

## Alright then, who ate all the pies?

The Good Life helped pick the town's top pies at the Surbiton Food Festival, in a belt-busting judging session. Editor Tim Harrison (right, dithering) and former Woman editor Sarah Edwards tasted 20 entries.

Ian Roscow's ménage a trois (asparagus and ham on a pastry 'mattress') had its own mission

statement, and won amateur savoury. Amateur sweet went to Annie Morris's lemon meringue.

French Tarte chef Joel Wilson won the pro sweet award, with Piers Driver winning pro savoury. "I was completely pie-eyed after the judging," admitted Tim.

● Winning pie recipe on p5



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## Curry and cake – Surbiton's treats

Surbiton is a town of curry addicts who also adore cake.

A third of locals admit to a regular Indian meal, with other popular indulgences being cake (28%), pizza (21%) and burgers (11%), according to a survey which comes hard on the heels of the town's second successful food festival.

Surbitonians spend £81.12 a month on fast food of all types... just under Kingston's average of £83.97 a month.

So why is curry so popular? Naushad Khan, runs Surbiton's oldest curry house, East India at 1 Brighton Road, set up

by his father in 1967, and believes it's about breadth of choice and quality.

"Surbiton loves curry, without a shadow of a doubt," he said. "There's so much demand! People don't go to Kingston for curry, they come to Surbiton. We have regulars from Epsom and Weybridge. Having so many Indian restaurants in one place keeps the standard up."

Brighton Road is Surbiton's most tightly packed curry boulevard, with East India, Maya, Joy, Red Rose and Guru Express in a 100-yard stretch. Ewell Road and Tolworth Broadway boast

Prithi, Indian Tapas, Sarada, Fusion Spice, The Raj, Agra, Jaipur, Spice House and Thanuska.

The proliferation of coffee shops in the town probably accounts for cakes of all descriptions being second on the list.

The vouchercodepro.co.uk survey found major regional differences. Scotland's top snack is crisps, Yorkshire prefers fish and chips, while 44% of the South West pick pizza.

The survey's aim was to highlight unhealthy eating habits. It pointed out that a 57-minute jog is needed to burn off a large portion of fries.



## Crossroads drama for busload

There were lucky escapes for a busload of passengers and two drivers after this K3 collided with a van in Effingham Road.

The bus driver was taken to Kingston Hospital for treatment to an injured knee, and a female passenger was treated at the scene by medics, but neither was seriously hurt after the crash at the junction with Windmill Lane... a crossroads where screeches and crunches are only too familiar to residents.

Ironically, the other vehicle involved in the accident belongs to Nationwide Repairs, a firm which specialises in patching up vehicles damaged in collisions.

According to police and witnesses, the van coming up Windmill Lane from Portsmouth Road crossed the junction and collided with the Kingston-bound K3.

The van was flipped on to its roof by the

impact, rolling several times after mounting the grassy bank at the junction and demolishing the street sign.

The bus windscreen became a spider's web of cracks, but didn't cave in, sparing the driver and front passengers from being showered in glass.

Effingham Road was sealed off for two hours after the crash, with local diversions put in place.

A week before the accident, which happened on Wednesday May 7 at 5.45pm, Windmill Lane had been resurfaced – filling in the potholes which had pockmarked the tarmac.

Loose chippings covered the road surface, and the stop-line markings at either side of the junction had not been reinstated.

However, temporary signs were attached to lampposts warning that markings were missing.

Within two days of the accident, fresh stop lines had been painted on the road.



## Will this do? Thistle Dew fine...

There's something faintly heroic about giving Surbiton houses names in this era of numbers and postcodes.

Personalising your castle by nailing The Laurels above the

door seems to generate a feeling of suburban pride. So what's behind house-naming, and is it a Margo-and-Jerry thing?

The Good Life has been investigating. Full story on p6

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Gardening tips by Janice Cripps

# Chelsea can't stop scoring..



The Chelsea Flower Show is the highlight of my gardening calendar. The show gardens are a feast for the eyes and offer a tremendous source of inspiration.

This year was no exception and, despite the large crowds and having to continually side-step lumbering camera cranes and television crews, I made my way round all the gardens and enjoyed every minute.

No expense is spared for a Chelsea garden. If you didn't know already, the garden makers get up to all sorts of trickery to ensure their plants are in bloom and at the height of perfection on the exact day of judging. Two years ago the winner of the best-in-show garden grew over 500 foxtail lilies to guarantee that he could select seven to feature in his award-winning garden!

Unfortunately, the average person cannot afford a £250,000 show-stopping garden with a team of helpers to dust petals and vacuum pathways. So I ask myself, apart from picking up on this year's trends like planting purple and welcoming back weeds to the garden, what can be learned from the Chelsea

experience? I think it depends on your powers of observation and this applies to any garden that appeals to the eye. Here are three general principles to bear in mind:

- Every good garden has a structure and order which allows you to move through it easily, but in a controlled way, stopping at specific points to appreciate views or points of interest. The garden has to flow and its various elements need to work together, just like the interior of a beautiful home.
- Choice of materials is important. They should fit with the style of planting and style of the house, so strengthening and enhancing the

composition. For example materials that have been used to build the house are often used in the garden to give it coherence and integrity.

● Plants are also chosen to fit in with the overall concept and style of the garden. They are not necessarily chosen for their individual star qualities but whether they can be used in conjunction with other plants to create interesting combinations of form, colour and texture. In other words, the whole is more important than the individual parts.

If Chelsea has somehow passed you by, but you're seeking inspiration, The National Garden Scheme charity opens thousands of outstanding gardens to the public every year.

Many are in Surrey and the London area, and are well worth a visit. There is normally a small entrance fee but it makes a lovely day out and owners are usually on hand to show people round and pass on their gardening wisdom.

If you're spoiled for choice go for the garden offering afternoon teas; the home-made cakes are delicious!



Luciano Giubbelei's garden, 2014 best in show

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](http://www.janicecripps.co.uk)

## Cable's business call

Business Secretary Vince Cable visited the Maple Works shared office space in Maple Road, and fielded questions from owners of local small enterprises.

Among them was Sue Black, a computer scientist who led a campaign to save Bletchley Park, and who now encourages women to start digital careers via Techmums.

Topics ranged from planning to business rate relief, taxes on pubs to funding start-ups, with MP Ed Davey and local chamber of commerce leader Jerry Irving joining in.

On a scarcity of office space caused by more planning consent being given for residential conversion, Dr Cable said he was aware of the problem, but that the housing shortage had been seen as more urgent at the time.

Asked about sources of start-up capital for small businesses and social enterprises, Dr Cable extolled concepts such as peer-to-peer lending and crowdfunding.



Vince Cable chats to Sue Black

Picture: Eric Doyle



Bottoms up! A yoga class in the studio, pictured below, led by Surbiton teacher Asha Khagram, right  
Pictures: Berni Low & Sasha Pommelova



## From cars to karma, a new yoga studio opens

It's an unlikely location for a yoga studio; the old Home Park petrol station site where Portsmouth and Uxbridge roads meet.

Until recently it was the Riverside food shop, but for 50 years it was the

office where you paid for your four-star and were given Green Shield stamps.

The Yoga Alliance-registered Asha Khagram was raised in India "where you had to do yoga in the freezing cold at 5am". After moving to the UK

she married, had children and divorced... then rediscovered yoga.

She and her daughter are both yoga teachers, with Asha, 63, blending 'sivananda' with the spirituality of 'ashtanga' yoga.

She ran classes in her flat in nearby River Court until moving to the car wash site; a room to improve posture, for beginner or expert.

Sessions run most days, and you can roll out your mat for £15; less if you book a course. Also meditation and children's yoga, including a course for two to four-year-olds.

● Home Park filling station at 34 Portsmouth Road dates from 1957, when Wolseleys and Rileys ruled the streets. Built by Land & Property for garage owner Mr HC Borrett, its role altered in 2009 when Raeburn Avenue car-wash entrepreneur David Krasniqi set up in business with Eastern European squeegee teams on valet duty.



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Laxmi celebrated

Every pew was filled as St Matthew’s celebrated the life of churchwarden Laxmi Atkins, above, who died of cancer at 67. The Rev Helen Hancock described her as “a loving mother and grandmother”. Helen’s predecessor, the Rev Simon Hones, said she was a nurse who could “put consultants in their place”, adding: “We loved her warmth more than we feared her discipline.” She was also a valued Good Life distributor.

Lords changes

Lords’ offices in Brighton Road and Tolworth Broadway have been rebranded after the estate agency was sold. It brings to 21 the branch network of new owner Curchods, established in Weybridge in 1938.

Brabham’s links

Race ace Jack Brabham, the three-times Formula 1 champion who has died at 88, lived at 3 Ashcombe Avenue in the Southborough estate. He ran Jack Brabham Motors car repairs in Hook Road, in what today is a Jet petrol station. The race team admin office was in Victoria Road.

Half-time biccies



The French Tarte in Maple Road celebrates the World Cup with gift macaron boxes, £7.50, in England and Brazil team colours, pictured.

Access learning

Over 19? Interested in access courses to higher education? Kingston College is holding an open day on June 27, 11am-2pm, where experts will guide, advise and assist.

School app hunt

Surbiton’s online eureka firm, www.7billionideas.com, is touring schools to encourage young people to think outside the box. Based in North Road, the company wants young people to come up with educational phone app ideas.

Shop slings hook

After a year’s trading, the BNSR fishmonger at the Ewell Road/Hollyfield Road corner has closed. Mohamad Fellahi tried to make a go of the wet fish business (he once ran a shop in his native Morocco), but there was just too much left on the slab at the end of the week.

Office lunches

Office space renters at Maple Works in Maple Road can take advantage of ‘working lunch’ deals at next door gastropub Gordon Bennett! From aubergine bake to haloumi salad, lunches can be delivered to desks at a discount.

Mike tops table

Surbiton racing driver Mike Robinson is on top of the Michelin Clio Cup race series standings after victory at the Oulton Park Island circuit. “I’m pleased with the win,” said the Ewell Road driver.

Surbiton pints

The first pints of Surbiton’s very own bitter will be pulled at The Antelope next month. The Big Smoke Brew Co’s microbrewery in Maple Road will produce 60 casks of beer a week, with the first foaming tankards expected by mid-July.

It’s the cat’s whiskers

Elaine Swift and Graham Taylor have lived in Surbiton for 20 years, and have had cats for all that time. Now the pair have come up with Mr Monty’s Fuss and Feed, a cat care service, named after their own pet, to allow the town’s moggies to remain at home in familiar surroundings while owners are on holiday (www.mrmontysfussandfeed.co.uk). “We’ve nothing against catteries,” said Elaine. “But we knew Monty wasn’t happy in them. When we got home his ears went flat and he wouldn’t take a treat from us.” Elaine and Graham’s service has three levels: cat licks, the cat’s whiskers and The Full Monty. That not only involves feeding

and fussing over your cat, but also watering the garden, opening curtains, turning on lights and even stocking the fridge with the basics for your return. “Some cats like being sat with, others like having their tummies tickled,” said Graham, who is able to tailor the stay-at-home service to the whims of each puss, and who makes a point of meeting and getting to know every cat before taking on a client. Prices start at £8 a visit. The couple are fully insured, are trained in animal first aid and would, in extremis, take puss to the vet. ● Graham and Elaine also run Mr Monty’s art emporium, devoted to cat-related arts and crafts. More in the next Good Life.



Elaine, Graham and Monty: feline art and holiday care



Forget raspberry ripple. Jessica Pritchard’s cones are... rasher. Candied bacon and golden syrup ice cream was oddly tasty at May’s sunny farmers’ market. It was devised by the retro trike-riding, 22-year-old at the City Arms, Portsmouth Road. “At first I churned the ice cream myself, then I raised enough for an old Gelato machine,” said Jessica. Watch for her at fetes.



Carrie Evans and her son Zachary, a Surbiton teacher, demonstrated costumes from the 15th century at a recent meeting of the town’s historical society. Both are involved in Destrier, a group which stages jousts (as in this picture by Alexander

Joust do it

Turner). Zac, wearing a fetching codpiece, got dressed in full armour – it weighs four stone, the same as an SAS pack – to the delight of a full house at the library hall. Most armour was black, from the forge, not shiny. Under it, men wore petticoats. “I made my husband’s and my son’s petticoats... which is quite a thing to say,” laughed Carrie.

Overheard in The Lamb

Unannounced, a man brings his best friend home for dinner after work. As they all stand in the hall, his wife begins screaming. “My hair and make-up aren’t done, the house is a mess, the dishes aren’t done, I’m still in my pyjamas and I can’t be bothered cooking tonight! Why the hell did you bring him home?” “Because he’s thinking of getting married.”

Erica leads the way down hill



Picture: John Kelly  
An unusual sight in Victoria Road... Erica the donkey helped worshippers at St Mark’s church remember Jesus Christ’s arrival in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Erica cheerfully gave children rides on her back, and then was led through Surbiton at the head of a procession of clergy, choir and congregation – some carrying palms – to the sister church, St Andrew’s, for the day’s main service.

● Inviting others for a meal in the 15th Century showed them how rich you were (it’s much the same in Surbiton today). The food you served indicated your wealth. The poor ate eggs (they were replenishable), the rich ate the chicken. People took their own cutlery to the meal, and would wash their hands in a bowl at the table.



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# The Greek God of Berrylands

A Surbiton medical student played a pivotal role in the post-war London Olympics, although it was kept secret until moments before the opening ceremony.

John Mark ran into Wembley Stadium at the start of the 1948 London Games, holding the flaming torch on the final lap of its journey while the nation cheered.

Was he a record-breaking sprinter? A top hurdler? A champion vaulter? Not a bit of it!

“He was picked for his good looks – that was it!” says the Surrey History Centre’s Phil Cooper, who showed a colour newsreel film clip of the torch event to Surbiton Historical Society.

To be fair, the ‘Anonymous Adonis’ did once come fourth in an amateur athletic association race, and he represented Britain on a single day in Paris in a 1947 competition.

But John’s selection bucked the trend of host countries picking their greatest sporting superstars for the honour of lighting the flame to herald the start of the games.

And it put several noses out of joint. Top choices for the role in 1948 included Godfrey Brown, a relay gold medallist; dinky Sid Wooderson, the 5ft 6in

world 880yd record holder; and Donald Finlay, medal-winning hurdler and dashing wartime fighter ace.

Instead, the Olympic committee picked the graceful Surbitonian with the flowing blond locks – a 6ft 2in pin-up, who looked the part.

In an overheard conversation at the time, the Queen Mum bemoaned the fact that an ‘unknown’ was going to light the flame, instead of Wooderson. “Dear me,” she is recorded as saying. “What a pity they did not get that dear little Sydney to do it.”

A student at St Mary’s Hospital Medical School in Paddington (where four-minute miler Roger Bannister later studied), John was a month shy of his 23rd birthday.

He lived with his sister, Louisa, and parents William and Pat at 13 Berrylands, across the road from Surbiton Tennis Club.

A speedy wing three-quarter at Cambridge University, he failed to get his blue because of a persistent shoulder injury. Sworn to secrecy about his role 18 months before the Games, he trained in secret at the London University sports ground, Motspur Park (now Fulham’s training ground).

The training was needed. The stadium torch weighed 7.5lbs (3.5 kilos), so carrying it at arm’s length for a lap of Wembley was a task.

Philip Noel-Baker, in the official account of the 1948 Olympics, said of Mark: “Tall and handsome, like a young Greek god, he stood for a moment in the sunshine, then ran in perfect rhythm round the track, saluted again and lit the flame in the bowl where, day and night, it burned until the Games were done.”

Mark, whose father was a Wimbledon



‘Greek God’ John Mark, above and right, with the Olympic torch and, left, 13 Berrylands, where he grew up

businessman, had to endure ribbing from fellow students when the secret leaked out. They ran circles round him, holding lit cigarette lighters!

There was excitement in the Royal Borough when the news emerged. Bentalls, in a move which would have given today’s health and safety officials the heebie-jeebies, lit a brazier on the escalator platform of the Kingston store, and kept it burning throughout the 1948 Games.

At the opening ceremony, mum Pat said: “We are proud and honoured our son was chosen to carry the torch.”

John’s time in the spotlight was brief. He fired the gun to start Surbiton Town running club’s 24-hour track walk at Motspur Park a month



after the Games... an event in which only six of 14 starters finished. Then he joined Surbiton mayor Alderman WE Dommett at the gala opening of XIV *the Olympiad, The Glory of Sport*, at the Roxy cinema, St Mark’s Hill (now the Coronation pub).

He vanished from the world stage as quickly as he’d arrived, quietly marrying and becoming a popular family GP in Hampshire. He had three children, and died of a stroke in 1991 at the age of 66.

**Tim Harrison**



## Jolly good show

The latest edition of your newspaper just dropped through my door.

I have meant to tell you before, it really is excellent; a great addition to Surbiton (well, in my case, Tolworth fringes) life. In particular, it is very well written. In this edition I would pick out the piece on the proposed station layout;

really clear, crisp writing (and editing, I presume) – head and shoulders more informative than any of the other available sources of information. And the bit on Boris – just the right amount of fine dry humour without tipping over into disrespect. He may be an Eton/Bullingdon ass, but he is Mayor (as a private citizen, I am not bound to show any respect).

In eight pages, the paper covers what I want to read

about my town, and not much that I am uninterested in, and always a few things I didn’t know I would be interested in – at the right length. Jolly good show.

**Bob Phillips**

## Litter scourge

We’re delighted Morris Thain’s scintillating stanzas focused on the ongoing problem of Surbiton litter.

Perhaps other avid Good Life readers will have noted this apparently growing problem.

Keep up the good work, Morris. Let’s hope our elected councillors take note. After all, there could be verse to come!

**Angela Cooper**

## Vicar’s chicks

In response to your item about Richard Briers, I can confirm that there are chickens very close to The Avenue... at Christ Church vicarage, directly behind my house, about halfway up the road. Furthermore, I had a reasonable crop of gourds (see picture), though as they were purely ornamental,

these would have been of more interest to Margo & Jerry than Tom & Barbara.

**Mark Butler**



Surbiton town centre having an attractive gateway and open space in the heart of the town. US studies have consistently shown that town centres that offer better cycling facilities attract a higher per-visit spend by shoppers.

The more people we can encourage on to bikes the fewer cars and buses will be on the roads, and I have yet to find anyone who believes Surbiton would not be better with fewer motor vehicles.

**David H Williams**

Very sad about the station. It’s so useful to be able to sit there for five minutes when collecting people. I like its old-fashioned look too.

**Georgina Allen**

## Station split

I am disappointed by your one-sided coverage (Surbiton Forecourt to be Pedestrianised).

Substantial space is given to a vocal, but minority, group (The Kingston Society) while no opinion was sort from the myriad of cycling groups in the borough such as Kingston Cycling Campaign, which I represent.

The hundreds of cyclists that use the station each day will be grateful that intolerant and inconsiderate taxi drivers are to be banished, and pedestrians will be grateful that the multi-lane vehicle terminus will be displaced.

Traders will benefit from

Surbiton station is used by thousands who arrive by bus, car, walk and, yes, a relatively few cyclists for whom adequate parking facilities can be provided at relatively low cost and minimal inconvenience.

What is being planned for the aged and infirm, who represent a significant sector of Surbiton’s population and travelling public?

Are they to be despatched to the rear entrance where they can access the station without walking across a sloping pedestrianised plaza? Yes... but there are no lifts on that side of the station!

Encouraging cycling or walking is commendable but it has to be put into perspective. Creating a pedestrian zone per se will have no impact whatsoever!

What will be done about all the approach roads to the station? Why are there no substantial facilities for cyclists at the rear entrance?

A service road behind the Victoria Road shops will be unable to manage the stream of taxis and cars dropping off and collecting people.

The car park is a shambles. Ticket machines often don’t function and spaces are too narrow for today’s ‘executive’ cars.

It is an extraordinary waste of taxpayers’ funds – all in a knee-jerk reaction to one of Boris Johnson’s less inspired dreams! I trust that voices of sanity will be heard on this topic!

**Jonathan Wheatley**

For 170 years, Surbitonians have been able to drop off and collect loved ones at the station – first by pony and trap, more recently by motor car.

Restricting the forecourt to cyclists is absurd. What are we all meant to do? Buy tandems to ferry people home? Maybe the political changes at the Guildhall will prompt a rethink.

**Cathy Winfield**

**Sarah Carter Counselling**  
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# How to create an award-winning pie...



Sarah Edwards and Tim Harrison congratulate pie challenge victor Joel Wilson on his creation (below)



A 21-year-old trainee chef at Maple Road's French Tarte won the professional sweet pie challenge at May's farmers' market, a Surbiton Food Festival event. Joel Wilson made creamy banana and custard pie with spun sugar topping. The pastry apprentice was also given a £20 bonus by delighted French Tarte owner Eric Guignard. Former Woman magazine editor Sarah Edwards and Good Life editor Tim Harrison tasted entries from lamb shank and butternut squash to blueberry and banana cream. Ian Roscow's ménage a trois pie – asparagus, ham and parmesan – won amateur savoury. The judges were united in giving the amateur sweet prize to Annie Morris (inset) for her richly flavoured lemon meringue pie, **recipe right**, while Antelope head chef Piers Driver won the award for professional savoury pie for his melt-in-the-mouth lamb and wild rosemary creation. Food blogger Sarah said: "We were incredibly impressed by the standard of entries. There were so many innovative, beautiful, delicious dishes. The awards were well deserved." Festival organisers were chuffed with everything from children's pizza-making to hopped beer tasting, from a boules contest to community sports day. "The second year was bigger and better, with more businesses taking part and record numbers," said Robin Hutchinson. "It is a real tribute to the local community that it was such a success."



## Annie Morris's Lemon Meringue Pie

**Cooking time:** 1 hr 45 mins. Serves 6-8  
**Ingredients:** Filling: 2 level tbsp cornflour, 100g golden caster sugar, finely grated zest 2 big lemons, 125ml fresh lemon juice, juice 1 small orange, 85g butter, cut in pieces, 3 egg yolks, 1 whole egg  
**Meringue:** 4 egg whites, room temperature, 200g golden caster sugar, 2 level tsp cornflour  
**Method:** Roll out pastry, line a 23 x 2.5cm loose-bottomed fluted flan tin. Neaten edges. Press pastry into flutes. Prick base with fork, line with foil, shiny side down, chill for 1 hour (or overnight). Put a baking sheet in oven and heat to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Bake pastry case 'blind' (filled with dry beans) for 15 mins, remove foil, bake 5-8 mins until cooked (can be done day before). Lower oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. While pastry bakes, prepare filling. Mix cornflour, sugar and lemon zest in saucepan. Strain and stir in lemon juice gradually. Make orange juice up to 200ml/7fl oz with carton orange juice. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thickened and smooth. Once it bubbles, remove from the heat and beat in butter. Beat the egg yolks (save white for meringue) and whole egg together, stir into pan and return to a medium heat. Keep stirring vigorously for a few mins, until the mixture thickens. Take off heat and set aside while you make the meringue. Put the egg whites in a large bowl. Whisk to soft peaks, then add half the sugar a spoonful at a time, whisking between each addition without overbeating. Whisk in cornflour, add the rest of the sugar until smooth and thick. Reheat filling and pour into pastry case. Put spoonfuls of meringue around edge of filling, then spread so it just touches pastry. Pile the rest in the centre, spreading so it touches the surface of the hot filling (and starts to cook), then give it a swirl. Return to the oven for 18-20 mins until meringue is crisp and slightly coloured. Let pie sit for 30 mins, then remove and leave 1 hr before slicing. Eat the same day.

# Could you offer a home to a child needing sanctuary?

Surbiton should be a fertile recruiting ground for foster carers... but for some reason it isn't. Safe, stable, with spare bedrooms, it is a territory full of caring, listening people who could offer sanctuary to a child without a home. Fostering fortnight in May highlighted the local shortage, with pleas for more carers to come forward. At the farmers' market on June 21, fostering staff will field questions, and a foster carer from Surbiton will be able to describe the warts-and-all reality. Andrew and Theresa, who have three older children of their own, foster very young children in their Surbiton home, and say it is incredibly fulfilling. "You love them like your own children," said Theresa, 47, as she played with the contented 10-month-old boy they are currently fostering. She admitted it was a wrench when the children moved on. "But it's the right thing; it's an emotional day, but we've done our bit and look forward to the next one arriving," she said. She and Andrew, 55, foster children from birth to two years old. "You meet other carers, and the council does support you," said Theresa. "I'm at home full time, so it seemed logical for us to have children at home full time." Andrew and Theresa have been fostering for three years, after picking up the phone and calling the



council's fostering team. "Life experience is important," said Andrew. "If you're young and have had a sheltered upbringing, it probably isn't for you; it helps if you've experienced life's ups and downs." Qualities which foster carers need include resilience, organisation, record-keeping (there's a daily diary), communication and the ability to listen. Before they began fostering, they talked it over with their own children. "Our daughter wondered why we hadn't done it before," laughed Theresa. Her main advice is to discuss it with other foster carers, to get the full picture. "Social workers know the official side... but foster carers know about the real thing," she said, adding that there were plenty of good times, but also challenges as well. "More people need to challenge themselves, and think about the positive impact they can have on children's lives... and feel good about what they're doing."

Demand for places in the Royal borough outstrips availability, resulting in youngsters being placed outside the area. Joanne Blackwood, from the local fostering team, explained: "There is a massive need; in the UK, 9,000 new foster carers are needed this year alone." Kingston borough has nearly 50 foster households, but needs many more. Although the area is one of the safest in the UK, drug and alcohol issues still result in a need for foster homes. Fostering takes different forms. Some carers offer short-term care for a day or two, or respite for a weekend. Some take children right through the formative years to late teens, or even early 20s. Fees and allowances ensure carers are not out of pocket (even birthday presents and holidays are funded), while training and support is given. You can be married, single, straight, gay... you don't need parenting experience, and there are no age limits. But you have to empathise with young

people in your care. You have to give them space, but be there for them; you mustn't judge them by their background, but you have to be able to provide a safe, loving home where they can play a full part in family life – often alongside your own children. In Surbiton, the serious shortage is of carers able to foster teenagers. "What's needed is commitment," said Joanne's colleague Adrian Duffy. "There are very few foster households in Surbiton, and we don't know why." "The most powerful recruiting tool is word of mouth; folk talk to folk. It takes ordinary people with special qualities to do it, and stick at it. 'Stickability' is what we prize the most." Joanne added: "We have an urgent need for more foster carers in the borough. Too often we have to place our children in families outside the borough, which leads to unnecessary disruption in our children's lives at an already distressing time."

Tim Harrison

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# Naff or fun? The story of Surbiton's house names

**Does naming your home add a personal touch, or does it just confirm a Surbiton stereotype? TIM HARRISON investigates**

House names have been in use far longer than numbers, though since the UK was fully postcoded in the 1970s they've been less an identification aid as a gift to sitcom writers. Had Hyacinth Bucket named her semi The Grange in Keeping Up Appearances, we'd all have guffawed knowingly. Leslie Dunkling, the prolific author and septuagenarian Thames Ditton resident who wrote English House Names in 1970 having founded the Names Society, scribbles down every Dunroamin' that he comes across.

He once told me that people divided into those who loved the idea of making a home more personal, and those who viewed the practice as out-and-out snobbishness. "It's a statement," he said. "It says 'Hey, this is mine; I own it.' Look at council estates which have privately owned houses opposite. It's very likely those houses will be named, to show they're not 'council'."

The study of proper names has a name of its own, onomastics (fulfilling Mr Garnett's instruction to me at Latchmere primary, to try to learn a new word every day). Hundreds of Surbiton homes have names, although I suspect many predate the current owners, and have simply been left screwed to the wall because it would leave ugly marks if they were taken down. How do you choose a name? Some combine their own names (Alfbar, Dorsyd), others buy a ready-made Oakdene or Squirrel's Leap from Squires.

Boringly, the UK's most popular names are, in order, The Bungalow, The Cottage and Rose Cottage, so there is scope for originality. Berrylands can boast a Bali Hai (did the couple meet while watching South Pacific?), Littlemore (perhaps the sum left on the mortgage) and Casa Aperta (open house). There is also a Hilvista and a Tregenna; a Cornish holiday flavour. The area is rich in names. Pounding the pavements, delivering the Good Life, is as good a way to sample them as any. There are ecclesiastical echoes. St Cyres, The Crozier, St Luke's Lodge and St Abbs are dotted about KT6. Most Surbiton house names refer to nature. Cedar Lodge, High Pines, Oakfield Cottage, Laurel House and

Holmwood are all in the Southborough area, along with Whiteoaks, Twin Trees, Woodlands and Willows (despite there being no evidence of any). However, Holly House in Queens Drive does indeed have a hollybush. Surbiton also boasts Dainton Cottage, Galloway House, Montilly, Cleeve Hall, The Old Coach House, Samuda, Granta, Green Shutters (it has them), Westmount, White Walls and Laleham Cottage. But there are some more puzzling ones. The Jalans is intriguing, there's a nice ring to Little Shambles (even though the house and garden seemed elegant and manicured), while Roshan sounds like a curry house order. Guarlford and Lanreath may point to the origins of early occupants of Surbiton homes. The Red House is indeed red (in places), Penton (the name on arguably Surbiton's most impressive property) may well have been a family name, while Bears Den conjures up all sorts of odd images... as well as being likely to invoke the fury of



while a chap living near right by the railway line calls his home Nessun Dorma (None Shall Sleep). Some opt for attractive-sounding Italian names. Con Amore (with love), Bella Vista (beautiful view) and Pittoresco (picturesque) evoke holidays, although one Italian whose children were reluctant to leave home named his house Sovraffollato (overcrowded). The Welsh have produced some poetic-sounding house names. Ty Ardd can be found in Surbiton, possibly put up by a Welsh exile. Elsewhere around London's suburbs are Nyth Bran (nest of the crow), Minafon (house by the river), Delfryn (pretty view) and Dryslwyn (brambles). Gaelic names can also suggest geographical beauty; Dromore (large mountain), Struthan Beag (little stream) and An Grianan (sunny side). Some Surbiton names reflect owners' towns of origin or the building's original use (The Old Post Office), but most seem to be evocations of nature... adding to outsiders' suspicions that it's all a bit 'Hyacinth Bucket'.



When it comes to witty names, Aussies are world leaders. An electrician lives at Ohm Sweet Ohm, while a strict teacher calls his semi Bendova. Other down-under phrases are disguised as names – Wattle It Be, Thistle Dew, Bringacanatwo, Weownit, Wypyafeet, Stagger Inn and Binalong Way. If the house is a bit tumbledown, Australians are likely to put up the exotic-sounding 'Ashanti' on a name plate. When former Surbiton resident Rod Hancock moved from Raeburn Avenue to Guildford, he put up a sign outside his home reading Seaview Cottage. It certainly broke the ice with the neighbours. Interestingly, having a house name is claimed to boost the value of your home. Richard Wade, founder of the House Name Heritage website, did a survey of 100 estate agents to find out if a well-chosen name could affect saleability. The consensus was that the right name could add up to five per cent to the value. Halifax Property Services always includes house names "as they are felt to add interest for many would-be buyers, and often seem to generate more inquiries". Yet Cheltenham & Gloucester says house-hunters regard 'silly' names as a turn-off, just behind annoying musical doorbells and an old banger in the drive.

Most of us just have a number; a system that came into force by act of parliament in the mid-18th century, with odd numbers usually on the left-hand side of the street as roads radiate out of town. So what are the most popular house names in Surbiton? Delivering the Good Life gives a unique insight. In reverse order, we reckon the top four are: Bell Not Working, Please Knock, We Do Not Buy At The Door and, in top spot, No Junk Mail.

● The perfect way to learn more about the area's house names is to join our happy little band of Good Life distributors. Email [thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com](mailto:thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com)



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# Natalie's powerful love story

Former Surbiton High pupil Natalie Dye has written a moving love story based around a tragic event which has cast a shadow over her in-laws, and an Italian town, for more than 70 years.

Arandora Star tells of the 1940 sinking by a U-boat of a Canadian-bound ship full of internees and prisoners of war.

Among more than 700 lost was her husband's grandfather, Giovanni, who emigrated to Wales years before war broke out.

Many of those who died came from one Italian town, Bardi. "The scandal is that the [British] government let the ship sail unescorted and with no markings," said Natalie, pictured. "It's a story that needed to be told."

The ex-Cosmo journalist, who now writes for TV magazines and is a media consultant at Kingston Uni, interviewed Giovanni's widow during her research. "She'd never said goodbye, and I felt the only way to get that across was in a fictionalised account," she said.

Published first as an e-book, and recently as a paperback, Arandora Star has garnered a host of positive reviews on Amazon, and could be the subject of a movie deal in future. It's an impressive, emotional and well-crafted read. **Tim Harrison**



# A round-the-world concert

Music from around the world for winds and piano is at the heart of a recital on Sunday June 22 at St Mark's church by the Waldegrave Ensemble. The 2pm concert, Around the World in 80 Minutes, includes works by Barber and Poulenc, and a performance premiere of the intriguing-sounding Calendar of Tolerable Inventions from Around The World by Raymond Yiu. Tickets (£9, £7 concs, £5 children) are available

on the door, or in advance from 0333 666 3366. Pictured, top row from left: Sarah Ovenden, flute; Jenny Melville, oboe; Elliott DeVivo, clarinet; bottom row, Emily Kate Blake, bassoon; Dan Coghill, horn; Alex Wilson, piano.



## Farewell, Keith

A popular local photographer, Keith Hern, has died of cancer at the age of 56 after a seven-year battle.

He charted his fight against the disease in the book Bangers and Mash, and helped others via motivational speaking, and regular upbeat postings on Facebook.

Keith, left, who lived in Thames Ditton, was married with a daughter. An accomplished networker, he was a widely admired member of Surbiton's business community.

A service celebrating his life was held in Wimbledon on June 11.



## Different dance steps

If you're between five and 11, Aurora Dance is for you at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road. "It's different; it's not strictly based on techniques," said Kira Palmer, 25, right, who runs it with Alice Burton; both keen Flight Dance movers back in the day. The next classes are on June 14, 21 and 28, 11am-noon. "It's kids' choreography; releasing energy, fun and creativity," said Kira, whose pupils will eventually perform a show at the centre. Amelie Dinnin, left, said: "I like dancing to pop music. My favourites are One Direction and Taylor Swift. And I love the Eurovision Song Contest!" Also pictured, Flo Queen.

## Chris Page rocks

Catch Surbiton guitarist Chris Page's rock anthem trio Eddie and the Redheads at Brave New World, Berrylands Road (the Bun Shop, as was) on June 27, 8.45pm. Chris, right, & Co went down a storm at the Black Lion recently, with a repertoire including Nutbush City Limits, Tainted Love, Love the One You're With, All Or Nothing and the Stones' Last Time.

● Next up at the Black Lion, soul band Funky Kingston, June 21, 8.45pm



## Prolific Pat strikes again

Pat Thurbin, right, is a man on a mission. "I'm 78 in September, so I've got to hurry up," he explained. After 30 years' teaching, he has written six e-books in two years, and is aiming for a dozen based around his murder-solving amateur sleuth Ralph Chalmers, a professor at Kingston Uni... where Pat was a visiting fellow for 12 years.

The adventures – which rattle along at a giddy pace – liberally name-check Surbiton (The Good Life paper even gets a plug in Murder at Downton, out this month!).

"I like Poirot; gentle murders," said the former Tiffin pupil, who lives in Kings Road, Long Ditton. "I really want people to have a good time with my writing."

He writes for four hours a day, and his e-books, including Murder at Seething Wells, sell for a modest 77p apiece. Search Amazon Books for PJ Thurbin, and the titles cascade!



## Steve is streetwise

As writers will tell you, putting words on a page is easy... marketing your work is the tough bit. So Surbiton sci fi novelist Stephen Harding went walkies to spread the word.

Part one of his trilogy, Janus the Arrival, was published for Kindle last year. Now part two, Janus the Offspring, is out; a 'gritty thriller containing adult themes'.

Steve, of Elgar Avenue, sacrificed lunch to pace roads near his Waterloo office, waylaying bemused passers-by. Rather than wait for men in white coats to arrive, he put one on himself to help stand out.

"It's been quite enjoyable, especially when people stop to chat," he said. "It's inspired at least two other authors."

Janus fans will now have to hang on until early 2015 for the third and final part. Download parts one and two on Amazon.



## Art at the Lion

Atmospheric black and white pictures of pub customers enjoying an evening out will be displayed around the walls of the Black Lion on the evening of July 5. They were taken by Kingston Uni art student Naomi Willis, 21, who said: "It was a project about pub life; I know the pub well, as I work there. It's part of my life." This one shows Black Lion regulars Sean and John having a laugh. Pictures are for sale. More at [www.cargocollective.com/naomiwillisphotography](http://www.cargocollective.com/naomiwillisphotography)

Get fit as a fiddle!

Over 50? Want to lose weight, get fit, and improve your mental wellbeing?

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## If you go down to the woods today..

Surbiton's over 50s are keeping active with a Fit as a Fiddle programme which includes Nordic walking. Co-ordinator Grace Shorthouse aims to keep people mobile and spritely, and is focusing recruitment on Surbiton and Berrylands.

Last year 250 residents improved their health, with St Mark's church one of the course centres. A few places remain on the new programme, which is just starting.

"Changing eating habits or getting fit can feel like a challenge at any age – more so if our health or mobility affects how much we can do," said Grace.

The programme is free, lasts six weeks and involves small groups doing weekly exercise and learning healthy eating tips. Activities include strolls through bluebell woods, pictured right, chair-based exercise, 'aquacise' and cycling.

"It's about responding to what people want, and providing it in a place, time and way that will suit them," said Grace, who ensures instructors are friendly, experienced and relate well to over 50s.

Fit as a Fiddle is funded by Kingston Public Health. Call Grace, 020 8942 8256, or email [grace@ageconcernkingston.org](mailto:grace@ageconcernkingston.org)



## Making English and maths fun to learn



If all learning was this enjoyable, there'd be no talk of skills gaps in the UK's education system.

Number Works 'n Words, based in a cathedral-like workspace above Langley's restaurant in Ewell Road, teaches children right through to A\* GCSE level with weekday term-time sessions at 4, 5 and 6pm, and inspiration-filled Saturday mornings.

Devised in New Zealand, the formula makes intelligent use of computers to teach youngsters at each one's most effective pace, assisted by sixth-formers with relevant, up-to-date knowledge.

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# A river runs through it...

Much like Ancient Egyptians, Surbitonians understand the benefits of living near a river. We may not wish to bathe or wash clothes in the Thames, nor use reeds to make paper and boats, but we are aware of its importance.

It offers a vital haven to flock to when the sun makes an appearance, because we know, mathematically, that lying on a riverbank in the sun makes you feel 19 times more summery.

When conventional road-based travel options become mundane for the thrill-seeking Surbitonian, the river adds a water-based option. Arriving at a local palace in an elegant riverboat is infinitely more fabulous than turning up in a Nissan Micra.

Sometimes it is neither desirable, nor emotionally viable, to spend seven hours in Saturday traffic to Kingston. The towpath provides a happy alternative to fatal road rage or a nervous breakdown.

The river provides relaxing ambience when peace and quiet is needed, or we need an hour to sit on a bench, gaze at the dusk sun dancing on the gentle ripples, and cogitate whether paying over the front garden was a mistake.

It affords a more interesting location to visit for a geography field trip than Tolworth Broadway.

When Surbiton's children have exhausted the developmental possibilities of a local park, desperate parents can plop them on the riverbank with the words: 'There. Learn about hydroelectric power and



effective flooding drainage systems?

The midges, mosquitos and other loathsome wildlife that swarm the riverfront in the summer months furnish Surbitonians with an additional reason to complain. Complaining is good for the soul and ensures minimal awkward conversational silences.

It allows the hosting Surbitonian to say to their guests: 'Now I have delighted you with the plethora of excellent local pubs, restaurants and estate agents, check out our local river - it's the Thames, don't you know?'

The river provides a crucial escape route should Surbiton be attacked by barbarians from neighbouring settlements, ie Worcester Park.

It is scientifically proven that alcohol tastes better when consumed within six metres of a river\*. Proximity to a gently

drifting river can allow the drinker to imagine they are somewhere much more exciting, such as the banks of the Seine, or the Colorado, or the Amazon.

If one tries hard enough on a balmy Prosecco-fizzled evening on Queen's Prom, one can forget one's proximity to the A3 and the Charrington Bowl.

When life reaches a point at which the only real solution is to have a quiet chat with a mallard, the river makes this entirely possible. Surbitonians have never had it so good.

\*This may not be scientifically proven.

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## The flat rate?

Sixteen flats in South Terrace - the loop road on the hill behind Surbiton station - have been sold before being built. Just one apartment is still up for grabs in the gated Victoria Place development from Jones Homes. It has one bedroom, is on the top floor, and costs £435,000. "We've had a terrific response," said sales director Sara Stanhope. "Purchasers include owner occupiers and buy-to-let investors."



## Store refreshed

The tired old checkouts and fridges of Sainsbury's Surbiton store have been refurbished in the first major revamp for years.

Workmen descended on the Victoria Road supermarket for a fortnight in May to create "a brighter and more pleasant shopping environment", pictured.

The frontage has been redecorated, alongside cosmetic changes to the car park.

Project manager Chuks Nwabineli told the Good Life: "The refurbishment represents a significant investment." Store manager Paul Stansfield thanked shoppers for their patience during the renovation.

## Council swings to the Tories

The Berrylands ward was one of the tightest in last month's local elections; Conservatives taking two seats, and the Lib Dems one.

It helped swing the balance of power on Kingston Council, giving the Tories overall control for the first time in 28 years.

The three Lib Dem candidates in Berrylands polled a total of 3,513 votes. The Conservatives polled a total of 3,659.

The Green Party, Labour, UKIP and a Trade Unionist candidate polled single-figure percentages.

Sushila Abraham was elected as the Lib Dem councillor, with

Mike Head and Andy Johnson the two Conservatives. Alexandra ward in Tolworth returned a trio of Conservatives, and St Mark's ward remained Lib Dem - despite a strong Tory challenge which saw candidates with blue rosettes come within 40 votes of success.

The picture was just as close in Surbiton Hill, where the Lib Dems held on to all three available seats. Tory candidate Peter Kelk came within 22 votes of defeating sitting Lib Dem councillor Malcolm Self.

The Lib Dems also held Tolworth and Hook Rise ward.



## Meeting Linvoy

Ex-Premier League footballer Linvoy Primus spoke to dads and youngsters at St George's church, Tolworth, then held a soccer coaching session on nearby Alexandra rec.

Linvoy, 40, a regular in defence for Portsmouth when they were in the top flight a decade ago, signed copies of his book Transformed, and spoke about his Christian faith and charity work. "At 29, God made an impact in my life and shook the foundations of my life," he told the Good Life, adding that he used to hold prayer meetings before matches at Fratton Park, to the bemusement of manager Harry Redknapp.

Now the dreadlocked Linvoy tours schools, churches and prisons, using the inevitable chat about football as a springboard to discussing his faith.

"It went really well," said organiser Rob Lelliott. "Linvoy ran a training session which 20 kids attended." Linvoy may return to Tolworth, as several men in the St George's congregation are now working with the footballer's charity, Faith & Football.

● Morris Thain is on holiday. Poetry returns in August



You've got a herd coming round, and you want to do a hot buffet - maybe a stroganoff or tagine. But you don't need stress or mess.

Pickled Pantry, the St Mark's Hill cafe, has launched Buffet in a Box, with food delivered to your door in Australian-made stay-hot reinforced insulated polystyrene containers.

"It only loses a degree of heat every hour," said George Setchell, above, who this month celebrates two years at the popular deli.

Whether chilli beef with rice or butternut squash crumble, the idea is to supply food easily eaten standing, with just a fork.

At the end, the debris is collected.

"We've catered for 80, but can do more," said George. "It could be for an anniversary, birthday, house party. We did one at St Mark's church, with lamb tagine and chocolate chorizo chilli beef. It went down well." Menus can include Pickled Pantry desserts.

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