



● Brazilian glamour arrives. See **p3**

● Hannah Kirk of Opera d'Amici is to serenade from the French Table balcony on the farmers' market's 10th anniversary, Oct 19. See **p2**



Hey, Ann, do you know you've got a chameleon on your head? See **p9**



● You see some odd sights in Surbiton, but few as topical as the number plate on this dinky little yellow MG, filling up with petrol in Hook Road before driving through the town. "It's real," the Belgian driver told The Good Life. "I got it in Brussels." Since 2010, Belgian drivers have been able to pay €1,000 for any customised plate.



New lane on to A3

Tolworth's traffic-choked roundabout is to get an extra filter lane, funnelling vehicles on to the A3. Transport for London wants to modify the roundabout, which currently handles 2,000 cars an hour, to let vehicles from the Ewell direction travel straight through towards Guildford.

The subway, left, surfacing where the Toby Jug once stood, would be obliterated in a scheme now out to a six-week consultation. Tolworth's Greenway would be extended along Kingston Road to Tolworth station, for pedestrians and cyclists.

The run-for-your-life crossing from the roundabout to the traffic island near the Hollywood Bowl – frequently jumped by speeding cars – will have a countdown.

TfL wants to 'future proof' the roundabout ahead of a rise in traffic caused by house-building on the former pub site and the opening of Lidl's new GB HQ.

But residents will not welcome more traffic and further pollution in a part of the borough already suffering some of the worst air quality.

● Continued on **p7**



The drive-thru kebab shop

Miraculously no one was hurt when Surbiton station's kebab shop became a drive-thru as a hefty Isuzu D-Max 4x4 lumbered back down the slope of the forecourt and embedded itself in the rear window of Surbiton Chargrill.

The vehicle demolished the back of the kebab and fried chicken outlet next to the florist, then pushed the counter out through the Victoria Road shopfront.

It only just missed the owner's son, who was – say eyewitnesses – standing on the serving side of the counter. Fortunately, on a quiet Sunday afternoon, no customers were in the fast food shop, run by the Medjedovic family for the past decade. Weeks later, the takeaway remains boarded up.

Sim's hair-raising lift moment

A hair-raising moment for stained glass artist Simone Kay, who got stuck 30ft in the air when a scissor lift seized up as she was repairing leaded lights at St Andrew's church.

Sim, who is also replacing stained glass on the east and west wings of the Maple Road church, was rescued with a very long ladder and was able to return to her work on the 148-year-old building.

"I wish I'd had my notebook with me," she told The Good Life. For four years she has made daily sketches in pen and watercolour of life around her. "I love the detail of the church; the brickwork is extraordinary. It is the most beautiful building," said Sim, who has been kiln-firing painted glass to match damaged panes.

● Continued on **p9**



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Surbiton's restaurant strip has a new eatery – The Brewhouse – behind the Antelope in Maple Road. The flaming wood-fired grill creates an atmosphere in the stable block which housed the Big Smoke microbrewery until its move to Esher. “We struggled to keep up with demand for food in the pub, so now we can take table bookings,” said Rich Craig, right. The menu has sharing plates, plus tacos and veggie/vegan options. The big feature is a retractable roof, for sunny days. The eatery can be booked for parties and receptions, has its own bar (Big Smoke beers, naturally), and the speakers are small, so as not to annoy neighbours. “James



Special Brew

and I designed the project ourselves,” said Rich, indicating James Morgan, left. “It’s great to have another independent restaurant in this strip.”

Tastes good, baby

Sisters Avi and Jem believe it’s never too early to feed good food to babies and young children. Their guest stall at the last Surbiton farmers’ market introduced everyone to Little Senses Whole Foods – healthy, wholesome meals for little ones. Jem, who lives in Douglas Road, said: “We’re both passionate about feeding goodness to babies. I gave up my regular job to focus on it.” The sisters live remarkable parallel lives. Both are married, and each has two children, aged four and one. “Mine are seven weeks apart from Avi’s,” laughed Jem. www.littlesenseswholefoods.com



Street food supper

Relaxing outside Surbiton's TripAdvisor-topping Doosra curry house in Ewell Road are Olga, Bince, Vinny and Sergej. The eatery's pioneering supper club offers stimulating multi-course menus. On Sun, Nov 3, Mumbai street food features. Visit www.doosra.kitchen

Table's festive dining

The French Table is taking bookings for its festive dining. A three-course lunch in December is £35, while a five-course tasting menu is £55. The Maple Road restaurant holds an autumn cheese and wine evening on Wed, Nov 13 at 7pm; five cheeses, five wines, and the tales behind them. £40pp. www.thefrenchtable.co.uk

Tolworth's market back on track

The next First In Tolworth Market is due to take place this Sunday (Oct 13). September's had to be cancelled due, the SHEDx organisers say, to “problems in the council's event process”. The market, which showcases the talents and wares of local artists, crafters, creatives and traders, is open from noon-4pm in the slip road at the corner of Ewell Road and Princes Avenue. It is hoped it will be the springboard for more community activities in the area. Future market dates are also on Sundays – November 3 and Dec 1 – same times.



Surbiton town centre's breakfast and lunch greasy spoon, The Surbiton Cafe, at 53 Brighton Road, has had a major facelift, with smart new barriers round its pavement tables. It serves the best fry-ups in KT6, say regulars

Taking cider with Toni

Half a tonne of apples have been pressed and made into 12 gallons of cider with the help of a team of cheerful volunteers. The back garden of The Lamb, Brighton Road, was a hive of activity as members of Abundance Kingston chopped cookers and eaters, then mashed them through a cider press.

It takes three weeks to ferment, with Toni Izard, who spearheads the harvesting, hoping it will be served at a future community event. “Anything to save waste; that’s the real key,” said Toni, who helped residents pick apples across the Surbiton area. “We want to save the apples from landfill,” she said. “We used about 50:50 cookers and eaters to get the right balance of sweetness. We use the natural yeast on the apples; you get a series of fermentations giving you greater character and variety of flavour.”

Meanwhile her fresh apple juice has proved a hit at Surbiton farmers’ markets.



Steve Lucas mashes apples in the cider press

Market's 10-year party

Next weekend, the farmers’ market in Maple Road celebrates its first decade. The event on Sat Oct 19 (9am-1pm) will feature opera singing from the French Table balcony, with a free cotton bag or apron to the first 50 people coming to the organisers’ table to wish the crew happy birthday. There will be slices of celebration cakes to enjoy, and £1 tickets are being sold for a raffle to raise money for Kingston Carers’ Network, supporting the borough’s carers, including 700 young people who look after adults.

Prizes total more than £1,000 in value, including meals at the best local restaurants, hampers of goodies, wine and jewellery. The draw takes place at noon.

Hannah Kirk and her singing partner Trevor from Opera d’Amici – popular entertainers at previous landmark markets – will perform operatic hits from 11.30am.

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the good life

Editor: Tim Harrison

Set up in 2012, the community paper for Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands and Long Ditton is now delivered to 11,070 homes. The Good Life appears six times a year between March and November. We’re always delighted to hear from you, whether it’s about editorial or advertising or joining our little group of volunteers who help deliver the paper. Email thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

In between publications, you can keep up-to-date with Surbiton news via our regular Instagram posts (@thegoodlifesurbiton)

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Open wide day

Maple Dental Practice at 71 Maple Road holds its first orthodontic open day on Sat, Oct 19 from 9am, where orthodontist Sana Luqmani will talk through the teeth-straightening options. Special offers, discounts and refreshments are promised.

A grave discovery

Three large cannabis fields have been discovered – and destroyed – on the Surbiton/Kingston boundary at Lower Marsh Lane. Around 200 plants were spotted by a Met Police drone on land alongside Surbiton Cemetery.

Paul cops a role

Surbiton actor Paul Hughes, King Saul in the 2015 film David and Goliath, has been cast as Inspector Lastrade in a crowdfunded movie adaptation of Stephen King's 1987 Sherlock Holmes short story The Doctor's Case.

Bike fundraisers

Surbiton estate agents Lisa Brand and Laura Humphrey and three of their staff pedalled between Long Ditton and Windsor to raise £5,350 for Long Ditton Infants, Long Ditton Juniors and the Royal Marsden.

Kempton birdies

Surbiton birdwatchers have talks on Kempton nature reserve (Oct 15) and birds of India (Nov 19) at Surbiton library annexe, Ewell Road, 7.30pm. All welcome. www.surbitonbirds.org

Food waste drive

Surbiton Cllr Hilary Gander welcomed news that Kingston borough recycles 49.4% of its waste, up 3% on last year. Checks show half landfill waste is food, which could be turned into compost and electricity. The council will soon start separating litter bin waste; something it doesn't currently do.

Lamppost fears

Kingston Council's public health director is to address concerns of residents in Malvern Road about the effect of converting lampposts into 5G cell transmitters. Louise Tassell raised the issue at a neighbourhood meeting.

Carers can apply

Surbiton unpaid carers can apply for cash from a new £5m carer innovation fund to offer respite, improve their health and reduce loneliness. Email carersinnovationfund@dhsc.gov.uk

Charity is chosen

Squire's in Long Ditton is backing the Royal Star & Garter for a second year. Last year the Woodstock Lane North garden centre raised £1,879 for the home for disabled ex-servicemen and women in Upper Brighton Road.

Supporting Mama

All by Mama, Gemma Whates' online marketplace based in Beaconsfield Road, Surbiton, has featured in Pitch@Palace, an initiative backing entrepreneurial mums who combine running a tech-based business with raising a family. "It's great that our mission is being recognised and understood," she said.

Stalls, songs, samba... it's festival time!

As well as the town centre's annual Surbiton Festival in September, with its stalls, stilt lady, music and parade, there was also a chance to cavort at a new celebration of Brazilian colour, culture and food – Vai Tolworth! – at the King George's Field home of Corinthian-Casuals.

The world's most celebrated amateur football club marked the club's ties to Sao Paulo's Corinthians Paulista, South America's biggest football club.

Giant puppets dressed in the clubs' kits flanked the stage, while deputy mayor Cllr Munir Ravalia joined a swaying crowd, schoolchildren, samba dancers and Latin-American bands in an

exuberant parade which was the centrepiece of an afternoon of music and dance led by SHEDx, which backs community regeneration in Tolworth.

"We couldn't be more proud to be part of Tolworth today," said John Forrest, Casuals' community officer.

Stalls at Surbiton Festival ranged from cookies, soap, cards and handbags to jewellery, woollens, playgroups, crafts, prints and honey, while the mayor, Cllr Margaret Thompson, and MP Ed Davey led the traditional parade through the town.

With a bar and live music in St Andrew's Square, and children's entertainment focused on Claremont Gardens, the weather held... and more than 10,000 people enjoyed the fun.

Among the veteran and vintage cars on display, this primrose yellow Trojan, below left, built in 1924 in Richmond Road, Kingston, and now owned by Roger Armstrong of Esher. The 1520cc engine (with just seven moving parts) is under the seats, the brake's on one wheel, but it can be shoved straight into reverse in emergencies!

● Vai Tolworth!, clockwise from top right: London School of Samba dancer; Barulho band; Our Lady Immaculate paraders. Surbiton Festival: goat-feed, Claremont Gardens; marching band; a Trojan car; dancers from Mrs Bennet's Ballroom; the mayor and MP

SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



Moving back in after a six-month rebuilding and extension project, the road seemed less friendly than it used to be

There is nothing like a dame

An ex-Tolworth Girls' School pupil is now a baroness, nominated by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. Christine Blower, 68, was in the grammar stream in the mid-60s, going on to be a teacher, then



the first female general secretary of the National Union of Teachers. Baroness Blower of Starch Green will campaign to abolish the institution of which she has become part. "Yes, I'll vote for the abolition of the Lords, and for an elected second chamber," she told The Good Life.

Surbiton swallows probus clubs

The retired professional and business clubs of both Kingston and New Malden have been amalgamated into Surbiton Probus Club, meeting as a borough-wide group at Glenmore House, near Surbiton clocktower. Affectionately nicknamed by some the 'Poor Retired Old Buggers' Society' Surbiton's group has – since 2017 – admitted women, and currently includes three in the 62-strong membership.

The merger adds a further 24 members from the Kingston and New Malden clubs, which will now close.

Surbiton Probus (www.surbitonprobus.org.uk) meets monthly for drinks, a three-course lunch and a talk of local interest, as well as organising social gatherings, outings, pub lunches, walks and regular four-day expeditions to places of interest in Britain.

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Who do you think you are kidding Mr Peters?

Having notched up 67 years in showbiz, you'd have thought Gordon Peters might take it easy. But as he nears his 93rd birthday, the Surbiton actor simply cannot resist the lure of the stage.

Dad's Army fans may recall the episode Put That Light Out, first screened in 1970, in which Capt Mainwaring's platoon is tasked with guarding the lighthouse... only to inadvertently illuminate the area as an air raid begins.

Gordon, playing the lighthouseman, watches as Pte Godfrey makes giant rabbit shadow silhouettes over Walmington-on-Sea, blissfully unaware that Warden Hodges wants the giant bulb he's standing alongside shot out with a machine gun.

Born Gordon Peter Wilkinson in Shildon, Co Durham, in November 1926, he was the

son of a butcher's boy. "My mother was the clever one," he said. "She was a music teacher, and had been to university."

Young Gordon's melodious singing voice gained him a place at Durham Cathedral School, while rehearsals for his parents' concert party introduced the young chorister to the world of entertainment.

When the family moved to Darlington in the Second World War, his mother ran a youth club, putting on Gilbert & Sullivan's comic operas Trial by Jury and HMS Pinafore. Gordon took the leading roles.

War intervened. Before he was 18 he volunteered for the Royal Navy (his eyesight not good enough for the RAF), and was sent to Butlins, where the camp had been commandeered for military training.

He served in the Far East; in spare time entertaining comrades and amusing audiences with his mimicry, especially playing silly, clueless officers.

Back home he rapidly tired of life as a bank clerk and applied for a job in South Africa where he entered, and won, a talent show... miming to Old MacDonald Had A Farm. He went to Johannesburg for the grand final – losing to "a singer who was bloody useless"; an injustice which still rankles 70 years on!

Back in the UK in the 1950s, he worked as a singer and stage manager in music halls and theatres. After being rejected for a part in a show at London's Adelphi on the grounds that he wasn't tall enough, he padded his shoes out with newspaper, brylcreemed his hair so it stood up, rejoined the queue... and got the job!

After a brief, ill-fated marriage to actress Joan Mann ("I should never have done it!"), he met and married Pat – a nurse who had come to watch one of his stage shows. The couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in March with daughter Katie, a television PA.

Gordon understudied for former

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Gordon Peters



Gordon Peters as the lighthouseman in Dad's Army (between Capt Mainwaring and Warden Hodges). Below left, at home in Grove Road

Crackerjack! presenter Peter Glaze, and worked with Lester Ferguson and Terry-Thomas. He also gained a reputation as a bewitching pantomime dame.

Television work followed. He hosted a quiz show for teenagers, appeared as a Black and White Minstrel, and was a warm-up man for the likes of Harry Worth and Mike Yarwood.

Dad's Army writer David Croft knew Gordon's versatility from summer stage shows, and so cast him in cameo roles in the first (as well as in later) series of Britain's all-time favourite TV comedy.

He went on to make a string of appearances in Dad's Army, as a soldier, a policeman... and as a fire chief in an episode that is now, sadly, missing.

"I kept bringing ladders on," he recalled. "And Captain Mainwaring was hoisted up on one of the rungs!"

He still earns a crust in repeat fees for such roles as the lighthouse keeper. "I was in awe of all the main cast, although no one knew then what a success it was going to be," he said. "It's good, clean, honest comedy; the success is in all the characters."



In the Dad's Army episode Is There Honey Still For Tea, playing opposite Arthur Lowe

In 1973, BBC One commissioned a new series, The Gordon Peters Show, based around him. But despite some viewers hailing him as 'the new Jacques Tati' and even 'the new Hancock', the critics were less generous. One cruelly described Gordon's face as "looking like it was put together at the wrong end of an assembly belt".

After five episodes, the Gordon Peters Show was pulled. Roles followed in Are You Being Served?, Hi-de-Hi!, One Foot In The Grave, and a shoal of other series.

But the stage beckoned once again. Gordon had always collected songs, and linked up with Danny La Rue's musical director, David Carter, to perform selections from Flanders and Swann, Noel Coward and Gilbert & Sullivan... and for the past 14 years the pair have entertained in halls, delighting audiences with singalongs and patter.

"I still enjoy performing," he said. "I didn't appreciate how clever Noel Coward was until I researched him."

He even published an autobiography, From Choirboy to Comic, celebrating his career in entertainment.

The only headache with doing tribute shows, Gordon admits, is that you have to stick to the words of the songs. You get the distinct sense that Gordon is more relaxed with stand-up comedy, where ad libs and flights of fancy are more vital than strict line-learning.

Gordon and Pat initially lived in Weybridge before moving to Vaughan Road, Long Ditton, and later Elm Tree Avenue, near Imber Court. They have been in Grove Road, Surbiton, for the past 16 years.

Tim Harrison

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Sports writer was rugby league fan

Surbiton sports writer Joe Rigby has died at the age of 70 following a heart attack.

Joe, who lived in Ewell Road, was on the Kingston Borough News in Brighton Road before embarking on a long career as a sports sub-editor and writer on Fleet Street, for the Evening News, Daily Express and Daily Mail. His identical twin Vic, who still lives in Surbiton, trod a similar sports journalism path.

Born in Woking on November 15 1948, Joe was persuaded to go halves with Vic on a £5,250 cottage in Westfield Road in the 1960s, beginning a 50-year love affair with the town.

A regular sports expert at Antelope quiz nights, Joe was described by his widow Angela at the funeral at St Mary's, Long Ditton, on September 16 as "the most modest and humble person". Dave Brubeck's Take Five, the first record he bought, played as his coffin arrived.

He loved rugby league, steam trains and watching (and playing) cricket, turning out many times for Hook & Southborough. Vic described his departed twin as "a great bloke, a decent bloke and my best mate for 70 years".

As twins, Vic and Joe were often asked if they were telepathic. Vic tells an intriguing tale. "I'd

left the Press Club, off Fleet Street, at 3am after a late shift, and went to Waterloo for the 3.48 train to Kingston, and a half-hour walk home to Surbiton. I fell asleep, woke at New Malden and – not knowing if I was going to Kingston or back to Waterloo – jumped out. There were no mobiles in those days, so I went to the nearby police station and asked at the desk if they had the number of a cab company. The helpful bobby rang for me, and I made it home, but got up so late I didn't see Joe that morning. That evening Joe had a late session in the Press Club, caught the 3.48, fell asleep, awoke at New Malden, jumped out and ended up at the police station, where he stood in disbelief as the bobby said: "Good morning, Mr Rigby, taxi to Surbiton?"



The day war broke out

Second World War veterans Betty Dawson – she's above – and Phyllis Hales, below, both 97, have made a video of their memories of the day, 80 years ago, when they heard the country was at war with Germany.

Residents of the Royal Star & Garter Home, Upper Brighton Road, they relived their recollections of the day on September 3, 1939, when Neville Chamberlain broadcast to the nation that the British deadline for the withdrawal of German troops from Poland had expired, and consequently the country "was at war with Germany".

Phyllis, then 17, heard the news on the radio with her parents and two brothers at home in Acton. "I remember sirens going,

and we were all a bit concerned," she said. "We thought there was going to be an air raid. It was something new and we thought that could happen... but it didn't."

Betty recalls crouching in an unusual place when those sirens sounded. "I was at home in Leeds with my mother," she said. "We had a big grandfather clock in a recess. She made me stand beside it. I don't know why!"

A couple of years later, both took an active part in the war effort, joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in 1942, and serving until 1946.

● For more recollections from Royal Star & Garter residents about the day war broke out visit: youtu.be/5_k0JD9hBcM



Surbiton's political map to alter

Who would you like to chummy up to? And who do you want nothing to do with? A consultation is under way on redrawing Surbiton's wards, to make more logical links between, say, communities and local shops.

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission wants help redesigning the council's ward pattern, although the current number of councillors in Kingston borough – 48 – will remain unchanged. The aim is electoral equality in council elections, so each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters.

The review also tries to ensure that wards reflect the interests and local identities of communities in the borough.

Commission chair Prof Colin Mellors said: "We'll take into account local community identities as well as ensuring electoral equality for voters. If you have a view about which neighbourhoods should be part of the same ward, we want to hear from you. If you think a road, river or railway makes a strong boundary, this consultation is for you."

New ward boundaries will come into effect at the 2022 council elections. You have until November 11 to make your views known at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Poetry themes

Fourteen different poets read their works at the last poetry evening at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road... with the customary mix of thought-provoking, zany and moving.

All are welcome to the next evening on Friday, December 6, at 7.30pm when the three themes chosen by poet David Loffman are *City, Time, and The News*.

The bar is open, and the £4 entry includes a cheese supper, served during the interval.

You can opt to read a poem or two, or simply listen to the verse that others bring along.

And if you need inspiration, David runs an informal two-hour workshop at the cornerHOUSE on Saturday, November 9, from 10.30am, where he reads examples of poetry on the three themes. Entry is free. Just turn up.

Filter beds: call to action

Surbiton's Green Party councillor has gone on the warpath after claiming that one of the town's wildlife havens is being irretrievably damaged.

Cllr Sharron Sumner, who defected from the Liberal Democrats, is an outspoken opponent of attempts to build on the old Seething Wells filter beds by Portsmouth Road.

A planning inquiry in 2013 rejected plans for 64 flats on a floating pontoon, a restaurant and a yacht marina, and an appeal was dismissed.

The ecological impact on metropolitan open land was cited, as well as the effect on wildlife and biodiversity.

Hundreds recently signed a petition against a scheme to turn the filter beds into an estate of 740 homes.

Now Cllr Sumner – who is also pressing for teenage climate change activist Greta Thunberg to be given the freedom of Kingston for her campaigning – wants the council to take a firmer line on the clearing of vegetation from around the filter beds. She leafleted the recent Surbiton Festival, calling on others to support her.

"They were a jewel in Surbiton's crown, but they've been destroyed while the council looks on," she said, demanding that "we restore the filter beds as the borough's most protected natural site".

Girls' night out

Great fun was had by all at a Ladies Night to raise money to help educate girls and young women in Malawi.

The all-women fundraiser in the upstairs room at Langleys restaurant, Ewell Road, supported girls at 27 schools in a large rural area north of the capital Lilongwe.

The £770 raised will build washrooms and supply girls' packs – drawstring bags for school use, but which are equipped with washable sanitary pads (made from duvets and microfibre cloths by women in Malawi), pants, soap and flannels.

"Each girl will now have a pack, so when they have their periods they can still go to school instead of missing two-and-a-half months of education each year," said Heather Palmer, above, CEO of Surbiton-based African Vision Malawi. "We thought of having a ladies fun night because this project is all about girls and about women. We are trying to support girls in Malawi, enabling them to go to school, get a better education, and hopefully go on to get a scholarship, which we also fund. We can change people's lives while we are having fun, and it can actually make a real difference."

More on the Upper Brighton Road charity's inspirational work with orphans, vulnerable adults and communities in Malawi at www.africanvision.org.uk



Beekeeper Keith McMahon and, right, Annie Lysander and Jean Ogden hard at work

A special 'hive' edition of Handmade at the Lamb brought local artisans, creatives, crafters and volunteers together to make bee-related objects for a touring community sculpture.

Activities at the Brighton Road pub included making wire-wrap bees, pom pom bees, felt bees, a weaving workshop, bee-print face painting, stained glass bees, willow bees and sewn bees.

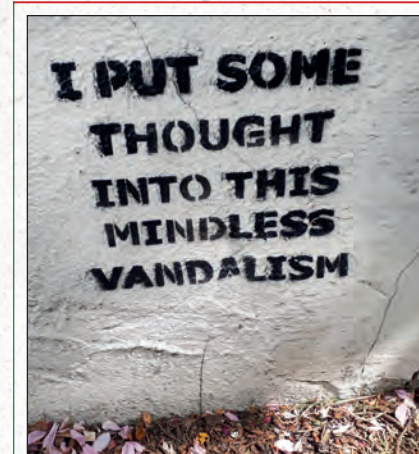
Centre of the, er, hive of industry was river road beekeeper Keith McMahon who brought along 10,000 of his bees, give or take.

"Children are much more knowledgeable about bees these days than they were 10 years ago," said Keith, who helps at a stall selling honey and other bee-related products at Surbiton Farmers' Market. "They can even point the queen bee out to me, and tell me about the drones and the female worker bees."

Annie Lysander of Hook Road, and Jean Ogden of Claygate were busy bees, making woollen versions to embellish Tolworth artist Debbie Chessell's Beehive sculpture, which – when finished – will go on tour around

the area as a hub for creativity.

"We've been making all different things for the project," said Jean. "I've learnt so much from other crafters. We've just had the most amazing afternoon."



● Has Banksy been holidaying in Long Ditton? This discreet piece of graffiti on a garden wall in Wentworth Close by the junction with Ditton Hill was spotted by one of our Good Life deliverers.

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Toads in toads' hall

Build it and they will come. That's the hope of 13 volunteers, creators of the Berrylands Nature Reserve hibernaculum for the frogs and toads that call its pond home.

A 5ft wide hole was dug, with pallets and bricks forming an internal structure before being filled with wood, stone and slates to make gaps for amphibians.

Offcuts of plastic pipe give access, and the whole thing was covered with soil for insulation.

"Hibernaculums are shelters for animals to overwinter," said the reserve's Andrew Irving. "This one gives amphibians a safe place to hibernate, protecting them from cold weather, as they are unable to regulate their own body temperature. We used materials left over from building our bug hotel.

Hopefully some frogs and toads which laid spawn in the pond earlier in the year will return, giving us another abundant new generation next spring."

It was built on a community day at the five-hectare site off Stirling Walk.

www.berrylandsnaturereserve.org



Let's talk

Surbiton neighbourhood manager James Geach, centre, and community rangers Jordan Brooker and Moon Hoang have been canvassing views. The trio sat at a pedal powered 'parklet' moored



outside Greggs in Victoria Road, answering questions and getting feedback from residents, shoppers and business people on what improvements they would like, as part of a council outreach effort.

"We had a really good afternoon, we must have talked to 100 people," said James, who took on the role of Surbiton neighbourhood manager earlier this year. "It's about getting residents' ideas for the community plan, so we can make sure that decisions in the future reflect people's ideas and aspirations for the area."

The team handed out leaflets encouraging online feedback, and encouraged thoughts on an 'ideas tree' via post-it notes.

Everyone has an opportunity to browse the proposed ideas at a Let's Talk forum on October 22. "Consultation on the plans is coming to an end, and so far we've received hundreds of ideas," added James. "At this forum we will display the ideas that have been submitted and, with subject matter experts on site, will ask residents to help us to clarify and prioritise their ideas."

The drop-in event will be at Glenmore House in Surbiton Crescent, 2.30-8pm on Tuesday, October 22. All welcome.

By Royal appointment, gardening writer Janice Cripps explores Highgrove

The garden where Charles is king



I'm at the gate, passport and tickets in hand, phone switched to silent and ready to pass through security. After months of waiting, I'm at the Prince of Wales' estate at Highgrove and excited to see what he has created on a 15-acre site which was once a chemical dumping ground.

The prince has a 10-strong team led by head gardener Debs Goodenough, and regular visitors include horticulture's own gardening royalty such as Sir Roy Strong, Bunny Guinness and Pippa Greenwood.

With such esteemed help, one might expect a grand exquisite landscape with imposing tree-lined avenues, manicured lawns and spectacular vistas reminiscent of Versailles. But on the contrary, the prince has



created a highly individual garden where he definitely reigns supreme.

Reluctant to throw things away, he likes to use unwanted items creatively. The garden is a jumble of ideas, packed with quirky artefacts collected on his travels, gifts from close friends and various sculptures and follies he has designed himself, often using upcycled or salvaged materials.

I can just hear Camilla opine: "Not more junk for the garden dear!"

The prince is hands-on, and knows what he likes. Whimsical topiarised yew specimens sit alongside messy cottage-style borders, and nature is often allowed to do its own thing.

He doesn't like the garden to be too tidy, and allows the abundant climbers to scramble around his house, often obscuring the windows. My overwhelming impression is

that the garden is primarily an outlet for the prince's imagination and creativity, be it the Islamic garden, William and Harry's old tree house or the stumpery (look it up!)

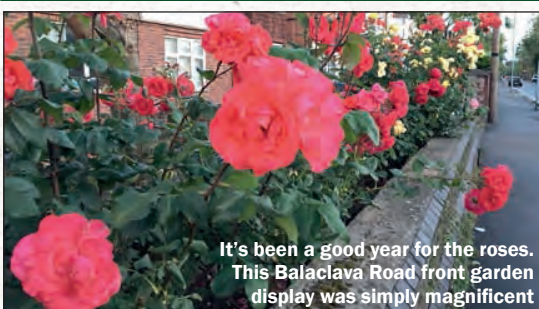
Some features are intensely personal, such as the willow memorial to Tigga, his late and much-missed Jack Russell terrier, who died in 2002 aged 18, and the 'Wall of Worthies', where busts of some of the most influential people in the Prince's life have been mounted on to a screen.

It may not be my Duchy of Cornwall cup of tea, but this a garden which makes me smile. Without doubt it gives HRH a tremendous amount of pleasure, reflecting his beliefs, providing sanctuary and allowing him total freedom of expression.

In this hectic, digitally curated age, shouldn't all our gardens be like this?

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

For advice, planting plans, or projects – from concept to completion – visit www.janicecripps.co.uk



It's been a good year for the roses. This Balacava Road front garden display was simply magnificent

On the trail of the lonesome pine

Naturalist Elliot Newton not only backs hedgehogs (see right), but he also led a tree trail at Fishponds Park to mark World Car Free Day. Elliot, the Friends of Fishponds Park conservation officer, pointed out rare and interesting trees on the 13.5 hectare site off Hollyfield Road, such as the coast redwood, the tallest tree species in the world, whose forests store more CO² than any other tree, a weeping beech whose branches can root again when touching the ground, and the tupelo, a favourite of honey producers because of its light and delicate taste.

He also described how bats use trees as corridors for movement, and the park's conservation value. If you missed out on the trail, you can download a guide on the council's website, and explore the area at your own pace. www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/2568/documents/2905

Rob Eyre-Brook, Friends chairman, said: "Elliot shared some of his wealth of knowledge about nature, with fascinating bits of information ranging from the number of different species of slugs to be found to how the Blackthorn developed its large thorns to ward off hungry woolly mammoths, millions of years ago!" Email: fishpondssurb@gmail.com



Can you dig it? Queen's Prom Friends began building a path and restoring unearthed Victorian railings at a volunteer day. Search for Queen's Promenade on Instagram to follow progress



Help our hedgehogs thrive

Few animals produce positive, heart-warming responses like the hedgehog. The prickly mammals regularly patrolled our back gardens, but have suffered a 97% population decline since the 50s, making any encounter rare and magical.

A 2018 report suggested main drivers were rural landscape changes (industrialisation of farming has led to loss of hedgerow) and a rise in pesticide and insecticide use, reducing available food and poisoning hedgehogs themselves. But all is not lost.

Our suburban gardens may hold the key to their survival. Surveys show hedgehog decline can be stabilised and even reversed if we 'rewild' parts of our gardens. Remnant populations of hedgehogs are clinging on across Surbiton, giving us the chance to create an environment where these snuffling wanderers of the night can thrive.

A few steps are outlined in Surbiton film maker Tom Hooker's charming animation (type **Hedgehog Close** into YouTube). Work with neighbours to create 13cm holes in garden fences to make mini wildlife corridors. Hedgehogs roam over a mile in a single night!

As Guy Fawkes night approaches, check bonfires before lighting; they are tempting winter bedding down places for hedgehogs. For more on rewilding, email elliott@citizenzoo.org

Elliot Newton, Citizen Zoo



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Wreathed in scaffolding, St Matthew's steeple. Right: Site foreman Jerry Sojka points out to intrepid climber Johnnie Byrne where a stone has been replaced

Aspiring to the top

Twenty five intrepid souls have climbed 170ft of scaffolding to enjoy the views from the top of St Matthew's steeple and admire the restoration work currently in progress to its tower and spire. Those with a head for heights were escorted to the tippity top (the height of Nelson's Column) at two open days at the St Matthew's Avenue church.

"We reckon we had well over 200 visitors at the church over the two weekends, including audiences for two concerts which went down very well," said Simon Hancock, the church's director of music and member of the project team leading the restoration work.

"Once finished, there will definitely be more community involvement in the church," he said. "We want to tell people about its heritage, and will also approach local schools to arrange educational tours."

Planning began in 2017, when a routine inspection found crumbling masonry. The grade II listed building was put on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

Soon after, the church applied for a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, resulting in a third of the project's total cost of £600,000 being awarded. Other grants and generous donations from the community and congregation are nibbling away at the £130,000 shortfall.

"A good deal of damaged stonework has already been removed and new blocks of Kentish ragstone and Bath stone are being cut to replace it," added Simon. "Scaffolding is also being put up inside the tower, to restore defective woodwork."

Other work includes repairs to the belfry windows, improved belfry access (plus CCTV, to allow viewing from the ground) and restoration of eight 144-year-old hemispherical Ellacombe chime bells, and a 285-year-old service bell currently in safe keeping at Loughborough-based John Taylor & Co bell foundry. It will hopefully be reinstalled for Christmas.

Builders started on site in May, and are due to finish in mid-November.

A separate, though linked, Spend a Penny Appeal has been launched towards the cost of rebuilding the church loos. "The old WCs have been removed and the walls knocked down in preparation for three new toilets to be installed," said Simon.

"The National Lottery Heritage Fund emphasises the importance of community, so we aim to be a community-focused church. The building will, in future, be open far more frequently than in the past, so the community can make the most of what we can offer."

Calum Kelly

New lane plan for roundabout

Continued from p1

There may also be opposition to the removal of a second subway access, the steps beside Sundial Court, which are used by Sunray estate residents.

Peter Horah, the TfL project co-ordinator, called the road expansion "an investment in growth", and said it would improve traffic flow and cut journey times. "We think we can make life better at Tolworth roundabout. This aims to avoid log-jams in future, caused by new developments."

Speaking at a recent neighbourhood meeting, resident John Tellick seized on TfL's admission that traffic levels would rise. "At last we're getting a bit of truth," he said, adding that developers constantly reassured the public that car numbers "would barely increase".

Cllr Sharron Sumner questioned why the Greenway, which she described as "not a success" was to be joined by "Greenway Mk2". But Cllr Malcolm Self welcomed its extension, and said that the only reason the original Greenway project hadn't stretched to Tolworth station was lack of funds.

Mr Horah stated that the subway nearest the Hollywood Bowl was "the least used", and promised that as well as more tarmac the scheme would improve biodiversity via tree-planting.

Cllr Sam Foulder-Hughes, who chairs Surbiton's neighbourhood committee, responded: "There'll be a little bit of scepticism among residents, as many trees [on the existing Greenway] haven't survived."

Consultation permitting, work would be completed by March 2023. The cost would be met by Lidl and Meyer Homes (which is building nearly 1,000 homes on the site once covered by the Toby Jug and government buildings).

TfL has pledged to place static displays of the plans on Tolworth Broadway and in the library, and is leafleting 1,900 homes. You can have your say at consultations.tfl.gov.uk

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I love a mince pie as much as the next girl, but really, this is too much...

Reeling us in with festive offerings

As I write this, it's discreet, almost subliminal. By the time you read this, it will be inescapable, irrefutable. We are being Christmassed!

There I am on a hot, sunny Saturday, standing in the supermarket perusing the cake aisle, as one does when one is feeling jaunty, and my eyes drift over the apple pies, Battenberg, lemon slices, jam tarts, chocolate rolls, mince pies, fondant fancies... wait a minute. What devilish work is that? Surely not... but surely so?

There they are, tucked slyly among the year-round sweetmeats: mince ruddy pies! Right in front of me; me in my summer dress and flip flops, faced with the prospect of Christmas. So incensed was I that I abandoned the aisle and angrily bought a yoghurt.

These sneaky festive offerings are currently mere flashes before our eyes. Shops are edging Christmas into our consciousness in the hope that these images infiltrate our thoughts and dreams (I'm flying over a mountain range with a unicorn, now I'm on a yacht on a purple sea with the Milky Way above, oh look there's George Clooney on a rock eating a Yule log).

The next three months are scrunched up, disregarded as unimportant before they've even happened, because the only thing the powers that be want us to think of is one single day in

December; our lives have no meaning until the 25th, by which time, they hope and trust we shall have spent billions of our hard-earned pounds in their shops, dumbly grabbing festive fodder from the shelves and to hell with the fact we've still got 100 days where we will need to eat things other than Christmas pudding and Quality Street.

But there's the thing. They don't want us to eat anything else between now and then; they want us to gorge ourselves on mincemeat and goose fat so we have to come back for more.

You know what? I love mince pies. I absolutely love them, but it is a truth universally acknowledged (apart from in supermarket accounts departments) that anyone who consumes a mince pie before December 1 should behave better, and I want no part of it.

Here we are, fresh out of summer, morosely shoving light things under the bed, breathing in the damp, oaky stillness of autumn. And there they are, sly daily images reminding us we're sliding towards the all-consuming inevitability of another Christmas, another year gone, another heap of ambitions not achieved, a year closer to old age, a year closer to a slow and painful death.

Now, see, I've depressed myself. I think I'll go and buy some mince pies to cheer myself up.

Becky Mayhew

Antique shop for sale

One of Surbiton's sleepest little shops, which has sold antiques, curios and bric-a-brac for donkey's years, is on the market. Winkworth is handling the freehold sale of Seventy Seven, next to The Lamb in Brighton Road, with offers of over £500,000 invited. There has been interest from would-be new owners keen to turn it into a nursery, a dog grooming salon... even a stamp collectors' shop. Behind the distinctive maroon frontage are storage rooms, a kitchenette and a loo, while there are two bedrooms up on the first floor – set back from the road. There are also two hidden walled gardens, plus an off-street parking space. The business used to be known as JP's Pastimes, dealing in secondhand furniture and house clearances.

Station on the telly

Surbiton station's architecture features in a new TV documentary. Historian John King – the fount of all knowledge when it comes to local railway stations – talks about its glorious art deco heritage for a show to be aired next year on the Yesterday channel.

John, author of The Railways of Kingston upon Thames, said: "The programme, a Brown Bob production, looks at different stations around the country which are of architectural significance. Surbiton is a station which I think is worthy of looking at much more closely.

"Most people walk through a station – it isn't the destination – but actually, when you look at it, Surbiton station is probably the best art deco station, apart from London underground stations, on the national rail system. There are so many features; it is a fantastic building."

The Railways of Kingston upon Thames, A Brief History is sold at Kingston Museum at £4.95.

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The Good Life... like a welcome visit from a gossipy friend

7

Tracing our long lost pond

In the late 19th century there was a heated dispute over what should become of Tolworth Pond. There's no sign of it today; the row led to it being filled in. But you can see it on the 1866 map.

Ewell Road crosses the map diagonally, from the junction with Ditton Road in the west to Red Lion Lane running southwards, at the eastern corner.

Woodside and Woodside Villas remain, either side of Douglas Road. The naturalist writer Richard Jefferies lived in one of the Woodside buildings, now Stack and Bonner, which sports a blue plaque in his honour. King Charles Road runs southwards at the top right of the map, petering out before reaching Ewell Road. The pond is an irregular shape, measuring 50 yards at its widest point.

More than two centuries before the map was published, a description of the pond in a legal

document of May 1665 recorded that Leonard Hammond of Teddington had taken possession (for the payment of one shilling) of 'that acre of ground lately made a pond for the breeding and keeping of fishe lying and being in the waste, commonly called Surbiton Common within the parish and manor of Kingston aforesaid, and parcel of the said waste there between a highway leading from Kingston towards Ewell in the east, Talworth Common to the south, a parcel of Common called The Glades on the west and a round hill parcel of the said Surbiton Common on the north'.

The document said that Leonard Hammond and his heirs were to 'keep the fishe pond and replenish and stock with such kinds of fishe as they shall please'. They were entitled to fish all they want, and to 'plant willows and other young trees in or near the

pond and they could also cut these down and lop as necessary'. They were to allow people with cattle on Surbiton Common to let the cows drink at the pond.

The rent was five shillings (25p) a year at the feast of St Michael the Archangel and the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. If not paid promptly, a tuppence-a-day fee was payable after 21 days.

A second pond, Chamberley Pond, near the junction of Ditton Road and Hook Road, was also to be administered by Mr Hammond. This must have been filled in before 1866 as there's no sign of it on the map, though it is shown on an earlier tithe map.

In 1866, the area was largely rural. But by the end of the century Ewell Road had become built up on both sides, with side roads extending into the fields and woodland beyond. The pond had become an embarrassment. It was generally agreed that it was no longer fulfilling its original purpose, but it was in an area of potentially valuable building land. A five-verse poem was penned by J Rayner in 1898, with the lament:

*Dejected, infected, neglected,
Hear my deepest sigh,
For shame sake, Masters let me go.
Oh, wherefore linger I?*

It seems the pond let off an unpleasant miasma, had outlived its original use and was doomed.

A report in the Surrey Comet of May 27 1893 refers to Mr Charles Schwind attempting to fence it off, presumably along the roadside as the dispute was with Kingston's Highway Board. The board had removed the fencing, stating that the public should be able to use the pond as a public watering place.

By 1901 it was in possession of Steven Kavanagh, who was offering rather less in compensation than seemed fair. The Comet report referred back to 1820, when the Enclosure Act took place, allowing for the watering of cattle at the pond.

However, Steven Kavanagh had purchased the pond from the Lord of the Manor, and so had certain rights. It had to be agreed with the inhabitants of Talworth and the Charity Commissioners that a piece of land of a similar size could be exchanged if the pond was filled in. In addition a drinking fountain and cattle trough should be supplied.

There were mutterings and letters to the Surrey Comet from an angry ratepayer, saying that this was an unfair exchange. However, it went ahead, and the fountain



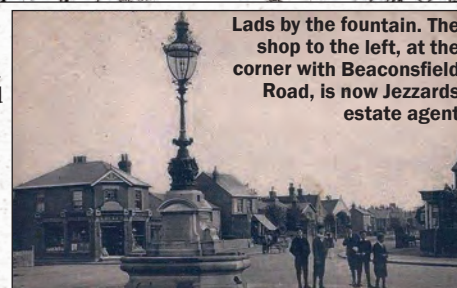
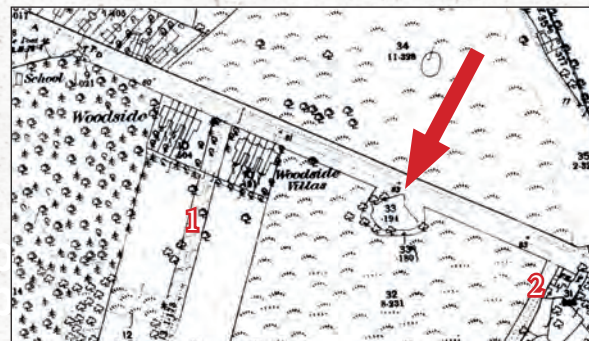
There is also a plaque on the wall at the southern end of Egmont Road bearing Steven Kavanagh's name, for anyone who wants to explore.

The Kavanagh family remained in Surbiton. Miss Nora Kavanagh, Steven's granddaughter, taught me history at Rosebery Grammar School in Epsom, but it was constitutional history, rather than the local history which has now become my passion.

Janet Heskins



The pond, as wide as five K2 buses nose-to-tail, stretched 50 yards from 336 to 348 Ewell Road today. This view (Tolworth Tower is far left) has Derby Road to the left and Egmont Road to the right. Below, the 1866 map, with the pond arrowed. Douglas Road is marked 1, Red Lion Lane (now Road) is 2



was placed in position at the junction of Ewell Road and Ditton Road, near where the police station then stood. It was at a time when drinking fountains were regularly being provided for the public.

The animal trough remains on the triangle at the junction of Ellerton Road and Ditton Road. Eventually, however, the fountain was deemed to be a traffic hazard and was removed and unceremoniously dumped in another pond, the Bluey, at Tolworth brick works. Maybe rancour was still felt against Steven Kavanagh...

Kavanagh was born in Ireland in 1847, and died in Kingston in 1921. He was the borough's water engineer and a JP. He had been head of Surbiton borough council, and was said to have discharged his duties wholeheartedly, putting personal considerations to one side.

At one time an engine driver at Tolworth's brickworks, he was involved in building projects, particularly cemeteries, and lived in Pembury Lodge, Ewell Road. Later his son Herbert lived at 322 Ewell Road, presumably continuing Steven Kavanagh's building company long after his father's death.

The site of the pond is close to the present-day junction with Egmont Road. The Earl of Egmont owned much of the land in Tolworth. He gave the land on which St Matthew's school stood, as indicated by a rather worn plaque on the Ewell Road wall.

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Exotic visitors enchant residents

Creepy-crawlies and exotic creatures were welcomed to Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter Home as a Brazilian black spider, a full-grown boa constrictor from Madagascar and a meerkat visited Upper Brighton Road to meet ex-servicemen and women living with disability and dementia.

Residents stroked and held animals and insects, while game 90-year-old Ann let a chameleon rest on her head. Other visitors included giant stick insects, a

parrot, lizards, a barn owl, an African bull frog, tortoises and a tenrec, a hedgehog-like mammal.

Ben Pugh, from Spirit of the Wild zoo, spoke to residents and relatives, describing creatures' habitat, diet and traits. The event was organised by activities manager Raquel Pena-Aristizabal.

She said: "I kept well away from the spider, but the residents showed no fear and loved meeting the wonderful animals and creepy-crawlies. They had a great time!"



Alec, 94, meets a parrot

Drones assist church repair project

● Continued from p1

One affected window in the east wing depicts Jesus. "He has a broken shoulder, which will need to be repaired," she said. "It's called 'stained glass' because of the yellow silver stain put on for firing. The piece of border I'm replacing today is kiln-fired and painted with a glass paint which becomes one with the glass. It's the same as the medieval process."

The renovations are part of a £160,000 repair programme which follows a quinquennial report by an inspecting architect which, among other things, identified issues with the roof.

A drone took 700 pictures (see right) of the roof, brickwork and masonry, with 150 tiles on the high vaulted roof needing replacing. A boom lift (top right) was used to reduce scaffolding costs. Gutters and downpipes have been repainted and cleaned, inside and out, stained glass windows repaired and cedar



wood louvres on the 112ft high bell tower replaced.

Churchwarden Martin Taylor said: "While we were working on all that, we thought we might as well get the clock faces done because they had been repaired in the past with inappropriate material. Some of the faces looked cream and some looked white – it looked a mess."

The faces were all removed to have the metalwork repainted and the faces reglazed in pure white.

"The main gables themselves have required drilling and pinning because the entire gables were starting to fall off the building, which wouldn't have been good!" said Martin.

"Once we had the scaffolding up at the eastern end we realised that there were more problems with the stained glass where there is bowing and breaks and cracks, and also at the western end,

so the opportunity was taken – while the scaffolding was up – to get repair work done to the stained glass at the same time.

"Simone is doing a wonderful job for us, as are our builders Telson Roofwise of Chessington, who have been absolutely superb."

Jane Grove



● Glenmore House looks set to be the new venue for the Surbiton neighbourhood committee; the next meeting is on Nov 7 at 7.30pm. Formerly at Dysart School in Ewell Road, the meetings on traffic and planning are now at The Crescent. The public are given time to speak. Agendas, minutes and recordings at www.kingston.gov.uk



Steam pulls in rail enthusiasts

Lecturer and raconteur Dick Crane, right, opened the 60th series of Wednesday evening illustrated train talks with a chance for the 80-strong audience to wallow in steam nostalgia.

He launched Talking of Trains with a look back to 1969, describing how the Flying Scotsman had been bought for £3,000 by a private enthusiast, with a deal to run it on existing tracks.

Images included a guard with a shiny 1960s ticket machine. "No need to link to a computer in the Far East," he quipped.

Despite being an era when railways closures were more frequent than openings, 1969 was the year when the Dart Valley Light Railway began; opened, ironically, by Dr Richard Beeching, much better known for axing many of the UK's lines.

The talk on Wed, Oct 16, at 7pm at the library annexe in Ewell Road sees Jim Lester reviewing his career at Nine Elms. Full details of all train talk topics at www.talkingoftrains.co.uk

New nursery launches

A secondary school teacher with a decade's experience has opened a new day nursery in Surbiton. Mum-of-two Vjolca Niklekaj, inset below, has set up the Monkey Puzzle day nursery at 34 Kingsdowne Road. The refurbished building gives children access to an outdoor terraced garden.

"Running a nursery is extremely rewarding as you're often the first experience of education and group interaction for a child," she said. "When I had my children, I didn't have family around, so I know how hard it is to bring them up without childcare support." Set up in 2002, Monkey Puzzle is the



Trainset event boasts 24 layouts

All aboard! Boosted by Channel 5's The Great Model Railway Challenge series (the trainset equivalent of Bake-Off), Tolworth Showtrain takes over Tolworth Recreation Centre on Nov 9 and 10.

"We aim to provide entertainment for all, not just the enthusiast," said manager John Noorani. Hampton Court Model Railway Society's 29th show has 24 working layouts from different locations and time eras, with one that children can operate. Demonstrators will



share modelling tips at the centre in Fullers Way North.

Layouts include Mike Walshaw's Scratchy Bottom, inset left,

based on the works of the cartoonist and whimsical sculptor Rowland Emmett. Tickets: £7 adults, £3 children. On Sun, Nov 10, one child gets in free for each paying adult. Family tickets: £15. A free bus runs between Surbiton station and the show. www.tolworthshowtrain.co.uk



Even limbo dancers felt challenged in Woodlands Road when the road name slipped to half mast. Pole and sign have now been removed



● Bike repair guru Andrew Manning has scooped the gong for best speciality retailer for the second year, AND the prize for green business of the year. Andrew, of Ellerton Road, Surbiton, who runs Cyclelink in High Street, Thames Ditton, changed out of his overalls as Thames Ditton's independents swept the board in Elmbridge, winning four out of seven categories. Paull's Fruit & Veg won best grocer for the sixth year on the trot, and Cafe Noir on platform 1 of Thames Ditton station was best eatery for the third year. Customers voted for their favourites. Cllr Tricia Bland presented.



Pop-up therapy

A social enterprise helping 16-year-olds who are disengaged from education has won £3,000 of funding from Surbiton neighbourhood committee for a mental health project involving Year 11 and 6 pupils.

Wonderland, inspired by Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, is a collaboration between Anstee Bridge and Bounce Theatre, giving students the confidence to discuss issues of identity, body image and depression, and consider how people transform and change, removing the labels which have been forced upon them.

As part of the project, students will create a fun, pop-up tea party network which will tour Surbiton, allowing young and old to discuss the themes of the play. Through the network, Anstee Bridge will work with primary school children who may be struggling with the prospect of moving to secondary school by offering support and strategies to cope with the pressure.

Iyengar Yoga



Experience the benefits of yoga in a home-based studio in Raeburn Avenue. Over 60s seniors, 5.15pm Thursdays. General classes: Wed 7.30pm, Thurs 7pm & Sat 8.45am. £10 per class. Phone or text: **07528 848474**

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Long Ditton celebrates

Community groups and sports clubs showcased their wide range of activities at the first Long Ditton Alive event.

The celebration of all things Long Ditton, held in and around St Mary's church, had activities for all the family including live music, guided walks around the historic churchyard, a treasure hunt, children's games, face painting, an art show, memory rock and stone making, and dance and singing demonstrations.

"We thought it was a good idea to get the community 'up the hill'," said organiser Ann Leeson. "We wanted it to be a celebration showcase, so people get to know what's on offer. We also wanted it to be open to all as a free event."

Dittons councillor Nick Darby, who used £500 of his community allocation funding from Surrey County Council to support the festival, said: "I am absolutely delighted to have been able to sponsor this and be able to show what Long Ditton is all about."



Top left, Lucia Cartier, 2, with Kate Felton of DJ Musica; above, Desiree Harris, one of The Good Life's deliverers, with children she was face painting; left, it's pom-pom time for participants of a Diddi Dance session run by Angela Jeffery



● New and old! Left, brothers Harry and Louis Goff, 12 and nine, from rock band The Bolders, at Long Ditton Alive, in St Mary's church. Right, the more sedate (though no less noisy) annual gathering and jam of septuagenarian old boys from Surbiton County Grammar School, on today's Hollyfield site.



Down the drain

Surbiton's historical society was taken down the drain by Julie Chandler, speaking on London's 1858 Great Stink, and appalling pollution levels.

● The society, which meets monthly at the library annexe, Ewell Road, urgently needs volunteers for its committee as ill health has struck down three experienced stalwarts.



Elaine mugs up on history

When one of Surbiton's popular former pub landladies settled into her new home, she didn't think she'd be taken for a mug.

But Elaine Mole, who ruled the roost at the Bun Shop in Berrylands Road (today, Brave New World) in the 1990s, has been given a limited-edition mug marking 350 years of Cleave's Almshouses in London Road, Kingston, where she now lives. "I think I'll put a little plant pot in it," she said.

The presentation was made on a heritage open weekend by mayor Cllr Margaret Thompson and consort Richard. The dinky cottages were built in 1669, for 'six poor men and six poor women of honest life and reputation'. "We've read the original rules," quipped Elaine. "We might all be thrown out!"

The mugs were created by Lynn John, 66, a former graphic designer who is now one of the almshouse residents.

● St Matthew's church, Surbiton, also opened for a heritage event, coinciding with the saint's feast day. There were hard-hat tours of the scaffolding-clad spire, while an illustrated timeline circled the walls in the church's Sitzler room.



● Getting into retirement mode in deck shoes and shorts is Richard Gee, managing director of Surbiton's 130-year-old estate agent Hawes & Co. The Grove pub was full of past and present colleagues to celebrate his 40 years in Victoria Road. "We all hope Richard enjoys a well-deserved retirement," said Lawson Hewett who, with Max Chapman, now jointly holds the MD title. As well as improving his golf swing, Richard is planning a trip to South Africa. The Magnificent Seven in our picture boast more than 200 years' house-selling experience between them. From left: Richard Deadman, Malcolm Gee, Richard Gee, Jerry O'Leary, John Cooper, Max Chapman and Lawson Hewett.



● The sun shone and the community gathered at the meet the neighbours day at St George's, Tolworth

Please block our road off!

Residents of Beaconsfield Road so enjoyed having the end of their road blocked off for weeks during recent gas works that they've asked the council to make it permanent.

Daniel Kennedy, who lives in the narrow street off Ewell Road, asked Surbiton's neighbourhood committee if a full-time barrier could be installed as the roadworks had briefly improved local life.

The council's senior engineer, Younes Hamade, said a full survey would have to be undertaken to gauge the impact it might have on other roads. "It's not currently on my list of jobs in this financial year," he added.

Mr Kennedy said that the use of Beaconsfield Road as a cut-through for motorists would only get worse when a planned new cycle lane eventually extends down Ewell Road towards Tolworth.

He also said that vehicles went too quickly, sometimes hitting parked cars in the narrow street.

Mr Hamade insisted that the average speed of cars using Beaconsfield Road was 22 to 23mph, and that making the road into a cul-de-sac wouldn't address that.

Cllr Sushila Abraham said: "Beaconsfield Road is very narrow, and gets very congested, but we would need to do surveys before a decision is made. We must properly consult on this."

Councillors considered the results of a public consultation on the parking issues affecting not only Beaconsfield Road but also Broomfield, Derby, Gordon, Hollyfield and Birchington roads... but decided not to introduce a residents' parking scheme.

The situation will be reviewed in a year's time, after the effects of a residents' scheme in Browns Road has been assessed.

Ellerton Road resident John Tellick said that the Ewell Road roadworks, and the resultant temporary closure of Ditton Road near the Co-op, had cut 'rat-run' traffic in his road by between 50% and 75%.

Cllr Sharron Sumner called for "a larger discussion about traffic flow in Surbiton, to prevent rat-runs".

● Westfield Road residents have petitioned for changes to parking rules in their street. They want the council to look at clawing back half the metered parking bays, and designating them for residents only, to stop people parking in the road in the late afternoon, then heading off to London for the evening. Petitioners say residents returning home from work find it hard to get a space.

Cllr Sam Foulde-Hughes said the council would look at the issue.



Some of the mess in Long Ditton rec last year after the travellers had moved on

Court ban

Kingston has joined Elmbridge in getting a three-year court injunction at 153 locations to block traveller camps. The order runs until spring 2022. Height restriction barriers now stop caravans entering recreation grounds, and powers to stop littering and fly-tipping have been beefed up. Anyone who breaches the injunction can be jailed, fined or have assets seized. Illegal encampments in Kingston can be reported to the council (020 8547 5800), or police on the 101 line.



● A wide open-air phonebox now blocks half the pavement in Claremont Road, near the clocktower, and you need a **minimum** of 60p loose change for a call. Someday someone will come up with a portable device to let people chat on the move... and then we'll be able to walk freely again.

● The council has taken the hint. A home-made No Entry sign, put up by a resident at the junction by St Mary's church, Long Ditton, has been replaced by the real thing. "It's been a source of anxiety," said Surrey county councillor Nick Darby, who represents The Dittons. "The left turn at the top of Rectory Lane is, in theory, one way, but in practice the signage on Church Road has been unclear." He said there had been near-misses, and praised the actions of the creator of the previous home-made sign as "thoroughly public-spirited".



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Pic: Steve Ullathorne

Comedy feast

American comedian Robyn Perkins, who combines a science background with ridiculous life stories, hosts a stand-up comedy night at the cornerHOUSE on Fri, Oct 18.

Also on the bill at the Douglas Road arts centre will be Xtra Factor host Matt Richardson and comedy award-winners Steve Bujega and Aaron Simmonds, pictured.

The gig benefits Surbiton-based Express CIC, which supports autistic people and their families. Doors open 7.30pm.

Tickets £10 + booking fee from: www.wegotickets.com/event/482260



Jake’s the king of the jungle

Still my beating heart. The man with the far away look in his eyes is Jake Palmer, or Jungle Boy as he’s better known to fans. Jake, of Upper Brighton Road, has released two singles from his new EP, out on December 6.

Haunted is about a vintage camera – an unusual topic, the 21-year-old singer-songwriter concedes. “It is weird, I guess,” he says, explaining that he wrote it after buying one for a music video. “It’s about a person who sees life through a camera. It symbolises someone who always lives in the past.”

Blueness is simpler. “It’s about getting so lost with someone you forget who you are.”

Still to come are **Bond**, about emotions that tie, and **Lanes Of My Past**, a reflective song about being unable to outrun your past.

Jake blends contemporary jazz, neo-soul, classical piano, alternative music and influences from the London scene. “People struggle to define it,” he says. He has already notched up 160,000 streams on various platforms with his debut single **Glass**.

The laid-back artiste, who has been playing the piano since he was knee-high to a grasshopper, also plays the drums and sings on his compositions.

He is excited about his new collaboration with independent Amsterdam music label TCBYML. “I’ve been holding on to these songs for a long time to make sure that when I do release them, it was with a label I was really happy with.”

● Listen to Jungle Boy’s latest tracks at www.soundcloud.com/tcbym1

Salons to return

Surbiton Salons will return to the cornerHOUSE next summer. July’s five-day bonanza of classical music, singing, workshops and literature brought together leading performers and artists, with founder and artistic director Charles MacDougall saying:

● After going down a storm in September, Out Of The Corner is back with a fresh showcase of local talent including Milly Roberts, a singer with a huge voice. It’s a fiver on the door at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, 8pm, Oct 24.



“I’m thrilled with the way it went. We were ambitious this year, moving into a new venue and filling the schedule with quality content, but it paid off.”

The Salons gained a £3,000 grant from Surbiton neighbourhood committee to pay top-drawer performers who had reduced their usual fees to take part, as well as costs incurred in staging the event.

Councillors heard how the Salons had moved from a former base in Berrylands to reach out to a wider section of the community with the aim of combating loneliness and isolation via music and literature.

The Surbiton Salons 2020 season will run from July 22-26 next year.



Melodious music lessons

Surbiton violin and piano teacher Susan Higgins is not only an accomplished tutor, but has deep roots in the local arts scene, dating to when she and oboe-playing husband Tom arrived in Victoria Avenue 45 years ago. She studied at the Guildhall School of Music, performed as a concert singer (and with the BBC Singers) before making her front room a tuition studio. A past secretary of Kingston Arts Council, she set up the 1980s listings mag Music Here In Surrey, and conducted Kingston Orpheus Choir. She still conducts three choirs as well as teaching adults and children (“I teach grades if people want; children are exam hard-wired these days!”), and has spaces available. **020 8390 1020**

● Free singalongs for those with dementia and their carers run at the cornerHOUSE, Mondays, 2-3.30pm. “We start with Getting to Know You and end with Show Me the Way To Go Home!” said organiser Joan Scriven. Songs range from My Bonnie to Fly Me To The Moon, plus hits from musicals such as My Fair Lady and The Sound of Music. “We also have a short quiz with our tea and cake,” added Joan. For more on the singalongs at the Douglas Road centre, call 020 8390 2019 or email singalong@allberry.org



● Jessica Hern is wowing audiences as Jordan Baker in the hit immersive show **The Great Gatsby**. The 26-year-old from Surbiton plays a headstrong socialite in the production which now transfers to the West End.

“I am hugely excited to be part of London’s longest running immersive show, but mostly I am ecstatic to be playing Jordan,” said Jessica, a Guildford School of Acting graduate and former Hinchley Wood School pupil. “The queen of sass, the life and soul of the party; you don’t want to get on her bad side!”

Jess said the show, which relocates from a warehouse to a Mayfair mansion, is a racy adaptation of F Scott Fitzgerald’s critique of the American Dream. You’re transported to the Roaring Twenties – an era of bootleg liquor, red hot jazz and hedonistic pleasures – to join one of Jay Gatsby’s parties. “Get your glad rags on and join the party,” says Jess.

Go to www.seetickets.com and search for The Great Gatsby at Immersive LDN.



● **Thames Concerts** – the prestigious four-month programme in the acoustically glorious interior of St Andrew’s, Maple Road – begins its new season with a performance by this talented foursome, the Halcyon String Quartet. Violinists Millie Ashton and Leidy Sinclair, violist Nathalie Green-Buckley and cellist HeeYeon Cho formed in 2012 at the Royal Academy of Music and regularly headline at international festivals. Their 7.30pm concert on Sat, Oct 19, features Haydn, Dvořák and Britten. The day starts with a free 50-minute concert by Hinchley Wood School musicians on farmers’ market day. Simply bowl up at St Andrew’s at 10.30am.

Your chance to direct a one-act play

Have you directed a play before, or always itched to? The oneACTS 2020 season at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, is recruiting. Now in its 14th year, the festival offers chances to direct plays of 15 to 30 minutes, working with small casts and minimal setting. Auditions are in Feb, and the festival opens on Apr 27 next year. Email cornerhouseoneacts@gmail.com by Nov 30, giving a bit of background. There’s still time to submit a oneACT play. You have until the end of October. For more information about the oneACTS festival, and how playwrights, actors and directors can take part, visit www.thecornerhouse.org/what-we-do/oneacts

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Graham Shaw,
Sue Offen,
David Bradley and
Jackie Wilson

Is this the area's best kept secret? An affordable place to play squash and get fit. Ditton Squash Club charges £100 a year and £4 per 45-minute session on newly refurbished courts.

Joint membership is £175, family membership £190, and juniors pay £33 a year. It shares its facilities with Surbiton Hockey Club in Sugden Road, Long Ditton, which means there are good changing facilities, plus a lively staffed bar for the inevitable post-game analysis and socialising.

There are also regular club nights.

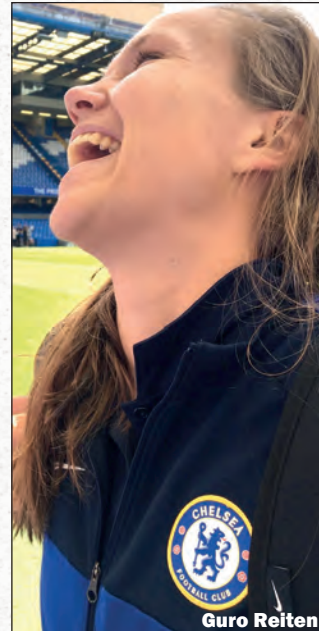
"It's a friendly, small, relaxed club – there are just 50 members," said treasurer Graham Shaw. "We don't take life too seriously, although we do have internal leagues and a couple of tournaments a year if people like to get involved in the competition side of things."

There is an online booking system to reserve courts. For more details email dittonsquash@gmail.com or visit www.dittonsquash.com

Hush-hush target

After a WSL brace, Chelsea Women's new signing Guro Reiten feels she's settling in. The winner of Norway's golden boot for the past two seasons giggled: "I haven't given myself a goal-scoring target... well, maybe I have, but it's a secret!" The 25-year-old scored twice in the Blues' 4-0 win at Bristol City, having netted direct from a curled corner to clinch the previous week's Conti Cup win against West Ham.

Equally comfortable up front, or just behind the lead striker, the footballer admits she did have anxiety pangs about leaving Scandinavia for England. "Nervous? Of course I'm nervous! In fact it's been a long time since I was this nervous," she said soon after arriving. But she's now savouring her new role alongside Beth England in a "faster, tougher and more physical" league. "In Norway, I knew all my opponents. Here I didn't know anything about anyone."



Guro Reiten



Let's go fly a kite, up to the highest height... this rather large one was attached to a man with a harness. The paraglider was practising his technique for controlling his 'wing' on a quiet evening in Long Ditton rec

Fancy a challenging ride?

If you took part in RideLondon, or feel inspired by it, here's a fresh challenge – a cycle ride in Malawi!

Surbiton charity African Vision Malawi has two challenges in 2020; an Easter 155-mile family ride and, in May, a 310-miler including Mount Mulanje. Both have down time too, with a visit to Lake Malawi.

The Upper Brighton Road charity has organised cycle rides over the past two years to support 3,000 orphans and 300 vulnerable adults in a 248 sq mile area north of the capital Lilongwe. To find out more contact CEO Heather Palmer at heather.palmer@africanvision.org.uk, phone her on 020 8287 8169 or visit www.africanvision.org.uk

Heather said: "In April, 11 cyclists covered an amazing 500km. All but two were from the Surbiton area. One only got on a bike in January! We raised just under £13,000 and everyone had an amazing trip, ending up seeing the projects that their money will go towards."



● Corinthian-Casuals, the team who play at King George's Field, Tolworth, and who boast a history of fair play eclipsing most clubs on the planet, have two quickfire home games coming up. On Sat Nov 2, Margate visit at 3pm, and then on Sat Nov 9, Bognor Regis Town pitch up. Tickets: adults £10, U18s free, seniors £6, students £4.

● Surbiton cafe Wags n Tales is sponsoring the player of the match for the Ladies' 1st team this season as Surbiton Hockey Club in Sugden Road, Long Ditton, start the new campaign with multiple teams at all levels and genders. Pop down to cheer the players on. Visit www.surbitonhc.com for up-to-date fixture lists.



● The high drama of the summer's Ashes series was matched by our local heroes at Long Ditton Cricket Club. The Hogs, who play at Stokes Field off Betts Way, won the treble for the first time in their history: the Fuller's T20 Cup, the league (with promotion to the Surrey Championship) and the league cup, beating rivals Croydon. Ecstatic 1st XI captain Dan Peall said: "It's been a very special season; something we'll remember for a long time." For more information on LDCC visit www.longdittoncc.com

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