



Westcombe NEWS

Est. 1973 Free to 3800 homes, and in libraries & some shops November 2012 Issue 9

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

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

Greenwich Market is saved!

By WN reporter

In a dramatic move, Greenwich Hospital, the navy's oldest charity, and landlords of Greenwich market, have dropped the controversial plans to develop the market by building a new 100-room boutique hotel.

Greenwich Hospital's change of heart was announced in the chapel of the Old Royal Naval College by Resources Director Edward Dolby, who outlined new plans for refurbishing the market, to enhance its distinctive character.

As the applicant conceded in his opening statement, the hotel scheme was strongly opposed by local residents, and many local traders. It was also opposed by some amenity societies, including the Westcombe Society (although it did get support from the Greenwich Society and local MP Nick Raynsford.)

However, even the councillors (both Tory and Labour) on Greenwich Council's planning board unanimously turned it down, despite the advice from an officer to accept the planning application.

In what many saw as an affront to local democracy, the Council's decision was in turn overruled by Communities Secretary Eric Pickles on the recommendation of a planning inspector.

Chair of the Planning Committee Cllr

Ray Walker responded at the time: "It is particularly unfortunate that the application will permit the Greenwich Hospital Estate to demolish the heart of Greenwich Town Centre just as we have shown off all its charms to the millions of visitors in 2012."

The plans for the new hotel would have required a radical revamp of Greenwich's historic covered market and would (in the words of a spokesman for the Westcombe Society) have caused "serious damage to the character of the conservation area, the Word Heritage site, and the wider local area."

One of the attractions of the market is the wide variety of ethnic crafts and foods available, which add much to the character and appeal of Greenwich town.

It was argued by opponents of the scheme that a boutique hotel, would lead to pressure to 'sanitize' the area and turn it into a cliched shopping mall, occupied by chain stores – the usual suspects that tend to dominate our high streets.

It was also argued that the sheer size of the plans would seriously mar the view of the historic town centre of Greenwich from the very heart of the Old Royal Naval College site. Observers now hope that the opportunity will be taken to utilize Joseph Kay's original roof design of the market.

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Blackheath: fireworks for local residents

This very popular event will take place at 8.00 pm on 3rd November. As usual there will be road closures on and around the heath. Those affecting Westcombe residents are mainly the roads between Westcombe Park Road and the Heath. (Residents in the affected area will receive a letter from Lewisham Council explaining the closures and methods of access). But they may also be affected by closure of Prince Charles Road south of the A2 roundabout from noon till 9.30pm.

As a result of the closures there will be a number of Bus diversions the first being for the 53, 202, 380 & 386 services which

use Prince Charles Road. This road will be closed from noon and the buses diverted via the Sun in the Sands roundabout and Prince of Wales Road until 6.00pm.

From 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm the above diversion will change, and buses 53, 89, and 108 will also be diverted as routes across the heath will be closed. 386 buses will terminate at Lewisham bus station, avoiding Blackheath and Blackheath Village altogether.

For further information please see <http://westcombe.blogspot.com> blog. The number on the night is 07834 145081.

Plans for police station SARAH WINTERBOTTOM

Plans to turn the sleepy looking, old Victorian police station on Combedale Road, an ex-high security overnight detention centre, into luxury apartments with off-street parking are now being considered by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. In a planning application submitted by a Dulwich based firm, the 0.4 acre site will be turned into nine flats.

While the Westcombe Society Planning and Environment Committee (WSPEC) has recommended a reduction in the density of accommodation, residents may be pleased to learn that the exterior of the handsome red-brick building is set to remain intact.

The building – deemed 'surplus to operational requirements' and costly to maintain by the Met. – was sold in 2011.

Originally the site of the Combe Farm (demolished in 1900), the property still includes an original wall from the farm buildings. Other than that there is nothing left of the location's agricultural past apart from a single remaining outbuilding nestled between Westerdale Road and the Police Station. It is hard to believe that in 1867 there were corn fields going all the way up the hill

According to the book *Combe Farm, Greenwich* by Barbara Ludlow and Sally Jenkinson, a much earlier Combe Farm, probably sited where the A102 is now, was purchased by Henry VIII to house his mistress, Anne Boleyn, within easy reach of, but at a discreet distance from, Greenwich Palace.

More scams circulating

Two local residents (names withheld to reduce the risk of them receiving begging letters!) have received notification from China that they stand to gain some five million US dollars.

The letter, supposedly from an official in the Shenzhen Development Bank in China, claims that someone had had an accident in China. Dying intestate, the money he invested with the bank could go to the state unless the local resident who shares the name of the deceased comes forward to claim the money.

The lucky local resident would split the wonga (Romany for "money") fifty-fifty with the bank employee, who claims he has access to the deceased's file. Don't get sucked in – you have been warned!

Meanwhile elderly people are being targeted by fraudsters who try to persuade their victims to buy high-performing "carbon credits" – apparently these are outside the remit of the Financial Services Authority regulators. Naturally, all the money disappears. The moral: never do deals on the phone – and even when the deal is in writing, always consult an advisor.

Yet another scam: if someone rings to say that your credit or debit card needs replacing because of fraudulent transactions, smell a rat – especially if they then ask for your pin number so a courier can come and pick up your old card. If it smells like a rat, it IS one.

The numbers to ring are either 101 – or the ActionFraud hotline 0300 123 2040.

NEWS BRIEFS

Bicycle thieves

The SNT (Safer Neighbourhood Team) report a sharp increase in the theft of cycles so make sure sheds and garages are properly secured and always lock your cycle when left elsewhere.

You can mark it with an ultra violet pen and you should also record the frame number on <http://www.immobilise.com/>. This site can also be used for recording the details of other items such as mobile phones and electrical equipment. If stolen, items that are recovered are checked against the site and you may be lucky!

Congratulations, Jan

The Westcombe Society's Hon. Sec. is having a Solo Exhibition of her still life paintings at the Conservatoire in Blackheath from 24th November until Friday 7th December.

Vandals

The Westcombe Society has active anti-graffiti volunteers who regularly take action against graffiti in the neighbourhood. Local residents have reported their repugnance at gross acts of vandalism directed at the telephone box on the corner of Wyndcliff Road and Charlton Road. Those with information should dial the police on the non-emergency line 101.

Well done John Roan

John Roan's involvement in the Olympics was not confined to Ella Statham carrying the torch. The school also provided a group of volunteers to act as "Ambassadors" in Spitalfields market, helping tourists to find their way around. The school also took part in the Paralympic closing ceremony – which involved auditions, and months of rehearsal. The Olympics had an enthusiastic write-up in *The John Roan News*

The Old District Hospital site

Construction of what we can now call the Greenwich Centre facility will be complete by the end of 2014. Piling has been completed, and excavation of the basement of the two community pools and gymnasium facility, and other construction works, started in October.

Age Exchange Reopens

Age Exchange in Blackheath Village will reopen to the public on 19th November, when all will be able to admire the new facilities. Chief Executive Craig Muir said: "We still need volunteers for this vibrant new community centre. We hope to tap into the new volunteering spirit generated by the Olympics." Please contact Suzanne Lockett on 8318 9105 for details.

COMMUNITY NEWS

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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<http://westcombe.gold.ac.uk>

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<http://westcombe.gold.ac.uk/westnews.html>
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<http://westcombe.blogspot.com>

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The Biggest Coffee Morning in the world



PHOTO: Neville Grant

It's early on, and delicious cakes and sandwiches have been piled up ready to be sold. They soon went like, well, yes, like hot cakes!

On the last Saturday of September, members of the Westcombe Society held a Coffee Morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support (part of their annual Biggest Coffee Morning in the World). The event raised an impressive £770, and our thanks go to all who made cakes and sandwiches, served the refreshments and washed up on the day, provided raffle prizes – and last but definitely not least those who supported us on the day, including the Mayor of Greenwich Cllr David Grant. Of the total, £181 was raised

by the raffle, for which the Vanbrugh Community Association and the Westcombe Society provided the major prizes of £50 cash and a £50 Voucher for Blackheath Cooks. The winners (Green 680 and Blue 612) have claimed. **Marilyn Little adds:** A big cheer for JJ, Maureen, Patricia and Maggie for organising and running the Quiz on 20th October. A very enjoyable evening was had by all and initial estimates are that around £200 was raised to help with the bird boxes for Greenwich and Bexley Hospice.

Letters

Letters to the editor may be edited through lack of space. Any views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the Westcombe Society or the *WN*.

From: Robert Owens Beaconsfield Road
 The Cutty Sark restoration has been a great disappointment because in my view the ship has taken second place to what became an over-designed and over-engineered building project.

Instead of the ship's hull being more visible it is now less so as a result of the crude and ugly glazed skirt which surrounds it which, incidentally, bears no relationship to the artist's impressions published beforehand.

The fact that the underside of the hull is now visible is no consolation for the sacrifices made to achieve this, the other major one being the huge steel and glass tower adjacent to the ship which has destroyed the historic view from King William Walk to the river.

It is claimed that this is necessary to provide disabled lift access to the ship though its primary purpose is to house ventilation plant for the enclosed space under the ship. If you want to see how small and unobtrusive a lift tower can be, look at the one in the internal courtyard of the Royal Academy!

The reasoning behind raising the ship was to take the weight off the keel but the reality is that it need only have been raised a few inches to achieve this. It is now in a completely unnatural relationship to the quay side and does not sit comfortably within the townscape of Greenwich as it did before.

Raising the ship by 3 metres has also involved a large amount of modern steelwork being installed within the hull which inevitably affects its historic integrity.

Compromise after compromise has been made in order to raise the ship so that people can see the underside of the hull. Is that really what they want to see?

Finally, I believe that there are considerable risks in enclosing part of the ship's hull whilst leaving the upper part exposed to the elements.

The ship's hull is primarily timber which expands and contracts with temperature and moisture and therefore the lower part which is in a controlled environment will be stable whilst the upper part which will bear the full brunt of weather extremes will inevitably move with changing weather conditions.

This will induce stresses along the line where the glazed enclosure stops which could over time tend to pull the hull apart. I asked the Cutty Sark Trust what measures had been taken to deal with this and they replied saying none as their design team did not think it would be a problem! Let's hope they are right!

From: Toni Hale Charlton
 We wanted to know if the *WN* would be able to cover a story for us. We are holding a memorial service for the civilians that died in WWII in 1944 in Sunfields Place.

We believe that there were 19 people killed here – the only three survivors later died in hospital.

The Council are providing us with a tree to plant in their honour and we intend to hold the service on the anniversary of their death on the Friday 30th November 2012 (time yet to be announced)). We are also hoping that the Minister in Sunfields Church will perform the ceremony. We have also commissioned their names to be carved in wood.

What we would like to ask is if there are any living relatives who would like to attend the service – we can provide the names of the deceased. It seems putting the information in all newspapers seems the best way to reach people. I do hope you can help.

Please contact **Toni Hale, Campaign Manager CAPP Consultancy. Mobile: 07786895799 Email: CAPPConsultancy@live.co.uk**

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PHOTO: Claire Smith

No, Caroline is not offering the Mayor of Greenwich, Cll David Grant, a cream cracker. It's the Grand Draw, of course!

New proposals on boundaries

Richard Baglin, the chairman of the Greenwich Society, writes:

It is about a year ago that we put in our submission, along with others, arguing that Greenwich should not be split into two constituencies with Greenwich West and Blackheath going into "Deptford and Greenwich" and East Greenwich going into Woolwich.

Revised proposals have now been published and the changes are significant.

The Commissioners have been persuaded of the case not to split Greenwich town although they have not accepted the Nick Raynsford alternative.

Instead they have made a radical revision with East Greenwich (Peninsular ward), West Greenwich, Westcombe, Blackheath all going into a new constituency called Greenwich and Lewisham Central including Lee Green Catford and central Lewisham.

It is quite a long thin north/south wedge. No doubt it will cause local political ructions although it does solve the big issue for us, not splitting up Greenwich.

There is now a short consultation until 12th December but I imagine that no further changes will be made. Whether or not the changes go through parliament in 2013 is of course up in the air. Still it is nice to think that we played a part in getting one important change accepted.

For more details, visit:
<http://www.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

Who's for tennis?

New tennis facilities including 4 adult courts and 4 mini tennis courts were opened in Hornfair Park in October.

The tennis scheme has been funded through the Royal Greenwich Olympic Playground to Podium Legacy fund (£96k) plus the Lawn Tennis Association (£106k) and Mayor of London (£20K).

Shooters Hill Tennis Club and Greenwich City Tennis Club will run a wide range of tennis courses and tennis exercise classes at the site. The courts will also be available for general public use.

Hot Desk Available In Blackheath Village

Serviced office in the centre of Blackheath Village with internet, 24 hour access and a lovely location. Fabulous views of the Heath and Canary Wharf.
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SE Trains: All change . . .

The Department for Transport (DfT) – still smarting over the recent west coast mainline franchise debacle – is due to award the new franchise for South East Trains at the end of 2013.

As part of this process public opinion has been actively sought, both from passengers and stakeholders, one of whom is the Westcombe Society.

According to the DfT's original press release, these opinions will help 'shape' the final spec against which interested applicants will be asked to bid.

Those shortlisted will then be invited to tender, with the final decision due to be announced at the end of next year, with the new contract set to start in April 2014.

Perhaps the most important question for passengers is: how will this affect my journey to and from London? The answer is, no matter which company is awarded the franchise, all our journeys are likely to be extensively disrupted due to the on-going major redevelopment of London Bridge station as well as the realisation of the Crossrail and Thameslink multi-million pound projects.

Whether you are looking to get off at London Bridge, or maybe catch a train to

Gatwick for your holiday, the implications of the London Bridge redevelopment project are significant for those using the Greenwich line.

Those who use the overland to get into town should note that Charing Cross trains will not stop at London Bridge in 2015/16; and in 2017/18, it will be the turn of Cannon Street trains to pass through without stopping. And once London Bridge station is completed, there will be no direct train services to Charing Cross at any time of day.

Since becoming aware of the full implications of the London Bridge project earlier this summer, the Westcombe Society's Planning and Environment Committee (WSPEC), in conjunction with the Greenwich Society, has taken steps to make sure local rail users' views are heard by helping in the establishment of the Greenwich Line Rail Users' Group (based on the Charlton Rail Users' Group experiences).

If you're interested in finding out more or want to make sure your views are heard, please contact WSPEC on westpes@gmail.com or call chairman Dick Allard on 8858 7305

Investors conned by wine merchant

A local man has been jailed for three years for selling phony wine investments. Keith Milton, 42, a former wine merchant who lived in Mycenae Road, was sentenced after a trial at the Old Bailey.

Milton befriended his victims, and offered them the chance to invest in wines from the Bordeaux and Burgundy regions of France.

The investors were told that the wine was being held in a bonded warehouse, and that it would be sold on their behalf after they accrued in value.

The trouble was, the wines simply did not exist.

Twenty investors were defrauded of some £760,000. In 2009, they began to grow impatient at the delay, and some of them demanded to see the wine they had bought. Milton confessed his crime to his wife – and fled the country.

DC Elliot Toms, of the Met's Fraud Squad, said: "Here is a man whose greed saw him trick supposed friends out of thousands of pounds, and whose cowardice saw him flee when confronted by them."

Milton's method was a classic example of how investment fraud is carried out.

"He had a company name, he used his knowledge of the product he peddled and he seemed an amiable, trustworthy person.

"But this was all a ruse to part unsuspecting people from their money. His sentence is well deserved. Unfortunately he is not the only person running a scam like this, and I urge anyone thinking of investing to seek independent legal advice before committing themselves."

Milton pleaded guilty to one count of fraud by false representation and one count of deception, and was sentenced to three years in jail.

Attention all readers!

CHRIS GODWIN

Have you discovered the Oxfam bookshop in Greenwich yet?

The shop opened just under a year ago, but it seems that many people are not yet aware of its existence. It is at 2 College Approach, next to the Spanish Galleon pub in the centre of Greenwich.

This should be an excellent position, but because of crossing points the shop is less visible than it should be.

It is a bright and friendly shop, very well stocked with good-quality books,



DVDs and music of all kinds (including records for your treasured turntable); there is an excellent selection of modern fiction for all age groups at very fair prices, as well as classics, lots of non-fiction and rarer books. Donations of books in good condition are also very much appreciated.

Foot tunnel fiasco

Serious questions are being asked about the way the Greenwich and Woolwich Tunnel projects have been handled.

The council was given £11 million to refurbish the tunnels. However, the three contractors hired to do the job were sacked by the Council last December, and the Council is now taking legal action to recover funds from them.

Work on the tunnels began in 2010, and they still remain an eye (and a smell) sore. The lifts (which are unmanned) have repeatedly broken down, and there have

been many negative comments from the public about cleanliness, security – and strange smells.

The smells may not be unconnected by the fact that the Greenwich foot tunnel with its (off-white) tiling looks like the longest public loo in Europe.

The Council has now organized a review of the project before new contracts are awarded. Answering a question by Cllr John Fahy, Chief executive Mary Ney assured him that the council's role in the fiasco will be thoroughly examined.

New vision for Greenwich GEOFF GARVEY

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is leading the way in a London-wide initiative to win better services for people with sight loss.

Supported by the sight loss charity, Thomas Pocklington Trust, Greenwich organisations have worked together to develop a Local Vision Strategy – helping the local authority, NHS and private and voluntary sectors to meet local needs.

The Greenwich scheme is the first in what will be a London-wide series and it provides a model for schemes in other London Boroughs to follow.

"The Local Vision Strategy draws together the needs and wants of local people with sight loss and delivers those insights directly to the people who shape our services," said Colin Brown, Chief Executive of the sight loss group Blind Independence Greenwich (B.I.G).

B.I.G., the charity that the Westcombe Society supported last year in its fund-raising activities, is one of three local societies leading the scheme, including the Royal London Society of Blind People (RLSB) and RNIB. Around 5700 people in Greenwich are estimated to have some level of vision impairment. Across the UK the number of people with serious sight loss is estimated at 2 million; but this figure is expected to double by 2050.

STOP PRESS:

Colin Brown adds: Many thanks to all who attended and donated to the Clare Langan Concert in Stone House, Lewisham. (Thanks for your very generous hospitality, Jonathan and Yvonne!) What a night it turned out to be! Clare and her accompanist Maria King gave a stunning performance with a very comprehensive repertoire of both classical and popular music. A total of £2000 was raised for B.I.G.

Contact: Colin Brown on 020 8853 2474 or colin@blindindependencgreenwich.org.uk

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The Blackheath Society is celebrating their 75th anniversary with a Supper in Blackheath Halls on Friday 30th November.

The event starts at 7.00pm with a complimentary glass of fizz, thereafter a pay bar. The Tallis Choir will provide music and verse during the evening, with a light supper at 8pm. Tickets are £30 or £27.50 for a full table of 10.

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FEATURES

Don't forget!
The Dickensian Christmas Bazaar Sat November 17th
at Blackheath High School for Girls

OneSpace opens in Kidbrooke Village

MARTHA OAKES

RIGHT: Margaret & Barry Mizen and Rev Margaret Cave celebrate the opening



PHOTO: Kim Hitch

The sun shone at the opening on the 7th October of OneSpace, the new youth and community centre in Kidbrooke village, which was announced in last month's *WN*. The event was really well attended by residents old and new, young and old, and other friends and supporters. Giving opening good wishes were The Right Reverend Dr Michael Igrave, the Bishop of Woolwich, Councillor David Grant, Mayor of Greenwich, Clive Efford MP and John Anderson, Chair of Berkeley Homes (Urban Renaissance). There was a host of free village fete activities, and the opening events culminated in the building being wrapped up in purple before the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon followed by a cake for the centre's birth day.

Tasty refreshments were on hand from The Café of Good Hope@OneSpace, the second community café to be set up by the Jimmy Mizen Foundation. Jimmy Mizen's parents, Margaret and Barry, also spoke at the opening, saying that Jimmy would have been glad to see the opening of OneSpace. The day was led by Rev. Margaret Cave, Director of OneSpace and Chaplain of Kidbrooke Village.

The worst journey in the world

Winston Churchill called it "the worst journey in the world". During World War II there were 42 eastbound convoys taking supplies for the Soviet military. Conditions for these brave men were appalling – even the walls of the cabins were covered in two inches of ice – and the chances of death high.

In all, 3000 personnel lost their lives, over half from merchant ships. For many years survivors of the convoys lobbied British governments to issue a special Arctic Medal to mark their service. Their

plea has fallen on deaf ears, on the grounds that The Atlantic Star Medal covered their service. Only some 200 surviving veterans remain. David Cameron ordered a review into the issue last year, but MoD rules say that medals should not be awarded more than five years after a campaign.

To mark the 70th anniversary of the first Allied convoy to Russia, the National Maritime Museum has put on a display called "Arctic Convoy". Admission free. REMEMBRANCE DAY is on Sunday November 11th.

Trinity Laban's free concerts

We are very lucky to have so much good music on our doorstep - and tuning in need not break the bank! A quick look at Trinity Laban's calendar of events tells you all you need to know about these concerts.

Examples of free events include:

Fri 2nd Nov Postgraduate recitals at the Old Royal Naval College Chapel 3.0 pm

Sat 3rd Nov. Junior Trinity Open Day King Charles Court (Free, but prior registration required) from 10.00 am

Tue 6th Nov Wind ensemble ORNC Chapel 1.05 pm

Tues 13 Nov Guitar Department ORCN Chapel 1.05 pm

Tues 13th Nov. John Longmire Competition for solo piano King Charles Court 6.00 pm

Wed 14th Nov Undergraduate Choir ORNC Chapel 6.00 pm

Thurs 15th Nov Keats String Quartet St Alfege Church 1.10 pm

... and many more beside!

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Ghosts and Chilling Tales of Old Greenwich

A Special Halloween Tour led by the Greenwich Tour Guides Association

Saturday 3rd November
Other dates available for Group Bookings
Join us if you dare on this special tour to discover the darker side to the history of Greenwich. Hear tales of Ghosts, Murders and Sinister Events.

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Government corruption, media intrusion, wholesale privatisation, royal scandals, rampant personal debt – no, it's not the Daily Mail: welcome to *Utopia (Limited)*.

Ruthlessly lampooning cultural imperialism and Victorian values, Gilbert and Sullivan's last great political satire follows the laid-back inhabitants of a seemingly idyllic South Sea island as they willingly undergo Anglicisation. But a government of English technocrats soon provokes rioting in the streets....

The Centenary Company returns to Greenwich Theatre for a seventh year to present this unnervingly prescient musical comedy. It's sure to bring a smile to your stiff upper lip!

Directed by Jerry Pinel, with Elinor Corp as Music Director, this is the same creative team responsible for a number of inventive stagings of Gilbert and Sullivan operas at Greenwich.

Theatre-goers can expect a treat: past shows such as (*Patience*, 2010); *Ruddigore* (2011) received rave reviews.

Formed in 1995, the Centenary Company is a Greenwich-based community group specialising in the shows of Gilbert and Sullivan. Following a long association with Blackheath Halls, the Company has presented annual productions at Greenwich Theatre since 2006



PHOTO: Martin Vickers

With a 30-strong cast and a 13-piece live orchestra, *Utopia* reunites the creative team – director Jerry Pinel and music director Elinor Corp – behind last year's hit production of *Ruddigore*.

When and where is it on?

Nov. 7th - 10th. *Utopia (Limited)* (fully staged with 13 piece orchestra) Wed. – Fri. 7.30pm; Sat. 6.45pm Sat. matinee: 1.45pm
Greenwich Theatre, Crooms Hill, Greenwich, SE10 8ES Tickets: £13, £15.50, £18.50 (concessions £2.50 off top price); Sat. matinee family ticket: £48 Box office: 0208858 7755 www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk

'Nature ... rede in tooth and claw'

TESSA CROSS on Ashley Greaves' pictures "Cruel Nature" at the Paul McPherson Gallery

A rainy evening in October found my colleague and I hurrying through the back streets of Greenwich to the delightful Paul McPherson Gallery for the Private View of Ashley Greaves' latest solo exhibition, entitled 'Cruel Nature', a collection of somewhat challenging paintings.

We entered the gallery and went downstairs to the bar for a chat with the owner and some dutch courage.

Feeling thus emboldened, we went upstairs to confront the paintings and chat with the artist, Ashley Greaves.

He explained that he feels '...compelled to go down what some may say is the ugly path...' which leads him to ask more questions about prescribed ideas of beauty, happiness and gratification, thus inviting viewers to re-evaluate what they are trying to achieve in their lives and to question whether they are searching in all the wrong places.

Ashley asserted that '...all art arises from error...' and he uses the grotesque nature of his figures and motifs to acknowledge this. He said the challenge is in knowing how to exploit it. Far from



learning from his mistakes, he wants to create more and then recognise what is insightful. (Thus echoing the views of Dr Julian Edge who defines "mistakes" as "learning steps".) As the gallery began to fill up, we went out into the rain once more, feeling that we had plenty of food for thought. Missed it? Then why not go to see the Blackheath Art Society exhibition which runs from 29th October - 10th Nov. at the Gallery at 77 Lassell Street.

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WHAT'S ON

Don't forget!
The Dickensian Christmas Bazaar
Saturday November 17th
at Blackheath High School for Girls

ARTS

BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY, St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath 4th Thursday of every month, 2.00 for 2.30. Next meeting: 22nd Nov. Bertie Pearce on Now you see it, now you don't: the Art of Visual Deception, Optical Illusion, Camouflage, and Trompe l'Oeil Non-members £5 on the door. See www.artsinblackheath.org.uk or ring 83187550

GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich NEXT LECTURE: Monday 12th Nov. "Great East India Company Adventure" by Gerald Davison 020 8852 7873. Non-members £8.00

BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY Exhibition of their work at the Paul McPherson Gallery Lassell Street Greenwich SE10 9PJ Tel. 0208 269 2990. From 29th October- 9th. November Open: Mon 12-5 pm, Tues-Fri 11-5 pm. Sat 10-2.30 pm. Sun Closed. www.paulmcphersongallery.com

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COMMUNITY

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
 in aid of Save the Children
 at the Old Royal Naval College Chapel
 Tickets £20, £18, & £15 from the Box office
 Blackheath Halls 8463 0100 (Some tickets may be available on the door - cash or cheque only)

THE FRIENDS OF AGE EXCHANGE
 Sat. 19th Nov. 7.00 pm at St Margaret's Church, Lee Terrace "RADIO TIMES - THE MUSICAL" Music from BBC radio of the 1950s with Simon & Jenny Standage, Simon & Emily Gunton and children from St Margaret's & All Saints Schools Tickets £10. from Victoria West Age Exchange victoria.west@age-exchange.org.uk 8318 9105

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EVENING
 Sat. 4th Nov. 10.45 am to 4.0 pm Greenwich Cystic Fibrosis Fundraising Group have teamed up with Epilepsy Research to hold a sale of donated gloves, handbags, belts, hats, costume jewellery, scarves etc in aid of both charities at the newly refurbished Age Exchange Centre, 11 Blackheath Village.

TEA DANCES
BLACKHEATH HALLS Great Hall Wed 28th Nov. 2.00 - 4.00 pm
BOROUGH HALL, Royal Hill 10th Nov & 15th Dec. 4.30 pm. £8.00 (£6.00 concs.) includes tea and cakes. Organised by Greenwich Dance

BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
 Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, SE3 7SE Nov 16 7.45 pm "Deterioration of Plastics in Art" Prof N Billingham University of Sussex Visitors are welcome, and requested to donate £ 3.00 to Society funds.

BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION Wed Nov 7th. 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm AGM & Focus on Human Trafficking Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, Blackheath Village All welcome. Info: Neville Grant 8858 8489

SECOND CHANCE CHOIR Thursday evenings during term time, in Blackheath. contact Margery Nzerem 0208 858 3544 gery@nzerem.bbmax.co.uk

LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Labour: Cllr. Alex Grant Tel. 8855 7292E-mail Alex.grant@greenwich.gov.uk **Surgeries:** 1st. Friday of each month, 7.00 - 8.00 pm, Mycenae House; 3rd. Saturday of each month, 3.30-4.30 pm, St James Church Hall, Kidbrooke Park Rd.

Conservative: Cllr. Geoff Brighty Tel. 8921 5663 (Town Hall) or 8858 9731 (Home) geoffrey.brighty@greenwich.gov.uk
 Cllr. Alex Wilson Tel. 07783 611607 Email: alex.wilson@greenwich.gov.uk **Surgery:** 1st Monday of the month 6 - 7.00 pm Blackheath Library, Old Dover Rd.

THEATRE & OPERA

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 Nov 1st - 3rd Alan Ayckbourn's **PRIVATE FEARS IN PUBLIC PLACES** at Alexandra Hall, Bramshot Avenue 7.30pm & £8. (concs £7)

MUSIC

BLACKHEATH CHOIR AND ST PAUL'S SINFONIA St Margaret's Church, Brandran Rd, Sunday 9 December 7.30pm
Corelli: Christmas Concerto
Respighi: Lauda per la nativita del Signore
Bach: Magnificat (with Christmas movements)
 Tickets £12 from choir members, from 020 8300 1180 or email tickets@blackheathchoir.org or at the door.

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 18th & 25th Nov 11.00am Parish Communion with Sunday Special for children age 3 and up.



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FEATURES

Hanging Hooke

MARY SPENCE

Robert Hooke was a scientist, architect, and engineer. He was the first curator of the Royal Society and the surveyor who rebuilt London with his friend Christopher Wren. In Greenwich he and Wren established the Royal Observatory and Hooke also designed a gazebo on Crooms Hill.

Despite his vast array of achievements, he has had little place in history. Since the anniversary of his death in 2003 people have been wondering why. Was it Hooke's tendency to be excited by the new and to move from project to project rather than developing a specialist area of work? Was it a deliberate act of his enemies, most particularly Isaac Newton who was ruthless in holding his own place in the scientific world? Was it because Hooke, a man of humble origins, was an employee in a world of gentleman scientists?

Or perhaps it was it Hooke's own personality, his arrogance and paranoia finally driving away his allies and ruining his credibility? The latest addition to this debate was Robert Hooke Day presented by Greenwich Theatre. The day consisted of a guided walk, the play *Hanging Hooke*, and a discussion between the play's author Siobhan Nicholas and Rebekah Higgitt from the Royal Observatory. *Hanging Hooke* chronicles Hooke's rivalry with



PHOTO: Mary Spence

Newton, his destructive self medication, his relations with his family. It also demonstrated his quicksilver mind and boundless enthusiasm and excitement with knowledge. The discussion focused on how he came to be lost to history.

Though the play is dark in places there is a real life happy ending. In 2006 a folio of Hooke's notes was discovered in a cupboard in Hampshire and put to auction. Despite international interest (there were rumours of the long pockets of Bill Gates being involved) a group led by the Royal Society secured the papers.

They can now be seen on the Royal Society website. *Hooke is home at last!*

New music centre opens

ANNE ROBBINS



If, as you walk past the old cinema at the bottom of Vanbrugh Hill, you faintly hear classical music, don't think that you are imagining it. Louisa Stonehill and Nicholas Burns have recently set up a wonderful, intimate studio and recital space in a disused shop and installed a glistening piano. It's a good example of the phenomenon of artists making use of unusual spaces.

Louisa and Nick arrived in Greenwich as post-graduate students at Trinity. Now married, they have lived in the Westcombe Park area for several years. She plays the violin; he's the pianist. They play together as the Steinberg Duo, as well as in other ensembles. And both give lessons to child and adult learners at all grades. But they were feeling the pressure of trying to practice on different instruments in one flat, when they realised that the empty shop was a great opportunity.

The space itself is small: there's room for an audience of around 20. Nick says, 'you can feel every note vibrating.' Both love the intensity this lends the music, and the fact that an audience can see how much the music affects the players, emotionally.

Studio concerts

For their first studio concert, the Duo played a Beethoven Sonata for piano and violin, and a violin sonata by Strauss. It was an ideal test run for the first of a series of concerts they are playing in central London, highlighting the way composers build on earlier works. More studio concerts are planned, and details of these and their other recitals are on their website.

Equally, the studio is a well-proportioned practice space for other chamber

music groups, such as the Academy of St Martins in the Fields. Nick and Louisa plan to let it hourly or daily, and can install basic recording equipment which won't give professional results, but 'you would be amazed how much musicians learn from hearing themselves in playback.'

Louisa says the studio is also wonderful for teaching as it provides 'a more resonant space than their own home.' They are both enthusiastic teachers, and they say that people can learn to play music at any age – as long as they practice regularly!

A community of learners

Nick and Louisa aim to build a community of learners who will encourage each other as they all improve. Already, they hold twice-yearly pupils' concerts at St Alfege's Church in Greenwich, with the next planned for November.

Their sense of belonging within a community really makes the studio stand out, both for concerts and for learning. They say, 'We love taking what we do into this odd space, a shop, on a suburban street. But people get to live with the music, rather than having to journey to it.'

The next Studio Concert by the Steinberg Duo is Sunday, November 18, with music by Brahms and Schumann. As space is limited, you should book in advance. Tickets are around £10.

The Steinberg School of Music Pupils' Concert will be on Sunday, November 25. See the website: www.steinbergduo.com



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Fund-raiser for Demelza

Local musician Ben Golding has been organising Open mic/ music events in Greenwich for several years as well as teaching/writing/recording music in the area.

Along with some of the great musicians who play at the open mic nights, Ben has organized a fund raising music event/gig on Saturday November the 10th with The Demelza House Charity.

The show will be in Oliver's Music Bar in Nevada St, Greenwich and will feature acoustic music from some fantastic musicians. There will also be some great CD's on sale as well! All money raised from the night will go to Demelza.



The Demelza House Charity Music Night: Saturday 10th November. 8.00 pm to 11.00 pm at Oliver's Music Bar at number 9 Nevada St, Greenwich, SE10 9JN
Featuring great music and entertainment from Ben Golding, Carlos and the Jackals, James Wills, Nicola Naylor, Gus Glen and Naceur Hammami PLUS guests.
Admission just £3.00..... CD's available for sale on the night !!

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Remembering Prince Henry

November marks the 400th anniversary of the death of Henry Frederick Stuart, Prince of Wales, eldest son of King James I (James VI of Scotland) and Anne of Denmark.

Born in Stirling Castle in 1594, the prince moved to England after James became King of England in 1603.

Prince Henry was popular and witty, with an outgoing personality and a keen interest in sport. He was outstanding in maths and science, and was interested in naval and national issues. He was a great admirer of Sir Walter Raleigh.

The prince spent much of his time in Greenwich, where his father had the Queen's House built for his wife.

Many people believe that he would have become an

excellent king. Sadly he died of typhus in November 1612, aged eighteen.

One can only speculate how history might have changed if he had ascended the throne instead of Charles I. Might our country have been spared the horrors of the Civil War?

Prince Henry's name lives on in Charlton, where a road is named after him.

On Friday 16th Nov. at 1.00 pm Trinity Laban are putting on a concert at Charlton House: its title is Weep Britons Weep.

This is a concert of English music for voices marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Prince Henry.



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John Payne

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ENVIRONMENT



Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Library on the lower ground floor of the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington St. They may also be viewed on www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning

MAGGIE JONES on the WESTCOMBE SOCIETY's Charity of the Year

Woodlands Farm

... and invites you to visit their stall at the Christmas Bazaar!



Bird-watching ...



Mother & calf doing well

Grateful thanks to the Westcombe Society for choosing Woodlands Farm Trust as their charity of the year. It's great to be recognised by another local community organisation.

We are always surprised when local people turn up and tell us that they didn't know we existed! But the farm has 'always' been there. After clearance of the woodlands a couple of hundred years ago, it was a privately owned farm; later, it was bought by the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society in about 1920, used for over 60 years and then left derelict. After the defeat of the East London River Crossing plan, the Woodlands Farm Trust gained charitable status, lottery funding, and was able to take over as leaseholders in 1997.

Woodlands Farm is a fragment of London's old countryside and offers a unique opportunity to conserve heritage landscape and promote biodiversity. It is a conservation and development project. In practice this means fields free of pesticides, fertilised by our small flock of about 60 sheep and some rare breed cows, hedges maintained in traditional ways, volunteers gaining fantastic experiences they could never dream of otherwise, nearly 100 schools visiting each year, a lively toddler club, and families coming in just to visit or to one of our special open days.

And then there is our programme to monitor and improve biodiversity. This year we are fortunate to have a full time Wildlife Officer, funded by the Heritage Lottery. She does great work in training children and adults in the mysteries of ecological monitoring. She works alongside our Education Officer a post funded by the City Bridge Trust. This enables us to provide visits to local schools, and other clubs at a low price, giving children and

young people a countryside experience.

As for finance, well apart from grants (which we have to apply for annually, and which may not be renewed) we are basically self sufficient, receiving no grant from either of our boroughs. Volunteers work hard to make enough income from our hayfields, log sales, events, seasonal café, jam, honey and other home grown items to keep the place going. From all this we keep going and employ a farming professional, David Jones, to ensure that our stock is well looked after, our fields maintained properly, our volunteers keep to safe practices and our project is kept on course.

This is under the management of a membership-elected Board. At the moment we need a Treasurer to guide and advise. Our Treasurer would not need to be involved in day-to-day finance. Banking and recording is managed by our Finance Officer and Book-keeper.

So, if there is a professional out there who would like to find out more, please email woodlandsft@aol.com



Happiness is ... a fishing rod

Deadlock at Seren Park JULIAN BLANE

The 210 flats at Seren Park were sold on the basis that the developer would provide a path with direct access via a gate to Maze Hill Railway station platform.

A year before opening, the gate was padlocked by Network Rail and a large amount of money was requested from the developer before they would open the gate. The developer, who I understand may be in financial trouble has not been able to reach an agreement with network rail and the situation has reached a stalemate.

Legally the developer has met the requirement under Section 106 planning permission in providing the pathway from the development to the platform.

However, purchasers were promised in the advertisements that there would be direct access to the station. Some of the residents are elderly, and some are in wheelchairs, and therefore have mobility issues. They are growing increasingly frustrated at this situation.

In addition, residents at Tom Street Close are growing increasingly annoyed

with people cutting through past their apartments. They are insistent that Network Rail should open the gate as soon as possible. In February this year Network Rail announced they had come to an agreement and local MP Nick Raynsford made an announcement*: but unfortunately that has not come to fruition.

We had a small local campaign last December to publicise the matter but again we seem to have reached a roadblock.

Needless to say with the recent Paralympics being hosted in London we hope this can be a focus and I am engaging also with a local disabled group for support. <http://www.gad.org.uk/>

ED: One issue, we understand, is that SE Trains require an Oyster reader at the entrance to the station – and Oyster readers do not come in cheap. So, readers, do you have any suggestions on how this thorny issue can be resolved?

* <http://www.nickraynsford.org.uk/success-as-direct-access-to-maze-hill-station-finally-agreed>

John Roan Works

EMILY NORTON

The John Roan Re-development Working Party met at the beginning of October. Topics discussed included problems for residents living near the Westcombe Park Road site with regard to demolition, noise from the temporary generator, parking and landscaping.

Demolition on the Westcombe Park Road is now complete and the school thanked residents for their consideration during this difficult period when some residents had to suffer not only the noise but also considerable vibrations.

There is also a problem for some residents due to noise from a temporary generator. Noise will be monitored at the nearest residential properties and the school has undertaken to try to reduce further the use of electricity at night, as usage is directly related to noise. Planning permission has been granted for a new electricity sub-station which, it is hoped, will be up and running by Christmas.

Another problem is parking: as there is now much reduced on-site parking at the school, teachers, contractors, residents are all using limited parking. The school is consulting with the Royal Borough of Greenwich to try to seek a solution to this and to try to increase safety to pupils.

Meanwhile residents, teachers, contractors and parents are asked to take great care when driving near the site especially in Vanbrugh Park Road West where the entrance currently used by students is not protected by school zig-zag markings.

The Westcombe Society have asked the

school to consider replacing some of the trees lost on the Westcombe Park Road site with a feature tree on the forecourt which it is hoped would soften the lines of the new buildings and help them blend with the local environment in which trees are an important feature.

Residents have also been assured that the landscaping brief includes the whole school so areas that may now be unsightly should improve in the future.

Work is now in progress on the foundations for the new building on the site in Westcombe Park Road. Demolition work on the Maze Hill site will commence in January when the GCSE year groups move to temporary accommodation in Royal Hill. Year groups 7, 8 and 9 are already using the temporary buildings on the Westcombe Park Road site.

Finally, the working party agreed that the Royal Borough of Greenwich should be asked to consider rerouting the HGVs servicing the development site so that they do not use Vanbrugh Hill

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(See also <http://westcombe.blogspot.com/>)

13 GLENLUCE ROAD ref 12/2247/F
Construct 1-storey and 2-storey rear extensions with terraces on top; loft conversion with roof lights to front, rear and side; remove part of front garden wall and install hard standing.
14 GLENLUCE ROAD Flat 3: ref 12/2271/F
Replace two wooden windows to front
14 VANBRUGH HILL Flat 2 ref 12/2284/F
Install replacement timber windows

TREE WORKS

3 VANBRUGH PARK ROAD WEST ref 12/2486/TC
Fell ash tree in rear garden
45 WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD ref 12/2470/TC
Crown reduce by 30% robinia and prunus in front garden and sycamore in rear. Reduce 6 conifers by 2ft
71 WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD ref 12/2487/TC
Crown lift to 3-5m all trees and reduce back by up to 3m

Christopher's column

Faded glamour

I've written here before about our dank Autumns and Winters denying us those crisp frost-rimmed landscapes beloved of garden photographers.



But we can have a little of that, given that we grow the plants which leave substantial seedheads. Probably the best is *Phlomis russeliana* whose grey leaves hug the ground all year, with odd yellow flowers leaving a stem of seedheads which is hard to beat (and withstands much bad weather). A fashionable hybrid form 'Amazon' is more elegant but also leaves a good silhouette.

A few grasses stand winter really well – *Molinia 'Transparent'* seems delicate but keeps its shape – whereas grasses with fluffy heads become sodden straw (e.g. *Calamagrostis*).

Alliums crumble easily but the seedheads and dry stems of *crocosmia* (montbretia) and *agapanthus* usually last well. So do some asters and members of the sunflower family. If you have Chelsea chopped (nipped out growing tips), you will have sturdier stems, and it's often the

stem which fails not the seedheads.

The dependable *persicarias* flower for months, right up to the frosts (they turn mushy), and fit well amongst drying seedheads. Apart from *phlomis*, the most robust heads are fennels, teasles and some verbasicum (mulleins).

If you can grow it, the fluffy *agastache* lasts a long time, and so do seedheads of some scabious types (including *cephalaria* and *knautia*), till the birds get them. You might have some thistles still standing but you should have cut back cardoons and artichokes to ensure fresh new foliage in Autumn, lasting through to Spring.

If you are planning ahead, it's time to buy some cheap bare rooted shrubs to provide catkins in late Winter – hazels, birches, willows and alders – but also consider those which flower on bare wood before the leaves appear.

These include prunus varieties, cherries especially, and the good old forsythia (if you can bear it), both of which can be coaxed to flower in a vase if you cut them around January. I'm about to embark on a project to devise a Winter cutting garden, so I shall probably revisit this subject again early next year.

Christopher Raven



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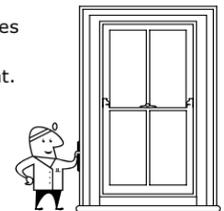
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