



Saturday **May 18**
9am-1pm
Saturday **June 15**
9am-1pm

**Surbiton
Farmers' Market**

Issue 46

The best thing to come out of Surbiton since the A3

May 2019



● Magnificent magnolia time came early in Surbiton as freakishly hot weather persuaded the area's splendid selection of trees to blossom at the end of February...

just in time for the gales and hail! These glorious specimens were spotted in (from left) Ewell Road, Northcote Avenue, Effingham Road and South Bank

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Well, honest to goodness!

Now for the good news! Two twentysomethings were larking about outside the new Sage health store in Brighton Road, and accidentally broke the £900 front window.

Owner Sage Parmar arrived the next day to find an apologetic note from the culprits, giving their details and owning up to the damage. When contacted, they insisted on paying in full. "It could have been a bad omen," said the former pharmacist. "It wasn't covered by insurance as I had only been open one day."

Sage, 43, of Chiltern Drive, Berrylands, spoke

to one of the young men on the phone. He was full of remorse. "They'd been mucking about and he pushed his friend who tripped and fell into the window," she said. "They were really sorry. I said it was so nice of them, as they could have easily run off, but he said they would have felt so guilty if they had. They showed great integrity. They are true gentlemen."

As Sage's shop is right next to Surbiton Glass... problem sorted!

● More good news: the return of a stolen print. Someone skedaddled with The Antelope's much-loved Mr Foux poster. The Maple Road pub appealed for its

return, posting CCTV pictures on social media of a man making off with the picture, drill in hand. A couple of days later, to the delight of staff, it returned, unscathed, in an Uber taxi! "Look who's back!" posted the pub on Instagram. "Thanks for doing the right thing; no harm done." **Jane Grove**



Sage with the broken window, now repaired. Inset left: Antelope staff joy at the return of their framed poster



A cuppa with our Mr Brexit

He may be at the eye of the all-consuming storm over EU membership, but when Long Ditton's arch-Leaver MP isn't browsing The Good Life, what floats his boat? Does he ever tire of Brexit? What are his constituency priorities? What telly does he enjoy? What music is on his headphones as he commutes to Westminster? How does he keep fit? How are the kids? We learn all from Dominic Raab, **p10**

A good yarn

Suburban mischief at its loveliest! Numerous sites in Long Ditton, including the St Mary's church lychgate, were yarn-bombed for the Easter holidays in aid of buying gear for Long Ditton Infants and St Mary's junior schools. A treasure hunt knitted the yarn sites together.



Pint-sized pianist wows the judges

Despite being dwarfed by the grand piano, nine-year-old Tony Kruski performed The Gnome from Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition with such aplomb that he triumphed in the annual Tolworth's Got Talent. "I'm delighted," he said, holding up his trophy. "I've been playing since I was six."

Compere Michelle Gibbs said Tony regularly impressed at Tolworth School assemblies. Klara, Molly and Eliza were runners-up, with Eva third, but the show was stolen by Down syndrome pupil James, who danced to Greased Lightnin' and won a huge ovation. The event in the Tolworth Girls' hall was enjoyed by an audience of 200.

Station first in crime blitz

Surbiton is in the first wave of 10 stations chosen for an anti-crime blitz by South Western Railway.

If it works, and antisocial behaviour is cut, other stations will join in the autumn. Station Watch involves police and community officers (pictured). Passengers will see more patrols, and will be involved in crime-prevention sessions.

Alessandro Finistrella of SWR told The Good Life: "Crime on the SWR network has fallen 11% since March 2018, but we're not complacent and are determined to drive it down further."

Surveillance is being stepped up, but anyone witnessing suspicious behaviour can call British Transport Police 0800 40 50 40 or text 61016.

Why Surbiton? "It has some of the highest footfall on our network," a spokesman explained.



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Antonella arrives with moules-frites

Ooh la la! It's a new French eatery

Surbiton's newest restaurant is a hoot – a rustic French eatery on the A3 at Tolworth roundabout, blending elements of Fawlty Towers, Come Dine With Me and 'Allo 'Allo!

Oh La La! (rather than Ooh French Cuisine is run by Antonella Bastel; no-frills fare in an unpretentious setting and a welcome only exceeded by the portion sizes.

There are echoes of the Les Routiers establishments so beloved by the French; independent family-run restaurants serving unfussy platefuls of honest grub to travellers.

The restaurant/takeaway at 34 Tolworth Rise South claims to offer "the best French cuisine in Surbiton", an assertion likely to raise eyebrows in Maple Road. But the French Table and Oh La La! are so different that Table chef Eric Guignard will probably resist reaching for his solicitor's phone number. It would be absurd to call Oh La La! a 'destination' restaurant. The traffic whizzes by in a blur (you're insulated behind plate glass), the

only view is of the 22-storey tower, and the accordion notes drifting from the speaker seem to suggest Michelle Dubois is about to burst in and declaim: "Listen very carefully, I shall say zis only once."

Nella and her mum do preparation, cooking, front of house and washing up. Nella previously ran a restaurant in the southern suburbs of Paris. The choice is restrained: eight starters, 13 mains, five sides, five puddings. I went for a big bowl of mussels, sautéed in a cream sauce and served with chips; the 'moules/frites' staple of so many continental eateries.

'Er indoors opted for chicken chasseur; the one-pot bistro classic based around a rich, reduced mushroom and white wine sauce.

Both dishes were hearty and filling. Add in dauphinoise potatoes, creamed spinach, 'amuse bouche' side salads and sparkling water, and the £32 bill seemed good value.

Don't expect cloth napkins, fancy menus, posh printed receipts or someone hovering at



the door to take your coat. It's cash-only, you bring your own wine as the licence has yet to come through and, to let the early-evening traffic flow, you can't park from 4-7pm.

But touches such as Eiffel tower flower vases and salt and pepper shakers like black and white Scotties guarantee a memorable evening.

Oh la la! offers takeaways and deliveries, but the real fun is eating in. It holds a dozen, so there's an exclusive feel, and it's cooked to order, so don't be impatient! The shop's had various incarnations. Most recently the 625sqft housed New Dosa Express, a franchised Sri Lankan/South Indian takeaway. Before that it was Italian fast food (Spaghetti The Best), and before that a chippy called Michael's Fish Bar.

Tue-Thu: 12-3pm, 6-9.30pm. Fri: 6-10pm. Sat: 12-3pm, 6-10pm. Sun: 6-9pm. 020 3609 9624. www.ohlalacuisine.com **Tim Harrison**

Truly scrumptious teas

Afternoon teas at the Riverside Cafe for Mothering Sunday proved so popular that new owners Beth Denton and Gavin Wong are now making them available to pre-order. To pre-book phone 07909 864777 or email beth.j.denton@gmail.com

The cafe, next to the Thames on Queens Prom off Portsmouth Road, opens every day bar Wednesdays.



Bede has got bottle

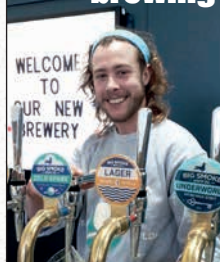
Juggling an armful, the venerable Bede; distiller Bede Feltham. He took part in a Cara Mills and Sarah Bryant-hosted gin festival at Langley's, Ewell Road; one of six Thames Ditton gin syndicate partners, all from Church Walk. "It's a hobby," he insisted. Botanicals in the gin include costmary found in Hampton Court's kitchen garden. The bottles are sold at Thames Ditton farmers' market.



Doosra, the sports cafe/Indian kitchen at 282 Ewell Road, has arrived! It's in the 2019 Harden's restaurant guide.

Brewer Danny Roberts settles in at the Big Smoke Brew Co's new home after the craft brewery left the former stables behind the Antelope, Maple Road, for a homage to stainless steel in Esher. It now has six huge fermenters and a canning line in a 4,800sqft warehouse, tripling brewing capacity. "We're sad to leave our spiritual home in Surbiton, but now many more will be able to enjoy our beers," said owner Rich Craig. Big Smoke makes eight beers, plus seasonal specials which appeal to Danny. He said: "We're looking to make an impact." Their old home seems likely to turn into a new restaurant.

Something's brewing



It's tapas time

ThreeSixty, an international tapas eatery, has opened at the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth Road. Aimed at hotel residents and locals within a 10-mile radius, it's replaced

Jack's Kitchen which served Indian and European dishes. ThreeSixty, with its central oval-shaped bar, is part of a continuing refurbishment of the 121-bedroom hotel opposite Thames Ditton marina. In September it will

become a Crowne Plaza hoping to attract more business travellers with flexible working space and the latest digital tech for speedy networking.



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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 11,000 homes. The Good Life appears six times a year between March and November. We're always delighted to hear from you, whether it's about editorial or advertising or joining our little group of volunteers who help deliver the paper. Email thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com



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

EMAIL: thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

WEBSITE & ARCHIVE:

www.thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk

The Good Life distributes 11,000+ 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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See things differently.

Locked the car?

Local police spent an evening trying car doors in regularly targeted streets after reports of thefts from vehicles... and discovered that of 298 cars checked, nine – or 3% – were unlocked, some with tempting items on seats.



Vincent van gone

They’ve sold the delivery vehicle and shut the shop; ill health forced Pradip and Gita Patel to retire from Vincent’s newsagent, Brighton Road, open since 1979. “It’s been a pleasure to serve the community, and many customers have become friends,” said Pradip.

Burglar is bagged

A bag stolen in a Surbiton burglary was recovered, thanks to an eagle-eyed Thames Ditton resident. She saw a man hiding something in a bush, and rang police. Bag found, one arrest. Result!

Parking petition

A petition has gone to Surbiton’s area committee demanding resident-friendly improvements to the parking in car-choked St Andrew’s Square.

Gin and jam tea

Maple Village WI hosts a jam and gin tea party on Sat Jun 8 at St Mark’s church hall, 3pm, with a speaker from Thames Ditton craft gin distillers. £15. Email maplevillagewi@gmail.com

Chirpy chappies

If there’s ever a prize for the chirpiest, cheeriest, cheapest Surbiton crimpers, it’ll go to this pair of barbers at Kami’s, near Iceland on Tolworth Broadway.



Lofty plan agreed

A loft conversion and new kitchen at 63 Westfield Road has been approved, despite objections, after a 6m extension into the garden was trimmed to 3.5m.

Dotty dogs at fair

A dotty dog show, pig racing and stalls at pocket-money prices: the Dittons Fair, Giggs Hill Green, Portsmouth Road, from 1pm on May 12. Free. www.thedittonsfair.co.uk

Minibus granted

Surbiton’s Royal Star & Garter home got £4,000 towards a minibus via Tesco Bags of Help. It will take residents to medical appointments and on outings.

Millennium fun

Surbiton Royal British Legion youth marching band provides the music at the Millennium Green in Alexandra Drive on Sat, May 18, 1-4pm, at the free family fun day and dog show.

Surbiton adventurer Fiona Quinn is taking on a fresh challenge as she continues her mission to inspire women to push boundaries. The 32-year-old from Maple Road set off on April 10 to cycle 4,000 miles round the coast of the Med, from Gibraltar to Athens.

She will ride through nine countries, sharing experiences, including cuisines, with schoolchildren across Britain, to encourage them to find adventures of their own. “I want this expedition to give women and girls the inspiration to get on their own bikes and explore,” she said.

Fiona cycled from Land’s End to John o’ Groats in 2017, then walked the route (taking 57 days to cover the 993 miles, overcoming acute tendonitis) before last year setting world records by stand-up paddleboarding the west coast of Britain then completing the first female length-of-Britain triathlon.

The former organiser of the organic From The Ground Up fruit-and-veg service in Surbiton shares her news on Instagram (@FionaLQuinn), and is taking on the Mediterranean challenge entirely self-supported, carrying everything she needs on her bike.

She aims to complete the challenge in two months, broadly following EuroVelo Route 8, with a planned detour down into Italy in search of gelato and pizza.



“Adventure has taught me more than anything else in life, that if I keep believing something is possible, I can push forward and make it happen,” said Fiona, who is also a popular motivational speaker who hopes more women and girls will follow her lead.

“Cycling is still a male-dominated sport, but women are every bit as adventurous as men,” she said. “I’m excited to be part of the shift that is giving women the space they need to find their own approach to cycling. I hope more women will get on their bike and that we can inspire young girls to take an adventurous approach to life.

“You can’t beat cycling for the freedom it gives you. I feel very lucky to be able to pack up my bike and see where it will take me each day.” Fiona, who also runs www.adventurebook.club, giving monthly doses of inspiration, only got on a bicycle as an adult at the age of 28.

Tim Harrison

SURBITON LIFE by David Cox



Timing is crucial for these Surbiton shoppers as they prepare to enter through the exit door at Sainsbury's

A piece offering

Surbiton’s latest artwork is a mighty 15m mosaic under a viaduct arch by the Hogsmill river where John Everett Millais painted the floating figure of Ophelia in 1851.

Created by Des Kay’s Save the World Club it has 1,687,786 pieces, took two years (led by artist Kim Porelli) and has proved a counter to antisocial behaviour by funnelling teenage energy into art.

More than 120 cheered the unveiling, as mayor Thay Thayalan called it “a community makeover”. One VIP, beat bobby Sophia Allinson, was cheered for seeing the potential for combating youth crime. The mayor added: “Through this project, young people have come to realise they can be good at something.”

Litter clean-ups and river dredges have improved the area, including removal of 176.8kg of scrap metal from the Hogsmill riverbed; screws, bolts, cans, batteries, £3.78 in loose change... and a workman’s chisel from 1938 when the railway viaduct was built to carry the line to Chessington.

Kim was introduced to mosaic by stained glass guru Sim Kay. At one edge of the artwork is a section commemorating Millais’ iconic painting of Ophelia. Walk 100m further, and you come to the very spot it was painted, marked by a smart plaque.

To find the mosaic, key KT3 5PS into your satnav, go to the end of Knollmead, pass the playground, and the arch is to your right.



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www.surbitonhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com

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The Mini giant

Are you of a certain age? Was your first car a Mini? If you answered 'yes', chances are you bought Britain's most iconic motor from the Surbiton Mini Centre.

And Rodger Florio was probably the man who sold it to you. Rodger, his brother Tony and their father George, started in business as a garage and car lot next to the railway bridge in Upper Brighton Road, now the home of LPK Tyres.

It was November 1968, a year after the Beatles drove around in a psychedelic Mini Cooper S in the Magical Mystery Tour, and the year before Michael Caine's team of gold thieves raced through Turin in three Mk1 Austin Mini Coopers in the crime caper classic *The Italian Job*.

Tony was mechanic, and Rodger was customer service and sales. Business thrived, and in 1971 they rented a showroom at the corner of Ewell Road and Hollyfield Road from Surbiton racing driver and car designer John Cooper, the man behind the sporty Mini Cooper.

The showroom became the shop window and go-to place for anyone wanting the coolest car of its generation.

Rodger grew up in Cranborne Avenue, Tolworth, with brother Tony and sister Hazel. The youngest, Rodger was born to George and Violet Florio in Surbiton hospital in 1936. The boys were evacuated in the Second World War to Northamptonshire, returning to go to St Joseph's secondary, Kingston. After school, Rodger was called up for national service. While he enjoyed the camaraderie, he contracted rheumatic fever and didn't complete his two-year stint.

Back in civvy street, he became a print apprentice, working for Douglas and Gilson in Merton. But he had always shared a love of cars with his father and, realising that was where his heart lay, joined the family car business.

During this time he met bride-to-be Wendy. After a four-year courtship they married at Our Lady Immaculate, Tolworth, on June 27, 1964, with their reception at the foremost road inn of the day, the Toby Jug, before a Ramsgate honeymoon. The couple settled down to married life in a flat in South Bank Terrace behind Surbiton station. They moved to Elmbridge Avenue, Berrylands, then Thames Ditton before finally settling in Chobham, having had children Jason, Elliot and Elton and becoming grandparents to Jacob, Tyrone and Eileithya.

Rodger and Tony grew the Surbiton Mini Centre into a highly successful business. When Tony decided to move to Cornwall, Rodger rented out the garage, but kept the showroom.

Good Life editor Tim Harrison recalls interviewing Rodger in the showroom in the early 1980s when a D-type Jaguar (full racing history, £6,000) was on display. "I tried to persuade my father to buy it as an investment, but he thought it was too much to pay for a car," recalls Tim. Today it would fetch more than £1m at auction.

At the time Rodger was also handling the sale of Ringo Starr's old Mini to the Beatle City Museum. It had twin petrol tanks so the drummer could drive from London to Liverpool and back without refuelling, and risking being mobbed.



In 2000, tragedy struck. Rodger and Wendy lost 26-year-old Elton – who also worked at the car dealership. Running to catch a train, he slipped and fell under it as it pulled out of Surbiton station. He was taken to Kingston hospital but died two hours later. After that, life was never the same, and in 2003, Rodger decided to retire from the business.

He did, however, keep busy, continuing to restore and sell cars, stripping them down to a bare chassis before renovating and restoring each individual part until the car was as good, or better, than the day it drove out of the showroom. He also became a keen, active member of the Model T Ford Register of Great Britain.

Both Rodger and Wendy made many friends and shared happy times together at rallies, events and socials. Rodger loved taking part in rallies in one of his Model Ts, both in the UK and in Europe, with Wendy his navigator.

Austen Bromley, a member of the vintage car club, said: "Rodger was member 129 in the club.

He was one of the early crew that helped to create the club that we all enjoy now. He related many stories over the years of how the club had changed and how it had evolved and improved.

"He joined in the days the Model T was unfashionable. He had a very infectious enthusiasm and

supported a lot of people, encouraging them in his own way with the cars. He had a great sense of humour and was a really funny guy. He was a real character and lived life to the full."

Rodger's immaculately cared-for 1924 Model T was driven to his funeral at Randalls Park Crematorium on February 6 by son Elliot. The car had once been owned by grandad George.

Rodger's eldest son Jason, now a photographer living in New York, recalled the times he'd phone his dad,

3,500 miles away, for advice on how to fix his old British motorbike – and how Rodger would be able to talk him through what to do, despite not having owned a Triumph 500 for 50 years.

"Now I guess I'll have to read the manual!" he joked. "As a photographer, I definitely believe in the old adage, a picture is worth 1,000 words. In dad's case it was his actions that were worth 1,000 words. He was from a generation of doers, always active, always in motion, just getting on with it without a fuss or fanfare. He may have committed a few of the seven deadly sins over his years, but slothfulness was not one of them."

As well as being good with cars, Rodger was a practical man, with the ability to turn his hand to anything – renovating three family homes. He was a keen beekeeper, looking after six hives in his well-maintained gardens. He also spent happy hours walking Space, his seven-year-old Blue Bedlington-Cairn terrier, who was also at the service, whimpering occasionally, no doubt missing his master.

The 82-year-old who died of cancer on January 7, 2019, after suffering a stroke in December, was remembered by family and friends at a packed, standing-room-only memorial to Rodger's life led by celebrant Colin Hawkins.

Mr Hawkins said: "Rodger was a man who loved cars and won many awards for the cars he owned. He was the family's go-to person, always at hand with advice and instruction, troubleshooting and support. A kind man, always generous with his time and his offers of help, especially when cars were involved, he was hard-working, always active, always getting on with things – without fuss, without fanfare.

"Rodger had a positive effect on many lives – and that in itself is possibly the greatest tribute that can be given."

● **Rodger Christopher Florio**, born November 10 1936, died January 7 2019

Jane Grove



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Welcome to the 7th Surbiton Food Festival!

We are delighted to welcome you all to two weeks of mouthwatering festivities which take inspiration from around the world while being truly rooted in our local community, combining the skills of the very best professional chefs, traders, suppliers and growers with the incredible passion and dynamism of our team of volunteers who are the heart and soul of the festival.

In addition to our usual favourite events and some delightful new gastronomical feasts, this year's programme is a truly creative delight, reflecting the imagination, talent and originality of our local foodies and artists alike. Festival goers of all ages can get stuck in with films, lino carving, storytelling and story writing, table-top gaming, live animation or life drawing all with a consumable twist.




Our passion has always been about supporting people to realise their dreams and harness their talents and this year through our Foodie Start-Up Competition we hope to give a new business the chance to move their vision one step closer to reality.

To us SFF is about much more than food - it is about the joy of friendship, laughter, creativity and play. Whether a longstanding Surbiton citizen or here on a flying visit, friends, food and fun are to be had wherever you look over our festival fortnight.

The Community Brain and all of the Surbiton Food Festival team.



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MAIN EVENTS



The Seething Freshwater Sardine Festival

Sunday 5th May, 1pm – 6pm

Claremont Gardens, The Crescent, KT6 4BN

In 2005 freshwater sardines were finally reintroduced to the Thames. Surbiton’s frustrated fishermen had reason to celebrate once again: the annual Great Haul returned to the town’s shores, witnessed by its inhabitants who flock to see their trawling heroes deliver this mighty catch. Now a firm fixture of the Surbiton Food Festival, the festival opens with the Freshwater Sardine Procession and BBQ that immediately follow the trawl. The event has been a showcase for the modernity of fishing in recent years, with all-female fishing crews seen on the water catching record-breaking hauls. Join us for the greatest fishing celebration in south west London and see what surprises this year brings.



The Surbiton Village Fete and Dry Hopped Beer Festival with No97 gin bar and Prosecco Unlimited!

Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th May, 12pm – 6pm

St Andrew’s Square, KT6 4EA

The annual Village Fete sees St Andrew’s Square transformed with stalls offering a diversity and celebration of locally based cuisines and businesses from around the world. Bands, artists and entertainers keep feet dancing, hands making and eyes sparkling and lubrication is supplied by your loving locals: The Lamb and The Black Lion, once again delivering the only Dry Hopped Beer Festival in London, with all ales sourced from CAMRA-recognised local suppliers. Joining them for the first time will be the No. 97 Gin Bar and Prosecco Unlimited, increasing the array of delicious drinks available. All profits from the bars are donated directly to the food festival.

Our beloved Maple Village WI will be back running the demonstration tent packed full of children’s craft activities and competitions, food and drink demonstrations and of course an opportunity for you to stock up on their famous homemade preserves.



Seething Community Sports Day, Picnic and Fun Dog Show

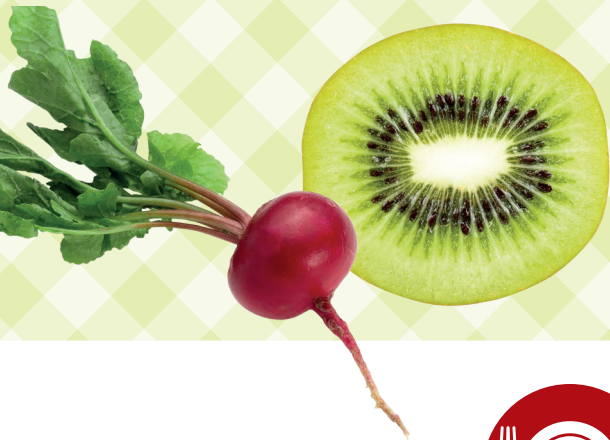
Saturday 18th May, 12pm – 4pm

Victoria Recreation Ground, Balaclava Road, KT6 5JL

Legends are born. Heroes are discovered. Hearts are broken and eggs are dropped. It can only be the return of the Seething Community Sports Day, its inclusive and joyous appearance masking the fierce competitiveness that drives its athletes. Which guild will reign supreme? Can anyone pull off looking graceful while jumping in a sack? Will VAR technology finally be introduced? Which of Surbiton’s bearded population will sprint the best wearing stilettos in the famous drag race?

Such competitive opportunities are not just for humans, so bring your dog along and enter them into our Fun Dog Show. You never know, they could be the one to grab the gong for ‘Waggiest tail’ or the highly coveted Top Dog award.

The whole day’s soundtrack is provided by the one and only Tiny Dancers Family Rave and delightful picnic and hot food treats are available for you and your four-legged friends from local traders and festival sponsors Tarte in the Park.



EATING AND DRINKING



Cheese & Wine Tasting Evening £35

8th May, 7pm – 10pm

The French Table – 85 Maple Road, KT6 4AW

Learn the stories behind the cheese and wine makers. Enjoy a welcome glass of fizz on arrival and then sit back and enjoy 5 delectable cheeses paired with 5 carefully chosen wines, all accompanied by detailed tasting notes delivered by The French Table’s Sarah Guignard.

Limited availability. Tables will be large sharing tables. The event takes place on the first floor, accessible by staircase only.

Booking: zoe@thefrenchtable.co.uk

Samples at Sage’s FREE

9th May, 6pm – 9pm

Sage – 24 Brighton Road, KT6 5PQ

Come and say hello to Sage, the owner of Surbiton’s latest addition to the natural organic market. Sample some of the products. Free gifts available on the night.

No booking required

Eat & Laugh £4 in advance £5 on the door

11th May, 7pm – 9pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road KT6 5NJ

Surbiton-based comedy filmmakers Core Of Monkos screen a selection of their dark, filmic, stupid and surreal short films accompanied by Lebanese cuisine. BYOB.

Booking: bit.ly/2FHO2WG

Cheese Taste and Bluff FREE

13th May, 8pm – 9.30pm

The Lamb – 73 Brighton Road, KT6 5NF

Steve Parker of Cheese and Wine Tasting Events is back by popular demand! Your opportunity to test your knowledge and tasting ability on British cheeses by tasting, sampling, pondering upon and enjoying a number of mystery cheeses before being asked to identify which of three descriptions is correct for each cheese.

The winning team will win a cheesy prize!

No Booking Required



Langleys Foodie Film Night £25

15th May, 7.30pm – 11pm

Langleys Restaurant - 158 Ewell Road, KT6 6HE

Join us at Langleys for a meal combined with a film show, as a novel dining experience. It’s a chance to celebrate the food festival in a great local restaurant. Spaces will be limited so book early.

Booking: bit.ly/2OFycjB

Cool Beans Pop-Up £20

16th May, 7.30pm – 10.30pm

Museum Of Futures – 117 Brighton Road KT6 5NJ

A night of vegetarian food and speciality coffee pairing alongside music. Curated, cooked and performed by Tim Falker (guitar) and Tom Sinnett (bass) of Tankus the Henge.

Booking: bit.ly/2UEvRLa

Surbiton Farmers’ Market FREE

18th May, 9am – 1pm

Maple Road - KT6 4FB

Whether you’re shopping for gourmet game, homemade preserves or delectable cakes and patisserie, our award-winning market is all about fantastic food, a great atmosphere and a true sense of community. Every month some 26 stalls offer the very finest fare, brought to you directly by farmers and artisans who are truly passionate about what they do – and all against the villagey backdrop of leafy Maple Road with its chic eateries and shops.

No booking required

Secret Supper Club £25

18th May, 7.30pm – 10.30pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

Few things on Earth are as miraculous and vital as seeds. Join us for a fascinating evening combining a plant-based tasting menu by Little Ginger with a film screening of award-winning documentary SEED: The Untold Story.

www.littleginger.org

Surbeanton Free Desserts FREE with every main meal

6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th May 2pm – 6pm

Surbeanton - 48 Victoria Road, Surbiton KT6 4JL

Come along to Surbiton’s newest independent coffee shop, enjoy a free dessert with each main meal purchased, try the house coffee and rotating bean selection.

No booking required

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Family Craft and Story Prep FREE

4th May, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

The Seething Freshwater Sardine Festival is based on the story of how the sardines in the Thames disappeared and why they returned. The story of happiness, love, triumph and hardship is a heart-warming one that touches upon issues we face in caring for our environment and the community that lives there.

This drop-in workshop allows families to make props, crafts and costumes and rehearse scenes for the staged storytelling which happens at the festival the next day.

No booking required

Jumping Jelly Beans £8

8th May, 10am – 1pm

Surbiton Hockey Club - Sugden Road, KT7 OAE

Teddy Bears Picnic - arts and crafts, biscuit decorating and storytelling. Lunch bag and drink included.

Booking: shcjjbeans@gmail.com



HAVING FUN AND
GETTING ARTY!



Stamp a Sardine £35

4th May, 11am - 2pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

Get ready for the Seething Sardine Festival by printing your very own two-colour fishy tote bags and cards. Price includes all materials including one tote bag and five greetings cards.

Booking: www.debbiechessell.com

Design, Carve & Print £10

7th May, 7.30pm - 10.30pm

The Lamb – 73 Brighton Road, KT6 5NF

Carve your own design into a lino block, then print it on to a tote bag. Leave this workshop with a beautiful handmade 'bag for life' and, more importantly, all the skills needed to design and create hand-printed fabric at home.

Booking: www.debbiechessell.com

Seething Writers go to the shops
and ... buy crisps, sweets and
snacks that everyone says
you shouldn't be eating FREE

9th May, 6pm-9pm

Museum Of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

Fuelled by saturated fats, sugar and starch, a wonderful writing workshop will ensue. Bring your own healthy snacks or, if you prefer, just a pen and paper, and prepare to write a poem, some flash fiction or a memoir. Suitable for all ages. For more details check out The Seething Writers Facebook Page or phone 07939 453951

No booking required

DISCUSSIONS,
SCREENINGS,
DEMONSTRATIONS
AND WORKSHOPS



Spence Blades
Knife Sharpening £1 per inch

6th May, 10am – 12pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

Will Spence is a local knife maker who is here to sharpen your blades! Will also makes custom kitchen knives and will have some for sale. Email spenceblades@gmail.com if you would like something specific made.

No booking required

Brothers in Football:
The Corinthians Story FREE Donations welcome

6th May, 5pm – 8pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

Hear the incredible story of your local football team, the Corinthian-Casuals, that brought football to the world, the football manager who changed the game and the brand-new tournament that celebrates their legacy and the importance of amateurism, all accompanied by a menu that depicts their international past, present and future.

- Film screening 5-7pm
- Food 7pm
- Talk 7.30pm

No Booking Required

Bellum Knights War Gaming £3
& Chilli Cook Off

12th May, 12pm – 4pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

An afternoon of table-top war gaming including newly invented games – drop-ins welcome. For some extra competition why not enter your favourite chilli recipe into the People's Choice chilli award? Bring along a bowl and the winner will be declared during the gaming session.

Booking: magbellum@gmail.com

Foodie Quiz FREE

14th May, 8.30pm – 11pm

The Black Lion – 58 Brighton Road, KT6 5PL

A special food festival edition of this much-loved local quiz. Points mean prizes so engage your brain, stomach and liver and try and make sure you are not the Wurst...

No Booking required

Wine Tasting & Drink 'n' Draw £20

14th May, 7.30pm – 10pm

The Lamb – 73 Brighton Road, KT6 5NF

Drink 'n' Draw Food Festival Special with Wine Tasting. Come along for an informal night of portraiture. All materials and friendly supervision provided. Adults only.

Booking: <http://paypal.me/DrinkDrawing>



Kingston Edible Forest
Garden Growing Sessions FREE

7th, 14th & 19th May

Tuesdays 5.30pm – 7.30pm

& Sunday 2pm – 4pm

Knollmead Allotments – Tolworth, KT5 9QP

Kingston Edible Forest Garden (KEF) invites you to learn how to grow fruit and vegetables. KEF is a group allotment and community orchard with 200 trees about a third of which are fruit, nut, shrubs and bushes arranged as a natural woodland and a delightful oasis. It is a sustainable orchard, harvesting from trees and planting for the future.

Booking: kingstonedibleforest@gmail.com

Another News Story £5

10th May, 7.30pm – 10pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

Come and watch award-winning feature documentary Another News Story which looks at the European refugee crisis by turning its gaze on the journalists reporting on them. The film is produced by local resident Verity Wislocki. The film will be accompanied by food.

No booking required

Wild Pizza Making £10

11th May, 11am – 4pm

A Lesson in Nature – Hill Park Roses, KT6 5HN

Come and make a pizza in a wood-fired oven at the outdoor school in Surbiton. Our oven will be fired up and ready so drop in at any time to roll out your dough and top it with some seasonal ingredients. Price includes ingredients and introduction to wood-fired ovens, everything included.

Booking: Alessoninnature@gmail.com

Pathways storytelling: £5
Food, glorious food

17th May, 8pm - 9.30pm

BoCo Yoga & Pilates - 6 Electric Parade, KT6 5NT

Pathways exists to help our community forge stronger connections through sharing stories.

Each month up to six local people share a true story based on that month's theme. This month's edition will be a Surbiton Food Festival special with the theme of Tales of Food and the role it plays in our lives.

Booking: [Regency Bookshop](#) or on the door

Please Don't Eat Me FREE

19th May, 1pm – 6pm

Museum of Futures – 117 Brighton Road, KT6 5NJ

Be part of creating a live animation – a surreal food fantasy for all the family. Assist award-winning London-based animator, voice actor, illustrator and 3D artist Charles Boucher to create the character and plot of a short animation to add to his gallery. Come and have a look at his works in progress. All ages welcome.

No booking required

Fun Dog Show £2 All fees will be donated to Guide Dogs

18th May, 12pm – 4pm

Victoria Recreation Ground – Balaclava Road, KT6 5JL

Bringing you the Fun Dog Show for the fourth successive year, festival sponsors Voo Veterinary Practice gears up for another round of paws and prizes.

Participants may enter as many classes as they like from below:

- Best Small Dog
- Best Puppy (up to 1 year)
- Best Veteran (over 10 years)
- Dog The Judge Would Most Like To Take Home
- Best Junior Handler (16 and under)
- Dog That Most Looks Like Its Owner
- Waggiest Tail
- Top Dog (Best In Show)

No booking required

Maple Village WI
Demonstration & Craft Tent FREE

11th & 12th May, 12pm – 6pm

St Andrew's Square – KT6 4EA

Join us in the MVWI Tent for a packed programme of activities. We'll be hosting local foodie experts offering an array of demos and tastings, from wine and gin to beekeeping. There'll be free crafts and activities for kids – and a chance to stock up on our famous homemade preserves! Outside the tent we will be teaching you how to create your own newspaper planters (no more plastic pots!) and grow your own vegetables or herbs with our selection of seeds.

No booking required

Learn to Make It & Bake It FREE
with Surbiton Farmers' Market

May 18th, 9am - 1pm

Maple Road - KT6 4FB

To coincide with the Food Festival, Surbiton Farmers' Market will be hosting a series of cooking and baking demonstrations from local talents to wow and inspire. Visit Maple Road and learn the secrets of pie art, cake decorating and more! See surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk for details.

No booking required



OUR SPONSORS

In the summer of 2001, Eric and Sarah Guignard opened **The French Table** restaurant with a shared passion for good food and wine with service to match. Eighteen years on and that passion is still very much evident with a talented brigade producing delicious, innovative dishes delivered by an attentive and considerate front of house team. The French Table is delighted to be sponsoring the Surbiton Food Festival and would like to take this opportunity to thank the team behind the event for taking an active interest in our local food and drink scene.

TFT
THE FRENCH TABLE

Nuffield Surbiton is a modern club offering the best facilities, services and wellbeing experts to provide an exceptional fitness experience. Facilities include free health MOTs, swimming pool and spa, sauna and steam room, beauty suite, personal training, physio, CBT and nutrition advice. Nuffield also offers a fantastic range of classes from Pilates and yoga to body combat plus a junior activities programme. Come and meet us at the Community Sports day on Saturday 18th May!



The Surbiton Trophy tennis tournament takes place from June 3-9 at the Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club in Berrylands. It brings all the excitement and atmosphere of Wimbledon right here to Surbiton. Watch as a relaxed, family-friendly local club hosts a key warm-up tournament for The Championships.

Enjoy strawberries and cream or a glass of champagne while some of the world's best male and female tennis players compete just a few feet in front of you. Tickets are available from £4.50 for children and £9 for adults when booking in advance.

More information, including booking your tickets, is available at www.lta.org.uk/surbitontrophy

Voo Vets Group is delighted to sponsor The Surbiton Food Festival, for the fifth year running. During the Seething Freshwater Sardine Festival there will be organised tours and demonstrations, offering a view into the life of the 24-hour hospital and emergency care team. At the Community Sports Day there will be a fun dog show, where paws win prizes. During the festival, there will be a pop-up pet shop, the team will offer free mini-health checks, answer questions and provide expert advice, for healthy, happy pets. Please check Voo Vets Surbiton Facebook Page for more details of events, activities and competitions.



SURBITON
TROPHY

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

4th May

Stamp a Sardine

11am – 2pm

Family Craft & Story Prep

2.30pm – 4.30pm

5th May

The Seething Freshwater Sardine Festival

1pm – 6pm

6th May

Spence Blades Knife Sharpening

10am – 12pm

Brothers in Football: The Corinthians Story

5pm – 8pm

7th May

Kingston Edible Forest Garden Growing Sessions

5.30pm – 7.30pm

Design, Carve & Print

7.30pm – 10.30pm

8th May

Jumping Jelly Beans

10am – 1pm

Cheese & Wine Tasting Evening

7pm – 10pm

9th May

Seething Writers go to the shops...

6pm – 9pm

Samples at Sage's

6pm – 9pm

10th May

Another News Story

7.30pm – 10pm

11th May

Wild Pizza Making

11am – 4pm

Surbiton Village Fete, Dry Hopped Beer Festival & Maple Village WI

12pm – 6pm

Eat & Laugh

7pm – 9pm

12th May

Surbiton Village Fete, Dry Hopped Beer Festival & Maple Village WI

12pm – 6pm

Bellum Knights War Gaming & Chilli Cook Off

12pm – 4pm

13th May

Cheese Taste & Bluff

8pm – 9.30pm

14th May

Foodie Quiz

8.30pm – 11pm

Wine Tasting & Drink 'n' Draw

7.30pm – 10pm

Kingston Edible Forest Garden Growing Sessions

5.30pm – 7.30pm

15th May

Langleys Foodie Film Night

7.30pm – 11pm

16th May

Cool Beans Pop-Up

7.30pm – 10.30pm

17th May

Pathways Storytelling: Food Glorious Food

8pm – 9.30pm

18th May

Surbiton Farmers' Market

9am – 1pm

Learn to Make It & Bake It

9am – 1pm

Seething Community Sports Day, Picnic and Fun Dog Show

12pm – 4pm

Secret Supper Club

7.30pm – 10.30pm

19th May

Please Don't Eat Me

1pm – 6pm

Kingston Edible Forest Garden Growing Sessions

2pm – 4pm

Various dates

Surbeanton Free Desserts

2pm – 6pm

Key: Main Events



Eating and Drinking



Discussions, Screenings, Demonstrations and Workshops



Children and Families



Having fun and Getting Artly!















COMMUNITY MATTERS

The Community Brain

The **Community Brain** is dedicated to fostering creativity, innovative thinking, and playfulness in order to bring people together and ensure Surbiton remains an exciting and vibrant place to live. We strongly believe that by tapping into the huge source of talent that is in our local area we can put a smile on our town's face in a positive, sustainable and collaborative way. Talent can come in any form, so whether you're technical, academic, practical or artistic, your skill set will find a home. For more information and details of upcoming events, see www.seethingwells.org



The Museum of Futures

Do you have an idea that you want to try out? Does your new business or enterprise need some space in which to work creatively? Do you have a show or a band but no rehearsal venue? We may be able to help. In 2016, The Community Brain transformed a vacant premises at 117 Brighton Road to create **The Museum of Futures** – since then hundreds of recently established or brand new businesses, artists, musicians and members of the community, have used the space to follow their ideas and ambitions. www.museumoffutures.org



The Community Kitchen

One key feature of the Museum of Futures is the **Community Kitchen**. The storming success of our first Food Festival in 2013 made it abundantly clear that Surbiton was rich in creative culinary talent to the extent that we saw in it many new potential businesses – so we decided to provide an industry-standard kitchen for them to test their ideas and hone their recipes. The Community Kitchen also serves as a space for cookery workshops, demonstrations and can also be used for event catering. In combination with the Museum of Futures it makes a wonderful intimate space for pop-up restaurant events. If you have an idea or project that would benefit from either space, get in touch through the Museum of Futures Facebook page or www.museumoffutures.org. We're delighted to have both spaces packed with events for the Surbiton Food Festival.



SHEDx

SHEDx encompasses a range of activities to activate and engage the community of Tolworth to take ownership of their unused and green spaces to help define and improve the future for their town. Helping to engage and energise, the project is enabling the community to shape the future of Tolworth. Recent projects include the planting of new bee-friendly and air purifying beds along Tolworth Broadway, the setting up of a suburban 'Farm of Futures' at Tolworth Main Allotments and a series of educational bee talks and seed ball-making workshops in local primary schools, with Kingston Beekeepers Association, as part of our flower-planted walking trails BeeLines. For more information visit www.thecommunitybrain.org/shedx



FOODIE START-UP COMPETITION

Brand new for this year! Have you got a foodie-based business dream? If so enter our **SFF Start-Up Competition** and win a full day and evening's use of the Museum of Futures Community Kitchen for your inaugural event plus all the ingredients provided for you and ongoing mentorship from other local food businesses. Simply fill in the entry form, bring along a sample of your produce for the judges to sample at the Village Fete and begin making your start-up dreams come true! Full terms and conditions and entry forms available at www.surbitonfoodfestival.org



PLASTIC POLICY

We are in the midst of a global climate emergency and at SFF we are trying our hardest to combat our plastic use. All the bars this year have moved to re-usable stacking cups – better for the environment and much easier to carry large rounds for all your new friends! Maple Village WI will be using recyclable or reusable plastics in the tent and around the festival, and are running a national campaign specifically around microplastic fibres, the main cause of microplastic in our oceans. Information can be found at their tent on how you can tackle microplastic fibres in your own home.

We are encouraging all traders to **limit the amount of plastic to a minimum** and we would like to encourage you to actively **think about separating your rubbish into our recycling bins** at our events and where possible **bring with you water in re-usable bottles and your own shopping bags.**



WITH THANKS TO

We would like to give a huge thank you to everyone who has worked so hard to help us produce the Surbiton Food Festival. In particular we are incredibly grateful for the support provided by

Seething Volunteers, South Western Railway, Kingston Pound, Salmon Magazine, The Good Life, Karen, Gen, Liz and Adam and The Lamb, Mark and The Black Lion, Prosecco Unlimited, No97, Gavin, Robin, Tina, Yell, John Carrington, MVWI, Kelly Woods, Tangle, all of our musicians, event hosts, demonstrators and traders.

Elliot is honoured

Conservationist and Good Life columnist Elliot Newton, who helps coordinate environmental work at Berrylands nature reserve and Fishponds, is one of this year's council community heroes.

Others include Simon Green, of the Sunray estate monthly litter picks; Daryl Wraight, a garden volunteer at the Fircroft Trust in Ditton Road; Suhi Sivalingam, who runs a Tamil Saturday school at Tolworth Girls'; Thevaunchari Nathan of Surbiton Sports Club; Michael Pearson, a Bardwell House befriender; and sisters Lesley Parvin and Shirley Pass who (with husbands John and Terry) assist at Surbiton's Royal Star and



Picture: David Jackson

Garter home. "The awards recognise the amazing contributions of those who have given their time for the good of the community and to help others," said the mayor, Cllr Thay Thayalan.



● **Seventy children with special educational needs and disabilities from Dysart School, Ewell Road, have cycling skill certificates after doing Bikeability training at Kingsmeadow, learning about bicycle parts, steering and safe dismounts. In the past year, 2,000 borough pupils have earned the national award. Cllr Hilary Gander said: "The more young people we see on bikes the better." Dysart governor Tony Williams congratulated staff. "They work with, encourage, support and laugh with our pupils," he said. "They are a credit to Dysart and are making a difference to pupils' lives."**

Feel free to rip out wooden windows in Surbiton's historic conservation area and replace them with uPVC. That seems to be the message from Surbiton's neighbourhood committee, which is letting the owner of a Victorian mansion keep her vinyl frames, despite councillors being warned it could set a precedent.

In 2017, the council refused retrospective planning permission for uPVC at 48 Maple Road, citing disrespect for the "architectural character" of the town conservation zone. The owner appealed and lost; the inspector describing the plastic frames as "jarring".

Now Surbiton neighbourhood committee has voted six to five against making the owner do anything... ending the integrity of a half century-old area of townscape merit centred around St Andrew's Square, the only traditional Victorian example in the entire borough. The Gothic-style mansion was built in 1876, five years after nearby Grade II-listed St Andrew's church. It is now four flats.

The committee was told by Marian Kelly, agent for owner Marilyn Fairburn, that replacing all the unauthorised uPVC windows could cost £50,000. She suggested a



48 Maple Road is the central villa

compromise: restoring the windows facing Maple Road to wood, but retaining the less visible uPVC back windows "to mitigate the cost". Vice-chair Cllr Malcolm Self was amenable, proposing that only the front ones be returned to their former glory.

It was pointed out that next door's property had fitted some uPVC windows, but had "got away with it" as four years had elapsed, and enforcement action could no longer be taken. Planning officer Barry Lomax said a compliance timetable had

Putting plants together is more of an art than a science, says Janice Cripps

Orchestrating the perfect ensemble



Spring is an exciting time; the garden is coming back to life and we have time to review our borders and planting schemes, deciding what worked well last year and what needs changing.

There may be gaps in the borders where plants have died or planting combinations just didn't cut it, so we need to try something new.

I always think it's difficult to replant or revitalise small areas of the garden. It's like introducing newcomers to a bunch of old schoolfriends at a party and hoping they will fit in!

Some years ago, I attended a lecture given by a plantsman who described his role as that of a conductor. The plants were the instruments that made up his orchestra, just as the various sections – strings, wind, brass, percussion – all had to play well together to create wonderful music.

Just like an orchestra, a beautiful garden needs a range of plants to



work together and harmonise.

Although this sounded rather highfalutin at the time, the point was well made. There are countless books out there that will give you encyclopedic knowledge of a plant's characteristics but when it comes to putting those plants together in an exciting way, it is more of an art than a science. Indeed, it's often the visual surprise in the garden that makes it come alive.

I like to think of plants as design tools, noting their shape, leaf

texture, foliage, colour and habit. Do they trail or climb? Do they anchor a bed with their sturdy stems and dense foliage, or are they delicate and wispy? Flowers are ephemeral so I consider how they will look throughout the year, not just at their peak in the flowering season.

One of the best ways to study plants as design tools is to observe them season by season by visiting as many gardens as you can and noticing what schemes or combinations appeal to you most, and asking yourself why. I sometimes screw my eyes up to look at plant shapes and densities as a black and white image is easier to analyse. I try to ignore the strange looks!

For the ultimate in inspiring plant design, a visit to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show from May 21-25 is a must. Tickets are still available but sell out fast. To book visit www.rhs.org.uk

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

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

Conservation is thrown out the window

agent shouted that the owner had lived there since 1968, before the zone existed... but

she was told, firmly, not to interrupt.

Cllr Self conceded that the quality of the uPVC windows which had been fitted was good. "If windows of a much lower quality had been put in, we wouldn't be having this discussion," he said.

But Mr Lomax from planning warned: "If you enforce some windows and not others, you'll set a precedent. There is a duty to preserve the character [of the St Andrew's Square conservation area]."

He advised councillors that this wasn't a case of merely overruling local regulations, but would be in contravention of the council's own core strategy policies, not to mention the 2016 London Plan and the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework.

Yet despite the owner being prepared to fork out to meet the cost of replacement, despite the council contesting (and winning) a planning appeal, and despite the council's own policy being to "preserve the heritage assets of the borough", the neighbourhood committee voted against enforcing its own conservation rules.

Tim Harrison

MRS BENNET'S BALLROOM

Regency Dance Classes

Learn to dance like Jane Austen's heroines & heroes and cut a dash!

Wednesdays in Surbiton

St Mark's Church Hall, Church Hill Rd, Surbiton KT6 4LS

Time: 8pm – 10.30pm

Dates: May 8 & 22 June 5 & 19 July 3 & 17

Summer Tea Dance on Saturday July 27th

New classes in Fulham & Camden – see our website

This is Strictly Come Dancing as we know it!

As Jane said "To be fond of dancing is a certain step towards falling in love"

Entry £5 per class tea included

Contact: Libby

mrsbennetsballroom@gmail.com

www.MrsBennet.co.uk [MrsBennetsBallroom](https://www.facebook.com/MrsBennetsBallroom) 020 8391 1215

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A black belt in optimism

Yes, agrees Long Ditton's 45-year-old MP. Like everyone, I get bored with Brexit! It's a disarming admission from the man who resigned from the Cabinet, citing democratic betrayal and condemning Theresa May's proposed deal.

But what about Dominic Raab the husband, dad and constituency rep? Chatting in a tearoom, the ex-lawyer (who has held ministerial posts in housing and justice and is often tipped for the ultimate job) says that beyond EU shenanigans, his mailbag is dominated by housing shortage, visa issues and education... with the imminent arrival of two new Elmbridge state secondaries "a good local story to tell".

Dom, as he introduces himself, sets aside Fridays for local issues, and weekends for his sons, aged four and six. "My working week involves commuting from Thames Ditton up to Westminster, Monday to Thursday, then coming back late afternoon on Thursday," he says. The working day starts with an hour of casework in the two-room office he shares with three staff.

Representing a leafy area means his constant struggle is balancing the demand for housing with

the need to preserve precious open space. "I was a housing minister [for the first half of 2018, until taking over from David Davis as Brexit Secretary]; we need more homes built for aspirational younger families, but they have to be the right homes in the right places. I think people in this area recognise the importance of the opportunity to own your own home."

Angst over last year's traveller occupation of Long Ditton rec was eased by a three-year

Quickfire questions

Music? I've Amazon on my phone; I listen to everything from old Motown to [Scottish singer/songwriter] Tom Walker
Books? I enjoy historian Niall Ferguson
Football? Chelsea. And it's terrific the way the women's football game is taking off
TV? Box sets: Game of Thrones, Money Heist

court injunction gained by Elmbridge, for which Dom claims some credit. "I helped strengthen the law when I was a housing minister," he says.

Married to a Brazilian, Erika, the couple's sons learn Portuguese as well as English. Dom himself speaks Portuguese, and the

family visited the in-laws in the south of Brazil at Christmas. His boys play football in Claygate, and learn martial arts (Dom is a karate black belt). "I also go to a boxing club... but their mother thinks they're still too young for boxing," he says.

Of his Thames Ditton home he says: "This is a lovely area in which to bring up a family... but it can be an expensive place to settle and, like everyone, I feel the pinch these days."

Does he ever get bored with Brexit?

"Yes. Like - I think - everyone, I get bored with Brexit! We must get beyond it and get on..."

He concedes that while the Europe issue has stimulated interest in politics, public faith in politicians is low. "I actually noticed that when I was elected back in 2010; I've watched the loss of deference which started with the expenses scandals reported in the Daily Telegraph."

But Dom's an optimist. "Our democracy is pretty resilient. The fringes of opinion tend to dominate, but I'm interested in the moderate middle, rather than the 5% at each end of the spectrum who shout and jeer the loudest on programmes like Question Time. If I'm speaking at a public meeting I always try to keep an eye on the people who sit and listen and say absolutely nothing."

How does it feel to be a Leave MP in a Remain area?

"I didn't know what the outcome of the referendum would be when I voted in it," he said. "We voted as one nation. And I was elected again in 2017, after the referendum [with a majority of more than 23,000]."

"There is Brexit fatigue, and there's a desire to just get on with it. It has become a soap opera, but - while there may be some short-term uncertainty - we have to deliver Brexit and be faithful to the referendum result."

Is he flattered to be linked to the future leadership of the Conservative Party? "I think talk of that is just self-indulgent; I try to focus on the issues." And a non-politician's answer? He smiled and said: "I suppose anyone would say that it feels nicer to be spoken of in flattering terms than not to be."

Tim Harrison

Can't park? Join the club

Residents' permits won't solve the parking crisis in Browns Road or Beaconsfield Road, it'll simply shift the problem.

That was the view of Surbiton councillors who kicked the can down the road until the wider public have had their say on the likely knock-on effect of residents' schemes, and on new permit price hikes based on vehicle emissions.

The neighbourhood committee looked at banning non-residents from parking in Browns Road and Beaconsfield Road - both notoriously congested streets off Ewell Road.

A packed public gallery made its feelings clear. On Browns Road (proposal: residents-only parking, Mon-Fri, 11am-2pm), neighbours in Alpha Road and Britannia Road said they'd simply get all the displaced cars. "We only found out [about this] by accident," one said. "No one was told!" Another said the net result would be everyone paying hefty fees to park, without any easing of the frustrating daily hunt for a space. A third said that two current building developments would further skew the equation.

A similar plea to improve life in car-choked Beaconsfield Road was also on the agenda... residents pointing out that they'd been campaigning for three years for something to be done. Again councillors reasoned that a scheme in one road would have a wider, potentially worse, impact.

"I'm incredibly disappointed," a Beaconsfield resident told councillors. "Is there any point in discussing it?" She said the problems were exacerbated by overnight vans and King Charles Centre evening class students. "It doesn't take Einstein to realise there'll be [parking] displacement," she said of the proposed permit schemes.

Everyone agreed that banning public parking in one road would worsen the issue in the next. With no clear solution, the whole thing was deferred for wider consultation.



Crossing roads is now safer

Pedestrians will find it easier to cross two busy roads. A central island refuge has been installed near The City Arms pub in Portsmouth Road (below), while Upper Brighton Road (above),

near the Lovelace Road/Walpole Road junctions, gets a controlled pedestrian crossing - replacing the long-standing zebra crossing which is especially busy with commuters during rush hours.



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● Toni Izard cuts a cake to mark getting a community award. Presented by Surrey High Sheriff Jim Glover (and nominated by Elmbridge mayor Cllr Shweta Kapadia), it recognises the Ditton Hill



resident's 15 years' leading Long Ditton Youth Club. A founder member with Sir George Vallings in 2004, she became chair in 2008, ensuring the Friday night club is a safe space for youngsters enjoying cookery, painting, craft and outdoor games.

Facebook workshop

Are you making the most of Facebook's promotional potential? Surbiton social media guru Rachel Fallon, who runs Black Parrot Training, hosts a workshop, An Introduction to Facebook Ads: Setting Your Ads Up For Success, at Hotel Bosco, St Mark's Hill, on Thu, May 2, 10am-1pm. Book: www.blackparrotsocial.co.uk "The aim is to demystify Facebook ads and look at what makes a successful campaign," she said. "There are a few spaces left."

Shop rates are eased

Finally, good news for the high street. A retail rate relief programme has just kicked in. Surbiton shops with a rateable value of less than £51,000 get a third off business rates for two years. Revised bills from Kingston Council are in the post.

"Small businesses face challenges in the current economic climate; this relief is welcome," said Cllr Alison Holt.

Freshening history

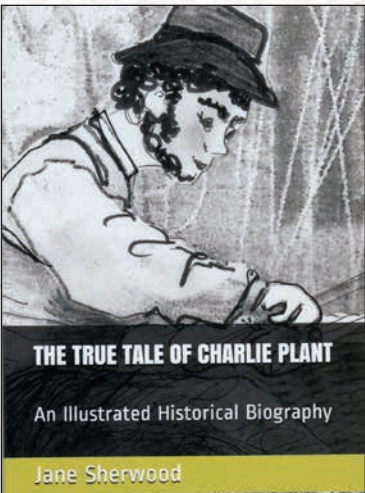
History can sometimes be dusty, but here's a way to freshen it up.

The True Tale of Charlie Plant is based on fact; a part-imagined story of a Surbiton man in Victorian times, originating in family research, then interwoven with invented conversations and events.

"The text is not intended to be an academic exercise," says Kingston-born author Jane Sherwood. "It's the story of a simple man and how he led his life."

Charlie Plant, Jane's great grandad, had an inauspicious start in life, born in the workhouse in 1855. But persistence saw him through his early years. He was apprenticed to a draper in Thames Street, Kingston, married (at Christ Church, Surbiton), had a family and lived into his 70s.

His home was one of the cute cottages in Richmond Grove, just



off Ewell Road, with the family later settling in Lenelby Road, Tolworth.

The author focuses on his early life, described in minute detail, while his later years are concentraed into

a few pages.

But those early years are vivid, and also tell a lot of Surbiton's history. They were hard times; infant death was common and there was a stark gap between the wealthy and impoverished wings of the family. But we warm to Charlie, and we want him to succeed.

Jane partly wrote the book to give her grandchildren some context.

A former pupil of Knollmead Infants and St Matthew's Juniors, she lived her teenage years on the Sunray estate, and later in Beaconsfield Avenue. She said the book stemmed from a chat with her mother, who said that her great grandad had been a Thames wherryman.

"That triggered the research. Ten years later I joined ancestry.com and was astonished to find out about the family history," she said. The book is on Amazon at £8.99. **Tim Harrison**

Tom's movie

Surbiton resident and BBC wildlife cameraman Tom Hooker, who has worked on high-profile wildlife productions including Blue Planet 2, has made a short film about the borough's most important nature corridor and its globally rare chalkstream, the Hogsmill.

Narrated by Griff Rhys Jones, The Hogsmill gets its premier at Wild Kingston on Sun, June 9. The event at the Rose Theatre, Kingston, aims to inspire people to learn more about our amazing local wildlife and to get involved in local conservation projects.



There will also be a series of inspirational talks about some of the fascinating creatures that call the borough home.

Tickets are £10 for adults and £7 for children. For more, visit www.rosetheatrekingston.org



● Annie Leach and Pete Hind-Fletcher (above) will talk about their art at a meet-the-artist night on Tues April 30 at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, 7-9pm. It's a gala night for their joint exhibition, Leaves & Shadows, which runs to June 2. Annie's work (acrylics on canvas, often large-scale) explores the patterns and shadows created by flowers and leaves, while Pete's colourful, vibrant paintings of a stylistic natural world have a dream-like quality. Admission free. Complimentary drink until 8pm.

Political satire roles

Inside No11 Downing Street it's all cronyism, power play and spin. The Chancellor is the poodle of his spokesman, austerity is cutting deep, and No10 is being kept in the dark and feeling the pinch.

But one man isn't fooled; one unlikely hero who's determined to find a better way.

Fun and friendly auditions for The Bottom Line, a political satire written and directed by Susannah Finzi, will be held on Sun, April 28 from 2pm and Mon, April 29 from 7.30pm at 63 Red Lion Road, Surbiton. "Let's build a dream team for this summer show," said Susannah.

This Lean Theatre Productions play will be staged at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road on July 18-20.

Email susannah@antelopes.com or text 07773 060130 for further details. www.susannahfinzi.wordpress.com



● Folk/rockers Crooked Weather pitch up at The Lamb, Brighton Road, on Sun, May 12, 7.30pm. On the playlist, new single Easy ("a tormented piece of spectral folk") and tracks from the new album, Are We Lost.

● The delightfully deadpan Milton Jones was the star turn at Surbiton's newest comedy venue, with 120 people in the upstairs room at Langleys restaurant, Ewell Road, informed that he comes from a family of magicians. "I've got two half-sisters!" He added that he'd recently performed north of London. "Turns out I'm Luton intolerant." Organised by Outside the Box, future evenings include Romesh Ranganathan on May 6 and Al Murray on May 9, both with support bills. www.outsidetheboxcomedy.co.uk



● Don't get bogged down in mud at a summer festival. Keep your wellies clean and come to the cornerHOUSE instead! The Surbiton arts centre will be turned into a music festival for its big summer show A Midsummer Night's Dream, with the audience encouraged to don colourful festival-wear. "It'll be summer, so think Glastonbury," said director Clea Williams. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare's most popular comedy, will be staged at the venue in Douglas Road, from Thu, June 13 to Sat, June 15, 7.30pm. Tickets £10 (£8 concs). To book visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents

● Martha Christoforou is just one of the performers who will be on a bill of rising talent in Out of the Corner, an unplugged showcase event at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road. She sings regularly with a local jazz band and is crafting her own rich, soulful R'n'B style. This uplifting acoustic evening at the arts centre on Fri, May 24 at 8pm, has cosy, cabaret seating with a reasonably priced bar. Tickets £5.



● Want to keep fit while learning to dance like characters from Jane Austen novels? Your dreams have come true. Mrs Bennet's Ballroom runs regular Regency dance classes in St Mark's church hall at the top of St Mark's Hill from 8-10pm. All you need are a spring in your step and soft-soled shoes. No costumes or experience needed. Classes cost £5, tea is included, and the next sessions are on May 8 and 22. www.mrsbennet.co.uk

Dodgers' art goes on display

The Artful Dodgers, a group of 20 local artists, exhibit at the cornerHOUSE in June, with a gala night on Wed, Jun 5, 7.30-9.30pm. The group paints together informally on Saturday mornings, with occasional trips into the city or further afield, plus picnics. If you'd like inspiration and the joy and challenge of painting outdoors, join the club! The tumbling phone box painting is by Olga Polozhenko. More art and info: www.artfuldodgers.wix.com/artful



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Were you ever involved in the Racial Decca Rugby Club at Tolworth, formed 1959?

You're invited to the 60th anniversary bash on May 11, from noon, at what is now the Goals' 5-a-side centre, KT5 9NT. Decca will play a Baa-Baas XV. Decca's social club was a casualty of a buy-out by the French



firm Thales in 2000. "Our club house was knocked down, replaced by a building to service five-a-side pitches," said club president Tony Downing. "It was heart-wrenching to see that history disappear, but our club survives. I hope past players and staff will come along." www.pitchero.com/clubs/racaldecca1xv

The cruellest twist

Chelsea Women are trying to restore defender Magda Eriksson's self-confidence after a freak own goal in stoppage time dumped the Blues out of the Women's FA Cup at Man City's Academy ground. "We have to stick together as a team, but I'm gutted for her," said manager Emma Hayes after the 25-year-old Swede's sliced clearance ended up in her own net, denying Chelsea a Wembley final and leaving her inconsolable. The Blues' Champions League hopes hung in the balance as The Good Life went to press, but Hayes knows that solid foundations are in place for serious tilts at glory next season at Kingsmeadow.



Tennis: a treat is in store as top international players limber up for Wimbledon at the **Fuzion 100 Surbiton Trophy**, June 3-9. Crowds flock to Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club to see stars battle it out on the world-class Berrylands courts. www.surbiton.org/surbitontrophy2019



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A share bonus

Corinthian-Casuals and Kingstonian will continue their groundshare next season at King George's Field, Tolworth. The clubs play in the Bostik Isthmian League. The arrangement means season ticket holders of one club can enjoy the other team's home matches for half price. In recognition of their first season together at the ground off Hook Rise South, the clubs will be hosting a **Casuals v Kingstonian** supporters match. Representatives from both sides will take to the field on Sun, April 28 for bragging rights. Entry free, with buffet and bar for all to enjoy. Kick-off time (likely to be 11am) was being finalised as we went to press. Check www.corinthian-casuals.com or www.kingstonian.com



Ks' Dean Inman and Casuals' Hamilton Antonio battle for the ball



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