

# Views from the Hill

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Summer 2015



## Homelessness in Lewisham – a hostel solution?

Printed on  
recycled paper



As part of the Council's strategy to reduce homelessness in the Borough, planning applications have been submitted to turn 118 Canonbie Road and Hamilton Lodge on Honor Oak Road into hostels for homeless families. Short term family accommodation is much needed for Lewisham families who find themselves homeless, often through no fault of their own. At present there are 574 Lewisham residents being put up and paid for in bed and breakfast accommodation, many of them outside the Borough: this type of temporary accommodation is very expensive as well as being unsuitable for families in housing need.

Hamilton Lodge, a detached three storey Edwardian building, was used as a 32 unit nursing home until it was purchased by Lewisham Council following closure after the Care Quality Commission found serious issues of non-compliance with four of five key regulations. The Council acquired 118 Canonbie Road in April after protracted legal processes to gain possession of the property which was being illegally run as a hostel. If change of use is approved, work will start to build self-contained accommodation for 9 families in Canonbie Road, and convert Hamilton Lodge into 22 residential units, some self-contained, some shared facilities, but all of a good standard. Neither properties will be used to house single homeless people.

Objections to the planning applications have been raised by some TLERA members primarily concerning pressure on local services, particularly schools, and the potential for anti-social behaviour. Regarding primary school places, because of the temporary nature of the accommodation, in-year transfers will not be an issue if the children are already in another school in Lewisham. Children starting school for the first time this year will not be a problem either, as they will already have a school place. Looking forward to September 2016, the aim would be to find first time places in schools near to where the families are likely to be rehoused. Discussions with two of the three local primary

schools indicate that they do not consider the proposals will present a problem for them.



What is perhaps more of a problem for neighbouring householders is the antisocial behaviour issue. Members living near 118 Canonbie have had to endure years of antisocial behaviour when the property was used by a private landlord as an unlicensed hostel for mainly single people, many of whom appeared to have come to England in search of work. Police were frequently called to the property to deal with disturbances and instances of alcohol and drug abuse, often in the early hours of the morning. Council officers liaised with police, housing and environmental agencies to try to resolve the issues but eventually had no option but to undertake lengthy legal procedures to obtain vacant possession of the property in April. However, the effect on neighbours, particularly those with young children, has meant that there is an understandable mistrust of the property once again being used as a hostel, albeit a Council run facility. We have been assured that the Council has a long and successful history of managing hostels in the

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*While this newsletter was in production, the Council arranged a community meeting to give residents an opportunity to raise their concerns about the proposed change of use with our councillors and relevant Council officers. We will post an update on this, together with any subsequent developments via e-mail/our website.*

Borough and will provide a full management, housing support, maintenance and caretaking service. Householders will rent their accommodation by way of a licence which means that if they fail to comply with the conditions attached, e.g., not causing a nuisance or not looking after their accommodation, they can be served with a notice to vacate within 7 days, or sooner if necessary.

The TLERA Committee have discussed the Council's plans in detail on several occasions, but no clear consensus was reached. What was also clear in discussions with members was that there was also no real consensus among them.

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### Dates for your diary

NGS Open Garden event: Saturday, June 20th & Sunday, June 21st

TLERA Summer Picnic: Sunday, July 5th  
between 1-5 pm in the triangle, Horniman Drive

Given this, it was agreed that the Association should not formerly object to the proposals, but note any concerns that were raised and seek clarification/reassurance from the relevant Council officers. This was also the stance adopted by the Forest Hill Society (FHS). Rowena Lowe, our lead Planning Officer, is advising members who oppose the application of several issues she has identified that can be used in their letters of objection. These points have been shared with the FHS who have also raised concerns relating primarily to transport issues and the proposed internal layout of the accommodation.

Fireworks event: Saturday, November 7th  
(provisional)

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### From the chair

The Association is receiving a growing number of complaints from members about the impact on their property of loft conversions and extensions carried out by neighbours. With increased demand for housing and the rising popularity of home improvement projects (we're all doing them!) it's likely that more applications will be put in over the coming months. Our involvement in commenting on planning applications for these is considered on a case by case basis. However, with ever-rising property values and the temporary relaxation of planning regulations, many fairly major changes to a house and its gardens may be undertaken without the need for planning permission. If you are considering alterations to your home, do think about the impact on your neighbours, and discuss the changes you are proposing with them - whether or not planning permission is required. Whilst we can have no official input in such areas we feel that by encouraging a sense of community and contact between neighbours we can try to ensure that such changes are done with sensitiv-

ity to the environment and that their impact is minimised.

As you will read in this newsletter, our first Easter event was a real success, with all money raised going to Demelza, a charity providing hospice care for very sick children in south east London and Kent. We will most definitely be adding that to the annual TLERA events calendar! This year, our Garden Group has organised two open garden events for the National Garden Scheme (NGS), the first of which may have taken place by the time you receive this newsletter. If you are not on our email list and missed the first opening, do come along and see the four gardens opening on June 21st and 22nd, buy some plants, enjoy tea and homemade cakes - and help us raise even more money, mainly for cancer charities including St Christopher's Hospice. We hope to see you there.

*Dave Lowe & Valerie Ward*

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### Hamilton Lodge – a view from our councillor

I've read with dismay recent figures obtained through the Parliamentary library detailing there are 2,800 children without a permanent home in Lewisham – an increase of almost 1,800 from 18 months earlier. Make no mistake this is a London wide issue with a total of 80 per cent of those children in England living in temporary accommodation found in the capital.

I believe that the use of B&B accommodation is expensive, inadequate, and has unacceptable

long-term effects on homeless families, as they are often shut out of their accommodation during the day, causing huge disruption to daily routines of school and work. Every child deserves a decent home to come back to after school, where they feel secure, and where they can sit down to do their homework. That is what at least good temporary accommodation can provide. It's heart-breaking to see so many children in Lewisham growing up without the basic necessity of their own home. Inequality is



robbing these children of their childhood. This is why I believe that the option being put forward to use Hamilton Lodge for temporary accommodation over the next 5 years is a better option than subjecting families to B&B.

London has both the most expensive housing and the largest number of people living in poverty in Western Europe – and incomes are falling as the cost of housing rises. The Mayor of Lewisham has taken some steps in addressing the issue of the lack of permanent housing within the Borough – we have started to build Council homes for the first time in 30 years with a target of 250 as a minimum by 2017. I believe we need a long term aim of providing more truly affordable housing for residents, or the option of rents that people can actually afford to pay on tenancies that let them create a home.

I appreciate and understand the concerns that local residents may have regarding school places. This year the Council is investing around £1m in Horniman Primary School, not just in providing an extra form entry at the School. The works comprise the design and construction of a new build kitchen within an external undercroft area, internal remodelling and refurbishment works to provide an additional classroom, and improved learning

spaces and toilet layout. I will continue to monitor any pressure that the proposed usage of Hamilton Lodge may or not place upon primary school places within the area.

I will also work with the Council, Safer Neighbourhood Team, and local residents to ensure that effective reporting mechanisms and tough penalties are in place for any person found to be contributing towards anti-social behaviour whilst a resident of Hamilton Lodge.

I know a number of residents may not agree with me, but I would like to assure you that supporting this scheme is not a decision I have taken lightly – last year for instance I opposed the extension of Miriam Lodge and would do so again. However, I believe with all my heart that faced with the increased number of homeless families that it is better to provide decent temporary accommodation than subject them to the roulette wheel of unpredictability that B&B accommodation provides.

*Cllr Paul Upex*  
*Forest Hill Ward*  
*cllr\_paul.upex@lewisham.gov.uk*



*A longer version of this article appears on the SE23 Forum*

## Sun comes out for Easter Egg Hunt on the Hill!

After a week of overcast skies and high winds, we couldn't believe our luck with the weather on Easter Sunday afternoon for the Easter Egg Hunt. TLERA had decided that it would be good to hold a family event early in the year to complement the summer picnic and the autumn fireworks and it was decided to hold this Easter event in aid of Demelza Hospice Care for Children. Demelza supports families with very sick children throughout south east London and Kent. Originally, the plan was to use the Triangle, but we decided that the garden of 'Hilltop', Horniman Drive, would be a much better venue.

All the TLERA wonderful cake-baking regulars sprang into action, and the Committee donated the chocolate eggs. Although many people were away for the long weekend there were still plenty who came along with their Easter visitors. The children loved hunting for eggs, feeding the chickens, riding the rocking horse, and following the 'Hilltop' Story Trail. The atmosphere was great and it was particularly nice to meet new families on the Hill. Demelza has written thanking us for the cheque for

£360.72 raised from the small entrance fee, selling refreshments, and the generous donations we received.

Many people who came said they were in favour of supporting future events held for Demelza. On this note, I would like to hold other such events in the garden, so if anyone has any ideas for fundraising events please come and talk about them! The Story Trail is always there (and developing all the time) so all we need is the weather and the cakes!

All in all, the afternoon made me – as always – extremely grateful that I live on this lovely hill, with TLERA and all the people who put so much time and energy into events like this one.  
*Frankie Locke*



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## Summer events 2015

### *Garden Opening*

The second of our two garden openings for the National Garden Scheme (NGS) will be on Saturday, 20th June between 5-8pm and Sunday, 21st June between 2-6pm. As in 2013, seven members are opening their gardens this year - too many gardens to visit in one afternoon, even for dedicated gardening enthusiasts!

The four very different gardens opening in June are:

27 Horniman Drive

28 Horniman Drive

53 Ringmore Rise

Coach House, 3 The Hermitage, Westwood Park (recently redesigned).

Combined admission is £7, payable at 28 Horniman Drive (no charge for accompanied children). There are plants for sale at 27 Horniman Drive, and garden ceramics and sculptures at the Coach House. On Sunday tea and homemade cakes are available at 53 Ringmore Rise. There will also be a Story Trail for children at 27 Horniman Drive on both days.

Members of the Garden Group have been opening their gardens since 2001 for the NGS. Last year was the best ever – just over £4000 was raised for cancer and caring charities. So do come along and help us to do even better this year.

*The Garden Group meets in the evening on the first Wednesday of each month to exchange advice (and plants); arrange visits to gardens open to the public; and organise bulk purchases of gardening materials. If you would like more information, contact Nano McCaughan on 8699 8438.*

### *Summer Picnic*

The annual Summer Picnic will be held on Sunday, 5th July in the Triangle between Liphook Crescent and Horniman Drive from 1pm. Bring some food to share with friends and neighbours, plus your own plates, glasses, and cutlery. The Association will, as always, provide the liquid refreshments!

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## Reservoir site under threat – again.

Last November, TLERA members living in and around the reservoir site received flyers from Thomas Wrenn Homes Ltd inviting them to attend an ‘illustrative’ display of a proposal to not only build houses on the site but also on 116-118 Canonbie Road. An attempt to once again develop the reservoir site and what was formerly 116 Canonbie Road was not entirely

recently acquired the property and were working hard to gain vacant possession.

The Association arranged for Committee members to go along at various times during the day to view the proposed development and gauge the opinion of TLERA members who attended. Needless to say, there was no support for the development, with many expressing real concerns about its impact on both neighbouring houses and the environment – the developer’s assurances that the ecological value of the site was appreciated and would be conserved were not convincing.

Subsequent contact with the Council confirmed that there had been no discussion with the developers, and they had no intention of selling the property to Wrenn Homes. Needless to say, it is clear that a planning application will be submitted in the not too distant future which will once again threaten this valuable site, which is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (see below). We understand Lewisham Council will be conducting updated surveys of all SINC in the Borough during 2015. However, whether Mr Wrenn will allow access to the site is another matter...

*Valerie Ward*

*Architects plan for the reservoir site*



unexpected given they are both owned by Mr Wrenn. However, the inclusion of 118 Canonbie Road in the scheme was very surprising – as you will have read, Lewisham had

## History of the reservoir site

For members who were not around when the Association began a successful campaign to prevent the development of the site some 20 years ago, the large underground reservoir at the top of the land between Canonbie Road, Liphook Crescent and Horniman Drive was constructed in 1885 by the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company. It acted as a header tank to maintain water pressure in the mains serving much of South London. Advances in pumping technology reduced the need for header reservoirs and the site became redundant in the 1960s and was effectively abandoned by Thames Water.

By the time the site came up for auction in 1995 the land over and around the reservoir had remained largely undisturbed for over 100 years allowing many wildlife species to flourish, including some almost unknown elsewhere in London. Although the Council made it clear to intending bidders that they saw only a very limited opportunity for development on the site, the property was bought by a development company, who subsequently submitted a planning application for a 60 bedroom nursing home.

The next four years saw some of the most intensive activity ever undertaken by the Association as efforts were made to save this valuable plot of green space from the developer's bulldozers. An Action Group was set up to co-ordinate objections to the application, which the Council rejected early in 1996. Undaunted, the developer then acquired 116 Canonbie Road, which had the potential to provide a relatively level access to part of the site, and submitted a second application in 1998 for development of 36 flats and 50 car parking spaces on the site.

However, as well as carrying out an Estate wide survey in which 86% of members opposed any development and a petition to the Mayor signed by 500 local residents, the Association commissioned an entomological survey of the site. The survey found 78 invertebrate species, many in great abundance, including 10 species of ladybird and 11 species of butterfly. Of major importance was the presence of a very rare picture-winged fly, *Acinina corniculata*, recognised as an endangered species recorded on only a handful of scattered localities in Southern England, with only four British records of sightings since 1960. The survey concluded that the site warranted recognition as a valuable local habitat and protection against development. A more general ecological assessment undertaken by the London Ecology Unit on behalf of Lewisham Council recorded no less than 127

different plant species on the site, noting the existence of heath grass and cowslips known nowhere else in Lewisham. Together, these surveys revealed that we had in our midst, not a water reservoir, but a nature reservoir, of an importance which is unique in Lewisham, and of very considerable importance in a London context. As such, the site was designated as a Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation

Following rejection of the second planning application, a Public Enquiry was held in February 1999 to determine the application. The enquiry heard representations from the applicant, the Council, ecologists for both sides, an arboriculturalist and, of course, the

Association. We presented pictures of the site as it appeared in summer, a haven for wildlife and a refuge from the built up surroundings. The enquiry inspector was sufficiently impressed by the photographs to ask for them to be copied to all parties. We also called as a witness the entomologist who had done the initial survey. The Inspector visited the site and inspected it in minute detail. At the time it was in a sorry state after the developer arranged for the occupation of the site by six horses during a wet winter. However, after some anxious weeks the verdict was delivered – the application had been rejected.

Since then, little has happened on the site. Whilst work was being done on 116 Canonbie Road it suddenly became unsafe and had to be demolished, conveniently providing a much bigger access route. Over the ensuing years, the Association has remained vigilant to the possibility of a future, unsuitable planning application and will continue to oppose any development that will destroy a site of unique environmental importance and also be highly intrusive to nearby homes.

Valerie Ward



*The steps to the old reservoir.  
A photo from our archives.*

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*Footnote:* During our campaign to save the reservoir site, Steve Grindlay, a local historian and member of the Sydenham Society, made a fascinating connection when he saw one of our newsletter articles about the proposed development. He had been reading a biography of Walter de la Mare (1873-1956) and recognised that the reservoir mentioned in a long, meditative poem on Time, *Winged Chariot*, must be the one in our article. The poet lived in Bovill Road, Forest Hill, as a child. The reservoir, then in relatively undeveloped countryside, would have been within easy walking distance of his home. Steve wrote to the planners asking that this connection to the poet should not be forgotten when the application for development was considered.

*Many older residents have told us that they used to play on the site as children. No doubt their parents or grandparents could have played with Walter de la Mare when they too were young!*

### **Excerpt from *Time: Winged Chariot***

Yet there was a mystery too: those steps of stone,  
In the green paddock where I played alone,  
Cracked, weed grown,  
Which often allured my hesitant footsteps down.

To an old sun-stained key-holed door that stood,  
The guardian of an inner solitude,  
Whereon I longed but dreaded to intrude;  
Peering and listening as quietly as I could.

There as I knew, in brooding darkness lay  
The waters of a reservoir. But why,  
In deadly earnest, though I feigned in play,  
Used I to stone those doors; then run away,  
Listening enthralled in the hot sunny day.

To echo and rumour; and that distant sigh,  
As if some friend profaned had made a reply,  
When merely a child was I?  
*Walter de la Mare, 1951*

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## **Planning update**

The planning team has had a reasonably quiet few months in comparison to last summer. We responded to the following two planning applications that had already received permitted development permission.

ted development rules for large, single storey extensions in the back garden. We are trying to find out whether the developer would be allowed to add the storey to the bungalow as well as building a large extension in the back garden.

### *58 Canonbie Road*

We have lost count on the number of applications for this property, which relate not only to the existing house, but various changes and additions to the garage which fronts onto Westwood Park. The Planning Inspectorate has recently refused permission for a 'garden room' above the existing garage and Lewisham Council is yet to decide on an application for an outbuilding adjacent to the existing garage and submerged below ground.

Back in May 2013, various temporary changes were brought into the planning rules under the Coalition Government for an initial period of three years to 30 May 2016. Importantly, any development that has received permitted development approval under these temporary rules must complete the development by end date of May 2016. It is not known what the new government will do regarding this current end date.

As well as reviewing applications for private houses, various members of the Committee attended the consultation meeting last Autumn held by Lewisham Council over the proposed plans for 118 Canonbie Road and 36 Honor Oak Road (previously Hamilton Lodge). Given



### *46 Ringmore Rise*

There have been an extraordinary, and confusing, twelve planning applications submitted for this modest bungalow. At one extreme, the application was for the demolition of the bungalow, replacing it with a pair of three storey, flat roofed houses, on a larger footprint. At the other, demolishing the garage at the side and rebuilding it as a study/bedroom. The application for two houses was rejected by the Planning Inspectorate. Unfortunately, another application to add another storey to the bungalow on a larger footprint, has been allowed after a Planning Inspector visited the site recently. There are several applications under the permit-

the differing views held by both the TLERA Committee and Association members, it was decided not to formally object to the change of use applications, but to advise members who wished to do so of any grounds that would support their objection. All the relevant documents were scrutinised and a number of areas where current policy/regulations did not appear to be adhered to were identified.

These were shared with concerned members who contacted us for help and advice. We understand that another public consultation will be held prior to the change of use applications going to Lewisham's Planning Committee. Members will be advised of the date via e-mail and/or through our webpage ([www.tewkesburylodge.org](http://www.tewkesburylodge.org)).

*Rowena Lowe & Irene Greene*  
*Planning Group*

## 20mph-the good, the bad, and the ugly!

**THE GOOD:** After much pressure from campaigners, Lewisham Council has finally agreed to introduce 20mph zones throughout the borough. Hoorah!! This is fantastic news and will hopefully go some way in helping to make our streets safer. Surrounding Southwark streets are all now 20mph so it only makes sense to unify the area.

**THE BAD:** This is, however, just one step in a long list of safety measures we are urging the Council to implement in order to make the local streets safer. Despite engineers visiting the site last summer, being shocked at the potential traffic dangers and making promises for immediate action, still nothing has been done.

**THE UGLY:** Rat-running and reckless driving on Canonbie Road and Westwood Park are reaching alarming proportions: on Monday 9th February, 240 vehicles were recorded between 7.30am and 8.30am. This is a highly dangerous volume of traffic for what should be quiet residential streets. Smart Sat Navs (designed to find shortcuts) are the biggest part of the problem, leading vehicles along Canonbie Road away from the South Circular and nearby junctions. Roads on the Estate are now considerably more dangerous than they have ever been due to this increased volume of traffic. Many

heavy commercial vehicles 'shudder' up and down the roads every day, causing vibrations that have been shown to damage foundations and structures of adjacent properties.

We need to act now before the situation gets out of hand and what is now a temporary solution becomes a permanent one. We are continuing with our campaign to urge the Council to do something about this before there is a tragic accident.

Please help us to stop this madness!

*Dagmar Vesely*



## Water, water everywhere - and sometimes not a drop to drink...

I've lived in the area for over 18 months, and have noticed a worrying increase in the number of water issues on the Estate. It started off as regular low water pressures, but has progressed to a number of mornings, days, and even weekends with no water.

Over the weekend of the 24-25 January 2015, there were long periods where no water was available which was really difficult to manage, especially given the cold weather at the time. Then on Tuesday, 10 February 2015, Fairlawn

School was closed due to no water being available and there was certainly no water available for a shower in the morning at home (although it was back on in the evening). Thames Water said that a 4inch water mains pipe that needed replacing on Honor Oak Road was causing the problem, and noted that there were several further repairs needed in the area as well.

This really does seem to be an issue that we should keep an eye on, and take the time to report problems to Thames Water. If the problem persists, we should perhaps try to keep track of

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issues that affect the Estate so that we can present detailed evidence to our Councillors if, as an Association, we need to take further action.

On the positive side, this at the very least meant that I saw lots more of my neighbours as we went back and forth checking to see who did and didn't have water, and discussing what a pain it was not to be able to have a shower at home in the morning!

*Sally Tuhami*



### **Advice from Thames Water:**

*No Water or Low Pressure – what to do*

- Check the Thames Water LIVE interactive map with your areas latest known incidents.
- Try your cold kitchen tap –the main water supply normally enters your home in the cold kitchen or utility room tap. If the water comes out of this tap but not elsewhere, the problem is with your internal plumbing.
- Check your stop valves – your inside stop valve needs to be fully open. It's usually located under the kitchen sink, in the airing cupboard, or under the floorboards by the front door. If the valve is closed, turn it anti-clockwise to ensure that it is fully open (further advice on Thames Water website of how to do this).
- Check for frozen pipes – the cold weather can freeze your pipes, making them more likely to

expand and burst. Check visible pipes for damage. Consult the Thames Water website if you find a frozen pipe for advice on how to treat it.

- Check with your neighbours – if possible, check if your immediate neighbours have the same problem. If there is no issue with their supply, the problem is with your internal plumbing.
- If you've completed the above steps without success, please call 0800 316 9800 to let Thames Water know. To report leaks/bursts, please call the 24 hour leakline number 0800 714 614 or use Twitter @Thameswater, or complete the online form (on the Thames Water website).

### **East Dulwich Picturehouse & Café**

Sadly, expectations that the Wetherspoon pub in Forest Hill would revert back to a cinema were dashed last year, but soon after that it was confirmed that the former St Thomas More Community Centre on Lordship Lane would be converted into a three screen cinema. After many delays, it finally opened on 23 April. I went along with a friend to see what was on offer.

There is parking in nearby roads, but the Picturehouse is very quick to get to by bus or bike (cycle racks are available directly in front of the building) – and even not too far to walk. Given the absence of neon signs (thankfully), it would be easy to miss – no issues here regarding blending in with the streetscape!

Complete refurbishment of the building took a lot longer than expected but the architects have retained some of the original features: arched windows and wooden floorboards in the triple height foyer, as well as some of the beam work that was hidden beneath suspended ceilings. The café bar on the ground floor serves interesting 'light bites' as well as mouthwatering cakes



and pastries. More substantial fare such as seasonal salads, gourmet burgers, and a daily special is also available and, I believe, main meals including a Sunday lunch menu. The aim is to serve fresh food handmade on site using ingredients from local suppliers wherever possible. As well as Fairtrade teas, coffees and hot chocolate, a range of wines and beers are available. And because all the screens are licensed,

*For more information, including films showing, membership details, disabled access/facilities, and carer's cards etc., telephone 0871 902 5749 (calls cost 10p a minute from a BT landline) or go to [https://www.picturehouses.co.uk/cinema/info/East\\_Dulwich\\_Picturehouse](https://www.picturehouses.co.uk/cinema/info/East_Dulwich_Picturehouse)*

you can take your drink with you to watch the film on state-of-the-art curved screens in comfortable, semi-reclining seats with ample leg room!

With regard to the films, there seems to be something for everyone: mainstream and family films, independent, world, and documentary cinema, and the latest digital and satellite technology means that live broadcasts of the best performing arts productions from around the world can be shown, such as the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, Bolshoi Ballet and New York Metropolitan Opera. There is a Big Screen Club for parents with babies, Toddler Time sessions, and a Kids' Club every Saturday, as well as Silver Screen viewings for the over-60s, and a Slackers Club

for students.

Work is still going on at the Picturehouse: the courtyard garden and a green roof that will form a kitchen garden are not yet finished, and the cafe will be enlarged in the coming months to incorporate the empty shop next door.

Residents were really disappointed when a proposal to open a cinema and arts centre in Forest Hill came to nothing, but at least we now have a really good, community-focused cinema just a short journey away. Going to see a film at either the Odeon at Beckenham or the Multiplex at Peckham would be cheaper, but for convenience and comfort, the East Dulwich Picturehouse gets my vote!

*Valerie Ward*

## Nature corner

When moving some old tree logs at the bottom of the garden which have been there for a number of years, one of the logs fell in half and revealed some stag beetle larvae. As they take up to 7 years to become an adult, the eggs must have been in the log for a number of years. We put the log back together again and placed it very carefully where it was found. As the Stag Beetle is a protected species it's very rewarding to see them in our garden. It pays to be patient and leave some old rotting tree stumps or wood at the bottom of the garden - and not be too tidy!

*Norma and Derrick Butcher*

### ***A few Stag Beetle facts you might not know.***

- Although now rare in Britain, mainly due to loss of suitable habitat, the London Wildlife Trust says Lewisham is a stag beetle hotspot.
- It is Britain's largest native ground-dwelling beetle. Adult females can be up to 5cm long and some males may reach 7cm.
- The male is easily recognised because of his mouthparts which have evolved into enormous jaws, resembling the antlers on a stag's head. Despite their fearsome appearance, these antlers are useless for biting, and are used to fight other males. It is the smaller female we need to be wary of - her tiny antlers may look less threatening but they can inflict a sharp nip!
- Males will fly out to look for a mate at dusk



on humid, thundery evenings between May and August. Females can also fly but rarely do so, releasing pheromones instead to attract males to them.

- Most stag beetles live for only a short time after emerging as an adult, with many dying during the winter. A few can survive if they find somewhere warm to live, like a compost heap.
- Stag Beetle larvae are really good for your garden. They eat rotting wood, returning important minerals to the soil, but don't eat living plants or shrubs.



## Exciting plans for the Horniman Gardens.

In February we launched our new exhibition, Plantastic - a fun and interactive exhibition that reveals the wonderful world of plants to visitors, and I recommend anyone who hasn't seen it to come along and have a look. To link

the Gardens into this exhibition, we have three bespoke displays planned over the summer. The first we are calling *Anatomy of a Flower*, that will be a carpet bedding display made up of 3000 plants laid out to represent a dissected

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flower, similar to what you used to get in biology text books. This will be situated opposite the outdoor eating area by the cafe and will be planted at the end of May.

Next up is Sunseekers - a mass planting of sunflowers; *Helianthus* 'Prado Red', and 'Prado Yellow'. This is going to be an extravagant display of colour in the bed opposite London Road (the bed that we used last year for our hardy annual display). We are hoping this will brighten up the South Circular over the summer as the sunflowers should be flowering away during June and July! Both of these displays have been funded by the Friends of the Horniman for which we are very grateful.



*Hardy annual display  
residents enjoyed last  
year*

The third display will be another hardy annual bed situated in the recently emptied border on the Bandstand Terrace. This was sown in April and by June, hopefully, will be a riot of colour that will not only look amazing but help attract lots of pollinating insects. We really hope you come in to the Gardens over the summer and enjoy them!

Other projects in the pipeline are the redevelopment of the Rock Garden in the sunken garden. Gardener Damien has been gradually removing all the overgrown shrubs and conifers that were there and starting to plant up with a carefully chosen selection of unusual rock and alpine plants. This is a display that will take a few years to really bed in and mature and we are all really looking forward to watching it develop. We are doing something a little different in the Food Garden this year: we are going to display the 'grain' section as a mini-trail where visitors will get a chance to walk through the crops and

discover all the different plants that we use for grains rather than looking at them from the pathway.

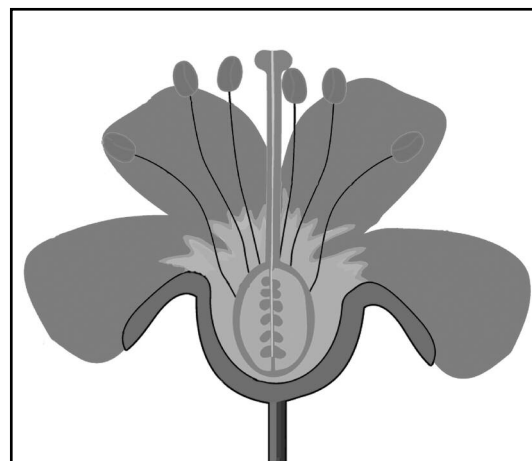
Last year we received lots of positive feedback about the hardy annual displays that we had growing in the beds close to London Road. These were actually a bit of an experiment: we cleared the beds over the winter because they desperately needed redeveloping but although we didn't have the time or resources to permanently plant them up, we didn't want to leave them empty either. We put on our thinking hats and drew inspiration from the 2012 Olympic site where they used mass planting of hardy annuals (plants that complete their life cycle in one year) to provide instant colourful displays over large areas. We ordered the 'Pastel' seed mix from the fantastic Pictorial Meadows seed company [www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk/](http://www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk/) and followed the instructions on the packet.

The process is simple: you dig and rake over the area you want to plant, sow the seeds directly onto the ground at the recommended rate and then just sit back and watch them grow. You don't have to worry about fertilising or irrigation unless we get drought conditions so they don't need regular watering. For the first few weeks, I was a little nervous as it just looked like we were growing a large bed of weeds but as they started to flower we had a constantly changing display that lasted from May through to October. Ideally you need an area that gets full sun, but there are seed mixes especially designed for shady areas. A very easy, cheap way of creating an amazing display!

As you can see we have lots of exciting new projects at the Horniman and do hope to see you soon.

*Wes Shaw, Head of Horticulture*

*Anatomy of a flower - one of  
the planned carpet bedding  
displays*



## News from the Horniman Museum and Gardens



Some busy recent weeks and months have culminated in exciting new displays and projects inside the Museum, online, and elsewhere. The revamped entrance area to the Natural History Gallery is now showcasing some of our star specimens, as we invite visitors to explore our fascination with nature. The model dodo has made a welcome return, alongside newly displayed creatures including a flamingo and an okapi, as well as the Horniman Beetle, named after our founder. The display area also includes a space to highlight work by contemporary artists and others inspired by the Horniman and its collections. The first of these is Polly Morgan, an artist at the forefront of the taxidermy renaissance and a visitor to the Horniman.

Another artist inspired by our collections is Mark Fairington. We recently launched our first crowdfunding campaign, raising money to stage an exhibition of Mark's paintings of taxidermy and skeletons in our stores, alongside the specimens that inspired them. Supporters could choose from a range of wonderful rewards – including a zebra-eye tote bag, a floral silk scarf and a limited edition gilded

print – all featuring Mark's stunning paintings. We had until 23 April to reach our target, and are delighted to say that thanks to everyone who supported the campaign, the full amount was raised and Mark's stunning work will be on display in November.

Further afield, our Aquarium team have been busy sharing their expertise to create a live coral reef as part of the Natural History Museum's exhibition Coral Reef: Secret Cities of the Sea. The exhibition also features a video about the Horniman's Project Coral research, which aims to help ensure the future of coral reefs. And of course visitors can still see our own coral reef closer to home, along with the other Aquarium displays.

Looking ahead to the summer months, our Head of Horticulture, Wes Shaw, promises us some wonderful Gardens displays linked to our Plantastic exhibition (see separate article for details). And we've just announced our African Summer season of events – from dance performances, films and museum displays, to African-themed live music at our evening jazz picnics and Sunday Bandstand concerts. Events will run throughout July and August.

Further information on all the events and activities this season can be found at [www.horniman.ac.uk](http://www.horniman.ac.uk).  
*Alison McKay*

*In there, Somewhere,  
by Polly Morgan*

*African season  
©Benedict Johnson*



## Seasonal recipe

### ***Pavlova with Lemon Curd and Berries***

A pavlova with homemade lemon curd filling and sprinkling of seasonal berries – perfect for a Summer's day! The lemon curd and meringue base can be made a few days ahead of eating. Store base in an airtight container until ready to use.

Short of time? Unexpected guests? Well a quick trip to the supermarket to get a ready-made meringue, jar of lemon curd, carton of cream, and some berries is the alternative option – although it may not taste as good...

### *Ingredients*

For the meringue:

4 egg whites  
Pinch salt  
250g (8oz) caster sugar  
1tsp white vinegar  
½tsp vanilla essence  
2tsp cornflour

For the lemon curd

4 lemons, grated rind and juice  
450g (14oz) sugar  
125g (4oz) butter, diced  
4 free-range eggs, beaten

*And if you can't eat it  
all yourself, just give  
some of it to Pavlovas  
dog...  
geddit?*



To serve:  
250 (8fl oz) double cream  
Mixed ripe berries, such as blueberries and blackberries

#### Method

- Heat the oven to 120°C (gas mark ½). Line a baking tray with baking paper, then draw a circle 20cm (8in) in diameter in the middle of the paper.
- Place the egg

whites and a pinch of salt in a clean dry bowl. Beat with an electric whisk until soft peaks form. Gradually add the caster sugar, beating well after each addition. Beat until the mixture

is stiff and glossy. Fold in the vinegar, vanilla and cornflour.

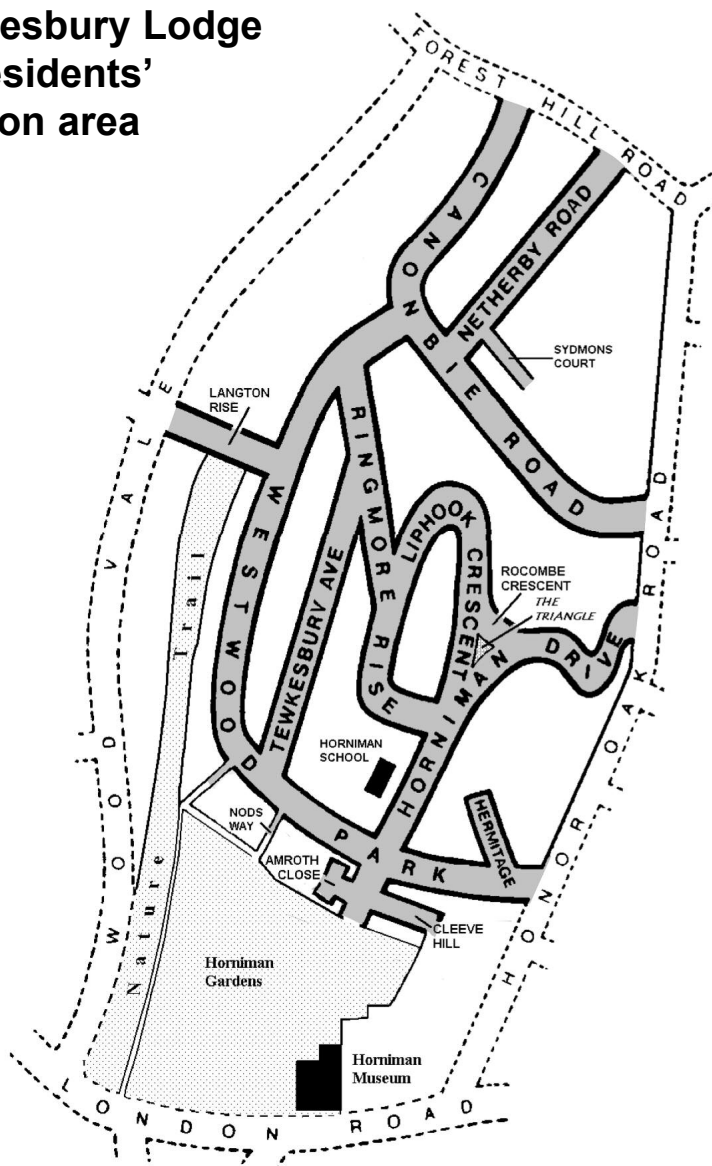
- Pile the mixture onto the circle on the baking paper, shaping it with a spatula and leaving the centre slightly hollowed. Cook for 1-1¼ hours, or until crisp and dry on the outside. Turn off the oven and leave it to cool with the door ajar.
- To make the curd, finely grate the rind of the lemons into a bowl and add the juice. Add the sugar, butter and beaten eggs to the bowl and sit it over a saucepan of simmering water - don't let the bowl touch the water, stir with a wooden spoon until thick and the curd coats the back of the spoon. Chill until needed.

To assemble the pavlova, whip the cream until it just holds stiff peaks, then fold about 3tbsp of the cream into the curd. Spoon the curd onto the meringue and heap the berries on top. Serve with the remaining cream on the side.

**Your subscriptions**  
The annual subscription remains at £5 per household for 2015/16, which we hope you agree represents good value for money. An envelope to return your subscription to your road representative is enclosed with this newsletter. Please save your road representative time and trouble by putting it through their letterbox as soon as possible, so they don't then have to send out reminders.

We are also finalising a simplified local trade directory for members. Our thanks to those who returned the form giving their recommendations for good tradesmen, shops, and services.

## The Tewkesbury Lodge Estate Residents' Association area



This newsletter was compiled and edited by Valerie Ward, and proof read by Carole Abrahams. Design and layout by Michael Schlingmann. Contributions from members are very welcome and can be e-mailed to us at [secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk)