



## Dates for your diary

### Meet your local councillors

Monday 31st January 2011

From 7.00 – 9.00 pm at the Liberal Club

*This is your opportunity to hear about Greenwich's plans for managing cuts and maintaining a vision for the area*

### Quiz night

Saturday 26th February 2011

Doors open at 7.00 pm at St. Richard's Hall

*This is a very popular event so get the date in your diary and start to sort out your team.*

### Spring meeting and social

Monday 11th April 2011

### Open Gardens and members' barbecue

11th and 12th June 2011

### Community day and ceilidh

Saturday 2nd July 2011

## CCRA membership

January is the month for renewing your membership. Don't forget that the more members we have, the stronger our voice. By the time you read this you will probably have received a membership form. Please take a few moments to complete it. Alternatively you can print a membership form from our website ([www.charltonresidents.org](http://www.charltonresidents.org)) or contact the membership secretary Duncan Alexander on 0208 244 7555. Don't forget that we are always looking for more support of all kinds!

## What kind of member?

Are you an active member  
The type who would be missed,  
Or are you just content to be  
A name upon a list?

Do you come to all the meetings  
And mingle with the crowd,  
Or would you rather stay away  
And complain long and loud?

Do you give a little time to us  
And help to make things tick,  
Or leave the work to others  
Then moan about the clique?

There's quite a programme scheduled  
That means success if done,  
And it can be accomplished  
With help of everyone.

So join in events  
And help with hand and heart  
Don't just be a member  
Take an active part.

Think it over, member,  
Are you right or are you wrong,  
Are you an active member  
Or do you just belong?

(with grateful thanks to Mary Swanson)

## Whitstable Weekend!

Escape to 'Ostrea'. This beautifully refurbished 3-bedroom Victorian house is only a few minutes walk from Harbour Street, the beach and lovely eateries.

**Call Patrick on 07974 150850 or full details and online booking at [www.whitstableholidayhomes.co.uk](http://www.whitstableholidayhomes.co.uk)**

## Classified Ads

Grapevine currently reaches 1000 homes and other outlets in the local area. If you would like to advertise goods or services cheaply, effectively and locally contact Sarah Roseblade on 0208 2442405 or [sarah.roseblade@ntlworld.com](mailto:sarah.roseblade@ntlworld.com). A form can be found on our website, rates for individuals and small businesses are as follows:

- Ads containing up to 15 words plus contact details cost £10 for one issue or £35 for four issues.
  - Ads containing up to 20 words, contact details & an image/ logo cost £20 for one insertion of £70 for four.
- Space is limited so get your ad in soon

## Charlton Central Residents Association



Charlton Central Residents Association (CCRA) is committed to ensuring a safe and friendly community. ***Please join us!***

Don't forget to check out the website - [www.charltonresidents.org](http://www.charltonresidents.org).

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to [grapevine@charltonresidents.org](mailto:grapevine@charltonresidents.org) by Monday 21st March. Alternatively phone Linda Pound on 0208 858 7377.

## Getting the best out of the council services

In November a combination of heavy rain, high winds and falling leaves looked as difficult as it gets when cleaning the streets. By December, to this mixture had been added heavy snow and ice. Before the snow, council staff had given the Charlton Church Lane end of Wellington Gardens a really good clean using a machine with a huge hose to suck up leaves and other rubbish. Great, if you live in Wellington Gardens. But just round the corner in Sundorne Road similar heaps of soaking leaves were left untouched and remained there rotting for about another week – then to be coated with snow, leaving a treacherous path for pedestrians. The leaves came from the same trees as those that covered the pavements in Wellington Gardens, and only stretched for about 50 yards down the road. They could have been sucked up in five minutes, but they were not on the schedule.

Now it is so easy to criticise and much more difficult to provide a really flexible service without adding to the costs. But that's what will be needed if the quality of cleaning is to be maintained or improved when the council will be under huge financial pressure. CCRA wants to work with Cleansweep and other council services to help protect the environment. We will monitor cleanliness in the streets and pass on information about any problems, be they leaves, blocked drains, unlit lamps, broken pavements and, yes, dog poo. We will also suggest minor variations to their weekly plans to take account of seasonal variations like leaves.

But let's also recognise that a lot of the litter should not be there in the first place – take it home, put it in the bin and pick up your dog's mess. And cleaning the gutter next to your parked car is very tricky; you could help by brushing it out. We're entitled to expect a good cleaning service from the council but they can reasonably expect our help and co-operation. Grapevine would like to hear from you on this – both justified complaints and constructive suggestions. In the light of cuts to council services which will have to be made in the coming months, it is vital that we seek ways to maintain effective communication with the council.



*Big society solutions?*

### Working with the council

Greenwich Council has a strong record on waste collection and recycling. They remind us that we can help them to continue to make significant improvements by:

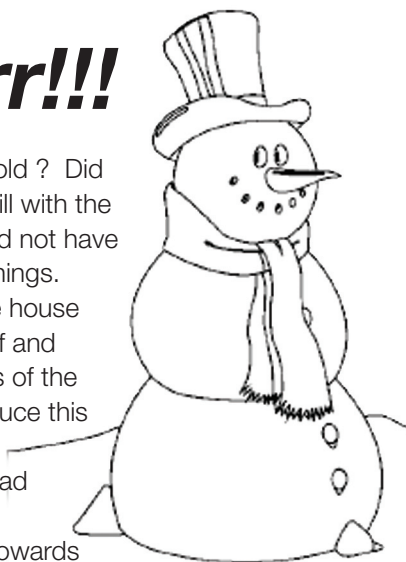
- Ensuring that only paper, cardboard, tins and cans, glass and plastic are put into the blue top bins.
- Rinsing out food jars, bottles and containers before putting into blue top bins. Food and drink remaining within the containers has the potential to contaminate a whole dustcart's load.
- Putting dirty tissues and paper towels into the green top bin for composting.
- Ordering clear plastic sacks from the Council Contact Centre (telephone 020 8921 4661) or obtaining them from the blue top collection crew if you don't have a blue top bin.

### Meet Your Councillors

On Monday January 31st CCRA has arranged for local councillors to answer your questions at a public meeting to be held at the Liberal Club from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm. If you are worried about the impact of cuts on services in this area, come along, raise your questions and hear the answers. Working with CCRA will give us all a stronger voice!

# Brrrrrrrr!!!

Did you suffer the cold? Did your wallet catch a chill with the heating bills? You need not have done either of these things. 25% of the heat in the house is lost through the roof and 30% through the walls of the house. You could reduce this without hurting your wallet. There are myriad organisations that are willing to give grants towards loft insulation; wall insulation; windows; and draft proofing. For example you could qualify for a grant of up to £200 for loft insulation depending on your personal circumstances. It is worth it to have this done professionally! It can cost £150+ in just materials from local DIY stores for an average loft size.



So who qualifies? Everybody does - but the extent of the cost is dependent on individual needs and requirements to bring the property up to the current building standards. Looking around the roofs in the CCRA area during this spell of cold it is quite clear that some of our residents would feel a lot more comfortable if more heat was kept indoors.

For more information you could contact:

- Your energy utility company
- <http://www.energysavers.gov>
- <http://www.warmfront.co.uk/>
- Impartial advice on energy matters: Greenwich Council 0800 512 012 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)
- <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk>
- We at CCRA can also help; just contact the Environment Action Groups (David on 0208 305 2851) who will put you in contact with someone who can come and see you and take you through the options.

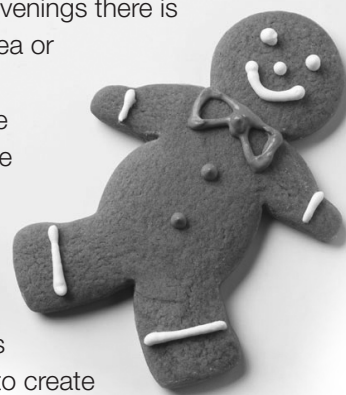
## Do you want to live in a conservation area?

The pros and cons of living in a designated conservation area have been talked about locally within the last year or two. So CCRA took a look at this issue and local circumstances. Possible reasons for applying could be an expectation of enhanced property values or a brake on certain types of development. There is a view that conservation area status leads to higher property values but it seems that transport links, access to good schools and leisure facilities and good shops are much more influential.

In addition, our research leads us to believe that for the foreseeable future even if we felt the pros outweighed the cons, we would be wasting our time. The process of determining which areas should be designated is costly and the council has indicated that they are unlikely to undertake such work during the next five years. Pressure to improve cleaning and greening in our local streets and perhaps introduce traffic calming measures, as well as a slightly longer term campaign to improve the area around the shops and station in Charlton Church Lane are more likely to bear fruit.

## Baking on cold days?

We have already welcomed the new year 2011. But for long and cold winter evenings there is nothing better than a cup of tea or coffee and some home-made biscuits or cakes. My favourite biscuits from my childhood are gingerbread men. They taste great and they can be made in advance with the willing help of children – in no time at all. Just put the ingredients together and choose cutters to create the shapes children want, not just the traditional gingerbread man. If you don't have a recipe to hand, please email me on [info@mylondonchef.co.uk](mailto:info@mylondonchef.co.uk). Or you might want to share your own favourite recipe for cakes or biscuits. Just e-mail me and maybe we could share them in next edition of 'Grapevine'. Happy baking (and a happy new year)!



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# Would you be willing to...

## foster a smile and build brighter futures?

Foster carers make a difference to the lives of hundreds of young people in Greenwich every year. You could become a foster carer if you feel you have the ability to care for a child or young person in your home, and provide them with a safe and loving environment.

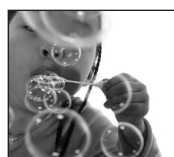
Greenwich Council wants to recruit new foster carers for children and young people. You would be providing a home for someone else's child - usually for a temporary period. You would care for the child until difficulties within the child's family are resolved and the child either returns home, or a different long-term placement solution is found. By becoming a foster carer you would be helping children in Greenwich to stay within their borough, keeping friends, school and a familiar environment. Ultimately you may be helping to keep a Greenwich family together. Children may require fostering because of the death or ill health of a parent, because of divorce, abuse or financial problems, or because parents are unable to cope for whatever reason.

The children and young people range in age from newborn babies through to teenagers and may be sibling groups. They reflect the wide cultural and ethnic mix of the borough and the Council takes every care to ensure that carers and children are well matched according to nationality, ethnicity and the particular strengths of the carers and needs of the child.

Foster carers can be single, divorced or in a couple. They must be aged 25 or over. All ethnicities are encouraged to come forward. To be considered as a foster carer you will need to be able to commit full-time to supporting the child at home. You will need to have a spare room suitable for the child or young person, unless it is a baby and there is room in your bedroom, and you will need to meet with a social worker for detailed interview, about you and the fostering task. Foster carers get plenty of support – including access to a 24-hour helpline and monthly visits from your social worker. You would be paid a weekly allowance, which would not affect any benefits that you may be receiving. Training in child care is given to all foster carers and there are regular opportunities to meet with other foster carers and share experiences.

Cllr Jackie Smith, Greenwich Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said, "Foster carers play a hugely important role in offering stability and security for children and young people, often at difficult and challenging times in a young person's life. I know that foster carers find their role incredibly rewarding, in the knowledge that they are helping to make a real difference to the lives of young people."

To find out more about fostering in Greenwich visit [www.greenwich.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/fostering) or call free on 0800 052 1499.



### CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE IN 2011 FOSTER WITH GREENWICH

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- like caring for children
- have a sense of humour
- have a spare room
- want to make a difference

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freephone 0800 052 1499  
[www.greenwich.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/fostering)

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# Give cold callers the cold shoulder

CCRA and the local Neighbourhood Watch have been working with Greenwich Council's Trading Standards Officers and the Safer Neighbourhood Team to make residents more aware of bogus callers and reduce the number of people being taken advantage of.

Doorstep sellers typically turn up at homes without advance notice, offering to carry out building work, house repairs or to check gas or electrical supplies. Some of these people even pretend to be from the police saying they need to check your locks because of burglaries in the area. While it might be tempting to agree to attractive prices being offered on the doorstep, you need to think twice. These traders or "cowboy builders" often pressurise householders into having unnecessary work carried out and then charge inflated prices for very poor work. Householders should never agree to building work, house repairs or any other services from people who "cold call". Here are some top tips if someone does cold call your home:

- Always ask for identification that you can verify and don't let them into your house until you are sure they are who they say they are.
- Be wary of special offers – we are only in your area today - or warnings about repairs needed to your home
- Never hand over a cash deposit
- Do not accept a lift from the person to your bank or building society to withdraw money to pay for the work
- Don't feel pressurised into having the work done immediately
- Remember building control. You may need to make a building control application so don't accept a builder's or contractor's word that approval is not required. You may have problems later when you want to sell your home.

- Take time to get a second opinion from someone you know and trust before making any decision
- If in doubt contact Greenwich Trading Standards Advice Service Tel 08451 040506

If you do have work carried out, in order for the contract to be completed successfully by both parties, the trader must serve you a written notice of your cancellation rights. Also ask for a quote as this is a fixed price, whereas an estimate can be altered up or down. Greenwich Council Trading Standards Department has produced an information pack entitled "Choosing a Reliable Trader", available by telephoning 020 8921 8223. The Council's "What Trader?" scheme aims to take the headache out of picking a reliable trader. This tracks customer comments and measures satisfaction levels for participating traders.

Potential customers can choose traders who have been highly rated by previous customers and participating traders can also benefit from having the quality of their work recognised. The scheme is free and applies to all building works and related home improvement services carried out in the Borough.

Greenwich also operates a Handyperson Service to help older and disabled residents with small jobs around the home. For further information contact 0800 783 1612 or [handyperson@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:handyperson@greenwich.gov.uk)

## Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch

The "Watch" is now sending "Instant Alerts" by email, or post to members who do not have email, giving information that needs to be circulated quickly. The first "Instant Alert" informed members of bogus callers operating in our area. We have been told that bogus callers have pretended to be gas or water board officials needing to check your supply, members of the police checking the security of your home and officials from building agencies or the Council needing to check the condition of your walls. In November a bogus caller gained entry to a home in Delafield Road. If in doubt ask for their identification and ring the Council's Trading Standards Service on 020 8921 8223. Keep this number handy.

Please report all suspicious callers to the Safer Neighbourhood Team on 020 8721 2734 Or 07766 992585. If you would like to join the local Neighbourhood Watch and receive "instant alerts" about incidents in the neighbourhood please contact: Brenda – [b.taggart@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:b.taggart@ioe.ac.uk) Tel 020 8853 3354

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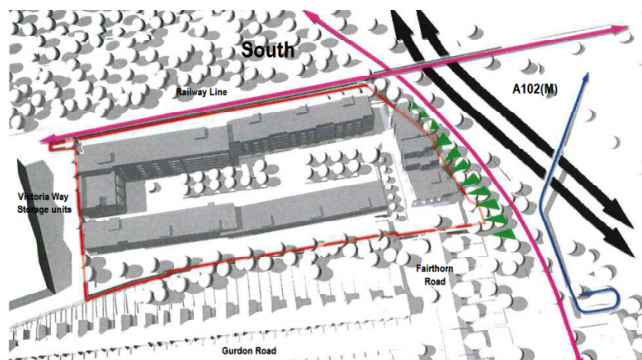
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# New housing estate in the neighbourhood



Galliard Homes' initial application for a development with 230 flats, office and live/work space with associated parking and landscaping in 2007 was rejected on a number of planning related issues including environmental health. The subsequent appeal resulted in planning permission being granted in August 2010.

The development will consist of a collection of multi-storey buildings providing private and affordable accommodation around a central landscaped courtyard. There will be space for 169 cars. New access to the estate will be formed on Fairthorn Road via Woolwich Road.

The site lies between the North rear gardens of Victorian terraces in Gurdon Road; south lies the railway track; to the east lies Victoria Way and the Squirrel storage units (see picture); to the west lies another railway branch line and Blackwall Tunnel approach road A102(M). It is not anticipated that the CCRA area would be affected by the construction other than building traffic on the Woolwich Road adjacent to Fairthorn Road which is the main site access. The impact of the new development on local amenities and infrastructure requires consideration. It is likely that commuter rail traffic will be heavier at Westcombe Park Station as it is a little closer than Charlton.

Further information can be obtained online at [www.greenwich.gov.uk](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk) in the Planning application search section application No. 07/1725/F.

**Editor's note:** as stated above this development may not have a direct impact on CCRA residents. However, CCRA remains concerned about the density of housing in our area. Two large properties in Wellington Gardens have recently been sold by the council, with a clear lead to suggest that this could be a plot suitable for redevelopment. The Floyd Road development will have more flats. At what point does the council decide that amenities such as drains and parking facilities can no longer cope with yet more residents? What are your views?

# Letters to the editor



**Charlton Toy Library** Please pass on a huge thank you to all those from the Charlton Central Residents Association who took part in the Carol singing and for the generosity of those residents who donated. It was fantastic that for the second year running you have graciously provided the money collected towards Charlton Toy Library. Two hundred and thirty three pounds is an amazing total from ten streets and will really make a big difference to us. The toy library based up at Charlton House and the mobile van which reaches families in real need across the Borough provide an extremely valuable service to children and parents. In these times of austerity it's great that toys, safety equipment and educational aids can be provided cheaply and efficiently to hundreds of families. Thank you again.

*Colin Brown, (Chair of CTL)*

**Mystery... probably fox related!?** I and a number of neighbours have frequently found hens' eggshells around the garden. They are often almost intact but empty. Closer inspection reveals that the eggs have been stamped, suggesting that they come from a shop. Can anyone shed any light on this?

*S Evans, Priolo Rd*

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Classes now open in Blackheath Standard  
(Fridays) & Charlton (Tuesdays)

# *I heard it on the grapevine...*

## ***How happy is my valley?***

Charlton is again at a crossroads. The Baton (name of the original holding company) has been passed to new owners (CAFCH) whose intentions are not yet clear and the amount they bought the club for undisclosed. The manager has been sacked and Charlton stalwart Keith Peacock is named as Caretaker manager for the FA Cup game against Tottenham. He has been handed a tough assignment facing a Premiership team that is in form. The New Year present to supporters was a dismal game against Swindon in which Charlton lost 4-2 but at least we are still in the right end of the table. We can but hope that the new owners are sound and will take the club in the right direction. These are difficult times for football. The funding for League football, in the UK, has, in most cases, always been difficult and subject to whims of the market and owners. At Charlton we have been very lucky that Richard Murray, the previous owner, was also a passionate football fan and Charlton Supporter. But as they say, the easiest way to become a millionaire in football is to start out as a billionaire. One can only imagine how much money Richard Murray has lost in the last couple of years. These are interesting times for the club and its fans. The Grapevine wishes the club all the best for 2011.

## **Me-time with kids**

Want to do something for yourself without having to organise childcare? Why not take your child to one of the local classes listed below to share some quality 'me-time'? The widest choice of mother and baby classes is in exercise classes that you can join six weeks after a natural birth or eight weeks after a caesarean. Bernadette King ([www.peacefulpractice.co.uk](http://www.peacefulpractice.co.uk)) offers post-natal recovery yoga courses for mothers and babies under 9 months.

For mothers of children between 9 months and 4 years she offers family yoga with songs, rhymes and movements. Until your baby starts crawling you can attend postnatal Pilates on Mondays and Wednesdays in Greenwich run by Ellie Brown ([www.greenwichpilates.co.uk](http://www.greenwichpilates.co.uk)) who also runs Running Mummies in Greenwich Park on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. As long as they are not bored in the pushchair you can bring babies of all ages to Running Mummies. Local residents Sarah Roseblade (07779 024226 [sarah.roseblade@ntlworld.com](mailto:sarah.roseblade@ntlworld.com)) and Kate Ensor are the founders of Charlton Chariots a friendly group of local mothers and babies that meet in all weathers on Tuesday mornings at 10.30am at the back of Charlton House for a brisk walk around Charlton Park and Maryon Wilson Park followed by coffee and cake at Charlton House Mulberry Tea Room. From April 2011 Kate Ensor ([kateensor@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kateensor@yahoo.co.uk)) will also be offering NCT Early Days courses - aimed at new parents and offering a supportive environment to help you become the confident parent you want to be.

Local resident Katrin Bain is starting the new mum-me-time (07981 456470, [www.mum-me-time.co.uk](http://www.mum-me-time.co.uk)) class on 13th January in Charlton. Mum-me-time is a personal development class for mothers where are welcome to bring your baby and/or toddler. They can play with the toys provided or nap in the pushchair. Meanwhile you enjoy a themed session with like-minded people. Mum-me-time has no pre-set agenda and can potentially cover all aspects that will help you to live a more fulfilled life.

A good way to release stress and let off steam is to sing it out. Toria Parsons ([www.singitout.co.uk](http://www.singitout.co.uk)) runs a singing class for pregnant mothers to be and mothers with pre-crawlers in Greenwich. And finally if you know a few other parents who could do with some pampering why not get together and share the care while taking turns having a relaxing massage ([www.prosperwithmassage.co.uk](http://www.prosperwithmassage.co.uk)) in your own home.

## **Having Problems RENTING?**

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# Local community interest groups

## Book group

If you like reading and are interested in joining the group contact Diana Browne on 0208 893 6431.

## Gardening group

Garden, allotment, grass verge, patio pot or window box gardeners are invited and welcome to join the seedling Charlton Gardening Group. At this early stage we're a 'virtual' group, meeting online to share information about all things green and growing in the central Charlton area. Ideas about how the group could develop are welcome.

Join the seedling Charlton Gardening Group online at <https://groups.google.com/group/charlton-gardening-group/> or by emailing [charlton-gardening-group@googlegroups.com](mailto:charlton-gardening-group@googlegroups.com).

## Music group

The music group has been meeting for almost a year now, and has attracted a regular group of players of instruments including guitar, bass, keyboard, clarinet and saxophone. We continue to perform a varied repertoire of music, which we arrange according to our own preferences. Unfortunately, our scheduled performance at the Charlton Christmas Cracker, just before Christmas, was cancelled because of the weather, but we will be starting up again in January with some new ideas. The group meets on alternate Mondays and dates for the new year are: Jan 17, 31; Feb 14, 28; Mar 14, 28; Apr 11. New players are always welcome, whatever your level of experience – please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377

## Local history group

After a hesitant start, the local history group has had a more active few weeks. Activity really started with a visit to the Heritage Centre in Woolwich. They have such a wealth of resources there – including access to online and microfiche information. Whilst still buzzing from the range of material available, we met to plan a social evening for CCRA residents on April 11th. We hope this will include information on particular streets, shops and buildings; a photographic comparison between our area in the past and now; and a slide-show of old photos of people and places. Come along to St Richard's Hall on April 11th and find out about our area's past. The future of the group depends on the interests of the members so it might take up any aspects of our area, but it seems a worthwhile thing to record our discoveries for future residents!

For further details or if you're interested in joining the group contact Jill Austen on 0208 853 4366

## Singing group

Our year ended with two performances: the first at an Advent Celebration at Our Lady of Grace Church on November 28, which was our first performance outside of CCRA events; and the second at the CCRA Christmas Social on December 8. We followed this with two evenings of carol singing around the CCRA area. Despite the cold weather and (on the second night) the snow, a good number of people turned out and raised over £230 for Charlton Toy Library, so congratulations to one and all. The group meets fortnightly, alternating between Mondays and Thursdays. Dates for the new year are: Jan 13, 24; Feb 10, 21; Mar 10, 21; Apr 7. If you would like to join us, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

## Wine appreciation

The wine appreciation group met in November to sample drinks for the festive season, hosted by David and Alexis of Inverine Road. Tastings included a Sherry and a Madeira, as well as a celebratory fizz and a selection of red and white wines. A good time was had by all. A gin tasting is planned for January 15th. The next meetings will be on 12th February when Wines of Chile will be explored and on the 19th March (topic to be decided). Generous quantities of wine and nibbles and a convivial night out can be had for approximately £15 a head depending on the tasting. The atmosphere is always relaxed and no previous expertise is required!

Anyone interested in attending these or future dates please email [charltonwine@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:charltonwine@yahoo.co.uk) or call Elizabeth Palmer 0208 305 0872. Places are allocated on a first come first served basis!

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