



## Surbiton is becoming berry-lands

Entrants are being wished the berry best of luck as the farmers' market on Saturday June 16 issues its annual cookery challenge.

Be it a gooey pavlova, blueberry muffins, gooseberry crumble or strawberry cheesecake, everyone is being urged to make a dish involving berries.

It could be savoury – a berry-

glazed salmon or a pork and cranberry terrine, for instance.

Bring your dish to the competition tent in front of the Antelope pub by 10.30am, with winners being announced at midday and awards handed out.

There are prizes for amateurs, pros and under 12s. Full details at [www.surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk](http://www.surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk)

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# You've been Tango'd

Surbiton has changed from blue to orange in a dramatic political pendulum swing.

May's local elections saw the Conservatives swamped by a tsunami of Lib Dem votes, wiping out the 10-seat majority achieved by the Tories in the 2014 poll.

There are now 39 Lib Dems and nine Tories on Kingston Council, with the seven Surbiton and Chessington wards entirely orange.

Only four of the 16 wards in the whole borough have any Tory councillors, with influential names such as Terry Paton, Richard Hudson, Mike Head and Phil Doyle

defeated, and reigning mayor Julie Pickering losing by three votes in a tight fight which went to recounts.

Prime minister Theresa May visited a week before the poll, to try to shore up the Conservatives' vote.

Surbiton MP Ed Davey bowed along to the count to witness a "rout" of the Conservatives, leading the cheers as his wife, Emily, became one of three Lib Dem victors in Norbiton ward (previously represented by the borough's only Labour councillors).

The Lib Dems won 52% of votes, the Conservatives 31%, Labour 12% and Greens 3% on a 46.3% turnout.

Continued on **p10**



Emily and Ed Davey celebrate a major win for the Lib Dems



● This year's Surbiton Food Festival was the best-attended in its six-year history, with a packed programme of well-supported events... including the village fete (above) in St Andrew's Square. Chuffed organiser Robin Hutchinson purred: "We're delighted with the way it has gone." Reports from many of the varied happenings are dotted throughout the pages of this issue.



© Google Street View

## Pothole patch leaves Cat drained

Cat Coull's joy was short-lived after a pothole she'd reported as dangerous was finally repaired.

For not only did the contractors resurface the damaged road... they also tarmacked right over the nearby drain!

The exasperated good citizen alerted The Good Life to the issue near her home outside Millbank House at the junction of Browns Road and Ewell Road.

She explained: "There was a badly potholed stretch of road near the bus stop, but my worries that debris was going into the drain were allayed when I saw that they'd simply tarmacked over the drain as well! Unbelievable!

"All the power in my phone battery was used up hanging on to report the issue to Kingston Council in the first place, and the facility to get them to call back before 5pm bore no fruit two days running. The person I eventually spoke to admitted the website was a mess."

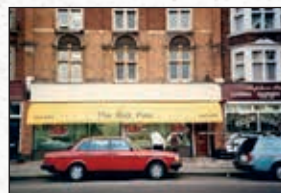
A council spokeswoman insisted that the tarmacking of the drain had been intentional. "This was done deliberately to protect the integrity of the carriageway, but is only temporary," she said. "A permanent repair, including reinstatement of the whole gully area, will be carried out in the next couple of weeks."

## In top 10%

Surbiton is among the top 10% of areas in England when it comes to being community-minded, a new survey reveals.

Residents trust their neighbours and the area is also one of the most vibrant places for dynamism and innovative ideas.

● Details on **p7**



It's a quarter of a century since independent store The Bed Post opened in Brighton Road, when Volvos were red and delivery vans blue. It's far from a sleepy story.

● The full tale is on **p9**

## Part of the service

Careers advice? Try Community Motors! The garage's mission is training the next generation of car mechanics. How well are they doing? The story is on **p5**



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# Surbiton leads trend to vegan dishes

Surbiton is once again ahead of the curve after Langleys restaurant launched a dedicated vegan menu alongside its regular lunch and dinner options. UK diners identifying as vegan have increased 350% in a decade, while many start the year with a meat-free 'Veganuary'.

Instead of being compelled to interrogate waiters about ingredients, vegan diners at the Ewell Road/Langley Road eatery, have an all plant-based menu.

Chef Mandar Desai, from Mumbai, and right-hand man Jay Panchal, also from India, have devised an alluring dish selection, which proved very impressive.

After a vegan beer (an organic 4.8% lager from the Freedom Brewery, Staffs), a roast carrot and quinoa starter; crunch added by broccoli floret slices, sweetness by cherry tomatoes and sharpness by a shallot vinaigrette.

An alternative was seared asparagus with smooth guacamole, pea shoots (Mandar loves them for their curly tendrilled look as well as the flavour) and toasted hazelnut pesto. It was simply superb.

Our main course choice was pappardelle ribbon pasta, sliced wild mushroom and sun-dried



Menu masterminds Mandar Desai and Jay Panchal; the asparagus and guacamole dish; Charles Burnett and Chris Kendall arrive with the tasty starters

tomatoes in basil oil (the herb oil aroma shining through). The alternative was a warm chickpea curry with spinach and potato cakes, tempered cucumber (this one didn't even seem mildly annoyed) and crispy parsnip. Both dishes joyously flavoursome, washed down with a hearty vegan wine, a 2012 Don Jacobo Rioja. For pud, poached plum with granola crumble and raspberry sorbet for me, and



pineapple slices for 'er indoors, the fruit cresting a sea of light maple syrup like Thor Heyerdahl's raft, and topped by a spoon of coconut sorbet.

When restaurants attempt vegan food they simply subtract interesting items from other recipes. That's not true at Langley's.

This is from-the-ground-up building of varied, invigorating dishes, so you're not fobbed off with butternut squash risotto.

"So many more customers are asking for vegan food, and a few of the staff here are vegan," bar manager Chris Kendall explained. "We only used to get occasional inquiries, now it seems that about every third booking asks, and we like to cater for as many people as possible."

The wine list marks the vegan options too (Chris rang round individual vineyards



to verify the bottles' status), and when food is prepared, the chopping knives and chopping boards are colour co-ordinated to ensure vegan stays vegan.

Chef Mandar explained that he came from a family where veganism was a part of growing up. "For one month a year we'd all go vegan at home; in the summer, when animals are raising families," he said. It has given him an understanding and appreciation of quality, flavoursome vegan food.

Tim Harrison



Down the hatch  
Picture: Jude Watts

## Pint of no return

The ninth Hook Beer Festival, run by the leaders of the 1st Hook scouts and staged at their HQ in Verona Drive, Surbiton, was a roaring success, with 920 thirsty visitors downing 3,500 pints over a sunny weekend. The event raised £10,500, with Prostate Cancer UK receiving £2,700 and the balance ensuring the continued success of the scout group.

## Outdoor pizzeria arrives as old friend departs



A topping wheeze: Louis' open-air oven

A rustic outdoor pizzeria specialising in foraged toppings has sprung up just as one of Surbiton's most popular restaurants, Da Lucio, has abruptly closed.

Teacher Louis Spence, whose inspirational outdoor school - A Lesson In Nature - is up a woodbark track behind Hill Park Roses near Squires in Long Ditton, baked pizzas in an open-air oven at a wild food session during the Surbiton Food Festival, after enthusiasts had picked wild garlic from the fields. Louis also works with children, especially those struggling with mainstream education, and teaches claywork and carving.

Meanwhile Da Lucio owner Luciano Orindi, who lives near St Mark's church, surprised everyone by suddenly closing the Maple Road eatery he'd run since 2005.

The 52-year-old stuck a sign on the window informing customers that after 13 years' trading he had decided to "hang up my apron, close the doors and retire from the restaurant business", adding: "It has been a difficult decision, and wasn't taken lightly, but for personal reasons I feel the time is right."

He thanked his loyal customers, who remain baffled; the restaurant was often packed, especially with family groups at weekends. As recently as March he was still advertising for staff. Though the pizza oven has cooled, the interior is intact, prompting speculation a new buyer might take it on.

Back in Victorian times the restaurant on the corner of St Leonard's Road was a dispensing chemist shop called Absolom.

● A Friday evening option for local pizza lovers is Conor Hadfield's Dough Shack, a van which pitches up outside Mannys, Fleece Road, Long Ditton. Full story in next issue.



Last slice for Da Lucio  
Pic: Christopher Houghton

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**Choral evensong**  
Singers (sight reading an advantage) are invited to a choral evensong at St Andrew’s, Maple Road, on Sat June 9. Rehearsal 3-5pm, service 6pm, tea and cake between. £5 cost covers music hire and refreshments. Email [simonhancock29@gmail.com](mailto:simonhancock29@gmail.com)

**Charity quiz night**  
A trivia quiz night is being staged upstairs at Langleys, 158 Ewell Road, on Sat June 2 from 7.30pm, organised by Claire and Jon McGrath of Winkworth estate agents for Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. £15 entry with a free drink and food. Email [mcgrath@winkworth.co.uk](mailto:mcgrath@winkworth.co.uk)



**Street clearance**  
More than 2.5 tons of rubbish and waste were collected when volunteers blitzed Broadoaks, the service road so prone to fly-tipping at the back of Tolworth Broadway. “The outcome is spectacular, and we’d like to express our thanks to all who attended the clean-up and contributed via crowdfunding,” said an organiser.

**Business awards**  
The deadline for the 2018 business awards, staged each October at the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth Road, is June 22. There are 12 categories, from best start-up to best indie retailer, best customer service to best campaign. Visit [www.kingstonawards.co.uk](http://www.kingstonawards.co.uk)

**Calling all posties**  
Surbiton historian John McCarthy wants past staff at Kingston’s old head post office at the Eden Street/Ashdown Road corner to reminisce and share pictures. The listed redbrick building, now shrouded in scaffolding, is the subject of a commemorative booklet. Email [john@johnandpatmcc.plus.com](mailto:john@johnandpatmcc.plus.com)

**Veterans’ fete day**  
A day of live music, food and stalls awaits at the Royal Star & Garter Homes’ summer fete, supporting disabled veterans in Surbiton. Plant cuttings and cakes gratefully received at the Upper Brighton Road home in the week leading up to the event on Sat July 21. Entry free. The fete is staged in the home and grounds, 1.30-4.30pm.

**Van men held**  
The police squad tasked with reducing burglaries in Long Ditton stopped a van in Portsmouth Road last month to check documents. The two men inside opted to leg it, but were swiftly arrested. They are being questioned and the vehicle has been seized.

**The fun of the fair**  
Sumo wrestling, gladiator games and basketball shootouts are among the activities at Long Ditton village fair at St Mary’s junior school, Sugden Road, on Sun July 8, 1-4pm. There is a Punch and Judy show, and the Royal British Legion marching band plays. Entry £1, children free. In aid of Long Ditton youth club and the Friends of St Mary’s School. To book a stall or help on the day, email [julieeburnett@hotmail.com](mailto:julieeburnett@hotmail.com)



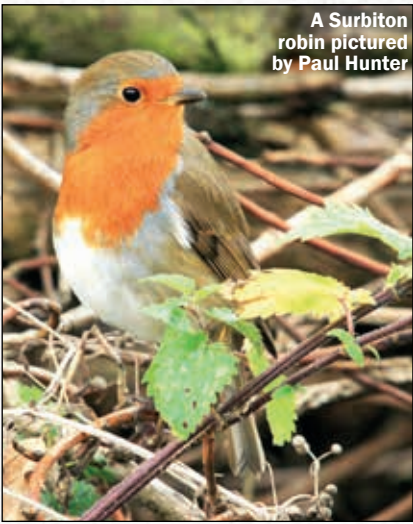
**Jammy dodgers**  
They still make jam – as evidenced by the array of pots for sale at the Maple Village WI stall at the recent Surbiton village fete in St Andrew’s Square. But there’s more to this branch than doilies and macrame. From meditation to gardening, puds to campaigning, there’s plenty going on. Take a look at [www.maplevillagewi.ning.com](http://www.maplevillagewi.ning.com)

# Robins adopt the trolley staff



The robin's nest is in the hole nearest the car charging point

Shoppers using the Waitrose car park were delighted to spot that robins had nested in a hole in the wall by the electric car charging point. The birds – known for choosing anywhere and everywhere to nest – built their home from odds and ends on the floor of the underground parking level. They lay up to half a dozen eggs. Store regulars spotted the birds in March, flying in and out of a circular hole drilled in the side wall to channel wiring. The robins were supplementing their usual worm-and-spider diet with crumbs from baguettes and stray blueberries which had tumbled out of punnets. Robins usually ‘adopt’ gardeners, but this pair have grown particularly fond of the supermarket staff who collect the trolleys, and drivers of Nissan Leafs who regularly use the charging point bays.



A Surbiton robin pictured by Paul Hunter

A support group, the Friends of St Matthew’s Church, is being launched to back a fundraising drive to save a much-loved landmark – including one of the rarest working bell peals in the UK. Urgent structural work is needed to make the tower and spire safe after Historic England placed the Grade II listed building on its ‘at risk’ register. High on the tally of concerns is the state of the Ellacombe chime, one of the few such working stacks in the country. The peal is not generated by bells, but by hemispherical mushroom-shaped chimes arranged on top of each other. It is named after a vicar who, fed up with the drunken antics

# Help save our mushroom-shaped chimes!

of his bellringers in the 1820s, hired a craftsman to design a frame with eight bell ropes which could be operated by one (sober) ringer! In all, £750,000 must be raised, with a £250,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant getting the ball rolling. Individual donations can be made via the church website, [www.stmatthewskt6.org](http://www.stmatthewskt6.org) As well as safeguarding the fabric of the 145-year-old building, the plan is to refurbish the loos so the church can serve an even wider purpose in the community, and be more

regularly open for public use. It is the largest project this active, thriving church has attempted since construction of the Sitzler Room – a new integrated church hall – in 1975. The friends group will add impetus to the appeal; helping to project-manage the building work and thoroughly researching the church’s history. St Matthew’s will be open on weekday mornings throughout the summer for people to drop in

for coffee, look round or just sit and enjoy the peace and quiet of the building. Future fundraising events and concerts will include silent films with live organ accompaniment, which have already gained a loyal following. Research is also being done into the 136 names on the church war memorial. Anyone with personal memories of St Matthew’s or the memorial names are asked to get in touch.



The Ellacombe chime at St Matthew’s is under threat

## SURBITON LIFE by David Cox



Customers often provided the Saturday girl with invaluable feedback on the whole range of cheeses

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# The laureate of suburbia

Not all who celebrate Surbiton have lived here. Neither John Esmonde nor Bob Larbey, co-writers of The Good Life sitcom, had links.

But the first writer to use Surbiton to epitomise suburbia was Keble Howard, nom de plume of John Keble Bell, the 'Laureate of Suburbia'.

Born in 1875, the son of a clergyman, he grew up in Warwickshire, failed his degree at Oxford and worked as a journalist in London. One of his first literary successes was The Smiths of Surbiton.

In 1904 he was commissioned to write a story for a new monthly journal, The World and his Wife, published by the Daily Mail. It was to be the domestic adventures of a married working class couple, but editor Leicester Harmsworth, still 14 years from being made a baronet, summoned Howard for some late changes. Howard's biography, My Motley Life, recalls the conversation. **Editor:** The proprietor has changed his mind about the social status of these people. He wants you to re-write the instalment, and make them people with about £600 a year. Can you do that?

**Howard:** Yes, I suppose I can.

**Editor:** This means a change of title. We've secured the whole front page of the Daily Mail tomorrow to advertise it, and should like to include the title of the

## NOTABLE SURBITONIANS John Keble Bell

serial story. So could you let me have it now?

**Howard:** Do you mean now – right away?

**Editor:** Yes please. The proof of the advertisement is waiting.

**Howard:** Oh, let's see. £600 a year? That means the suburbs. And they're to be quite ordinary, typical everyday people. The Smiths of Surbiton?

**Editor:** Sounds excellent.

Put on the spot for a name evoking suburbia, he chose Surbiton. "That is how I became an 'authority' on suburban life," Howard later said.

It was a hit. Published in 1906 in book form, with illustrations by Frank Reynolds (who went on to become art editor of Punch), it was followed by two sequels, The Smiths of Valley View and, in 1918, The Smiths in War-Time, and also spawned a play in 1922.

The Guardian hailed the book as "delightfully amusing, well-written and genuinely clever" while The Daily Telegraph called it "an entertaining presentation of life as it is lived".

Success meant that when he married in 1911 he could buy a nice house in the commuter belt – which he named As You Like It. Sadly it was in Merstham, near Redhill, not Surbiton. **Richard Pearson**

● John Keble Bell, born in Basingstoke June 8 1875, died in Bournemouth March 29 1928

## The Smiths of Surbiton... when the villas were new

The book follows the lives of newlyweds Ralph and Enid Smith, in 1906 newcomers to what Enid called 'a smart place like Surbiton'.

Ralph worked in the City. He was 32, 'tending to plumpness, an Englishman to the core'. Edith, eight years his junior, 'knew how to buy and wear clothes, and regarded her mother with a dutiful toleration'.

They rented a five-bedroom villa called The Pleasance, in fictional Eton Road, 'two minutes from river and seven from station', lit by gaslight and with no telephone.

Might Howard have had in mind St Leonard's Road?

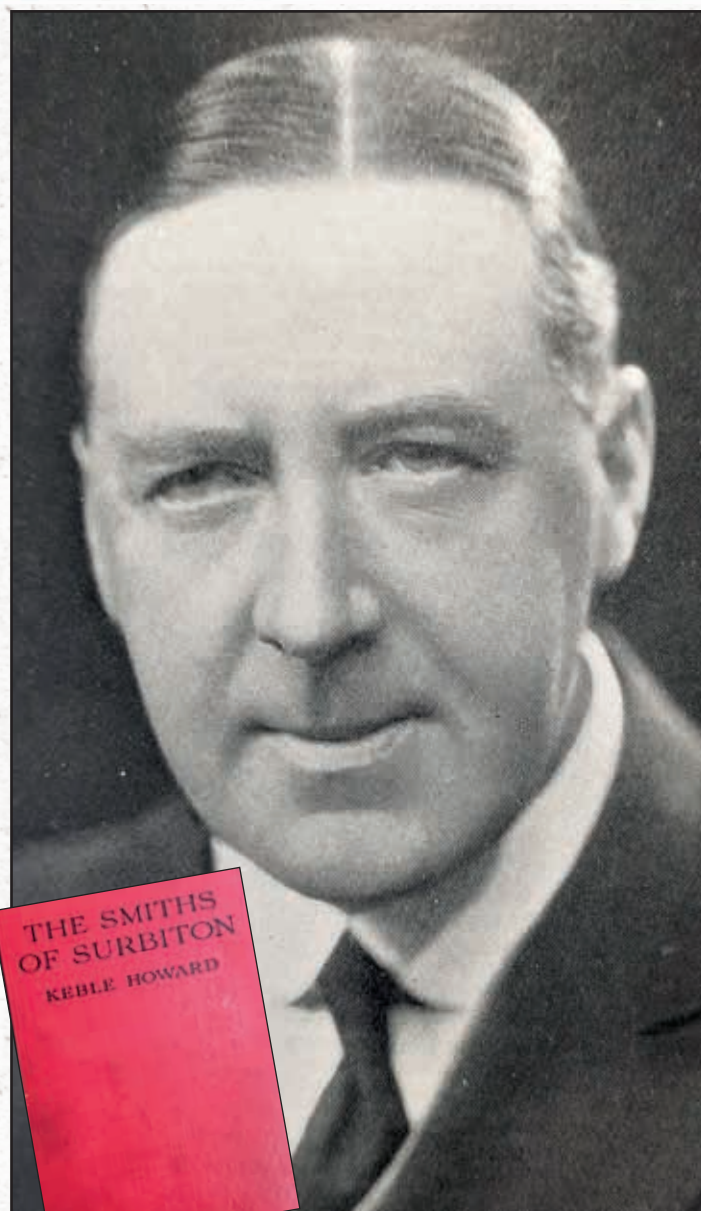
Enid went to the post office to telegram his office if Ralph was unable to go to work. The house had a number, 'but the Smiths decided to dispense with it, their note-paper bearing the simple address, The Pleasance, Eton Road, Surbiton'. They had two live-in staff, cook and housemaid, with a nurse added when their first child was born.

They had no transport of their own, but often used a horse-drawn cab hurrying home from the station.

Ralph earned £350 a year as a clerk in an insurance office, rising to £500 on promotion to head clerk, plus £150 from gilt-edged securities. Enid received £100 a year from her father.

The daily commute has changed little since 1906. Ralph was a season-ticket holder who walked to the station, complaining 'it is generally quite impossible to find a spare seat in a first-class smoker'. The train gets to London, 'sooner, if it's fine and there's nothing special happening; later if there's a fog or a race-meeting'. Once at Waterloo, he 'climbed into another train that takes me to the City'.

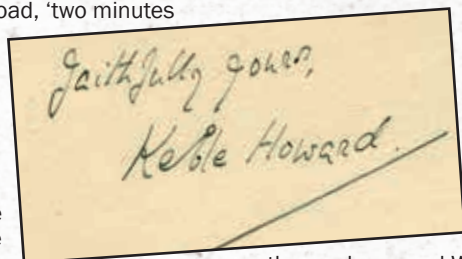
– the newly opened Waterloo & City line. Late evening travel also sounds familiar. The Smiths, up in London for the theatre, just miss the fast train to Surbiton and have to wait 20 minutes for the slow train, 'wandering up and down the draughty



platform'. Finally aboard, they doze off, but are 'woken at every station stop – seven times'.

The Smiths enjoyed 'a brisk walk along the river in the direction of Kingston', and went to the Rowing Club Ball at the Assembly Rooms, 'the most swagger thing of the Surbiton season', where they enjoyed the small orchestra, supper and, for Ralph, the smoking room.

After 23 years at The Pleasance, still rented not owned, the Smiths moved within Surbiton to Valley View, 'on the hill', presumably up towards Ewell Road. A far more pretentious residence, it had three reception and seven bedrooms, 'to say nothing of the electric-light fittings'. Clearly a suitable house to round off a successful life in Surbiton.



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From top: training manager Kevin Martin shows how to put the twists in a new brake fluid pipe; trainees from St Philip's School with their certificates; and a trio hard at work on an instructive mock-up of a 1999 Rover car's braking system

# Training pledge at ethical garage

A group of young trainee motor mechanics has completed a year's on-site work experience course at Community Motors, Surbiton's ethical repair garage... and have certificates to frame.

The Year 11 trainees, all 15 or 16, spent Friday mornings at the maintenance and MoT centre off Red Lion Road, Tolworth, working for their Level 1 motor vehicle studies qualification.

They are all versed in workshop safety, removing tyres and repairing engines and brakes.

Providing training was a central part of the mission of the garage, set up three years ago as a commercial business with a charitable heart, and the students from St Philip's School, Chessington, were chuffed to receive awards at school assembly from Kevin Martin, Community Motors training manager.

"They learn teamwork, workshop safety and mechanical skills," said Kevin, adding that the trainees had mastered replacing wheels, checking fluids, maintaining lights and removing spark plugs.

Familiarity with the numerous tools in the workshop seems to come easily, with the trainees able to strip an engine and name the components.

"The biggest change over their year with us is their dexterity," said general manager Justin Cooper. There's also a marked increase in confidence, with several of youngsters hoping for mechanical careers. The idea of the garage is to put something back into the community by offering training to disadvantaged groups. Customers let us generate money to do it."

Loyal customers have proved keen to back that aspect of Community Motors' work, and it's clearly benefiting the trainees. Lewis Sheead, 16, said: "It's helped me learn how to help solve problems."

Kevin added: "It's a springboard; a bridging gap between school and work." It's also providing basic training that a lot of colleges simply no longer offer.



# Liam's pint-size pop pulls 'em in

Surbiton is bursting with wannabe pop stars, if Liam Cottrell's pint-sized musical sessions in the Lamb pub, Brighton Road, are a guide. The singing guitarist entertains under fives every Friday from 1pm, with a mix of original songs and classics. Liam, of Lovelace Gardens, ran two sessions during the Surbiton food festival, with vaguely food-themed music from Old Macdonald to Prince's Raspberry Beret. A former Kingston Uni music graduate, he delighted, among others, Finn, Clementine, Ruby and Penelope with puppets and strumming. All tiny pop stars welcome.

# 100 not out, market celebrates success

Sharing a laugh at Surbiton's 100th farmer's market, co-founder Richard Sealtiel of Gordon Bennett! and actress and charity patron Felicity Montagu, who unveiled a plaque to mark an unbeaten century, and cut a cake. April's market raised £1,276 for the Momentum children's charity.

One current market organiser, David Jacobson, made a speech at a reception to mark the occasion, praising the loyal stallholders, supportive local councillors and "incredible volunteers who turn up each month, rain or shine".

Since its launch in Maple Road in 2009, the market has raised £60,000 for charities and won eight awards including farmers' market of the year.

"Success has come from being truly run by the community for the community," said Richard.

Simon Cox of Simon's Eggs has sold 192,000 eggs since the first market, Danny and Janet from Flavours of Sicily have sold ten bathfuls of extra virgin olive oil, while The Giggly Pig has sold

enough sausages to stretch from Surbiton to Guildford.

Richard said that he was proud of reaching 100 markets. "It is undoubtedly an achievement for all involved, and I know the community at large feels very proud too," he

said. "The market has evolved as a major light in our town and I continue to overhear conversations, especially between residents and weekend visitors, highlighting the 'farmers' market on my doorstep'."



# Naturally it was eggs royale for the big day

The Limping Fox in Rushett Road, Long Ditton, was just one of the many venues - and streets - in The Good Life's territory to be marking the Royal Wedding in some form or fashion.

The pub, previously The New Inn, laid on a Royal Wedding Brunch, with a wedding breakfast (a full English), and eggs royale among the offerings.

Brunch-goers also got to watch live TV coverage of Harry and Meghan saying their wedding vows.

There was a royal wedding picnic on Barnsbury Crescent Green on

the Sunray estate during the afternoon of the wedding day, with revellers urged to bring chairs, food and drink, and

Surbiton farmers' market held a fancy dress competition, with prizes for the best-dressed princes and princesses.



The poster for the Limping Fox event



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## Town's old warrior is stumped

One of the oldest, mightiest trees in Surbiton has been felled after being declared diseased and potentially dangerous.

The London plane in Maple Road, opposite Catherine Road, dated from about 1810, before the railway's arrival. In its 200-year life it defiantly absorbed a Victorian lamppost, and pushed through the low retaining wall around the Exeter Court flats.

A council spokeswoman told The Good Life that the tree was found to have a heartwood fungus, making its centre hollow and meaning it risked falling. You can see the hole in the stump.

The first London planes were grown 150 years before the Maple Road specimens were planted. A hybrid of Oriental plane and American sycamore, it became the capital's most popular tree as it was resilient to industrial revolution soot and smoke.

When its distinctive camouflage-pattern olive and grey mottled bark flakes, exposing a creamy colour beneath, the tree is cleansing itself of pollutants. No more will this beauty's annual harvest of orange maple-like leaves cover the pavement in the autumn. The town has lost one of its longest-lived warriors.

Janice Cripps reports on innovations at Chelsea and Hampton Court

## Asymmetry sets the trend at shows



If updating or redesigning your garden, ask yourself if emerging trends in garden design will last, or go the way of harem pants and stirrup leggings.

This year, outdoor features are big; not just the summer house or garden office but 'plug and play' pergolas with radio technology and integrated heating, lighting and drainage.

Like it or not, surfing the net and interacting with social media is a prime leisure activity... so why not include it in the garden?

Sustainability has long been a buzzword; gardens which benefit the environment and encourage wildlife. 'Growing your own', energy-saving LED lighting and locally sourced materials are important elements, and should all be part of today's self-respecting garden.

In 2017, Chelsea Flower Show featured polygonal paving, but at this year's show, and at Hampton Court (July 3-8), we're going for asymmetry. Be prepared for a contemporary update on classic crazy paving using large-scale stone - locally sourced of course.

Natural materials have always been popular in garden design as they age well and stand the test of time. Hand-made bricks and textured paving blocks with irregularities and imperfections bring a natural element to the garden.

In keeping with this theme, there is a move away from stainless steel and shiny surfaces in favour of copper which weathers naturally to an attractive blue-green patina.

Limestone is also making a comeback with the introduction of harder-wearing mid-tone stones rather than the harsh white varieties which used to be popular.

Porcelain paving has taken off. It is hard-wearing, scratch and stain

resistant, easy to keep clean, and is perfect to link the indoor with the outdoor space. As the price of wood-effect porcelain (so widely used by interior designers) becomes more competitive, its popularity is assured.

Plants and planting styles also fall in and out of fashion. Many designers are moving away from naturalistic perennial and ornamental grasses in search of something new. Shrubs are set to make a comeback, as are the conifers of the 1970s.

For a shady garden, woodland-style planting mixing ferns, mosses, anemones and tufted grasses is definitely something we can expect to see more of.

Gardens can cost a pretty penny, so it's preferable to build something that has an enduring quality, adds value to your home and, most importantly, enhances your life.

But which trends are here to stay? You be the judge!

Tickets for Hampton Court at [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)



Woodland-style planting in Surbiton

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.  
For advice, planting plans, or projects - from concept to completion - visit [www.janicecripps.co.uk](http://www.janicecripps.co.uk)

## Tell us a story

One of the gentler, more reflective events at this year's food festival took place at the open day for the Edible



Forest Garden at Knollmead Allotments, when Jack and Belinda from the Surrey Storytellers sat in the dappled sunlight to weave their magical tales. Young visitors were also able to share their picnics with Jade, the friendly Indian runner duck, try pond-dipping, tour the orchards to admire the blossom and buy plants at an event which benefited Surbiton charity African Vision Malawi.

## Ahhh, spring finally arrives



Rickards Close, Surbiton, April 2018



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Picture: David Jacobson

As they sashay down the street, three local ladies are doing more than merely enjoying that free-and-easy weekend feeling. They are also modelling some of the fresh summer looks at Shoes at Last, the independent Maple Road clothing, shoes and accessories boutique. The trio are wearing clothing from Ilse Jacobsen and Sandwich, with cotton shirts from Gibson and Birkbeck, and shoes by Bibi Lou, Superga and Ilse Jacobsen.

# We’re among most community-minded

Surbiton is among the top 10% of community-minded areas in England. It has a high sense of ‘belonging’, its residents trust their neighbours and it is also one of the best places in the country for dynamism and opportunity.

Those are among the findings of a comprehensive survey of all 324 local authority areas conducted by Grant Thornton. However, the picture isn’t all rosy. Overall, the Surbiton and Kingston area ranks 53rd out of 324, but it could have been worse. Last year when the accountancy and consultancy firm did a similar survey, we were 85th.

Researchers took into account economic factors, health, happiness, inclusion and equality in reaching their conclusions. Less encouragingly, the borough is 73rd in terms of prosperity, 66th for inclusion and equality, a lowly 96th for health and a poor 221st – well below the national average – for sustainability.

# Top tucker on the Thames

It may not have the sweeping white sands of Australia’s iconic beach or rolling waves to draw the surfers, but the newest addition to our restaurant scene has a wow location. Bondi Beach Club, open at the Thames Ditton Marina, Portsmouth Road, in the former River Hut, is a breath of fresh air... which you get plenty of if you order meals and drinks at a river view table on the outside decking.

Area manager Siim Kutser says the Aussie-owned restaurant has delighted Antipodeans who say it reminds them of the beach bars of home.

“This is a new adventure for us,” said Siim, who is also responsible for the club’s sister restaurants in south west London. “The atmosphere here is relaxed, to go with the beach-style, casual location, but we are all about providing quality food and service.”

With all-day breakfasts, a grill, bar snacks, salads, desserts, wine, cocktails, shakes and Aussie beer, there is wide choice for beachcombers seeking fusion-style tucker. Bread is



baked fresh, the restaurant ages its own steaks, and cuts its own chorizo, ham and bacon. Lattes are made from creamy Friesian-Jersey milk.

“The response has been great; we’re starting to get regulars,” said Siim.

Bondi Beach Club is dog-friendly, inside and out, and sells its own T-shirts, so you can arrive in one outfit and go home in another.

● Bondi Beach Club, Thames Ditton Marina. 020 8398 3900.

Cocktails are served. Siim Kutser dishes up a trayful of drinks to customers at the Bondi Beach Club

# Glassy looks as new block is approved

A three-storey extension to an existing classroom block at the back of Hollyfield School in Surbiton Hill Road has been approved... despite concerns by neighbours that their privacy is being compromised.

The area’s neighbourhood committee voted six to one in favour of allowing the building – increasing floorspace by 128 sqm on the site of a former two-storey block – providing obscure glass is used on both first and second floor windows.

James Britton, whose house in Cranes Park backs on to the school, said: “We accept the need for the school to develop, but it’s important to balance the residents’ interests.”

He called the proposed classroom block “oppressive and overbearing”, and said that a three-storey building was inappropriate in an area of two-storey structures.

Mr Britton added that “11 of the windows would be directly peering into our kitchen and living area”.

But after hearing from head teacher Tom Maltby that the building would provide specialised teaching facilities for 20 autistic children, the committee gave the scheme the green light.

“We believe the building, in purpose and design, has integrity and will serve an important role,” said Mr Maltby. “At its highest point it is still not as high as the existing building.”

Councillor Ian George questioned the need for obscured glass, arguing “school is bad enough anyway without not being able to look out and dream of better things”!

Will panpipes serenade us as we join the queue for bargain buckets?

# Solving the Great KFC Mystery



I write this on the umpteenth day KFC has been closed for refurbishment. A sign on the door claims it will shortly reopen, which prompts an important question. What are they doing in there?!

- The facts: 1) They are very small premises.
- 2) They cook chicken.

Now, I’m no expert on the architectural complexities of improving culinary establishments, but this doesn’t feel like a very big job – unless we are about to have the privilege of boasting the most technologically advanced, super-shiny, robot-operated KFC in the land, and the giant eco-friendly lasers that will cook the chicken have taken longer than expected to install.

Or perhaps the waiting area is being transformed into a spacious spa, and we hungry Surbitonians will be able to relax to the gentle whisper of panpipes as hot chicken breasts are placed on our pressure points to ease the wait for our bargain buckets?

Maybe the Colonel is undertaking the work single-handedly, and the carving of diamond-encrusted chickens on the wall tiles is trickier than he anticipated?

Whatever the reason for its interminable closure, this is fast becoming the most significant gastronomic crisis Surbiton has faced since Hong Kong House (alongside The Lamb) sold its last spring roll.

I personally know 19 people who are struggling with

its temporary absence, several of whom are secretly battling their own personal demons in realising that they actually prefer Chicken Cottage.

I myself am a trifle vexed, considering I’d just begun to get the hang of KFC after a shaky start.

I have been to KFC fewer than four times in my life. My first experience was a year ago (I was a late starter), and it can only be described as unsuccessful.

I happily trotted out of the takeaway one night, clutching my brown paper bag containing two bits of chicken and some chips. I’d got halfway up the high street when, outside the Victoria, the bottom fell out of the bag and my delicious, nutritious dinner bombed on to the pavement.

My instant devastation was corroborated by a smoker standing outside the Duke of York yelling across the road: “Ahhh, mate! That’s the saddest thing I’ve ever seen!”

I have had approximately three visits since; the above experience being replicated on the third visit, but then I’d only made it across the road to ExCellar.

Perhaps the longevity of KFC’s closure is due to a forensic examination of their packaging? Whatever the reason, be patient, enjoy your Chicken Cottage, and set some time aside in your diary for the long wait in the queue outside KFC once it has reopened.

Becky Mayhew

# Best foot forward as Suzanne walks to work

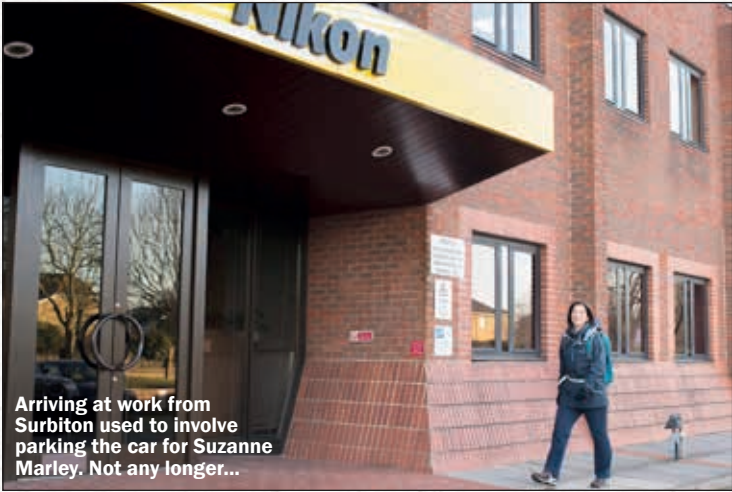
Suzanne Marley isn’t superwoman, but she has committed to walking 1,000 extra miles in 2018.

The HR executive, who lives in Avenue Elmers but works at Nikon’s Kingston headquarters, now hikes the 2.7-mile journey to work, leaving her Ford Fiesta at home.

“It doesn’t sound so bad until you miss a few days and have to catch up,” she said. “But for someone who has driven to work for nearly 15 years, it represents something of a lifestyle change.”

Her aim is to both improve her fitness and raise money for the Fircroft Trust, the charity in Ditton Road which helps adults with learning disabilities via a day centre and supported living.

“I’m not sporty or brave; I’ve essentially committed to doing something many people could do,” she said. “I’ve had the privilege of seeing first-hand the care and support Fircroft offers to adults



Arriving at work from Surbiton used to involve parking the car for Suzanne Marley. Not any longer...

with mental health problems.”

Suzanne, who with colleagues has also volunteered at Fircroft as Nikon UK is backing the charity, has set up a donation page at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/suzannemarley1](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/suzannemarley1)

By last week she was nearly halfway to her 1,000-mile target.

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# Chocks away! Phil recalls his Spitfire career

Phillip Johnson is modest about his bravery as a pilot in the Second World War. “It was just part of the career. It’s what we had to do, so we just did it,” said the 94-year-old Surbiton resident.

Phillip, who joined the RAF on his 18th birthday, was recalling his time as a flying ace to commemorate the air force’s centenary.

He trained in the UK, Africa and Egypt before being flown to Malta to join 185 Squadron. In 1944, he was moved to Italy, and flew with a fighter-bomber unit supporting the Allied advance.

Phillip recalls his plane being struck by enemy fire. “There was a lot of flak from the ground,” he said. “We swooped, attacked and made towards the sea. When I landed, I noticed there was a great big hole in the rear of my plane. It would have been very different had it hit me or the fuel tank.”

In early 1945, he returned to Blighty,



Phillip in his Spitfire days and, above, today, with his medals



joining 174 Squadron for missions over Germany, retraining to fly the Hawker Typhoon. Its engines were noted for being ‘temperamental’. “On one flight, the engine cut out. I had to find a landing place pretty quickly. I glided down to land in a large field. I got it down alright but broke the aircraft’s back. It caught fire and I got out quickly!”

When he returned, the Squadron Leader ordered Phillip to get back flying again within two hours. “That was deliberate. It didn’t give me time to think about what went wrong.”

Not only did the RAF provide adventure and camaraderie, it was where Phillip met his future wife, Doreen, a mechanic in the WAAF. “As soon as I saw her I knew she was the girl for me.” Phillip and Doreen shared 66 years of marriage.

Phillip moved to The Royal Star & Garter Home, Upper Brighton Road, a year ago when he began finding it difficult living on his own. In November, at the home’s Remembrance Day service, he proudly wore his medals for the first time in his life. The Star & Garter provides specialist care for veterans and their partners who live with disability or dementia. As part of a military family, it helps reconnect veterans with their past.

[www.starandgarter.org](http://www.starandgarter.org)

Jane Grove

# Cycle heritage is celebrated

This fine blue steed is The Surbiton, built in the town in around 1910 in GW Rice’s workshop at 81 Victoria Road – now Barclays Bank.

It was one of the intriguing exhibits in Wheels of Time, a show on cycle history curated by Alex Beard from the local history room, aided by volunteer researchers. “It’s quite trendy looking,” said Alex. “It wouldn’t look out of place in Shoreditch today!”

Bearing a metal shield on the head tube declaiming ‘The Surbiton’, the bike can be dated by its backpedalling brake invented in 1908, a stopping mechanism additional to the conventional front-wheel pull-rod. Long mudguards, a melodious bell and no gears complete the feature list.

April’s exhibition at the Museum of Futures in Brighton Road was at an apt venue; it was Nunn’s bike shop from the 1930s to 70s. “It was where you went if you wanted something a bit special,” recalls former customer Keith McMahon.

The exhibition featured the story of John ‘Happy Jack’ Keen, Surbiton’s pioneer racing cyclist (see issue 5, July 2012, of *The Good Life*), a star of the oblong penny farthing Surbiton Recreation Grounds race track which existed from April 1879 to 1890 on land now covered by Victoria Avenue, Electric



Parade and Balaclava Road.

As it sloped downhill from the railway, racers could get off to a rapid start on the cinder surface, and the track was dubbed ‘the fastest in England’.

Exhibits at the show included this 1880 poster plugging medical student HL Cortis’s bid to be the first to ride 20 miles in an hour. He failed that day, but managed the feat two years later.

Also highlighted, the important contribution to women’s cycling of Eileen Gray (our *Notable Surbitonian* in issue 37, Oct 2017).

Tim Harrison



# Ironing out the wrinkles in Tolworth’s Greenway

They’ve been ironing out the wrinkles in Tolworth’s stripy Greenway.

The 50-shades-of-green track down the middle of the Broadway had developed bumps, dips and creases in the five years since its official opening, replacing an ugly central barrier.

In one of his last comments as a councillor, before being ousted in May’s local elections, the Conservatives’ former resident services spokesman Phil Doyle confirmed to the Good Life: “We have listened carefully to residents’ concerns and, as a result, have made the surface on the central section of Tolworth Greenway smoother for pedestrians and cyclists alike.”

He added that the resurfacing

work had had “no impact on the health of trees in the area”, presumably referring to the spindly saplings that poke apologetically out of the striped ribbon of tarmac.

In an odd way, Tolworth Broadway has learnt to love its colourful central path, which was memorably described – shortly after opening – as “looking like a child’s painting” by Yousif, the chirpy crimper at Kami’s barber shop.

Opened in November 2013 by the then mayor Cllr Penny Shelton, and costing £3million, it has engendered a slower, more considerate, driving style among motorists (though the average speed is still more than 20mph).

At a public meeting held in the dying days of the last council administration, former leader Kevin Davis referred to the Greenway as “a runaway success that has silenced its critics”... outing himself as one of those early doubters.



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# 25 notches on the Bed Post

A quarter of a century ago, a family business, Bed Post, was started by Lesley and Geoffrey Mead. The earliest incarnation, in 1993, was a pine furniture shop in a tumbledown wooden building which once stood in Brook Street, Kingston.

Then the couple took over the Studio 7 cinema – the former Kingston Kinema, which stood on the site of the present Rotunda.

They named it Pine World, and also launched Bed Post in Brighton Road, Surbiton, in a parade once dominated (those of a certain age will well recall) by a



The way we were: this ramshackle wooden building in Brook Street, Kingston, was Bed Post's first incarnation

sprawling store called Transatlantic Plastics.

When they retired to Florida in 1998, son Lance took over the business.

"I hadn't had any intention of taking it on," he told me at the current shop in Brighton Road. "I'd just got married, my wife was pregnant and this shop in Surbiton wasn't doing that well... it just hadn't really found its market."

That changed. Bed Post has evolved into a trusted, established and valued local store, outsmarting larger competitors, beating rivals on price and evolving into Surbitonians' go-to destination for beds, mattresses and bedroom accessories.

"There aren't many other independents, but we compete with John Lewis and the big chains," said Lance, who has tripled the turnover at Bed Post in the past decade.

"We can offer a better service, a more personal service and better products; we're not tied to one manufacturer," he said.

Bed Post specialises in mattresses (there are 35 different ones in stock), and offers a 100-day sleep trial so buyers can be sure their choice is right, with delivery when the customer wants.

"People like coming to local shops," said Lance. "But we have to be good because otherwise people will look online or go elsewhere."

Lance, who grew up in New Malden and attended Beverley School, went on to study computer



Lance and Lorraine Mead mark 25 years of The Bed Post

programming, then travelled the world before settling down.

Wife Lorraine focuses on curtains and blinds, offering a bespoke hand-made service to customers... including home visits to measure up.

**Tim Harrison**

## Phil runs marathon to provide a life-saver

A man who spotted a serious gap in Surbiton's emergency health provision has run the marathon to fund a public access defibrillator for the town.

Phil Harris completed the race in 4 hours 36 minutes, "which considering it was the hottest London Marathon on record, I'm pleased with".

His target was to raise £2,000, and he has more than succeeded - so much so that the community champion (a title bestowed by the council on those whose efforts are exceptional) is now collecting for a second.

The first defibrillator will be housed beside the Victoria pub.

"Now I'm hoping to agree another site in the not so distant future, and convince local businesses to chip in so that we can have a second defibrillator in Surbiton," said Phil.

So, how did it all come about?

"My dad, who is a heartstart trainer, found an unconscious man at a car boot sale last

year, and found himself having to give CPR until the ambulance arrived," explained Phil. "There was no AED [automated external defibrillator] anywhere near. 100,000 people a year die from sudden cardiac arrest; 620 of them under 35, with 270 deaths to children within schools."

"If defibrillation takes place within the first three minutes of a cardiac arrest, the patient's chances of survival increase by upwards of 80%."

His father's experience prompted Phil to take a heartstart course.

"After it, I looked online to see where the nearest AED is in Surbiton... and found we don't have a single 24/7 publicly accessible one. I was shocked, as it's fundamentally life-saving."

Phil has worked with community manager Richard Dean on identifying potential locations for AEDs in Surbiton.

More details on the fundraising at [www.aeddonate.org.uk/projects/aed-for-central-surbiton](http://www.aeddonate.org.uk/projects/aed-for-central-surbiton)



## New generation street phones imminent

You will be able to make free calls from the street when a new generation of public telephone arrives in Surbiton... but you'll also have to put up with some very shouty adverts.

The innovative design has a smaller footprint than the traditional, and now rarely used, public telephones that it is gradually replacing, and if you ring a UK landline or mobile, it is free.

However, there's no privacy; everyone can earwig what you say!

Instead of charging for the call, BT makes its money via back-lit adverts, after going into partnership with outdoor advertising company Primesight.

The sleek new pop-up hubs, known as InLinks, also offer free wi-fi, with speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second, and the capability of allowing several hundred people to connect to it simultaneously, with no time-outs or caps on data.

The InLink service is already popping up across central London, with the roll-out meaning traditional pay phones will soon be a thing of the past.



How the next generation of public phone is going to look... flashy, free to use and not very private

An InLink uses up about a yard of pavement – less than existing phoneboxes – and is barely 1ft deep. A series of charging cables hang from the side, so you can recharge your mobile for nothing if you are running low. There is also free access to maps, an emergency button that automatically dials 999, and access to information on local shopping, business and places of interest via a touchscreen tablet.

Everything is paid for by advertisers whose messages flash relentlessly on to the two high-definition digital screens on either side of the new phone.

That's the trade-off; bright,

intrusive ads, while the free calls involve speaking loudly and publicly into a fixed receiver to make yourself heard over traffic.

Passers-by can marvel at you repeatedly asking if we're running short of baked beans at home.

Eventually, nearly 17,500 BT payphone kiosks across the UK will be replaced with InLinks.

Some traditional red telephone boxes are Grade II listed, and will therefore survive.

An InLink spokesman told The Good Life that Surbiton was high on its list. "We have had high-level conversations with the council," he added.

**Tim Harrison**

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## THANK YOU...

On Wednesday 28 March my four-year-old grandson inexplicably ran out of Pizza Express in Surbiton. He crossed the narrow road and sped towards the roundabout. I couldn't reach him. I screamed for someone to stop him and a young woman grabbed him just before he ran into the traffic. It was a heart-stopping moment. My family and I are so grateful for your quick reaction and kindness, and we would like to thank you properly. Please email via: [thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com](mailto:thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com)

*-Janet Turner*



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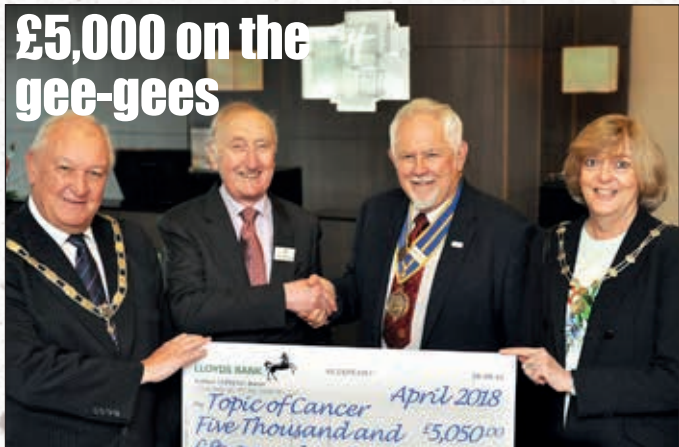


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## £5,000 on the gee-gees



Surbiton Rotary Club's charity night at the Holiday Inn to enjoy fish and chips and bet on screened horse races raised £5,050 to combat cancer.

Deputy mayor and mayoress Mike and Sandra Head were guests of honour at a lunch at the Portsmouth Road hotel for the cheque presentation.

Nigel Lewis-Baker (second left), founder of charity Topic of Cancer received the money from Surbiton Rotary president Bill Lock (third left) as the civic couple fulfilled one of the last engagements of an event-packed year in office.

The donation adds to a Rotary district target of £250,000 to fund Surrey University trials on an immunological treatment for bladder cancer.

Nearly 30 cases are diagnosed daily in the UK, with standard treatment unchanged in 40 years.

The university has been using patients' immune systems to target rogue cancer cells and destroy them in the way our bodies fight viruses or infections.

More at [surbitonrotary.org.uk](http://surbitonrotary.org.uk) or [topicofcancer.org.uk](http://topicofcancer.org.uk)

## Surbiton's been Tango'd

Continued from p1

By comparison, in 2014 the Tories polled 39% of the vote, the Lib Dems 31%, Labour 17%, the Green Party 7% and UKIP 5% on a 43.2% turnout.

Speaking from the podium in Chessington's King's Centre, where the council had broken with tradition by replacing overnight counting with next-day tallying, Lib Dem leader Liz Green

thanked returning officer Andrew Bessant, and praised all contenders who had put themselves forward.

"It takes guts to stand for election, so thanks to all the candidates," she said, beneath a banner reading Nothing Beats Knowing Jesus (the hall doubles as Chessington Evangelical Church).

She claimed the result as a verdict on the government's performance, as well as being a barometer on how the borough has been run by the Tories for four years.

Former council leader Kevin Davies, one of the nine Tories to hold his seat, said the Lib Dem surge in neighbouring Richmond had been a factor in the outcome.



Activists watch the count for Surbiton's Alexandra ward, where a 16% swing to the Lib Dems unseated three Tories

The result was doubly disappointing for the Conservatives as they had persuaded PM Theresa May to visit Chessington a week before polling to drum up more support.

Hook and Chessington were strongly Leave in the referendum, and the Tories had hoped to turn former UKIP voters their way.

Surbiton is now completely orange, having also won the front-garden 'signs on sticks' war, notably throughout Berrylands. **Alexandra** ward's councillors are: Mark Beynon, Sam Foulder-Hughes, Sharron Sumner;

**Berrylands:** Shushila Abraham,

Anita Schaper, John Sweeney;

**St Marks:** Liz Green, Diane

White, Yogan Yoganathan;

**Surbiton Hill:** Hilary Gander,

Alison Holt, Malcolm Self;

**Tolworth and Hook Rise:**

Lorraine Dunstone, Dennis

Goodship, Thay Thayalan.

MP Ed Davey said of the swing: "I've never known

anything like it." Asked for his reaction to his wife's success, he added: "I'm overjoyed for Emily; she's a housing lawyer and wants to use her skills to help people in the borough."

The Lib Dem campaign was partly masterminded by Chris Nicholson, a former councillor in the area in the 1980s, who became the first non-Conservative leader of Kingston Council in 1986.



## A kindly stranger

Although I haven't lived in the UK for 25 years, I always return to Surbiton to visit family and friends.

On my last visit I was walking down Maple Road late on a busy Saturday night, when everyone seemed to be out partying!

Somehow my iPhone slipped out of my coat pocket somewhere near The Grove pub.

It was picked up by someone who straight away thought of redialling the last number called, which enabled a dear friend to track me down.

We retrieved my phone from the pub shortly after.

Could I ask the Good Life to thank the kind, honest, quick-thinking stranger who made this possible? Without their help it would have been a different story.

**Penny Cartier**

## Free time is cut

Seems M&S Tolworth has decided to discourage shoppers from doing their weekly shop there as they have reduced the free parking time from two hours to one, and the operating company aggressively tickets overstayers.

M&S says it is nothing to do

with them, despite their name, logo and VAT number appearing on the tickets. Oh well, it looks like it's off to Surbiton's Waitrose or Sainsbury's from now on.

**Paul Curtis**

## Our bus success

I was interested in your piece in the Good Life about the K1 bus (Hold tight! Bus review mooted, *issue 40*).

When I was on Kingston Council (1986-90) it was I who suggested that an existing bus route (I think it was then the 52) was rerouted between Tolworth and New Malden to include the Sunray estate, which at that time was not served directly by bus.

Labour councillors carried out a consultation with residents, who were in favour of the idea but didn't want double-deckers as passengers might see into their bedrooms!

Then we councillors put the idea before London Transport (as it then was) suggesting a revised route could also make use of the A3 slip road.

To our great surprise London Transport agreed and the bus route was amended. I've no idea when it changed from the 52 to the K1.

**Phil Cooper**

## Route suggestions

Thank you for your interesting publication which has recently started to be delivered to my area.

As a former driver at Kingston and Norbiton bus garages, I keep an eye on route changes, and continue driving classic buses at the London Bus Museum in Brooklands.

Here are some of my radical ideas, with apologies to any intending

## ...while Long Ditton's count couldn't have been closer

The battle for Long Ditton ward on Elmbridge Council saw Lib Dem Barry Fairbank, a councillor for 18 years, cling on to deny Conservative Claudia Riley-Hards by eight votes. She polled 1,011 to his 1,019 on a 42.6% turnout, portraying herself as a Green Belt protector, and the only candidate to live in Long Ditton. The ward includes the St James estate, Effingham Rd, Fleece Rd, St Mary's Rd, Ditton Hill, Rectory La, Kings Rd, Prospect Rd, Oaks Way, Devonshire Dv and Church Meadow.



passengers my ideas may upset!

- K1. Reinstate the original Surbiton terminus, using the former 152 stand in St James's Road.

- K2. Reinstate original Tolworth Tower terminus as operated by Routemasters in 1983 and divert via Kingston Hill to enable double deckers to return to this route.

- K3. When the route transfers to Tolworth bus garage in the near future, here is a loopy suggestion. Run an express service via the By-Pass between Roehampton Vale and Esher, just serving the intersections and creating a circular service. I told you it was loopy!

- K4. Probably the most radical proposal. Instead of following the 465 and 71 along the A243 every half hour, divert at Hook Library along the current K2 route to Tolworth, then replace the 281 between Tolworth and Surbiton, and then go via current K1 route to Kingston. If the Tolworth-based 85 was extended at night from Kingston to Tolworth (as the 65 does to Chessington at night), a 24-hour service to Kingston Hospital would be provided.

- K5. A Sunday service on this route would be marvellous but the parking, especially vans, along the residential roads transversed by the the route would probably be prohibitive. I believe the frequency of this route was doubled in recent years, as per route 481 from Kingston to the West Middlesex Hospital.

Hopefully some councillors may read this and get some ideas

should any (unlikely) funding be available.

**Graham Burnell**

## Catch the killer

You may be aware of the killings and mutilations of domestic pets, mainly cats, being carried out by the person dubbed the UK Cat Killer.

The operation being carried out by Snarl (South Norwood Animal Rescue and Liberation) and the police is named Operation Takahe.

Snarl wants to make as many people as possible aware of what is happening.

Previously volunteers would only leaflet in 'kill' areas, but now because the person carrying out these killings is so prolific, Snarl wants to leaflet everywhere.

The mutilation and decapitation now numbers way over 450.

Boudicca and Tony, who run Snarl, are working with the police.

If you see anyone luring, kidnapping or harming an animal please dial 999, quoting Operation Takahe.

If you see anyone loitering suspiciously around an animal without good reason, please dial 101 and provide a description and any vehicle details to the police.

If you find any mutilated bodies, call Snarl on 07961 030 064. If you have information on who might be committing these offences, call the Croydon serious crime squad, 020 8649 0216. Thanks in advance for any help you can give.

**Lin Keyworth**

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# New book celebrates Surbiton's rail heritage

A slim, meticulously researched book tells the tale of Surbiton's railway, and through it the origins of the modern-day town itself. Written by former Tiffin deputy head John King, **The Railways of Kingston upon Thames** is a lean, distilled 24-page gem, free from waffle and richly illustrated.

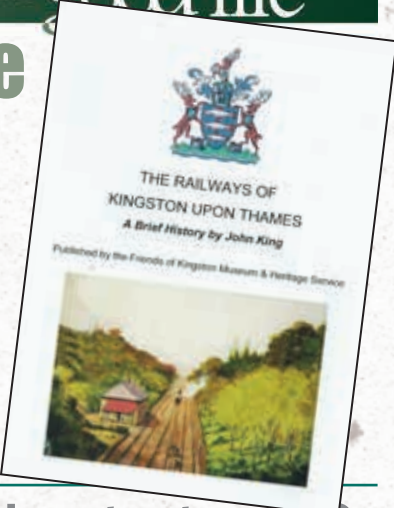
Published by the Friends of Kingston Museum & Heritage Service, it explodes several myths about the local rail routes. For example, the impetus to build the original London & Southampton Railway didn't come from the capital, but from Southampton, as a means of transporting cargo

from its port to the big smoke. Then there's the often-cited assertion that Kingston turned down the chance to be on the main line because it would harm its lucrative stagecoach routes. Balderdash, says King. When an army of navvies began excavating Surbiton Hill in 1834, the intention was to create a goods line... not a passenger route. And anyway, one of the new railway company's directors had a major stake in the coach trade.

The line was routed through the (relatively) empty fields of Surbiton to avoid expensive litigation with the landowners of Kingston.

King's petite volume also charts the changing names of the station in Surbiton. It began life in May 1838 with the nickname Kingston upon Railway. The station that did finally open in Kingston town centre in 1863 was first called Kingston New, while the station everyone knows today as Surbiton was rather confusingly renamed Surbiton and Kingston.

● The book is at Regency Bookshop (£4.95), or by post (£6 incl p&p) from the Friends of Kingston Museum, 65 Manor Drive, Surbiton KT5 8NE. **Tim Harrison**



## Bluegrass boys

Acoustic bluegrass folk duo Copper Viper were a highlight of the sound stage at the Surbiton Village fete in St Andrew's Square.

The boys, songwriter Robin Joel Sangster and mandolin player Duncan Menzies, are building a strong UK following with their well-crafted vocal harmonies and whimsical blends.



## Double bill gets the party started

Based On A True Story brings two one-act plays to the cornerHOUSE. The company performs **Party Night** and **A Cabinet Meeting** by Kingston-born playwright Sean Lang at the Douglas Road arts centre, before the Edinburgh fringe.

Party Night, directed by James Stedman, is set in 1979. Keith and Valerie have been together for 15 years... but he is keeping something from her. It is a dark play, inspired by real-life events. A Cabinet Meeting, directed by



David Blaikie (Keith) and Izzy Rees (Valerie) in Party Night

Andrew Bailey and set in 1988, is a funny, poignant play about the workings of a government.

● Fri Jun 29 and Sat Jun 30, 7.30pm. £10, (£8 concs) [www.thecornerhouse.org](http://www.thecornerhouse.org)

## Feeling tortured?

Could you play a tortured soul? Ian McKellen, Albert Finney, Peter O'Toole, Patrick Stewart, and Kenneth Branagh have all faced the challenge of playing one of the deepest, most complex figures of Shakespeare's imagination. Now it could be your chance.

Director Leo Ellmers is looking for an actor to play the eponymous character in a fresh production of Macbeth, first performed more than 400 years ago, which is to be staged at the cornerHOUSE in November.

Auditions for a full cast of the Shakespearean tragedy, which dramatises the damaging physical and psychological effects of political ambition, will take place at the arts centre in Douglas Road, on Sunday, September 16 at 2pm. Be prompt to register.

● For more details about the production, email Leo at [thechartistic.team@gmail.com](mailto:thechartistic.team@gmail.com)



## 'I love people's reactions'

Artist Anna Dyson fills the exhibition walls of Surbiton's cornerHOUSE arts centre in June. Her show, **Intuitive Oils**, runs from June 10 to July 8.

All are invited to a preview on Tuesday June 12 from 7-9pm to meet the artist, view a screen presentation and tuck in to nibbles.

Many items are on sale, from cushions and leggings to cards, bags and ties, in addition to original abstract oil paintings.

It is the Kingston artist's first solo show, and she will be explaining many of the inspirations for her designs.

"I gain pleasure in the different way people of all ages react to my work," she said. "I work in a spontaneous style, and painting is an important and positive part of my day-to-day life."

● Visit [www.thecornerhouse.org](http://www.thecornerhouse.org) and [www.intuitiveoils.co.uk](http://www.intuitiveoils.co.uk) for more details.



● There's an operatic theme to Kingston Choral Society's next concert, on Sat Jun 30 at St Andrew's, Maple Road. A **Night at the Opera** begins at 7.30pm, with an open rehearsal at 2.30pm. On the bill are arias, duets and choruses, including music by Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, Dvořák and Puccini. The society's summer concert features Australian soprano Lauren Fagan, who has sung leading roles at The Royal Opera, Welsh National Opera and Opera Holland Park, and British tenor David Butt Philip, who has recently performed at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne and English National Opera. Leanne Singh-Levett is on piano while Andrew Griffiths wields the baton. Tickets start at £5, with full details at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/404668](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/404668)

## Oh, very funny

Stand-up comic Reginald D Hunter is at the cornerHOUSE on Wednesday, June 13, having last appeared in an Outside The Box show at the centre in October 2016. The laid-back performer is on stage three days after Josh Widdicombe, an evening already sold out.

For a 150-seat venue, the arts centre in Douglas Road has always punched above its weight when it comes to comedy.

Tim Vine is the centre's active patron, regularly bounding on to stage to do the warm-up before pantomime shows in January. The cornerHOUSE helped launch the career of Al Murray, with one of his first pub landlord shows being staged in Surbiton.

Today, a host of big names use the centre to try out new material, reasoning that if a Tolworth audience falls about laughing, the rest of the nation is sure to follow.

Other names performing in June and July are Hal Cruttenden, Peter Firman and Ed Gamble, while tickets for straight-faced joker Milton Jones are already selling well ahead of a show in January 2019!

## Poetry and recipes

The themes for the next poetry evening at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road are rhythm, rhyme and recipes.

In an enthusiastic and supportive atmosphere, poets – novice or experienced – are encouraged to read their words.

Friday June 8 is the date, with the doors open from 7pm.

Chaired by Good Life editor Tim Harrison (who is also happy to read your poems if you're feeling coy), the evening costs £4... which includes a cheese-and-biscuit buffet that proves so popular you wonder if anyone's actually there for the verse itself.

## Exhibition is in 3D

3D photographer Terry Arpino's other-worldly undersea pictures are being exhibited on the walls of the cornerHOUSE until June 10. The works are on sale from an affordable £15 a print, with profits helping to support the arts centre's running costs.

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## Serving up top tennis

Finals day has sold out for Surbiton's premier tennis tournament, but the good news for local fans is that it's free to watch the big names in the early rounds.

The Fuzion 100 Surbiton Trophy runs from June 2 to 10, a prestigious Wimbledon warm-up competition staged on Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club's manicured grass courts in Berrylands, near the junction with Manor Drive.

The event marks the start of the British grass court season, with professional players from the sport's Top 100 battling it out.

The first weekend (June 2 and 3) is community open weekend, and entry is free.

"Alongside the matches the club runs free coaching sessions for adults and juniors of all ages and abilities, so everyone can give tennis a try," said head coach Tom Crisp.

Tickets are still available for other days, starting at £10.50. Full details at [www.surbiton.org/surbitontrophy2018](http://www.surbiton.org/surbitontrophy2018)



Dustin Brown flies through the air at last year's Surbiton event



## Take a punt at this sport

Long, mild evenings mean that punting training has resumed on the Thames at Surbiton... with an open invitation to give this unusual seasonal sport a try.

Among the five clubs competing in an activity which goes back to the 1880s are local outfits the Dittons Skiff and Punting Club and the rival Skiff Club.

Competitors race on either 2ft wide or 1ft wide racing punts (each is 28ft long) over buoyed 200m courses, while regatta events include single and double punting, and races for men, women and children.

"It takes a while to master, but it is excellent exercise for brain and body," said Peter Williams. "It does require a sense of balance, but the punts are more stable than you'd expect."

Pop down to the Dittons club in Queens Road, Thames Ditton, on a Monday evening to give it a go. The next regatta is Hampton Court and Dittons on July 21. [www.dittons.org.uk](http://www.dittons.org.uk)

## Chelsea do the double

No one really doubted it, but there was still relief when Drew Spence's header flew in and Jonna Andersson fired a second away at Bristol City to clinch the double for Chelsea Ladies with a game to spare.

A 2-0 win capped a glorious season for club captain Katie Chapman, right, who is quitting playing to become a global ambassador for Chelsea.

"I'm ready for a break," the 35-year-old told The Good Life. "I want to watch my kids play football now," she added, giving Riley, 9, and Zach, 4, a hug.

Beating Arsenal at Wembley earned her a 10th FA Cup medal, having won her first at 14. She said it was an emotional decision but "now's the right time".

Crowds have been building at Kingsmeadow, and although the Ladies' squad is losing several big names, new signings are planned.

"Players leave and new ones come through," said Chapman,

adding that she would help mentor young talent. "I love this team and I love this club."

As heavily pregnant manager Emma Hayes missed the title-clincher (she's about to deliver a double of her own with twins due any day), defender Millie Bright facetimes her during the pitch celebrations, so she could still be a part of it all. "I'm delighted for Emma," said assistant Paul Green.

Tim Harrison



Blues captain Katie Chapman shares the joy with Riley, 9, and Zachary, 4



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