

Crisp days, amber skies, and stories waiting to be told

The London & SE University Group

News that the Universities of Greenwich and Kent are to be merged, with some 50,000 students and a single Vice-Chancellor, came as a shock to many. It shouldn't - it has been well known for a long time that smaller universities have been in severe financial difficulties.

The new 'super' university, under the proposed name London and South East University Group, will launch in autumn 2026. Jane Harrington, the current Vice-Chancellor of Greenwich, will be the new Vice-Chancellor of the group. (Kent only had an interim Vice-Chancellor, Georgina Randsley de Moura.)

Oddly, the two universities will have a single governing body, executive team and academic board, which may make them more financially viable. However, the universities will continue to award degrees, retaining their identities, courses and campuses. Greenwich and Kent already share a Medway campus, including the well-resourced Drill Hall Library.

Kent was granted its Royal Charter in 1965, and its first Chancellor was the late Duchess of Kent. Its first group of students - all 500 of them - arrived on 11 October. Today it has some 18,000 students, but even after cuts has been in financial difficulties.

Greenwich University started as the country's second oldest polytechnic in Woolwich, in 1890. In 1992, Thames Polytechnic was given university status, along with various other polytechnics - changes whose rationale many now question. It was renamed Greenwich University in 1993.

Relocated to its current campus in the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, it thus became England's fourth grey-stone university. It currently has some 30,000 students - over a third are postgraduates. Like Kent, Greenwich has had financial problems, and in August created 319 redundancies, affecting mainly casual hourly-paid lecturers, but also some senior staff in the prestigious Architecture School.

Critics have noted that Greenwich currently has a handsome surplus - and the Vice-Chancellor's pay has increased from £299,000 to £374,000 over the last four years.

Many universities have suffered from the government's policy on cutting foreign students' visas, and it is likely that similar mergers in the university sector may follow.

*Neville Grant*

Siebert Road Consultation

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has been consulting on a number of proposals to improve areas affected by the Silvertown Tunnel work around the Westcombe Park area, including at the Siebert Road underpass.

Maintenance here has long been a concern, with lighting not fully working and the chicane to stop cyclists riding through missing some of its equipment. Transport for London is responsible for this and responds very slowly to requests for repairs. The tunnel is quite busy during commuting and school hours, but it's not very inviting. Also, the area around it at Siebert Road has been churned up by the building work for the noise and pollution barrier.

As part of an agreement with Transport for London, the RBG Transport Department have some funds for mitigation work. For the underpass, they have proposed putting planters and new chicanes on the Charlton side, and planting up the bank between the walkway and Bramshot Avenue. On the Siebert

Road side, they have proposed a 'pocket park', with paving, some fresh planting in the ground and in raised beds, and benches. This is by no means a final proposal.

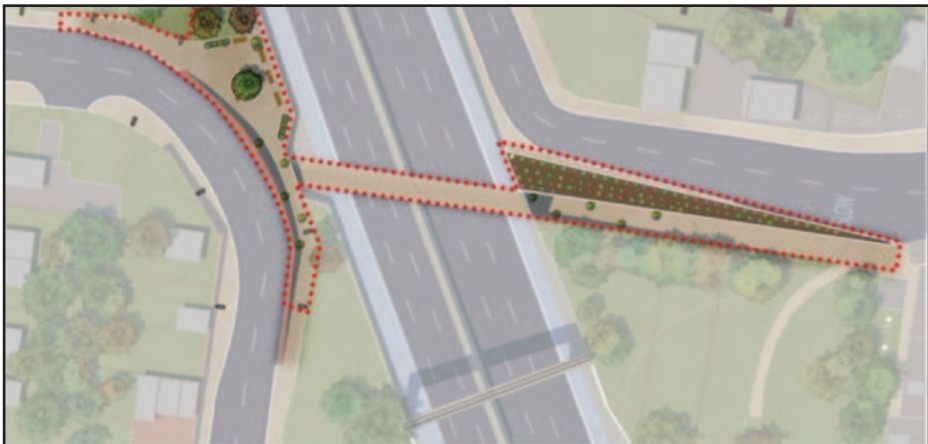
The Transport planners want very much to hear views and arranged two sessions at Mycenae House to talk with members of the public, as well as asking for responses to the consultation online, up to the 6th of October. The Westcombe Society will form its response based on comments from its members, and from common sense.

At the presentations, people were able to express concerns about the plans, including the extended hard-standing causing rainwater to run into the drains rather than into the ground; the use of planters which

pedestrian access. At Farmdale Road, there are proposals for the area behind the houses which would have fresh planting and a physical barrier between them and the south-bound slip road of the A102; at the base of the footbridge with hedges, new trees, and some seating; and at the junction with Woolwich Road where the toucan crossing would be moved and planting installed in the traffic island. There are proposals for better play areas at Horn Lane, across from the Sainsbury's petrol station, and at the Rose Garden at the junction of Tunnel Avenue and Blackwall Lane. All of these areas could benefit from being spruced up.

Once the RBG Transport Department have read all the comments, they'll refine the proposals and cost them, then move to a further consultation. Please submit your own thoughts using the online form here <https://silvertown-tunnelenhancement.commonplace.is> or by emailing [traffic.team@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:traffic.team@royalgreenwich.gov.uk).

*Anne Robbins*



The Siebert Road underpass area, outlined in red

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2 x standard (horizontal or vertical)	£76	£350
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**A Walk for Love  
and Money**

The first lucky break on our 7-  
mile jaunt from the Cutty Sark  
to Victoria Park was the  
co-operative weather... no rain,  
wind or chill. The second lucky  
break was a lively, buzzy group of  
15 Westcombe Park locals, happy to  
give up their Sunday and come  
together to raise funds for  
Macmillan Cancer Support.



We’ve trodden this path before  
because it’s scenic, historic and takes  
in so much that makes London  
special: the Thames, the Regent’s  
Canal, quirky houseboats, abundant  
birdlife, vibrant graffiti, plus the  
splendid Victoria Park itself. And  
except for taking the stairs at both  
ends of the Greenwich Foot Tunnel,  
which we all did with a certain  
panache, the walk was all on the  
flat.



The only hiccup during the walk  
was finding that the charming little  
café by the canal was closed, which  
meant that when we reached the  
park we made a hasty beeline for  
coffee there.  
Victoria Park, London’s oldest  
public park was a beautiful  
backdrop for lunch.  
And to cap a lovely day’s outing, we  
raised £220 for Macmillan Cancer, a  
truly wonderful charity.

*Diane Blackwell*

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**Westcombe Society Quiz Night - A  
Quiz to Get You Reeeally Thinking**

**Saturday, November 22nd at  
Mycenae House.**  
**The action kicks off at 7.00 p.m. for  
a 7.30 p.m. start.**

Challenge your grey matter,  
which makes up about half  
your brain and consists primarily of  
neuronal cell bodies, dendrites and  
unmyelinated axons. (This is not a  
teaser for a quiz question!) Activate  
those parts of your brain you  
thought you had lost touch with!  
Yes, it's Quiz Night. Robbie, Peter  
and Patrick, your three Quiz  
Meisters, will be gathering in a local  
pub over the next few weeks to  
create a series of questions that are  
devilish, intricate, learned, silly,  
funny, and some just plain easy. It's  
a jolly and relaxing evening as we

begin to hit the tough, long nights of  
winter.  
There are 10 tables, each seating 6  
people, so gather your pals or make  
new friends on the night. Non-  
quizaholics are welcome too, along  
with the diehard quiz geeks.  
And if some of the questions don't  
go down well, the half-time fish and  
chips feast (£14 per person)  
definitely will. Alcohol will be freely  
available, and there's a raffle too,  
with all proceeds going towards our  
Charity of the Year.  
Win or lose, it's guaranteed to be a  
night to remember.  
*The entry fee is £8 for Westcombe  
Society members and £9 for  
non-members. To book, please email  
Gavin at gavin.wsevents@gmail.com*

**Friends of Westcombe Woodlands:  
Trustee Vacancy**

You may be aware of the work  
of the Friends of Westcombe  
Woodlands, who look after the  
woodland reserve between Maze  
Hill, Vanbrugh Hill and the railway.  
A vacancy arises for a Trustee to  
join our Committee at the next  
AGM. So if you share our love for  
Westcombe Woodlands and are  
willing to muck in and join us in the  
various tasks we undertake, please  
let us know.  
We are a group of twelve Trustees  
who meet about half a dozen times a  
year, get involved in the regular  
work in the Woodlands (volunteer  
days, Open Days, etc.) and  
sometimes work in smaller groups  
on, for example, fundraising bids,  
our management plan, our website  
or our Newsletter. Amongst us we  
have different experiences and  
strengths and we are all willing to  
get stuck in to whatever's needed.  
To see who we are, see

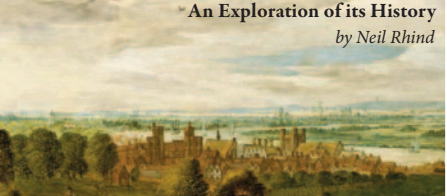
[https://www.westcombewoodlands.  
uk/who-we-are/](https://www.westcombewoodlands.uk/who-we-are/). To join us, we hope  
you would share our enthusiasm for  
a sustainable, biodiverse woodland  
and bring experience of one or more  
of our activities – working in the  
woods themselves, community  
engagement or our various IT  
activities.  
If you are interested in joining us, or  
if you know of anyone else who  
might, do write to the Chair, Nigel  
Duncan on [n.j.duncan@city.ac.uk](mailto:n.j.duncan@city.ac.uk),  
saying a bit about yourself, your  
experience and what you can offer to  
the Friends of Westcombe  
Woodland. Or please feel free to  
contact Nigel for a chat about what  
we do and what you will bring to the  
group; or come along and chat to  
other trustees at our next volunteer  
days (7 September and 5 October).  
The formal process of electing a new  
trustee will take place at our next  
AGM on 18 November.

*Nigel Duncan, Chair of Trustee*

**STOP PRESS**

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# NEIGHBOURHOOD

## Obituary for Dr Colin Gillespie

01-05-1937 to 09-09-2025

Colin Gillespie, who sadly died in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 9th September 2025, was a much-loved General Practitioner in Greenwich for 32 years. He was educated at Dartford Grammar School before studying medicine at Charing Cross Hospital Medical School. After qualifying as an obstetrician, he began his career as a GP in 1965 with the Vanbrugh Group Practice, working alongside Dr John Lee and, from 1971, Dr Tina Challacombe. Throughout his career, Colin was devoted to his patients, always willing to make a house visit whenever required, and is remembered with great affection for his kindness and care. Outside of medical practice, Colin had many interests, including theatre, rugby and sailing. He served as Medical Officer to Blackheath Rugby

Club for several years and gave long service to the local BMA as Chairperson and Treasurer. He was made a Fellow of the BMA in 1997. In retirement, Colin continued to be involved in several local medical societies, as well as medical history and travel. He also undertook work as Medical Officer for the disabled on the Tall Ships and as a repatriation doctor for medical emergencies abroad. Colin was happily married to Janet for 55 years and, together, they had three sons who survive him. He continued living in Blackheath, where he remained a constant presence in the community. Colin will be remembered as reliable, dependable and, above all, an excellent doctor. He will be deeply missed by all his family, friends and colleagues.

## The Poppy Appeal

**23 October to 11 November 2025**  
Captain David Kerr thanks all who donated during his house-to-house collection last year and, from several addresses, every year since 2009. Their warm welcome and their generous support have been greatly appreciated. He hopes that readers will find it helpful to know in advance that another local volunteer will make the house-to-house collection this year. Poppies and enamel lapel badges will be brought round on dry days to the addresses visited in

the past by Captain Kerr, and possibly more widely. When we went to press we did not know on which days the collection will be made. David Kerr hopes to collect inside Marks & Spencer on most days between 30 October and 11 November. Each collector hopes to be with a card reader. That will mean they can accept donations by card, cash or cheque. They ask that cheques be made payable to "The Poppy Appeal".

## Fireworks - Pets and Neighbours



**Blackheath Fireworks 2025**  
As many of our readers are probably already aware, after a gap of six years, there will be a fireworks display on Blackheath this year on Saturday 1st November, although it will be a ticketed event. The fireworks themselves will start at 8 p.m. and will in part be visible from outside the event perimeter. Inside the event, which kicks off at 5p.m. and closes at 10:30 p.m., there will be food and drink to buy and live music performances, amongst other entertainments. For more information and details of how to buy a ticket, go to <https://tickets.blackheathfireworks.com>. We are told to expect similar parking restrictions and road closures to those in previous years, as a significant number of spectators are expected to be present outside the event perimeter. This area will also be policed and stewarded. The return of

the professional firework display on Blackheath this year will provide entertainment for many although at a price this time, as those wishing to attend have to purchase tickets. The firework season, with what seem to be increasingly loud 'explosions' and bright flashes can, though, cause distress for our pets. Both Cats Protection and the Dogs Trust are among organisations offering advice on how to keep our cats and dogs happy and safe. Suggestions include keeping them in after dark, staying in with them, ensuring all exits are closed to prevent escapes, playing soothing music to cover the noise. There is more information available from: [cats.org.uk/fireworks](https://cats.org.uk/fireworks) [www.dogstrust.org.uk/dog-advice/life-with-your-dog/seasonal/fireworks](https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/dog-advice/life-with-your-dog/seasonal/fireworks). From now until New Year is prime time for letting off fireworks and it is always worth remembering that consideration for neighbours, as well as their pets, is important. In fact, it is illegal to set off fireworks after 11pm - except on Bonfire Night itself when the time limit is midnight, and on Diwali and New Year's Eve when it is up to 1am. It is also illegal to let fireworks off in a public space. [www.gov.uk/fireworks-the-law](https://www.gov.uk/fireworks-the-law). So enjoy - but perhaps spare a thought for neighbours, as not all may relish the noise, as well as their pets.

## Duke of Greenwich Pub Closes in East Greenwich

The Duke of Greenwich, an east Greenwich pub in Colomb Street, closed its doors for the final time on Sunday 21st September after failing to reach an agreement with its landlord, an Isle of Man-based developer. Previously known as the Duke of Edinburgh and later the Vanbrugh Tavern, the pub had reopened in July 2023 under its current name, managed by the team behind The Jolly Gardeners in Kennington. In an Instagram post, the pub thanked staff and customers: "After two years of trading we unfortunately could not agree terms with the

landlord. Thank you to all the staff and every single person who got a drink here." Its final weekend included free food, very cheap drinks and the sale of furniture. Although a developer won permission to build a house behind the pub in 2020, the project never went ahead and the permission has now expired. Hamna Wakaf, which bought the pub from Punch Partnerships in 2013, has been linked to several pub closures in London. The company recently attempted, unsuccessfully, to convert the China Hall pub in Rotherhithe into flats.

## Back to the Future on the Number 54



Bus enthusiasts and ordinary passengers alike were delighted to be carried for free on a variety of

vintage buses on the number 54 route on Saturday 13th September. The special service ran from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., from Elmers End to the Blackheath Standard, to help celebrate 111 years of operation of the Catford Bus Garage, one of the oldest in London. The buses, dating from the 1950s to the 1980s, were provided by the London Bus Museum as part of a programme to bring the museum and its vehicles to the streets of the capital. The number 54 route has run between Woolwich and Elmers End for over 100 years, originating in 1922 as routes 54 and 54A, which ran from central London via Lewisham and Catford to Bromley or Forest Hill.



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# FEATURES

## Nicholas Hawksmoor 1661-1736

Greenwich has some of the finest examples of English Baroque architecture by the architects of the period; Sir Christopher Wren, Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor, all of whom were involved in the building of Greenwich Hospital. But it is Nicholas Hawksmoor who, late in his career, was to produce the most creative, original, eclectic and idiosyncratic architecture that had ever been seen in London, including that of St Alfege church at Greenwich.

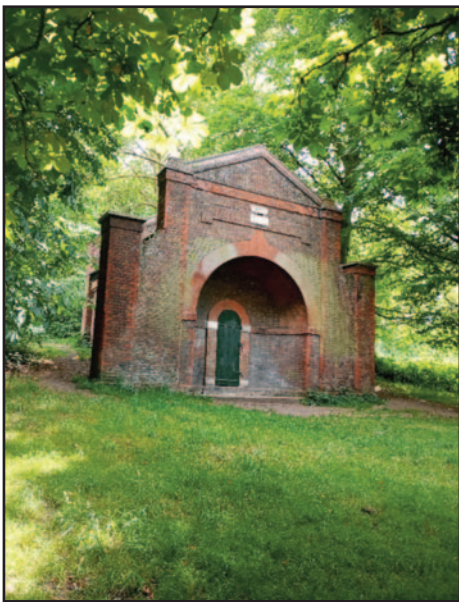


Nicholas Hawksmoor was born to a farming family from East Drayton, Nottinghamshire. We know little about his early schooling but as a young man he was employed as a clerk to a judge in Doncaster. Sir Christopher Wren had somehow heard of the young man's talent as a draughtsman and at the age 18 he moved to London to take up a position as an apprentice to the great man. Under Wren's guidance, Hawksmoor developed his skills to eventually become an architect. Early drawings of his from the age of 22 are held at the RIBA and show his architectural progression as a draughtsman. Initially, he worked very closely with Wren completing City of London Churches rebuilt following the Great Fire of 1666 and it is only quite recently that the design of many of the church towers, steeples and spires have been attributed to him. He was involved with Wren not only on these churches but also St Paul's Cathedral, Chelsea Hospital, Kensington Palace and many other buildings elsewhere. He held various positions in his

career including, in 1698, Assistant Surveyor and Clerk of Works at Greenwich Hospital built between 1705 and 1733. During this time Hawksmoor was instructed by Wren to work on improving the conduit water supply necessary for the new Greenwich Hospital. The system had been in existence during the Tudor period and used by the previous Palace of Placentia which the new buildings replaced. There are many natural springs in the area which come from the gravel and sand sub-layers south of

buildings on the estate. The Fifty New Churches Act of 1718, initiated by Queen Anne, was an attempt to address the imbalance by asserting the Anglican Church's authority outside the City of London where non-conformist churches were establishing themselves. Hawksmoor was one of those appointed to the position of Surveyor. He designed six of the twelve churches that were eventually built across the East of London, the City and Bloomsbury and two in collaboration with a fellow architect John James. St Alfege Greenwich was the first church designed wholly by Hawksmoor. This was followed by Christ Church Spitalfields, St Anne's Limehouse, St George the East, St Mary in the City and St George's Bloomsbury. All these churches are totally individual in style and decorations which are very idiosyncratic. London had never experienced architecture like this and there was some criticism at the time. Hawksmoor had never travelled abroad on the Grand Tour to Italy or to places of antiquity but educated himself on architectural drawings brought by others. He studied the works left by Roman architect Vitruvius and combined motifs, decorations and ornaments including obliques and pyramids in a way that was completely new. He was influenced by a reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon, Jerusalem and was inspired to incorporate elements of its design.

In 1723 Hawksmoor succeeded Wren as Surveyor (Architect) to Westminster Abbey and designed the two West towers of the Abbey, successfully combining Gothic and Baroque architectural features that clearly demonstrated his unique talent.



Hawksmoor had suffered with gout for much of his life and died of it in 1736. He is buried at St Botolph's, Shenley, Hertfordshire.

It has been said that Hawksmoor was a very modest, not at all self-promoting, man. Today his buildings display a great and uniquely confident talent in the design, originality and execution of classical architecture.

David Fletcher FCSD  
Fellow of the Chartered Society of  
Designers

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# FEATURES

## Heiresses to the Rescue!



The great-nieces of William Murray, Dido Belle and her cousin Lady Elizabeth Murray at Kenwood garden by David Martin, circa 1778.

Most of us are more than happy to be living south of the river, but there IS life on the other side! If you haven't visited Kenwood House on the northern boundary of Hampstead Heath, you're missing something special.

Kenwood House was originally built in the 17th century, remodelled in the 18th century by Robert Adam; until the 20th century, it was the home of the Earls of Mansfield. William Murray, the first earl, is remembered for his pioneering judgement in 1772 (the 'Somerset case'), holding that English law did not recognise the state of slavery.

A walk down the dripping drives of Kenwood, past the rhododendrons, to Kenwood House, is particularly rewarding at present, because there is a fine exhibition awaiting you - Heiress, Sargent's American Portraits. (Until 5 October; yes, you'll have to hurry!).

It used to be a truth universally acknowledged that a penniless duke was in need of a rich bride. These women, heiresses from wealthy American families, often labelled 'Dollar Princesses' by the popular press, crossed the Atlantic to marry into British families - not all aristocrats - and made a significant contribution to British society.

For years, the expat American artist John Singer Sargent was written off by art critics as a society portraitist, a creator of images that best suited the lids of chocolate boxes or biscuit tins. Even so, he was never entirely forgotten - sometimes for the wrong reasons; witness his controversial painting of Madame Gautreau at the 1884 Paris salon, notorious for her shameless display of naked arms and shoulders. Shock, horror!

To escape the scandal, Sargent moved from Paris to London. His reputation reached its peak in the 1890s and early 1900s - he became a full member of the RA in 1894. Among his triumphs was a portrait of Dame Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth. While he continued to exhibit both in London and America, he never went away, but it became fashionable to regard his works as passé, best forgotten, like others such as Landseer. But the best reason to visit Boston is to view his murals at the Boston Public Library. And how can a man who could paint one of the greatest paintings to emerge from the First World War, Gassed, at the Imperial War Museum, be forgotten? One is haunted by that image of the line of soldiers, blinded by mustard gas, being led past the corpses of their dead comrades.

For the present exhibition in Kenwood House, our thanks are largely due to Richard Ormond, former director of the National Maritime Museum in London. Richard Ormond has created a massive nine-volume

oeuvre, the catalogue raisonné of the artist, published by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and distributed by Yale University Press. Ormond has helped to inspire, or organise, numerous exhibitions of Sargent, now recognised as an artist who inspires both admiration and respect. Ormond comments that the moment critical in his revival was perhaps in 1998, when Tate Britain mounted an exhibition of his work: the then director of the Tate, Nicholas Serota, rather grudgingly conceded that Sargent 'might not be admired by many, but cannot now be ignored.' Damned with faint praise indeed.

In recent years there have been numerous exhibitions revealing the variety of Sargent's work; not just painted ladies. Some of us may have seen Sargent the Watercolours at the Dulwich Picture Gallery a few years ago.

And now, thanks to the Friends of Kenwood and the English Heritage team, led by curator Wendy Monkhouse and curatorial adviser Richard Ormond, we see Sargent's work again, at Kenwood, demonstrating the skill and vitality of his oil painting of the Dollar Princesses, side by side with his creations in the unforgiving medium of charcoal, the latter perhaps offering a glimpse of the real person not camouflaged by the beautiful dresses so skilfully realised by the artist.

The Heiress exhibition not only highlights Sargent's mastery of portraiture where every detail speaks of the character of the subject; the hands gently fondling a pearl necklace, the white silk dresses where every curl and wrinkle in the material captures a different shade, not just of white; even the little dog tugging at the hem of a skirt. Equally memorable are the charcoal sketches of the same subjects, suggesting different characteristics: which image is the real person? In the painted image, a society lady in a gorgeous costume; in the charcoal version, the woman of the world, or the girl next door - and sometimes, the understated femme fatale.

The exhibition in Kenwood is at pains to represent the women not just as images. These women are not brainless society ladies; they each have an individual persona, a tale to tell. A person who, to use a bit of feminist jargon, has agency. The best example is, of course, Nancy Astor. When her husband Waldorf, an MP, went to the Lords on the death of his father, she stood in his place - and was Plymouth's MP from 1919 to 1945. Our first woman MP! In Sargent's hands, the charcoal version of this woman, with her slightly Napoleonic hat, is strong, determined, observant, well-suited to campaign for the many causes she espoused.

The Dollar Princesses brought much-needed wealth to cash-strapped British aristocrats and saved many an estate. On the whole, they navigated their new roles with grace - unlike others one can call to mind. Take the Leiter sisters, from Chicago, daughters of a real estate magnate. Mary married Lord Curzon, later Viceroy of India. Her younger sister, Daisy, married Henry Howard, 19th Earl of Suffolk - killed in action in WW1. Daisy was full of life, and you can see it in Sargent's magnificent painting; she loved hunting, driving fast cars and

flying around in her small plane. She also used to arrive at the Ritz in a helicopter. She bequeathed the famous Suffolk Collection of Jacobean portraits to the nation - originally displayed at Ranger's House in Greenwich but now at Kenwood.

However, the marriages were not without problems: Consuelo Yznaga del Valle, from Louisiana, who played the banjo and smoked cigars, was the daughter of a naturalized Cuban. She met George Montague, Viscount Mandeville, at Saratoga Springs, NY State. She became mistress to the Prince of Wales. Her husband, a notorious womaniser and drunk, died at the age of 39.

Another sad tale: Consuelo Vanderbilt was bullied by her domineering mother to marry against her will the penniless Charles Spencer-Churchill, 9th Duke of Marlborough. She soon learnt that he only married her to save Blenheim Palace - and that he loved another woman. The marriage was deeply unhappy and ended in divorce. Consuelo then went on to marry a French aviator, Jacques Balsan. Not every bridegroom was a penniless

aristocrat: Jessie Duncan's British husband was William Phipps, who imported coffee from Brazil. Jessie became a dedicated public servant, working for the London County Council. Her eyesight began to deteriorate, and she became Chair of the Central Council for the London Blind. Her granddaughter was Joyce Grenfell. Sargent's painting of her is, again, outstanding. It could be a Manet.

This exhibition casts little light on the motivation of most of those who currently decorate the walls of Kenwood House - for motivation, one needs to read between the lines. However, some of the weddings that took place were, it seems, love matches; for others with a romantic turn of mind, and a sense of adventure, marrying a foreign aristocrat could be very tempting. Who are we to judge?

Neville Grant

Richard Ormond's John Singer Sargent: The Charcoal Portraits published by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (2025) is now out, distributed by Yale University Press.

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# ENVIRONMENT

## My, How You've Changed: a visit to Mycenae Gardens in 1984

This October 23rd, please come to the Friends of Mycenae Gardens Annual General Meeting. It's being held at the Waldorf School in Mycenae Road at 19:00, with drinks and crisps to make an interesting meeting even livelier. This year, we'll be focusing on therapeutic gardening and on how being in and observing the natural world can lift spirits and improve mental well-being. You'll also hear about plans to improve the gardens, including extending the space for wildlife by developing new hedging and adding to the ornamental plantings in the oases and the meadow.



The 'mossy' acorn cups of a turkey oak. From Wikipedia.

Those new plans are a reminder that many other ideas of what to grow have been implemented before our current designs. Forty-one years ago, in 1984, the Charlton and Blackheath Amateur Horticultural Society made a group expedition to the garden and published a report in the monthly newsletter. In those days, it was printed without photos, but the report gives a good sense of what was there. And it's fascinating too because not all the plants are still in the garden. The group was shown round by Barry Last from Greenwich Park, and part of the point was to teach members how to take cuttings from shrubs to grow fresh plants. The basic techniques haven't changed much, though Mr Last recommended using polystyrene cups rather than plastic pots, to hold heat. It's rare that we see polystyrene cups these days! There are several surviving trees described from that visit. The tamarisk, which has a cloud of pink flowers in spring, recently had a thorough pruning, and it's showing

plenty of vigorous new growth. This spring, we planted a new specimen to complement it. The turkey oak remains, described only as having 'mossy acorn cup' in the report. It's a slow-growing variety of oak with a lifespan of up to 200 years, so you can probably expect to see it still there in another 40 years. And of course, the giant oriental plane trees were a feature, then as now. Other trees, though, have not survived. A very showy-sounding poplar, *populus candicans* 'Aurora', with cream and green variegated leaves tinged with pink in the new growth, had been planted 10 years previously. Grown from a cutting brought from Devon, where the variety was apparently developed, it's no longer in evidence. The report also mentioned some conifers, and warned; 'these need a lot of ground preparation before replanting or from containers. If you can't do this, save your money as they will wilt as three bushes had done.'

Several shrubs are no longer in Mycenae Gardens, including hibiscus and hardy fuschias. The eleagnus, with its grey-green foliage, may not be the same specimens but we do still have one. Perhaps the choisya, Mexican orange, is the same plant, and some of the showy yellow forsythia and beautifully scented philadelphus are quite mature. But there are plenty of new shrubs which will grow larger over the coming years: Christmas box, clerodendron, witch hazel, physocarpus with its dark foliage, and a showy scented viburnum x carlcephalum. In fading light, according to the report, Mr Last went on to talk about some of his favourite plants in Greenwich Park: the tulip tree, a metasequoia, the alarmingly-named Devil's Walking Stick, and a sweet chestnut planted around 1600. The meeting ended with questions, including one about horse chestnuts dying, apparently due to a gas leak. It seems that CABAHS members had a wonderful visit, and were full of the curiosity that still marks its meetings.

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## LTN report "suppressed" ?

While the experimental LTN affecting West Greenwich and the Westcombe area continues more controversy surrounding such schemes has been revealed. The Times and the local news source Greenwich Wire have reported that a University of Westminster study for TfL costing £82,000, has not been published by TfL. According to those reports critics say that TfL stopped work on the report and refused to publish it because the results indicated that LTNs didn't cut car use, whereas TfL have repeatedly

claimed that 'such schemes help reduce traffic'. A TfL spokesman said, "This particular study was initially funded to explore the impacts of LTNs but following a review of the second year's findings, we concluded that the data didn't offer sufficient new insights to justify further investment in continuing the survey." As public money has been spent on the two year study, and LTNs are a controversial issue, shouldn't Londoners have been given the opportunity to see the report for themselves?

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## Letter

Another Round of Royal Greenwich consultation on Street Improvement! <https://silvertowntunnelenhancement.commonplace.is/> This is about the treatment of seven small locations around the Westcombe Park area. The plan is to tinker with tiny areas that haven't been maintained, basically with grass, low-level planting and a few seats. The staff at the 10 September "drop-in" at Mycenae House said these locations were fixed in 2018 and can't be changed. And if the money isn't spent here, it's lost. Who decided this, and why can't it be changed? Planting grass and a few flowers alongside pavements pales into insignificance compared to Woolwich Road flyover, and is doomed to join the other unmaintained areas and pavements. I think a minimal number of people are benefitted by the plans. They are not needed and, like existing areas and pavements, won't be maintained. Most of the schemes are next to the Blackwall Tunnel southern approach road; I doubt that the council's pictures of tots playing there with balloons will ever materialise, or that anyone would choose to sit next to this pollution. The Farndale Road area will benefit a handful of people. Contrast this with the ugliness, stress and danger of walking across Woolwich Road under the flyover by tens of thousands of people. People have died and suffered life-changing injuries here. Cars wizz through, not seeing worn-out road stop markings, all the many traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, and the yellow box. This is a main pedestrian route from the train station to the Charlton superstores, shops, IKEA, and the river, the Peninsula. As more homes are built without car parking, the number of pedestrians increases; crossing here often means queuing in small spaces or dodging runners and cyclists on pavements. The cycle route at the roundabout is a mess. Much bigger lorries are now coming through the

Silvertown Tunnel onto this roundabout, increasing gridlock. Why can't this Silvertown money fund a cohesive Woolwich flyover masterplan, used to bid for funding from National Highways, TfL and the Council, implementing parts as and when money becomes available? Newham has had loads spent on their side! There is to be one more "drop-in" soon, but I can't find the time or date on the above link. Many people have said the advertising of the drop-ins was confusing and they didn't know they were about this. A tick-box exercise?

Catherine Kell, Kemsing Road

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\* 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)

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# WHAT'S ON

## Charlton House & Gardens

**Sunday 19th October: Horn Fair 11am-4pm**  
This Horn Fair is stepping back 100 years to 1925! With performances from The Charlie Chaplin Show, Punch & Judy, and Piano Jam where you can listen to live music or bring your own musical instrument and join in the performance! There'll be crafts, history talks, a ghostly garden trail and plants for sale. Also, this year we are hosting a fancy-dress competition

**Thursday 30th October: Halloween Ghostly Ghouls.**  
2 sessions, 10-12pm & 1.30- 3.30pm. Suitable for ages 5-12, £5 per child plus Eventbrite booking fee. Join us this Halloween to explore Charlton House's ghosts and ghouls, then see how many ghosts you can find in our haunted garden trail. Feel free to come in your best Halloween costume!  
[www.greenwichheritage.org](http://www.greenwichheritage.org)

## Westcombe Society Quiz

**November 22 at Mycenae House.**  
7pm for a prompt 7.30pm start. £8 for members and £9 for non members.  
Bring a team of 6 or come and be allocated to a table, Half time fish and chips £14 per person.  
To book please email Gavin: [gavin.wsevents@gmail.com](mailto:gavin.wsevents@gmail.com).

## Mycenae House

Come Dance With Me  
Over 50s dance class is holding a sharing of dances, open for the public to come and watch, **Friday 7th November at 4.30pm** and International Folk dance sessions with Caller Jo Clare, on **6th and 11th November at 2-3pm** Info & book your place: [joclare@hotmail.it](mailto:joclare@hotmail.it) tel 07709952215

**Thurs 16 Oct 7.30pm** - Gong Bath. Journey through meditation & sound. £18.  
**Fri 17 Oct 7.30pm** - The SWOP Sessions. Foot tapping, jazz, with Open Mic. £8.  
**Sat 18 Oct 10.30am** - Baby Broadway Concert. £13.50.  
**Tues 21 Oct 7.30pm** - Film Night. a screening of Lee Daniels' The Butler. Free entry.  
**Thurs 23 Oct 4pm** - Bach to Baby concert. £16.  
**Fri 24 Oct 7.30pm** - Spoken Word & Music Night. GFMA present a BHM special featuring Mosi Conde and other artists. Free entry (book in advance).  
**Tues 28 - Thurs 30 Oct 10am - 4pm** - Engineering Minds Holiday Club. Exploration, creativity & innovation for children 6+. £57 per day.  
**Fri 31 Oct 11am + 1pm** - Colourful Tales. Join Amethyst Theatre for this interactive performance for toddlers. £12/£10.  
**Fri 7 Nov 7.30pm** - KT Bush Band. Featuring original band member Brian Bath £16.  
For further information about all Mycenae House events visit [www.mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://www.mycenaehouse.co.uk)

## The Blackheath Flower Arrangement Society

We meet once a month (every 3rd Friday) at Mycenae House 1-3 £8 admission for visitors & £50 per year for members.  
We have professional demonstrators who make extraordinary, artistic displays that are raffled to the visitors and 3 times per year we have creative workshops with professional assistance. [www.mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://www.mycenaehouse.co.uk)

## Blackheath Halls

**Mon 6 Oct 10am** Music Appreciation: Late Haydn/Early Beethoven  
**Sat 11 Oct 6pm** Diwali Dinner and Dance  
**Mon 13 and 20th 10am** Music Appreciation: Late Haydn/Early Beethoven  
**Mon 13 Oct 1.10pm** Lunchtime Recital: Berniya & Riya Hamie  
**Fri 17 Oct 7pm** Trinity Laban: New Music Now  
**Sat 18 Oct 1.30pm & 4pm** The Gruffalo's Child  
**Sat 18 Oct 7.30pm** Lady Maisery  
**Sun 19 Oct 11am & 2pm** The Gruffalo's Child  
**Tue 21 Oct 7pm** Trinity Laban: Sounds of West Africa  
**Tue 21 Oct 9.30pm** Late Night Jazz in the Bar  
**Thu 23/24 Oct 7pm** Trinty Laban Opera Scenes  
**Fri 24 Oct 8pm** Ivo Graham | Orange Crush  
**Sat 25 Oct 7.30pm** Ronnie Scott's All Stars with Jo Harrop  
**Tue 28 Oct 1pm & 3pm** Let's All Dance | Hansel & Gretel  
**Thu 30 Oct 7.30pm** Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra | Dance Through the Darkness  
**Thu 30 Oct 9.30pm** Late Night Jazz in the Bar  
**Fri 31 Oct 7pm** Trinty Laban | Live sets of new songwriting  
<https://www.blackheathhalls.com/>

## Old Library Charlton House

**Music or an Autumnal evening Sunday 12th October 7:00pm doors open at 6.30pm**  
A Gwen Zammit B.E.M. Production  
A concert of instrumental and vocal music in aid of the demelza children's hospice Eltham. Featuring musicians from London's West End, Trinity College and St Luke's Players  
Tickets: £10, Child £5 (wine, beer & soft drinks on sale) **BOOK NOW!**  
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1ST- 25TH OCTOBER 2025

Race, ethics, sanity and prejudice collide in Joe Penhall's exquisitely sharp 'state of the nation' classic. Age Rec 14+

## National Maritime Museum

**The Keeper of All the Secrets**  
Jacqueline Bishop's The Keeper of All the Secrets is a major new acquisition that is on display in the Queen's House. The Jamaican-born artist has adorned a traditional British tea service with collages of Caribbean market women intertwined with local flowers and plants.  
Date: Daily  
Time: 10.00 – 17.00  
Age: Suitable for all ages  
Location: Queen's House, Greenwich  
Admission: Free  
[www.rmg.co.uk/queens-house](http://www.rmg.co.uk/queens-house)

**SPECIAL EVENTS**  
**Illuminate: Diwali Festival**  
The National Maritime Museum is teaming up again with South Asian arts platform, CommonGround&, to celebrate Diwali with a day festival suitable for all ages.  
Date: 25 October 2025  
Time: 10.00 – 18.00  
Age: Suitable for all ages  
Location: National Maritime Museum  
Admission: Free  
[www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/national-maritime-museum/diwali](http://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/national-maritime-museum/diwali)

**FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**Myths and Legends: October Half Term**  
Step into a world of myths, magic and maritime mystery this October half term at the National Maritime Museum and Queen's House.  
Date: 25 October – 2 November 2025  
Time: 11.00 – 16.00  
Age: Suitable for families with children of all ages  
Location: National Maritime Museum and Queen's House  
Admission: Free  
[www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/national-maritime-museum/october-half-term](http://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/national-maritime-museum/october-half-term)

## The Arts Society Greenwich

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

**The History and Highlights of the British Museum**  
**Monday 13 October 2025 at 7.30 pm**  
Lecturer: Anna Warrillow  
Venue: James Wolfe Primary School, Royal Hill, Greenwich  
Guests very welcome: £10; membership £65 for 10 lectures  
If travelling by car, please note Greenwich New Traffic Management Scheme finishes at 7pm.  
We look at the establishment of the British Museum and hear the stories behind some of the most important pieces that highlight the development of civilisations as made by the hand of man.  
*Anna Warrillow studied for her BA in History of Art & Italian at the University of Sussex and did her MA in Renaissance Decorative Arts & Design at the Royal College of Art. She worked for 6 years as a curator in the Sculpture Department at the Victoria & Albert Museum as well as in smaller collections such as the Henry Moore Family Trust. As well as guiding she is an adjunct lecturer at Richmond the American International University in London where she teaches undergraduates The History of London.*

## Thomas Tallis Society

**7.30pm, Sunday 21 September 2025**  
**St Alfege Church, Greenwich**  
Thomas Tallis Society Choir perform Benjamin Britten's Flower Songs, Eric Whitacre's Flower Songs and motets from Pärt, Palestrina, and Cecilia McDowall. Conducted by Eamonn Dougan.  
Tickets £15 & £10, available online or on the door:  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts)

## Old Royal Naval College

**Cinematic Sounds:Film Music Concert Sat 18 Oct | 7.30pm**  
Enjoy an evening of unforgettable film music in the stunning Chapel of St Peter & St Paul, in partnership with Docklands Sinfoniatto celebrate 100 years of filming at the Old Royal Naval College. Tickets: £55 (Adults), £20 (Students), £10 (Children), £65 (VIP ticket, front row)

## Cutty Sark

**Sheep, Actually (2025) screening: The Cutty Sark Wool Experience**  
Step aboard the iconic Cutty Sark for an atmospheric evening of film, music and storytelling. Your ticket includes after-hours entry to the legendary tea clipper, the film screening, a post-film Q&A, drinks and live music.  
Date: 9 October 2025  
Time: 18.30 – 21.30  
Location: Cutty Sark, Dry Berth  
Admission: Adult £25 | Member £22

**Attention All Shipping**  
As the solemn, rhythmic intonation of the Shipping Forecast embarks on its second century after turning 100 years old in 2024, bestselling author and award-winning broadcaster Charlie Connelly's hilarious and informative one-man show brings the legendary broadcast vividly to life as never before.  
Date: 17 October 2025  
Time: 18.30 – 21.00  
Age: Suitable for ages 16 and over  
Location: Cutty Sark, Dry Berth  
Admission: Adult £22 | Member £20

**Fairport Convention**  
Fairport Convention have been entertaining music lovers for over half a century, with 2025 being their 58th anniversary. The band features founding member Simon Nicol on guitar and vocals, Dave Pegg on bass guitar and vocals, Ric Sanders on violin, and Chris Leslie on bouzouki, mandolin, banjo, fiddle, and vocals. Join them underneath the copper hull of Cutty Sark - this will be a night not to be missed.  
Date: 26 October 2025  
Time: 18.30 – 21.25  
Age: Suitable for ages 16 and over  
Location: Cutty Sark, Dry Berth  
Admission: Adult £40 | Member £36  
[www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on)

## Poetry Reading

**'Islands of the Mind', October 7 at West Greenwich Library (doors open at 7 for a 7.30 start).**  
by the fabulous Fiona Moore, Lisa Kelly and Gale Burns  
They will be joined by musician, composer, and lecturer Alexis Bennett.



# MARKET PLACE

## THERAPIST

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**COME DANCE WITH ME.**  
Fun dance sessions for over 50s. Fridays 11am -12pm at Mycenae House, Mycenae road SE3 7SE  
Take part in regular exercise exploring a variety of dance and music genres, meet new people, have fun dancing together. The class aims at maintaining and improving flexibility, balance, strength and memory. Everyone welcome, regardless of ability and experience. Qualified & experienced teachers, Joanna Clare & Justyna Sochaj. info: [joclare@hotmail.it](mailto:joclare@hotmail.it) tel 07709952215

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