



## Bearded market visitor due

A Christmas farmers' market on December 17 in Maple Road will be selling seasonal food, gifts, mulled wine and a hog roast. Festive music will come from The Kingstones, while a flash choir sings carols.

Santa will visit (that's him, left, last year)

and there will be craft activities for children. A free draw has a Christmas hamper as top prize.

The market's charity of the month is Momentum, based at Kingston Hospital, working with children with cancer and life-limiting conditions.

Picture: David Jacobson/AndMakettSnappy

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## Erin lights up the town

● The Good Life brought her to Surbiton, now Strictly's Erin Boag has turned on the Christmas lights in the town she calls home. See page 4

# Surbiton's health has just improved

If you bash your finger with a hammer doing DIY at the weekend, a walk-in mini surgery is now open to all in Surbiton.

Bowl up, 8am-8pm Saturdays and Sundays, to Surbiton Health Centre, Ewell Road, on the old hospital site.

It means the walking wounded's trapeze to Teddington or Roehampton (if they can't face Kingston A&E) is now a thing of the past.

MP James Berry (pictured) welcomed the news. In the first four weekends of operation, 213 patients were treated for cuts, bruises, burns, high temperature, dizziness, sprains, infections, abdominal pain and skin complaints.

For chest pain, pregnancy-related issues, severe breath

shortness or mental health emergencies, patients should still call 999 or go to A&E.

"Staff and patients I spoke to were very positive," he said, adding it would help weekday workers and those needing urgent weekend GP care. "I back plans for more primary care hubs, so some services for which people go to hospital can be delivered close to home."

Walk in and wait, or book a same-day appointment (020 3841 9942). You don't have to be registered with a GP. Kingston Clinical Commissioning Group picks up the tab for six months, reviews take-up then may roll out other walk-ins at Chessington, Kingston and New Malden.

Tim Harrison



## MP is taking Waitrose to the cleaners

Surbiton's MP is urging shoppers to support independent traders rather than fuel Waitrose's expansion into areas already well covered.

James Berry has dubbed the supermarket's launch of dry cleaning at its Claremont Road store "a miscalculation", and says it poses a threat to the overall retail health of the town.

Waitrose insists it wants to play its part in "helping the local business community to thrive", but critics say its actions do not live up to its words.

The supermarket chain has reversed a 2013 pledge not to offer dry cleaning at Surbiton, an undertaking made following representations from traders.

Waitrose now takes in dirty washing across its customer service desk, with a van from Johnsons Cleaners collecting garments and driving them away to an industrial park.

Roberts, the one-branch dry cleaner opposite the supermarket for 33 years, has responded by displaying a sign (pictured) pointedly stating that it does not sell groceries.

Waitrose, which prides itself

on donations to good causes and job creation in the town, finds itself in an uncomfortable Goliath v David situation.

Head office in Bracknell is trying to increase individual customer spend at Surbiton, which is lower per head than



at other local branches of the supermarket.

Privately, some staff have expressed reservations about taking on yet more tasks.

Regular shoppers question whether the attention to detail which is the Waitrose hallmark can be maintained if the options at customer service continue to proliferate.

One staff member said it was

already a challenge refilling the free coffee machines and tracing click-and-collect orders, never mind dealing with day-to-day inquiries or taking in washing.

The town's MP says he will not be bringing his suits to the store, and has urged others to follow his example if they want to see a thriving, diverse town centre.

In 1998, when Waitrose returned to Surbiton after a 40-year gap, demolishing the old Odeon cinema (latterly a B&Q) to create the supermarket, it insisted to the council's planning department that it would 'predominantly' sell groceries.

While innovations such as the recent launch of a sushi service by the front door have been widely welcomed as providing something the town lacks, moves into areas such as fresh coffee, flowers and now dry cleaning have been less favourably received.

At the time it launched its dry cleaning service in the first week of October, Waitrose said it was responding to customer demand.

● Continued on page 6

## New Greenway will not be green

A new bike lane will help cyclists ascend St Mark's Hill – the first of a fresh series of segregated cycle paths in Surbiton.

Other measures include turning an extension of Tolworth Broadway's Greenway into a two-way route for cyclists... though council officials have decided not to make it 50 shades of green, and will keep the new stretch a neutral colour.

Work on the latest batch of bike lanes starts in January.

● Turn to page 5 for the full story

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Recipes for a Good Life: Annie Morris

## Soup packs a punch

With a chill in the air, try warming yourself up with a curried apple and parsnip soup.

You need two large parsnips, peeled and diced, one diced onion, a clove of garlic, a medium potato (peeled and diced), two Coxes eating apples (peeled, cored and diced) and one tsp of hot curry powder (be careful not to add too much).

You also need a litre of vegetable stock and a big knob of butter.



Add the butter to a pot and throw in the veg. Sauté gently till translucent, about 10 mins.

Add the spices and stir well. Add the stock. Leave to simmer until everything is soft. Blend until smooth. Serve with a good dollop of natural yogurt and some fresh coriander.



Design trends with Elena Romanova

## Mixing and matching gives a home soul

When decorating, plan, plan and plan. Come up with a concept, put together mood and sample boards before committing, and sort the layout and flow in your home before moving on to pretty things.

Plan lighting carefully. It is one of the most important elements of design and sets the atmosphere. It is expensive and a hassle to change later.

Embrace mood-enhancing colour and pattern to lift the space. If you are nervous about using them, build gradually. Trust your eye and ask yourself if a room feels overstuffed or too busy. As with herbs and spices, add colour and pattern little by little until it's just right.

Mix and match. Don't let your



property look like a picture from the Next Home catalogue. Mixing and matching gives a home personality and soul.

Do not use white paint in a small, dark room; go for a dark cocooning colour or strong wallpaper. Make it small and inviting or dramatic.

A little wallpaper goes a long way. Don't be afraid of using

wallpaper. Gone are the days when it was considered granny annexe territory. There are many ways to use it to make the look more interesting.

Don't leave walls bare. If you don't have interesting art, decorate with a poster or family pictures. It doesn't have to be expensive – it has to be individual.

Do something unexpected with a tiny space. If you don't feel too daring but want to embrace bold colours, start with a small room, such as walk-in wardrobe or cloakroom. Such spaces are often given little thought, but jazzing them up could boost your mood.

Email [elena@elenainterior.co.uk](mailto:elena@elenainterior.co.uk) or call 07990 560 264.



## New Tarte opens in park's pavilion

The French Table has launched a third Surbiton outlet. To the restaurant in Maple Road and the French Tarte café is now added Tarte in the Park, in part of the pavilion in the Victoria rec.

The launch follows Eric Guignard's crowning as Surrey chef of the year, nominated by diners.

Now celebrating its 15th year, the French Table came top for produce awareness, culinary expertise and 'sensational seasonal menus'.

Eric and wife Sarah collected the prize for 'impeccable service, the knowledgeable front-of-house team

and a passion for contemporary French/Mediterranean dishes'.

Down the years, there have been several attempts to make a commercial success of a café in Victoria rec, with the Tarte in the Park likely to come into its own when the weather perks up in the spring.

The café is open Wed-Sun, 9.30am-4.30pm. The old pavilion at the centre of Surbiton's eight-acre recreation ground was built in 1893. It is 70ft long, constructed of varnished deal wood, and cost the princely sum of £240 to build.



The Tarte in the Park and, left, Eric and Sarah Guignard



## It's grrrrrrreat

A cake featuring a grinning lion has won a baking contest. Natalie's entry triumphed in the children's section of the Great Surbiton Bake-Off, staged in St Andrew's church, which raised £550 for international Christian charity USPG. Adult winner Jo Casey's cake was hippo-shaped.

Picture: John Kelly

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## Help clear snow

Snowmen needed! Volunteer gritters will be issued with tools and materials by the council to clear pavements in icy weather. Last year, 50 joined. For more, call 020 8547 5000 or email [snow.friends@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:snow.friends@kingston.gov.uk).

## Opposing killings

A new Surbiton charity opposes forced marriages and so-called honour killings. “Feedback has been brilliant,” said True Honour founder Sarbjit Athwal, whose 27-year-old sister-in-law was murdered in India for supposedly bringing shame on the family. More at [truehonour.org.uk](http://truehonour.org.uk)

## Best in the show

This seascape in oils entitled The Gulls by Daniele Mandelli was voted best in show by visitors to Surbiton Art Group’s autumn show. Next year the group celebrates its 70th birthday.



## Locks changed

A stand-off between the manager of Vinoteque, the Claremont Road wine bar, and the building’s landlord in a dispute over rent means the bar is currently closed, the premises repossessed and the locks changed.

## Cake fundraiser

Staff at Roberts the dry cleaners in Claremont Road raised £206 for Macmillan Cancer Support by setting up a cake stall just inside the entrance.

## Debunking myths

A musket and cannonballs were among artefacts speaker Gareth Glover used to illustrate a talk on the battle of Waterloo at Surbiton’s Historical Society. An ex-naval officer, he debunked many myths, including the location of the fighting (it wasn’t Waterloo, it was Mont-Saint-Jean) and Abba’s unhelpful line about Napoleon surrendering (“He certainly didn’t”).

## Mums to mums

Saddled with last year’s superseded Christmas toys? Need to clear space or make some cash? Mums sell to mums at a nearly new sale at St Mark’s church hall, St Mark’s Hill, on Saturday February 4, 10.30am-12.30pm. Up to 200 buyers turn up to each event. Stall details at [www.mum2mummarket.co.uk](http://www.mum2mummarket.co.uk)

## Chocolate treat

Festive events are planned at the community kitchen at 117 Brighton Road in late Nov/early Dec, including pop-up restaurants, a chocolate workshop, tastings and cake decorating. Check window for details.

## Snappers’ social

Surbiton Photo Circle is holding an informal Christmas gathering on Monday Dec 12, when news of 2017’s programme will be revealed. Anyone with a camera or smartphone welcome. Venue and time details at [www.surbitonphotocircle.weebly.com](http://www.surbitonphotocircle.weebly.com)

## No hot dogs here

Fire prevention has led to a fall in blazes, Surbiton MP James Berry was told when he met new borough commander Peter Rickard. The MP was particularly impressed to hear how Surbiton’s firefighters recently saved the lives of seven dogs about to perish in a house fire in Chessington.

## Community win

Community Motors, the social enterprise car servicing and MoT centre in Red Lion Road, has been named best start-up at the borough’s annual business awards. General manager Justin Cooper said: “We’re really chuffed. This award is about the impact we have on the people we’re serving.” Best customer service award went to the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth Road, where general manager Jay Potdar said: “I’m proud of everyone for their efforts day in, day out.”

# Palladian-style gem for sale at £3m

For the first time in a generation one of Surbiton’s most historic homes is on the market – at £3million.

Southborough House, designed by John Nash (creator of Buckingham Palace, Regent Street and Marble Arch), gave the district its name.

A well-preserved landmark with a distinctive green copper dome above its octagonal hall, it is Grade II listed.

Built in 1808 in the style of the Venetian architect Palladio, it has wine cellars, a stone cantilever staircase and six bedrooms on the first floor.

The attic, reached by ladder, was for servants who slept dormitory-style.

The house at 14 Ashcombe Avenue was built 30 years ahead of the railway’s arrival, with three farms and a windmill.

Originally you could walk out of the back door and stroll half a mile through the garden all the way to the river!

The Royal Institute of British Architects holds the plans, from the days it was known as Southborough Place.

From upstairs, the only other building you could see was Hampton Court Palace. It was built for Thomas and Sarah Langley (hence Langley Road). So fond was Tom of looking at Hampton Court that he insisted homes built between him and Cardinal Wolsey’s old palace should not have second storeys.



When Sarah died, it passed to their nephew, Charles Corkran (as in Corkran Road), a cricketer, eccentric and MP. By 1864 the new owner, a Mr Curling, began splitting up the estate and selling bits off. Today it is protected by the 37-year-old Southborough conservation area.

Nash had a colourful life. His hat-mad wife, Jane, ran up a milliner’s bill of £300, and had a

fling with – and a child by – a Welshman who rejoiced in the name Charles Charles. The Nashes eventually divorced.

Southborough was one of a dozen country houses Nash built; all symmetrical, Italianate, picturesque and superbly proportioned.

In recent years it has been used for filming. Knight Frank is the agent. **Tim Harrison**

## Brownies and guides make plea for leaders

There are 120 under-8s on a waiting list to join brownie and guide packs in Surbiton... denied places by an acute shortage of volunteers.

Lara Martin, brown owl for 1st Surbiton brownies, says it is so serious units could close.

She launched her pack after her daughter joined the queue, with no end in sight. “Both my daughters are now young leaders and love it, so it’s not just adults we are

looking for it is anyone 14+.”

Volunteers and leaders are needed for rainbows (3-7s), brownies (7-10s) and guides (10-14s). Both training and safeguarding checks are free.

A drop-in coffee morning is being held in the glass wing at St Andrew’s church, Maple Road, on Saturday February 4, 9am-noon. Alternatively, email [surbitondivisionguides@outlook.com](mailto:surbitondivisionguides@outlook.com) or visit [www.girlguiding.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/volunteer)

A recent study in the Journal of Epidemiology showed that guides and scouts have better mental health, calmer nerves and higher levels of happiness throughout their life – so the legacy is enduring.

Girlguiding has 100,000 volunteers across the UK, including in admin and support roles. No experience needed; just a passion for fun, with a commitment to as little as an hour a week.



## Prayers for peace at memorial

More than 600 people gathered in the sun at Surbiton’s war memorial on Remembrance Sunday, where the Rev Stan Brown from Surbiton Methodist Church led the annual open-air service.

He called for a minute’s silence to honour the dead of two world wars and other conflicts, and “to honour those who suffered the pain of their loss”. He led prayers for peace.

Service groups, scouting packs and British Legion veterans were among those laying wreaths at the war memorial in Ewell Road. Teas and coffees were served in the church.

### Feeling a bit horse

Comedian Tim Vine, shopping in Surbiton’s Sainsbury’s, says: “A cowboy walks in to a German car showroom and says ‘Audi!’”

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# Strictly's Erin trips the light fantastic

Few women can claim to have spent time wrapped in the arms of Vince Cable, Julian Clary, Peter Schmeichel and Rory Bremner... but the woman who turned on Surbiton's Christmas lights last week has.

Erin Boag, familiar in living rooms the length and breadth of the land after a decade of professional appearances on Strictly Come Dancing, was born in New Zealand, but has now adopted Surbiton as home.

The ballroom babe flew to London in 1996 to seek fame and fortune; a 21-year-old dreamer, with her life in two suitcases. Having nowhere to live, she thumbed through an A-Z at the airport and spotted a familiar name.

"I recognised Surbiton because of The Good Life," she said. "I watched it when I was growing up."

Having lodged at a B&B and spoken to a few estate agents, she spotted a card in the window of Martin's the newsagent, opposite the station, advertising a one-bed flat in Berrylands.

"This old chap showed me round. The flat was very dirty. He said it would be ready next week, when he'd cleaned it. I offered to clean it if I could move in tomorrow and he agreed."

There have since been stays in Kingston and Cheam but, insists Erin, "my heart is in Surbiton".

"It has everything you need; lovely cafés, great schools and it's a wonderful place to bring up children."

After leaving Strictly, she married businessman Peter O'Dowd and the couple now have a two-and-a-half-year-old son, Ewan, currently doing two days a week at the Montessori nursery in Long Ditton. They have created their own home in leafy Lovelace Road; preserving three of the outer walls of an old south-facing cottage and transforming it into a glam five-bedroom house.

"This now feels like home," she said. "We regularly walk down to the river – when we lived for a while in Charter Quay in Kingston we walked along the towpath every day."

One of their favourite spots is the little riverside café near St Raphael's.

Peter has a five-minute stroll to the station in the morning, while the next step for Ewan may well be Surbiton Prep in Avenue Elmers.

When Ewan was born there was only one choice for godfather; Erin's dance buddy of 18 years Anton du Beke (whose partner Hannah is currently expecting twins). The ballroom expert was also her



## NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Erin Boag

'head bridesman' at the wedding.

While she misses appearing on Strictly, she has thrown herself into so many other shows, tours and commercial appearances that it's hard to see how she'd ever have the time to return to the programme. And any spare moments are spent running dance classes in Kingston or staging dance weekend breaks at hotels.

After a Christmas show at the Royal Albert Hall, she and Anton embark on a gruelling UK dance tour with their show Swing Time, from January to April, travelling to 28 cities with an orchestra and a trailer full of costume changes.

Who's minding Ewan? Erin's mother comes over from Auckland to babysit and bond while she's on the road... although she does pop back at every available moment to see hubby and son.

And as Erin demonstrated when she turned on the Christmas lights last week, she's now a Surbitonian at heart.

"I really look forward to the Christmas lights each year," she said.

Tim Harrison

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## Twiddlemuffs are fun to use as memory aids

The ladies at the Maple Village WI can't stop playing with their twiddlemuffs.

They have delivered a dozen of the colourful dementia aids to residents at the Royal Star and Garter Home in Brighton Road after knitting and crocheting the sensory tubes, embellished with buttons, beads, ribbons and other tactile objects.

The project supports the WI campaign to build dementia-friendly societies, promoting

understanding of the disease and helping sufferers and their families feel included.

"Twiddlemuffs provide sensory stimulus to dementia patients which can calm them and help them to focus on other tasks," said Kelly Woods, president of Maple Village WI in Surbiton, and on the right of the picture.

"Our members have taken part in a dementia friends session, delivered by volunteers as part of the Alzheimer's Society, and this

is a great way to support patients in our own community."

Twiddlemuffs are welcomed by most hospitals and care homes who look after dementia patients.

If you fancy taking up your knitting needles to create a twiddlemuff, you can find a pattern at <http://pin.it/3FTEUaX> Maple Village WI, formed in 2009, has more than 80 members, and meets at Wags 'n' Tales, Brighton Road.

## Food ousts sport at Vic

One of Surbiton's oldest pubs has reopened after a transformation by the brewery Young's.

The main entrance to The Victoria has moved from Victoria Road to St Andrew's Road, the loos (bar the disabled loo) have shifted upstairs and the garden now has a winter fire pit to keep customers toasty.

The TVs on every wall have been sold, with sport banished to the Black Lion in favour of more food, including an outdoor 'burger shack'.

With original brick exposed and tables reconfigured, the new-look Victoria also has a private dining room, the Simpson Study, celebrating engineer James Simpson whose filter beds in Seething Wells helped defeat cholera.

Seething Wells opened in 1852, two years after The Victoria was built. Whether he'd recognise it is unclear. He'd scratch his head about the fireplace being filled with books.

The pub's old engraved saloon bar door has been retained, but sideways – a relic incorporated into the bar.

A panel on the wall relates tales of local 'sardine fishing' – the baloney



which is a source of despair to the borough's local history archive, which laments such invention in an area blessed with genuine history.



The new Simpson Study in the reopened Victoria pub (top)

Known down the years as the Victoria Tavern and the Victoria Hotel, it began as a beerhouse, gaining a full licence in 1861 after being turned down by councillors for six straight years on the trot!

Landlord Thomas Musgrove told the committee his pub served "a class of traveller who know where the shoe pinches" and said the Vic's clientele was mainly "tradesmen, mechanics and labourers".

Young's bought the pub in 1897, and it has been in brewery control ever since; a meeting place in the heart of Surbiton.

Food has always been important. In February 1899, for instance, the 50 (yes, 50) staff at Surbiton station held their annual lunch there.

## Now Ruby's a film star

Megan Taylor, who is helped through life by her remarkable dog Ruby, has filmed her canine carer's typical day after being challenged by a thoughtless stranger.

Megan, 20, of Cranborne Avenue, was walking Ruby, who assists her following a head injury in 2011 which left her prone to fainting.

A stranger approached and said: "I feel sorry for your dog having to spend its life with some disabled person; poor doggy."

Megan explained that 'some disabled person' was her, but the woman walked off.

Ruby, provided by Dog AID, is now in a Facebook video (search for 'superdogruby') to celebrate a varied life.

Ruby can unload the washing machine, open doors, retrieve shoes, press a crossing button, untie laces, pick up coins, activate an emergency alarm and pull Megan into a recovery position.

"She also enjoys being a dog!" added Megan.



## Sushi bar is a first for the town

A new sushi bar at Waitrose is giving residents an experience of freshly sliced raw fish and crispy veg.

While New Malden is already familiar with fresh sushi bars, thanks to its South Korean shops, it is a first for Surbiton.

Sited at the main Claremont Road entrance – as foretold in the last Good Life – Sushi Daily has bumped rotisserie chickens

to the rear of the store.

'Artisans' prepare Japanese fusion food of bitesize fish and vegetarian morsels.

The entrance area has been reconfigured, with bread and newspapers moved and the free coffee machines relocated.

Sushi ranges from seaweed rice rolls to veg coated in spices to seafood wrapped in lettuce.

## Cycle lanes spell big changes

Surbiton residents coming to terms with the two-way Portsmouth Road bike lane face even greater change in the coming months.

After consultation, St Mark's Hill – enough to challenge the Tour de France king of the mountains – will get an uphill segregated lane, so puffing cyclists can reach the summit safely.

Council experts say there is no need for a downhill cycle lane as some bikes even overtake cars on the swoop towards the station.

A two-way lane (a twin to the controversial Portsmouth Road model) will whisk cyclists along the western kerb of Ewell Road to Tolworth, with bikes crossing back to their customary side at a revamped crossover near the war memorial.

The blizzard of loading bays, parking spaces, entrances and side turns along Ewell Road to Browns Road are, experts agree, a nightmare... and shopkeepers fear that any more restrictions could drive away customers.

But the council is determined to bring in more cycle lanes heading towards Tolworth Broadway, meeting the Greenway (pictured) which will extend for cycle use round to Red Lion Road.

However, having reviewed how the green-striped lane has operated since its introduction in 2013, the extension will *not* be painted green.

Officials admit that the original mix of colours – from apple to lime and asparagus to bile – has not exactly weathered attractively, and that there is no need to recreate the blurred, muddy look that time and pollution have conspired to give us.

Construction of a multi-lane St Mark's Hill starts in January. There will be a 2m footpath, then an uphill cycle lane, then the row of parked cars, then the carriageway. The old trees will be preserved, which may pinch the lanes at certain points.

In the section of Ewell Road between Browns Road and Fishponds there will be cycle lanes either side, with the southbound downhill lane on the inside of the existing bus lane.

More than 500 people gave their views on Portsmouth Road's cycle lane – still a source of contention to residents and motorists – with 400 already contributing to the next chapter of 'Go Cycle'.

"Portsmouth Road does work," one consultation official insisted to The Good Life. "It works in that it has slowed down the traffic, but I agree that there are still some 'issues' with it."

The Greenway extension from Tolworth Broadway to Red Lion Road will be specifically marked out as a two-way cycle lane.



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Gardening tips by Janice Cripps

## Winter is the ideal time to take stock



In winter, your garden may not be top of your to-do list, but it is the perfect time of year to assess it critically and decide what works and what doesn't.

All beautiful gardens have good form and structure, provided not only by hard landscaping – patio, paths, walls, arches and so on – but also the framework of trees and shrubs visible all year around.

When plants gently die back and borders become sparser, you can clearly see the shapes of trees and shrubs left behind. If the layout of the garden is not right, this is the time of year it is most apparent.

To get the architecture right, I start by cutting back anything that has become unruly, overblown or looks plain ugly. I rather like the bare branches of deciduous shrubs and the relative simplicity of the reduced mass of planting, but I'm careful not to go too mad.

I hang on to plants that in their natural dying state have something to offer, be it seedheads, attractive foliage or colour. I don't like to see too much brown soil, so I add evergreen ground cover plants like epimedium or bergenia to plug gaps. These winter stalwarts have leaves and flowers that do a great job before the spring bulbs and summer perennials.

Next on my agenda is judicious pruning of trees, shrubs and hedges. Some plants, mainly evergreens, will be clipped into sharper formal shape, others carefully pruned to enhance their natural shape.

Not all varieties can withstand or benefit from winter pruning, so check beforehand. It's tempting to chop back willy-nilly or clip everything into ball shapes, but that leads to a very boring garden and you may be chopping off next year's flowers – so tread carefully.

Lawns often lose definition and sharp edge. If your planting borders are eating into your lawn and spoiling its geometry, it doesn't look good. A timber or metal retaining strip can be used to prevent this, and it also makes mowing easier.

When a garden is in semi-nude state it may cry out for a large tree or several shrubs to achieve a cohesive, balanced look. Maybe it lacks a focal point, or has gaps. Go to RHS Wisley for inspiration. If you can add something colourful or scented, so much the better.

I love the vivid red, yellow and black stems of cornus (dogwood) in its various forms. These look stunning planted en masse, particularly if they catch the pale winter sunlight.

My favourite is probably a coppery toned witch hazel such as hamamelis Jelena or Diane with their delicately scented flowers and elegant tiered branches. Enough to brighten any garden on a cold winter's day.

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



The Victoria rec's urban fox as it looked in October and (right) the scene today after the arson attack. Below, the red-eyed tree frog on the garden gates of The Lamb, Brighton Road



## Arsonists destroy park's urban art

Arsonists who destroyed the maintenance shed in the Victoria recreation ground are being hunted by police.

The attack comes weeks after the previously anonymous building in the eastern corner of the rec was brightened up with a widely admired portrait of a bushy-tailed urban fox, which was visible from every part of the open space.

Inside the ruins of the council lock-up are the charred remains of the rollers and lawnmowers used in the upkeep of the recreation ground. The cost of replacing the building and equipment will run into thousands of pounds.

The artwork was a commissioned piece created by We Are Sky High (Wash), a pioneering group which has promoted 'the positive side of graffiti' for more than a decade, and encourages young people to take part in organised workshops to learn about painting and funnel their energies into constructive pursuits.

There has been a storage shed in the corner of the Victoria recreation ground since 1900, the year the adjoining tennis courts were constructed.

Wash, several of whose members live locally, also transformed the once-dreary side doors at The Lamb pub in Brighton Road. They are now guarded by a perky looking red-eyed tree frog.

Wash's street art workshops steer young paint-sprayers towards more worthwhile pursuits than simply tagging walls with squiggles. It is a group which counts the Met Police among its supporters.

Nearby resident Sylvie Jordan said the paintings helped "cheer the streets up".

A Wash spokesman confirmed it knew of the arson attack, adding: "Looks like we need to find space for another one now."



Madeleine Powell, 89, left, and Margaret Grant, 90, enjoy their day

## 100 tuck in to their tea

The annual Sunday afternoon tea and entertainment for 100 Long Ditton senior citizens was a roaring success on November 20. The first event was held in 2007 to mark the village hall's centenary, and it has become a firm fixture on the calendar ever since.

The idea is to reach out to elderly people in the area who have become isolated through illness, mobility, bereavement or lack of transport. Volunteers helped transport everyone to and fro, while Deidre Cole, Lorraine Black and Sheila Tilling co-ordinated all the arrangements.

Annie Genower and her troupe from Molesey Musical Theatre entertained. The event, funded by the village hall, included a visit by the rector of St Mary's, the Rev Kuhan Satkunanayagam.



## Good design makes home No1

Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter Home is the best designed in Britain. It picked up the prize at the national dementia care awards, with architect David Duckworth and interior designer Lori Pinkerton-Rolet singled out for praise.

They have filled the home with military memorabilia, an old-style dressing table with perfume, a sweet shop, DIY tools, a pool table, an office with typewriter and stationery and an indoor garden to help the 26 residents who live with dementia interact and stimulate memories.

Hat stands invite people to try on scarves and hats, which create a playful atmosphere, while dolls and soft toys generate feelings of nurturing.

Bedroom doors are decorated with photos, personal histories and

mementos to individualise rooms and assist residents in finding their way around.

Staff wear decorative aprons which contain small sensory items to act as conversation prompts.

Choice and independence are encouraged through gardening, with raised flowerbeds for access from a wheelchair, and glass-fronted fridges to prompt residents to help themselves.

The award was presented at a ceremony in Brighton.

Pauline Shaw, Royal Star & Garter Homes care director, said: "The award recognises the passion of everyone in providing specialist care in an environment tailored to each individual's needs, from fabrics and furnishings to life stories and memory boxes. It is so well deserved. A truly inspirational team has achieved great things."

## Concern grows at Waitrose's expansion of services

● Continued from page 1

That led to a withering comment from Robert Helliwell of Roberts that "I don't see queues of irate shoppers banging their fists on the welcome desk, clamouring to hand in their washing".

Roberts is one of three dry cleaners within 100 yards of the supermarket.

Among Waitrose customers complaining about the expansion into dry cleaning is Pam Newman who wrote of the "deleterious effect" on the town's small businesses, adding she would boycott Waitrose until it stopped posing a threat to the survival of existing traders.

Another, Rosalynde Lewis, wrote directly to the store's managing director about the "provocation" of offering dry cleaning when the town is well served by independents.

"I have always been a regular customer of both Waitrose and John Lewis," she wrote. "But if you feel it necessary to squeeze a tiny extra profit from attempting to ruin local businesses, then I will take my custom elsewhere."

She added: "Even some of your own local staff are against this."

One member of staff was heard to say, tongue in cheek, that it would not come as a surprise if the customer service desk was soon asked to sell houses, mend shoes and bury the dead.

Ironically, the chain that claims to be never knowingly undersold charges £15.50 to launder a two-piece suit while Roberts charges £11.17, and £3.30 per shirt (Roberts: £2.62).

Waitrose employs 200 people at Surbiton, full and part-time, and gives £12,000 a year to local causes via its green token scheme, as well as donating 250 staff volunteering hours a year.

It claims it is offering nothing that rival supermarkets do not offer.

A spokesman told The Good Life: "We are very proud to be part of the local business community in Surbiton – and we want to play our part in helping it to thrive. Like any good business, though, in order to do so it is necessary to always be improving the service we offer and adapt to changing shopping habits.

"We hope that by providing a shopping experience that customers really like, we can continue to attract more people to the area, who – as well as shopping with us – will bring increased trade for other local businesses within the town, rather than going to supermarkets located elsewhere."

MP James Berry agreed that it was "very much in Waitrose's interest for Surbiton to be an independent destination for shoppers, with a distinct offering" but argued that a continual expansion of services into areas already well covered was not the way to achieve that.

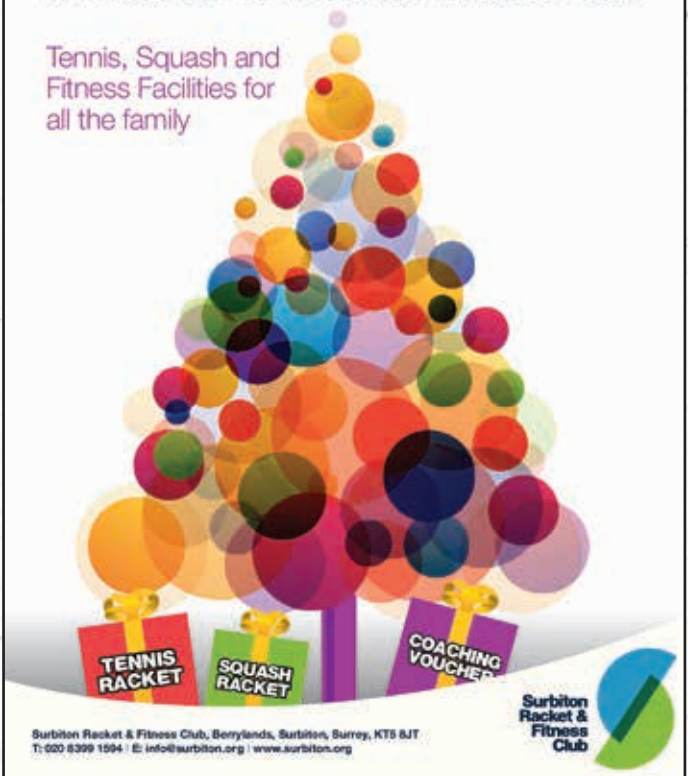
"Waitrose wants a vibrant high street, but this is a miscalculation," he said. "If people want there to be independent dry cleaners and other shops in Surbiton, they should take their business there. I won't be taking my dry cleaning to Waitrose."

Tim Harrison

● For news of the arrival of sushi, see page 5

## Great offers this winter at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club

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Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club

# Yo bro, I talk Surbo innit?

Earwiggling in Surbiton gave author Mark Leigh much material for a book which lets anyone talk like a teenager. Mark, who lives off Ditton Hill, was inspired by the often incomprehensible gibberish spouted by the youth of today.

"I write regularly in Starbucks, Victoria Road," he said. "I overhear noisy teens yakking away like they're speaking in tongues.

"But the more I listen, the more I realise it's English peppered with words I haven't heard." He began to jot. "There's slang for things that don't need it. Who knew FoCo means Food Court?"

How To Talk Teen (Little, Brown £9.99) is a parents' guide to talking to teenagers, while for teenagers it's a contemporary phrasebook.

"I eavesdropped all round Surbiton," said Mark, who reckons the 71 and K4 are an inspirational source.

Be warned. As anyone overhearing teens on buses knows, the language is not merely fruity, it's ripe. The f-word appears 14 times on one page alone. A politically incorrect volume for troopers and navvies, not delicate flowers.

**Talking teen**  
**Pit stick** – underarm deodorant  
**Vidiot** – someone who plays too many video games  
**Bro** – a male friend (also Bruv, Bruvva, Dude, Bud)  
**Convo** – a conversation  
**Mantrum** – male hissy fit  
**Fabulise** – to improve someone



# Dance moves counter dementia

A third generation dance teacher is transforming lives affected by dementia thanks to her innovative classes.

Lottie Barker, 25, left, whose mother teaches dance and whose late gran was also an instructor, brushes aside the cobwebs of the condition via movements which activate memories of the past.

"I ask people to come with carers and partners, do some warm-up, have a dance, then a cuppa," said Lottie of her Monday afternoon gatherings at the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road.

No booking required, no fee charged (Alzheimer's Society and crowdfunding pays) and the hour-long sessions which begin at 3.30pm are open to all.

"The battle is persuading people to come along," said Lottie. "Once here they love it."

Dementia dance starts with everyone seated, doing gentle movements. Then 'ratpack' songs or musical theatre tunes trigger dance

steps from the past.

"People have different degrees of dementia," said Lottie. "One woman was diagnosed in April, and is still very cognitive. Others have more serious dementia."

The classes are popular with women whose partners have passed away, and the sessions have been described by participants as the perfect antidote to loneliness.

"My mum's a dance teacher, and my grandmother was," said Lottie. "I said I never would teach dancing, and I did English Lit at St Andrew's University... but here I am!"

Lottie's late grandmother was a teacher who had dementia, but familiar music from the past kept her feet tapping to the end.

"It's about getting people out of the house and doing something different," Lottie said. "Music therapy can help keep you stable."

Email [lottiebarker@btinternet.com](mailto:lottiebarker@btinternet.com) or call 07734 324814.

Tim Harrison

# Jazz singer leads masterclass

A masterclass in jazz singing will be led by vocalist and pianist Liane Carroll (below) as Surbiton's popular Thames Concerts series broadens into the community.

The workshop, 2-5pm on Sun Dec 11 at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, is followed by a short show at 5.15pm.

It is staged the day after Liane's 7.30pm Saturday concert at St Andrew's church (full details, [www.thamesconcerts.com](http://www.thamesconcerts.com)).

The masterclasses launched with one-to-one coaching by members of the Lejeune String Trio at a strings workshop following their recent appearance at St Andrew's.

Violinist Kaija Lukas gave pointers to young enthusiast Keira Bullen, who said afterwards: "I liked the teachers; they gave good advice."

The workshops are funded by a new initiatives grant obtained by the cornerHOUSE from Kingston Arts, designed to offer amateur musicians the wisdom, experience and assistance of seasoned performers.

Another participant, cellist Carolyn Parker, said: "This is the first time I've taken part in one of these classes; the advice has been really encouraging and at just the right kind of level."

On the next market day, Dec 17, there is another free 10.30am concert in St Andrew's with The Kingston Music Service and a Christmas theme, then the next offering in the Thames Concerts list is on Sat Jan 7 when pianists Samson Tsoy and Pavel Kolesnikov visit Surbiton.



● Kingston Choral Society's Christmas concert is on Sat Dec 17 at 7.30pm at St Andrew's Church (open rehearsal 2.30pm). Alan Bullard's festive cantata A Light in the Stable features organist William Vann (above), and there will be carols and mince pies. Tickets via [www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk) or on the door.

# Charitable art

Fourteen artists come together at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, Nov 28-Dec 31, to exhibit on behalf of Express CIC, a local group which supports people with autism and their families. Artists donate from sale fees. All welcome to a free gala night on Dec 6, 7-9pm.

# Costume drama

Staff at Richmond Theatre's recent Pride & Prejudice show did a double take when a group from Mrs Bennet's Ballroom turned up in costume, as if they'd stepped out of the show poster. The group meets at St Mark's church hall on alternate Wednesdays for Regency dancing. All welcome. [www.mrsbennet.co.uk](http://www.mrsbennet.co.uk)

# THAMES CONCERTS

2016-17 concert series held at St Andrew's Church in Maple Road, Surbiton. Concerts start at 7:30pm

<b>Saturday 26 November 2016</b> Robin Blaze (counter-tenor), Joanne Lunn (soprano), Benjamin Costello (piano)	<b>Saturday 25 February 2017</b> Zamira Duo Tansy Garrod (violin) Mary Reid (harp)
<b>Saturday 10 December 2016</b> The Liane Carroll Trio	<b>Farmers' Market Days</b> Thames Concerts also hold free coffee concerts at 10.30am at the Surbiton Farmers' Market in Maple Road <b>17 December</b> (w/ Kingston Music Service) <b>18 February</b> (w/ Kingston University)
<b>Saturday 7 January 2017</b> Samson Tsoy and Pavel Kolesnikov (pianos)	
<b>Saturday 28 January 2017</b> Daniel Clark (organ)	

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## Café opens thanks to gran

A tribute to a generous granny is contained in the name of Surbiton's newest café, at 16 Berrylands Road. Jean's Café, run by mother-and-daughter team Sarah Conte and Zoe James, serves lattes and cappuccinos to locals delighted to see a freshening up of the shopping parade.

"We used my grandmother's inheritance to fund it," explained Zoe. Until the summer, the shop was Home & Leisure, a fridge and washing machine business largely supplying buy-to-let landlords.

"We've done a lot of work to it," added Zoe, left. "We ripped down the rotten false ceiling, put in a new ceiling, then sorted out the basement with loos, storage space and an office."

The result is impressive. While Sarah's boyfriend was taking up five layers of flooring ("including one of black gloop"), Zoe's boyfriend removed plaster from one wall, leaving a display of red brickwork. The men completed the work by creating a new counter, tiling and plastering.

Originally the building was known as Paragon House. A century ago it was a draper and milliner's shop known as JE Allen.

## Branches close

There are two fewer estate agent branches in Surbiton following the decision by Curchods to contract from 21 branches to 19.

The branches in Brighton Road and Tolworth Broadway have shut, with staff transferred to the Kingston office.

A spokesman told The Good Life that it was a consolidation exercise.

"The branches were doing OK, but rents were very high and there are so many agents in Surbiton that it makes sense in the current climate to consolidate in Kingston.

"Sales have been down since Brexit, and it just didn't make financial sense to keep the two branches in Surbiton."

## Similar journey?

An informal support group helping those dealing with infertility, pregnancy loss or involuntary childlessness holds its next meeting on Tuesday December 13.

Launched by Surbiton TV producer Shannon Delwiche, it meets at the Museum of Futures, 117 Brighton Road, from 6.30-8.30pm.

"I don't have any formal training in this sort of thing, but as someone who is living with the aforementioned challenges myself in a community that seems teeming with babies and families, I was searching for a group of individuals who might empathise," explained Shannon.

"I couldn't find one, so I decided to start my own. The aim is to provide a space where anyone struggling with a life a bit less ordinary might benefit from sharing their journeys with others in a similar boat."

Simply turn up for tea, biscuits and chat.

## Over the pond

**An altered tone,  
A tub to thump,  
From 'Yes We Can'  
To faith's gazump;  
Four civil years  
Then one large bump,  
A fresh approach?  
A naive chump?  
A welcome change?  
Or Forrest Gump?  
The stakes are high  
And it's prime rump.  
If progress past  
Ends on the dump  
And hopes drain  
Like an engine sump,  
If most feel starved  
While some get plump  
If dreams take wing  
Then burn and slump  
Will progress stall  
At every hump?  
I'm feeling ill;  
Nurse! Stomach pump!  
I can't believe it...  
Donald Trump.**

Morris Thain

## A message from Mylo



From left: Becky and Emma with Mylo at the baking fundraiser

Every child should have an auntie like Becky Fowler! Her cute nephew Mylo will need a hearing aid all his life after being born with microtia, an underdeveloped external ear and ear canal which means he can't hear on his right side.

The tot is being well looked after at Great Ormond Street Hospital, so to thank staff, Becky and sister Emma – Mylo's mum – held a coffee morning at the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road raising an impressive £807.

At four months, Mylo was fitted with a bone-anchored hearing aid, transmitting sound through the bone to the inner ear.

With Becky's famous cup cakes and a host of other bakes, the building filled

with supporters and children at an event coinciding with National Baking Week.

Raffle prizes ranged from afternoon tea for two at a hotel, to tickets for Chessington World of Adventures, and a vineyard tour of Denbies in Dorking. As well as fundraising, the sisters set up a donation station for unwanted toys, which will be taken to the hospital for children staying over Christmas.

"Mylo's hearing aid cost Great Ormond Street £3,000, and the hospital helps so many children from all over the country," said Becky. "We wanted to give something back for all the help, support and kindness we have been shown, so that other children and families who need support can get it."

...and this one has a useful reading light

Continuing our occasional series featuring the comfortable street furniture provided by kindly people to give rest to the weary on their travels, this recent example in Rectory Close, Long Ditton, shows an exceptional level of thoughtfulness. For not only does the sofa which was helpfully left on the pavement look extremely soft and inviting, but it even comes with a handy overhead reading light. We are truly blessed to have so many selfless benefactors in our midst.



## Paws and reflect

They clearly do work! Poignant notes on trees or lampposts, alerting residents to missing pets, have been producing results.

A plea for help tracing Vincent, a ginger kitten who disappeared in Victoria Avenue, succeeded. 'Found!' banners were swiftly added to the original appeal for help.

Another concerted poster and social media blitz saw cat lover Sue Lee reunited with her pussy, Daisy, after her pet escaped from a basket on the way to the vet having been spooked by a dog's bark.

Despite spending just over a month on the run, Daisy was found after a resident rang in response to the 'missing' signs.

"I just knew deep down that she'd eventually come back," said Sue. "She's thin, ravenous and bewildered, but happy to be home. I started to cry when she reappeared, and I haven't stopped!"

Sue said that her runner husband Tim had covered 410 miles round the streets, shouting "Daisy" as he ran... only for the moggy to be found 100 yards away.

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