



AT THE RINGWAY CENTRE

Grove Park Community Newsletter Summer 2011

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The Ringway Fair

Saturday, 2nd July - 11am to 3pm at the Ringway Centre

Heidi Alexander MP will open the event at 11.30am

Grove Park Community Group

welcomes local residents, **ALL** ages, to a free-entry, fun-filled event, including Arts and Crafts; CDs, DVDs and Books; Air and Army Cadets; Fossils and Stamps; Nature and Nutrition; Bouncy Castle & Competitions; Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Team; Local History; Music and Zumba; Territorial Army; University of the Third Age

. AND much, much more!

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available



Grove Park Community Group, a registered charity, was formed in 1972 to bring together various local voluntary associations. In 1982, the Group established the **Ringway Centre** on land in Baring Road across the route of the abandoned Ringway 2 urban motorway.

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A message from the Chair

by Michael Hill, Chair - Grove Park Community Group

It is now six months since I was elected Chair of the Grove Park Community Group and it has been a very interesting and enjoyable experience. Not having previously held office in the Grove Park Community Group, I knew little of the internal administrative procedures. Our Centre Manager, Paul Beresford, was very patient in explaining them to me and has since given me a lot of help.

We have been fortunate in being able to access some Lewisham grant funds in the past six months. We applied for a grant to buy new chairs from the Locality Fund and were successful. By the time you get this newsletter the new chairs will have arrived. The Ringway Centre is, as we all know, in need of replacement, but this is not likely to happen for some time. In the meantime we can refurbish the existing buildings to some extent, and for this we managed to obtain a grant from the Mayor's Fund at the last Grove Park Assembly Meeting. As soon as this grant is received we will start on the project. In this respect we are going to need volunteers to help us carry out the work. If you have some spare time in June, July or August we could use your help. In particular we need someone with experience of external decoration using Sandtex or a similar paint.

In April, along with other voluntary organisations in Lewisham, we submitted our main grant application for the next three years. Lewisham, like all local authorities, is having to cut back on their spending, so this year's grant application was the hardest we have ever had to submit. Again our Centre Manager, Paul Beresford, came to the rescue, and I can honestly say that without his input we could not have submitted such a detailed application. His experience of past grant applications and detailed knowledge of the Ringway Centre users was invaluable. We will know how successful we have been sometime in July. □

The Ringway Centre - rooms for hire

If you are a member of a local group or organization requiring space to hold its meetings then please contact the Centre Manager on 020 8857 7980 or email paul268ringwaycentre@yahoo.co.uk for availability and prices.

The Ringway Centre is an ideal venue for children's parties, especially in the summer when the grounds are at their very best. We can accommodate up to 30 primary school aged children with adult helpers. Contact details are as above.

Rooms at the Ringway Centre are hired out to a number of groups covering such activities as Keep-Fit, Yoga, Pilates, Lace Making, Philately, and Art. The University of the 3rd Age (U3A) holds meetings for Photography, Art and Bridge. The activities of some of these groups are described in the pages which follow. □

RINGWAY LACE AND NEEDLECRAFT GROUP

- Bobbin lace making
- Tatting
- Knitting
- Crochet
- Cross stitch
- Canvas work

We meet on Wednesdays at the Ringway Centre (10am to 12 noon), and everyone is welcome, whatever their level of skill – especially beginners. . .

. . . If you want to try something new, you can borrow equipment to try it out.

Your first lesson is **FREE**, so why not come along?

The new term starts on Wednesday, 28th September 2011

Keep-Fit at The Ringway Centre

If you would like to keep fit in your friendly local community centre, I take two over-60s classes and one Pilates class at the Ringway Centre. The two over-60s classes are Exercise To Music on a Monday and Friday from 10am to 11am, and the Pilates class is on Tuesdays from 1.30pm to 2.20pm.

The Exercise To Music is great for mobility, flexibility, strength for muscles and bones and stamina. The Pilates is a special type of exercise for the core (stomach muscles) and back muscles and very good for flexibility. The classes are mixed ability and good fun, and after the over-60s class we all have a chat over tea and coffee (and biscuits!) The classes are only £3 and everyone is welcome.

Come and get fitter and meet new people in your area.

The Monday class is usually full, but the Friday class and Pilates have spaces.

Jane Cullen

ZUMBA at the Ringway Centre.

Come and try out this Latin-based dance fitness class that is taking the UK by storm. It's fun, energetic and gives your abs the most fantastic workout. You don't have to be a dancer, just allow your body to move to the music

. All abilities welcome. Start working towards that beach body now

Every Thursday @ 7.15pm

Half price with this advert

ZUMBA Gold

New at the Ringway Centre. Also know as Gentle Zumba. Perfect for students looking for the same flavour and fun as regular Zumba, but with less impact and intensity. Great for beginners, the active mature person or people returning to fitness (e.g. after pregnancy,)

Every Thursday @ 6pm

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Places for both the above classes are limited. Register with Emma on 07979 330145

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Walking Diary - May 2011 by Sonja Aldengard

The last newsletter announced that healthy walks were finally coming to Grove Park. A day before the walk was due to start, it looked bleak, very - we had SNOW! In a flurry of activity, a plan B was devised: we would meet at the Ringway as planned and simply stay there for a chat over a hot drink, as walking was deemed too risky. On opening day, five persons braved the weather expecting a walk, so we navigated in deep snow to Chinbrook Meadows and back, warming up at the Ringway afterwards. The next week we were eight and, despite icy pavements, we ventured to Northbrook Park. By the third Wednesday the snow had gone and again we were eight, including a man who is registered blind. This walk took us to Horn Park off Winn Road. Since then the group has grown and grown, so that we now have over 20 people registered. Not only are the numbers increasing, we are also walking in ever increasing circles. We were a bit restricted during the winter months, sticking mostly to streets, but spring allowed us to investigate footpaths leading further afield. More recently, we have walked all the way to Eltham, to Chislehurst and Beckenham Place Park. Because of the Ringway's location, some of our walks take in no less than three boroughs. While walking and talking, nobody thinks about distance, but when I tell the group afterwards how far they have walked, they are usually amazed. One walker said: I've no idea where I am and where I've been walking, but I've enjoyed every single minute of it.

In late November I had the chance to attend a workshop organised by the Ramblers at the London Living Room on

the 9th floor of City Hall, although there were no panoramic views on that rainy day. It was a revelation: The Ramblers are no longer all about open-air enthusiasts in anoraks and walking boots; their Get Walking Keep Walking scheme, aimed at getting inactive people walking, has been running for the past three years, with aims similar to those of Natural England's Walking for Health scheme: see websites www.getwalking.org and www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk.

A "walkshop" rounded off the day's programme. It was quite an adventurous walk, weaving in and out of London Bridge Station, Guys Hospital, Borough Street Market, all the while watched over by the imposing Shard in the making. And, as mostly happens on a walk, we discovered something new, namely the delightful Red Cross Garden, created in 1887, bordered by six picturesque Victorian cottages, a real gem for the residents of Southwark, then and now.

Increasing access to the natural environment can provide both mental and physical health benefits. Evidence from the Natural England Department of Health Walking for Health scheme suggests that, for every £1 invested in the scheme, £7 worth of health benefit is delivered. Are you ready for a dose of walking? All you've got to do to get your green fix is to turn up at the Ringway Centre at 10.30am on a Wednesday, fill in a simple form and start enjoying yourself. This is strictly come walking, in all weathers, come rain, come shine. My best tip: bring a bottle of water, your Freedom Pass, if you have one, and a brolly. See you on a walk soon! □

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Learning and Leisure for Your 'Third Age'

by John Morgan - U3A South East London

When my father died my mother was understandably at a loss, as they were very close. After some months of grieving, she was finding that daytime television and unnecessary shopping trips were not enough. She knew she had to do something or risk long-term depression. Luckily an organisation called **U3A South East London** was recruiting members, and had advertised a meeting in the local press. She went to the meeting, and after hearing about the activities, she joined on the spot. Twenty years later, at the age of 92, she was still an active member, with many close friends and acquaintances in the organisation.

In contrast, my wife and I had the opportunity to retire in our fifties. My wife was keen to improve her language skills and perhaps learn a new language. My mother introduced her to the possibility of doing this in U3A and soon she too was a committed member. I was eventually persuaded to go along to some interesting talks and to join in some of the outings, and now I too am an active member of **U3A South East London**.

So, what is U3A? U3A stands for University of the Third Age. The word 'university' is used in its original sense of a group of people with a desire to learn. No qualifications are required or given; it simply involves learning for pleasure. Our branch of U3A in South East London is an organisation devoted to encouraging people who are retired from full-time employment to pursue their interests in a wide range of academic and leisure activities. Our activities take place in the boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich in neighbourhood centres and in people's homes. Over the last few years we have

started a number of new groups at the Ringway Centre.

Some of our groups are led by volunteer members who want to share their particular knowledge, skills, experience or interests with others. Other groups are based on mutual self-help; the concept is called shared learning. One of the principles set out by a founder member of U3A in the UK, Peter Laslett, was that "Those who teach, learn. Those who learn, teach". For example, I lead a science group, but I also participate in other groups where I am an ordinary group member. Our organisation is run by a volunteer committee who co-ordinate the activities of all groups, and produce a programme of activities every term and a regular newsletter.

We now have over 700 members and over 80 activity groups. Our annual subscription is currently £15, which is all inclusive. You can participate in as many available activities as you wish. The only extra costs are for materials, travel, tickets and personal expenses.

Our programme for summer 2011 includes classes in country dancing, photography, family history, science, history, languages, painting and bridge, to name but a few. We also offer theatre visits, discussion groups, book clubs, outings, walks, and Sunday lunch clubs. New groups are formed at frequent intervals. We particularly welcome new members who wish to start a group, and try to give them as much help as possible.

For more information on U3A South East London visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/london-se or phone John or Jean Morgan on 020 8853 5803. □

Music and drama in Grove Park

In previous issues of the Newsletter we pointed out some of the musical activities in the Grove Park area together with opportunities for participation in music and drama.

St Augustine's Church, once described as "Grove Park's primary concert venue", again lived up to its reputation, when, on Sunday, 15th May they were hosts to

Robert Munns, the international concert organist, and his wife, soprano Sally Johnson. The concert was entitled "Birthday Boys" and included organ and vocal music by composers with anniversaries in 2011. Then on Sunday, 29th May the Leoa Male Voice Choir, whose members all originate from Sierra Leone, visited the church and performed Handel's oratorio "Samson" to a packed church. An organ concert by Brian Newman is scheduled for 16th June at 6.30pm and a concert by the Lewisham Concert Band for Sunday, 18th September. Keep an eye out for future concerts via their website www.staugustines-grovepark.com or their notice board.

For those wishing to participate there is **Eldorado Musical Productions**. Their last production at the end of March was *Our House* - a musical based on the songs of the band Madness. Their next production will be the hippy musical *Hair* from 19th to 22nd October at the Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham. Rehearsals are on Monday and Wednesday evenings at Burnt Ash Methodist Church. For further information about the company and how to join see their website www.eldoradomusicalproductions.co.uk.

The drama group, **College Park Players**, also meets at Burnt Ash Methodist Church. Their May production was the comedy *Relative Values* by Noel Coward. Their next production will be a pantomime running from 8th to 10th December. For more details about the group, and how to join, go to their website at www.collegeparkplayers.com.

At least one pub in the Grove Park Ward has live music - the **Summerfield** at 60 Baring Road (tel. 020 8857 8247), but do check dates and times before you go.

Also, don't forget the Folk Workshops at the **Ringway Centre** every month! □

Folk Workshops at The Ringway Centre

from 7.30pm to 9.30pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month

Learn traditional songs Bring instruments along.

Join in the singing.

All welcome to join in.

Next workshops: 16th June & 21st July

Lewisham Inspirational Community Choir

by John Harrison

The Ringway Centre is currently host to this newly-formed choir which, since 21st May, has been rehearsing on Saturday afternoons for a performance at Lewisham People's Day on Saturday, 9th July. Rehearsals are led by Brenda Rattray whose innovative methods bring people together, get them used to singing with each other, help them lose their inhibitions and relax and also coach them in the basics of singing and reading music. I attended one of her rehearsals and have seen her methods work!

The choir is open to all - beginners to very experienced singers. In her own words, "The overall aim of the choir is to build bridges between people in Lewisham, share skills, build confidence, explore part singing, reading and singing in harmonies. laugh and have fun". For information on current and future projects contact Brenda by email - brenda@nicepeople.co.uk or on 07956 173570.

Also see Brenda's website at www.nicepeople.co.uk. □

Dog walking in Horn Park

by Jane Cullen

My old Cocker Spaniel, Henry, was a lovely dog, but at about the age of eight he suddenly became very protective and decided he didn't want any other dog to come within twenty yards of me! Consequently, we would walk together in the local area avoiding any other dogs and their owners. At thirteen, Henry died, and after ten days of a house that was too quiet, I trawled the internet for a Cocker Spaniel puppy. As soon as I saw Harry's photograph I knew I had to have him, and so at just three months he came to live in Lee.

Harry is a completely different dog from Henry and loves everyone, and so dog walking for me has become a much more sociable event. We began walking to Horn Park and soon met up with all the other dogs that play there, and what a variety of breeds there are! Harry has made friends with two beautiful King Charles Spaniels, Lincoln and Bailey (yes, their owner Ginny is a lawyer!), a huge Lab called Bruno who is able to carry half a tree trunk in his mouth for about an hour without dropping it once, His owner, Rupert, wears a fur hat that looks like he is hunting in the wilds of Canada. Then there's Lily, the enormous Great Dane who is as big as a donkey, but so gentle she can take a biscuit out of your pocket without you feeling it; Ben, who is old now and deaf, but he can still

break into a trot if there is food on offer; also Pebble, another blue roan Cocker Spaniel like Harry, who knows she was a princess in a former life, and Ralph, Jenny's working Cocker, who acts like a policeman by breaking up any dogs who look like they may get angry with each other; lastly Jean's two Jack Russell's who you can hear right at the top of the park when they enter the bottom gate, and Max, Sadie's gentle Springer, who is terrified of children on bikes.

These are just a few of Harry's friends, and, although it's wonderful to see these dogs romping together, it's an even more social event for the dog owners. Not only are we exercising our animals, but we are also getting exercise for ourselves in pleasant, quiet surroundings and making friends with other local people. If we had all been simply walking on our own we probably wouldn't have started chatting, but, when you have a dog with you, you have a starting point for a conversation.

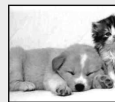
Most of us take our dogs to other parks for a bit of variety. These include Greenwich Park, Chinbrook Meadows, Cray Meadows, Grove Park Nature Reserve (adjacent to the Ringway Centre) and along the Green Chain Walk. Horn Park is lovely in all the different seasons, especially in spring when the blossom is out and even in the heavy snow last December. Walking our dogs there is always a pleasure and never a chore. □

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Our parks and open spaces

Grove Park Nature Reserve - launch of new mobile audio guide

*by Mark Ingleby, Chair - Friends of Grove
Park Nature Reserve.*

Thanks to the continued efforts of our small but dedicated groups of volunteers, Grove Park Nature Reserve (GPNR) continues to enhance both its excellent conservation record and its visitor amenities. We will shortly be competing for a record consecutive third **Green Pennant Award**, and some of the improvements we have been making stem from their last recommendations:

Firstly, we have been able to purchase and install a secure on-site container shed and a substantial amount of tools and equipment with money from the Council's Locality Fund. Secondly, we have been looking for ways to raise the profile of the Reserve in the local community, and so we are launching two innovations this summer - **bee hives** (to create GPNR Honey) and a unique **mobile phone accessed audio guide**, spoken by a mystery celebrity British actor (we think it's Sean Pertwee), to guide visitors round the site.

Our **Pilot Audio Guide** will be accessed by a landline number dialled from a visitor's mobile, from which they will be able to hear two minutes of commentary and sounds spread across all six of the strategically placed waymark posts in the Reserve. This is an audio system used for example in Central Park, New York City, and in the Alcatraz museum in San Francisco, but not, to our knowledge widely used in the UK, if at all.

This will certainly be a first for Lewisham and South East London, so we are inviting our mayor to officially launch the system at our **Open Day on Saturday, July 16th from 12 noon to 3pm**. We hope to hear again from some of the local schools' singers whom you can hear on the mobile audio guide in the section by the Tutu Peace Sculpture, as recorded at its unveiling in September 2009. There will also be opportunities for bat and bird box making, guided walks, story telling and consuming locally baked teas and

cakes.

Thanks to the imagination and sensitivity of our volunteers, we have also been able to develop informal trails and desire lines into some of the less explored parts of the Nature Reserve, which are always popular with younger, accompanied children, so there will be plenty to do...

Thirdly, we are approaching the Local Assembly for a grant to help create a more direct and wheel-chair friendly path from the grounds of the Ringway Centre to the Railway Childrens' Walk gate of the Reserve, to make a much easier and more pleasantly rural approach for visitors to the Nature Reserve from the centre of Grove Park. Come and have your say and use your vote... □

Burnt Ash Pond Nature Reserve

by Jess Kyle

On Sunday, 7th August, we are having an Open Fun Day from 11am to 1pm, and there will be food and drinks. Otherwise the normal Open Days are on the first Sunday of every month between 11am and 12 noon.

If you are interested in helping in the future management of Burnt Ash Pond or just take an interest in this local green space, why not join the Friends? If you are interested contact Jess Kyle at jessica.kyle@lewisham.gov.uk or on 020 8314 2119. □

Chinbrook Meadows

by Anne Slater

When writing in the last newsletter we were uncertain about the future of the proposed new play area because of government cut backs, but we heard just before Christmas that the plans would go ahead and the new facilities will be ready for use very soon. There will be an opening event on 18th June. We hope that young people in the area will really benefit from this new play area. The main structures include a conical climbing frame, a dual see-saw swing, a slide and a table tennis table. The area has been

(Continued on page 10)

landscaped to encourage children to clamber over bridges, hillocks, boulders and steps, and the old paddling pool has been filled with sand to provide a soft surface. We will be watching with interest to see if the area encourages more young people to the park.

We were also pleased to receive funding via the Assembly to enable us to establish a cricket pitch once more. This has been a much longed for addition, and will be available for junior cricket with planned coaching in the future too.

The Friends of Chinbrook Meadows are always looking out for new ways to improve our park. Currently we are trying to get funding for a zip wire, "trim track" exercise equipment and a water fountain.

During the winter and early spring a great deal of work has been done by the riverside to manage the meadow area. This work has been done by a combination of volunteers and professionals. "The Rivers and People" project, "Nature's Gym" and Glendale have all played a part. The area had, over the last couple of years, become increasingly overgrown with self-seeded sapling trees, nettles, creeping thistle and other dominant species. The aim has been to clear selected areas to encourage greater diversity of plant life. Anyone wishing to volunteer will find information about forthcoming sessions via Glendale (Tel: 020 8318 3986; email: lewnature@glendale-services.co.uk). It is a great way to keep fit, do something for your community and meet new people. The work is obviously an on-going process and, with the professional advice and support we receive, we hope to improve the riverside management so that it can be enjoyed by wildlife and people alike.

The Friends of Chinbrook Meadows are always keen to welcome new members with an interest in the park. Forthcoming meetings are on 19th July and 11th October, in the pavilion at 6.30pm. Contact telephone number (via Glendale) is 020 8318 3986. Note also our Arts and Crafts Fair on 13-14th August, 11-3 pm.

What's happening at Northbrook!

by Michelle Ball

Northbrook Park Community Group has been up and running now for just over a year during which time it has been working very hard to raise money and get things changed for the better in Northbrook Park.

We have now a grand total of £222k to spend on the park from various funding pots. The changes we can make with this money will mean that a fantastic new play area can be created for children of all ages, with more seating for the families including a picnic bench and drinking water fountain.

The main grass area will be an official dog-free enforceable zone with fines for dog owners who break the rules. The main grass area will be fenced off like Manor House Gardens Park, while the play area will be landscaped to ensure it looks appealing to the eye.

We have recently had 104 trees (whips) donated through RHS and another 300 hazels donated by Cheviot Trees for a coppice in the forest school area. These have been planted by the community.

We are currently working with Baring School Year 3 pupils to make wildlife boxes including Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Mason Bee houses, Bug Hotels and Hedgehog Houses to attract more wildlife. We could not have done this without the help of Catford Timber, Travis Perkins (Lee) and Chris Ball Roofing who donated materials.

From May Lewisham's Natures Gym team lead by Lara Glendale (Parks Management) own conservation officer have been creating a wildlife pond, stag beetle logger and a bug hotel, while Baring Reception and Year 1 pupils will be filling the hotel with recycled items. We could not have made this project happen without donations from the following: Travis Perkins (Catford), Pondkeeper.co.uk, Torry Hill Chesnut Fencing, Paul Bromfield Aquatics, Gordon Low Products and Pets at Home in Charlton. For further information and events go to our website www.northbrookparkcommunitygroup.co.uk □

125th Anniversary of St Augustine's Church

As part of the 125th anniversary celebrations of St Augustine's, a most interesting exhibition on the history of the church, its people and the parish was held on 19th March. It included several displays which covered every aspect of the church and the local area from 1886 to the present day. Most intriguingly, the research undertaken by members of the congregation revealed that virtually the whole building and its contents were paid for by the people of the parish. Some of the displays focused on the founding members of the church and something of their social history. A series of Ordnance Survey maps of 1865, 1900 and 1950 graphically illustrated how much Grove Park had changed over the years. The many photographs of the church and the area from the beginning of the 19th century to recent times gave an insight into how people lived in times past - they generated a degree of nostalgia by some elderly visitors. Extracts from the first parish magazines were a source of amusement and amazement while the almost monthly obituary notices between 1914 and 1918 were particularly sad and poignant.

The parish baptism and wedding records, which for some years have been deposited in the Lewisham Archives, were borrowed for the day. These proved to be of particular interest to visitors when they saw the actual

records of their own and parents' weddings and baptisms.

The exhibition was spread between the church and the adjoining hall where there were photographic displays of church events, local history and weddings. These were of great interest and amusement, especially when one saw how the now elderly and middle-aged members of the congregation looked and dressed in their youth. There was a steady stream of visitors, both regular church members and local residents, throughout the day. Many stayed for several hours to browse amongst the exhibits and displays. It was a very professional exhibition by a small and dedicated team who at quite a late stage had been dropped in the deep end; and it was greatly praised by local historians and archivists. The good news is that the exhibition will be repeated on Saturday 9th July if you missed it in March.

Other events include a Procession of Blessing around the parish on 12th June, a Summer Fair and Family Fun Day on 18th June, a Summer Children's Service on 3rd July, an Anniversary Ball with the Buddy Cleverley Band on 16th July, a Garden Party on 10th September, a Concert by the Lewisham Concert Band on 18th September and the Anniversary Consecration of the Church on 24th October. □

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Local Issues

Baring Hall Hotel

This not unattractive building has been empty and looking very forlorn for two years. We have reported in previous newsletters that the new owner wants to demolish this early work of the distinguished arts and craft architect Ernest Newton (1856-1922). We have examined the plans which we consider an over-development. Certainly, replacing what was once a public house with flats will do nothing to help revitalise the centre of Grove Park. English Heritage has declined to list the building, but some strong support for its retention has come from outside the district, in particular from the Blackheath Society, SAVE Britain's Heritage and the RIBA. We are currently waiting for the date when the owner's application will go before Lewisham's Planning Committee. Hopefully Lewisham will eventually locally-list the building, although the borough's record in this sphere has not been good.

Railway Bridge

This is a sorry story which has not been helped by a certain ineptitude on the part of Network Rail, although to be fair to the state company, it was a problem that it inherited from its predecessors, Railtrack and British Rail. Nevertheless the company has not been good in communicating with the tenant shopkeepers on the bridge and the community at large. We understand that repairs have still to be completed. Our Member of Parliament, Heidi Alexander, has been in constant communication with the company and has reminded it of the need for faster action. A meeting of interested parties is understood to be imminent. The good news is that Sainsbury's still appears to be intent on re-opening the former supermarket when the repairs are completed.

Traffic Management

We are still awaiting another meeting with TfL and Lewisham officials to review the working of the traffic lights in the station area following some changes in layout and phasing that our GLA member, Len Duval, was able to secure. Certainly there has been an improvement in traffic flow and pedestrian safety, but whether it

is possible to make further improvements is debateable, although there has been some useful tweaking in the phasing of the lights. There will of course always be a limiting factor – that, at peak times, too many vehicles are going through the intersections of Baring Road, Downham Way and Chinbrook Road.

Railway Land behind Bus Station

Some residents may have noticed activities on railway land behind the bus station. This has been the levelling of the land for a car wash business. Unfortunately Network Rail's agent did not request planning permission. The Enforcement Officer at Lewisham has now advised the agent of his folly but work has continued.

2 Baring Road, aka Burnt Ash Farm

This saga appears to be on-going in that another application has been made to build houses on this site after Lewisham rejected an earlier application. It is understood that there have been changes in the detail. A date has yet to be fixed for its consideration by Lewisham's Planning Committee.

Oldman Court, Marvels Lane

This attractive building which was once the administration block of Grove Park Hospital and until 1914 Grove Park Workhouse, has at last been locally listed together with the frontage buildings. We are pleased that Lewisham's Cabinet took the listing decision, but it has to be said that it took twenty years for the Planning Department to secure it.

Grove Park Library

By the time this newsletter is published, the library and some others will have been closed by Lewisham Council in an endeavour to balance the books – pun unintended. Our library was due to re-open a few days later by the Pepys Resource Centre. We regret Lewisham's action and can only wish the new managers every success. When the library was opened by the Mayor, Cllr Draper, on 12th December 1953, South Lewisham MP, Herbert Morrison who was also here, declared that there was no better way to fill in spare time than by reading. □

Grove Park does have a history

At a joint meeting of the Grove Park Community Group and the Lewisham Local History Society in February, we were all reminded that Grove Park does have a history. That was on Friday 18th when our Local Historian and chairman of our Environment Committee, John King, gave an illustrated talk, GROVE PARK: ITS HISTORY REVISITED. It was also the occasion of the launch of John's book of that title which had been sponsored by the Grove Park Assembly. It is not the first book that John has written about Grove Park – in 1981 he co-authored with Josephine Birchenough *Some Farms and Fields in Lee*. In 1982 he wrote *Grove Park: The History of a Community*. That was very successful and was re-printed three times; then in 1983 he wrote *Grove Park and the Great War*. For some time, John was under pressure to revise and extend the 1981 book, but he was a busy man. Eventually he was cornered by a meeting of the Grove Park Assembly!

Essentially John's book is an enlargement of the 1982 book but with much additional information. It is illustrated, A4 in size and runs to just over 100 pages. So Grove Park does have a history. Indeed, at the beginning of his talk, John recalled that some years ago someone had been overheard to say, "What history can Grove Park have?"

As the book reveals, our recorded history, which spans 150 years, is very rich – farms, housing, industry and businesses, the workhouse and hospital, the army and transport which was responsible for the beginning of the community in the 1870s and nearly destroyed it one hundred years later.

It was a well-attended meeting at the Burnt Ash Methodist Church with over eighty in attendance, and all seemed to enjoy the talk which incidentally was sponsored by Sainsbury's. We were particularly pleased to see some distinguished visitors from beyond our boundaries including Blackheath historian Neil Rhind and Hither Green historian Godfrey Smith.

The book is published by the Lewisham Local History Society for the Grove Park Community Group and is still on sale at the very reasonable price of £4-90. It can be purchased at the Ringway Centre in Baring Road (but check first that it is open by ringing 020-8857 7980); at Downham and Manor House Libraries and at Local Studies in the main Lewisham Library in the High Street (020-8297 0682). Unfortunately it is no longer available at Grove Park Library for reasons which we cannot understand. The book can also be purchased by post – just send a cheque payable to the Grove Park Community Group, adding £1-30 for postage and packing. □

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Neighbourhood Community Safety Service

The Neighbourhood Community Safety Service has been set up to help provide assistance to residents by working with other agencies and partners in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

To help facilitate this we are holding surgeries in the Ringway Centre on the last Tuesday of every month. At these sessions residents, businesses and any other concerned parties will be able to discuss issues about anti-social behaviour, crime and any other concerns they might have. The Neighbourhood Community Safety staff will then liaise with appropriate agencies and establish a course of action to address any issue accordingly.

To find our more come to the drop-in surgeries held at the Ringway Centre on the last Tuesday of each month or meet us at the Ringway Fair on 2nd July.

The next two meetings are to be held on 28th June & 26th July.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2011

The Ringway Centre

Tuesday, 28th June: Neighbourhood Community Safety Service surgery 7pm to 8.30pm

Saturday, 2nd July: Ringway Fair - 11am to 3pm

Tuesday, 26th July: Neighbourhood Community Safety Service surgery 7pm to 8.30pm

St Augustine's Church

Saturday, 18th June: Summer Fair and Family Fun Day

Sunday, 26th June: Anniversary Organ Recital by Brian Newman

Saturday, 9th July: Open Day and Exhibition (possible repeat)

Saturday, 16th July: Anniversary Ball with the Buddy Cleverley Band

Saturday, 10th September: Garden Party

Sunday, 18th September: Concert by the Lewisham Concert Band

Other Local Events

Saturday, 11th June: Grove Park Assembly Meeting 10.30am to 12.30pm
at St Augustine Church Hall, 336 Baring Road, London SE12 0DX

Saturday, 18th June: Opening event at Chinbrook Meadows

Saturday, 16th July: Grove Park Nature Reserve Open Day - 12 noon to 3pm

Tuesday, 19th July: Meeting of the Friends of Chinbrook Meadows at 6.30pm in
The Pavilion in Chinbrook Meadows (entrance in Amblecote Road)

Sunday, 7th August: Open Fun Day at Burnt Ash Pond Nature Reserve,
Melrose Close, SE12 - 11am to 1pm; refreshments available

Saturday, 13th August &

Sunday, 14th August: Arts & Craft Fair in Chinbrook Meadows - 11am to 3pm

A few words from our councillors

It is now a year since being elected as a Councillor of Grove Park Ward. I have enjoyed working with the local residents in many different situations. Grove Park has a very active community group and the assemblies are always well attended. I have particularly enjoyed working with Nature's Gym. I work as a nurse in a local GP surgery four days a week, so getting outside with enthusiastic volunteers is much needed exercise and a different way of meeting residents from across Lewisham. This year Nature's Gym has helped Grove Park Nature Reserve plant trees and they are planning to help in Northbrook Park with their project to update the area.

Cllr Christine Allison

My first year has been a whirlwind. I have very much enjoyed being out and about in the Grove Park Ward and particularly working with Northbrook Community Group with their People's Millions campaign and tree planting sessions, and with the Friends of Chinbrook Meadows, developing the new play area. I have attended many local groups, meeting many new people. I look forward to the year ahead and, in particular, to working with residents to improve Grove Park.

Cllr Suzannah Clarke

Councillors' contact details and surgery times

Cllr Christine Allison:

4th Saturday of the month
from 11am-12 noon
Grove Park Library,
Somertrees Avenue,
Grove Park, SE12 0BX
Tel: 020 8314 6902
Email: cllr_christine.allison@lewisham.gov.uk

Cllr David Britton:

2nd Saturday of the month
from 11am-12 noon at the
Ringway Centre,
268 Baring Road,
Grove Park, SE12 0DS
Tel: 020 8852 2694
Email: david.britton17@hotmail.com

Cllr Suzannah Clarke:

1st Saturday of the month
from 10am-11am at
Grove Park Library,
Somertrees Avenue,
SE12 0BX
Tel: 020 8314 6944
Email: cllr_suzannah.clarke@lewisham.gov.uk



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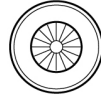
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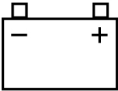
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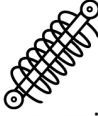
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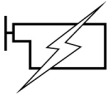
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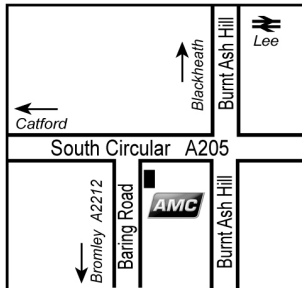
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