



● An unfeasibly large cheese crosses the Brighton Road zebra during the Seething Festival. See p2



Batter get prepared...

Wash your apron, clean your spoons, sharpen your knives and check your flour levels.

Surbiton farmers' market holds its Great British Cake-Off challenge on April 16... ahead of this year's Surbiton Food Festival. There's a fruity theme, with categories for pros, amateurs and youngsters. Entry is £1, with slices and cupcakes sold at the end for charity. Meanwhile the March 19 market supports Kingston Association for the Blind.

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The magnolia season is here

Spring is on the way. Surbiton's magnolias – a barometer of the changing seasons – are hitting their peak this week. This magnificent specimen is in The Mall, close to the river. The blooms are a week earlier than last year, two weeks earlier than 2014 and three weeks earlier than 2013.

Gimme shelter: could station canopy be extended?

Passengers at Surbiton station will have a roof over their heads along the length of Platform 1 if MP James Berry gets his way. He wants Network Rail to extend the existing canopy to shelter those clustering in all weathers in the open air. More on p8

Heart v head: MP opts to stay in EU

After agonising whether to stay in the EU or leave, Surbiton MP James Berry will vote to remain... even if his heart is telling him otherwise.

The MP revealed his decision to The Good Life during an interview in the Pugin room at the Houses of Parliament.

"I'm a eurosceptic; my heart says it would be good to leave, but my head says stay," he said, adding that he plumped for 'in' having weighed up the effect of an exit on local businesses, and the uncertainty an 'out' vote could trigger.

"I can see small businesses seeing benefits, so I'm reluctantly voting to stay in. I hope constituents will respect my decision. Unfortunately, I think the debate is going to be massively influenced by the Syrian refugee crisis, which is nothing to do with the EU."

He added that if the June referendum result is tight, other EU leaders will be forced to concede the British public's appetite for



reform. "I've spoken to MEPs in France and Germany, and they just don't get the strength of feeling there is."

"I have no doubt this great nation could survive, even

thrive, outside the EU, but I think we have a better chance of securing long-term prosperity as a member of the EU."

"I will cast my vote in a personal capacity. It is worth no more than anybody else's, and I'm not seeking to tell people how they should cast their vote."

He said few constituents listed the EU as a priority. "Even with a referendum, a lot aren't interested," he said.

On Boris Johnson's 'out' decision, the MP said he felt the London Mayor could easily have declared his opinion several months ago.

Reliable Ruby's a top dog



Meet Ruby. That's her on the left, with Megan Taylor, 19, of Cranborne Avenue, Tolworth. Megan suffers fainting fits up to six times a day, but specially trained Ruby is always there for her. And then there's doggy art... Full story on page 6

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Squires is expanding

Squires, the garden centre in Woodstock Lane North, Long Ditton, has revamped its huge indoor hangar, increasing the sales floor area by a quarter and improving accessibility.

The gardening and landscape business just off the A3 slip road now boasts an even bigger café (up 30%), new flooring, extra tills (they were being installed as The Good Life went to press) and a reorganised layout in the plant area.

The only person to have lost out is manager Ian Wright, whose office was handily placed next to the entrance, and who now has to traipse to a far-flung corner to sit at his desk!

The Squires garden centre business began life in 1964, with the branch in Sixth Cross Road, Twickenham, although founder DJ Squire actually set up as a landscaping gardener in 1935, before branching into air raid shelter production in the Second World War.

The Long Ditton centre was opened in 2003 by singer Kim Wilde, who turned up in a floral frock to cut the ribbon.

Two years ago, Squires added Secrett's garden centre in Milford to its empire, boosting the number of outlets to 15.

Secrett's runs the fruit and veg stall at Surbiton's monthly farmers' market.

In Season by Fiona Quinn

Try your salad warm or cold

Watercress, salmon and potato salad is delicious as a warm or cold lunch, with the light dressing making it a healthy option.

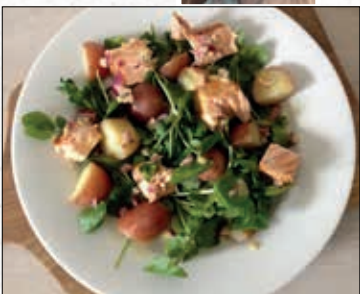
New potatoes are just starting to pop up in Europe. While the British ones won't be available for another few weeks, Nicola potatoes from Italy are lovely, and when teamed with the pepperiness of British watercress you're on to a winner.

Cook the potatoes and salmon as normal and flake on top of a handful of watercress.

For the dressing, mix olive oil, diced red onion, Dijon mustard, white wine vinegar, a pinch of salt and a crushed garlic clove together, and add to the salad.

For the full recipe visit From The Ground Up's website, and click on seasonal recipe book.

A big thank you to everyone who bought their organic produce from FGU in February. Ten per cent of the profits from last month will be donated to Love Kingston to help turn isolation in Kingston into integration.



● From the Ground Up, Surbiton's fruit and veg service, allows you to select fruit and veg online, and collect it from the YMCA cafe. Order at www.fguorganic.co.uk



Recipes for a Good Life: Annie Morris

The bubbly way to do veg

Trying to persuade the younger members of your family that they'll grow into strong, well-nourished adults if they'll only eat more vegetables? Try **Bubble and Squeak**.

Take cold leftover mashed potato, cooked sprouts, carrots, greens or any other vegetable that you have after finishing your roast dinner, put it all in a bowl and season well with salt and ground black pepper.

You can even add some cooked crispy bacon or pancetta.

Mould into small patties, or put inside a metal crumpet ring for a more rounded shape. Dust with flour and heat up a frying pan or cast iron griddle pan with a small amount of oil. Fry for a few minutes until you have a lovely crust, then gently turn over.

You can freeze them, and they go well with gammon steaks and fried eggs for brunch.



Design trends with Elena Romanova

Whimsy adds 'wow' factor

Winter drags on, and a Surbiton summer is too distant to get excited about. But you can beat the winter blues by making simple changes to the way you decorate your home. Here are five tips for instant cheeriness.

● **Add colour.** Nothing transforms a home as much as well-chosen colour. We could all be a bit bolder. Go for the whimsical and unexpected; features that make visitors say: "Wow." Think which colours you're drawn to, and explore how to translate into a workable shade for your home.

● **Let there be light.** In winter, atmospheric lighting brings a warm ambience into your home. I tell clients to ditch harsh overhead lighting; instead use lamps to create lots of soft pools of light. Use warm white bulbs to cast a cosy, amber glow. On wintry evenings light candles to add a flattering glow.

● **Bring in greenery.** Beat blues with green. Real indoor plants, big and sculptural or small and intimate, bring energy into your home, at minimal effort. Tiny succulents add personality, while orchids are always a winner. With minimal care they last for months – chasing your winter blues into spring. Shops like the Botany shop and Grace & Thorn have great ideas, and the plant stand at Surbiton farmers' market has reasonably priced plants.

● **Get cosy.** Add throws and cushions to your seating, and perhaps a textured rug. When selecting soft furnishings for winter, pay attention to colour and texture. Textured blankets are



irresistible, just inviting you to curl up with a book.

● **Bring in scents.** Do you enjoy the evocative feeling of walking into a home filled with a nice aroma? You can easily have it. Invest in a couple of quality candles, diffusers or home scents. Try Farrago, Hoi Polloi or The Beauty Room (soy candles) in Surbiton, while The White Company in Kingston is always a safe bet. For more ideas, call me or come to one of my workshops. www.elenainteriors.co.uk 07990 560264

Morris dancing at festival



The Seething festival parade entertained Surbiton town centre on February 28 with five giant guinea pigs, children dressed as cheeses and the local scout band playing favourite marches. Kingston Morris performed in St Andrew's Square, dedicating their dances to Ben Izard, a keen member and Surbiton resident, who died a year ago.

Food festival offers cookery demos

The annual Surbiton Food Festival runs from April 30 to May 15.

The format follows last year, with a launch event on April 30, the sardine festival in St Andrew's Square on May 1, and the village fete and dry hopped beer event over the weekend of May 7 and 8.

Everything rounds off in Victoria rec on Saturday May 14 with a community sports day and dog show. Sprinkled across the menu are a host of mini events staged by the town's food shops and restaurants.

For the first time this year there will be a community kitchen in the Museum of Futures, Brighton Road – once a shadowy private detective and surveillance shop, now converted into a stimulating local space with Greater London Authority cash.

It will be used for talks, pop-ups, cooking demonstrations, workshops and shows, including a Mad Hatter's tea party, a blues and butchery event, tastings, a comedy night, the periodic table of cheese, concerts and arts events.

The kitchen, equipped to professional standards, is geared up for use by small and start-up businesses.

More at www.surbitonfoodfestival.org



Past Surbiton food festivals have seen Maple Infants pupils planting street herbs

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Hail to the chief

There’s a new chief executive at Royal Star and Garter, whose home in Upper Brighton Road is the template for the charity’s future developments. Andy Cole has succeeded the retiring Mike Barter. Ex-Leonard Cheshire, he formerly led the baby charity Bliss, for which he was made an OBE.

Apprentice deal

One hundred MPs, including James Berry, back apprenticeships, aiming to create three million by 2020. “A brilliant opportunity for businesses to help develop the careers of talented young people,” said Surbiton’s MP. Kingston College is holding an apprentice week open event on Tuesday March 15, 4-6pm. See p7.

Marmalade ale

The Hook Beer Fest, Verona Drive, Surbiton, is on April 15 and 16, with 15 ciders and 50 ales on tap, including Salopian Golden Thread, Hop Back’s Crop Circle, Greene King’s Marmalade On Toast and Blue Monkey’s Infinity. Entry £5, with advance tickets and full details available at www.hookbeerfest.org.uk

Honouring fallen

A memorial is planned to Shrewsbury House pupils and staff who served in the Second World War. The roll of honour includes Flying Officer Raymond Bulman, only child of Hawkers’ test pilot Group Captain George Bulman, killed in action at the age of 21, flying over Germany in February 1945. To contribute names, email mail@local-hero.org.uk



A penny arcade

Prices rose a penny when the 99p Store in Surbiton’s old Woolies was taken over by Poundland, but stock availability is more consistent now, and that improvement has been generally welcomed by shoppers.

Future directions

Surbitonians are being urged to take part in a neighbourhood debate on the town’s future priorities, at the British Legion, Hollyfield Road, on Tuesday March 22 at 7.30pm. Affordable housing, health, education and transport are on the agenda. Refreshments from 7pm.

Developing skills

Surbiton’s laid-back Photo Circle meets on Monday March 14 at 8pm at Maple Works, 73 Maple Road, where a Photoshop wizard will help improve your images. Bring a small selection on a memory stick, for constructive criticism by others. No fees, and all are welcome... including iPhone snappers.

Beware of Curly

Police warn elderly residents to beware of a conman posing as a visiting carer. The man tricked a woman out of £90 after she let him in. He is white, around 25, with short curly hair, and wore a navy blue ‘police’ shirt with paint on it.

‘Excellent’ work

After volunteering at Yorda Adventures in Surbiton (providing play projects to children with learning disabilities) and at Tolworth Gym Club, MP James Berry said: “I saw at first hand the work some of our excellent local charities do,” he said. It was a chance for people to raise issues that bothered them with the MP.

Dealer targeted

By specifically targeting a persistent drug dealer who had been operating at the Brighton Road/Victoria Road crossroads, in Cottage Grove and in Electric Parade, police have succeeded in reducing the problem, a meeting on antisocial behaviour has been told. The operation was welcomed by the local MP.



Pete and Leo Williamson, who have set up whatdadcooked.com to celebrate their father’s meals... including Swedish meatballs (below)



Dad wears the apron

A Surbiton dad has found himself thrust into the spotlight after his sons decided to put his favourite recipes online.

Bill Williamson is now adjusting to celebrity status after sons Leo and Pete launched www.whatdadcooked.com to share the home-cooked dishes they had grown up with at home in Malvern Road.

“He’s not the typical look-at-me-and-my-food cook that we see so frequently,” said Pete, who hopes the website will be a springboard to future community events. “Dad is a designer by trade, and while cooking has never been the day job, it’s certainly more than a hobby.

“Among family and friends Dad is famous for his consistently excellent food... but he’s not fancy, showy or arrogant. He doesn’t try to impress, yet somehow he always does.

“Dad likes to tell stories about food, but in the past, if you ever asked him how he cooked something, he’d shrug his shoulders and say ‘Oh, you know...’

“But we didn’t know! For years we’ve asked Dad to write down his recipes or show off his cooking... and he said no.

Now we’ve persuaded him to open up.”

All the food on whatdadcooked.com is the food he actually cooks for the family; family feasts, treats, weekday meals for two and snacks. Dishes range from banoffee pie pancakes to spaghetti with artichokes, squash and sausage casserole to pear tart, radicchio and black ham gratin to cuttlefish paella.

Bill buys bread at the French Tarte, loves shopping at the farmers’ market too, enjoys family meals out at Da Lucio, and regularly sups pints of micro-brewed beer at The Antelope.

His preferred coffee stops are The Pickled Pantry and Caffè Amici (in Amici, Victoria Road, he buys a canoli with his macchiato, and a Milano Pannetone).

Further afield he buys fish from Jarvis in Kingston and is always off to Garsons farm shop with its fishmonger, Poulters, on Fridays.

The website’s aim is to provide quality food recipes and knowledge to inspire people to cook and pick up the tricks of the trade as they try out recipes.

Overall 20mph limit gains popularity

Public opinion seems to be swinging behind a general 20mph speed limit throughout Surbiton, instead of variable stretches of 20 or 30mph.

Jeremy Leach, from the London-wide 20’s Plenty movement, was applauded recently when he told a 100-strong public meeting that a single speed limit applied to all roads bar the A3 would “encourage a better balance between people and cars” and encourage walking and cycling.

Kingston Council’s Conservatives still instinctively prefer variable speeds, with a presumption that motorists can do 30mph unless they are near schools, even if it means speeding up then slowing down.

Leach says Islington is now completely 20mph except for TfL bus routes, and that Waltham Forest, Greenwich, Camden, the City of London, Southwark, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Lambeth have followed suit. Wandsworth is consulting.

Other measures that help drivers

stick to urban limits include more tree-planting. Research shows that motorists drive slightly slower on tree-lined roads.

The technology also exists to limit bus speed to the maximum permitted on the roads they’re using.

Traffic engineer Liam Judge told the meeting he had initially been sceptical of the 20mph Broadway change and central barrier removal, but said he now recognised it has opened the area up. “I now appreciate that the Broadway is a lot nicer place,” he said.

Police statistics reveal the average speed along the Broadway is 25mph – still over the limit, but down on previous figures. Yet there are anomalies. You can only do 20 on the Broadway, but turn off into narrower streets and you can then do 30.

The police are stepping up enforcing the Broadway limit, with officers watching at ‘high risk’ times. Police have to wear hi-vis jackets, and admit “everyone then drives as good as gold”.

Do the Good Life exercise

The Good Life pops through more than 9,000 letterboxes, six times a year... but we wouldn’t be able to do it without the help of 50 gallant volunteers who cheerfully give up an hour or two of their time to help between March and November.

You get a chance to stretch your legs, check out your neighbours’ front gardens, fill your lungs with fresh air... and you’ll sleep better, sure in the knowledge that you’re helping keep this community project afloat.

We need more help distributing the paper, so if you can assist – even just every now and then – get in touch.

We particularly need help in delivering to Herne Road, Ditton Hill, Woodlands Road, Southborough Close, Ashcombe Avenue, Corkran Road, Claremont Road, Adelaide Road, Regent Road, The Ridge, Pine Walk, Berrylands, Kings Drive, Queens Drive, Elgar Avenue, Raeburn Avenue, Greenfield Avenue and Meldone Close. If you can help, email Tim.Harrison@thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

Overheard in the Press Room

Two psychologists were walking through Kingston town centre, when they saw a man lying in the gutter with serious stab wounds. “We must find who did this,” said one. “He obviously needs help.”

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Last notes of the music man

Surbiton is a quieter, less colourful place following the death of Wes Johnson, one of its most joyously boisterous residents.

Born in Surbiton Hospital a month before the bomb fell on Hiroshima, Wes discovered a flair for music; a passion which remained with him to the end.

Instantly recognisable, sporting bushy whiskers and hurtling around Berrylands with reckless abandon in his wheelchair, he grew up in his parents' home in The Crest.

At eight he joined the choir at Christ Church, in King Charles Road, alongside best friend Julian Power, where he was fascinated by the rumbling power of the church organ.

A couple of years later he was among 70,000 at American evangelist Billy Graham's crusade at Wembley Stadium; an event which had such an effect on the youngster that he declared he would no longer be known by his birth name, Michael, but would now be 'Wesley'.

He took organ lessons from Victor Burnett, organist at Christ Church, and attended Crusaders at the church on Sundays, regularly playing the piano.

At 16 Wes bought a Royal Enfield motor cycle, upgrading to a 350cc Triumph Twin

in July 1964, and running it in by riding to Edinburgh and back. It could do a ton, something he regularly achieved below the A3 underpass at the Ace of Spades.

Wes's father worked in the city, but that held no appeal, so Wes trained as an electrical engineer, biking to work.

In August 1968, near Canbury Gardens, Kingston, Wes was in a head-on collision with a car, breaking his back and having lengthy rehabilitation at Stoke Mandeville.

Yet despite being in his wheelchair, Wes focused on what he could do, refusing to rein in his ambitions. "He was very keen to live life to the full," said Julian.

An ardent Liverpool football fan (You'll Never

Walk Alone was sung at his funeral at St Matthew's), he regularly visited Liverpool Cathedral, home of the largest organ in the UK; a 10,268-pipe instrument which inspired him like no other.

He had an infectious enthusiasm for his projects, passions and hobbies, playing the cornet in the Cobham Brass Band and singing with Kingston Choral Society.

Helping make everything possible was his wife Jessica, who doted on Wesley, and was adored in return. She enabled him to live his dream; his guardian angel.

They had a son, Stephen. He said of his



dad: "It has been 36 years of surprises. You were never sure what he'd take up next. He never tired of learning new things. There was something interesting about everything Dad did, and always a twinkle in his eye. He craved life and spread joy."

Wes regularly played the organ at St Matthew's, trying out his own compositions

at services, including his anthem Ave Verum.

A week before his death he reminded everyone of the quality of his melodious singing voice by doing a couple of turns as part of a barbershop quartet at a music hall evening at the cornerHOUSE arts centre.

Wes Johnson, born July 2 1945, died December 2 2015.

Tim Harrison



Just over 100 years separates these views of Lovelace Gardens... leafy in 1910, and still leafy today. The lampposts were half the size, but prettier, in Edwardian days, when the trees were relative saplings. Nearly all the original houses have been replaced with low-rise flats, but the obvious difference is the yawning emptiness of the road. Parked cars have turned the carriageway width from palatial to cramped. Presumably the woman in the original has reached the Brighton Road shops by now, while on the plus side the council has got round to fixing the pothole in the foreground.



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Fifty years ago, a bird’s eye view of an extraordinary excavation project

This remarkable ariel view of Tolworth’s A3 underpass under construction in the spring of 1969 is one of the most arresting images in a new book by social historian Mark Davison, a man who has made a career of noting down and drawing together memories.

Fireside Tales of Tolworth is the latest in a series of more than 20 picture-driven books by Mark which include Surbiton Bombed, Surbiton Memories and Tolworth Remembered.

Right in the centre of the photograph is the Toby Jug pub, with the Excel Bowl – later Charrington Bowl, later still Hollywood Bowl – behind it.

Modern motorists must boggle at the fact that progress along the Kingston By-Pass was originally interrupted by traffic lights and roundabouts, creating gridlock and even lengthier jams than the ones which beset it today.

By the early 1960s the traffic problems were so great that everyone agreed urgent action was needed. In 1963 a flyover/underpass combination was proposed to replace the conventional Tolworth roundabout.

It was going to send traffic between Ewell and Tolworth Broadway over new elevated lanes, while A3 traffic heading between London and Guildford squirmed through an underpass. At ground level, the existing circular

roundabout was to be expanded for local traffic.

In the end, the flyover between the Broadway and Tolworth railway station was ditched, and only the underpass and giant roundabout were built.

Fitzpatrick & Sons won the tender to dig the underpass with a bid of £1,080,000. The enlarged roundabout was positioned on giant concrete runways which spanned the tunnel sections. As the picture shows, long retaining walls were built, each measuring 1,200 yards, to house the underground traffic lanes.

Four pedestrian subways were also added, emerging at each corner, although they regularly flooded and were viewed by most people as ‘muggers’ alleyways’ after dark.

Intriguingly, there’s a (long abandoned) control room underground, reached through a secret door, containing the switches used to regulate the temperature of the road surface!

Work began at the end of August 1968, and was completed 17 months later. The total cost, including landscaping, was more than £2m.

Mark’s new lavishly illustrated volume is in the horizontal A4 format he has made his own.

“It was after publishing Tolworth Remembered that I

began to receive many letters from readers keen to share their memories and family photos from the past,” he explained. “Two of the letter-writers, Ray Hart and Eddie Gardner, were approaching 90. I realised it was important to preserve their reminiscences, or they could be lost forever, so I pulled out all the stops and wrote Fireside Tales of Tolworth.

“It is not a book looking at Tolworth’s ancient past, or the village as it was in Victorian times. This is a collection of memories of people brought up in Tolworth; their stories of schooldays, early working days and family tales. Some of the pictures they provided are wonderful.

“During the research, I stumbled across some amazing stories. Debbie McGee, the wife of magician Paul Daniels, was brought up in Tolworth and worked part-time in Kentucky Fried Chicken in Tolworth Broadway!

“Two Eurovision Song Contest near-winners, Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson, who were household names in the 1950s, were from Tolworth, and I took delight in finding that Ted was born in Douglas Road in 1919.”

The book is available at The Regency bookshop, Victoria Road; at Surbiton and Tolworth libraries; and at Tolworth News in the Broadway. It is published by Mark Davison at £9.95.

Tim Harrison

He was the snappiest man in town

The man who took more photographs of Tolworth, Surbiton and Hook than anyone in history has closed his lens cap.

David Tippet-Wilson, pictured, who for half a century has never been seen in public without a camera swinging from his neck, has died at 77.

An only child, he saw the roof of the family home in Compton Crescent, Chessington, blown off by a doodlebug flying bomb, prompting his evacuation to a Barnado’s home in Shropshire.

After national service he worked for AC Cars and at Mac Fisheries before training as a psychiatric nurse and spending 30 years on the staff of the large hospitals in Epsom.

But photography was his passion, especially snaps of celebrities out and about. Mark Davison recalls him arriving by motorcycle at the Brighton Road office of the Kingston Borough News, “bursting in, clasping his camera and announcing that he had some brilliant pictures”.

Mark added: “He captured on camera everything that

moved. He took pictures of everyday characters he saw at the shops, to preserve images of day-to-day life for future generations.

“He could be mildly irritating, but I say that with a smile. He never understood if you said: ‘Sorry, David, I’m in a hurry.’ He was passionate about the neighbourhood, and was saddened when any shop closed.”


He was almost perpetually on the phone to the papers with tip-offs and news snippets; an essential element of traditional local journalism.

Diane Brannan, who helped care for David at his home in Hook Road, said: “He was very sociable, and chatted to everyone he met.

“As a result he became very well known in the community.”

David Cedric Thomas Tippet-Wilson, born July 3 1938, died February 1 2016. TH






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Gardening tips by Janice Cripps



Trees are so rewarding

As my neighbour's magnolia bursts spectacularly into bloom, its contribution to the road is indisputable.

The right tree, strategically placed, is an enormous asset in any garden and can perform many functions; creating foreground interest to a view, blocking out an eyesore, providing shade or a sense of privacy. It is a long-lived addition to the landscape and surprisingly, perhaps, asks for little in return from the gardener.

Your choice of tree will normally be influenced by the job you want it to do. For example, if you want it to provide a focal point you will probably go for something that provides all-year interest whether in shape, foliage colour, interesting bark, flowers or fruit. If, on the other hand, you want permanent screening, your main criteria may well be that it is fast-growing and evergreen.

Whatever your choice, it is essential you consider garden size, soil conditions, climate and aspect. A tree planted in unfavourable conditions is unlikely to thrive and reach its full potential.

Also consider the ultimate size at maturity. We all know about the horrendous consequences of planting cypress leylandii that can grow 5ft a year. Compare that to a Japanese maple where the annual growth is almost imperceptible.

There are so many trees available in garden centres and from specialist nurseries it's a shame we're not more adventurous. Just because a tree is commonly available does not mean it is the best bet. For example, the ubiquitous

cherry suckers like mad and its roots often run along the surface creating havoc with the lawn; they are old at 25 compared with, say, a birch that has twice the lifespan or hawthorn, four times the lifespan!

Focusing on small trees suitable for suburban gardens, here are some suggestions.

- Sorbus aucuparia (Rowan): a real toughie that dares to grow where others cannot
- Ilex x koehneana (Holly chestnut leaf): fast-growing evergreen for impatient gardeners
- Phillyrea latifolia (Green olive tree): an elegant evergreen which improves with age
- Crataegus laciniata (oriental hawthorn): its shimmering silver foliage will stop you in your tracks
- Cornus kousa and Acer griseum: ticks the boxes for autumn colour, interesting bark and attractive fruit and flowers
- Amelanchier lamarckii (Snowy mespilus): another good all-rounder, highly prized by garden designers
- Betula jacquemontii (Silver birch): graceful, white-stemmed, with a light and airy canopy which allows you to plant underneath
- Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer' (Ornamental pear): a great screening tree with a compact root system which won't affect pavements or basements.

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

Paws to admire Ruby's artistry

Surbiton has plenty of talented artists, but Ruby is the first dog to join their ranks.

She lives in Cranborne Avenue, Tolworth, with her 19-year-old owner Megan, and has painted a picture to raise funds for the Dog Assistance in Disability charity, or Dog AID.

It helps people with disabilities train their pet dogs to assist them.

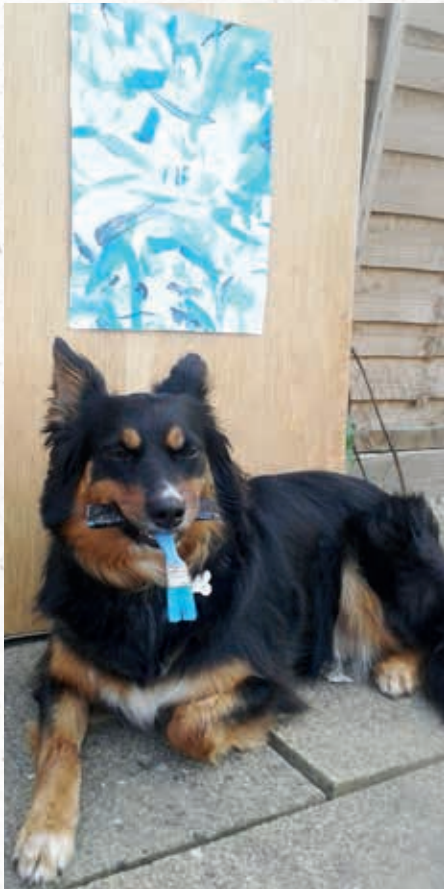
After a head injury in 2011, Megan suffers dizziness, poor balance, hearing loss and fainting episodes which occur up to six times a day.

Ruby, who has been trained to carry out helpful tasks for Megan, produced a stencil print by moving a brush with her mouth.

"Seeing Ruby paint is impressive," said charity chair Sandra Fraser. "Megan is an inspirational girl who does not let her condition affect her life. Ruby already does sterling work helping her."

Ruby, who has endearingly pale brown paws and eyebrows, and a distinctive white patch on her nose, is an honorary member of 1st Tolworth scouts, where she has earned 30 badges with Megan, herself a member for 13 years.

Among Ruby's household skills are unloading the washing machine, opening and closing doors, and tidying toys away. But



significantly, she can also do emergency first aid, by pulling Megan into the recovery position. Ruby also recently featured in the launch of an online dog show to benefit the training charity.

Bumper fairs are church hall hit

If you see a queue snaking out of the door of St Mark's hall, Surbiton Hill, join it! It means a children's clothes and toy fair is being staged.

Run under the Mum2Mum banner by Janine Turland of Grove Road, the fairs attract hundreds of buyers eager to snap up nearly new and quality used bargains, from pushchairs to books, stairguards to party frocks, romper suits to pushalong toys.

"The first hour is always really busy," said Janine. She wasn't joking. The one I popped into was jammed as the doors open.

Eleanor Hayward, right, of Tolworth Rise South, who has been selling at fairs for a year, said: "I have three neices, so that's where much stock comes from. I sell toys, clothes and nursery equipment. It's well organised; I take a stall every couple of months.

"It depends on the crowd. Sometimes clothes sell well, sometimes not. I usually aim to sell half the stuff, though last time we came with two full cars and went back with nothing. It's always a nice crowd; really friendly."

Most items sell for between £1 and £30. Bargains include playpens, dressing-up outfits, board games, cuddly toys and carry cots.

There are a handful of children, a sprinkling of dads, but most buyers and sellers are mums. Next fair: March 19 at St Mark's hall. Book stalls at www.mum2mummarket.co.uk

● Mother-of-three Cath Harrop, who set up



mum2mum in 2011, won £35,000 investment from Deborah Meaden on Dragons' Den last month, to improve the website. Janine Turland said: "Getting national exposure on prime-time TV is amazing and inquiries and stall bookings have gone berserk." **Tim Harrison**

Store denied delivery change

Surbiton's Waitrose has been rebuffed in an application to allow night deliveries.

Fourteen residents of Claremont Road and St James's Road wrote to the council planning department opposing the supermarket's bid to let three articulated trucks use the delivery entrance nightly between 10pm and 7am.

The store commissioned a noise assessment survey, but planners rejected the proposed change after ruling that residents had "a reasonable expectation of a quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of their homes".

The flats above the shops in Claremont Road and St James's Road (St James Court and Claremont Court) and Suffolk Court, behind the Surbiton Club, would have been affected.

Residents argued that Waitrose's existing daytime deliveries already caused disturbance. Several stated that lorry drivers didn't turn off their engines when stationary.

Planners ruled that even Waitrose's own noise assessment of the impact of any change "will exceed British standard guidelines".

Waitrose says its staff have only 30 minutes on weekdays to unload fresh produce and stock shelves ahead of the first customers. It also points out that when the council empties the nearby glass recycling bins in the wee small hours, the racket would wake the dead.

"Ensuring the store is fully stocked when it opens at 7.30am is extremely important as, being near Surbiton station, it is popular with early-morning commuters," Waitrose argued.

The supermarket pledged no overall rise in the number of truck deliveries, but said they would be spread more evenly. It also promised that all its staff would "speak in hushed voices", to help keep the noise down.

Tim Williams, on behalf of Waitrose, said a delivery time extension was needed "to support the long-term health of the town centre" and "meet the shopping needs of the modern customer". Waitrose calculates articulated lorry deliveries take between 30 and 45 minutes.

Waitrose was built in an old B&Q store in 1997. It, in turn, had been built in the town's old Odeon cinema. One remarkable feature of the store is the subterranean delivery yard.

Lorries drive in, spin on a turntable, unload, then drive out into St James's Road, eliminating the need for dangerous reversing.

● The Waitrose application to the council refers to the closest flats being "on the north side of Moorbridge Road". In fact, Moorbridge Road is 19 miles away in Windsor – the result of an unfortunate bit of cutting and pasting from a completely different planning request.

Get this straight

Why do Surbitonians have their teeth straightened? Father of two Darsh Patel, left, lives in Berrylands and walks each day to the Invisibrace orthodontic studio, by Pickled Pantry in St Mark's Hill.

After five years working on local smiles, he says people have work done to improve confidence and boost job prospects.

"Surbiton is cosmopolitan. It's a good indicator; we see so many more individuals wanting to look after their teeth, and adults wanting to take action," he said. "The stigma was always the look, but now removable and invisible plastic is in. We also offer more powerful braces."

Darsh said that as we grow older, teeth lose elasticity. "The biggest reason people have work done is confidence; it's more



accepted that you should have a nicer smile. Job opportunities, expectations... there's more of a stigma to crooked teeth, especially among younger people."

It also affects general dentistry; if your bite is poor it can mean more crowns and fillings down the line.

"There's a health point of view, not just a cosmetic one," he said, adding that invisible options, concealed behind the teeth (and favoured by celebs), were now available to all.

Darsh, 42, lectures on the subject. He recently addressed 800 at an industry forum in Barcelona, and will shortly talk to 1,200 at an event in the USA. Lecturing keeps him ahead of the game, and up to date with the latest treatments.

As a trained dentist, Darsh can still theoretically do fillings. "I just don't do them every day," he laughed – needless to say, displaying perfect teeth.

Typical outlay? The average cost is £3,000 to £8,000.

Invisibrace is at 8 Central Parade, St Mark's Hill. Call 020 8399 6333 to fix a meeting with Dr Darsh Patel to discuss options. www.invisibrace.co.uk

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A free Saturday morning concert by harpist Mary Reid, a former Surbiton High pupil, attracted an enthusiastic crowd as fascinated by the instrument as the performance. After the 40-minute recital (interspersed by readings by Tim Lavis), a group gathered round the carved instrument in St

Andrew's church to question Mary about tuning/transporting/learning something so unusual. Most were boggled that her feet danced over seven foot pedals in works ranging from Paul Hindemith's Harp Sonata to Jean-Philippe Rameau's L'Egyptienne.

Puppets inspire film-makers

Film-makers Tim Prescott and Miriam Rodriguez are hoping for big things from an 81-minute full-length comedy drama, shot in Surbiton. Selective Listening was filmed in the couple's one-bed St Mark's Hill flat; a challenge in itself as a full crew had to work in the cramped conditions. It stars actor Salvatore Stella in a story which deals with mental health and puppetry. That's Salvatore in the picture, with puppet Smiling Herbert. "Our target audience is probably 25 to 45, and there is some strong language," said Miriam, 35, who is originally from Spain, "where people swear more!" "We've been trying to get films off the ground for several years, but it's Catch 22. Without a film behind us, it's so hard to get funding," she said. To accommodate the filming, the couple had to do without a bed for six weeks. Fortunately their neighbours were fascinated with the film project too... and were very understanding of any disruption.



"Puppets can be scary," said Tim, 40. "I wanted to do something with actual puppets, rather than use CGI. I was influenced by The Pipkins as a kid. Puppets have different personalities. We designed each one because we didn't want copyright issues. My mum, my aunt and I made them all!" The couple, who have lived in Surbiton eight years, developed the idea in May 2013, after the Chancellor's budget gave film-makers positive tax breaks. There was some artistic wrestling. Tim, who has worked as a graphic designer, wanted the film to be more dark. Miriam wanted more comedy elements. But they're both pleased with the result. Butcher Jennings helped with props, while the nearby Ewell Road reptile shop enabled filming of a spider! "We had to sandwich filming between workmen drilling outside," said Tim. Other shots were filmed in Victoria Road; by the Red Rose, Brighton Road; and in St Andrew's Square. **Tim Harrison**

Life drawing classes

Two Surbiton artists are leading life drawing classes to help others master the art. Martin Alton and Sue Wright are staging classes at the culture café within Pickled Pantry in St Mark's Hill; a mix of drawing from life, plus tea, coffee and cake. Sessions run 7-9.30pm on Tuesdays at the café. Full details by calling Sue on 07963 147741 or emailing martin@altonart.co.uk

Aarrgh! Sally tells the tale of the pirate's daughter

Surbiton writer Sally Malcolm has branched into historical fiction with the first in a series of books about Amelia Dauphin, daughter of a pirate king. The Legend of the Gypsy Hawk is a departure from the day job for Sally, 46, who lives in Browns Road and is a former Hollyfield pupil. For the past 15 years she and husband Tom have run Fandemonium Books, producing books based on the cult series Stargate under licence from MGM. They have written or commissioned more than 50 titles! The mother of two (son Ben is at Hollyfield, daughter Jess is at Tiffin Girls) studied American history and politics at uni in Norwich, including a year's study in Texas where she met Tom. Her first historical novel is published by Choc Lit and is aimed at women. The publisher selects its books in an unusual way... using a 20-strong panel of readers to pick writing that it can be sure appeals.

"The way I write is around a couple of characters, scenes and an ending," said Sally. "It works if you're not working to deadline, but having a deadline it's definitely better to write a detailed outline first. "I often write with my writing partner Laura in Glasgow. We met last weekend in York, bashing out the outline for the next Stargate book. "We were both fans of the

show Stargate and had written several things together. "We split scenes up and work through a book in a linear way. We Skype a lot." Gypsy Hawk (Choc Lit, £7.99) is an action adventure romance set in the 1720s. "I researched a lot of material on pirate agreements," said Sally, who is now working on a second book, developing another character. **TH**



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Inspired by the Bard

This Saturday (March 5) at 7.30pm at St Andrew's church, Maple Road, Kingston Choral Society marks the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death with a concert, Let Us Garlands Bring. Conductor Andrew Griffiths explains the thinking behind it.

I had the idea for the Shakespearean theme; it's the 400th anniversary of his death and I thought we'd get in early. There are very varied styles; it's as varied a programme as I can think, and it's a good opportunity to find music that isn't heard so often... specially the Thomas Lindfern; a ridiculous and flowery, over-the-top ode to Shakespeare; absolutely worth resurrecting! I was introduced to Shakespeare at school; I remember writing incidental music to a production of Hamlet. It wasn't very good! I think composers were generally too terrified to write anything to Shakespeare, but there were composers around the Globe theatre, and songs were written for shows, especially The Tempest. The George Shearing music? He's a jazz pianist with a background in choral music when he was young. It's a very light style; I think he was encouraged to write by John Rutter. It has light, jazzy harmonies. I'm excited about it. Soloists? Marcus Farnsworth is one of the best young baritones out there, especially with English music. Pianist Leanne Singh-Levett is a fine accompanist who's our regular rehearsal pianist. www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk

New comedy material is tested

The cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road is the place to be on Wednesday, March 16 if you like stand-up comedy. There's a new material night in the studio. Bar doors open at 7pm, with acts starting at 8pm. Line-up includes Maff Brown, Paul McCaffery and Troy Hawke. Entry £3. Visit www.thech.org Meanwhile, the arts centre's oneACTS festival runs from May 9-14. Full details in the next Good Life, but themes include Rupert Bear, ballet dancers and flies. There are nine new plays, never before staged. It's the 11th festival run by the centre.

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Surbmeisters, there has been an incident. I strolled into M&S to get lunch, and was met with the distinct feeling that my trousers were coming loose. This was not unexpected, as they are old and tired and no longer have the energy to keep upright. I tried to discreetly hoist them in a northerly direction, but it was difficult grappling with my thick coat, so I went about my sandwich selection, then strode confidently towards the checkout. Those five bold strides were enough to almost completely dislodge my trousers from my rear.

I stood before the checkout lady for a full five minutes as she chirruped about the weather, the weekend, the meaning of life etc, and all the while I could feel my trousers slowly creeping towards my knees. It was when they started to take my knickers with them that my knee-length coat really came into its own.

By the time I waddled out of M&S my trousers were halfway down my thighs. I had to dive into the alleyway to St Philip's car park to execute the almighty manoeuvre that was so desperately required, without being arrested for some lewd public offence.

So I add another entry to my list of Surbiton Locations In Which I Have Embarrassed Myself. The list looks something like this:

- Surbiton station: Fell down steps while distracted by rain. Helped up by elderly lady.
- Starbucks: Walked into clean glass door. Laughed at by children.
- Rubicon: Fell off sofa, under the influence. Helped home.
- Woolworths (God rest its soul): Pulled down entire tinsel display. Glared at by staff member.
- St James's Road: Threw yoghurt at passer-by (accident). Apologised profusely, scuttled away.

My trouser malfunction

- The Grove: Spoke loudly and disparagingly about a person. Person sitting two tables away.
- Lovelace Gardens: Chased by fox the entire length of the road while out running. Never been so terrified.
- Gordon Bennett!: Fell down step clearly marked 'Mind the step'. Apologised to a door.
- Sainsbury's: Collapsed into a shelf of shampoo after particularly nasty bout of lady-cramping. Gaspd at by elderly gentleman.
- Caffè Nero: Knocked latte over man's laptop. Left immediately.
- St Matthew's Church: As a very small child, too frightened to ask to go to the toilet at playgroup. Sat in church hall waiting to go home, and quietly soiled myself.
- River: Tripped over dog while jogging. Tried to style it out, failed miserably, hurt ankle.
- Black Lion: Given small child to hold. Dropped small child.

A long and varied list, you'll agree. But I need you to reassure me I'm not the only lummo in Surbiton; I want to know about the times you've made a monumental noodle of yourselves in and around our town. Please email me at beckysaysthings@gmail.com with tales of your local oafishness, and we'll all have a good laugh over it in next month's Good Life. Come on, what's the worst that could happen...? **Becky Mayhew**



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Visit is a piece of cake for princess



It's always a shrewd idea to take a little something along as a gift for your host and hostess... and Princess Alexandra is clearly a well brought-up girl.

She turned up on a visit to Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter Home with a box of cakes for staff, residents and volunteers.

The princess was celebrating the centenary of the disabled veterans' charity, of which she has been president since taking over from Viscount Alanbrooke in 1964.

After driving to the Brighton Road home from Richmond Park, the princess was given a welcome bouquet by Jean Chambers, one of the newer residents. "I'd never met her before; she was so lovely when we chatted," said Jean, pictured left with the royal visitor.

Shop is having a party

Surbiton's newest shop is Partylol - a shop serving the fancy dress market.

Partylol, at 154 Ewell Road, is the concept of Mohsen and Sedi Sargazi, a husband-and-wife team who were formerly involved in Sedi's father's wholesale confectionery business in Dubai.

"My dad had the wholesale business, including five warehouses, but we wanted to do something different," explained Sedi.

The couple, who have two children and live in Teddington, say the party goods shop brings them face to face with customers in a way that wholesaling didn't.

"It's a happy, active job running the shop; everyone comes here for fun," said Sedi.

As well as fancy dress outfits, the shop sells masks, balloons, party gifts, decorations, party bags, plates, costumes, wigs, cards, hats, fake moustaches, banners and ribbons.

The shop now occupies what was Kevin White Studios. Kevin now operates from an address in Fetcham, offering photographic studio services... and hypnotherapy sessions.

A website for the new shop (www.partylol.co.uk) will be up and running shortly.



Mohsen and Sedi Sargazi behind the counter of Partylol, the new wig, mask and fancy dress shop

County Limerick

There was a young lady from Hook
Who learnt all she knew from a book
'That old internet's fine
If you've oodles of time
But the real thing is best; take a look'

There was a young lady from Seething
Who said 'I'm alarmed by a wee thing
The blossom's all out
Spring is here, there's no doubt,
I'm inspired by the area's tree thing'

MORRIS THAIN

MP's wish list for the train stations

Surbiton's MP has put train overcrowding at the top of his wish list as the South Western route franchise comes up for grabs.

James Berry wants all peak-time trains to be 10-carriage, not eight, with an urgent improvement in step-free access to all stations in the area.

As an MP with 10 mainline stations in his constituency, he says 55% of workers commute out of the borough every day, with 18,777 using the train.

The backbencher, who lives in Berrylands and regularly shares night trains home with nearby MP Dominic Raab, calls overcrowding "disgraceful" and "oppressive", and says it has safety implications both for trains and platforms.

He wants Berrylands, Chessington South, Chessington North and Tolworth to have four services an hour, not two, to become "genuine turn-up-and-go stations".

He wants Kingston and Surbiton in Zone 5, not 6, saving season ticket holders £156 a year, and he says there should be a new bridge at Surbiton to tackle stairwell congestion, feeding passengers from the platforms to the station car park and the Sainsbury's slip road, beside Hawes.

He also wants lift access at the Glenbuck Road exit at Surbiton... where there is an existing liftshaft, but - mysteriously - no lift.

He wants staff levels maintained, a new drive to combat suicides, and better maintenance of platform loos.

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