

# WestcombeNEWS



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Feb 2025 No 1

*February is the promise of brighter days.*

## Silvertown Tunnel

Vehicle	Off-peak charge 6.00 to 22.00 all days including weekends, except when peak charges apply	Peak charge Monday to Friday only Northbound 06:00-10:00 Southbound 16:00-19:00
Motorcycle, moped	£1.50	£2.50
Car, small van	£1.50	£4.00
Large van	£2.50	£6.50
HGV	£5.00	£10.00

TfL have announced that the Silvertown Tunnel will open on April 7th, 2025. They claim that it will: 'help to reduce congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel, deliver faster journeys during peak times, help manage overall air quality and allow for better cross-river public transport.' To help manage traffic levels across the Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels, repay costs for building the new Silvertown Tunnel, and cover ongoing maintenance and operation costs at both tunnels, a user charge will be introduced on 7 April 2025. A charge payable by phone or online, will be levied on all journeys through both the Silvertown and the Blackwall tunnels.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/silvertown-tunnel> There will be one new bus route, the Superloop 4 from Grove Park to Canary Wharf, and one extended route, the 129 which will go on to City Airport and beyond, using the new tunnel. These will take the number of bus crossings per hour to 21, up from the 6 provided by the 108. All three routes will be free for a year, even if you don't use them to cross the river. TfL have also identified a number of sites which will require 'mitigation measures', mostly signal timings, before the tunnel opens; these include the Angerstein roundabout. TfL tell us that throughout the



Credit-Greenwich Wire.

There will be 'a package' of concessions, including a 50% discount for those on low incomes. It will be necessary to apply for concessions during the pre-registration phase. More details can be found on the TfL website;

construction of the new tunnel, which began in 2021, more than 1,860,000 tonnes of material have been transported to and from the site via river rather than using roads – helping to remove around 110,000 lorry trips from local roads around the construction site.



Tunnel Interior - Credit - Riverlinx/TfL

## Update on the Archive

The Greenwich Heritage Centre (the merged Museum and archive) was suddenly closed in 2018 to allow the buildings to be used by an entertainment complex. The Archive, which is managed for the Council by the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust (RGHT), is in storage with limited access. RGHT are also responsible for a number of historic structures, including 1607 Charlton House which has just been listed 'at risk' by Historic England.

In December 2023 Greenwich Archive Users Forum presented a petition to the Council. The Council's response to the petition is at <https://committees.royalgreenwich.gov.uk>. Thanks to members of the Trust who have kept in contact with us.

RGHT was scheduled to report to a Council Scrutiny Panel but events outside the Council's control delayed this until November 2024. A video of that meeting is at Inclusive Economy and Culture Scrutiny Meeting 27 November 2024. Thanks to Carol Kenna from the Charlton Society for representing our views.

The current situation is that access to the archive is now for a few days a month, which have to be booked. There are no browse facilities of the book collection and the museum is never mentioned. The archive is housed in an industrial unit in Anchor and Hope Lane – which is within the flood risk zone. I understand that RGHT is trying to find a solution to this and when we hear something we will of course report it. Meanwhile our

petition is still live (currently 2,686 signatures). Please help us by adding more signatures. We need to continue to demonstrate to the Council and RGHT the strength of feeling about this issue. The link to it is <https://chnng.it/cS7TtpzyHj>. Happy to discuss further with residents. We would be very interested to hear people's experiences accessing the archive. Please contact us via Westcombe News. *Mary Mills*



<https://www.greenwichheritage.org/heritage/archive-access-reading-room/>

## Feedback on the LTN

The scheme has now been in place for a number of weeks and there is an option to comment on <https://greenersafergreenwich.commonplace.is/>

Comments can also be sent to [transport-strategy@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:transport-strategy@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) If you would like your feedback and comments on this important issue to be included in a future issue of the Westcombe News please email [environment@westcombesociety.org](mailto:environment@westcombesociety.org) Your comments can also be sent to our local councillors [Marlam.lolavar@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Marlam.lolavar@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) [Christine.stmatthew-daniel2@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.stmatthew-daniel2@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) [Leo.fletcher@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Leo.fletcher@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

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To access back numbers (in colour) go to:

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SIZE	Per Issue Cost	5 Issue Discounted Cost
Standard 6cm x 6cm (one column wide)	£48	£220
2 x standard (horizontal or vertical)	£76	£350
3 x standard	£107	£485
4 x standard	£138	£620

## Christmas Tree Thanks

The festive season may be yesterday's news but who can forget the magic of that twinkling Christmas tree at the Standard?



Deadlines being what they are, this is our first chance to say a heartfelt "thank you" to Duncan and Mike of Siebert Road for putting up the tree and dressing it with a fabulous display of lights. Many thanks too to **Brown & Brooke Estate Agents** for their sponsorship.

## Advertising Manager

The Westcombe News seeks a new advertising manager. Tasks in this voluntary position include responding to queries for new ads, invoicing and monitoring payment. Many advertisers pre-pay for future ads, so monthly invoicing is minimal.

Basic spreadsheet skills a bonus but training could be given. Around 7/10 hours over the month would be needed.

Please contact Marilyn on [Advertising@westcombesociety.org](mailto:Advertising@westcombesociety.org) or 07939386215

## The scuppering of a dream lift?

Many have dreamed of the day when our community centre at Mycenae House would have a lift, and this was looking possible when the Vanbrugh Community Association (VCA) which runs Mycenae House received a grant from Greenwich Council to install a lift to make all four floors accessible. A lift will not only improve accessibility for wheelchair users and the elderly but also help staff move equipment and heavy objects up and down the building as well as increasing the capacity and sustainability of Mycenae House as a business enterprise.

In April 2024 the VCA submitted a planning application (24/1119/F) to the Council for an external lift shaft on the eastern side of Mycenae House. This, however, was refused by the Council's Local Planning Committee which met in November. The reasons for refusal were that although the proposal was considered acceptable 'in principle' the siting and scale of the lift shaft would be 'a dominant and overbearing addition, which fails to respect the character and appearance of the Westcombe Park Conservation Area and erodes the setting of the adjacent Grade II\*

## Lime Bikes – update

In the December issue of Westcombe News we reported that the Council were 'exploring the idea' of designated parking zones for e-bikes. In the absence of any regulation of bikes, Greenwich were seeking to reach a Memorandum of Understanding with bike operators. We are told that, 'negotiations with RBG and Lime are in progress,



prospective docking bays have been mapped out' including an area around the park and heath. Some authorities, including Lewisham, have already begun installing these bays but at present local authorities have very limited powers and can only impound bikes that are parked dangerously. Some authorities are adopting a Code of Practice which operators are asked to adhere to. Then, just before Christmas, the Standard stated that the Mayor and TfL were to get new powers to 'crack down' on irresponsible operators. Greenwich Council have been invited to comment on the situation but so far have not responded.

*To report a bike that is obstructing the pavement or illegally parked, email [london-ops@li.me](mailto:london-ops@li.me).*

## Keep Greenwich Tidy

The fine for littering has now gone up to £200.

The Council and Police will be issuing on-the-spot fines to anyone caught littering - and that includes cigarette butts.

Listed Building'. Council Officers considered that the lift could be adequately situated at the rear so that it is not visibly obtrusive. The refusal is a disappointment as the VCA has been fighting for a lift for over 16 years and granting of the money seemed that success was within reach. The latest development, and a welcome one, is that with the help of local councillor Mariam Lolavar, a meeting with officers from the planning department has been arranged to discuss how to proceed with the application, and the VCA is still hopeful in gaining planning permission. So the dream is still alive!

*Ann Hill*

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## A Whizz of a Quiz

There's something especially satisfying about a hard-fought, challenging quiz when proceeds from the evening go to a good cause ... and we're not talking about the winning table!

As ever, last November's Westcombe Society quiz night at Mycenae House was a huge success with 11 tables of six grappling with a calibre of questions to really burn brains. The wide range of topics set by quiz masters Robbie, Peter and Patrick tested knowledge and memory to the limit. Half-time sustenance in the form of piping hot fish and chips from the Standard chippy provided renewed vigour for the home stretch of brain teasers. It was good sport all round with this year's chosen charity 'Afril' (a local charity helping refugees) benefiting from the evening's takings.

**A special thank you to the staff at Mycenae House for ensuring the evening ran smoothly.**

*Diane Blackwell*

## Party Reminder

If the Westcombe Society's party on February 7th isn't already in your diary, here's a last-minute reminder to join us in celebrating the generosity and hard work of our members and volunteers.

It's the most important annual event in the Society's calendar and everyone is welcome for this one big 'thank you' to the beating heart of our work ... the locals who give of their time and talents to make Westcombe Park a special place to live. The fun is from 7.30 to 10pm with a light spread and drinks at Mycenae House.

And if you're not already a member and/or a volunteer, here's your chance to be convinced it's a great idea.

To book: Call Tessa on 07757 105808 during the day; and on landline 020 3759 5117 after 7pm

*Diane Blackwell*

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# NEIGHBOURHOOD

## Letter

### Supermarket Parking Fines

Dear Editor,  
The latest scam is that some supermarkets such as Aldi (at their Kidbrooke branch) allow car park companies to oversee their car parks. If you don't notice the small notices in the car park and fail to give your car registration number in the store you will receive a £70 parking fine from the operator who seems to do nothing else to maintain the car park. To make matters worse these companies are given direct access to your car registration name and address by DVLA.

*Malcolm Hardy, St John's Park*

## Go wild for nature...

18 & 20 February, 11:00am - 3:00pm

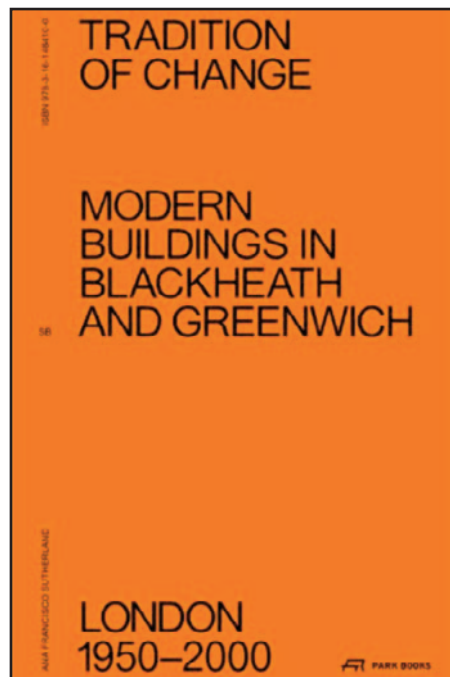
Join us in Greenwich Park and Kensington Gardens for FREE drop-in activities perfect for nature-lovers, families and budding conservationists!

### Go wild:

- Follow a scavenger trail to get you in the mood for spring.
- Have a go with binoculars to take a closer look at nature.
- Create your own nature crafts and have a go with our interactive games!
- Drop in anytime between 11am – 3pm to take part in fun interactive activities.



## New Buildings for the Future



A new book, *Tradition of Change: Modern Buildings in Blackheath and Greenwich, 1950 – 2000*, edited by Ana Sutherland, has been awarded a bronze medal in the German Photo Book awards (Deutscher Fotobuchpreis) – and it was the winner of the Architecture Book of the Year Award in the Guide category.

The book is copiously illustrated with photographs and ground plans of the new buildings that have sprung up in the last 70 years or so, sensitively designed to fit into our semi-urban landscape, many by locally based architects, such as past or present residents of Westcombe Park, Trevor Dannart and Ursula and Gordon Bowyer.

The Blackheath Society was one of the key supporters of this brilliantly researched book – required reading for anyone interested in architectural design, and a fascinating glimpse into the world of modern architecture for the general public. The buildings include many domestic houses across the area, and others, such as The Friends Meeting House in Lawn Terrace.

This awards initiative is organised

by The Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects, Temple Bar Trust and the World Architecture Festival. The judges said:

'This deserving winner squarely hits the brief of an architectural guide book. It is a thorough and complete' piece of work, brought to life by clear layout and provision of the context of all the architects and communities served. The inclusion of plans/drawings are really instructive and provide a fantastic starting point for a conversation about the design of houses and housing – topical.'

Many congratulations to the editor, Ana Sutherland, who put the book together from a large number of contributors, no easy task; not forgetting the long list of extremely talented architects. The book is available in Blackheath Waterstones.

*Neville Grant*

## Escalators to be replaced

Transport for London have announced that all four escalators at Cutty Sark DLR station are to be replaced. Journeys to Greenwich Town centre via the DLR have been difficult for around four years as each of the escalators failed and emergency exit steps have been the only way to exit the station.

TfL have said that all four escalators will be replaced now that funding has been found but no timescales have been given as to when the work will commence.

## Conversations with Judges

On the last four Wednesdays in January, February, March and April 2025, the University of Greenwich and the Greenwich Society will be jointly hosting four conversations with distinguished Judges. The events will take place in the Stockwell Street Lecture Theatre at 7pm.

There will be an opportunity for all those in the audience to put forward questions to the speaker at the end of the conversation, and to mingle socially and talk informally with the judges afterwards.

Admission is FREE but tickets via Eventbrite are required to book your place.

Please see the Greenwich Society Website

[www.Greenwichsociety.org.uk/events/](http://www.Greenwichsociety.org.uk/events/) for further information on those taking part and the subjects to be discussed.

You do not have to be a Greenwich Society member to attend.



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# FEATURES

## Greenwich Power Station - a History

Today Greenwich remains the home of London's only and oldest operating power station. London's other power stations have either been demolished, as in the case of Deptford West Ferranti and Deptford East, or ceased to operate as power stations. Two of these are architectural Art Deco icons, Bankside, now the Tate Modern Art Gallery, and Battersea Power station, now a shopping mall and multiple leisure centre. Greenwich had a sister station at Lots Road, Chelsea, which has become luxury residential apartments while retaining its very

slate, later replaced with corrugated iron. It appears that the Royal Observatory had no idea of the size of the power station until its construction had already started. They objected to the high chimneys and feared that vibration from the steam engines would be detrimental to their very sensitive instruments. Also, the heat and pollution from the chimneys, they feared, would affect their observations of the Northern sky. Questions were subsequently asked about this in the House of Commons.



distinctive industrial outer walls. The history of Greenwich power station starts when the site was occupied by the Greenwich and Peckham horse-drawn tram network's stables and tram depot. The power station we see today was built between 1902 and 1910 to supply power to the new electric tram system run by the Pimlico, Peckham and Greenwich Tramway Company. In 1902 the then London County Council (LCC) was empowered to construct and improve the system and provide energy to the tram system - the largest tram system in the world at the time. Greenwich trams had a unique power supply from a conduit set in a rail in the road. It was costly to install and maintain, but it did dispense with the ugly overhead wires used in other parts of the city. The Greenwich power station building was designed by William Edward Riley, senior architect of the LCC. It was one of the earliest examples in London of a steel framed building. Built in a neoclassical style, it was clad in London stock bricks with subtle Portland stone details and decoration. The windows in the north and south elevations were what are called architecturally Diocletian windows, named after the Roman Emperors' baths in Rome. The roof was originally Welsh

The original design had two 349 feet chimneys but following the Royal Observatory objections this was changed to four chimneys, each of 180 feet. The power station boiler house was originally powered by coal brought by river to the elegant Doric-style column pier which supported cranes to transport the coal to the station's bunker next to the West Nave that housed the boilers. The East Nave housed the engine room with four compound reciprocating engines. These engines were eventually replaced by steam turbines, a more advanced technology of the time. Eventually coal was replaced by oil and then gas and the coal pier became redundant but has remained in situ unused. When, in 1998, London Underground decided to use the National Grid for its supply, the Lots Road station, Chelsea, was decommissioned leaving only Greenwich as a back-up should the National Grid fail. The steam turbines were eventually replaced by six Rolls Royce gas turbines housed in the turbine hall. These are switched on once a month for two hours as part of the station's maintenance programme. I am sure Greenwich power station will be part of our river landscape for many years to come.

David Fletcher

## SAVE OUR..... Bumblebees

*The latest in a "Save our....." series, with advice on how we, as individuals, can do our bit to help our vanishing wildlife and make a positive difference to the environment.*

Bumblebees are crucial pollinators for wild plants and for a number of crops. Their relatively long tongues allow them to access flowers unavailable to many other pollinators. Yet habitat loss has reduced the areas suitable for their nesting sites, plus the availability of nectar and pollen, leading to an environmental crisis for this endearing insect. What to plant? It's a little-known fact that the 'forage gap' for bumblebees occurs when they need it most, in March/April! The demand is driven by the requirements of the larvae, which need both nectar (for sugar/energy) and pollen (for protein). The brood also needs to be heated to approximately 30 degrees C ideally, requiring a lot of energy in cool weather. Unfortunately, many pollinator planting lists contain few plants that flower at this time. To provide the most effective support for bumblebee foraging we should therefore aim to provide bee-attractive flowers from early spring (well before a large number of adults can be seen flying around in search of food) continuously until the end of the season.

### Recommended early flowering plants

- Willow - e.g. Salix caprea, Pussy willow (Feb.) \*\*Top plant (small varieties available).
- Hazel - Corylus avellana (Feb)
- Cherry - e.g. Prunus Okame (March)
- Blackthorn - Prunus spinosa (March-April)
- Flowering currant - e.g. Ribes sanguineum (March-April)

- Mahonia - e.g. Mahonia "charity" (winter/early spring)
- Bulbs - Snowdrops, Crocus, Grape Hyacinths, Bluebells
- Other - Ground ivy, Red dead nettle, Dandelions, White Clover, Knapweed.

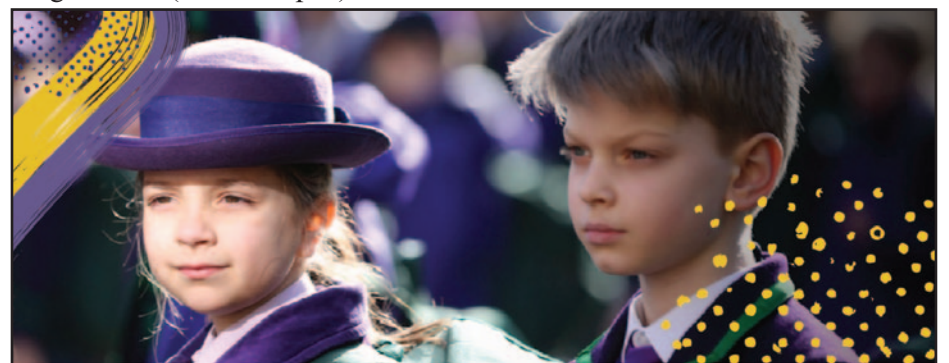


Tree bumblebee on Pussy Willow. Credit/reference- <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org>

### Other ways you can help

You don't need to have a flowerbed to help the bumblebees. Planting flowers in window boxes, hanging baskets and pots will attract bees to windowsills, patios and balconies - even high up on taller buildings. Choose plants with long flowering times and keep them flowering by 'deadheading'. Grow flowers with different shaped flowers - some bumblebees with short tongues forage on open, simple flowers such as apple blossom, while bumblebees with long tongues can forage on deeper tube-shaped flowers such as foxgloves. Plant flowers in groups or clusters of the same type if you have space, to help bumblebees save energy and fly from flower to flower more quickly.

Shirley Broughton  
Bumblebee Conservation Trust  
[www.bumblebeeconservation.org](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org)



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# FEATURES

## Ursula Bowyer RIP



Jews. Ursula was only 16 when Regent Street Polytechnic accepted her to train as an architect and it was there that she met her husband, Gordon. With him, they created their first work, the Sports Pavilion at the South Bank Exhibition for the 1951 Festival of Britain, which received public acclaim.

Among many works carried out locally was the conversion of Vanbrugh Castle, at the top of Maze Hill, into apartments. She and Gordon subsequently moved on to larger housing and commercial projects such as IBM, and Max Factor in Europe and the US.

In 2010, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Greenwich. Ursula was interviewed in the Westcombe News in September 2024. With her death, Greenwich has lost a strong champion for our rich heritage, and Ursula will be greatly missed.

*Neville Grant*

We are sorry to announce the death on January 15th of Ursula Bowyer, the distinguished architect. She was 99. As founder and life president of the Greenwich Society, Ursula Bowyer campaigned vigorously for the preservation and improvement of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage site.

Originally a German national, she came over to England with her family in 1937 at a time of increasing Nazi violence against

## Helios in The Painted Hall

### Exhibition: Helios in the Painted Hall

See the Painted Hall in a new light Looking for some winter sun? Be the first to see Luke Jerram's newest and most ambitious artwork, Helios, at the London premiere.

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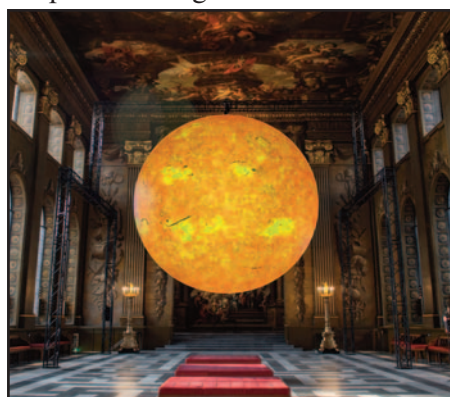
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## Dangerous Treatments given to Dogs and Cats

We are said to be a nation of animal-lovers, and around half of UK adults own a pet. In 2022 it was estimated that there were 10 million dogs and 11 million cats in the UK. Many pets are considered part of the family and their owners take care to keep them healthy and free from parasites such as fleas and ticks. The 'spot-on' treatment for fleas and ticks involves applying a drop of liquid to the skin at the back of the pet's neck. Once applied, natural oils in the pet's skin distribute the liquid around the body and the hair ollicles continue to release the substance after the application. The 'spot-on' treatment is so easy that many pets receive monthly treatment year-round as a preventative measure, even when there is no need. But this has dangerous consequences.



at the University of Sussex tested English rivers in 2021 and found fipronil in 100% and imidacloprid in 70% of them, and concentrations often exceeded safe levels for wildlife. This could explain the ever-decreasing numbers of caddisflies, dragonflies, stoneflies and mayflies, and their decline puts fish, birds, and bats that feed on them in grave danger.

And it is not just wildlife that is in danger. Owners are at risk too. Fipronil and permethrin are carcinogens and are suspected to disrupt hormone systems. Fipronil and imidacloprid are known to contaminate ground water and both fipronil and imidacloprid are found routinely on the hands of pet owners due to on-going contact with their treated pets. "If they're on our hands then these neurotoxins will be all over our homes. That doesn't sound healthy to me" says Professor Dave Goulson of the University of Sussex.

### What can be done?

Twenty-four environmental and veterinary organisations – including Buglife, the RSPB and Wildlife Trust – have written an open letter calling on the UK Government to ban five toxic pesticides (fipronil, imidacloprid, permethrin, dinotefuran, and nitenpyram) from being included in medicines for cats and dogs, and to ban any pesticide deemed to be too harmful to be used on crops in the future to be automatically banned from appearing in veterinary medicines.

### What are safer alternatives for pet owners?

Do not use flea treatments preventatively in the winter or spring when the risk of infection is low. Treat only if there is evidence of infection. Flea-treatment tablets are less contaminating than 'spot-on'. The Rivers Trust suggests:- brush fur regularly to remove flea eggs or larvae bathe pets with shampoo that contains neem, lavender or rosemary choose flea-repellent collars containing cedarwood or eucalyptus oils vacuum areas regularly where pets lie.

*Ann Hill*

### What is the danger?

Common components of 'spot-on' treatments are fipronil, imidacloprid and permethrin: these are neurotoxins and are banned in agricultural settings due to their harmful effects on wildlife, but there are no restrictions on their use in veterinary products and they are readily available without prescription. In the UK, about 80% of dogs and cats receive regular flea treatment. Worryingly, these neurotoxins are getting into our rivers as millions of our treated pets swim outdoors, are bathed, and their bedding washed: hence these toxins are entering our waterways directly, or through household wastewater that is eventually discharged into rivers or the sea. These toxins can persist in water for several years. Researchers

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# ENVIRONMENT

## Is Your Health at Risk?

Drying clothes in winter can be particularly difficult for those without a garden or balcony. High energy prices and increased costs of living make it tempting to dry laundry on radiators or drying racks, but a typical wash retains about 2 litres of water which, during drying, is then displaced into the air around the home. As warm air can hold more moisture than cold air, condensation forms when this warm air comes into

old Awaab Ishak who died as a result of prolonged exposure to black mould. House-dust mites also feed and multiply more rapidly in damp houses and they are one of the most common allergen triggers for asthma. If mould persists, it can also migrate into floors, ceilings and walls making it difficult and expensive to treat.

Ways to reduce the risk of damp include:



contact with a cold surface such as a wall or window. Over time, condensation will lead to damp and mould, which can be hazardous to health.

Inhaling mould spores can lead to allergies, exacerbate asthma, and cause coughs, wheezing and immunological disturbances. Mould spores can even lead to death, as in the case of two-year

drying laundry outside if feasible using a fast spin to remove as much water as possible correctly positioning vented tumble dryers to the outside using an extractor fan or dehumidifier to extract excess moisture if drying indoors keeping windows open during drying to prevent buildup of moisture.

Ann Hill

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS\*

[www.westcombesociety.org](http://www.westcombesociety.org)

35 SHOOTERS HILL ROAD,  
Flat 2 ref 24/4097/L  
To reinstate original planform and install new kitchen.

99 MYCENAE ROAD  
ref 24/3942/F and 24/3943/L  
To replace all doors, windows and rooflights in this Grade II listed building.

### TREE WORKS

81 MAZE HILL ref 25/0152/TC  
To fell sycamore and crown reduce

yew by 30% in rear garden.

81 MYCENAE ROAD ref 25/0082/TC  
To fell Robinia in front garden.

46 PARKSIDE, VANBRUGH  
FIELDS ref 25/0075/TC  
To fell two conifers.

VANBRUGH CASTLE, 121  
MAZE HILL ref 24/3962/TC  
To crown lift sycamore and crown reduce sycamore and Robinia in rear garden.

\* Please be advised that the planning applications noted here are based on information available at the time of print.

For the latest updates, please visit our website  
[www.westcombesociety.org](http://www.westcombesociety.org)

## Coming Up at Mycenae Gardens

What's coming up at Mycenae Gardens? Refurbishment of our local park continues, thanks to the Friends group and a score of volunteers, including neighbours, parents of Waldorf School students, and the wonderful Good Gym; and with grant support from Veolia and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association.

There are now three fenced off areas which are being planted with a range of shrubs and flowering plants. The Friends committee asks all users to respect those barriers. One area is for wildflowers, adding to the variety of food sources for pollinators. This has been expanded by the borough's Parks and Open Spaces department, and the additional area will be rotovated and seeded in the spring. The others are for taller bushy plants and a more traditional style of garden. They have new plants going into the ground alongside the mature shrubs. The bright forsythia and philadelphus are a great feature. You should see the results from this spring, and over coming years as the plantings mature.

The Gardens also have a substantial area set aside for wildlife alone. This is marked out by 'dead hedging': piled up lines of branches form a line protecting the west side of the park and the even wilder Dell just below. Thanks to the Greenwich Parks Forum, the Friends have raised funds for a further survey of birds and butterflies that they hope will flourish behind the hedge this spring. The volunteers are adding to the dead hedge monthly, so that as the lower parts break down and nourish the soil, the piles should continue to form a barrier. Mycenae Gardens and the Dell are

a designated SINC, an area of Special Interest for Nature Conservation, and this protection for wildlife is one reason for that. The Friends group asks that users stay out of the wildlife areas, and don't let children or pets enter them.



Photo courtesy of Glenis Giblett

This combination of welcomes for humans and for wildlife makes Mycenae Gardens unique locally. The Friends group wants to celebrate it with a monthly Photo Competition, so please send your pictures of park life to them at [friendsofmycenaegardens@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmycenaegardens@gmail.com). Your photo could be shown in Mycenae House, on the noticeboard, and in the Westcombe News!

Anyone who likes a bit of outdoor activity can volunteer for the monthly sessions. Coming up, these will be on Saturday February 22nd and Sunday March 30th, from 10:30 till 1:00. You don't need prior knowledge, there is always a variety of tasks. Some may be more intensive and some calmer, but the sessions are always fun and a great way to meet Yourcenae neighbours and friends.

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# WHAT'S ON

## Blackheath Halls

### Justin Moorhouse: The Greatest Performance of My Life

Sun 2 Feb, 8.00pm

It's the Justin we have come to expect – funny and interesting, and perhaps there's a little that warms the soul, too! £16

### Music Appreciation: Mozart The Concertos

Mon 3 Feb – Mon 31 Mar 10am

Join the Blackheath Music Appreciation Group with Matthew Taylor for a captivating journey through Mozart's dazzling world of concertos!

Course £135 / £15 per lecture  
mail: johnbartram75@hotmail.com  
for further information.

### Lunchtime Recital: Samantha Crawford & Charlotte Forrest

Mon 3 Feb, 1.10pm

Freedom Cries Out, a programme telling stories of displaced people and refugees through song. It touches on themes of Homeland, Exile, War, Family, Hope and New Beginnings. £10

### Quiz Night 2025

Fri 7 Feb, 7.30pm

Put your wits to the test across a range of exciting rounds and compete for the title of Quiz Masters of Blackheath £15

### Blackheath Halls Orchestra Perform: Vaughan Williams, Strauss & Dvorak

Sun 16 Feb, 7.00pm

This special concert will showcase: Vaughan Williams' Concerto in A Minor for Oboe and Strings  
Featuring soloist Lydia Brookes, this beautiful concerto captures the tender, pastoral beauty of the English countryside with grace and nuance.

Richard Strauss' Serenade in E-flat Major, Op. 7

Dvořák's Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

With folk-inspired melodies, rich textures, and a lively spirit, Dvořák's Symphony is a true celebration of joy and resilience. £16 / £7 u12s

### CoLab 2025: Final Night Showcase

Fri 21 Feb, 5.30pm

Experience an evening of innovative, cross-disciplinary performances and projects, highlighting the extraordinary work created during this unique festival of artistic experimentation.

Free, booking required

### CoLab 2025: The Finale

Fri 21 Feb, 7.30pm

Round off the CoLab 2025 festival with an unforgettable Grand Finale! Free, booking required

### The Smartest Giant in Town 2025

Sat 22 Feb, 1pm & 4pm

Sun 23 Feb, 10am & 1pm

Based on the best-selling book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler  
This heart-warming tale about friendship and helping those in need is brought to life in a musical, puppet-filled adventure.

£17 / £15 u16s

### Lunchtime Recital: Olga Stehsko, piano

Mon 24 Feb, 1.10pm

Lev Abeliovich Three Romantic Preludes & Tarantella

Bach Toccata in E minor BWV 914  
Debussy Estampes

Beethoven Sonata Op.31, no.3 'The Hunt' £10

<https://www.blackheathhalls.com/>

## Mycenae House

### Stargazing for Beginners.

Tues 4th + 11th Feb 8pm - Learn how to recognise the things in the night sky. £15.

### Baby Broadway Concert.

Sat 8th Feb 11am - The whole family can sing along to songs from hit musicals. £13.50.

### Dementia Music Session.

Sat 15th Feb 10.30am - For care givers & those living with dementia. Free.

### Engineering Minds Holiday Club.

17th-19th Feb 10am-4pm - 3 days of exploration, creativity & innovation for children 6+. Tbc.

### JK Performing Arts Holiday Club.

Fri 21st Feb 9am-3pm - Moana 2 inspired theatre workshop for children 4+. £40.

### The SWOP Sessions.

Fri 21st Feb 7.30pm - Foot tapping, finger snapping, jazz, soul & blues with Open Mic. £8.

### The Icarus Club.

Fri 28th Feb 8pm - The best original acoustic music feat. Mississippi MacDonald + more. £15.

Visit [www.mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://www.mycenaehouse.co.uk)

## Greenwich Theatre

### The Magic Bookmark 19th/20th February

Join "everyone's favourite pantomime dame!" (Metro) and Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist Mama G on an award winning, panto adventure for the whole family!

Book Worm is livid that encyclopaedias give people so much knowledge, so decides to steal all the books from Mama G's library.

Before the world can turn to chaos, Mama G vows to save the day by proving that books can help make the world a better place. Of course, she can't do it alone, and that's when she discovers the mysterious and wonderful Magic Bookmark...

Families will love this storytelling show full of panto fun, original songs, and some of the finest picture books on the market!

<https://greenwichtheatre.org.uk/events/themagicbookmark/>

## Harmony Sinfonia

– talented local orchestra

### Myths and Echos, Aho, Beethoven Sibelius Lemminkainen

Friday 21st February 7.30pm

St Alfege Church, Greenwich

<https://www.stpaulssinfonia.com/>

## Greenwich Industrial Society

### 11th February - History of Women of Greenwich

A collaboration between local historians supported by the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust and the University of Greenwich.

A free Zoom talk.

Book via Greenwich Historical Society Facebook page. from 4th Feb. All welcome.

Claire Eustace, Dr Ann Dingsdale and Lynne Dixon

## The Arts Society Greenwich

[www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk)

### Paris and the Belle Epoque

Monday 10 Feb 2025 at 7.30 pm

Lecturer: Cindy Polemis

Venue: James Wolfe Primary School, Royal Hill, Greenwich

Guests very welcome: £10

If travelling by car, please note Greenwich New Traffic Management Scheme finishes at 7pm.



The Moulin Rouge immediately evokes the Belle Epoque - a period of French, and especially Parisian history around the turn of the 19th century which pulsated with artistic energy, technological and scientific innovations, risqué entertainment and boundless optimism; but there a dark side as well.

Cindy Polemis explores the contradictions of the golden era of the Belle Epoque: from the towering height of the Eiffel Tower to the seedy glamour of Montmartre, from the curls and curves of Sarah Bernhardt's Art Deco costumes to Henri Guimard's Metro Designs - everything was open to creativity. [www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk)

## Woodlands Farm

### Wild in the Woods

Wednesday 19th February

10am - 12pm and 1pm - 3pm

Come and join us for an adventure in the woods. We shall be building shelters as well as cooking bread and toasting marshmallows over the campfire. This event is suitable for children age 6 and over. £7 per child. Booking is essential, to book visit [www.thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org](http://www.thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org)

### We are going on a Farmyard Hunt

Thursday 20th February 10am-2pm

Drop by to get exploring around the farm. Most of our animals are inside now, so not only will you be looking for our animals but also trying to find things connected to them all. What will you find? There will also be a farm animal craft to do as well. A fun activity for the family to enjoy. £4 per child. No need to book, just drop in.

### Science Investigators

Friday 21st February 10am -2pm

Would you like to have a taste at being a scientist and doing investigations? We will be delving into the world of biology with microscopes, owl pellet dissection and more. Drop by to find out more about science on the farm. No need to book. £5 per child.

For more information, see our website or contact Hannah Ricketts on [education@thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org](mailto:education@thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org) Open 9.30am-4.30pm, Tuesday-Sunday. There is no entry charge except for special events, though donations are always welcome.

We are a farm so sensible shoes and clothing are recommended! Dogs are not allowed on the farm, unless they are assistance dogs.

## Royal Observatory Greenwich

In association with BBC Sky at Night Magazine, the dates for the Astronomy Photographer of the Year 17 competition are announced – the annual search for the most inspiring images of our cosmos. Entrants have from Monday 6 January 2025 until midday on Monday 3 March 2025 to submit their work. Up to ten images can be entered into various categories via [www.rmg.co.uk/astrocomp](http://www.rmg.co.uk/astrocomp) (entry fees apply, for more information check the competition rules). 100 breathtaking images, from the Astronomy Photographer of the Year 17 competition will be displayed in an exhibition at the National Maritime Museum from September 2025.

### Special Event at the Royal Observatory

### Star Makers: Visions of the Cosmos in Art

Since antiquity, people have drawn, painted, printed, etched, and stitched the stars into the fabric of art history. This event will explore the various ways artists have represented the universe and the techniques employed to capture the essence of the astronomical sublime.

Date: 21 February 2025

Time: 18.30 – 19.30

Suitability: Suitable for ages 16+

Admission: Adult £10 | Student £9

[www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/royal-observatory/star-makers-visions-cosmos-art](http://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/royal-observatory/star-makers-visions-cosmos-art)

## Old Royal Naval College Greenwich

### Labyrinth on the Thames

First two weekends in August  
This summer, the ORNC will be welcoming Labyrinth on the Thames—a six-date music series set within the spectacular grounds of the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Greenwich. For the first time, contemporary dance music will take centre stage at this iconic riverside location. Some of the world's most influential artists will perform against the stunning backdrop of 17th-century architecture.

Line-up

Friday 1 August | Black Coffee |

Pre-sale tickets go on sale January 30 at 10am, sign up here.

Saturday 10 August | Anjunadeep |

Pre-sale tickets go on sale January 31 at 12pm, sign up here.

More artists to be announced [ornc.org/whats-on/labyrinth-on-the-thames/](http://ornc.org/whats-on/labyrinth-on-the-thames/)

## Poetry reading

### 'A Better Future'

February 4th 7.30-9.15 at West Greenwich Library.

Title 'A Better Future' was borrowed from the theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day.

Acknowledging the horrors of past and present while injecting a sense of hope and concentrating on the beauty of words is what it's about. Poets Jacqueline Saphra and Sue Rose will read and they are hoping harpist Lucia Foti will provide some musical interludes.

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