

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 25 November

Knit and natter + tea and cake

2.00 – 4.00 pm at St Richard's Hall

See page 8 (below)

Tuesday 2 December

Knit and natter + tea and cake

2.00 – 4.00 pm at St Richard's Hall

See page 8 (below)

Saturday 6 December

CCRA Christmas Social

4.00 – 7.00 at St Richard's Hall

Monday 15 December

Carol singing

Meet up at 6.45 at 26 Wellington Gardens

Warming refreshments for singers around 9.00

Thursday 18 December

Carol singing

Meet up at 6.45 at 26 Wellington Gardens

Warming refreshments for singers around 9.00

Saturday 28 February tbc

Quiz night

7.30 – 10.00 at St Richard's Hall

Classified Ads

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- Panel ads containing up to 20 words, contact detail and an image/logo cost from £30 for one insertion or £100 for four.

Christmas is coming!

Start your Christmas celebrations with CCRA's Crackling Christmas social on Saturday 6 December at St Richard's Hall from 4-7 pm. There will be live music including community carol singing, stalls selling decorations and presents, plus a cake stall, tombola and raffle. Seasonal refreshments will include mince pies, mulled wine, soft drinks and cakes. See you there! You can book a table to sell decorations, craft items etc for just £5. Offers of help gratefully received. Further details from Chris or Linda on 020 8858 7377.



Calling Knitters (and 'crafty folk')

'Knit and Natter' is CCRA's latest interest group. We have met four times to bring together people who can knit or want to learn, to raise funds for an Age Concern campaign. 'Innocent Smoothies' encourages knitters to produce little 'hats' to decorate their juice bottles, promising a 25p donation to the charity for each hat sold, to support local branches in providing services to senior citizens, who often need a little extra help during the winter. The CCRA group made a staggering 234 little hats, including 60 sent by a resident's mother from Denmark!

The group is planning more events/projects so why not come along for cups of tea, scintillating conversation and a craft or two. You don't have to be able to knit. If you are interested in crafty activities come and share your talents.

Further details this page. Check out the CCRA Website: <http://www.charltonresidents.org> for forthcoming dates and pictures of the hats.

Worried about Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is highly prevalent in South East London. It accounts for 15-25% of all recorded violent crime – and a lot more goes unrecorded. It can include mental, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and violence. Repeated shouting and banging coming from a neighbour's house can be a sign of domestic violence and although the causes may be complex such as mental health issues or anti-social behaviour the end result can be devastating for all involved. Just because it doesn't show, doesn't mean it doesn't matter.

In an advertising campaign, the Metropolitan Police are urging neighbours to report domestic violence rather than keep quiet. Their message is: 'You make the call, we'll make it stop.' They advise that if you suspect an assault is happening, phone the police on 999. Be careful not to put yourself in any danger. If you are unsure and there is no immediate danger, you can seek advice from the Domestic Violence Hotline (24 hours): Local : 0208921834 National : 0808200247

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine, should be emailed to grapevine@charltonresidents.org by 12 January. Alternatively phone Linda Pound on 0208 858 7377, Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697 or Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034.



CCRA's newly elected officers: l to r: David Gayther (treasurer), Jasbir Dhesi (secretary), Brenda Taggart (chair), Martina Keating (vice chair) pictured outside St Richard's Hall

St Richard's - an asset of community value

St Richard's Hall, in Swallowfield Road, has been granted Asset of Community Value (ACV) status, following CCRA's application to Greenwich council. We are delighted to report this as St Richard's Hall is at the heart of our community and a very important focus for social events.

St Luke's Church (which is responsible for St Richard's Hall) has recently had a major problem as the ceiling in the central nave has collapsed. Work has begun to repair the ceiling and is scheduled to be completed in November. At the same time St. Richard's Hall has developed a leak over the porch which it is estimated will cost around £5,000 to repair. The church wardens have asked CCRA whether we would be willing to contribute to the cost of the repair. With

this aim we would like to put on some fund-raising events. Our area is full of talented people. If any of you have a good idea for fundraising we'd be delighted to hear from you (contact details on page 8).

As reported in the last Grapevine, Charlton football stadium and the White Swan in Charlton Village also have ACV status. Many of you will be aware that Punch Taverns are planning to sell The White Swan. If no one registers an interest in bidding for it the Brewery will be able to put it on the market. If however, a community group declares that they intend to bid for it, there will be a delay of six months to enable the community to put together a plan that would enable them to buy the property. Even then Punch Taverns would not be compelled to sell to a community group but it would at least give time to the community to put together a viable plan. The Charlton Society has informed Greenwich Council that it wishes to bid for the pub. There are as yet no details of the bid but you can contact Charlton Society at charltonchampion.co.uk/tag/charlton-society/.

STOP PRESS

Christmas is coming! Come and celebrate. When? Saturday, 6 December from 4.00 to 7.00pm. Where? St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road For full details see page 8!



Do you have children? Do you have respiratory problems? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, read page 2 and find out about the problem of poor air quality in this area.

Take a deep breath...

Let's talk about air quality

Whatever your views on the Silvertown Tunnel, something we can all agree on is that air quality is a serious problem.

Prolonged exposure to air pollution causes respiratory problems and can lead to cancer. It can affect the development of children's lungs and elderly people are likely to be adversely affected. In many parts of Charlton (and Greenwich) air quality does not meet the levels considered safe under European law.

Greenwich Council has been testing air quality since 2005 but in 2010 stopped reporting its findings. A Freedom of Information request shows that since testing began in Greenwich, levels of pollution along the length of the Woolwich Road but especially at the flyover have been consistently well above the legal limit.

Children walking to school in Charlton face a level of 104 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (compared with 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for nitrogen oxides which is the European legal limit). Levels outside Fossdene school (and other local schools) are also significantly higher than that level.

CCRA is to undertake an independent survey of air quality early in the New Year when air is likely to be at its most pernicious. We have been fortunate to receive donations to cover the cost of the diffusion tubes which will be dotted around the CCRA area to test air quality measuring nitrogen oxide.

If further funds allow, the exercise may be repeated later next year for comparison. Analysis will be performed by an independent laboratory although 'No to Silvertown Tunnel' (<http://www.silvertowntunnel.co.uk>) is facilitating the procedure. Other local groups are also planning to participate.

We will need volunteers to help attach and collect diffusion tubes next year. If you can help, just contact one of the editors (contact details page 8). You might like to buy your own tube to test air quality outside your house – tubes (including analysis) are just £7 each. When we have our results we'll decide on our next steps.

Mercurial write up

Check out the weekly Mercury which now carries a write up of CCRA's events and interests. Joy Ogden, one of Grapevine's editors, would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions about interesting stories in the CCRA area for inclusion. Ring Joy on 0208 293 3034 or email joy.ogden@btopenworld.com

Letter to Grapevine

I enjoyed your piece in Grapevine (Vintage 30: 'In praise of bridges'), and agree with its thrust.


However, I think you need to be circumspect in talking up the advantages of bridges for cyclists and pedestrians. Any bridge out here has to be 50m high, and the plans for Gallions Reach seem to imply access ramps of about 500m. That's a 10% slope, roughly Shooters Hill from the lights up to the top. Even a 1 km ramp gives you 5%, maybe the lower half of that hill. Those sorts of inclines may be cycle-accessible, but I'm not sure they're bike-friendly.

Clearly lifts could be provided, but you then discover the other truth - high bridges are always really windy. I'd build, and toll, Gallions Reach. I'd ride over it, but I'm not sure how many of us there'd be up there. And I wouldn't want to lose the cycle access on the Dartford crossings.

Duncan Alexander



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Drilling down through the pros and cons of a new Silvertown Tunnel...



Local residents may be aware of proposals for a new Silvertown Tunnel under the Thames linking the Royal Docks with the Greenwich Peninsula. A number of local amenity groups, including the Charlton Society and the Westcombe Society have taken a position on this, and it has been proposed that CCRA might do the same, so we can influence the debate.

There are arguments for and against a new tunnel. Demand to cross the river in Greenwich now exceeds the Blackwall Tunnel's capacity, which leads to traffic queues waiting to enter it. This leads to congestion in surrounding roads, and has an adverse impact on local air quality. The Silvertown Tunnel has been proposed to provide extra capacity and ease these flows, particularly as demand for cross-river traffic is expected to increase as London's population grows.

However, some studies show a new tunnel would attract additional traffic into the area to cross the river at this point. Some critics say that additional traffic will increase congestion on the A102 and A2 through Greenwich, Kidbrooke, Eltham, Bexleyheath and beyond, and exacerbate the poor air quality, including that in the Charlton area. It has been noted that a new tunnel would allow easy access for Kent car commuters to access Canary Wharf as well as to the Royal Docks.

Only 14% of traffic using the tunnel comes from Greenwich – so local council tax payers will be paying fines for poor air quality on behalf of the remaining 86% of tunnel users.

Transport for London (TfL) proposes introducing a toll, broadly similar to those of the Dartford crossings (currently £2.50 for a car, though there could be a premium for peak time) for both the Blackwall Tunnel and the Silvertown Tunnel once completed. It says the charge is necessary to manage demand for the tunnels and to ensure the local road network can accommodate future traffic levels once the new tunnel is in place. This suggests that TfL recognises the concerns

about attracting more traffic into the area and plans to manage it by charging. The estimated cost of building the tunnel is £750m. Construction could start in late 2017 and the earliest the tunnel could be open to traffic is 2021/2022.

There are other options for additional river crossings further to the east but these are based on the assumption that a Silvertown Tunnel would be built. Further information on the position can be found on the Transport for London, Greenwich Council and silvertowntunnel.co.uk/ websites. TfL is consulting yet again on the Silvertown Tunnel (see <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/>). This one focuses on congestion, the rising population and the fact that congestion can only get worse. Closing date is 19 December. You can also attend a roadshow to ask questions and register your views in person. The last two opportunities will be at O2 on Tuesday, 25 November from 12-4 and Saturday, 29 November from 11-4. Should CCRA take a position on this? If so, what arguments should we put forward on local residents' behalf? Give us your views (contact details page 8).

A summary of the issues

Pros

- ✦ A new Silvertown Tunnel would increase river-crossing capacity in Greenwich.
- ✦ It could reduce queues and speed up journeys through the Blackwall Tunnel.
- ✦ Fewer holdups might lead to improved air quality.

Cons

- ✦ More traffic would be attracted to cross the Thames at this point, creating more congestion, poorer air quality, and possibly an EU fine for exceeding air quality targets.
- ✦ A toll on both the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels with, apparently, no exemption for local residents, even if their crossing is a necessary regular commute.

A gem of an AGM



CCRA's community singers, accompanied by Chris Harrison on guitar, commemorating those who died in the First World War

Members turned up in force to register their enthusiasm for the CCRA at its Annual General Meeting in Swallowfield Road on 6 October. Outgoing co-chair Annie Galloway welcomed them to St Richard's Hall, specially thanking everyone who has contributed to the association's success throughout the year.

The newly elected officers were warmly welcomed: Brenda Taggart as chair, Martina Keating, vice chair, Jas Dhesi, secretary and David Gayther, treasurer. Brenda Taggart said: 'I'm delighted to take over as chair of such a vibrant and exciting association that, through its many activities, enriches the lives of all those who live in our area.'

When the AGM's formal business ended, Carolyn Ayers spoke about her work as manager of the World War 1 project at the Royal Greenwich Heritage Centre. CCRA member Jill Austen, a volunteer at the centre, talked about the Local History Group's research into soldiers who had lived locally. The audience was visibly moved by the CCRA's community singers' performance at the end of the evening, singing songs to commemorate the soldiers killed in the 1914-18 war.



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A whizz of a CCRA quiz



Some tough questions faced the 10 teams of Charlton Central Residents' Association (CCRA) members and guests who turned up for a grilling in St Richard's Hall at the popular Quiz Night on Saturday (18 October) - such as: 'Name one of the three sovereign countries completely surrounded by another country'*.

Sixteen year old Rajinder Dhesi set the questions after finishing his GCSEs this summer.

His brother, Harvinder, who started at Kent University this autumn, was quiz master.

Mum, Jas, organised the evening. 'Universally Challenged' was the winning group with a score of 69, boosted by judicious use of the Joker, and they won bottles of wine.

It was generally agreed that everyone went home a winner in terms of a good time.

*San Marino, Lesotho or Vatican City; *

Blooming lovely!...

The Annual Flower, Produce and Craft Show in September has become one of the highlights of the CCRA year and this year was no exception. Entries were up 15% on last year, and encouragingly, there were a good number of new entrants. The CCRA was grateful and delighted to welcome Blackheath & Greenwich Women's Institute President, Cathy Rousham and fellow judges, who wrote careful notes and discussed each entry's merits for more than two hours before announcing their final decisions.

Cathy Rousham, presenting the prizes, paid tribute to the overall standard, and many new entrants were successful. Two old rivals for the lemon curd crown, however, promised a return match next year. Congratulations to the various winners (see the CCRA website at www.charltonresidents.org for a full list of winners) and commiserations to those who did not do as well as they had hoped.

The Show, while a competition, is also enjoyable and good fun, enriching, as it does, our social bonds and growing sense of community. To help you plan for next September's show, the Schedule of Classes for 2015 will be available in January and we hope, if you didn't enter this year, you will enter next time.

To propose additional classes for inclusion in next year's show, please contact either Len Weir on 0208 858 4920 or Brenda Taggart on 0208 853 3354 before the end of December.

Good luck and we hope to see you at the event in 2015.



Above, CCRA's new chair Brenda Taggart's prize winning knitted poppies



Left: Joy Ogden surveys the table of tasty food and fabulous flowers



OPEN GARDENS At CCRA's bi-annual Open Gardens day in September, members popped into designated gardens to admire, swap gardening tips and chat. As CCRA's new Chair Brenda Taggart said: 'Such events help us achieve our aim of building a village in the city.'

Visit Stefan, the German Master Baker in his mobile shop just outside 84 Wellington Gardens, every Saturday between 8.45 - 9.10 am.

Treat yourself to his delicious breads, cakes and delicatessen.



I heard it on the grapevine...

How happy is my valley?

All change! This is Charlton! All change! Welcome to my first review of the new season and with 16 games played it is a good time to assess the never-ending saga of fluctuating fortunes down at The Valley.


Those naysayers of the national Press predicted us as prime candidates for the drop even before a ball had been kicked. This corner of London has long been considered unfashionable so that was no surprise. But I must say, after I watched the traditional opening friendly at Welling, where we were beaten 2-0, I began to wonder. But results picked up on the ensuing European tour and I now have great delight in raising the traditional finger of scorn to those miserable pundits.

Why? Because we are doing very well, thank you. We've won five, drawn eight and lost three and we stand at tenth, just outside the play offs. Not bad for a team "doomed" by the so-called experts. There have been many changes since we scraped home to safety by a whisker last season. Three managers, one new owner and a lot of new players doesn't suggest stability, but it seems to have worked. When Bob Peeters came in during the closed season he cleared out more than half the team and brought in names of which most of us faithful had never heard. Could they gel as a team and give good account in a division widely recognized as the toughest in the league?

The answer must be a resounding yes. We went

unbeaten for the first eleven matches and new striker Igor Vetokele, Belgian/Angolan international (yes, he played for Standard Liege) made himself a fans favourite by earning the division's Player of the Month award. Then he got sidelined by injury and returned to play as a sub against Sheffield Wednesday and delighted the away fans by slotting home a vital equaliser. He's now notched up seven goals.

We have become draw specialists and can't find that final goal to clinch victory. Against Leeds earlier this month we dominated play, went behind to two superb individual goals, then fought our way back for yet another draw. Manager Peeters is as frustrated by this as anyone but points out that a long list of injuries to crucial players is hampering progress. We've taken on loan players to alleviate the situation and recently signed mid-fielder Francis Coquelin from Arsenal for an initial month's spell. The new pitch is holding up well and, literally being a level playing field, is helping to provide some good positive football at the Valley. Peeters has said that if we continue to show progress boss Roland Duchatelet is prepared to go into the January transfer window with his precious chequebook open. This is a robust side, strong in defence and exciting up front. The midfield needs some improvement but I think Peeters is working towards that. I'm confident we can achieve solid results this season. Unlike the national Press, I'm predicting a top ten finish. Congrats fished. COYR's!



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Community interest groups

Charlton Community Gardens

Charlton Community Gardens group has celebrated a fine harvest from the raised beds at the station. Winter planting includes a green manure crop to give natural fertiliser to one of the beds. We have also been working with Sherington School and the Friends of Sherington School to reclaim their Nature Area. The Year 1 pupils chose which trees we will plant from among samples of Cox and Russet and Fortune apples. It's been a good year for growing. The monthly Sunday afternoon Gardening parties (first Sunday of the month from 2–4) will continue over the winter to keep the station garden looking tidy and volunteer helpers are also welcome to join the Sherington after-school Gardening Club. Join us for a winter warmer and a review of the gardening year on Monday, 1 December from 8.00 pm at St Richard's Hall. Look forward to seeing you with seasonal cheer!

CCRA Local History Group

Thanks to all Group members for their tremendous efforts for our presentation at the recent AGM. As the World War 1 centenary approached we decided to see how it affected local families and, without glorifying war, how we remember events today. Fortunately we found a compilation of all the fallen named on the Charlton War Memorial and in the Book of Remembrance and thus found 35 who lived in our area; there may have been many more but their addresses were not identified. Using contemporary newspapers we found more detailed stories and often photographs of the dead servicemen. We then examined our own families' experiences and by collecting artefacts, letters, documents and other memorabilia, unfolded the stories of those who had fought. We shared some of our research with Carolyn Ayers of the Royal Greenwich Heritage Centre, who was mounting a travelling display. She kindly brought a part of it to St Richard's Hall to complement ours (the full RGHC display can be seen at Woolwich Town Hall and Charlton House in November). The Local History Group usually meets about every six weeks at my house and sometimes organises trips to places of interest; anyone interested in local history is welcome to join us. Please contact Jill Austen at: jillmo@btinternet.com for meeting details.

CCRA Music and Singing Groups

Both groups continue to flourish. The band ('SE7') played at Cattleya on 26 October, and are planning further evenings there before Christmas. The singers are performing on 7 November at a private view and again at a Wassail Night on 11 December, both at Charlton House. Carol singing dates have been fixed for 15 and 18 December. Check the CCRA website for details of further performances in the run up to Christmas. Both groups are always ready to welcome new members, whatever your level of experience. If you are interested in joining, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

Walking Group

If you are interested in taking turns to lead this group, we'd be pleased to hear from you. Jill Austen will take the first steps and suggests we start with a walk on Sunday, 4 January to follow part of the Quaggy River in Sutcliff Park; then to Severndroog Castle on Sunday, 1 February. From then I suggest we take a walk every first Sunday of the month; as before, starting at Charlton Station at 10.30 and ending at a friendly hostelry. To get involved please contact Jill at: jillmo@btinternet.com

Station bookshelf

CCRA's bookshelf at Charlton Station is highly popular. Residents have eclectic tastes with books in a range of languages, physics text books and chick lit proving to be equally popular. But the scheme is a victim of its own success – we need more books! Please remember to donate some books as well as taking them away.



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