

Remembering the heroes who saved the village of Slade Green

Cllr John Easthaugh has sent information about plans to honour several almost forgotten local heroes of World War 2.

On the night of 16 and 17 April 1941, the Luftwaffe launched air raids on the railway sidings at Slade Green causing severe damage to the houses near the depot. During the night, fires to railway wagons caused great concern and produced several local heroes.

The raid had started fires towards Erith. Station staff went to help put out the blaze, but saw that another fire closer to factories could be far more serious.

The Thames Ammunition Company had loaded six wagons with high explosives which were standing in the sidings and were being threatened by the creeping fire. Railway staff tried to get a train to pull the wagons clear but, because the power was switched off, their only recourse was to physically push the wagons out of danger. Their brave action saved the village of Slade Green.

The following were honoured for their heroism on that night: Bobby Jeeves GC; Alf Reardon MBE; CF Sturgeon, HC Constable, S Boswell, G Law & WJ Love, National Commendations.

Sixty-eight years later, the people of Slade Green had all but forgotten the day that Slade Green nearly died. Now, however, the local Community Forum is to stage a series of events to remember the raid of 1941. The intention is to raise enough money to put a commemorative plaque as close as possible to the actual spot, in remembrance of the heroism of that night.

A 1940s themed dance will be held in the Sportsman Club on Friday 17 April, followed by an exhibition in the Slade Green Railway Club the following morning.

Tickets are £5 and all the money raised will go towards a permanent memorial.

New Erith library opens

The Erith Library will open on Saturday at new premises at 100 Erith High Street.

It will be open six days a week, including lunchtimes, and on Tuesday evenings until 8pm. The library will feature up-to-date interior design offering enhanced services such as wi-fi access, a large children's library, a dedicated area for teenagers, a Council contact point, a meeting room that can be booked by community groups - and much more. It will have an improved, high quality stock of books and other items aimed at all readers.

The library will also feature some display cases of items from the Erith Museum collection. Meanwhile, the Museum itself will remain in the old library building and will continue to be open as usual on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

The future of the Carnegie building will continue to be considered as part of the wider regeneration of the Erith Western Gateway.

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John Austin MP together with Andy Burnham, Eddie Izzard and Kevin Spacey have praised Labour's offer of free theatre tickets for under 26 year olds and the commitment of many theatres in London and the south east to offering free theatre tickets for under 26 year olds. John Austin said: "Greenwich Theatre and The Churchill, Bromley are among a number of theatres, in easy reach of constituents, who have signed up to Labour's free theatre scheme which is offering 618,000 free theatre tickets across England for the next two years".

MP WELCOMES £5m

Thamesmead's MP, John Austin has welcomed the award of £5m for a youth project in Thamesmead. Trust Thamesmead has received the funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families through the Big Lottery for its ambitious Youth Leisure Zone at the Arches in Thamesmead.

Austin said: "This is great news for Thamesmead and I want to congratulate Trust Thamesmead and all those who drew up this superb project which will not only make excellent use of the southern arches under the flyover but will provide much needed sporting, recreational and leisure facilities for young people in Thamesmead and make a great contribution to social cohesion and tackling anti-social behaviour".

Council vote against Fair Trade!

Local MP John Austin criticised the London Borough of Bexley for refusing to commit to achieving Fairtrade town status at the meeting of the Full Council held on 25 February 2009.

He said: "During this global economic downturn, it is vital that world trade continues.

"Our shopping habits can make a real difference to the world's poorest people. Fair Trade helps support 7.5 million people in the developing world.

It was therefore deeply regrettable that Bexley's Conservative councillors voted against a motion which would have committed the council to offering Fairtrade products and supporting their promotion within the Borough. Of particular concern was the fact that 16 members of the Conservative Group who had supported a similar motion in 2005, decided to either vote abstain or vote against the motion."



Michelle, Charlie and Jemma strike a 'Charlie's Angels' pose

Bexley brims with Irish cheer

Good cheer and high spirits filled the ageing civic suite of the London borough of Bexley on Saturday evening as the Mayor's Office co-celebrated St Patrick's Day with the Courtney McMahon School of Irish Dance. Festive fun combined with a successful fundraising effort as £1,000 was raised for the British Red Cross, the world's leading humanitarian aid agency, and the Bexley division of the Alzheimer's Society.

Deputy mayor, Cllr. Ray Sams was presented with a cheque by accomplished dancer, Eleanor Hobbs, who attends St Thomas A Becket primary school in Abbey Wood.

A capacity crowd enjoyed a fine display of Irish step dancing,

reels, jigs and hornpipes as well as show style rhythmic ensembles. Niamh McGlynn, aged five, was the youngest child to perform, and her confidence and skill made a big impression. Enthusiasm replaced skill as parents joined their children to take part in ceili dancing. Enormous fun was had by all.

Liz Hobbs was thrilled to win top tickets to see Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance at London's Hammersmith Apollo. Other delighted guests won an array of prizes that included tickets to the British Music Experience at the O2 in Greenwich, a cabaret evening at Greenwich Dance Agency, a family pass to visit Leeds Castle in Kent and, complete sets of

autographs for Charlton Athletic F.C.

The Irish step and ceili dancing was followed by a disco where many children sported Guinness hats, fluorescent tu-tus and vivid colourful tights.

Laura Deacon, Project Manager for Dance for Life, an ongoing funding initiative organised by the British Red Cross, was very happy with the injection of funds. The Courtney McMahon School of Irish Dance, based at Townley Grammar School, Bexleyheath, will be running a talent identification programme in the borough of Bexley in the summer term in its ongoing support of the British Red Cross.