



# Westcombe NEWS

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October 2017 No. 8



Few stalls available for the Christmas Bazaar; please ring Marilyn on 020 8853 1312

## Funding crisis in our schools *WN* reporter

**L**ondon head teachers are grappling with a funding crisis that will damage the quality of education schools can provide, research commissioned by London Councils has revealed.

London Councils represents London's 32 councils and the City of London. It is a cross-party organisation that works on behalf of all of its member authorities regardless of political persuasion.

*Talking Heads*, a survey of nearly 400 London head teachers and senior school leaders conducted for London Councils by TES, The Education Company and Shift Learning, shows that increased costs due to a range of increasing pressures, such as growing pupil numbers, pensions and national insurance contributions and the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, are forcing head teachers to make some tough decisions to balance school budgets.

The *Talking Heads* report lays bare the negative impact of insufficient funding on teacher and teaching assistant numbers, curriculum options, learning resources such as IT equipment and textbooks, and the upkeep of school buildings.

70% of London school leaders who responded to the survey have already experienced budget cuts. Since 2015, £2.8 billion have been cut from school budgets.

The effects are country-wide. 38 out of 40 schools in Greenwich will lose money and resources. For example, the *WN* has learnt that John Roan School will lose over £472,000 by 2020; that means £451 per pupil; and quite possibly 8 teachers lost. \*

More than 80% believe that the quality of education will be harmed by further cuts, and pupil outcomes will be negatively affected. The TES research shows that:

- London head teachers rank managing budgets as the number one challenge
- 47% of secondary school head teachers in London have already reduced the breadth of their curriculum to deal with funding cuts.

- 70% of primary schools have already
- \* Figures from Andrew Baisley, SchoolCuts.org

reduced the number of teaching assistants.

- Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils are most likely to be affected by the cuts.
- 65% of London secondary schools are planning to cut teacher numbers.

In July, the Education Secretary Justine Greening fudged the numbers. She claimed there would be an 'additional' £1.3bn for schools over the next two years. But she raided this money from other parts of the education budget, including some from the Free Schools allocation.

But MPs on all sides of the house have doubts: the new funds simply do not make up for cuts already made. In addition, as if these problems weren't enough, there are now reports that there is a shortage of school places especially at secondary level.

A mass lobby of MPs by parents and teachers is planned for October 24th.

**NOTE FOR PARENTS: Secondary school applications in Greenwich close on 31st October 2017 – and primary school applications close on 15th January 2018.**

### CASE STUDY: IT

**IT equipment is becoming more and more important to staff and students, though schools are finding it difficult to find funding to invest in it. Front and back-end equipment is required to be up-to-date and capable of meeting the demands of both the curriculum and office requirements.**

**Recent curriculum reforms have placed an emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths.) with higher digital engagement expected of learners of all ages. While some schools have decidedly invested in new resources such as tablets, PCs and robotics equipment, many find the required budget for such investments to be unrealistic in the current climate. Some schools find it difficult to provide IT education of an adequate standard, and threatens to impact upon Ofsted ratings. Institutions already classed as Requires Improvement may find it more difficult to progress with these barriers in place.**



Yinka Shonibare's ship in a bottle is a scaled-down replica of Nelson's ship *HMS Victory*. First seen on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, in 2012 it was installed outside the Sammy Ofer wing of the National Maritime Museum after the public helped to raise £362,000. The ship's 37 large sails are made of richly patterned textiles commonly associated with African dress and symbolic of African identity and independence. The work reflects the legacy of British colonialism and its expansion in trade and empire, made possible by the freedom of the seas that Nelson's victory provided.

*Should Lord Nelson be removed from Trafalgar Square? See Letters, page 2.*

## Phone masts update

**Y**et another phone mast – in Bramshot Avenue (near the car pound) – has been applied for. Matt Pennycook MP reports: "Applications for phone masts are coming in thick and fast across the constituency (either as a result of upgrade work or because demand for 4G is increasing) and in planning terms it can be difficult to find strong grounds for refusal. ... I'm doing my best to represent the understandable concerns that residents have about masts going up near their homes."

Pippa Hack of the council has confirmed that none of the reported irregularities invalidate the permission for the Siebert Road mast. Marilyn Little has gone back to her expressing disappointment, and asking for confirmation that the land ownership issues are still under investigation.

Campaigners are still hoping that the land ownership question can quash the Siebert Road proposal. Rebecca Moore reports that, apparently, sharing the Bramshot Avenue mast is not an option.

## Become a Youth Councillor!

**D**on't miss out on your chance to be part of Greenwich Young People's Council.

If you're aged 11 to 18 years old (or up to 25 years old if you have a disability), this is an opportunity to make your voice heard and create positive change.

The Young People's Council creates an annual manifesto and action plan, holds events and consultations, and helps to run campaigns. The role also gives Youth Councillors a chance to meet new people, learn new skills and take part in regional and national activities.

Candidate nominations opened on 4th September and close at 5.00pm on 13th Oct. ahead of the election in November.

Cllr Chris Kirby said: "Becoming a Youth Councillor is a fantastic opportunity to get involved – running campaigns on the issues that matter to you, & organising events for young people to share their views. It also boosts your CV!"

Candidates can nominate themselves, and can choose whether they represent their school or their local area.

**To apply, download an application form from [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/gypc](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/gypc)**

## < < Newsbriefs > >

### Our Christmas Bazaar

The Westcombe Society's Christmas Bazaar is back at Blackheath High School for Girls again this year with some lovely craft stalls and our usual children's entertainment with Father Christmas, Punch and Judy, refreshments and a celebrity opening.

The Westcombe Society has chosen two local charities to support this year – MumsAid, and MEFA – Montessori Education For Autism.

**The Christmas Bazaar is on Sat. 25th November 11.30 to 4.00pm.**

### People

We are sorry to announce the death of Mary Greenhalgh, a past editor of the Westcombe News; and M.A. Qavi, past secretary of the Westcombe Society. (See pages 2 and 6.)

### Bid by Greenwich Park

The bid by Greenwich Park for £4.8 million in Lottery funding for improvements to the park, (phase 1) which was strongly supported by the Westcombe Society and other groups, has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The outcome is expected some time in December.

Fingers crossed.

### Controlled Parking Zone

Details of the proposed new CPZ scheme have been delivered to local residents. The plans can be viewed at drop-in sessions as follows:

\* Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road. Monday – Tuesday 2nd – 3rd Oct. 9.00am – 8.00pm

\* The Greenwich Centre Library Lambarde Square SE10 9HB Wednesday – Thursday. 4th – 5th Oct. 9.00am – 8.00pm.

Officers will be available to answer questions from 4.00 – 8.00pm on each of these days.

### St George's new kitchen

St George's new kitchen was officially launched on Sunday 10th September. The congregation warmly applauded the team of volunteers who had done the work, and in particular Doris who also gave substantial financial support.

### Well done, John Roan

John Roan School achieved its best ever exam results this year. In the A level and BTEch exams, 49% of the candidates achieved Grades A\* or B; and 93% were awarded a Distinction\* or a Distinction. The GCSE results were also up this year. Moreover, Key Stage 2 results were among the best in the country.

## The Westcombe Society

**The Chrysanthemum Tea for Senior Citizens is on Sat. 21st. Oct. 2.00pm to 4.00pm in Mycenae House**  
Invites have been sent out, but if you haven't had one or would like to come along for the first time, please contact Caroline Owens on 020 8853 0948.  
If you would like to make cakes for our guests, these are always gratefully received.  
Please contact Joanne on 07709 571777.

### Quiz Night

**Fri 3rd Nov. 7.30pm for 8.00pm at Mycenae House.**  
Please book your team of 6, or your place on a team, by calling Caroline Owens on 8853 0948 by Oct. 15th.  
Chicken/fish 'n chips may also be ordered in advance.

**Tickets: £5.00 members, £6.00 non-members**

# COMMUNITY

## WESTCOMBE NEWS

### ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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**Deadline for the November issue:** 16th October

**Environment Editor:** Maggie Gravelle

### What's On:

**Reporters:** The community – that means you!

### ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**Emily Norton** All queries and comments to: 020 8853 2756  
environment@westcombesociety.org

### DISTRIBUTION Emily Norton and volunteers.

Volunteer distributors please phone 020 8853 2756, we need your help!

### ADVERTISING MANAGER

**Marilyn Little**, 163 Westcombe Hill, SE3 7DP 020 8853 1312  
Advertising@westcombesociety.org

All adverts payable in advance by cheque to **The Westcombe Society**.

**DISPLAY:** Single column 6cm x 6cm: One - four issues £35, five-plus issues £30 each. Other sizes: please inquire.

**Classified Ads** (Market Place) 30p per word (A telephone number = one word. An email/web address = 3 words.) Deadline for all adverts is 10th day of the preceding month.

**Printed by:** Trojan Press

### Contact the Westcombe Society:

WestcombeNews@egroups.com

**Publisher:** The Westcombe Society

**Chairman:** Marilyn Little

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To access back-numbers (in colour) go to: [www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/](http://www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/)

Westcombe Society's Blog:  
<http://westcombe.blogspot.com>

### Westcombe Society Membership

please send this membership form to:  
**Christine Legg**, 69 Mycenae Road,  
London, SE3 7SE

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Please enclose payment as appropriate:

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## The Macmillan Charity Walk



PHOTO: J-J Aune

Over twenty Westcombe Society members and friends took part in the annual Macmillan Cancer Support Charity Walk on 17th September.

Three generations of Westcombe Parkers took part in the walk, including two pregnant women.

A feature of the walk – designed by the Westcombe Society – were the wonderful views that could be had.

The money raised for the charity will be added to that raised in the Coffee Morning in late September. Results will be announced in November's issue. The organiser, Caroline Owens, thanked all those who took part in support of a very worthwhile charity. Late donations still welcome. Well done, everyone!



## Letters

Any views expressed are not necessarily those of either the Westcombe Society, or the Westcombe News.

### From: N Grant Stratheden Road

A recent survey shows that a quarter of all those who backed Brexit believe they were misled by the Leave campaign; almost one-in-ten now say they would change their vote if a second referendum was held. Another survey shows that 60% of people in the UK want to retain their EU citizenship.

As the pound sinks, and the cost of living rises, it is time the BBC gave adequate time for such views on their news and talk programmes; and it is time that Parliament insisted, for the good of the country, on having a free vote – no Party Whips' interference – with a second referendum on whether to proceed with the folly of Brexit. That's their job – to represent our interests, and the good of the country.

No one argues that the EU is perfect: its flaws are many and well-documented: but we aren't going to change things by leaving it.

It is becoming increasingly evident that no good can come of our negotiations with the EU: any dealings we have with Europe will be in accordance with their rules, not our fantasies; and by leaving the EU – our largest single market by far – we will have no say whatsoever in what those rules will be. So much for "bringing back control." We already have less control, and less influence – in Europe and the world – than we have had for decades, if not centuries.

### From: Thomas Turrell

In June Transport for London put up their new LED advertising screens on the Sun-in-the-Sands roundabout over the A102/ A2. Since the boards have gone up it is easy to see why Greenwich Council were right to refuse permission for these. The light from the screens shines into peoples bedrooms and living rooms, and drivers complain of being distracted by them.

Cllr Geoff Brighty and I have been working with members of the London Assembly to raise concerns about these screens with the Mayor of London (Chair of TfL).

TfL have so far denied that these signs are in an inappropriate location but have claimed to have dimmed the lights to prevent light from these screens shining into peoples homes. We raised these issues with the Mayor at September's Mayor's question time. Cllr Brighty has also raised concerns about the screens with the council environmental health department. We will continue to press for their removal in line with the Council's original decision.

### From: Andrew Graham Vanbrugh Hill

For over 20 years Lab, Con Lib and now Conservatives have rubber stamped and bank rolled extra judicial Drone Killings of thousands of people in illegal wars to promote some obscure global agenda.

I am sure that ALL Greenwich Councillors would condemn terrorism, and with one excep-

tion would criticize the IRA, and their Protestant opponents. I have no doubt that the DUP have, as much, maybe more sincere concern over big issues than the mainland parties and no interest in promoting terrorism.

The DUP will not collect their £2 billion unless they reach a deal with the Republican MPs first. Does Mr Allman object to restarting the N Ireland Peace Parliament with some mainland cash? We all know that money is the only functioning lubricant in a morally bankrupt system.

I voted Tory for the first time in 40 years for Brexit to stop Corbyn, although he is a sincere man. The NI bribe is only paid on receipt of a peace dividend of huge worth that could pave the way to a United Ireland outside the bondage of European mismanagement; the obvious solution to the concerns of the South on borders and other longstanding matters!

### From: Peter Dempsey Hardy Road

Yet another weekend listening to the thump, thump, thump of loud music from the Heath (mingled with the revving and roaring of engines from the boy racers who speed around unhindered by Greenwich's useless Police, as they have done for a decade) is a reminder that Greenwich and Lewisham Councils are determined to exploit this amenity for money and that nothing will get in the way of that plan.

But then I remembered that it is all in a good cause. Greenwich has 17 members of senior management who are paid between £87,000 and £98,000. Another seven are paid more than £111,000. A further seven are paid between £126,000 and £157,000. One is paid £181,000, and another is paid £197,000.

These ludicrous salaries have to be paid from somewhere. It is no wonder that the Councils are determined to erode the amenity of places like the Heath, in pursuit of the money with which to pay themselves handsomely.

### From G Bailey Westcombe PR

An article in the *Guardian* suggests that we should tear down the statue of Lord Nelson in Trafalgar Square because he supported slavery. That he is a national hero who saved the country from a French dictatorship counts for nothing, it seems. OK, let's do it!

And while we are about it, let's boycott the play at the Globe Theatre on Boudica, and tear down the statue of her on the embankment: after all she was a war criminal who presided over the torture and massacre of thousands of men women and children.

## Mohammad Abdul Qavi

Our beloved friend Qavi (a friend of oppressed people especially in Palestine) died peacefully on 27th August in Bethlehem, Palestine.

A good-bye gathering at The Women's Union El Beit Guest House in Beit Sahour was held on 28th August. Funeral services were held after the noon (Dohr) prayers at the main (Omar Bin Alkhattab) mosque in Beit Sahour on the same day.

Condolences will be received at the Palestine Museum of Natural History (<http://palestinenature.org>). He was buried in Bethlehem according to his wishes.

Qavi had been coming to Palestine from London regularly for fifteen years helping students with their tuition, demonstrating and speaking out for Palestinian rights. Join us as we mourn this loss but also celebrate a life of giving for this man – an extraordinary human being who left his imprint on the lives of so many grateful people.

**Mazin Qumsiyeh**

*Professor and (volunteer) Director Palestine Museum of Natural History Palestine Institute of Biodiversity and Sustainability, Bethlehem University, Occupied Palestine*

**Ed:** Please see an obituary on p.6. We extend our deepest condolences to family and friends for a man who was much loved both in Blackheath and Palestine.

### St George's, Glenluce Rd.

**Sundays: 11.00 am** Children's Church  
**11.00 a.m.** Holy Communion (All Age service 1st Sunday of each month)

**Wednesdays: 8:30 a.m.** Morning Prayer

**12.30 p.m.** Soup Lunch & Fellowship

**Sceptics Group** meets at 89 Westcombe Pk Road) 1st & 3rd Sunday each month

**Special Events in October at St George's:**

**Spiritual Film Night: Wed. 18th Oct. – 7:30 pm** *A Special Day (1977)*

Two people meet during Hitler's visit in Italy in May 1938. (Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren)

**Contact: Rev'd Tim Yeager**

**ryeager@gmail.com Tel. 07804 614245**

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Our New What's On Brochure Is Out on 6 SEPTEMBER

# LOCAL NEWS

## Looking for a job? Don't get on your bike – get on our bus!

Help and advice finding a job is available on board a bus which will be popping up around the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) community outreach bus is one of the Council's innovative approaches to supporting local residents improve their skills to gain permanent employment.

The service, which was launched in General Gordon Square in August, will help GLLaB services to make contact with the community, making it easier and more convenient for people to obtain the help and advice they need.

Residents who are looking for work, training or apprenticeship opportunities will be able to get on board for help with their job search, preparing CVs as well as interview techniques. They'll also be able to find out about job opportunities with local employers from GLLaB staff.

Cllr Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Transport, Economy and Smart Cities, said: "GLLaB offers a fantastic range of

services for job seekers and the community outreach bus helps increase awareness of this. I'd encourage anyone who is looking for work to hop on board and find out what help and advice is available – the next stop could be the job of your dreams!"

The bus will next be in General Gordon Square from 10.15am to 2pm on 29 August and fortnightly after that. People looking for work can also get on board at other locations in the borough including Greenwich Islamic Centre, 131 Plumstead Rd, SE18 7DW, Middle Park Community Centre, Middle Park Ave, SE9 5SD, and Armada Community Hall, 21 McMillan Street SE8 3EZ.

A drop-in service is also available at 25 Calderwood Street, Woolwich, SE18 6QW on weekdays from 9:30am to 4:30pm.

More venues will be added and the GLLaB Bus will also feature at major weekend events around the Borough.

**To find out more or to register with GLLaB, visit [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/gllab](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/gllab)**

## Are new builds up to scratch?

Public confidence in new builds is falling at a time when the average house in England will have to last 2,000 years. If the sluggish rate of house building and replacement continues, the LGA (Local Government Association) has warned that the average new home in England will have to last 2,000 years.

The country has not built enough homes for decades. As a result, existing homes must house more people and last for much longer. This means that the country will have to spend nearly as much on the repair and maintenance of existing homes as it does building new ones. (The report reveals that in 2016, £27 billion was spent on the repair and maintenance of existing homes, with £35 billion spent on building new ones.)

### Dissatisfied house-buyers

No wonder that one in ten new home buyers are dissatisfied with the quality of their new home, and one in six would not recommend their house builder to a friend.

The LGA report, *The Quality of Housing*, also reveals that most local areas have more homes built before 1930 than from any other period of time, thus demonstrating the age of much of England's housing stock.

The LGA is calling on government to help councils build a new generation of high quality, genuinely affordable and additional homes, supported by adequate infrastructure and services: buildings that will stand the test of time.

Another report indicates that buildings in the UK often use double the energy –

and emit twice as much CO<sub>2</sub> – as their designers predicted. Like the VW scandal. This at a time when companies such as Berkeley Homes are making huge profits.

### Building renaissance needed

What's more it has now emerged that a number of tower blocks are at risk because they are not built to withstand gas boiler explosions. This problem has emerged in several areas of London, including Peckham, Lewisham and Tower Hamlets. Greenwich is currently carrying out investigations.

With increasing numbers of people in the private rented sector, council leaders are also concerned that 28 per cent of privately rented homes are not decent, an increase of 150,000 homes since 2006. In comparison, council homes are more likely to be better in quality, with 85 per cent meeting the decent homes standard, an increase from 70 per cent in 2008.

Local government leaders insist a "national renaissance" in council house-building must be central to solving our housing shortage and improving quality, and for delivering the mix of different homes that meet the growing and changing need of communities.

For this to happen, the LGA said that councils need to be able to borrow to build and to keep 100 per cent of the receipts of any home they sell to reinvest in new and existing housing.

Cllr Judith Blake, LGA Housing spokesperson, said: "Everyone deserves an affordable, decent – and safe – place to live."

## Is education happening?

Yes. Michael Oakeshott famously said that education was a conversation between generations. In recent times a considerable gap has opened up, because children see a different world with different emphases and fashions. This makes education very difficult. Parents need to do everything they can to "talk the same language as their children".

Schools need to do everything they can to win the trust of pupils. Without these moves much teacher talk in classrooms is a waste of time.

The PER Group's new website: [www.perprospero.co.uk](http://www.perprospero.co.uk)

## St George's Garrison Church



If you haven't been to St George's Garrison Church in Woolwich, you should definitely put this poignant reminder of past sacrifice on your "to do" list.

St George's was built in 1862-63 as a Church of England place of worship for the Woolwich Royal Artillery garrison. In 1944, it was hit by a V-1 flying bomb, and largely destroyed by fire.

The church stood as a sad ruin for decades; but phoenix-like, it has risen from the ashes thanks to a dedicated band of friends and volunteers, as well as a very pro-active Trust, chaired by Tim Barnes.

The restored building with its canopied roof, its blue, red and yellow brick walls, its mosaics, and a memorial garden is open to the public on Sundays; you can also visit it on Open House weekends (this year it was on 16th/17th September, when refreshments were also served.)

The Church retains strong links with the military, and has hosted christenings, weddings and funerals. The very beautiful mosaic work around the altar is still largely intact, and the walls surrounding the freshly planted garden (by Seth Furminger) contain a number of commemorative plaques for servicemen and women, including several VCs.

The Summer Newsletter of the Trust lists some of the events mounted in the Church, including an interfaith service, performances by Tramshed Theatre (Greenwich and Lewisham Young Persons Theatre); and a performance of *Hamlet* in July by the Changeling Theatre which was

very well supported. Later that week the Greenwich and Docklands International Festival (GDIF) put on four performances of a dance event called *Five Soldiers* on a stage laid in front of the Chancel steps.

Plans are in place for a continuing programme of improvements, including the installation of new gates (below, right).

Cllr. Brooks (the Mayor of Greenwich) has adopted the church as one of his two mayoral charities for the current year.



[See also What's on, page 5.]

### Tim Barnes, Chairman of the Trust, adds:

**If you would like to support our work in renovating St George's Garrison Church, why not become a Friend?**

#### Annual subscription:

£10 for those living in SE18 (to encourage those living in the locality to join)

£15 for those living elsewhere.

Family membership is £25 a

Life membership is £100.

For further details visit our website. <https://www.stgeorgeswoolwich.org/>



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# FEATURES

## Death in the Ice

The *WN* looks at the latest special exhibition mounted by the National Maritime Museum



Crew of HMS Terror, stuck in the ice, salvaging lifeboats and provisions east of the Frozen Strait, during the Frozen Strait Expedition, 1836-1837.

*Yellowknife, Prince Of Wales Northern Heritage Centre*

Sir John Franklin was one of the most celebrated explorers of the Nineteenth Century, leading four expeditions to the Arctic. In the first three expeditions he had explored and mapped much of the Arctic coast line, and had reason to be optimistic about finding a new sea route – the North-West Passage, a short route from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In 1845 he sailed from England in HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*. The ships were powerful and luxurious, with elaborate heating systems, and Franklin had secured huge supplies of preserved foods.

In late July, the two ships were seen by a whaler in Baffin Bay, waiting for ice to clear in Lancaster Sound and to begin their journey to the Bering Strait.

However, the voyage ended in tragedy. Facing some of the most inhospitable conditions on earth, all 129 members of the crew perished in a mystery that has endured for over 150 years.

Franklin's final expedition has captured the public imagination for over a century. Over thirty expeditions were mounted to

find out what happened, but had little success until 1859: following information provided by Inuit, an expedition led by Francis McClintock found relics and human remains on King William Sound. Then last year, the ships were discovered by Canadian archeologists, who also found a number of new artefacts now on display in the exhibition at the National Maritime Museum. Starvation, madness or even cannibalism – can these amazing objects reveal the crew's true fate?

Read more at <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/john-franklin-final-north-west-passage-expedition-1845#Xb10IbGXhcSvqMwC.99>

[RIGHT] One of the artefacts displayed, this model ship made of wood and bone, indicates the Inuit had contact with Europe long before the C19th.



## The Blackheath Society's two new books

The Blackheath Society has published two new books to celebrate its 80th birthday this year - one details historical walks around Blackheath Village and the other tells the story of the Blackheath Preservation Trust.

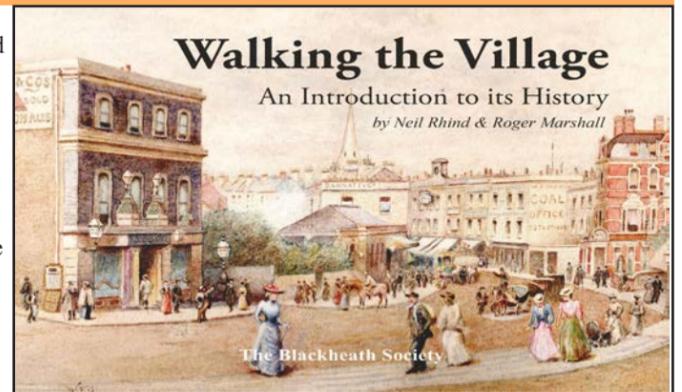
*Walking the Village*, written by Society President Neil Rhind and former committee member of the WS Roger Marshall, is a handy pocket size 90-page colour book providing a guided tour to over 250 years of the recorded history of one of London's surviving rural villages.

It is a companion volume to their *Walking the Heath*, published in 2013, and covers three walks around the Village with many photographs, fascinating details about buildings past and present and a historical section on *The Making of the Village*.

*The Blackheath Preservation Trust 1938 - 2016*, was written and edited by committee member John Bartram. It is a 40-page book which tells the full story of the BPT with complete details of all the buildings saved during its 80 years. It costs £5 and is available from the same outlets.

The BPT was founded in 1938, one year after the Blackheath Society, to buy buildings under the threat of demolition and to preserve, enhance and then sell them on into safe ownership.

Much of today's built environment of Blackheath was preserved thanks to its efforts.



The BPT was taken over by the Society in 2010 and wound up in 2016, when better planning regulations and a greater interest in preserving older buildings meant that its efforts were no longer needed.

*Walking the Village* costs £10. *The Blackheath Preservation Trust* costs £5.00. Both books can be bought from **The Bookshop on the Heath, 74 Tranquil Vale (phone 0208 852 4786)** or from **the Society's office at Studio 2, The Old Bakehouse, 11 Blackheath Village (phone 0208 297 1937).**



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# WHAT'S ON



## ARTS

**BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY**, St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath [www.artsinblackheath.org](http://www.artsinblackheath.org)  
All meetings are on the 4th Thursday of each month - except August and December - 2pm for 2.30pm  
**26th Oct John Ericson Children's book illustrations** - Non-members may pay on the door  
**GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY** King William Court, University of Greenwich 9 Oct 7.45 **Rescuing Zeugma** from the flood waters of the Euphrates by Louise Schofield Free for members. Visitors can pay on the door.  
**BLACKHEATH HALLS**  
From Thurs. 2nd NOV 10:00am  
**ART EXHIBITION: REBECCA WALKS**  
Using the traditional art technique of pen and ink, Rebecca Walks' work explores and presents her inner responses to the world in the form of a visual tableau.

## CHILDREN & FAMILY

**BLACKHEATH HALLS 23**, Lee Rd. Blackheath SE3 9RQ 0208 463 0100 [www.trinitylaban.ac.uk](http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk)  
**Sat 7th Oct. 11.00 am & 3.00pm BILLY GOATS GRUFF** Recital Room. Garlic Theatre present the story of three hungry goats and a grumpy old troll. With puppets, live music, storytelling and singing Tickets £8.50 Ages 3 - 6. Running time: 35 mins.  
**Sat 21 Oct 11:30am & 3.00 pm Recital Room THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER** Norwich Puppet Theatre's playful retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's classic poetic story £8.50  
**GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL** London SE10 8ES 8858 7755  
**Sat 21st - Sun 22nd Oct. THE DREAM FACTORY** GT Studio A young girl can't dream ... Suitable for family  
**SHERINGTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE**, Tel. 0208 - 3053140 - 14, Sherington Road SE7 7JW  
**DAD'S STAY AND PLAY** session every Wednesday, 1.00pm - 2.30pm - free drop in Sherington Children's Centre, all home dads welcome Each 2nd Saturday of the month - 10.00am - 11.30am - free brunch/arts and craft Contact [Daniel.hall1985@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Daniel.hall1985@hotmail.co.uk) for more details, [www.selondondads.org.uk](http://www.selondondads.org.uk)

## SPOKEN WORD

**BLACKHEATH HALLS 23**, Lee Rd. Blackheath SE3 9RQ Box Office: 0208 463 0100  
**Wed. 11th Oct. 8.00 pm Recital Room: STEPHEN H GRANT** on **COLLECTING SHAKESPEARE: THE STORY OF HENRY AND EMILY FOLGER** Recounting the American success story of Henry & Emily Folger of Brooklyn, devoted to each other, & Shakespeare, and bitten by the collecting bug.  
**Fri. 27th Oct 8.00pm DAN CRUICKSHANK** talks on **A HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE IN 100 BUILDINGS** Journeying through time and place, from the ancient Egyptian pyramids to the soaring skyscrapers of Manhattan, renowned architectural historian Dan Cruickshank explores the world's most amazing buildings  
**Wed 1st Nov. 20:00h** Recital Room **LU SPINNEY** talks on **Beyond the High Blue Air: A Memoir**. A passionate, urgent account of the years following her son Miles' snowboarding accident.  
**INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**10th Oct. 7.30pm** Industrial history in Greenwich, presentation and discussion at The Old Bakehouse, Age Exchange, Bennet Park.  
**BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY**  
Mycenae House. **Friday 20th Oct 7.45 pm** 'Tales of Things' in the Olympic Park **TALK** Speaker **Dr Duncan Hay** Visitors welcome - donations £3.  
**IN-WORDS**  
**Tuesday 10th October 2017, 7.00 for 7.15pm**  
**Poems & Pictures** poetry reading Irena Hill in association with Mary Evans Picture Library: to celebrate the second anniversary of the Library's Poems and Pictures Blog. An evening of words, images and music, compered by Mick Delap, and including local poets. FREE.  
*See [in-words.co.uk](http://in-words.co.uk) for details of upcoming events.*  
**DOCKLANDS HISTORY GROUP**  
**MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS**, West India Docks **Wed. 4th Oct. 7.30 TALK:** The Final Days of Rotherhithe Ship-Building: The Clipper Ships By **Andie Byrnes**  
**Wed. 1st Nov. Talk on** Blockade Running in the American Civil War with special Reference to London-Built Ships By **Edward Sargent** our Chairman. [www.docklandshistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.docklandshistorygroup.org.uk)

## THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

**Sat 21st Oct. 2- 4.00pm** Mycenae House: Chrysanthemum Tea for senior citizens  
**Fri 3rd. Nov. 7.30 for 8.00pm** Autumn Quiz in Mycenae House  
**Sat. 25th Nov. 11.30 4.00** Christmas Bazaar at Blackheath High School for Girls. To book a stall, ring Marilyn on 8853 1312

The Westcombe Society really needs more volunteers to help out at these events. If you are interested, please ring Joanne on 07709 571777.

## COMMUNITY

**WESTCOMBE WOODLANDS**  
The woods on your doorstep! Celebrate the Autumn on our OPEN DAY **Sun. 8th Oct.**  
\* Beehives explained \* Woodcraft activities  
\* Pond-dipping \* Storytelling \* Refreshments  
Entrance: Gate at the end of Seren Park car park near the footpath to Maze Hill station  
Next volunteer day: **Sun 1st Oct. 10.00am - 1.00pm**  
Info: [www.westcombewoodlands.org](http://www.westcombewoodlands.org)  
**BROMLEY & GREENWICH AGE UK MEN IN SHEDS:** an exciting new project to be held here at Mycenae House & Gardens. It's a DIY project for men over 50 years of age or more. A chance to meet and chat with others. And it's FREE! You don't have to be an expert woodworker, you simply need an interest. The mobile shed will be here at Mycenae House till 11th Oct. For more information about the overall project visit [meninshedsageukbg.org.uk](http://meninshedsageukbg.org.uk)  
**BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE** Meets first Wednesday of every month, doors open at 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Sunfields Methodist Church on Old Dover Road  
**BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB** duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon & Thurs 7.15pm and on Wed at 1.15pm. Tel Ron 0208 319 1312

## AGE EXCHANGE

**11, Blackheath Village, London SE3 9L**  
Tel :0208 318 9105 [www.age-exchange.org](http://www.age-exchange.org)  
**Oct. 14th 10- 4pm** - Book Sale in the Bakehouse. Find wonderful bargains at our monthly book sale Also our **Arts and Crafts Sale** - including Esta Finlay's handbag & scarves stall (donations welcome (ring 8852 5944) and Eileen Flanagan's delicious home-made jams.  
**Oct 20th 1.00 - 3.00pm** Friends Friday meeting: Talk on photography. Free - £5 for non-members. Retiring collection  
**Oct 27th Free concert - Trinity Laban students**  
**Sun 19th Nov: Blackheath Christmas Fair in Blackheath Halls.**

**Thomas Tallis Society Choir**  
Directed by Eamonn Dougan  
**Mozart Requiem**  
but not like you've heard it before!  
Sunday 1 October, 7.30pm

**MONTEVERDI**  
VESPERS OF 1610  
Orchestra of The Sixteen  
Tenor Nicholas Mulroy  
SUNDAY 11 NOVEMBER, 7.45pm

**Messiah - Handel**  
by candlelight  
Saturday 2 December, 7pm  
St Alfege Church, Greenwich  
Tickets on sale now [www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts)

## MYCENAE HOUSE LIVE EVENTS: OCTOBER 2017

**Every Thursday 1- 4.00pm - Drop-In Cafe** for Seniors at Mycenae House. Carers & Family welcome. Tea & Cake £1.  
**Thurs 12th Oct 4pm** - Bach To Baby. Classical Concert for families. £10.  
**Fri 13th Oct 8pm - JazzNights.** Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk featuring special guests plus JazzNights Allstars. £10.  
**Wed 18th Oct 7.00pm - African Spoken Word Night.** As part of Black History Month hosted by Global Fusion. £6.  
**Fri 27th Oct 7pm Ceilidh and Acoustic Night**, hosted by Morrigan plus guest artist. Global Fusion Music & Arts. £6.  
**Sat 4th Nov 1pm + 3pm - The Owl & The Pussycat.** Let's All Dance present this charming, original family ballet. £9/£8.  
**Fri 17th Nov 7.30pm - Roger McGough & Little MACHiNe.** 'The Patron Saint of Poetry' joins us for an evening of famous poems set to music. £22.50.  
For further information visit [www.mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://www.mycenaehouse.co.uk)

## Global Fusion of Music & Arts October Programme: Black History Month

**Friday 6th Oct.** Charlton House - World Cinema Night *Martin Luther King*  
**18th Oct** 7.00pm African Spoken Word night Mycenae House  
**Friday 27th Oct.** Mycenae House, Ceilidh & Acoustic Night: Morrigan & Freddie Macha  
**Saturday 28th Oct.** Charlton House - BHM Children's Workshops Contact: 8858 9497

## THEATRE

**THE GREENWICH THEATRE**, Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES Box Office: 8858 7755 [greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://greenwichtheatre.org.uk)  
**Sun 1st Oct. THE SANDMAN** contemporary ballet  
**Mon 2nd Oct** We are Bronte: irreverent romp  
**4th - 7th Oct. DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE**  
**5th - 8th. Oct. STOLEN** GT Studio  
**Tues. 10th - 20th Oct. HOWERD'S END** in the Studio Celebrating the life of Frankie Howerd  
**10th Oct NOCTURNES** Spy thriller  
**Thurs 12th - 14th Oct. New Musical: PROMISE & PROMISCUITY**  
**Thur. 1h-21st Oct KWAIDAN** Japanese ghost story  
**THE ALEXANDRA PLAYERS** present **SEASON'S GREETINGS** by Alan Ayckbourn at the Alexandra Hall, Bramshot Avenue, SE7  
**Wed. Oct. 25th = Sat Oct. 28th. 7.30 for 8.00pm**  
Tickets: £9 (£8 Concs) 07867 627 987  
Email: [andrplayers@gmail.com](mailto:andrplayers@gmail.com)

## MUSIC

**BLACKHEATH HALLS 23**, Lee Road SE3 9RQ 0208 463 0100 [www.trinitylaban.ac.uk](http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk)  
**Mon 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th Oct. MUSIC APPRECIATION** with Matthew Taylor continues: **Music Deco 1925-1935: Round the World Trip** An Adventure to explore music written during the decade starting with the 1925 Paris Expo des Arts Decoratifs and include Les Six  
**Wed. 4th October 7.30pm MONTEVERDI 450:** A celebration of the music of Claudio Monteverdi on his 450th Anniversary £12.00  
**Sun 8th Oct. 11.00am BLACKHEATH SUNDAYS** James Gilchrist tenor & Anna Tilbrook piano celebrate 20 years of their duo partnership with a recital featuring work by Clara Schumann, Schubert & Finzi.  
**Sun. 29th Oct 11.00 am UBUNTU ENSEMBLE** from RSA play Mozart Schubert & Rossini  
Tickets £14 | £12.00 concs.  
**Mon 23rd Oct. 1.10 pm LUNCHTIME RECITAL:** among the most perfect gems of the song repertoire, by turn humorous, bitter and tender.  
**Sun 5th Nov 6:30h**  
**BLACKHEATH HALLS ORCHESTRA**  
Come and listen to our very own Blackheath Halls Orchestra perform Mozart and Mahler in our fabulous Great Hall. £11 | £9 | Under 12s: £6  
**THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY** Mozart Requiem Mass in D Minor Not as you've heard it before! Sunday 1st Oct., 7.30pm St Alfege Church, [www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/tts)

## DANCING

**BLACKHEATH HALLS**  
**Tues. 3rd Oct. 1.30 pm TEA DANCE** with Mr Wonderful £5.50 in advance £6.50 on the door  
**Sat 7th Oct 7.30 pm HAVEN'T STOPPED**  
**DANCING YET AUTUMN DISCO**  
Recital Room An autumnal version of the hugely popular Christmas event with the usual mix of 70s and 80s soul, funk and disco classics (15.00 in advance | £18.00 on the door

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Or visit our website for more details [www.zoomnurseries.com](http://www.zoomnurseries.com)

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# FEATURES

OBITUARY

## M. A. Qavi: A Scholar and a Gentleman

Neville Grant: a personal memoir of a local hero

If you passed through Blackheath Village on a Saturday morning, you might have seen a small man with a big placard standing on a traffic island. The placard demanded of us that we should "Repair the World" not destroy it.

This one-man demonstration made his first appearance in the aftermath of 9/11 and became a regular fixture of Blackheath Village life for years; the man, was, of course, Qavi, our favourite local eccentric, Mohammad Abdul Qavi, who some of us knew as the only Moslem Quaker we had ever met.

Sadly, very sadly, he is no longer with us: he died on 27th August 2017 in Bethlehem, Palestine.

Sometime membership secretary of both the Westcombe Society, and Blackheath & Greenwich UNA, and resident of Parkside, he was born in India in 1936; at the time of partition, his family moved to what was later to become Bangladesh.

Subsequently, he moved to Dubai, where he saw a business opportunity: at that time Dubai was at the start of its rapid development. There was a huge demand for housing; but how to furnish the houses and shops that were developing?

Qavi's business provided the answer: for nine years, Qavi ran an astonishingly successful – and profitable – furniture making business: though he himself knew nothing of wood, or carpentry, he taught himself enough to be able to develop a reliable workforce producing high-quality furniture.

"I made enough money to see my time out on this earth," he said. "I had little interest in making money for its own sake, so I decided to quit while I was ahead, and sold the business."

He might have stayed happily in Dubai, which was a comfortable place to live in "as long as you kept your nose out of politics"; but it became clear that Dubai was no place to retire in: at that time the state expected its foreign residents to be productive and would not otherwise renew your residency.

So a friend suggested that Spain would be a good place to retire. So off to the Costa Brava, where he negotiated a house purchase from a very elegant English woman who was the wife of a British diplomat; but when it came to completing the purchase in the local municipal offices, the Spanish official asked the lady where her husband was. "Oh, we are in the process of getting a divorce," she said.

The deal could not go through: a law dating back to Moorish times decreed that a woman could not sell a house (even if it were her own) without the permission of her husband. And he was nowhere to be found. So the deal was off, and the poor woman, in Qavi's words, "collapsed", distraught; and Qavi's plans for life in the



PHOTO: Neville Grant

Costa Brava came to an end.

Passing through London, Qavi met up with an old friend, John Parkinson, whom he had known in Dubai, and who was at a loose end. So Qavi invested some money in a house-building company, which built houses in the Reading area. But it soon emerged that this was not a good time for property developers: in the early eighties, the housing market was in a bad state, and mortgage rates were for a while up to 17.5%.

The business was in serious difficulties, and Qavi came over to help resolve the problems. In Dubai he applied for an investor's visa, and the British Embassy people were "astonishingly welcoming."

Arriving in England in 1983, where he knew almost no one except John Parkinson and a Parsee friend in the city, Qavi solved the problem by writing off his investment. And then wondered what to do to justify his annually-renewable investor's visa.

Staying in rented accommodation in Richmond, he happened to see an ad for an on-going business, Pine Interiors, in Blackheath. He did not even know where Blackheath was, but to cut a long story short he bought Pine Interiors from its owners, a charming couple, Mr Kenneth and Mrs Renee-Marie Croose Parry, co-founders of the Teilhard Association.) (The shop has since become Raffles.)

Every day Qavi looked up at the tower of All Saints Church, and grew increasingly irritated that in a world where he valued order, the clock never seemed to work. It was a daily, standing reproach; thus began the endless saga of All Saints' clock.

He raised funds in Blackheath Village to have it refurbished; however, it appeared that the church authorities never managed to obtain a satisfactory maintenance

agreement, and the clock was for ever "behind the times". Qavi spent much of his waking hours campaigning for the clock to be properly maintained; today, it still stands, currently having caught up. Qavi would be very pleased.

Qavi is a man of strong religious and moral conviction: a Moslem for today's world – one that accepts diversity, and tolerance between people of different faiths, and which abhors violence, racism or extremism. Beneath a serious and slightly forbidding persona there beat a true, faithful, loving and caring heart.

My wife and I once had the privilege of visiting him and his Palestinian friends on the West Bank, where we stayed in the Arab Women's Rest House Co-operative in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem. As he grew older, Qavi spent most of his days in Palestine, on a series of three-month visas, witnessing the on-going tragedy facing the different communities in Palestine/Israel; and his placard in Blackheath morphed smoothly into another, which he regularly displayed near the American Colony hotel in Jerusalem, with the slogan *TIKUN OLAM* [Repairing the World] in Hebrew.



Keeping hope alive in Jerusalem

The *WN* has received a quite exceptional number of letters and emails from the many friends of Qavi: he was much loved by so many. We have since learnt all kinds of details about his life: how in the UK he spent one day a week working in a soup kitchen; how he helped many Palestinian students to go through University; how he tirelessly sought to raise the world's conscience about on-going injustice in the Occupied Territories and Israel, as well as the dangers of Wahhabism *aka* Salafism.

Indeed, he was more than a scholar and a gentleman: he was a man of principle, of conscience, a man who bravely stood up to be counted, strongly opposing violence, hatred and injustice.

He made it clear to us that, suffering from cancer, he expected, and hoped, to end his days surrounded by Palestinian friends, Moslem, Christian and Jew.

Now that he has finally picked up his exit visa, we shall deeply miss him.

**A memorial event is to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 24th October 2017 at the Friends Meeting House, Lawn Terrace, Blackheath.**

## Blackheathwood

The Blackheath Society is hosting a talk in October highlighting the local building where the famous film *The Night Mail*, with the verse commentary by W H Auden, was made in the 1930s.

The former Blackheath Art Club at the end of Bennett Park, was the home of the General Post Office film unit before and during World War II.

John Grierson, the pioneering Scottish documentary maker also began his career in Blackheath. The fascinating history of film making in the building is by Steven Foxon, BFI curator of non-fiction films.

**Thursday Oct. 12th, 7 for 7.30pm at St Mary's Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath. Tickets from [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk) at £10 (inc. glass of wine) or ring 8297 1937.**

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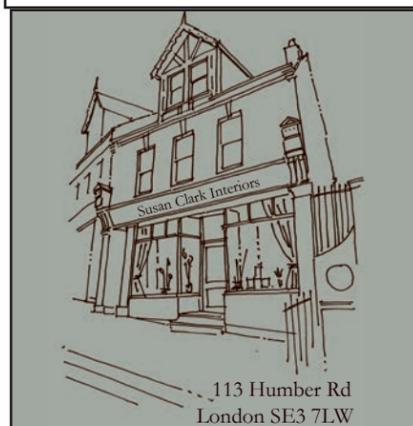


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Three of the students he sponsored at Al Quds University PHOTO: Neville Grant



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](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning)

## An Inconvenient Sequel

Neville Grant reviews probably the most important film of the year  
 “Scientific evidence for warming of the climate system is unequivocal.”  
 - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

## “Truth to Power!”

The first time that Vice-President Al Gore’s second film on climate change was shown was to the press on Jan. 19th, this year, the day before Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States. The film – directed by Jon Shank and Bonnie Cohen – had been selected to open the Sundance film festival.

The film is therefore timely. It is of course a sequel to his film *An Inconvenient Truth*, first shown eleven years ago, and looking at its sequel, it felt like *deja vu* all over again, as it were. Surely *An Inconvenient Truth* did its job? As one watched Greenland melting before our eyes (a third of its ice has now disappeared) it was very hard to believe that there were people, many people, who remain unconvinced.

### Fake news, fake science

The facts visibly displayed before our eyes it seems count for nothing, for we live in a world of “fake news”, of “alternative facts” according to Trump’s spokeswoman Kellyanne Conway. We are living in a world of infantile fantasy, in which some people believe what they want to believe: literally, a land of make-believe.

And Trump, the master of fake news, turned it around: anything he doesn’t like whether news or opinion, he writes off as “fake news”.

In the same way, the massive consensus of the scientific establishment is also consigned to the status of conspirators, cooking up “fake science”, because they have evidence that conflicts with what Trump and his cronies want to believe. And what they want is in uncanny accord with their business interests. Funny, that...

So in Trump’s view the evidence adduced by 99% of the scientific establishment, the Met office, all but five members of Parliament, all major political parties in the



UK, the EU, the UN, the Royal Society, NASA, every major newspaper, and 175 countries attending the Paris meeting, is all wrong, wrong, wrong!

No one is suggesting that any one disastrous event “proves” that climate change is taking place; but a succession of events – the increase in intensity of hurricanes such as Irma, Sandy, Katrina, and Harvey, the gigantic floods currently besetting much of Asia, must indicate a significant trend.

### Examples of climate change in action

It is in the Alice in Wonderland world of Mr. Donald Trump that Al Gore felt he had to produce a sequel to *An Inconvenient Truth*: the first film dealt in some detail with the science, and included many quotes and observations by reputable scientists such as James E. Hansen.

The second film does contain some compelling graphs, but the main thrust of the film is towards anecdotal evidence which is likely, in the world occupied by Trump supporters, to count for more than scientific evidence

However, the second film would have been much more persuasive if the evidence for showing that climate change is down largely – mainly? – to human agency had been provided at some point.



The film opens in Greenland, where the images of melting ice, exploding glaciers, storms, and great cracks opening in the ice, are very telling.

The film then takes one round the world (in my view sadly missing out the

dying coral reefs) but always ending in the US – for that is where Gore wants his film to have the biggest impact.

Three striking examples of the way the world is going drives home his message, all set in the US; first, he mentioned that in *An Inconvenient Truth*, it was quite possible that the rise of sea levels could flood the 9/11 monument in New York.

“Ridiculous exaggeration!” was the response by his critics. Well, six years later, floods did indeed inflict serious damage on the 9/11 monument.

### The message is getting through

Thence to Miami, where the authorities are in a desperate fight to cope with rising sea levels: sea levels rise, and the roads are flooded. So the Republican mayor of Miami, and dozens of mayors across Florida, are investing in alternative energy. Hundreds of mayors across the US are following suit. Meanwhile Trump has cancelled billions of dollars spent on climate change research, and opted out of the Paris accord on climate change.

### Truth to power

And so Gore continues to campaign for climate policy change in the US, Asia, Europe – around the world. His slogan “Truth to Power” is compelling; his call to action: “If President Trump refuses to lead, Americans will.” He argues: “It is your choice, your voice, your vote.”

An admirable person, a courageous and determined person, whose persistence is remarkable; one major omission in my view marred the film: he does not specify what John Doe, the ordinary citizen, can do to mitigate the dangers of climate change in terms of personal life-style. For that, one needs to read something like the Green Party manifesto... Sadly, John Doe might find that too difficult a pill to swallow....

Still unconvinced? See: <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

## The Community Infrastructure Levy

In 2014 the Government introduced new regulations allowing local authorities to levy a charge on large developments in their areas in order to contribute to “a positive economic affect” on local services and amenities.

In London a proportion of the levy is available to the Mayor to fund roads or other transport facilities. Local authorities must “allocate at least 15% of levy receipts to spend on priorities that should be agreed with the local community in areas where development is taking place.”

The Royal Borough of Greenwich adopted this scheme in 2015 and began the consultation under the Better Together meetings. The Westcombe Society has attended several of these meetings.

The borough has been divided into four sections, and Blackheath and Greenwich covers Greenwich West, Blackheath Westcombe and Peninsula wards. Together with other local amenity societies we are seeking further meetings with the Council in order to get more information about the levy. We have written offering to work with them in their attempts to consult with the community and ensure that the broadest possible range of people, including traditionally ‘hard to reach groups’, have an opportunity to represent their views as to how this money should be spent.

*We welcome readers’ views on issues that you would like raised, and on your priorities for improvements to local services and amenities.*

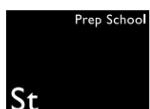


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## More affordable homes

A recent report has revealed that the Royal Borough of Greenwich delivered the second highest number of affordable homes in London in 2015/16.

The Mayor of London’s London Plan Annual Monitoring Report, published in July, lists 786 new affordable homes being built in the Borough during the past 12 months. Over a three year period, 40 per cent of the new houses built in Royal Greenwich were affordable - almost twice the London average of 24 per cent.

And there’s more to come as 200 new affordable homes are set to be built with rent levels set at or below 65 per cent local market rent levels. This follows approval for the disposal of three sites.

Greenwich has two affordable housing schemes run in partnership with Meridian Homestart and PA Housing Group.

*Ed: That’s good news as far it goes... but what about social housing? And exactly how affordable is “affordable”?*

## Cycling issues

There have been several incidents in which cyclists and pedestrians have nearly come into collision. Recently, a woman was tragically killed in London by a speeding cyclist.

As cyclists we are fortunate to have a number of shared paths on Blackheath and within Greenwich Park. We are aware that these paths are a useful route to get around the area but we should remember that they are not suitable for cycling at speed. We are aware of some inconsiderate behaviour and would remind cyclists that pedestrians have priority.

We should indicate our presence by an audible alarm (a bell) and speed should be kept to a safe level, especially around children and when space is limited. Some people may not be aware of us – the hard of hearing or visually impaired, and those wearing ear phones; and we need to take particular care at entry points, corners and where sight lines are poor.

The Westcombe Society has long been an advocate of improved facilities for cyclists, including in Greenwich Park and around the Standard, but public support will be eroded unless we recognise that shared paths are exactly what they say they are and are not suitable for speeding.

We would all welcome the creation of further shared facilities but we have to use these harmoniously with other users.

**A Concerned Cyclist**

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