



# Westcombe NEWS



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February 2019 No. 1

A Happy, Peaceful and Prosperous New Year to all our readers.

## New hope for John Roan? WN reporter

**University Schools Trust (UST) has pulled out of its controversial plan to turn the John Roan School into an academy.**

In a letter to parents, Grahame Price, the chief Executive of UST, said: "Our sole interest from our first engagement has been to help the school to overcome its current difficulties and provide the quality of education that your child deserves."

"However, having commissioned a range of external specialists to look in detail at the current status, it has become clear that the school has a very wide range of deeply embedded educational, financial and operational challenges that will require a truly exceptional level of investment and a sponsor with extensive resources to call upon."

Readers will recall that last year, the school was judged "inadequate" by Ofsted, and as a result, the Department for Education decided the 300-year-old school should become an academy. It indicated that UST was its preferred sponsor.

### Local opposition

The proposal was met with strong local opposition by teaching and support staff, and some parents, and there were several one-day strikes last year. Campaigners pointed at alleged management failings of UST, questioning whether UST had the necessary financial resources – a claim seemingly born out by events.

A local resident, Linda Baker, told the *WN*: "Parent campaigners, via a freedom of information request, found that the UST's flagship school in Tower Hamlets had a very high staff turnover of 21%."

"Also, it was found that last year about one million pounds had been spent from the school budget, some of it spent on so-called school improvement plans run by the UST, and leaving the school in deficit. The "professional services" of the UST failed to improve the school, but a significant amount of money was spent."

Parents are also concerned that academisation creates the dangers of the run-down of Special Needs provision, and of "off-rolling" - i.e. weeding out weaker students, especially in examination years, to improve results. But above all, perhaps they hate the idea of a well-loved local school rooted in the community being placed in private hands.

Last year Danny Thorpe, the leader of Greenwich Council said UST was probably

"not the council's first choice" of provider. In December, the council's cabinet deferred approving the choice of sponsor in order to carry out "due diligence."

### Positive developments

UST alludes to 'weaknesses' at John Roan, yet this word may be more appropriate when applied to UST. However, David Skinner, the current chair of governors on a new governing board refers to a number of positive developments over the last term, including:

\* For the past four weeks, many students have been in school on a Saturday morning to work through past papers and revise with undergraduates from King's College London supporting them.

\* A recent audit of our safeguarding practices reported on significant improvements over the past 12 months, with students keen to talk about how safe and well-cared-for they felt in the school.

\* There have been many improvements in terms of student behaviour in the school and both students and staff recognise the progress made in this area.

\* Teachers are sharing good practice around their teaching and accessing exam board training where available in order to ensure that they are fully up-to-date with the new specifications.

### What next?

It is likely that the academisation process will continue, albeit with an interim five-person executive board, including Florence Kroll, head of children's services at the council, and with a new sponsor.

No doubt the Department of Education will now be looking for another sponsor. The front-runner is likely to be the Harris Federation. However, campaigners remain concerned – one told the *WN*:

"We should be careful what we wish for. The Harris Federation is well-funded, but according to a report in the *Guardian* last November, it has a record of "off-rolling" poor performing pupils."

One teacher commented: "In one local authority school I worked in, we were forced to accept such pupils, and the result was that we became a 'failing school'."

The Harris Federation would also most probably drop the John Roan name. The Harris Academy Greenwich was called Eltham Foundation School before it was taken over by the Harris Federation.

(cont. on page 6)

## Let's All Dance



PHOTO: Alexander Yip

Late last year, three Blackheath High School ballerinas, Eloisa Carter (Year 7), Sophia Sutton (Year 7), and Isabella Carter (Year 6) [Front row, above] went on tour performing a spectacular ballet, *Sleeping Beauty*, with "Let's All Dance" a top London professional dance company.

After a performance at Blackheath Halls, the girls went on to perform at Sadler's Wells as part of a tour of Sussex and Kent. The special highlight of the tour saw the girls returning to Blackheath High Junior School to perform in front of their old school friends along with the full cast and crew of *Sleeping Beauty*, a special end-of-term Christmas treat.

The Head teacher Carol-Chandler Thompson said "It is a very proud moment to see our Senior School and Year 6 girls act as superb role models for our younger Junior School girls. Dance is very important to us at Blackheath High School. We know it is incredibly good for students' confidence, poise, social skills and positive well-being. It helps girls to overcome inhibitions and develop performance skills that have an impact in other areas of their lives."

Anne Fuell

*Let's All Dance is a professional dance company based in London, and founded by Artistic Director, Orit Sutton*  
[www.lets-all-dance.co.uk](http://www.lets-all-dance.co.uk)

## New Year Resolutions

**How many New Year Resolutions did you make? And how many have you already broken - be honest, now!**

Some people have resolved to do more exercise; others to take up yoga (Right; thanks to Meghan Markle's blog *The Tig*).

Other people have supposedly gone on a diet. For more ideas on "Green" resolutions please see pages 4 and 7.



In the December edition of the *Westcombe News* we published an open letter from some parents at The John Roan school which wrongly stated that Ms Whatford, the former Chair of Governors of John Roan, was a 'close personal friend' of the lead Ofsted Inspector, and twice made reference to this 'possible conflict of interest' affecting the outcome of the inspection.

It is now known that this was not the case: they did not know each other personally at all and the only relationship that existed was a professional one in that Ms Whatford had met the Lead Inspector briefly when she attended two sessions of Governor training that the Lead Inspector delivered to the governing body of a school Ms Whatford was working with several years ago. The Lead Inspector had properly declared this at the time of the inspection, and this was not deemed to be a conflict of interest.

We recognise that that the publication of these completely unfounded serious allegations, is potentially damaging to Ms Whatford's reputation as someone who has worked in schools and Local Authorities for 50 years and whose work was recognised in 2002 by the award of a CBE for her Services to Education.

We would like to apologise to Ms Whatford for the hurt that has been caused by the publication of these allegations.



## Newsbriefs



### Update on the ORNC

Many members and residents have expressed dismay at the proposed change in name of the Old Royal Naval College to Greenwich Palace and Royal Hospital by the custodians of the site, the Greenwich Foundation.

We have now learnt that the Foundation is to commission further research with focus groups over the coming weeks so that they can hear from as many people as possible on the naming and identity proposals. This will include local Amenity Societies.

The *WN* understands that the Royal Borough of Greenwich

supports this plan. The Westcombe Society will be taking part in this research. Watch this space.

### Chariot bows out

Chariot will not be renewing their licence to run their service from Shooters Hill as from the end of January.

### Well done, Invicta

Rebecca Moore told the *WN* that the school was successful in its application for a Community Green Space Grant and has been awarded £9500 to contribute to their 'green wall.' Thanks to all for your support!

### Mums' Aid

More brilliant news – the local charity Mumsaid has had yet another success. It has been awarded funding as part of the National Lottery's 'Building Connections' Fund. The money will help the organisation to offer home visits from peer supporters for mums who are in need.

### STOP PRESS:

Goodbye to the one-way system in Greenwich town? The Council seeks your views! See page 7.

## WESTCOMBE SOCIETY Members' & Helpers' Party

Mycenae House Saturday 16th February 8.00 - 10.00pm

Invitations went out in mid-January. Please ring Caroline on 8853 0948 if you did not receive yours. New members are welcome: come and join on the night, but please let us know in advance by ringing Caroline.



Daffodil Tea Sat 16th. March 2.00 - 4.00 pm

The Daffodil Tea for Senior Citizens is by invitation, and these will be going out in mid-February. If you haven't had an invitation by then, or are new to the area, and would like to come, please ring Caroline on 020 8853 0948.



# COMMUNITY

## WESTCOMBE NEWS

ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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ALL MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:  
wnews@westcombesociety.org

**Deadline for the March 2019 issue:** 16th February.

**Environment Editor:** Maggie Gravelle

**Sub-editor:** Annie Grey

**Roving Reporter:** Vivienne Raper

**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.** More volunteers always needed - please ring 8853 2756

### 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

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WestcombeNews@egroups.com  
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To access back-numbers (in colour) go to:  
www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/  
Westcombe Society's Blog:  
http://westcombe.blogspot.com

**WANTED! More volunteers to distribute the W/N – and to help with Westcombe Society's community events. Please phone 8853 2756 if you would like to help.**

### WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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

Name.....

Address.....

Tel.....

Email: .....

Please enclose payment as appropriate:

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Individual Membership	£8	[ ]
Senior Citizens/unwaged	£4	[ ]

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## The Christmas Craft Fair

The Westcombe Society's Christmas Craft Market last November seems an age ago already, and we should all be grateful to all those who worked so hard to make it such a success, and raise funds for charity.

Marilyn Little, Chair of the Westcombe Society, said: "Yet again we would like to record our sincere thanks to all the local traders, and others, for their generous donations. Our donors are listed below."

**Sue Clark** (for sponsoring the Christmas Tree)

**Felicity Lord** (the banners)

**David Lloyd Kidbrooke, Sue Clark** and

**Burn it Fitness** (for giving items for the silent auction.)

For the raffles, our thanks are due to several private donors, and to our wonderful local traders:

**Apple and Orange**

**B Brown**

**Blackbird Boutique**

**Blackheath Pet Supplies**

**Boulangerie Jade**

**DIY Standard**

**Fergus Noone**

**Go West**

**Hortus**

**Moca**

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**Nickys News**

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**Passion Flower**

**Simon Carter**

**Sir Barbers**

**Sparkes**

**Standard Pharmacy**

**The Voewood**

**Well Bean**

**Westcombe Food & Wine**

**Westcombe News**

## Regeneration Rethought

Richard Upton is giving the Richard Grierson Architectural Lecture this year. It's on Tuesday 12th February at 7.30 pm in The Recital Room in Blackheath Halls.

Richard Upton is an unusual developer who straddles the boundary between architecture and developer. He believes strongly in heritage and the quality of buildings, and has a clear vision of what architecture can achieve for the wider community beyond its commercial objectives.

He was involved with the successful regeneration of Deptford Market, and the saving of Smithfield Market. He was appointed a Commissioner of Historic England this year.

A patron of the arts, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts, and a member of the London Advisory Board of Historic England.

**Tues 12th Feb. 7.30 pm. Tickets: £15 | £12 concs. | £6 students.**

## Southeastern Train Services

EMILY NORTON

Some of you may have been caught by station-skipping as a result of SouthEastern's autumn timetables. The good news is that to date no more station-skipping has been announced.

However SouthEastern has announced a 'Winter Weather Timetable' and a 'Severe Winter Weather timetable' which may come in at very short notice if the weather forecast is poor or severe. They have also announced that snow and ice-busting trains will work around the clock to keep us all moving.

The 'Winter Weather Timetable' is essentially a Saturday service and the 'Severe Weather timetable' is basically two trains an hour. As far as we can tell this applies to SouthEastern services to Cannon Street only so Thameslink services may run in addition to this.

We are also aware that on January 1st and 2nd Thameslink ran services down the Bexleyheath line instead of the Greenwich Line: Thameslink has since said that this was a mistake. A number of passengers are likely to have been greatly inconvenienced. The Westcombe Society and GLUG are still lobbying our train companies for a more reliable service.

Meanwhile our best advice is to check before you travel whenever you can. The National Rail websites and app have live departure pages.

*If you don't have access to these we suggest you try calling National Rail on 03457 48 49 50. (Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls).*

## Wassailing in the Pleasaunce



PHOTO: @richstories



The Wassail event at the East Greenwich Pleasaunce in January was enjoyed by over 150 people entertained by Wassail Crown, Halstow Community Choir, Greenwich Morris Men and Morigan – plus stories from the Holly Man aka @richstories. All celebrated the memorial orchard that has been run for 5 years by PIP! Planting in the Pleasaunce. The cider stall did a brisk trade and many children made Wassail crowns. RICH SYLVESTER



## Letters

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

**From: Chris Godwin Vanbrugh Park**

I was very interested in the report of Matthew Pennycook's speech, and was glad that you published it. However, the first paragraph in the second column on page 1 does not seem to make sense: "and that no deal would be better than membership" does not follow from the earlier part of the sentence. After that, it should be "However, he argued..." (rather than we). Your link to the text of his speech was very helpful. Ed: Thanks for that. The text should have read "and whether no deal would be better than membership." The word *that* should be *whether*. The corrected version appears on-line.

**From: Trevor Allman Coleraine Road**

So, Seaborne Freight has been awarded a Government ferry contract, despite having no ships, no history of running a ferry service, and a website with terms and conditions allegedly copied and pasted from a takeaway delivery site. The Official Monster Raving Loony Party have also applied for a ferry contract, given we already have two seaworthy vessels, with more easily obtainable.



The contract being awarded should be a formality and crew recruitment will begin forthwith, should anyone wish to apply. Ed: Let's hope that Seaborne Freight recruit a workforce from really reliable outfits like G4 or the RMT.

**From: G. Bailey Humber Road**

Between them, the Confederation of British Industry, the British Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, the manufacturers' association EEF and the Institute of Directors represent the great majority of businesses operating in the UK, and are now aghast at the political in-fighting in Westminster. The only way to resolve the issues is by a People's Vote.

The last two decades of our membership of the EU have seen the UK economy stronger than it has been for decades. Our politicians are deeply culpable for not ensuring the prosperity was not shared round the whole country: those who seek to blame the EU are misguided. And what is far too often overlooked is the fact that we need immigrant workers to help run our country: in our NHS, in business and commerce, in agriculture, in our universities, in our care system, and in our construction industry.

All the deals on offer are much worse than the best: to remain. Mrs May's deal cedes control to Europe; No Deal damages our trade with the EU – and cuts us off from the 91 Deals that the EU already has with countries round the world which we would have to renegotiate.

Moreover, turning our country into a small offshore island north of Europe is to reduce its standing in the world to a minor irrelevance. In the EU we were a major player commanding much respect; outside we would be a mere spectator. Better our voice is heard in Europe than we simply submit to "their" rules in order to trade with them. The rules that currently exist in Europe were in many cases drawn up by our own representatives; the standards that have been set were very largely the result of British input – and have influenced standards around the world. I vote for a People's Vote – and to remain.

## From your Editor

We are very happy that in addition to our helpful proof reader, Annie Gray, the W/N now has a Roving Reporter, Vivienne Raper, whose professional skills are much needed. But there is still room and a need for a new assistant editor to join the team. Training, and lots of back-up provided. Interested? Pl. ring me on 8858 8489!

**From: Ian Bruton-Simmonds Langton Way**  
I agree with most of our MP's views on Brexit statements in January's W/N, particularly that the EU, by far our biggest customer, takes 44% of our exports. To cut that percentage by even 5% would indeed be a catastrophe.

However, I disagree with his belief that a No Deal Brexit (NDB) would be catastrophic. I think that a NDB would be the best move both for us and our friends the EU, because a NDB would sweep aside the long-winded fumbles and illogicalities of bureaucrats, politicians and miscellaneous "experts". I write this on December 5th: and predict that NDB is now the most likely outcome.

**From: Pete Sampson Vanbrugh Park Estate**  
The VPE Residents' Association have created a website for and about the estate (vanbrugh-parkestate.com) including detailed information about the suffragette Emily Wilding Davison who lived in Vanbrugh Park.

At an all-residents' meeting, there was support for adding a plaque to commemorate this. We're aware that this wouldn't be eligible for an English Heritage blue plaque (as the original building no longer exist) but thought that one of the societies concerned with local heritage could help us obtain a plaque that commemorates it as the site of her home. We hope that local amenity societies such as the Westcombe Society will support us in our endeavours.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## New cultural hub in Woolwich

Greenwich Council's ambitious plans for redeveloping the riverfront at Woolwich recently attracted coverage in the London Evening Standard. The council is to invest some £40m in the project.

The plans are for an arts and media hub rivaling the South Bank, covering some 160,000 sq feet, and involves repurposing a series of historic buildings – including the munitions factory that used to house the Heritage Centre.

Local historians are still smarting over the improvised plans for access to records that used to be housed in the Heritage Centre, which also gave space to excellent exhibitions on local history and culture, and wonder why it could not have been included as part of the master plan.

Difficult, perhaps, but not impossible: the building it was in is to be redeveloped as a 4,000-seat performance venue. Also planned is a 600-seat open-air courtyard theatre, and a small 450-seat studio theatre. The intention is to provide rehearsal space for theatre companies and individual artists. Phase 1 covering restoration work

and pop-up theatres received planning permission last summer.

Once the buildings are complete, the council will be setting up the Woolwich Creative District Trust, responsible for overseeing the development and growth of the project, and is seeking trustees.

Ideal candidates will be from the borough and able to demonstrate experience of not-for-profit governance with organisations of similar scale and complexity in the cultural sector, or creative industries. Professionals in the sectors of finance, facilities management, creative arts, law, leisure and hospitality, education and training, marketing and digital transformation are urged to apply.

Cllr Miranda Williams, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and the Third Sector said: "The Woolwich Creative District will create around 400 new jobs and attract investment in the creative industries."

**For an information pack please contact: Volunteer Centre Greenwich Telephone: 020 8317 3817**

## News from the MHA Trust

The Mental Health Activity Trust MHA Trust is closing the doors to its shop in Delacourt Road. The last day of trading will be 29th March 2019, the end of an era. 5 years in the making of the cheapest charity shop in a 20 mile radius, a drop-in for people to come and chat, and a place for lots of activities.

Many people will be shocked by the news.. The MHA Trust shop has been a life-line for many who have worked there and who work there now.

Though the shop will close, the charity will continue to do the great work it has done for the last 7 years. With over 59 people in paid employment and helping over 2000 people with welfare rights, it's a legacy that will need to continue.

Toni Hale the Founder & Director states, "You need to know that within the shop,

the retail environment can only work if there is a team within it. In this industry it is tough to hold on to the team."

The Charity has been working on a recent pilot study this year where it put ten new volunteers into other organisations and businesses. They get the same treatment as other staff; however, there are many more opportunities, and four more volunteers have been offered full-time positions.

Toni Hale told the *WN*: "This is fantastic news for the charity, it needs to move with the times. Having the shop was great and backed up our previous research but this new way will get more people into work quicker. Isn't that our end goal? We are still here to help and support people, as we have been for the last seven years."

**If you need help and support please email [info@mhatrust.org](mailto:info@mhatrust.org)**

## News from Greenwich Park

Having worked at the London Wildlife Centre until last year, Helen Wallis has become Partnership and Community Engagement officer (PACE) in the park.

Her plan is to consult park-users and local communities about a new project, Greenwich Park Revealed, and develop pilot projects for the park.

"We want to cover four themes," said Helen. "They are: biological enhancements and tree replacement; volunteering and training opportunities; landscape restoration; and the Learning Centre."

Public consultations to discuss these themes are to be held from 10.00 am - 4.00 pm near the Pavilion Cafe Bandstand on Great Cross Avenue on these days:

- \* Thursday 21st February
- \* Sunday 24th February
- \* Thursday 11th April
- \* Sunday 14th April.

The consultation process will include information about new volunteering opportunities. These include researchers for new talks and walks, gardening, mobility drivers, education, community archeology and Park Ambassadors to meet and greet visitors. and to give them information about the park.

One interesting development is an investigation by archeologist Graham Keவில் of the construction of the Giant Steps below the Wolf Statue. There has been some concern in the past about soil erosion. This feature dates from the 1660s and was part of Charles II's restoration of the park. The research will form part of a report to Historic England on the history of the Giant Steps, and how to manage the feature in the future.

**To learn more please ring 07817 882135 or email [hwallis@royalpark.org.uk](mailto:hwallis@royalpark.org.uk)**

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## New PLA film & archive

Public access to a unique river and docks archive charting the history of the River Thames over nearly 250 years has been secured following a new agreement between the Museum of London and the Port of London Authority.

relied solely on touch rather than sight to find their way about.

Filling two kilometres of shelving, the archive details the work of the PLA and its predecessors from 1770.

**Members of the Port of London Authority police force testing new life-jackets. Did they sink, or swim?**

(c) PLA



To mark the milestone, the PLA has also issued a new YouTube film about its archive, housed at the Museum of London Docklands since 2003. The film has a diverse cast list, including: Field Marshall Montgomery thanking dockers for keeping the docks operational during World War II.

Giraffes arriving in the docks en route for London Zoo in 1946  
Chipperfield Circus elephants landing in the UK in the 1950s and

The port's first female police officers, recruited in 1954

Also featured is a PLA diver from the 1930s in full protective gear, when their work regularly involved raising wrecks, as well as checking under water structures. Due to the murkiness of the river, they

Parts of it are showcased in a permanent display at the Museum of London, Docklands on West India Quay.

The collection includes more than 40,000 photographs, some dating back to the 1850s, and more than 5,000 boxes of architectural and engineering plans of the docks. In addition, there are 5,000 paintings and drawings, 500 maps, and 350 reels of film, many showing the riggers, stevedores, lightermen, and riggers – and the port's own rat catcher, with his dog.

The archivist, Fiona Keates, said: "The archive's rich content is an invaluable resource for students, academics, and members of the public."

**You can inspect items from the archive that are of interest to them via [portriverarchive@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:portriverarchive@museumoflondon.org.uk)**

## Our local police

The Blackheath & Westcombe Safer Neighbourhood Team, (SNT) is a group of Met police officers dedicated to serving the local community.

Each SNT is made up of officers including at least one Police Sergeant, two Dedicated Ward Officers (PCs) and one Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who are based in your area. These officers are supported in their work by emergency response team officers and additional officers from the wider area.

Your local SNT works closely with local authorities, community leaders, neighbourhood watch schemes and local residents to decide the policing priorities for the area.

On the home page of the Met Police website there is a section that says, 'Find your area'. If you enter your location here it will bring up details of your local SNT. You can also get the latest crime statistics, and advice. Residents can also help with appeals for information and can find out how the SNT is tackling crime in the area.

There is also a section for you to

"Voice your concerns". This section of the website is a place for you to tell the SNT what you're most concerned about in your neighbourhood. The results of this poll will be used to inform on policing priorities. These priorities are discussed and set at regular ward panel meetings, which the team attend. If you would like to find out more about these ward panel meetings, please use the contact details below.

SmartWater (a traceable property marking kit) is currently available for distribution to the following roads: Kidbrooke Grove, Kidbrooke Park Road, Kidbrooke Gardens, Liskeard Gardens, Humber Road, St Johns, Langton Way, Coleraine Road, Heathway, Westcombe Park Road, Westcombe Hill, Glenluce Road and Ulundi Road. Please email the SNT if you live in any of these roads and would like a free-of-charge kit.

**E-mail: [Blackheath.Westcombe.SNT@met.police.uk](mailto:Blackheath.Westcombe.SNT@met.police.uk)  
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# FEATURES

## John Roan School

(cont. from page 1)

The John Roan campaigners firmly believe that the school should stay under local authority control. The campaigning group Parents for John Roan are now calling on our MP, Matt Pennycook, David Gardner and the head, Cath Smith, to do everything they can to halt the academisation process.

Greenwich Council deputy leader and education cabinet member, David Gardner, made these comments to the *WN*:

“As a former long-standing John Roan governor, I know what a special place the school has in the local Westcombe Park community on top of its historic and enduring relationship with Greenwich.

“While it has had some incredibly tough challenges these last few years, I do have confidence that with the support of local parents and the wider community as well as the outstanding leadership of the new Head, Cath Smith, its resilience, spirit, dedication and huge reservoir of talent will pull it through.

“As much as I oppose any forced academisation and the government’s ridiculous legislation, I would strongly urge the Regional Schools Commissioner to take strong account of the school’s traditions, ethos and the need to continue being rooted in its community in the selection of a new sponsor.”

## A Fresh Look At Christianity

St George’s Church is happy to announce the launch of its new course exploring matters of faith entitled: “THE GALILEE COURSE - A fresh look at Christianity for inquiring minds.”

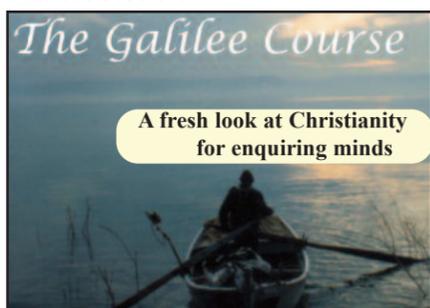
Designed by the Rev Tim Yeager, the course will meet on Thursday nights beginning on the 14th of February, at St George’s Church on Glenluce Road. The format begins with a simple meal at 7:30, followed by a talk with a slide show or video on a key topic, and then discussion in small groups, ending by 9:30 pm.

There will be eight sessions, with the final one on the 4th of April. Participants are encouraged to attend all the sessions, but you are also welcome to attend any one or more of them. It is designed as an introduction to Christianity for the curious, but seeks to offer new insights for more experienced Christians as well.

Bible stories will be examined in the light of their historical and social context, and a variety of perspectives will be offered on questions such as the meaning of the Kingdom of God and the Resurrection, including those of contemporary progressive thinkers.

Participants are invited to explore their own faith questions in a friendly and welcoming environment. The course is free and open to the public.

For more information or to register for the course, contact Rev Tim Yeager at: [tim@stgeorgeswestcombpark.org.uk](mailto:tim@stgeorgeswestcombpark.org.uk) or call: 020 3633 5494.



## A gift from Greenland’s melting ice



These blocks of ice from Greenland by Scandinavian artist Olafur Eliasson were placed outside Tate Modern to demonstrate the reality of Global Warming.

Looking for a New Year Resolution that’s worth keeping? More, that’s really necessary? Look no further!

Last year, global greenhouse-gas emissions reached a record high, and the United Nations released a landmark report saying that nations around the world need to take unprecedented actions to cut their carbon emissions over the next decade. Also, a new report says that ocean warming is accelerating at a 40% higher rate than was thought.

According to a report published in late December by REN\*, Britain leads the world only in the amount it has cut investment in solar and wind energy. And state subsidies to oil and gas continue to distort the market’s slow progress to clean energy.

*The Climate Majority* by Leo Barasi is not about the climate change deniers or the climate change activists. It’s about apathy – about those who may talk about

global warming, but don’t do a great deal about it. Like many of our politicians.

Millions of people know there is a problem, but are not engaged enough to stimulate the changes needed to stop it.

This is the first book to investigate climate apathy – describing how apathy prevents action to stop climate change, and showing how it can be beaten with a political campaigning strategy.

Political leaders from around the globe should be made to realise that it’s an issue that needs to be dealt with much more firmly – certainly more proactively than those attending the recent climate change conference in Poland. If we care, we need to persuade others to care too. If enough people think this way, our politicians will get the message: voters who care about the future of the planet can win elections.

\* *Redes Energéticas Nacionais based in Portugal*

## A drama for those who grow younger, not older

Go to Trieste, and you will see a statue of James Joyce; go to Charlton, SE London and you will see a blue plaque to his friend Aron Schmitz. It’s at 61 Charlton Church Lane.

As we contemplate the leap in the dark that is Brexit, it is so easy to forget the close cultural and historical links between the British Isles and Europe – and role that their citizens have played beyond the countries of their birth.

Born in Trieste (in Austria-Hungary) as Aron Ettore Schmitz to a Jewish German father and an Italian mother, Italo Svevo was one of seven children, and grew up enjoying a passion for literature from a young age, reading Goethe, Schiller, Shakespeare and the classics of Russian and Italian literature. Despite his German name Svevo thought of himself as Italian, and that was the language he wrote in.

Known to some as “the man with the split personality,” Italo Svevo led multiple lives. He was a man of letters, a bank clerk, and the manager of his father-in-

law’s paint factory first in Trieste, and later in Charlton. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Charlton Football Club, the Addicks, and he was featured in the *WN* in 2017\*.

*As a Man Grows Younger* is a play for one voice by Howard Colyer a former resident of Vanbrugh Park. What does a man think as he waits for a knock on the door by the Fascist secret police? The play is set in Italy in the 1920s, and is inspired by the friendship between two writers – Svevo and James Joyce, and their roads from obscurity to fame.

[\* See the *WN* for July/August 2017 p.4 for an article on Italo Svevo by Irena Morvai Hill and Vesna Domany Hardy.]  
The play is produced by Irena Hill of In-Words, formerly of Foyle Road – and Trieste. The play is on at the Brockley Jack, 40 Brockley Road London SE24 2DH from Tuesday 19th - Sat. 23rd Feb at 7.30 pm Tickets £16 | £13 concs. on line from [brockleyjack.co.uk](http://brockleyjack.co.uk), or phone 0333 666 3366 (£1.50 booking fee for phone sales only.)

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## Facing up to Obesity

A recent report in the *Mercury* highlighted the problem of childhood obesity. It quotes a Public Health England report indicating that six of the ten councils with the highest levels of childhood obesity are in South London: Greenwich, Lewisham and Bexley are all above the national average. Greenwich has the third highest obesity rates in London.

In Greenwich over 40% of children are overweight. In England, the average for 11-year-olds is 33% – which is already unacceptably high. In 2017, Greenwich was among the first London boroughs to launch a Sugar Smart scheme, which asked local institutions to take action to promote healthier, lower-sugar alternatives and it gained support from 18 organisations. The council is now planning to reduce obesity in the borough through new well-being strategies, and a specific healthy weight action plan.

Parents and guardians can play an important role, but much can be done through improved dietary requirements for school meals, and building physical activities into the school day.

However, while the Borough might be able to influence matters in local authority schools, there is no such leverage available in schools that have been academised.

### What about adults?

The hard work to tackle obesity in Greenwich has been recognised with the Best Practice award 2017 from the Association for the Study Of Obesity. The Bariatric Consultancy, which delivers the service on behalf of Greenwich CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group), has been singled out for praise.

Increasing obesity is directly linked to a rise in Type 2 diabetes and is a major risk factor in developing certain cancers.

The 4 healthy weight Greenwich is a specialist weight management service for patients with severe and complex morbid obesity. The service is accessed by 400 patients a year.

Patients accepted onto the programme have 15 months intensive support (a three month rigorous treatment phase followed by a maintenance plan). Dr Ellen Wright, Clinical Chair of NHS Greenwich CCG said: “It can be difficult for people who are overweight to seek help.”

This service has been designed as an alternative treatment to weight-loss surgery. It is located in GP surgeries and community locations across the borough of Greenwich, including: Eltham Community Hospital, Gallions Reach, Millennium Village Peninsula Practice, Charlton Carers. For information on how to cope with obesity, visit the NHS Choices website.



# WHAT'S ON



## ARTS

**THE ARTS SOCIETY, GREENWICH**  
King William Court, Univ. of Greenwich  
All lectures start at 7.45. Wine served from 7.15.  
**Monday 11th February 2019: WOMEN BEHIND THE LENS** - Talk by Brian Stater  
Visitors welcome, please pay at the door  
**THE ARTS SOCIETY, BLACKHEATH**  
**Thurs. 28th Feb. Doug Gillan on HIDDEN CANVASSES: STREET ART AND THE CITY** 2.00pm.  
with tea and coffee, and lectures at 2.30. Venue is St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park Blackheath  
Visitors welcome, please pay on the door.  
**THE GREENWICH GALLERY**  
Until Feb 17th: **NICK RAYNSFORD** - Visual Geometry. More stunning photographs from our former MP Linear House, Peyton Place, London SE10 8RS [www.thegreenwichgallery.com](http://www.thegreenwichgallery.com)  
**THE BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY**  
The next Exhibition of artists' work is at West Greenwich Library, 146, Greenwich High Road E10 8NN **29th Jan. - to 1st March**. Viewing during normal Library hours - daily except Monday mornings, Wednesdays and Sundays.

## CHILDREN & FAMILY

**GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL**  
**2nd - 3rd Feb THE SINGING MERMAID**  
Feb. 9th - 10th **OSKAR'S AMAZING ADVENTURE**. A puppy looks for friendship in the Alps  
**Feb 21st. ILLUSION CONFUSION**  
**Feb 22nd MIRROR, MIRROR**  
**THE ALBANY, DEPTFORD**  
Friday 1 February, 7pm & Sunday 3 February, 1pm & 3pm. £7 / £24 family ticket. Ages 9+.  
**CHINA PLATE PRESENTS**  
**ROMEO & JULIET - MAD BLOOD STIRRING**  
The audience is guided through the story in contemporary language spoken by our narrator – the Friar. Featuring live music and projection  
**Saturday 9 February (Canada Water Theatre) & Sunday 24 March (The Albany), 1pm & 3pm. £7 / £24 family ticket. Ages 3+.** **LYNGO THEATRE PRESENTS JACK AND THE BEANSTALK**  
Expect lots of surprises from Cbeebies's Patrick Lynch as he tells the classic fairy tale  
**Sunday 10th. Feb., 1pm & 3.00pm. £7 / £24 family ticket. TARA ARTS & POLKA THEATRE Present THREE SAT UNDER THE BANYAN TREE**  
Wonderous animal stories brought to life with gorgeous masks, movement and music. Based on The Panchatantra – India's Aesop's Fables. Ages 7+  
**BLACKHEATH HALLS**  
**Sat 9th Feb 1.15 pm** The Walrus and the Carpenter £6 Ages 4+ Parental guidance  
**Sat 23rd Feb. 11.00am & 3.00pm** Hansel and Gretel £8.50 Ages 3+  
**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 for more details, [www.selondondads.org.uk](http://www.selondondads.org.uk)

## THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

**Sat 16th Feb Members and Helpers Party**  
**Sat March 16th - Daffodil Tea**  
**Sat 20th April - Easter Egg Hunt in Mycenae gardens**  
**Sun 15th Sept - Macmillan Walk**  
**Fri 27th Sept - Macmillan Coffee Morning**  
**Sat 26th Oct - Quiz Night**

## COMMUNITY

**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. Newcomers welcome. Bridge lessons on Tuesday evenings 7.15 pm. Tel. Ivy 8293 5354  
**SUNDAYS AT SUNFIELDS at Sunfields Methodist Church 95 Old Dover Road, Blackheath SE3 8SJ**  
**Lunch! 1.00 - 4.00 pm First Sunday every month.** ALL older people and their carers are welcome FREE, so please do just come along

## THEATRE and PERFORMANCE

**THE GREENWICH THEATRE, Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES Box Office: 8858 7755**  
**Feb 1st-3rd THE SHY MANIFESTO**  
**Feb 5th - 16th THE TEMPEST** by W. Shakespeare  
**Feb 17th JOE SOLO** comical, or political...?  
**Feb 19th ROUSE YE WOMEN**  
**25th - 28th Feb. THE SHROUD MAKER** Gallows humour from Gaza  
**March 1st - 3rd THE ODYSSEY** with the Pantaloons  
**THE ALBANY, DEPTFORD**  
With 3 for 2 ticket offer.  
**Thurs. 14 / Fri. 15th Feb. 7pm.**  
**Luca Rutherford's POLITICAL PARTY**  
Luca is fed up with politicians. So she is throwing a party. A political party. £10 / £8. Ages 14+.  
**Tues. 26th & Wednesday 27th Feb. 7.30pm.**  
**THE HEAD WRAP DIARIES** : Three fierce and witty female characterstell us some stories: Dance theatre £14 / £10. Ages 5+  
**Fri 1st March, 7.30pm, Sat. 2nd March, 2.00pm & 7.30pm.** 'FLIGHTPATHS' The Goze were blind storytellers who travelled mediaeval Japan making a living from their epic tales. In this production, three visually impaired performers from Japan, Nigeria and the US follow their example to tell contemporary stories of migration to the UK. £14 / £10. Ages 14+  
**All shows feature an integrated audio description and you can book a free, pre-show touch tour.**

**THE ALEXANDRA PLAYERS**  
**Feb 20th - 23rd 8.00pm at The Alexandra Hall, Bramshot Avenue. DROWNING ON DRY LAND** by Sir Alan Ayckbourn. Charlie Conrad is a celebrity famous for just being a celebrity. Then he meets Marsha... and all that fame turns to dust.  
**Box Office 07867 627 987 £9.00 | £8.00**

## SPOKEN WORD

**BLACKHEATH HALLS**  
**Feb 12th 7.30 pm** Richard Upton lectures on Regeneration Rethought. See page 2.  
**Wed 13th Feb. 8.00pm** Henry Macrory gives a talk on Ultimate Folly: The Rises and Falls of Whitaker Wright £10 inc glass of wine.  
**Sat 2nd March 8.00pm** Killing Time with Jo Caulfield A funny Ozzie perspective on life in Oz and UK Tickets £15.00  
**IN-WORDS**  
**Feb. 19th-23rd at The Brockley Jack Studio:** a new venture for Irena as producer of a dramatic monologue written by Howard Colyer and directed by Kate Bannister, *As a Man Grows Younger* - on being a writer under the fascist regime in 1920s Italy, and being friends with James Joyce... Tickets £12.50. Available online through: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/in-words-1td](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/in-words-1td)  
Visit [in-words.co.uk](http://in-words.co.uk) for more information.  
**INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**19th Feb. 7.30pm** David Cuffley talks on Discovering history of a house - case study: Salutation Alley Woolwich Meeting in the Old Bakehouse, behind Age Exchange.  
**BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFC SOCIETY**  
**19th Feb. 7.30pm** Old Bakehouse, SAGE Exchange, Bennett Park David Cuffley. Discovering history of a house -case study Salutation Alley Woolwich

## MYCENAE HOUSE LIVE EVENTS: February

**MYCENAE HOUSE, Mycenae Road SE3**  
**Fri 1st Feb 6.30pm - A Night of Young Musicians.** Featuring Casima, Leon Tilbrook and Cypher. £3.  
**Thurs 7th Feb 7.30pm - Steve Knightly. Roadworks Tour 2019 - more songs & stories from the road.** £18.  
**Fri 8th Feb 8pm - JazzNights.** Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.  
**Fri 15th Feb 7.30pm - Global Fusion Chinese New Year Event.** Great night of dancing, singing and lots of fun!  
**Sat 23rd Feb 1pm - Total SILC Workshop.** Learn a groundbreaking new dance syllabus dedicated to a vast & eclectic range of slow-tempo, contemporary music. £30.

For further information visit [www.mycenaehouse.co.uk](http://www.mycenaehouse.co.uk)

## MUSIC

**BLACKHEATH HALLS**  
**Box office: 020 8463 0100**  
**Mon 4th. Feb 1.10pm** GODDESS OF BEAUTY 1.10pm. Iuno Connolly soprano & Dylan Perez piano perform Brahms etc. Free, donations.  
**Wed 6th Feb. 7.30pm** Great Hall Trinity Laban Soloists Competition Final  
**Fri 8th Feb. 7.30** Great Hall SHAPESHIFTER CONCERT Beethoven Symphony No. 8, and other works.. Free, but booking required.  
**Sun 10th. Feb. 11.00 am** Recital room Yoanna Prodanova & Mihai Ritiviou perform Faure, Janáček & Chopin £10 | £8.00  
**Thu 21st Feb. & Fri 22nd Feb.** Trinity Laban perform a cross-disciplinary festival with music and dance 2.00 & 7.00pm Free, booking required.  
**Sun. 24th Feb. 3.00 pm** FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE Stuart Jackson tenor & Jocelyn Freeman piano perform Liszt's *Petrarch Sonnets*, plus Tosti, Britten Prokofiev and Rachmaninov  
**Mon 25th Feb 1.10 pm** Annie Yim plays Beethoven, etc. Free, but a retiring donation.  
**Wed 27th Feb. 6.00pm** Alexander Roche, guitar, plays de Falla, Villa-Lobos & Toru Takemitsu. Free, booking required.  
**Fri March 1st. 6.00pm** Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra perform Dvořák's The Wild Dove and his The Water Goblin

**BLACKHEATH MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP: THE BARD AT BLACKHEATH**  
Matthew Taylor Lectures on music inspired by the works of Shakespeare  
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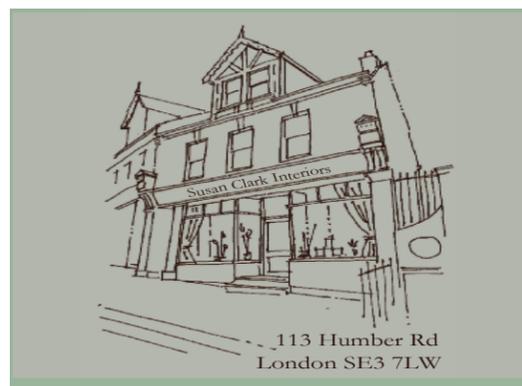
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# FEATURES

## John Kemmis – The Children’s Champion

We are very sad to report the death on December 12th. of local resident John Kemmis. The *WN* pays tribute to his life in an interview carried out shortly before he died.

There was a time when children at risk were shunted around from care home to foster family, then back to care home, another foster family ..... and so on: without being consulted on what they wanted, or needed. The System was In Charge.

The National Charity Voice (formerly The Voice for the Child in Care (VCC) started to change all that – largely through the efforts of its second executive director, our neighbour, John Kemmis.

For more than 30 years, VCC provided specialist advice and training services for professionals in the care field with the aim of helping children give voice to their own needs. They were thus enabled to tell the children’s courts in their own words that a given children’s home had not served their needs well; or that they did not want to be split up from their sibling(s); or that they did not want to live with a parent, step-parent or guardian that the System might have deemed appropriate; or that their foster home was not working out well.

It was largely through the dedication, and persistence, of John Kemmis that VCC achieved what has now become (almost) normal in some areas, at least. How many of us neighbours are aware of all the good work he has done?

John and his wife Sue have lived in Greenwich since 1972, for ten years or so on Royal Hill, and then in Westcombe Park. Educated at Downside, and then Oxford, John acknowledges that he comes from a privileged background – yet he has dedicated his life to the welfare of children. The *WN* asked how he got this urge to serve society?

“I think it started in primary school, where I was bullied by a sadistic teacher,” says John. “Ever since then, I have had this urge to stick up for the underdog.”

### Teaching in Poplar

So it was that on leaving Oxford, John became a supply teacher in Poplar; this gave him an insight at first hand into some of the serious issues that face many members of society: for example, children who are poorly educated, and who have correspondingly poor expectations.

“Many of the secondary school children I taught could barely read and write,” he said. “I went to the headteacher and said we needed to tell the feeder schools – the local primary schools – that they needed to do something about it.”

As a fresh young supply teacher, his voice fell on deaf ears, so he decided to take matters into his own hands. He set up literacy classes, run by volunteers. He also set about broadening the children’s horizons, and raising the consciousness of the children as to what was possible: by organising extra-curricular activities: visits to cinemas and theatres, picnics and camping trips, and the like. John even managed to persuade Michael Caine to visit the school – an ideal role-model.

### Social work

However, it was clear that the problems facing the schoolchildren were more deep-rooted than education, and he enrolled on a social workers’ course in Hull to train as a child care officer. There he met his wife Sue, a teacher of music and French, who has been a stalwart supporter in all his endeavours. For some years John worked as a social worker and then team leader in both Wandsworth and Greenwich.



He eventually became an area manager in Wandsworth, where his brief became much wider than children’s issues, but he retained a special interest in children’s welfare. It seemed to him that there was a need for systemic change that could only be dealt with politically; which is why he joined Voice for the Child in Care (VCC) where he became Chief Executive.

Since then, the organisation has mutated, first into Voice, and then joining the Coram group of charities to become Coram Voice. But the main function remains the same: to offer help (called advocacy) to young people who are living in care or have recently left care as well as providing support to young offenders in the prison system. They can also help children if they cannot live at home any more and feel they need extra support and services. Currently, there are about 68,000 children and young people reliant on the state for their care and wellbeing; 378,000 more need some level of support from children’s services.

### The impact of austerity

The government’s austerity measures have created an increasing need for the work of such organisations. John says:

“In the face of the closure of youth provision, children’s centres and many community-based voluntary organisations, together with changes in welfare benefits, we should not be surprised by the rise in knife crime and increasing numbers of children coming into care.”

The children’s advocacy services remain very patchy across the country; a new campaign led by **Article 39**, spearheaded by some 40 organisations, including Coram Voice, has been launched to ensure that children and young people can access an independent advocate whenever needed.

Independent advocates are necessary, because advocates employed by the state or local authorities can be placed under some pressure (due to financial constraints and other factors) not to “rock the boat”. In John’s words: “So many decisions are driven by money at the expense of what the child or you person really needs.

**Article 39** formed in 2015 and became registered with the Charity Commission in March 2016. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child grants children living apart from their families the right to special protection and assistance. Our focus is on making sure children who suffer abuse and neglect are able to recover in environments which nurture their health, self-respect and dignity.  
<https://article39.org.uk/donate/>

“A good advocate can ensure a child is properly heard and their rights respected. They also give children an independent person to turn to when boxed in, feeling isolated, or, in extreme cases, are being abused.”

I asked John what he was most proud of in his life. He thought for a moment, and then said: “First my family (he and Sue have four children and nine grandchildren); and then, of course, VCC.”

Of course. N.G.

### A case study

*“I could not live with my mother.”*

*Sonya is fifteen and an only child. She has never known her father. Her mother is a Jehovah’s Witness, and very strict. Sonya’s advocate tells her story.*

Sonya was more or less a prisoner in her town home, forbidden to socialise after school or at weekends. When her mother went out she would lock up the TV, the video and the telephone so Sonya couldn’t use them.

Sonya had gone to Social Services many times asking to be put into care. Sometimes they said no, other times they said if she went home they would find something. But they never did.

Sonya could not carry on living with her mother so she left. After seven months, staying with friends and her boyfriend’s family, she found herself homeless.

### Reaching a compromise

She contacted Social Services and was told about a Refuge. She was also put in touch with VCC and given an advocate.

A meeting was arranged with Social Services, who still refused to find her a place in a home or with a foster family. Instead a compromise was arranged. Social Services agreed to fund Sonya to stay with a family she knew through some friends of hers. Sonya agreed to this. Social Services agreed to speak to her mother about the arrangement. Sonya agreed to meet her mother at a meeting with Social Services for a “reconciliation” meeting.

### New family

Sonya moved to the new family. She has managed to continue at her school and is studying for nine GCSEs. She hopes that her relationship with her mother will eventually be repaired. (*Sonya is not her real name.*)

[From *Shout to be heard* - Stories from Young People in Care. Published by VCC 1998, edited by Tamsin Growney]

## When we moved here Gabi Marston

When we mentioned to our friends in North West London in the late fifties that we were planning to move to South East London, the news was met with disparaging remarks.

Then, as now, there was a condescending attitude, with the Thames as the dividing boundary.

Our reasons for moving were: lower house prices, the Royal Park, green spaces, the river, historic buildings, good schools, and easy access to the Kent countryside.

While none of these advantages have diminished, after sixty years here I want to add yet another: the kindness and consideration shown to me in my eighties by people, particularly at the Standard and in East Greenwich.

On shopping trips to the nearby facilities, I am almost invariably offered help with opening and holding open the doors of shops (these usually have strong closing springs) and enquiries if I need help with loading my “walker” into the boot of my car. So I would like to thank all these unknown people for adding to the joy of living in SE3

*Gabi also sent in this poem - “Inspired,” she says, “by Wendy Cope and the arrival of ‘A Christmas Letter’...”*

### Grandchildren

Can be a joy  
No matter whether  
They be girl or boy.  
But those I’ve never  
Clapped eyes on  
Or seen  
On the horizon?

Though to boast of them  
Is endemic,  
My interest must be  
Academic.

Of course mine  
Are fine  
So beautiful  
And clever ...  
To tell you about them  
Would take forever  
So I’ll refrain....

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

## To UPVC or not to UPVC?

MAGGIE GRAVELLE looks at the pros and cons

Much of Westcombe Park lies in a conservation area with properties from the late Victorian and Edwardian periods.

The Council's Westcombe Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2010, which informs planning decisions, discourages the replacement of timber window frames and doors with uPVC.

It states that, "Many of the Victorian and Edwardian buildings have retained their original timber sash and mullioned windows. However a few have been replaced with unsympathetic uPVC frames."

Their Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2016 suggests, "Extensions should respect the original architectural features and detailing of the dwelling and should be designed to complement the dwelling in terms of windows, doors, openings, roofs and materials.

"UPVC replacement windows and doors will be discouraged where they would be detrimental to the character of a conservation area."

Many choose uPVC (which stands for unplasticized polyvinylchloride) because it is advertised as being cheaper, energy efficient and more durable than timber.

However, the Westcombe Society often opposes planning applications that include uPVC replacement frames on the grounds that they are unsound environmentally, unsustainable and unsightly.

The Westcombe Society's environment committee are also working with the Council to apply for an Article 4 Directive: this would increase planning powers, including replacement windows and doors, in the conservation area.

### Cost and durability

Manufacturers often argue that uPVC is cheaper or similar in cost to replacement

timber frames but the Wood Window Alliance claim that 'lifetime cost', taking into account the durability of wood, makes uPVC more expensive than timber. This is disputed by some manufacturers and by the Swiss Institute for Testing Materials, which claimed in 1996 that there was no difference in durability.

### Energy conservation

A consideration by householders choosing replacement windows is often energy conservation. Double glazed units are often uPVC and it is claimed that uPVC tends to be more energy efficient. All materials can be made into double glazed units and the energy efficiency depends on the type of glass, the gap between the panes and what fills this gap rather than on the material of the frame.

### Manufacturing process

To date this is one of the main areas of difference between the two materials. The production of plastic is environmentally damaging, with some research claiming that 43% of uPVC is made of (non-renewable) oil products and that the waste products, some of which are toxic, are mainly disposed of in landfill. It also takes more energy to manufacture plastic than timber.

Manufacturers of uPVC claim that recent improvements in production have reduced the negative environmental effects. They also argue that timber is not as well managed or as sustainable as is sometimes maintained.

### Sustainability

Timber, particularly fast-growing soft wood, is more sustainable than plastic. In general plastic is not easily recycled whereas timber is biodegradable.

However, the Energy Saving Trust argue that "uPVC frames last a long time

and may be recycled." However, if uPVC is disposed of by burning, it gives off toxic fumes.

### Appearance maintenance and alterability

One reason why many conservation areas oppose the use of uPVC windows and doors is that they do not match with the style of historic buildings.

Since plastic is not as strong as timber the window frames have to be thicker in order to support the same area of glass. uPVC degrades more rapidly in sunlight than timber and cannot easily be mended if damaged.

In addition, uPVC cannot be painted and the range of colours is very limited. However, manufacturers are increasing the range of styles of windows they produce and many of them are very similar in appearance to the historic originals.

So there are advantages and disadvantages to uPVC, and obtaining independent advice is not easy. Some websites such as those listed below might help in taking decisions:

<http://www.haysomwardmiller.co.uk/resources/upvc.pdf>

<https://sashwindowexperts.com/our-services/replacement-or-restoration/>

[https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-06/windows\\_0305.pdf](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-06/windows_0305.pdf)

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

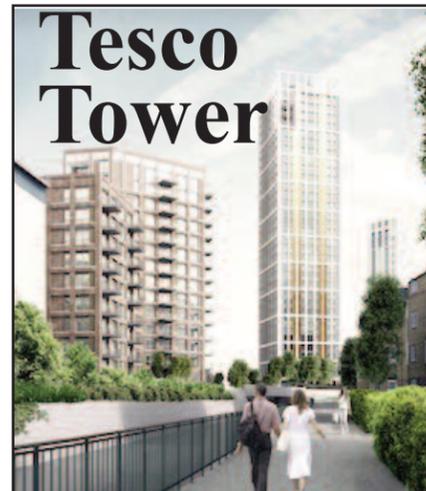
<http://www.tangram.co.uk/TI-Glazing-Windows.pdf> (n.b this is a report from 2004)

<http://www.greenne.com/sustainable-design-and-manufacture-timber-vs-upvc-window-frames/>

<https://sunhomedesign.wordpress.com/tag/vinyl-window-frame-environmental-issues/>

<https://www.ribaproductselector.com>

<https://www.safestyle-windows.co.uk/ask-an-expert/useful-information-and-top-tips>



There are occasions when planning decisions outside our immediate area have an impact on Westcombe Park. One such is the application to build a 34-storey block of flats on the site of the former Tesco car park in Lewisham.

A representative of the WS environment committee attended the planning meeting in December in order to support the local opposition to this development.

The proposal, which had been rejected in April, is for what Meyer Homes call a 'marker' building which, they argue, will form a focal point for the development of the townscape. Lewisham is identified in the Mayor's London Plan as a possible 'town centre of Metropolitan importance' and this proposal would be part of the continuing growth of the area.

Local objectors argued that little in the proposal had changed since the earlier rejection and that the height of the tower was excessive. Those residents who live closest to the building were eloquent in their criticisms, demonstrating how overpowering and obtrusive it would be.

There were strong concerns too about housing provision: in the Conington Road development, only 20% of the units were affordable, and only 7% available for social rent. There are some 10,000 people on the housing waiting list in Lewisham.

The Westcombe Society, on behalf of residents and the BJWP, objected to the impact that the tower would have on the 'open and natural aspect' of views across the heath. However, the application was approved by a small majority. M.G.

## The Council's Transport plans Maggie Gravelle

Greenwich's Local Implementation Plan – basically the Royal Borough's required response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy – was a big document with very little time to respond.

In its response, the Westcombe Society said

\* the plan was very piecemeal and it  
\* did not take account of local topography, particularly the steep hills which are characteristic of much of Greenwich.

### Radical plans for Greenwich?

Under new plans the town centre in Greenwich could lose its current one-way system. The plan would be to turn College Approach and the northern half of King William Walk, on the north and east side of Greenwich Market, into a preserve for pedestrians, with a dedicated cycle track.

Nelson Road and Greenwich Church Street, to the south and west of Greenwich Market, would become two-way streets with pavements widened to accommodate more pedestrians.

The scheme would have to be approved by the Mayor's Office in City Hall.

Greenwich Council is asking for public feedback on the proposals on a dedicated website:

[greenwichtowncentreproposals.commonplace.is](http://greenwichtowncentreproposals.commonplace.is)

## Rent-a-Bike scheme takes off

You can now borrow an e-bike for only £10 a month, as part of a scheme to improve air quality and get people active.

E-Z Cycle allows you to ride a pedal-assisted e-bike - to give you a boost up hills or when starting off from junctions. They are a great way to return to cycling if you haven't done so for a while, or if you have health conditions that make riding a regular bike tricky.

Following a successful trial in the Low Emission Neighbourhood of Greenwich West and Peninsula wards last year, the Council and Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) are expanding the scheme to all residents in Royal Greenwich.

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport, said: "This is one of a wide range of measures we're taking to improve air quality across the Royal Borough.

"As well as helping more people try out cycling, which is a great way to take more exercise, the E-Z Cycle e-bike hire scheme will help reduce traffic," she said.

Deb Browne, CACT's Head of Health Improvement, said: "We are delighted to be supporting this project and very much looking forward to the first session. We know that there are many benefits to be enjoyed through cycling, including increased cardiovascular strength, muscle

strength and flexibility, improved joint mobility, and decreased stress levels - the list goes on, really.

"Our Health Improvement advisers will be on hand to provide one-to-one support to everyone who collects and drops off a bike and will be able to inform residents how they can keep cycling."

E-Z Cycle is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in the Royal Borough of Greenwich aged over 18. The £10 cost is to cover insurance for a month.

Loan sessions, where you will collect your e-bike and do some training, take place twice per month:

\* on the fourth Saturday of each month at Charlton Athletic FC Training Ground, Sparrows Lane SE9 2JR

\* on the second Sunday of each month at The Valley stadium, Floyd Road SE7 8BL

The first session was on Saturday 26th January, 1-4 pm, at Charlton Athletic FC Training Ground, Sparrows Lane SE9 2JR.

You can also have the option to buy an e-bike at a discounted rate after taking part. E-Z Cycle is a Royal Borough of Greenwich scheme, part of the Sharing Cities programme and the Mayor of London's Air Quality Fund.

Want to book a bike? Visit [cact.org.uk/Ez-Bike-Loan-Scheme](http://cact.org.uk/Ez-Bike-Loan-Scheme)

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(See also <http://www.westcombesociety.org/>)

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In rear garden, coppice hazel.

## Has education lost its way?

'Education' actually means the induction of youth into the core of the historic classless culture. This isn't simple. We need first to de-toxify it by removing ancient strands of imperialism, sexism and racism. We need second to energise it by adding new, enduring stuff – modelling with digital electronics. Many educationalists lean towards the left and they conflate the historic classless culture with the current Status Quo – which they hate. The historic classless culture of the UK is about common law, commonsense, and a freedom to think deeply which was stamped out in most other countries. This is needed.

A society which neglects its core values falls apart. The P E R Group websites: [www.philosophyforeducation.co.uk](http://www.philosophyforeducation.co.uk). [www.perprospero.co.uk](http://www.perprospero.co.uk)

  
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