



● There's a mystical moment when a wisteria blooms before its leaves appear. For a round-up of Surbiton's finest specimens turn to **p6**



Lettuce sell! Erin, 4, starting at Maple Infants in September, sold salad plants at a fundraiser for the school; an antidote to the cupeakes on the next table!



● Ollie Bath has spent 7 days doing 7 marathons in 7 countries. Has he lost his marbles? See **p12**



Planting plans are derailed



Plans to brighten up the drab platforms of Berrylands station with flower planters have been derailed by train bosses. South Western Railway has scuppered volunteer efforts to jolly up the bland elevated walkways, confining any beautification to around the little-used ticket hall. It's a slap in the face for

Dawn Lloyd and Dee Ayling, left, secretary and chair of Rose Walk residents' association, which adopted the station last autumn to unite the community and use flower power to counteract vulnerable passengers' suicidal thoughts. The rail firm trumpeted the news ("I'm delighted," said station manager Scott

Cooper. "They have fantastic plans.")... then backtracked. With a £3,000 council grant, residents put forward platform planting proposals. It's too narrow, said SWR, you need 2.4m from the platform edge. Residents measured; it was 3.5m. Troughs are too heavy, said SWR. So is the platform safe for people? asked Dawn and



Dee. It would affect access, said SWR. Tosh, said D&D. The Rose Walk residents arranged for two local disabled lads, assisted by their carers, to keep the flowers regularly watered, in response to another SWR rebuff. **Continued p8**

Bug heaven

Creating bug hotels in which insects can lodge hit a creative peak with a structure in Claremont Gardens... but that was a mere 3-star guesthouse compared to the veritable Hilton at Fishponds! See **p6**



The lookalikes

The wet nose, the shaggy fur tumbling into his eyes, the cute expression... no wonder the judges enjoyed meeting Samuel Manz at the Seething community sports day. And they also liked Ernie, his soft-coated Wheaten terrier. Sam (he's on the right) and Ernie won the prize for the dog that looks most like its owner at the show on Victoria rec, as determined by vet Tom Bacon from Voo in Surbiton. More on the success of other events in this year's bumper Surbiton Food Festival on **p7**



Pic: Simon Adrians, Tangle Photography

Crowdfunding holds key to Surbiton Festival

Surbiton Festival – the town's largest annual event – looks like it will go ahead, thanks to crowdfunding. It was feared spiralling costs due to the council outsourcing its services could scupper a community day which has pulled in tens of thousands for 25 years. The public is being asked to bridge the cash gap. "To keep this great event running, we need donations; even the cost of a cup of coffee will make a difference," said organiser David Shade.



The festival, on Saturday September 28, will have a midday street parade, two live music stages showcasing local singers and bands in St Andrew's Square and Claremont Gardens, dance performances and a children's zone with games, a petting farm inflatables and Punch & Judy (right) plus a street market of artisan stalls and food outlets. A gig including music by Travisty (left), with singer Michelle J, was held at Wags n Tales to launch the fundraising and, provided enough cash comes in, the festival will be staged. To donate, visit www.spacehive.com/surbiton-festival-free-to-all



Is 'video' GP the end to queues?

A Tolworth chemist has opened a virtual 'surgery' allowing patients to see a GP via a video link. PSM Pharmacy at 388 Ewell Road, near the Elgar Avenue junction, charges a £39 fee for consulting a doctor who might be sitting miles away. It is being billed as a way to skip appointment queues at surgeries, or avoid the wait at Kingston A&E... but some GPs are in two minds about it. One told The Good Life: "If you can afford to pay, fine. GPs are stretched, but does this really address the problem? Having said that, 90% of diagnoses are made on the patient's story alone, so you may as well sit in front of a screen!" Patients sit in a private room in



the chemist's and chat via video to a doctor somewhere else in the UK. MedicSpot, which runs the service, claims 96% of conditions can be treated remotely. Doctors 'examine' patients via an attached blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, thermometer, pulse oximeter and a small camera for throat and ears. The patient is instructed, by the 'video' GP, how to use the instruments. Any issued prescription can then be collected at the chemist's counter. PSM pharmacist Shushma Patel said: "This will be an asset to those who can't get an appointment, or who are visiting the area." The video doctor service is open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, Sat 9am-1pm. Visit www.tinyurl.com/y5wh4jk8

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Rock... and rolls

Though the 'home team' of Rebecca, Leia and Tabatha didn't win the St Andrew's & St Mark's interschool healthy baking contest (that honour went to St John's honey onion sausage rolls, below) they proved that the after-school baking club is inspiring a new generation of cooks.

Your editor was one of three judges tasked with picking the top dishes in a 'battle of the saints' which also included St Matthew's; a chance for Year 5 and 6 youngsters to dream up and create healthy dishes.

Set up by teacher Azmina Hansraj, the competition generated some imaginative creations, including 'pizza quiches', banana flapjacks and a very tasty lemon loaf.

The rocky background music to TV's Great British Bake-Off provided the soundtrack... and the event is likely to be repeated.



Truffles feature prominently on chef Akshay Sabharwal's menu, notably in a magnificent vegetarian risotto with trumpet mushrooms and pink pickled celery; a stand-out choice at Surbiton's newest top-end restaurant, 360 at the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth Road.

Not that it will be Holiday Inn forever. It's morphing into a more upmarket Crowne Plaza, with the



Manager Rishu Roshan, left, and chef Akshay Sabharwal

Help the kneady

Knead, turn, knead, turn; keep it up for 10 minutes until the dough is silky smooth and elastic, then turn lumps into rolls, plaits, fish, hearts... or these rabbits made by Year 5 youngsters from Surbiton High boys' prep school. Bake, and hey presto!

Forty-two pupils from the school in Avenue Elmers recently enjoyed a four-day trip to Northern France,

Classy dishes at new eatery

new eatery setting the tone.

One of the signature starters entails scallops bathing in coconut milk and kaffir lime, with sprigs of samphire and seaweed (to make them feel at home). Sustainably farmed, the exquisite shellfish are dramatically revealed beneath a smoke-filled glass dome; sheer culinary theatre.

360 has international tapas dishes at its core, with vegetarian and vegan options including fried courgette flowers in honey and heritage tomato tortillas. Standard starters and mains are also available, if you don't want to go down the shared dish route.

The menu also includes chilli langostines, miso cod and a tapas of mini burgers served with a tiny shot of beer in a chilled stein.

experiencing the traditional art of bread making. They also milked goats, had beach picnics, made lollies in a sweet shop, and practised French, buying fromage et saucisson at a Le Touquet market.

The gourmards worked up an appetite at an aquatic centre, tried sand yachting, and worked on their dance moves at a disco.

The reconfigured restaurant (once called Jack's Kitchen) has tables ranged round a circular cocktail bar in the heart of the ground-floor restaurant.

Chef Akshay is a thoughtful man, receptive to suggestions from his team, and with a Michelin backstory. "I devise everything; I do the menu, but I give the staff a free hand to try different ideas," he said.

With seasonal menu changes, this is a well-run ship with a happy crew. Windows look out on the trees that fringe the Thames.

Meat comes from five farms grouped around Guildford and veg, when supply lines are in place, will come from local farms too. "We should use local produce where possible," insisted chef.



Artistry: Parma ham on a crushed potato base with caramelised grapes and Merlot dressing... an imaginative starter

One persuasive dish is soft-shell crab; whole, battered, with dark rice and an ultra sweet sorbet.

Above all, this is classy food – particularly the cleverly balanced tapas dishes. An asset to Surbiton's dining scene.

Tim Harrison

Vegan food club

What are you doing this summer solstice? Why not mark the longest day by dining on a harvest of vegetables and fruit? The Plant Powered Supper Club on June 21 at Brighton Road's Museum of Futures offers cocktails and canapes before a fully plant-based meal, wholly

suitable for vegans. Free from refined sugar, gluten, dairy, egg and wheat, it's good for non-vegans too. If you're experimenting with veganism, or just want a healthier option, Danielle Webber (Ripe and Nine) and Emma Egerton (Little Ginger) will serve up a healthy meal. Tickets £35, BYO. www.ripeandnine.com



Egerton (Little Ginger) will serve up a healthy meal. Tickets £35, BYO. www.ripeandnine.com

Big grins for numero Uno

It's the look that says 'We've done it!' Restaurateurs Alex and Sam Berry are all smiles at the opening of their new restaurant, Cento Uno, in Maple Road. The neighbourhood Italian is the latest venture by the husband-and-wife team who own next-door restaurant and gin bar No 97 plus One One Four in Teddington. Centre stage is a Gozney stone pizza oven which bakes the creations of head chef Dario Zannoni and his team – trad Italian with a modern twist. Cento Uno is a welcome addition to the scene in the leafy parade after Da Lucio closed in April last year.



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the good life

Editor: Tim Harrison

Set up in 2012, the community paper for Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands and Long Ditton is now delivered to 11,000 homes. The Good Life appears six times a year between March and November. We're always delighted to hear from you, whether it's about editorial or advertising or joining our little group of volunteers who help deliver the paper. Email thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com



In between publications, you can keep up-to-date with Surbiton news via our daily Instagram posts (@[thegoodlifesurbiton](https://www.instagram.com/thegoodlifesurbiton))

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June's July salute

Surbiton author Bob Phillips hosts a garden party on July 27 to salute the doyenne of local history, June Sampson, at St Luke's vicarage at 4 Burton Road, Kingston, from 2-5pm.

Awards deadline

The deadline for nominations for the Royal borough's annual business awards is Fri June 28, with categories including best new business, best charity, and entrepreneur of the year. Visit www.kingstonawards.co.uk

Watch the birdies

Surbiton's bird enthusiasts meet at Ewell Road's library hall on Tues June 18, 8pm, for Jeff Blincow's talk on Birds in Flight. The bird watching society has been airborne since 1954.



UXB clears school

Surbiton High, and its prep schools, were evacuated when workmen on the Hotel Antoinette site dug up a 550 lb Luftwaffe bomb on European election Thursday. But the community rallied round in a fine display of neighbourliness. Both St Mark's church and St Andrew's church immediately opened their doors to accommodate the prep school pupils... but it was the senior Surbiton High girls who were in a bigger pickle as the evacuation fell right in the middle of GCSEs and A-levels. "Hampton School very kindly allowed our GCSE and A-level pupils to take their public exams at their school on the Thursday afternoon and Friday," said a relieved, and grateful, spokeswoman. "It was wonderful our community came together to help us." Other pupils who weren't doing exams were taken by coach to Surbiton High's sports ground at Hinchley Wood. Roads around the Antoinette on the Kingston/Surbiton boundary were sealed off and 1,500 homes cleared before a controlled explosion on Friday afternoon returned life to normal. A Euro election polling station at St Raphael's church transferred to Glenmore House in The Crescent.

Making history?

Surbiton's historical society needs to recruit two committee members to maintain its busy activity programme, and a volunteer to co-ordinate outings. www.surbitonhistoricalsociety.org



A fairytale carpet

It looked like snow in May... a dazzling display of daisies behind flats in Edith Gardens, Berrylands, delighting bees.

It's good to talk

What keeps Kingston Council leader Liz Green, right, awake at night? Funding the budget for children with special educational needs.

As the Royal borough population soars (180,000 today, 228,500 by 2050), such considerations have the biggest impact on balancing the council's books.

The cost of looking after the single neediest child in the borough is £354,000... for one academic year.

"We need to balance competing demands with reduced resources while still supporting the vulnerable and providing universal services," said Cllr Green at a Let's Talk event in Surbiton as she relayed how her administration is having to bear the brunt of central government cuts.

The borough no longer gets any funding from Westminster. As recently as 2010 it received £66million.

Now each resident is invited to add their two pennorth to a consultation to determine Surbiton and Kingston's fate over the next two decades. You have until the end of July to respond. The new local plan supplants a 2012 document, determining the siting of new houses and workplaces.

"It's vitally important we get this right," said Cllr Green.

The government wants the borough to build 1,364 new homes EVERY YEAR until 2041, partly to make up for recent inactivity on the house-building front.

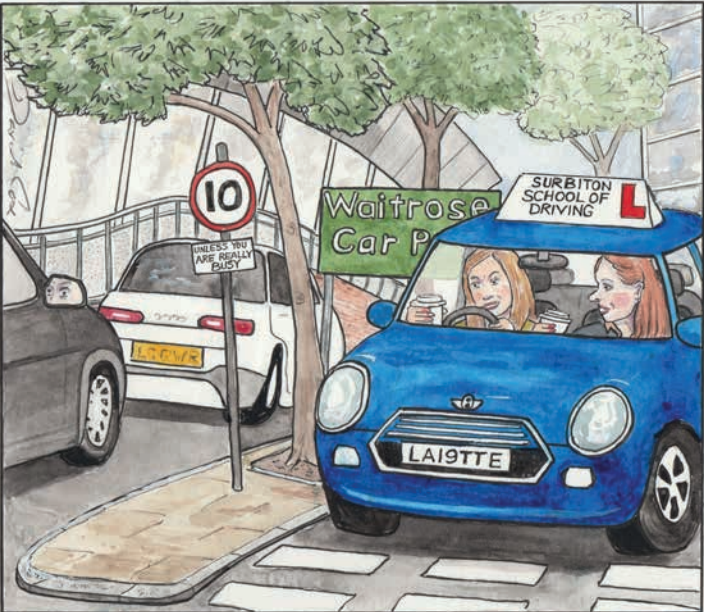
Should we build upwards and create more 'Tolworth Towers' (at 81m, the tallest building in the borough)? How do we cope with an ageing population's needs? In 10 years there will be 46% more over 65s in the borough, and 59% more over 75s.

Printed copies of the consultation document are available at Surbiton and Tolworth libraries, or - if you live, work, study or merely visit the borough - you can have your say online by going to www.kingston.gov.uk/newlocalplan



SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



To complete this manoeuvre safely, the lid must be firmly on your free coffee with the little hole towards you

Lib Dems surge in polls

In some of the biggest surges in years, the Lib Dems' vote share rocketed in both European and local elections.

The Euro poll in Surbiton and Kingston saw the Lib Dems take 47% of the votes (Brexit 19%, Green 9%, Tories 8%, Labour 7%, Change UK 4%). In neighbouring Elmbridge, the Lib Dems polled 39% (Brexit 28%, Tories 12%, Greens 10%, Change UK 5%, Labour 4%).

Mirroring the Lib Dems' European advances, there was also good news for the party in local elections, where one Long Ditton seat was up for grabs. Cllr Neil Houston swatted away a challenge from Tory Claudia Riley-Hards, who had come a whisker from victory in 2018.

A year ago, just eight votes stopped her displacing sitting Long Ditton Lib Dem Barry Fairbank. In 2018 Riley-Hards polled 45.5% of the votes to Fairbank's 45.8%. But this May, with Cllr Fairbank's colleague Neil Houston's seat at stake, the swing saw Houston poll 57.8% (1,194 votes) to Riley-Hards' 36.7% (757 votes).

Cllr Houston, of Cumbrae Gardens, told The Good Life: "While I think the government's handling of Brexit played a small part, it was not decisive. Residents are concerned about local issues and recognise that by electing me they get someone who really cares about the village."

Cllr Houston, a former BBC drama producer, was first elected in Long Ditton in 2015. Before that he served as a Kingston councillor, representing Surbiton Hill ward.

● Is there something in the water? As we went to press, Long Ditton MP Dominic Raab was fighting to become Tory leader, as adjoining Surbiton MP Ed Davey was battling to be Lib Dem leader against Jo Swinson.

Prom's primp

If you're enjoying your riverside stroll more than usual these days, admiring the look of one of Surbiton's greatest amenities, you can thank the Queen's Promenade Friends.

The community action group, formed early this year following a string of well-attended and effective clean-up days, aims to keep the prom looking its best.

At one recent volunteer day, 15 staff from Nando's (right) joined in the transformation of a former caretaker's building and the creation of a 'pocket park' wildlife garden.

The hut will become a hub for the Friends' activities. Chairman Julian Meers said: "The prom's a special riverside walk used by all ages, and we want to enhance the community's



enjoyment of this beautiful local amenity."

Volunteers have unearthed and resurrected old Victorian seats and railings to restore and incorporate into the



revamping project, which is enhancing the magnificent river views.

All are welcome at the next volunteer day on Thu July 11, 10am-2pm; meet by Raven's Ait. Follow @queenspromenade on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

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Noel Pope, left, and pictured during a record attempt on a 500cc Norton at Brooklands in 1939... without such fripperies as a front brake or mudguard!

The Boys' Own record-breaker

Noel Pope, Surbiton's forgotten record-breaker, was fastest around the famous banked Brooklands circuit – an achievement which can never be bettered.

His 124.51mph lap on a supercharged Brough Superior motorcycle on July 4 1939 will stand for all time, as the track near Weybridge never reopened after the war.

He is also a key figure in local journalism, setting up the Surbiton News in the autumn of 1959 – a newspaper which evolved into the Kingston Borough News.

Born in Liverpool's suburbs in 1909, he was given the middle name of Baddow, the stage name of his father, a professional music hall ventriloquist who performed with a dummy called Tim.

After dad Robert died of tuberculosis in 1911, at the age of 27, he and his widowed mother, Edith, moved, ending up in Surbiton in the mid-1920s. They first lived at 32 Maple Road, then in 1934 moved to 64 Portsmouth Road.

Away at boarding school, he looked through the railings and saw Lawrence of Arabia whiz by on a motorcycle... determining there and then to devote his life to racing.

His first motorbike was an old side-valve Matchless, followed by an ancient Douglas which he bought for 10 shillings.

He studied engineering at University College London, but had to leave and finish his diploma at another institution after being fined £3 for obstructing a PC in 1930 during rag week!

A motorcycle addict, he raced professionally, setting his famous all-time lap record at Brooklands – a Boys' Own hero for a generation of thrill-seeking youngsters.

On his 21st birthday, Noel part-exchanged his old Matchless for a 350cc Zenith, striking a deal with Comerfords of Thames Ditton which began a long association with the company which sponsored him for nearly every Isle of Man TT event.

In 1933, he raced at Brooklands as part of The Dittons Motor Club team. The bumpy track was, he wrote, like a camel, his steed rearing, plunging and shuddering.

Later that year, despite having a damaged wrist, he rode in the Manx Grand Prix, skidding on a pile of cow dung and sliding along the road on his back, while watching his machine bounding along the wall alongside the road.

During the Second World War he served in the Royal Army Service Corps, was evacuated from Dunkirk, fought in North Africa and took part in D-Day.

Resuming racing, he made an unsuccessful bid to beat the world land speed record in September 1949, on the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, again with Comerfords backing. At 150mph he crashed his Brough, a streamlined version of the one he'd used for the Brooklands record 10 years earlier, and had to abandon the attempt.

He wrote an autobiography, *Full Chat*, published in 1952; the title being a synonym for maximum throttle.

An active member of Kingston Sub-Aqua Club, he wrote science fiction, launched the Surbiton News in 1959 (a decade later it became the Brighton Road-based Kingston Borough News), was vice-president of an avant-garde art group and president of Kingston and District Motorcycle Club.

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Noel Pope



Noel, Daphne and sons admire the streamlined Brough Superior at Comerfords, Thames Ditton, before his record bid in September 1949. Inset, the now-defunct Kingston Borough News, which Noel launched as the Surbiton News 60 years ago

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Things can only get batter

There's hope for Surbiton a-fish-ionados. Grimsby seafood entrepreneur Bradley Taylor, banned by the local authority's inflexible attitude to pop-ups, might be permitted to return. The council is letting the public 'reshape' its street trading policy. After consultation, a committee is poised to relax the rules. The appeal of farmers' markets and street stalls could persuade one of England's oldest market towns to modify its stance.

Last year Taylor was stopped from selling seafood on an unused stretch of pavement by the Duke pub in Victoria Road. Traffic wardens said he was obstructing... despite turning a blind eye to festive Christmas tree sales on the same spot. If artisan producers and craft sellers can trade from a wider list of licensed pitches it could revitalise the high street at a time when shop footfall is being squeezed by online sales.

"I'd be overjoyed if they let me sell in Surbiton again," said Bradley, when told of the review. The council last reviewed its policy in 1991 when (under pressure from Kingston Market) trading was limited to a tiny handful of locations. With the exception of the Maple Road farmers' market, the only part of Surbiton where occasional trading is theoretically permitted is the station forecourt.

"When street trading is managed well, it adds a wonderful vibrancy to the area, creates jobs, boosts the local economy and allows entrepreneurs to develop businesses," said council communities director Stephen Evans, signalling a change of heart. "Our policy is over 25 years old and needs updating to make it more flexible." The licensing sub-committee will have the final say on July 17.



Naturalist spearheads pango preservation

Surbiton conservationist Elliot Newton is campaigning to save the pangolin – an anteater which has lived 70 million years on the planet.

Newton, of Queens Drive, is part of the borough-based People for Pangolins team working to preserve the endangered species.

The animal is one of 10 creatures Sir David Attenborough picked in 2012 to save from extinction as part of the BBC Natural World series.

The veteran broadcaster rescued one from a cooking pot while filming in Asia early in his career. "It's one of the most endearing animals I've met," he said. "Huge numbers are illegally exported, mainly to China. In 15 years, half the Sunda pangolin population has disappeared."

Now Newton (Surbiton's answer to Chris Packham) has taken up the cause. "When I talk about pangolins, people think they've misheard me saying 'penguins'."

Eight species remain; four Asian, four African. Covered in scales, they roll into a ball like a hedgehog when threatened. So strong are their keratin scales they can withstand attacks from tigers. The tongue is nearly as long as the body.

"They are the world's most heavily trafficked wild mammal, with 100,000 taken from their natural environment each year; more than rhinos, elephants and tigers combined," said Newton.

There is demand for their meat in South East Asia, and their scales in China, where they are thought to have medicinal properties. This has no scientific backing and could be compared to nibbling fingernails.

"These threats are further compounded by bush meat consumption and death by electric fences," added Newton.

To support pangolins visit www.peopleforpangolins.org

The new home of pampered pets

Dogs love being fussed over, says Becky Hodge, the 29-year-old entrepreneur who has just opened K9 Paws n Play dog grooming salon opposite Our Lady Immaculate in Tolworth Broadway. And, boy oh boy, does the trimmed and cosseted Sadie, right, prove the point!

With soothing dog relaxation music playing, and a plug-in diffuser filling the air with calming canine aromatherapy scent, it's no wonder she curled up asleep on the floor after her pampering.

It's a first business for Becky, who put herself through college to get a set of framed qualifications which include City & Guilds styling training and dog first aid before renting and equipping half of Tolworth's former HSBC bank building.

The set-up costs mean she has put on hold her wedding to patient fiancé James, a mechanic who jokes that he's going to become her driver when the business takes off!

Becky, who has been grooming for five years, and who grew up in Herne Road and went to Tolworth Girls', also runs a dog creche for use by owners of pets prone to separation anxiety (typically rescue dogs) who need to nip out to the dentist, school run or a hospital visit.

As it's only Becky on duty, dogs get individual attention. She uses natural products and pet-safe detergents, has competitively priced spa treatments (at £3 for teeth cleaning, I was tempted to get my own done) and offers a multi-pet discount for families with more than one pooch. Everything is tried and tested on her own dogs, a 15-year-old Westie called Molly and a Dalmatian puppy called Lexie, who is now so used to his nail-clipping routine that he instinctively presents his paw on the treatment table!

"I do all dog breeds," said Becky, who charges different rates for long and short-haired dogs.

The salon is open Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm. It also sells dog grooming diaries and classy canine accessories. Every doggy customer leaves with a little ribbon on their collar. www.k9pawsnplay.com

Tim Harrison



● The 10th anniversary Hook Beer Festival attracted 1,000 ale lovers to Verona Drive, sampling 50 real ales, 20 ciders and – for the first time – a gin bar featuring local tipples. All the profits went to charity, with £11,000 shared between Staywell (formerly known as Age Concern Kingston) and the 1st Hook Scout Group. "We were delighted with the fundraising efforts of our local drinkers," said Dave Walker.

Tolworth's new dog grooming salon & dog creche!

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It's a bug's life

The sturdy build quality and well-appointed interiors of Surbiton's newest bug hotel (now open to guests) is enough to make you wish you were a creepy-crawly.

And that's before you appreciate the views from the numerous entrances.

Commissioned by the Friends of Fishponds Park, it's a functioning habitat for critters from woodlice, lacewings, snails, centipedes and spiders to solitary bees, and a focal point to inspire everyone to think about the insects with whom we share the planet.

It's also an artistic masterpiece,

Elliot Newton, Rob Eyre-Brook, Tom Hooker and Jeremy Wadia



with dragonfly, moth and stag beetle shapes cut into the sides – the design signature of Surbiton bug hotel architect Tom Hooker.

Made of recycled wood, including old floorboards from the refurbishment of nearby Christ Church, and filled

with pine cones and other critter-friendly furnishings courtesy of 47 Year 6 pupils from St Matthew's primary, the hotel has pride of place in Fishponds park. Interested in joining the Friends of Fishponds, set up six months ago by Rob Eyre-Brook? Check it out on Instagram, or email fishpondssurb@gmail.com

My favourite tried and tested stunners will do the job, says Janice Cripps

Perfect perennials for your border



When designing a planting scheme, it's easy to be seduced by glossy mags offering new varieties. Hundreds of plants are launched each year, with big claims of hardiness, longevity and a free-flowering nature... but many don't cut the mustard. I prefer my list of tried and trusted stalwarts that I know won't let me down. Mine have to be strong, reliable, disease resistant and interesting for more than just a few weeks. At this time of the year, gardeners are thinking of brightening up their borders. Here are some of my favourite flowering perennials.

● **Verbena bonariensis**, with its purple flowers and see-through quality,

can be as effective at the front of the border as the back, making it easy to dot into a planting scheme. It provides vertical interest, vibrant colour, and its tall, sturdy stems can even prop up floppier plants.

● **Hardy Geraniums**, not to be confused with pelargoniums sold as summer bedding plants, are useful for lush, often aromatic, ground cover. They are easy to



grow; there's one for every garden situation. Bursting with bright blue flowers, **Geranium Rozanne** is one of the most readily available varieties. It blooms June-October, in sun or shade, and spreads quickly, so needs space. Looks great under shrub roses or tumbling over a wall. **Geranium White-Ness** is undemanding and thrives

in any situation – its pure white flowers are useful for brightening up a dull, shady area. **Geranium Patricia** is one of the taller varieties. It has vivid magenta flowers and is perfect for the middle of the border.

● **Salvia Viola Klose**, pictured, has distinctly dark stained stems and provides neat clumps of deep purple flower spikes which bloom from June-September. Salvias come in all shapes and sizes, from common sage to summer bedding salvias in a range of garish colours. But Salvia Viola Klose is different. Close cousins Salvia Mainacht and Salvia nemorosa Caradonna are just as good.

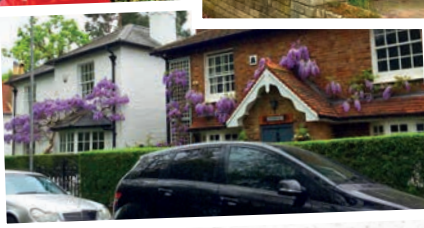
All feature at the Hampton Court Flower Show, July 2-7. For info, visit www.rhs.org.uk

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

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



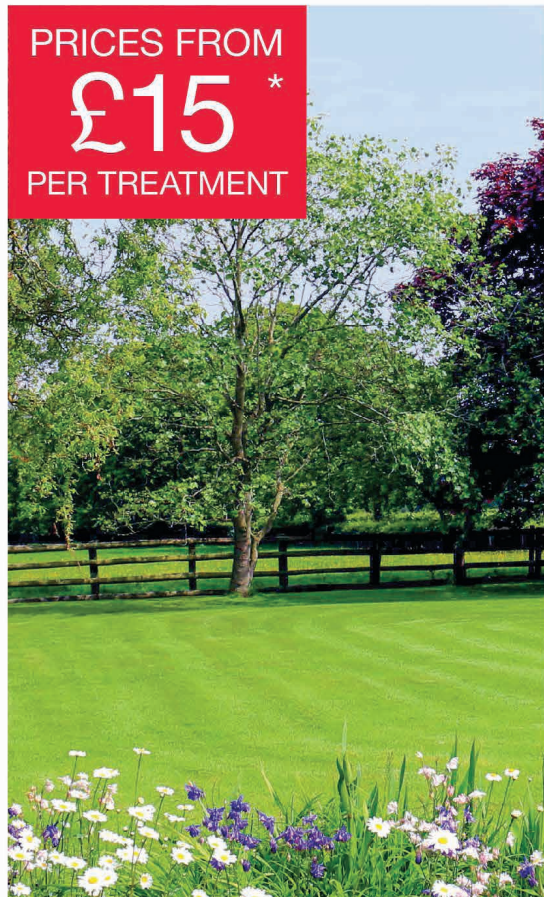
Wisteria hysteria



After a superb magnolia season, Surbiton's wisteria display proved even more impressive. By early

May the purple blossoms were at their pendulous peak, with most roads boasting stop-you-in-your-tracks displays of mauve and violet... until the leaves sprouted and the show was over. We could have picked 100 images of wisteria wonder in Tolworth, Berrylands, Long Ditton and Surbiton, but here's a selection of some of the finest. Clockwise, from left: Surbiton Hill Park; Walpole Road; Corkran Road; Herne Road; Avenue South; Westfield Road; Adams Close; Claremont Road; Effingham Road.

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Foodie heaven

This year's Surbiton Food Festival launched with the Seething freshwater sardine procession from Ravens Ait to Claremont Gardens, plus barbecue and entertainment.

The town's annual two-week homage to nourishment included the village fete and dry hopped beer festival, picnics, a cheese taste and bluff evening, creating poetry about food, printing tote bags on a fishy theme, film screenings accompanied by food, a foodie quiz, storytelling about food experiences, knife sharpening, a chilli cook-off and a secret supper club.

Volunteers teamed up with groups and businesses to make it a success.

Organiser Robin Hutchinson was exhilarated about the record weekend event crowds. "It really is energising to hear so many positive comments



Mooshwa Pooshwa play Claremont Gardens



Simone Kay and Glen Rowden party

about the events and how important it is to people," he said. "Nothing would happen were it not for the astonishing volunteers who give so much time and care to helping organise and run events. We're grateful to everyone who has taken part, attended and helped. Now to start planning for 2020!"

Why did the chicken cross Maple Road? To get to the village of course!

Village people, this is your town

We need to talk about something that's been bothering me. Apparently, within our humble town, we have a village. Its exact boundaries are unclear (I'm waiting for a call back from the Ordnance Survey), but it appears to be the bit of Maple Road between Gordon Bennett! and The Grove pub. It's a small village, as villages go, but apparently a village nonetheless.

It's just not though, is it? There is clearly a trend for calling pretty bits of towns 'villages', and I blame a savvy estate agent from Wimbledon who realised they needed to let rich people know that the area on top of the hill was more desirable than the slightly frayed-round-the-edges Wimbledon proper.

Now, I accept Wimbledon Village. At least it's a separate entity from the rest of the town. It has a more or less defined boundary, and stables, which scores at least 18 village points. Cheam Village? Yes, I'll take that: a definable, fairly wide boundary, albeit centred round a busy crossroads, and lots of shops and restaurants, some mock Tudor – at least 10 village points.

But to call a stretch of road a 'village' is being frankly profligate with the truth, even whimsical with geographical classification. What makes

it a village? Its prettiness? The fact that the shops occasionally put up bunting? I'm sorry, that doesn't wash. If we're going to call it a village, it needs to do better. At the very least we need a 'Please Drive slowly through our village' sign by The Grove, and a 'Thank you for driving slowly through our village' sign 200 metres on, by Gordon Bennett! Maybe we could shove in a cattle grid outside Maple Infants? Yes, this could cause problems, but plucking small children from grids could become an eccentric village sport, like cheese-rolling or bog snorkelling.

Perhaps we could grab an armful of geese from the Thames, and let them roam free outside the French Table, which could seize the opportunity to offer 'pavement-to-plate' dishes.

Or we could chain a cow to a tree, so ruddy-faced 'villagers' can stroll out in the morning to get milk for their lattes. Except that won't work, because humans haven't yet invented a cow that gives skinny-soya-almond-mountain-dew milk, which I gather is popular in the area.

So unless we can come up with something more than a monthly farmers' market (granted, pretty villagey), can we stop calling it a village?

Becky Mayhew

It's all going swimmingly

Pupils at three Surbiton schools now have the benefit of a swimming pool, thanks to the generosity of Shrewsbury House in Ditton Road.

Prep school head Kevin Doble is allowing free use of his school's recently refurbished pool to three local schools as part of a facility-sharing project. "In fact, they're currently making more use of it than we are," he laughed.

Participating schools include nearby St Matthew's CofE primary, which alternates Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils weekly, improving swimming skills and water confidence.

Shrewsbury House had explored the possibility of widening access to local adult swimmers, and had held talks with the Southborough Residents' Association.

But the demands of modern-day 'elf 'n' safety' have forced a rethink. Mr Doble told the association agm: "We've looked at ways of opening the school's pool, but the already extraordinary regulations have become even more onerous and pervasive. "We'd have to employ two lifeguards

to be on duty at all times, our staff would have to be there, and there would also have to be checks made on all adults using the pool at the same time as children."

Defeated by the cost and complexity of compliance, the school has shelved hopes of any community pool share in favour of the school link-up.

● The suffocating strictures of relentless regulations were also visible at the residents' association agm, staged in the Shrewsbury House school hall, where two St John Ambulance staff were on duty (to comply with requirements of a multi-page risk assessment which the association officers had to prepare), while traditional pre-meeting nibbles were ditched as rules now mean every attendee would have to be interrogated about allergies, notices would have to be displayed listing all ingredients, and any packaging would have had to be preserved for a month. "I'm afraid it has proved too onerous," chairman Phil Steer explained. "Safety comes at a price, so we're sticking to wine and soft drinks only!"



Now you see it...

Nice back garden, but where'd the home go? A one-time coach house in Lovelace Road has been razed to make way for a two-storey dwelling. It was converted into a home in 1954 and was later modified with a two-storey extension.

Karate kid has the Abi habit



Eleven-year-old Abi Kearnes, left, is as pleased as punch. She's gained her karate black belt. But the Holy Cross pupil, who lives in Berrylands, isn't stopping there. After her 1st dan, she's after more. "I want as many dans as possible," she said.

Abi, who also plays rounders, hockey, football, athletics and netball, has been learning karate for five years. In the months leading up to her grading she trained three times a week and undertook a four-day course before pitting her skill against 10 black belts one after another to see how she fared. She passed with flying colours.

"Technically she's very good, and very focused," said proud instructor Jack Holdbrook. "She's also very fit which certainly helped her push through."

For Abi, it's "really good exercise and you learn how to defend yourself". There is, she

says, a great team spirit at the Shoden Martial Arts & Fitness club.

Jack, head instructor at the club he set up in 2013, runs family karate classes at Southborough High School and the Hook Centre and beginners' classes at Nuffield health centre, Long Ditton, and the Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club.

"These days a lot of families are so busy with their separate lives that they aren't often able to spend time together," said Jack who has been training in seiki juku karate since he was nine, and achieved his 1st dan black belt in 2005 and his 3rd dan in 2016.

"With these classes they can spend quality family time, plus they are all getting fit together."

Jack, of Courtlands Road, said some families liked the competition between themselves as well as helping each other progress.

"The kids can encourage the parents and the parents can encourage the kids. It works both ways. They are all learning the same thing at the same time. They are equal – they all work together learning a new or different skill at the same time as exercising. It's a good atmosphere and it is always positive."

Jack, who also has a 1st dan in jujutsu, runs juniors, advanced, adults-only and kick-fit martial arts classes too.

"Karate also helps with discipline, respect, concentration, co-ordination, and balance," he added.

Visit www.shoden.club for details about free two-week trials on all classes.

Jane Grove



Jack Holdbrook, left, with fellow instructor Alex Vassallo



Holly's crowning glories

Learn to make a flower crown, put together a terrarium and create a perfect bouquet at Holly and the Ivy's summer workshops. The florist in Brook Road, Surbiton (near the Ace of Spades) runs a Summer Solstice flower crown workshop constructing garlands fit for the gods (Fri, June 21, 6.30-8pm, £30); Build Your Own Terrarium (Fri, July 5, 6.30-7.45pm, £39.50) making a mini eco system in an elegant vase; and Summer Bouquets (Wed, July 10, 6.30-8pm, from £49.50pp) leading a masterclass in creating a hand-tied bouquet. Refreshments included.

Head florist Holly McLoughlin says: "I'll talk you through each step from start to finish." www.hollyandtheivy.com/flowerschool



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Farewell Gwyneth

Gwyneth Whittle, of Pyne Road, who has died four months short of her 100th birthday, was born Gwyneth Lillian Owen, near Crewe.

She became a teacher, married Ray Whittle, and had two children, Marion and Christopher. Widowed in her 50s, she moved to Tolworth to be near her octogenarian mother.

I saw the little figure going by all the time, on a bike, with her dog – a Shih Tzu called Sam. One day we spoke.

Within days we were having tea in each other's houses. Then it was theatre, concerts, local shows. We went on coach trips and holidays; popping in and out... both of the waste-not-want-not brigade. She gardened (her father had also been keen) and made jam – strawberry, rhubarb, blackcurrant, selling it for charity. I was on the receiving end of her tomatoes!

She volunteered at Surbiton Methodist church and Surbiton Blind Club, and was active in book clubs, knitting circles and the historical society. She was good company; knowledgeable, interesting, interested, always eager for something new. And if her calendar was empty, she'd walk in Alexandra rec.



"My genes are very good," she said a couple of years ago. "There are long lives in my family. My great-grandfather, born in 1810, saw Queen Victoria's funeral. I am very lucky."

Gwyneth is survived by her younger sister, her son, five grandchildren and many great grandchildren. The funeral was at Kingston Crematorium on June 5, followed by a thanksgiving service at Surbiton Methodist church.

● **Gwyneth Whittle, Sept 6 1919 – May 8 2019** **Pamela Pickton**
(www.zitebooks.com/pamela-pickton)

25 years on, Helen reflects...

A quarter of a century has passed since the CofE voted to allow women to be ordained, paving the way for Helen Hancock's installation as vicar of St Matthew's at the end of 2012; the Royal borough's first full-time female incumbent.

She was 31 when the first women were ordained in March 1994, after decades of debate and a nail-biting General Synod vote.

Intriguingly, it pretty much passed her by. "I admit it didn't really register at the time," she says. A part-time lawyer in New Malden, her hands were full bringing up three children.

"I was still quite a reluctant Anglican then," recalls Helen, raised in a nonconformist home. "I'd always gone to church, but things changed for me in 1997." A member of Christ Church, New Malden, she began taking a more active role in church affairs, spurred on by the discovery of several sermons which had been delivered by an aunt; a Liverpool lay preacher.

"I could hear my voice through her words," she says. "In 2003 I started looking towards ordination." She'd led the local pathfinders, and delivered the odd sermon, but the real impetus came from a new curate's encouragement.

"I studied for a year, and then you start the rounds," she says, referring to placements in different churches before final selection and



training. Ordained in 2009 and 'priested' in 2010, she became a full-time curate at St Andrew's and St Mark's in Surbiton, then applied for the vacancy at St Matthew's.

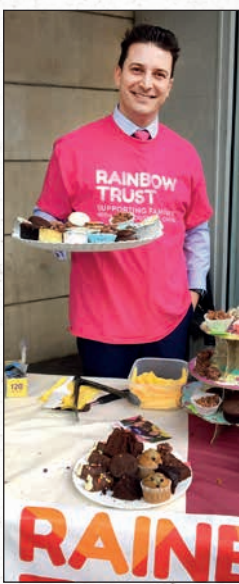
The Good Life, announcing her appointment in December 2012, quoted her as saying: "It's all very exciting!" Any initial uncertainty in the more traditional pockets of the congregation was overcome by the energy and positivity Helen radiates... backed by husband and church music director Simon. "I hope the person speaks louder than the gender," says Helen.

Tim Harrison

● Craig Custance, new sales director at Humphrey & Brand, offers cupcakes to help the Rainbow Trust, a charity supporting children with life-threatening conditions. A cake sale outside the branch by Waitrose raised £500.

Craig, who has sold houses in Surbiton for six years, predicts a bumper half-year ahead for first-time buyers. "There are great opportunities; people who have felt priced out of Surbiton in the past now have a golden chance," he said.

With stamp duty discounts for first-time buyers paying up to £500,000 for a property, and many buy-to-let landlords selling one and two-bed flats, the market is more hopeful for would-be home owners.



It's a life-saver

A potentially life-saving defibrillator has been fitted outside The Royal Star & Garter Home. The £850 device, which delivers an electric current to restart the heart when someone is in cardiac arrest, is in a prominent position by the main entrance near the busy Upper Brighton Road/Langley Avenue junction, available to all.

An in-built speaker gives simple step-by-step instructions, so no medical training is needed. Registration of the machine with London Ambulance means the home's staff are notified if a 999 call for a cardiac arrest is made within 100 metres.

It was bought by the charity following two collapses on the road nearby. In one, trainee nurse Michelle Nicholls, above, from Claremont Medical Centre, Glenbuck Road, saved the life of a collapsed cyclist by resuscitation and mouth-to-mouth before paramedics arrived. Michelle, who had a placement with the Royal Star & Garter in December, said: "I'm very happy there's a defibrillator here. It's good for the community."



● After a decade in estate agency in some of the leafier corners of Surrey, Charlie Bone has started work as lettings manager at Seymours in Surbiton.

"I actually started working in Guildford – where I was born," said the 32-year-old, now based at the office on the corner of Brighton Road and Victoria Avenue. "Then I moved to Woking."

He likes life in Surbiton ("It has a Guildford village feel to it"), and has boosted Seymours' lettings business by 40% this year.

"We're busier than ever," he said. "It is competitive, but Britain is a nation of renters, and we've enjoyed a very good start to the year."



Into the woods

What could be finer than immersing yourself in the nature surrounding you?

That's the principle of the Stepping Stones pre-school for 2-5s, where nature club introduces young people to the wild. Every Thursday afternoon the youngsters set off to the woods around Long Ditton, accompanied by well-informed teachers and guides, to learn how to make dens, use tools, balance on logs... even light fires safely.

"We observe the nature around us and discover plants and insects," said Aggie Taraga. "Outdoor play fosters independence and develops imagination. In the woods toys are not needed. The pond turns into the sea, and sticks are transformed into wands."

The ethos of Stepping Stones (based



Under supervision, a child uses a real saw to cut a branch

at Long Ditton Cricket Club) is that outdoor play is crucial to development as well as building confidence and helping youngsters assess risk. The school holds an open day on Thurs June 27, 10-11.30am. Just turn up.

www.steppingstonessurbiton.org.uk

Saving the planet can wait, say cllrs

In a spectacular handbrake U-turn, Surbiton's Lib Dems have abandoned a key pledge of their manifesto – to improve air quality by penalising gas-guzzlers.

In February, Kingston Council (39 Lib Dems, 9 Conservatives) proclaimed its big strategy move against air pollution by imposing graduated residents' parking permit charges, based on individual car makes' emissions.

Electric and hybrids would be free, little runarounds would pay £90, while Range Rover owners would pay up to £460 a year – depending on how many cars they run.

"Polluted air leads to the risk of early death," said environment lead Cllr Hilary Gander. "These changes are part of our efforts to protect the health of residents by encouraging people to think carefully about their choice of vehicle."

Then dozens of angry motorists gave councillors a roasting at a consultation meeting... and the visibly shaken Lib Dems decided that improving air quality and saving the planet could wait.

Council leader Cllr Liz Green justified the reversal by saying it's "a listening council", adding: "The strength of feeling expressed by residents affected has led us to withdraw the proposals." Permits now stay at £90.

She said the U-turn was "good for our democracy", though whether there's full agreement among any coughing residents who backed the original policy isn't clear.

The council's next move will be to form a citizens' assembly on air quality. If it concludes that owners of gas guzzlers should pay higher permit charges, the Lib Dems will have to reconsider their policy – again.

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Nature School



An adventure in nature.....

The children will venture out into the woods for an adventure full of fun-filled activities.

We will be making potions, crowns and magic wands.

The children will build dens, toast marshmallows and sip on hot chocolate.

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- Learns about risk taking
- Is exposed to real-life materials which makes learning more authentic, like wood soil and water
- Has a great opportunity to use numeracy and literacy skills in a meaningful context

www.steppingstonessurbiton.org.uk

Tel: 0788 434 8597

Continued from p1

"They said you can't do this, can't do that, can't do the other... I wanted to burst into tears," said Dee.

Despite support from MP Ed Davey, meetings with the rail firm simply ran into the buffers.

Finally husbands Steve and Andrew built troughs (aptly from old sleepers) around the ticket hall and on Chiltern Drive, leading

Planting plans derailed

down to Berrylands station.

Volunteers helped plant them up... but plans for jolly, drought-resistant plants on the platforms sit in the eternal 'pending' tray.

"It's been obstacle after obstacle," said Dee. "We're devastated; it's been 18 months of hard work! If the platforms aren't strong enough to support a planter on each side,

is the station safe at all? We've done everything we can; they've done absolutely nothing."

The vision of adding flowers to "grey, bland, soulless platforms" is fading. "Surbiton, Hampton Court, Thames Ditton... they have flowers," said Dee. "We wanted that for our station, too."

South Western Railway was twice asked by The Good Life to comment, but answer came there none.

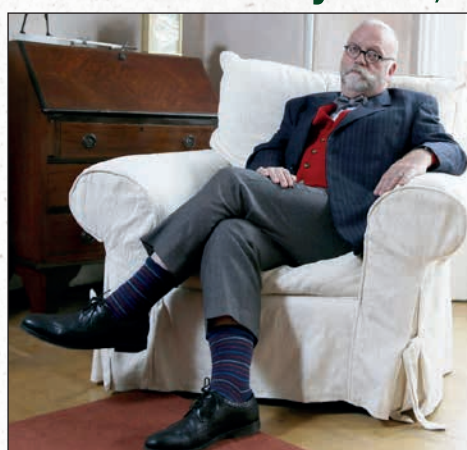
Tim Harrison

Dizzy? Tired? Take an early test, advises Roland

A Surbiton man given two weeks to live after an HIV diagnosis urges others not to delay tests, for the sake of their long-term health.

Doctors couldn't work out what was wrong with Roland Chesters, who lives just off Maple Road. "I'd been very poorly with loss of movement in my arms and legs, dizzy spells and tiredness," said the 59-year-old. "I'd seen oncologists, cardiologists, psychologists, a neurologist, but they didn't know what was wrong."

Test results came through just before he and his partner of 22 years, Richard, were due to go on holiday. They revealed serious mischief. Had he gone away, doctors told him, he might have



Roland has written **Ripples: From the Edge of Life**, available via Amazon, and set up Luminate – an organisation to help others (**www.luminate.uk.com**)

returned "in a box"... it was that critical.

Roland took five months off his Foreign Office job to recover. "I'm much healthier and happier today, thanks to the treatment. I'm extremely lucky," he added.

Tests are discreet, and can be done at home.

"I'm angry that what now seem to be blindingly obvious symptoms were missed," said the modern languages graduate, looking back to that dark hour. "My verbal and written skills are no longer up to scratch; it's disappointing for someone with my background."

Margaret archives herself

After 21 years volunteering at the borough's local history room, Margaret Kelly has archived herself!

Margaret, of St Matthew's Avenue, was given a heartwarming send-off on her retirement by well-wishers, with past staff members and fellow volunteers filling the subterranean rooms below Kingston's Guildhall where the popular research centre is located.

As well as weekly volunteering stints, keeping the records in good order and cataloguing new deposits, Margaret also filled in for six months as a paid staff worker during a hiatus in official appointments; a role which was simplicity itself as she was so familiar with the system.

She cut a cake to mark her long service, and everyone



tucked into drinks and nibbles. Margaret was presented with cards and a bouquet of flowers, but her main leaving gift was the present of two cherry trees for the garden she and husband John enjoy.



Need an imposing place to hold your committee meeting? Surbiton's community groups are being offered a posh space for free. The community room in Kingston Guildhall can accommodate 12 around an oval table – ideal for most organisations. There is free wi-fi, ample sockets and a disabled access lift. The room is 54sqm. Paid for out of council tax, the room is available 7am-7pm (or later if there's a council meeting on). It is, said Cllr Jon Tolley, the ideal solution "when meeting space is sometimes hard to come by". Book by calling 03337 000595 or emailing tftpmlhelpdesk@engie.com

Share in grant divvy

Community and voluntary groups in Surbiton are being invited to apply for a share of a sizeable grant pot.

The neighbourhood community grants programme is now open, but unlike past years there is no deadline on when applications have to be submitted.

To qualify, you must be a voluntary, community, not-for-profit or faith group looking to set up accessible activities or projects to benefit residents, or make a difference to the area.

Individual grants of up to £3,000 are available for groups in the Surbiton area, as well as additional borough-wide grants for projects that benefit residents across the local authority area.

Surbiton's neighbourhood committee can also make 'councillor ward funding' grants for specific projects.

"Residents do tireless work to make the borough a better place, and this is about ensuring they can keep doing that," explained council leader Cllr Liz Green. "By allowing grants all year round, we hope more people will apply."

Email grants@kingston.gov.uk



Kit Bardsley lowers the chimes through the bell hatch

Bell hangers are going to a peal

I don't think I can do it, I said, climbing the precipitous, wooden, pigeon poop-encrusted staircase to the belfry of St Matthew's. It was a long way down and I wasn't yet prepared to meet my maker.

Then came words from above – not from the Almighty but from bell hanger Andrew Mills, working with colleague Kit Bardsley to lower eight hemispherical bells and the massive 355kg service bell down the 173ft steeple (think Nelson's Column) through the bell hatch to the floor of the porch below.

"There are some beautiful bells up here. It's worth seeing." I clambered on; it was.

Andrew, a bell hanger for 35 years, and Kit, two years in the job, had already removed four smaller 144-year-old domed bells from their frame in the bell chamber of the church in St Matthew's Avenue.

"This is very different," said Andrew, a director of the Loughborough-based John Taylor & Co bell foundry which will restore the Ellacombe chimes and 285-year-old service bell cast by Joseph Smith (and listed for preservation by the Church Buildings Council) to their former glory.

"The manoeuvres I'm doing on these to get them out I've never done before. You have to think outside the box. There is no standard procedure ever."

He said the bells would need some minor tuning. "Some have had it, and some are not quite in pitch with themselves, and



then there's the cleaning," said Andrew whose passion for bells began when he was a young bell ringer (his parents were bell ringers too).

"Most work will be done to the fittings, which are coming off as well; it's not just the bells which are getting a refurbishment. We are rebuilding everything."

Normally it would take two months, but because the church is having work done to restore its 144-year-old crumbling tower and spire, the bells won't be returned until everything is completed in six months' time.

"We are also really busy with other jobs at the moment, including making new peals," said Andrew, who said he had a head for heights and a love of the job.

"Sometimes you see things that haven't been touched for 300 years, so it is unique stuff you are taking apart. It is just different; it is out of this world, you can't really imagine what it is until you see it – and you get great views at the top too!"

When the bells are put back into their frames at the end of the process the idea is to open the tower up to the public by making the staircase more accessible, even for the faint-hearted.

CCTV will also be installed in the belfry allowing people like me to see the newly restored bells in action without having to do a John Noakes.

To help fund the restoration, visit www.mydonate.bt.com/charities/stmatthewschurchsurbiton **Jane Grove**

Fairground ride fun

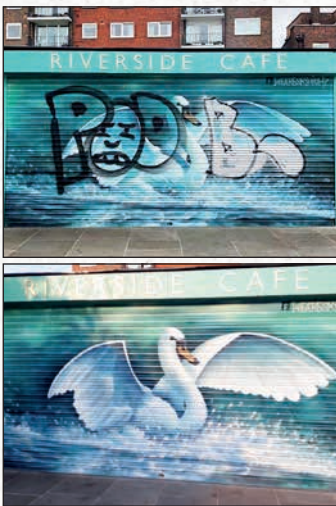
Fairground rides and Punch and Judy shows are on the bill for Long Ditton Village fairgoers. The fete at Long Ditton St Mary's Junior School, Sugden Road, has a tug-of-war, dance show, singing groups, food stalls, tea, beer and Pimms tents and barbecue. The Royal British Legion marching band will play. Open 1-4.30pm, Sun June 30. £1 adults, children free. Profits to Princess Alice Hospice and Friends of Long Ditton St Mary's School.

HollyFest fireworks

Hollyfield School's 2019 HollyFest is on Sat July 6, from 4pm until a fireworks finale at dusk. There are sports, international food stalls and entertainment, showcasing talent in dance, art and music, organised by the PTA at the school in Surbiton Hill Road. Funds raised will buy music equipment. Tickets via www.hollyfieldpta.org

Swansong

The impressive swan mural on the Riverside Cafe shutters is back to its former glory after hoodlums tagged the eye-catching artwork. Tom of WeAreSkyHigh, who created it, wove his magic to repair the damage at the riverside eaterie on Queens Prom, to the joy of owners Beth Denton and Gavin Wong. "People love the artwork, so this feels like an attack on everyone who strolls down this lovely part of town," said Beth after the incident. "We have been warmed by the concern from neighbours and customers."



Inspirational

Surbiton's branch of Diabetes UK, which meets monthly at Kingston Hospital's education centre and runs weekly exercise classes, is shortlisted for a national Inspire award. "It's rewarding to see how those attending our free meetings gain help managing diabetes," said chairman Richard Allen. An estimated 2,000 borough residents are diabetic. Next meeting: 6.45pm, Tues June 18. Mary Murray talks on pregnancy and sexual health linked to the condition. richard.allen52@btinternet.com



A giant tug-of-war competition, with dozens on each end of an enormous rope, is one of the highlights of the Berrylands Summer Festival at noon on Sun July 7 on the former lagoon site in Stirling Walk. Organised by the Berrylands Scout Group in aid of scout hall renovations, there will be games, inflatable rides, food and drink stalls, market stalls and dancing displays.



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Harvey wins bone

Harvey the loveable lurcher has won a pets-as-therapy medal for bringing canine warmth to residents of Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter Home in Upper Brighton Road. The bone-shaped award, made of copper, marks five years of visits with owner Irene Rowe.

"Harvey loves coming here," she said. "He pulls me in, and knows which residents have treats for him. I like coming here because I enjoy talking to people and hearing their stories; it's very humbling."

Activities manager Raquel Pena Aristizabal, who also gave awards to other volunteers at the home, said: "Helping others is the highest expression of the soul, and we recognise that this is what our



volunteers do for our residents." Could you help? Visit www.starandgarter.org/volunteer

You're so vein... male donor plea

There's a shortage of men in Surbiton. Well, there really is when it comes to giving blood.

The latest stats show twice as many women as men come forward as new donors.

Does it matter? Oddly, it does. Male donors are more likely to have blood that can be used for platelets and allogeneic serum drops to treat people with dry eye conditions.

While donors of every gender are always welcomed by the transfusion service, men's blood can contain fewer antibodies against red and white blood cells because women often make these antibodies during pregnancy.

Men also generally have higher iron levels than women, so they are less likely to be turned away for low haemoglobin.

Locally, the nearest regular donor station is St Christopher's church, Hinchley Wood.

Mike Stredder of NHS Blood said: "It's vital

more men start donating as their blood is used to provide life-saving products like plasma and platelets to save victims of burns, car crashes and to treat patients with cancer.

"We're incredibly grateful to all our female donors, but we need men! Men's blood is more likely to stop bleeding after injury or surgery."

There are 81,000 active blood donors in London, but NHS Blood and Transplant needs to collect 1.4 million units of blood a year to meet the needs of patients across England.

There are four main blood groups: O, A, B and AB. The universal blood group (O negative) and B negative are particularly vulnerable to shortfalls.

While overall demand for blood falls 3% a year due to clinical practice improvements, 21,000 new donors are needed each year to keep the right group mix. www.blood.co.uk



Send us your views!

thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

Pushing the envelope

I am a big fan of The Good Life, and I read 'Surbiton set to get noisier after Heathrow change' (issue 45) with interest.

Surbiton and Tolworth will not only be affected by a third runway, but will be in three 'design envelopes' (in plain English, flightpaths) and will continue to be affected by the holding stack on busy days, with no meaningful respite.

The Heathrow rep at a recent consultation compared the sound to a 'noisy open plan office'. Having lived in Isleworth I'd say it's more like a neighbour's noisy lawnmower.

Heathrow wants to increase flights to 740,000 a year (260,000 more than at present). This seems completely out of touch with recent reports on climate change. Current aviation technology is not designed to be green. It's based on burning fossil fuels and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Dee Davies

Our honeymoon drive

I'd like to congratulate you on producing a cracking little newspaper full of interesting stories and little snippets of local news. Since

the loss of the Guardian and the Kingston Informer it is the only local news I see.

I particularly enjoyed your article on Roger Florio (issue 46) and his family as owners of the Surbiton Mini Centre as I purchased an MGB from that showroom in 1971 just before my marriage, and my wife and I took it on honeymoon to Appledore in Devon. Keep up the good work.

Stephen Ennis

Overdue road repairs

This photo comes from Orchard Close, Long Ditton. I and my neighbours have fought tooth and nail to get something done.

A few elderly people with walking frames live in the road. Yet a lot of smaller roads do get done, depending on who has clout with the council. I've checked where councillors live and - wow - their roads are fine! By the way, a wonderful magazine.



Steve Wright

Preloved fashion sale?

I've been trying to sell some no-longer-used clothes. A great deal has gone to charity shops (liberating) but there are hardly used outfits, quite expensive and bought for weddings and formal occasions. I'm reluctant to take all of these to the Oxfam shop, yet dress agencies will not accept items that are more than two years old or not bearing designer labels.

There's a market for smart, pretty clothes among larger ladies of a certain age who dress up for weddings and christenings and like a posh hat, without wanting to spend huge amounts on it.

Years ago, when I had very small children, I occasionally bought a child's dress or dungarees from a house where baby and toddler clothes were sold informally every so often. Today such sales are common.

Would other Good Life readers be interested in organising the occasional sale of 'preloved fashion'? I'm not looking to sell anything at a high cost, just recoup some of the initial outlay. I think others may feel the same way. It wouldn't have to be a venture just for big-sized things, but I feel there would be interest in them.

Cecilia Hatt



Crazy parking fine haul

I read in The Good Life that parking costs are set to increase, reminding me to share this photo.

We were walking to the station and noticed a car covered with fines. It resonated with a recent experience I had when I got into my car, which I use infrequently, and discovered I had collected three fines. My permit had expired and I'd overlooked renewing it because of the change from paper to electronic permits. I challenged the penalty charges and was fortunate that Kingston Parking Services waived them.

Surely the 'service' should write, notifying the owner they have a fine and that they will receive another if the vehicle has not been moved within x days? In most residential cases, the vehicle is outside the owner's house. Sticking fine after fine on the windshield is clearly not addressing the issue and appears to be a revenue-generating scheme.

Kevin Gale

Breathe in... then cough

Why are benches in the high street set so anyone sitting down has a view of passing traffic and can inhale the carbon monoxide effortlessly? Would it not be more sociable (like most street furniture) to set them facing other pedestrians? It might, er, set a benchmark.

Julian Meers



Our caring K1 bus driver

Many of our bus drivers are kind, skilful people. But a driver on the K1 is truly exceptional. He has a Mediterranean accent, and radiates warmth and good humour, joking with - and caring for - the passengers. His buses are full of smiles and laughter. Sorry not to be able to identify the driver better. I wish I could thank him constructively. I suspect I'm not the only Good Life reader who feels the same way.

Athar Yawar



Neighbourhood Watch

I delivered The Good Life on a Sunday morning in Browns Road under the watchful eye of this local resident!

Phil Cooper

● If you, too, would like to interact with wildlife and neighbours, raise your step count and help deliver the paper six times a year, drop the editor a line.



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● A feast of music, theatre and literature comes to the cornerHOUSE as **Surbiton Summer Salons** stage five concerts, two talks and three workshops in five days.

With increasing popularity and ticket demand, the Salons (held since 2013 at a home in Berrylands) now move to the arts centre in Douglas Road.

This year's performances include Royal Opera House tenor Nicky Spence, the Naked Pianist Emmanuel Vass, duets by tenor Charles MacDougall and baritone Gavin Cranmer-Moralee, an exploration of Monteverdi madrigals by early

music ensemble Ceruleo, and a jazz concert to wrap it all up.

Talks on music and fashion from Jane Austen's era, and workshops on Shakespeare's sonnets, a cappella jazz, and using your body as a percussive and vocal instrument add to the diverse programme.

Founder MacDougall, of Ewell Road, said: "I'm delighted our festival will reach a wider Surbiton community. At our core is a belief that the arts should be accessible. We hope our musicians, speakers and workshop leaders will inspire audiences."

www.surbitonsalons.com

Colourblind

Look, no colour does what it says on the tin. Artist and photographer Terry Cripps found inspiration on his allotment for an exhibition of black and white photographs as he turns his lens on the marvels of nature.



Terry, of Red Lion Road, the Artist in Residence at London's Guildhall Art Gallery, said: "Inspiration as an artist comes from the unexpected places, none more varied than nature. While tending my allotment one spring I noticed the astonishing variation in poppy blooms that had self-seeded throughout the Sugden Road allotments in Long Ditton. That was the beginning. I became enthralled with flower structure and remembered the work of Karl Blossfeldt, the 19th century photographer of natural forms. **Look, No Colour** was born!"

This glorious affirmation of the simple and beautiful things around us runs at the cornerHOUSE arts centre, Douglas Road, from June 30-August 4. All welcome to the Meet the Artist night, Tues, July 9, from 7-9pm. Prints and postcard collections are also on sale with proceeds from the cards going to Refugee Action Kingston.

Print makes us smile

Fancy a reminder of your beloved town on your walls? This print by illustrator Lisa Tolley, formerly of this parish, is available from her website, www.lisatolley.co.uk. The signed, fine art print (30x40cm, £35) depicts Surbiton station, St Mark's Church, the clocktower, Maple Road shops, restaurants and market, The Vic, The Antelope, The Lamb, Victorian cottages, villas, town houses, mock Tudor homes, the old post office (now Zizzi), and trains, buses and taxis which transport us.



She created it using gouache paint on heavy watercolour paper. It follows numerous requests for a depiction of the town after she took a stall at Surbiton Farmers' Market.

Lisa, now in Thames Ditton, has been an illustrator for 15 years. She told The Good Life: "I started doing small paintings of peoples' houses, then created a series depicting life along the Thames. My illustrative style is naive, colourful and slightly playful. I like to include details that make people smile or capture a moment that will bring back memories."

For 10 years, Lisa has also been working with The French Table in Maple Road to produce a range of tea towels, mugs and bags featuring the street scenes of the area.



● If you're a political animal you can't help but be fascinated by the machinations in the corridors of Westminster. But it's austerity rather than Brexit which gets Surbiton playwright Susannah Finzi's creative juices going in her witty satire **The Bottom Line**. Inside 11 Downing Street it's all cronyism, spin and power play. The Chancellor is the poodle of his spokesman, austerity is cutting deep, and No10 is being kept in the dark and feeling the pinch. The truth is out there in the real world – it just needs an unlikely hero determined to find a better way.

This Lean Theatre Productions play is at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, July 18-20 at 7.45pm. Tickets £10 (£8 concs): www.ticketsource.co.uk/thebottomline or call 0333 666 3366.

Thriller audition dates

Auditions for Martin McDonagh's dark comic thriller **The Pillowman** will be held at the cornerHOUSE on Sun, July 7, 2pm, and Mon, July 8, 7.30pm. You don't need to prepare anything, and you only need attend one. There are parts for six male characters and two female characters. Over 17s only. Be prompt. Directed by Tanju Duncan, it runs at the arts centre from September 5-7. Email thechartistic.team@gmail.com or just turn up.

● Have you a play in you? The cornerHOUSE arts centre in Surbiton, is looking for new, 15 to 30-minute plays for the **oneACTS 2020**, a week-long showcase of original writing in April next year. Denise Rocard, who chairs the artistic team, said: "Plays will be selected by a panel of judges; yours may well be one! Even if it isn't, you get feedback to help with your future writing." Deadline: Thu, October 31. Directors will be chosen, then actors cast. How to submit your play? Visit www.thecornerhouse.org



Uplifting!

"Wonderful, happy, joyous, uplifting!" The verdict of the new mayor, Margaret Thompson, left, on Royad's Got Talent at the cornerHOUSE. It was an early mayoral gig with consort and husband Richard. Also in the picture, co-chair of Royad Shoshana Foster. Royad (Reaching Out to Youth and Adult Disabilities) formed in 1997 to support able-bodied adults with a mild learning disability. It meets on Sundays for drama classes at the arts centre in Douglas Road. www.royad.org



● The circus comes to town! **Happy's Circus** sets up a big top on the playing field at Long Ditton St Mary's Junior School, Sugden Road, for a magical night at 6pm on Fri, June 21, with acrobats, aerialists, magicians and clowns by this animal-free circus, plus face painting, barbecue and bar. £9.50, under 2s free, £37 family of four. Email longdittonfriends@outlook.com

Inclusive choir is in harmony

It's a lively, relaxed, inclusive choir... and it's based at Surbiton YMCA. With no auditions to endure, it has grown from four to 40 in double-quick time, says founder Jacky Bone. The music is modern (from The Beatles' All My Loving to U2's With or Without You) and new musical director Charlie Swift is inspirational and encouraging.

Just bowl along to the Y, Wednesdays at 7pm. It's £3.50 a session (free for Universal Credit). "You don't have to be able to sing a note," laughed Jacky, who said it's as much social chat as choir. There's also a show on June 22, 7pm, at The White House, Hampton.



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Kate's big year

A 14-year-old Long Ditton girl will be in the spotlight when she competes in the Horse of the Year Show.

Kate Hewson will ride her Welsh mountain pony Flute, an eight-year-old dressage expert. "It's always been my ambition to ride at the Horse of the Year Show; I'm incredibly proud and excited that this year I'll be there competing alongside the very best ponies and riders in the country," she told The Good Life.

The event is being staged at Birmingham's NEC in the first week of October. "First, though, I have to focus on the Royal International Horse Show at Hickstead in July, where I will be competing on three different ponies... riding one of them side saddle."

Kate, who lives just off Lovelace Road, began riding lessons in Kingston five years ago, and now competes all over the country in showing and dressage events. Kate and Flute together represent the British dressage youth team southern in regional and national competitions.



● Ping-pong, anyone? Two free-use, all-weather outdoor tables are waiting for you in Long Ditton rec.

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It was the fact that he was supporting a worthwhile cause that kept him going, but it's still an astonishing achievement to run seven marathons in seven countries in seven days.

The final one for Ollie Bath, from Highfield Close, Long Ditton, was very much home territory; from Leith Hill to the Albany, Thames Ditton, where a crowd of friends, proud wife Kate and a foaming pint of beer were waiting.

In the six days before, Ollie and three running chums completed marathons in Switzerland, France, Italy, Leichtenstein, Austria and Germany, navigating snowfields and forests – some at high altitude.

It has benefited the Bokamoso Education Trust, a charity close to Ollie and Kate's hearts as they

are from South Africa, have two young sons themselves, and are mindful every child needs an education.

BET finds school places for underprivileged kids.

Remarkably, it's Ollie's second year of Run777, having pounded through Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the UK with buddies from Surbiton and Thames Ditton in 2018.

With proper coaching, Ollie reckons many can meet the challenge. "Anyone who loves pushing their limits and seeing places should think about signing



Marathon man

up!" He and colleagues Nick Shraga, Todd Hussey and Christopher Koller raised £4,400. Is he crazy for attempting such super-endurance dares? Ask him next year after Run777 shifts to eastern Europe and the Balkans! Interested? He's recruiting. www.facebook.com/run777



Cup is tribute to coach Erno

This impressive piece of silverware is the Corinthian Cup, a trophy which will be held aloft in triumph by the winners of the Egri Erbstein Tournament, staged in Budapest over the weekend.

Holding it, reverentially, is Surbiton journalist and author Dominic Bliss, whose research on the Hungarian coach Erno Egri Erbstein, right, who was killed in the Superga air disaster of 1949, was the catalyst for the competition.

Tolworth's Corinthian-Casuals, who play at King George's Field off Hook Rise South, are one of four teams in a tournament that Dominic hopes will be the springboard to future international competitions for amateur clubs like the Casuals. His book *Erbstein: The Triumph and Tragedy of Football's Pioneer* paved the way for this cup, which has an extraordinary 115-year backstory.

"Last year, after it was translated into Hungarian, I was approached by a group of football enthusiasts in Budapest who had been inspired by Egri Erbstein's story to reform the club where he spent most of his playing days, Budapesti Atletikai Klub (BAK)," said Dominic of St Mark's Hill. "They made me an honorary ambassador and told me part of their plan was to inaugurate a tournament in Egri Erbstein's name. They wanted it to be an international event to bring Europe's historic grassroots clubs together."

"As a regular at Corinthian-Casuals, I was aware the Corinthians had played a significant part in the development of Hungarian football, having visited Budapest on their first tour of mainland Europe in 1904, when they were one of the best teams in the world. The Corinthians were so impressed by the passion of the local football community that they

donated a solid silver trophy to the amateur clubs of Hungary, and the Corinthian Cup soon became an important part of the football calendar there.

"We hope the tournament can allow amateur football clubs from across Europe to come together and compete for a prestigious title, and connect teams who share a passion for the game. It's an ambitious project but one we are immensely proud to be involved in." **Jane Grove**



Anyone for cricket?

Grudge matches loom for local cricket teams. Long Ditton face rivals Thames Ditton in a Twenty20 at 5.45pm on Wed July 3, then – on Sat July 27 – all eyes are on Giggs Hill Green for Thames Ditton v Long Ditton first XIs at 1pm. tinyurl.com/y2qmjsfp

● Meanwhile Surbiton hockey thrives, with promotions for next season earned by ladies' 2nds and 3rds, and men's 3rds and 4ths.



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