



Seasons Greetings to the Ice-breaking Greenwich Visitor of 2021



Photo credit Gary Hamilton

Sailing South for a Climate Crunch New Year

After spending three days moored off Greenwich towards the end of October the RSS (Royal Research Ship) Sir David Attenborough a polar research ship, which is sailing under the flag of the Falkland Islands, departed for Parkstone

Quay before heading on to Portsmouth.

The ship left Portsmouth on the 17th November and is now in the North Atlantic heading for Port William in Florida where she is due to arrive on 9th December.

More details of the previous ports of call

treasurer and advertising manager.

We couldn't do what we do without volunteers and really appreciate the help of those who run events, work on our committees and help distribute the paper but always need new faces. Can you spare half an hour once a month to help deliver the paper or help with an event occasionally? Are you interested in joining one of our committees? Please let us know, even occasional help is very welcome.

- The Westcombe Society

USE YOUR VOICE NOW!

West Greenwich low traffic neighbourhood

Westcombe Park residents have until 25th February 2022 to respond to the current consultation on the above.

Traffic within Westcombe Park has suffered a dramatic increase since this scheme was introduced leading to delays, queueing traffic and poor driver behaviour. It is important that residents respond to the consultation at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/westgreenwich to ensure that this is not allowed to continue.

of the vessel and its next destination and location can be found on www.vesselfinder.com. Its ultimate destination is the Antarctic where it will enable climate research in the polar region.

Further information about the Sir David

Attenborough, from its inception and build, can be found on the Maritime Museum Website at www.RMG.co.uk.



Cop26 - Greenwich is Watching

With Cop26 still in our minds we were interested in the response of Greenwich council.

1. RBG has signed The Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration. Councillor Sarah Merrill, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport reported that, "The Royal Borough of Greenwich is wholly committed to helping tackle the climate emergency, and this includes calling for reforming systems of how we produce and eat food." The declaration recognises that food production and distribution account for approximately a third of all greenhouse gas emissions and signatories determine to reduce this. RBG has established a Good Food in

Greenwich partnership with local firms and community organisations in order to realise this goal and help residents to eat healthily and sustainably. Sitopia, the urban farm previously featured in Westcombe News is part of this initiative 2. RBG has also set an ambitious target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 (see the

Carbon Neutral Plan 2021-2030). In order to help meet this a water-source heating system to warm 95 homes in Greenwich is being installed. RBG argue that "water-source heat pumps are a low carbon and cost-effective alternative to traditional gas boilers". They work by extracting heat from underground water. This water is further heated and circulated to radiators before being returned to the ground.

Air-source heat pumps are being installed in four other housing estates. Works are also continuing to improve insulation, low energy lights and window repairs on a number of council estates. 3. One of the Greenwich Builds schemes at Kidbrooke Park has just been awarded a Best Affordable Housing Development award. All the homes include sustainable technologies such as air source heat pumps and solar panels. The award also recognises the plan for a "diverse range of homes including accessible properties, as well as landscaped amenity spaces and a nursery to benefit everyone in the surrounding area."

- Maggie Gravelle

2022 the Year of the Neighbourhood?

Throughout the past year the Westcombe News and committee members have aimed to bring you news and information, as well as being the voice of the community and represent your interests and concerns. The various committees have been involved with matters concerning the environment, buildings, traffic and amenities. Due to the pandemic events have been scarce but there was a very successful Zoom Quiz and the Tea for the senior citizens was well attended. We were particularly pleased with the support shown at the Macmillan Coffee Morning which raised £1,200. We hope to have a full social calendar in 2022.

We know that many residents are concerned about the increase in traffic, particularly on the hills and along the lower road. We continue to monitor the situation by contributing to consultations and meetings. Maintaining the character of the area requires a watching brief on all planning applications, adding our comments where necessary. We have been specially vigilant with respect to unauthorised tree work.

However all these matters rely on YOU the Westcombe community. We still need a chairperson and grateful to Marilyn Little for holding the fort. We do have a new

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Please send your details to:
Christine Legg, 69 Mycenae Road,
London, SE3 7SE or email:
membership@westcombesociety.org
And pledge your support and annual membership subscription.

Family membership £12
Individual membership £8
Senior Citizens/Unwaged £4

Thankyou and see you at
an event in 2022

The Live Nativity comes to The Blackheath Standard

Saturday 11th December

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

a street drama for all ages with
music and live animals

Another spectacular Christmas tree was delivered by Alan's Plants on Woolwich Road. Peter Andrews and his team have done their usual good job of putting it up and dressing it in its golden finery.

The tree has been sponsored by Westcombe Cleaners, 74 Westcombe Hill and Sue Clarke Interiors of Humber Road. Many thanks to both for their continuing support.

'Tree' Christmas card by
Gracie Murphy (5yrs)

NEIGHBOURHOOD



WESTCOMBE NEWS

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Latest on Mama Mia!

Due to the fact we still have two more parts to find actors for, we have decided to move the production of Mamma Mia! to 4th, 5th and 6th March.

We still need some young people for dancing and chorus, otherwise the rehearsals are going fine and the actors and dancers we do have, are very enthusiastic. Our tickets will be cheaper than the 02 and the show just as good!

Gwen Zammit
Charlton Village Theatre

Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice Christmas Appeal

For people and their families receiving end of life care, choice is one of the most important things the Hospice team say they can offer. Every day of the year – not just at Christmas, their care is about those special things,

“Sometimes its about our team knowing when to do something unexpected. There was one man whose sons came to visit him at the Hospice. The three of them used to go down to the pub together to watch the football, and a nurse overheard them saying, “*We wish we knew the last time we were all at the pub together was going to be the last time*”. The nurse knew exactly what to do. She went off and came back with the drinks trolley and handed a beer to each of them whilst finding a football match on the telly.

Their Appeal asks readers to make a gift of £20 to help more families get the Christmas of their choice.

This amount could fund a whole hour of support to focus on the little things that mean the most to those they care for. Christmas cards and lottery gift vouchers are also available from Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice Ltd
T:020 8312 2244 E:info@gbch.org.uk

The Greenwich One Card

The Greenwich One Card is launching its autumn offers with its latest deals for Woolwich Works and The Queen’s House Ice Rink (10% discount off all November skate sessions). Discounts are also available at independent fashion, beauty shops, cafes and restaurants all over Royal Greenwich.

It’s not all about food, clothes and fun days out - savings stretch to DIY shops, pet care and dentists.

Everyone who lives, works and studies in the Borough can pick up a Greenwich One Card at a local library or leisure centre.

CHRISTMAS IN THE PLEASANCE

Christmas starts in the East Greenwich Pleasance on Sunday 5th December, 10am-4pm with The Bridge hosting their annual Father Christmas Grotto with help from the Flying Seagull Project! Whilst tickets for the grotto sold out in five hours, there is still plenty to do.



Carol singing in the Cafe in the Park alongside festive food and drink and there are plans for a Christmas Market celebrating local crafts-people (TBC). There will also

be a Christmas Jumper Swap in time for Christmas Jumper Day at School. So bring along your old jumpers/tops and swap them for other secondhand ones, or just buy one! Especially good for the children’s jumpers as they grow out of them so quickly! Let’s promote re-using and recycling !

Money raised from the event will go towards helping The Bridge with their important work supporting the local community.

For more information, visit
www.thebridgegreenwich.co.uk

A Peace Garden

There is a hidden secret just behind the busy urban stretch of Trafalgar Road which offers local people a place for peace and reflection. Christ Church East Greenwich, which hosts the Forum at Greenwich has a ‘Peace Garden’ round the back of the building. The garden is open to all for a moment of stillness and contemplation amidst our busy urban lives.

A small, dedicated team of gardeners tend the Peace Garden on Tuesday mornings. If you would be interested in joining this group, please contact: 020 8853 3235 or info@christchurcheastgreenwich.org.uk

St. John’s Church Notices

For more details about the Live Nativity and others we are running during December please look at the St John’s Church website for details on:
www.stjohnsblackheath.org.uk

NB: The Live Nativity event will take place subject to Covid and/or bad weather; please check website for updates.

Mycenae House Holiday Closures

House closes: 5pm Tuesday 21st December 2021. House re-opens: 8.30am Tuesday 4th January 2022.

Spoiler Alert

A newly-named conservation group, the Vanbrugh Volunteers, led by local naturalist Joe Beale, last month cleared the ground of brambles about this oak tree at Vanbrugh Pits to let it breathe/thrive - only for malefactors to take advantage of the space created to set a motorbike alight.

The results are clear from the below - note the scorching to the trunk.



Greenwich Winter Night Shelter

Since 2014, Greenwich Winter Night Shelter has operated the ‘one shelter, seven venues’ model offering warmth, accommodation and support for homeless people in Greenwich – St George’s Westcombe Park was one of the seven venues. This year, GWNS has decided to move away from the rotating model and is in the process of renovating a building and opening a static shelter from January 2022.

The new building is located in Eltham on Middle Park Avenue. It’s a great space that will mean GWNS can offer individual rooms to its guests and look to develop its year-round support for homeless guests. There will be nine single rooms, including a women’s only wing with separate bathroom facilities. There will be a day centre where guests can receive healthcare, specialist advice and a place to spend the day.

GWNS is hopeful that having one single venue will provide stability and consistency for its guests. It will mean that they can leave their belongings somewhere safe during the day and be able to return to the same place every night.

To keep up to date on renovation progress and volunteering opportunities, sign up to our newsletter on our website and follow us on Facebook and Twitter! To make a one off or regular donation, you can do so via the ‘donate’ button on our website. **Our new address: 360 Middle Park Avenue, SE9 5QH. - Revd Margaret Cave**

STGEORGE'S
WESTCOMBE PARK

Christmas at St George's
Sat 4th Dec @ 4pm: Beer and Carols, outside The Royal Standard

Saturday 18th Dec @ 4pm: Parish Carols in the Park, at The Pleasance

Sunday 19th Dec @ 6pm: Carol Service

Friday 24th Dec @ 4pm: Crib Service

Friday 24th Dec @ 11:30pm: Midnight Communion

Saturday 25th Dec @ 10:30am: Christmas Day Family Communion

Sunday 26th Dec @ 10:30am: Sunday Morning Communion

St George's Church, 43 Glenluce Road, London SE3 7SD

[@StGeorgesWP](https://twitter.com/StGeorgesWP) [St George's, Westcombe Park](https://www.facebook.com/StGeorge's%2CWestcombePark) www.stgeorgeswestcombepark.org.uk

Join the *WN* in the New Year

Are you looking for a new adventure in 2020? Enjoy writing? Have energy and enthusiasm for the neighbourhood? Then the editor of the WN would like to hear from you!

The job can provide you with as little, or as much responsibility as you wish - from writing a single article each month to becoming a page editor. Polly, who has

sadly left *WN* to find paid work, took responsibility for the What’s On page and was able to see press shows and events.

General help post deadline would also be welcome, i.e. laying out the editorial, finding suitable pictures, thinking of headlines and using press releases. Interested? Please email wnews@westcombesociety.com

A Fruitful Wassail to You

Wassailing is a New Year tradition - possibly dating back to Saxon times - of singing health to the fruit trees in the hope of a good harvest.

Sunday 16th January is the 8th anniversary of the Wassail in East Greenwich Pleasaunce, with local storyteller Rich Sylvester taking the role of the "Holly Man" or MC.

Morrigan - <http://www.morrigansong.co.uk/> and Halstow Community Choir will sing traditional songs and the Greenwich Morris Men entertain with a clacking of sticks and a merry dance.

The assembled "wassailers" will then process from the cafe to pour a "blessing" of cider on the small orchard of trees, which were first planted in December 2010.

Make a Wassail crown, enjoy a drink and fine food at the cafe. New talent welcome -

Pic: Fergal Spelman



Rich Sylvester wearing the 'Holly Hat' - 'the Holly King' is the character who appears to battle the 'Oak King' in the old folk lore of seasonal change. Holly (being evergreen) wins over the oak in the Midsummer as the oak loses strength - then in Midwinter Oak starts to win the battle as the new growth appears

get in touch if you want to perform (e.g. music, story, song or dance) at the Wassail, contact Pip! Planting in the Pleasaunce (on Facebook) - or Richstories123@gmail.com

A Visual Feast for Christmas

Westcombe Hill resident, Tim Crane, has published his latest book on West Ham United. *'They Played with Bobby Moore - The West Ham Years,'* is a revised edition including 500 new photographs.

This book preserves the memories of 89 Hammers who played with the golden boy from the golden era. The 376 page hard-back book is available from December 1st and is a must have Christmas gift for all football fans.

"Given the overwhelming number of rare photos kindly shared by all those who played with Bobby Moore, I am delighted with the visual feast awaiting all Bobby Moore fans." Says Tim who has lived on



Westcombe Hill for 20 years. He is offering signed copies from 183 Westcombe Hill. Alternatively you can order your copy from www.thewesthamyears.com

Pure Water Shop Arrives at the Standard

Corruption has prompted us all to take a serious look at what individuals as well as governments and business can do to support the environment and prevent further harm.

We live in a hard water area and many households suffer from limescale deposits and above average use of detergents. Some people buy bottled water rather than drink tap water but plastic bottles contribute to pollution of our seas and rivers. Help may be at hand. Pure Water Point, is a new shop recently opened on Westcombe Hill and, whilst water softeners add chemicals which then get into the water system, Pure Water use TAC, a catalytic process to convert the minerals causing hard water, into harmless, disposable crystals, which are then washed away. "Both water softeners and TAC protect boilers, showerheads and other appliances from gathering wasteful limescale." says Billy Frodsham, the shop's owner.

Contact us for further information or to arrange a tour

“The quality of the pupils’ academic and other achievements is excellent”
ISI Inspection Report

www.stolaves.org.uk. Call 020 8294 8930

YOUR PET CAT!

Sir David Attenborough warns that cats are killing large numbers of birds in British gardens and says that cat owners should buy a collar with a bell on it, to help stop these deaths.

The Mammal Society estimates that cats in the UK kill at least 27 million birds over the spring and summer. Blue tits, blackbirds, house sparrows and starlings are particularly affected.

Our gardens provide food and shelter to many species of songbirds and so our pet cats are in close contact with them.

According to new RSPB research, cats with a collar and bell brought in 41% fewer birds compared with a plain collar. So, on your Christmas list, please consider a collar and bell for your cat. They are inexpensive. For example, Blackheath Pet Supplies on Old Dover Road has a wide selection for under £5. They should be quick release and fit firmly.

Another helpful tip to protect songbirds



Young robins caught by a cat in Blackheath village, rescued and cared for by The Greenwich wildlife network

is to keep your cat indoors for an hour after sunrise and at least an hour before sunset to allow birds to feed safely. This is especially needed after bad weather or a cold snap, and during the months, December-July.

- Ann Hill



Letters

Dear Tony/*WN*
The 48 bus?

I love your memories of the route, though was it not the 53? It went all the way to the Zoo. The other bus that went along the Park wall was a useful Green Line Coach - I've forgotten the number (702 Gravesend to Sunningdale?). It stopped, inter alia, just outside the Albert Hall. Very convenient - it's not so easy to get there now.

The shelter at the War Memorial had wooden divisions then. Glass was chosen for security reason on the revamp, perhaps 20 years ago (?), following which the clock worked, for a bit anyway.

You missed a landmark bus stop, the last one on the Heath! The Green Man pub facing the Heath at the top of Blackheath Hill was demolished around 50 years ago for redevelopment. By then it was rather dismal-looking but notable for a 400+ year history and

having been the HQ of the Royal Blackheath Golf Club.

Dear Westcombe News,
I read with incredulity the article "Tall Buildings Are Not The Answer" (Westcombe News - November 2021 Edition), as I felt the debate as to whether tower blocks were good for people or not was done and dusted when I was a Borough Councillor for this area in the 1980's. Greenwich Council at that time was not only committed not to build any more high-rise accommodation, but some of us even discussed whether it was possible to reduce the height of some tall flats in the borough.

As any honest person in the construction industry will tell you, flats are cheap to build and maximise developers' profits due to being able to crowd more housing units into a smaller space.

As we know, there has been a large increase in high-rise accommodation in the Borough of Greenwich since the days of the Councillor Roberts leadership, when the borough's Labour Party developed a close relationship with developers which would make even the sleaze-ridden Conservative Party blush, leading to it being euphemistically known as "The Berkeley Homes Party".

Needless to say, should any Official Monster Raving Loony Party candidates get elected to Greenwich Council in the 2022 local elections, they would oppose any further high-rise accommodation being built in the Borough of Greenwich, unless the sweeteners (bribes) from developers were way too good to refuse, of course !!
For the Manic, not the Few, Trevor Allman
(Official Monster Raving Loony Party - Greenwich Branch)

Change their world for £2 a month...

...that's the cost of providing a school-age girl in Africa with sanitary pads for a month. Without such protection, girls often miss lessons and can lose over two month's education every year.

A small group of individuals provides sanitary protection in Kenya for up to 600 girls every month. We are now seeking to create a regular donation base of £400 a month (to achieve a maximum of £5,000 a year) to continue this work into the future.

Stamens is a 'small charity' [registered under HMRC for GiftAid] based in Greenwich - 100% of the donated money is spent on the mission, which has no administrative costs.

Do you have £2 a month to help?

To find out more or to set up a £2 monthly donation, please visit www.stamens.org.uk

FEATURES



Local Staffing Crisis but People Want to Work

by Polly Morgan

If you have been watching the news recently, you can't avoid bulletins about the national and local staffing and recruitment crisis facing Britain right now. Sensationalist headlines scream that we may all be short of food and essential goods this Christmas, but what really is the reality on the ground locally?

I have been looking for employment myself but have specific requirements to fit around a long term health condition I have been managing, so I have been seeking out more part-time roles and those with flexible hours. These are sometimes harder to find, so my job hunt has taken a little longer than usual but I am still finding exciting opportunities.

When I started my job hunt, I made sure I updated my LinkedIn profile with information from my current CV, and signed up to a plethora of recruitment bulletins via email for communications, writing and part-time roles locally. I have applied for

roles as varied as a receptionist job, looked into working in a library but always come back to my passion which is writing and communications. I have now been offered the potential opportunity to start a marketing and promotions placement at an established local charity and I am very happy about that.

I recently attended a job fair in Charlton Athletic football ground hosted by the Royal Borough of Greenwich recruitment agency, GLLaB. There were a myriad of stalls, offering all types of work from library work to hospitality, catering, construction and administration - all manned by many local businesses. The event was extremely busy, packed with people looking for work. It showed that there are many vacancies in the local area, desperate to be filled, with willing candidates around, but are there enough candidates?

We spoke to Lorraine Power, Managing Director of local recruitment agency based

in Blackheath, Village Staff Ltd. She told us: "We are short of people and overrun with vacancies. We are short of staff for driving jobs, driving heavy goods vehicles and we have noticed these staff shortages across the board as our agency covers many roles from individual work to office-based roles, to catering. We have been here for over 40 years and put these staff shortages down to the effects of the recent lockdowns plus Brexit."

"We are doing recruitment drives all the time to increase take up numbers. Please get in touch if you are looking for any of these types of jobs and we will help you find a suitable role."

A former writer of Westcombe News and talented chef, Jo Burnand, also spoke to us about going back to work. He said: "Finding work at the moment as a chef is easy. I get hundreds of emails per week offering me jobs all over London. I may consider them below my ability and refuse,

but that is my choice. Covid obviously has been a trial for the hospitality industry, but I don't think Brexit has had that much of an effect. Where I work, a multitude of Europeans are glad to work in London, glad to get paid more and glad of the opportunity."

"The problem for restaurants is that there is almost too much opportunity. To keep the customers coming they must strain every resource and churn stuff out for as long as they can. This means working a 16-hour day, for very little pay, is common for a chef. At the end of the day, you've got to more than love cooking to be a chef, you have to need it."

Looks like now is the time to get out there and find a job you really love! **For more information about finding a suitable local job, please visit: www.villagestaff.co.uk or: <https://www.royal-greenwich.gov.uk/info/200150/greenwich-local-labour-and-business>**

Barrage balloons

by Tony Lord

Years ago I went to Battersea Dogs' Home and took away a dog which we decided to call Sandy. He was the result of a brief romantic interlude between a greyhound and a whippet. Every day he would pull me along to the gravel pits where I would let him off the leash. Vanbrugh Pits were his idea of Heaven because one afternoon he found a discarded cheese sandwich. Every time we went there he sniffed around in the same spot hoping to find another one.

There were several of these pits on the heath. People used to turn up with horses and carts and dig out the Blackheath gravel, using it for building purposes and ballast for sailing ships. One pit by the park wall was big enough to accommodate the funfair which came on Bank Holidays.

When the second world war came to an end most of the pits were filled in with rubble from bombed houses so that under the expanse of grass we know today lie thousands of broken bricks, glass, pots and pans and even, perhaps, human remains.

For some mysterious reason nobody



filled in the pits to the north east corner of Blackheath. The one nearest the Standard was much larger than it is now and during the war years contained a barrage balloon which happily sat there out of the wind. There was a hut providing accommodation for the WAAFS who handled the big silver beast and a winch which could let out 5,000 feet of cable.

There were more than four hundred balloons flying over London and their trailing cables forced enemy bombers to fly higher up. Thus making it difficult for the German bomb-aimers to hit their targets.

Huge blue painted sheds were built at the old Kidbrooke aerodrome where the balloons were inflated and checked for leaks.

I remember going to the airfield in the early thirties and seeing Alan Cobham's Air Circus. Five bob for a flip over London. I didn't go, five bob bought a lot of groceries in those days.

Yours, La

Book Review

This treasure trove of a book curates a selection of letters written between 1943 and 1945 from a loving mother to her only son, John Henry Oakley MC (1918-2004).

These letters were found, tied with string in neat bundles alongside John's medals, badges and bullet-riddled beret. La's granddaughter, Katie, who created the book, titled it, *Yours, La*, which is how her grandmother signed off each letter.

In her letters she reveals the harsh realities of daily life on the home front in south-east London (she lived in Beaconsfield Road). As well as commenting on points made in John's letters (including his war wounds).

Lovers of social history will really appreciate all this detail. La talks of rationing, queuing for hours for food and essentials, growing vegetables, being bombed out, moving in with the next-door neighbours.

Yours, La is available to purchase £11.98 send cheque to K. Oakley, 11 Clifton Park Avenue, London SW20 8BB or via Paypal to paul@paulsharma.com or email an enquiry and Katie can give details for a bank transfer



A sample letter from La to John

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WHAT'S ON

ARTS SOCIETY GREENWICH

Caravaggio: Murderer or Genius?

Lecturer: Julia Musgrave
7pm Monday 13 December
Caravaggio's paintings inspired many artists during his lifetime and would go on to influence many more, from Orazio Gentileschi to Peter Paul Rubens, Gerard van Honthorst and Rembrandt. Each absorbed a different aspect of his work. His style spread across Europe and gave rise to the international movement known as 'Caravaggism'. Yet for many, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio is famed as much for his art as for his criminal record. Was it the violence of his times or his own violent spirit that inspired the dramatic lighting and intense naturalism of his work? This lecture follows the dramatic incidents of the artist's life and looks at why and how his influence spread so far. This lecture will be presented on Zoom. Members will receive email joining instructions. Guests are welcome: £8, please email ticaclark@hotmail.com for further details.

Poetry

In-words presents tall-lighthouse redux. Thursday 20th January at 7.30 we will be celebrating the return to pamphlet publishing by this long-standing local poetry publishing house. An international lineup, with Joshua Calladine-Jones reading from Prague, Sarah Shapiro reading from Boston (USA), and Chris Horton and Mark Wynne reading from closer to home. Free Zoom event. For an invitation, please email irena@in-words.co.uk
More information on www.in-words.co.uk

Folk at Mycenae

Though Christmas seems to be celebrated earlier every year, there are at least some things which are worth preparing for early! For the last three years The



Christmas with The Kimberleys

Kimberleys have been bringing their wonderful collection of seasonal folk songs to Mycenae House for a festive spectacular to sold out audiences and this year looks like it will be no exception. Isobel and Jim have collected songs from as far back as the 13th century, they arrange and perform them with exceptional musicality and are warm and charismatic personalities on stage. This year's performance is on **Friday 17th December from 7.30pm**. Tickets are selling fast, so book early from Mycenae House in person or thekimberleys.org online.
This is not the only folk-flavored seasonal show Mycenae House is hosting this year; **16th December Keith Christmas** (yes, this is his real name) will be playing with support from Morigan, a locally based folk musicians of high quality. Keith Christmas is an exceptional songwriting talent, another top-notch folk concert to consider.



Boy Bitten by a Lizard by Caravaggio which can be seen in the National Gallery. www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk

Diary Dates

Ice Rink at the Queen's House
18th November - 9th January
Tickets.RMG.co.uk
Sparkle in the Park
Christmas light trail. This year in Maryon Park, Charlton, from 1st-5th December.
Blackheath Flower Club AGM and Christmas Workshop 3rd December: Tel: 07790 003037
siancaroline@googlmail.com
****Reach Out Christmas Party** for Seniors**, Mycenae House, Thursday 16th December 1pm
Bach to Baby Christmas Concert for small ones - Thursday 9th December 4pm

Blackheath Halls

Saturday 4th Dec
Blackheath Village Day at Blackheath Halls 10.30am-2.00pm FREE family festive craft activities, recital by the London Joy Singers at 11am + homemade cakes
Saturday 11th Dec
The Nutcracker (Let's All Dance) 1.30pm and 4pm
Sunday 12th Dec
The Ubuntu Ensemble 11.30am
Fela Sowande African Suite arranged for piano quintet by Robert Matthew Walker
Schubert Quintet in A major, D. 667 'Trout'
The Nutcracker (Let's All Dance) 11am and 1.30pm
Sat 18th December
Blackheath Goes Gospel 7.30pm
Sun 19th December
Blackheath Halls Christmas Concert 7.30pm
Sun 9th Jan
Danny Baker 7.30pm
Sat 15th Jan: **The Elves and the Shoemaker (Theatre of Widdershins)**

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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!

Christmas at the Old Royal Naval College

A Christmas Carol in the Painted Hall
Daily, 3-23rd December
Earlybird tickets from £9
A thrilling musical adventure to the past, present and future! It's midnight on Christmas Eve, a time when the spirits of Christmas come out to play. A spooky choir tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a penny-pinching businessman without a song in his heart. Scrooge hates Christmas and everything about it, but things are about to change when his business partner, Jacob Marley, returns from the grave... Can Scrooge mend his ways before it's too late?
Watercolours and sketches from the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust
'Reflecting Greenwich' showcases a selection of rarely seen paintings showing what the area looked like in and around the Old Royal Naval College site over 200 years ago. To coincide with the exhibition there will be guided walks discovering the scenes depicted in the watercolours.

Kids Activites/Workshops
Sunday 12th December Free
Enjoy our Make History day, where kids can have a go at making mini wreaths and Christmas crackers just like the ones created in Victorian times.
Sunday 19th December Free
Using props and percussion to delve into the story of Scrooge and the ghosts who come to inspire him to change his ways in Scrooge Spooked.
Wednesday 29th & Thursday 30th December £5 per person
continued next column

Forest Day Out

Forest club day for all (including children) at Lesnes Abbey Woods, Thursday 16th December.
We are meeting at the Chestnuts Kiosk by the café at 9.45am and staying until you or we are done!
This is a regular project led by Stephen Stockbridge and we are taking advantage of it to gather the wood needed to fence at least one of the shrub beds in the gardens.
Come and help us coppice and collect the wood we need. In the new year, we shall be asking Stephen to show us all how to use the wood collected to build the fence. But for now, come and enjoy the woods, learn woodland skills (and visit the historic abbey ruins if you would like). Please tell us if you intend to come... friendsofmycenaegardens@gmail.com

Lanterns, Carols and Mulled Wine

East Greenwich Church of England Team Ministry are holding a community carol singing event in the East Greenwich Pleasaunce on Saturday 18th December at 4pm with lanterns and accompanied by accordion. Everyone is welcome to join in and Pistachios will be selling mulled wine and soft drinks. For more information about this event and the parish, visit www.eastgreenwichparish.org.uk.

continued from previous column
Twixmas Shanties in the lull between Christmas and New Year. Listen to sea shanties being performed, learn what they were all about and even join in yourselves.

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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

All Aboard Please....

At Westcombe Park station, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) have put some work into improving the landscaping, with a section of new planting along the raised bed nearest the station itself. They contacted the Westcombe Society, to see if anyone might be interested in helping maintain the new garden.

Some years ago, members of Planting in the Pleasaunce *had* acted as guerrilla gardeners, but it was discouraging work: a bed of herbs disappeared; there was a lot of litter in the beds including broken bottles. Southeastern, which manages the station, had a team of strimmers who didn't necessarily respect the gardening efforts while keeping the platforms clear.

Now, though, GTR have been helpful in taking suggestions for amenity planting that would support pollinating insects, and Southeastern met with some of us to discuss their community engagement programme and the issue of safe working along the platform. They will be able to direct more sensitive strimming and litter picking, and improved communications with their team may help with other issues, like uneven paving in Station Crescent.

We've planted a big bag of daffodil bulbs from Christchurch Community Garden, and some tulips thanks to the Charlton and Blackheath Amateur Horticultural Society: it's great to have the support of other community gardening projects.

We're aiming to set up regular 30 minute sessions to look after the planting, Wednesdays at 1pm and Saturdays at 10am, weather permitting. At the moment, the main task is to keep the weeds at bay. There's plenty of green alkanet and wild allium to deal with. There's also strategic planning to be done: Network Rail may be able to help with funds for more garden improvements, much needed where brambles are threatening to take over. This work calls for professional help with full safety training because of the danger of material falling onto the line. So taking the improvements forward, as gardeners and as planners, will be a great way to contribute to making the station a welcoming place for rail users, and to supporting the natural world at the same time.

Interesting in helping? Please contact environment@westcombesociety.org or come down to the station to see us.



Before

After

- Ann Robbins

Retrofitting Homes in the Conservation Area

Readers may be aware that around 22% of carbon emissions come from homes, approximately one third through walls, then roof, windows, finally 10-15% from floors. So, there is much talk about insulating walls and floors etc. The government has announced that it will be providing grants (up to £5k) for air source heat pumps. <https://www.government-grants.co.uk/renewable-heat-incentive/air-source-heat-pump/>

Having attended two excellent webinars from SELCE (SE London Community Energy Co-op) <https://selce.org.uk/>, it is clear that you must understand the whole house first. Advice was loud and clear – ‘don't rush in’ because radical improvements are very intrusive and costly, and inexpertly implemented they risk being money wasted. For example, wall insulation (external or internal) should not be undertaken without detailed surveys to see how your house ‘breathes’ and to identify any ‘problem’ areas. Moisture movement is very important. Too airtight and there will be condensation, mould and impacts on inhabitants’ health. There are other considerations too, (around 30% of us are in houses with solid brick walls), so it's important to have had good surveys and use experienced contractors. Currently, there is a skills gap here, unfortunately. However, if you are under-



taking major internal works, such as gutting out for a new bathroom or kitchen, putting in a new heating system, refurbishing your floors or building an extension then that's the time to consider some wall or floor insulation retrofit works.

Air source heat pumps are not a simple replacement for your gas boiler. Heat pumps heat water to a lower temperature than gas boilers so they usually need to run all the time in a house that is FULLY insulated, otherwise the house will not be warm enough. (You may also need larger radiators, different pipework and possibly underfloor heating, in addition to space for the heat exchanger and water tanks.) Historic England explains the Whole House Approach in more detail: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/saving-energy/energy-efficiency/>

However, don't do nothing. There are smaller, incremental and cheaper things we can be doing.

Part of retrofitting is to first correct neglect such as wall cracks, mortar and rendering issues, overflowing external pipes or inadequate guttering because damp areas

are major heat loss ‘cold spots’.

- Draught proof where you can – around windows, doors, and lag exposed pipes. Insulate hot water tanks.
- Install radiator reflectors (apparently can save £30-40/year).
- Switch to LED lighting.
- Have good loft insulation.
- If there is an issue with having double glazing, consider having secondary windows inside, (single glass panes that open), as that is nearly as energy efficient as double glazing.
- Look at behaviour, e.g. not wasting heat by having windows open, and monitor your heating use. Consider having a thermal imaging survey in the winter, so can ‘see’ where you are losing heat.
- Choose A+ ‘white goods’ but don't replace until necessary to minimize landfill.

Again, the advice is to ensure the carbon impact is part of your decision making as we move away from fossil fuels.

The Westcombe Society Environment Committee would be interested to hear about the experiences of any residents in the area who have already installed a heat pump or taken other retrofitting action to reduce the carbon emissions of their home. Note: SELCE report they provide tailored, impartial advice services on ‘greening homes’ predominantly in Lewisham and Greenwich. Surpluses go back into fuel poverty services.

- Helen Warner

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

83 WESTCOMBE HILL ref 21/3520/HD

To construct single storey rear and infill extension, first floor side extension and dormer window on rear first floor outrigger.

142 HUMBER ROAD ref 21/3363/HD

To demolish side and rear walls and construct single storey rear and side extensions and alter boundary.

53 VANBRUGH PARK ref 21/3878/F

To convert loft and install two rear dormers and three rooflights to front.

49 MAZE HILL ref 21/3607/HD

To enlarge rear garden boundary wall.

TREE WORKS

20C GLENLUCE ROAD ref 21/4111/TC

To re-pollard lime in rear garden.

1A VANBRUGH TERRACE ref 21/4074/TC

To reduce width of beech tree by 2m and crown of lime by 1.5m.

On verge outside 85 VANBRUGH PARK ref 21/4051/TC

To fell poplar that has a tree preservation order.

“Throw out the Log Fire James!”

There is nothing cosier than a log fire to brighten up the long winter evenings ahead. Many people bought wood burning stoves thinking them to be eco-friendly, offering a low-carbon method of heating. A recent article in the Telegraph claimed that they "are among the most lusted-after" items. With energy prices set to rise they also seem to be an economic alternative to some other forms of heating.

Trees absorb and store harmful carbon dioxide but they release it on burning which encourages manufacturers to claim that they are 'carbon neutral'. However, this ignores the other effects of using wood as fuel. The timber has to be transported, dried and cut up, all of which use energy. As it is burnt it emits particulates which

contribute to air pollution and are harmful to health. Recent research at King's College and from The Danish Ecological Council has found that particulates from burning wood cause considerably more pollution than traffic. Other harmful substances in wood smoke include benzene, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides.

Although London is a smokeless fuel zone, wood burning stoves which are approved by Defra are still permitted. However, Professor Martin Williams of Kings College suggests that “People should think twice about wood burning stoves because the particle emissions are much higher than using gas or electricity.”

Some points to consider when looking at your eco-friendly heating options!



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SPORTS WELLBEING



Get the Ball Rolling!

We want to say a Huge Thank You to everybody who supported us. Thanks to this local community's fabulous generosity, not only did we smash our original fundraising target of £2,000, ensuring the weekly sessions in Greenwich Park continue, but we've also donated towards new powerchairs for Greenwich Powerchair Football Club. We will be going to watch the football team in action and will report back on how your money is being used. **Greenwich Powerchair Football Club** <https://gpfc.co.uk> **South London Special League** <https://slsl2013.wordpress.com>



Rachel Mai Jones, Olwen Davies, Cath Farrant, Helen Marley-Hutchinson

WN asked the above Go-Getting Group for their best suggestions for a Happy and Healthy New Year 2022....

No matter how old or unfit you are - you're never too old or unfit to get active!

Thinking about getting off the sofa can be more off putting than just...getting off the sofa.

We can think too far ahead when all we need to do is just take that first step and see what happens next.

As the old Chinse proverb says, 'a journey of a thousand miles starts beneath one's feet'.

So where might your feet take you in 2022? Here are a few suggestions:

1 - Find exercise you can enjoy and commit to. This is very important. If you don't enjoy it, you'll find endless excuses why you can't do it today.

2 - Join a friendly and inclusive fitness club. We all met via Burn It Fitness and bonded over 6am burpees on the Heath in freezing fog. Friends will cheer you along your way and get you up and out on dark winter mornings. They'll keep you going when your own motivation wanes.

Pilates with Saskia

Saskia is a physiotherapist and Pilates instructor offering a Foundation Course for people new to Pilates/want a refresher to learn the principles of Pilates and good movement. **Charlton United Reformed Church Hall, 109a Bramshot Avenue, SE7 Tuesdays 9:30-10:30am (term time only) 4th January - 8th February 2022** Six week course, small group size with plenty of attention to detail. For more information and bookings contact Saskia: pilateswithsaskia@gmail.com or call/text 07540097064.

3 - Walk a dog. Dogs live in the moment. Be more dog. Chasing sticks, sniffing leaves, running back to you for treats. If you don't have a dog - find a friend who does and go walking with them. Or sign up to <https://www.borrowmydoggy.com/dogs-near-me/south-east-london>



4 - Go messing about on the river. Become accredited at Level 2 Sculling on the River Thames by this time next year with Globe Rowing Club <https://globerowingclub.co.uk>



5 - Sign up for an event. Start with a Park Run - free weekly 5k runs around the UK with no time limit <https://www.parkrun.org.uk>. And then - build up to whatever distance you like. You might want to try a 100k Ultra Marathon Race to the Stones <https://www.thresholdtrailseries.com/event/s/race-to-the-stones/> Or you might want to stick to 5k - it's up to you!



Don't forget - the difference between 'try' and 'triumph' is a little 'umph'! Make 2022 the year you try something new. Let us know how you get on. **Helen Marley Hutchinson, Cath Farrant, Rachel Mai-Jones, Miren Davies, Olwen Davies. And WN!**

Reach for the Top

The sport of indoor climbing has grown so much over recent years. Originally made for outdoor climbers seeking to stay fit and train throughout the winter. There are now walls across world and many of their regular members have no intention of ever going out to find real rock.

The progressive technical grading systems the climbing gyms use, are designed to develop a climbers technique, strength and mental grit at any level. From beginners to Olympic athletes, there are challenges for all.

The NICAS (The National Indoor Climbing Wall Scheme) progress participants though learning to be safe in a climbing environment (Level 1), learning to belay and communicate better than most adults (Level 2), gathering the equivalent of a GCSE's worth of climbing knowledge, including movement, techniques, warm ups, equipment (Level 3) and then on to Lead Climbing, where all of the techniques and exciting falls are taken to the next level (Level 4).

Adults are welcome to come down at any time to try their hand at bouldering. A collection of the hardest moves in the sport at low level (below four meters) with large 'crash mats'. Once they are experienced boulderers they will then be able bring down two guests/children.

Those who are keen to 'learn the ropes' will want to do our Basic Skills Course. A two 3 hour day course, six hours of tuition for £55 each. These can be booked online. The course is so popular that budding future climbers currently have booked the course into mid Jan 2022! After the course most are more than confident enough to take their own families to The Reach and start their journey towards future family trips into the mountains and beyond!

Users often come back again and again, trying to gain that one extra step to ascend to the top of our projects - getting fit and healthy is often a happy side effect.

WN asked Nina Aird (10yrs) to ask her brother Milo (9yrs) of his experiences of climbing at The Reach:
What are the instructors like? *They are all nice and they help me when I am stuck.*
Is it easy for you? *Most of the time.*
When does it get difficult? *When I'm doing a 6A!*
Are there levels? What level are you on? *Yes ... I'm on level two of NICAS.*
Do you have to wear special clothes? *No, all you need is a harness and you get that there.*
Is it enjoyable? *It depends on how hard it is, but normally, yes.*
Do you have competitions? *No, but when you finish a level you get a certificate.*
What is your favourite thing about The Reach? *I like climbing and bouldering the best.*
020 8855 9598
www.thereach.org.uk

Intermittent Fasting

Why giving your body a break is best for weight loss and long-term health

All diets work. All diets also fail. While Intermittent fasting (IF) can be met with skepticism, it's efficacy has ensured its staying power over the last decade.

The biggest issue my clients have when I recommend IF is they feel fasting means starvation. Not having three meals a day seems at best counterintuitive. However this is only a recent phenomenon since the advances of agriculture and global trade have provided plenty of food to those who can afford it. Many cultures and religions have historically practiced fasting as a period of reflection, introspection and returning to health.

Continually eating throughout the day keeps your body in a constant state of growth. Your body is processing the foods eaten, leading to insulin spikes; which contribute to weight gain and other health issues. IF gives the body time to carry out necessary functions for optimal health as well as giving the body an opportunity to mobilise fat once carbohydrate stores in the body are used up. Simply put; eating triggers growth, fasting triggers repair.

The most manageable type of fasting will vary individually, these are just two examples:

Time Restricted Eating:
Aim for a 16:8 or 18:6 hour split of fasting and eating. Worry less about restricting what you eat or abstaining from an occasional snack. Try not to eat two hours before bed so your body has a chance to rest and digest. This will encourage your body to mobilise fat and offset insulin resistance. It may also improve sleep.

5:2 Dieting
5:2 splits your fasts into days of the week where you eat under 800 calories. On these days it is recommended you abstain from refined carbs but otherwise simply eat a reduced amount. 4:3 splits can be undertaken for greater impact. If weight regain is a concern, keeping up one weekly fast can be a good habit to keep.

The only diet which works is one which you can incorporate into your daily life. This is where IF benefits long term. Many of my clients have made their fasting second nature so when they do occasionally have a snack or a drink it is a non-issue. The diet industry makes money off over-complicating and commodifying weight loss. I propose we are much better off simply taking a break from eating once in a while.

For those who want to know more, I recommend:
Fast 800 - Dr Michael Mosley
The Diet Myth - Tim Spector
Matthew Nyx - Personal Trainer & Nutrition Coach

Personal Training At Home, Blackheath, The Pleasaunce & Fitstudios Greenwich from just £40 per hour.

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Mycenae House&Gardens

Christmas with

The Kimberleys

Friday 17 December 2021

Join Isobel and Jim on a winter wonderland of seasonal folk music and the less well trodden yull tide avenues. If you are in the know, you know that these annual shows are a very special feast and not to be missed.
If you dont know well just trust us and get your self a ticket!

Tickets from www.wegotickets.com/event/530691
7.30pm £12 / £10 concession

Plus

Christmas Concert - **Bach to Baby** Thursday 9 December 4pm
Reach Out Christmas Party Thursday 16 December 1pm
Due to Covid 19 there will be **NO** Christmas Carol Service this year

www.mycenaehouse.co.uk 020 88581749