



It's bog standard

You could throw loo rolls into a Vladimir Poo-tin (or his rival, Donald 'Dump') as the Berrylands Festival raised £10,000 for scout hut repairs. Bog-lobbers won bags of sweets as prizes. Staged in 32° heat on the old lagoon site off Elmbridge Avenue, the event had inflatable pig racing, ballet displays and a tug-of-war; the girls beating the boys, again.



Berry impressive

Market volunteer Robyn McAllister was first to sample the winning cake at the Maple Road farmers' market bake-off. Chef Richard Jones of Wags n Tales, Brighton Road, was top pro with this berry cheesecake. "If I went into a shop today in search of something special, this is what I'd buy," said judge Jo Harrington. More on **p2**

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How sell-fish is this?

Entrepreneur Bradley Taylor wants to sell fish, but jobsworths have forced him out.

The 22-year-old brought fresh fish from Grimsby docks to the high street for customers eager to buy... until officious enforcers stopped him, even though the same Victoria Road pitch is used each year for Christmas tree sales.

Neighbouring Elmbridge lets

Bradley trade in Thames Ditton and East Molesey but, despite his top five-star hygiene rating, his van has been banned from Surbiton.

"A man in uniform came up on a bike and said I was blocking the pavement," said Bradley, who is from a line of fisherfolk (dad's a fishmonger, grandad's a fish market buyer, great grandad was a dockerman). Surbiton lacks a fishmonger,

apart from Kevin Oakman's stall at the monthly farmers' market, and the high street – like most in the UK – urgently needs shoppers, yet Kingston Council insisted: "You require a licence and pitch designation to sell within 7m of the public highway. If the trader gets in touch with our licensing team they'll explain the legislation and talk through available options."

Bradley's van stocks salmon, cod, sea bass, haddock, bream, plaice, sole, halibut, monkfish, mackerel, scallops, crabs and lobster, fresher than the supermarkets' and keenly priced, straight from the market.

"I'm the only young person on the docks today," said Bradley, who lives in Cleethorpes and is resupplied nightly when on the road. "I was 18 when I began travelling south with the van. All the fish is fresh Grimsby fish." The chirpy piscatorial dealer still makes home deliveries in the Surbiton area, taking orders via the number on the side of the van.

Tim Harrison



She's 100 and still has a job

Born as the First World War raged, Esme Mills has celebrated her 100th birthday, and insists she'll continue working in a Surbiton charity shop.

Friends and family, including her son and two grandsons, joined her at home in Christ

Church Road to mark the day, while colleagues at the Princess Alice Hospice shop opposite Sainsbury's cut a cake to salute their 'Thursday girl'.

"I enjoy doing it," said Esme, who began working at the Kingston branch in the 1980s.

Her link with the Surbiton shop, now in bigger premises in Victoria Road, began after the death of husband Ron, an affable Northern Irishman who was cared for in the hospice. "When he died 11 years ago I took his clothes to the shop, and began to work there again," she said.

Born in London in 1918

("Yes, I'm a Cockney!"), Esme is sometimes mistaken for the Queen (eight years her junior), from whom she had the famous congratulatory telegram in June.

"One gent regularly comes into the shop and calls me the Queen," she laughed. The

Thursday girl does three and a half hours at the shop each week. "They're all very nice to work with," she said.

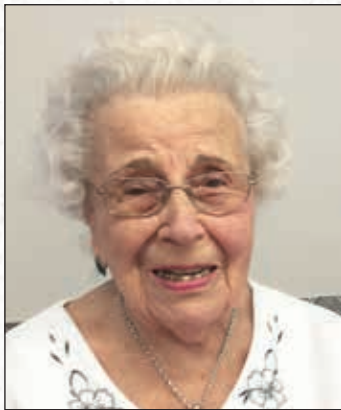
"The customers are nice too; we get quite a variety!" she added, raising her eyebrows knowingly.

Esme's other claim to fame is she played organ at St Raphael's, Portsmouth Road, for 40 years, and

regularly played at Our Lady Immaculate, Tolworth.

Staff decorated the charity shop with balloons for the big day. Asked if she now planned to stop volunteering, she said manager Alison Connors would have to kick her out before she'd leave!

The Esher hospice has provided free end-of-life care to tens of thousands in the past 30 years.



● He's spotted you! Surbiton's new fox mural, on the Claremont Road's Clocktower Cafe wall, was done by the town's 'Banksy', Tom, the graffiti artist who also painted the fox and ladybird on the Victoria rec pavilion.

SBC revival

The Surbiton Business Community, which supports home-based traders, shops, offices and start-ups, has relaunched with a fresh membership drive as it works to unite and encourage local businesses in these competitive, but uncertain, days. Find out if it might suit you by turning to **p8** and **9**

● If you stand in the right place, and hold it up, you can see the inspiration for designs on a new series of local currency notes devised to boost spending within the Surbiton area. Story: **p5**



● You have to say it's uncanny! Judge and vet Kavir Manro gave Lisa and cocker spaniel Leopoldo the lookalike prize at sports day on Victoria rec.

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Vinnie Patel at Doosra

New curry house leaps to top of London TripAdvisor ratings

In the space of six months, Surbiton's newest curry house has been catapulted to the top of TripAdvisor's Indian restaurant ratings... **for the whole of London!**

It's a meteoric rise for Doosra at the junction of Ewell Road and Worthington Road, and for Vinnie Patel, the effervescent thirtysomething co-owner and head chef.

Opened in the rebuilt premises of the former Indian Tapas, the light,



Top choice: jhinga mujjah

bright interior has skylights and a fully refitted kitchen - it's the

area's first sports bar/curry house.

Other curry houses have page after page of choices (achieved, says Vinnie, using a big pot of all-purpose sauce), but Doosra's menu is a compact A5 sheet.

Vinnie has experimented with Indian cookery since, as a precocious nine-year-old, he persuaded his vegetarian gran to let him try preparing meat.

She insisted on separate cooking pots and utensils - a rule Vinnie sticks to. His kitchen also has separate fridges for

organic meat, fish and veg. Doosra is named after Pakistani cricketer Saqlain Mushtaq's fiendish off-spinner, which twists in a baffling direction, while light sculptures of tumbling wickets make for striking wall art.

You can only eat in - no takeaways! One menu highlight is Tanzanian lamb curry, but the star dish is jhinga mujjah, a prawn triumph with fusion elements which draw on Thai and Spanish flavourings.

Tim Harrison

A fine match for English wine

An event upstairs at Surbiton's premier eatery, The French Table, delighted diners by pairing food with an English winelist.

Winemaker Fergus Elias from the 400-acre Hush Heath vineyard, Kent, unveiled the wines (including an award-winning Balfour blush sparkling rosé) as chef Eric Guignard beavered below in the kitchen, creating matching masterpieces: chilled melon gazpacho with that rosé; bouillabaisse based on

reduced red mullet with a Skye chardonnay (the vineyard owner often uses his daughters' names); Orkney scallop and lobster sauce with a chilled Nannette's English rosé.

While the French Table's gruyere cheese bread takes some beating, the piece de resistance on the night was the pud, a phenomenal caramelised apple mousse and purée with cinnamon ice cream... paired with sparkling apple wine. Heaven. The French Table, Maple Road, turned 17 in June. Many happy returns. **TH**



Fergus Elias of Hush Heath; right, apple mousse perfection

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In their cups



In the end, riot police weren't needed as Waitrose in Claremont Road officially gave out its last throwaway cup at 4.59pm on Sunday, August 12. The free coffee

deal is still on offer, but you now have to bring your own reusable mug. Surbiton's numerous coffee shops are delighted with the news as fewer spur-of-the-moment free coffees should mean more trade for them.

● She's queen of Surbiton's amateur bakers! Hazel Moysey's matcha tea-infused chocolate and raspberry sponge won the farmers' market baking contest. Hazel, 76, based it on a Women's Weekly recipe. "Now I have to go home and make another as my son's coming over from Austria!" she said. The children's winners? Sophia and Zara McHardy with their raspberry and ginger jam tarts.



● When historian John McCarthy of Grove Road turned 90, Sarah Guignard at the French Table personalised his strawberry sabayon!

Open all hours

Surbiton's first 24-hour shop has opened at the foot of St Mark's Hill in the old Du Cane dry cleaners. The Best-One convenience store is for anyone who gets the 3am munchies, or merely runs out of milk. It sells bread, sweets and groceries; part of a 600-strong UK franchise chain. Yet as it opened, the Best-One in Fleece Road, Long Ditton, closed.



Pic: Christopher Houghton

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Mobiles banned

Mobile phones are banned at Long Ditton youth club after a vote. “We want to see kids talking face to face, not just sitting looking at their phones,” said Toni Izard. Volunteers always needed. Call Toni on 07749 633 973.

Recycling rises

Forty-eight per cent of waste is recycled or composted, a record for the borough and 1% up on last year. Cllr Hilary Gander thanked Surbiton residents for their commitment to reducing landfill, but added: “We can do more!”



Drivers in Woodstock Lane, Long Ditton, did a double take in the heatwave after seeing horses dressed as highwaymen. Masks and capes were actually protection from sun and flies.

Dom runs Brexit

The Rt Hon member for Esher (and Long Ditton) is now managing UK withdrawal from the EU. MP Dominic Raab, a Thames Ditton resident, took over as Brexit Secretary after David Davis quit in July over the so-called Chequers agreement.

Spare room plea

Surbiton residents with spare rooms are asked to offer under 25s affordable housing in a scheme run by the YMCA, Victoria Road. Up to £400 a month rent is paid. Co-ordinator Natasha Price said it “helps young people get back into education, work or training”. Details at www.tinyurl.com/y988l8to

New fountains

In a bid to reduce plastic bottle waste, Surbiton will get new public drinking fountains, following a council vote.

Proms beamed

Experience the fun of the last night of the Proms at St Mary’s community hall, Long Ditton, from 7pm on Sept 8. Bring a picnic and Pimms, and watch as the event is screened live.

Training course

A free course to train home-visit volunteers to help Surbiton families struggling with post-natal illness, bereavement or disability starts on September 18, aimed at parents or grandparents able to spare three hours a week. www.homestart-rkh.org.uk

A hearty helper

If you’re taken ill in Long Ditton, help is at hand with a defibrillator on the wall of Manny’s shop in Fleece Road, thanks to local councillor Nick Darby who used Surrey County Council grant aid to buy the potential life-saver.

Podcast launches

Surbiton TV producer Shannon Delwiche has launched a podcast Happily Ever After (Without Children) about the mission to find happiness after struggling to conceive.



Fledgling robin is off his trolley

Remember the robins’ nest by the Waitrose car park charging point, pictured in the last issue? There was a happy ending when one chirruping fledgling interrupted its first flight to land on the roof of your editor’s car, as if to inquire why he’d gained local celebrity status. The nest had become a source of

entertainment to shoppers, and to the supermarket’s trolley collectors, who kept an eye on the progress of the eggs on the underground level. After a few cheeps and a wink, the tiny bird left a small deposit, then hesitantly, but determinedly, flew away, presumably to begin a new life in a nearby bush.

A blinking good idea

After Erica Taylor’s breast cancer diagnosis, the single mum cared for her two daughters through chemotherapy, radiotherapy and operations. Nine years on and in the clear, she is providing others with products she wishes she’d had then. Helped by neighbours Nick and Sindy Midgley, she runs www.blinkingthinking.com, sourcing items and advising relatives who may not know which way to turn. The trio, from Oaks Way off Ditton Hill, “do the blinking thinking so others don’t have to”. Erica, 51, was told to use pH-neutral shampoo, to try to keep her hair during treatment. “I went to Boots, looked and couldn’t find any! Ridiculous!” Her start-up business stocks tested, affordable products, with a cut of profits going to the Royal Marsden (where she was treated), and Breast Cancer Care. Lotions, creams and shampoos start at £1.99, and include products Erica, Sindy and Nick have developed, from headbands to surgical bottle covers.

Erica explains: “When my daughter Eloise – now 13 – came to visit me in hospital, it upset her to see bottles connected to me, full of stuff. So, helped by other mums, we’ve designed, patented and produced bags to cover them.” There are products for hospital overnights, and practical advice for families who may be unsure how best to support their loved ones. Erica recalls receiving boxes of chocolates she couldn’t eat, when all she really wanted was hard-to-find, perfume-free moisturiser. Although all three of the Blinking Thinking crew still hold down jobs, their product supply company is growing via word of mouth and charity endorsement. Nick focuses on the IT side, Sindy is described by Erica as “the creative brain”, while Erica herself concentrates on the commercial aspects of running a constantly expanding website and building a loyal customer base.

“When you’re diagnosed with cancer, you need someone to help you make decisions,” says Erica. “Cancer charity websites don’t recommend specific products, and when we searched websites in the USA, Australia and Europe we found the products too expensive.” The website explains

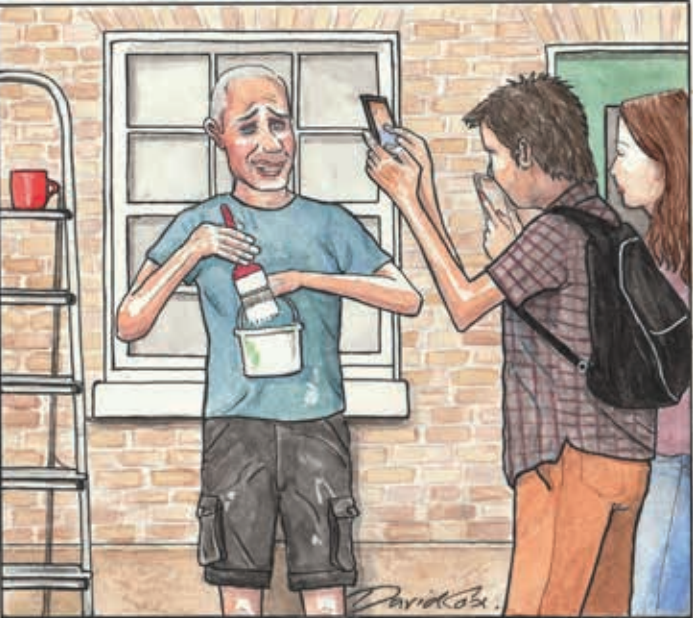
Roles swapped on committee

Six new councillors have taken their seats on Surbiton neighbourhood committee. The newcomers are Mark Beynon, Sam Foulder-Hughes and Sharron Sumner of Alexandra ward, Anita Schaper and John Sweeney of Berrylands, and Alison Holt of Surbiton Hill. Cllr Sushila Abraham, pictured, and Cllr Malcolm Self



swapped roles; she becoming chair of the committee, he the vice chair. There is now no opposition voice on the decision-making body. All the members are Lib Dems following the routing of the Conservatives in Surbiton in May’s local elections. The next meeting (open to the public) is on Wednesday September 12, 7.30pm, at Dysart School, 190 Ewell Road.

SURBITON LIFE by David Cox



Bemused to be known as a ‘local character’ - the Surbiton man who paints his own house

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Celia was a true inspiration

When Hollyfield Writers' Club founder Celia Cross died, one obituary was headlined The Last Chapter. But her students, and others she inspired, have been writing their own sequels ever since.

Celia mentored many aspiring writers in Surbiton after launching an adult education class, Writing for Profit, at the centre in Hollyfield School in the early 1970s.

A feisty lady, she was as old as the century having been born on Dickens' birthday in the year 1900. A prolific magazine story writer, she began teaching at an age when many would have expected to retire.

Through Celia I met ex-Children's Laureate Jacqueline Wilson, then an up-and-coming author of detective novels. They met at book events, and lived locally... Celia in Mellis Cottage, Berrylands Road.

The class had a story competition, and in my first year Jackie judged it, and gave me first prize. Jackie was very busy at the time; I don't think she would have done it for anyone else. She adored Celia.

When the class stopped, the writers' club continued, meeting in people's homes throughout the 1980s. Celia came too, and also continued to teach from her home.

The club had charity status, with Jackie as its president.

Jackie judged the Hollyfield Writers' Club competition for the new millennium, open to all who lived, worked or studied in the borough. At the prizegiving, in Kingston's Waterstones shop near Kingston Market, Jackie talked

about the club's esteemed founder, describing her as, at times, outrageous!

Tiny in stature, Celia could be prickly, and was very critical of students' work. But she was a great, strong lady; her own person. Once we were planning a Christmas party, to be held in the Hollyfield classroom, and we were all going to bring food contributions. As we left to go home, one burly man went up to Celia and suggested that instead we just each donate 50p.

Celia pulled herself up to her full height and replied:

"No! Some of my students can't afford 50p."

After Celia's death, the writers' group continued, eventually being given free use of a room in Hollyfield School because of the long association and the historic link of the name.

Away from Surbiton, Celia was a leading light in the national Society of Women Writers and Journalists, helping organise its first weekend school, handling bookings, balancing the books yet – as fellow member Jean Bowden recalled – "always appearing the perfect hostess; sparkling with vivacity".

Her writing, added Jean, was "light and elegant", with her forte being short stories filled with wry wit and often a touch of pathos.

Celia had two sons, both of whom married and moved abroad; one to France, and one to the United States. Celia died at Bourne House nursing home, Langley Avenue.

Pamela Pickton (www.zitebooks.com/pamela-pickton)

● Celia Cross, b February 7 1900, d November 9 1993

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Celia Cross



Celia Cross

Just watch this 80-year-old fly!

Tony Green doesn't mind heights. Just as well if you're going to hurl yourself out of an aircraft at 15,000ft.

Two weeks before his 80th birthday, the Lovelace Road resident, for 20 years an ITN cameraman covering conflicts in Africa and the Far East, trained and jumped at the Old Sarum airfield near Salisbury.

"It was brilliant," said Tony, whose children Rachel and Ashley and three of his five grandchildren were in Wiltshire to witness his tandem jump in aid of the Princess Alice Hospice. "There have

been so many positives to come out of it, and I am a legend now at my grandchildren's school!"

After being kitted out and suspended from a safety harness, he was taught to practise freefall and landing positions, then met instructor George of the GoSkydive team before boarding a Cessna Super Cargomaster for the 125mph 60-second freefall skydive and five-minute parachute glide over Salisbury Plain.

"I went at 15,000ft," said the action man who did the jump to fundraise £1,340 for the hospice, and in memory of his

late wife Patricia, who died last year. "I was the oldest to jump that day. I wasn't terrified, but it was scary. I just saw cloud when I jumped, which was probably a good thing!"

"The views over Salisbury were amazing, but it was a relief to land," added Tony, who confessed he was most worried about losing a shoe on the way down!

The octogenarian, a volunteer bereavement co-ordinator at the Esher hospice, said a parachute jump seemed like the perfect challenge. "I don't want to stagnate," he said. "I

like meeting people and talking to them."

Meeting people was very much part of his ITN job. "I got to film Churchill, Macmillan, Thatcher, Eisenhower and Nixon, as well as Diana," said Tony. "I filmed her right through her life to her funeral."

Much of his work was spent in war zones, including a close shave

in Algiers at the start of his career where he and a colleague came under fire from a volley of shells. He says he's always taken risks, but calculated ones.

"I've had a good innings. I feel like a survivor and I still take risks," said Tony, who has vowed to do the jump again in five years' time for his 85th. **Jane Grove**



Arms outstretched, Tony Green drops earthwards

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Raphael revealed

A talk on Alexander Raphael (of St Raphael's fame) will be given by David Kennedy, archaeology society chairman, at Ewell Road library hall, on Thurs Sept 13, 7.30pm. Entry £3.

Surplus of fruit?

Too many apples? Wading through pears or quinces, but don't want them to go to waste? Community fruit harvesters will pick and supply jam-makers. If you've too much fruit, not enough, or could help pick, call 07749 633973 or google Abundance Kingston.

History, on foot

A 90-minute guided history walk of Surbiton starts at the station forecourt at 11am on Sept 16, as a heritage open day activity. As there are only places for 20 people, pre-booking is essential at www.kingstontourguides.org.uk



It's festival time

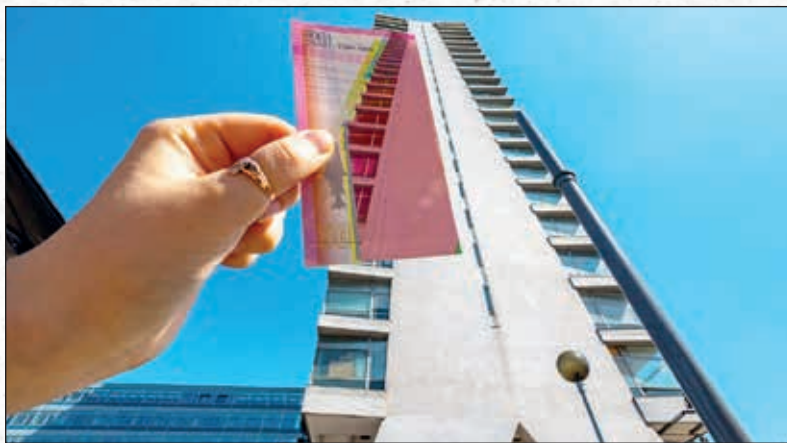
Surbiton's high street will be closed to traffic on Sat Sept 29 for the annual Surbiton Festival, with stalls in Victoria Road and St Andrew's Road, live bands at Claremont Gardens and St Andrew's Square, and a parade from St Andrew's church, ending at Claremont Gardens.

Healthy interests

Three Surbiton Hill councillors (Hilary Gander, Alison Holt and Malcolm Self) will serve on Tolworth Hospital community forum, developing health services at the Red Lion Road hospital.

Flat plans agreed

Plans for 950 homes on the Toby Jug and government offices site, Tolworth, have been approved, 16 years after the pub was bulldozed, with 285 of the flats 'affordable'. Planning chair Cllr Patricia Bamford called the decision "difficult".



Tower is on new note

Tolworth Tower and Surbiton station are among landmarks on designs for alternative local currency the Kingston pound. Created by Kingston School of Art graphic design students Molly Dunne, 23, and Ella Hilton, 22, the soon-to-be released notes come in four denominations – £1, £5, £10 and £20.

"We tried to make the design as complex as possible to ensure the notes can't be forged," said Ella.

Following similar ventures such as the Bristol pound and Brixton pound,

the idea for a Kingston pound was first discussed five years ago. The aim of the currency is to ensure more money spent in the borough remains in the borough, helping the local economy.

Andrew Connolly, one of the founders, said: "The notes will attract people who haven't seen the Kingston pound before, and as they use them they will start to notice the design detail. The process then becomes more of a social transaction rather than just a monetary exchange."

● A cappella group KT6 is on the hunt for new voices. The 20-strong vocal harmony group, which meets on Wednesday evenings at Surbiton High School, was

formed two years ago by a small group of friends who had sung with other choirs in south-west London. Led by musical director Matt Burdynowski, the singers have entertained audiences with songs from artistes as diverse as Madonna, Joni Mitchell and Radiohead.

Following the success of KT6's most recent sell-out show at Surbiton's cornerHOUSE, the group returns to the Douglas Road centre on Sat, Nov 10. "Although we're keen to recruit more basses and baritones, we're also happy to hear from female soprano and alto singers and male tenors," said Natalie Ward. "If they can read music, great, but it is certainly not essential."

To audition, visit www.kt6vocalgroup.org



Pic: Kirsty Hamilton

Nursery grows

Grand Avenue Primary School is to get a single-storey extension to its nursery.

Cllr Malcolm Self, vice chair of the Surbiton neighbourhood committee, said that although he supported the plan for the extension, it was a great pity the way the school in Grand Avenue had been enlarged down the years.

"You've got buildings now sprawling out over virtually the whole of the site," he said.

"With proper forethought, a few years ago, it could have been developed in a nicer and better way."

Councillors voted unanimously in favour of allowing the extension.

Romans on the road

Peter Stammers wore a fetching plastic helmet as he introduced himself to a 100-strong audience at Surbiton & District Historical Society as legionnaire Petrus Ulpus Stammers, a bachelor and Roman citizen of good birth. In a lively talk entitled Going to War in Style – the Roman Army on the March, he said he'd taken a military oath, but had had to pay for his own kit and food, including hobnail boots to help him march 20 miles in five hours.

Addressing an audience mainly composed of intrigued Britons, Petrus said that the Romans had brought sanitation, decent roads and education to Britain... but sadly had also introduced polio and leprosy.

When the Romans marched, the line would stretch for 20 miles as it included cattle herds and tons of corn, barley and hay. When the first legionnaires stopped for the night at their new camp, the end of the line was still closing up the previous night's site!

● On **Tues, Sept 4** at 7.45pm at Kingston Guildhall, Nicola Tallis talks on Lady Jane Grey's life.

● Remember Tolworth's Toby Jug pub? Good Life editor Tim Harrison gives October's talk to Surbiton's historical society on the pub's amazing life and times. Illustrated with rare photos, the talk takes place at the Ewell Road library hall on **Tues, Oct 2** at 7.30pm. Members free, or £2 on the door. Details at www.surbitonhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com



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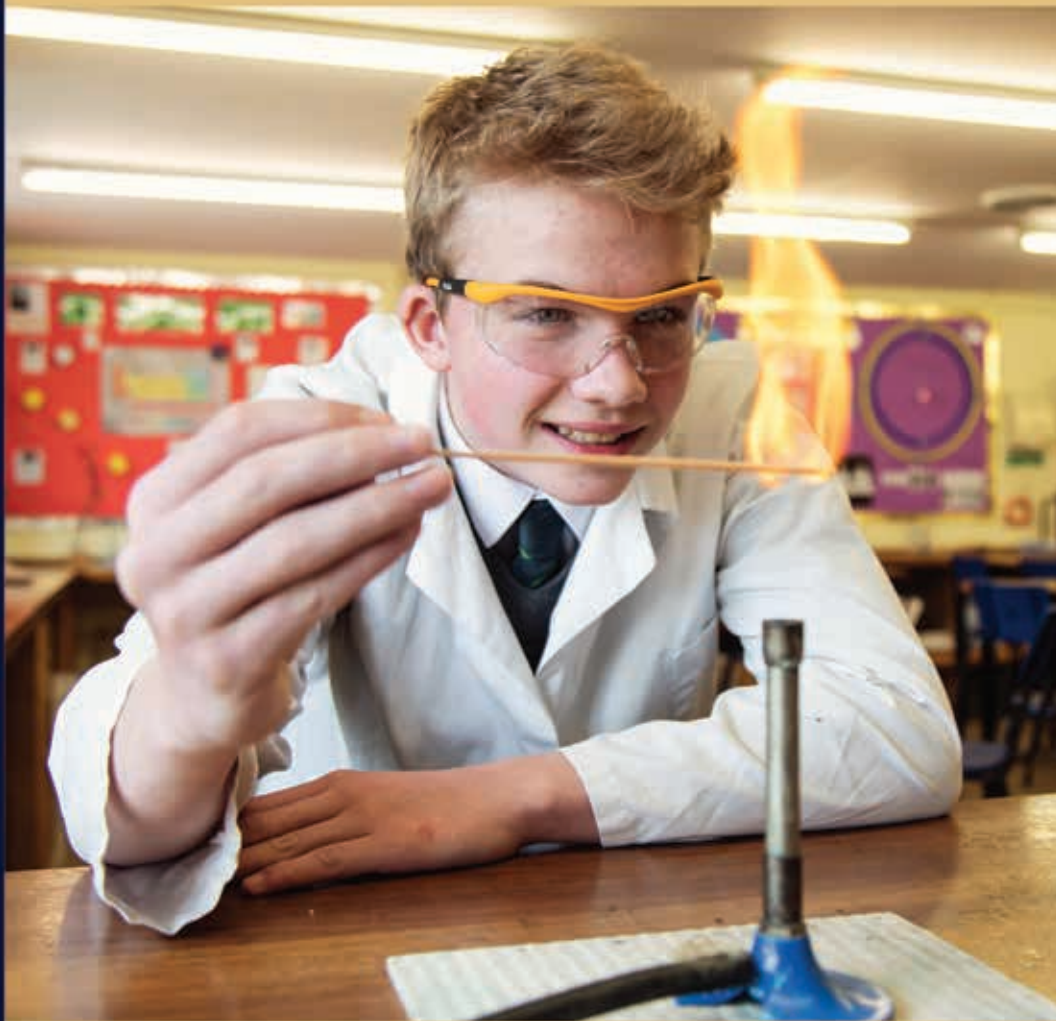
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It must be time to join the Kew

Surbiton photographer John Kelly took this picture of the temperate house at Kew Gardens, open again after a £41m restoration of Decimus Burton's original 1863 structure.

Five years' work on the building involved removing 15 coats of paint and replacing all glass. "Now the architectural features look crisp and new," said John. "At 200 metres long and 4,880 sq m in area, it's the largest Victorian glasshouse in the world, twice the size of the Palm House."

Many plant specimens are new, replacing ones that outgrew the space. "Go now," urges John, of St Matthew's Avenue, "while plants are still small and you can appreciate the wonder of the Victorian structure." And there are loos!

After the scorching summer, Janice Cripps' thoughts turn to watering

To drip or sprinkle, that's the question

My postage stamp-sized lawn is deliberately small for ease of maintenance. I religiously watered all summer and was rewarded with a lush green sward worthy of any self-respecting green-keeper!

But a week away and my efforts were ruined, with yellow, parched turf that looked as if it had never been cared for.

Although my planting borders fared better, I have been considering an automatic irrigation system.

My view on this has changed since I began working as a garden designer, when my mantra was 'right plant, right place'; in other words, matching a plant's characteristics to the soil conditions, aspect and position was the way to go.

I did not believe in lawn watering in summer, knowing inconsistent watering did more harm than good, and that the lawn would recover in autumn.

But now, as I want to grow a greater variety of plants and go on holiday every so often, irrigation is the answer.

The options: sprinkler or dripline.



Janice on the prowl at Hampton Court

Sprinklers mimic rain. Water is pumped through a series of pipes then sprayed into the air via strategically placed nozzles 30-45cms above the soil. Pop-up sprinklers vanish into the ground when not in use but, while aesthetically pleasing, it can be wasteful.

A dripline delivers water to the base of plants through a network of flexible tubing, like a hosepipe, with pre-installed drippers at regular intervals. It works best if pipes lie on the surface, but this is unsightly and

unsuitable for lawns.

Driplines can be buried, but in the clay soils of Surbiton tubes can easily clog and there is always the risk of accidental damage with a garden spade or fork.

I have also found that it is difficult to tell if this system is working properly – if there's a problem you usually have to dismantle large sections before you find the fault.

That said, the dripline is more environmentally friendly, releasing water more slowly and allowing greater precision. It is more expensive than sprinkler systems, but whichever your choice, it will be cheaper than watering with a garden hose, and less time consuming and obtrusive. Both systems can be set on a timer to operate twice a day during sleeping hours for a mere 10-20 minutes. Leaving you more time to go on holiday.

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

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

Choose a new Korea

Gardening? Chinese brush painting? Or how about learning the Korean language, now that Kim Jong-un seems to be the West's new buddy?

There are hosts of adult education options at the King Charles Centre, Hollyfield Road, as the autumn prospectus is launched.

A "learners' festival" trumpeted the study opportunities available with other courses fresh to the new curriculum including Introduction to Psychology, History, Philosophy, History of Art and Japanese.

Cllr Diane White, responsible for adult education, said she was "very proud of the breadth of courses we offer".

The new offerings are in addition to established subjects such as computing, stained glass, upholstery, weaving, bookkeeping, creative writing and numerous other languages.

Most of the courses begin in the second week of September. To view the list visit www.kingston.gov.uk/adulteducation

Do I know you? And is this your shed?

A surreal moment at Hampton Court Flower Show saw Robin Hutchinson, inspiration behind the SHEDx allotment project in Tolworth, come face to face



with comedian Bill Bailey... each looking as if he'd dressed that morning using a picture of the other.

The SHEDx veg garden, with slightly ramshackle shed, broadcast the words of local allotment lovers from its door.

Among them, home-grown veg fan and Surbiton fireman Simon Jakeman, left, who designed the neighbouring Fire Brigade garden, and who is persuading London firefighters to grow food and bee-friendly flowers in pots on the roofs



of fire stations.

Recently, 300 people attended a brainstorming session (above) on the top floor of Tolworth Tower, to capture thoughts for the SHEDx project. From the brilliant to the bizarre, ideas flowed to reimagine

the area with shared spaces in mind.

The venue was crucial to the exercise, said Robin from The Community Brain. By giving residents a rare view from above, people could see beyond the traffic to the area's greenery.

"One woman was planning to downsize and move away, but changed her mind after taking a fresh look at Tolworth from the top of the tower!" said Robin. "If we're not careful, regeneration is something that happens to people, not with them."



Bill Bailey and Robin Hutchinson show off their eerily co-ordinated dress sense

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Amelie and Daisy O'Shea are part of the KT6 team



The Queen's Prom tidiers assemble

New fronts open in clean-up war

More people than ever are enlisting as volunteers to keep the area tidy. Feel free to join the KT6 Litter Pickers when they next meet at 9.30am on Sun Sept 9 by the Tarte in the Park in Victoria recreation ground for an hour's litter-clearing. An amiable, family-friendly crew spanning the generations, they blitz an area every few months. "We're a community group, established because of our disappointment with high levels of litter in the area," said Sian Headley. Thirty turned up for the first volunteer litter pick in Long Ditton, gathering six binbags of rubbish.

● "We want to restore Fishponds to its former glory," said Cllr Sushila Abraham, busy at work with dozens of volunteers in the park off Ewell Road, clearing duckweed, brambles and rubbish clogging the ponds, bushes and culverts of this cherished conservation area. The councillor with Environment Trust nature conservation manager Elliot Newton, is spearheading a project to rejuvenate the 13.5-acre park and create a better habitat for wildlife and a nicer space for visitors. Friends of Fishponds was launched with a summer clean-up and picnic, drawing many helpers. Sainsbury's and the Co-op provided food and drink. "It used to be the prettiest park in the borough; we want to get it back to that," said Sushila, who hopes to get the park's water pump fixed, to link up the ponds again.

● A Queen's Prom clean-up saw volunteers gather at the Riverside café before collecting



litter; cleaning, sanding and varnishing six memorial benches and clearing the Portsmouth Road cycle lane of overhanging branches. "It looked a thousand times better by the end," said Julian Meers. The council and contractor idVerde provided tools and a truck, while Nandos presented the volunteers with lunch. "Come and sit on a restored seat and enjoy one of the best views of the Thames," said Julian, who is co-ordinating another Queen's Prom blitz on Sat Sept 29, 10am-1pm, meeting again at the café on the towpath almost opposite St Raphael's church.

"The train on platform 14 calls at Death Valley, Hell and Surbiton..."

Hot, bothered and delayed



Parched lawns and baking pavements are a far cry from the usual beastly mud and oomska that usually plague English summers. Our town may have looked a little heat-battered, but wasn't it great? Unless, of course, you had to go anywhere by train. I say 'go anywhere', but if you were able to get anywhere by train, it was a bonus.

Our train network only operates within a very specific set of perfect criteria: between 14 and 21.5 degrees, wind speeds of zero to 4mph, no precipitation (unless it's soft drizzle – and then not too soft as that's slippery) and 100% visibility. We have largely been way outside that limited set of optimum conditions.

If, in the last few weeks, you weren't:
a) forced to get on a train from Waterloo whose destination was not Surbiton, but a faraway mystical place (Shepperton or Windsor & Eton Riverside);
b) spent an hour with your face in somebody else's Niagara-wet armpit before the train has sludged out of Waterloo;
c) found yourself weeping softly between Earlsfield and Wimbledon while travelling at half a mile an hour, tears congealing with the sweat excreting from every pore of your body... you

must have been abroad. Emerging from the tube to the Waterloo concourse and being faced with a heat-scarred army of moist commuters staring up at the words CANCELLED and DELAYED became the norm this summer. On the last leg of a journey from Seven Sisters which included being chucked off the Victoria Line at Oxford Circus, I found myself headfirst in Waterloo's M&S sandwich fridge wondering whether to walk home rather than face the pandemonium that would follow 'Surbiton' appearing on the board, then 3,402,699 out of 6,488,531 people on the concourse rushing for it. As it turned out, the decision was made for me. The two promised Guildford trains never turned up (presumably deciding to stay in Guildford where it was 45 degrees cooler than in London), and I had no option but to brave a Shepperton train. This took 50 minutes to crawl to Kingston, where 1,000 sodden folk oozed from the carriages. A furnace-like 71 chugged me to Surbiton, where I downed 41 beers in a baking pub and vowed to move to Iceland. Now I wish I'd made more of the hot weather. After all, we'll soon be back contending with the wrong sort of rain.

Becky Mayhew



Jamie Wallace and Olivia Boulton

Olivia makes quiz debut

They drank Coke and looked like teenagers on a date, but a quiz night run by Winkworth estate agents was actually the first official engagement for the youngest deputy mayor in 183 years. Ex-Surbiton High girl Olivia Boulton, now a Lib Dem councillor, and consort Jamie Wallace enthusiastically joined in the event at Langley's restaurant, helping to raise £1,068 for charity. "It's a great figure, and I want to thank all the businesses who supported us," said Claire McGrath of Winkworth in Brighton Road. The team from Voo veterinary practice proved the brainiest. The borough's twentysomething deputy mayor swept into Canbury ward in May's local elections, gaining the most votes of all 13 candidates.



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Surbiton Business Community



There are many hidden gems in the area. The relaunched Surbiton Business Community is going to help everyone discover them!

We are stronger together, and by working as a supportive network we can encourage – and give a voice to – the multitude of amazing and unusual start-ups, back-bedroom businesses, home traders and online enterprises in the area.

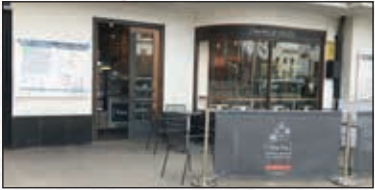
In addition to independent shops, restaurants and office-based firms, the Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands and Long Ditton area boasts one of the UK's highest concentrations of small, creative, artistic and innovative new enterprises.

The SBC aims to reveal those hidden gems to a wider world, stimulating local businesses of all sizes by providing talks, training and advice sessions, and social get-togethers to share experiences and encourage member networking in a mutually beneficial way.

We live in uncertain times, and in an era when high streets are struggling with multiple challenges, home businesses are one of the lifebloods of the community.

With pump-priming cash from Kingston Council, SBC can sustain itself with just modest annual charges. So if you are one of those hidden gems, SBC can get you noticed without breaking the bank.

Full details on the website: www.surbitonbusiness.com



A Swedish arrival

The former Cornish pasty shop by the main entrance to Surbiton station is now a Swedish cafe. Fee-ka means ‘coffee break’ in Swedish, says The Good Life’s Stockholm correspondent. It opened on August 19. Full report in the next issue.

Watch the birdie

Chris Ward speaks on ‘our changing wildlife’ at Surbiton & District Bird Watching Society’s meeting on Tuesday Sept 18 at the library hall, Ewell Road, 7.30pm. The society’s agm is at the same venue, Oct 16. www.surbitonbirds.org



Ideal gnome show

At first it looked as if Surbiton estate agents Seymours were trying to find a resident for a tree stump... perhaps an elf or gnome. Turns out a flat was to let in nearby Exeter Court in Maple Road, and a new tenant was rapidly found.

Choo-choo chatter

If you enjoyed Michael Portillo’s Great British Railway Journeys, the Talking of Trains talks at the library hall, Ewell Road, are for you. Lectures are on Wednesdays, 7pm; the first (entry free) is on Sept 19. www.talkingoftrains.co.uk



Festival of talent

Fay Tiplady and Julie Burnett need help with the Long Ditton village fair; a huge annual community draw. “The more who come forward, the less everyone has to do to make the fair a success,” said Fay. July’s event, in scorching heat, drew 1,000 people and raised £3,000 from which Long Ditton St Mary’s Junior School, which staged the event, and Long Ditton Youth Club get £1,000 each. The rest will buy a new gazebo and replace equipment. “Next year we’re thinking of having a celebration of Long Ditton talent and business.” Call 07486 696167 or email faytiplady1@gmail.com



Heritage on display

There’s a chance to tour St Matthew’s church during Surbiton’s impending heritage open days, to explore the interior and learn about the major structural repairs and restorations currently being undertaken.

The 1875 church with its 173ft spire, impressive stained glass and First World War memorial, is open for tours on Sept 13 (10am-3pm), 14 (10am-3pm), 15 (10am-5pm) and 16 (2-5pm).

The church in St Matthew’s Avenue has a fine Binns organ, installed in 1906, while the carved stone war memorial, by sculptor Thomas Tarran, includes two brothers... sons of the landlords of the Royal Oak and Maypole pubs.

Smarties, the church’s active embroidery group, will show the work it has done, and encourage visitors to participate in creating a new banner.

Grade II listed since 1983, the church was put on Historic England’s at-risk register last year, with the tower and spire needing urgent and significant repair. A fundraising drive is under way, with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund. You can help save it via www.tinyurl.com/yajmtlt9 Free entry, refreshments available.

Searching out hidden gems

A relaunch of Surbiton Business Community is focusing on helping publicise and promote ‘hidden gems’ and start-ups often based in back bedrooms or on kitchen tables.

Research shows that this part of south-west London boasts one of the most varied and concentrated groupings of creative new businesses, solo enterprises and home traders.

Using the website www.surbitonbusiness.com the SBC works to support local businesses as they blossom from small beginnings.

Helped by seed-funding from Kingston Council, the SBC holds regular meetings in local cafes, bars and other venues to network, collaborate and exchange ideas and experiences

to the mutual benefit of all enterprises in the Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands and Long Ditton area.

“By working together we can encourage the multitude of amazing and unusual ‘hidden gem’ businesses in the area,” said SBC chairman David Randall, who runs the Maple Works shared office space in Maple Road which exemplifies the aim of supporting those in the area who don’t have their own premises.

By offering a platform and a networking forum to the ‘hidden gems’, the SBC hopes its efforts can also regenerate shop parades, and keep more of Surbiton’s revenue working in the town.

Tim Harrison



Baby sign classes

Suzanne Green is launching ‘sing and sign’ sessions to help parents communicate with their babies. Her first Surbiton classes are at St Andrew’s church, Maple Road, on Thurs Sept 20. “I show children how to communicate using signs before they learn to verbalise,” she said. It’s for babies of six and seven months, with classes also at St Mary’s hall, Church Road, Long Ditton. www.singandsign.com

Schools attain impressive A-level results

Rebecca Keddle gained an A* and two As and will read history at Oxford; one success story as Hollyfield School achieved its best A-level results, with 82% of grades at A*-C. “I’m relieved and very happy,” she said.

Head teacher Tom Maltby said: “I’m so proud of our students for their hard work and resilience, and want to thank the teachers for their extraordinary commitment.” Special praise went to head of sixth form Duncan Warren.

With 30% of grades at A*-A, and 58% at A*-B, Hollyfield

finished in the top 10% of all sixth forms and colleges in England and Wales.

Megan Field achieved A*, A*, A, and will read chemistry at Birmingham, Valeriya Bykova’s A*, A, A, means she’ll do architecture at Bath and Joanna Dunn’s A*, A, A grades are enough to study medicine at university.

The borough’s schools finished above the national average, with Cllr Diane White commenting: “It’s great to see more and more achieving the higher grades.”

At Surbiton High, half the

sixth-formers achieved A*-A grades, with 86% of grades at A*-B and a record 10 going on to Oxford or Cambridge.

One girl at the Surbiton High sixth form centre in Surbiton Crescent gained four A* grades, in French, Latin, Greek and history.

Principal Rebecca Glover said: “This is a tremendous set of results and the girls should be extremely proud of their achievements.

“The staff, students and all those involved in supporting the girls have worked very hard.”



Going nuts for it

Glancing out at his back garden feeders in Raeburn Avenue, Berrylands, Ian Fereday saw this intriguing combination of birds queueing up for a nutty snack. The ring-necked parakeet (Britain’s only naturalised parrot) is a regular Surbiton garden visitor, the juvenile great spotted woodpecker less so. But the two together... well!



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Meet the folk who live nearby

Ever wonder who lives opposite you? A meet-the-neighbours day on Saturday September 15, noon-4pm, offers Tolworth residents a chance to say hello to each other.

“With busy work schedules, technological gadgets and social commitments, we often do not know our neighbours, yet we have a desire to be part of a community,” said Ken Lowes, who is helping organise the informal event.

The family fun day at the St George’s church hall in Hamilton Avenue (a three-minute stroll from Tolworth Broadway) also celebrates the area’s cultural diversity, irrespective of faith.

There will be live entertainment, stalls, refreshments, a dress parade, dance displays, bouncy castle and games... and it will give the church’s recently appointed vicar, the Rev David Nyirongo, an opportunity to introduce himself.

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Caravan convoy ruins the rec

Long Ditton breathed a collective sigh of relief as a 40-strong traveller convoy left the Windmill Lane recreation ground after five days.

"Thank goodness!" said one customer in Thorkhill Pharmacy. "The mess is just terrible!"

In early August the open space became a no-go zone. Cars churned up the cricket green, rubbish was dumped and signs and park benches were vandalised.

After five days, Elmbridge Council (which organised a water supply for the visitors, plus extra bins) won a court order to remove the intruders,



and the travellers left that evening. Security has now been beefed up; a tree trunk blocks the entry gate.

The travellers arrived on Saturday August 4 after being evicted from Claygate recreation ground, where volunteers spent a day clearing up.

A police helicopter monitored the Long Ditton encampment, while the council's Gypsy Roma Traveller liaison officer visited to speak to the new arrivals. "Nomadic life is not illegal, and gypsy, Roma and travellers have a basic right to this way of life," said the council, adding: "We also recognise that this has to be balanced with the rights of the general public to enjoy public land."

Elmbridge Council has spent £80,000 on metal posts, wooden posts, height barriers, ditches and deterrent planting around its open spaces, but it wasn't enough to keep out the latest occupation.

After the site was reclaimed, a team of contractors began repairs



Anyone for cricket? The surface after the convoy left

and rubbish removal, although pools of smashed glass could still be found a week later.

The playground was temporarily closed, angering those denied the amenity in the summer holidays.

Cricket fixtures were cancelled, while deep rutting from car tyres on the football pitches put them out of use too.

'Too big for lane' homes approved

Two three-storey 'mansions' are to be built on a small lane which runs between Southborough Road and Dunton Close. The track, which is barely wide enough for one car and a pedestrian, is unadopted and has no lighting.

Garages to the rear of 88 Ditton Road are currently being demolished and the ground prepared to make way for the new five-bedroom, Edwardian-style homes with parking.

Andrew Clark, speaking on behalf of the Southborough Residents' Association and neighbours of the site, told a crowded Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee meeting that they appreciated the land needed to be developed as there was a need for more housing stock, however they had strong objections to the "oversized development".

"The point is this is an overbearing development of two five-bedroom mansions on a plot that was previously approved for a single, smaller property. This development would be between 65 to 75 per cent larger than the neighbouring properties on the lane. It is just too big for the site."

Mr Clark argued that homes nearby would lose natural light and there would be visual intrusion from the new-build properties which would be higher than their neighbours.



The lane off Southborough Road

The issue of the safety of pedestrians who used the track, with the extra traffic generated by the large homes, was also raised at the meeting, plus the potential damage to trees which lined the lane and the loss of most of the 34 trees on the site.

Developer Jeremy O'Brien, managing director of Beaufield Homes, said the company had been patient and taken a lot of time to come up with two, high-class buildings in a style which will enhance the conservation area. He said the firm, based in Guildford, would improve the lane, and widen it so vehicles could pass and turn.

Councillors approved the scheme subject to the planting of mature trees along the northern boundary of the site and the retention of some of the existing trees. **Jane Grove**



Life, the universe... Upkeep of the Prom

While Douglas Adams gave life a meaningful number, 42, it seems it isn't essential after all if this abandoned blue-top bin is anything to go by.

Left hanging around on its own in Thornhill Road (where there is no house 42) and also apparently not required in nearby Bond Road, Tankerton Road, Tolworth Park Road or – perhaps more fittingly – Douglas Road, it needs a home.

Is it yours? Come and fetch it from halfway down Thornhill Road!

Arthur Dent

Having watched, with interest, the regeneration of the towpath gardens opposite Woodbines Avenue, which had been in a state of total neglect for some years, it is, to say the least, disheartening to see them returning again to a weed-choked mess.

What was the point of spending a considerable amount of our money if you are not prepared to maintain it?

Fingers crossed the new Liberal council might realise the value of keeping the towpath – which is so popular – in a decent state.

Rosemarie Swinfield

Wake up, Guildhall!

I recently phoned the council to resubscribe to the garden waste wheelie bin service. I tried to resubscribe online, but the website advised me to phone the council. I waited over half an hour on the phone to get through. Is this a record?

Olive Phippen

The zig-zag issue

If you use the zebra crossing on Maple Road between Cleaveland Road and Westfield Road, vehicles travelling from Kingston towards Long Ditton cannot see you until you are already on the crossing.

Cars and vans park right up to the edge of the crossing as there are not



The zig-zag markings are cut short for parking in Maple Road

enough zig-zag lines to prevent them from doing so.

This obscures the motorist's view of any pedestrians, so please treat this crossing with the utmost care to prevent a tragic accident occurring.

Despite being warned in 2016 and 2018, Kingston Council feel that the markings conform to the road traffic regulations, and are unwilling to address this potentially dangerous situation.

Richard Leeson

In praise of community spirit

I live in Long Ditton with my husband and two children, and used to live in St Andrew's Square.

I recently attended a fab, inspiring conference for entrepreneurs and I noticed a theme emerged around the value of communities.

Some speakers were talking about online communities; some referencing local communities and all were talking about the importance of making and building connections with your community.

Reflecting after the conference on my communities, I realised how much I value The Good Life publication.

It is truly community-orientated, and the style of writing shows a combination of warm-heartedness for our local area, with a witty, self-deprecating take on the trivialities of local life.

I much appreciate it, and in an age when I desperately try to keep up with social media input, I particularly appreciate the hard-copy, hand-delivered approach!

I always enjoy Becky Mayhew's articles and often find I am snorting into my coffee over her humorous take on life.

I hear neighbours and local friends also commenting on her writing, so I know that others agree!

So, just emailing to say all of that to you and your team as it is often easy to forget to show appreciation and thanks.

Caroline Evanson

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Quit monkeying around

Disappointed with your holiday snaps? Those distant shots of the family on the beach, those nausea-inducing sloping horizons?

Surbiton snapper David Jacobson, a licentiate of the Royal Photographic Society, is running a workshop to teach the art of taking

top-notch pictures. Designed for beginners or those 'stuck on auto', the one-day course in Kingston on Saturday, Sept 8 is packed with hints and tips 'from a lifetime of obsessive snapping' and covers everything from composition and lighting to how to get those lovely blurry

backgrounds in your photos. "With practical exercises and a photoshoot in Kingston town centre, it promises to be an exciting day," says David. Places on the course are limited. For more details visit **AndMakeItSnappy.com** and click 'Learn'.



Are you missing us?

The art show on the walls of the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road through September includes this striking image, *An Absent Howl*, by artist Graeme Armstrong. A frequent visitor to Surbiton in the past, he left south-west London for The North, and uses imagery to convey his feelings about the move.

On Tuesday Sept 4, 7-9pm, he hosts a film at a free gala evening when he will chat about his work. All welcome. The exhibition runs until October 6, and



can be seen every time the arts centre is open. See **www.thecornerhouse.org** for times.

● Jake Palmer, 20, is racking up hits on Spotify. The Upper Brighton Road musician has gone solo; his debut single *Glass* clocking up 35,000 streams in two weeks. Recording as *Jungle Boy*, he also teaches piano and drums and is part of *After London*, a group headlining *The Old Blue Last*, Shoreditch, Oct 7. "I work with the label Zildeep," said Palmer. Lessons: **www.musiclessonsplus.org/lessons/jacobpalmer**



Jungle boy

Artists know their onions

The Berrylands artists' group displayed 100 paintings at its annual exhibition at the Berrylands Christian Centre, King Charles Road.

Inspired by mentor and guide Audrey Roberts of Manor Crescent, visitors turned out in force for a show where prices began at £25. As well as paintings, hand-made cards were sold.

A hallful of critics voted for their favourite, with your editor's choice being a well-observed study of onions, inset right, by Thelma Cripps of Wentworth Close.

"The group members encourage each other; it's good to mix as a group," said Audrey, who set up her first art class in Chessington 37 years ago, and the first in Surbiton 30 years ago. So popular did the Surbiton group become that it had to be sub-divided... twice.

The Berrylands artists meet at the centre every Monday; one group 10am-noon, another from 2-4pm.

Interested in joining? Simply pop by one of the sessions at 41 King Charles Road.



Light, bright and arty

Stained glass, vivid painting and textile art illustrated the talents of Surbiton artists Gill Davies and Simon Hancock at a show at the cornerHOUSE. Simon's contribution was stained glass, the sunlight through the arts centre's windows illuminating his work.

Gill, one of the inspirations behind the centre's Crafty Afters sessions for multi-discipline craft enthusiasts, focused on bold watercolours and intricate textured works combining beads, embroidery and painted backgrounds.

Aptly named *Light & Bright*, the gala night was accompanied by projections of the exhibits on a big screen. "I've always loved stained glass. I gave it a go five years ago when my wife gave me a weekend course," said Simon. "I took to it; I like combining art and craft elements." Every work he has created was shown, including his first panel.



Louis Segal and Antony Dowd in rehearsals for Honour Amongst Thieves

Courtroom drama

Praised by Manchester Royal Exchange for its clever writing and skilful humour, Ian Callaway's courtroom drama *Honour Amongst Thieves* comes to the cornerHOUSE in October. Written at the end of Callaway's 25 years as a senior crown prosecutor, the play focuses on the appearance of three defendants at a magistrates' court.

From waiting room to court, to a drunken session in a graveyard, there are laughs along the way.

Honour Amongst Thieves, directed by Dina Yates, is on at the Douglas Road arts centre from Thurs, Oct 11 to Sat, Oct 13, 7.30pm. Tickets £12 (£10 over 65s, £8 for students with ID). You can book at **www.ticketsource.co.uk/honour-amongst-thieves**

Rhyme or reason

One of the gentler, relaxed and stress-free events at the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road, is upon us. Another poetry night takes place on Fri, Sept 7, from 7pm. The £4 entry charge includes all the cheese you can eat – a challenge poets seem to rise to. The themes are rain, trees and mirrors. Tim Harrison comperes. Read your poems, and enjoy those of others.



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Blues face tricky start to season

Chelsea Women start the defence of their league title with a tricky opening fixture against Man City.

For Emma Hayes – pictured with three-month-old son Harry – the match on Sun Sept 9 is one to relish. “We’ve got to play them at some point,” she said. “At least we’re at home; we’re two opponents that expect to play each other quite a lot, so let’s get it out of the way early.”

The Kingsmeadow factor is important; when the home crowd gets behind the players, you can see the change in energy.

A knowledgeable and vocal fanbase is growing for Chelsea Women matches, enhanced by an army of youngsters, clamouring



for autographs and obsessed with getting selfies with the mascot.

New signing Sophie Ingle, who has been playing just in front of the back line, is a key buy. The Welsh captain, who turns 27 this week, signed from Liverpool, and was watched by England manager Phil Neville in the Blues’ 3-0 pre-season victory over Juventus.

“She’s been immense,” said Emma. “It’s been a seamless transition for her; she’s got many positions in her and she’s been running the game in midfield.”

How will Chelsea win the clash with Man City? Emma smiled.

“Champions have ways,” she said. Tickets at chelsea.fawsl.com

Tim Harrison

Ks are back! Tolworth is the new home

After a season in the wilderness playing in Leatherhead, Kingstonian FC are back in the borough. Ks are groundsharing with Corinthian-Casuals at King George’s Field, Tolworth, debuting at their new ground with a commendable goalless draw against a Crystal Palace U23 side. Both Kingstonian and Casuals compete in the Premier Division of the Isthmian League, the seventh tier of English football.

Ks’ recruitment for the new campaign has been impressive. Elliott Buchanan, the Isthmian’s top goalscorer with Staines Town last season, is the most eye-catching capture, while former fan favourites Aaron Lamont, Shaun McAuley and Louie Theophanous have also returned after spells playing at higher levels. Speedy wide forward Muhammadu Faal has also signed a one-year contract after scoring seven times in an eight-game loan spell from Dulwich Hamlet.

Ks’ start to the new campaign disappointed, however. On the opening day they suffered a shock 3-2 home defeat to Essex side Brightlingsea Regent. Theophanous and Faal were on target, but Ks were reduced to nine men, with Buchanan and centre-back Ugo Udoji dismissed for two bookable offences. Three days later they suffered a 3-0 loss



Louis Theophanous celebrates scoring Pic: Simon Roe

at newly promoted Potters Bar Town, increasing pressure on manager Leigh Dynan.

But 2018-19 promises to be an exciting season, and with both Ks and Casuals competing in the same league, there’s a good standard of football on offer in Tolworth almost every Saturday at 3pm.

Michael Cox



Serving up a treat

Crowds flocked, the weather behaved and fans enjoyed a competitive final (above) as Jeremy Chardy (France) beat Australian Alex de Minaur 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in the Fuzion 100 Surbiton Trophy final at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club. Local schools provided ball boys and girls, and volunteers ensured the event ran smoothly.

Isn’t it time you started making a racket?

At the start of the year, it was too cold for tennis. In the summer it was too hot. Now it’s just right, and if you fancy getting back to a land of lobs and volleys, there’s a new way to play.

The Kingston Parks Tennis League makes it easy to play friendly, competitive singles matches. You don’t have to be a member of a club and it doesn’t matter what standard you are.

Players are organised into groups of a similar level, and arrange their own matches at mutually convenient times. If you complete three matches

by the midway point, you get a free can of tennis balls. Each group winner gets a prize worth £20.

“I took up tennis late in life, and was having lessons but was not really improving,” said Sally Kinnes, who runs Local Tennis Leagues. “My coach said I needed to play matches and suggested I start a



league. It worked well. I started another, then another.”

Thirteen years on, there are 170 leagues around the country, based on public parks, with more than 8,000 players. “This is the ideal place for a league as the courts at Alexandra rec have been refurbished,” said Sally.

An annual pass is less than £1 a week, and court use is free. Round 2 of the Kingston Parks Tennis League starts Thurs Sept 27. www.localtennisleagues.com/kingstonparks



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