The Mad Hatter meets the Mental Health Trust

Among those who sportingly dressed up for the Mad Hatters Tea Party were Toni Hale (the Queen of Hearts) who was joined by Alice, the Cheshire Cat, and the White Rabbit. Of course, too, no party could be complete without a Mad Hatter!

The Mental Health Activity Trust set up by Tony Hale celebrated their shop’s first birthday in March with a Mad Hatters Tea Party at the shop in Delacourt Road.

The shop sells quality clothes and homeware:

Shop staff and volunteers dressed up as characters from the surreal Alice in Wonderland movie by Tim Burton, based on the original novel by Lewis Carroll, and invited those attending to talk openly about mental health. There were lots of activities for children and adults alike, and everyone enjoyed the fantastic costumes.

“It was a great day out full of entertainment and great activities enjoyed by all, everyone looked great in their costumes too. There was lots of laughter, just what we needed. More importantly it raises awareness about mental ill health in its fight to stop stigma and discrimination.”

Visitors enjoyed many activities, a pets’ corner, and lots of food and drink. Visitors were tempted by “Eat Me” cakes and “Drink me” drinks, though there is no record of anyone growing huge or tiny!

The idea was to raise funds – and to raise the profile of the MHA. Everyone enjoyed identifying the different characters – the make-up was skillfully created by Stefanie Cayless. The costume worn were created by volunteers entirely from products in the charity’s shop.

Toni Hale set up the charity called the Mental Health Activity Trust three years ago and in March 2014 opened the first MHA Trust charity shop.

The MHA Trust aims to help people with mental health issues to get back into the workplace. Since its inception it has achieved outstanding results, with eight people employed in full and part-time employment, and fifty-two people with mental health problems that they are helping into full or part-time work.

The Trust aims to support people in their employment as well as the families of people with mental health problems.

Toni Hale said: “I knew then that there was a need for this service when I started the charity. What we are doing differently is helping into full or part-time work.

The charity continues to move on in leaps and bounds, and the number of people that walk through the door is a testament to that. But we could always do more. We are helping into full or part-time work.

A community newspaper commended by the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies

Monthly newspaper of The Westcombe Society: fostering a sense of community

An eggscellent time was had by all

Despite a cloudy day, a good time was had by all at the Westcombe Society’s Annual Easter Egg Hunt in Mycenae Gardens. We had nearly a hundred intrepid hunters and many mini -eggs and creme eggs were exchanged for those found in the garden. There were some lovely entries for the best Easter Basket – the winner won a tin of sweets. The winner of the best Easter bonnet also won an Easter Egg full of jellys. There was a cake stall and a tombola as well as craft activities. Many thanks to Emily, Jody and Laura for organising the event.

Winners of civic awards

The Royal Borough of Greenwich identified no fewer than 42 people representing all aspects of life in the borough as worthy winners in this year’s Civic Awards. They were publicly honoured in the Civic Awards ceremony in March 2015 with presentations made by the mayor, Cllr Mick Hayes.

While it is rigorous to single out any of the very worthy winners, the R/BW would like to congratulate in particular: * Terry Powley, Chair of the Greenwich Parks Forum for his work in helping to safeguard the future of Greenwich’s much-valued parks and open spaces.

The Westcombe Society

The Annual General Meeting of the Westcombe Society is at 7.30 pm on Friday May 22nd, at Blackheath High School for Girls (entrance from Vanbrugh Park.) All paid-up members of the society are invited to attend.

After the meeting, wine and cheese will be served.

Election news

Leaflets announcing election hustings have been circulating widely in our area. In case the word is unartful: “Hustings: n. A place where political campaign speakers are made” lavishly, they involve candidates having to answer questions from the audience.

Nine of these events took place in Greenwich during April, most of them in and around our area.

The first took place on 15th April, in Mycenae House, organised by Mycenae House and Blackheath & Greenwich United Nations Association. The candidates in attendance were: Ryan Amy (UKIP), Abbye Akahbash (Conservative), Lynne Chamberlain (Trade Unionist & Socialist Coalition), Matt Hartley (Conservative) and Matthew Penrose (Labour).

Tim Holder (Lib Dem) was not able to be present, and Simon Waddington, a candidate for Eltham, stood in for him.

Neville Grant of UNA chaired the meeting, which was very lively, and very well-attended. Questions ranged from local issues – the NHS, education, housing, transport, and pollution – to wider issues – the renewal of Trident, human rights, defence, climate change, & trade (TTIP)

Dogged campaigning

Two local councillors had their fingers burnt, or rather bitten, by dogs, while on the campaign trail. On April 6th, Cllr John Hills, was bitten by a dog on Mansion Road, while on the campaign trail. On April 26th, Cllr John Fairley was also bitten. He commented “Maybe I should carry a tin of sausages around with me.”
**Westcombe News**

**Palm Sunday at St George's**

*It's a dog's life... ED MAYO*

Right: Lisa Long from the 'Owse-Dog Look-Allie' Prize parrots.

*Below: Lilo Plank picks up a prize in the 'Best Legs' category*

**Letters to the editor**

Any views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the WVN or the Westcombe Society.

From: Richard Fenny. **Hardy Road**

In March's WVN, you report that the project to expand London City Airport was given the go-ahead, despite more than 1,000 objections. It was implied that aircraft overhead at 5am was due to London City airport. However: an aircraft to/from City Airport doesn't fly over Westcombe Park.

*In the morning, the first departures from/ arrivals to City Airport aren't until 6.30am
* the project to expand City Airport hasn't happened — in any case

*the expansion project has recently been turned down by the Mayor of London.*

I believe, as P M Rogers observes in April's edition, it was implied that aircraft heard overhead at 5am was due to London City airport. However: an aircraft to/from City Airport doesn't fly over Westcombe Park.

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* the project to expand City Airport hasn't happened — in any case

*the expansion project has recently been turned down by the Mayor of London.*

**Thanks for this correction, Richard. The information that we had was correct at the time of printing. So we have to thank Boris for turning the City airport plane.

From: Trevor Allman. **Catherine Road**

I read with interest the vexous platitudes from Abby Alkinson (Green Party Candidate for Greenwich & Woolwich) regarding the "No Silverton Toll" campaign (Westcombe News, April Edition).

*Given neither he nor James Parker (Green Party candidate for Eltham) have been involved in any activity pertaining to the campaign in the two years it has been running, I am not sure how Mr Alkinson thinks he is placed to pass any comments on how it has been organised, for better or for worse. He doesn't have a great record of political campaigning.*

As a Greenwich Green Party activist for 11 years I know we never heard of him before, as he had never attended a Greenwich Green Party meeting, had a zero record of any Green Party activity and is completely ignorant in green concerns before becoming a candidate.

Also, in the April edition of the Westcombe News was a letter from Matt Harty. Whilst the local Labour Party, who control Greenwich Council, are very easy targets for criticism, I think it was a bit of a stretch for the Labour Party candidate Matt Pennycuick, regarding the Council's record on standing up to the campaign against and seemingly uncontrolled developments in the borough and the lack of affordable housing.

Isn't it Mr Harty's party that has pursued legislation to stack the cards so much in favour of developers that even if a council opposes a development, they are odds-on to lose any appeal made to the Secretary of State? And is for "affordable housing", we have to ask "affordable for whom?" What we urgently need is social housing for working class people, now that Thatcher's "Property owning democracy" rhetoric has been totally exposed as the myth that many of us always knew it was.

From: Tony Eriksson. **Westcombe Hill**

Quite rightly the housing crisis has become a major public concern but this problem is really insoluble. The more houses you build, in any city, the more people outside flood in. There is also the expanding birth rate encouraged by government incentives to produce larger families.

There is however one solution for smaller families and single people. In every high street all over the country there are millions of empty rooms above shops. The government should encourage shop-owners to turn these spaces into liveable units — rather than threatening greenfield sites. This could be a simple but easily realised solution.

From: R. G. Marvin. **Catherine Road**

Some years ago, there was an attempt to enrich the plume of traffic to town for the project to towns for train at Westcombe Park Station by doing some grassland gardening on the long-buried line on the south side of the platform.

Due to an unfortunate combination of circumstances — two left the area, and old age and arthritis is taking in toll — a new injection of enthusiasm is urgently required.

No bureaucracy or expense is required, so if anyone is interested, please ring R.G. Marvin on 020 8858 0720 for more information and suggestions.

From: Janet Sweet. **Westcombe Hill**

In April's WVN you ask whether we should spend our money on a new Ship? I'm glad to see that the BBC have grown up in the family house in Humber Road, and in fact, Tony himself lived most of his life there. He was out of London during the war, enjoying rural tranquillity in Berkshire until about 1946. He then lived with his parents in 110 Humber Road. He was a creative artist from very early on, attended Camberwell School of Art, and became an art director and an illustrator, a great landscape painter in both water colour and oils.

After a brief stay in a London flat, he moved back into Humber Road and stayed there for the rest of his life, caring for his mother. He loved this area — Greenwich, Westcombe Park and the Thames touport, all of which were his cycling haunts. He contributed to the WVN about local developments and any animal adventures. He was a huge lover of all animals. He was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable member of the local community of Humber Road and Westcombe Park, and a warm and welcome neighbour.

He suffered a stroke just before Christmas and spent most of the time since then in hospital. He died peacefully on 11th March.

May 2015, WVN QXD 20/04/2015 10:27 Page 2
May is a busy time in Greenwich Park. The 16th there is the Battle of the Boroughs - a 10 kilometer run. Then on 24th there is the Royal Mail 10 kilometer run. Not forgetting the Run for Diabetes on 18th June.

If you are tired of running you might wish to catch a lift on the London to Brighton Classic Car event, which starts in Greenwich Park on May 51st. Oh joy, 100 classic cars! Motoring beware.

Look out for the real treat in store; the Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band is back in the Observatory Garden, Greenwich Park, at 1pm on Sunday 21 June, for their midsummer jazz concert. This is a marvellous event for all the family, organised by the Friends of the Park. Gates open from noon. Good idea to bring a picnic! But there is also a bar, run by Day’s of Greenwich, and the Pavilion Cafe is running a stall serving ice cream, food and soft drinks.

Tickets: £5 for adults (£3 on the gate). Under 18s free. Send cheques to “Friends of Greenwich Park”, 25 Greenwich Park Street, SE10 8LF. For further information, phone 02088352750 or email cnhrw@hotmail.com.

Meet the man who loves animals... (even those that aren’t very lovely)

Local resident Ray O’Neill is a man with a mission. In his view, all animals are lovable - but at present society thinks that some are more lovable than others.

To prove his point, wearing his Spiderman Vest, he brought along to Toni Hart’s Mad Hatters Tea Party at the MBA shop a selection of his favourite pets, including two beautiful black rabbits (very cuddly), a bearded dragon, (rather less cuddly), and least cuddly of all, two huge hairy spiders from Chile.

Bearded dragons originate from central Australia. Ray’s dragon is called PuFF (in PuFF the Magic Dragon, remember him?) and is largely vegetarian, though he does love crickets. Ray brought some along with him in a see-through box. (“When you hold that, people on buses quite often move seats!” said Ray.)

He calls the spiders Tara and Katara – hugely hairy, but wholly harmless, he said.

Blackheath High Girls Turn ‘CSI’ Detectives

Five pupils from Blackheath High School’s Junior School spent a whole morning immersed in a taster session of science for ‘CSI’ School, in exciting ‘CSI’ (Crime Scene Investigators) themed sessions, facilitated by the Senior School’s Science Department staff, to deduce clues, determine details and draw conclusions from their investigations.

Their activities included using microscopes to analyse materials and fibres; analysing unknown powders; testing for light, analysing footprints and assessing the reliability of eyewitness statements. At the end of the morning, the pupils compared their evidence, and discussed their findings. The event was deemed a great success – a real eye-opener for how exciting science can be!

Worried about rogue traders?

E ver had someone turn up on your door step offering to “put spare” gravel on your drive, at a “cut price.” They often say things like “I’ve been doing a job, and I’ve got some gravel left over, so I can let you have it really cheap.” Another ploy is to say that they noticed that your roof is badly in need of repair, and they can fix it, cheaply. Unsolicited visits of this kind are best avoided.

Royal Greenwich Trading Standards operate a Neighbourhood Response Team. Two Trading Standards Officers will come and help solve the crime.

Throughout the morning, the girls took part in Biology, Chemistry and Physics improvement services carried out in Royal Greenwich by local owners. Spaces are protected by a partnership with the Friends of Hervey Road, and The Royal Borough of Greenwich, in Hervey Road is now protected for ever. Supported by a £4 million investment, Hornfair Park is now a multi-sports facility for various sports activities, including tennis, football, rugby, athletics, cricket, hockey and bowls.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich and its partners have delivered development across a variety of outdoor facilities including Sutcliffe Park which is currently undergoing a significant transformation with a bid to make it into a top-class athletics facility. After a £4 million investment, Homfart Park is now a multi-sports park with Charlton Lido, new changing facilities, a top-grade BMX race track and tennis facilities. Maryon Park next?

Beware of rogue traders!

For details of traders on the scheme, please contact us on 02089218223.

Many of the rogue traders visiting our area are part of organised gangs who prey on the most vulnerable residents; they often also return to visit these residents again and again.

The council are part of a What Trader? scheme run by Siteon, a software company, to help protect and improve outdoor spaces in partnership with the local community for various sports activities, including tennis, football, rugby, athletics, cricket, hockey and bowls.

Regular Worship Times

Sundays 11am Parish Communion

Wed. 6th May

Weds., 8pm: Workshop on How to Pray

Frids. at 12.30pm Soup lunch & fellowship

Wed., May 13th

14th Ascension Day

Sat. 30th May

8pm: Workshop on How to Pray

Meet Andy, Win Prizes

ANDY GRIFFITHS’ UK BOOK TOUR

THE 13-STORY TREEHOUSE!

Meet the man that aren’t very lovable)

(please never contact)

WINSTON THE LION

Meet the man

WITH A MISSION.

ANDY GRIFFITHS’ "THE 13-STORY TREEHOUSE"

Sat. 30th May

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8pm: Workshop on How to Pray

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THE 13-STORY TREEHOUSE!

Meet the man that aren’t very lovable)

(please never contact)
Fine prints on show in the Halls

A big treat in Blackheath Halls in May, when two artists are exhibiting their work. Not to be missed!

Jane Lydbury, a long-time resident of Westcombe Park, trained at Camberwell in the University of the Arts in London. She has worked as a printmaker and is much respected as a book illustrator (she has done a lot of work for the Folio Society.) Her inspiration is English and European literature, both contemporary and ancient and is underpinned by an interest in the workings of the unconscious as expressed in myth and legend.

Jane Daniell is an artist printmaker based in London. Her work tends to be in myth and legend.

Jane Lydbury's print The Distillation of the Monasteries, 12 x 9 cm. Jane explains that the print, above, is "deliberately ambiguous", and was inspired by the poem by Andrew Marvell, "Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax" to give it its full title, written in about 1651. Jane Lydbury and Jane Daniell's work is on show in the Cafe Bar in the Halls 10.00 - 5.00 from May 7th - May 31st.

Songs and sounds of praise at St George’s

If you live near St George’s Church, at the corner of Glencoe and Kirkside, you may have been hearing some new sounds emanating from the church.

And it isn’t just the bagpipes played by the vicar, Tim Yeager, mentioned on page 2 of this issue!

The church has also hired Trinity Laban graduate Joe Graves as its new Music Director. Joe has his degree in organ and is much interested in the workings of the unconscious as expressed in myth and legend.

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The hotel postlude on Easter Sunday has been so well received that the church has begun to follow a different tradition. For many years, the church has been known for its Easter pageants and, in recent years, it has been the custom to perform a play in the church itself. This year, however, the church has decided to stage a play in the church itself. The play, which is entitled "The Easter Story," is based on the Gospel accounts of the resurrection and the empty tomb, and it is performed by the congregation.

The church has also hired Trinity Laban graduate Joe Graves as its new Music Director. Joe has his degree in organ and is much interested in the workings of the unconscious as expressed in myth and legend.

So Sunday worshippers can expect to hear some wonderful music as the church celebrates the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Essence of Love

JANUARY 2015

Vanessa Stott

The Essence of Love is on from Wed. May 27th to Saturdays in Blackheath Halls, 457 - 459 Shooters Hill Road, Shooters Hill, London SE10 9BY, at 8.00 pm. Tickets £12 (£10 concessions). Phone 020 8853 2759 or 0795 0015412.

email: alexandraplayers@gmail.com website: www.alexandraplayers.org.uk

The Essence of Love is a satirical operetta about a love affair in a small town. It was written by Victorian playwright Henry Arthur Jones and first performed in 1893. The story follows the relationship between the young couple, Tom and Mary, as they navigate the ups and downs of their relationship. The show is a timeless comedy that explores the complexities of love and relationships.

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CARrying out an electrical safety inspection to (for the tenth year in a row)! Ticket prices: £13.50, reviews and he’s only just celebrated his 6th birthday. This is a lively and engaging first theatre experience suitable for ages: 14+

£30.50 (Concessions: £23.50) Suitable for ages: 14+

& 7.30pm Sun 6pm Tickets: £28.50 Premium seats

Times: Tue-Thu 7.30pm Fri 5.00 & 8.30pm Sat 2.30 & 7.30pm at Sunfields Methodist Church, Old Dover Road. Blackheath High School Orchestra play R Strauss. Free, but ticketed.

Tickets: £10.00

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HS2, though not everyone with Westminster. Bridge project linking Lambeth with Westminster.

The proposals put forward by an outfit called the Garden Bridge Trust for a garden bridge over the Thames – “a snip” at £60 million – has run into an outburst of anger from物业. Two months ago the WN reported that the scheme has now been approved by both councils involved – Lambeth and Westminster Councils.

The project now faces a legal challenge in the high court mounted by Michael Ball, sometime head of the Waterfront Community Development Group, who claims that Lambeth Council wrongly granted planning consent.

What are his chances?

The bridge, the brainchild of designer Thomas Heatherwick and Joanna Lumley, was originally presented as a £60m project to be entirely funded by the private sector. However, the goal-posts have changed: it now has a budget of £175m and requires 30% public funding (which George Osborne has already agreed to). Critics say that this is a misuse of public funds – and that this is the second worst category meaning “very uncomfortable”.

“Thousands of local residents,” according to objections, “will have their lives blighted.” Critics say there could be dangerous crowd pressures on the south side of the Thames, already very overcrowded.

No public right of way

The bridge is supposed to be “a new public park space”, but it has since emerged that groups larger than eight will have to book in advance. Picnics are prohibited, cycling is banned. There will be no public right of way across it, and it will close at midnight.

Twelve times a year it will be closed for money-earning events (mainly in the summer, presumably the time when most people will want to have access to it.) But it is pointed out that most museums and galleries and parks have regular private functions as an important source of income.

“Uncertainty of income stream”

Critics believe it is arguably unlawful to grant permission when there are so many uncertainties about crucial issues, such as funding – one reason why the whole project now faces a high court challenge.

Among many other reasons: it is claimed that the project will blight views of Somerset House and St Paul’s.

The bridge’s designer, Thomas Heatherwick, is a man of many talents – but he also has a track record: his disastrous sculpture in Manchester, from which bits fell off; his Blue Carpet in Newcastle was late and over budget – and within a few years became fifty shades of grey. Will his bridge be more successful?

According to Rowan Moore of the Sunday Observer, “By any reasonable interpretation of the relevant planning policies, the bridge should be refused.”

What do readers think?

TOM HOLDER argues for new policies for Greenwich.

Greenwich council is putting the health of its residents at risk with its misguided pursuit of the Silvertown Tunnel.

Air quality measurements of the areas at either end of the proposed tunnel register nitrogen dioxide levels more than one and a half times the EU’s legal annual average limit (of 40µg/m³).

What does the council think will happen to air quality if a new tunnel is built? Tons of thousands of additional cars and lorries will increase an already congested area to a standstill.

Public Health England estimate that 119 deaths per year in Greenwich are attributable to pollution in the borough – how much higher are we willing to see that number climb?

New roads and crossings do not relieve congestion; they create it. The M25 filled up almost as soon as it was built, as does every time the lanes are widened. The second Blackwall Tunnel doubled the traffic at the crossing within a year and jammed the roads at either end within a decade.

So why are there so many vehicles in Greenwich? I call on TfL to come up with a comprehensive plan to bring Greenwich’s public transport system in line with neighbouring boroughs. Our smaller neighbour, E-wisham, has almost 50% more train stations (including DLR, overground and underground), so it should come as no surprise that we are more congested than many other areas of London.

With so many of the train stations losing direct access to Charing Cross we believe the New Cross branch of the Overground should be extended into Greenwich and Woolwich.

Around the corner, Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat MP, has fought and won his battle to get extra stops for the jubilee line within Herne Bay, and he is now on the cusp of extending the Bakerloo line into the southern reaches of his constituency. On the other hand our outgoing Labour MP, Nick Raynsford, has failed to provide an adequate transport system to meet the needs of our growing population.

Something needs to change.

Even without building new infrastructure there are ways of moving people from roads to buses. The Liberal Democrats support the one hour bus ticket, which would allow people to switch buses within one hour of getting on the first bus without paying twice. This would help tens of thousands of people across London and put us in line with the system used in many other large international cities.

If we do not address the rising congestion and poor transport, Greenwich and Woolwich will suffer economically. If we continue to push ahead with the Silvertown tunnel, Greenwich and Woolwich residents will suffer medically.

Blackheath Art Society Open Studios

For two weekends this month twenty artists, all members of Blackheath Art Society, show their work at 8 venues in the area.

Paintings, drawings, prints, ceramics, sculptures, textiles, jewellery, photography, tideline art and combinations of all of these can be seen and enjoyed – free. This is an exciting opportunity to talk to the artists and watch some of them at work.

There are many highlights this year. Julia Goddard’s mostly bronze sculptures are on show at 29 Foxes Dale SE3 9BH, while Nicola White creates glass from the flotsam and jetsam on the Thames Foreshore at 10 Hardy Road SE3 7NP.

Althea Battams’ exciting and detailed paintings capture light and shadow in a fresh way. She is one of four artists showing at 40 Reynolds Place SE3 9RQ, 4th-29th June and at the Paul McPherson Gallery 19th-30th October 2015.

Blackheath Art Society Open Studios 9-10th and 16-17th May 12-6pm. Free.

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This year the Open Studios are clustered around Blackheath Village and Blackheath Standard creating the opportu-

nity for an enjoyable (and culture-filled) walk and day out!

A map and list of venues is available at www.blackheathartassociation.org.uk or from 0208 8853 2269.

A taster exhibition of some of the work Open Studio artists are at the Greenwich Picture House upstairs Sat from 11-6th May. More news of Blackheath Art Society will be showing their work at the Summer Exhibition at Blackheath Halls SE3 9RQ 4th-20th June and at the Paul Mc Pherson Gallery 19th-30th October 2015. Blackheath Art Society Open Studios 9-10th and 16-17th May 12-6pm. Free.
ENVIRONMENT

Welcome to the Greenwich Centre

As it is unfinished state, the Greenwich Centre makes a dramatic statement at the foot of Vanbrugh Hill, even if at present the stitching is still visible.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has announced that the brand new Greenwich Centre is now just weeks away from completion. The gym is being fitted out with more than a hundred pieces of equipment, and the new swimming pools are being filled. When open, the Greenwich Centre will offer local residents a brand new state of the art leisure centre and a bigger, better new library.

A short walk from Greenwich Town, the Greenwich Centre is the third and final new Royal Borough Centre to be constructed. It is an iconic building which will house first class community facilities including a health facility, créche and café. All, almost literally, on our doorstep.

The new leisure centre will be run by Greenwich Leisure Ltd. with brand new facilities that mirror what are currently available at East Greenwich, and the new library will also have its own IT suite, with dedicated tablets for children to use. Staff will be on hand to help customers make the most of the new IT suite, where they will find it easy and more efficient to access council services online.

The new Greenwich Centre will also contain a new NHS health centre which will offer a range of health services to local people.

Clr. Denise Hyland, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich said: “It’s brilliant news for the residents of Greenwich and the borough as a whole...”

“This is a superb building; it completes our long term vision of delivering new, modern and more efficient services to residents by building our three new local centres and bringing facilities under one roof. We’re so proud to be delivering new state of the art leisure and library facilities at a time when other areas are seeing such closures close.”

“This is a cost-effective strategy which means our residents are getting brand new community facilities – while we’re able to continue to freeze council tax for them too.”

Facelift for the Royal Standard

The Royal Standard is currently being refurbished, having been taken over by Castle (Mitchells & Butlers). The pub’s historic status dates back to 1848 when William Wynn built it for the princely sum of £2800.

At one time it had a reputation as being a great centre of sports: it had its own bowling Green and Quints ground, quoted as being the “Biggest in all of Kent”. It was also a Courge pub for many years.

Mitchells & Butler’s website states: “We’re the largest operator of restaurants, pubs and bars in the UK, providing a wide choice of eating and drinking-out experiences through our well known brands and delivering great service, quality and value for money to our guests.”

M&B operates more than 1,700 restaurants and pubs around the UK, including the popular All Bar One and O’Neill’s chains.

The Royal Standard, a long established landmark pub by a large roundabout, has given its name to the locality and has, in the past, been used on bus destination blinds. The current refurbishment is due to be completed in mid-May. Local customers are watching developments with keen interest; one local man, Kevin Barry, expressed concern that it might be “pushed up” and lose some of its local clientele.

“We’ll believe it if we see it!”

Focus on Energy

It is a welcome move to create renewable sources of energy in this country, plans to generate electricity from the world’s first series of tidal lagoons have been unveiled in the UK.

The six lagoons - four in Wales and one each in Somerset and Cumbria – will capture incoming and outgoing tides behind giant sea walls to make electricity which will be fed into the grid.

The £1bn Swansea scheme, said to be able to produce energy for 155,000 homes, is already in the planning system.

The hope is that tidal power round our coast will produce huge amounts of low-cost, low carbon energy – though anglers worry about endangering fish stocks if fish are chopped up by the turbines.

The structures have strong aesthetic appeal (unlike the wind turbines?) were they perhaps created by the sculptor Maggie Hamblin, whose sea shell adorns the shingle at Aldeburgh in Suffolk?

Friends of Mycenae Gardens

There was excellent attendance at the AGM of the Friends of Mycenae Gardens on March 24th. Members enjoyed an impressive presentation by Tim Hoe describing the Spring Planting event which took place earlier in the month in a glade on the west side of the Gardens.

In addition to ‘before’ and ‘after’ scenes, Tim showed colourful photos of the new shrubs (Euclider rose, wayfaring tree, dogwood, spindletree and sweet box). These native plants are beneficial to insects and birds, as well as beautiful.

Snowdrops and bluebells have also been planted and further plantings of bulbs and woodland plants will take place soon.

In a wide ranging report, Eileen Bell, the Chair of the Friends of Mycenae Gardens Committee, said that the Royal Borough of Greenwich, who own the Gardens and Dell, have responded favourably to the draft Management Plan prepared by the Friends. Greenwich Parks Department had commenting particularly on its quality and content.

The Plan gives the fascinating history of the Gardens as well as plans for future maintenance and responsibilities.

What is in the dell?

This is a question being asked by Friends of Mycenae Gardens about the wild area north of Mycenae Gardens, and the answer is beginning to emerge thanks to local ornithologist Joe Beale. At the AGM, the Department had commenting particularly on its quality and content.

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