

Cake bake



Amber, 11, offers a tartlet to estate agent Laura Humphrey at a cake stall set up to fund play equipment. Story **p10**



Why the big grin?

If you'd just scored the goal of your life, you'd be smiling too. Jonna Andersson relives the strike **p12**

Never give up on a lost cat! Read Husky's tale, p5





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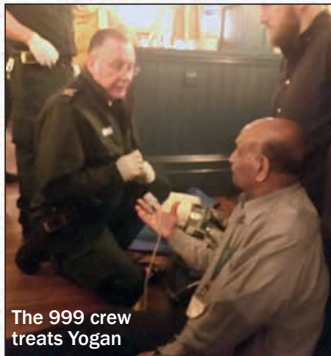


Heart-stopping moment



Ben Edwards, one of the Vic managers, with the defibrillator in situ

There was drama at the Vic, and it wasn't even EastEnders. The pub in Victoria Road was unveiling a defibrillator when Cllr Yogan Yoganathan – there to support the event – collapsed. Dr Marion Norbrook, demonstrating how the new equipment worked, gave first aid until the speedy arrival of an ambulance. Mercifully, the life-saving equipment wasn't needed and Yogan, who gave his blessing to this picture being used to thank the crew and publicise the defibrillator location, went to hospital, was released at 3am and has made a full recovery. Phil Harris, Dr Norbrook's neighbour in Cleaveland Road, raised £2,000 by running the London Marathon to buy the defibrillator, having been dismayed to discover that Surbiton town centre didn't possess one. It is now sited in the Victoria pub, where the incident underlined its potential value. Turn to **p10**



The 999 crew treats Yogan

Transformed

The huge Victorian red-brick exterior is unchanged, but amazing things are going on in the landmark Christ Church, Surbiton. Full story on **p3**



Parking charges set to surge

Parking charges in Surbiton will surge on June 1 to improve air quality. Vehicles cause 72.5% of nitrogen oxide emissions in town. Resident permits, on-street parking and council-owned car park fees will dramatically rise, but (in a major change) hybrid and electric cars will be exempt. Free local 30-minute parking remains. "Polluted air leads to illness and risks early death," said Cllr Hilary Gander. "This is part of protecting residents' health."

Change tax to save high street: MP

The high streets in Surbiton and Tolworth are "in dire straits", says MP Ed Davey, who is pressing for urgent action to support shops and businesses. "We have to get to grips with this issue pretty soon," he told The Good Life. "There are many reasons; the internet has led to dramatic change, but the taxation system has not helped," he said. He wants reform to tax so that shops pay less and the likes of Amazon pay more. "But this is a Europe-wide problem," he added.

Surbiton set to get noisier after Heathrow change

Surbiton **will** suffer more aircraft noise if a third Heathrow runway is built; changing from a high ethereal whistle to the throatier rumble Teddington experiences. Pinning down experts to define the effect on life in Surbiton (no change due until 2026) is like nailing jelly to a fence.

Officials, fully briefed on airport expansion, left visitors bewildered as 'design envelopes' – the euphemism for flightpaths – were unveiled at a consultation staged at Kingston Uni.

A final decision on a third

runway will be made in 2021, but one insider told The Good Life: "I wouldn't put my house on there being a third runway at all."

If it goes ahead, runway alternation will shield Surbiton from noise for half the day. Current flightpath maps date from the 1950s, so updating is overdue, but when experts talk of 30% easterlies and 3pm changeovers, it's hard to



compare today with tomorrow. Bottom line? Surbiton will be under new paths which see aircraft descend from 4,000 to 3,000ft. Today it's 6,000ft. So it'll be louder. www.heathrowconsultation.com **Tim Harrison**

Revealed: the new care home

A first glimpse of how Surbiton's £15m 80-bed dementia home, to open in Browns Road on the site of Newent House in early 2021, could look.

Funding was approved in February for future care of the area's ageing population.

Council-owned, it will be run by an independent company, with beds available to borough residents who fund their own care, and those whose care is paid for by the council. Residents will still have a say in its size and



appearance, with formal planning consultation now beginning.

Cllr Margaret Thompson said: "Kingston residents will have priority access to the very best in dementia care." More than 1,500 Royal borough residents have dementia, a figure expected to rise to 2,100 by 2027.



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Natalie, John and Rosita at the Surbeanton counter

New coffee shop adds to scene...

Surbiton's vibrant café scene has a new independent, Surbeanton, at 48 Victoria Road, in a former beauty shop. Owner John Basar spent days sitting on the wall of the YMCA opposite, to assess morning footfall. With double-cylinder teapots, profuse plug and phone points, powerful wifi and wheelchair access, the shop is already bustling. John, originally from Istanbul, ran a café in north London for a decade, as "dishwasher, barista, waiter and manager". Why settle here, where competition is intense? "I feel I've walked down every street in London," he said. "But I fell in love with Surbiton; it felt so right." John lives in Claygate, but aims to move to Surbiton for an easy commute. He reckons to

have visited hundreds of coffee shops, to see what works and what doesn't. At 59sqm, there's a long banquette seat down one side, loo at the end and kitchen. Healthy lunches complement the usual cakes and biccies, with vegan options, sandwiches and tarts. Fresh, raw food is a speciality. Plants hang in the high ceiling space, art dots the walls and the Allpress coffee is the café's own blend. Each month there's a guest filter coffee. "I love it when people say 'Wow' when they come in," said John, who enjoys experimenting with food colours and flavours. And the name? "I came up with it," admitted John. "It was the best of 100 choices!" Open 7am-6pm, every day except Tuesdays. **Tim Harrison**

...but as one door opens, another shuts



Starbucks has shut its unprofitable Surbiton branch. "It just wasn't selling enough coffee," one staff member said as the lights went out at 7.30pm on Friday February 8. The US chain still has 880 UK outlets. Teams were twice sent in to try to turn round the fortunes at 68 Victoria Road, but the white napkin was finally run up the flagpole. In a manner of speaking, it was cobblers to Starbucks. Once a shoe repairer, it opened in 2004, but always struggled with the shop's long, narrow layout. Rob McCoy, Starbucks UK director of operations, told The Good Life: "We understand the community in Surbiton is disappointed. As part of routine business we sometimes need to make the difficult decision to close a store." The café staff were popular with regulars, and Starbucks pledged to help them find alternative work. "We're proud how much our team means to customers," said McCoy. ● See Becky Mayhew, p7



The Tragic Wok

Three decades of spring rolls, crispy seaweed and bean curd is over. No more egg fried rice or squid with ginger. The Magic Wok, a pork ball's lob from Surbiton station, has pulled down the blinds. Opened in 1989 in St Mark's Hill, it was a fixture in the dining scene with its 'departure lounge' bar seating and dining zones separated by plants and wooden screens. "What a shame; a wonderful restaurant," said MP Ed Davey. Once well-reviewed, regulars reported a dip in standards. It got three out of five for hygiene from inspectors two years ago. ... but watch out for a fallen angel



Sip 'n' savour

Curated by bloggers Cara Mills (Gin and Interiors) and Sarah Bryant (Gin with Sarah B) a mini gin festival celebrates craft distilleries. Hayman's (Balham); Bloody Bens (Earlsfield); Distillers of Surrey (Ripley); Greensand Ridge (The Weald); Cabin Pressure (Horsham); Blackdown (Petworth); and Thames Ditton Gin (yes, you've guessed it) are at Langley's restaurant in Ewell Road on Thursday, March 28. "We wanted to create a small festival to celebrate craft distilleries," said Cara, of Douglas Road. "If you love gin and want to discover new brands, this is for you." Bottles are for sale, tonics by Merchant's Heart. Tastings 7.30-10.30pm. Last drinks 11pm. The £25 ticket gives two G&Ts, canapés, samples and goody bag, plus a prize draw for a gin hamper. To book visit tinyurl.com/y6rr252s **Jane Grove**

Some sage advice

An organic and vegan shop, Sage's Health Store, is to open in the empty former estate agents' office at 24 Brighton Road; the premises between Surbiton Glass and Winkworth.

Ian's ceps appeal

Fancy growing your own mushrooms? Surbiton Farmers' Market stallholder Ian Loynes was at February's event in Maple Road selling £10 bags of straw pellets impregnated with grey oyster mushroom mycelium, ready to go. "You take a sharp knife, cut it open, give it about enough light to read by, and you'll get three to four flushes," said Ian, below, who runs Sutton's Nonsuch Shrooms 'urban farm'.



WANNA PIZZA ME?

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- Where do Chelsea stars go for a cuppa, cake and chinwag when they're not training? Wags n Tales, Brighton Road, of course! Defenders (and best buddies) Ali Riley, Magda Eriksson and Anita Asante enjoyed some chill time ahead of a string of big fixtures for Chelsea Women FC... and the trio also went up to Stamford Bridge to cheer on the men in their ill-fated FA Cup exit to Manchester Utd
- Learn how to make Elyse Savage's award-winning salted caramel brownies. The farmers' market regular at the Lallapolosa Baking Company takes you through the art of preparing and baking brownies and chocolate chip cookies on Thurs April 11, 6.45-9.15pm, at the bakery in Broomfield Road, Kingston. £55. Elyse, of Lovelace Road, has won 10 national great taste awards. www.lallapolosabaking.co.uk



the good life

Editor: Tim Harrison

Set up in 2012, the community paper for Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands and Long Ditton reaches 27,500 readers. 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 daily Instagram posts (@thegoodlifesurbiton)

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A clue to home

Crossword buffs chortled at a Guardian 8-letter clue. *Runs into coach going north into changing part of London.* Reader John Pilling explains. Coach going north is BUS reversed; weave in R (short for run, cricket). Into is an anagram of ITON. Result? SURBITON.

Lunchtime help

Volunteers are needed for friendship lunches at the community hall of St Mary's, Long Ditton. To join the rota (about one lunchtime every couple of months) call 020 8398 1184.

Techno link-up

Kingston and Sutton councils are pooling technology to cut costs and simplify residents' online payments. The often impenetrable council websites will, it is promised, be more user-friendly. "We're delivering digital government," said Cllr Jon Tolley.

Hearty equipment

There is now a defibrillator at Long Ditton parish hall, Thorkhill Road. Trustees decided strenuous activity (zumba, judo, badminton etc) and sport on the nearby rec justified siting potentially life-saving equipment there.

Spoiling mother

Treat mum to clotted cream scones and as much tea as she can get down her on Mar 31 as Tolworth's Court Farm café marks Mothering Sunday. It's £17.50 a head, prosecco extra. 020 8337 9922.

Comedic drawl

Comedy headliner Reginald D Hunter comes to Surbiton. The provocative American stand-up with the honeyed drawl performs on the same bill as Mike Cox, Harriet Kemsley and Maff Brown at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, on Wed, March 20, 8pm. www.outsidetheboxcomedy.co.uk

Oi, that's my pint

The annual Hook Beer Festival is staged at the scout hall, Verona Drive, on April 26 and 27, with 54 beers and 20 ciders. www.hookbeerfest.org.uk

Taken for a spin

The former Surbiton Hardware Shop in Brighton Road looks set to become a spin studio, full of exercise bikes. Workmen are busy converting the interior of the old nuts & bolts store.

Lamb curry treat

Surbiton's Indian kitchen and sports café Doosra, which tops TripAdvisor's curry house ratings for the whole of London, is open again, Wed-Sat, 5.30-11.30pm, plus home delivery. It is at 282 Ewell Road, by the Worthington Road corner. Head chef Vinny Patel's creations include Tanzanian lamb curry and jhinga muijah, a prawn dish with Thai and Spanish flavours.

Toby Jug recalled

Good Life editor Tim Harrison's illustrated talk on the history of the Toby Jug pub, Tolworth – where David Bowie launched Ziggy Stardust in 1972, and Cold War spies met – is at The Museum of Futures, 117 Brighton Road, 7.30pm, Thurs March 21.

Church is reborn

It's impressive; £1.4m raised to restore and regenerate one of Surbiton's finest Victorian churches. The money has been donated by the 130-strong congregation of Christ Church, with fundraising events and some grant aid also contributing.

Phase one has begun, transforming the church at the corner of King Charles Road and Christ Church Road. "We're calling it Christ Church Renewed; we'll see the building renewed, but we are also praying the congregation will be renewed in our vision for our work here," said the Rev John Birchall. "We are making new space as well."

Alterations from the 1970s have been stripped out. Offices and the dais in the nave have gone, creating a more adaptable east-facing worship area, while the chancel has been opened up to give a clear view of the central stained glass window.

Floors have been lowered for step-free access, with a new vestry and first-floor rooms for children and youth activities. Glazing in the south porch will make the building more welcoming. As well as new lighting and underfloor heating, the audio-visual equipment is being upgraded, and baptism by full immersion is now possible; Christ Church has a baptism pool.

A further £100,000 is needed to finish the work, with phase one due to end in May. Phase two, on the west side, will cost a similar amount and create a new and enlarged kitchen, better (and more) meeting rooms at ground and first-floor level with lift access, and improved toilet facilities.

The vicar, who has led the evangelical Anglican church for the past 10 years, is delighted with progress and praised the builder,



Claremont of Hook Road. "They are a great firm to work with," he said. "It has taken years to get here, planning and fundraising, and it is exciting now that it's happening."

The project was mooted nine years ago, to make more space for a growing congregation in the busy, vibrant church.

"The vision was to restore the church, creating better use of space with a lighter, brighter atmosphere," said John.

The builders began last July, with services switched to Christ

Church primary school, Pine Gardens.

"Fundraising has helped raise the profile of the project, but the most significant proportion has been given by the congregation," added John. "The challenge to do this raised a sense of commitment and belonging. It is extremely encouraging that people have been ready to give to the project, and a sign of God at work in our congregation, and a blessing to our local community."

Jane Grove

SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



After a lively debate everyone agreed that to restrict Surbiton Farmers' Market to Surbiton farmers would just leave Keith the bee keeper

No projector? It's no problem

It's every speaker's nightmare – you turn up to talk, and someone's forgotten the promised microphone and projector. But Mel Harrison (right) is unruffled. Having once been librarian at the Tolworth Broadway branch, little fazes her.

To the awe of a 70-strong audience at Surbiton Historical Society at Surbiton library hall, Mel delivered a fascinating address on notable women in the Wars of the Roses, without visual aids... though she was nearly hoarse by the end as her current day job is as a teacher at a Battersea school.

Those whose (often overlapping) lives were featured included Margaret of Anjou, Cecily Neville (Richard III's mum, who so loved luxury she had a padded loo seat constructed to cushion the royal bottom), Elizabeth Woodville and Margaret Beaufort.

All too few gatherings in Surbiton these days end with a show of hands on who killed the princes in the tower, but this one didn't disappoint! The outcome? Inconclusive, but intriguing.

The next meeting of this vibrant, well-attended group, Tuesday April 2, 7.30pm, when, spookily timed four days after we're due to Brexit, Andy Thomas will talk on The Story of English Freedom. More information at www.surbitonhistoricalsociety.org



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A month shy of 106, Beavan's in Heaven

The mantle of being Surbiton's oldest man sat easily on Eddie Beavan's shoulders. His was, said the minister at his memorial service, a long life, well-lived. He died one month short of 106.

A resident of Portsmouth Road, Surbiton, he adored travelling... which is how he came to be arrested at Heathrow in 2014.

Walking through passport control on his return from Tenerife, he triggered alarm bells and was led away for questioning.

Immigration officers eventually fathomed that their computers couldn't cope with anyone aged 103, and had recategorised him as a three-year-old, attempting to enter the UK alone!

Born in Teddington in 1912, the year the Titanic sank, he attended Twickenham prep school and Hampton Grammar before, as "a mediocre student excelling only in maths, music and sport", according to son Peter, he embraced engineering.

He joined the Westinghouse in Liverpool as an eight-bob-a-week trainee draughtsman, studying at Liverpool Poly in the evenings.

"His father," said Peter, recalling grandad, "was deeply ambitious, and somewhat unpleasant." It was while living on Merseyside that Eddie was taken to Sunday services at the Welsh chapel.

"Eddie liked sermons to be concise and precise," said Peter, which explained why the engineering student abandoned interminable chapel services and, in 1931, crossed the road to a Wesleyan Methodist church which proved more to his liking.

He started playing the organ there in the 1930s, beginning a lifelong love of church music (Welsh church music in particular), culminating in 15 years playing the organ at Kingston Methodist Church, where his memorial service was held in January.

His field of expertise during a 40-year engineering career was railway signalling, with his first break coming courtesy of Scarborough borough council which had set up a miniature steam train layout in a public

park and needed someone to design a safe self-stopping signal system for it.

He eventually graduated to designing the signalling for the electrified West Coast mainline.

In 1953 Westinghouse's signalling division transferred him to its London sales office, where he replaced his chain-smoking dad, who had reached retirement age after working for the same company.

Eddie and wife Dorothy shared a house in Tudor Drive, Kingston, with Eddie travelling to India, South America and the Far East, selling signalling systems.

He ended up with responsibility for the opening of the company's office in Newport, commuting to south Wales every weekend, right up to his own retirement from the firm in 1977, after 47 years' service.

Yet he was a mere lad of 65 then, with 40 years ahead of him.

After Dorothy's death in 1998 (the couple were married for nearly 60 years) he moved to the Thames Haven riverside flat which he shared with Peter.

"It wasn't difficult living with Eddie as every day was a celebration of laughter," said his son.

Retirement meant even more freedom to travel, and Eddie set off on trip after trip around the globe.

While riding the subway system in Singapore on one jaunt, he spotted a Westinghouse logo on a metal plate between two carriages, and pointed out to bemused fellow train travellers that he had negotiated the contract.

An enthusiastic motorist (he didn't hang up his car keys until the age of 102), he got his first points on his licence at 98... for speeding!

He spent his centenary in Malaysia, making the trip out there with Peter.

Eddie joined the Probus Club of Kingston and New Malden when it was established in 1981, and was an enthusiastic member, attending monthly lunches (except on his frequent holidays) at Glenmore House,



Surbiton, even after turning 105.

At the service, the Rev Graham Cocking revealed that Eddie joked that Probus stood for "the poor retired old buggers' society".

As the Methodists' church organist (originally in Eden Street – site of today's Primark, then in the more modern building on the Fairfield), he persisted in his view that brevity was the most important quality when it came to the length of any service.

Mr Cocking told of the time that the minister, conscious of his organist's preference, announced that he would be restricting his address to just six sides.

"Why don't you start on page 5?" came the shout from behind the organ!

In his day, an enthusiastic opening bat for a Lancashire village cricket team (with an average run rate up in the 70s), Eddie was also interested in gardening, the Red Cross and old people's welfare, and was a

terrible, but enthusiastic, poet, regularly composing verses for pals' birthdays.

He wrote his last poem – an effort which would have made Pam Ayres shudder – four days before his death. It began unpromisingly: "I think my brain has blown a fuse..."

His personality was in his organ playing, said Mr Cocking. "He played with love and conviviality. He was totally reliable, a tremendous flirt and a character full of humour," he said. "He was one of Christ's own. He loved his church, and there is joy in a long life well-lived."

His explanation for his amazing longevity? "All things in moderation," he would say. "Age is not important; it's all about how you feel." **Tim Harrison**

● Edward James Beavan, born December 31 1912 in Teddington, died November 30 2018 in Surbiton.

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Kingston has its tumbling phone boxes, now Surbiton aims to replicate the artwork. The BT boxes near KFC, Brighton Road, loll together like a pair of Saturday night drunks ever since a truck reversed into them. Panes of glass were broken, yet nearby traders still spot people making calls!

Deli given a very hard smak

A Tolworth delicatessen has been fined and downgraded to a zero food rating after serious hygiene failings.

An inspection of Smak, the Polish and Russian food shop in the Broadway, led to owner Violetta Semyonova appearing before Lavender Hill magistrates. She pleaded guilty to food hygiene offences and was fined £500, with £3,300 costs to Kingston Council.

A dozen hygiene breaches were found when inspectors visited, including displaying

cooked chicken and pork at 23.4 °C (the legal limit is 8 °), selling out-of-date food and not training staff.

Officials seized 15 kilos of discounted food past 'use by' dates, while raw sausages

were in contact with ready-to-eat unwrapped meat.

Cllr Dave Ryder-Mills promised that there would be no let up in Kingston Council's war on food safety breaches.

"Officers will continue to inspect food businesses to ensure they meet high hygiene standards," he said.



Raffle raises profile

A raffle at Surbiton's farmers' market raised £1,132, and increased awareness of Express CIC, based in Ewell Road, which supports young people with autism and their families.

At the stall was Gillian Claugher, centre, whose son was diagnosed with Asperger's two years ago at the age of 12.

She credits the organisation's workers Annette and Tracey with enabling him to get the support and education he was missing out on, and urges other parents in a similar position to make contact with them via www.expresscic.org.uk

"Children with neurodevelopmental disabilities such as autism already have difficulties with social communication and interaction and those, like my son, who are deemed 'high functioning' often attend mainstream school," she said. "He experienced severe anxiety and low self-esteem as a result of being physically and verbally assaulted, and struggled in an environment that lacked understanding and provision for his autistic needs."

Thanks to support from Express, he is now starting at a new school.

"I'd encourage other families with an autistic child to get in touch with Annette and Tracey at Express – their dedication, commitment and enthusiasm is wonderful," she said. An Express autism conference is being staged at Kingston's Rose Theatre on Wed March 20 from 10.30am. Details on the website.

Husky is home

When Husky vanished for 17 days, Jo Harrington was in despair. The black-and-white cat ("matinee idol looks, soulful personality") had been confined to his Grove Road flat while recovering from a fractured jaw, but evaded protective custody.

Jo feared the worst; temporary wiring restricted Husky's ability to eat, and the moggy was woozy on antibiotics.

She stuck 'lost' notices up and put the word out on Facebook. Neighbours joined the hunt and catsitters Elaine and Graham from Mr Monty's Fuss and Feed assisted.

"I received dozens of calls and texts with potential sightings," said Jo, who helps at the farmers' market. "I spent hours searching, and spoke to locals who told me stories of their own cats who had gone missing or recently passed away, or that their children were out every day looking. One person even put my dirty pillowcase in their garden to attract him!"

Two and a half weeks later, Rebecca – a resident in The Mall, five streets away – sent some blurry pictures to Jo of a cat she'd spotted. Armed with a tub of tuna and a bag of Dreamies, Jo stood in her garden and called Husky's name. "In the distance I heard a faint noise," said Jo. "I kept calling, and it became obvious that it was my chatty boy, responding with distress and urgency. He popped into view along the top of the fence!"

Husky had lost over a kilo, and was covered in scratches

and bites, but has fully recovered. If you've noticed a tuna shortage in Waitrose lately, Jo apologises, but she's been building Husky up.

"It was heartwarming to know people are willing to take time out of their busy lives to try and find a hungry, scared cat. I'm grateful to everyone in Surbiton who helped, and I've made some new friends!" **Tim Harrison**

Are there too many cllrs?

Too many councillors, or too few? The Boundary Commission is deciding. The first reassessment since 1999 will redraw Surbiton's council wards. Proposals will be put to consultation in October. "I'd encourage everyone to have their say," said the council's Quentin Baker. The last reshuffle saw wards cut from 20 to 16.

Spy movies

If you push the two-hour time limit at the Waitrose car park to the wire, beware. You can no longer sweet-talk attendants into giving you extra minutes; the robots are in charge. The supermarket has brought in automatic number plate recognition, so spy cameras time comings and goings.

Britannia Parking still runs the Claremont Road car park for Waitrose, but automated £95 fines will now wing their way to overstayers, and to anyone nipping back inside an hour. The Good Life broke the story in November, although



the supermarket denied it had plans for imminent change.

"We still provide two hours' free parking," said a spokesman. "This ensures we continue to look after our customers who have found it difficult to find spaces because of the increasing pressure our car park has come under, especially in busy trading, while still providing free parking for other shoppers."

Could you speak up?

Surbiton neighbourhood committee, where planning bids and other issues are discussed, meets on Wed, March 20, 7.30pm, at Dysart School, Ewell Road.

All Surbiton councillors are present.

If you want to speak on a planning application, enforcement action or tree preservation order, you must register at least three days before the meeting. Either call Gary Marson on 020 8547 5021 or email him on gary.marson@kingston.gov.uk

Lines of duty

Yellow lines could be painted in Alexandra Drive, Berrylands, said council engineer Younes Hamade in answer to a query at a committee meeting from road resident Roger Jones. All options are on the table, including waiting restrictions and double or single yellows.



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● Fifteen volunteers gave the Sunray estate a clean-up, fanning out to cover as big an area as possible with litter-pickers and gloves. Several dozen binbags were filled. Co-ordinator Karen Fisher, right, gave out equipment, funded by a social night. Lib Dem cllrs Sam Foulder-Hughes and Mark Beynon were there. "The community is taking responsibility as council resources are limited," said Sam. Also hard at work, Aphra Brandreth, picked as Conservative candidate for Surbiton's parliamentary seat. "We collected a huge amount of rubbish; definitely a worthwhile initiative," she said. Other projects include bird boxes and planters (Court Farm is donating bee-friendly plants), and crisp packet recycling to fund new saplings. Litter dates: Sat April 6, Sat May 4, Sat June 1. Meet 10am on the green at Barnsbury Crescent.

Commuters 1 Council 0

People power has won a 20-year war of attrition between council and commuters over a shortcut on Victoria rec. Rather than follow the path, Long Ditton commuters going to Surbiton station pounded a diagonal from water fountain to exit. Weekend footballers grumbled about renting a pitch bisected by a footway, so Kingston Council reseeded the track and fenced it off. The fence was trampled down. Now the pitch has moved and a tarmac path splits the rec. Commuters 1 Council 0.



Care in forward planning can keep costs under control, says Janice Cripps

So, what price a designer garden?

How much is a beautiful garden? I've been designing them for 10 years and budget is always a difficult issue. For most clients, it's a one-off, and they have no previous experience to draw on.

If I say be prepared to spend what you would on a kitchen, it often elicits gasps of horror as they can cost tens of thousands.

Most new garden designs cost £10,000+, and that's just for a small, easily accessible garden with minimal hard landscaping like paving, walls, steps or buildings.

Appoint a designer – after all, you wouldn't build an extension or a house without appointing an architect, would you?

For smaller budgets or for a 'makeover', it may again be worth seeking out a garden designer to help clarify ideas and make the most of your space and budget. This could be advice and guidance rather than more costly formal plans. Most people underestimate a new garden's



cost, so here are a few basics:

- Contemporary minimalist is expensive, especially with complex, clinical hardscape, as are design details with no tolerance for change
- Simple lines are straightforward but curved walls, angles and intricate paving patterns are trickier, take longer and waste materials
- A traditional look is easier to achieve, especially if some imperfection is part of its charm, for example, a woven hazel fence, bark path or walls of oak sleepers
- There's always a more affordable hardscape option. Portland stone

can cost £200 per sqm but you may be able to get the same look using a sawn sandstone or porcelain at a fraction of the price

- Don't overlook timber or stone cladding to disguise an ugly fence or wall. It's less expensive than demolishing and rebuilding
- Access problems can mean soaring costs; if you can get a mini digger on site, your problems are halved!
- Keep costs down by using plants in place of hardscape. An evergreen hedge can screen rather than a wall, an ornamental tree is just as effective a focal point as a sculpture or water feature
- You don't have to do it all at once. Bury electric cabling, but install fittings at a later date.

If you have a clear vision of what you want to achieve, then the budget can often be adapted to suit. And remember, it's easier to make mistakes on paper than wait until work has started.

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

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

- Are you a fan of terrariums? Tolworth's Court Farm Garden Centre runs a mini glass jar garden workshop on March 30. Materials supplied. Make it, then take it home with you. www.jarandfern.co.uk

Chance to win £100 worth of plants

Enter a survey about how 'green' you are, and you could win £100 of plants from Court Farm garden centre. SHEDx, a project for residents and businesses to regenerate Tolworth, is running the survey with Kingston Environment Centre. The two-year initiative by the Tolworth-based Community Brain aims to nurture community-led renewal in the area through creativity, imagination and fresh ideas, supported by a £385,000 grant from the Mayor of London.

The closing date is Sunday, March 17. To enter and read more about SHEDx's projects in Tolworth and how they are progressing, visit www.thecommunitybrain.org/shedx-home



The Community Brain's Robin Hutchinson & shed



Volunteers planted saplings to create a natural filtration and sediment barrier near Raeburn Avenue to keep a pond and tributary clean, benefiting insects, fish and other wildlife. Seven welly-clad friends of the Berrylands Nature Reserve joined forces with the Environment Trust for, as Karolina Peret (above) put it: "Fresh air, physical activity, chat, laughs and the satisfaction our collective effort makes an immediate impact."

www.environmenttrust.org

Friends reunited

The recently formed Friends of Fishponds Park, which aims to restore and maintain its 13.5 acres of woodland, meadow, ponds and open grass spaces, has already notched up more than 70 members.

The group, which pledges "to improve Fishponds Park for the benefit of the local community and its wildlife, while protecting its natural and cultural heritage", will be holding its first agm on Saturday, April 27 at 2.30pm at the Royal British Legion in Hollyfield Road, just opposite the park. All welcome.

The team has already received a grant of £750 from Berrylands ward councillors, some of which will go towards building a bug hotel. It has also received £105 in individual donations, with more promised.

The next community action day on March 30, from 10am-2pm, will focus on removing any remaining duck weed from the smaller ponds and clearing them of debris (waders provided), completing the renovation of the rose beds, litter picking and clearing more brambles. Care to ensure no nesting birds are disturbed is a priority.

Organisers are hoping that plenty of people will come to help with the clear-up of what is a well-used green space in the heart of Surbiton. Meet in the middle of the park by the sign board at 10am.

For more details about the group, email fishpondssurb@gmail.com



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Kingston College

Make no bones about it

The hunt is on to intercept a phantom chicken dumper who, for nine months, has been scattering raw meat on Surbiton streets at night.

Signs on lampposts, alerting residents, have been ridiculed by some, but Mike Tattersall says it's no laughing matter, and is attracting rats.

Raw chicken offcuts are flung from a blue Vauxhall Astra along King Charles Road and Alexandra Drive, mostly at weekends and invariably between 9pm and 11pm.

"We think he must be a butcher or restaurant owner who doesn't want to pay to have it collected," said Mike. "He probably thinks he's

feeding foxes, but it's attracting rats; I've seen them." The council has been alerted, but says it needs the car's registration number.



● The U19 girls' A-team from Surbiton High School, right, and the school's U11 mixed team triumphed in the floor and vault finals at the regional gymnastics championships, and will now represent London at the national finals in May.



Vaulting ambition

Up and down, the quietway sign

No sooner was it up than workmen were told to take it down! A sign for a 'cycle quietway' from Surbiton clocktower to Kingston was hoisted up on a pole last autumn. But three months later, after market research determined no one knew what it meant, Transport for London has decided to ditch the name.

Having spent several hundred pounds putting it up, it and other similar signs will be replaced. Also being scrapped, for baffling people, the terms cycle superhighway and mini Holland (the name first given to bike routes criss-crossing the Royal borough).

Quietways, like the one in The Crescent, were 'non-segregated routes'... or roads, as we once called them.

A report for London Mayor Sadiq Khan found that the plethora of new names left everyone "horribly confused".

Will Norman, who delights in the title 'walking and cycling commissioner', said: "Not all quietways are quiet and not all superhighways are super." The monikers (dreamt up by consultants) were being abandoned.

Incredibly, the costly rebranding actually put people off taking up cycling as some thought cycle superhighways were, in effect, motorways for cyclists.

Introduced by Boris Johnson, they are widely felt to

have led to a rise in 'Lycra louts'; militant riders who fly through red lights and imperil pedestrians.

Mr Norman is determined to press on with encouraging more cycling, convinced it will improve air quality and increase trade for small shops. "We need to keep that drumbeat of showing the benefits of cycling," he said. "It's making London more successful, more prosperous, and cleaner and healthier for everybody."

All new cycle routes will now be known simply as cycleways. TfL is spending nearly £170m a year on cycling, to "make the streets healthier".

A spokeswoman (no pun intended) for TfL told The Good Life: "The problem we've had, as cycle routes develop, is that some are on back roads, some have segregated cycle lanes, some are on busy roads, some are off-road in parks... and we've found that the name 'quietway' was confusing."

"We felt we were overcomplicating things, so now we're making it easier to understand. The word 'cycleway' is internationally understood."

She said maps showing cycle routes would simply be marked 'cycleway'. "It'll take a bit of time, and the signage will change," she added. So don't expect to see any more quietways in Surbiton.

Tim Harrison

Is coffee-driven productivity sky-high in caffeine-consuming Surbiton?

Wet or dry, we're obsessed

So Starbucks has left. Is Surbiton's love affair with coffee dwindling? Have we finally realised that 7,691 coffee outlets in one town is too much? No, of course we haven't.

We can't get enough of the stuff. Look at the poor old station pasty company which thought they could flog us pasties to and from work, and had barely finished typing up the minutes from their first staff meeting when they realised we just weren't interested. We waved them off, and smiled quietly as a coffee shop moved in.

Who wants a pasty on the 07.27 to Waterloo? Not when we can have three coffees before we've even arrived at the station, then play the unfailingly thrilling Russian roulette with Nero's staff on platform 1, the ninjas of the barista world. Will they make my coffee in time for my train? The answer is almost always an impressive Yes, resulting in an Indiana Jones-style leap through the closing train doors, cup in hand.

We love coffee so much, we now have Surbeanton (I know, I know. Let's not dwell on the name), sandwiched between Ex Cellar and Soprattutto, across the road from Wags n Tales, up the road from Costa, round the corner from Three Peas.

We're insatiable. One can only imagine that

productivity levels in Surbiton are sky high, considering we're all off our nuts on caffeine all day.

Of course some Surbitonians do not share our obsession. These are peculiar creatures who order things like a large camomile tea. It's surely the most miserable way to start the day. Is it me, or does everyone think it smells like hot wee?

But these people exist, as do people who order a 'wet cappuccino'. Yes, there are wet and dry cappuccinos. Those of us who naively assumed all cappuccinos are wet clearly need to take a long hard look at ourselves. It's something to do with how much foam there is on the surface of the milk. I'm sure it's a scientific calculation but I, for one, want no part of it.

Is it telling that the one shop not getting enough business in our coffee-obsessed town should be Starbucks? It's arguably the godfather of takeaway coffee – the one that began it all. Have we shunned it because we didn't like the coffee, or because we prefer independents which, apart from Costa and Nero, is what they all are?

Or is it because we have a thing about avoided tax? Whatever the reason, I don't think anyone is screaming WHERE AM I GOING TO GET MY COFFEE?

Becky Mayhew



...but overall, cycling's on the rise

The lanes, tracks and paths which have sprung up in Surbiton in recent years are paying dividends... cycling is on the up. A report reveals a steady rise in two-wheeled travel since 2014, with a surge in the past year. The news has been embraced by Cllr Hilary Gander, Kingston Council sustainability panjandrum.

"Our investment will ensure we continue to provide safe and convenient cycling routes for commuting and pleasure," she said. The council report concluded that the main reasons people cycle are to improve health, save time and because it is simply enjoyable.

Council-run cycle training for adults and children is growing, while the report shows increased levels of safety awareness and rising confidence in cycling as a result of cycle path improvements.

The cycling report can be read at www.kingston.gov.uk/go

Course is the antidote to anxiety

A course which tackles anxiety and depression has had such success that it is being expanded.

Practical Ideas for Happier Living, run by the council's adult education department at the King Charles Centre, Hollyfield Road, covers resilience, the importance of doing things for others, connecting with people, mindfulness and finding ways to bounce back from adversity.

Other topics include meditation and relaxation, and exploring the benefits of healthy eating on mental well-being.

Results from the first year show that 61% of attenders who started their course with anxiety or depression no longer had clinically significant symptoms by the end – an outcome which is attracting interest from other agencies and other areas.

Initially funded in 2015 as part of a £20m mental health research project, the course aims to help people manage and recover from mild to

moderate mental health problems.

Sam Burgess of Kingston adult education said: "We're proud of the impact this course has had. In addition to helping more than 300 people, it has built up a great, supportive community."

Derek Underwood, a retired Surbiton engineer who had been struggling with insomnia and relied on medication, was one who benefited.

"I can't praise the effect it has had on me too highly. It enabled me to completely re-evaluate my attitude to life and resulted in a much more positive outlook and general enthusiasm to everyday living."

"I am now off all medication. I admit I was fairly sceptical at the start, but it has inspired me."

The course is free, it's open to all (even if you live outside Kingston's borough boundaries) and it runs for six weeks on Wednesdays, 6.45-9.15pm. Email Annette.brown@kingston.gov.uk



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Diabetes research boost

Supporters of the local Diabetes UK charity have donated £1,100 to help fund a research project into blood sugar control.

Run by Surrey University, and managed by the diabetes charity, it will investigate if and how resistant starch in carbohydrates can improve managing the level of glucose sugar in the bloodstream.

Project leader Dr Denise Robertson is looking into ways a combination of diet and physical exercise can affect medical readings.

In Surbiton and Kingston alone, more than 3,000 people have diabetes, with 1,000 undiagnosed (some in denial).

The support group for Surbiton and Kingston meets monthly at Kingston Hospital, and runs weekly exercise classes.

"Often shared experiences produce ideas which help all involved lead more rewarding lives," said David Cruden. "I urge more to get in touch and attend our free meetings."

Meetings are led by specialists. For more, email chairman Richard Allen at richardallen52@btinternet.com



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Businesswoman to fight Ed's seat

A Surbiton businesswoman is the Conservatives' choice to fight Ed Davey at the next general election. Aphra Brandreth is finance director of Vet4Life in Brighton Road, after helping husband Ian set it up three years ago.

She says her policies will be shaped by Surbiton residents, and she's asking people – via door-knocking and online surveys – about

their priorities. "I think people are sick of being told what to think," she said.

The 40-year-old mother of three is familiar with local issues; she's a Richmond councillor. She also knows what being an MP entails; as a teenager, her dad, Giles Brandreth, represented Chester. "It's given me a perspective, but probably made me more hesitant to throw myself into it, as it's all-encompassing if you have a family," she said. "But Ian has been hugely supportive."

Named after Aphra Behn, a 17th century poet, playwright and feminist, she studied economics at uni and was for 10 years a civil servant in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Working on developing policy led to wanting to become an MP. "I've got more involved in local politics; if you want to make an impact, you have to stand up and do it," she said.

She's out twice a week, knocking on doors and finding out which issues matter.

"Having worked at Defra, I know we need to look after our environment, and we mustn't



lose perspective on what makes this place so good to live," she said.

Her younger son has asthma, making air quality improvement one of her priorities. "I hope to represent the modern face of Conservatism," she said.

And what about the elephant in the room? "Brexit has really divided people," she said. "We need to get away from asking people how they voted in 2016. We need to bring people together; decide where we're going and how we are going to make the best of things. I'm an optimist; I'm keen to get on with the

withdrawal and start negotiating the trade agreements."

The Kingston and Surbiton seat is a marginal, twice switching between the Lib Dems and Tories since 2010. Theoretically (but who can tell in these peculiar times) the next general election is on May 5 2022. "I know the date," said Aphra. "It's my wedding anniversary!"

"Whatever happens, you have to enjoy the journey," she said. "And I'm loving getting to know different parts of the constituency, and its people."

Tim Harrison

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MP on warpath over trains

Surbiton MP Ed Davey has held crisis meetings with Network Rail and South Western Railway (SWR) over local train services he dubs "deplorable and appalling".

He says current transport provision is "the worst since the railway came to Surbiton [in 1838]" and that he had spent more time dealing with train complaints since re-election in 2017 than in his previous 18 years as the MP.

He has prepared a report, *Passengers Must Come First*, and submitted it to Transport Secretary Chris Grayling, having set up an all-party group to examine rail issues.

"The managers are hopeless," he said, adding that while "unwarranted strikes" had aggravated the situation, he did not think the unions could be blamed for the sub-standard overall service for Surbiton passengers.

He believes the government must act on 28 recommendations of Sir Michael Holden, who reviewed the rail service, he wants to either remove SWR's franchise or impose a new performance-related contract, and he does not rule out renationalisation, "though there's a danger of creating a lot of turbulence for years".

Sir Ed yearns for the relative efficiency of past franchise holder South West Trains, but says he has a bit more confidence now the SWT's ex-boss is Network Rail chief executive. "I'd like to think that I'm the MP more on top of this than anyone else; holding people to account," he said. "My report is a staging post."

The Holden review recommendations, which Sir Ed endorses, are at: <https://bit.ly/2QjNAFI>

● Enterprising Southborough School students sold two-in-one speaker/headphones for £24.99 at the farmers' market. www.irisye.co.uk



● No sign yet of Stratford Johns, but Zedcar has replaced Mogul minicabs at 118 Ewell Road, keeping the old 020 8390 0888 phone number.

● To slow King Charles Road traffic to 20mph, unpopular chicanes will go with £40,000 spent on raised crossings, refuges and speed tables.

● Councillors praised the Substance Misuse Service at Surbiton Health Centre after hearing of its support for those with drug and alcohol issues. Set up with council funding in 2013, it offers assessments, peer support, group work, keyworker sessions etc. You can be referred if you are local and over 18. Use the confidential email: cim-tr.kws.drug.alcohol@nhs.net

● Alpha Road residents pleading to be included in a parking permit scheme will learn their fate on March 20 at 7.30pm at Dysart School, Ewell Road, at Surbiton's next neighbourhood meeting. They want to be part of the Browns Road parking area, so they aren't landed with all the displaced cars.

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Flats to replace B&B

A Surbiton hotel is to be demolished to make way for a three-storey block of flats.

Warwick Lodge at 319-321 Ewell Road will be replaced by eight flats; two one-bed, four two-bed and two three-bed.

Planning consent depends on the flats having secure bike parking, landscaping, a disabled parking bay and no bins out front.

Neighbours objected, saying the scale and design would harm the character of the area, affect their outlook, block light and increase parking problems.

Neighbour Bridget Walker said it resembled an office block. "It makes no attempt to respect the character of the existing houses," she said. "How can this small site fit eight flats and 16 bedrooms?"

Mr Rajan Patel, planning agent on behalf of applicant Vijay Patel of Jennings Close, Long Ditton, told Surbiton's neighbourhood committee that the plan had been scaled down from the original proposal.

"The B&B business has been in decline and while the business has been operating with the family for a long time, modern and larger amenities like Premier Inn mean it's no longer viable.

"The council has found previously the loss of this facility to be acceptable, and in principle residential development to be acceptable on the site."

Councillors on Surbiton's neighbourhood committee voted nine to one in favour of allowing the application. Only Cllr Anita Schaper opposed it.

Mr Patel was urged to consider providing an electric vehicle charging point and solar panels in the replacement building.



You owe me five farthings say the bells of St Matthew's

The renovation that rings a bell

Restoration work on the bells, tower and spire of St Matthew's church is about to start, with scaffolding going up next month and repairs to weather-damaged stonework beginning in early June.

A specialist contractor will repair the Grade II listed Victorian building in St Matthew's Avenue after the steeple – which stands the same height as Nelson's Column – was placed on Historic England's 'at risk' register. Replacing masonry, reinstating rotted mortar and securing the fabric of the church which was completed in 1875 will cost £600,000.

St Matthew's bells will also be getting a complete overhaul by specialist company John Taylor & Co of Loughborough.

The church has grabbed the nettle and is updating its facilities at the same time – the loos in the adjoining hall will be refurbished.

Funding sources include the Heritage Lottery Fund, local

fundraising events (a recent variety show at the cornerHOUSE arts centre recently raised £1,200) the church's own reserves, and by donations from parishioners and the community at large to a MyDonate page, mydonate.bt.com/charities/stmatthewschurbsurbiton

"It will be business as usual, or as close to usual as is possible, with services continuing to run and the church's social and community programme being woven in among the works," said project co-ordinator and music director Simon Hancock. "The church website will keep the parish and the wider neighbourhood up to speed on what services and events are on at the church and what might change."

St Matthew's will hold open days through 2019, with guided tours of the

building and tower (for those with a head for heights) to follow progress. Dates to be posted on the website.

A fundraising piano and organ recital by keyboard virtuoso Gareth Giles, below, including Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue and music by Debussy, will be held in the church on **Saturday, March 23 at 7.30pm**. Refreshments served. Entry free, with a retiring collection for the restoration work.

Jane Grove

www.stmatthewskt6.org



Bins 'the worst in UK'

There are more complaints about slapdash bin collections in Long Ditton than anywhere in the UK.

Elmbridge Council tops the local authority list for missed bins, according to figures gathered by the BBC under Freedom of Information.

In 2018, Elmbridge Council fielded a boggling 411 complaints per 1,000 households – far and away the highest in the UK.

The Good Life asked the council whether this was because the bin collections were rubbish, or if it was down to residents being proficient complainers. Three weeks later, we're still waiting for a reply.

The BBC survey showed that the number of missed bin complaints had risen by a third in the past four years, with an average of 4,500 reports of dustbin avoidance phoned or emailed to UK councils every day.

Figures collated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government revealed that overall spending on waste collection by councils had fallen from £1bn in 2011 to £888m last year.

Martin Tett from the Local Government Association said that 99.8% of bin collections were done without complaint, adding: "Between 2010 and 2020, councils will have lost almost 60p out of every £1 the government had provided for services."



Surbiton's school sport wins gong

They love sport at Surbiton High, and the passion has been recognised with the school winning the TES Sports award.

It marks official endorsement of the school's 'sporting choice for all' programme, which aims to develop a love of sport at all levels and among all ages.

The school runs 80 sports clubs every week, allowing 3,500 pupils to take part, from reception classes up to Year 13.

The award (made by the Times Educational Supplement) is a feather in the cap for Sunita Pottay, the school's director of sport.

"There's a place in sport for every child at Surbiton High and we create a strong sense of belonging, whatever the level," she said. "Our ultimate aim is to ensure pupils leave school with a lifelong love of sport."

Both the boys' and girls' prep years have been awarded the school games mark gold award in recognition of their efforts, while in the senior school three separate pathways allow girls to pursue the sporting curriculum they most enjoy.

Principal Rebecca Glover (second, right) said: "I'm delighted; the curriculum in sport ensures each child is able to flourish in an extraordinarily wide range of disciplines."

"Pupils have the opportunity to represent their country, county, and school teams, and our successes in rowing, tennis, gymnastics, hockey, netball, football and skiing speak for themselves."

So what's next? If you have a greenhouse in Surbiton, beware! The school is offering cricket this summer.

Mosaic for Ophelia sightseers

A 15-metre mosaic is being unveiled this month, to commemorate the best-loved painting of Surbiton.

Designed by campaigning group the Save the World Club, it will lead Pre-Raphaelite aficionados to the spot where Sir John Everett Millais painted the iconic Ophelia, by the Hogsmill on the Tolworth/New Malden boundary.

Des Kay, director of Save the World Club, told The Good Life: "The community mosaic transforms a little-used space into a tourist focus."

Schools and artistic groups have all had input, under the supervision of artist Kim Porelli.

The unveiling is at 2pm on Sat, March 23. Access via Knollmead, Tolworth, or Sheephouse Way, New Malden (KT3 5PS). "Many thanks to all our supporters, sponsors, community officer Sophia Allinson and Kingston Council, which helped us succeed with funding," added Des.



Now and then. The Kingston Choral Society today and Surbiton Oratorio Society in St Andrew's church in the 1950s



Handel with care, it's our 250th concert

One of the best-supported local choral groups returns to its roots to perform its 250th concert.

The Surbiton Oratorio Society launched on March 30 1950 in St Andrew's, Maple Road, singing The Messiah. On March 30 this year the singers, today known as Kingston Choral Society, again present Handel's oratorio, accompanied by the Purcell Orchestra.

The 130 society members sing in Kingston parish church at 7.30pm, Andrew Griffiths conducting his 33rd local concert.

Down the years, the society has performed the work 13 times, the last time in March 2010 on its 60th anniversary.

The first concert in Surbiton in 1950 had a ticket price of 2/6d (12.5p or, inflation-adjusted, £15.09). Aptly, today's tickets (www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/543617) are £15.

Back in the day, Surbiton Oratorio blooded many fine singers. A young Kenneth McKellar joined the choir for its 1953 Messiah concert,



while a 22-year-old Philip Langridge performed it in 1961. More recently, Dame Sarah Connolly gained early experience as a soloist, in 1992.

The mixed-voice choir rehearses at Hollyfield School on Thursday evenings.



Picture: Marco Borggreve



Above: John Wilkinson, musical director 1952-80; left, Andrew Griffiths, MD from 2011-present

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Do you know about war evacuees?

During the Second World War, a group of Surbiton children were evacuated to Atherton, a small industrial town near Manchester. Elaine Swift is researching the tale. "I grew up hearing stories from dad about the children who came to his school, and with whom he made friends," she said. "One, Connie Thorn, lived in Alexandra Drive and used to tell him about the green, leafy suburb and the rec." The contrast between Surbiton and cobbled streets, mills and miners coming off shift – faces blackened with coal dust, was stark.

Coincidentally, Elaine now lives in Beaconsfield Road, just round the corner from Connie's original home, and she is trying to find out more about the wartime evacuees. "Perhaps you are related to someone who was sent to my home town in the North West, or maybe you know why Atherton was chosen?" she asked. You can email Elaine at elaine@elaineswift.co.uk

Surbiton High School is an aspirational independent School for boys aged 4-11 and girls aged 4-18, which inspires, encourages and empowers its pupils with an innovative, creative and inspirational learning curriculum.

Upcoming Open Events 2019

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Surbiton High School is part of United Learning

Winners announced

The council's community award winners are announced on March 18; the mayor's pick of citizens who deserve special recognition.

A matter of a pinion

Chris Ward talks to the Surbiton birders on Tues March 19 at 7.30pm in the library hall, Ewell Road, on The Magic of Mallorca. Then on April 16, Simon Ginnaw speaks on Kent's Wild Year. www.surbitonbirds.org

Developing talent

Bring a dozen snaps on a memory stick to a meeting of Surbiton's laid-back Photo Circle on Wed Mar 13, Wags n Tales, Brighton Road, 8pm, and bask in Ooohs and Aahhs.

An Oxbridge record

Nine Surbiton High girls won places at Oxford and Cambridge from a school-record 31 applicants, as head Rebecca Glover praised their have-a-go mentality.

Food, glorious food

The Surbiton Food Festival runs May 4-19, with scores of events including the sardine festival, Surbiton fete and community sports day. Full details in the next Good Life issue.

Music talent search

Strum a guitar? Play the piano? Results of the CirKT.com talent hunt – to be judged by music industry giants – are out soon. "A great chance to discover new music talent," said Surbiton cllr Malcolm Self.

Electric car booster

A hundred electric car charge points will be installed in the Royal borough in the next three years to combat exhaust pollution.



It's the icing on the cake

"I made the chocolate brownies," said 11-year-old Amber as she and her Year 6 chums from Long Ditton St Mary's School made £355 selling cakes, biscuits, sausage rolls and fudge.

Backed by Humphrey and Brand estate agents (directors Laura and Lisa attended), the girls and their mums set up outside Waitrose in Claremont Road... with the supermarket donating cakes too.

The centrepiece was a Valentine's Day cake, which was raffled. Was Amber going to buy a ticket, to present the cake to her boyfriend?

"I don't have a boyfriend," she giggled.

The only problem was wind gusts, which sent several balloons sailing over the nearby clocktower.

Each year at the school is competing to raise the most, with a bonus of £200 at stake, provided by the community-minded estate agents, to be spent by the top year's teacher.

The cake sale money will buy adventure playground equipment, including a scramble net, in the school grounds. Next cake sale dates: Mar 16 and Mar 30.

Please don't make a fuss!

She's about to turn 100, but Ida's playing it down. "I don't want a celebration," she said, admitting that her daughter was fed up trying to persuade her to make whoopee.

Ida Upham-Battlogg reaches her century on April 27, but thinks "it sounds terrible", adding: "I can't do anything about it!"

Born in St Anton in the Austrian Tyrol, five months after the Great War ended, Ida worked winters as secretary of a ski lift company, and worked summers at a hotel.

She came to Surbiton to be a nanny to the three young children of an eye surgeon who lived near Claremont Gardens. At first she hated it, but in 1950, to improve her spoken English, she enrolled in classes at Tiffin Girls, and the area began to grow on her.

Walter Upham, who ran Surbiton's branch of WHSmith, chatted her up when she ordered an Austrian newspaper. "I couldn't make up my mind whether to marry him or not," she admitted. "So I went back home to

do another season with the ski company."

Walter wooed her by post, and even went out to visit her. "In the end I gave in," she said. They were married at St Raphael's shortly before Christmas 1951, setting up home in Southcote Avenue, Berrylands.

Widowed in the mid-60s, Ida later worked on the 13th floor of Tolworth Tower for the then Ministry of Housing... although she had to unlearn her old German shorthand and learn Pitman instead.

She retired from the civil service in the 1980s, and is now one of the perkier residents in the Surbiton Care Home in Park Road, where she is regularly visited by daughter Diana, of Grand Avenue.

"I loved the atmosphere of Surbiton in the 1950s. I loved St Raphael's, and walking by the river, but my favourite place – and Walter's – was Kew Gardens," said Ida, recalling the era when a pre-decimalisation penny would grant entry.

Tim Harrison



Ida Upham-Battlogg is 100 next month

Crafty ideas for mum

Wondering how to inspire mum on Mothering Sunday? Take her to an arts and crafts market at The Lamb pub. Handmade at the Lamb on March 31 is bursting with talented artists, makers and creatives.

A joint event between the Brighton Road pub and Chessington-based The Place to Make, it has workshops and 'makeaways'. Join in, or just watch.

On the bill: Sarah Richardson, The Place To Make, crochet clinic; Debbie Chessell's lino printing; Maria Marsh, macramé feathers; Louis Spence, whittling; Purl Jam at the Lamb, handcrafting; Will Spence, knife sharpening; and Two for Joy, making a woolly word.

Afternoon tea is served, and other temptations include luxury chocolates, macarons, handmade cosmetics, jewellery and ceramics, all by local artisans.

Entry (noon-6pm) free. Workshops from £5.

Organiser Sarah Richardson said: "Creativity is so important in our lives. It makes us stop and take note of ourselves; we have to be present. An event like Handmade reminds us how to engage without a screen."

Debbie Chessell, left, runs lino printing workshops at the pub and at the nearby Museum of Futures. Full details: www.debbiechessell.com/workshops



Debbie Chessell, left, supervises lino printing

'Traction' zone enlarged

Patrols have been stepped up in Long Ditton after a nearby stabbing. Local police commander Insp Dallas McDermott swiftly extended a 'dispersal zone' to Long Ditton following injury to a 16-year-old in Woodfield Road, Thames Ditton. Three teenagers have been arrested.

Under Operation Traction, police have enhanced stop-and-search powers. A dispersal zone means suspects can be barred from the area for 48 hours.

Insp Dallas reassured a community unused to such incidents that all is being done to keep young people safe. "There are two specific groups of youths involved, from Kingston and Elmbridge," he said. "You'll see an increase in officers in the area over the coming weeks."

Police are also making more visits to secondary schools, to warn about knife crime.



● Three cheers for Marks & Sparks, Tolworth. As Lauren Nichols demonstrates, staff are helping shoppers pick, weigh and pack fresh produce in a three-month trial to rid the world of plastic packaging. If it works in Surbiton it will be rolled out to all UK M&S stores.

● Continued from page 1

Staff at the Young's pub have been trained on the equipment. Publicising its existence and location is now the imperative.

Phil, 33, hopes firms will back a second defibrillator. He realised the need after his father, Keith, went to the aid of a man who collapsed in front of him. Keith now runs voluntary medical training courses.

Dr Norbrook, based at Kingston Hospital, was at the Vic to show the equipment's use on dummy torsos.



Yogan, who thinks an undiagnosed nut allergy may have led to his collapse, thanked Phil, the 999 crew and Marion. "I'm fine now," he said.

Neighbourhood manager Richard Dean, who helped find the site for the defibrillator, also praised Phil's 4hr 36min marathon success, and said it was an example of how the community can pull together. "It's a fantastic effort," he added. **TH**

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Prolific Surbiton author Stephen Harding has published his sixth novel, a sequel to Twice Bad, featuring DCI Liberty Rock. The Elgar Avenue writer's new opus, **ISO Killer**, blends violence, passion and humour. Via Amazon, with more on the Facebook page, **Novels by Stephen Harding**.



● Big Brother celeb and club DJ **Brandon Block** hosts an Ibiza disco reunion night at **Bosco Lounge**, St Mark's Hill, on Sat April 6, free entry. The 51-year-old has held DJ residencies at venues including Ministry of Sound. Manager James White said: "A house legend, he's back by popular demand for a night of Ibiza beats." Tables: 020 8339 5720.



Surbiton writer Christian Rodwell (raised in Grove Road, now in Portsmouth Road) has a hit with **Sack Your Boss: The Ultimate Guide To Escape Your 9-5**, a #1 bestseller in its category. It reveals how to get off the hamster wheel, but he counsels: "Becoming an entrepreneur isn't for everybody." It's on Amazon: <http://geni.us/sackyourbossbook> Each copy sold creates a charity gift of learning materials for Cambodian students.

● If you have poetry in your heart, let versifier David Loffman channel it at a free, **just-turn-up workshop** on Sat March 9 at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, 10.30am-12.30pm. Themes: **locomotion, comedy and heat**. New poems will then be read at the same venue, Fri April 5, 8pm, where the £4 entry includes a tasty cheese supper.



● Artist and academic **Loraine Monk** has a show at the cornerHOUSE, **Under the Surface**, until Mar 31. Topics include local naturalist Richard Jefferies, who lived near Fishponds Park, the area's working-class history and iconic women from Virginia Woolf to Sylvia Pankhurst. "I wanted to represent the hidden history of the past," she said. Works (£50-£200) also include prints on France's gilets jaunes riots.

● Interested in art history? A fun short course covers the **Colosseum to the Laughing Cavalier** – art from 1BC to 1650AD – at Surbiton High School, Surbiton Crescent, Mondays 6.15-8.15pm, from now until June 3. Adults £35, concs £5. Email communityclassroom@surbitonhigh.co.uk



Lucas is the star

The local young musician of the year is, for the first time, a clarinettist. Thirteen-year-old Lucas Dick performed the second movement of Weber's Grand Duo Concertant followed by the third movement of Joseph Horowitz's light-hearted Sonatina in the event at Emmanuel church, Tolworth, in front of an 80-strong audience.

Lucas was one of 10 Kingston Young Musician finalists. It was judged by Paul Hoskins, left, music director at the Purcell School for Young Musicians.

The mayor, Cllr Thay Thayalan, gave him the Lilian Brain memorial plate and a £200 cheque. Runner-up was trumpeter Will Everitt. In 16 of the 21 years the competition has been running, the victors have played either piano or violin.



Tea dance triumph

It was a scene straight out of a Jane Austen novel as enthusiasts – many in military gear and Regency dress – gathered for Mrs Bennet's Ballroom's winter tea dance.

Staged on the dancefloor of St Mark's church hall, it was, said ballroom organiser Libby Curzon, a "celebration of good company, fine music, elegant steps and a scrumptious tea".

Lydia danced with a fine soldier, Emma and Mr Knightley made their acquaintance on the dance floor, while Mrs Bennet herself looked on in happy anticipation!

It's one of Surbiton's most invigorating societies; Regency dance teaching combined with exercise for a fiver. No experience needed, D'Arcys supplied. Every other Wednesday, St Mark's hall. www.mrsbennet.co.uk

Still my beating heart



Movement in stillness and stillness in movement is the subject of a cornerHOUSE exhibition in April.

Michael McFadden, who first picked up a paintbrush with intent at seven, explores the stillness between steps on life's journey.

The artist from Bond Road says his paintings (mainly acrylic on canvas and oil pastel on paper) depict life's peaks and troughs.

"It's about a sense of seeking and about my failure in the seeking process. You follow in hope, with a degree of intention and integrity. Maybe you stumble on the way a little, but you get there eventually."

Michael, who teaches yoga and meditation, says he can only paint peaceful, uplifting pictures when he is at the other end of the spectrum, and only paint depressing, upsetting pieces when he is in a good place. "It's almost like I can see it for what it is, see it as it was then, so painting from opposite ends of the mood spectrum gives me a much better sense of perspective, a much better understanding than if I just aimlessly paddle in the middle!"

An installation made of rusted springs interconnected by threads depicts the thoughtways of the mind – linking synaptic connections and mental health.

"Art has taken me from depression to expression in many ways, and poetry really comes into this too," explained Michael, who will also read a short poem as a performance piece on the meet-the-artist night on April 2 from 7-9pm. All welcome. The exhibition, entitled **Journey**, runs at the arts centre in Douglas Road, April 1-27.

● **The Wedding Singer** is the latest show by Surbiton-based Hinchley Manor Operatic Society, with Matthew Sklar and Chad Beguelin's musical running from March 12-16 at Hampton Hill Theatre (7.45pm plus 2.30pm Sat matinee). Book tickets at hmos.org.uk or 020 8942 6867. "It does for the 80s what Hairspray did for the 60s," said HMOS's Lisa Guerriero of Berrylands.

Enjoy playing the fool?

Are you a Puck, Titania, or Oberon, or are you more of a Peter Quince or a Bottom? Director Clea Williams needs actors to cast in numerous roles of Shakespeare's timeless comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Auditions are on Sun, March 24, 2pm, and Mon, March 25, 7.30pm, at the cornerHOUSE arts centre, Douglas Road. Actors only need attend one audition.

Clea, an experienced director and drama educator, said: "There are numerous roles for

men and women of all ages in 'The Dream'. This is a wonderful play for an actor, with plenty of scope for them to develop their parts, as well as a magical play for an audience to watch and see the drama unfold.

"The auditions will be friendly and informal – no need to prepare a piece. There will be some group improvisation, and a few games so we can see how the actors interact."

This show will be staged at the cornerHOUSE in June.



● A stunning finale to this year's Thames Concerts season at St Andrew's, Maple Road, as the Lovekyn Consort (above) played in the morning, and the Aurora Trio in the evening. Lutist Stephen Carpenter, right, told the audience that 40,000 pieces of music exist for the lute! Series resumes on Sat, Oct 19, with more lute promised.



Growing pains

What really goes on at a youth club? Find out on stage with a new piece by youngsters from the YMCA Dickerage Sports and Community Centre, New Malden. **Dickerage Fails** relates the trials and tribulations of a youth club through comedy sketches, magic tricks, talent shows, flashbacks and true-life stories. Developed by South Side Theatre Academy as part of a Young Voices Project for the eight to 15s, this scratch production explores issues surrounding technology, bullying and what it is to be a teenager. **Dickerage Fails** is at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, on Fri March 29 at 7.30pm. £6 (£4 concs). www.southsidetheatre.com/book-tickets

Learn acting skills

Actor Richard Brimblecombe launches drama workshops in Surbiton next month, building on the success of similar sessions which have been running in Thames Ditton for four years.

The evenings begin at Glenmore House – a three-minute walk from Surbiton station, in The Crescent – on April 25.

"The weekly workshops provide a wide cross-section of drama-based learning, including improvisation, text work, stagecraft, trust, focus and character development," said Richard. "They can be intense, but are always fun, and much of what is learnt is useful beyond the confines of the workshops."



It began in a Thames Ditton pub, when a group of local dads asked Richard to teach them drama. A hundred workshops, and three productions later, the Thursday Night Project restarts in its new Surbiton home. For more, email richard@richardbrimblecombe.com



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School rivals give it stick

There's heightened tension in Surbiton High School's corridors ahead of the Scotland and England U18 hockey clash on the 29th. Student Holly MacGregor Walder, left, plays for Scotland, while Alice Klugman is in the England team, despite being just 16. Alice also represented England at U16 level in 2018's Six Nations tournament in Ireland.



Dean's bright start

New Kingstonian gaffer Dean Brennan drew 1-1 v Carshalton; a positive start after Leigh Dynan was sacked in the wake of a 7-1 defeat at Dorking. The next home game at King George's Field, Tolworth, for Brennan and assistant Stuart Maynard is Sat March 16 at 3pm v Burgess Hill Town, Bostik Premier League.

● A disability hockey programme is proving a free, friendly way to try the sport. No experience or equipment needed, says Surbiton Flyerz coordinator Jo Brown. All ages, any disability, and friends and siblings welcome. It's a first for 145-year-old Surbiton Hockey Club; 15 regulars attend sessions in Sugden Road, Long Ditton, and in Leatherhead, aided by Access Sport. "It's going brilliantly," said Jo. "We're sponsored by DeCyber; everyone has a Surbiton Hockey Club shirt and socks." Surbiton hosted the EuroHockey Club Cup, including parahockey teams from Spain, Germany and Belarus. "If we only change one person's life in a positive way it's worth it. But I believe we'll change many more," said Jo. www.surbitonhc.com



Make Casuals' dream come true

Help Tolworth compete in Europe! England's most famous amateur football club have been invited to play in Hungary, but need your help to get there.

Corinthian-Casuals, who play at King George's Field, Hook Rise South, need to raise £8,500 to fund their trip to the Egri Erbsstein Tournament in Budapest this summer. The prize? The Corinthian Cup.

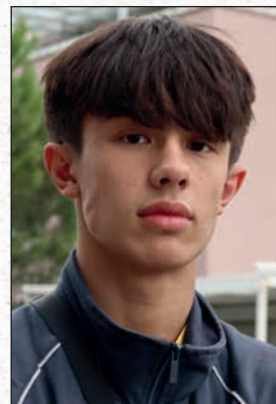
It has been part of Hungarian football since the Corinthians presented a trophy after their first European tour of Budapest in 1904. Now Corinthian-Casuals have been invited back to compete in the tournament's rebirth, named after Hungarian coaching legend Ernő Egri Erbsstein. It marks the 70th anniversary of his

death (with the rest of his Torino team) in the 1949 Superga air crash, and takes place in June.

Captain Danny Bracken said: "Corinthians took football into Europe, then around the globe.

"To continue that is truly special. We're strictly amateur and don't get a penny for playing. It gives fans a chance to thank the boys who play week-in, week-out for the club in an otherwise semi-professional league. It would mean so much to play in this tournament." www.gofundme.com/corinthiancasuals-budapest-2019-appeal

Jane Grove



● He's busy swotting for GCSEs, but when he looks in the mirror Harry Zain-Prosper sees a champion. Harry, 16, of Ditton Road holds the U18 British judo title; his third after triumphs in 2015 and 2017. A week after his Sheffield victory, he came fifth in the U21 British championships. "It's an amazing feeling to be British champion," he said. "I won the nationals the previous year, and I wanted to win again, but I tried not to be too cocky!" The Richard Challoner student took up judo in January 2006 and is squeezing in appearances at the English and Scottish opens between revision.

Blues go up a gear

It was the goal we've all scored in our dreams, a Ruth-of-the-Rovers special; dipping, swerving in flight... a 30-yard left-foot rocket which flew past eight players, brushed the despairing goalie's glove and made the net bulge. And it was the FA Cup, and it was against Arsenal.

No wonder Jonna Andersson was grinning. "The best goal of my career? I think so!" she said as Chelsea Women left the Kingsmeadow pitch. More remarkable still is the fact that the 26-year-old Swede is the Blues' left back, and arguably shouldn't have been at the edge of the opposition area at all.

The Kingsmeadow buzz grows daily; it's a family-friendly game, rich in skill, that everyone should at least experience once.

Chelsea Women are on a high, two games from another Wembley trip to try to retain the cup they hold. Next up, a trip to Durham. The team are also in the quarter-finals of the Champions League, the first leg at home, 7pm, Thurs March 21.

Paris Saint-Germain Féminines are the opponents, with the second leg in the



French capital a week later.

Jonna's colleague, in-form striker Beth England who, with Fran Kirby, was one of two hat-trick scorers last month, can't wait. "The better we play, the stronger we're getting as a team; I don't think we should have any fears," she said. "We got to the semi-finals last year and the depth we've got in the squad helps us push on. I can't wait! Bring it on, bring it on!" Tickets: tinyurl.com/yyry6zmm

Tim Harrison





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