

## Blackheath and Greenwich UNA

The branch has had two special projects.

### **A International Art Auctions for UNHCR**

These were to raise funds for UNHCR. Locals donated pictures mainly from, or about, other countries in the world, and over a period of around five years three auctions were held: the first in the Chair's garden, the other two in a local community centre, provided free of charge. The auctions raised some £6,000.

### **B Greenwich Social Network**

The Greenwich Social Network (GSN) began in February 2008 as a follow up to a Christmas party for people known to Blackheath and Greenwich Branch of UNA-UK who were waiting a long time for a Home Office decision to determine whether they were eligible for UK residency; their wait may have been many years. Council officials helped to identify beneficiaries.

The GSN was established as a friendship group: limited funds were available, and no attempt was made to give legal advice. It was noted that many refugees and asylum seekers were scattered around the borough, and often led very isolated lives. The GSN provided a social network that developed independent of the branch; but the branch organised a number of events, including: local trips (such as on the river, into London); shared lunches; parties and picnics. We also gave out Oyster cards so travel became affordable.

Neville Grant