

WestcombeNEWS

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July/August 2024 No 6

"Summer has filled her veins with light and her heart is washed with noon." - C. Day-Lewis

The Westcombe Society AGM Report

The Society's AGM was held on the 24th May at Blackheath High School. Reports were submitted by officers of the Society. The Chair's report is included in this issue of the Westcombe News.

The Events report was given by Jean-Jacques Aune who detailed the events that the Society has held this reporting year:

- The Parkfest in Mycenae Gardens.
- The two quiz evenings in the year.
- Afternoon teas for the elderly (although these have now been discontinued due to falling attendance).
- The MacMillan Walk and Coffee Morning which are always very well supported. The society raised over £1000 in this reporting year.
- The Easter Egg Hunt in the grounds of Mycenae House which attracted over 200 children.
- The Members and Helpers Evening which is an opportunity to thank those who give their time and to welcome newcomers to the area.

We thank the Mycenae House staff for the invaluable help and support they give to our events.

Profits from these events are used mainly to support our chosen charity apart from the events specifically for MacMillan.

The report by the Environment Committee was included in the June edition of the Westcombe News.

The editor's report was given by Christine Fells who said that the Westcombe News epitomises

community spirit, as it is delivered to everyone in the Westcombe Park area, regardless of whether they are members of the Westcombe Society. It is the product of the active participation of volunteers in the production and distribution of the paper together with numerous contributors. We recently moved to full-colour printing which has proved popular with our readers.

We have an editorial team who unstintingly support each issue of the paper, often providing articles featuring local individuals, historical insights, and upcoming events.

Contributions come from the Events Team and the Environment Team (on local traffic and environmental issues). The possible introduction of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) is emerging as a key topic of discussion this year. Articles of interest are also submitted by our readership and these are welcomed. We have a committed delivery team who sort and deliver nearly 4,000 copies to residents.

The membership report was given by Christine Legg who reported a membership of 271, of which 18 are new members including one new life membership.

The Treasurer's report was given by Miles Storey, who presented the audited statement of accounts for the year ending 31/3/2024. He commented that although costs of running the Society had increased,

the Society's funds were in good shape. A slight increase in the Annual membership fee was suggested that will take effect from member's next payments. The new Annual rates are £15 family, £12 Single, and £6 Concession.

All Officers agreed to stand again apart from Jane Wilson (as

in the June issue of Westcombe News.)

Annie Hart queried Greenwich Council's policy on traffic restrictions and Geoff gave the background to the proposed LTN in Westcombe Park, noting that any decision would now be delayed due to the general election.



secretary) who will be replaced by Andrew Graham.

We welcome Andrew to the team and also Jaya Narang our new Advertising Manager.

Charity of the year - Jean-Jacques Aune confirmed this would be AFRIL - Action for Refugees in Lewisham noting that Greenwich and Southwark were covered as well as Lewisham. An article appeared

As Chair, Geoff thanked Jane and presented her with gifts in acknowledgement of her contribution to the society over 10 years as Secretary.

The meeting was followed by an illustrated talk by Joe Beale on improving biodiversity at Vanbrugh Pits. (This is described in more detail in this issue of the *Westcombe News*.)

New Learning Centre in Greenwich Park Unveiled

The long-awaited Learning Centre in Greenwich Park was unveiled on 25th May and will provide new outdoor learning for schools and community groups. It is sited in an area to the south of the flower garden and can be approached via the path from the Ignatius Sancho Café.

It was funded as part of the Greenwich Park Revealed project alongside contributions from other charitable institutions.

The new building, which is

accessible and sustainable, is entered via the former Wildlife Centre which is now a welcoming entrance with accessible facilities. The indoor learning space sits within a larger outdoor learning area, which includes a learning canopy, nature trails (with wooden sculptures), a dipping pond, and a wildlife meadow.

The Field Studies Council will be running school sessions from the new Learning Centre as well as other activities out in the park.

The Royal Parks' Learning Team is exploring options for a community public programme that can inspire communities local to Greenwich and

beyond to connect with nature, heritage, and wellbeing.

Further information can be found at www.royalparks.org.uk



The dipping pond, Credit: The Royal Parks

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Westcombe News

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Please send payment to:
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Westcombe Society Annual General Meeting

Chair's Annual Report 2023 - 2024

When I became Chair of the Westcombe Society in 2023, taking over from the redoubtable Marilyn Little, I already had a fairly reasonable idea not only of the range of activity covered by the Society but of the effort put in by a relatively small number of dedicated volunteers.

The committee reports deal with the main activities and issues covered during the past year. For example, the Environment Committee's impressive attention to the complexities of the Council's latest proposals for a Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme for the West and East Greenwich/ Westcombe areas. Then there is the Events Committee which swings seamlessly into action to bring us popular Society events such as the Quiz, the Easter Egg hunt and the well supported fund raisers for the Macmillan cancer charity.

Our Treasurer, Miles Storey, and Membership Secretary, Christine Legg, provide excellent support while the Society's Executive Council brings all the various strands of activity together.

The Westcombe News continues to be a well-respected and popular publication provided free to the local community by the Society. It has assumed an even more important role since the demise of printed local newspapers. It is one of the Society's key and best-known activities but has lately faced problems due to costs and a dip in advertising revenues which means that it is currently, but hopefully temporarily, being subsidised from general

Westcombe Society funds. During the year we were very pleased to welcome a new Editor, Christine Fells, who together with the editorial board and the network of deliverers ensures that the News is published and delivered to homes regularly and is an informative and entertaining read.

After a year in the job I am even more aware of the unstinting efforts and wide range of talents of our volunteers. As Chair of the Society, I would like to salute the dedication and attention to detail of the small band of volunteers who keep the organisation functioning as effectively as it does, but it is a small number. Hopefully others might like to become more involved - you can be sure of a warm welcome!

I would also like to record the thanks of the Society to Jane Wilson who, after ten years, has decided to stand down as Secretary having done a really wonderful job in an often unsung role.

Lately we were sad to have to record the passing of several friends. These included a former popular and respected Chair of the Society, Gordon Baker, honorary life member of the Society Neil Rhind, often known as "Mr Blackheath", and environmental champion and former Westcombe resident Anna Townend. It will, as ever, be interesting to discover what challenges the forthcoming year will bring but whatever they may be I feel sure the Society will be ready to meet them and to continue its excellent work.

*Geoff Brighty
Chair: Westcombe Society*

Might a dream come true?

Many have dreamed of the day when our community centre at Mycenae House would have a lift, and it is possible that this dream might become real. For sixteen years the Vanbrugh Community Association (VCA) which runs Mycenae House has been seeking permission to have a lift installed to make all four floors accessible. A Stannah stair lift was installed in January 2023 as a short-term measure whilst the administrative complexities were addressed.

These complexities now appear to have been resolved and the VCA has submitted a planning application (24/1119/F) to the Council for an external lift shaft on the eastern side of Mycenae House which would be accessible from all floors.

The architects of the proposal give four key objectives:

1. **Accessibility:** especially for wheelchair users and the elderly, but also to help staff move equipment and heavy objects up and down the building.

2. **Inclusivity:** to foster a more equal and diverse environment that allows more comfortable navigation around the building.

3. **Heritage preservation:** the design will harmonise with the existing building while meeting modern accessibility standards.

4. **Community benefit:** the lift will benefit current and future users and demonstrate a commitment to promoting social cohesion and cultural enrichment as well as increasing the capacity for activities within the building and the sustainability of Mycenae House as a business enterprise.

Mycenae House is already a vibrant community hub with on average over 125 community activities including various classes, clubs, concerts and café. Up to 4,500 people visit the centre each week. Many within the Westcombe Park community will wish the application every success and will look forward to the realisation of their dream.

Ann Hill

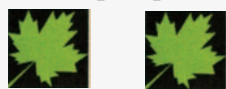
Kisstory and Uptown Festivals, Blackheath 27/28 July

Some residents have received leaflets about the Festivals taking place on 27 and 28 July. On both these days, Hare and Billet Road and part of Goffers Road will be closed. With regard to noise there will be sound checks in the morning with events themselves running from 12 noon and until 10.30pm on Saturday and 10pm on Sunday.

Anyone experiencing noise nuisance should call the Community Hotline number 0333 880 2469. This will be operational from 9am until 11pm on both event days. Further information about the festivals are available on the community information page of blackheathlive.com.

Information is also available on uptownfestival.co.uk.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD

Local News

Dry Riser thefts increasing

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Council has reported an increase in thefts of dry riser valves from blocks of flats across the borough. These brass components, stolen for scrap metal, are critical for firefighting, and their theft endangers lives by preventing the London Fire Brigade from

accessing necessary water supplies during fires. The council is raising awareness and urging residents to report suspicious activity to help combat this issue. For more information, please see the article on RBG website: Lives endangered by increasing dry riser valve thefts in Royal Greenwich.



Parking in Westcombe Park

Residents may have noticed signs going up on some parking bays showing PayByPhone. The Westcombe Society have requested more information about this from the Council. Further details will be posted on westcombesociety.org when we receive a reply.

Are you a Lime Bike/Forest Bike User?

The Royal Borough of Greenwich are currently holding talks with the Lime Bike operators about parking with a view to designated parking zones because of the problems caused by inconsiderate parking. This photo shows two bikes which may appear to be parked considerately at first glance. The question is, can a wheelchair or buggy pass between the post and the bikes? Probably

not in this case. PLEASE PARK CONSIDERATELY WITHOUT BLOCKING PAVEMENTS.



LTN

Any updates over the summer will be posted on our website

westcombesociety.org

Friends of Mycenae Gardens

Planting, pruning and nurturing the park

Recent Action Days for Mycenae Gardens have brought a good turnout of volunteers to the park, concentrating on the shrub beds. These had become somewhat overgrown, and there's plenty to keep helpers busy. Three areas (plus the new wild-flower bed) have been fenced off, and that's giving us the opportunity to keep weeds at bay and plant flowering perennials. Ox-eye daisies, geranium 'Rozanne', and late-flowering rudbeckia are in the ground, and we've seen some earlier planting regenerating too.

And where have the new plants come from? Volunteers have given their time, but people have contributed in other ways. The geraniums are a very kind gift from the Greenwich and Bexley

Community Hospice, in exchange for different plants from a supporter's garden. The rudbeckia, too, came from a local garden. It's not invasive, but it does spread, and a clump was lifted and divided this spring, leading to spare plants. The daisies are thanks to Greenwich Park; you'll see their siblings in the beds in the Flower Garden, near the new Ignatius Sancho Café. The Royal Park gave some spares to Christchurch Community Garden, which has been distributing them around other local growing spaces.

This is a good example of how gardening can encourage community-building, and perhaps you can help too, in the autumn, and next spring. The Friends group are looking to expand its planting scheme, and if you have suggestions or plants you can spare, we'd love to hear about it. You can contact us through the website, mycenaegardens.org.uk. You'll find our Action Days there, too: come and help, or just come and see what we're up to in your Mycenae Gardens.



National Award for The Voewood Local Boutique

The Voewood lifestyle store at Blackheath Standard is celebrating after beating off nationwide competition to scoop a national retail award. Known locally by many as a 'mini Liberty', its eclectic mix of womenswear, home and interiors and gifts saw it sweep past the likes of the National Gallery Gift shops to SE3. You can see the award proudly displayed in the window on Old Dover Road.

such a fabulous independent community to be part of and the award is really a tribute to our fabulous, loyal local customers – without them we truly wouldn't be here."

The award is the latest in a string of awards and nominations for businesses at The Standard. The Voewood itself has previously received nominations from Time Out and Royal Greenwich Retail Awards, and Sarah Crawford Beauty has this year won a



The boutique was founded nine years ago by local mum, Nicola Hibon Jackson, who previously had a career in journalism working for both the BBC and Sky News, and led PR for Friends of the Earth and the Climate Change Bill. However, her background in retail goes back to her childhood, as she grew up learning about independent retail from her parents, who have had a similar shop in the north east of England since 1966. Nicola says: "We're totally thrilled to have brought a national award back to Blackheath Standard. It's

national training award, whilst Brother's Bakery has previously received the Royal Greenwich Award for Best Food & Drink Venue.

Other Local Store News

- The Marks and Spencer Simply food store near Blackheath Standard will be closed for a 'refresh' from the end of June and is due to reopen in September.
- Greenwich Oxfam Bookshop was recently announced as the regional winner for London and the South East Volunteer team of the Year.


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FEATURES

A Playground for Modern Architects

Patrick van IJzendoorn

Ten years ago, Langton Way had its 15 minutes of fame when a film crew descended upon No 31. The modern, single-storey three-bedroom house at this address was chosen as the home of MI6 agent Hector, played by Damian Lewis, in the film adaptation of John le Carré's spy-thriller, *Our Kind of Traitor*. It was a belated reward for the architects David Thomas and the late Peter Foggo who had designed this 'experimental' house in the late fifties, one of the finest examples of modernism in the capital.

The Gum Tree House along the unmade road features alongside 63 other bricks & mortar projects in *Modern Buildings in Blackheath and Greenwich*, a book by Blackheath-based architect Ana Francisco Sutherland. It was launched at the end of May, in a packed Quaker Meeting House. An apt location, as this lantern-shaped building is the local legacy of the late architect Trevor Dannatt, who had lived and worked on Westcombe Park Road. Most of the buildings Sutherland deals with are located in Blackheath, chiefly at the Cator Estate.

But the Westcombe Park area does have its fair share of post-war architecture. The epicentre of Westcombian modernism obviously is the Vanbrugh Park Estate, designed by the same architects - Chamberlin, Powell & Bon - who were behind the Barbican and the nearby Golden Lane Estate. The brutalist development, especially the towering and inkwell-shaped Westcombe Court, has never been without its critics. As often with post-war architecture, it is better to be in it than next to it.

Sutherland writes that 'the finer details are reserved for the interiors' like 'the imaginative use of clerestory windows and bold stoves with tubu-

lar, which together with open staircases, provide sculptural features'. This interior is a nod to the Helsinki-studio of the Finnish designer Alvar Aalto. It is one of the many examples of European influences. Arther Rubinstein's terrace of twenty interlocking maisonettes along Vanbrugh Park Road, or example, is a development with a Dutch feel about it.

Scandinavian in its spaciousness is the modernist dwelling at 129 Maze Hill, home of architects Myles and Deirdre Dove. The aforementioned 'Hector House' is inspired by the ideas of the continental architects Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. Other Westcombe Park developments in the book are the terrace of five houses at Lyndale Close, the Church Army Chapel, a couple of houses along Heath Way. An extension of the coach house at Langton Way was designed by Trevor Dannatt for his brother George, a music critic.

It's remarkable how many of the modernist houses were built for the architects themselves, like John Vanbrugh had done with his quirky castle on Maze Hill. This part of Southeast London appears to be an architect's paradise. With the buildings of Inigo Jones, Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor and John Vanbrugh, Greenwich has always been a permanent expo of architecture. Over 416 richly-illustrated pages Sutherland shows that the wave of modernism is an interesting contribution. But acquired taste might be needed.

Modern Buildings in Blackheath and Greenwich, a book by Blackheath-based architect Ana Francisco Sutherland

Modern Buildings in Blackheath and Greenwich | Park Books (park-books.com)

Opening up for the Community Hospice

One of the great treats of the summer took place in June, when dozens opened their gardens to the public to raise funds for the Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice. This year, that meant the opportunity to admire private gardens in Greenwich, Blackheath, Eltham and Lee, and hear from owners about what had moved them to create their sites, what had worked well, and how their designs had blended with existing older trees and plantings.



Angerstein Lane, credit A. Robbins

In Westcombe Park, it's always a delight to see Stephen Whitefield's garden along Angerstein Lane. It's planted with formal elements, like low hedging that encloses some beds, and more naturalistic informality where plants have gently seeded themselves. A dogwood tree was in flower, and so was a spectacular Kiftgate rose, a vigorous climber working its way to the top of a mature lime tree. There was a lot to learn from the front gardens at 84-101 Vanbrugh Park, where the modernist maisonettes have narrow front gardens. Neighbours had worked together for the scheme while showing great individuality, including a sedum-roofed bin store, trees bought from Greenwich Park plant sales, and the plants in pots to bring changes in height. New to the scheme this year was a mature Mycenae Road garden with a bridge over a small water feature, built in the 1930s, and a much older Spanish oak and other trees adding to the sense of being in the countryside. A broad theme - the plight of box hedges, where blight and caterpillars

have affected plants in several gardens, and learning what treatments or replacements might be available.

Nearby Blackheath and Greenwich gardens were also open, including Morden College with its new RIBA award-winning pavilion, and sites in Crooms Hill, Westgrove, and Gloucester Circus. The Christchurch Community Garden and the Maze Hill and Prior Street allotments showed off fruit and vegetables, and the joy of cooperative growing. There was even an evening jazz concert in a garden in Dartmouth Grove, with musicians from Trinity Laban.



Morden College, credit A. Robbins

It was pretty clear that many groups of people walking the area were garden enthusiasts. One proud Blackheath gardener estimated at least 200 had come along to his garden this year. The funds raised will support the work of the hospice, which cares for people in the final stages of their lives and supports their families through that difficult time. Here, work is ongoing to make its own garden more inviting and accessible to the patients. While these are not generally open to the public, the hospice's emphasis on the restorative power of gardens has again made for a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness of its work while giving local people a chance to see the area in new ways.

Anne Robbins

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FEATURES

More on Memorial Plaques

Following on from the feature in Westcombe News (Dec 2022) on the Blue Plaque commemorating the Blackheath roots of Mass Observation and the accompanying selection of "Other Plaques in and around Westcombe Park", which focused on the Blue Plaques of English Heritage, Rich Sylvester compiled an additional list. This included a number of new plaques commissioned by groups like Nubian Jak - nubianjak.com/ and other memorials to commemorate the local presence and contributions of a wider and more diverse range of people.

On that list, Rich highlights:

John Blanke, Trumpeter at Greenwich Tudor Palace (fl.1507-1512) commemorated by two plaques: one on the Hawksmoor staircase at Trinity Laban and a Black plaque in Greenwich Visitors Centre.

See www.johnblanke.com.

Ignatius Sancho (c.1729-1780) Butler, writer, composer, shopkeeper, social commentator and aboli-



tionist. A white stone plaque is located in the wall of Greenwich Park, beside the former site of Montague House where Sancho worked for the Montague family.

A café in the park was recently named in his honour and an appeal by Greenwich University has raised £26,000 for a relief sculpture by Christy Symington to be placed next to the plaque.

Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-97) Seaman, abolitionist and author who lived briefly with the Guerin sisters at 111 Maze Hill where a plaque was installed in 2021. According to his memoir, he was from the village of Essaka in modern Nigeria and enslaved and transported to north America as a child. He is best known for his autobiography 'The Interesting Narrative'.

Fela Kuti (1938-97) Nigerian musician, bandleader, composer and political activist. Fela came to London in 1958 and studied composition and trumpet performance at Trinity College of Music. Developing a fusion of African and black American music known as 'afrobeat', he produced more than 50 albums. His plaque is located in Reception, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Dance and Music, College Way SE10.

Stephen Lawrence (1974-1993) Blackheath Bluecoat pupil and aspiring student of Architecture, he was murdered in an unprovoked

racist attack thirty years ago. The University of Greenwich founded the Stephen Lawrence Gallery in his memory in 2000 and it is now located at 10 Stockwell Street. In 2023 a new scholarship programme was established in Stephen's name by the University working with the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation. His memorial plaque on Well Hall Road in Eltham had to be repaired and replaced due to vandalism in 1995 and 2019.

Rich goes on to ask whether readers may be able to help with the obvious question – where are there plaques or memorials to women and those of working class backgrounds connected to this locality?

Rachel and Margaret McMillan - the pioneers of nursery education whose plaque sits in Deptford, or the suffragette Emily Davison, who is commemorated on the storyboard opposite the Vanbrugh Park entrance to Greenwich Park. There have been proposals for a plaque on the Vanbrugh Park Estate where the house she lived in used to stand.

Which other local women from the past would readers like to see commemorated? Rich suggests:

Mary Roberts, a widow with six children who took the lease on Combe Farm from 1846 and lived locally until she died. Both Mary and her son Nathaniel kept detailed diaries on some of the work of the farm and their social life. An edited booklet with extracts is in the local interest section of the library.

Maria Belville (1811-99) and her daughter Ruth (1854-1943) who had the title of the 'Greenwich Time Lady'. They 'sold' the correct time as per Greenwich Observatory by carrying a pocket watch to clock-makers and companies across London.

Rich Sylvester is a local resident and guide to "Green Spaces and Old Places" ([Instagram @richstories123](https://www.instagram.com/richstories123))



A Statue of Britannia for Greenwich

Following Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile in 1798, it was proposed by the then Duke of Clarence (later William IV) that a competition be held for the design of a monument to commemorate the great naval victory and provide a national symbol of pride. Several proposals were entered including a naval pillar by artist James Gillray (1756-1815) and a sculpture of

The proposed location for the Flaxman statue, carefully chosen to reference Greenwich's naval connections, was on the summit of Greenwich Hill overlooking the Wren masterpiece of the Royal Hospital, Inigo Jones' Queen's House and next to the Royal Observatory. This location is now occupied by the far more modest statue of General Woolfe.



Father Thames by James Barry, RA (1741-1806). Neither submission compared with the proposal of "Britannia By Divine Providence Triumphant" entered by the sculptor John Flaxman, RA.



John Flaxman worked as a young man for Josiah Wedgwood creating classical reliefs for his famous jasper and basalt ware ranges. As a Neo-classical sculptor, Flaxman was sent by Wedgwood to Rome to further his study of classical art for what was to be two years but which eventually became seven. He returned to London following the completion of Italian commissions and after compiling a book of his classical engravings. He had by this time gained an international reputation and became the first professor of sculpture at the Royal Academy.

The proposed statute of Britannia was enormous, standing at 230 feet - twice the height of the Colossus of Rhodes and 80 feet taller than the Statue of Liberty. Christ the Redeemer at Rio is only 98 feet high. It was designed to be, and clearly would have been, seen from many locations across London. The engravings of the statue illustrated are by William Blake, a pupil of John Flaxman. A model of the monument exhibited at the time still exists and can still be seen at the Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln Inn Fields. His designs for Britannia can be seen on the Trafalgar Memorial to Nelson at St Paul's Cathedral and on a memorial to Prime Minister North at All Saints Church, Wroton. Due to lack of subscriptions the competition was withdrawn.

In later life, Flaxman designed classical friezes for Buckingham Palace and a frieze inspired by the Elgin Marbles behind the portico of The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, which survived a fire from a previous theatre and was incorporated by architect E.M. Barry into his new building.

It was the death of Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar and not the competition that was to provide London with perhaps its most famous monument, Nelson's Column, surmounted by the sculpture of Admiral Nelson by another pupil of Flaxman, Edward Hodges Bailey (1788-1867).

The Statue Of Britannia, had it been built, would have dominated Greenwich and been without doubt one of the world's most famous statues.

David Fletcher FCSD
Fellow of the Chartered Society of
Designers

ENVIRONMENT

The Vanbrugh Pits Joe Beale

A talk for the Westcombe Society AGM

In May I had the honour of giving a talk at the Westcombe Society AGM. I talked about the Vanbrugh Pits, aka the Dips, a special corner of biodiverse green space in our neighbourhood, and the effort that is going into maintaining it for wildlife and people.

I mentioned that it is a mosaic of habitats, including acid grassland – a Royal Borough of Greenwich Priority Habitat. For a small site it's incredible that 26 butterfly

cycling, watching wildlife, or simply as a breathing space. Our dedicated group, the Vanbrugh Volunteers, enjoys helping to maintain the site, although it can be hard work at times! This work is done based on sound ecological understanding and is with Council permission. The aim is to maintain a dynamic habitat mosaic, and so the volunteers ensure a varied structure of heights of vegetation are maintained, with temporary spaces enabling new growth and patches of bare ground (some

of resilient habitats offers food and shelter for wildlife and is pleasant to walk through.

I talked about the hope to make Vanbrugh Pits a Local Nature Reserve. This would provide a little more protection, and it may be easier to seek support for vital habitat maintenance. It would also help raise awareness of the site's true value - most people understand the term 'nature reserve' and would see this positively. So far, we have the biodiversity data, community support, the local



species, 68 spider species, over 70 plant species, many birds and even a rare lichen found nowhere else in London have been recorded. More than 40 rare or Nationally Scarce invertebrate species have occurred, and recently the wildlife organisation Buglife agreed to include it within their Thames Estuary South Important Invertebrate Area.

It's not just wildlife that needs the Vanbrugh Pits, of course, and many people value it for walking,

uncommon plants require newly disturbed habitat, while mining bees use warm, sandy open spots, for example). Biodiversity is maximised, rather than a few abundant species dominating.

The results are rewarding, including a range of butterflies – such as Green Hairstreaks and Marbled Whites – and a vast array of other, less conspicuous, invertebrates, many bee species, and breeding Whitethroats. A dynamic mosaic

councillors' support and the Council's Parks and Open Spaces department appear keen. Watch this space!

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

www.westcombesociety.org

37 MYCENAE ROAD,
Ref. 24/1689/HD

Replacement roof to existing former garage, removal of secondary porch frame and replacement of existing driveway paving and associated works

41 MYCENAE ROAD,

ref. 24/1616/HD

Construction of a single storey rear extension, formation of a loft conversion comprising of two rear dormer windows, two front rooflights and the creation of a lower ground floor storage area under existing rear terrace including any other associated external works

99 MYCENAE ROAD,

ref 24/1135/L and 24/1132/F

Like for like replacement of all windows and doors

TREE WORKS

THE POINTER SCHOOL, 19
STRATHEDEN ROAD, ref

24/1977/TC Robinia crown reduce

70 HUMBER ROAD, ref.
24/1960/TC

Cherry, heavy crown reduction

31 HARDY ROAD, ref 24/1945/TC

Pollard sycamore tree

77 VANBRUGH PARK,

ref. 24/1912/TC Fell two ash trees

18 BEACONSFIELD ROAD,

ref. 24/1878/TC

Robinia crown reduce

THE RED HOUSE,

19 HEATHWAY, ref 24/1920/TC

Ash crown reduce



A supernumerary rainbow spotted on the Heath; image, courtesy of a local reader, Penny Moyle

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Letter to the Editor

More Skyscraper Riverside

Living in lovely, leafy Westcombe Park, it is easy to lose sight of all the planned developments down the hill, along the riverside in east Greenwich. There is planning permission for extensive tower blocks of housing both on Enderby Place and Morden Wharf sites [and also further along the riverside in Charlton]. The future skyline will be very different and it is surprising that the level of development has been allowed such a short distance from the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site.

It seems Greenwich has treated each site separately. One has to ask what the impact of at least 5,000 potential new residents just in east Greenwich will have on the already over-stretched GPs and health services in this area. There appear to be no plans to deal with this and insufficient talks with Transport for London – so the Morden and Enderby Wharf sites look like they will not be at all well served by public transport. As most of the pricey apartments will be 2 bedrooms, with only disabled parking and potentially high management costs, one must ask who will be living there and how does this meet local housing needs? We need the next Greenwich Local Plan (consultations start later this year), to be very clear on its policy for high-rise living and to ensure that all developments take heed of the needs of communities and the wider infrastructure impact on surrounding areas, so it is important that Westcombe residents get involved in future planning.

A local resident (name and address supplied)

Peninsula Gardens

Having been withdrawn last year, plans to develop the IKEA car park site have now been revived. They would result in the demolition of B&Q, but the retention of the cinema and adjacent restaurants, as well as IKEA itself. The current proposals, which have just been submitted to the Planning Department, include:

- * 8 high rise blocks of flats of between 16 and 20 storeys
- * shops and businesses facing the IKEA store
- * "neighbourhood" residential streets to the north
- * a central open space and pavilion
- * a smaller car park

The plans can be consulted on the Royal Borough of Greenwich website, reference 24/1695/F

WHAT'S ON

National Maritime Museum & Queen's House, Greenwich

July/Aug 2024

A full programme of events for child and adult visitors to the historic Greenwich National Maritime Museum, Queen's House, and Prince Philip Maritime Collections Centre. All visitors, including Members, are advised to pre-book their tickets at least 24 hours in advance. Please check rmg.co.uk for the latest information on what is open.

Highlights in July include: Explore the latest exhibition at the National Maritime Museum to find out more about the Women of the RNLI. Visit the Museum's collections centre for a Community Day looking at the theme of 'Routes'.

Head to the Queen's House during the summer holidays to take part in playful family workshops and meet character actors.

Highlights in August include:

Last chance to see last year's award-winning photos in the fifteenth Astronomy Photographer of the Year exhibition.

Learn about the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans during a commemoration of International Slavery Remembrance Day. Head to the Queen's House during the summer holidays to take part in playful family workshops and meet character actors.

ROYAL OBSERVATORY GREENWICH

July/August 2024

A full programme of events for child and adult visitors to the Royal Observatory Greenwich. Admission charges apply to planetarium shows, Flamsteed House and Meridian Courtyard, courses, and some events – see below for details.

All visitors, including Members, are advised to pre-book their tickets at least 24 hours in advance. Please check rmg.co.uk for the latest information on what is open.

Highlights in July/Aug include: Learn more about Earth's lunar neighbour in an after-hours moon gazing session.

Visit the Observatory as a family during the summer holidays to watch a variety of planetarium shows for all ages.

And in August

Discover the Arabic stories behind popular constellations during a show on the connections between Islam and astronomy.

How will The Universe end?

Join the Royal Observatory this summer to discuss the scary notion of how the Universe end, – will it be with a Big Freeze, a big RIP, or something even weirder? Look into the distant future with astronomers from the Royal Observatory Greenwich. To find out more visit: www.rmg.co.uk



Greenwich Industrial History Society Talk

Deptford and Greenwich's Industrial Riverside 1982-1992

Mike Seaborne will be talking on Tuesday 9th July about his photographs of Deptford and Greenwich's industrial riverside taken from 1982-1992.

During the 1980s and early 1990s he undertook a major project to document London's changing docklands, including the area around Deptford Creek.

His free talk will be by Zoom only in the evening of Tues 9th July 1915 start for 1930 UK time. You must book your free slot by sending an email to

greenwichindustrial@gmail.com with the subject line "GIHS talk on 9 July" before 1900 UK time on Tues 9th July. We will send you log-in Zoom details before the talk starts.

The Old Royal Naval College

Summer fun at the Old Royal Naval College including free outdoor cinema!

The iconic Old Royal Naval College has announced fun events this summer, with something for everyone. A free, outdoor Summer Big Screen will serve up quality tennis with Wimbledon, followed by the best of world sports with the Olympics. There will also be a free outdoor cinema with the Village Screen. Families will be able to set sail on a swashbuckling adventure with the Golden Age of Piracy, complete with pirate music and sword demonstrations. Plus, Horrible Histories are bringing their Rotten Royals show to this former Tudor Palace to regale families with terrible tales of the monarchy!

There will also be wellbeing events including Feel Good Friday Yoga on the last Friday of every month in the Painted Hall, Bridgeton-themed Afternoon teas and Cacao Bliss as part of the wonderful Chocolate House exhibit currently on at the ORNC. Lots to see and do this summer in Greenwich, so enjoy!

ornc.org/whats-on



Cutty Sark

July 2024

A full programme of events for child and adult visitors to Cutty Sark. We recommend that all visitors, including Members, pre-book their tickets. Please check rmg.co.uk for the latest information on what is open.

Highlights this month include:

- Climb aboard during the summer holidays to take part in playful family workshops.
- Explore the ship with a self-guided tour using only your mobile phone.

Blackheath Conservatoire

Summer holiday 2024 children's courses and workshops for adults, are now on sale at the Conservatoire in Blackheath and they are running from Saturday 27th July to Sunday 25th August in the theme of 'Passport to Creativity.'

There are courses of all types of length that offer children fun and educational workshops in art, music, drama, digital and dance as well as a variety of great art, drama, and music courses for adults. Book now by calling 020 8952 0234 or popping in to see us or visit our website at: <https://www.conservatoire.org.uk> Or emailing: info@conservatoire.org.uk

The Arts Society Greenwich

www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk

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Mark Ovenden is a broadcaster and author who specialises in the subjects of graphic design, cartography, and architecture in public transport.

www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk

Mycenae House

Live events at Mycenae House this summer

Fri 12 July 7.30pm - Sonic Blue. Performing two funky sets of rock-blues and R&B. £10/£8.



Thurs 25 Jul 4pm + 15th Aug 11am - Bach to Baby concert. Classical Concert for families. £15.

Sun 28 July 11am-4pm - PARKSfest Family Fun Day. Craft activities, play zones, performances, food & drink + more! FREE

Tues 6 Aug 10am + Wed 7th Aug 7pm - Chameleon Quartet. Get an insight into the woodwind family of instruments. Tbc

Fri 16 Aug 8pm - The SWOP Sessions. Foot tapping, finger snapping, jazz, soul and blues. £8.

Tues 27 Aug 10am - Boppin' Bunnies Music Show. Music, dancing & singing for families with toddlers & babies. £11/£5.50.

Sat 31 Aug 11am - Baby Broadway Concert. The whole family can sing along to songs from hit musicals. £13.

Children's Holiday Activities at Mycenae House this Summer 29 Jul - 2 Aug 9am-1pm -LinguaPlay Russian Club. Ages 3-6.

29 Jul - 2 Aug 10am-4pm - Engineering Minds. Ages 6-11.

Fridays 2 - 23 Aug 10.30am + 11.30am - Baby Sensory. Birth to 13 months.

6 - 8 Aug 9am-3pm - JK Performing Arts. Ages 4-11.

12 - 16 Aug 9am-3.30pm - Bo-Peeps Pre-School. Ages 3-5.

19 - 22 Aug 9.30am-3.30pm - Young Musicians Club. Ages 7-11.

Mons + Weds 10am - diddidence. Ages 1-5.

For further information about all Mycenae House events visit www.mycenaehouse.co.uk

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