

Congratulations to our singing group and friends who raised the magnificent sum of £630 on two evenings of carol singing locally. We are grateful to all who donated so generously. The money will be divided between the Greenwich Food Bank and the Greenwich Winter Night Shelter – two very worthy causes (see p12 for Singing group)



## READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Is this our youngest reader? Niamh, just 14 months old, is a big fan of *Grapevine* and never misses

a chance to catch up on all the local news and gossip. Perhaps she's reading the

football page on events down at the Valley. After all, she's a regular Charlton dribbler ...

# LET THE GRASS GROW UNDER YOUR FEET!

A meadow in Charlton? Never heard of it? Well you soon will. Because Friends of Charlton Park and other community organisations are campaigning to turn the far end of the park near Cemetery Lane into a wild meadow and seem to have backing from the council. It is another step in the growing range of activities provided in local parks.

The idea is still being developed but a new pond could be included. There is another string of ponds and a lake not far away which, many years ago, used to be accessible to the public.

Repository Woods, just beyond the cemetery wall is at the eastern end of the land developed by the Army early in

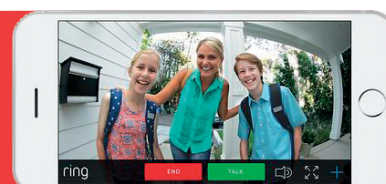
the 1800s with the famous Woolwich Barracks and Parade ground at the other end.

The Old Cottage Café was the appropriate venue for the meadow meeting on Saturday 11 January. The group have the backing of Greenwich Council, and received funding from Greenwich's Ward Budget scheme for the commissioning of an independent report by LUC, an environmental planning, landscape design and management consultancy.

The Friends hope the addition of a meadow will improve biodiversity in the park, and strengthen ecological connectivity locally. Whilst the mechanics of how the

continued page 9

**STOP PRESS:** Renew your membership by 24 February to be included in a Prize Draw to win a Ring Wi-fi enabled, HD video doorbell worth £89. See page 3 for details





# TRUEPENNY'S

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

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Truepenny's have won two Gold Awards  
for Estate Agent & Letting Agent in SE10!

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then please call our office on 020 8858 9595

We look forward to hearing from you

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# Membership renewal

You can be entered in a draw to win a Ring doorbell if you renew before Friday 24 February

Just a reminder to all members that membership fees are due in January each year.

This year, CCRA are offering the opportunity to win a Ring Wi-fi enabled, HD video doorbell if you renew your membership by 24 February. Return your form to be included in the draw, which will take place on Monday 27 February at the end of the Exercise Class at St Richard's Hall – approximately 1pm.

If you have renewed already, thank you, and



you will automatically go in to the draw. You will receive a reminder shortly, along with a form to sign and return with your membership fee.

You can pay by standing order and this method of payment is really helpful to CCRA. Full details of how to do this will be on the form.

Many thanks for all your support in 2019 and hope you will be with us again in 2020.

■ Please note you need a smartphone to use this type of doorbell.

## Members with benefits

2020 sees the start of our CCRA 'Members Benefits Scheme'. We have two local businesses signed up and ready to go. We thank them for their support as we launch this scheme.

**C. WATTS & SONS ELECTRICS**, offers CCRA members a 10% discount on all estimates (excluding materials) on presentation of a valid CCRA membership card.

Contact details:

- Mobile: 07460643143
- Email: [charlie@cwattselectrics.com](mailto:charlie@cwattselectrics.com)
- Website: [www.cwattselectrics.com](http://www.cwattselectrics.com)

**CRAFT LONDON**, at the 02, is offering CCRA members a 20% off the total bill in the Restaurant – book through their website: [craft-london.co.uk/book-table](http://craft-london.co.uk/book-table) or call: **020 8464 5910**. Walk-ins can be accommodated if space is available. Craft London is at Peninsula Square,



Greenwich Peninsula, SE10 0SQ. Glass building on right as you walk towards the Dome. They say: "Can we ask that the CCRA Membership card is shown to our staff on the day so we are able to validate the discount. We look forward to welcoming CCRA Members in 2020."

■ If you have any questions about membership, or are interested in offering CCRA members a discount or special service as part of our Members Benefits Scheme, please contact Jacqui, the Membership Secretary at [membership@charltonresidents.net](mailto:membership@charltonresidents.net) to discuss.

## Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch

Are you a member of Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch – if not, why not? Joining the Watch has the following benefits, it's: i) free; ii) keeps you in touch with local community safety issues; iii) gives community safety advice; iv) provides an interface with the police; v) helps identify local policing priorities; vi) works positively to reduce crime. To find out more visit [ccnwatch.org](http://ccnwatch.org) or email [mail@ccnwatch.org](mailto:mail@ccnwatch.org) or ring 020 8853 3354.

### Watch co-ordinators are:

#### Calydon –

Dhesi: 07816 548581

#### Delafield – Annie:

020 8305 1484 /  
Brenda: 07939 090676

#### Inverine –

Cathy: 07989 415473 /  
Jonathan: 07875 054597

#### Nadine/Gollogly –

Lydia: 07956 207155

#### Swallowfield –

Heather: 07836 559420

#### Elliscombe –

Michelle: 07957 27573

## Grapevine

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of *Grapevine* should be emailed to: [grapevine@charltonresidents.net](mailto:grapevine@charltonresidents.net) by 9 March. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 020 8293 3034 or Bob Smith on 020 8853 2697.

*Grapevine* reaches more than 1,000 homes and retail outlets, in our designated area and beyond. To advertise contact [grapevine@charltonresidents.net](mailto:grapevine@charltonresidents.net). Rates for individuals and small businesses: small ads up to 15 words plus contact details: £10 for 1 issue, £30 for 4. Panel ads single column 8cmx8cm: £40 for 1-4 issues, £35 for 5+. Other sizes please enquire.

Check your local noticeboard, the next *Grapevine*, our website (please note new address [charltonresidents.net](http://charltonresidents.net)); Twitter (@ccra\_se7) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/centralcharlton](http://www.facebook.com/centralcharlton)) for details of CCRA events.

## PLAYING OUT

# Calling Fossdene kids and parents

As the days slowly start to get longer, Playing Out returns to Sundorne Road in February after its winter break. Our first session of 2020 will be on 12 February and then alternate Wednesdays after that.

This year we are hoping to see more children and parents from Fossdene as well as from elsewhere in our neighbourhood – we would love to see you there. Pop by and share a cup of tea or coffee while your children enjoy some play in the street.

Playing Out depends on our stewards, and new volunteers are always welcome! It's not hard work, and you can do it while keeping an eye on your children. Every session needs two stewards at either end

of the road to let cars in and out of the road, and to tell children when they must move onto the pavement, and when it is safe to play again. There are always at least two experienced stewards on hand who can help with any questions. If you are interested please let Tim know at [playingoutse7@gmail.com](mailto:playingoutse7@gmail.com), or speak to a steward on the day.

Playing Out takes place on Sundorne Road every other Wednesday, between 3.45 and 5.30pm. The next dates are: 12 and 26 February, 11 and 25 March, and 8 and 22 April.

■ For more details or to stay updated, please email [playingoutse7@gmail.com](mailto:playingoutse7@gmail.com). For details about the nationwide Playing Out scheme, please visit <http://playingout.net>



## Get fit...

New Year's resolution to get fit – improving either brain or physical muscle (or maybe both)? Volunteer for some of the local projects happening in the area, that will work wonders! The link to the website gives detailed info here: [www.friendsofcharltonpark.org/meadow](http://www.friendsofcharltonpark.org/meadow)

**The Alexandra Hall, Bramshot Avenue, SE7 7HX**  
**7.45pm | 19 – 22 February 2020**  
*(Doors open 30 minutes before curtain up)*  
**Seats £10 | Concessions £8**

**THE ALEXANDRA PLAYERS**  
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A Comedy by Peter Quilter

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**BOX OFFICE 07867 627 987**  
[alexandraplayers@gmail.com](mailto:alexandraplayers@gmail.com) | [www.alexandraplayers.org.uk](http://www.alexandraplayers.org.uk)

## Homes in multiple occupancy licences

Landlords must have a licence if they run a house in multiple occupation (HMO) in the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG).

To be granted a licence, landlords must make sure the property is safe and a healthy place to live. If you think an HMO is in disrepair, poorly managed, causing a nuisance or might not have a licence, then let RBG know, as it might be illegal.

You do not have to live in the property to report it and reporting can be done anonymously.

Phone HMO licensing on 020 78921 8157 or email: [hmo-licensing@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:hmo-licensing@royalgreenwich.gov.uk).

■ The list of registered HMOs is available at: <http://bit.ly/RBG-HMO>

## Station parking

CCRA are actively working with the Royal Borough of Greenwich to solve the vexing problem of illegal parking at the bottom of Charlton Church Lane outside the Post Office/Sainsbury's. Inconsiderate parkers are causing daily chaos as they block buses and add to the traffic congestion in this area. We look forward to having some good news later on this year. Watch this space ...

CHARLTON RIVERSIDE

# Still waiting

It is just about a year since London Mayor Sadiq Khan supported the views of Charlton Together in rejecting the Rockwell planning application for two sites on Anchor and Hope Lane.

They appealed at the last minute and eventually it went to a major planning inquiry which took place at the Valley before Christmas. Throughout the inquiry, which lasted nine days, the barrister-led teams from Greenwich and the Greater London Authority (GLA) and our humble representatives, coordinated by Jodie and Emma, all made similar arguments, broadly in support of the Greenwich masterplan, or SPD, for the area.

A recommendation from the Inspector should by now be with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick. We are still awaiting the decision, which may well determine what the Charlton riverside will look like for generations to come: it could be as late as June but possibly as early as March.

Along with all the locally interested parties, we understand a number of other London councils, with their own local masterplans, are also watching closely. There is widespread concern nationally about current planning procedures and this case might be taken into account in any future changes.

Win or lose, there will be a need to plan a new infrastructure for the area: safe walking, cycling and bus routes and a restricted road network to provide access but stop rat-running through new housing.

We understand that Transport for London (TfL) are working with the council on this. There is less news on the social infrastructure: buildings and services for children and for elderly people, health and social care, play and parks and other community facilities and public realm.

We hope both Greenwich and the GLA are looking at every opportunity to incorporate as many green, clean, energy-saving and low emission measures as possible both in the new housing and commercial developments, and in the infrastructure plans in an area currently very short of public space, wildlife and trees.

Charlton Together recognises that some delay is inevitable until we get the inquiry result, but is very frustrated at the slow progress on infrastructure plans.

However we are urging both Greenwich and the GLA to push ahead on this, preferably working together in some form of close partnership, and we think we are being listened to. Though – as yet – no detail is forthcoming, we're expecting some announcements before too long and a possible council-led event to update people locally.



## Local girl makes good

The Booker prize for literature in English and published in Britain is widely regarded as the top literary prize in this country. Last autumn, for the first time, there were two joint winners: Margaret Atwood for *The Testaments* and Bernardine Evaristo for *Girl, Woman, Other*. Margaret is well known; Bernardine less so.

Bernardine was born in Eltham, grew up in Woolwich, one of eight children. Her mum was English and a teacher and her dad came from Nigeria, was a welder and, for a short time, a Labour councillor in Greenwich.

She has now written eight books, lots of other material performed on radio and, among other things, is now Professor of Creative Writing at Brunel University in West London. She's been reported as saying her education really got started at Greenwich Young People's Theatre which was then in Burrage Road.

*Girl, Woman, Other* introduces us to 12 very different people, mostly black, mostly women and much of it is set in south-east London.

It is uncompromisingly feminist and a great stimulating read. It was one of Barack Obama's top 19 books for 2019.

It is surprising there has not been more local publicity and celebration of her work.

### The Old Cottage Coffee Shop

*A traditional tea shop serving high  
quality tea, coffee and snacks*

*Open every day from 10am in Charlton Park*



*Closes 4pm in winter  
and 5pm in summer*





*Computer generated image of proposed changes to the junction at the bottom of Charlton Church Lane*

# New cycleway plan that could start a chain reaction

Transport for London (TfL) have decided that a quality cycle route between Greenwich and Woolwich is a high priority in developing a cycle network throughout the capital. And as a first phase they are consulting on proposals for the section between the junction at the bottom of Charlton Church Lane and the Woolwich Ferry roundabout.

The core proposal is for a new two-way, fully segregated Cycleway that would run along the south side (our side) of this section of the main road. There would be new or improved pedestrian crossings included on the Woolwich side of the Charlton Church Lane junction and a widening of pavements in some places. They say just under half of all trips made on Woolwich Road are by bus and propose to bring bus lanes together to create a two kilometre bus stretch at one point.

Although it is essentially a plan for a safe cycle route, their document is headed "our proposals to transform streets in south-east London between Greenwich and Woolwich" and it is a much more radical set of proposals than it appears at first sight. Again, in their words, it is designed to enable people to walk, cycle and use public transport more and private cars less. So it is not just of

interest to cyclists, but to all of us. Walkers and cyclists are being given some priority for the first time and there are some curbs on vehicles. It includes, for example, suggestions that there should be no right turn onto Woolwich Road from some local streets.

This is a great opportunity for Charlton residents to have their say and ultimately have some real impact on future arrangements on traffic, air quality, access and enjoyment of our area. There is a serious attempt to redesign the main road, currently the most dangerous in the borough, to make it much less aggressive. And talking of danger, there is a first attempt to tackle the nightmare of the Angerstein roundabout under the motorway.

Take a look at the proposals, especially the maps. Most of us have already received a leaflet about the consultation which continues until 16 February. There are drop-in events at the Greenwich suite at the Valley football ground on Tuesday, 28 January from 12noon to 7pm and on Saturday, 8 February between 11am and 4pm. There is a questionnaire and more information on [tfl.gov.uk/Greenwich-Woolwich](http://tfl.gov.uk/Greenwich-Woolwich).

■ For more details go to: [consultations.tfl.gov.uk/cycling/greenwich-to-woolwich/](http://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/cycling/greenwich-to-woolwich/)

# Fossdene invites would-be helpers to come for a chat

Fossdene Primary School is the local school for the CCRA area. We see our school as the heart of the local community and seek to engage with local residents. We welcome enquiries and visits if you are considering placing your child at our school. We currently have full and part time places available in our nursery.

On the other hand, we also welcome offers of support and help in our school. Have you ever considered helping a child with their reading or supporting children with their creative activities?

We are particularly looking for active people with an interest in encouraging and supporting children with their learning. Perhaps you have been a parent or grandparent and can recall the value a little bit of time, patience and understanding can offer children.

Our school is a Victorian building: negotiating our stairs would be necessary. We are also required to



ask you for a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check before we can accept any applications.

Why not get in touch with us and come in for a chat about how

you might support our children? You would be most welcome.

■ If you are interested, please contact the school office on [admin@fossdene.greenwich.sch.uk](mailto:admin@fossdene.greenwich.sch.uk)

## OBITUARIES

### Jim Free

Sadly we must announce the death of Jim Free – a keen supporter of CCRA and member of the Local History Group – providing many of the photographs used in CCRA local history displays and yearly photographic contributions to the Flower and Produce Show. He died on 28 December after battling lung cancer for nearly two years.

He lived all his life in the CCRA area of Charlton and knew it intimately, going to local schools (Fossdene & Sherington) and later working as an engineer at Sykes Pumps and Thames Poly (later Greenwich University).

His lifelong love of model boat building led to a racing enthusiasm and huge successes including national racing records (one of which he held for almost 20 years!) and a



World Championship gold medal.

We shall greatly miss a real gentleman as a kind and thoughtful neighbour, with a dry sense of humour; our kindest thoughts go to Sue, his wife of nearly 50 years.

### Allan Polin

We are sorry to report that Allan Polin, Elliscombe Road resident for more than 40 years, died in December, aged 68.

Allan worked at the Brook Hospital for many years as a porter before moving to King's Hospital. He was a familiar

figure in the road, walking his two Irish wolfhounds, a task later undertaken by his wife, Christine.

Allan was an avid car and motorcycle enthusiast, noted for his broad sense of humour and his generosity of spirit. He will be missed.





# Favourable news on the fence front

Green-fingered folk will know the Inverine Road greened plot has seen better days, and has recently become a hot spot for dog fouling and litter accumulation. But in late December there was some favourable news for the plot, when a new fence was installed in December by Santa's helpers at London & Quadrant Housing Trust, which owns the site.

Special thanks to Darren Rodney, Property Manager at L&Q, who CCRA partnered with to install the fence. It has a charming little gate so that the plot can be accessed for planting and weeding in spring, and litter picking all year round.

The fence is a welcome addition to this strip, which is tended by residents during the year and on Community Day. We already have a thriving New Zealand flax, persicaria and poppies there, and in the spring we hope to add some new botanical information plates and a few other new plants!

If you would like to get involved in our Environment Action Group, we are welcoming CCRA members for a drinks and nibbles evening in early March – details below.

## ENVIRONMENT ACTION GROUP DRINKS & NIBBLES

***You're Invited!***

**Where:**

**4 Delafield Road**

**When:**

**Thursday, 5 March**

**Time:**

**7.30 - 9.15pm**



■ If you have any questions contact  
chair@charltonresidents.net or call 07523 490 523

**THE  
RIVER**  
ALE HOUSE

131 WOOLWICH ROAD



SE London Camra pub of the year  
SE London Camra cider pub of the year  
SPBW Greater London pub of the year





## Festive feast at the Old Cottage Cafe

With their customary generosity, Michael and Mimi at the Old Cottage Café in Charlton Park threw another Christmas Party for residents spending the festive season on their own. And, as usual, a stalwart band of customers and friends rallied round to help.

Eleven guests were provided with a traditional lunch. Michael and Mimi roasted the turkey while other helpers cooked the trimmings. And there was

a glass or three of wine for everyone.

Kind visitors to the café made donations throughout the year to help fund the event and provide a cash gift for guests. There was still enough money in the kitty for Michael and Mimi to make a donation of £374 to the Greenwich Mayor's Charity Appeal. They have already received a letter from the Mayor, Councillor Mick Hayes, thanking them for their support.

Michael said: "It was a lovely festive celebration and we all had a good time. We would welcome more guests next year, so if any of you knows of someone local who will be spending Christmas alone, please let us know. We don't want anyone to be on their own."

Michael and Mimi, who have run the café for eight years, have donated to many local charities, including the Greenwich and Bexley Hospice.

## LET THE GRASS GROW UNDER YOUR FEET!

from front page

meadow will take shape are in the early stages, there was keen interest by locals with 30 people attending the meeting!

Joe Beale from the Greenwich Advisory on Wildlife (GWAG) was on hand to answer questions on the merits of the LUC report. GWAG's view was that the area should be simple to maintain, leaving the grass to grow, to be mown once a year and the cuttings removed to reveal the poorer soil that supports more diverse species, with insect refuges to be dotted across the site.

**FACTS:** 75% of the insect population in Europe has vanished in recent years and this impacts on the birds that feed on them; hedgehogs may be extinct within five years.

These losses are down to choices we make as

individuals, and the Group hopes that if enough people do something now, we could change this disastrous outcome.

Project manager Elizabeth Rutherford-Johnson said: "While what is happening with the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis can leave you feeling completely helpless, working to get the Meadow Project off the ground has shown me that we can still make a difference and that our actions still matter. I was thrilled to see such a fantastic turnout on Saturday and by the positive response to the Meadow Project.

"We would be particularly keen to get in touch with any groups that use the park for sporting or other activities, to hear their opinion, to help share information and also publicise their activities."

The next stage – stage 2 – involves a walk around the local site with group reps, park users, dog walkers and residents.

■ Anyone wanting to get involved – in any capacity – should contact Friends of Charlton Park on [friendscharltonpark@gmail.com](mailto:friendscharltonpark@gmail.com)





Simon Hughes  
Managing Director

## WHY ARE ESTATE AGENTS HATED?

We can all agree that for many years the industry of estate agency has been less than favourable with the British public! If you compare the British agents to the US Realtors, it is quite the opposite - in the USA the industry is held in great esteem along with occupations such as Doctors.

There is good reason for this. In the UK anyone can be an estate agent. A fraudster, on the day of release from prison, could open an agency, accessing properties and handling large letting deposits - it has danger written all over it huh? You need not have any experience in selling or letting properties yet you can attempt to do the job with no training, advising would-be sellers and landlords incorrectly. This is partly the reason our industry is so tarnished over here: but changes are afoot, at long last!

There has been government consultation on estate agency regulation, and it has been announced by the government that we are highly likely to be fully regulated in the coming years, which is great news in our opinion. This means that anyone wishing for a career as an estate agent must have qualifications and work for a fully regulated firm who is accountable to the chosen regulator. A win-win for consumers surely?

Becoming an industry where qualifications matter, where advice is given with built-up knowledge, and companies must abide by set rules from an independent regulator to improve standards, is likely to increase the talent wishing for a career in estate agency.

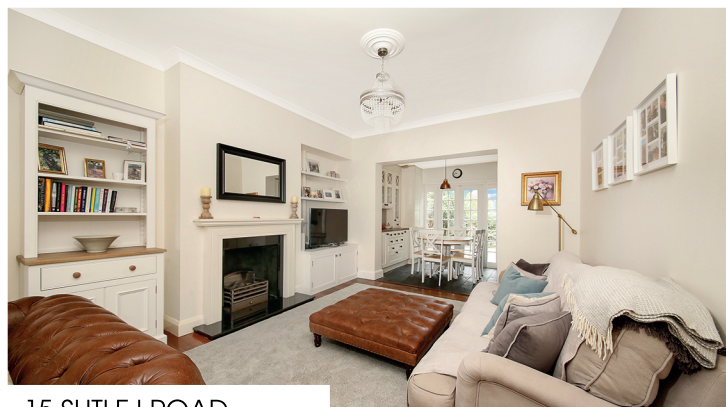
We very much look forward to embracing the new chapter ahead for our industry and look forward to a more favorable view of estate agents from the British public... hopefully!

BROCKLEY | FOREST HILL  
CHARLTON | WESTCOMBE PARK  
LEE | ELTHAM  
GREENWICH | BLACKHEATH  
ASSOCIATED PARK LANE OFFICE  
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15 SUTLEJ ROAD

OFFERS OVER £625,000

A surprisingly spacious and extended four bedroom semi-detached house with a 'to die for' family bathroom with slipper bath. EPC: E



6 ELLISCOMBE ROAD

ASKING PRICE £650,000

Another gem in a favourite road in Charlton, with original brick façade and tiled path this property has the archetypal 'kerb appeal'! EPC: TBC



52 MONTCALM ROAD

GUIDE PRICE £530,000

We love the amazing 5\* kitchen-diner with island, tons of storage, quality built-in appliances, and French doors, the hearth of this home. EPC: D



97 DELAFIELD ROAD

ASKING PRICE £725,000

Don't you love a cosy living-dining room with wood-burning stove? This Victorian terrace is just about the cosiest. EPC: D





# 43 SWALLOWFIELD ROAD

ASKING PRICE £760,000

A very spacious Victorian house with a beautiful loft conversion and situated in one of the most desirable roads in Charlton.

This exceptional home provides superb flexible living space which is laid out over three floors; perfect for any growing family.

The stunning frontage with fig tree and tiled path leads into a long hallway with beautiful ceilings and handy under stairs storage. The living-dining room is a good example of the high standard of this property in general; with its brilliant blend of traditional features and modern, practical

enrichments such as bespoke folding doors, fireplaces, bay window with shutters, ornate ceiling plasterwork and wood floors.

The external space at the rear is of similar quality with a lovely rear garden that faces south-west with wisteria and a pear tree.

On the first floor, there are three double bedrooms and a family bathroom, and the top floor boasts a bedroom with rooftop views and an en-suite shower room.

Highly recommended. EPC: E





# I heard it on the Grapevine

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

### Walking Group

Each December it's good to look back over pleasant events of that, and previous, years – I've had such a good time walking with delightful people and meeting new ones but one thing that has struck me has been the change in the weather from what we would normally expect.

December's walk (taken with light snow and frost on the ground in the past) was relatively mild as we strolled through the gardens of the Inner Temple just off Fleet Street. The buildings, such as the Temple Church, were not open to visit but we found the exterior of the Chambers interesting as we tried to spot famous legal names amongst their occupants. A walk along The Strand past St Clement Dane's (the RAF church) brought us to a turning to Covent Garden. After admiring the Christmas decorations, browsing some of the stalls in the Jubilee Market and having refreshments in the Transport Museum we went on to Seven Dials and then down to Trafalgar Square to see the Christmas tree.

If December is mild I always assume January will be rather chilly and planned a walk with lots of places to get out of the cold. But we were pleased to have a bright sunny morning to set out to Canary Wharf and it stayed dry, if increasingly cloudy all day. We headed off from the tube station through Jubilee Park to the Crossrail Place Roof Garden to find trees and shrubs originating from many of the countries visited by the West India Dock Company and brought back to that site over 200 years ago. There was also available to printout a story lasting one, three or five minutes to take home for bedtime reading! We moved on to the Museum of Docklands for a browse through this fascinating museum – an offshoot of the Museum of London – on all aspects of dock life over the centuries, eventually ending up at the pub next door (with the most luxurious ladies' loos!). Some walkers then decided to make their way home whilst others of us took a diversion to East Greenwich Pleasaunce for the Wassail festival – much of which we missed but there was still mulled cider available and they performed a last wassail for the late-comers. 'Waes hael' everyone!

Our next walk will be on Sunday, 9 February starting at 9.30 from Charlton Station. Please contact Jill for more information on: [jillmo@btinternet.com](mailto:jillmo@btinternet.com)

### Exercise Group success

Back in the Summer, CCRA decided to have a go at setting up a viable exercise group open to every age group but meeting in the mornings and therefore skewed to more mature Charlton residents. After a dry run at the community day, we secured a grant from the council to cover the cost of a trial period for 20 weeks, and got started in October. Altogether over 30 different people have come along at different times, feel better for the activity and enjoy making new friends. We feel this counts as a successful pilot project, so we are certainly planning to continue the classes when the original funding runs out in the spring.

We have funding until early March but are seeking some subsidy to allow us to move gradually to fully funding ourselves. In the long run, we shall have to cover both the cost of hiring the hall and of our very energetic instructor Mandy. At some stage we will need to introduce a small charge and have had some preliminary chats about this with the group.

The Church Hall could accommodate about two dozen people comfortably; our biggest attendance so far is 22 but we could take a few more. We'd be pleased to see more happy movers doing their stuff for an hour and gossiping afterwards.

It's every Monday morning: St Richard's Hall opens at 11am and the action begins at half past, followed by a hot drink and snacks. Just come along or ring Dave on 07562652767 if you want a bit more detail.

### Book Group

Our last book was *Daniel Deronda* by George Eliot who was born in November 1819. It was probably her bicentenary that prompted the choice, which was not an easy read. Our next read is likely to be something lighter but still we hope worthy of discussion. If you like reading why not join us? If you're interested contact Zoe on [zoe31well@hotmail.com](mailto:zoe31well@hotmail.com).

### Knit and Natter

The QE's neonatal unit was again delighted to receive our gifts for their Christmas babies. Every year we deliver knitted Snowmen and Santas as well as mitts, hats and blankets to the unit. If you'd like to get involved in charity knitting or if you have your own project then come along to our group. We meet in St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road, 2 – 4pm on the following Tuesdays: 25 Feb; 31 March; 21 April; 19 May; 30 June; 28 July; 29 Sept; 27 Oct; 24 Nov; 15 Dec.

### CCRA Singing Group

Our regular Monday singing sessions began on Monday 13 Jan, and the remaining dates until Easter are: 27 Jan; 10, 24 Feb; 9, 23 Mar. All sessions are at 26 Wellington Gardens, 7.30-9.00. These evenings are open to anyone, so please come along and help us to raise money for local charities. If you are interested in joining the group on a regular basis, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

### Instrumental Music Group ('SE7')

We were busy in December, playing at the CCRA Christmas Social on 7 Dec and at Cattleya on 15 Dec. Between now and Easter, members of the group will be involved in playing for two ceilidhs at Mycenae House: Burns Night on 24 January and St Patrick's Night on 20 March. We also hope to return to Cattleya soon. We are always interested in gaining new members, whatever your instrument or level of experience, and reading music is not essential. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

# On your bike...

The Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) is to build more than 700 new cycle parking spaces at a variety of locations across the borough.

The funding is provided as part of the Transport for London (TfL) Cycle Parking Implementation Plan, designed to ensure that there are enough cycle parking spaces to meet demand across the capital. RBG has benefited the most of all London boroughs from the funding.

The first of the new spaces are set to be in place by the spring and will include secure cycle parking for people who live in flats, for 11 RBG schools, plus more spaces at stations and more cycle racks on the streets.

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Sustainability and Transport, said: "I welcome any initiative that makes it even easier for more residents to enjoy cycling. School streets are making the roads outside schools safer, the Woolwich to Greenwich cycleway is being consulted on now, and our EZ cycle scheme lets people try out e-bikes. We're delighted we've got funding to create more new cycle parking spaces than any London borough."

A consultation on extending the Greenwich Cycleway route out to Woolwich was launched earlier this month and closes on 16 February.



## No rogue callers

Since the introduction of our NO COLD CALLERS zone we have seen a massive reduction in rogue trading in the area.

However, we must not get complacent. We have received reports of 'door knockers' pretending to be police officers, bank officials, builders and council officials.

The rule of thumb is never let anyone into your home that you don't know and beware that identification cards can be bogus. If someone wants to enter your home you should arrange an appointment time that gives you sufficient time to check on their credentials. Never meet with a stranger on your own to discuss your finances or property.

If in doubt call the police on 101 or RBG's Trading Standards on 0208 921 8223. Let the Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch know if you have any concerns about community safety ([mail@ccnwatch.org](mailto:mail@ccnwatch.org) or phone 020 8853 3354).

## History in storage

The Local History centre was once in the building next to Mycenea House, in Westcombe Park, now occupied by the Rudolph Steiner school, and then moved into a grander listed building near the river in the Woolwich Arsenal site. It has moved again to Charlton, still near the river in the industrial site at the bottom of Anchor and Hope Lane.

For many this seems a terrible decision, and there has been a lot of protest. History in a modern industrial unit!! Will this prove to be the final destination? It has some advantages. The atmosphere in the building can be properly controlled, the storage arrangements don't have to fit a listed building and the most modern technology can be and has been installed.

It is not possible just to walk in and look around. But it is not meant to be a museum. And, at the moment, it is only possible to visit by appointment one day a week. But it can provide a first class service.

In the next *Grapevine* we'll provide more detail on how to make the best of the service available.

# *How happy is my valley?*

... A view from the terraces

## The Abu Dhabi Valley!

The situation at Charlton was as bleak as the weather when I wrote in December. A catalogue of injuries almost unheard of in the annals of league football, an absentee owner seemingly unmoved by the problems and results on the pitch reflecting that crisis.

Rumours of a change had been ricocheting around the Valley for years and we faithful fans had become immune to it. Then, almost without warning, came the news we had all been waiting for – Roland Duchatelet had sold the club to an Abu Dhabi based company rumoured to have billions in the bank! Hallelujah! We had to wait a few weeks before the Football League cleared the deal then as the time ticked into January and the transfer window, we watched with anticipation. Full steam ahead.

So who are the new owners? The company is East Street Investments, part of a wider organisation headed by His Excellency Tahnoon Nimer, who runs some 60 companies. They are based in Abu Dhabi. Chairman of East Street is Matt Southall who was quick to take to the media to reassure fans of the new company's intentions.

And it is clear they intend to put the community at the heart of their strategy. While Duchatelet stayed away and appeared indifferent to the club's future, East Street have straightaway struck a positive note. In his first interview, Matt said: "We bought the club because of its location, its heritage and its fan base. This is a premier-ship club and that's where we're headed. I didn't expect the level of enthusiasm from the fans. But it's a long-term strategy. There will be no boom and bust. We want to build on what is already here and we will do it slowly, sensibly and sustainably. There is a fantastic academy and we want to develop that. We are committed to doing it. The club is the heart of the community. Remember, we are only the custodians."

But he warned there may be difficult decisions to make and they might not always please the fans. "I may have to take tough decisions but they will always be in the interests of the club. Our first priority now is to make sure we stay in the championship. To do that we need to strengthen the squad. We are working round the clock to solve this."

He was keen to stress the company's commitment to the local community and their fan base. "We need to reconnect with the community and the fans. We want them all to come back. They are returning. We want to see 27,000 people in the Valley for home games. The fans here are amazing and, as Lee Bowyer has said, they make a huge difference, singing and urging the team on."

Matt's thoughts were echoed by Tahnoon Nimer who, in his first statement, said: "With Charlton you are dealing

with the very heart and soul of the community. I am more excited by this latest venture than I have been about anything else for a long time. I hope to be in London as soon as possible to come and watch a match."

Comforting words for us all. And the change could not have come at a more fortuitous time. The injury crisis has continued, though some of the players are back in training now. Johnny Williams is back in the squad and so is Jake Forster-Caskey, who both played in the 2-2 home draw against division leaders West Brom. When the season began we were in the top four and on a roll, but the catalogue of injuries saw us drop down the table and put us perilously close to the drop zone. On one Saturday in January Lee Bowyer could not even fill the bench. In our January cup match against West Brom, we fielded a sixteen year old. Several times we have had six or seven academy players on the pitch. All have acquitted themselves well, but the inexperience has shown and, though we never get beaten badly, nonetheless we keep losing by the odd goal. Recently a few draws have seen us start on the road to recovery but there have been

more set-backs. Conor Gallagher, our young loanee from Chelsea, who has played brilliantly, was suddenly called back to his home club.

And in a real slap in the face for Bowyer, he was promptly re-loaned out to Swansea.

Iconic striker Lyle Taylor is injured again and is still undecided about his future with the club.

So far he has turned down what Matt Southall described as a "very reasonable and fair" offer. As we go to press, no decision on his Charlton future has been reached. Macauley Bonne, the young striker brought in to strengthen the squad, suffered a hamstring injury that will keep him sidelined for weeks. Recent signing Josh Davison from Peterborough is looking like a lively replacement and scored his debut goal against West Brom in a bruising encounter at the Valley. The club is looking to buy 26-year-old Marcus Maddison from Peterborough. He is a play-making midfielder and was expected to sign for Charlton as we went to press. It is believed the club was paying £2.5million for him.

Before the away match at Preston, Lee Bowyer was looking more optimistic, particularly as several players are ready to start again. But he was still discussing his own future at that point and indicated he was expecting to resolve contract negotiations very soon. With the new owners firmly committed, the possibility of new players coming in and injured players returning, we can only be optimistic.

**Crongers fissed. COYR's!**







# Appeal in Wellington Gardens

The land behind the wall at the end of Wellington Gardens between Victoria Way and Wellington Mews is covered by trees and shrubs and saplings. (see photo) It has been the subject of several planning applications over the last ten years or so, all of which have been turned down by the Council.

The latest plan (19/0755/F) for one four-bedroom

house, two three-bedroom houses and two two-bedroom flats was turned down in July last year and the owner of the land appealed against this decision at the end of December. There will be an appeal process which will involve an Inspector looking at relevant documents and written submissions before making a site visit and announcing her or his decision.

## New tunnel is going ahead

A number of local people seem to think that the Silvertown tunnel is no longer going ahead but that is not the case. It was approved last May after a public inquiry, and, though delayed by legal action, the £1billion contract for the construction was signed in November.

Work is expected to start this year and the new tunnel is expected to be open from 2025; not 'in' but 'from'. There will be a toll to pay for building and maintenance and a new toll on the Blackwall Tunnel, which now seems a requirement for government support, but the charge will be decided later.

Transport for London (TfL) are still saying it will 'effectively' eliminate congestion and that the user charge will ensure overall traffic volumes and associated carbon emissions 'do not increase'.

This is a more modest claim about the benefits than originally suggested. At the same time there is reference to both tunnels being within the expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone to be introduced before 2025 which will 'improve air quality all over London'.

The Silvertown Tunnel will take bigger lorries that cannot pass through the Blackwall Tunnel at present, so

large high vehicles, that are not polluting our roads at present, will be able to do so, albeit on payment of a high charge. Why not ban them altogether, with the exception of double decker bus routes which will be a real benefit for local people?

If it all goes ahead as planned, Greenwich will get some improvements on the sides of the roads from the tunnels: some screening and greening on both sides of the road coming up the hill from the Woolwich Road and an improvement to the foot tunnel under the motorway from Bramshot Avenue.

Clever public relations language does not prevent many people from seeing a big contradiction between the Silvertown scheme and the radical steps the country needs to take in confronting climate change. TfL are looking at other river crossings for pedestrians and cyclists and public transport, which would help reduce car dependence.

Let's hope that TfL keeps control of the day-to-day management of the tunnels and tolls, and doesn't franchise out to an agency which has an interest in stimulating as much traffic as possible.



## Dates for your diary

**Every Monday through to and including 16 March**

11.30 – 12.30

Exercise class followed by refreshments  
St. Richard's Hall  
Swallowfield Road

**Saturday 4 April**

7.30-9.30 pm

Spring Social  
(details including venue to be confirmed)

**Sunday 31 May**

Open Gardens

Check noticeboards and website for details nearer the time but if you are interested in opening your garden, please email [events@charltonresidents.net](mailto:events@charltonresidents.net)



# 20mph speed limit through the Village

There have been several road accidents in the Village recently which has added to the pressure for a 20 mph zone.

A traffic order followed by a short period of consultation could lead to introducing the speed limit in the spring.

At the same time, we understand that steps were taken to establish a Charlton Traders Forum at an inaugural meeting in December.



*Damaged flower wall in Charlton Village*



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