



Cycling heroes

Any Surbitonian who popped down to Portsmouth Road to watch the rain-soaked Prudential riders cycle through the remnants of the Bertha storm must have been impressed by their efforts. This picture shows some passing the City Arms.

● Read the background to two of the Surbiton cyclists who were among the 24,000 wet heroes **p4**

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Surbiton actor's crowning glory

Surbiton actor Paul Hughes has landed his big Hollywood break, playing King Saul in a \$50million Biblical epic, David and Goliath.

The film opens in US cinemas in March 2015, with Paul promising an exclusive viewing at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road, where he has directed and performed.

Paul, who lives off Maple Road, returned last month from shooting in Tunisia on desert scenes involving David, also played by an English actor, and Goliath, played by the tallest man in Canada, a 7ft 4in, 32-stone giant called Jerry Sokoloski.

Coming hard on the heels of Noah, which has already

grossed \$359m, and Ridley Scott's Exodus, planned for a Christmas release, director Tim Chey hopes the film will capture the public's imagination and feed into enthusiasm for the swords-and-sandals genre which have led critics to dub this 'the year of the Bible movie'.

"In May I was invited to audition for the role of a 'king' figure in a film to be shot in north Africa," Paul told The Good Life. "Two days later I turned up at the Marriott Hotel by Westminster Bridge. I still had the beard I'd grown from performing in The Seagull in London in December.

"I'd thought about how the character might be, and I was told I took direction

well... and I was asked how I'd cope with 12-hour filming days in Tunisia, and did I have a passport?"

Paul heard nothing for a nail-biting week, then Chey rang and organised another audition, sending through part of the script and instructing him to let his hair grow.

From the first wave of 2,300 applicants, the final competition for the plum role of the king was between Paul and two American actors... with the Surbiton thesp winning the day.

He was flown out to Hammamet - a popular tourist destination on the Tunisian coast - and put up in a four-star hotel with an impressive pool. "I had a



Paul Hughes, right, in a break in filming in Tunisia, playing King Saul, with fellow English actor Myles Soman (alongside him) cast as David in David and Goliath

huge room; we were really spoilt," he said.

On location in an ancient desert village surrounded by traditional farmers with herds of sheep and goats, Paul was put through the promised long days of filming, with 6.30am starts. Then it was back to the hotel where script rewrites arrived

at 11.30pm ahead of the next day's shooting.

As in so many films, much of the day is spent waiting around. Fortunately Paul is a past master at yoga, which he describes as "the effective use of doing nothing", so that wasn't a problem.

Now the classic underdog tale is at the editing and post-

production stage, ahead of release in the spring.

"If it grosses a certain figure, it's big money," said Paul. Director Tim Chey, who is aiming for a grand-scale epic on the lines of Lawrence of Arabia, aims to open in 1,500 cinemas across the States.

Tim Harrison

Festival reborn

Organisers say that Surbiton's annual festival, rebranded The Surbo, will be bigger than ever. The fun starts on farmers' market day - Saturday September 20, with the main parade staged a week later. Details on **p6**, and see **p8** for columnist Becky Mayhew's take on the festivities.



Last year's Surbiton Festival parade came up Victoria Road towards the station. This year's parade, on September 27, follows the same route

The Brownway

Dead and dying trees have turned Tolworth's infamous Greenway into the Brownway - as many predicted it would.

Apparently, sinking cypress trees into luridly painted resin and surrounding them with continuous traffic isn't a recipe for a long and happy arboreal life.

Contractors will return in September to uproot the sorry specimens and plant new ones... but there's no guarantee that the replacements will take to their strange positions any better than the current trees.

Ah well. At least the project to turn the street into a bilious boulevard only cost council taxpayers £3.1million.

Meanwhile the raised, green, semi-official tarmac wxcrossing humps continue to baffle pedestrians and motorists, who still can't decide who is supposed to have priority.

The Highway Code doesn't mention them.



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School site mystery

A new primary school will open in Surbiton in a year's time with an initial roll of 60... but nobody knows where.

Surbiton Primary School will be a free school, as championed by ex-Education Secretary Michael Gove, with a two-form entry ultimately rising to 420 pupils.

The target is to open in September 2015, meeting rocketing demand for places fuelled by the population boom.

The school will be run by the education charity Gems Learning Trust, set up in Dubai in 1959. It owns 46 schools, mostly in the Gulf but with five in the UK.

Uncertainty surrounds the location.

Kingston Council says the government's Education Funding Agency will supply a site. However, a spokeswoman for Gems (it stands for Global Education Management Systems) initially told the Good Life: "The local council will find the site and the building."

Gems chairman Chris Kirk said he would ensure successful students were "nurtured" via "international best practice in the curriculum, and the use of technology". Gems will also launch a primary school in Twickenham next year, again with an initial intake of 60.

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An eye for a bargain

Surbiton couple Paul and Liz Hunter did spectacularly well on daytime TV's Bargain Hunt, in which rival pairs of amateur antique buyers are given £300 to make money on three auction lots.

Pun-potty presenter Tim Wonnacott was impressed by Paul's decisiveness (the rival red team were all adither), and was in awe of Liz's knowledge of 20th Century British art glass.

Retired tax adviser Paul applied to go on the show without telling Liz, and the pair were filmed trawling antique shops in Lewes in January, before seeing how the buys fared at auction in Billingshurst. Liz had set out to buy "something small and silver"... so the fact that their final choice was Scandinavian pottery, a chair and an aboriginal didgeridoo came as a surprise.

The chair, one of a limited edition made by Lord Snowdon for Prince Charles's investiture in 1969, did them proud. Expert Thomas Plant predicted it might fetch £80-£120 at auction. Paul and Liz paid £90. At auction, in a frenzy of bids, the price shot up to £320.

After making a £285 overall cash profit, the couple – both keen birdwatchers – won golden gavel lapel pins.

"We had a wonderful time," said Paul. "We really enjoyed the experience, and everyone was so nice."

Liz is now a minor celebrity at the Surbiton YMCA, where she exercises regularly, with several of her gym buddies spotting her on the programme.

● Liz and Paul are in blue fleeces, flanked by antiques expert Thomas Plant and the bow-tied Tim Wonnacott



Chelsea stardust

First SW3, then New York, now the Made in Chelsea stars are hitting the glamorous bar scene in Surbiton.

Cast members Louise Thompson and Andy Jordan will be reunited at the Lounge at Hotel Bosco after a summer apart. A table has been booked for the ex-couple at the cocktail bar for the evening of Saturday September 6.

Louise has spent the summer in New York filming Made in Chelsea, while Andy has been touring the UK after the release of his new EP.

Fans will see if the soft lighting of the Lounge in St Mark's Hill might rekindle this on-off romance.

Meanwhile, Bosco regulars (one pictured) have been solving clues on Facebook to win £50 tabs at the boutique hotel's bar, with vouchers hidden in envelopes in town centre shops.

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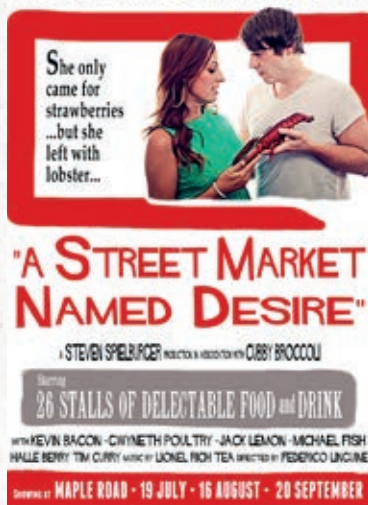
Desirable market

Following Kingston Market Place's hideous Disneyland makeover, Surbiton's farmers' market is becoming the go-to destination for discerning shoppers.

With its endearing mix of stalls of different size, shape and style, the monthly Maple Road market is an antidote to Kingston market's dull uniformity and unpopular paving, condemned by historian June Sampson as 'reducing the heart of the ancient royal borough to a flimsy pop-up stage set' which has 'lost its integrity as an authentic, working market and has become an Ikea designer's concept of an open-air mart'.

Market grandee David Jacobson designed this new poster to help spread the word about Surbiton's alternative... based on the 1951 Marlon Brando movie A Streetcar Named Desire.

SURBITON FARMERS' MARKET PRESENTS



Gardening tips by Janice Cripps

Time to zhuzh up the garden



There comes a time in midsummer when the garden begins to look a little tired; the lawn is not as green as it was and the planting which was slow to take off in spring has reached its peak and is threatening to take over.

Paradoxically, the need to hack back the borders coincides with the very time most people want to relax in their garden and enjoy the long summer evenings, perhaps

entertaining family or friends. After all, that's the point of gardens, isn't it?

So what can be done to zhuzh up the summer garden and give it back its self-respect?

The first step is to cut back early spring or early summer perennials that are past their prime.

Apart from removing unsightly tattered and discoloured growth, this will promote strong healthy growth for attractive late-season foliage and

possibly a second flush of flowers.

The same goes for early flowering shrubs that will benefit by forming strong flower buds and a better resistance to disease and weather damage in the year to come.

Plants in window boxes and containers may also have outgrown their situation and need to be trimmed. Remove spent flowers and cut back leggy stems and vigorous sprawlers to reinvigorate flowering.

Trailing petunia and other trailing plants benefit from this. In fact make deadheading part of your daily routine.

Planting at this time of year seems just plain wrong but if a ruthless tidy-up has left gaps in the border, adding some late-flowering colour will perk it up and take you through to autumn. Japanese anemones, asters and sedums are good 'do-ers' and you will find plenty at the garden centre. Alternatively use ready-made planters to fill the space.

In Europe, modern gardens often do not get into their stride until this time of year. Dutch designer Piet Oudolf has pioneered 'prairie' planting schemes which combine late-flowering perennials with ornamental grasses to stunning effect.

The hot or tawny shades of an Oudolf-inspired late summer border gives a different look to the garden and is doubly attractive in a west-facing border, backlit by the setting sun. If you've got the space, vibrant orange helenium, yellow rudbeckia and carnelian red achillea are a winning combination.

Planted in swaths with grasses like miscanthus or Japanese blood grass, it creates a spectacular border, full of colour, light and movement – not for the faint-hearted and sure to wake you from your midsummer reverie.



Late-summer planting combination of helenium, blood grass and ligularia



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



Cheapest trims

A barber shop in Tolworth claims to be the cheapest for miles. Kami's at 48 Tolworth Broadway charges £6.99 for a haircut... accompanied by gossip and discussions about the Greenway. Here is the chirpy crew.

As fit as a Nordic

If you're over 50, live in Kingston borough and want to get fit, Fit as a Fiddle runs free six-week courses from September in Nordic walking, aquacise and body balance. Call Grace Shorthouse, 020 8942 8256 or email grace@ageconcernkingston.org

Speaking tapas

Acquired a taste for tapas on holiday? Make your own, and speak Spanish, on afternoons at the Fox & Hounds, Portsmouth Road, on September 7 and 21, from 1-3.30pm. Anne Morris has teamed up with David Sanchez to create mini potato tortillas and churros... in Spanish.



A lovely surprise

Cornish visitor Isobel Porter was so impressed by the wild flowers at the Glenbuck Road station exit, she took this snap. "It was such a lovely surprise," she told the Good Life. "A lovely gesture by whoever planted it... and on the public pavement, not on private property."

Mike's on pole

Surbiton race ace Mike Robinson extended his lead to 36 points at Brands Hatch thanks to two wins in the Michelin Clio cup. Qualifying in pole for both races, the Ewell Road driver made faultless starts each time, winning by two seconds and 1.1 seconds respectively. Next up, Snetterton in Norfolk.

Bookworm draw

The challenge is on to get youngsters to read six library books over the summer, with a prize draw for a £100 book voucher. The Reading Maze is free to join at Surbiton Library. It ends on September 13.

My, it's altered

Groans and ahhs filled Surbiton library hall as John Kelly and Tim Harrison beamed 'then and now' images of the area on a screen, contrasting the borough of 1983 with today. The biggest groans came when the revamped Kingston Market Place was shown. Other talks at Surbiton Historical Society were by William Jones (the Burma-Siam railway), Margaret Mitchell (the Scottish Borders) and Anthony Lunn (on his uncle Roy, who designed the Ford Anglia).

Baby sale bonus

Outgrown baby and children's things, from cots to cardigans, are turned to cash at the mum2mum market on September 20, St Mark's church hall, St Mark's Hill, 2-4pm. Twenty stalls are co-ordinated by Janine Turland, who has run sales for a year for 200+ buyers a time. "There has been fantastic feedback; buyers save hundreds of pounds," she said. Entry £2. Two-for-one vouchers and stall details at www.mum2mummarket.co.uk

Join our team

Does the Good Life inspire you? Have you an hour or two to help make Surbiton's community paper an even bigger success? Email Tim Harrison at thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

Can you help trace soldier Sid's family?

A sad note in a dusty file has led to a First World War mystery. At the end of hostilities, war widow Mrs SJ Northfield sent the only photograph she had of her husband in uniform to the council, so it could be added to the official roll of honour.

In her note she asked for the return of a picture so small it almost certainly came from a love locket.

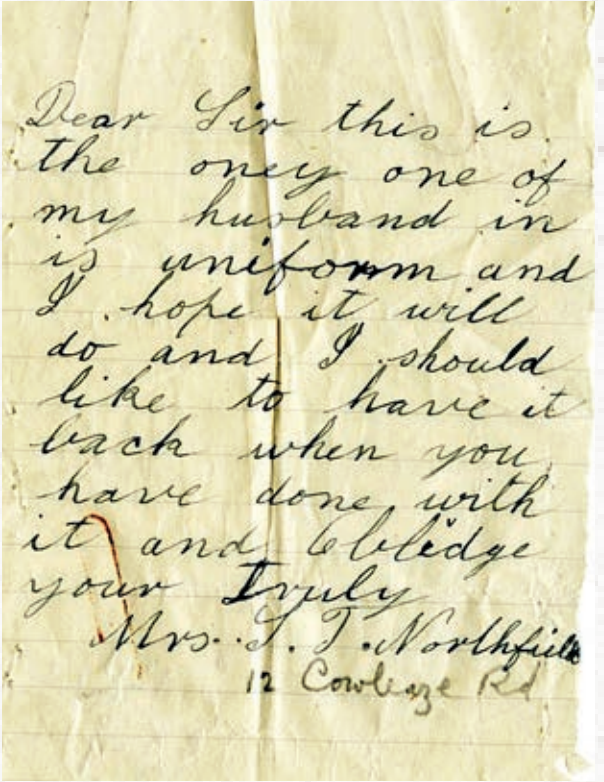
But the tiny photo, with rusty paperclip stain, has only now surfaced. Sadly, she never got it back.

The Good Life has been enlisted in the search for relatives of Sidney Thomas Northfield, who lived in Cowleaze Road, Kingston, when war broke out a century ago, but who may have had Surbiton connections.

Archivists Amy Graham and Lucy Harris, who recently spoke in Hook Library about researching war dead, want to track down any local

Northfields with a family link to the man who died in the trenches, so the picture can finally be restored to them.

An exhibition about the First World War is being staged all summer at Kingston Museum.



Sidney Northfield and, above, the poignant note from his widow



A bird-day cake

Thelma Caine and Anne Turner of the Surbiton & District Bird-Watching Society, left, cut the cake which Anne made, to commemorate the group's diamond jubilee year.

Celebrations took place at the society's 60th anniversary meeting in the library hall, Ewell Road. Members have held a string of events, culminating in a bird-watching trip to Scotland. They also enjoyed a display of photos stretching back to the 1950s (when wildlife enthusiast Hockley Clarke set up the group), and an illustrated talk by Mike White on birds which have appeared unexpectedly in the area over six decades.

Visit www.encief.co.uk/sdbws for more, or turn up to the next meeting at 8pm on September 16, when Nigel Choat will discuss wetland birds.

Beware of change scam

Surbiton shopkeepers are being warned to beware a scam in which tricksters pay for low-value goods using £50 notes.

The fraudsters hand over a genuine £50 note, and take their change in fivers, tenners, twenties and coins. Then they pretend to have second thoughts about the transaction, and ask for their money back.

The fraud involves switching one of the £10 or £20 notes in the shop change for a counterfeit version, and hoping the shopkeeper doesn't notice that it has been swapped in all the confusion.

There have been several reports of the scam in recent weeks.

Overheard in The Waggon & Horses

A couple are sitting in the living room of their Surbiton home. "Just so you know," he says. "I never want to live in a vegetative state dependent on some machine. If it ever happens, pull the plug." So she got up and turned off the telly.



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No surprise! Tufty is the most frequent of our garden visitors

It will scarcely come as news to anyone who ever glances out of their window, but grey squirrels are the most frequent visitors to Surbiton gardens.

Latest statistics show 63.5 per cent of Surbiton's back gardens are visited daily by squirrels.

The most often seen birds in KT5 and KT6 are, in order: blue tit, house sparrow, woodpigeon, blackbird, starling, great tit, robin, magpie, goldfinch, collared dove, chaffinch, feral pigeon, dunnoek, long-tailed tit, carrion crow, jackdaw, coal tit, ring-necked parakeet, greenfinch and nuthatch.

Goldfinches are climbing the table, with the number of nyjer seed feeders in gardens being one explanation.

The garden wildlife survey conducted by the RSPB reveals 37 per cent of Surbitonians see frogs at least once a month, but hedgehogs, which have dropped

by 30 per cent nationally since the millennium, are only spotted by about 20 per cent of people.

This year, for the first time in the 36-year history of the Big Garden Birdwatch survey, participants were asked to report on other wildlife. Almost half a million people took part, helping the RSPB to tailor advice on helping wild visitors find a home, feed and breed.

Surprisingly, 15 per cent of urban residents see badgers. Toads are seen monthly by 28 per cent of people, while the common frog is the most abundant garden amphibian.

Approximately half the people in the UK see one at least monthly, although they are only seen regularly in 11 per cent of gardens in Surrey.

Last year, 25 wildlife organisations, including the RSPB, released a report revealing 60 per cent of wildlife species

have declined in recent decades. Many garden favourites are in serious trouble, including starlings and hedgehogs, as well as some butterflies and ladybirds.

Daniel Hayhow, RSPB conservation scientist, said: "This shows how important our gardens are for wildlife. This is the start of something big. In a few years' time we'll be able to compare how the distribution of garden wildlife may have changed. Hopefully, the fact that more people are helping to give nature a home in their gardens and outside spaces will mean we see improvements rather than declines."

The charity asks people to provide a place for wildlife by planting pollen-rich plants to attract bees and butterflies, putting up a nestbox for a house sparrow, or creating a pond.

Tim Harrison



Forget sparrows, blackbirds and pigeons... here's the most regularly sighted guest
Picture: Ben Hall



Paul's epic ride... fed via a straw

To the pantheon of remarkable Surbiton cyclists we must add a new name... Paul Alderson.

Paul, 45, is currently riding to Istanbul; one of 101 competitors in the second Transcontinental, a bike race evoking the glory days of endurance cycling when iron-thighed men rode all day and slept rough in barns, without support crews or team cars.

His preparations were hardly ideal. A few weeks ago, he flew over the handlebars and broke his jaw in two places. It means his epic 12-day journey is being fuelled through a straw, as he can't eat solid food. "Eating is a bit tricky," he told the Good Life. "I can't munch on a baguette, for instance."

Paul, left, who cycles from his Tolworth Road home to central London each day on his Planet X steed, regardless of the weather, is riding for Surbiton charity African Vision Malawi, specifically to help disabled people in that needy country; a group all too often left on the bottom rung of the relief aid ladder.

His training mishap is by no means his first cycle injury. In January 2012 the ad agency art director's bike slipped on cobbles and he broke his femur,

spending a year on crutches. His leg was pinned back together.

Only 21 of the 30 who started last year's race actually finished, underlining how tough it is. There are two mandatory checkpoints en route to the Rumelihisari fortress on the Bosphorus.

His journey takes him through Slovakia, Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece, with wife Karen and daughters Abigail, 22, and Anna, 14, able to monitor his progress via a GPS signal which beeps his position every 10 minutes.

"I hope I'm still awake enough to do some sightseeing in Istanbul when I arrive," he said. Asked whether cycling across Europe with a broken jaw wasn't too daunting, Paul simply said: "It's tougher in Africa."

Charity chief executive Heather Palmer said that Malawians with disabilities were especially vulnerable; often ostracised and accused of being possessed by evil spirits. Paul's ride will help 93 people be assessed for prosthetic limbs to enable them to gain mobility and independence.

Support Paul at mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/transcontinental2014

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Jane & Willpower

Among the 24,000 in the Prudential bike ride, which whistled along Portsmouth Road, Surbiton, on August 10 in atrocious weather, were Jane and Will Durston, left, of St Mary's Road. Jane took up cycling having got the all-clear following treatment after breast cancer was diagnosed at the time of the 2012 Games.

"It was the day after Bradley Wiggins won the time trial, so we thought it fitting to use our bikes to raise money for charity," she said. Helped by coffee mornings and cake sales, the pair raised £6,000 for Breast Cancer Care.

"I have never been so wet in my life, but it was a brilliant day," she said afterwards.

"Will has been key to the whole event for me. He has been absolutely amazing throughout it all. He set up a training plan and worked out I needed a jelly baby every 10 minutes, so set my bike computer to 'ping' to ensure I keep up a good intake."

Jane sported a tiara on her helmet after a friend sponsored her £100 to wear it the whole way round! You can still donate at www.justgiving.com/Jane-and-Will-Durston

Learn Latin American Spanish at the same time as Peruvian cookery by joining Martha Jesty's Wednesday early evening sessions at the Vinoteque wine bar in Claremont Road. Three classes cost £99, and run from 5.30-7pm starting in September.

Martha, who lives opposite the North Star pub in Hook, teaches Spanish to groups in Chessington and Kingston.

The Peruvian, who has lived in the UK for 24 years (the last 17 of them in Surbiton) is pictured, right, in Vinoteque.

She also runs networking and team-building businesses, but her biggest kick is "teaching Surbitonians to have fun while learning to cook".

Her favourite dish is ceviche from Lima; fish marinated in citrus juice and spices. More at www.spanishlessonsinsurrey.co.uk



Cook with a Peruvian accent

Talking news is going digital

Blind and partially sighted readers can now get a flavour of The Good Life. The talking newspaper once got all its material from paid-for papers, but Brian Gaff, who runs the valued service, feels a constant diet of murder, doom, rape and crime simply doesn't reflect the reality of life in Surbiton.

So the Good Life is helping plug the gap, with volunteers reading stories such as this one in their 90-minute bulletins, recorded in a studio in Hobhill Walk.

The weekly round-ups, soon to go digital, are distributed post-free by Royal Mail, and can be heard online at kingston.talking-newspapers.co.uk

Established in the late 1960s by Gil Hancock, a Raeburn Avenue resident and secretary of the Berrylands Residents' Association, the Kingston talking newspaper's recordings were

originally done in a room at the Alfriston day centre in Berrylands Road.

For 45 years, the service has used cassette tapes, but that is to change with the introduction of memory sticks.

Many of the 35 volunteers bemoan the unremitting diet of grim tidings they get in the weekly press, so the Good Life has now been added to the mix.

Phil Margree, a producer for 15 years, said: "We could do with a few more male readers... and a producer or two, especially if they're digital-savvy."

The talking newspaper, part of the free-to-join Kingston Association for the Blind, includes audio-described cinema listings and details about roadworks that affect blind people.

Lighting-up times are also given, so partially sighted people know when to put a light on, for security.



Phil Margree (left) prepares for another recording session, assisted by readers Katie Worsley, Carol Clarke and James Edenborough



Nigel Watkins, right, is congratulated on his long service by Surbiton manager Mark Stevens

Nigel's never knowingly undervalued

He's one of the most familiar faces in Waitrose, stocking the chilled sandwich cabinet. But next time you see Nigel Watkins, murmur a word of congratulation. The 62-year-old has just notched up 45 years' service... and now sports a badge to prove it.

Branch manager Mark Stevens presented Nigel with his commemorative button at the shop's partners' day last month, before swapping his customary dark suit for an apron to cook and serve breakfast for his staff in a novel role reversal.

The day marked John Lewis's 150th anniversary, with several Surbiton staff meeting chairman Sir Charlie Mayfield at the Kingston store.

Staff who achieve 25 years are given a six-month, fully paid break, so Nigel - who lives in Claygate - is five years from a second sabbatical. Not bad for someone who only joined the company after getting the sack

from Woolies! "I'd taken the afternoon off to watch Guildford City play in the FA Cup," he recalled. "Guildford lost... and I got the sack. So I walked round the corner to Waitrose and got a weekend job there."

That was in 1969. Nigel joined the O-level management scheme at the Guildford branch, which bumped his pay from £8.50 a week to 10 guineas, and led to a series of promotions culminating in being manager of the Esher Waitrose when it opened.

Now part-time, Nigel works early morning to midday, stocking the sandwich cabinet. "I know the regulars," he said. "Having been a manager, I know it's a key job. But now I can go home and switch off; you can't do that as a manager."

How is the Waitrose of 2014 different to the one he joined in 1969? "It's a more professional environment. Partners are asked to do more now. Maybe we had more crazy laughs in the past."

Garett leaves his salon

Paul Garrett, one of the area's best-known hairdressers, has suddenly closed his salon at 43 Victoria Road, opposite Sainsbury's.

Garrett & Jones came to an abrupt halt on July 11, with no advance warning, ending 36 years of history... although Steve Jones is now cutting and styling at Archie's in Maple Road.

In a long, distinguished career, Paul - now in his mid-60s - has taken part in numerous national hairdressing competitions. He has also coached the British hairdressing teams in international contests.

The Elgar Avenue resident has coiffed the barnets of Surbitonian brides for three decades, although many men have also trusted their tresses to the hairdresser.

Trained by Vidal Sassoon, Paul was one of the area's first mods - buzzing around on a scooter at weekends, and ditching old-fashioned back-combs in favour of dramatic geometric haircuts. He is a skilled trainer; dozens of salon owners have learnt from him.

Could CCTV foil tipplers?

Enforcement officers may install CCTV cameras along a quiet road where fly-tipping has become a near-weekly problem.

The sleepy cut-through to the By-Pass slip road, best known as the home of Squires garden centre in Long Ditton, has been plagued with fly-tipping for years. With the cost of disposing of skiploads of debris at official dumps rising, illegal fly-tipping is on the increase... and Woodstock Lane North has gained an unwelcome reputation as a preferred dumping spot.

This was a recent scene. A motorist told the Good Life: "Every week you see piles of rubbish dumped in the verges... but this was just extraordinary. Instead of dumping it at the side of the road, it was emptied on the tarmac. There was an old bathtub and cracked toilet, kitchen units, downpipes - it looked like the contents of a house refurbisher's skip. It's really dangerous."

Kingston Council commits to removing notified fly-tips which cause an obstruction within four hours, while Elmbridge Council - with more rural streets and a bigger problem - offers £500 rewards for information leading to tipplers' convictions, and pledges to clean up every reported fly-tip within three days. Woodstock Lane North is just across Kingston's boundary, in Elmbridge borough.

Magistrates' courts can fine fly-tippers up to £50,000, while crown courts' fining powers are unlimited.



Remembering an American who fell in love with Surbiton

Hartley 'Hart' Deacon was born on April 23 1932, and died on July 11 at the age of 82. His daughter shares some memories.

Hartley 'Hart' Deacon, a native of Philadelphia, moved to Surbiton in 1972 and fell in love with the little village - not yet the bustling town it is now.

It was rather untrendy, and definitely not THE place to live at the time, somewhat chuckled at in the popular sitcom of the time The Good Life.

But with the beautiful river close by, a butcher, greengrocer, bakery, Puttocks the sweetshop and a marvellous array of pubs to explore, this was where he wanted to make home for his wife and twin daughters.

With the eight trains an hour (some non-stop, usually with a buffet car), he would leap on an early afternoon train from work in London to Surbiton, pick his twins up from school and enjoy walks

along the river with bread for the ducks and jelly beans for the girls.

He had a wonderful 'mind's eye' for the house he 'bought for a song' in Balaclava Road, then made up of six bedsits. Armed with the estate agent and a 6in nail, he ventured into the cellar to check out the damp. Thankfully there was a not a damp patch to be seen, which was good enough for him. While not one for making instant decisions, he bought it on the spot without his wife even seeing it.

A true character, on just the right side of eccentricity, Hartley led many up the garden path with his adventures and stories. Holding court at the Plough and Harrow (now the Ditton) or the Victoria or the Black Lion in the 80s and 90s, new friends were never quite sure whether this colourful American they had just met really was a brain surgeon or a ballet dancer!

In later years he was a very proud

member of the Surbiton Club in St James' Road and found new friends to delight with his stories at the Coronation Hall - two beautiful buildings in Surbiton he loved. He really enjoyed seeing people move to the area and breathing new life and colour into the town it has now become. He thought Waitrose was the most exclusive shopping experience to be had, enjoyed Surbiton's buzzing café society atmosphere and loved every minute of his retirement.

Surbiton was Hartley's home and his castle for 42 years and he will be greatly missed. At his recent funeral, everyone wore summer party clothes. Four cups of tea were drunk and four cases of wine consumed. A celebration of a great life.

For those that knew him, had a drink with him, or discussed the joy of daughters, grandchildren or even being a foreigner with him, raise a glass to this very special American. **Kate Harland**

Newest school gains high Ofsted rating

Surbiton's newest school is pleased with its first Ofsted report.

Lime Tree primary, on the old Surbiton Hospital site off Ewell Road, gained 'good' ratings in teaching, behaviour, safety and management.

Headteacher Clinton Pascoe said: "Given we have only been open for two years, it was the best outcome we could achieve."

Richard Heys, chair of governors, said he was delighted.

"Being able to achieve consistently across all areas is a true reflection of the efforts of the headteacher, his staff and the students to achieve against the school's ethos of Healthy Body, Brain and Heart," he said. "That Ofsted rating us as 'good' across all aspects of school life was particularly pleasing."

Among Ofsted's findings were that 'behaviour and safety are good, pupils behave well and are safety conscious, and they feel

safe and very well cared for'.

Inspectors also found that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language were making good progress at the 180-pupil Lime Tree.

Areas which inspector Lesley Leak feels need sharpening include pushing more able pupils harder, and improving pupil presentation, handwriting and spelling.

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Early birds get a shopping bonus

Surbiton's biggest supermarket has extended its hours to cater for early birds. Waitrose manager Mark Stevens said he hoped earlier opening would assist the gaggle of expectant faces invariably pressed to the glass doors every morning.

On August 10, the Claremont Road store brought forward its weekday and Saturday opening time from 8am to 7.30am.

In response to customer surveys, Waitrose will also extend its Saturday closing time from 8pm to 8.30pm.

"Last Saturday more than 20 people were at the door before 8am, waiting to come in," Mark told the Good Life. "I've spoken to them, and they welcome an earlier opening time. Hopefully it will also allow more early-morning commuters to get their free coffees."

The store's popular free cuppa deal, and a free weekday paper if you spend a fiver, will also apply to 7.30am shoppers.

So new Monday-Friday hours are 7.30am-9.30pm, Saturdays are now 7.30am-8.30pm, while Sunday remains 11am-5pm.



Festival is rebranded

The Surbiton Festival, a highlight of the town's social calendar for 22 years, has been renamed 'The Surbo'.

The week of activities from September 20-27 culminates in the traditional carnival parade and the transformation of the town's main shopping street into a street market.

Events include a photo competition based on the theme My Kinda Town with prizes worth £600, a boat rally at Queen's Prom, storytelling, outdoor theatre in the garden of the Grove pub in Maple Road, and a giant Scalextric circuit at the Holiday Inn, where the Surbiton grand prix will be staged.

Music plays an important part, with this year's theme celebrating trios covering jazz to opera, blues to modern. Open-air art will turn Maple Road into 'Montmaple'.

The Surbexpo at Glenmore House in The Crescent gives entrepreneurs and sole traders a chance to publicise the businesses they run from home.

It is also the venue for a fashion fair and catwalk show.

On the main festival day, Saturday September 27, Victoria Road and part

of St Andrew's Road will be sealed off from 6am to 6pm to allow stalls to be put up, and sound stages constructed in the station forecourt and Claremont Gardens. Last year's festival had 150 stalls, and this year's – backed by the Rotary Club of Surbiton – has even more.

St Andrew's Square and Claremont Gardens will both have food stalls, games, bouncy castles and beer tents.

The carnival procession will start at noon in St Andrew's Square and travel up St Andrew's Road, Victoria Road and Claremont Road, with the marching bands, dance groups, historic cars, Morris men and street entertainers finally dispersing in The Crescent.

The station forecourt will be sealed off, buses will be funnelled down St James' Road instead of Victoria Road, and many parking bays will be suspended.

Organiser Bob Noble advised drivers to avoid the town centre between 11.30am and 1.30pm, when the carnival procession marches through. Details of times, venues and updated events at www.surbitonfestival.co.uk

Chris is diving with princes

A Berrylands scuba diver rubbed shoulders with the Prince of Wales and Prince William at the handover of the presidency of the British Sub-Aqua Club.

Chris Elliott, 35, a member of Kingston Uni's sub-aqua club, is four to the right of Prince Charles, in the back row.

Prince William has followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather to take the helm of the BSAC, the UK's governing body for scuba diving and snorkelling, which celebrated its diamond jubilee last year.

One hundred invited members thanked the Prince of Wales for his four decades at the head of the organisation.

Chris was invited to the event to talk to Prince Charles about several successful underwater litterpicks in the Thames, carried out as part of a nationwide effort.

The aim was to encourage members to protect marine life by collecting and recording litter brought up from dive sites.

Chris, a former computer security student at Kingston Uni who has been diving for five years, said: "The prince spent quite a bit of time with us, talking about what we had achieved with the underwater litterpicks. He was interested in the usual detritus that seems to be shopping trolleys.

"He was amazed that anyone would

take a shopping trolley and dump it in the Thames."

Speaking at the reception, Prince Charles said: "I feel extraordinarily proud having lasted for 40 years as your president. I am delighted



my eldest son is taking over from me. I can only assume his interest stems from the fact that I threw him into the pool on many occasions. Instead of putting him off, it actually enthused him."

The Duke of Cambridge, pictured in the pool third from the right, took the plunge at the event, held at the Oasis lido in the West End, where he buddied up with 17-year-old Tom Billingham on a short pool dive.

He said: "Like my father and my grandfather the Duke of Edinburgh, I can proudly say I learnt to dive with the club.

"I hope one day my son George might follow in our footsteps. At the moment, bathtime is a quite painful, but I imagine as he gets a little bit older, donning a snorkel and mask might calm him down."

Information on the Kingston University Sub Aqua Club at www.kusac.org

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Jem Sharples relaxes ahead of next month's concert, where he will sing alongside daughter Emily's choir. She is pictured far right

Harmonious family life

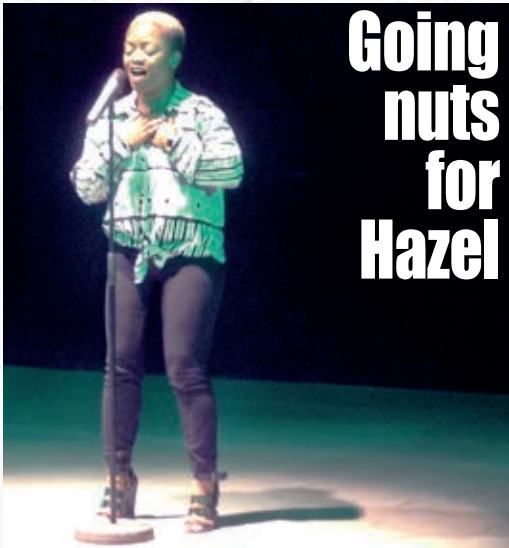
Berrylands tenor Jem Sharples is busy gargling and doing scales ahead of a concert next month when he proudly takes to the stage alongside his daughter Emily. Jem, part of opera-singing 'man band' Tenors Un Limited, performs a new touring production, Show The Suit Who's Boss. Needing backing, the tenors turned to Surbiton's Arnould Girls' Choir, which rehearses on Wednesdays at the Methodist church hall in Ewell Road... and which happens to include his daughter, a Tolworth Girls' pupil. On the bill, versions of Something's Coming from West Side Story and Bob Dylan's Make You Feel My Love, as well as The

Pearl Fishers' Duet, Nessun Dorma and O Sole Mio. "Being local has let us call on the services of the Surbiton-based Arnould Girls' Choir," said Jem. "I heard them at the Richmond Music Festival this year and was amazed by their pure sound and harmonies. The fact that my daughter is in the choir is a lucky bonus!" Aimed at 11 to 18-year-old girls, the choir is run by Berrylands choirmistress Rebecca Gresson, and is nearing its first anniversary, with a broad repertoire from pop and glee arrangements to traditional choral works and folk. ● Tenors Un Limited perform at Richmond Theatre on September 26 at 7.30pm. **Tim Harrison**



Eddie's back again

● Surbiton rockers Eddie and the Redheads play the Royal Oak, Ewell Road (now under new management) on Friday Sept 12 from 8.30pm.



Going nuts for Hazel

A garden music festival is being staged on Saturday August 30 at 31 Upper Brighton Road, 2-6pm. Acts include the Sugardrum folk band (fresh from Glastonbury), Rowland Middleton, Afumu and Malawian singer Hazel Mak (above). It is all in aid of African Vision Malawi. There is a cash bar, but visitors can bring their own drinks. The £10 entry ticket includes tea, cake and a raffle ticket, but it's £8 for early birds (text AFVMOO£8). Children free. Face painting, loom band making and henna designs.

King of the mountains

Mindful of his impending 50th birthday, writer David le Vay decided that the appropriate thing to do was hike round Western Europe's highest mountain. David, of Tolworth Park Road, produced a book on his travels, A Tour of Mont Blanc and other circuitous adventures in Italy, France and Switzerland. The new book, published at £9.99 and launched at the cornerHOUSE arts centre, is about David's fascination for the mountains, and the characters he has met on his travels. "Mont Blanc beguiles, bewitches and charms the lesser folk who seek to frolic and play among the buttressed foothills of its ancient frame," he explained.



"It's an account of my journey on the Tour du Mont Blanc – a 170km hike around the mountain – and it's a follow-up to my first book, The Hairy Hikers, which was about a two-month, 750km coast-to-coast trek along the French Pyrenees. "On one level it's about walking the famous route around Western Europe's highest mountain, but it is also something of a meditation on walking, life, childhood, growing up and reaching 50, where one inevitably looks back to what has gone before. "So the walk is something of a metaphor, I guess, a reflective account of my own journey through life. Woven into all this are stories about Mont Blanc – tales of the eccentric Victorian alpinists who first conquered the summit and the myths and legends of the area. ● Right, David surveys the peak and muses on life



Purring artists

Listen for sustained purring at this year's Surbiton festival. A feline-themed arts and crafts business is being introduced at a stall on Saturday September 27. Mr Monty's Art Emporium includes vintage paintings, prints and sculptures, all for sale online, and modern works by innovative artists including Linda Miller who creates machine embroidery images, one of which is pictured above. Elaine Swift and Graham Taylor, who also offer a 'fuss and feed' service for cats when owners are away, are long-term art collectors. "It's all UK-based makers, with work from across all disciplines; print, paper, jewellery, glass, ceramics, textiles and crafts," said Elaine. "And it is all feline-inspired!" The plan is to back new artists rather than selling mass-produced shop items.

Concerts begin

The first of the new season's Thames concerts takes place at St Andrew's church, Maple Road, on Saturday September 20 at 7.30pm, featuring the Kingston Chamber Singers taking advantage of some of the finest acoustics in the area. On the bill is a feast of British music, including works by Lambert, Dyson, Dring, Bennett and Salzedo, all performed to the beat of artistic director Benjamin Costello's baton. This season, concert-goers can look forward to hearing clarinettist Joseph Shiner; pianists Frederick Brown, Daryl Griffith and Simon Ferris; soprano Alison Pearce; baritone Adrian Clarke; jazz singer Ian Shaw and the Percussion Ensemble of London. Ticket details at www.thamesconcerts.com

Jess's debut show is a hit



Jessica Hern, left, a star of past cornerHOUSE pantos in Surbiton, has made a dazzling professional acting debut at the Edinburgh Fringe in a new musical, The Outback Games. Jess, 21, has the lead role as an Australian swimmer; the ideal platform for her accent skills. Giving the show a four-star rating, reviewer Will Jackson said she played the part 'with incredible gusto and lovely degrees of subtlety'. "Edinburgh's great," she told the Good Life. "The show's the world premiere of a new musical. Houses have been good, and it's been so much fun to do."

Choir call

Fancy singing? The YMCA community choir meets at the YMCA in Victoria Road on Wednesdays from 7.30-9pm. It is made up of residents, ex-residents, volunteers and people from in the community. There is no audition to get in, and it does a lot of popular music. Katy Treharne, who has been a professional singer for six years, started the choir. She has quite a pedigree, having played Christine in the Phantom of the Opera in the West End. Email katy.treharne@hotmail.co.uk or just bowl up.



In session

Surbiton resident Ollie Jackson and the Sessions Band, left, raised £10,000 for the charity SeeAbility, formerly the Royal School for the Blind, which supports people with sight loss and other disabilities to gain greater independence via a new supported living service in the town. Said Ollie: "My brother receives fantastic support from SeeAbility."

New screen means film club is really motoring

Surbiton's cornerHOUSE arts centre can now be instantly transformed into a cinema after the installation of a motorised screen which drops down from the roof space at the press of a button. The centre's film club, which costs

£10 a year to join, showed 20 films in its first season, and has a busy programme coming up. A Kingston Council grant let the Douglas Road centre buy both projector and screen. To meet its licence terms,

only members can get details of screenings. Recent movies have included Kes, Cinema Paradiso, Rear Window, The Van, Toy Story and Wadжда – a Saudi film about a girl's battle to win the right to ride a bike. ● Email info@thecornerhouse.org

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The smack of whimsy

What do these have in common? Glastonbury, Reading, Isle of Wight, Surbiton. Answer: They host four of the greatest festivals known to mankind.

While there are some small differences (it is less likely attendees at Surbiton's festival will be under the influence of hallucinogens, or that Coldplay will turn up to do a stint in the station forecourt), the epicness of our town's annual shindig cannot be denied.

Every year, the Victoria Road festival prompts a Surrey Comet article declaring it 'the biggest ever', implying it is statistically possible that the turnout will continue to grow and grow until the festivities spill into the Thames. So why is it so popular?

To many, it is a fiendish irritation that blocks a major thoroughfare and makes popping to M&S for a sandwich a biblical journey.

To others, it is a glorious affair that celebrates all that is silly and eccentric about this town, justifies gorging on cake to the point of sickness, demonstrates one's ability to bash a toy rat with a sockful of lentils, and lets



out the Morris Dancers.

On the day, it is entirely acceptable to forgo a trip to the dump, visiting in-laws, mowing the lawn, tackling Kingston, or falling asleep in front of an abysmal film.

Instead, watch men wave sticks and bells around, win a bottle of Cinzano in a raffle, and sample the culinary delights of every foodplace in a three-mile radius.

The festival is a perfect symbol of the close-knit community that is Surbiton. Every business gets involved, giving

residents a chance to celebrity-spot local figureheads. Even neighbours who usually try to avoid each other find themselves making friends in the face of such gaiety.

It is also a chance for people to immerse themselves in our little Surbo-charged world (see what I did there?). If you're a newcomer or someone who likes to keep their head down, the festival will welcome you with open arms and say 'Hello, my name is Surbiton, and I am a little bit eccentric. Come on in.'

It's not everyone's cup of tea (I know people who would happily chuck a grenade into the whole proceedings), but I think it's marvellous.

Every town needs an identity, and while Surbiton permits a smidgen of pomposity in its genetic make-up, the festival is a much-needed smack of whimsy that shows we don't take ourselves that seriously.

So if you got rained on at Glastonbury, or had second thoughts about Reading, relax and enjoy. The festival to end all festivals is here.

Becky Mayhew



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Craning to get a good view of it all

It's a rare thing to see Surbiton's main shopping street blocked off completely, but it happened on a recent Sunday as the mother of all cranes was used to complete the structure of Plaza 2.

Flats next to Zizzi in Victoria Road were all snapped up by the time the shell was built.

The dozen 'affordable' homes in the latest phase of the grand project – a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments – were built by Taylor Wimpey as part of a phase which also contains two shops and a doctor's surgery.

The street was sealed off for a full day while the crane winched the last bits into place, attracting groups of intrigued locals.

"For those of you who passed by, we're sure you'd agree it was an incredible sight," said site manager Simon Reynolds.

Picking an apt flag

The Maple Road shops were garlanded with bunting and flags during the recent World Cup.

But how did each shop decide which flag to fly? Farmers' market stalwart David Jacobson asked Sarah Taylor of Shoes at Last to explain the selection process.

"Well," she replied. "Da Lucio chose the Italian flag, Gordon Bennett! went for England, and the French Tarte France."

And what, David inquired, did the Beauty Room select?

"Oh, that was easy," she said. "The Brazilian!"



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+ extra for grow
175g blueber
75g strawb
green chilli
lemon gras
43 lemons
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Off your trolley

I love forgotten shopping lists
On trolleys lined for duty.
Tomatoes, peas and chocolate,
Eggs, cheese. Get something fruity!

Remember Molly's birthday, and
The loo roll needs replacing
Potatoes (small) and sausages,
Turn left and then you're facing

Cos Madge is coming round tonight
(You know she likes a schooner)
Oh... parsley (flat) and lemons, oh
And lots more tins of tuna

Those washing tablets, NOT the green,
The blue ones are the best,
Get one small chicken, if they're out
Get pieces; legs or breast

The little scraps of paper clinging
On; memento mori.
So innocent, so fleeting
Yet each pen stroke tells a story

Morris Thain



Make yourself at home

They know how to make you feel welcome, and comfortable, in Tolworth. This sofa was thoughtfully positioned at the back of the Broadway, presumably for the use of weary shoppers. In an even kinder gesture, refreshments in the form of a half-drunk can of beer were provided. Why can't other areas be so accommodating?

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