

OUR 50th ISSUE!

# the good life



Saturday December 21  
9am-1pm  
Saturday January 18  
9am-1pm

Issue 50

The best thing to come out of Surbiton since the A3

Winter 2019

We've hit a landmark: 50 issues (each archived online). At 50 we apparently take things less seriously, find it easier to laugh at ourselves, appreciate life's quirks and are not afraid to have opinions. Many thanks to everyone who supports us.

## Remembering

The remarkable fact about Surbiton's annual open-air remembrance service in Ewell Road is that while old soldier numbers inevitably decline, the people paying tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice keeps rising. More

than 1,200 gathered at the war memorial, above. In Long Ditton, pupils from Long Ditton Infant & Nursery School dressed a bench, left, with a blanket of crocheted poppies for the open-air service.



And at the gong... Simon takes a bath. See p5

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## Chuffed by youth turnout

More youngsters than ever spent the weekend playing trains as Tolworth Showtrain pulled in to Tolworth Recreation Centre on Nov 9 & 10. "They may have been inspired by The Great Model Railway Challenge series on TV," said show organiser John Noorani of Hampton Court Model Railway Society which meets at the centre on Sundays. Visit [www.hamptoncourtmrs.co.uk](http://www.hamptoncourtmrs.co.uk)



Modeller Andy Jones looms behind his Tarring Neville layout



## The world-saver

Repair, reuse, rehome. That's the aim of a new recycling centre, a vast warehouse round the corner from Berrylands station.

Opened by campaigner Des Kay, The Circulatory has a simple aim - to save the planet. "It's a facility to reuse, upcycle, repair and rehome things that would otherwise end up in landfill," said Des, left, who hopes volunteers will help him sort and sift.

With at least a year's rent-free occupancy of the huge building, Des is decanting the contents of seven lock-ups currently overflowing with rejected - but perfectly serviceable - goods, to give them a new life.

Bicycle repair, luggage restoring and bric-a-brac salvage will take place in a building well-equipped with loos and kitchenettes.

Continued on p6



## New estate plan is overruled

It's back to the drawing board for the would-be developer of an estate of nine new homes in the Southborough Conservation Area. Councillors rejected Daniel Less' bid to build four and five-bedroom properties on the site of a large house in Corkran Road, destroyed by fire more than four years ago.

Surbiton's neighbourhood committee turned down Ascot Design's plans for the semi-detached and detached properties to replace the ruins of the once-imposing Tudor-style home.

Overdevelopment, density and character clash with other homes in a conservation zone were cited.

There were also concerns for road safety and access, tree loss and habitat loss for bats, badgers and other wildlife.

Under the proposal, the property, a gatehouse, a clutch of outbuildings and a bungalow would have been demolished to make way for a drive to the new-build

homes with off-street parking. "These are not large detached houses as characterised by the conservation area," said Surbiton Hill ward Cllr Malcolm Self to loud applause in the public gallery.

He said he thought the properties were nice houses, and that in another location they would probably be considered as an underdevelopment of the site, but he thought the application should be refused as "it is our duty to preserve or enhance the characteristics of the area".

Cllr Liz Green of St Mark's ward told the developer that if he intended to submit new plans for the site, and wanted to develop neighbouring No16 Corkran Road (which he also owns), it would be advisable to submit the application under one scheme as she didn't like the idea of piecemeal developments.

Jane Grove



The gate to the site and, top, the gutted building in 2015

## Adult education is axed in Surbiton

The King Charles Centre, hub of adult education in Surbiton, has been sold off for £3million to become a new free school.

Courses will move to Kingston, upsetting many of the centre's 3,000 users.



The popular King Charles Centre

"It's terrible news," one art student told The Good Life. "We love coming here."

Staff are putting a brave face on it, but in eight months, all adult classes in the rabbit warren of the old Hollyfield School end.

More than 150 courses (jazz to yoga, lip-reading to stained glass) run day and evening, while 250 attended a recent mental well-being festival.

Principal Sam Burgess said: "I love it here. This

is a really lovely adult education community; it's the people that make it." She added that the service had survived past relocations, and said Kingston had better transport links than the King Charles/Hollyfield Road site. "It means more people will be able to access us," she said.

Adult education finishes at King Charles in July after the council's finance

Continued on p9

## The team that get you moving



Laura Humphrey



Lisa Brand



Craig Cuxstane



Ryan Murphy



Jasmine Cole



Stephen Breach

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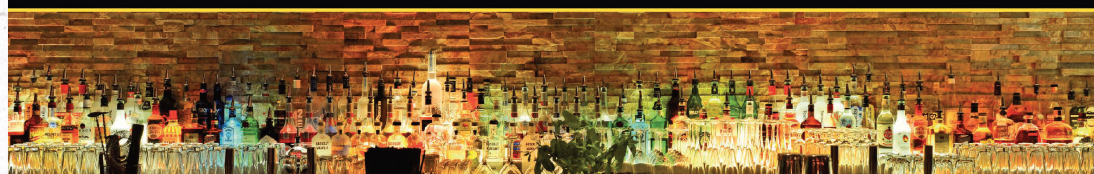
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Like many, she learned cookery from mum. Now Michelle Stewart home-cooks at Three Peas in a Pod, the Brighton Road cafe diagonally opposite KFC.

With 15 chairs inside, and a few out, there's a friendly welcome and feel of exclusivity. The multiplying vegetarian and vegan options (plus hearty lamb lunches and trencherman breakfasts) reflect Surbiton's changing tastes.

In a town awash with coffee, her cafe is both traditional and fresh.

"More and more people ask for vegetarian, so we always do three different meals for them,

## It's the home of home cooking

including vegetarian curries," said the 52-year-old who learnt from "a little Irish lady who was a midwife for 25 years".

Open seven days, 8.30am-3pm, breakfasts merge into lunch. Three Peas is bargain home cooking, from onion-filled Yorkshire puddings to veggie cottage pie; chicken soup to pie'n'mash.

"I recently did a vegan course, and got ideas from that," said the grandmother, who spends any leisure time riding horses.

Helped by Nicola and Jo ("my

right-hand girl"), there are fresh flowers on the tables for her tribe of regulars. "I feel lucky; it's a real community around here," she said. She makes her marmalade and pesto, sources locally where possible (Garson Farm is a regular shop), and in January launches a supper club, with BYO, once Christmas menus are done. **Tim Harrison**



## Surbiton's go-to coffee shop has had a winter makeover!



Coffee on the Corner has a new menu which includes winter warmers such as hot soup and stews along with a new variety of delicious sandwiches and paninis

Looking for somewhere to catch up with friends over the festive season? You can grab tea and cake for two for only £7 up until the New Year.

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## The holy spirit

Surbiton's oldest church, St Mark's, has launched its own gin to help fund organ renovation. Blomfield's Batch No1, infused with Berrylands nettles, will also benefit the sister church, St Andrew's in Maple Road.

The Rev Robert Stanier hopes it will prove a popular Christmas gift for parishioners.

"It costs £200,000 a year to run our two churches, and that's without unexpected bills," said the vicar. "We've just renovated the tower and roof at St Andrew's, and the St Mark's organ needs an overhaul."

It is, he added, an example of the church being entrepreneurial. "I think it could be a solution to help us grow," he said.

At 40% proof and made with help from Sam Berry of No97, it is named after Sir Arthur Blomfield, architect of St Andrew's. It is nearing its 150th birthday, with St Mark's even older... dating to 1845. Each £30 bottle sale adds £15 to church coffers. Launched at the churches' Christmas fair, it is available (together with free tastings) at the Maple Road farmers' market on Saturday December 21.

The gin, with its stained glass window label, is infused with church garden rosemary and wild nettles from Berrylands Nature Reserve – hence the claim that it 'captures Surbiton in a bottle'. Aficionados will be uplifted by flavours of lemon peel, cardamom, coriander, orris root and juniper. It is best served on ice with a sprig of rosemary and fresh slice of grapefruit. **TH**



## Niku: a bold venue

Road (just steps from Surbiton Health Centre) is huge, but is subdivided into little pockets.

The Mediterranean menu includes veggie options such as beetroot burger, a dish so 'convincing' that one diner demanded to see the chef to be assured it wasn't meat.

Mellow music plays upstairs, but below is a 100-guest party room for hire, complete with dancefloor and DJ station.

Prices are competitive, the house wine is excellent and cocktails are half-price, 5-7pm.

Niku is at 92 Ewell Road, KT6 6EX. Visit [www.nikubrandrestaurant.com](http://www.nikubrandrestaurant.com)

It's changed (it was Italian eatery Casa Viva), but now Niku has a fresh, gloriously OTT image, with flower-covered walls, marble tables, party basement, an enticing menu, and warm welcome from the Albanian Zega family, who have upgraded the venue and named it after a favourite uncle.

The restaurant/cocktail bar in Ewell



## Antelope

pub's recent

beer festival

was the best

yet, said

Big Smoke

Brew's

Rich Craig.

"The pub

was full of

happy, well-

behaved, friendly people."

In all,

5,000 pints of beer and

600 pints of cider were drunk

over three days.

"We sold out of all beer by

the end," added Rich. Live

music from funk and soul

band Alix Anthony kept the

crowds entertained.



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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](mailto: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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The Good Life distributes 11,070 copies in Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands & Long Ditton. Also at Michael's shoe repairs, Shoes At Last, Jennings, the cornerHOUSE, Community Motors & Stear greengrocers.



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### Fraudster alert

Phone fraud is on the rise in Surbiton and Long Ditton, say police, with older generations targeted. If someone claiming to be from the police rings, hang up, wait five minutes, ring 101 and ask to speak to the officer directly.

### Xmas market time

Tolworth's Christmas market is on Sun, Dec 1, 11am-3pm in the slip road by the Ewell Road/Princes Avenue junction. "Celebrate in Tolworth with mulled wine, carol singing and Christmas trees on Tolworth Broadway," said Charlotte Levy. The tree lights switch-on is at 4pm.

### Berrylands lights

Rose Walk Residents' Association has been given £150 in councillor ward funding by Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee for a Christmas tree and decorations by Berrylands station, and a festive gathering in Rose Walk itself.

### Bonus coffees

Wednesdays are free coffee days at Tolworth Court Farm garden centre for loyalty card members spending £20+.

### Avian gathering

Surbiton's birdwatchers next meet at the library hall in Ewell Road on Tues Dec 17 at 7.30pm for a festive evening enjoying members' slides and digital photos of birds and other wildlife.

### Bollywood arrives

A free festival celebrating Tolworth's communities has live music and dance, Bollywood workshops, Rangoli competitions, children's fun and food stalls. Sun, Nov 24, 1-5pm, Tolworth Girls' School, Fullers Way North.

### Festive grant aid

A £1,500 neighbourhood committee grant will help all 150 residents of Surbiton's YMCA in Victoria Road enjoy a three-course Christmas dinner, presents and festive activities.

### Old folk take flight

Alpha Road residents have received £1,000 from Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee to fund a children's party and a road trip to Birdworld for elderly people. Cllr John Sweeney said: "We hope that everybody has a good time".

### Goodies for sale

The Handmade Christmas Market is on Sun, Dec 15, noon-6pm in The Lamb, Brighton Road. Avoid Kingston's shopping mayhem and find affordable, quality gifts by local arts and crafters.

### A musical treat

Ten young musicians aged 11-18 will perform at Emmanuel church, Grand Avenue, Tolworth, on Sat Jan 25 at 7pm as part of Kingston Festival of the Performing Arts. Each has a 12-minute spot. Entry on the door, £8 (£5 concs).

### Orchard planting

The Friends of Fishponds Park will plant a community orchard at the 13.5 acre site off Hollyfield Road, Surbiton. The Orchard Project will help volunteers plant the trees near the Mayberry Place entrance in January.

### SURBITON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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[www.surbitonhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com](http://www.surbitonhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com)



## Just a Lidl bit closer

Work is continuing apace on the new Lidl GB HQ in Tolworth. The final steel beam is in place – 1,439 tonnes of structural steelwork is in the 367ft long, 144ft wide (112m x 43.9m) frame – the upper floor concrete slabs are complete, and work is progressing on the glazed external envelope and steel framing system for its decorative columns.

The five-storey, 250,000 sq ft (23,226 sq m) building in Jubilee Way boasts offices, meeting rooms, canteen and basement with parking for 301 vehicles in a separate multi-storey car park. In addition there will be 10 disabled parking spaces at ground level alongside the main building.

A £5m pot has been pledged for infrastructure improvements in the area including an extension of the 281 bus service, better access for pedestrians and cyclists along the A240 Kingston Road, and changes to the A3 roundabout to offset traffic increases.

Access to the five-acre site is via a priority junction with ghost island (a cross-hatched area) and right turn lane to Jubilee Way, with separate HGV access from Kingston Road.

Work started in February, after the supermarket giant secured a 999-year lease in a £10m deal with Kingston Council. The £70m glass and concrete HQ with striking central



**SURBITON LIFE**

by David Cox



Ploughing his own Go Cycle route through Surbiton on someone else's 'gone cycle'

rooflight will accommodate the retailer's 800 head office employees, while providing support for its growing UK store network and 13 warehouses across the country.

The project is due to be completed at the beginning of 2021 when staff will begin to move over from their current HQ in Wimbledon.

A Lidl spokesman said: "Our new Tolworth site will provide the space and facilities to build a new office to accommodate our growing head office team. We're looking forward to joining the Tolworth community and becoming a neighbour to existing businesses, and encourage any job seekers in the area to take a look at the roles that we are currently recruiting."

To view details on Lidl's head office jobs, visit [careers.lidl.co.uk/en/our-head-office-jobs-2920.htm](http://careers.lidl.co.uk/en/our-head-office-jobs-2920.htm)

Jane Grove

## Marking your X on December 12

With the general election looming on Thursday

December 12, local candidates and supporters have been busy pushing leaflets through doors, trying to persuade residents where to put their X.

Kingston & Surbiton (which has swung between the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives in recent years) is an eight-way fight, and includes both Brexit and UKIP candidates.

However, Esher & Walton (which includes Long Ditton in The Good Life area) is a slightly clearer battleground with six contenders.

In the last Esher & Walton poll in 2017, Dominic Raab had a 23,000 majority, but both Green and Brexit candidates, Laura Harmour and Axel Thill, have stood aside to give, respectively, Libs Dems

and Tories an easier ride.

In Kingston & Surbiton the candidates are:

**Con: Aphra Brandreth**

**Monster Raving Loony:**

**Chinners Chinnery**

**Lib Dem: Ed Davey**

**Independent: James Giles**

**UKIP: Roger Glencross**

**Brexit: Scott Holman**

**Green: Sharron Sumner**

**Labour: Leanne Werner**

In Long Ditton, the list is:

**Labour: Peter Ashurst**

**Monster Raving Loony:**

**Baron Badger**

**Lib Dem: Monica Harding**

**Independent: Kylie Keens**

**Con: Dominic Raab**

**Advance: Kyle Taylor**

The cut-off to register to vote in this general election is midnight on November

26; the same day postal vote registration closes. Details:

[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

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# The football pioneer who coined 'soccer'

Former England football captain Charles Wreford-Brown is the man credited with coining the word 'soccer'.

A centre-half for Corinthian FC – now the Corinthian-Casuals, who play at Tolworth – he lived at 1 Walpole Road, Surbiton, an imposing pile on the corner with Upper Brighton Road.

Affectionately nicknamed Mr Corinthian, he was an immense character of the game, combining his love for football with an impressive first-class cricket career, playing for Gloucestershire.

Demonstrating the breadth of his talent, he even once represented Great Britain in a chess tournament!

The Corinthians were football's first global superstars. The club is credited with popularising the game around the world and championing sportsmanship and fair play – hence the term Corinthian spirit.

Though strictly amateur, they were typically made up of the cream of the players from the top schools and universities. Wreford-Brown fitted the mould perfectly.

Born in Clifton, Bristol, in 1866, midway through Queen Victoria's reign, he was the second of five children, attending Charterhouse School in Godalming before moving up to Oxford University. It was here that he was recruited to play for the fledgling Corinthians.

CB Fry said of Wreford-Brown that "Charles played so long and so finely for the Corinthians that one period can scarcely claim him as its product."

Oddly, he made his debut as a goalkeeper, coincidentally against Oxford University in 1887. It was here that Wreford-Brown supposedly coined the word 'soccer'.

Legend has it that while having breakfast one morning he was asked: "How about a game of rugger after brekker, Wreford?"

Our notable Surbitonian is said to have replied: "No thanks, I'd prefer soccer." That disarmingly simple abbreviation of the game's then long-form name, association football, appears to have stuck.

Wreford-Brown also had the honour of

being the England captain when Corinthian FC (on two occasions) became the only club side to ever represent the England team in its entirety, in games against Wales in 1894 and 1895 at the Queen's Club in London and in Wrexham.

Only playing as an amateur, Wreford-Brown was a solicitor by profession and a partner in the city firm Jenkins, Baker and Wreford-Brown.

By 1911, he, his first wife Helen and their two children, Guy and Peter, had moved to a house named Curford, at 1 Walpole Road, Surbiton; ably attended by their four servants.

Later in life he'd remarry at the age of 70, getting spliced to Agnes Pope, a woman almost half his age.

He took pride in captaining his country, revelling in reminding the professionals in the side of his amateur status. One such pro, Derby County

striker Steve Bloomer, recalled this story about their 1898 international against Scotland in Glasgow. "He wore good old-fashioned shorts which had side pockets in them. When Freddy Wheldon of Aston Villa scored England's first goal, Wreford-Brown slipped his hand in his pocket and pressed a gold sovereign into Wheldon's hand.

"When I then scored England's second, he did the same. So Wheldon and I gave the money to the referee for safe keeping, and when I got another sovereign for scoring England's third, the ref remarked: 'If you keep this up, Steve, I shall have to go and get a handbag!'

"After finishing victorious, Wreford-Brown invited the team in to his private changing room to celebrate with some champagne."

His final game for the club came an astonishing 40 years later, in 1927 at the age of 61. He clocked up 161 appearances for the amateurs. As an early legislator of the game, Wreford-Brown played a pivotal role in shaping football as we know it today. As a solicitor, he was first appointed to the council of the Football Association in 1892, a position



Charles Wreford-Brown, whose breakfast banter is said to have coined the word 'soccer'

he held for 59 years. He served as an FA vice president from 1941 until his death in 1951.

A first-class cricketer for Gloucestershire, Wreford-Brown lived an incredible sporting life. A midfield general, he was at the heart of Corinthians' most outstanding victories, touring the world on early pioneering trips to South Africa, USA, Canada, Sweden and Denmark. When his serious playing days ended, he represented Great Britain at the 1924 Olympics... at chess!

#### Stuart Tree

● Charles Wreford-Brown, born October 9 1866 in Bristol, died November 26 1951 in Bayswater.



1 Walpole Road (the house in those days was called Curford) was home to Charles Wreford-Brown, his wife, two children and four servants

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## Crossroads rakes in the cash

A crossroads in Surbiton is proving a cash cow for the council as untemperament motorists are ticketed in the stop-start, roadworks-jinxed Ewell Road.

The yellow box junction at the Elgar Avenue lights is a champion income generator, pumping tens of thousands of pounds into the local authority's coffers.

From January to the end of September it pulled in more than

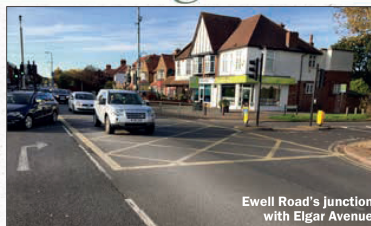
£50,000 in fines from drivers who stopped on the hatching, a freedom of information request reveals.

In three years the council has collected nearly £3m in fines from its box junctions around the borough.

The eastbound yellow box at the Elgar/Princes intersection (from Surbiton towards Tolworth Tower) saw 1,704 fines issued in 2016, 4,371 in 2017, 732 in 2018 – drivers

learning to be wary – and 661 this year. Heading west, with traffic flowing more freely, there were 610 fines in 2016, 196 in 2017, and 151 in 2018.

At £130 a pop (halved if paid promptly) the Ewell Road yellow box junctions raised £353,123 in fines in 2016, £119,510 in 2017, and £55,025 last year as drivers wised up. This year, to September 30, Ewell Road's yellow boxes have generated £53,505 in fines.



Ewell Road's junction with Elgar Avenue



## Relaxing and recharging in a gong sound bath

The last time I saw a gong as big as Simon Walker's, it was at the start of a Rank Organisation film. But Simon uses his gong in a different way to the hammer-wielding muscle man of the movies.

His expertise at producing a range of gentle, soothing sounds from the huge suspended metal discs in his Berrylands studio is remarkable.

Theoretically capable of summoning people half a mile away to dinner, the brushes and touches he achieves produce an array of relaxing – and quite ungonglike – notes. Add in the haunting vibrations from Himalayan singing bowls, and the shoreline chuckles of upturned rainsticks, and you can close your eyes and be transported to another world.

Simon is an exponent of 'sound baths', a relaxation technique with its roots in cultures thousands of years old. "Two years ago I quit work, went to India for three months, lived in a shepherd's hut in an orchard and began developing my sound therapy," explained the 51-year-old from Raeburn Avenue.

Simon has been on quite a journey. After divorce and depression he found a way out via a counsellor who led him to meditation. A carpenter by trade, he began meditating 10 years ago, and now – with partner Emily (wedding bells will ring next year) – runs

sound baths and reiki in the 'dharma den', a peaceful studio space at the bottom of the garden. He aims to leave participants recharged and stress-free. It's both refreshing and energising.

Simon, who also runs spoon-carving workshops at festivals, does sound baths at St Mary's hall, Long Ditton, and also runs dedicated sessions to improve the well-being of local college staff. Sound baths are £15 in the dharma den, last up to an hour, and can be booked (a thoughtful Christmas gift, perhaps?) by emailing [simon.soundhearts@outlook.com](mailto:simon.soundhearts@outlook.com)

Tim Harrison

## It's kirtan-up on yoga of the heart

Three years ago, when Alys Hennessy's singing/meditation teacher moved abroad, her class was threatened with closure. So Alys embarked on intensive training under the queen of kirtan, Nikki Slade, then took on the class leadership. She hasn't looked back. Kirtan is 'yoga of the heart'. It began 500 years ago in India; relaxing and uplifting call-and-response chants, sung in Sanskrit, developing a deep sense of well-being.

Alys, 49, a single mum of Cleaveland Road, now leads multiple classes in and around Surbiton, including sessions in the new year at the busy BoCo yoga and pilates centre, behind KFC, in Electric Parade, off Victoria Avenue.

"Since I started singing, my life has simplified," said Alys, who has a University of London music degree, but has never fully embraced western instruments. She accompanies the chanting and singing with the harmonium; a gentle drone "with melodic ornaments" to guide participants. "It invites you to harmonise," she said.

"When we sing, we let our voices resonate; you lose track as you sing, and it becomes a relaxing, uplifting cathedral of sound." Alys also works with people recovering from alcohol and narcotic addiction, where kirtan chanting has proved effective. "It also helps fight depression and anxiety, and can assist children with ADHD," said Alys. "Singing yoga is the highest form of yoga; we definitely need classes like this in Surbiton!"

Visit [www.kirtanwithalys.com](http://www.kirtanwithalys.com) for information on Alys' £10 kirtan and mindfulness meditation (family discounts). Details of therapies and classes at BoCo from [www.boco-uk.com](http://www.boco-uk.com) TH



Beatrice Yamikani, 12, and Annie Konikisi, 13, from Chisworth village

## Fish and quiz

A Christmas fish and quiz night takes place on Sat, Dec 7 to support orphans and vulnerable adults in Malawi.

Funds raised from the event at St John's Hall, Grove Road, Kingston, will help communities in a large rural area north of the capital Lilongwe.

"Join us for a fun evening of Christmas-themed questions and added challenges!" said Lorraine Mole of the charity African Vision Malawi, based in Upper Brighton Road. "You can get a team of six together or just join in a team!" "Giving to people in most need is a great way to start the festivities."

Tickets for the charity night are £15. There is also a cash or card bar. Dietary requirements can be catered for.

To book visit [www.africanvision.org.uk/event/christmas-fish-quiz-night](http://www.africanvision.org.uk/event/christmas-fish-quiz-night)

### Christmas Menu

Oh La La French Cuisine

2 course meal: £28 Or 3 course meal: £35  
Glass of champagne Included. Choice of 1 dish per course and 1 side dish

Starters	Main
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oysters in "Chemise"</li> <li>Duck Foie Gras on crackers and mixed leaves</li> <li>Smoked Salmon, cream cheese, crackers, frisée salad</li> <li>Escargots Persillade X 6</li> <li>Veg platter: Garlic prawns, Bouchees, Ratatouille skewers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roasted Leg of Lamb (3 slices)</li> <li>Sides</li> <li>Turkey Chestnuts</li> <li>Fish Meuniere</li> <li>Veg: Courgette and prunelle gratin, savoury madeleine: goat cheese, sundried tomato</li> </ul>
Sides	Desserts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed winter mushrooms saute</li> <li>Saute of mixed greens</li> <li>Duck fat roasted potatoes</li> <li>Roasted parsnips</li> <li>Roasted chestnuts</li> <li>Braised fennels in garlic butter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheese platter (Selection of cheeses, grapes, dried winter fruits and nuts, gherkins) Grilled bread</li> <li>Framboisier (Exquisite and light raspberry cream cake)</li> <li>Traditional Christmas log</li> </ul>

Oh La La French Cuisine  
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Vegetables in season:  
Broccoli, cauliflower, all types of baby carrots, parsnips, brussel sprouts, sprout stalks, brussel tops and swede



## Wood you make a tree warden?

Could you help look after the trees in your street? Residents and community groups interested in getting more involved in the planting and maintenance of trees are being encouraged to join Kingston Council's new tree warden programme.

Those who sign up will play an active role in conserving and enhancing trees in their area, helping organise planting events, watering, monitoring and reporting diseased, decayed and damaged trees, as well as helping raise funds to sponsor trees. Between now and March 2020, the council is planting more than 600 trees across the borough, prioritising areas of poor air quality, including near schools, areas where there are fewer trees, and where they have had requests from residents.

Visit [www.kingston.gov.uk/tree-warden-scheme](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/tree-warden-scheme)

## Recycling project opens

● Continued from p1

There is also ample space for artistic creation, using secondhand objects.

Des makes the point that items in charity shops have a shelf life. "Charity shops keep things for a limited time, then throw them out," said Des, who believes a concerted effort to repair existing things is far more planet-friendly than buying new.

Assisted by a mini army of supporters, he hopes The Circulatory will become a template for similar recycling

places everywhere, reviving a repair and mend culture.

Des, founder of The Save The World Club ([www.savetheworldclub.org](http://www.savetheworldclub.org)), negotiated occupancy of the former Ana Wiz maternity supplies warehouse at 5 Chiltern Works, Chiltern Drive KT3 8LS.

The building, 50 yards from Berrylands station, may have begun life as a Second World War munitions factory.

Welcoming the arrival of The Circulatory on behalf of the council, Cllr Sharon Sumner backed the project. A believer in reusing (she only buys secondhand clothes), she said: "It's amazing; imagine what Des can achieve now with so much room! I hope the council gets behind this project, to stop the terrible wastage that goes on. We should all be proud that our community is doing this."



## It's good to get grubby!

Berrylands Nature Reserve holds a midweek community volunteer day next Wednesday (Nov 27).

Recent sessions uncovered a lost path, halved a magnificent oak tree, improved drainage (efforts continuing), cleared brambles and historic litter, and thinned blackthorn, using it to create a shelter for birds and small mammals and a habitat for creepy crawlies. "There is so much to do to care for our local green spaces at this time of the year, so any time you can contribute would, as always, be greatly appreciated," said the nature reserve's treasurer Andrew Irving. "There will be some task to suit everyone, regardless of age, ability or experience."

Meet outside Berrylands Scout Hut in Stirling Walk off Raeburn Avenue at 10am. Tools will be provided; all you need is sturdy shoes or wellies, and clothes you don't mind getting a little bit grubby.

"We will even keep you supplied with warm drinks and biscuits as a bribe to say thanks for coming along!" said Andrew.

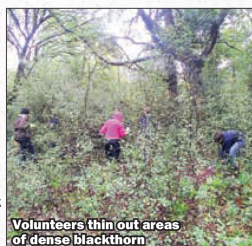
If you have any questions about volunteering at the reserve, email [berrylandsn@gmail.com](mailto:berrylandsn@gmail.com) or find out more by visiting [www.berrylandsnaturereserve.org](http://www.berrylandsnaturereserve.org)

● Are you a member of a voluntary sector organisation or community group? Are you aware of the support available from Kingston Council?

Discuss how to shape your future relationship with the council – and how it should spend its money – by meeting

officers and fellow members of the voluntary and community sector. Join all, or part, of a round-table discussion at Surbiton Library in Ewell Road on Tue, Dec 10 from 4-7pm.

To register for the event visit [www.vcskingston-codesign3.eventbrite.com](http://www.vcskingston-codesign3.eventbrite.com)



Volunteers thin out areas of dense blackthorn

Bridge the gap to winter with a splash of dramatic colour, says Janice Cripps

## If you want 'wow', embrace the bishop

Take a look at your garden on this late autumn day, and be honest. Is it a place of floral beauty and delight? Does it make your heart soar with its vibrant colour and interest? Or could it be that a few well-chosen flowers would make all the difference?

November is not the best time for flourishing blooms, but there are still quite a few late flowering perennials that will keep on going until the winter frosts appear.

Japanese anemones are perhaps the first to come to mind as they're so easy to grow and do well on our Surbiton clay soils. Michaelmas daisies, asters, salvias and penstemons are also 'good-doers' and come in a vast array of colours, forms and sizes.



If you deadhead the spent flowers regularly, they just keep on giving. For the wow factor in the flower world, welcome back the dahlia and chrysanthemum!

In recent years, their gaudy flamboyant blooms have been deeply unfashionable and scorned by the horticultural style police, but now they've made a resurgence, largely due to how they are used by garden designers.

Rather than planted in large clumps, they are more successfully used sparingly among other foliage plants and ornamental grasses where their floral firepower can be appreciated; making planting borders sing!

There is a chrysanthemum or

dahlia to suit most tastes. For va va voom, I'd go for the dahlia Pontiac, although my personal favourite is the Bishop of Auckland, left, an elegant single dahlia in deepest maroon. It flowers prolifically and looks great among pheasant's tail grass.

Dialling it down, one of the loveliest, most graceful autumn flowers is the kaffir lily, botanically known as hesperantha. Originally from South Africa, this eye-catching gladioli-like flower has adapted well to our mild wet British climate, and can keep flowering well into December, creating colour and impact as autumn leaves fall and the year comes to its close.

So, while colour in the autumn garden can come from foliage, bark, stems, hips and berries, don't forget the extra razzmatazz a beautiful flower can provide.

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

For advice, planting plans, or projects – from concept to completion – visit [www.janicecripps.co.uk](http://www.janicecripps.co.uk)



● The Queen's Prom Friends' pocket park is taking shape, helped by volunteers at goodgym, Nandos and AstraZeneca. Since April, a site has been cleared with a raised bed and wheelchair-friendly path. Victorian heritage has been reinstated, plants deadheaded, weeds and litter picked. Next task: to find local firms to sponsor this thriving community project. Also needed, a friendly roofer, as the caretaker's hut is like a sieve when it rains. To volunteer, or sponsor, email [queenspromfriends@gmail.com](mailto:queenspromfriends@gmail.com) or Instagram @queenspromenade

## What do you love about green space?

Have your say on how green spaces in Surbiton, Berrylands and Tolworth are looked after.

Kingston Council is responsible for more than 500 hectares of open space, including 43 parks, 22 allotments and 30 playgrounds in the borough. There is an annual maintenance schedule, determining how often grass is cut, litter picked, playground equipment repaired and shrubs cut back. The council's current contracts for the management of green spaces and trees end in 2021.

Resident feedback will help shape how green spaces are looked after in the future. Sarah Ireland, director of corporate and commercial at the council, said: "We know our parks have a special place in the lives of our communities so it's important we work together to ensure our open spaces are the best they can be. We need to understand what residents value most about their local green spaces and what needs to change."

● Respond by Dec 2: [www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/GreenSpaces](http://www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/GreenSpaces)



Fishponds

## On a hiding to £3,000: Citizen Zoo's bold project

Citizen Zoo has been given a £3,000 Surbiton neighbourhood community grant to construct a nature watching hide at Tolworth Court Farm's Moated Manor site.

Thirty Kingston University architecture masters students, supervised by architects Takeshi Hayatsu and Jim Reed, will work on the project. They have already completed a site visit and are working on drawings.

Citizen Zoo, a Surbiton-based rewilding group led by Elliot Newton, will also run volunteer sessions with Tolworth's SHEDx on the 2.7 hectare site off Old Kingston Road, so it is fully prepared for the installation. The team is also planning a grand opening ceremony and nature celebration next summer.

It is hoped the pioneering design will revolutionise how

nature watching hides are created, inspiring new recruits to take an interest in Alexandra ward's rich local wildlife and natural heritage, and eventually increasing the area's biodiversity.

It also aims to give the students a greater appreciation of the natural world, which may influence how they practise architecture in the future.



The new row of trees in Victoria rec

## We're 'most improved'

Recognition! Kingston borough has been cited in The Good Parks for London 2019 report as the most improved for its parks, and is now 19th out of 33 in the capital's league table... up 14 places on last year.

The annual report, compiled by Parks for London, assesses all the work taking place across parks, to share good practice and improve quality standards.

It measures each borough's parks against 10 yardsticks, including public satisfaction, events and community involvement. This year the report also focused on how parks can boost health and well-being.

Kingston Council launched its community parks programme in 2018, with a pledge to invest £1.3 million. Among the projects, the Victoria recreation

ground, pictured, where the play area has been upgraded, and new trees planted alongside the diagonal path from the Victoria Avenue gate.

The borough has also been recognised as having an active and engaged network of volunteers. Between April and August, 775 spent a combined 4,068 hours helping out with maintenance and nature conservation tasks.

Cllr Hilary Gander, who speaks on the environment, said: "In just over a year we've climbed 14 places in the London league table. It's testament to the fantastic work by both council and community and voluntary groups, to protect and enhance our green spaces for everyone."

"We're now gearing up to review how we look after our green spaces and will be refreshing our wider strategy next year."

For more, visit: [www.kingston.gov.uk/communityparksprogramme](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/communityparksprogramme)

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## It's the icing on the cake

Slices of home-made cake (the lemon drizzle was divine) and cups of tea meant visitors to the Nationwide experienced even better customer service than usual.

October 15 marked the 40th anniversary of the opening of the building society's branch in Victoria Road, Surbiton, and staff rolled out the red carpet.

Instead of simply paying in cheques and inquiring about balances, customers were handed plates and invited to tuck in to cupcakes, biscuits and cake slices.

A montage of Nationwide adverts from 1979 was on display, harking back to the giddy days of 17% interest rates, when the average house cost £13,650.

An expansion drive saw the building society open 51 new branches that year, including Surbiton. Nationwide had bought the property at 63 Victoria Road in the summer of 1978, fitting out the interior the following year.



Laura, Rehana, Louise, Leanne and Julio

On September 15 1979, having spent £39,673 on renovation, the branch opened for business.

Manager Laura Baldwin was delighted with customer reaction to the anniversary cakes, while staff used the event as the springboard to launch their annual fundraiser, this year benefiting Growbaby, a charity based in Surbiton Road.

Local businesses have donated products for hampers, which will be prizes in a grand raffle.

"It lets us donate toys to children in care and families with limited means, so every child gets at least one Christmas present," said Laura.

Surbiton has become Germiton as the coughs and colds are circulated

## Season's greetings: 'tis germy time

Take cover and batten down the hatches, for 'tis the season to be germy. We're nostril-deep in the perilous certainty that 'there's definitely something nasty going round, and if you haven't yet spent a week snorting into your sleeve and binge-eating Strepisils, you're either dead or bionic. If it's the latter, keep it quiet because science will want you for research.

The thing about this season is that we know there's a high chance we'll be struck down by some snotty-sneezy-coughy cold, and that if we take all precautions possible – dosing up on Echinacea and Vitamin C, drinking plenty of water, not licking the handrails on public transport – we might just get away with it.

What these precautions don't protect us against, however, is the incredible generosity some people display when it comes to sharing their own germs. You know the sort of heinous specimens I mean:

- The colleague who drags herself into your airless office, announces she's horribly ill but had to turn up as she's so important and indispensable, then phlegms over your keyboard;
- The coffee barista who sneezes 173 times into their palm, then proceeds to press their slimy hand on to the lid of your coffee right over where you will place your thus-far healthy lips;
- The guy who rises from his deathbed to come

to the pub on the grounds that he 'had to get out of the house', then hacks microscopic plague granules into the air that come to rest on the rim of your glass.

- The Waterloo commuter who sneezed down my neck, then, dissatisfied with where her moist pathogens had landed, repositioned herself so the next sneeze hit me squarely on the cheek;
- The 'friend' who spent 10 minutes yelling at me, six inches from my face in a busy pub, then announced he had a 'terrible cold'.

It is tantamount to being under attack. I've fallen victim to a classic pincer movement. My perpetrators surrounded me with such precision and determination, that I couldn't evade them. There's also the subtle, all-encompassing way of incubating germs so they pervade our systems more thoroughly by turning up all radiators to a billion degrees and shutting all windows.

Ventilation is the parasite-sharer's enemy. The process is simple: catch the germs, swirl them round a stuffy airlock like dregs at the bottom of a glass, then wait for them to be gobbled up by some poor sod whose dedication to antibacterial handgel is rendered entirely pointless by this airborne scourge.

I wish you luck in the face of such evil, Surbiton. Or should I say Germiton.

Becky Mayhew



## Katrina tidies up at awards

Professional declutterer Katrina Hassan has been named best newcomer at the borough's annual traders' jamboree. Katrina, 35, of Maple Road, who runs Spark Joy London, received the award at a black-tie dinner on Raven's Ait. She was also commended in the entrepreneur category.

The mother of two uses the KonMari technique devised by Japanese tidier Marie Kondo to help people reduce their haul of possessions.

"I'm absolutely honoured to have won best new business; it's the highlight of my journey from stressed-out teacher to professional organiser," she told The Good Life. "The past 16 months have been incredibly busy and rewarding as I have had to balance looking after my two small children with launching a successful business."

She thanked the community and businesses for helping spread the word by recommending her services, adding: "Most of all I'd like to thank my husband for his continued support and guidance in helping me turn my passion for tidying into a career."

The businesswoman, with nearly 50,000 Instagram followers, likens her role to a personal fitness coach. As well as individuals, she helps firms and schools declutter too.

Other Surbiton successes in the Kingston business excellence awards included: Holiday Inn, Portsmouth Road (commended, customer service), K9 Paws n Play, Tolworth Broadway (highly commended, best new business), Doggy Styling Boutique, Brighton Road (commended, best new business), Genuine Solutions of Hook Rise South (winner best medium-sized business & community business), and Pickled Pantry, St Mark's Hill (highly commended, food & drink).

## New townhouses

A trio of three-bedroom homes will be built on land behind a block of flats in Lovelace Gardens.

Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee approved plans for the three-storey townhouses by the railway embankment behind Leander Court, a block of flats built in the 1960s. Car parking for five cars (two for visitors) and secure cycle lockers will be provided.

In a consultation, objectors cited loss of privacy, overdevelopment, increased parking pressure, impact on trees, habitat and property values as reasons to reject the planning application.

However councillors approved plans on the proviso that one parking bay will be reserved for disabled parking, and one active and four passive charging points are installed. It also wants a neighbouring tree to be surveyed to see if it justifies a preservation order.

## Sugar celebration

To mark their 35th birthday, members of Surbiton's sugarcraft guild threw a party to celebrate the contribution of the group's longest standing member, Janet McCreedy.

At a gathering at Tolworth's United Reformed Church hall, the cream of the area's cake decorators toasted Janet and applauded as she cut a cake specially baked for the occasion by Becky Smith.

"Janet was instrumental in setting up the branch all those years ago, and we were very pleased to be able to celebrate with her at the meeting," said branch secretary Anne Jones. "We were thrilled that she cut the cake."

Interested in the art and skills of cake decorating, and to wield a piping bag?

Pop along to the British Sugarcraft Guild Surbiton branch on the second Wednesday of the month, 8-10pm, United Reformed Church at the corner of Raeburn and Elgar Avenues.

Dec 11: the Christmas cake competition. Jan 15: Robert Haynes demonstrates how to make sugar clymen. Visitors welcome.

Full information at: [www.bsgregion8se.org](http://www.bsgregion8se.org)



Janet McCreedy

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The cricket ball at  
Coffee on the Corner  
Photograph: Bob Phillips

## Hit for six by Sobers

**H**anging from a string at the doorway of a recently opened Surbiton cafe is a cricket ball. It's at Coffee on the Corner, where Beaconsfield Road meets King Charles Road. But what is it doing suspended there?

It commemorates the mighty six scored by arguably the greatest cricketing all-rounder of all time, Garry Sobers, who in July 1959 was guesting in a charity match at the Alexandra recreation ground.

So powerful was his shot that it sailed out of the ground, over the railings and across the road, before falling to earth in front of the door to the then corner shop.

A combination of factors led to the rare, but not unheard of, occurrence of a ball flying clean out of the ground which had been used for local cricket matches since 1912. Sobers was a left-hander, so the boundary by the fence was easier for him to reach, and the 22-yard cricket strip was, in those days, slightly closer to the railings.

Historian Bob Phillips, co-author of the definitive *The Story of Tolworth*, explained: "The doorway is famous; it's where the ball landed when Garry Sobers – Sir Garfield to you and me – hit that monster six in July 1959."

"The cricket pitch on Alexandra rec was a mite nearer Beaconsfield Road then than it is now, but it was still a spectacular boundary shot, from a spectacular cricketer."

The danger to the public from flying cricket balls in Tolworth was highlighted in a report in the *Surrey Comet* the following month, August 1959, headlined *Shattering Surbiton's Sundays*.

Surbiton Council's open space committee debated what to do about the problem of cricket balls landing in the garden of a home at the recreation ground end of Derby Road while the householder was snoozing in his deckchair, a couple of feet away. In the end, the committee did what all committees do best – put off any decision to the following year.

In July 1959, Garry Sobers was the £500-a-season pro at Radcliffe Cricket Club in Lancashire, but his contract allowed him to guest for any other side if Radcliffe didn't have a match.



The ball dangles from  
a string by the door  
Photograph: Bob Phillips

Which is how he came to be playing for a Surrey County Cricket Club XI in Tolworth in a charity fundraiser.

It had been organised by Ray Eades, now in his nineties, who still lives in Broomfield Road, just round the corner from the cafe. Ray arranged charity matches for the Surbiton RAF Association, a popular little club which, a month earlier, had beaten Old Tenisonians' seconds by 113 runs. He took this snap of Sobers, soon to turn 23, on Alexandra rec.

Sadly there was no mention of Sobers' feat in the *Surrey Comet*; the paper was embroiled in a five-week printers' strike, and the presses were silent.

Ray's evocative photo of Sobers is to be enlarged, framed and mounted in the cafe. There's a poignancy to the picture. It was one of the last taken of a carefree youthful Sobers before an incident which was to haunt his life.

Two months after the Tolworth game, he was driving West Indies teammates Collie Smith and Tom Dewdney to London. At 4.45am on the A34 in Staffordshire the car crashed into a 10-ton cattle truck. Smith, asleep on the back seat, died from his injuries a couple of days later.

Sobers and Dewdney suffered cuts and bruises, but escaped serious harm. Sobers said he'd been dazzled by oncoming headlights... but was found guilty, at trial, of careless driving.

It was to have a profound effect on Sobers. For the rest of his long playing career he dedicated any of his successful batting or bowling displays to his former room-mate Collie.

Sobers, now 83, was born with six fingers on each hand. Astonishingly he removed the extra digits 'using catgut and a sharp knife' as a teenager. The Barbadian played 93 tests for the Windies.

The year before his Tolworth appearance, in 1958 at the age of 21, he had scored 365 not out against Pakistan – a record which stood until 1994 when it was beaten by one of the young players he had mentored, Brian Lara.

Knighted in 1975, Sir Garfield Sobers was no stranger to mighty sixes. He famously hit six successive sixes off a six-ball over in Swansea in August 1968 as captain of Nottinghamshire in a match against Glamorgan.

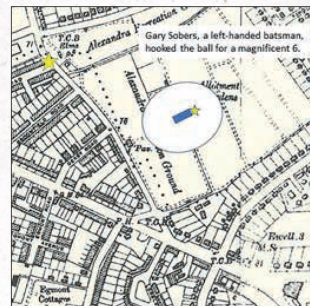
Tony Lewis, who went on to captain England, was leading Glamorgan at the time. He said of Sobers' feat: "It was not sheer slogging through strength, but scientific hitting with every movement working in harmony."

● Last month some oik pinched the suspended cricket ball... but Kyle Hyams, who opened Coffee on the Corner in the summer, was planning to install a replacement as *The Good Life* went to press.

**Tim Harrison**



Ray Eades' precious scratchy snap of Garry Sobers, 22, on Alexandra rec in 1959



Bob Phillips' map shows the location of the cricket pitch in Alexandra rec in 1959... and where Sobers' six landed. Above, Surbiton Council agonises about balls landing in residents' gardens, as reported in August 1959. Scan courtesy of Kingston History Centre in the Guildhall

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● A 70-strong audience at Surbiton's historical society heard Matthew Bowman, right, tell the tale (without notes) of Owen Tudor, who fought at Agincourt, then fell in love with the widowed queen of Henry V. The next meeting (Tues, Dec 3) sees local writer Sharon Wright discuss her book, **The Mother of the Brontës**. All welcome, 7.30pm, library hall, Ewell Road. Meanwhile, Matthew's next adult storytelling is at 2pm on Thu, Nov 28 at Tolworth Library, 37 The Broadway; on the **Forty-seven ronin**; samurai who avenged a feudal lord's death in the 1700s.



## We need to be more switched on over Xmas lights

Will there be a Christmas lights switch-on event in Surbiton this year? That was the million dollar question as Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee met.

When celebrity resident Erin Boag of Strictly fame did the honours in 2016, hundreds met Santa, shopped at stalls and listened to carol-singing choirs.

Last year, the lack of any event was met with disappointment, and this year looked to be going the same way as we went to press;

committee chair Sam Foulde-Hughes admitting the organisation hadn't gone to plan.

"We should have started a lot earlier, to get community groups involved in organising the Christmas lights," he said, adding that he had spoken to Surbiton station about using the forecourt for a last-minute switch-on.

He had also approached several celebrities, but didn't want to promise anything because "it has been a little bit more chaotic than

perhaps I would have liked".

He added: "It's something I really want to work on as I think Christmas lights give a sense of community and are really, really important."

The council **is** providing a tree at the roundabout, and **is** installing Christmas lights on the lampposts.

Tolworth, as yet, does not have the infrastructure or funding in place to support Christmas lights in The Broadway... but he hopes that will be rectified in the near future.

## Why more flats when rehab is needed?

Plans to demolish an NHS building in Surbiton to replace it with nearly 60 homes could harm residents' long-term health.

That was one response to a consultation on the future of 187 Ewell Road – the red-brick former primary care trust office and stores. Bob Phillips argues the site is ideal for rehab beds, which have largely vanished in recent years.

"We used to have rehabilitation beds at Surbiton Hospital, but they were abandoned when the medical centre was developed," said the local author and historian. "We had rehab beds at Tolworth Hospital, but lost them when the mental health trust repossessed the whole site. Now there are no rehab beds."

He believes the site is ideally positioned, but

the NHS property services agency – charged with offloading underused sites – proposes a 59-home scheme; six storeys replacing the current two.

"Housing is important," concedes Bob. "But if we lose this site, the chances of getting rehab beds back again is low. It's a no-brainer; it's a property with a vital health use. There are other places for housing."

Bob, 68, whose mother was a Tolworth Hospital rehab patient, fears Surbiton's long-term health is being sacrificed for short-term profit.

He says rehab beds free up hospital acute beds, and that cash made by selling the site would be rapidly burned up by alternative NHS spending.

The agency consultation will inform a planning application to be submitted to Kingston Council.



The old NHS site at 187 Ewell Road... 59 homes are proposed

## Signal failure

Surbitonians on the ee mobile network were left cursing their lack of a decent phone signal through October. According to staff at Victoria Road's ee shop, "a cable burnt out when new 5G masts were being installed", damaging coverage. However, network technicians insisted no such thing had happened. Meanwhile, if you have trouble



charging your mobile, use a cocktail stick to gently poke around your recharging slot. This excavated clod of fluff represents two years' worth!

## Adult education axed in Surbiton

● Continued from p1

committee agreed to sell the acre of prime land to the Department for Education for just over £3m – well below the price a house-builder would have paid.

The £700,000 cost of upheaval to Guildhall 1, a block beside Kingston's 1930s Guildhall, will have to come from the sale price. The council is braced for a dip in adult education take-up following the move, but hopes numbers will recover.

Gems Learning Trust, which has been searching for five years for a Surbiton academy site, will open a two-form-entry primary school on site in September 2021, demolishing existing buildings, which now need serious, overdue maintenance.

Most classes will move to the Guildhall complex, but arts and crafts will get a purpose-built home, including kilns for pottery firing, alongside Kingston Museum, where the children's library once stood. Time is tight, but the council insisted: "Subject to formal planning permission it is anticipated that the arts and crafts units will be in place for September 2020 to provide continuity of service to learners."

Arts and crafts are a big earner for the council, and are among courses most valued by students. Adult education makes a £300,000 annual profit... but less easily quantified are the skills gains, the reduction in social isolation and the well-being benefits.

A consultation of 62 learners revealed deep affection for the King Charles Centre, which costs £200,000 a year to run, with many students saying the social side of taking a course was as important as the learning. Also popular is the centre's Balance community café, which trains people with learning disabilities. A similar café is planned for Guildhall 1.

Gems operates two free schools in Twickenham and Didcot, both rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted. "We aim to deliver the same high standards," pledged chief executive Jodie Croft. The academy will meet a spike in demand which existing primary schools can't fulfil.

The 70-year-old Avondale Gymnastics Club, next to the King Charles Centre, isn't part of the sale.

Kingston Council has inserted a clause in its sell-off deal so that if in future the site is sold on, it has first dibs to buy it back **at the original sale price**.

Built in 1937, the King Charles Centre began life as Surbiton Central School. A mixed secondary school, it became Hollyfield County Secondary in 1960, then Hollyfield School. In 1966, Hollyfield moved to Surbiton County Grammar School's Surbiton Hill Road site when the grammar school turned into Esher College and shifted to Thames Ditton, freeing up the King Charles Road premises for adult education use.

Why 'Hollyfield'? It was the name of the house on Surbiton Hill owned by Sir Frederick Butler, from the tobacco family (as in Lambert & Butler).

In May 1935, Surbiton Urban District Council bought the 12-acre Fishponds estate from Sir Fred, for



The Guildhall 1 building in Kingston



● Like Brexit, the deadline for finishing tower and spire restoration at St Matthew's has been delayed until the end of January. "It's a bit longer than planned as further defects have been discovered," said music director Simon Hancock. "We won't be hearing the bells again just yet." The church is still fundraising to cover the £600,000 cost. To contribute, visit [www.stmatthewsktf6.org](http://www.stmatthewsktf6.org) and follow the links.



● Watch out for Santa's sleigh jollying up the streets of Surbiton, Berrylands and Tolworth, broadcasting carols. OK, it's a 1956 3-wheel milk float that can be challenging to drive as the brake and accelerator are reversed. With Father Christmas will be members of Surbiton Rotary and other community groups, collecting for good causes. Details of the route, from December 2 to 23 will be posted on the rotary club's Facebook page. "Our collections are focused on local needs," said volunteer project manager Jeremy Thorn, pictured, after sprucing up the 'sleigh'. Past beneficiaries include Kingston Foodbank, Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness, Xmas parties for the elderly and Alexandra Millennium Green. "It's not just about fundraising, it's also providing close engagement with families and children in the local area," added the former mayor.

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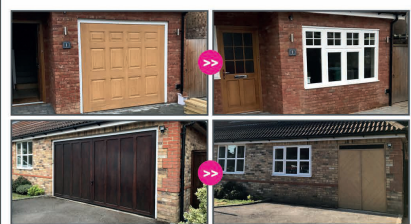
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## Begging the question

As you leave the station, you're asked for coins. Cross to the bank, and a man with a bandaged foot murmurs: "Spare change?" By the railings, beside a rubbish bag, a woman holds out her hand and repeats: "Please, please."

Two men, sleeping top to toe, live in a nest of blankets in the former Starbucks entrance in Victoria Road.

Begging and homelessness is more prevalent than ever in Surbiton, but what should be our response? Declared candidates (as The Good Life went to press) for the Kingston & Surbiton seat were asked for their thoughts.

Ed Davey (Lib Dem) says it's a complicated issue, and there is no easy, simple answer. He believes it's important to back local charities which try to help homeless people, notably Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness (KCAH).

Set up 25 years ago, it runs a night shelter for street sleepers and works to help those in need.

Matt Hutton from the charity agrees with Sir Ed that begging is complex. He told The Good Life: "Some will be genuinely homeless, others not."



He said helping an entrenched rough-sleeper often required intensive input from both voluntary and statutory services.

"In the meantime, that person living on the streets, sometimes battling addiction or significant health issues, is begging to survive... or even to avoid committing crime," he said. "While KCAH does not condone begging, we understand why it happens." He appealed for volunteers, who the charity will train. [www.kcah.org.uk](http://www.kcah.org.uk)

Aphra Brandreth (Conservative) also supports charities such as KCAH and Kingston Street Pastors.

"But we need to address why people end up begging on the streets; it's a complex problem which requires a strategy with multiple approaches, bringing together police, social services, charities and the council."

Sharon Sumner (Green Party) has sympathy for those who live on the



streets. She herself lived for a while in a refuge as a child. "I think we need a bit more compassion," she said. "Instead of moving people on, we need to recognise there's a bigger problem."

Leanne Werner (Labour) called for mental health and housing to be prioritised. She wants "more affordable homes, stronger rights for renters and better mental health services". She added: "I'm confident we can end rough sleeping in Kingston and Surbiton within a parliamentary term."

Scott Holman (Brexit Party) said he was committed to solving a housing crisis that "major parties routinely ignore".

"We must ensure demand for houses does not exceed supply," he said. "We plan to invest in

communities with the money we'll save by leaving the EU, scrapping HS2 and reducing foreign aid."

Independent candidate James Giles grew up in an overcrowded council flat. "I understand the challenges people on the poverty line face," he said. "Were it not for the luck of my family getting a council flat, we couldn't have afforded to live in Kingston."

"Our next MP must stand up for, and demand, more social housing in the area, giving people pathways out of homelessness and into a secure home at a truly affordable rate."

Chinners is standing as the Monster Raving Loony Party candidate in Surbiton. He wants free bobble hats for all, so that politicians can more easily pull the wool over people's eyes.

The issue was raised at the Surbiton neighbourhood committee. Resident John Tellick said: "Begging seems to be getting worse and doesn't reflect well on Surbiton town centre."

Tim Harrison

## Celebrating the market's first decade

The sun shone on Surbiton's farmers' market as it marked its 10th birthday in October with cake, opera singing, free aprons and bags and a giant prize draw.



Ralph Isaacs in his birthday cake hat

It raised £1,354.88 for Kingston Carers' Network. The charity had a guest stall at the market to publicise its work. Hannah Kirk and singing partner Daniel Meads of Opera d'Amici serenaded shoppers from the French Table balcony, while the first of the free market morning concerts took place at St Andrew's church, heralding the launch of the new Thames Concerts season of evening events (see p11).

"What a morning!" purred David Jacobson, one of the market's long-time stalwarts. "Live opera, a magnificent birthday cake from our friends at the French Tarte, and an incredible £1,354.88 raised by our raffle to treat a group of Kingston young carers to an unforgettable day out."

"The generosity of our local businesses and residents



Daniel Meads and Hannah Kirk singing from the French Table balcony

in supporting good causes never fails to amaze me. What a wonderful community we live in!" Among the 28 prizes in the grand raffle were flowers from independent Surbiton florist Clare Marie Jones.



Andrew Smyth and son Ethan, 8, at the Sarah Jane baking stall

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## The new must-have accessory

Draped in the latest must-have accessory for stylish about-towners are these three lovelies (as Great British Bake Off's Noel Fielding would say).

The scarf, depicting leafy Maple Road, was designed by artist and illustrator Lisa Tolley.

Sarah Taylor, owner of Shoes At Last, liked the design so much, she had it printed by an Italian scarf company. Now luxury limited-edition scarves are on sale at the boutique for £59 – an ideal gift.

The scene is also on notelets, gift cards and tea towels at Sarah Guignard's The French Tarte, next door. "Sarah has been selling Lisa Tolley's Maple Road design for the last couple of years on mugs, tea towels and aprons at The French Tarte," explained Sarah T. "But this year she updated the design because a lot of businesses have changed hands."

"We were discussing them when I said I would see if I could get a scarf designed by my Italian scarf company based in Lake Como, so that is how the scarf idea came about."

"The scarves are selling fast and make great Christmas presents."

Jane Grove



Lisa Tolley, Sarah Guignard and Sarah Taylor, seated, with the new Maple Road scarf and gifts

## The ideas are all on the cards

From the inspired to the bizarre, 100 ideas, culled from neighbourhood gatherings, have been presented to Surbitonians to prioritise.

From calls to reinstate the lagoon to criticism of cycle lanes, each was printed, verbatim, on cards in a display at Glenmore House in The Crescent.

Councillors and officers were on hand to field questions, and an interactive display showed the locations of

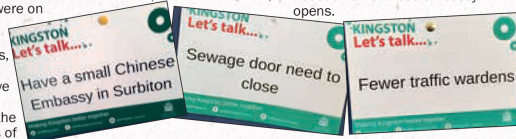


No shortage of ideas: Cllr Liz Green is surrounded by suggestions

gripes and brainwaves. Among suggestions, a call for a 'small Chinese embassy in Surbiton', the surreal 'sewage door need to close' and the plea for 'fewer traffic wardens', presumably from someone who has recently had a ticket.

Liz Green, the council leader,

called by to chat to visitors, and pledged: "The suggestions and ideas will help inform council policy." She said, however, that there would not be any referendums, after the nation's last experience! We wait to see whether or not a 'small Chinese embassy' opens.



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TP1 the french table





## Holly bakes to fund film

Surbiton filmmaker Holly Stevens has been baking cakes and crowdfunding for her latest movie, *From One Empty Nest to Another*.

The 20-year-old London Film Academy student has written the script and will direct the short film about the relationship of an elderly woman with her adult daughter. It's her third film with producer Django Pinter.

Donations from the appeal, and from her recent cake-and-everything stall set up outside her home in Ellerton Road, will help pay for the casting, locations, kit, catering, travel and crew. Crowdfunders who have helped towards the film's costs will be invited to screenings with the cast and crew, and might even find their names flashed up as executive producers in the credits. Holly hopes to begin filming on November 30, funds permitting.

## Now let's be Frank

Crooner Jason Philips sings love songs from the 50s at the cornerHOUSE, promising "an evening of nostalgia, anecdotes and mirth". Jason Sings Sinatra is at the arts centre in Douglas Road, Surbiton, on Fri, Nov 29, 7.45pm. Tickets £10 (£8 concs): [www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents)



## Playing your part

Open auditions for the borough's top original playwrighting festival, now in its 14th year, take place on Thu Feb 13 (7.30pm) and Sun Feb 16 (2pm) at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road. No preparation needed. OneACTS 2020 is staged Apr 27-May 2.

● A Surbiton artist has created a remarkable art installation in Nevada... and hopes to bring it to England. Andrea Greenlees of Langley Avenue made the 21ft high, 25ft wide Bee Dance from steel and copper for a festival called Burning Man.

"It celebrates one of the most wonderful examples of communication in the natural world; the dance routine forager bees use to convey the distance and direction of nectar resources to worker bees," she said. It also highlights the risk to the human race of falling bee populations.

Andrea's festival entry last year, a 33ft steel robot, is now on display in Philadelphia.



says Phil. "Audiences can enjoy a streetwise Aladdin, a cross-dressing genie, a really boo-able Grand Vizier and Ali Baba's crew of pathetic pilferers."

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents)

● Do you fancy taking part? The cornerHOUSE runs workshops on Wed, Dec 4, 7.30pm, and Sat, Dec 7, 2pm, to cast adult parts for Jack the Aladdin and the Faulty Thieves. The sessions are relaxed,

require no preparation or auditions, and you only need attend one. You must be available on Dec 11 for a read-through. Rehearsals start on Dec 29 with a fairly full schedule. No previous experience necessary.



## Aladdin a panto!

Following the all-action big-screen Disney Aladdin, a live version hits the small stage at the cornerHOUSE. The 32nd panto, Jack the Aladdin and the Faulty Thieves, is on Tue, Jan 28-Sat, Feb 1, 7.45pm + Sat mat.

Expect cringing puns, dubious morality and family fun as a poor lad happens upon a magic lamp. As ever, the cast features an array of talented local actors.

"Unbelievably, despite three decades of shows, we haven't tackled Aladdin or Ali Baba," says scriptwriter Phil Cooper. Will it give Disney a run for its money? "You bet,"

## The power of print

Lorraine Monk's striking exhibition of black and white linoprints, woodcuts and banners depicting the life and work of Denise Wren, one of Britain's first female studio potters, runs at Kingston Museum until January 11.

Lorraine, a former Bond Road resident, is artist in residence at the museum in Wheatfield Way; her work inspired by social history, community and protest.

Expressionist textile banners and prints hang in the stairwell and on panels with images of Wren at the wheel, her fellow Knox Guild members, floral designs and scenes such as the opening of Kingston's Women's Social and Political Union (suffragette) branch in 1914, just off the marketplace.

The figurative artist who is also a lecturer, researcher and printer, was inspired by Wren's pioneering work and the fact that she and other students took a stand and quit Kingston School of Arts in 1912 after the resignation of their mentor, art nouveau designer Archibald Knox, following criticism of his teaching methods. The women set up the Knox Guild the same year, renting a shop as

a craft co-op. "I hung the whole idea of researching her life on the fact that they were suffragettes, and young women; crafts people working together," said Lorraine. "I was also attracted to the fact that the theme for the exhibition was about Women and Design."

The Knox Guild exhibited in Kingston's Art Gallery in 1914, then annually from 1919-1935. Because of the local connection, the museum has a large archive of Wren's work including photos, ceramics, designs, notebooks and letters which are also on display in Kingston.

Jane Grove



Lorraine Monk

## Enter the magical (and hilarious) world of Jack the Aladdin and the Faulty Thieves

The cornerHOUSE arts centre's annual pantomime  
Written by Phil Cooper ▶ Directed by Alice Burton  
Tuesday January 28 - Saturday February 1 at 7.45pm

▶ Sat matinee at 4pm. Tickets £10 (£8 concs)  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents)



● Denise Rocard

plays a vengeful vigilante in *The Lying Kind*, a black farce by Anthony Nielson about the unintended consequences of trying to be kind by not telling the truth. "I first saw the play at the Royal Court in 2002, and thought it was a brilliant take on traditional farces," said the Tolworth actress. "It is very funny but has some uncomfortable truths." The tale of misguided festive do-gooding is founded on a web of deceit, cross-purpose conversations and moral dilemmas. *The Lying Kind*, directed by Erica Miller, will be hosted by Ram Jam Records at The Grey Horse in Richmond Road, Kingston, on Dec 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 at 7.30pm. Tickets £13. To book visit [www.ramjamrecords.co.uk/theatre](http://www.ramjamrecords.co.uk/theatre)



## Reel benefits

Mix a foot-tapping playlist of traditional Scottish tunes and a supply of homemade shortbread, and Surbiton & District Caledonian Society lives up to its motto, Joy Through Dancing.

Surbiton Festival's station forecourt display was a call to newcomers to experience the fun and sociability of Scottish country dancing. The club has also entertained veterans at Brighton Road's Royal Star and Garter Home, dancing the Duke of Atholl's reel to bagpipes, and inventing the Star and Garter caper, a dance widening participation to those in wheelchairs, and their carers.

"We've also been guests of the

Surbiton Care Home, as we heard many of them enjoy doing daily exercises to Scottish music," said the society's Cathy Dalry.

Younger generations are joining in too. The club's qualified tutors have been putting cubs and scouts through their paces at Scottish-themed evenings; an outreach activity adding a new dimension to this established Surbiton club.

Surbiton & District Caledonian Society meets at 7.30pm. Thursdays, St Mark's church hall, Church Hill Road. You don't need a kilt, a partner or experience, and you don't have to be Scottish! Non-members £4. Tea, coffee and shortbread provided.

● The new season of Thames Concerts, in the glorious setting of St Andrew's, Maple Road, continues on Sat, Jan 18 with Katherine Dienes-Williams performing works by Widor, Liszt and Bach on the organ. There are also free market day concerts on Dec 21, Jan 18 and Feb 15, at 10.30am, coinciding with the farmers' market 100 yards from the church. On Oct 19, students from Hinchley Wood School made the most of the church's fine acoustics with samba drumming and lively folk and rock songs. [www.thamesconcerts.com](http://www.thamesconcerts.com)

## Can you host a work of art?

Tolworth artist Debbie Chessell needs venues to host her Beehive - a 4m x 3m art installation which comfortably seats 12 people.

The geodesic dome, made from UK chestnut, is lined with artwork made from donated fabrics and features handmade bees by local creatives. It is covered in recycled gazebos and crushed velvet.

To build it, Debbie ran more than 60 hours of free community workshops. The installation will go on tour, offering an eye-catching venue for local

individuals, groups and organisations.

"I'm looking for venues in Tolworth, Long Ditton, Surbiton, Kingston and surrounding areas to host the Beehive for five weeks at a time until March 2020," said Debbie.

It's free to host and needs to be indoors. Email [hello@debbiechessell.com](mailto:hello@debbiechessell.com)

● Had we but world enough and time... Feel inspired by the city, the news or time? Write some verse and share it at a poetry reading evening! Like-minded souls gather at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, at 8pm on Fri, Dec 6 to read to a friendly, appreciative audience in the Barry Rocard Studio. The £4 entry includes a hearty cheese buffet in the interval. Bar opens at 7pm.



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A French programme by Emma Halnan (flute) and Daniel King-Smith (piano) with music by Bach and York Bowen

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## the good life Sparring partners separated by 230 miles

GL sport

Young fighters from Surbiton Boxing Club have built a strong bond with their counterparts from Hull after a cultural exchange between two Kingstons separated by 230 miles.

Dubbed Project Athelstan, and co-ordinated by Martin Ellis of Waverley Avenue, Surbiton, the initiative involved 10 young boxers from Kingston upon Hull travelling down to the club behind the old telephone exchange in Ewell Road – between St Mark's Hill and Berrylands Road.

As well as training and sparring with Surbiton's pugilists, the Hull contingent enjoyed a slap-up meal at the Royal British Legion, Hollyfield Road, funded by the Surbiton Labour Party, which is backing the project.

"The kids from Hull were great – relaxed, confident and clearly had a good relationship with their coaches," said writer and historian Bob Phillips, who attended.

A tour of London included a visit to Parliament where the Hull contingent met Hull East MP Karl

Turner, who promised to help them find urgently needed new premises. If all goes well, boxers from Surbiton will be among the first to visit.

Martin's hope is that boxing can help combat anxiety and benefit mental well-being as well as bringing together communities which would otherwise not interact.

"The aim is to help reunite the country by promoting social cohesion via cultural exchanges which open people up to new experiences, and break down prejudices," he said.

Sean Ross, head coach of East Hull Boxing Academy, said: "The boxers really looked forward to the trip, especially training at another club."

"It was a fantastic experience as, being from a socially deprived area, not many kids get that opportunity."

The name Athelstan refers to the coronation in Kingston nearly 1,100 years ago which united England. It is hoped it will be a blueprint for similar twinning exercises to forge links between clubs.



Young members of boxing clubs in Surbiton and Hull enjoy a visit

Set up in 2013 to coach youngsters in competitive Olympic-style amateur boxing, Surbiton Boxing Club has enthusiastic qualified coaches leading training, but it also runs non-contact recreational sessions for anyone wanting to improve their fitness levels.

Full details at [www.surbitonboxingclub.co.uk](http://www.surbitonboxingclub.co.uk)

## Stephen's VIP day

Fulham fan Stephen Vause, who suffered serious head injuries in a bomb attack as a serving soldier in Iraq, enjoyed VIP treatment at his beloved football club.

Stephen, of Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter home, was invited to Craven Cottage by players Kevin McDonald and Cyrus Christie when they paid a surprise visit.

The match against Hull was the club's official remembrance game, with wreaths laid in the centre circle before kick-off.

The 32-year-old met forward Bobby Decordova-Reid (right), and was given a club scarf and programme signed by star striker Aleksandar Mitrovic.

After the 3-0 defeat, Stephen said: "I enjoyed it, I'm very thankful for the

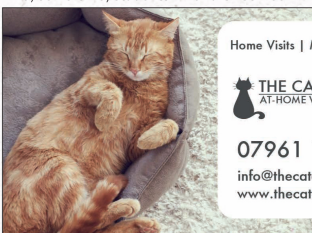


tickets. Next time I go we'll win!" When they visited Stephen in Upper Brighton Road, McDonald and Christie also gave him a shirt signed by the squad, and a book on Fulham matches down the years.

Stephen was 19 and on his first tour in Iraq with 4th Bn The Rifles when he suffered brain injuries in a mortar explosion near Basra in 2007. The charity has cared for him since 2015.

McDonald said: "When you consider what Stephen's been through, it's an honour to meet him." Christie, whose brother was in the Army for 10 years and served in Afghanistan, said it was "humbling" to meet Stephen. He added: "He's a true inspiration."

Kingstonian and Corinthian-Casuals fans will benefit local charities at their pre-Christmas derby on Sat, Dec 21. The clubs, who groundshare at King George's Field off Hook Rise South, Tolworth, will collect clothes for Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness, and donate matchday raffle, golden goal and bucket collection income to MIND in Kingston and Kingston Young Carers. Kick-off 3pm. Adults £10, seniors £6, students £4 and U18s free.



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## Millie: The bigger the venue, the better

Chelsea defender Millie Bright dreams of playing in huge stadiums after being on the bench when England played Germany at Wembley in front of a record 77,768 crowd.

"I'd love to play at Stamford Bridge week in, week out," said Millie.

The 26-year-old, who scored her first goal of the season against Birmingham in a 6-0 rout, will play a key role when Manchester City visit Kingsmeadow



on Sun, Dec 8. "We talk about change, and being equal, so for me to say I wouldn't want to play at Stamford Bridge every week would be a lie," she said. "It's something all clubs should try to do; play at big stadiums and increase the audience."

Millie added that she'd noticed a rise in the number of boys turning up to watch Chelsea Women play at Kingsmeadow – a real positive in terms of males taking the women's game more seriously.



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