

# Westcombe NEWS

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November 2020 No. 8



*“Go not to the Elves for counsel, for they will say both no and yes.” J.R.R. Tolkien*

## “AND THE QUEUES GO ON”

Marilyn Little

Since the closure of roads in West Greenwich to through traffic some parts of Westcombe Park are experiencing heavier traffic as drivers attempt to access Greenwich via Trafalgar Road. Vanbrugh Hill and Maze Hill continue to suffer queues of traffic during the morning rush hour.

Residents have been logging traffic numbers and journey information and found that many journeys, whilst ending in Greenwich, were coming from areas east of the borough. Drivers were insistent that they needed their car to transport goods

and tools to do with their jobs. The residents felt that the number of vehicles was not reducing and some days were worse than others. It has been noted that the volume of traffic using the A2 has an effect on the number of vehicles taking avoiding action and cutting through Westcombe Park. When the West Greenwich scheme was introduced the council had expected that most drivers would stay on the A2 to complete their journey. This is obviously not the case.

A site meeting was called by local councillors for residents to meet with Highways officers and the leader of the council Danny Thorpe.

Councillor Thorpe felt that the problem was caused by the increased use of cars due to commuters not wishing to use public transport during the pandemic and he called for Sadiq Khan to encourage its use.

Council officers have undertaken to investigate traffic counts and collect journey information in both Maze Hill and Vanbrugh Hill as well as considering the phasing of the traffic lights where both roads join Trafalgar Road. It is recognised that the ongoing TfL roadworks in Trafalgar Road for Cycleway 4 are also continuing to have an impact on local traffic. The recent raising of the borough Covid risk level will have an impact on this and no timescales were agreed. We feel that any suggestions to alleviate the current issue by making modifications to

the east of the Park should be subject to consultation.

The Westcombe Society feel that unless there is a substantial reduction in traffic running through the conservation area, evidenced by a reduced number of vehicles using both Maze and Vanbrugh Hills, the West Greenwich Traffic Scheme should be withdrawn in all or part and not considered for reinstatement until traffic levels have returned to pre-Covid levels. The borough of Lewisham have removed many of their Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in response to increases in congestion locally.



Traffic on Maze Hill

A petition run by the residents of Maze Hill has gathered over 3,000 signatures and was to have been presented to the full Council Meeting on the 29th October. Unfortunately this has been cancelled due to the current Covid risk level and will be replaced by a Special Meeting in early November which will discuss urgent council matters. At the time of writing it is not clear what interaction with the public will be possible at that meeting.

We think the broader issue of an overall transport/traffic plan for South East London is well overdue but obviously the area is large. However there is a substantially smaller well-defined area made up of four residential communities between Deptford Creek, the A102, the A2 and the river which have interrelated traffic problems (i.e. Hills and Vales, West Greenwich, Westcombe Park and East Greenwich).

We would therefore like to see the council commit to work together with ALL the communities in this area to work out a long-term traffic plan that works for all areas together rather than pushing the traffic from one small community onto another.

## PLENTY OF ROOM IN THIS LANE.....

Jo Burnand

With the rush now on to link up London via a network of cycleways in anticipation of four million extra journeys every day by 2025, work has begun on the first stage of a cycle route linking Greenwich with Woolwich.

The works will test the feasibility of a cycleway running from Greenwich town centre to the Angerstein roundabout near to where cyclists have been killed, two in the space of two weeks in 2018 and another in 2009.

In a bid to overcome the problem of integrating a cycle lane with an already narrow road, the route shadows the A206 through the Royal Naval College and along the Old Woolwich Road, joining it at Christchurch Way. A two-way cycle lane with line markings and segregated from vehicles with flexible cylinders starts up along the north side of Trafalgar Road (A206) and continues through to Denham Street on its approach to the Angerstein roundabout.

To free up space for traffic, bus stops, parking and loading bays are being relocated while what is currently two lane traffic east and westbound on the approach to Blackwall Lane is reduced to one lane in both directions. Traffic eastbound will be further restricted by having access prohibited to Rodmere Street and the A102 North slip road.

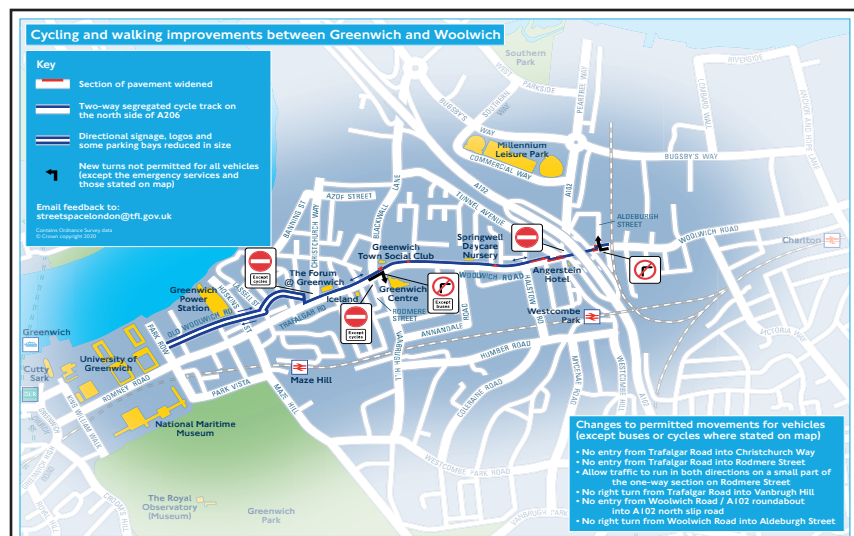
Local resident Alessandro who uses the lane (although it is not officially opened as



Photo: Jo Burnand

yet) says, "It's a very good idea but needs further improvement. The turning points into the main road I feel are very dangerous because you need to be aware of cyclists and traffic coming from both directions. Another main concern is the emergency services. Traffic was bad as it was, but now cars have nowhere to pull in to let the emergency vehicles pass."

The route was initially planned as the last link in the chain of Cycleway 4 connecting the ferry at Woolwich with the City. The first stage of this route has now been completed, incorporating a state-of-the-art cycleway the length of Jamaica Road. Funding restrictions, plans to pedestrianise Greenwich and perhaps do away with the Angerstein roundabout altogether, are among factors determining when Cycleway 4 will be finished and whether other cycle routes feeding into this main artery will materialise.



## << Newsbriefs >>

### Charlton Gardens Success

We learnt, too late for the October edition, that Charlton Community Gardens have been awarded certificates by London in Bloom in the Our Community category. This year judging was done on the basis of report, submitted by local groups, of the activities undertaken. The Community Orchards were judged as Outstanding and Charlton Station Garden gained a Gold award. Congratulations to all concerned.

### Tudor Grange Appointee

Congratulations to Denise Marney on being made permanent Manager at Tudor Grange. She joined the staff in April 2020 just after lock-

down had started and immediately began to put all her energy into the job during a very difficult period. All the residents greatly appreciate her hard work and look forward to a very fruitful future with her at Tudor Grange. Jackie Bogue and the Tudor Grange Residents

### Sad loss

We are sorry to report the death of local artist Cristiana Angelini, a number of whose works have featured in the pages of the Westcombe News. Our condolences to all her family and friends. (See Community page)

### Congratulations, Denise!

Former resident of Westcombe

Park, and contributor to the Westcombe News, Cllr Denise Scott-MacDonald, has just been elected Deputy Leader of the Council.

### Travel issues

TfL is losing money hand over fist as the Covid pandemic continues. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, asked the government to provide financial assistance. The government agreed, with conditions. One of these is that TfL has been forced to scrap the Zip Card which provides free travel for 11 – 18 year-olds. The Zip Card has been used by some 30,000 children in Greenwich, and its abolition has imposed great financial

hardship on many families – 40% of children are already living in poverty in the borough.

### Reminder to parents!

Primary school applications close on 15th January 2021. Visit the school admissions pages on RG website for further details and information at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/schooladmissions).

### Add your name

Barclays Bank at The Standard is set to close its doors to the public 15th January 2021. The bank has issued a leaflet called, 'Reasons for Closure' and you can pick one up at the branch. *WN* heard there is a petition circulating to keep it open.

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# COMMUNITY

## Westcombe News

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## MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO CRISTIANA ANGELINI 1937 - 2020

Terry Scales, chairman of The Blackheath Art Society, pays the following tribute to Cristiana Angelini.... “I first met Cristiana when I took a summer school in Kent. I was immediately struck by her determination to tackle the most difficult of subjects. That meeting developed into a bond where we were practically



inseparable. Painting together in the Kent valleys or on the Thames shoreline we were able to give each other practical criticism. I believe on our tours of Kent she saw something of her native Italy where in her earlier years she studied at the Florence Academy of Art.

In England she soon became involved in art projects and was a long-term member of and contributor to The Blackheath Art Society. Cristiana exhibited at many prestigious galleries including the Royal Academy, Whitechapel Gallery and the Mall Galleries. In 1990 Cristiana was

awarded first prize in the Laing Collection Exhibition for London and the South East. We must not forget that she achieved all this while bringing up three daughters.

More recently, The Millinery Gallery in Islington was her main exhibiting gallery where her paintings held their own against well-established artists exhibiting alongside her.

Parallel to her painting career, Cristiana was also a visiting lecturer at the Adult Education College for Bexley for some 30 years, stimulating many students. As testament to her skill as a teacher and warmth as a person many ex-students stayed in touch.

Personally I was always amazed at Cristiana's energy and always that Italian sparkle to liven us up. At her peaceful passing we say goodbye to a truly renaissance woman. She was my soulmate and I was so lucky to have shared my life with her for so many years.”



## MACMILLAN COFFEE AND CAKE FUNDRAISER

Caroline Owens

In September 2019 we were delighted to raise £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support at the Westcombe Society Coffee Morning and challenged ourselves to do it again in 2020. We booked the Hall at Mycenae House for 25th September to participate once again in The Biggest Coffee Morning in the World, but that was before Covid-19 changed our lives. As all other events had to be cancelled because of lockdown we wondered if the coffee morning would be able to go ahead. With fingers crossed we contacted our loyal volunteer cake and sandwich makers who were willing to help us once again.

We pressed on as Macmillan needs the funds raised by this event but we knew that some would be unhappy for us to do so; of course we would not do so if it was against the law. Someone took all the posters down in the area to make their views known but we had sought the opinion of Macmillan's

Legal Department and the view was that we could carry on, so that was what we did.

The day started well, apart from the weather; small tables for two were suitably spaced, the cakes and sandwiches were displayed and everything on the food stalls were covered in cellophane; the servers behind the stalls wore face masks or visors and gloves and we anxiously waited for our first customers to arrive. There was not the usual rush of customers but a steady-stream. The take home cake stall did good trade having started the day with a wide selection of attractive hand decorated cakes including one Victoria Sandwich Cake made by ten-year-olds Vasi and Amayah, pupils of Invicta School. We placed this marvellous cake on the raffle table so that more people had the chance to win it as a prize.

With most of the ‘coffee with cake’ deal

## “YOUR PAPER NEEDS YOU”

We are short of deliverers for the Westcombe News, in particular we need people to regularly deliver to Langton Way and St Johns Park and other smaller rounds near Blackheath Standard. The commitment is only once a month for ten months of the year.

However please don't be put off volunteering if you live in another part of Westcombe Park, we can always do with extra people to cover when people are away or sick and to take on rounds when people move.

*Think of all that exercise and fresh air!*

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR HISTORIC GARDEN

In April The Charlton & Blackheath Amateur Horticultural Society (CABAHS), launched the Charlton House Old Pond Garden volunteer scheme, which aims to restore one of their 400-year-old walled gardens. After just a few sessions the scheme was locked down so they missed the key Spring planting period. Things started up again on June 30th and volunteer sessions are held every Tuesday (2-4pm) and Thursday (11-1pm).

**Come and join the band of existing volunteers and work in the fresh air. All are welcome, no experience is needed, just a wish to help in the restoration of a lovely garden.**

<https://cabahs.com/old-pond-garden-project/>  
-Polly Morgan



## Letters

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

### The Poppy Appeal 2020

I hope readers will accept my thanks on behalf of the Royal British Legion for the generous donations they have made while I have been collecting at the Standard in recent years.

This year, because of the coronavirus, volunteers will not be allowed to collect inside supermarkets.

Although outdoor collecting will be possible in some circumstances it has been decided locally, and with great regret, that the pavements at the Standard and in Blackheath Village are too narrow to permit social distancing and so I will not be making my usual collection inside or outside Marks & Spencer during the last week of the Appeal. Although there will be collecting boxes in some shops it may be more diffi-

cult than usual to find a poppy.

However I hope readers will find it helpful to know in advance that I hope to bring round poppies and metal lapel badges and make a doorstep collection in Westcombe Park between Monday 2nd and Sunday 8th November. As I will not be provided with a card reader donations should be in cash or by cheque please.

Cheques should be made payable to “The Poppy Appeal”. Yours faithfully  
**David Kerr**  
**Kidbrooke Grove SE3**

### Dear Westcombe News,

It was so heartening to read the Westcombe Society's response to Greenwich Council's disastrous roads programme (Westcombe News – October Edition).

Going by social media, it

appeared the Official Monster Raving Loony Party (Greenwich Branch) were like a voice crying in the wilderness in opposing the disastrous scheme, whilst official Greenwich Council accounts and “green” zealots have expounded the increase in congestion and pollution as some sort of major success.

I'm guessing none of them actually live in our neck of the woods.

Whilst Greenwich Official Monster Raving Loony Party are all for reducing traffic volumes and pollution, we are not in favour of merely shifting the problem from the wealthiest part of the borough to the less affluent parts.

With public transport capacity reduced for the foreseeable future and Boris's “Project Fear”

making many people wary of coming into contact with others, thus increasing people using their own private vehicles if they are able, now was certainly not the time to engage in some ideological experiment, if indeed any time was suitable.

What also angers Greenwich Loonys is that whilst Greenwich Council is spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on this ludicrous roads scheme, they have cut monies to the disabled and withdrawn Discretionary Housing Payments (which offset the “Bedroom Tax”) from many of the borough's poorest residents, which we totally condemn. Yours for the Manic, not the Few, Trevor Allman  
Leader – Official Monster Raving Loony Party (Greenwich Branch)

# LOCAL NEWS

## GREENWICH COUNCIL TO TAKE OVER TEST AND TRACE

Neville Grant

In Greenwich, you would think that the national and international pandemic isn't taking place here in our borough. That's because there have been virtually no local Covid-19 Testing sites in the borough apart from a drive-through site near the O2 on the peninsula.

Well, the good news is that following representations by the Council, and by local MP Matt Pennycook, the government has

places as far away as Wales, Leicester and even Scotland. (A great way to spread the pandemic, one might think ...)

However, across the country, there have been many objections to the government hiring commercial companies, such as Serco to (mis)manage coronavirus testing, often without proper tendering procedures – seen by some as a process of creeping privatisation. The question remains: should

these centres be in the hands of the Council – or our local NHS?

The Cabinet Member for Health, Cllr Miranda Williams criticised the national Serco-Deloitte Test and Trace service run by Baroness Harding, claiming that the service was clearly not fit for purpose

Mr Steve Whiteman, acting Director of Public Health for



finally agreed to another coronavirus testing centre – at Avery Hill in Eltham.

Following an agreement with Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, Greenwich Council already manages testing in local care homes.

Up to now, testing facilities have been very limited: apart from the drive-through site near the O2, there is only a testing site in Lewisham, and a walk-through site in Deptford. There was also – briefly – a Covid testing centre for students at the University of Greenwich (but not the general public).

It is extraordinary that there have been such sparse local facilities for Greenwich residents. According to some observers, with the opening of the university, the problem could become more acute – and the need for more testing centres is in any case becoming urgent.

The new coronavirus testing centre in Eltham is good news for those local residents who, worried about their symptoms, tried to get a test, and were referred to

NHS Greenwich, said that staff were being trained on contact tracing; he pointed out that the Town Hall had better records on people than the government's outsourced service. Locally trained staff were well placed to locate people who have tested positive, and to provide advice about self-isolation and identify anyone with whom they have come into contact.

Mr Whiteman reports that the situation had already started to improve. "The diversion of resources has ceased, and there has been an increase of tests happening in London boroughs," he said.

The new testing centre in Eltham is to be welcomed; but is it enough? Only time will tell. Cllr Danny Thorpe, leader of the Council, says: "We are delighted that our efforts to get a new testing centre at Avery Hill have at last been successful. We are now hoping to have another testing centre set up in North Greenwich."

## WORK BEGINS ON DINSDALE'S DANGEROUS WALL

Work on the area in front of 49 Dinsdale Road has at last begun following several years of concern by local residents. Permission was granted to fell most of the trees in 2017. The retaining wall was deemed unsafe and temporary fencing was erected but no further work carried out, although



permission was granted in 2018 to demolish and replace the wall.

Now it appears that the land is again being cleared since many of the trees have put on new growth. An application to approve the style of bricks for the new wall has been withdrawn.

We await further developments.  
- Maggie Gravelle

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## RAISING THE UN FLAG



Photo: Brian Aldrich Photography

Greenwich Council celebrated UN Day on 21st October with a flag-raising ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Pictured: Cllr Denise Hyland, Deputy Mayor; Cllr Denise Scott-MacDonald and Neville Grant - members of Blackheath and Greenwich United Nations Association. The Preamble to the UN Charter was read out to mark the occasion.

## TEACHERS AWARDS FOR TWO AT JOHN ROAN

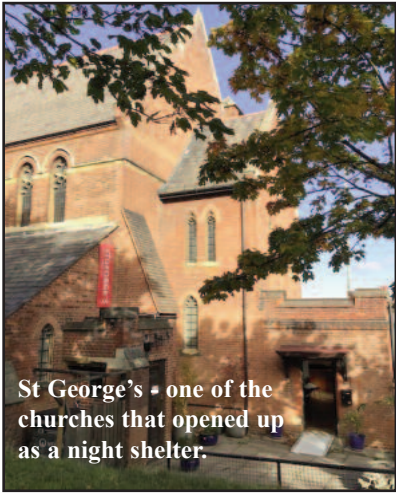
Elly Porter from the History department won the prestigious Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) of the Year award in the United Learning 'Best In Everyone' Awards this summer. In her first year of teaching Elly organised a successful mock General Election for students, arranged for several high-profile speakers, and spear-headed the fundraising campaign to buy 240 laptops to facilitate at-home learning during the pandemic and beyond.

Courtney Van-Beest ('Coach Courtney') has been awarded the prestigious title of Teacher of the Year by the Inspire Schools Educational Fund. Courtney is the head coach of the John Roan's Basketball Academy and as a Mentor works with students to support them to overcome barriers and to succeed academically.

## WN CHARITY OF THE YEAR HIT BY COVID -19

The Greenwich Winter Night Shelter (GWNS) was the Westcombe Society's charity of 2019 ( £1300 raised) and despite Covid 19 casting its shadow over the shelter's work, Marianne Gass of Trustees of GWNight Shelter reports: "We're working with the Council to find a building that can be made covid secure". Marianne says that "thanks to wonderful support and generous donations like that from The Westcombe Society we've replaced worn out mattresses and pillows, and run a very successful pilot day centre which allowed guests a safe warm place with access to computers, and clothes washing and drying facilities. We were also able to bring in experts to advise on applying for benefits and helping with job

search and to help people move into more permanent accommodation."



St George's - one of the churches that opened up as a night shelter.

## AND FINALLY.....

Wind power cometh to the Heath.

The Government has extolled the need for wind farms to decarbonise our energy needs in the future. Lo and behold, on Blackheath appeared a wind surfer squatting on a trolley and being pulled along by a serious kite (no I had not been in the pub). These are more normally found on beaches I believe. Quite a number of calories would be needed to control the "vehicle" so this must be offset against the "free" power source. Earlier inventors proposed telescopes and helicopters but were ridiculed so we must look closely at the possibilities of local wind farms etc. Also wind transport from Blackheath station car park to Greenwich Park via a dedicated, highly visible path which could also be used by cyclists and e-scooters (but the latter are not carbon-free). Southeastern trains would have to have a dedicated trolley carriage like ski racks on Swiss trains. Use in the Park might be limited by intruding trees so there would have to be a lockable trolley park outside the Park Gate.

Anonymous

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# FEATURES

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Neville Grant

During the 2012 Olympics, when Greenwich Park hosted a number of equestrian events, local residents in Ulundi Road received a letter purporting to come from Greenwich council, announcing that Ulundi Road was about to be renamed Isandlwana Road. The reason: to avoid offending the South African contingent at the Olympics. It took some time before it became apparent that the letter was a very convincing hoax.

Historians among us will recall that the Battle of Isandlwana in January 1879 was the first major engagement between British troops and the Zulu Kingdom. It was a resounding defeat for the British, and over 1,300 troops, and several hundred civilians, were killed. The Westcombe News marked the Zulu victory with a photograph of the Isandlwana Monument: one can still view the monument in what is now KwaZulu-Natal.

The Battle of Ulundi was the last Battle of the Zulu War, in which the Zulu Kingdom was defeated, and King Cetshwayo was sent into exile. Zulu sub-chiefs remained in place, but the unity of the Zulu Kingdom was destroyed.

There is no doubt that the two sides were a military threat to each other; and it has to

be acknowledged that many non-Zulu inhabitants of the region had suffered severely at the hands of the Zulu Kingdom during the ravages of the Difaqane. Some neighbouring groups took refuge in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, where King Moshoeshoe generously gave a home to the refugees. Conversely, the arrival of the British, and the Boers, was not good news for the indigenous population either.

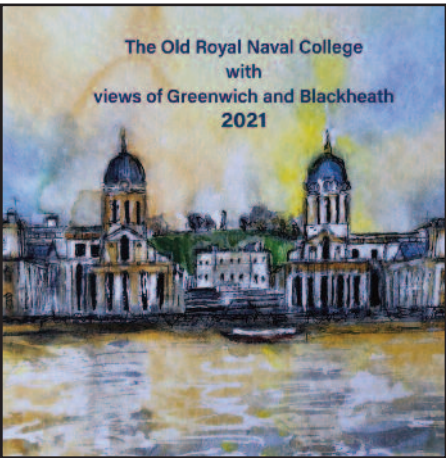
In view of the Black Lives Matter campaign, it will be interesting to see whether the residents of Greenwich decide that Ulundi Road should change its name; or that the many British nationals who died during the Zulu War deserve to be commemorated, just as the Zulu combatants are in KwaZulu-Natal.

**PERHAPS YOU KNOW THE STORY BEHIND YOUR STREET NAME?** Is Beaconsfield Road connected to Disraeli? Why is Batley Green so named? (I know the answer to that one!). Who is Humber Road named after? And, what is the connection, if any, between ancient Greece and Mycenae Road?

-Maggie Gravelle

## SILVER LINING FOR LOCAL ARTIST

When Edythe Peters, from Vanbrugh Hill, and long-time member of the Westcombe Society, retired after a career as a special needs teacher, she was looking



forward to enjoying her retirement. However, fate had different ideas; as, soon after retiring, Edythe suffered a serious injury and broke her knee in five places.

She said: "My thoughts soon turned to painting at home. I had taken A-level Art and taught painting in the past, so I thought why not give it a go. I found I loved it, I love Greenwich and started painting scenes of my historic surroundings."

"I joined Blackheath Arts Society, and they invited me to exhibit one of my paintings at Old Royal Naval College. I couldn't believe it when I sold one of my paintings!"

Edythe had always crafted hand-made Christmas cards for her friends and one of them suggested she started painting them to sell. She was overjoyed when the Old Royal Naval College ordered some for their shop and also asked her to create some calendars for Christmas. She has also sold her designs in Greenwich market, Artfix café in Greenwich and Mycenae House.

Edythe has now recovered from her knee injury and miraculously manages to walk three miles around Greenwich Park every day, taking pictures as she goes that are used to create her wonderful designs. She adds: "Painting has made me happy!"

**To view and order Edythe's creations, visit: [www.edytheart.com](http://www.edytheart.com)**

- Polly Morgan

## CHILDREN UNITED

Last month was The Fostering Network's 'Sons and Daughters Month' and it shone a spotlight on the important role foster carers' sons and daughters play in a fostering family. Royal Greenwich foster carers have over 160 children between them, and each is receiving a thank you card decorated by one of our foster children, Sinead (card pictured below).

Cllr Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in RG, said: "When a child or young person joins a fostering arrangement, the whole family plays a part in providing a safe, stable and a welcoming home to them. I'd like to personally thank all the sons and daughters of foster carers in Royal Greenwich for playing such an important role and making a positive difference to their fellow residents who need it through their kindness."

If you feel inspired to share your home and keep a young person safe this winter, please get in touch with us. Or why not join our next online information event on 12 November? If you are over 18 (and mature), have spare room and time to give, then we'd love to hear from you.

[royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fostering](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fostering)



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## IGNATIUS SANCHO

A plaque in Greenwich Park commemorates a person who lived well before the Battle of Ulundi.

Ignatius Sancho was born on a slave ship sailing from West Africa to the Spanish West Indies in 1729. At the age of two he was brought to England and 'given' to three sisters who lived in Greenwich and who probably treated him as an exotic toy. As a teenager he ran away and became a butler in the house of Duke John Montagu, close to Greenwich Park. Montagu(e) was a well known anti-slavery campaigner and regarded Ignatius as his protégé, seeing to his education and lending him books.

Ignatius moved in literary circles and was very fond of the theatre. He became a friend of David Garrick and corresponded with Laurence Sterne, the novelist. He also composed music and knew several painters including Gainsborough, who painted his portrait, now in the National Gallery of Canada.

Sancho was a prolific letter writer and used his correspondence to campaign for abolition of the slave trade.

A legacy from John Montagu gave Ignatius the opportunity to leave service, although he squandered much of this in 'good living'. Eventually, he married and settled in Westminster where he and his wife had seven children, affectionately known as the 'Sanchonets'. They opened a grocery business in Mayfair, ironically selling tobacco and sugar, commodities underpinned by slavery and the slave trade.

As a male householder Ignacio was eligible to vote - the first black man known to have done so. On his death the shop was taken over by his son, William, who converted it into a bookshop and publishing house and published his father's letters in 1782.

**His plaque can be found on the site of Montague House in the south west corner close to Queen Caroline's bath.**

## STEINER SCHOOL SEEKS INDEPENDENT GOVERNORS

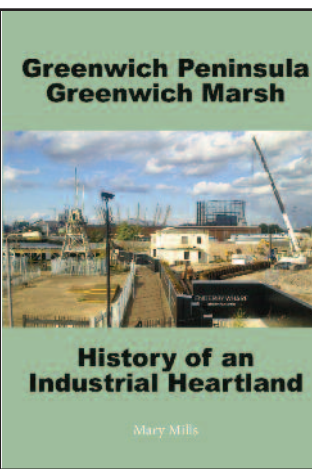
At Greenwich Steiner School we feel passionately about empowering children for life using Steiner principles at the heart of everything we do.

We opened our independent co-educational day school in 1998 and by 2023 our first cohort of students aged 17 and 18 years old will graduate with the NZCSE - a university-recognised qualification, based on continuous assessment and equivalent

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**If you would like more information, please contact the school - [admin@greenwichsteinerschool.org.uk](mailto:admin@greenwichsteinerschool.org.uk)**



A new book has been published by local historian, Dr Mary Mills, telling the story of Greenwich Peninsula.

"Greenwich Peninsula - Greenwich Marsh: History of an Industrial Heartland". Readers will discover more about the Peninsula's history in the industries of gunpowder, ship-building, cable-making, telecommunications and more.

Mary Mills has lived in Greenwich for 50 years and for 14 years was the local Labour councillor for the Peninsula and East Greenwich. She is also the Chair of Greenwich Industrial History Society.

**Available through Amazon at a price of £10. ISBN: 979-8669957155**



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# WHAT'S ON



*WN* thanks Polly Morgan for putting the What's On page together. If you have any events, happenings or entertainment you'd like publicised, please email: [wnews@westcombesociety.org](mailto:wnews@westcombesociety.org). Polly and our readers look forward to hearing from you.

## EVERYBODY SING!

Local musicians Emma Bond and Martin Batchelor established the non-profit organisation, Nightingale Music CIC during lockdown. Following a summer of singing fundraisers, held online, they are



now ready to relaunch free weekly music classes for people with disabilities and their carers at the wonderful community centre, Mycenae House, Westcombe Park. It is run in collaboration with MH Reach Out project, to help the more vulnerable in our community, From 4th November, Emma Bond will be leading the musical sessions for free, for service users and their carers, every Wednesday 2pm-3pm. Emma Bond said: "We are delighted to be welcomed back to Mycenae House in these challenging times when people with vulnerabilities need the uplifting power of music more than ever. All singing will be achieved under the strict Covid-19 Government guidelines and as stipulated by the British Association of Choral Directors, making it a safe activity for all." **To find out more, please visit:** <https://singtogether.org.uk/community> or email Emma at [info@singtogether.org.uk](mailto:info@singtogether.org.uk)

## UP THE O2 WITH SQUEEZE

Anne Williams

Local hero, Glenn Tilbrook, will be doing all he can to lift spirits and take minds off Covid-19 when he and his band Squeeze fill the O2 on 5th December with the first socially distanced live music. We asked Glenn, a long-time fan of the



Westcombe News what song would he be kicking off the show with? He replied the set list wasn't done yet but as the band have a huge songbook to choose from, a back catalogue dating 1973-2017 it probably does take time! He did say, though, that Squeeze will be playing many of their best known songs, along with newer ones, which they hope the audience will find just as entertaining.

His son Leon Tilbrook with his group

The Wilhem Scream will be opening the show. Leon is part of the rich vibrant music club scene that is happening in Greenwich, Deptford, Peckham areas these days; a scene that reminds Glenn of his early beginnings with Squeeze. Will Leon be nervous playing in front of the large audience at the O2? His father didn't think so, saying proudly, "He's very talented, cares about his music and will put on a good show."

When asked if he would find the social distancing off putting, Glenn said he'd played a couple of shows with Tom Kerridge over last summer where the audience stayed with their cars (not in them) having picnics and drinks, and what he realised was that what everyone enjoyed transcended social distancing - the sense of joy, relief and feelings of communication that music brings.

So Glenn and Squeeze are very much looking forward to kicking off the O2's first show since March. They know everyone wants the show to do well proving that playing live, adhering to the rules of safety, can work very successfully. Although it is not a financial model that will be sustainable long term, he adds.

So how does he feel about playing virtually? He says his bandmate, Chris Gifford

has played quite a bit virtually and that they were actually both in his south London studio that day setting up cameras and deciding how the musicians can use the different rooms to socially distance whilst they play together.

It was time for the telephone interview to finish and I just managed to get in a last question: "What was his favourite Squeeze song?" Glenn thought about it but couldn't bring himself to name a single song. "How can I?" he said, "they are all my babies!"

Thanks Glenn for talking to the *WN*, we wish you the best show ever at the O2 and I'm sure lots of our readers will be in the audience cheering you on.

**Book your tickets here:**  
<https://www.theo2.co.uk/events/detail/squeeze-2020>



## ICE-RINK RETURNS

The only outdoor ice rink in south east London and popular with all who visit it is back this Christmas – no mean feat in these Covid times!



Bringing some Christmas cheer and set against the striking backdrop of the

Queen's House, visitors will have the opportunity to skate in the beautiful surroundings - and this year the rink is even bigger.

New measures have been introduced to make sure that everybody can enjoy the ice rink safely. There will be hygiene standards fit for royalty, with enhanced cleaning regimes and handwashing sanitation facilities available. Meanwhile staggered skate sessions will ensure there are fewer people on the ice at any one time.

The Queen's House ice rink is open from 20 November 2020 – 10 January 2021 from 11am - 8pm (last skate 7pm) on off-peak days or 10am - 9pm (last skate 8pm) on peak days. Advanced booking is recommended. visit [rmg.co.uk/skate](http://rmg.co.uk/skate)

## PLANETARIUM REOPENS

If you are a bit tired of this planet right now, why not journey to another one and leave 2020's problems behind.

The Greenwich Planetarium has reopened on its site at the Observatory.

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/solar-system-discovery-virtual-planetarium-show>.  
<https://www.rmg.co.uk/see-do/exhibitions-events/one-day-on-mars>  
Book your tickets by phone only, as places are limited: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/planetarium-shows>



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# FEATURES

## BABIES BORN IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

WN Team

Having a baby is a unique experience for every new mum. But the current crisis means that this ‘unique’ experience will be challenging, to say the least. We spoke to three local women welcoming motherhood while life is in upheaval around them.

### ANNA

Anna, petite and heavily pregnant with her second child, was walking slowly up Westcombe Hill en route to Mycenae Gardens with her chatty four-year-old and a yappy dog running circles round her. Her due date was a few weeks away and Anna was weary of Covid-19 and the extra worry and anxiety it was causing her pregnancy.

Anna was in her first trimester when, in March, Boris Johnson added pregnant women to the ‘at risk’ category. “I cried when I heard the breaking news update,” she recalls, realising then and there that this second pregnancy would be harder than her first.

“I was very anxious, knowing I’d been at work and commuting to and from Blackheath and New Cross during the start of the virus peak. Also, my husband Adam was still working and so wasn’t able to self-isolate with me and this intensified the anxiety...would he bring the virus home?”

To intensify the experience, Anna developed complications that resulted in water retention which meant several extra trips to hospital. “During the first and second

trimester I went to a private clinic. My anomaly scan appointments fell in April and May when hundreds of people were dying in hospital daily.” Due to the restrictions, partners/husbands could not go along to these appointments. “I felt very isolated and nervous,” Anna remembers. “What if I got bad news? Adam wasn’t there to support me, not even just to hold my hand.”

On Monday morning, 28th September, Anna called a cab to take her – alone – to hospital to be induced. “I was given a Covid-19 test on arrival and all staff were in full PPE gear”.



How scary that must have been! Anna had a long, dramatic birth. “I was relieved when, after 28 hours of solo labour they took me to theatre to do a C-section. This meant the doctors judged the labour to be ‘active’ meaning Adam was

now allowed to support me and see our daughter Frida come into the world.”

After five days in hospital – a place no one wanted to be – Anna went home with her newborn. “Frida and I received one home visit from a midwife and all follow-up appointments will now be via phone. I have to weigh Frida myself, and if I’m worried about her you can’t just walk into a baby clinic.”

“I worry for first-time mums who might be struggling with postnatal depression or simply need some encouragement and professional support.”



quarantine period had been lifted.

“I’m very happy to be pregnant,” she told us. “It’s such a wonderful gift and a lovely piece of news to share (soon) in such down times.”

This local mum-to-be didn’t let the virus put her off falling pregnant. “It’s a shame to allow Covid to control every aspect of our lives,” she said. “At some point we will return to normal or simply find the new normal, so life must go on!”

“But I am having to think about where the baby will be born and if my husband will be able to be with me at the time, or attend any of the appointments. It’s hard to tell what 2021 will bring so I try not to overthink it. What matters the most to me is being healthy and the baby being healthy.”

“I’m excited to meet the baby and start our lives together. What’s happening with Covid and all the other insanities of the world cannot be helped, we can only do our bit to put it right and that’s how I will raise my child to be.”

### STEFF

Our third mother, Steff Haire, choose Chelsea and Westminster hospital to have her first baby, Albert (Albi) who arrived on one of the hottest days of the year. All the doctors and nurses were in

full PPE gear and Steff herself had to wear a mask whilst giving birth which must have been suffocating for all!

Steff managed to get a referral to Lewisham Midwives at Manor House Library attending every five days for about three weeks. “They did all the health checks and weigh-ins so we were really well looked after.”

The week Steff gave birth the rules changed allowing partners to join, so Charlie was able to be there from 8am - 8pm so, “he was there from beginning to end.”



It is very pleasing to hear this pandemic is not stopping the babies arriving but it does mean the ever-changing rules of Covid are affecting the experience of motherhood to a great degree. Frida’s entrance was a challenging one, whilst Albi and his parents had a smoother time. Perhaps the quarantine baby will take the middle path? And that’s life! WN wishes all mums the best of everything going forward.

## ‘IN WORDS’ IS BACK!

Irena Hill through ‘in-words’, her small company aiming to showcase local (but not only) authors, especially poets, with live readings at the wonderful West Greenwich Library and sometimes at The Prince of Greenwich and The Greenwich Tavern pubs. After a long break for obvious reasons, Irena has overcome her reluctance to host events on Zoom and had her first event in October, with two poets reading from their homes in the West Country. Exciting! Australia next? Who knows, but in the meantime a November reading is scheduled for Remembrance evening, 11th November at 7.30pm and will feature South London poets Chrissie Gittins and Wendy French and the musical duo The Moonpennies. More information on [www.in-words.co.uk](http://www.in-words.co.uk)

Zoom invitations will be emailed to those interested the day before the FREE event, so if you’d like to attend please email [irena@in-words.co.uk](mailto:irena@in-words.co.uk) in good time.

## NEWS FROM WOODLANDS FARM

Diane Blackwell

Our precious local Woodlands Farm Trust survived an attempt by developers to build on its 89 acres in the mid 90s, and it’s not going to let a virus bring it down now.

Disappointing Spring/Summer weather meant the farm’s hay harvest was a disaster and Covid means they are closed to the public, but some staff and volunteers are still working – busy hedging, repairing and gardening.

Visitors and schools can’t learn about farm life and experience Woodlands’ treasure trove of native birds, butterflies, wildflowers and ancient woodlands.

There are also no farm shows this year, so another source of has income gone. BUT... the Trust is still solvent as a result of prudent cash management. Although Farm management have to be very careful they are extremely grateful for the donations they receive.

The Farm is very grateful to Royal Borough of Greenwich for their newly-resurfaced entrance and farmyard, funded by a Neighbourhood Community Grant.

The Farm’s cattle, sheep, pigs and small animals are thriving including their herd of Manx Laoghtan sheep, one of the ancient breeds and it is vital, like all rare

native breeds, that they continue as part of the national gene pool for the future.

And that future? Says Maggie Jones from the Woodlands Farm Trust: “We’re still locked down now, but one day we’ll be welcoming you all back. A lot of thought and planning is going into possibly refocusing our farming activities towards more conservation and reviewing and expanding the range of educational experiences we offer.”

For now, the Farm cannot allow the public to drive in and out to buy items but [Sales@thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org](mailto:Sales@thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org) will take orders online and agree pick-up times.



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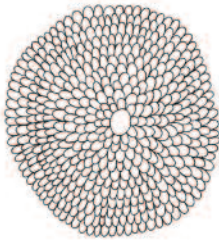
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# ENVIRONMENT



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](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning)

## AIR POLLUTION -THE INCONVENIENT FACT

On October 3rd the Guardian reported that air pollution in London had 'plunged' with a 94% reduction in the number of people living in areas with dangerous, and illegal, levels of NO2. This has been achieved in part by charges that have penalised drivers of the most polluting vehicles. The reduction in traffic during lockdown has also had a noticeable effect on air pollution.

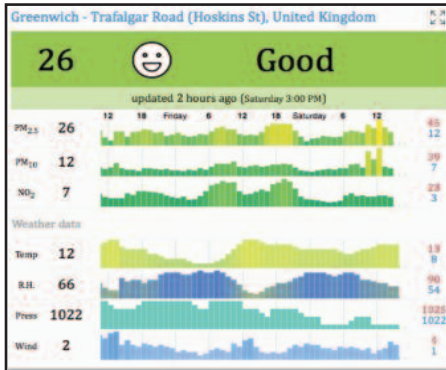
However, almost a quarter of roads with in the north and south circulars still exceed the legal limit for NO2, a situation that may be ameliorated by the proposed extension of the Ultra Low Emission Zone in October 2021.

The London Air Quality Network which is run by Imperial College, monitors air quality across the capital and has monitoring sites in all boroughs. It records and reports daily values of all airborne pollutants. The nearest sites to Westcombe Park are Trafalgar Road and John Harrison Way, both of which regularly report very low levels of pollution, and the Woolwich Flyover which has slightly higher, but still low levels. Some pollutants, such as NO2, fluctuate throughout the day, being highest at mid-day. Others, such as particulates are steadier, but still relatively low, although they can reach higher levels near the Woolwich Flyover.

Simon Pirani of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies investigated the impact of the Silvertown Tunnel on behalf of a coalition of groups campaigning to stop the tunnel. The report was published by Transport Action Network in June this year. It argued that far from reducing the environmental

impact, the effect of the tunnel would be at best to redistribute and at worst increase pollution levels. It also claimed that there would be an 'induced traffic' effect with an increase in vehicles, particularly HGVs.

It concluded that: "We are particularly concerned at how the tunnel will expose some of the most vulnerable communities to more air pollution and will do little to help them with their everyday transport. The current crisis has highlighted the benefits of clean air and that those who suffer high levels of air pollution are more vulnerable to infections and diseases. If we



Air quality at Trafalgar Road (Hoskins St.) This graph was taken from the Real Time Air Quality Index website (<https://aqicn.org/city/london/>) This is an example of the information available to the general public.

really want to create a fairer society and rectify some of the inequalities within it, we need to start acting like we mean it. A good place to start would be to scrap this tunnel and to invest in cleaner and healthier solutions instead." -Maggie Greville

## GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO UNDERTAKE MAJOR PLANNING REFORM

By Helen Warner

There have been two major White Papers out for consultation with deadlines in October. At the start of October was Changes to the Current Planning System. This focused on the method for assessing housing targets in strategic plans.

### Housing targets – the new Standard Method

The proposal is for a target of 300,000 dwellings per annum for England. This would be distributed by central government to local authority level based upon a formula/algorithm – the new Standard Method. On analysis, this algorithm skews allocations to building more homes in areas with high house prices, i.e. London and the South East, regardless of whether there is the capacity to deliver these numbers. It would result in c93,500 pa being the “housing requirement” for London, nearly double that in the (Intend to Publish) New London Plan (NLP).

It is widely agreed that the White Paper target would not be achievable in London and risks protections for Metropolitan Open Land – the critical green space accessible to Londoners – heritage assets or other amenities or green belt, or would result in even more high rise towers. Within the last twelve months, an Inspectorate Panel examined the NLP developed over several years by the Mayor and reduced the Mayor’s original London-wide housing target to 52,000 pa. In the NLP, borough-level targets are the result of redistribution based on boroughs’ ability to accommodate additional housing. The White Paper target would increase the number of homes Greenwich would be required to build by more than 50%, from 2,824 (NLP) to 4,289 (White Paper) annually.

It is all very well setting high targets, but if developers with building consents do not actually develop the site(s), there will be a

growing number of unimplemented ‘housing consents’ and there are already around 300,000 unbuilt units in London.

### ‘First Homes’

The White Paper contained other proposals of concern – notably the enforced delivery that 25% of all ‘affordable homes’ built would be ‘First Homes’. From statistics published by the GLA, 80% of all new homes delivered are affordable by only 8% of Londoners. Those that fall into the category of First Homes would be affordable to only the richest 2% of households in London, (i.e. those with incomes over £76,000, assuming a 30% discount on market value).

### Infrastructure Levy

There are also proposed changes to the way Councils would receive funds to develop and improve local infrastructure. Clearly, it is not sensible to build additional housing schemes without consideration for the local and wider infrastructure (roads, transport, open space, services, etc). The proposals would give concessions on payments of the Infrastructure Levy to the Local Authority by developers of First Homes and ‘small site developments’ i.e. 40 or 50 units. This would reduce the sums available (and worryingly, a further proposal in the Planning for the Future White Paper – also out for consultation - that the Levy would be paid only after the homes were sold).

The Westcombe Society supported the London Forum of Civic and Amenity societies’ detailed response to this consultation which they made on behalf of 130 London societies and you can view this at [https://www.londonforum.org.uk/reports/London\\_Forum\\_response\\_to\\_'Changes\\_to\\_the\\_Current\\_Planning\\_System'\\_consultation.pdf](https://www.londonforum.org.uk/reports/London_Forum_response_to_'Changes_to_the_Current_Planning_System'_consultation.pdf)

## ENJOYING THE GARDEN IN NOVEMBER

Ann Hill

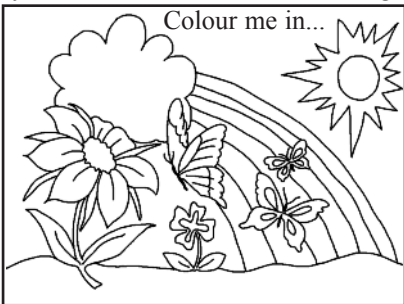
This is a good month to enjoy the vibrant colours of autumn. It is also the best month for planting tulips, whether in the ground or in pots. Plant them deep – 20cm. Their lovely colours will brighten any space from March onwards. Now is also the time to plant indoor hyacinths, hippeastrum and paper white narcissus. Watching them grow is enjoyable, and the flowers and scent are an added delight.

The usual advice is to lift dahlias this month, cut the stems down to 15cm and store in a dry place. I leave mine in the ground as the pebbly soil is very free draining, but this can be risky and the tubers may rot.

Here are a few jobs to enjoy this time of year:

•Plant bare-root roses, shrubs and trees

- Clear away fallen leaves, especially from lawns and ponds
- Cut away soggy foliage from the base of perennials to prevent pests overwintering
- Leave strong stems with seed heads for birds
- Leave ornamental grasses untouched until



the spring

- Remove saucers under pots to prevent waterlogging. Raise onto clay feet if possible
- To store dahlias, clean off the soil and turn upside down for a few days

to let moisture drain

•Put food out to encourage garden birds.

On wet dreary days we can plan ahead and look forward to the re-awakening that spring will bring.

## EXTINCTION REBELLION PLANT TREES, STAGE A DIE-IN AND TRADE FACTS

For Clean Air Day, Extinction Rebellion planted 26 silver birch trees at the planned locations of the North and South ends of the Silvertown Tunnel to represent the 26 lives lost each day in London due to air pollution, while catastrophic global heating is already irreversible. This acts as a beautiful and tragic monument to the satirical folly of building yet another road to reduce traffic when this has never worked in the history of the internal combustion engine, turning our minds and hearts towards another kind of future. Activists additionally staged a die-in to further bring home the human cost of irresponsible developments that ignore grave environmental concerns.

Our Government, the Mayor of London, and Transport for London have pressed ahead with the construction of the Silvertown Tunnel, knowing full well that its economic model is flawed and that the tunnel will breach the UK's commit-

ment to the Paris Agreement.

Why do we care, when London apparently needs additional river crossings? 26 people die each day as a direct consequence of air pollution in London - which is already above recommended levels across the boroughs of Newham and Greenwich. We need to take an immediate and drastic look at how we can reduce air pollution, arising from increasing traffic in London. The Silvertown Tunnel will affect areas in Greenwich and Newham the worst, pushing



ing entire swathes of residents into a life of lower quality, plagued by chronic respiratory disease and possibly death, further exacerbating economic inequities.

The Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition has been lobbying and local MPs have written to the

Mayor to ask him to reconsider

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

There are none that will still be in date by the time the November issue comes out.

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