

Our monthly market pips Kingston's

Surbiton Farmers' Market has been named south-west London's best food retailer, beating Kingston Market and Surbiton Waitrose in the process. The award was collected by market leading lights (from left) David Jacobson, Alison Ewbank and Julian Meers.

Last year the monthly event in Maple Road won the national title

of best farmers' market. "We're all chuffed to bits," said David. "Beating one of the country's finest grocers and a market that's been established 800 years is quite an achievement, and a massive testament to our wonderful team of loyal volunteers who work tirelessly every month to produce a market Surbiton can be proud of."



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Having twice the fun of anyone, twins Max and Harry Gallucci, aged two, of Glenbuck Road



Surbiton's uniformed youth organisations joined the parade, as 19,000 people poured into town

Festival fun in late summer sun

The sun smiled on this year's Surbiton festival, with an estimated 19,000 people descending on the town centre to enjoy craft and food stalls, bouncy castles, street performers, games, music and ballyhoo.

Victoria Road was pedestrianised on the parade day, with buses diverted,

as everyone made the most of the late September warmth.

Other events through the festival week included free open-air drama, concerts, art shows, business networking and book events attended by local authors.

• More images from the festival [p4](#) & [p5](#)

We're now the UK's 'fashion hotbed'

When you next catch a train, check out your fellow passengers.

Platform 1 at Surbiton boasts some of the most fashion-conscious people in the UK, according to a major advertising strategist.

James Davies of Posterscope, which controls a third of the country's advertising sites, was investigating target markets for a recent campaign when he made a startling discovery.

"We were looking at places for a fashion client to advertise, and discovered that Surbiton station is a massive fashion hotbed," he said, revealing that high-end designer websites were

the No1 choice for internet trawlers waiting for trains to Waterloo.

Posterscope, which manages 30 per cent of out-and-about ads on shopping trolleys, petrol pumps and bus stops, researches ways to reach customers.

"Traditionally it has been done using industry data about poster sites, but now mobile data is being used, courtesy of phone companies," he said in a Daily Telegraph interview, adding that weekday commuters on Platform 1 seemed glued to clothing websites.

It comes as no surprise to Surbiton fashion guru Virginia Grose, 43, a published author and

University of Westminster lecturer.

"I certainly think it's a very 'fashionable' place to live, or I wouldn't have moved here," she trilled. "Kingston has a great shopping centre, which attracts fashion-seekers and there are many media, fashion and PR types, and celebrities, in Surbiton."

"I have noticed Prada, DKNY and Louis Vuitton bags at the station, not to mention amazing pieces from the high street and vintage stores mixed together in a clever way."

However, she sounded a note of caution. "They may be trawling, but are they necessarily buying?"

Tim Harrison



Fashion-conscious commuters trawl websites while awaiting their Waterloo train

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Activity with bells on

If a world of bells, jigs, hankies, straw hats and sticks intrigues you, here's a chance to learn more. Surbiton Morris man Ben Izard (below, right, with fellow dancers) is helping organise free try-out sessions. "You can get fit and make friends," he promises.

Members of Kingston Morris performed at Surbiton's festival, promoting a lively activity with ancient roots. The first recorded Morris dancing in the borough was in Kingston in 1507.

Men and women are equally welcome at St John's church, Grove Lane, on the Kingston/Surbiton boundary at 8pm on Mondays to learn the ropes. More at kingstonmorris.org



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Five keen customers at Maple Road's Shoes at Last modelled new autumn and winter fashions while local paparazzo David Jacobson snapped away. The shop is now open seven days a week.



Surbiton's answer to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon – the dramatic annual dahlia display where St Philip's Road meets St James' Road – didn't disappoint, with its sunflower backdrop.

Planting up the pavements

Fiona Quinn aims to transform the town by using spare areas of space to grow herbs.

A trained aromatherapist, Fiona, 27, studied property planning and sustainability at Kingston Uni.

But it is guerrilla planting in Surbiton that has raised her profile; growing herbs and vegetables in public places, and educating people about their use.

"I've always had an interest in living ethically, and taking account of the environment," she said.

"The idea is to plant out herbs which are

then free to pick. There's a real enthusiasm for it in Surbiton."

Kingston Council has given her a grant to fund a polytunnel, and last year she teamed up with the YMCA to plant veg in an unused



garden in Balaclava Road.

Planters, built from old pallets by Ann Bedford of Main Kitchen Supplies, proliferate in Brighton Road (left), with sage, basil and other herbs brightening the street scene. She has also been planting spare space around trees.

Roadside herbs encourage insects, especially bees, boosts a sense of well-being, and improve drainage in our increasingly concreted world.

One inspiration is Todmorden on the Yorks/Lancs boundary, where 40 public spaces have been planted up, and locals simply help themselves.

• www.urbanfarmacy.org

A chain reaction

He's a familiar sight on his tandem; wife Carina on the back. Now Andrew Manning has turned his back on 30 years in the city and is servicing Surbiton's bicycles.

Cyclelink collects and drops off bikes within five miles. "I turned 50 last summer, and decided I'd had a really good career, so last October I got out of insurance," said the Ellerton Road resident.

Initially he volunteered at a foodbank ("an eye-opener"), then did bike exams to level 3, equipping him to rebuild shocks and forks for even high-end road bikes; the UK's top bike qualification.

He wants to encourage more people to ride, even if the bicycle gathering dust in the garage needs TLC.

Twenty years ago, he settled in Surbiton. "It's the perfect commute, there are good schools and we found a house we wanted. I love the Ellerton community."

The couple have two daughters in their late teens.

"When I'm at home I'm on a bike as often as I can. I've been out a few times with the Berrylands Cycling Club [enthusiasts at all levels meet in Hollyfield Road for regular jaunts], and I've done a few charity rides.



"Living with three women, cycling is a great way of getting out," he added with a grin. "Bikes always come with us on holiday."

He set up Cyclelink in his back garden, and aims to eventually run basic bike maintenance courses.

"I won't turn anything away, from punctures to complete rebuilds," he said. A service is £35, an advanced service is £50, but a simple puncture repair is a fiver.

Freewheel to www.cyclelink.bike for more.

Gardening tips by Janice Cripps

Making a playful garden



When designing your garden a three-metre wide trampoline or red plastic slide is probably not top of your wish list. But gardens have to be practical, multifunctional spaces and this often involves an area for children to play.

The problem is combining it with an attractive space for grown ups to relax and enjoy.

A hundred years ago when I was a child, I spent many hours in the garden making mud pies, creating dens and fashioning necklaces from daisy chains. I didn't have any props or special equipment but I had a lot of fun.

Lots of equipment isn't necessary to fire the imagination, but if you have a large garden it isn't so much of an issue.

Anything ugly, plastic or brightly coloured can be banished to a dedicated play area. It is difficult to supervise children if that area is completely hidden, so I'd suggest a partial screen using trellis work or soft planting such as molinia; a tall semi-transparent ornamental grass.

Children's play takes many forms: doing nothing in particular, exploring, being adventurous, boisterous, social, reflective and quiet. Most gardens cannot really cater for the child who needs to let off steam (a trip to the park is probably best for

that) but it can cater for other types of play.

Here are some suggestions.

- Garden features can double as props for play – stepping stones for hopscotch, tree stumps for sitting or climbing, a sturdy archway or mature tree as a frame for a swing.
- A raised deck or gable wall can



Cowboys and indians might also enjoy a natural wigwam made from runner beans

house a climbing wall up its side or a playhouse or sandpit underneath.

- Sink the trampoline. It involves a massive hole, but it means children have less far to fall.
- Create a den. Children love to hide, so make a runner bean wigwam with 6-10 bamboo poles and string. The scarlet flowers look fabulous and the structure can be an eye-catching focal point in the garden. For an even more vibrant display, interplant the beans with nasturtiums.

Involve the children in planting. Satisfies both adult and child in that it is educational, mucky and very rewarding to see that tiny seed or plant grow into a beautiful flower.

Play equipment doesn't have to destroy the garden aesthetic if you go for natural materials rather than manmade plastics.

Nothing sits more comfortably in the garden than wood, and there is a lot on the market to choose from. I particularly like Judith Needham's designs for playhouses in crafted willow – just beautiful, and designed to be seen.

Janice Cripps is a professional garden designer based in Surbiton. For advice, planting plans, or taking projects from concept to completion, visit www.janicecripps.co.uk

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The Esso petrol station in Brighton Road, pictured, has closed after its Jersey-based owner, Rontec Watford Ltd, sold it to 'an independent dealer'. There is speculation it may be developed for housing, although Kingston Council has yet to receive a planning application. Rontec bought the site in January 2013 after the French oil giant Total sold off 500 filling stations. Rontec told the Good Life: "I have been instructed by our in-house lawyer that we cannot comment further on the details."



The Surbiton branch of Phones4U was a casualty of the company's collapse in mid-September. The Victoria Road shop was one of 720 which shut. Seven jobs were lost. Four doors down are branches of EE and Carphone Warehouse.

Good Life original Penelope Keith, the pro-chancellor at Surrey Uni, gave drama students their degrees last week... and some career advice. "Listen, question and enjoy," Margo told the graduates. "Listen to everyone, and don't ever be afraid to admit you don't know something. Clever people ask questions."

It wasn't just the farmers' market that did well in south west London's food and drink awards. The Antelope won best newcomer (although the pub's been there since the 1860s!), while commendations went to the French Tarte and Table, Duke of York, Bosco, Lamb, Laithwaites and From the Ground Up, the organic veg service which operates fortnightly at the YMCA.

Surbiton racing driver Mike Robinson won the Michelin Clio Cup after his eighth win of the season at the Croft circuit, north Yorks. The Ewell Road speedster finished on 282pts, ahead of David Dickenson (230) and Luke Herbert.

Glide down St Mark's Hill on blocks of ice. Ski Sunday is on October 19, from 11am-1pm, raising money for the Shooting Star children's hospice. It is followed by hot soup, served in Claremont Gardens, with live music.

Head for the Black Lion at the Maple Road/Brighton Road lights to mark Halloween. A party is being staged on Saturday November 1, with tribute band The Jammed playing 9-11pm, and fancy dress prizes.

The next sale of nearly-new goods for babies and children organised by Surbiton entrepreneur Janine Turland takes place at St Mark's church hall, St Mark's Hill, on Saturday October 18, from 3-5pm. Up to 200 buyers attend. Discounted entry vouchers and stall details at www.mum2mummarket.co.uk

Heroes and Legends, the hobby store in Ewell Road, has closed, blaming the tough financial climate. Business partner Jon Corps said "with a heavy heart" that it had become impossible to run two branches, but that the shop's Croydon outlet would remain open. Heroes specialised in roleplay games and miniature wargaming.

Surbiton residents who have been the victim of cowboy builders are being sought by a TV production company for a new BBC1 show. Email kathrinbenoehr@brownbobproductions.com with details of your experiences.

If anyone knows about the health of Surbiton's feet, it's Mary Rigal. A couple of years after qualifying in 1988 she set up her business in Tolworth Broadway... and it's still going strong a quarter of a century later. "There was a recession at the time; my husband thought I was mad," she said.

Mary, pictured, treats everything foot-related. "You never know what's about to walk through the door," she said. "We treat lots of ingrowing toenails; I always like doing them. They're fun, and it's nice to cure something and make people better."

Over 25 years she's seen many of Surbiton's 'plates'. "On the whole they're pretty good," she said. "But because the NHS doesn't do free treatment any more, I see more neglected feet... and more verrucas. People go to the gym more, and GPs don't treat them. I think it's to do with budgets."

Every December Mary, who lives in Epsom, joins the volunteer team at London's Crisis centres, treating the feet of homeless people. She also goes round nursing homes and makes home visits to people who can't get out. "It's very much part of the work," she said. "You get very fond of patients."

Mary, who also has a practice in West Ewell, said that as Surbiton had a higher

percentage of elderly people than average, there was a greater need for chiropody – or podiatry, as the NHS calls it these days.

Footwear trends change, but the other thing that's altered is daytime TV, she said. I looked blankly. "There are a lot of daytime TV adverts for nails and fungal conditions; there's a tremendous mark-up in the cost of products," she explained. "There is more awareness of foot health. People look after themselves better than they used to."

She feels it's an advantage working from a shop, rather than from home. "People, especially women, feel more secure at a shop," she said. "I like Surbiton; I know all the local GPs, and some patients have been coming to me since I started here. I even see the children and grandchildren of my earliest patients. There are often similarities in their feet, and their gait. It's to do with the way your bones are set!"

Sound basic advice is to change socks and footwear regularly, wash your feet and rub in cream, though never between your toes. Best time is after a bath or shower, ideally just before bed.

And never use corn plasters. "It's such a strong acid, and it doesn't discriminate between good and bad skin."



The first beers commercially produced in Surbiton have been going down well with real ale lovers.

Created in the Big Smoke microbrewery behind The Antelope in Maple Road, they were produced by aptly named landlord Pete Brew and assistant Nick Blake.

First out was a 4.8% pale ale, described by licensee Rich Craig as "easy-drinking, medium to low bodied", with a citrusy aroma.

The only disappointment is that the beers have yet to gain Surbiton names. Drinkers have to ask for 'trial pale ale', rather than, say, half a Maple or a pint of KT6X.

American hops have been chosen for the pale, which sells at £3.50 a pint. The other new beers are a porter – an old-style dark, hoppy ale – and an amber beer with a bit more body, sweeter flavour and punchier

ale didn't cut the mustard for the brewers, so the recipe was altered, the yeast was changed and it was rebrewed.

The porter (£1.95 a half) impresses. Fuggles hops are used, as well as a mix of black, chocolate and Munich malts. The result is sweet, liquoricey, with a hint of burnt almond.



Chocolate cake, lemon, coffee and banana, AND cup cakes. The table at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road was groaning for the World's Biggest Coffee Morning.

People sipped cuppas and enjoyed home-baked treats to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

"I was really pleased with the way it went," said organiser Becky Fowler, left. "We made over £200." She hopes to do a re-run next year.



Gardeners brought spare produce to September's farmers' market in Maple Road to help the homeless. Market goers responded to an appeal on behalf of the Joel Community Trust, and made generous fruit and veg donations from their plots and allotments.

Carol Holmes, Dan Wheeler and Becky Mills, pictured, collected produce for meals for homeless people in the night shelter alongside St Peter's church, Norbiton.

The trust, set up in 2010, houses 100 people a year, and offers training, activities and help to many others.

Uniformed officers arrested a man at the Surbiton festival for selling tablets he claimed gave eternal youth. When checking the police national computer they discovered it was the fifth time he had been done for fraud. He had previously been stopped in 1794, 1856, 1928 and 1983.



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Fun in the sun: 2014's festival

An estimated 19,000 people filled Surbiton town centre on the last day of the week-long festival, one of the best crowds in the event's 22-year history.

A parade marched up St Andrew's Road and Victoria Road to Claremont Road, while games, activities and food stalls filled Claremont Gardens and St Andrew's Square. The pedestrianised town centre was filled with music, craft stalls and street entertainers, all enjoying the sun.

You could try an aloe vera drink, buy an I Love Ponies sign, design your own bib, meet a chiropractor and even become a freemason.

Other high points included open-air theatre at The Grove, a photo show at St Mark's church, Montmartre-style art displays in Maple Road, a giant Scalextric track and book readings.

Not everyone warmed to the festival's name change to 'Surbo'. "It's not very Surbiton," said one regular. "I just think of Serbo-Croat." But everyone agreed it had been well organised, well marshalled and full of new ideas, with credit going to co-ordinator Bob Noble.

"I am absolutely delighted with the way this year's Surbo went," he said. "After 11 big events during the week, the main Surbofest couldn't have seen more smiling Surbiton faces across the town. The sun shone on everything that is great about living in Surbiton."

Plans are already under way for next year's festival week, culminating in a parade on September 26.



Clockwise from top left: Feline facepaint; Tuckers exotic burgers include some unlikely fillings; entering an enormous bouncy castle; Benchmark Theatre players at the YMCA; enjoying the 1st Hook scout band play; Superman and Batman abandon crimefighting to watch Punch & Judy; and two thrill-seekers whirl on the waltzer at Claremont Gardens



dear good life

Send us your views!
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Telegram name

Re your article about Surbiton's house names in the June issue, The Jalans was born soon after we married in the days of telegrams which charged by the word.

By combining the three words Jill and Alan into Janan or Janan, depending on who we addressed, we saved two words every time. When we started a family we called our house The Janans, and so it remains.

We always enjoy The Good Life and its articles.

Kind regards from The Janans,
Alan Tyler

Good Greenway

Can't you stop being negative about the green Broadway? Funny colours, yes. Trees need some replanting... that's bound to happen.

It's a much better place to go, and it must be better for the shops. The fence down the middle used to be awful. Now people can cross the road.

There haven't been accidents, shoppers and motorists co-exist well and traffic is no worse than before. I really can't get the negativity. It used to have the ambience of Colditz, now at least you can go from one side of the road to the other, and pedestrians feel welcome.

OK, disabled people have to go to the lights - but they always had to. To be honest, I bet motorists would stop for disabled people too if they get eye contact before crossing (after all, that's what most people do anyway).

Celia Osbourne

The first words

After reading your article about the Kingston Talking Newspaper in the September Good Life, I thought you might be interested to know how it all began in the late 1960s, when it was started by my father, Gil Hancock.

The whole family was involved in local blind clubs, and Gil discovered that there was a talking newspaper in Carshalton, and went to investigate.

He wanted to copy the idea. The equipment was duly bought, funds having been raised, and the venture took hold.

For the first years it was all done at our home in Raeburn Avenue, Berrylands.

The Kingston Borough News came out on Friday and the paper (then in Claremont Road) gave Gil a proof copy on the Thursday, which he dropped off to my mother, Juanita.

She spent the afternoon deciding who should read what, I set up the machines in the front room, and a team of volunteers arrived at about 7.30pm, induced by glasses of Gil's famous homemade wine.

If nothing went wrong, the recording was complete by 11pm and the volunteers left. We then did the copying into the small hours.

Some years later, a room was found at the Alfriston centre, and we alternated with another team to give everybody some time off.

Well done on The Good Life paper - it's one of the best things I've read in ages.

Rod Hancock

Women's golf 'needs support of the stars'

Golf pro Mel Reid was in Surbiton to promote the women's game with other pros at the Golf Studios in the Nuffield centre in Simpson Way.

Mel, 26, pictured, a four-time winner on the European circuit and member of the successful 2011 Solheim Cup team - the ladies' equivalent of the Ryder Cup, so satisfyingly staged at Gleneagles last week, told the Good Life that the women's game needed the boost that men's golf gets from celebrity endorsement.

"We need more influential women playing golf," she said, citing the fact that many footballers and rock stars spend their spare time thwacking balls down fairways. "England's footballing girls play a bit, but if you get an England girls' captain playing golf too then it expands the game for girl fans."



Mel believes simulator centres are ideal for all-weather practice, improving stance and swing, and ironing out mistakes. "You get more feedback here, and if it's rainy, it's fantastic," she said, adding that she found centres such as Surbiton's perfect to come to with her girlfriends at odd hours, play shots and have a few beers ("Not that my training regime allows that!").

She has converted the garage of her Loughborough home into a gym, and plans to add a simulator as well.

Golf pro Laurence Pawley, director of the studios and the pro at Hoebridge, said he hoped Ladies European Tour star events would help. "We're trying to increase the number of girl golfers," he said.

Mel reckons girls' golf is in a good place. "Girls are more athletic, and they're dressing a little bit smarter," she said.

Visitors bombarded the pros with 'What if' questions, and watched examples of recovery shots using the simulators' adjustable platforms.

The pros fought a mock tournament at a virtual St Andrew's course, and even tried hazardous one-legged shot challenges.

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Fingers. 6 fingers up, how many down? If 6+4=10 then 40+what =100? So 24+what =30?

Doubles, well nearly. I know 3+3=6; so 3+4 must be 1 more; I know my 2x table so 8x2=16, so 8+9 must be 1 more.

+10 is easy, so is +9. I know 5+10=15; 5+9 must be 1 less. So I can add 90, 19 and 99

Can I do this in a fun way? Play catch. A calls out a number when throwing, B says number bond to 10 or 20 when catching. Make a bingo board with nine numbers from 2-18. Throw two 0-9 dice or three 1-6 to generate numbers. Who can tick off all their numbers first? With a pack of cards, play snap or pairs adding up to 7, 9, 10 or 12. Learn cribbage - great for bonds to 15. Put numbers to 10 on A4 pieces of paper and place randomly around the room. Jump from one to the next stating the total as you move. Have fun helping your child learn; above all, be inventive! **www.numberworksandwords.co.uk**



Clockwise from left: The stilt-walking tea lady; music at the St Mark's church photo show; another 10-footer; Nancy Vlasto, 89, collects for charity as Blossom the horse; MP Ed Davey and family; Victoria Road abuzz; 71 buses rerouted along Maple Road; a young lad watches some senior jazz players; and the 'Montmartre' look as Maple Road becomes an outdoor art show



Good Life plea

If you enjoy getting the Good Life, and live in one of the following roads, could you help us deliver six times a year? We need helpers in Herne Road, Shrewsbury Close, Oaks Way, Saffron Way, Mandeville Drive, Devonshire Drive, Arlington Road, Cottage Grove, St Andrew's Road, North Road, St Philip's Road, Regent Road, The Ridge, The Ridings, Grand Avenue and Greenfield Avenue. You get fresh air, a snoop at neighbours' gardens, and you'll help keep this little community project afloat. thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

A funding bonanza

Every year Kingston Council distributes money to its component areas. You have until October 24 to nominate projects to share a £36,000 funding pot for Surbiton. Application forms are available at www.kingston.gov.uk with the stipulation being that proposals benefit the town. A decision on the share-out will be made on December 3 by the Surbiton neighbourhood committee.

A new level of service

Not all estate agents are the same. Mahadeo & Co offers a personal service, with managing partner Surbitonian Rhakesh Mahadeo in day-to-day charge.

After completing his degree in estate management at Kingston Uni, Rhakesh, pictured, settled in Surbiton Hill.

Eleven years ago he began work as a Saturday viewing assistant, rising to assistant manager and building up a healthy database of satisfied customers.

Two years ago he set up his own firm at 11 Brighton Road, offering impartial, independent lettings and sales advice.

He quickly clinched his first sale – a £1.1m property in Giggs Hill Green – and has steadily built up the business, relying on one-to-one service, local knowledge and high standards to gain word-of-mouth endorsements.

"When it comes to local lettings and sales, both

landlords and vendors need to know they can rely on a professional to take care of important assets," said Rhakesh. "I listen to landlords' and vendors' needs, and act on their wishes. It isn't all about money; building a relationship is equally important."

He loves Surbiton and the surrounding area for its quality education, independent shops, range of restaurants... and the river. Mahadeo & Co, 11 Brighton Road, Surbiton KT6 5LX. Tel: 020 8390 8500



Could a big P hold the key to Tolworth Broadway's future prosperity? Andrea Tucker, right in our picture, thinks it might.

One of the Broadway's best-kept secrets is the public short-stay car park by M&S, and members of the Broadway Community Group – a grassroots movement

I'll have a P please, Bob

uniting businesses and residents who want to see the area prosper – feel that better signing could boost footfall.

The group meets regularly (email broadwaycommunitygroup@outlook.com for details), and is exploring better designated crossing points, a 'Tolworth Day'

with street food and craft stalls, and co-ordinated Christmas lights.

But a huge blue 'P' to indicate the existence of the 'hidden' public car park may prove the single biggest boost to the Broadway. Negotiations are to begin with the council and Transport for London.



Sophie's choice

Sofia Guerriero has high hopes. The girl from Pine Gardens is climbing Kilimanjaro – at 19,341ft the highest peak in Africa – for Parkinson's UK after her grandmother was diagnosed with the degenerative disorder. "My Grandma Jean means the world to me, so I will hold my head high despite blistered feet and aching back to fight my way to the top," she said. "I owe this wonderful woman a reason to continue hoping for a cure."

Donations can be made at <http://www.justgiving.com/Sofia-Guerriero>



Made in KT6

Made in Chelsea duo Andy Jordan and Louise Thompson, left, were snapped leaving the lounge of Hotel Bosco in St Mark's Hill in the early hours, making a sharp exit from the late-night haunt.

They had been partying with newcomer to the show New Yorker Alik Alfus.

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A man with a nose for Napoleon

Tony Wall, one of the leading lights in the local am dram scene, has died at the age of 74. A TV and film performer whose early credits included Dr Who, Tony was a seasoned, polished performer, involved in shows in Surbiton and Claygate for three decades.

He died peacefully in his sleep on August 29, surrounded by family. He had been diagnosed with cancer a year ago but, with true professionalism, masterminded a swansong production of the black comedy Arsenic and Old Lace earlier this year at Claygate Village Hall.

It was a show which had special significance. In 1965 he performed in an acclaimed West End version at the Vaudeville alongside Sybil Thorndike and Richard Briers, and later directed a reprise of the show for the Surbiton Hill Players at the Methodist church hall in Ewell Road.

A memorial service to Tony, who lived in Ellerton Road and more recently in Grand Avenue with wife and fellow drama soulmate Sue, was held at the church on September 12. More than 300 attended. The couple were a month away from celebrating their golden wedding anniversary.

“He loved comedy,” Sue told the congregation. “He had a desire to act from an early age.”

Tony grew up in Shoreham, then went to St Edward’s School, Oxford, where he appeared as Badger in Wind of the Willows (author Kenneth Grahame was a past pupil) in a version narrated by another alumnus, Sir Laurence Olivier. An early member of the Ralph Reader gang shows, Tony cut his dramatic teeth in weekly rep before appearing

in a string of films made at Merton Park Studios.

Belita Charrington, who acted alongside Tony in many local productions, recalled that one of his favourite stage roles had been in My Fair Lady at the Secombe Theatre.

She referred to his “ability to ad lib without the audience being any the wiser”, and said he had been a pantomime dame with a faultless sense of timing, as well as an expert stage designer and set-builder.

Tim Combe, who directed several of the early black-and-white Dr Who episodes in the 1960s, told The Good Life about Tony’s connection with the popular series.

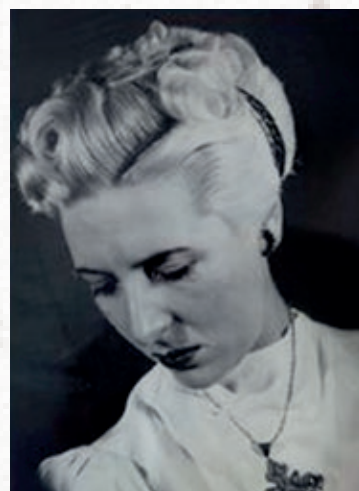
“I cast him as Napoleon in the very first series of Dr Who – the Bill Hartnell days – in an episode set in revolutionary France. He was a very tall Bonaparte, but the audience didn’t know that. He had the right nose!”

Tony also appeared on TV in No Hiding Place, several Edgar Wallace mysteries, Mogul and Softly Softly.

Actor Rodney Pearson, who shared the stage with Tony in the 1987 Claygate production of the trouser-dropping comedy Not Now Darling, affectionately recalled him as a great farceur whose sometimes uncertain memory for scripted lines kept everyone on their toes. “We would get the general gist of the line, but with Tony you never quite knew what cue line you’d get,” he said.

As the memorial drew to a close, the congregation gave Tony a sustained and hearty ovation; a final curtain call for the popular thespian whose boat on the Thames was named Applause.

Tim Harrison



Zoe; salon star

One of Surbiton’s longest-lived and most intriguing characters, Zoe Di Biase, has died at the age of 98. Zoe, who lived in a compact, pink-painted house in Cottage Grove, was the altogether more humble-sounding Zoe Smith when she was born in Weybridge on May 9 1916.

Her father was a furniture maker, her mother a milliner, but Zoe had a fascination for hairdressing, working initially in the West End as a salon receptionist, but later taking up comb and scissors herself.

During the Second World War she worked at a hairdressers in New Malden, taking over the running of the business when the two brothers who owned it were called up.

In 1948 she married one of the brothers, taking his distinctive and rather more exotic surname, Di Biase.

Nearly a century after it was founded, there is still a Di Biase salon at 54 High Street, New Malden.

She and husband Frank ran a salon together in Kingston, and became leading lights in European hairdressing competitions, with Zoe modelling the latest trends.

Many of the Surbiton area’s prominent hairdressers were taught their trade as juniors and apprentices at Di Biase.

Zoe was widowed 25 years ago, but, right up to her death on July 22, retained the strong, commanding features which had made her a sought-after model.

She had particular passions for theatre, cinema, art and cricket, and maintained her back garden as if it was about to be opened to the public.

TH

● Zoe Di Biase is pictured modelling a hairstyle in competition in 1947

A kind, caring gent

Doug Clapp, who has died at the age of 86, was the youngest of three brothers born in Surbiton to Ada and Jimmy Clapp.

He attended primary school in Alpha Road before going to Hollyfield School, on its old site in Hollyfield Road.

He did two years of national service in the Royal Navy, and began going out with Rose Hill. They wed in 1952, a marriage which lasted more than 62 years.

Their only child, Debra, led the tributes at Doug’s funeral in August.

Doug was employed as a cooper, an upholstery apprentice and then a motor engineer, working with his brother Tony at Prince Machines in Norbiton, before going on the road as a sales rep, where his success earned ‘reward’ trips to far-flung places including Bermuda and Mexico.

This encouraged Doug and Rose to travel more widely, although they always enjoyed returning to the home in Beresford Avenue that they shared for 42 years; the scene of numerous parties and gatherings.

Doug, a proud grandfather to Courtney, was a great fan of sport who liked a modest flutter, whether on the dogs, the horses or round the card table with the family at Christmas.

In her eulogy at Kingston Crematorium, Debra summed up her father as a Surbitonian with impeccable manners.

“He was impatient, impetuous, sometimes a bit like a bull in a china shop; always immaculately dressed, often in tightly fitting V-neck jumpers in a variety of bright colours,” she said.

“He was happy and lively, with a sense of fun and enthusiasm for life.

“He was also kind, caring and generous; a real gentleman, and one of the most honest, sincere people you could know.

“He never had a bad word to say about anyone – an uncomplicated, genuine man.”

She recalled asking him why he always seemed happy.

He replied: “I made my mind up years ago that I might as well be; what other choice is there?”

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War music

Kingston Choral Society has two shows coming up. On December 13 the venue is St Andrew's church, Maple Road, for a concert marking the 1914 Christmas truce, but first there's a Great War tribute on Saturday November 22 at 7.30pm in Kingston Parish Church featuring soprano Susanna Hurrell and baritone Gareth Brynmor, with Andrew Griffiths conducting. Tickets £15, £13 concs, £5 U18s. Box office: 020 8977 4801.

Show auditions

The Surbiton-based Hinchley Manor Operatic Society will perform South Pacific... and is on the lookout for enthusiastic new singers, especially men. The Rodgers & Hammerstein classic will be staged in mid-May at Epsom Playhouse. Auditions will be in the first week of December at Surbiton Hill Methodist church in Ewell Road. More information at www.hmos.org.uk

Meanwhile, HMOS stages The 7.42 to Waterloo; a compilation of songs from musicals, at the Vera Fletcher hall, Thames Ditton, Oct 29-Nov 1. £13. 020 8942 6867.



Susanna Hurrell is one of the soloists in the Kingston Choral Society's autumn concert

Tartuffe time

Moliere's comedy about religious hypocrisy, Tartuffe, is being performed at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road from Wednesday, November 19 to Saturday, November 22 at 7.45pm. Tickets £8 (£6 concs) via www.thecornerhouse.org

The show marks the relaunch of the arts centre's inHOUSE productions. Director Tanju Duncan said: "We will rely heavily on characterisation bringing out the fun, making it a bright, light and energetic show."

Meanwhile, this month at the cornerHOUSE:

Sat Oct 18: Crafty Aft from 1-3pm with embroidery, card-making, weaving, painting. Free.

Sun Oct 26: Two Welsh-themed films, 3pm and 7.45pm. Join the film club by emailing info@thecornerhouse.org

Mon Oct 27: The Big Draw, 10am-noon. A chance to draw objects through windows, with a range of materials provided. Entry is free. Children must be accompanied.



Austen powers

Was that Jane Austen herself, sweeping through Surbiton in the festival parade? No, it was Libby Curzon, organiser of the historical dance group Mrs Bennet's Ballroom Classes, which meets on alternate Wednesdays in St Mark's church hall from 8pm. Next date is October 22. The cost is £5 an evening, and all are welcome. Visit www.mrsbennet.co.uk for more. A tea dance is planned on January 25.



A spectacle

Staff at Surbiton's Specsavers branch at the foot of St Mark's Hill were raising funds for the Down's Syndrome Association by dishing out hot chocolate and cake at the Surbiton festival to mark the shop's fifth anniversary.

Greggs donated muffins for the good cause. Jay Patel, store director at Specsavers, said: "We're thrilled to be celebrating five years in the community."



Open-air drama success

One of the innovations of this year's Surbiton festival was the SurboActs - one-act plays performed in the open air by cornerHOUSE arts centre regulars.

More than 150 people gathered under the lights in the garden of the Grove pub in Maple Road to watch five free plays: Couple by Colin Pink, The Visit by Graham

Large, Sudokuholics Anonymous and Sir Gwaine Colombelles, both by Tim Harrison, and Going for Gold by Andy Moseley, featuring Vern Raye, pictured above.

- Anxious neighbours rang the police to report a heated 'domestic incident' a day before the event. PCs discovered the cast of Sir Gwaine loudly rehearsing!



Peppa promotes party packs

One of the most popular sights for children at the Surbiton festival was Peppa Pig. She was promoting a lively Surbiton business, run by Liz Guest from Prospect Road.

Packaway Parties offers parents an alternative way to create affordable, fun parties

by providing hire packages containing everything needed.

Prices start from £79 for a 12-child party, with a range of themes from Harry Potter to Dinosaurs, Jungle Animals to Pirates.

- More information at www.packawayparties.co.uk

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Go to www.kingston.gov.uk and search for Surbiton Community Funding

The Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee is offering an opportunity for any community or voluntary group, club or residents' association to apply for funding for a community project. Individuals and businesses are also welcome to make an application so long as their proposal benefits the local community.

Earwigging

Here's a tip from the top. Eavesdrop on Surbiton's private conversations. Seriously, there is untold mystery, horror and comic genius going on all around us. Observe.

The French Tarte. 11am. Monday. I am waiting for my coffee amid a gaggle of mothers and babies. One woman is bouncing her baby on her lap. She says loudly to the others: "She's beautiful, she's absolutely everything I could wish for, she brings me so much joy, but sometimes I do wish I could kick her off the balcony." Nothing like honesty!

Victoria Road. 9.30am. Wednesday. A man walks past me outside Boots and says into his phone: "Oh, she's just using it as an excuse to buy a lot of carrots."

Two questions. 1) What event is being used as an excuse to bulk-purchase carrots. 2) Why? Sainsbury's. 2pm. Saturday. I am quietly celebrating the return of Brussels sprouts.

A young woman next to me says to her friend: "Dan, don't even think about it. You know what they do to me. Seriously, I can't even look at them without having to clench my bum." Dan replies: "Oh no, I don't want a repeat of Littlehampton."

A simple trip to Sainsbury's opens up a



world of intrigue. Something unspeakable once happened in Littlehampton. I shall spend the rest of my days wondering.

Oxfam. 12.30pm. Wednesday. I peruse the books. A mother and her young son look at the board games. "Excuse me," she says to the shop assistant. "Do you have the Harry Potter trivia game?"

"Er," says the shop assistant. "All the games we've got are right there."

"Hmfm," hmms the mother, and turns to her six-year-old. "This place really has

gone downhill. Monopoly and Cluedo? They need to get with the times or they'll sink."

I'm sure Oxfam will bear these comments in mind next time they place orders with generous Surbitonians (who clearly have somewhat archaic tastes in board games).

Coronation Hall. 10am. Sunday. I sip coffee and do some writing (promise). Two fortysomething gents sup ale at the table next to me. The following ensues.

"Do you ever think about ending it?"

"Well, I suppose we all have thoughts about that at some point. When things get really hard, you do think 'What's the point?', and yeah I've thought about how I'd do it, and it'd have to be quick, you know? I don't want to get dragged half a mile down a railway line with a smashed-up leg, I wanna be dead, you know what I mean?"

"I'm not talking about ending your life, I'm talking about ending your mobile phone contract. You haven't been listening to a word I've said, have you?"

Oh, Surbiton. You make me so happy.
Becky Mayhew



Visit marks 50 years

She chose a different hat, and conceded by her choice of coat that mink stoles are not quite as acceptable today as they once were... but in other respects Princess Alexandra's visit to Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter home was like stepping back half a century.

In July 1964, the then newly installed president made her first official visit to the original home for disabled service personnel on Richmond Hill, after taking on the role following the death of Viscount Alanbrooke.



She marked her 50th anniversary with a speech to residents at the replacement home in Langley Avenue, and was given three cheers. "She was so lovely when we chatted; charming and very beautiful," said resident Jean Ryder, who presented a posy. "She was wearing the most gorgeous dress."



The princess meets resident Martin Sutcliffe, with chairman of governors Sir John Dunt. Left, Princess Alexandra in 1964 on her first visit as charity president

If I knew you were comin' I'd've baked a cake

Inspired by the Great British Bake-Off? Toni Izard, Surbiton's answer to Mary Berry, will run a cookery class to create Christmas cake, pudding and mincemeat, with a second on marzipan, and making lemon curd, truffles and peppermint creams as gifts.

The afternoon classes on November 22 and 29 cost

£10 each (£5 for students and unwaged). Tuition, hand-outs, equipment and refreshments are included; ingredients extra.

To book, email baizard@hotmail.co.uk "The aim is to encourage everyone to produce delicious food using seasonal produce, locally grown where possible," said Toni.



Keep healthy

Surbitonians make more use of free health checks than anyone else in London. Last year, more than 7,500 people in the borough took advantage of check-ups to detect the risk of heart disease, strokes and diabetes.

At 18 per cent of the population aged 40-74, that's a higher take-up rate than anywhere in the capital. Fifty-nine per cent of those tested were women. For a free NHS check-up, call 020 8547 6805.



Reclaim the streets

by Morris Thain

It's always so impressive when Our old town pulls together. A tribute to the volunteers (thank heavens for the weather).

How lovely would be Surbiton Without the motor cars, A peaceful, tranquil throwback... or was that Life on Mars?



Who is the jean genie?

Out and about, delivering last month's Good Life, one of our noble volunteers came across... an abandoned pair of jeans; washed, ironed, neatly folded and placed on a wall in Avenue South. Nobody was around. Is there a denim surplus? Is someone wandering around the area in their pants? It throws up so many questions.

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