

Westcombe NEWS

Free to 3800 homes, in libraries and shops and online

November 2021 No.9



“At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them” from For the Fallen by Laurence Binyon

Driving, The Millennium Way

Neville Grant

Over the past year, drivers have been having difficulties dropping off passengers. For years they have been accustomed to using the only place available to them – a bus stop seldom used adjacent to the station, in Millennium Way.

On 19th October last year, the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) commenced CCTV enforcement and, after initially issuing Warning Notices, started to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) from 2nd November.

Several drivers were caught out; not having received warning notices, they simply did what they had done for years dropping people off - often older or disabled people. In some cases, drivers dropped off husbands, wives or children on their way to work.

A parking fine is usually £30 or sometimes £60. RBG started handing out fines for £130.

RBG point out that the lay-by is clearly marked as a bus stop clearway – just as it always has been – and it is clear in the Highway Code that you should not stop or park in a bus stop. RBG also points out that the bus stop provides “essential” extra capacity for North Greenwich bus station, especially in the event of planned and emergency works or in the event of an evacuation of the tube or bus station. RBG also says that TfL has raised several complaints about illegal parking here over a number of years.

Questioned over the issue by local Cllr Geoff Brighty, the Council said that a second lay-by has now been constructed. The official short-term drop off/pick up point is now inside the station complex; its delay due to the pandemic and the subsequent withdrawal of funding by Transport for London. Additional delays were caused by deciding on the location of way-finding signage for the alternative location. RBG also had to seek advice what wording for the signs should be used. An official said: “As the Highway Authority we need to ensure that this is correct so that we are not left open for legal challenge.”

Many drivers are angry, it certainly seems that things could have been handled better.



New Wheels at the Standard

Meet the team Rich, Daniel, Vaidas and Wesley (left to right above) serving up, not another cafe or take-away (we have a good selection already) - but bikes. The team behind the new shop at The Standard hope to provide cyclists of all stripes with quality service and a lack of pretence - there's "no need to put on your bike shop face here" they say. Owners Vaidas Grabauskas and Richard Kerr are keen cyclists. Vaidas hails from Lithuania, and cycled for the Junior Olympic team back in the 90's.

Silvertown Tunnelling Timeline

Marilyn Little

The construction of the Silvertown Tunnel moves ahead as much of the preparatory work has now been undertaken or is underway. A brief summary of the Tunnel construction timescale is given below. (The dates are indicative.)

- * Construction of the Tunnel Boring Machine launch chamber will be complete in early 2022 which will allow southbound tunnelling to commence from Newham to Greenwich in Q1 2022 and finish in Q3 2022.
- * Construction of the Rotation chamber which facilitates the turning of the tunnel boring machine will commence in Q3 2021 and be complete Q3 2022.
- * After the Tunnel Boring Machine has

been turned the northbound tunnelling will commence in Q4 2022 and be complete in Q2 2023.

* Testing and commissioning takes place from Q3 2023 to Q1 2025.

Community Liaison Meetings organised, by Riverlinx, are held quarterly and are attended by a number of interested parties including local amenity societies, schools, councillors and other groups. TfL are also represented and can respond to questions not directly related to the tunnel construction, rather surrounding infrastructure and environment. Riverlinx present an update on the project and questions are invited from attendees to further understand aspects or to raise issues.

The Westcombe Society is represented and focuses on items of local interest such as the noise barriers, lorry movements, southbound A102 vehicle numbers and pollution, to ensure that these requirements/concerns are taken forward to satisfactory conclusion.

Further details and a project plan can be found at <http://www.riverlinx.co.uk/virtualalexhibition>

Questions can be sent to environment@westcombesociety.org and will either be answered directly or taken forward to the next liaison meeting in December. Questions can also be directed to help@riverlinxcjv.co.uk and copied to environment@westcombesociety.org.

A Happy Ending for Nugget and Berger

The smallest owl was given to our local animal rescue heroine, Tracey Parsons, after being found on the Cator Estate with a badly damaged eye. He was given treatment and pain relief then transferred by wildlife transporter Paul Elliott from The Greenwich Wildlife Network to rehabber Kelly Wolmer who lives in Great Yarmouth and runs RWR Runham Wildlife Rescue.

Kelly sent WN this report on the two owls pictured right. “Nugget and Berger are permanent residents at the rescue here. Both owls have had a hard start in life and have long term disabilities. Berger (the darker brown aka grey) suffered head trauma and ocular injury called hyphema at a very young age, he was unable to stand or regain balance and his eye was severely damaged. After a long period of rehabilitation and handfeeding and commitment by the staff here he lost the use of the eye but has overcome all his other challenges, he is now a healthy, happy little owl with a lot of personality.”

“Nugget (the lighter orange aka brown) came as a beautiful healthy, captive-bred baby but was having trouble navigating; he was diagnosed with retinal detachment in one eye. With something in common these two have built an unconventional relationship and formed an unbreakable bond.”

“Owls have very complex needs. These two have trained hard and become beautiful additions to our extended rescue family.”

<https://www.runhamwildliferescue.org>
or <https://www.greenwichwildlifework.org/>

Nugget and Berger



The Westcombe Society QUIZ NIGHT

27th November
7pm for 7.30 start

This very popular event is taking place at Mycenae House. Please book your team of six or come on your own and you will be allocated to a team by calling Marilyn on 8853 1312 or by email to info@westcombesociety.org by 13th November to secure your booking.

Tickets £5 members, £6 non-members. ‘Chippy’ suppers can be ordered in advance but we are awaiting an update on prices.

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The Freedom of Greenwich Awards

Leading Greenwich historian and an award-winning novelist are among those who have received a most prestigious award.

On 4th October the following people have been awarded the Freedom of the Royal Borough of Greenwich:
Dr. Kevin Fewster CBE AM
Bernardine Evaristo OBE
Dr. Barry Gray
The following people have been awarded Alderman and Alderwoman of the Borough:
Alderwoman of the Borough:
Mavis Best, MBE
Alderman of the Borough:
Allan MacCarthy

Book Review:

111 Places in Greenwich...

Anyone living in Greenwich knows that it is a great place to live. But how many of us can claim we really know Greenwich?

Even those who have lived here for forty years or more, as I have done, will be surprised by what they find in a wonderful new book that has just come out – **111 Places in Greenwich That You Shouldn't Miss**. The book sings the praises of all the places you would expect, but what about those that are much less well-known?

This book, the size of a paperback, is full of revelations. How many of us have



Memorial to Tom Cribb bare-knuckle fighter 1781-1848

even heard of the Monument to a Dead Parrot (pic below)? The Blue Cross Pet Cemetery? Lesnes Abbey? Well Hall Pleasaunce? Tom Cribbs's Grave?

It has taken a French woman, local resident Solange Berchemin, and Martin Dunford, a well-known Rough Guide writer, to produce this book with brilliant photographs of every place listed by another local, Karen Tearle. Every household in Greenwich should have a copy! Published by Emons: Verlag BmbH 2021 236 pages £12.99 in all good bookshops

The Westcombe News Challenge:

We challenge readers of this book to send in pen portraits of 111 words for one of the places you think should have been included – and isn't (photo also welcomed). The *W/N* will print the six best entries!



Both pictures by Solange Berchemin

Plans for Peninsula Gardens

Peninsula Gardens is the area of the Millennium Retail Park closest to Westcombe Park. The development would result in considerable change to the area around IKEA, B&Q and the Odeon. 1,300 new homes, commercial space for shops, offices and cafes are planned around a public square with parking space underneath it.

A public consultation was held in the second half of July. 60 people attended in person and 73 online. There were divided views about the provision of 1,300 new homes with roughly 50% being opposed and 40% in favour. In contrast nearly 70% of respondents supported the idea of a new

public square and a similar proportion positive about the 'range of non-residential ground floor uses'.

The main concerns were about the height and density of the buildings and of the capacity of local infrastructure, particularly transport, to respond to the increase in population.

Further public engagement events are planned for the autumn. Contact the community engagement team by emailing MillenniumRetailPark@kandaconsulting.co.uk if you have any questions. This scheme could impact on all of us one way or another.

-Maggie Gravelle

The Bereavement Journey

Are you grieving someone's death or struggling with the long-term effects of loss? St John's Church is offering a six-session course in November. It will be run in small groups. The course cost is free. Course dates:

Tuesday 2nd November, 7pm-9pm.
Then Tuesdays 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th November and Tuesday 7th December.

Each session will comprise of two short talks followed by a discussion and a mid-way break. Light refreshments also available at the start of the evening for those who might be coming straight from work. Attendance for all of the first five sessions is recommended, though starting from session two is possible.

Topics include: • Attachment, separation and loss • The impact and pain of bereavement • Adjusting to change • Anger and guilt • Coping with others' reactions • Moving on healthily • And an optional 6th session on Faith questions

The Bereavement Journey is for anyone who has been bereaved at any time. It was developed at Holy Trinity Brompton Church in central London and appreciated by thousands of people over 20 years. Visit www.stjohnsblackheath.co.uk for more details and/or sign up via Eventbrite, or ring 020 8305 0520.

Christmas Is Coming Early to The East Greenwich Pleasaunce

On Sunday 5th December, The Bridge East Greenwich, the Friends of the East Greenwich Pleasaunce and the Café in the Park, are kicking off the festive season in style!

Father Christmas will be making his long-awaited post-Covid return to SE10. Each child will receive a gift and listen to a story. DJ Toby will be playing some festive songs too and there will be mulled wine and mince pies for the grown ups.

Then head out of the gate to be met by the Halstow Community Choir singing under the twinkly lights and some hot festive drinks and delicious food at the café. Browse the market stalls and get some of your Christmas shopping in early.

Pre-booking for The Bridge grotto will open on Monday 8th November. There will be a few, very limited drop-in spaces available, so pre-booking is recommended. The grotto is low cost to ensure it is open to all. All activities outside The Bridge do not require a ticket.

Anyone interested in having a market stall or helping to sponsor the event, please email thebridgechristmas@gmail.com
"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!!"

-Lucie Murphy

Newsbriefs * * * *

Traffic Update

There has been little improvement in the traffic conditions affecting Westcombe Park since the re-opening of the Hyde Vale filter.

This suggests that either the signage is not effective, the route itself is not popular or is not known to be reopen for two hours in the rush hour.

In any event it is important that residents continue to respond to the West Greenwich LTN consultation at <https://consultations.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/> The consultation is open until February 2022.

Micro Brewery on Barclays Site

A decision was made at this weeks Planning Committee to permit the application for the micro-brewery to go ahead with a few conditions.

A Westcombe Society representative, at the meeting said, "This was approved 4 for and 1 against but with important conditions: no outdoor seating or bins in the area by no. 43 fronting Vanbrugh park. The chair said it was a difficult application because under the new change of use rules, something more disruptive to the area could occupy that space such as a betting establishment, or 24 hour retail shop.

Fireworks on the Heath

CANCELLED for another year. Due to the pandemic and budget restraints.

Climate Vulnerability Map

A series of London-wide climate risk maps has been produced to analyse climate exposure and vulnerability across Greater London. The maps, produced by Bloomberg Associates, in collaboration with the Greater London Authority and may be of interest to readers.

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:

Family Membership £12 []

Individual Membership £8 []

Senior Citizens/Unwaged £4 []

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WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Chrysanthemum Tea



For a good dose of cheer there's nothing better than a cuppa and a natter with friends. Partakers of this year's Chrysanthemum Tea - making a welcome return after 2020's Covid cancellation – chatted up a storm.

Delicious sandwiches and cakes were washed down with tea and laughter. There was a fun (delightfully challenging) quiz with prizes but the highlight of the get-together was the surprise appearance of long-time Westcombe Society volunteer and friend to all, Myles Dove, 94.

- Diane Blackwell

Good Neighbours

Beaconsfield Road has been the location over the last month for Series 2 of the BBC thriller 'The Capture'.

The BBC says this six-part gripping drama "will again question if we can really believe what we see. Britain is under siege: hacked news feeds, manipulated media, and interference in politics". Holliday Grainger plays Detective Inspector Rachel Carey and Callum Turner plays Lance Corporal Shaun Emery. Joining the cast is Paapa Essiedu as a young, ambitious, idealistic MP.

cont. top of next column.....

Donations for Afghanistan Refugees

Since August the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) has taken in over 400 Afghan refugees, most of whom possessed virtually nothing but the clothes they wore on their flights over to the UK.

An appeal for donations of clothes and toiletries was put out by Christ Church, Trafalgar Road (Parish of East Greenwich); organised by The Revd Jane Petrie (Team Vicar for Holy Trinity on the Peninsula), in conjunction with RBG staff. Greenwich residents generously donated items of clothing, shoes, nappies and sanitary products for distribution to the refugees.

At my house, Poplar Cottage in Charlton Road, I received about 30 large bags of clothing; overall, approximately 150 - 170 bags and boxes of donations were received at Christ Church.

The clothing and shoes were sorted into various categories by gender and age

continued.....

In reality having that large a production on your doorstep/in your road is very intrusive to everyday life. Crowd scenes staged in the road, parking bays suspended and there are those 'officials' with a walkie talkie and a film crew security jacket, stationed at either end of the road stopping you as you drive out/in. "Sir/Madam, this will just take a few minutes." Only, as anyone who has been on a film/TV set knows...nothing takes just a minute.

Two long-time neighbours, living in close proximity to the Production, got together on the pavement to consider the fairness of it all. After all this was becoming quite a regular occurrence in their road.

Et voila! NBCUniversal International Studios have donated £500 to the Westcombe Society for inconvenience and disruption to neighbours: the donation is warmly received.

Fancy Being a Paperboy/Girl Again?

Volunteers wanted! To deliver the Westcombe News. Rounds generally take about half an hour, ten times a year at the end of every month (except December and July).

Papers arrive in a bag, some pick up from Coleraine Road, others from Westcombe Hill and, where necessary, we deliver to the deliverer (though it is a huge help if they can be collected). There are currently 70 rounds covering the whole area.

Right now we have a vacant round in Vanbrugh Park but often need help when other deliverers are away or ill. Rounds also become available on a regular basis as deliverers move or have to stop for a variety of reasons. Most rounds involve steps so good for the thighs!

If you'd like to help contact Emily Norton on 0208 853 2756

Cont....

(including items for babies and children). I have never sorted clothes like that before, and it felt quite odd to be ploughing through people's personal belongings... making decisions about which clothes might or might not suit a teenage girl or boy is not exactly my strong point. Some of the clothes and shoes still had shop labels on!

Tea Hut Reappears

As many of our readers may have noticed, the tea hut on Blackheath has reappeared. This came as a surprise, not least it appears to Lewisham Council. Following the accident in which a car came off the A2 and ploughed into the hut, the owner, with the assistance of the Blackheath Society, had been in negotiations with Royal Borough of Greenwich, who in turn had been talking to the Crown Estate about the possible relocation of the tea hut to the abandoned toilet block next to Folly Pond outside Greenwich Park. Things had been progressing nicely until the Crown Estate recently underwent an internal reorganisation causing negotiations to come to a halt. It seems that the owner



felt let down by this and decided to reoccupy the original site, relying on his original licence. The new tea hut is a mobile temporary structure, and it is hoped that once the Crown Estate has appointed a new case officer for this project, the original plan will proceed.

- Mike Norton



Letters

To the Westcombe Society

I am writing to thank you for the very enjoyable tea party on Saturday.

It is very good of you to put this on and I am sure it is much appreciated by everybody. A great deal of work must have gone into it to make it run so smoothly. We from Tudor Grange particularly enjoy the quiz, which is always fiendishly difficult but we try our best! One year we actually won it but alas our star solver has died. All thanks for all the things you do for us.

Rosemary Heath

Dear Editor

The Poppy Appeal 2021

I hope you will find room to publish my thanks on behalf of the Royal British Legion for the generous donations Westcombe News readers made in 2020 and in earlier years while I have been collecting door to door in Westcombe Park and at the Standard. Although last year the Appeal had to close five days early because of a coronavirus lockdown, and I

was only able to collect in Westcombe Park for three days, your generosity contributed to my raising a significant and very urgently needed sum.

This year, because of current coronavirus infection rates it has been decided locally, and with great regret, that the usual street collection in Blackheath Village would be again be unwise. Although there will be collecting boxes in some shops it may be more difficult than usual to find a poppy.

I therefore hope readers will find it helpful to know in advance that if the weather is dry I hope to bring round poppies and metal lapel badges and make a doorstep collection in Westcombe Park between Monday 8th and Thursday 11th November. I also hope to collect under cover at Marks & Spencer on wet days and on Friday and Saturday 12th and 13th 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

Cont...Afghan Refugees

Overall, the collection was a great success, indeed it was judged there was more than enough for this particular appeal. Clothing was forwarded to refugees through the Red Cross, some remained at the Forum for distribution later on.

So, a big 'thank you' to everyone who donated items so promptly.

It is still possible to support this work for refugees, not with clothing and goods at the moment, but financially through various local organisations; a list can be found at:

<https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/refugeeswelcome>

-John Philpott-Howard, Assistant priest East Greenwich ministry

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FEATURES

Keep (Morris) Dancing!



I am writing in a state of contented exhaustion. Today Greenwich Morris Men danced two sets at the Horn Fair at Charlton House. This was our first proper public performance in the two years since Covid wiped out the dancing calendar. As the public isn't about at 5.15am we did honour our traditional commitment to dance on Blackheath as the sun comes up on May Day, but festivals such as Rochester Sweeps were cancelled, along with community events.

We usually have the honour of dancing before Queen Elizabeth, the Princess of Wales and the Duke of Sussex. Not this year, because those pubs, along with all the others, were shut. In the confusion of changing rules even practising became impossible - how many people could gather? Could we meet outside? Are we an arts organisation?

It was, then, with joy that this afternoon we danced, to live music, to a live audience. People who were so enthusiastic that, at the end, little persuasion was needed to press them into joining in 'Bonny Green Garters', the traditional Morris farewell dance.

Why, I wondered, as I capered, caught sticks and attempted Adderbury heys and other moves, does Morris dancing matter to me as it does? There is the pleasure of collaboration, doing something together;

there is ambition (it might not be obvious but we do try to get it right); there is the primal pleasure of exuberant exercise, and of performing. There is the music, too, tunes such as Shepherds Hey, Speed the Plough and The Nutting Girl - these are beautiful and, along with the one, two, three, hop Morris step, somewhat strange.

Also important is the satisfaction of tradition, of knowing that people have been doing this generation after generation. I felt this acutely today. In 1268 King Henry III granted a three-day fair to the Abbey of Bermondsey, which owned the manor of Charlton, and that was the beginning of The Horn Fair. The earliest reference we have to Morris dancing is from 1448. Given the Horn Fair's reputation for ribaldry and misrule, there's no doubt that people have been Morris dancing at Charlton Horn Fair for centuries.

Greenwich Morris Men are back in their winter quarters, Mycenae House, practising every Thursday evening at 8.00. Any men who would like to give the original street dance a try, and to ensure that the lively tradition of Morris dancing continues in the centuries to come, are assured of a warm welcome.

- **Julian May**
(bagman@greenwichmorris.org.uk Tel: 01322 515 450)

November dates for the diary:
5th Guy Fawkes Night
11th Armistice Day

13th World Kindness Day
14th Remembrance Sunday
(2 minutes silence at 11am)

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Donate, Donate, Donate

When you are in the supermarket do you notice the box for donations? Perhaps you put something in from your shopping. Maybe you are one of those organised people who have checked the Greenwich App to see what they are short of?

Foodbanks rely on food donated so that people going through a crisis, unable to manage on their small income or receiving an unexpected bill can survive. The food is essential, not luxuries, they went a long time ago. So please do try and put in a small treat which, lets face it, we all need from time to time.

Greenwich food bank is organised by Greenwich churches and operates everyday of the week. The Welcome Centres are to be found in East Greenwich, Thamesmead, Plumstead, Blackheath, Woolwich, Charlton and Kidbrooke. Each one operates one day each week and hopefully within easy reach of most people who need us.

If someone is in distress and has no food or money, help can be found in various places - churches, doctors' surgeries, charities, the Job Centre or the hub at Charlton Athletic and many other organisations, who have agreed to issue vouchers.

The food parcels are put together by volunteers at the Foodbank warehouse on Shooters Hill. They are sent out to the Welcome centres each week where volun-

teers greet the visitors and try tactfully to find out if more help is needed so they can then signpost them to the appropriate help. It is not a difficult job but the one skill needed is no prejudging.

At Kidbrooke we are very lucky that the husband of one of the volunteer's has agreed to donate 25 Christmas hampers so as the year goes on names are put onto the hamper list and the recipients get a Christmas lunch, some sweet treats and, if we have them, a few toys. People in the area are very generous and we can usually send people off with a smile on their faces ensuring that at least Christmas day will be relatively normal. If you would like to donate to the Foodbank check the website (which is undergoing repairs), the App free from the App store or contact your nearest Welcome Centre.

Most of the Welcome Centres close for two weeks over the Christmas period but food can be delivered from the warehouse via the App directly to the client.

There are other sources of free food in the area if you are in need and a search of the internet is a good starting point. Some are clubs you join for a small fee then you can buy food at a greatly discounted price.

On 18th/19th November the Trussell Trust are organising a donation drive in big Tesco's in the area.

- **Chris Witt, Kidbrooke**
Foodbank, OneSpace Kidbrooke

The 48 Bus

by Tony Lord

Today I'm inviting you to join me on my time machine and travel back 70 years or so to the bus stop outside Gambardella's Café in Vanbrugh Park. A big red six-wheeler bus is standing outside there waiting to start its long journey to the West End. Inside the warm, steamy café the driver and conductor are having strong cups of tea during their break between journeys. In the shop next door Addie Gambardella is busy selling sweets, tobacco and newspapers. She is everybody's friend and nothing is too much trouble for her.

The bus is the LT1 type which served the London public for over 20 years from 1932 to 1956. It had room for 56 seated passengers and another dozen or so standing on the lower deck. The conductor was kept busy all day collecting fares and issuing tickets up and down between the two decks. Smoking was only allowed on the upper deck. Sometimes policemen got on board and travelled free. So did I when I was wearing my Royal Navy uniform.

Anyway, the conductor and driver have finished their tea and we're off along Vanbrugh Park, passing St. Andrew's Church at the corner of Mycenae Road before we stop at Mandeville Close, the new flats which replaced the houses destroyed by the V2 rocket which fell on this spot in 1945.



Now we're coming to the Andrew Gibb Memorial Shelter with the clock on the top. Inside was a water fountain and Y-shaped glass screens which kept the chill winds from whichever direction they came. Andrew was the first alderman of the Metropolitan Borough of Greenwich. He died in 1908 and left money for a shelter to be built, though it was not until 1931 that his wishes were carried out.

Across the road at the corner of the park is the War Memorial to the 1,600 Greenwich men who were killed serving their country in the First World War. It was unveiled in front of a huge crowd in 1922 by Mr. Harry Sewell, father of Lieutenant Cecil Sewell, the 'Hero of the Burning Tank', who won the Victoria Cross in 1918.

Now the bus continues along its old route beside the park wall before joining the A2 by the tea hut where we must leave it and come back to 2021 and a very different world.

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WHAT'S ON



After many months of meeting virtually, we are delighted to be returning in the flesh to Blackheath Halls for Matthew Taylor's Great Beethoven Blast series, planned to commence on Monday 1st November at 10am. It will be great to see familiar faces again and to welcome new ones to these unique sessions. Matthew Taylor is a composer, conductor and lecturer who illustrates his historical/anecdotal input on the piano before we listen to the pieces on CD. With enough time for coffee in the interval (sessions are 10.00-12.00), these are also sociable times, and a great way to start the

Poetry

From **In-words Limited** a new event with four outstanding poets reading from their latest collections. Free on Zoom on Thursday 25th November at 7.30pm. Please email ireaan@in-words.co.uk for an invitation to hear Isabel Bermudez, Maggie Butt, David Cooke and Dino Mahoney. The reading is entitled 'Windows' because it'll inspire us to look out onto different places, cultures, people - but also to look in, as poetry always does. Do join us! Details on in-words.co.uk

Sparkle in the Park

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is bringing the hugely successful Sparkle in the Park Christmas light trail back for a second year. This year in Maryon Park, Charlton, from 1st-5th December.

As well as the spectacular light trail, delicious food and fairground rides, visitors will be able to enjoy magical Christmas activities, live performances and seasonal market stalls.

Unlike 2020, when tickets were snapped up in hours, the event will not be ticketed (subject to Covid restrictions remaining unchanged). To be the first to find out, sign up to the council's email newsletter at: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/newsletter Local traders interested in having a stall at the event should contact events@cceventsuk.com



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week.

The Great Beethoven Blast, designed to mark the great composer's 250th anniversary last year, will open our eyes to less well-known aspects of his life and music, and will run, with half term and Christmas breaks, until March 2022. No prior knowledge is necessary and lectures can be paid for per term, in blocks of sessions or per session. And if you are new to them, you can attend a taster for free. For more information and booking, please contact Lionel Lewis on LJL@lioneljlewis.org.uk or Tel: 020 8297 1075

Westcombe Woodlands AGM - with Fungi!

Short presentation "Fungi Found on Trees and How to Manage Them" from Jack Partridge and Joanna Driver, Tree Officers with the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Weds 3rd November - 7.30pm

Venue: Greenwich University (Room TBC) - email westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk to receive details.

DROP IN WELLBEING CAFÉ

Westcombe News has been intrigued by adverts for this drop-in café - a meeting place for the lonely or isolated people of our community. Single crafters can also get together with others who enjoy same, like the group of talented knitters/crocheters that volunteer Amanda told us had formed. So one Thursday the *WN* went to see what this drop-in had to offer...

Stepping into the Wellbeing Cafe in the Main Hall of Mycenae House certainly feels pretty healthy. There are quite a few small groups chatting and a seated circle were exercising, someone was getting a free massage.

By the big windows we found the industrious circle of wool crafters holding court. They were going great clicks feuled by "just a little glass please". Latest wool finds were being shared, "I never pass a charity shop without asking" a man said as he followed an intricate pattern for a

Clubs, meetings, talks, entertainment are coming back to life. The *WN* would love to hear from all who used to feature regularly on this What's On page as well as new venues and happenings. We feel there is a lot of culture and entertainment to be catching up on. So please, get in touch and we'll be there!

Craft Market at Mycenae House

Shopping for gifts? Why not give Amazon a break and support local crafts people instead?

#TheCornerAtMycenae, is a Christmas market at Mycenae House on **27th November 10.00am-4.00pm**. Run by the owners of the Corner Shop (No.96 Bramshot Avenue, SE7), Louise Tomlins, knitter and potter, and local potters Fiona Veacock and Anne Richards.

For the Market they have collected 20 local crafts - knitting, studio ceramics, painting, silver jewellery, children's clothes, photography, stationery, prints, drawings, metal work, toiletries, breads and even nursery plants. They can often personalise gifts and homewares.

Arts Society Greenwich

Insiders/Outsiders Refugees from Nazi Europe and their contribution to British Visual Culture

Lecturer: Monica Bohm-Duchen
7pm Monday 8th November

Despite the traumatic nature of their dislocation and the obstacles they often encountered on arrival in the UK, those who fled here from Nazi-dominated Europe in the 1930s and 1940s made a deep, pervasive and long-lasting contribution to British culture. Focussing on the visual arts, this lecture will examine the nature of this contribution, embracing not only familiar names such as Ernst Gombrich, Oskar Kokoschka, Piet Mondrian, Kurt Schwitters and John Heartfield, but also lesser-known figures such as Albert Reuss, Josef Herman and Marie-Louise von Motesiczky.

This lecture will be presented on Zoom. Members will receive email joining instructions. Guests are welcome for £8 - please email ticaclark@hotmail.com for further details.

www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk

Blackheath Flower Club

Third Friday of the month in the Main Hall at Mycenae House. 1-3pm.
19th November: **David Thompson - seasonal arrangements** 3rd December: **AGM and Christmas Workshop**. All are welcome and there's a raffle to win one of the six £25 flower arrangements. Your first visit to the club is free. Contact Sian Tribe Tel: 07790 003037 siancaroline@googlemail.com

Greenwich Society Annual Lecture

The Last Queen of Scotland

Sunday 7th November at 11.00am by Raymond Barron Woolford. Venue: The National Maritime Museum Lecture Theatre. Tickets: £10.00 tickets from www.greenwichsociety.org.uk

SMAG Art Exhibition

Smag Art Ltd is a not-for-profit company set up to run art exhibitions in a Blackheath church. Net proceeds from the exhibitions are gifted to local charities. Their next exhibition of **local affordable and original artworks** is: **18th-27th November at St Michael and All Angels Church, 1 Pond Road, Blackheath SE3 9JL** SMAGSE3@gmail.com

Winter Trees by Sophie Harrison-Knibbs 17"x14" Gouche on paper

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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

Some Ecological Musings by Pat Rogers



Heath Lane Before and After "the temporary loss and replacement of garden habitat is not considered to be ecologically significant" - ecological appraisal in: https://planning.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=_GRNW_DCAPR_99355

On our kitchen board is an old, a decade and more, list of common birds in our garden. Most are still about but often in smaller numbers. Some have disappeared, some are new. I offer some of what is doubtless a complex of reasons, at least for the losses:

Continuous land conversion – two years ago there was a biggish garden next door, managed to be wild, thus species-rich. It has been “developed”. The developers' ecological appraisals downplay the ecological impact of their proposals, homing in on unlikely endangered species (the “straw man” technique) while the most common, often unidentified, are dismissed as unimportant. Next door's ecologically rich garden is now ecologically dead. No weeds, no bugs, no bats, no birds. Nothing but tidiness and run-off. Nature abhors tidiness – our most common fauna like our most common plants, often weeds and the more the better.

Existing buildings – they are better maintained than previously so no longer offer habitat for nesting. I'm guilty there too, mending our eaves which used to house plenty of house sparrows and starlings. There are none of either now.

Cats – there are lots more, partly because the local human population has grown along with development, partly perhaps because of Covid. Give those feline trespassers tinkling bells. It might go a little

way to spoiling their predacious perambulations!

Which brings me to biodiversity. Lack of understanding of it is in part responsible for deterioration of our (not the) environment. We hear a lot about rainforest, barrier reefs and marine parks, but what is missing is emphasis on the importance of place. Mongolian pastures have little biodiversity, perhaps half a dozen species, so do they matter little compared to the species-rich Amazonian forest (tens of thousands of plants)? Well they matter hugely to Mongolia, but hardly to Brazil nor Blackheath. What are important to Blackheath are species that grow here, especially the most common, not the rarest.

In Blackheath we need sycamores, buddleia, bramble, gorse, elder, dandelions, plantains, beech, dock, all those weeds, because that's what can and does grow here. A diversity of plants leads to a diversity of animal life – ladybirds, gnats, flies, wasps, spiders, worms, bees, bacteria which all in turn support frogs, newts, mice and of course bats, birds and, eventually . . . us. The more diversity there is the more stable is the ecological system. In turn, the more it can withstand or adapt to change. An ecologically healthy environment helps absorb noise, reduce pollution, retain moisture, control run-off, buffer local flooding and, most of all, helps us feel good!

Take Action Now! Save our Horse Chestnut Trees

Horse chestnut trees in Westcombe Park are under attack from the horse chestnut leaf-mining moth, a small moth whose caterpillars feed inside the leaves, causing unsightly brown blotches between the leaf veins - you can see the caterpillars if you



hold a mottled leaf up to the light. Heavily affected trees can drop their leaves early, although the Royal Horticultural Society (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=533>) says that the moth has little effect on the horse chestnut trees' health or growth. Conkers from trees infested with the moth "may be slightly smaller".

The leaf-mining moth arrived in Britain in 2002 and is particularly prevalent in the south of England. The moths overwinter in fallen leaves, so the only real way of controlling them is to sweep up any horse chestnut leaves and burn them or put them in your garden waste recycling bin. Some residents in St John's Park are also trying a

pheromone trap that attracts male moths. Collecting all the horse chestnut leaves in your garden is important because "even a few leaves can harbour dozens of pupae ready to emerge", according to James Hedges, Greenwich council's Arboricultural Manager.

Mr Hedges said, "Although visually disfiguring, the pest does not generally lead to the decline of the tree although it can potentially reduce energy levels and make the tree more susceptible to other pests and diseases. This is far more significant in young trees.

"Trials are currently being undertaken to see if there is a suitable chemical control (in the absence of any natural predators) although this is unlikely to be a cost-effective solution.

"Sweeping up the fallen leaves will reduce the level of the pest and so reduce or slow down the rate at which they colonise trees when they emerge in the late spring.

"I'm afraid that this pest is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future, although we continue to monitor developments and provide advice to the public when requested."

The message is clear then: we need to scour our gardens for any fallen horse chestnut leaves that are hiding in the flower bed!

-Andrew Riley

Tall Buildings are not the Answer

The London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee recently undertook an investigation into housing density and the development of tall buildings for residential use in London. Their key finding is that “high rise blocks are NOT the answer to London’s housing needs and should not be encouraged outside of a few designated and carefully managed areas”.

Andrew Boff, Chair of the committee, has given this advice in a letter to some London Councillors.

The Committee heard oral evidence from a range of experts. Tall buildings tend to contain a majority of studio, one-bed and two-bedroom flats, resulting in a lack of family-sized housing and poor use of space. They have high management and service charges which precludes affordable tenures. Well-designed family homes in tall buildings are harder to achieve as they are remote from shared amenity and play spaces. “In general families are disadvantaged if they are living in tall buildings”.

The Committee found growing evidence demonstrating that tall buildings are less sustainable than those which provide a similar density of development in other

(low rise) configurations. Energy use is higher in tall buildings. The increase from six storeys to 20 doubles the energy intensity per square metre. The taller the building, the higher the amount of embodied energy required per useable square metre since low-carbon materials such as timber are not viable. Tall buildings also suffer more from heat loss for the same amount of insulation as lower buildings.

“The Committee is concerned that while delivering higher densities may seemingly make more effective use of land, tall buildings will not produce the high-quality homes and neighbourhoods that London needs.” Planning and Regeneration Committee London City Hall.

The Westcombe Society hope Greenwich Councillors are listening and halt the approvals of very tall housing towers.

- Helen Warner



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

- 3 Hardy Road ref 21/2804/HD**
To construct single storey ground floor extension.
- 58 Hardy Road ref 21/3467/HD**
To construct single storey side/rear extension and separate single storey rear extension.
- 86 Westcombe Hill ref 21/3634/CP**
To convert loft including rear dormer roof extension and two rooflights to rear.
- 68 Beaconsfield Road ref 21/3442/HD**
To construct single storey rear extension and change openings on ground floor side elevation.
- Land To Rear Of Blackheath Service Station,
- 37 Shooters Hill Road ref 21/3220/F**
To construct a two-storey 4-bedroom family

- house.
- 169 Westcombe Hill ref 21/2692/HD**
To replace single garage with new double garage in rear garden.
- 166 Westcombe Hill ref 21/3283/A**
To install non-illuminated fascia sign.
- 31a Vanbrugh Park ref 21/3296/HD**
To convert basement into habitable space, construct front and rear lightwells, and replace front door.
- TREE WORKS**
- 3 Mycenae Road ref 21/3754/TC**
To fell ash in rear garden
- 229 Westcombe Hill ref 21/3672/TC**
To fell lime in rear garden, repollard two limes, and reduce canopy of crab apple.





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EXERCISE & MENTAL HEALTH

Bringing Home the Money



L-R - Cath Farrant, Olwen Davies, Helen Marley-Hutchinson, Rachel Mai Jones, Miren Davies on Sunday 3rd October
“A collective thanks from us all to everybody for your incredible support and powerful community team spirit - nearly £10,000 raised for South London Special League - including £4,500 from Blackheath and Westcombe Ward.”
<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Team/RunningforSouthLondonSpecialLeague1> - “and there's still time to donate!”
We will update *WN* readers on plans for this money over the next 12 months.

Pilates – A Different Kind of Workout

Pilates is a body-conditioning method which was invented over 100 years ago by Joseph H Pilates. Joseph Pilates himself suffered from many childhood ailments which led him to design and create a way of exercising as a pathway to total health, rather than a simple exercise regimen. Joseph Pilates saw how mental and physical health are interrelated and so when training the mind to focus completely on what you want to achieve, the body can master the precise nature of any movement you ask it to perform.

The traditional Pilates method has adapted over the years to suit the current lifestyle and activities, making it a safer and more adaptable approach to exercising. Although I believe that classical Pilates is still practised and taught to preserve it, by the loyal followers of Joseph Pilates. Generally Pilates is taught in two categories; matwork and machine-based work (reformer, Caddilac table and the Wunda chair), exercises consist of strengthening, mobilising and stretching working from your central ‘core of stability’ – your lumbo-pelvic region.

Without going into too much detail, in a healthy body your local and global muscle systems work in harmony. The local system acts to stabilise (movements which cannot be seen and include fine muscles deep within our core) and the global system which acts to provide the movements

we make consciously in our everyday life, such as walking, running, reaching out for that cup of tea.

When injury occurs normal muscle function is disrupted, the local muscle system switches off in response to pain and the global muscles will often spasm or work harder to compensate for the lack of support the local muscle system (your core) normally provides. Often (especially with back injuries) the local muscles stay turned off even after pain has gone and function has returned, leaving the spine without the stabilising core muscles and as a consequence 80% of back injuries will have a recurrence of pain or injury over time. Pilates is a wonderful form of exercise to really get to know your body, to recover from injury in a safe way and to improve the way you move, improve your posture and incorporate its principles into everyday life, making it a lifestyle. It doesn’t matter if you are a male or female, it doesn’t matter what your age is and it doesn’t matter what your level of fitness is – Pilates is a form of exercise which can suit anybody. Of course you will need to be able to get on/off the floor to get onto a mat in the first place! So if this is something you struggle with then find yourself an instructor or class which is chair-based or a standing Pilates class.

- Saskia Krijgsman, Physiotherapist and APPI trained Pilates instructor

Can’t I Just Take a Pill?

We all know exercise is good for us, and if it came in tablet form we would all be popping that pill! But when reality strikes - perhaps when a favourite item of clothing is too tight, or depression seems more common than not, we need to move from this spot. The secret is to find an exercise that you like doing - there are so many choices out there....and get moving. Minimising time spent sedentary is important for a healthy mind and body. The Government have issued some guidelines if you need their advice: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/829884/3-physical-activity-for-adults-and-older-adults.pdf

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Angel-Fish in the Water

Post wheelchair, depression came easy to me. Sometimes it arrived quickly pulling all the plugs out, leaving me flat and deathly tired. Other times it crept like a silent morning fog until I couldn’t see anything real anymore.

I used to be a naturally happy, lively person with a wide circle of friends. But slowly MS eroded all that. I didn’t have the MS that came and went, allowing its host to still climb mountains and ride a bike. Mine was a treacherous affair until one day my body came to a full stop and I experienced the horrors of council care. Luckily, luckily, luckily my dog walking community stepped in to help me. In particular a male nurse called James. A practical man who looked at my injury - an overused arm whose tendons/muscles had been badly damaged and said, “Let’s get you in the pool.”

“Oh yes and how am I going to be able to do that?” I asked.

“I’m going to take you.” he replied.
So a week later, swimming costume on, I was lifted into the ‘pod’ wheelchair which felt like a wheelbarrow several sizes too small, as I was so stiff. The pod docks onto a platform at the side of the pool which then lowers into the water. From the moment my toes touched the water I started smiling. James was in the water waiting. Thank god because when all of me was submerged my head started to sink and my legs stuck straight out of the water. I could of drowned there and then (I think it’s a neurological phenomenon), but James wasn’t fazed, “We will get some weights for your ankles.”

Within a month I had my own swimming style, a sort of listing, half-submerged doggy paddle/alligator with my paralysed legs trailing behind, but even in those early days I was putting my mind into my feet and getting movement in my legs by swinging my hips. I told James I no longer needed him in the water, he was holding me back! I just wanted to swim lengths, however slowly, to feel free of help, I wanted to be moving on my own.

Four years later, so much has improved both physically and mentally (I don’t even want to think about lockdown when the pool was closed). I do about 20 lengths, five times a week, helpers/cash permitting, and any bad mood I have when I enter the pool stays in the pool. At the end of the swim, as the platform rises out of the water I just feel incredibly blessed, relaxed and full of life.

A huge thank you to James and all the staff at the Greenwich Centre pool who have been so incredibly helpful with their positive ‘can do’ attitude.

- Anne Williams

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