



Peace begins with a smile.Mother Teresa

Liaising with our councillors

In the past, the Environment Committee had meetings with our councillors to share our concerns and issues. We hope to re-instate these regular meetings, the first of which was held early in January.

Council elections took place last May and our ward councillors are now Leo Fletcher, Mariam Lolovar (who were both first elected in 2018) and Christine St. Matthew-Daniel (who was first elected in 2022). Leo Fletcher is the current Mayor of Greenwich and Mariam Lolavar is Council Cabinet member for Inclusive Economy, Business & Skills.

All three are very busy, but Councillor St Matthew-Daniel agreed to meet the Environment Committee to learn of some of the local issues of concern.

Blackheath Standard We are fortunate in having a vibrant and varied shopping area at the Standard and are aware this can change if there are too many empty properties or struggling businesses. We asked what plans the Council, which owns many of the buildings, has for the area and agreed to send a list of those that are vacant to our councillors.

Article 4 Direction could provide additional protection to the

Conservation Area, particularly in reducing the number of front gardens which are converted to hard standing for cars. The issue was raised in 2010 in the Westcombe Park Character Appraisal but, despite investigation and a recommendation by the Conservation Officer, now appears to have stalled. We asked for local councillors' support to achieve an Article 4 Direction.

Planning Compliance and Enforcement is not always sufficiently rigorous. Planning applications are sometimes registered despite not meeting the requirements of the local list of documents. This can result in poor quality or incomplete applications which, we argue, should be returned to applicants for improve-



ment before time is spent on them by officers. Conditions imposed on planning applications are not always rigorously enforced.

Traffic and public transport is an ongoing concern and we said we would appreciate an update on the progress of the Strategic Traffic Review and whether it is being professionally undertaken. We would also like to know whether community consultation will take place at

intervals during the project or only at the end of the review. We also spoke of the changes to the timetable for trains on the Greenwich Line and thanked our councillors for organising the leafleting that had taken place. More is needed before the end of January which is the deadline for comments. We also pointed out that the TfL review of bus routes was overdue given the changing needs of commuters and the increased options for travel. We asked that our councillors learn when this is likely to be taken forward.

Community Consultations on developments have recently, we feel, been of poor quality and have yielded very limited information due to a low level of response. They often take place too late in the process when developers have already invested time and money. We argued that early engagement and public consultation, particularly for larger sites, was good practice and more likely to result in better quality developments and hope that the council consider developing an Early Engagement policy.

Mycenae Gardens is being degraded. Much work has been done by volunteers but this has proved inadequate due to the number and varied nature



of users. We requested our councillors to ask that a strategy for repair and maintenance for the Gardens is devised.

BJWP (Blackheath Joint Working Party) is a joint collaboration between Greenwich and Lewisham. Secretarial support has been provided by Lewisham but this has now passed to Greenwich and requires funding. We requested that our councillors investigate options for funding from within the Council

Local streets We discussed the replacement of the handrail on Halstow Road and the matter of clearing pavements of leaves which make them slippery and dangerous.

Future liaison We all agreed that the meeting had been very useful and thanked the councillor for her time. We hope to hold similar meetings to highlight issues and raise concerns in the future.

South Eastern Timetable Changes

The recent timetable changes have now had a chance to bed in without the interruptions caused by weather conditions albeit that strikes are still interfering with a regular service.

We would be grateful to receive any information you have of your experiences due to the changed timetable especially around;

- Short formations
- Overcrowding
- Cancellations
- Disruption

•And any problems caused by the irregular intervals
Supporting photos would also be very useful and will not be published. Please send comments to environment@westcombesociety.org

We would also encourage you to continue to write in to South Eastern and others as soon as possible expressing your concerns regarding the changes (that were made without consultation). See listing below. Also to sign our petition see QR code. Southeastern will be reviewing the timetable from early February and the sooner people write the more likely it

is that changes will be implemented in May. However it is never too late to write as timetable changes are made on a regular basis.

List of addresses:

Southeastern
Steve White, Managing Director,
SE Trains Limited,
Second floor, 4 More London
Riverside, London, SE1 2AU.
steve.white_MD@southeasternrailway.co.uk
Please also copy to George Patterson
George.Paterson@southeasternrailway.co.uk
Department for Transport
(Southeastern is currently under government control)
The Rt Hon Anne-Marie
Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Rd
London SW1P 4DR
annemarie.trevelyan.mp@parliament.uk



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WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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wnews@westcombesociety.org
Deadline for March copy
14th February 2023

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ADVERTISING
Andrew Cai
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Deadline for Advertising:
14th February 2023

DISTRIBUTION
Emily Norton and volunteers
Tel: 0208 853 2756

PRINTING
Trojan Press.
Email: dave@trojanpress.co.uk
www.trojanpress.com

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Christine Legg, 69 Mycenae Road, London, SE3 7SE or email:
membership@westcombesociety.org

Look Up/ Look out.

The number of thefts of mobile phones has risen across London, including in Greenwich Park. Groups of youths, often wearing balaclavas to avoid identification, use mopeds, electric bikes and e-scooters to target people using their phones. They snatch the phone and ride away quickly and silently. The Metropolitan Police have issued a leaflet to alert us all to the danger. This can be found at www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/campaigns/2020/look-up-look-out/ They advise us to 'Be aware of your surroundings and your valuables, keep mobiles, watches and jewellery out of sight and plan your route home.'

What Goes Up Must Come Down

Di Blackwell

Everyone agreed it was a stunning Christmas tree, one of the loveliest The Westcombe Society has put up and decorated over the years to add to the Standard's festive spirit. We'd like to thank Clare at Westcombe Cleaners at the bottom of Westcombe Hill for her generous donation and to Alan's Plants Garden Centre in Greenwich for



supplying such a splendid tree. The day the decorations and the tree came down, Peter (an amazing help for years and is now leaving the area) and Duncan , who will be stepping into Peter's shoes next year, got stuck in despite the challenging weather. The Christmas tree task needs about three people and if you feel able to help next time (it doesn't take long to put up and even quicker to take down) please email wnews@westcombesociety.com. Marilyn also helped the boys this year but is more than happy to hand over to someone else!

Blackheath/Westcombe Ward Councillor Surgery times

Leo Fletcher, Mariam Lolavar and Christine St Matthew-Daniel
Details are below, please come, and say hello to us. No appointments needed
1st Saturday of the month - 10am - 11am - Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, London SE3 7SE
1st Saturday of the month - 1.00pm - 2.00pm - Age Exchange, 11 Blackheath Village, SE3 9LA

Reported Crime

The crime statistics, and to an extent the number of personnel assigned to a Safer Neighbourhood Team, depend upon crime being reported. If it is not reported, it cannot officially be shown to have happened. Therefore, even if a member of the public feels that a crime they have suffered is unlikely to be solved, they should still report it because the statistics feed into many other decisions. If reported crimes are happening outside SNT normal hours those hours can be adjusted if there is evidence to support it.

Westcombe Society Events

Getting together is at the heart of The Westcombe Society and we hold a series of events through the year to encourage and nurture a spirit of community. Whether it be catching up with friends over tea and cake, joining the children for an Easter egg hunt, making new connections over coffee while raising money for charity, or testing your knowledge at our hugely popular quizzes (dates to be agreed), check the schedule below for an event that appeals. Newcomers are very welcome at all functions. If you are new to the area, why not begin by joining us at the Members & Helpers Night where you'll be warmly received and enjoy a light meal. The majority of our events are held at Mycenae House or gardens. If you know of specific parts of our area that would welcome a spring clean please again let us know at wnews@westcombesociety.org. If you are interested in assisting with the arrangements for any of the events or want any further information, again please email wnews@westcombesociety.org.

18 February 2023:
Members & Helpers Party

18 March: Daffodil Tea

8 April: Easter Egg Hunt

23 April: Spring Clean

19 May: AGM

17 September: Macmillan Walk

22 September:
Macmillan Coffee Morning

14 October: Chrysanthemum Tea

Blackheath Flower Club



Blackheath Flower Club begins a new year on Friday 20th January with a Winter Workshop session free to members and just £8 for visitors to get back in the groove and enjoy the creativity of flower arranging. We meet at Mycenae House every third Friday from 1 to 3pm, for these workshops during the year or to watch a professional demonstrate five large arrangements which are raffled at 2.30pm, while we have a chat and refreshments bought from the lovely café. Please contact via telephone on 07917843121 or by e-mail on richard.lovegrove1@btinternet.com if you'd like to find out more.

Advertising Rates for Display Adverts in the WN

Size	Per Issue	Five Issue Discount
Standard 6cm x 6cm (one column wide)	£40	£185
12cm x 6cm (horizontal or vertical)	£63	£290
18cm x 6cm (horizontal or vertical)	£89	£405
12cm x 12cm	£115	£515
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PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

64A ST JOHNS PARK ref 22/4203/F

To construct single storey side and rear wrap around extension.

WESTCOMBE COURT, WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD ref 22/4138/F

To install 6 telecommunication antennas, 3 transmission dishes, and associated equipment on the roof.

TREE WORKS

104 COLERAINE ROAD ref 22/4308/TC

To fell 3 leylandii trees in rear garden.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

Crochet is therapy!

When Sue and I met a few years back at Mycenae House to volunteer for the Thursday Wellbeing Group, we didn't expect to be presented with a massive bag of wool! So, we began to crochet and natter! Our group of knitters and crocheters gradually expanded – this isn't just a group for nannas, we make nice items! We have all ages come to the group – both beginners and experts, if you can make a chain you can learn. We've also had students from The John Roan school make items for our charity sales. Crafting is good for you and your mental wellbeing – you don't have to be an expert; even if it does mean you spend an hour unravelling a ball of wool; unravelling that ball of wool and talking to others is good therapy in itself. We now make fabulous items for the Mycenae House Reach Out charity, which are for sale at Mycenae House to raise funds for the charity that provides programmes for lonely or isolated people. Please recommend us to your friends, the group runs every Thursday 1-3pm and is very friendly. Join us, it's free. Or call 020 8858 1749. Amanda Arthur/Sue Seenan (Nuttie Knits) Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, SE3 7SE info@mycenaehouse.co.uk



My oh my how time flies when you are having fun!

We opened the doors to Ottie and the Bea at Blackheath Royal Standard back on the 15th September 2010. We lived locally and I wanted to start a family business in my local community which would involve my children and that's what we did. But now the time has come to say a very fond farewell. We have so many wonderful memories of events locally, taking authors into schools, wonderful workshops, book clubs, Greenwich Book Festival, and the simple joy of the day to day running of a shop whilst being a part of this wonderful community. We are so grateful for all your support and engagement with Ottie and the Bea. And hopefully we will see some of you when you are in Suffolk - you'll find us in Framlingham, a small market town. And in the meantime, don't forget our website - we will carry on offering book recommendations and subscriptions. Do stay in touch - thank you all so much from us - Julia, Peter, Bea and Ottie x Thank you Julia for providing a vibrant and welcoming space in Old Dover Road. We wish you well in Suffolk

St John's Christmas Pop-Up

St John's Blackheath outreach event was a nativity-inspired pop-up held on the Blackheath Standard for three days. Visitors had an opportunity to get creative in front of cut-out boards, transforming themselves into wise men, shepherds and even Mary or Joseph! The real highlight came with the window display featuring Baby Jesus nestled inside his manger surrounded by twinkling lights while hay from a local farm

provided inviting warmth that kept attendees cozy despite chilly winter temperatures outside. From hot chocolate and mince pies to squash and biscuits there were plenty of sweet treats available as over 400 people attended - generating lots of good conversation, fun times filled with community spirit!

Nicolette Grobler



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John Roan School PTA donates over £7000

Plenty of primary schools have Parent Teacher Associations who come together to raise funds for the school, but when it comes to secondary schools, a PTA is something of a rarity.

The John Roan School Association (JRSA) began as a friend's group of The John Roan School, but when schools closed during lockdown, the group quickly grew as families and staff came together for the 120 Challenge. Parents, staff and students were sponsored to paint 120 pictures, cycle 120 miles, bake 120 cupcakes, and so on, raising £17000 in total, enough money to provide even more than the 120 laptops originally planned for the students who were struggling to access online learning. By February 2020, the JRSA became a registered charity, and won the Parentkind award for "Best New PTA of the Year" in 2021. Over 200 volunteers come together regularly for fundraising events such as quizzes and BBQs, and school events such as welcome evenings for families who are new to the School. They even provide treat hampers for staff rooms and do the gardening! The JRSA also play a key role in enhancing the communications between the School and families through termly Parent Forums with the Leadership Team. In December 2022, the JRSA awarded over £7000 in "mini-grants" to various subject teams across the School, enabling staff to subsidise the cost of character-building trips for students and the Y11 prom, fund art workshops, provide reward prizes and purchase equipment. Read more about their work and get involved at <https://www.thejohnroanschool.org.uk/parents/jrsa-pta>



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At last....

A ripple of applause was heard on the top floor of Mycenae House as Marian made her entrance to the first Pilates class of the year having ascended on her 'maiden voyage' up the newly installed Stannah stair lift. After a year of struggling up the 44 stairs and arriving breathless, it was a welcome relief to ascend sedately in comfort.

The Vanbrugh Community Association, which runs Mycenae House and funded the stair lift ((£11,000), has been trying for 15 years to make all four floors accessible by having a 'proper' lift



installed, but difficulties arose as the House is leased from the Council. The ambition to have a 'proper' lift on the outside of the House to accommodate, for example, a wheelchair has not been shelved, and the stair lift is seen as a short-term measure of 2-3 years whilst the administrative complexities linked to the lease are sorted. Mark Johnson Brown, manager of Mycenae House, says that the stair lift is already being well used and appreciated, and that all staff will be trained. This will ensure someone is always available to offer help. A users' guide is also being prepared. The stair lift is 'sedate', taking six minutes to ascend all four floors, but Marian is very content and says "it is a huge relief that it is working at last".

Ann Hill

Letters

To the Editor
Pre-pandemic I did one shift at a local food bank, mainly allocating and handing out boxes to people coming in. I didn't have too much interaction with the recipients except for one young woman, who touched my heart. She arrived with her Mum and explained she was there because she had two disabled children so she couldn't work, and her husband had just lost his job. With no money coming in until she could claim Universal Credit and her Mum only able to help a little as her own finances were pretty limited, she'd had to come to a food bank. "I don't want to be here but I have no choice", she said, sadly, as she collected her box. So please, whenever you go to a supermarket and, if you can, buy just one thing extra (check out The Trussell Trust website for what's needed www.trusselltrust.org), drop it into the collection point and think of those people who, through no fault of their own, also have no choice.

Name and address supplied.

FEATURES

Gardens as a potential refuge for nature and a haven of biodiversity.

In Britain, there are more than ten million gardens and these are a potential refuge for wildlife. Making the most of this potential is especially important in view of climate change and the alarming (and related) loss of biodiversity.

“Bugs” (insects) are especially under threat. For example, a 2022 “citizen science” study of the splatter incidence of insects on vehicle number plates in the UK (BuglifeUK and Kent Wildlife Trust) found a 64% decrease in numbers of flying insects since 2004. Similar declines have been documented in Europe. Many people ‘of a certain age’ will remember cleaning windcreens of dead insects on trips to the country, and the clouds of moths that used to swarm around night-lights, and legions of furry caterpillars trooping across paths, and the regular to and fro of bees and other bugs in the garden.

Not only is there less buzz in gardens these days but songbirds, hedgehogs and

golden rod, buttercups, clover, and ragwort were allowed to flourish, transforming the lawn into a sort of meadow. This is never mowed; it is cut with shears from June onwards, bit by bit to always leave uncropped areas. Flower beds were enlarged with insect-friendly varieties like Caryopteris, wallflowers, lavender and sage, while hellebores, crocuses, daffodils and grape-hyacinths provided food for insects in early spring. Around 450-500 species of insects and spiders were recorded in my garden during 2020-22, including >50 species of bees and wasp (virtually none of which sting!), >50 species of butterfly and moth, and lots of grasshoppers, crickets, beetles and flies.

The basic ‘rule’ is a mix of pollen- and nectar-yielding flowers, and something blooming all year long. Maintain some evergreen bushes and trees to shelter insects during rainy weather and in winter. Never mow before May and, if you must mow, leave islands for insects and other animals. Log piles provide protection and can be used as nests by solitary bees and beetles. Never prune bushes and trees before flowering. Use a rake or broom instead of a leaf-blower and forego chemical treatments, including organic insecticides. Avoid light at night. Make compost using leaves and other debris. The greening of gardens and the encouraging of bugs and other wildlife is also beneficial for people! Time spent in green spaces is beneficial to mental health by



frogs have all become much rarer. These losses are linked, since they all depend upon insects (and spiders) for food. Moreover, insects are crucial pollinators. Simply put: no bugs means no crops and no food. Bees also provide honey and wax, and many insects recycle leaves to enrich the soil. Numerous species such as lacewings and ladybirds eliminate pests like aphids, slugs and mildew.

Bugs – and the animals that depend upon them – are disappearing fast for several reasons, many of them apparent in gardens. These include:-

- loss of living space (by concreting over gardens and a preference for sterile, manicured lawns)
- leaf blowers, which remove insects, their food and shelter, as well as topsoil
- intensive farming and land drainage
- urbanisation of the countryside and fragmentation of habitats
- loss of vegetation and cultivation of plants that yield little pollen and nectar
- pesticides and insecticides
- pollution (water, air and sound - leaf blowers again - and night-time light)
- invasive species like harlequin ladybirds and parakeets.

Nonetheless, gardens and other green spaces can genuinely help stem this decline if cared for with nature in mind. I have seen this in my own garden in Paris, which is similar to my family’s garden in Westcombe Park. It is not large, yet very diverse as I have allowed it to partially re-wild itself. Selected shrubs like firethorn (Pyracantha), honeysuckle and mallow were allowed to take root, and ivy (a key autumnal food resource) to spread. Pockets of “weeds” like ox-eye daisies,



reducing stress and promoting a sense of well-being. Conversely, disengagement from nature is a risk factor for poor mental health and problems like drug abuse, depression and schizophrenia. The Covid pandemic led to a deterioration of mental health across many communities, but having a garden, or visiting parks or the countryside, helped compensate for a reduction in human contact. Wildlife-rich gardens, balconies, parks and other urban green spaces play crucial roles in protecting nature, help counter climate change, and they are good for you as well!

Dr Mark J Millan grew up in Westcombe Park, studied Zoology and Ecology at Cambridge University, then retrained in Neuroscience and his research includes improving the understanding, prevention and treatment of disorders of the brain. He is currently a Professor (honorary/visiting) in the College of Medicine and Life Sciences of Glasgow University. He is a keen photographer and has exhibited his work.

Book Review

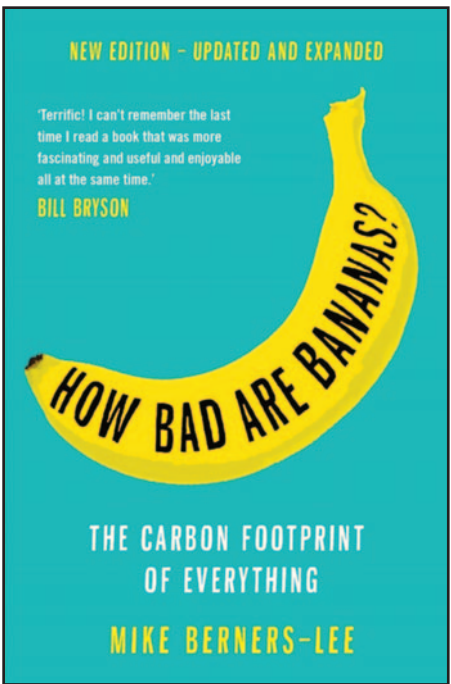
The Environment group met at the end of last year with Greenwich Council’s Head of Sustainability, and Averil Lekau, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member responsible for Climate Change, Environment and Transport, to find out about how Greenwich is progressing towards its goal of being carbon neutral by 2030 ... more on that in a later edition.

This book was first published before many of us had heard the phrase ‘carbon footprint’, but with COP 27 which took place last November and extreme events caused by climate change regularly in the headlines, dipping in to this 2020 edition can help us all be more aware of the impact of our choices.

Mike Berners-Lee (brother of Tim, who brought us the delights of the world wide web) has collected a vast amount of data and worked out the carbon dioxide emissions created by everything from a pint of tap water (not much!) to crypto currencies (he calculates that Bitcoin alone was responsible for 46 million tonnes of CO2 in 2019). Luckily, it turns out bananas are one of the least harmful foods in terms of carbon footprint because they’re grown in natural sunlight, come with their own packaging, and they keep well, so even though before arriving in your lunch box in the UK they travel thousands of miles, this is by boat rather than air. ‘The only really bad bananas are those you let rot in your fruit bowl. These join the scandalous 22% of food that is wasted by consumers in the UK and many other countries.’

A glance through this fascinating read is thoroughly thought-provoking. The author calculates that the CO2 emissions of the 2018 football World Cup in Russia were equivalent to half a pint of beer for every man, woman and child on the planet ... which was no doubt far exceeded by the 2022 Tournament in Qatar. But it manages not to be preachy – even when considering the impact of last Christmas! It seems we can all choose between a low, average and high-carbon festive season scenario with variable degrees of excess and wastage (eg unwanted presents). Top tip: be sure to choose LED fairy lights.

So, for readers interested in understanding more about the small decisions we



can make to reduce damage to the environment (or if you have friends or family who need a few hints) this is an entertaining and very practical read - the carbon footprint of a typical paperback book is about the same as watching six hours of TV!

'Reprinted, by permission, from the Greenwich Society Newsletter (Nov/Dec 2022, no.222)'. Suitably amended.

WestcombeNEWS

Editor Wanted

The Westcombe News seeks an editor or guest editors to work within a team to plan, revise and co-ordinate material for publication together with input from the WestcombeSoc.

This is a voluntary position. For further details please contact
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(Marilyn Little)

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FEATURES

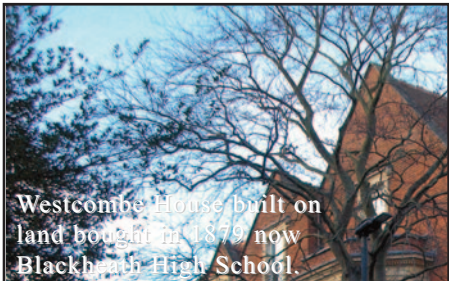
LOCAL HISTORY BROUGHT TO LIFE – Neil Rhind

The Blackheath Society maintains a large and growing archive of local records, especially over 15,000 images, of its area of interest. This includes Westcombe Park, from Maze Hill to Westcombe Hill and as far north as Humber Road. It also embraces the land encroached from the Heath by John Julius Angerstein in 1804 – giving land for the north side of Shooters Hill Road, St John’s Park the south side of Old Dover Road, and so on. Of special interest to Westcombe News readers is the first volume of the prospectus, Memorandum & Articles and minutes of the Board meetings of the Westcombe Park Estate Company, from 1877 to 1886. It is a remarkable handwritten document, over 400 pages thick. It is of immense value and full of important historic details about the unfolding development of Westcombe Park.



The company, led by architect James Edmeston, best known for his designs for the Blackheath Concert Hall, Conservatoire and Art School, took a lease and architects and planners were invited to submit a design (road plan) of the 108-acre ground. The winning scheme was by John Ashdown and titled “Invicta.” From

November 1877 the Westcombe Park Estate Company followed the plan and sold off plots for high class domestic properties. It all seemed to go well but the float coincided with a slump and the results were not as profitable as the directors had hoped. Nevertheless, the minute books do show an initial enthusiasm and a good number of plots were sold on the roads we know so well these days. Some were bought by



architects hoping to interest their clients in their designs, others by local builders anxious to run up a row of villas which could be sold for good profit. A few were purchased by middle class professionals who engaged designers and builders to put up their dream houses. Alas, although the minute book tells us a lot, it does not include the site plans, so we can but guess exactly where some of the plots were.

The site for a church was under consideration by March 1878 and the applicants assured the Board it had the funds for a church and a parsonage. A three-quarter acre site had been selected - the grassy triangle between Beaconsfield Road, Ingleside Grove and Hardy Road, now a small park. It was not until 1891 that a

new church was built – St George’s in Kirkside Road. Embarrassingly, there were not the funds to complete it. Most of the cost was paid by James Soames, the soap and candle maker and the father of the first incumbent, from the family house of some grandeur: Maze Hill House. The Rev Werner Henry Kolle Soames had his parsonage in Glenluce Road, and by 1896 threatened to resign because his parish couldn’t keep the church solvent. The other setback was the attempt by the Company to promote a hotel and licensed premises. The initial scheme was to be roughly where the shops are on the east end Humber Road, but the licensing justices repeatedly refused the all-important drinks licence. Legend grew that there were restrictive covenants on the estate prohibiting premises used for the sale of alcohol. Not so, it seems, but the “modern myth” continued until Greenwich Council obtained a drinks licence for the community centre in Mycenae House. Locals wondered how it had overcome the restrictive covenants, but Greenwich officers would not then be drawn.

Neil is a writer and local historian who was awarded an MBE 1998 for his work in preserving the historical character of Blackheath. He’s lived in Blackheath most of his life and is President of the Blackheath Society.

Greenwich Winter Night Shelter

The winter night shelter opened its doors again for overnight guests on 31st October.

They are looking for people to help out with the following shifts:
Evening shifts 6.30-10pm
Night shifts 9.45pm-6.45am
Morning shifts 6.30-9am

If you would like to get involved or would like to know more then please email volunteering@gwns.org.uk as they would love to hear from you!

An Update – Mary Mills

A couple of months ago I wrote an article about the signalling factory on the Angerstein Triangle site for Westcombe News. One of the main things I said that it seemed very, very difficult to find anything out about this works at all - although I had a picture of it following a V2 strike in the Second World War showing that it was quite a big works and clearly a lot of local people worked there. Despite this it has been very difficult to get any concrete information about it. I have had just two responses – one from someone who has studied railway



signalling works in some detail. He said: “All I can say is that there is no apparent works on 1893-4 OS maps and there is one in 1914. The Angerstein Railway branch was leased by the South Eastern Railway until October 1898, so it makes sense that the building of the works would post-date that event. Gray, in his history of the South Eastern Railway says “The SER maintained its signalling works at the site” which implies there was a works prior to 1898, but the 1892 OS maps show only a few buildings at the quayside. My understanding from conversations with a former employee is that by Southern Railway days it had become a civil engineers’ works rather than a purely signal works.” I would also very much like to thank the Hardy Road resident who sent me a page from the May 1959 edition of the British Railway Southern staff magazine, which doesn’t tell us very much about the works but gives a picture which confirms its size. Thank you!



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ENVIRONMENT

Sprucing Up The Dell

DL Gioe

If you’ve taken the short path that meanders through a wood between Mycenae Road and Beaconsfield Close, just on the other side of the Mycenae House walls, you’ve enjoyed one of the



area’s lesser-known wild places. Most days, you might catch only a trace of others who have trod the path before you – the odd footprint in the mud or patch to the side where someone’s dog has kicked up some dirt. Mostly, you’ll see birds, squirrels and the occasional fox, looking healthy and wily.

One Sunday in early January, nearby resident David Jervis was there as well, reweaving the evergreen ‘dead hedge’ fencing he’s created down the slope from the Beaconsfield side.

“It takes about six large Christmas trees to do each side,” David said, pointing to two discarded trunks he’d sheared of their boughs. “But it keeps the nettles and brambles back from the path.”

Not only does David’s recycling of discarded Christmas trees into an evergreen border add to the visual appeal, and aroma, of this minimally curated bit of nature, but dead hedging – or using branches blown down by wind or cleared through pruning (though David is quick to point out he only uses the former) – is a great way to protect the wild things that live in the dell from people and dogs that might otherwise stray from the path. Not just the fauna, but the flora too. Because while the dell feels like it was overlooked by the surrounding urban development, it has actually been through a substantial transformation over the last 30-some years.

“This area used to be grass when we first moved in down the road. People would picnic here and play cricket,” he reminisced.

Originally belonging to Mycenae House when it was still a convent under the care of the Little Sisters of the Assumption (1931-1967), according to David, a spring bubbled up in what is now the deeply-brambled middle of the space, making it difficult to maintain the lawns. The nettles and briars weren’t far behind. Trees that pushed their way through their tangles could grow, surrounded by natural protection. Now, the flora and fauna benefit from the extra protection David and his spruced up dead hedge provide as well as. The nesting boxes he’s installed together with the other little improvements he makes nearly every day when he visits are paying off, as a count last year identified 26 different bird species in the dell!

So for those who amble through the tall trees, avoiding the summer nettles as they creep but never quite over take the path; for the blackberry-pickers that harvest along the top of David’s recycled bulwark; for the bird lovers who spy a favourites species or hear a new song among the trees; for the autumn leaf collectors and for the winter-time wanderers who marvel at the new ever-green borders – spare a thought on your next walk through to give thanks to David Jervis.

In 2015, some major sprucing up was organised by the Friends of Mycenae



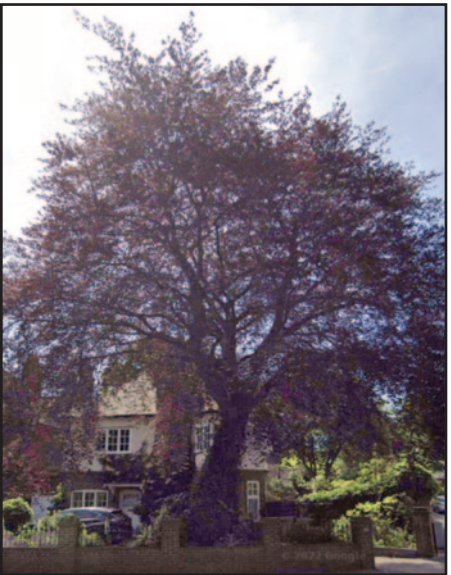
Benjamin Gioe

Gardens. With funding from the Mayor of London’s Capital Clean-up volunteer programme, local volunteers cleared and widened the perimeter path and planted a range of woodland plants, spring bulbs and wildflowers, especially near the top and bottom entrances. Woodpiles from fallen branches were built for insects and stag beetles. The Mayor unveiled the Wildlife Information Board in January 2016 designed by local resident Yu-Hsuan Lin, using Joe Beale’s photographs taken of flora and fauna in The Dell. The oak stand was made by Men in Sheds, a local volunteer group, and installed by....you guessed...David Jervis.

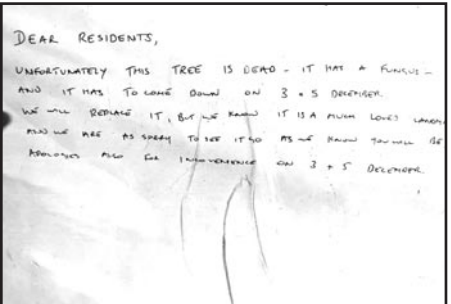
Our beautiful trees

The Westcombe Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal highlights the significant contribution that mature trees in our front and rear gardens make to the character of our area. The Appraisal also draws attention to the great variety of tree species in our gardens, a large number of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Unfortunately, some of our most distinctive trees have recently been felled, or requested to be felled.

Last year the magnificent copper beech

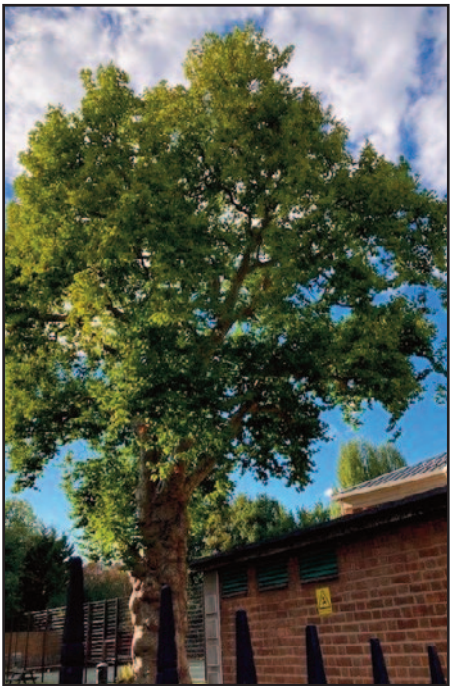


at 100 Westcombe Park Road showed signs of distress. The owners knew that residents would be concerned and wrote a note assuring passers-by that the tree would be replaced but that it had been suffering from fungal attack. This was confirmed by the Council’s Arboriculturalist who inspected the tree



and found fungus surrounding its base. The Tree Officer explained, "Given its prominent location on a busy road and school route the tree was removed on grounds of health and safety to ensure that the tree did not fall over the road or footpath."

Another favourite tree that is at risk of felling is the distinctive London Plane tree in the grounds of Blackheath High School. In 2020 an inspection deemed it to be healthy but in 2022 a different tree surgeon advised felling. Subsequent reports have suggested that crown reduction might relieve pressure on the tree which is of "high amenity value" and its future is still being decided. Loss of any tree is regrettable. They are a precious resource providing wildlife habitats, absorbing CO2 and pollutants, and enhancing the Conservation Area. All, or nearly all, the trees that were planted on the site at the corner of Dinsdale and Humber Roads appear to be dead. This is very disappointing after all the work that went into clearing and replanting the area. The site belongs to a Housing Association who are being asked to replace the trees and to put in place a plan to irrigate and maintain them in good condition.





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WHATS ON

BLACKHEATH HALLS

The Nosy Little Troll
Sat 4 Feb, 11.00am & 3.00pm
Parental guidance: 3-8 yrs
A warm-hearted Scandinavian story from Garlic Theatre, about a Nosy Little Troll who has an amazingly sensitive nose...with wonderfully crafted puppets, live music and lots of joining in.

Phil Beer
Sat 4 Feb, 8.00pm
Phil Beer is the multi-instrumental half of award-winning acoustic duo, Show of Hands. It's a treat of past and current favourites from one of the most popular musicians on the acoustic circuit.

Lunchtime Recital: Sarah Gilford and Rebecca Cohen
Mon 6 Feb, 1.10pm
Programme: Songs by Mahler, Richard Strauss & Johannes Hermann-Muller, English songs by Grainger, Britten, Muriel Herbert & Madeleine Dring.

Trinity Laban Soloists' Competition Final 2023
Wed 8 Feb, 7.30pm
Admission FREE, booking required
Finalists showcase their skills in this popular and prestigious competition, performing a concerto as they compete for the chance to perform as a soloist with one of Trinity Laban's full orchestras.

Quiz Night 2023
Fri 10 Feb, 7.30pm
The Blackheath Halls quiz night is back! Test your wits in a variety of different rounds and see who will be crowned the Quiz Masters of Blackheath.

Josie Long: Re-Enchantment
Sat 25 Feb, 8.00pm
Triple Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee, underdog Fringe hero and delirious new mother (the first person to have two babies) returns with a show about the changes wrought by time, passion, moving to Scotland, and loving the world under – let's face it – difficult circumstances.

Lunchtime Recital: Gunel Mirzayeva (piano)
Mon 27 Feb, 1.10pm
Programme: Variations on Goldberg by Gunel Mirzayeva
This will be the first public performance of a new work by pianist and creative thinker, Gunel, prior to its premiere London performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama on 6th March.

www.blackheathhalls.com/whats-on

National Maritime Museum and Queen's House, Greenwich

Astronomy Photographer of the Year 14
Now in its fourteenth year, the awe-inspiring winning and shortlisted images from this year's Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition are on display at the National Maritime Museum. It is organised by the Royal Observatory Greenwich in association with BBC Sky at Night Magazine.
Winner and Overall Winner 2022
Picture Caption: Disconnection Event © Gerald Rhemann



Tivoli Southern Sky Guest Farm, Khomas, Namibia, 25 December 2021
Date: 17 September 2022 – 13 August
Location: National Maritime Museum, Photography Gallery
www.rmg.co.uk/astrophoto
All the Queen's Men
Uncover the lives of Elizabeth I's male courtiers and their personal and political relationships with the monarch in this new display at the Queen's House.
www.rmg.co.uk/queenshouse/attractions/all-queens-men
Special Events

Time and Tide: The Thames, Greenwich and its forgotten past
Filmed over six years with input from Royal Museums Greenwich, the Museum of London Docklands, and Port of London Authority, 'Time and Tide: The Thames, Greenwich and its forgotten past' is a film of lost stories along a once industrial Greenwich shoreline, a place that's been reinventing itself almost continuously for 300 years.
Date: 2 February 2023
Location: National Maritime Museum
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/time-and-tide-the-thames-greenwich-and-its-forgotten-past-tickets-476379733607
Community Garden

Visit the community garden at RMG's collection and conservation centre in Kidbrooke. No matter how green your fingers are, come and discover where our food comes from, how it is grown and how it got to Britain. On select Friday afternoons the doors to the garden are opened for everyone to muck in.
Dates: Fridays during February – November
Age: Recommended for adults but families are welcome
www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/prince-philip-maritime-collections-centre/community-garden-prince-philip-maritime

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The Royal Observatory, Greenwich

Evening with the Stars
See the Moon, planets and constellations through the 18-tonne Great Equatorial Telescope and catch a planetarium show during this celestial evening at the Royal Observatory and Peter Harrison Planetarium.
Dates: 3, 4, 17, 18 February 2023
Location: Royal Observatory Greenwich, Peter Harrison Planetarium
www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/royal-observatory/evening-stars

Exploring Mars
Journey to the Red Planet in this exhibition exploring the incredible discoveries that have been made about Mars so far and consider the exciting possibilities of what the future may hold for humans on the planet.
www.rmg.co.uk/royal-observatory/attractions/exploring-mars-exhibition

The Sky Tonight
This live show, presented by a Royal Observatory Astronomer, takes visitors on a tour of what can be seen in the night sky on the day of their visit and the months ahead.
www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/planetarium-shows/sky-tonight

There are many more interesting and educational events and courses being held at the Royal Observatory this next month and beyond, visit: www.rmg.co.uk/whatson/royal-observatory/astronomy-courses

Arts Society Greenwich

www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk



Lecture to be held at 730pm at James Wolfe Primary School, Royal Hill, SE10 8R2.

Two Hellenic Cities: Alexandria and Pergamon - James Renshaw
Monday 13 February 2023
This talk explains how two incredible ancient cities Alexandria and Pergamon changed the intellectual and artistic landscape and examines their legacy.



For further information contact
T: 020 8852 0234
E: info@conservatoire.org.uk
www.conservatoire.org.uk

Cutty Sark Special Events

Welcome back to our annual late takeover to celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month. Join us for an immersive experience on board with London's finest drag and cabaret artists, featuring gender diverse performances, queer history treasure hunts and much more.
Date: 24 February 2023
Age: Suitable for ages 18 and over
Location: Cutty Sark
www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/lgbtq-history-month

Family Fun Weekend
Join us on board for a weekend of sailor fun. Listen to sea shanties on the tween deck, watch characters from the ship's past as they tell tales of life on board or take part in our drop-in workshops.
Dates: 4 – 5 February 2023
Location: Cutty Sark
www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/cutty-sark/family-fun-weekend

ACTIVITIES
Cutty Sark Rig Climb Experience
For the first time since arriving in Greenwich in 1954, visitors to Cutty Sark can climb the famous masts and enjoy views of the Thames and London like no other.
www.rmg.co.uk/cuttrysark/attractions/cutty-sark-rig-climb-experience

Old Royal Naval College:

Still showing - The Moon Rises in Greenwich

13 December 2022 - 5 February 2023
Following the phenomenal sold-out installation of Gaia in the Painted Hall in 2021, artist Luke Jerram returns to the Old Royal Naval College with his incredible artwork Museum of the Moon.

Blood & Battle: Dissecting the Life of William Beatty Until 25 March 2023

Explore the fascinating – and sometimes grisly – life and work of Admiral Nelson's surgeon, Sir William Beatty.

Make the most of your visit and get a £16 Painted Hall and Blood & Battle combined ticket.



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