

Views from the Hill

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

January 2013



Save Lewisham Hospital

Many of you will have heard that the A&E and maternity units at Lewisham Hospital are under threat of closure. A community campaign to fight the proposed closure needs the help of residents to keep up pressure on the Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, who will make the decision on the future of the hospital at the beginning of February.

South London Healthcare Trust (SLHT) was put into administration towards the end of last year because of debts of £150million. The Trust was set up in 2009 after the merger of three hospitals which had all been operating at a loss for some years: Queen Elizabeth in Woolwich, Princess Royal in Orpington, and Queen Mary's in Sidcup. Unfortunately, the merger did not solve the financial problems, and the total cumulative debt by the end of last year was estimated to be £356 million. The Trust Special Administrator (TSA) appointed by the Government proposed that the SLHT should be broken up and the three hospitals merged with neighbouring Trusts.

Given that Lewisham Hospital is not part of SLHT, why have cuts to the services it provides to many of our members been proposed? Apparently, Queen Elizabeth is expected to join with Lewisham Hospital. Lewisham Hospital has the reputation of being very well run – although it had a small deficit a few years ago, this has now been turned into an annual surplus. Furthermore, last year they opened a brand new A&E Department at a cost of £12 million. Yet the plan is to downgrade it to a non-admitting urgent care centre and transfer emergency services to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This will then leave the boroughs of Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley with one A&E for 750,000 people.

However, the proposals don't stop there. The lack of good critical care facilities raises the question of whether it would be safe to deliver babies at Lewisham Hospital, and so the TSA has suggested closing the delivery ward. The future of children's services, which are particularly good at the hospital, is also unclear. Lastly, the TSA points out that reduced services at Lewisham would mean that some of the land could be sold off to raise money. This has lead to fears that rather than improving Queen Elizabeth's finances, the merger could ruin Lewisham's finances - with potentially disas-

trous consequences for the future of Lewisham Hospital.

Support for the campaign to stop the closures has come from all areas of the community. Thousands of people marched through Lewisham in November 2012, symbolically linking hands around the hospital before attending a rally in nearby Ladywell Park. Another



day of action is planned for Saturday 26th January. Whether or not you join the march, we would urge all members to sign the petition to stop the closure - to date almost 27000 have signed it.

In the words of one of our members, who is also a senior member of staff at Lewisham Hospital, "When an A&E plus all acute admissions closes, the heart of the hospital has gone. All that will be left is an 'Urgent Care centre' - attending to the 'walking wounded', minor illnesses, those not requiring hospital admission, plus some elective surgery, a midwife-led 'low-risk' birthing centre (not sure who decides what is low-risk), outpatients and radiology. The 25,000 admissions per year plus at least another 35,000 A&E attendees will have to go elsewhere."

So why not help the campaign organisers to reach their goal of 30,000 signatures by signing the on-line petition today?
<http://www.savlewishamhospital.com/>

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A very happy new year to all our members...

Thousands brave the rain to protest against the proposed closure.

Inside this issue:

Page:

Lewisham Hospital:	1
Chair's report:	2
New Website:	2
Street Lighting:	2
51-53 Canonbie Rd.:	3
Forest Hill Pools:	3
Filming on the Hill:	4
Big Bang:	5
58 Canonbie Rd.:	5
Empty Homes:	6
Garden Wildlife:	6
Seasonal Recipes:	7
Road Gritting:	7
Committee list:	8

Chair's report



I hope everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable and relaxed Christmas. Now that the New Year has begun, we can take some time to reflect upon last year's events before looking to the future and contemplating what we'd like to achieve. In the last 12 months we've seen some very significant issues whilst at the same time attempting to bring up to date the way we communicate with our members (with the mass email system and revamping the web site) and continuing to organise all the usual social events. I should add that the Fireworks Party went very well as usual, and lots of people gave some very positive feedback.

In spite of the eventful year, we should not 'rest on our laurels'. This year, we intend to build more on our new web site, expand our email system and, for the first time, hopefully install electronic payment of subscriptions so that renewals can be done online (rest assured though that the traditional £5 in an envelope to your road rep will still be accepted!).

On a more negative note, as many will already be aware there has been a third application to redevelop the site at 51-53 Canonbie Road into six flats. Many local people, and the Association, have written to the Council Planning department to object to this proposed development. One of our main concerns is that this could set a precedent to allow others to do the same. This would adversely affect the character of the neighbourhood both in the short and long term.

I hope that you all have a prosperous new year. Please remember, as always, the Association is on the lookout for more volunteers, and we will always have something that will suit your free time (whether it be writing the odd news article or becoming a sub-committee member or a road rep). Please feel free to get in touch with any of the committee (their details are on the last page of this newsletter) or through our web site.

Dave Lowe

New Website now live



*Go and find us here:
www.tewkesbury-lodge.org.uk.*

Some of you may have already visited our relaunched website, but if you haven't as yet, please do go and take a look at www.tewkesbury-lodge.org.uk. On the site you will find the latest news from the Estate and local area,

details of past and upcoming social events, and information on how to contribute stories to this newsletter, or get involved with the Association.

The new design is, we hope, cleaner and easier to read than before, and will also be easier to keep up to date. So it should be your first place to look if you want to find out more about something happening on the Hill. Readers are also able to add their own comments, stories and post information - we'd love to hear more from you all.

Coming in the New Year, we hope to be able to take subscription renewal payments electronically. This should help everyone and free up more of the committee's time to focus on fun things – like organising the next residents' party! Please take a look and let us know what you think of the new website.

Tracey Syrett

Street Lighting update

Feedback from our members regarding the new street lighting suggests that people are generally happy with it, and some have commented that the workmanship on the pavement re-instatement has been good. The columns did need to be reduced in height due to a late change in design instigated by the contractors (Skanska) which they believe should be slightly better for

residents. Not all of the streetlights have yet been shortened. The concerns raised by members have been reported to Skanska, who have submitted a proposal to the Council in terms of work needed to address these areas. They hope to undertake remedial works early this year.

Dave Lowe

Update on 51-53 Canonbie Road

As we reported in the last newsletter, the site at 51-53 Canonbie Road has been the subject of a development proposal to demolish the existing building on the plot and build a block of flats. The first planning application for 9 flats was rejected on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate, the second application for 8 flats was rejected by Lewisham Council and is currently under appeal with the Planning Inspectorate, and a third application was submitted in November to build 6 flats.

The Association and neighbours in nearby properties rallied local residents into responding to the Council with their concerns about this latest application, and assisted in providing a concise version of the Association's objection letter on our website for residents to use as a template for their own response. In total there are 30 objections to the application on the

grounds of overdevelopment of the site, poor quality of the proposed development, adverse impact on parking, and the adverse impact on the neighbouring properties (particularly around overlooking and loss of light and views). Whilst the number of flats has been reduced in this latest application, and the scale does appear to be reduced, there is still a very significant and adverse impact on the neighbouring properties, the footprint of the proposed building being twice as much as the existing dwelling.

The target decision date stated on the Council's planning portal website is late January 2013. Given the volume of response to this application, we are hopeful that the Council will reject it. Do check our website, as any news on this application will be posted once we hear.

Rowena Lowe

The first and third planning applications.



Forest Hill Swimming Pools and Gym

If you have not yet explored or used this wonderful venue, then get down there immediately after Christmas, it's just the place you need for a detox!

The Pools are situated on Dartmouth Road, next to the library. There are no dedicated parking places, but parking is free on the side roads, although it is advisable not to go during school arrival and departure times! Also you can use the Council car park at Sainsbury's (free for 2 hours) and it's only a 5-10 minute walk from there.

The entrance has a lovely planting scheme, and is fully accessible for buggies and wheel chairs. The atrium is light and spacious, and is furnished with comfortable couches and tables with a view of the main pool through an interior window. Across the hall is the open plan café, serving good coffee and healthy snacks and light lunches – and breakfast too. There is a

training pool that can be used by parents and small children, and state of the art changing rooms and lockers. Upstairs (or by lift) you find the large Gym with all the usual equipment, and two studio rooms. One is a beautiful large room with a polished wooden floor, suitable for the yoga, dance or fitness exercises, the other is smaller. Both of these rooms and the large community room can be hired out by local groups for very reasonable prices.

The membership terms are generous compared to a private facility and seniors can swim and use the gym for free, while under-16s can swim for free. There is also a good array of coached activities, and some under the GP scheme are very reasonable priced for all.

So if you live in Forest Hill, there is no excuse now for not developing a very healthy lifestyle!
Nano McCaughan



Filming on the Hill

Over the years we have lived on the Estate we have seen various homes being invaded by film crews, and film cameras and vehicles dominating roads. I remember walking the children to school at Horniman Primary and dodging Bill Patterson, the Scottish actor, as he was filmed driving slowly up Liphook Crescent. When we moved into the area we were told this was where the famous Mr Bean's "Hill start" was filmed - I don't think anyone would question the logic of a hill start being filmed in our area...

Give that man a loaf of bread and there you have a seasonal remake of the Hovis advert!



Early in October, filming for a Ready Brek advertisement had taken place in the kitchen and front garden of our next door neighbours. Then, on Wednesday 24th October, the trucks arrived once again at about 6am and it was constant activity until about 6pm. What I think distinguished this latest episode was the fact that a small section of Canonbie Road (the houses



directly opposite the junction of Canonbie Road and Westwood Park) became a snow scene for the day! The film company was filming an advert for Macdonalds and it was played on TV throughout the festive season. If you missed it you can locate it on You Tube by keying in McDonald's "Christmas 2012 postman" TV ad.

Xmas trees were installed in the front rooms of four Edwardian Houses ,and the gardens and road were covered with fake snow. It did look

realistic and it was amazing how much colder you felt standing in the 'snow'. Apparently the material used was paper. It was all cleared up by machinery that night and the next day and whilst some plants retained their dressing of paper snow for a while, the rainy weather soon ensured there wasn't a trace left. The manager of the film company said he had chosen the houses because of the scene created by the hills and for the fabulous views, although on the day itself it was really misty and there wasn't a view to be had.

But his comments really resonated with us. That's why we fell in love with our house. So many of us are fortunate to have tremendous views either from the house or outside in our streets, and we have heard visitors to the area wax lyrical about these views. They are precious and they make this area special and we probably will continue to see film cameras from time to time in the future.

Christine Noon

The Big Bang

Another big success! As the planned date of the firework party fell at the end of half term, lots of people were away. There was concern that not many families would turn up, but this was not the case at all and about 180 people attended, including 12 new members who joined on the day. There were fewer cooks this year though, which meant that some had to cook around 50 drumsticks or sausages - double the usual number. There was plenty of yummy food to go around and, most importantly, no shortage of David and Rowena's delicious mulled wine!



Luckily, it was a cold but clear and dry night, which helped attendance. A row of creatively carved pumpkins lined the path to provide some much needed light. The pyrotechnics team did a great job and everyone was treated to a spectacular fireworks display against the backdrop of the London skyline. The children all had a great time, and did not seem to be scared by the loud noises of the fireworks this

year, although some very sensible brought along ear defenders - a good tip for next year.

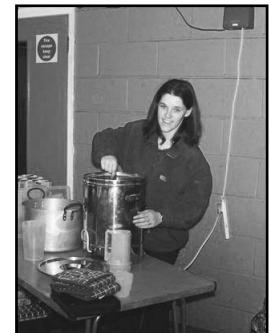


Thank you so much to all the volunteers who worked so hard to make this night such a success.

Dagmar Vesely

Is it bird? Is it a plane? No, it's those nutters on the Hill again!

Editor's note: We would also like to say a big thank you to Julia Clark, Head Teacher of Horniman Primary School, for once again allowing us to hold the event in the school grounds. It is an ideal site – and not only because it's actually on the Estate. A large covered area means that the food and mulled wine as well as members stay dry even if the weather doesn't. Perhaps more importantly, the fireworks can be let off safely in a play area enclosed by a high wire fence. And with the extensive views over London, we get to watch everyone else's fireworks as well as our own!



Update on 58 Canonbie Road

Readers may remember that the Association was contacted by Nick Long, Lewisham Council, regarding a house in Canonbie Road that had been standing empty for some time. Local residents had complained about antisocial behaviour incidents and graffiti at the property. The Council was applying to the Residential Property Tribunal Service for an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) to bring the property back into use, and needed to provide as much evidence as possible to support their application. At the Tribunal hearing in June, the owner gave assurances that he could complete the necessary work to make the property habitable in six months.

We are pleased to report that at a follow-up hearing in December, the owner impressed the Chair and Panel with the amount of work completed in the property. The appearance of the property is much improved, and the Council therefore withdrew the EDMO application, keeping open the option of re-applying if works stall.

Our thanks to Nick Long and his team for their efforts in resolving this issue.
Valerie Ward

More empty homes....

I recently found out that the police accommodation in the Hermitage, Westwood Park, was empty apart from one policeman still living there. I therefore wrote to the Mayor's Office in December to find out why the police were not maximising the use of these houses. A very prompt reply was received from the Deputy Mayor. Apparently the houses are now surplus to requirements having progressively become empty as residents moved out. The intention is to dispose of the houses at the same time as the adjoining Havelock House, which is currently leased to Crown Housing Association, and will not be returned with vacant possession until 2015.

Soon after, the Deputy Director of the Metropolitan Police Property Services visited the site to assess the situation. He has now written to me to say that they are working with Crown Housing to bring the properties back into habitable use in the short-term for temporary accommodation. Work is scheduled to start this month. In the medium term, access to the Hermitage is to be improved via Horniman

Drive across the adjoining site, also owned by the police and where their communications mast is sited.

I subsequently discovered that there are other police housing complexes lying empty in London, and brought this to their attention. The Metropolitan Police no longer consider that the direct provision of accommodation for police officers should be part of modern policing. Assurances have been given that the disposal of the houses in the Hermitage will be part of a much wider programme to sell off residential properties and re-allocate the monies raised to front line policing.

I was impressed by the rapid response of the Metropolitan Police to my letters, and that as a result the Hermitage properties will be made available for much needed housing in the area over the next few years. Let us hope that they move as quickly to utilise the other unused or under-used residential property they own in London.

Pat Rae

Garden wildlife on the Tewkesbury Lodge Estate - Winter

Berries become an important source of food for blackbirds and thrushes in winter, and native species such as hawthorn and holly will be visited when their berries are ripe. Among introduced berry-bearing shrubs, pyracantha does particularly well on the Estate and attracts blackbirds in large numbers and sometimes



The mistle thrush - sadly an increasingly rare sight.

thrushes as well. Thrushes, (both song and mistle thrushes) are seen and heard on the Hill less often in the summer than used to be the case but in the winter, as visitors from

Scandinavia, they appear in our gardens and can be heard in song early on a February morning. The country name of the mistle thrush is 'Storm Cock' because its strong voice from a tall tree can be heard in the strongest of storms. Most winters we also see a small flock of a smaller thrush called the redwing, which visits the UK when its supply of berries in Scandinavia runs out. It has a cream streak across its eye and a red patch under its shoulder and it seems to be attracted to hawthorn berries in particular. Birds need water for washing as well as drinking and are attracted to garden ponds and water features. The smallest bird we see on the hill is the goldcrest, a tiny green bird with a gold crest across the top of its head: this woodland bird is most at home in yew and conifers and hangs its nest (no bigger than a tennis ball) underneath a small branch.

None of the above is lost on the sparrow hawk, who feeds on garden birds from the smallest finch up to the largest wood pigeon. Sparrow hawks soar high overhead looking for food and sometimes hunt from a rooftop with a good view. They swoop down very fast to catch any bird that is in the open. For this reason bird feeders are best sited under a tree so that they are not in the flight path of a bird of prey.

Thirty years ago there were tawny owls on the Estate as well and they could be heard calling “twit-twoo” at night. And in one cold winter 30 years ago my wife saw a woodcock in our garden underneath a silver birch: unfortunately I was working at the time and so I missed our most distinguished visitor!

All of these winter birds have strong links to woodland - again emphasising the importance to nature of the trees in and around our gardens. If the trees in our garden were able to collect air miles from the long distance visitors that refuel in their branches, some would clock thousands of miles a year. Apart from the Scandinavian redwing in winter, which arrives in flocks, there are the occasional but regular long haul summer visitors from North Africa (chiffchaff) and South Africa (willow warbler) as well as more local woodland birds, which move in from the

countryside each winter in search of food. Sadly woodland birds on our Estate have become less frequent. Mistle thrush and song thrush which were plentiful (for example in Horniman Gardens 30 years ago) are now much harder to find. Nuthatches likewise are scarce and the tawny owl has completely gone. This must be partly a reflection of a national trend, but may be also an effect of the loss of trees from the Hill. If native trees such as oak, holly, birch and yew are established in our gardens then, by looking after them, we make a real difference to our local woodland life. It is also helpful to plant berry-bearing shrubs, to build a pond, or to put out nest boxes and bird feeders - once we have started to feed the birds who visit our gardens, we need to continue until their food is plentiful again in midsummer. The RSPB website has excellent advice on this.

Stuart Checkley

Seasonal recipe

Celeriac and leek frittata

Can be served hot as a main meal for 4. It also slices well when cold and is a very useful picnic or lunch-box snack. It is equally good if you substitute potato or parsnip for the celeriac.

Ingredients

375g celeriac (weight when peeled)

Good squeeze of lemon juice

250g leeks

1 tbsp sunflower oil

150g hard cheese

6 large eggs

4 tbsp chopped fresh dill

Plenty of black pepper

1tsp English mustard powder

Method

Peel the celeriac and cut into quarters. Squeeze some lemon juice into a pan of water and bring to the boil. Cook celeriac until just tender (about 15 minutes). Meanwhile, wash the leeks and cut into thick slices. Put the oil into a non-stick omelette pan and fry the leeks quickly over a high heat until just softening and starting to brown slightly.

Grate the cheese and cooked celeriac coarsely. Put the eggs, the chopped dill, pepper and



mustard powder into a large bowl and beat with a balloon whisk until combined (not too much otherwise the final dish will become leathery). Stir in the grated cheese, celeriac and leeks. Heat the non-stick omelette pan over a moderate heat and return the mixture to the pan, spreading it out and smoothing the top. Immediately reduce the heat to the lowest setting and cook for about 10 minutes. The frittata mixture should be firming up around the edges. Place the pan under a pre-heated grill for another 8 -10 minutes or until the mixture is firm all the way through and the top is golden. Slide or invert on to a serving plate.
Pat Rae

This isn't just any celeriac frittata. This isn't even a M&S frittata. It's actually a frittata on top of potato and parsnip hash brown cake. Sorry - best we could do....

Good gritting!

Residents will have noted that the gritting lorries have been pretty busy on the Estate recently. So now that the snow is falling, our roads remain clear. You will remember the difficult conditions we had to endure after the heavy snowfall in 2011 when all the roads on the Hill were closed to traffic. Not only could

residents not drive off the Hill, but the impossibility of access by ambulances and fire engines was a real concern. To avoid this happening again, representatives of the Association met the Lewisham Council Director responsible and visited the Council's 'gritting HQ' at the

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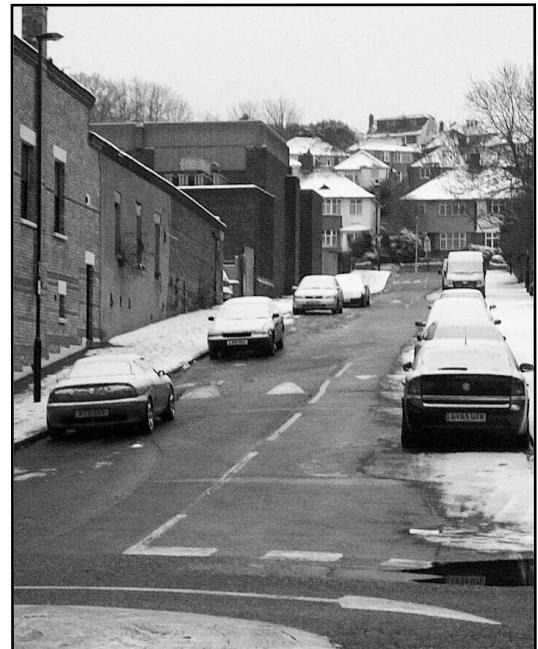
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Wearside Depot in Ladywell. As a result, the Estate was made an 'exceptional' gritting route, which means that roads are gritted as soon as snow is forecast, and the spreading rate of grit is more than elsewhere to help keep roads passable.

We are therefore really pleased that the Council is keeping up the good work, and our roads are safe and snow free, as can be seen in the photograph of Langton Rise taken just before we went to press with this edition of the newsletter.

Interestingly, when continuing on to Wood Vale and Underhill Road (both managed by Southwark Council), it was clear that the level of gritting was not as good. As ever, the Association will continue to monitor the situation and hope that road closed notices remain a thing of winters past!

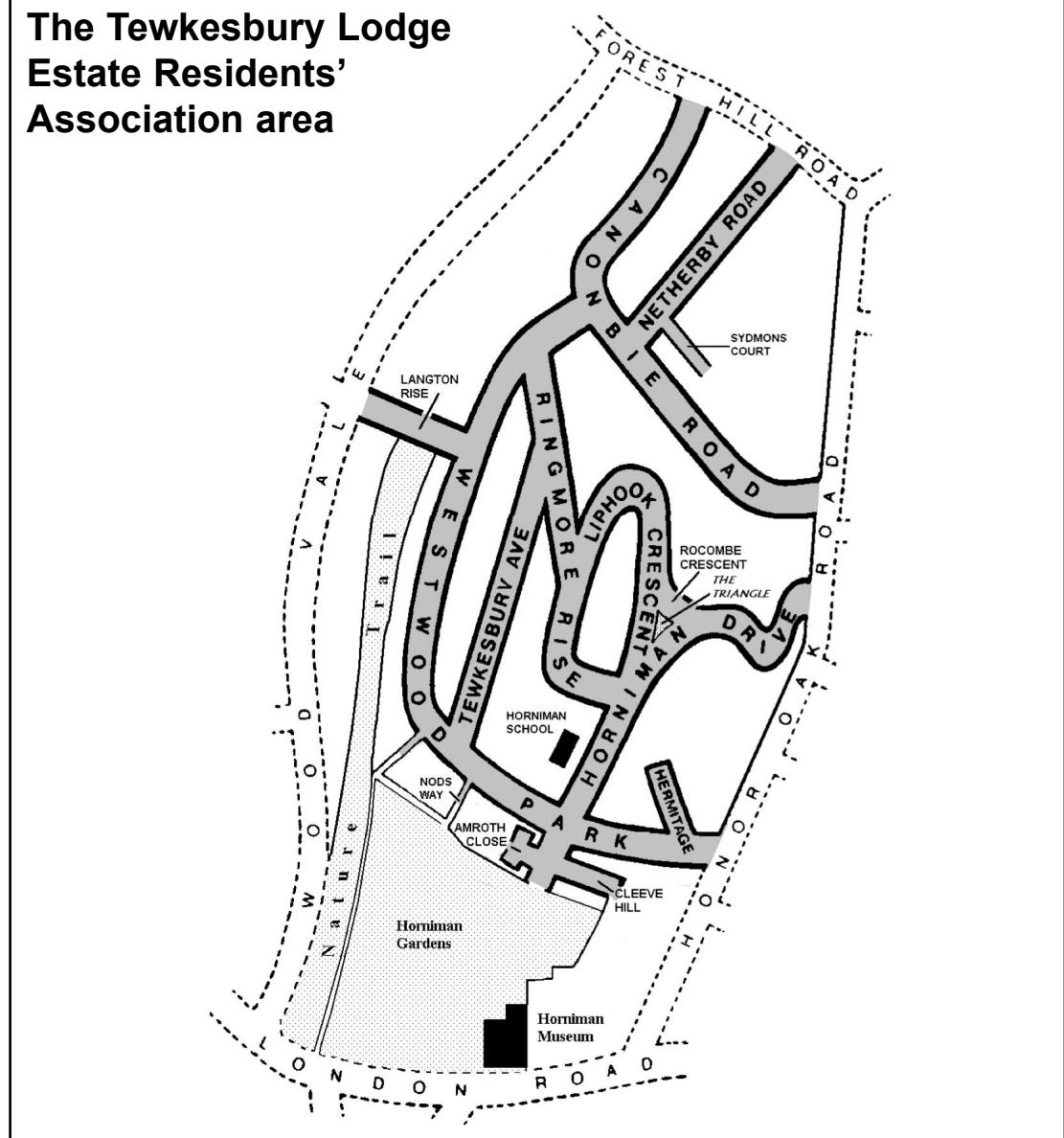
Valerie Ward



A job well done? Well please let us know!

We will be revising and updating our Local Trade Directory and Members' Handbook for 2013 and hope to be able to distribute the new directory to members during the summer.. So do let us know if you can you recommend any good, reliable companies or individuals that we can list in our local directory and members' handbook. If so, please e-mail our secretary Rowena Lowe (secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk) with your suggestions or pass details on to your road representative.

The Tewkesbury Lodge Estate Residents' Association area



This newsletter was compiled and edited by Valerie Ward. Design by Michael Schlingmann. Contributions by members are very welcome and can be e-mailed to: secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk