something away.

### HAVE YOUR SAY WHAT AND WHEN YOU THROW AWAY

This consultation closes at 11.59pm on Sunday 15 March.

[royalgreenwich.gov.uk/zerowaste](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/zerowaste)  
-Ann Hill

## Learn to Play Day



A free national event to encourage everyone in the UK to start making music - is coming to London this March.

Supported by Jools Holland OBE, and run by the charity Music for All, the 2020 Learn to Play Day will take place on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th March, and will see music shops, teachers, venues and schools throughout the county partner with leading musical instrument brands to offer thousands of FREE music lessons.

So far, participating venues include:

•Yamaha Music London in Soho

•PMT London on Old Street, EC1V

•World Heart Beat Music Academy in Southfields

•Musicroom London on Denmark Street

Find a FREE music lesson near you, visit <https://musicforall.org.uk/learntoplayday/>

### Events in Greenwich Park

1st March **The Big Half** - this is a half marathon finishing in the park.

25th March - 30th March Quantum Theatre will stage **Treasure Island in the Royal Observatory Garden**  
29th March, Sunday, **Bird Walk**, 8.30am Blackheath Gate.

Fri 6th March/Sat 28th March **The Parks Police** will run surgeries in the Pavilion Café from 10.00-11.00 a.m. These are informal drop-in sessions to talk with residents and visitors about any topic of concern.

## VINTAGE MEMORIES AND MEMORABILIA SOUGHT

This year The John Roan School is planning on hosting a birthday celebration for a former student who is turning 100.

We would love to create a mini exhibition of photos and stories tracing the history of The John Roan School as part of the celebrations.

If you have any resources or stories that you can share, please contact Jenny Allen on 020 8516 7537 or [Jennifer.allen@thejohnroanschool.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.allen@thejohnroanschool.org.uk). All stories or resources would be greatly appreciated.

### IT SUPPORT

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## MAKE DO AND MAINTAIN!

### Craft and Skills Sharing

Ever wondered how to keep your silver shining or how to mount a picture? Join us as we build a community of makers and menders. This is a club for old and young to share current skills and discover new ones. One of our experts will lead this monthly club, show casing a specific skill or technique that could be used to look after your own objects at home.

At this cross-generational club, the participants will see a new skill presented each month by a local specialist. Participants will also get to meet like-minded peers, work on exciting team and individual projects, and learn new skills from each other.

The Monthly club will consist of 90 minutes of activities and demonstrations. Our knowledgeable and friendly mentors will support you whilst you try out different tasks and projects.

Held third Saturday of every month | 10.30am-12.00 (21st March 2020)  
Admission: Free but booking required  
Location: **Prince Philip Maritime Collections Centre**. Bookings need to be made by phone: Tel: 020 8312 6608

## The UN at 75 DIARY DATE Unnecessary or Indispensable?

A free public meeting at St George's Church, Glenluce Road, SE3 7SD on Thursday April 2nd at 7.45pm. The talk marks the 75th anniversary of the UN. Speaker, Neville Grant, who worked for years attached to UNDP in China. Refreshments and Q&A discussions.

*Jim Four*  
photographer

View and share your  
**treasured images**  
on your computer.

I'm local and can

### **DIGITISE:**

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[jimfour@outlook.com](mailto:jimfour@outlook.com)  
[www.jimfour.com](http://www.jimfour.com)



# FEATURES

## AN ARCHITECTURAL GEM IN OUR MIDST

Controversy over this 1930s building, unique to our area, has been going on for several years. It is featured in the 2010 Westcombe Park Character Appraisal, described as being of the International Modern Style.

In 2014 there was an application to demolish the house, which was then in a poor state of repair, and to build 8 flats on the site. This was refused. In 2019 a planning application was submitted to convert the house to 8 flats. This included building a third storey. In their refusal the Planning Officers argued that, "The proposed roof and rear extensions, by reason of their unacceptable bulk, scale and materiality, would result in unacceptable harm to the host building, immediate streetscene and wider Westcombe Park Conservation Area".

Recently a further application was

submitted. The new proposal is for somewhat reduced extensions at the side and rear and a smaller third storey, to provide 5 flats. The Environment Committee of the Westcombe Society expressed a number of concerns about the plans. As well as felling 12 trees, most of the front garden is to be converted into a parking area with the consequent loss of green space.

We also queried the amount of living space in each flat, particularly those intended for families. But our principal concern is the bulk and visual prominence of the additional third storey which brings the building to the same height as the neighbouring house at 59 but with a flat roof.

The Environment Committee has submitted objections to the proposal.

-Margaret Gravelle



## A VICTORY FOR THE VANBRUGH

Royal Borough of Greenwich has rejected a further set of plans to build a house on the outdoor space behind The Vanbrugh pub in East Greenwich, after significant opposition from local residents.

This was the third such planning application in recent years from the pub's freeholder – Isle of Man-based Hamna Wakaf Ltd. – which would have seen the loss of 29% of the pub's outdoor space, including part of its beer garden.

As with the previous sets of plans, the reason for refusal centred around the amenity (garden) space that would be provided alongside the proposed three-bedroom house. The previous application was rejected by the Council in July 2018, with the subsequent appeal dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on the basis that 'the amount and layout of the amenity space provided would be inadequate'. In response, the applicant revised the plans by rearranging the footprint to provide more amenity space. However, these plans were refused in January on the grounds that the development 'would fail to provide a high quality living environment' because the amenity space would still be split between two different locations and half of it would be located beneath the upper floors of the proposed house.

Plans to develop the site have attracted

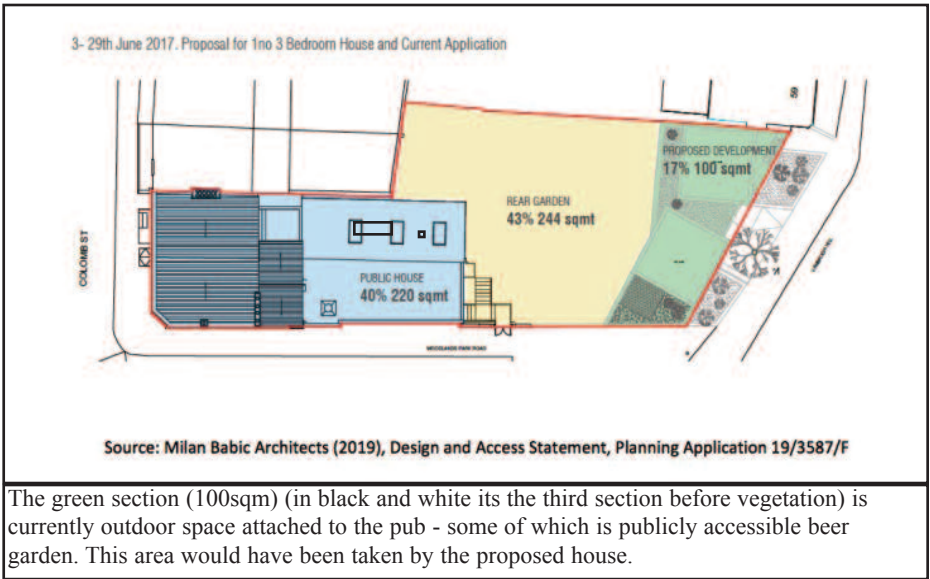
significant opposition from the local community. The latest application received 379 objections, including from Westcombe Society which considers the pub to be an important and popular local amenity – particularly its beer garden.

Meanwhile, The Vanbrugh lost its status as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) in December. Previously, the pub had been placed on the Council's list of community assets in August following a successful nomination by East Greenwich Residents Association, which successfully made the case that uses of the pub further the social wellbeing of the local community.

However, a subsequent appeal by Hamna Wakaf Ltd. led to the listing decision being reviewed and overturned by a Council officer who wasn't involved in the original decision. While ACV status does not protect a property from development proposals, it does afford the local community additional time to arrange a bid to acquire the property should the owner put it on the market.

Forthcoming events at The Vanbrugh include Tap Takeover (26th to 29th March), London Marathon Day (26th April) and the annual Garden Party (11th July). See [www.thevanbrugh.co.uk](http://www.thevanbrugh.co.uk) for further details.

- Tom Stanworth



## ‘YEAR OF PROMISE’ FROM BLACKHEATH HIGH

Blackheath High begins ‘Year of Promise’ Sustainability Project to Tackle Climate Change

The work Greta Thunberg has done in bringing the issue of climate change to the forefront of the political agenda around the world is highly admirable.

However, there is a downside. More than ever before, children are being exposed to the devastation caused by changes to our climate. This is creating a growing trend of ‘eco-anxiety’ - an accumulation of feeling powerless in the face of an inevitability beyond their individual control.

Given this new reality, Blackheath High School GDST has decided to celebrate its 140th anniversary by committing to 12 months of environmental pledges – 140 of them in 2020.

Already the school’s Head has pledged to not print anything for a year in a move to

reduce paper waste at the school.

Meanwhile the Design & Tech department have pledged to set up a ‘Bamboo Bicycle Club’, where students can make bikes from the sustainable material.

Appreciating their Maritime Greenwich location near to the River Thames, they’re adding the study of our oceans to the curriculum and getting their students out into nature to teach them how to protect it.

The school is also hoping the local community will get involved. So, if you have any good ideas for how you or your business can help the planet in 2020, email in your pledge at [BHSYearofPromise@bla.gdst.net](mailto:BHSYearofPromise@bla.gdst.net) or if you’re in need of some inspiration go to the 140th Anniversary page on the school website here: <https://www.blackheathhigh-school.gdst.net/1830/140th-anniversary-our-year-of-promise-project>

-Anne Fuell



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# WHAT'S ON



## WESTCOMBE SOCIETY EVENTS



Sat 21 March **Daffodil Tea** at Mycenae House, afternoon (by invite)  
Fri 15 May **AGM** 7.30pm at Blackheath High School for Girls, followed by a talk on the Angerstein family  
Fri 25 Sept **Macmillan Biggest Coffee Morning** (morning & lunchtime)  
TBC - **Macmillan Walk**  
Oct 24th **Quiz Night** Mycenae House

## ARTS

9th March **THE ARTS SOCIETY GREENWICH** Danish Modernism: The Skagen Painters. Lecturer: Dr Caroline Levisse Discover this group who painted en plein air and represented scenes from everyday life, many no doubt bathed in the particular light of Skagen's long summer evenings. In such sceneries their works often become more romantic and lyrical. Lectures at Greenwich University, King William Court, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich SE10 9LS. Wine available from 7.15pm. Lectures start 7.45pm. Guests: £10 at door. Please contact nancybettelley@hotmail.co.uk  
**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

## COMEDY

Fri 20 March 8pm The Hearn Recital Room Blackheath Halls. A new monthly **comedy night from Off The Kerb, one of the UK's leading comedy agencies.** Each night features a variety of acts from the British comedy circuit. Full details of line-ups to be announced closer to dates. Tkts: £10

## HORTICULTURE

Mon 16th March **"Dig for Victory"** a talk by Russell Bowes, followed by plant sales, raffle, refreshments. Charlton & Blackheath Amateur Horticultural Society, Charlton House Old Library, 7.30pm. Visitors (£2) and new members (£10)



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## COMMUNITY

**THE BRIDGE** in East Greenwich Pleasaunce runs regular stay & play sessions for under 5s and their parents/carers. We have a large, secure outdoor play space for the little ones to explore and waterproofs to borrow for rainy days. We run gardening sessions and a mini Forest School. Our indoor space has a variety of activities including soft play and arts & crafts. Low cost admission and hot drinks and snacks included. Off Chevening Road, Greenwich, SE10 0LB  
**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 Wed at 1.15pm. Newcomers welcome. 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  
**SUNDAYS AT SUNFIELDS at Sunfields Methodist Church 95 Old Dover Road, Blackheath SE3 8SJ** 1.00-4.00 pm First Sunday of each month. Two course hot meal + creative arts activity. £6.50pp + concs, carers free. Tel Aga/Naomi on 0208 318 9105.  
**Blackheath Flower Club** meets the third Friday of the month (2pm-4pm) at Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Rd., SE3 7SE. Visitors £6, raffle tickets extra. siancaroline@googlemail.com or on 0788 7790028

## TALKS

Diary Dates

**INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
10 March Andy Brockman **Woolwich and The Pipeline**  
14 April Stewart Ash. **150th anniversary of the cable to India**  
12 May Peter Marshall, A photographic walk  
9 June Julian Kingston **Deptford Shipbuilding Heritage and the Lenox**  
14 July Stewart Ash.  
**Research on development sites**  
13 October. Alan Burkett Gray **How Greenwich Helped to Build The Global Internet** Meetings held 7.30 The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3 (rear of Age Exchange) There is NO parking

## CHILDREN & FAMILY

28 March **'Drop In' at the Greenwich Park Wildlife Centre**, Saturday 1-3pm. South end of the lake in the Flower Garden - nature crafts and guided tours of of the Nature Trail and Deer Hide  
Sun 8th March **The Naughty Fox** Snuggle up with Honk, Splash and TaWit TaWoo. Imersive multisensory of friendship and play for little ones. 2-4pm £9.50 Family rates available  
Sat 14th March **Mark Thompson's SPECTACULAR Science Show** (awarded 'one of the top shows to see') 2pm Tickets £18 Children £9.50 Family rates available

## BLACKHEATH HALLS

**Box Office 020 8463 0100**  
-Sun 1 March **Evgeny Samoyloff piano** 7.30pm The Hearn Recital Room  
**Mussorgsky** From Memories of Childhood. A Night on the Bare Mountain Pictures at an Exhibition Tkts: £10 £8(c)  
-Mon 2 March 1.30pm Great Hall  
A magical afternoon in the friendly atmosphere of a **Blackheath Halls tea dance**. There's sequence dancing, quickstep, cha cha cha and much more. Tkts: £7 inc light refreshments  
-Tues 3 Mar **Trinity Laban Beats in the Bar** 7.30pm I The Hearn Recital Room  
Trinity Laban's Jazz Department is one of the strongest in Europe, and their performances are a great chance to hear the stars of tomorrow on stage today. Admission FREE booking required  
-Wed 4 March **Here's To Good Women** 8pm The Hearn Recital Room. An all-female panel discussion with former anaesthetist and police doctor Dr Clare Rosen and nautical scientist and Master Mariner Mette Enevold Peterson, in celebration of International Women's Day. Tkts: £12 inc a glass of wine  
-Thurs 5 March **Piano Masterclass with Joaquín Achúcarro** 10am & 2pm Great Hall. An unique opportunity to observe 'one of the greats' as he shares his insights with Trinity Laban students. Admission FREE booking required *And lots more ..check BH website for inspiration*

## THEATRE & FILM

**THE GREENWICH THEATRE, Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES**  
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Tues 10th-11th March **Womans (Like Romans, but with a W)** ..a raucous and hilarious tale of the first female resistance Tkts £18 Friends of GT £9.50  
Wed 11-15th March **The White Plague** . 7.30pm Tkts £13  
Tues 17th-21st March  
**The Incident Room** 7.30pm Sat mat 2.30pm Tkts £20 Friends of GT £10  
*And lots more (see Features page).....*

## SPOKEN WORD

Tues 24 March **In-words poetry at West Greenwich Library** 7.30 (door opens 7), two poets with very different voices - Edward Ragg, who lives in China, will read from his book Exploring Rights; Ian Gregson will launch his collection with the intriguing title The Slasher and the Vampire as Role Models.  
Free, all welcome.



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## MYCENAE HOUSE EVENTS

Fri 6 March **Sing Together choirs**. An evening concert of joyful, uplifting melodies. 7.30pm £8.  
Thurs 12th March **Bach To Baby** Classical Concert for families. 4pm £10.  
Fri 13th March 8pm **JazzNights**. Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.  
Fri 20th March 7.30pm **St Patrick's Day Celebrations**. Live music, dance and food with GFMA. £13 online/£16 on door. *For further information about all Mycenae House events visit [www.mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://www.mycenaehouse.co.uk)*

## THOMAS TALLIS

Sat 7 March **Celebrations & Commemorations** in St Alfege Church, Greenwich. A sequence of choral laments, tributes and memorials for specific occasions including music by Tallis, Howells, Byrd, Gibbons and Walton  
Thomas Tallis Society Choir conducted by Eamonn Dougan. Tickets £15/£10, available online or at the door [www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts)

**WN apologises for any omissions..if you know of, or would like to have your event(s) included on this page then email details to WN and space permitting, we can include them. Thanks -Ed.**



# FEATURES

## WINTER GARDENS FOR SALE?

Last year, the WN featured two articles about Eltham Palace. However, not to be forgotten is another very special place – Avery Hill House and park – including, especially, the indoor Winter Garden.

If you won the lottery, then you could put in a bid for the House, which is currently on sale by the University of Greenwich.

Avery Hill is an Italianate Victorian mansion on a site with a fascinating history. The land around what was then the village of Eltham goes back to the Domesday Book, where it was called ‘Eald Ham’ by the Anglo-Saxons. It came into the possession of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, the half-brother of William the Conqueror. It was Odo who probably commissioned the Bayeux Tapestry. The land was held for him by Haimo, Sheriff of Kent, as Odo was far too busy helping to rule England, being both scandalously immoral, and almost ungovernable (he was imprisoned twice for rebellion.) He died en route to the First Crusade.

The area of land that is now Avery Hill Park was originally a number of individual farms; in the eighteenth century they were combined to make up the estate of ‘Avery Hill’. The mansion house on the site was built in about 1841, and was the family home of James Boyd, a Scot, a sugar baron. Following Boyd’s death, John Thomas North, an entrepreneur who made his money from Chilean nitrates, rented the mansion, and the adjoining acres from Boyd’s widow, Anne Boyd, for £500.00 a year.

There he kept racehorses and greyhounds, and played at soldiers, reforming the Tower Hamlet Volunteer Engineers, and acquiring the honorary title of “Colonel”. North later bought the entire estate and added a further 100 acres, including Ox Leas and Shepherd Leas woods. In 1888, he bought Avery Hill House, and later in the year, never doing things by half, he bought too many pictures at the Italian Exhibition in Earl’s Court.

What next? Naturally, to house the pictures, he needed a bigger house: he commissioned the architect T W Cutler to do the job for £45,000, and then went back to South America. Returning in 1889, he

found Cutler had already spent £85,000. Outraged, he refused to pay, and the matter went to court: North lost the case, and had to pay up. The house eventually was eventually finished for some £125,000. That is around £16 million in today’s money.

The story does not have a happy end: the Colonel died in May 1896, aged 54; his wife tried to sell the house, but there were no takers. So she sold the contents, including the Italian pictures. In 1898 the house sold for a paltry £45,000, but stood empty until it was sold on to the London County Council for £25,000. The LCC retained the park, but opened the house as the first Local Authority Women’s Teacher Training College. The east wing had to be demolished after an incendiary bomb destroyed the roof in 1942. It continued as a teacher training college, merging with Thames Polytechnic in 1985, before becoming part of the University of Greenwich.

Today, visitors enter the Baronial Entrance Hall and proceed through the Marble Hall and Great Hall into the Annexe. From there one can go on to the Peach House, and on into the Vine House. Retracing one’s footsteps, one can then go past some arched windows to the Fernery. Many other rooms can be viewed including the Great Hall, the huge Temperate House, the Conservatory, Drawing Room, and the Colonel’s library. But the main attraction is the Winter Garden. Sadly, the future of Winter Garden is uncertain: the university would really like to hand it back to Greenwich Council.

The domed winter garden is open daily, from 10.00am to 12noon, and from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. Address: Avery Hill Road, Eltham, London SE9 2EP.

Admission is free. -Neville Grant



## THE STAGE IS SET

### -Big Productions planned at Greenwich Theatre



At Greenwich Theatre we aim, every season, to present a range of shows that will appeal to as wide an audience as possible, from big classic plays to new writing, musicals to comedy, with a healthy dose of family theatre thrown in. We collaborate with some major names in UK theatre, and we support some of the newest companies emerging on the scene. This season is no exception, and one of the biggest productions in the line-up is likely to be the arrival in Greenwich of The Incident Room (above pic).

This is our latest co-production with the New Diorama Theatre in Euston, a partnership that last saw our production of Secret Life Of Humans transfer from Greenwich to New York. Set in 1975, this new show tells the true story of the widely criticised five-year hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper, focusing on some of the women at the heart of the story - Sergeant Megan Winterburn in the Incident Room, Yorkshire Post reporter Tish Morgan and survivor Maureen Long. There is every chance that this show will follow Secret Life Of Humans and transfer internationally, but Greenwich audiences have the opportunity to see it here first.

Offering something completely different, we are also delighted to welcome international theatre company Ferodo Bridges to Greenwich for the first time with the off-West End premiere of The White Plague (pic below), a uniquely immersive production unlike anything we have ever hosted before. I worked with the company to test this show on the London fringe two years ago and it was a huge success. Loosely inspired by Nobel Prize winning writer Jose Saramago’s novel Blindness, which tells the story of a plague of blindness that indiscriminately attacks a city, for most of the show the audience wear special illuminated blindfolds so that all they can see is

a white haze. Presented in our studio the action takes place in and around the audience members, who can hear it, smell it and occasionally even touch it – but not see it.

Other highlights included in the season include Thunder Road, the latest offbeat comedy from the acclaimed RedCape Theatre, and a special evening with writer and Olivier Award winning actor Trevor Eve, who will be reflecting on his career and reading from his latest novel.

For families, we are proud to present the return of the Greenwich Children’s Theatre Festival from 5-19 April. Including everything from opera for babies in Meet Me A Tree to reinvented classic tales like Rapunzel or new stories like the environmentally themed Gulp!, the festival is designed to offer something for all ages. The line-up culminates in a visit to Greenwich for Cirque Enfant, an interactive show promising amazing acrobats, jugglers, clowns and more in a circus spectacular.

As we announce this season we are also in the final stages of negotiating a long lease with the council, protecting the future of theatre in Greenwich at a time when theatres around the country are facing ever more serious threats to their existence. With the lease imminent, the very best way that local audiences can support our future is to come along and see a show, or maybe two – to see the shows they know they are going to love, and to take a risk on something different, something new. For me there is nothing more exciting than discovering a new show or a new theatre company, a story told in a new way, and though I’ve worked in this industry for decades theatre still has the power to surprise me, year after year. I look forward to sharing some of those surprises this season.

-James Haddrell, Artistic Director



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

GREENWICH COUNCIL’S CARBON FOOTPRINT PLAN

In June 2019, the Royal Borough of Greenwich unanimously declared a climate emergency, this followed stark warnings in 2018 from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that urgent action, to reduce carbon emissions, must be taken within ten years. It also grew out of a petition, lobbying, and protests outside the Town Hall from Greenwich Green Party activists, local Extinction Rebellion activists, and concerned residents. The declaration was supported by councillors from all parties.

This declaration has led to a report, published at the end of January, on Development of the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan. This provides the evidence base from which Greenwich can form their plan, and points out how ambitious it is to aim for carbon neutrality within a decade. The Borough is also calling for a climate emergency network of individuals, businesses, and organisations. At the cabinet meeting on January 29th, the council agreed to bring the plans to full council for approval in Autumn 2020. Both motions were passed unanimously at cabinet and full council. Councillors agreed that this was a cross-party issue for which all needed to work together.

Councillors also noted that these ambitious targets would be expensive to implement but, as campaigners have said, even more expensive to ignore. It will be a challenge to keep support from the residents of Greenwich as infrastructure for travel by car is reduced in favour of walking, cycling, and public transport. Education and engagement are seen as key priorities so that street closures and reduced parking spaces, ambitious tree planting, and re-wilding proposals are

embraced as progressive and necessary to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

The report has been largely welcomed by activists as a way to start making changes. However, Simon Pirani, a research fellow at Oxford Institute for Energy Studies and Greenwich XR supporter, has warned that ‘there is a serious danger that, by falling in line with the conservative and inadequate policies of the government and the Mayor of London,... the council will miss decarbonisation targets by a long way.’ Campaigners have pointed to Transport for London’s Silvertown Tunnel project as symptomatic of how a ‘flawed framework’ could affect how thoroughly Greenwich will be able to reduce its carbon usage.

Greenwich will be consulting widely on its report and the measures it proposes, later in 2020. Among the recommendations are moving to 100% renewable energy supplies, replacing street lighting with LED low energy bulbs, planting trees, and improving access to electric car charging points. Other boroughs in London are also working on carbon neutral plans, with Hackney taking a particularly strong stand on the need for major policy changes.

There is a large resource waiting to be tapped in the community both to help make these plans as ambitious as they need to be. And local people can sign up to the council’s Climate Emergency Network and Partnership online (<https://www.royal-greenwich.gov.uk/xfp/form/509>). As Extinction Rebellion argues, once people realise the scale of the emergency, they will want to act to lessen the effects of global warming so that we, and our children, will have a safer and healthier future.

-Victoria Rance/Editorial team



LET IT RAIN!

As geography books from your school days show, water falls from the sky, enters the soil and slowly drains through to emerge as springs and streams. But what happens when the earth has been paved over?

In urban settings, rain has far less chance of draining into the soil. Instead, we’ve constructed a series of drains for houses and roads, and these carry the water away. Not all of it goes into the sewage system, though: the storm drains in roadways often carry their waste into the river systems. That’s true of much of north Greenwich. With the Thames right on hand, Victorian and later road builders did the obvious thing, and built storm drain systems to empty straight into the river.

Now, though, the system isn’t ideal. So much land has been built on or paved over that water table levels aren’t being replenished. London is slowly subsiding.

Global heating will likely bring wetter winters: using land to absorb the rain can help avoid flooded rivers. And storm drains carry lots of pollutants with the rain-fall. Particulates from exhaust fumes, tyres, brake linings and strong traces from petrol and diesel are being swept into the Thames.

We need to clean up our rivers, to make them safe for humans, fish, and all of their natural inhabitants. These are among the reasons why the Westcombe Society recommends permeable systems, if you feel you must pave over your front garden.

A new scheme in East Greenwich has been installed this winter, which aims to help with the problem. In Blackwall Lane, just outside the Christchurch School Community Garden, is a new Sustainable Drainage System, or SuDS.

The new SuDS looks a bit like any council tree planting scheme: there are half a dozen new ornamental pear trees, Pyrus ‘Chanticleer’, often used as street trees.

Look more closely, though, and you’ll see that the tree pits are all connected by a long strip of greenery, planted with wild-flower and meadow plants to absorb moisture and feed pollinating insects. What you can’t see, beneath all this, is the clever soakaway that carries water off through a couple of pumice-based filtration systems. The runoff is stored in a shallow cistern, under a couple of car parking spaces, and the gardeners will be using it to water their new orchard over the coming months and years.

This isn’t the first of its kind in the area: the Borough has also installed ‘rain gardens’ in Plumstead and Eltham, and some of the Peninsula developments have SuDS systems. It can be difficult, though, to bring together all the funding and the permissions. Along with the pocket parks, along Trafalgar Road, the Blackwall Lane system will help to improve the Borough’s sustainability profile in East Greenwich.

Clearly, every borough in London could be creating sustainable drainage systems to help improve water quality in the Thames and its feeder rivers, and lessen the risk of flooding. Thames Water currently is being pressed for answers on how often it allows raw sewage to flow into the river, which happens when the drains from buildings are unable to cope with heavy rain. But the storm drains are a constant source of pollutants.


The Zoological Society of London’s Mother Thames campaign has praised the regeneration of the river, but points to how much work still needs to be done. ZSL and other organisations, like the Thames Water Keeper, have teams of volunteers monitoring London’s rivers, with regular tests of water quality near outfalls. With the Borough so closely tied with the Thames, it makes sense for us all to be kind to our river and try to protect it from pollution.

-Anne Robbins

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


68 HUMBER ROAD ref 20/0105/HD  
To construct 2 rear dormers and install 3 roof-lights to front.  
11 STRATHEDEN ROAD  
ref 20/0325/HD - To replace lower ground floor windows, install metal railings to front steps, install CCTV to front, resurface driveway.  
43 MYCENAE ROAD ref 20/0285/F

To erect single storey rear extension, relocate rear steps, demolish rear outbuilding, install decking over sunken part of garden, install railings to rear boundary, fell tree.  
55 MYCENAE ROAD ref 20/0127/HD  
To construct single storey side extension  
69 ST JOHNS PARK ref 20/0127/HD  
To construct a single storey rear infill extension.



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