



A wheely odd sight

Surbiton snapper David Jacobson, whose local greetings cards pictures are well-known for capturing the town's vibe, took this superb image beside Surbiton station last week.

"Bicycles don't grow on trees," remarked David, who also did the photography for the Maple Road farmers' market calendar, and contributed most of the images used on the market's website, www.surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk

The creative lensman also produced the most amusing entry in the rhubarb and leek cookery and art challenge which helped round off the inaugural Surbiton Food Festival.

Rhub-henge, pictured right, came complete with a tiny English Heritage flag, and had pride of place on the judging table alongside the more conventional crumbles, pies and tarts displayed behind The Antelope pub in Maple Road during May's farmers' market.

Turn to pages 4 and 5 for a full festival round-up, and to see who won what in the leek and rhubarb bake-off.

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Station is good enough to eat!

Sugar replica of art deco building wins gold prize in competition

Surbiton's most iconic building is often cited as a national art deco treasure... but it has now been recreated in sugar!

This edible sculpture was created by the Surbiton branch of the British Sugarcraft Guild, winning gold at a Brighton exhibition which attracted entries from across the South East.

Mandy Litherland explained: "Each branch exhibits a table of models made from sugar-crafting (icing, cake, chocolate, marzipan and so on), following a theme. Entries are assessed by official guild judges."

When the 2013 theme was declared as 'art deco', members of the local branch immediately thought of the railway station. Because entries have to be anonymous, to guarantee impartial judging, the name was tweaked to 'Suburban Station'.

Judge Eddie Spence, a man regarded as the king of royal icing, called Surbiton's sugar sculpture "absolutely stunning", and gave it the gold prize.

"Everything you see was lovingly formed in an edible, sugar-based medium," said Mandy. "The elegant figurines, Afghan dog, luggage, trees, flower stall and tiny flowers are made of sugar paste. The wedding car is marzipan, the obelisk is piped royal icing, the Brighton Belle train



is chocolate modelling paste and chocolate, and the plaques are a combination of many sugarcraft techniques. The station itself is painstakingly covered and decorated in several layers of royal icing."

If you feel inspired yourself, Surbiton's sugarcrafters meet at 8pm on the second Wednesday of the month at the United Reformed Church, Elgar Avenue, Tolworth, where sugarcrafting techniques are demonstrated.

Call Mandy for more information on 020 8546 2846 or visit www.region8bsg.co.uk

Something to mention?

The Good Life is entering its second year in fine fettle, offering Surbiton's residents a platform for publicising the many activities in our bustling town, and giving advertisers the chance to promote their shops and businesses.

If you want to join those taking advantage of the competitive advertising rates that the newspaper can offer, simply email Rea Mole for information on rea_mole@yahoo.co.uk.

For any editorial help that the paper can give, email the editor, Tim Harrison, on timharrison444@hotmail.com

The next issue goes to press in August, ahead of the Surbiton Festival.



Enjoying the great Surbiton bake-off

Despite the gloomy weather forecasts, the two-day Surbiton Village Fete, staged in leafy St Andrew's Square midway through the Surbiton Food Festival, was sunny and thronged. The traditional baking contests proved popular, with Poppy and Martha Green, aged seven and five, of Berrylands - daughters of local councillor Liz Green - entering jam tarts which spelt their names. See page 5 for full festival round-up, and reports on the events.

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Royal teas are due

With the Duchess of Cambridge due to give birth on July 13, Surbiton's French Tarte is already on standby for a month of celebratory teas.

The Maple Road eatery will style its teas in blue or pink, depending on the news, and accompany cuppas with scones, clotted cream, brie-and-bacon and grilled veg sandwiches, cakes and bubbly.

Servings will be from 2-4pm on the four Saturdays and Sundays after the new royal is welcomed into the world. Price: £14.50 per person, or £22.50 with champagne.



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Good Life Pumpwatch

Since April, **unleaded** and **diesel** prices have crept down a few pennies. Here are the May 22 prices, to save you driving round in search of bargains.

Esso, 90 Brighton Road
135.9 141.9 May 22
136.9 143.9 Apr 3

Shell, Ace of Spades
134.9 140.9 May 22
136.9 143.9 Apr 3

Pace, 65 The Avenue
136.9 140.9 May 22
141.9 144.9 Apr 3

**Shell, Manor Rd Sth,
Hinchley Wood**
134.9 140.9 May 22
136.9 143.9 Apr 3

Esso, Tolworth Broadway
132.9 139.9 May 22
136.9 142.9 Apr 3

Jet, 248 Hook Road
134.9 139.9 May 22
136.9 144.9 Apr 3

Shell, 122 Portsmouth Road
134.9 140.9 May 22
136.9 144.9 Apr 3

Step change

The first website dedicated to changing negative perceptions of step-families has been launched.

Surbitonian Neil Reilly set up www.steppy.org after his four children coined the name when he remarried following the death of his first wife from breast cancer in 1999. "They didn't know what to call her," said Neil. "Mum" wasn't right. Then they thought of Steppy, and the name stuck."

Seventeen million UK families have step-relations, yet Hollywood invariably precedes the word stepmother with 'wicked', despite the enriching relationships enjoyed by step-families across the country.

The website celebrates positive aspects of step-families, collecting pictures and stories and building an archive about the fun and pride of being a 'steppey'.

"We're trying to chip away at negative perceptions, and collect statistics about extended families," said Neil, who also sees the website as a resource allowing estranged children and parents to make contact again.

Down the years, more than 900 stories have been published featuring 'wicked stepmothers', the best known being Snow White and Cinderella.

Gardening tips by Janice Cripps

Edible and decorative



Every so often I have the urge to rent an allotment. It makes economic sense, it's good for the environment and sitting down to eat what I have grown offers a real sense of achievement, not to mention the taste.

But tempting as it is, I eventually dismiss the idea. I only have a small family to feed and the time and effort cultivating 250sqm is more than I can manage. Besides, I don't need a large area to grow fruit and veg; they can be incorporated into a garden of any size.

At the simplest level, a window box or container of herbs, or wigwam with runner beans takes up little space and looks charming. Fruit is easy too; a single tree with pretty spring blossom can be an ornamental feature, and strawberries can be encouraged to climb (pictured).

In skilled hands, trained fruit on boundary walls and fences makes practical use of space, and creates an eye-catching structural framework. Espaliers, cordons and step-overs are all attractive options. Vines can create arches or tunnels, as at Hampton Court, and apple and pear trees can be flat-topped tables, goblets or weeping trees.

Vegetables offer a greater challenge. Many do not want to grow them am-ong flowers and shrubs... but think of their decorative characteristics; height, colour and texture. Use thyme to line pathways, Jer-usalem artichokes as a windbreak or sweetcorn to screen an ugly view.

Intermix herbs, flowers and vegetables to repel insects, limit plant disease and encourage growth. A companion planting chart will tell you which vegetables benefit from growing together.

Vegetables with colourful leaves can be used to great effect in herbaceous borders, if soil is fertile and they have enough moisture. Aubergines, peppers, red-leaved beetroot and rhubarb look superb in irregular drifts.

Planting in rows, blocks, circles or diagonals creates interesting patterns. The simpler the design, the more striking. Good combinations are red lettuce with cabbages, leeks and carrots or purple sprouting broccoli with cauliflower and pak choi.

Sticking to different colours of the same vegetables is fail-safe:

green, yellow and red chards; red and green lettuce; blue, red and black kales. For added impact, contain plants within a crisp framework of hedging. Indeed, the hedging can be edible!

At the end of their useful life, vegetables can run to seed. But rather than harvest them, leave them over winter and enjoy the beauty of their seed heads. The giant lacy flat-topped heads of angelica look fabulous in the early morning light, covered with dew or frost.

Similarly the globe artichoke with its purple thistle-like flowers and velvety blue/grey leaves has spectacular architectural qualities that can be used to dramatic effect. It looks a bit like supersized celery, can reach a height and spread of over 1.5 metres. Now for that I probably do need an allotment!



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

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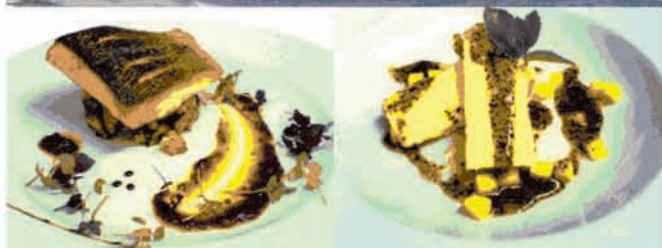
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Page the Oracle

Photographer Keith Hern talks about empowering people to tackle cancer at a fundraising open day for Oracle this Saturday, June 1, at the BoCo therapy centre in Electric Parade, Surbiton. There are also pilates, yoga and therapy taster sessions, including acupuncture and massages. The Oracle cancer trust supports the head and neck unit at Royal Marsden.

Poisson et frites

Surbiton's French Table put its Gallic roots to one side for a fish-and-chip night to celebrate England's patron saint. Head chef Eric Guignard served hake or haddock with tomato sauce and sauce gribiche in honour of St George, with 70 enjoying the quintessential English dish at the Maple Road eatery.

Careless talking

War posters urging Brits to beware of careless talk and dig for victory were the subject of James Taylor's talk at the Surbiton Historical Society. Seventy-five people filled Surbiton Library Hall to view screened cartoons by Cyril Bird, better known as Fougasse, at the Grevatt lecture, named in honour of a former society leading light. The meetings on June 4 and July 2 (both 7.30pm) see Malka Baker discuss Pugin and Phil Cooper talk about the 1948 Olympics.

Fircroft's suds

An arts and crafts show raised the profile of the Fircroft Trust, with items on offer including hand-made organic soaps. The display at the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road featured work by the Surbiton charity, which supports adults with mental health problems and learning disabilities. As well as soaps, the show included paintings, coasters and jewellery.

Back of a bus

Other Surbiton traders may follow suit after the success of Surbiton Cycles' posters on the back of buses. The shop, with branches at Thames Ditton Marina and St Mark's Hill, has had posters on the back panels of K1, K2, K3, K4 and 71 buses. "It's been really effective; a lot of people have said they've seen them," said owner Barnaby Postance.

Gardener wanted

Sign in a Berrylands garden: Weeds for sale. Pick your own

We are sailing

The oldest club of its kind in Britain, Thames Sailing Club, is holding a have-a-go open day on Saturday June 8. Founded in 1870, the club by Harts Boatyard in Portsmouth Road, Surbiton, is offering the chance to try out classic and modern boats, and learn a bit more about sailing. The open day runs from 11am-4pm, with more details at www.thamessailingclub.co.uk

Tour of Bordeaux

ExCellar, at the corner of Victoria Road and Brighton Road is demystifying Bordeaux wines on Friday, June 7. An expert will talk on the subject *Bordeaux, what's all the fuss about?* at 7.30pm, with liberal tastings accompanied by cold roast beef ("It goes very well with Bordeaux," insists ExCellar's Simon Baile), salad and cheese. Tickets are £25, and entitle holders to 20 per cent discounts on the night.

Chain reaction

Surbiton's Recycles bike shop in Brighton Road specialises in professional overhauls of bicycles, with prices starting at a highly competitive £35. Bike servicing involves resetting the gears and brakes, full inspections and checks of moving parts, plus a complete clean. For £45 bikes are stripped down and cleaned, while for £75 everything is stripped right back to the frame, all cables are replaced and cycles are given a full regrease and rebuild. Now is the busy time for bike servicing, with the weather improving, but turnaround time is still just a few days.



With Robert: Danielle and Angie Girdler, and Cecilia Ross

Keeping Surbiton clean for 30 years

Roberts reaches a landmark this year. It has kept Surbiton clean for three decades.

Set up in 1983 by Robert Helliwell, who still presides over the cleaning, tumble-drying and ironing empire, the business has a reputation for expertise and good service.

Robert began at 15 as a management trainee ("dogsbody") at Sketchley's in Hinckley, in the late 50s, following his father into a firm which started life as a dye works for Leicestershire's stocking industry.

As it expanded, he moved round the country, opening new branches. By 21 he was Sketchley's youngest manager, running 30 branches in the capital.

In 1983 he left to be his own boss, taking over Shattock's ladies' tailoring and furs shop at 18 Claremont Road and opening with a queue around the block eager to take advantage of a well-publicised, half-price dry-cleaning offer, although half of what price was never specified!

Friends and relatives helped staff the shop in the early days. "We had so much work we didn't know what to do with it all," said Robert, who lives in Surbiton and turns 70 later this year. He later took over an adjoining greengrocers, creating the distinctive double-fronted premises customers know so well today, opposite the front door of Waitrose.

"I've got a good team here," said Robert, paying tribute to generations of loyal staff. "Most have been with me 15 or 20 years!"

"Our big selling point is years and years of experience. One customer in the early days suggested we call ourselves The Caring Cleaners. It just about sums us up. We know what we're doing."

As well as basic cleaning, there is a 'sovereign' service for designer labels, and on-site tailoring for alterations and repairs.

Life outside the steamy warmth of the dry cleaners involves travel, and looking after the latest in a string of rescue Great Danes that he has owned. "I've had seven in all," he said.

That's me... with Pele!

Our story in the last Good Life about footballing legend Pele training in Tolworth in 1973 prompted Jonathan Quay to dig out an old photo album.

Here is the great man – bizarrely taking a turn in goal – at the old Decca sports ground on the other side of the A3 from Tolworth Tower, just ahead of the Fulham v Santos FC friendly which was played at Craven Cottage in March of that year.

Fulham used Decca's sports ground for training, so when Santos visited, the Brazilian players practised there.

News spread, and a few curious locals descended to get a glimpse of the man who eventually played more than 1,100 first-team games for his Sao Paulo club in a phenomenal career from 1956-1974.

In the last issue we recounted how a starstruck Steve Burniston had got Pele's autograph in blue felt-tip, reproduced here.

Jonathan – pictured just to the right of the pram in the



background... the only one of the group of six lads bothering to watch – also collected a few autographs.

"Jimmy Hill, the TV presenter was also there, although there were no TV cameras, from memory," he recalled. "So surprising by today's standards. It was modestly attended, as you can see from the photo. The Brazilian players were the Beckhams, Rooneys and Ronaldos of their day, so it is incredible really."

Overheard in The Antelope

A couple are dining at a posh restaurant. The husband keeps glancing across at a drunk woman swigging from a glass as she sits alone at a nearby table. The wife asks: "Do you know her?"

"Yes," sighs the husband. "She's my ex-girlfriend. She took to drinking right after we split up seven years ago, and I hear she hasn't been sober since."

"Incredible!" exclaims the wife. "Who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?"



Enterprising Sir

The vice-principal at Surbiton High has won the Queen's Award for enterprise promotion. Ian Smith, left, who has taught economics and business studies at the school for two decades, will receive his prize at Buckingham Palace. "I'm humbled and thrilled," he said. Ian has also chaired a young enterprise regional board.

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If you think all stepmothers are like Snow White's, you should visit www.steppy.org



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Strictly winners at rhubarb competition

Camilla Dallerup, the former Strictly Come Dancing star, judged the great rhubarb and leek cooking challenge at May's farmers' market; the culmination of the Surbiton food festival.

Thirty dishes featuring rhubarb, leeks – or a curious combination – were entered, from cakes to cocktails, soups to sausages.

There was even a sculpture of Stonehenge in rhubarb stalks. Children from Maple Infants created food-based art and Surbiton Brownies collected for market charities.

Camilla and Hollyoaks actor hubby Kevin Sacre sampled everything before declaring Richard Giles of the French Table the professional winner with his wild salmon dish, complete with leeks, rhubarb and vanilla.

Natalie Kontarsky's rhubarb and almond



Camilla with professional winner Richard Giles

madeleines won the amateur (sweet) title, with Becky Smedley's zingy vichyssoise soup the savoury winner. All won trophies and prizes donated by Pantry Cup Cakes and Lallapolosa Baking.

May's market featured Beeinspired, a honey and beeswax venture based in Thames Ditton, and chilli plants and herbs

from The Stud Nursery in Home Park. Kingston Food Bank had a charity stall, while newcomers included Kate's Flowers and Wild Country Organics.

May's was the last market for Quack's, the quirky pickle and marmalade maker, as Hook-based owner Peter Short returns to teaching... but he is continuing to sell his products online.

The next market is on Saturday, June 15, 9am-1pm.

Langleys rings the changes

The atmospheric restaurant with the stylish interior that, as Liberty Bell, attracted diners for nearly three decades is reopening as Langleys... a British brasserie.

The columned eatery at the corner of Ewell Road and Langley Road, which was thronged at weekends

in the good old days, with rack of ribs the clear menu favourite, has recently limped along in different guises since the chef who ran it for nigh-on 30 years retired to Spain.

As Victoriana it never really took off, and while the most recent incarnation – l'Esperance – may be French for 'hope', it never quite lived up to the optimistic moniker.

Now Bevan Hoogewerf and his wife Miranda are aiming to recapture the good times with a brasserie-style restaurant and wine bar.

The building has been restored, preserving the original features and distinctive Victorian character.

Bevan's pedigree is impressive. His CV includes The Savoy and Simpson's in the Strand (where he was banqueting manager), Blue Hawaii and Zizzi, although the Cape Town restaurateur is best known locally for running The Tryst in Weston Green for six years, and looking after catering at Coombe Hill golf club.

Bevan and Miranda's target? A relaxed and friendly environment where people can enjoy delicious, reasonably priced food, accompanied by well-chosen wines with excellent service.

"Miranda and I are really excited about opening Langleys," Bevan told The Good Life. "We want it to become the place for the local community to socialise with friends, work colleagues or family; somewhere to enjoy a relaxed lunch or dinner, or even just a quick drink after work. We hope it will quickly establish a name for itself and will draw patrons from far and wide into the area."

● Pictured, left, the eatery in mid-conversion



Don't vegetate, just volunteer!

Surbiton's organic fruit and veg service From The Ground Up needs volunteers to pack and sort produce on collection days.

By offering to help, you keep prices competitive at the fortnightly pick-up service operated from the YMCA, Victoria Road.

"As a community group we aim to bring people together with a common passion for affordable local organic food," said founder Steph Hofielen, pictured below at the Surbiton village fete. "Our many price comparisons tell us we are on the right track. Key to low prices is volunteer staff."

In three years the service has 300 regular customers ordering online. Helpers needed for June 15 & 29 and July 13. Produce currently includes eggs from an urban farm near Heathrow, and pumpkin plants for your own garden. There is also top rhubarb, wild garlic and Spanish new-season clementines.

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Food glorious food!

Surbiton's inaugural food festival was a thumping success, attracting enthusiastic foodies to a string of events crammed into a fortnight of imaginative themed programming.

More than 500 gathered in Claremont Gardens to greet the Thames sardine harvest from the bedraggled fisherfolk, tramping in procession from Raven's Ait and singing shanties, before enjoying a fishy barbecue.

The two-day village fete in leafy, bunting-ringed St Andrew's Square also pulled in large crowds on the middle weekend, while Victoria rec was teeming for sports day after one of the busiest farmers' markets in Maple Road.

Food 'passports' gave festivalgoers discounts on shops and restaurants, as well as introducing new customers to the town's eateries.

The fete included a beer marquee, jointly run by the landlords from The Lamb, Black Lion, Gordon Bennett! and Surbiton Flyer – an impressive demonstration of licensed co-operation. Our picture shows, from left, Chris Lucking, Rob Dunn, James French, Mark Sheehy and Richard Sealtiel.

Dry-hopped beers were on offer, with the ultrahoppy Sambrook's pale – with added Brambling Cross hops – a top choice. Eighteen beers, unique to the festival, were quaffed, with 1,000 pints pulled on the first day of the fete alone.

Other Surbiton favourites proved to be Brightwater's Daisy Gold, Surrey Hills' Gilt Complex and Twickenham Fine Ales' Naked Ladies.

Richard Sealtiel of Gordon Bennett! said: "We think this is the world's first dry-hopped festival; they drop the dry hops into the beer at

the end of the process, and you get this extraordinary flavour."

The beer tent



gave ale aficionados a taste for more. Lamb landlord Adam Lewis (pictured, bottom, in natty hat) said: "What was even more amazing was that after the fete all four pubs were rammed full of people!"

The fete's music



stage was busy, with 13-year-old singer Robyn Mae (pictured, right) a star attraction.

A series of food competitions included the category The Oldest Thing in Your Pantry, won by a 1984 bottle of Coke, against strong competition from a cobwebby pack of curry powder.

Ben Angwin's winning pasty was packed with goodness and had a well-made, perfectly baked crisp crust, in the judges' opinion, fully deserving of

his bright red winner's rosette. He is already planning the recipe to defend the title next year.

Bryony Harrison's was the top loaf, Maureen Blake won best cupcake, Sarah McDonald top biscuit, and Wilbur

Bodenham, the strangest veg, but special mention was made of the exquisite jam tarts made by Martha and Poppy Green – with the pastry spelling out the letters of their names. Surbiton Jennings

sausage masters of Ewell Road devised a Seething cycle sausage trilogy for the occasion.

Happy Jack, a traditional banger, was named after pioneering Victorian penny farthing rider John Keen, a regular at the town's Victorian cycle track; The First Lady, with a sweet, honeyed flavour, was a

tribute to ex-mayor Eileen Gray, a founder of the Women's Cycle Racing Association; while The Wiggins – a sausage with a hint of ginger – celebrated Sir Bradley's ride along Portsmouth Road on his way to Olympic gold last year. "We sold out of sausages, and had to go back to the shop to make more," said a delighted Kevin Jennings.

The fete was olfactory overload; a stunning mix of cooking smells that changed with every step you took, walking from one enticing stall to the next.

Ann Bedford from Main Kitchen Supplies (pictured, top) showed how to use kitchen equipment, including a vegetable spaghetti maker. Oh Banh Mi (it's Vietnamese for 'baguette') was one of a dozen food stalls which included Pickled Pantry's cakes and brownies, Naturally Chinese stir-fries, crepes and French macaroons. Gordon Bennett! chef Kalin Stoykob served roast pork and wraps, while From the Ground Up, Surbiton's fortnightly organic veg collection service, sold plants and signed up new followers.

Those attending nearby pizza-making workshops brought the finished product along to eat on the grass, while the cookery demonstrations pulled in big crowds.

"It's terrific," said co-ordinator Robin Hutchinson. "For Year One this is extraordinary. There's a really strong community in Surbiton and, given the right events, people are keen to get involved."

The only complaint from John Green of Traders

Coffee was that he'd underestimated the clamour for cuppas, and had only brought one lever espresso machine to the fete instead of the two that demand merited! "We've been doing very good business," he said.

Children helped decorate a food-themed graffiti wall, while all around town, herb-filled pop-up flowerbeds appeared in front of shops, with the YMCA boasting its own instant horticultural display.

On the final weekend, Surbiton Farmers' Market joined in the fun with the leek and rhubarb cookery challenge – a market day event which attracted a host of entries, and provided one of the festival's catchphrases as a look of horror flickered across the face of market organiser Alison Ewbank, who – remembering what was in her oven – dashed home with the words "I have to get my crumbles out!" Sid James would have been proud.

Strictly star Camilla Dallerup judged the entries, arranged on trestle tables in the cobbled area alongside The Antelope, while the French Table offered cheese and wine tasting.



Everything culminated in the community sports afternoon on Victoria rec (sack race pictured), and a teddy bears' picnic.

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Rewarding the regulars

It isn't often you chink glasses with the dream drinking companion, but the guy responsible for the flavour of Fuller's ales was everyone's mate



at the Surbiton Food Festival.

Head brewer John Keeling (pictured) was host at a 'tutored tasting' at the Surbiton Flyer, next to the station.

Introduced by head barman James French, he was soon into his stride, guiding regulars and visitors on how to swirl a glass of Seafarers bitter to release the aromas, weigh up the flavour and aftertaste, and take a deep sniff to detect the fruitiness of the yeast, the spiciness and citrus notes of the hops and the reassuring biscuit warmth of the barley.

"The aim of tonight is to reward the regulars," John told The Good Life, explaining that he had been invited along by landlord Richard Sealtiel. "It's to introduce people to the full range of Fuller's beers, and say

thanks for coming to the pub... and this is a lovely pub!"

As more and more sample bottles of Black Cab, London Porter and 1845 ale (commemorating the year Fuller, Smith & Turner was set up at Chiswick) were opened, more and more people began to sound like experts!

Keeling insisted that tradition and history were vital to the brewery, which boasts the oldest wisteria in the UK.

By the end, everyone knew that Fuller's trademark griffin is female (not, insisted Keeling, because it has a permanently open mouth, but because it has wings), and that the site of the brewery's telesales office was a brother in the 19th century.

The things you pick up on an evening out... drinking ale.

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Pane relief

Surbiton stained glass teacher Simone Kay has designed a lasting commemoration of Mary Heathcote's mayoral year.

The Surbiton councillor, who lives in The Crescent and represents St Mark's ward, asked Simone to create a stained glass panel to install in the mayor's parlour at Kingston Guildhall, and the artist incorporated the tumbling telephone boxes, mace of office, a bicycle wheel to represent Bradley Wiggins' Olympic triumph through the borough's streets and an aircraft to celebrate 100 years of plane-making in the area.

Simone, who has taught stained glass at the King Charles centre for more than a quarter of a century, runs a studio/shop in Hawks Road, Kingston.

"I hope the stained glass captures the spirit



Mary is pictured with consort Roger and the stained-glass pane

of a momentous year for the borough, and one in which I have been proud to serve as mayor," said Mary who has recently been succeeded by Councillor Penny Shelton.

Calling all Moggie Owners

Do you live in or around Surbiton and own a Morris Minor? If you do the organisers of this year's Surbiton Festival would like to hear from you. In fact if you own any classic Morris car, whatever their condition, you are invited to join in this year's carnival procession planned for Saturday 28 September.

One hundred years ago, the very first Morris cars were produced in the UK and across the country many car clubs and motoring organisations are celebrating with special events.

Most Moggies are now well over fifty years old and yet walk down any street in the area and you'll still see many of them in daily use.

If you are a proud owner and want to join in the fun during the Surbiton Festival contact bob@therichmind.co.uk for further information.



Fresh vision

Surbiton's Landirani Trust charity will be officially reborn as African Vision Malawi on June 15 with a lunch event on Saturday June 15, from 12.30-4.30pm at 31 Upper Brighton Road. Book a place (£10) by emailing info@africanvision.org.uk

The charity works to achieve lasting change in a needy area of Malawi. As well as food, the fundraising event has live music and original pictures for sale.



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they do?

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Tom sets new best

Surbiton sport student Tom Urry has produced his best in one of the largest open meetings for disability swimming in the world.

In four days at the British International Disability Championships, he competed in five events, reaching the B final of the 400m freestyle and finishing 10th, beating his time in last year's final by 14 seconds.

The Kingston College student also achieved a personal best in the 200m medley, taking part against many Paralympians.

Tom, pictured, who is studying for a Btec Level 3 extended diploma in sport, said: "I was really pleased to make a final and to go faster in the final than I did in the heats."

The 18-year-old trains with Kingston Royals swimming club and captains the London Disability Swimming Club.



Taking a hands-on approach

Back pain? Knee trouble? Frozen shoulder? Surbiton spinal expert Regina Smohai has the answers... and testimonials to confirm it.

Regina, pictured, of Lovelace Road, has worked at Chelsea Harbour Club for three years, but is now switching her attention to her home streets.

She has launched website www.spinalmatters.com

to build up business in Surbiton, with a key speciality being assisting golfers, who are notoriously prone to back problems.

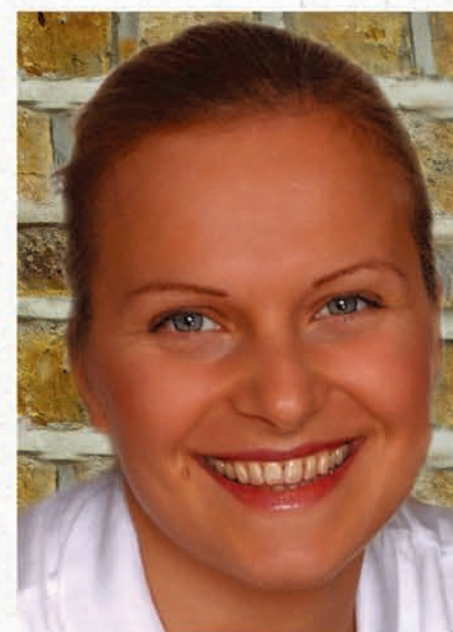
"Golfers suffer spinal injury as it's primarily a rotational sport," she said. "You add stress to the spine every time you swing the club."

Regina suffered scoliosis as a child, but is now pain-free thanks to a tailored exercise regime. She is offering home visits to pain sufferers, offering the hope of freeing up painful joints.

She is trained in neuromuscular therapy, a hands-on massage for pain management, offered by few in the UK, effective for migraine, stiff necks, whiplash and frozen shoulders.

All treatments start with a full assessment, moving on through gentle conditioning to floor exercises, with the ultimate aim being to take people back to a fully functioning state.

"It's very rewarding seeing the difference it can make to people," said Regina, who aims to set up in a studio in Surbiton.



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Writing is a class act

Inspired by a creative writing class in Surbiton three decades ago, Pamela Pickton has written several books, including a short-story collection, and is now urging other would-be authors to take advantage of the support and encouragement a writers' group can give.

As a young mum in the 70s, Pamela, who lives near Tolworth Broadway, did a night school class in writing at Hollyfield School, at the top of St Mark's Hill.

"I'd wanted to write since I was nine," she said. "The class was run by Celia Cross, a prolific magazine writer and great friend of Dame Jacqueline Wilson."

Dame Jackie, the Kingston author of the Tracy Beaker stories and ex-Children's Laureate, judged the class's annual writing competition... and Pamela came top.

"I still have it; a copy of her own first book. In it she wrote that I was a born writer, and asked me to send her a copy of my first novel!"

"That has been the most cherished of all praises or encouragements I have ever received."

Celia Cross led the Hollyfield Writers' Club, as it then became, outside the adult education system, until her death at 93, in the 1990s.

"Now I've rejoined the group, which meets in Hollyfield School at 7.30pm on the third Friday of each month," said Pamela, a divorced mother of four. "I have published three books, all available on the internet, with copies also in the Regency Bookshop."

Titles to watch for are: *Beautiful Dreamer*, *In A Place Of Disconnection*, and *If We Win The Pools We Can Go To The Coronation*.

She has also had short stories published in magazines, and has read her work on Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*.

One recurring theme is childhood trauma. She explained: "I never wanted to 'get it out of my system' as people think. I love words and people and the excitement when the story takes over, or ideas pop up from nowhere."

"I read Kate Atkinson, Anne Tyler and Anita Shreve, and murder stories in the form of MC Beaton's light murder mysteries."

One of Pamela's daughters also lives in Surbiton and teaches in a Surbiton primary school.

Email Pamela at pamela.pickton@btinternet.com for more on the Hollyfield Writers' Club.

A trio of authors

A trio of authors star in a literary evening sponsored by Surbiton's Regency bookshop.

Colin Cotterill, Martin Walker and Elly Griffiths (pictured) feature in a night of chat, questions and canapes at Glenmore House in The Crescent on Monday, June 3 at 7.30pm.

Elly is best known for her books about the forensic archaeologist Ruth Galloway, including *The House at Sea's End*, *The Crossing Places* and *A Room Full of Bones*. The inspiration came from Elly's husband, who switched career from his job in the city to train in archaeology.



Colin Cotterill writes the Dr Siri murder mysteries and Jimm Juree novels, including the gloriously titled *Grandad, There's A Head on the Beach*.

Martin Walker writes the Bruno Courreges mysteries, including *The Devil's Cave* and *Black Diamond*.

The evening starts with talks and a question-and-answer session. There will also be book signings.

Tickets £10, from the bookshop in Victoria Road.

Scholars entertain

One of the most intriguing lunchtime concerts to be staged in Surbiton this year takes place at St Mark's church – the fabulously restored place of worship on the hill – on Tuesday, June 18.

It is a scholars' recital, featuring the year 7 and 8 pupils of Surbiton High School.

The concert is free, it lasts from 1-1.30pm, teas and coffees will be available, and donations can be made to the St Mark's charity of the month.

In March, the Surbiton High School choirs and orchestra massed in the chancel of St Andrew's, Maple Road, for a stirring concert which ranged from the first movement of Beethoven's 6th to the theme from *Pirates of the Caribbean*!

Matthew O'Malley is director of music.

Listen to the sound of flowers

An evening devoted to the musical poetry of flowers is the treat in store for Surbiton music lovers at the Kingston Choral Society concert at St Andrew's church, Maple Road, on Saturday June 29 at 7.30pm.

A Garland for Summer features the world premiere of a new work by Surrey-born composer Graham Ross, a past musical director of the society, who is now director of music and fellow of Clare College, Cambridge.

Andrew Griffiths conducts, with pianist Leanne Singh-Levett (pictured) at the keys. Tickets £13 (£11 concs), U18s £5, from 020 8977 4801 or via www.ticketsource.co.uk/kingstonchoralsociety/events



Premiere is 'touching and gritty'



Billed as a touching, hilarious and at times gritty show which follows the fate of a group of young people, *No One In The World* is being produced by Kingston Musical Theatre in Surbiton in July.

Directed by Danny Willis, with musical direction by Nic Luker and choreography by Emma Rowland, the show by Kevin Hammonds and Charles Miller runs

at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, from July 11-13, with a sign language performance on July 12. Shows at 7.45pm.

Producer Dean Robertson said: "We're the first amateur group to put this on in the UK, and the composer himself is attending one performance."

Tickets are £12, with a £2 early-bird discount for anyone booking before June 28 via www.ticketsource.co.uk/kmt

It's a grave undertaking

Comedy thrillers are the favourite genre of the Upstage Theatre Company, which this weekend concludes a three-night run of Norman Robbins' show *Tiptoe Through the Tombstones*, following last year's *Canterville Ghost*.

Directed by Chris Smith, the play at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road, Surbiton, focuses on mysterious and murderous goings-on at a spooky mansion.

The run finishes this Saturday, June 1, so check for late ticket availability on 020 8390 9113. More details on the cornerHOUSE website www.thecornerhouse.org

Royal Oak is rocking

Surbiton rock 'n' rollers Eddie and the Redheads return to the Royal Oak, Ewell Road, on Friday June 28, playing originals, and gutsy covers, from *One of The Boys* by Mott the Hoople to the Stones' *The Last Time*.

From crowd reaction at the last gig, the most popular songs were the Crosby, Stills & Nash classic *Love the One You're With*, and the Small Faces' *All or Nothing*.

Chris Page (guitar and lead vocals), Martin Plumb (bass) and Tim Marrant (drums) have been together since 2009. They start playing at 9pm.

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Still reaching for the skies 50 years on

The term 'skyscraper' seems to fit Tolworth Tower perfectly. Designed by the late Richard Seifert's company, whose other projects included the NatWest Tower and Centre Point, it still dominates the landscape after nearly 50 years, its 22 floors soaring 81 metres above the A3 and the more modest buildings along the Broadway.

I was reminded how it can still divide opinion when I recently spotted the building in a book of boring postcards, lodged between a traffic interchange in Redditch and some flats in East Finchley. I laughed, but felt a slight sense of wounded local pride. When we moved to Tolworth in the mid-60s, I remember being stunned by this enormous slab of a building. It seemed, well, very modern and a bit... American. I never entirely lost my sneaking admiration for the Tower.

Returning from university in the late 70s to visit my parents with a couple of non-London friends, I felt a pompous swell of metropolitan conceit as my friends gazed in horror at this monolith across the roundabout. They lived in villages, so I guess for them this was like a scene from Star Trek or something. Well,

that's what I told myself (give me a break; I was 20).

Like it or loathe it, Tolworth Tower has been a fixed part of the area for the last half century. It perched on the skyline whenever I looked over from my school playing fields in the 60s. You couldn't avoid it, even if you wanted to. Come out of the station, there it was. Drive up the A3 and there it was again. Get off the 281 and you stood in its unremitting shadow. And 50 years on, it's still there.

I never saw the view from the very top. The closest I got was peeking out of a window in 1970 when families went there for a meeting about secondary schools. It would be interesting to know if the current owners are sympathetic to allowing some controlled, short-term access for local people, particularly with the building's 50th anniversary coming up.

So there it stands, its sky-hogging dimensions bossing the surrounding landscape, a surviving echo from the long-faded era of Concorde, Moon landings and computers the size of lorries. In a way, the Tower's Manhattan-style enormity is a reminder of all that aspirational white-

heat-of-technology stuff from the 60s, when expansion, including upwards, was a priority.

Yes, I think skyscraper is the right term. Happy 50th Birthday, Tolworth Tower.

Steve Burniston



Sparkling subways

Anyone using the network of subways under the A3 will notice a dramatic change.

A dozen offenders doing unpaid community work spent four solid days scrubbing graffiti off walls of all the By-Pass's subterranean passages... though some are now shut while Tolworth Broadway undergoes its current revamp.

Cllr Rachel Reid described the transformation as "a great job", while Hook Rise councillor Vicki Harris said it had "added to our efforts to rejuvenate our area".

Have a suspended coffee... it's on me

A Surbiton coffee shop has become the first in the borough to invite customers to buy an extra cuppa for a stranger.

The Press Room in Claremont Road has taken up an idea which emerged from Italy – suspended coffees.

When regulars buy for themselves, they can also pay for a second cup to be claimed by anyone down on their luck.

A tally on a board keeps score of available coffees.

Meanwhile, cards are being distributed at the YMCA in Victoria Road, to publicise the free coffees' availability.

Owner David Symons said: "Customers who are kind enough to buy a suspended coffee for others will know they are directly helping local people."

Supporters say it is a practical, dignified way of helping those strapped for cash. No one is required to prove anything to claim a free coffee; it is done on trust.



Amy Sanderson (left) and Chloe Phelps

Play Pebble Beach and the Belfry



With a spacious new location, Surbiton's Golf Plaza offers golfers a chance to play some of the world's finest courses, and improve their game with professional help.

Run by PGA pro Jon Wells, the Plaza is now in the high-ceilinged pumping room at the Nuffield fitness centre off Portsmouth Road.

"People love the old industrial features," said Jon, as he gave a guided tour of the first-floor centre.

Two simulators – one with a floor (pictured) which adjusts to the contours of the virtual course on the giant screen – let golfers polish their technique.

"There's a good synergy with the gym," added Jon. "You can come here as a group, or for individual teaching."

Choose from 150 courses, including Pebble Beach, the Belfry, Pine Springs and St Andrew's. If you just want to hit golf balls, opt for the straightforward range card (£50 for 10 half-hour sessions), but if you want to improve your style, a £250 six-month package includes half a dozen lessons with either Jon or fellow pro Bill Palmer, and daily practice slots.

There is also a lively junior academy. Call 020 8398 5423 or visit www.thegolfplaza.co.uk

Ode to food

by Morris Thain

The foodies' festival is done
It's all been eaten... every crumb
Fish on grills and pasty pies,
The calories flew past my eyes

I'm often asked, by hungry souls,
To name my favourite eating holes
I always say you'll have no worry
If you choose a tasty curry

East India is cheap as chips
Eight quid a head, including tips
Red Rose can boast the finest nosh
And Joy is great for rogan josh

Maya is a good venue
Big dining space, but tiny loo!
The Raj is tasty, Agra's fine
And Prithi's good (with nice house wine)

The Priya, Brighton Road, is new,
But Jaipur's columns beckon too.
One thing is sure; the choice is vast
No need to starve, no need to fast



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