

## A piece of cake

Charlotte looks pleased with her work; a cake decorated with a burrowing bunny. That's its white powder-puff tail disappearing underground. She made it guided by Sue Smith of the Surbiton branch of the British Sugarcraft Guild, which gave sugar design novices lessons and tips at the Museum of Futures, Brighton Road, as part of the recent Surbiton Food Festival. Adults were taught to create rose sprays out of sugar while children were shown how to decorate cup cakes with characters from Minions or the Mad Hatter's tea party. ● More about the workshop on p8



## Aria kidding me?

An operatic backing track accompanies June's farmers' market in Maple Road as the singers from Opera d'Amici perform on the balcony of the French Table. Hannah Kirk and her colleagues from the company founded in 2001 will sing at 11.15am.



## She sure looks Purdy

Spooky or what? Lee Johnston romped to victory in the Dog That Looks Most Like Its Owner category at the community sports day's dog show which helped round off this year's Surbiton Food Festival.

The Berrylands blonde's flowing locks perfectly matched the colour of cocker spaniel Purdy's floppy ears to gain the rosette in an event judged by staff at the Surbiton Veterinary Hospital. Purdy's the one licking her nose, by the way.

Two consecutive weekends of hot weather ensured this year's festival was a triumph, with more food-related events than ever before.

The village fete was a high point, with crowds thronging St Andrew's Square as the mercury soared.

Several events took place at the Museum of Futures, recently unveiled as a community resource. ● More about it on p4



## Landmark gains new rooftop flat

Surbiton holds its breath to see how one of its oldest landmarks will look once the scaffolding is down.

Queensborough House, where Claremont Road curves into St Mark's Hill, is getting a new storey after nearly two centuries.

Topped by a circular parapet, the Georgian structure, sheeted in blue, is gaining a rooftop flat.

Of 'townscape merit', the building dates from the late 1820s. It was put up on land owned by Thomas Pooley, an early developer. Builders are hard at work as a planning application chugs through council.

A grey slate mansard roof will house a two-bed, two-bath flat leading out to a roof terrace. The parapet forms a protective wall for the terrace. As the old photo shows, it used to be an open balustrade.

The application states there will be 'no adverse impact on the character of the conservation area'.

It is Queensborough House's whimsical architectural doughnut on top of the graceful corner curve which adds so much character to the original.



1924



2016

There's no lift, so the resident of the new flat on the third floor will need strong thighs.

Surbiton town centre conservation area covers 311 properties and forms the main part of Surbiton 'new town', which emerged following the relocation of the railway station to its current site in 1838.

The villas which once dotted Victoria Road and Brighton Road had been converted to commercial use by 1870, forming today's shopping heartland.

Queensborough House was, in Victorian times, a dentist's and chemist shop.

The enlargement, says the developer, 'reflects the hierarchy of the Georgian architectural vocabulary' and 'would not detract from the building of townscape merit or the character or appearance of the conservation area'. It goes further. 'The proposed mansard roof would help to complete the existing building and enhance its character.'

Time will tell.

Tim Harrison

## The seed of an idea

You will never be short of planting suggestions again, thanks to an idea dreamt up in a Surbiton garden. Two months ago, Daniel Richards threw in his job as group digital director for Virgin, running virgin.com and managing Richard Branson's social media, to launch a phone app, helped by a techie pal in Jersey.

In just eight weeks, GardenTags has become a social media phenomenon with 50,000 subscribers. "It was quite scary," he said over the rat-tat-tat of a woodpecker as we had a cuppa in his St Andrew's Square garden.

In effect, GardenTags is Facebook for garden lovers. It lets users compare plants, identify mystery blooms, share tips and pool a love of outdoor cultivation.

Like all good ideas, the notion of a social network for gardeners is disarmingly simple. "I'm a novice gardener," confessed Daniel, pictured. ● Continued p6



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Recipes for a Good Life: Annie Morris

## Lemons? Preserve us!

Take unwaxed lemons and limes, Maldon sea salt flakes, a tablespoon of crushed coriander seeds, bay leaves and black peppercorns (to look pretty if it's a gift). Clean your kilner jar and use a new seal. Wash the fruit and cut into quarters, not quite to the root.

In a bowl, mix the sea salt and coriander seeds. Open the lemons and push the sea salt mix into each. Pack into jar and tuck in a few bay leaves.

Liquid forms after a few days as the salt draws out the fruit's moisture. They will take three months to mature. Remove a lemon, scrape off the inside, and chop rind into small pieces. It will be very fragrant.

● Use in tagines, couscous, plain rice, and for flavouring white fish. If roasting a chicken, put under the bird's skin.



Design trends with Elena Romanova

## Avoid making colourful mistakes

Colour is the first thing you're aware of in a room. It takes precedence over period, design, arrangement and quality. It is, potentially, one of the most rewarding ingredients, and can be the least expensive. However, it can also be the most complicated and, if insensitively handled, can destroy a room. Here are some common mistakes.

● **Painting a small colour swatch.** Do not paint 100 tiny swatches straight on the wall. Paint a big piece of paper or foam core and move it round the room at different times of day to get a real sense of how a colour will look.

● **Choosing too bright a colour.** People are drawn to the cheery colours in magazines (we've all been there). However, these often overwhelm the room, especially tiny spaces. Without an airy, well-lit environment, brighter colours in a smaller space are overly intense.

● **Using white to lighten a room.** White can look amazing in well-lit rooms, but makes a small, dark room into a small, dark, dull room. You won't make it brighter, so don't fight it. Go for a colour with some hue or mid-tone. Make it inviting or dramatic. Make a small entrance hall a cosy, dark colour and you will notice



how, by contrast, other rooms look lighter.

● **Choosing a colour because it is trendy.** Keep an eye on trends, but putting them above personal taste is a recipe for disaster. The fact that a colour is fashionable won't make you happier if it isn't your cup of tea. Analyse colours you are drawn to (your wardrobe is a starting point) and see how you could incorporate them into your home.

● **Playing it safe.** Neutral tones look great but can make your home bland. Be brave and embrace the colour. If you are not ready for all four walls consider using colour as an accent. Think tiles, accessories, scatter cushions etc.

For more ideas, call 07990 560264 or visit a workshop. [www.elenainteriors.co.uk](http://www.elenainteriors.co.uk)



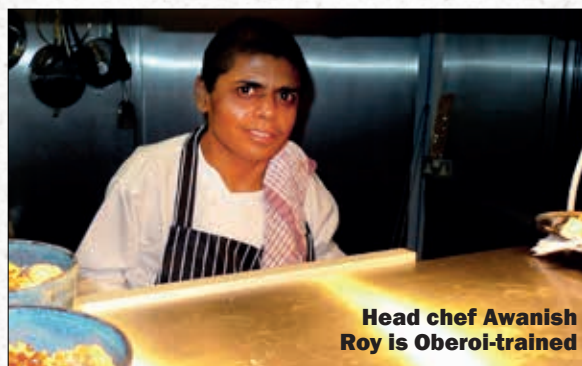
## Samba chef

A new chef is introducing his dynamic cooking style to Hotel Bosco and lounge. Davi Queiroz, who honed his craft cooking street food at the Rio carnival, arrived from Denbies vineyard in Dorking. "I had to eat a lot of caviar," said Davi, explaining how he researched options for the St Mark's Hill restaurant's diners. "We now have Arruga caviar and Severn & Wye smoked salmon on the menu. I've also sourced the most succulent South American steaks." Being Brazilian, he's a football fanatic, and will be glued to the Rio Olympics.

## Wild boar vindaloo tops new menu

Could a fresh style of authentic Indian cooking challenge Surbiton's addiction to chicken tikka masala? Ralph Sousa says it can, and is testing the theory by opening Saffron Summer at the Ace of Spades.

He's an intriguing character; dad Portuguese, mother Goan. Indeed his father was the last Portuguese mayor of southern Goa before it was subsumed into India. Forget



Head chef Awanish Roy is Oberoi-trained

run-of-the-mill dansaks, sleepy passandas, weary bhunas and samey jalfrezis.

Chef Awanish Roy, a spice guru with Cinnamon Club and Mumbai's Oberoi Hotel on his CV, specialises in wild boar vindaloo, guinea fowl banjara and tandoori venison.

Located next to the late-night chemist in Ace Parade, what used to be

Daruchini is now a bold, self-confident place, professionally staffed and determined to be different by offering 'Indian haute cuisine'.

"There are five or six restaurants in Surbiton fighting for the same pie," said Ralph. "But we serve authentic, original Indian cuisine, with a modern twist."

The restaurateur lives in Esher, and admits he looked there first when casting around for suitable premises. But he settled on the Ace of Spades, hoping to tap into the potential passing trade of one of the area's busiest intersections.

He has already run restaurants in Lisbon and Goa, so knows his stuff.

The policy is to offer 10 main courses, prepared well, rather than 100 prepared en masse.

Within that brief, the variety (expect seasonal changes too) is impressive. Chingi Malai, for instance, combines prawns, Brussels sprouts and mangetout, and doesn't figure on many curry house menus.

The opening of the 60-cover eatery was one of new mayor Cllr Geoff Austin's first gigs, and he and wife Sheila were impressed.

"It's the Indian equivalent of the French Table," he declared. "I tell you what; once we've taken our chains off, we'll be back."

### Different sauces

The restaurant is air-conditioned, the loos are pristine, the decor classy. "We use game, which is used a lot in the Coorg region of the south west of India," said chef Awanish.

Eight different sauces are prepared daily, compared to some restaurants which adapt one basic sauce. Lunch is distinctive too. "We highlight the importance of Indian street food, where two guys can very quickly get a queue of 50 people," said Ralph.

Hence Gol Gappa, a £1 shot of spiced tamarind and coriander liquid poured into an edible puri case that bursts into flavour in your mouth; an extraordinary sensation.

"We're making lunches distinctive, while Sunday lunch will be an Indian roast, plus street food brunch."

Push the boat out and try a tasting menu with wine pairings, but if you stick to starter/main/side/pud the price is comparable to restaurants such as Maya and Joy. After 6.30pm, parking nearby is a doddle.

If you have to have chicken tikka masala or lamb korma, it is buried at the back of the menu (under the heading 'British' dishes)... but why would you? Saffron Summer, 4 Ace Parade, KT9 1DR. 020 8391 4477.

Tim Harrison



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## Here for the beer

Wetherspoon boss Tim Martin paid a fact-finding visit to the Coronation Hall, St Mark's Hill, to inspect Surbiton's bargain-basement beer spot. The ardent Brexiter was fresh from making his debut as a panellist on Question Time. "I enjoyed it, even if I was sitting alongside Paddy Ashdown," he told The Good Life.

## Proxy vote surge

A late surge of overseas British voters registering to have their say in the in/out referendum on June 23 is intriguing local electoral officers. In Elmbridge borough (including Long Ditton), proxy votes from abroad shot from 90 to 1,000 in two months.

## Lines of duty

White lines and yellow lines were renewed in Victoria Road after the street was sealed off for two nights to let the paint dry.

## 100,000 cyclists

Nearly 100,000 cyclists will use Portsmouth Road on July 31 when cars are banned for the enduring two-wheeled legacy of London 2012, including a 100-mile London-Box Hill race, with bikes speeding through Surbiton at the 85-mile point.

## Queen's arrival

Handel's oratorio Solomon (the one which ends with the Queen of Sheba's arrival) is performed by the Surbiton-based choral society in Kingston parish church on July 2 at 7.30pm, although you can sneak in for nowt to hear the 2.30pm rehearsal. Andrew Griffiths conducts. More at [www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk)

## Make it snappy

If you took snaps at the Surbiton Food Festival, you can submit them to a photographic competition. Entries will help publicise next year's 16-day festival, and winning entries will be displayed in the window of Curchods. Email [info@surbitonfoodfestival.org](mailto:info@surbitonfoodfestival.org)

## Meet a fireman

If you want to know what it's like to slide down the pole or try on the boots, here's your chance. Surbiton fire station is holding a family open day to mark 150 years of the London Fire Brigade. Between 11am and 4pm on Friday August 19 you can meet firefighters at the Ewell Road station and watch demonstrations of rescues and life-saving. Fire safety advice will be dispensed. Surbiton's is one of 65 celebratory open days this year.

## Vampire diary

Vampires, Nazis and Spies is the eye-catching title of the next talk to Surbiton's historical society at the library hall, Ewell Road, on Tuesday June 7 at 7.45pm. Roland Wales will be regaling everyone with details of the Hollywood writing career of the playwright RC Sherriff. Teas and coffees served beforehand.

## Get fit as a fiddle

Healthy lifestyle courses aimed at mature exercisers launch this month. Free classes for over 50s run a day a week for six weeks. Body balance is at Surbiton Baptist church, starting June 16 at 12.30pm. Feeling friskier? There's Nordic walking in Richmond Park, 'aquacise' at the Kingfisher, Kingston, or settle for chair-based exercise at Tolworth United Reformed Church. Book a place on the Fit as a Fiddle programme by calling Grace Shorthouse on 020 8942 8256 or emailing [grace.shorthouse@staywellservices.org.uk](mailto:grace.shorthouse@staywellservices.org.uk)

## Oh, deliver us...

If you wonder how this copy of The Good Life made it through your letterbox, it's down to our small army of valued volunteers who take a street or two each, and help us deliver. If the idea (see above) of Nordic walking and aquacise doesn't float your boat, why not join the merry band of deliverers? It's only six times a year, and it helps keep this little project viable. To offer your services, email editor Tim Harrison at [thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com](mailto:thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com)



## Wheely great

Perfect juxtaposition? Julian Meers of Surbiton Photo Circle spotted this at the Brighton Road/Maple Road junction. The message from Top Cat, the indisputable leader of the gang brought out of retirement to plug mortgages, is upstaged by a large industrial wheeled bin. It has been pointed out that the wily moggy isn't necessarily the tip top choice as ambassador for Halifax financial products. For one thing, he's a con artist. For another, he actually lives in a bin, though a more traditional one than this model. Yet Top Cat was the 'standout favourite' in focus group research. The next photo circle meeting is on June 13, 8pm, Maple Works, Maple Road.

# We're good neighbours

A car-free day, a chance for neighbours to chat... and a real sense of community returned to a Surbiton street.

Outgoing youngsters Amélie Pember, 12, and Lucia Marfé, 11, couldn't understand why residents of Tankerton Road talked to each other so rarely, so they knocked on doors, gathered support and declared the last Saturday of the month party day.

They successfully applied to the council for a road closure, and everyone came out to set up tables in the street, natter, share food and drink, and play games.

Bunting was stretched from lamppost to lamppost, and activities were provided by Stepping Stones Pre-school and Wiggles Play Group.

The event included The Great Tankerton Bake-off (won by Fil Pereira-Lopez and his white chocolate and raspberry cheesecake), and Tankerton's Got Talent, won by Liza Pierrot, 7, and her dog Bondi.

"We found out that Tankerton Road used to have street parties back in the 1970s and 80s," said Lucia. Photos were unearthed featuring decorations for the Queen's Jubilee and Diana and Charles's wedding, while Judy at number 57 can still remember the knees-up when Tankerton Road had a party for the Queen's coronation in 1953.

Officers from Surbiton police team called by to demonstrate police work to the children, and let them try on uniforms,

police headgear... and push important-looking buttons in their police car.

Proud mum Suna Marfé told The Good Life: "Thanks to the girls, the community spirit is returning to Tankerton Road."



Amélie, left, and Lucia with crowned bake-off winner Fil Pereira-Lopez

## Shoes offer hope

Surbiton schoolboys are supporting children in Laos by collecting old sports shoes.

Boys at Shrewsbury House prep school, Ditton Road, are sending 220 pairs of outgrown trainers and boots to girls and boys in Laos.

Laotian pitches are stony, and with a third of the population grubbing by on less than £1 a day, access to kit and equipment is limited.

Many children play in bare feet or flip-flops, leading to injuries. Surbiton's target is to collect 500 pairs of outgrown shoes this year.

The idea germinated when Shrewsbury House hosted a youth team from Laos.

"Our children see the benefits of recycling sports shoes, and get feedback via social media," said teacher Steve Blevins. Cash is also being collected to cover the £1,000 shipping.

Teddington rugby club is supporting the scheme, after a confident 11-year-old Shrewsbury House schoolboy stood up at a club meeting to make a passionate speech.

The hope is other schools and sports clubs will start their own collections. "It is heart-warming to see such generosity," said Steve.

## Overheard on Platform I at 7.53

The man in the Nationwide began hiccupping. As he reached the counter, it got worse. He handed over his card and asked to withdraw £50. "You can't," said the cashier. "You're £10,000 overdrawn." The man looked horrified. "That's impossible," he shrieked. "You must be joking." "I am," said the cashier. "But it cured your hiccupps."

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Two forward-looking venues have recently opened on opposite sides of the world. Tim Harrison paid both a visit



## The Museum of Tomorrow, Rio de Janeiro

**Where?** Avenida Rodrigues Alves, Centro, Rio, Brazil ([www.museudoamanha.org.br](http://www.museudoamanha.org.br))  
**Appearance:** A beached dinosaur's ribcage, dramatically balanced in mid-air  
**Aim:** To create a fresh concept in museums, challenging the frumpy image which afflicts many tired institutions around the world; to stimulate visitors by provocative pictures and focus minds on the issue of climate change, using shock tactics  
**What's inside?** Disturbing, apocalyptic images; huge lightwalls full of foreboding; warnings about man's effect on the planet, bright walkways (see picture below)  
**It replaced:** A graffiti-ridden neglected stretch of run-down dockside near Pier Maua, facing Guanabara Bay. A reclaimed strip of land was created, jutting north-east  
**Catering:** Disappointing. If this was in the UK it would probably be built around a giant cafeteria, but you're hard pressed to even locate a cuppa inside the place  
**Disabled access:** Excellent. Lifts to each floor, ramps everywhere  
**Transport links:** New tram opens shortly to city centre, good bus links, 200 yards to metro stop Uruguaiana. Very little parking  
**Made up of:** The main exhibition leads visitors through five main areas: Cosmos, Earth, Anthropocene, Tomorrow and Now, via different experiments and experiences. There's even a mini planetarium; an egg-shaped cinema using nine projectors  
**Entry:** 10 reais (£1.90)  
**Architect:** Santiago Calatrava  
**Languages:** Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, American English  
**Fully operational:** December 2015  
**Cooling:** Deep-water system pumped from nearby bay, with 9% of power to run the museum coming from the sun  
**Cost:** £40m  
**Who's paying that then?** The municipality of Rio de Janeiro, plus sponsors, as part of its port renewal programme ahead of this summer's Olympics  
**Slogan/mission:** Who are we? Answer: Matter, life and thought; we are made of the same elements as Earth, moulded by combinations of rhythms that form the climate. Visitors are challenged to address sustainability issues  
**Why is it worthwhile?** It is an excellent example of the gentrification of one of Rio's poorest, most crime-troubled areas, and it is a very public demonstration of a long-term aim of cleaning up pollution that blights a magnificent city



## The Museum of Futures, Surbiton

**Where?** 117 Brighton Road, Surbiton, England KT6 5NJ ([www.museumoffutures.org](http://www.museumoffutures.org))  
**Appearance:** Bland shopfront in a quiet stretch of Brighton Road near Kwik Fit  
**Aim:** To create a vibrant community space to encourage local groups and start-ups by providing an adaptable venue for meetings, gatherings, launches and demonstrations  
**What's inside?** Light, airy multi-purpose adaptable space with well-equipped kitchen area, a full-size shop window to publicise events and a network of useful cellars  
**It replaced:** A spy-on-your-wife/husband private detective agency specialising in surveillance and confidential DNA analysis, which operated on an appointment system behind a door to the street which remained resolutely locked for 90% of the time  
**Catering:** Magnificent. The kitchen is superbly equipped and is poised to respond to each and every community culinary challenge with a £5,000 programmable main oven that would be the envy of most high-end catering establishments (see picture below)  
**Disabled access:** Disappointingly limited. A makeshift ramp helps get through the front door, but the kitchen is up steps and is not wheelchair-accessible  
**Transport links:** K3, 71 and other buses, plus rapid train connections to the centre of London which are the envy of the South East. Very little parking  
**Made up of:** Once through the door, a large square front room with huge shop window leading visitors up steps to a well-equipped catering space and second room. Two staircases disappear down to cellar rooms and loo  
**Entry:** Free  
**Architect:** Surbiton Urban District Council  
**Languages:** English (from Estuary to RP)  
**Formally opened:** December 2015  
**Heating:** Radiators  
**Cost:** £26,920  
**Who's paying that then?** £17,000 came from London Mayor Boris Johnson, plus help from Kingston Council and crowdfunding. The building has been rented for five years  
**Slogan/mission:** Something wonderful is about to happen. Vision is to harness community energy to develop a place people will celebrate, create a healthier high street and be an incubator for new food businesses in the Surbiton area  
**Why is it worthwhile?** It is a stimulating grassroots effort to encourage more participation in community life by setting up a meeting place and focus for activity in an era when the traditional church halls etc are being snaffled by developers



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## No benchmarks

If your loved one's name is on a Queen's Prom bench, you'll struggle to find it in future. Riverside improvements mean memorial seats are being removed and replaced with 'multi-level seating'.

Old benches celebrate the lives of residents who typically enjoyed strolling by the river or feeding the ducks.

More than 50 names are affected, the council claiming benches are in poor repair. Where it can, it says it has traced relatives, but records are patchy and some benches were privately installed.

Project manager Owen Bentley wants a call (020 8547 5002) if your loved one's surname is: Ballard, Montgomery, Parr, Wigmore, Egonu, Davey, Hayden, Owen, Awan, Sewter, George, Hansen, O'Neil, Pedder, Singh, Arnold, Burt, Larkin, McDonald, Ballam, Gibbs, Zohhadi, Holloway, Armstrong, Hatcher, Arditti, King, Friend, Garbett, Maries, Moores, Bayliss, O'Gara, Feltham or Greaves.

CLlr Terry Paton said old plaques will go on new seating areas. Where names are wood-carved, plaques will be made.

## Business prizes

Surbiton businesses have until June 24 to enter this year's excellence awards, culminating in a Holiday Inn knees-up. "It means three things: recognition, morale and fun," said Paul Crossman of Tolworth's Genuine Solutions, which won four prizes last year. Judges give feedback. Categories include community commitment, best customer service, top start-up and entrepreneur of the year. More at [www.kingstonawards.co.uk](http://www.kingstonawards.co.uk)

## The family firm

Now established in Brighton Road, Lodge Brothers stretches back seven generations. It was begun in Feltham by carpenter James Lodge (1762-1836). He passed it on to his eldest son William, who was, like dad, a top coffin-maker.

Current director Robert Lodge, of Thames Ditton, said 'undertaker' derived from the carpenter 'undertaking' the arrangements. "These days we prefer 'funeral directors', but most people still call us undertakers," he said.

William and wife Charlotte had 12 children. Their fourth son John took over, with his brother William.

When John died suddenly at 48, his wife Emma took over. Their son Stanley (named after the man who presumed to find Dr Livingstone) was next, and his sons George and William after that.

In 1965, William turned it into a company, giving his three sons equal shares. That trio have now retired, leaving their children – Robert, Andrew, Janet, Beverley, Christopher and Michael – to jointly run an enterprise of longevity which, despite having offices everywhere, still aspires to bring a family touch to helping the bereaved.



John Lodge, who lived 1828-76



Cheers: Chef Neil Rankin (left) and butcher Kevin Jennings

## Will No97 be the real deal?

Are repeated attempts to recapture the glory days of the bar/restaurant at 97 Maple Road finally to bear fruit?

The new incarnation is a tapas restaurant and wine bar, with owner Sam Berry upbeat about its prospects.

Now simply No97, its head chef is Dario Zannoni, formerly of Langley's. "The concept is 'city meets countryside,'" said Sam. "The ground floor will be a restaurant specialising in modern European small plates; tapas-style food, without just being Spanish."

Below, a wine cellar, with plans for film nights.

The different identities of 97 Maple Road would have kept a sign-writer in permanent employment. Most recently it was Rubi, part-owned by cricketer Kevin Pietersen. Before that it was Rubicon, though fondest memories are of the Tappit Hen wine bar in the 1980s; a friendly, buzzy place to while away evenings.

## The sound of pure bliss

Noises emanating from Brighton Road on food festival steak night suggested a Scandinavian porn film was being shot.

Mmmm. Ohhh. Ahhh. Mmmm. Ooooooh. There was even loosening of clothing, although it involved letting out notches on belts.

Participants agreed; this was a memorable foodie evening – an orgy of delight for committed meat eaters, and an apt christening of the community kitchen.

With Kevin Jennings, from the area's premier butcher's, demonstrating how to chop, slice and pare the choicest cuts, and barbecue specialist chef Neil Rankin in charge of cooking, the horde of

viewers felt transported to paradise.

Cooked to perfection, the meat was passed around for sampling... generating the succession of acclamatory sounds which could so easily have been misinterpreted.

Neil signed copies of his new tome on slow meat cooking, under the gaze of Pat Freestone-Bayes from the Regency Bookshop.

More than 30 attended, with dozens unable to get tickets. If the event is ever repeated (and there is clearly an appetite) they should check the availability of the Royal Albert Hall.

By the end, audience members could be found slumped in their seats wearing expressions of bliss.

## Samaritans move to a bigger, better HQ

The Samaritans, actively working to combat the depression which has led to suicides at Surbiton station, are relocating to better premises.

After four decades by St Andrew's church, the group is now at former Arbore at 2 Wheatfield Way in Kingston's one-way loop; once a centre for restoring worn-out chairs.

The shop window will raise its profile, while outreach programmes at the station and YMCA continue.

Spokeswoman Susan Ogier said: "The new premises near college roundabout will be fully accessible, letting disabled volunteers use it."

The old St Andrew's Road base had steep steps leading to both front door and basement. Donated to the group 40 years ago, it was in a state. Selling has allowed the Samaritans to buy the new headquarters.

"Just because we've moved doesn't mean we're not focused on Surbiton," added Susan.

A funding drive is under way to equip the new HQ. Details at [fundraising@kingstonsamaritans.org](mailto:fundraising@kingstonsamaritans.org)

Network Rail is aiding the charity's efforts at Surbiton station by printing the Samaritans' free-call number, 116 123, on the reverse of tickets.

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Gardening tips by Janice Cripps

## Keep an open mind at shows

There's so much to see at flower shows like Chelsea and Hampton Court that it pays to work out which aspects will interest you most. Will it be the show gardens? Pavilions displaying plants? Stands selling garden wares?

See a plant that you've just got to have? You're not alone. Each year the roads outside these events are full of people trying to get plants on buses, or through the roof of an open-top car.

Big shows have a plant crèche where you can leave plants and pick them up at the end. They also have nifty folding trolleys for carrying them. They're brilliant, once you've found who's selling them in the first place.

People buy plants that catch their attention, without thinking where they'll go. Will they go with other colours? Will they grow very big? Be wary of spontaneous purchases.

My biggest bugbear is camera crews. They always get the prime spots. That and celebs invited past the barrier into the garden to walk around and get in the way of my nice photos!

Be open-minded. There are good concept gardens – remember the Surbiton-designed Malawi garden at Hampton Court? It may not be practical for the UK, but it's the kind of thing

that informs opinion and is thought-provoking. Gardens aren't just a collection of plants.

They're evocative. They move you in some way.

Whether it's a Mediterranean garden where you can relax, or a jungly garden you feel secure in, they're as different as looking at paintings.

I enjoy show time; seeing trends and the new plants on the market, but it's remarkable how many designers use the same plants!

I know one designer at Chelsea who wanted a dozen foxtail lilies, and the nursery grew 500 so he could have a dozen perfect ones. The time and effort that goes into these gardens is extraordinary. Often they'll put something that flowers naturally in May with something that flowers in July – a tall order if you haven't got the services of a specialist plant supplier! So beware of flowers which appear to have come naturally into bloom for these events.

But above all, these shows will make you think: 'I must get into my garden.' And that's surely the most important thing.

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)



## Alan is top gardener

There was no sign of The Queen, and no one seemed too perturbed by the absence of Alan Titchmarsh, but the Maple Road flower show echoed the 'fringe' planting outside the posh shops of SW3 which coincides with the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Shoes at Last's Sarah Taylor persuaded everyone to become a gardener for the week with displays

from Cadogan Road to Westfield. "I thought it would be fun," she said. Natalie Kontarsky and Jenny Meers judged Alan Speight's cottage garden as Best in Show. Gold went to the horse trough outside Shoes at Last/The French Tarte; silver to Milena Sealtiel's creation at Gordon Bennett!; while the worthy bronze winner was Archie Arciero at Archies.



Small, cute and perfectly formed. But enough about Archie (above), bronze medal winner. Alan Speight's micro garden (left) at the corner of the town's converted original Congregational church won Best in Show at the enjoyable event dreamt up by Shoes at Last's Sarah Taylor, top

## School's links

A hands-on link between a Surbiton estate agent and school is proving mutually beneficial.

Humphrey & Brand, an independent in Brighton Road, backs events, to the unbridled joy of head David Gumbrell, who sees a value beyond mere finance.

Long Ditton junior school (as Kasim and Eleanor, right, can testify) has a new table tennis table and author visits thanks to the H&B support.

The estate agent backed the recent ball, funded by 70 parents each paid £10 to put up sponsored boards.

"That made the difference between doing it, and doing it well," said David. "They are genuinely interested."

Lisa Brand and Laura Humphrey, both Long Ditton residents and ex-Tolworth Girls, made the connection



with the school after valuing a house for a teacher.

"Running events would be harder without sponsorship," said David, an alumnus of St Andrew's & St Mark's primary, then Hinchley Wood School.

Author and illustrator Chris Mould is now a regular guest, and the sponsored table tennis table is a real hit. "I've suddenly got 100 kids who are keen on it. I can't beat them anymore," said the head.

The estate agent's window is a useful school art display case, while a summer cake sale is planned, using the wide pavement outside the office.

## Billy's southern cookin'

Surbiton's yee-haw campfire caterer Bluegrass Billy shops at Jennings and specialises in dishes such as this pulled Cajun chuck chilli, which he serves up with all the trimmings.

Billy, whose mother is American, takes orders via [www.bluegrassbills.com](http://www.bluegrassbills.com) to cater weddings, parties and barbecues.

"We spend a good portion of our lives eating and drinking and socialising, so it is important for our health and wellbeing to take time over this, and relax and enjoy the experience, like they do down south," reasons Billy, who cheerfully works anywhere within 70 miles of Surbiton.



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### Happy schooldays

I read with great interest your Good Life article on Allan Cuthbertson and showed it to my schoolfriend in St Albans.

We were both taught German up to O-level at Tiffin Girls from 1961-68 by his wife Gertrude. I continued with her to A-level.

She was an inspirational and memorable teacher; we both have great memories of her lessons and her dynamic

approach to teaching. She was also very wise and gave us advice and shared some of her viewpoints with us.

At the time, she didn't tell us she was married to such an illustrious actor, but I met her again in 1986 when I was expecting my second child and walking my Old English Sheepdog and a pram around Berrylands. She talked about Allan, showed interest in my teaching career and brought

round a present when my son was born; a book of Greek myths I still have.

Once I went back to work and the dog sadly died, I no longer ran into her around Berrylands, and regret not calling in at the house to say hello.

I would like her son to know what a soft spot many of us old Tiffinians have in our hearts for his mother's amazing teaching and personality.

Her enthusiasm for languages

is perpetuated in my family where my son achieved A\* in both French and German GCSE, and my daughter read French and Italian at university after taking French and German A-levels.

She was a wonderful lady; it sounds like together they made an impressive team.

**Christine Hale Berrylands resident, primary teacher, and ex-Tiffin Girl**

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The music strikes up before your grand entrance, and you wait to swan on to stage. The nail-biting tension is captured in this image of Surbiton cygnets from Dance Direction, founded in 2001 by Debby Tomlinson, which teaches students aged three to 80 at the Y and at a studio by the boxing gym at the Ewell Road railway bridge. This snap was taken at an Epsom Playhouse showcase where 220 performed. Visit [www.dancedirection.net](http://www.dancedirection.net)

## Magic photographs Not strictly

Animal magic is the theme of the photo competition at September's Surbiton Festival, with local snappers urged to capture insects, birds, foxes, squirrels, pet cats... or more exotic beasts. The competition is open to those with phones as well as those with flashier equipment. Surbiton Photo Circle is taking charge of the contest, which will see entries (A3 size) on public display. Local wildlife experts will judge pictures, such as this beautiful Surbiton starling, taken by Paul Hunter. Entry details in the next Good Life.



You can get trim for the summer and take part in some evocative dancing. And the only things you need are flat shoes and a love of Jane Austen. Mrs Bennet's ballroom dance classes at St Mark's hall in Church Hill Road run from 8-10.30pm, and the £5 fee includes a cuppa. No experience needed, partners provided if you're on your tod; simply wear something comfy. Next dates: June 8, June 22, July 6 and – on Sunday July 17 – a fully fledged dressy summer tea dance. There's always a welcoming atmosphere, and you can learn Regency dance steps and etiquette or sit and watch everyone else as you please. For more: [www.mrsbennet.co.uk](http://www.mrsbennet.co.uk)

## Rhyming's fun... just see what we've done

Silly rhymes can make learning fun, says Celia Osbourne of NumberWorks'nWords. "With this year's controversial Sats, you could be forgiven for thinking the fun's been sucked out of learning," she said. "Eleven-year-olds grapple with questions about clauses, adverbs and prepositions, while seven-year-olds are expected to be able to 'expand a noun clause'. She fears children's love of storywriting could vanish as focus shifts to grammar. The answer? Poems! "Use loads of rhymes while you cook or drive," she said. "Take inspiration from things around you. 'There's a fish on that lorry, and he's really very sorry because he left his favourite book, in the middle of a brook.' "Write them down or just enjoy the laughs. Children love coming up with their own silly poems." Other tips? Help children write. If your child has great ideas but

struggles to get them on paper, let them dictate. "It'll fire up their creative juices and they'll love hearing them read back." Inject a few adjectives and descriptive phrases to make it even better, draw story boards to plan via pictures. "We love tapping into what makes kids laugh whether it's silly stories, drawings or poems," said Celia. "Of course grammar is important, and we don't neglect it, but it's also about developing descriptions and vocabulary. It's more important to get them engaged, interested and having fun!" For a free assessment call Celia on 020 8399 1234 or book online at [numberworks'nwords.co.uk](http://numberworks'nwords.co.uk)

## A tennis bonanza

It's all happening at the Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club in Berrylands over the coming days as the pre-Wimbledon Aegon trophy is staged at the club. A host of big names are in action as players limber up for the All England Club by testing their skills on Surbiton's pristine grass surfaces. All 11 courts are in use, with the club's hard courts also being used for practising. Many big names have performed at Surbiton down the years at what is one of the country's most historic clubs. A little-known junior called Roger Federer took part in the 1990s. The great Fred Perry was a regular visitor, while Tim Henman, Boris Becker, Sue Barker, Stefan Edberg, Pat Cash and Billie-Jean King have also participated. Tickets are available by ringing 0844 581 1530 or visiting [www.surbiton.org](http://www.surbiton.org) The semi-finals are staged on June 11, with the women's and men's singles finals taking place on Sunday June 12.

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## Poetry evening? It could be verse

If you've ever felt moved to write poetry, here's your chance to share it with a sympathetic, supportive audience. The cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road is hosting an informal evening of verse on Friday June 10, from 7.30pm. Some of the distinctive stanzas of Surbiton poet and Good Life regular Morris Thain are included in the loose-knit programme, as are poems by other

Surbitonian versifiers Gill Davies and Simon Hancock. Bring your cantos along, and compere Tim Harrison – who also edits The Good Life – will find you a slot. The official themes of the evening are relationships, stormy weather and food, but you won't be excluded if your masterpiece falls outside that. The £4 entry fee includes cheese and biscuits, with the bar open too. Email [info@thecornerhouse.org](mailto:info@thecornerhouse.org)

## Band night

Musicians from the Cobham Band perform at St Matthew's church, St Matthew's Avenue, on the evening of Saturday July 9. The concert is dedicated to the memory of third cornet Wes Johnson, who died in December. The hour-long programme includes music from the film Saving Private Ryan and Arthur Sullivan's The Lost Chord. Free, 7.30pm start, retiring collection.



## Two guv'nors, three shows

Richard Bean's immensely successful play One Man, Two Guv'nors is being produced at the cornerHOUSE in Surbiton, with the experienced Maria Clinton in the director's chair. The play is an English adaptation of the 18th century Italian comedy Servant of Two Masters, transposed to Brighton in the early 1960s. A fast-paced theatrical juggling act centred on mistaken identity and confusion, it has been one of the biggest hits in the West End over the last five years... so it's something of a coup for the Green Theatre company to be able to stage it locally. The show runs from Thursday June 16 to Saturday June 18 at 7.45pm with tickets available in advance via [thegreentheatrecompany@gmail.com](mailto:thegreentheatrecompany@gmail.com) or by calling 07462 751682.

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For three months I have been training to walk 100k to Brighton for Cancer Research. Brush over the fact that I'm clearly bonkers, and focus on what I've learnt, pounding the pavements.

- The Surbiton/Kingston/Hampton Court loop is delightful. It's also almost exactly 10k, which is pleasingly neat. The towpath is perfect for a right old nose at the backs of houses in the private developments in Thames Ditton. It is also top and tailed by the opportunity for ice cream; the van on Hampton Court bridge, and the van in Kingston.
- Ice cream is crucial for any walk over 500m.
- There are parts of the towpath on the south of the river between Surbiton and Putney that are beautiful; Putney itself, Richmond, Hammersmith. However, there are parts that are heinous wastelands of tedium, between Kew and Twickenham Bridge. It is 4k of hedge, path, river, hedge, path, river, hedge, path, OH LOOK A BOAT, river, hedge, path, river. When you've already walked 30k from Waterloo (yes, that happened) and you desperately need visual stimulation to take your mind off the seeping pustules of hell that

are your feet, this is not a welcome stretch.

- The north towpath between Putney and Kingston is a veritable hotbed of undiscovered riverside pubs. If I have learnt one thing from my walking experience, it's that there are many, many pub crawls to be organised this summer.
- It is possible to get lost in Ham.
- Richmond Park contains some of the most unfriendly hillocks I have ever met. They stare you down as you approach them, beat you as you ascend, and call rude names after you as you stumble away from them. They are best avoided.
- You know the Leatherhead Road? That endless stretch of concrete on which you can watch your life pass before you and slip into a ditch by Chessington Garden Centre? You'd never want to walk it, right? Correct. I walked it. I became confused and frightened by the fact that it just wouldn't end. Every time I thought I'd crest a hill and see the glossy

shimmer of the M25, there was just more Leatherhead Road. I nearly queued to get into Chessington World of Adventures just for a change of scene. It took me an hour and a half from the Hook roundabout. No soul has ever been so delighted to see the M25. And my prize for walking the Leatherhead Road? Leatherhead.

- It is possible to stink out the 465 bus when one has walked from Surbiton to Box Hill on a hot day.

So, for anyone thinking of signing up to walk 100k, or wanting to spend more time trekking local paths, heed the advice above. Or just drive.

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## Meine damen und... heron



One of our younger readers took this picture of an elegant heron enjoying Claremont Gardens, restored by the Surbiton Wildlife Group's hard work.

Ingrid Smith, 12, from Norway was visiting her grandad Adrian Beales in Grove Road, and was on her way to the station when she spotted it.

"Maybe he's come to stay," said Ingrid. "The heron didn't seem bothered by us. We tried not to get too close, but it didn't seem like it would mind."

Ingrid visits as often as she can, "almost every holiday when mum and dad can come", and loves the place.

"Surbiton is great. It's by the Thames, so you can have a beautiful walk. I love how it's not in the middle of the big city, but still has shops and everything you need."

Of the effort to improve the once-neglected gardens she added: "The work done on Claremont Gardens is definitely worth it. There's a lot of wildlife for a small park. The heron was amazing, and I hope I'll see it again. My aunt works nearby, and she's seen it too. I've seen birds, squirrels and foxes, and the bug hotel is fun too."

## A tidy up

Volunteers are gathering to tidy up Surbiton's 'secret' woodland - Oakhill.

Tasks include picking up litter, repairing pathways, pruning and digging.

Surbiton Wildlife Group is co-ordinating efforts on Saturday June 11, with contractor Quadron providing a trailer to remove waste from the little-explored wildlife area behind Surbiton station.

"All equipment, gloves and tools will be provided, as well as drinking water," said Tom Hooker from the group. "Bring sturdy footwear, wear old clothes and sun protection, in case!"

Gather in the Oakhill woodlands between 10am and 2pm.



- Edward is the cup cake king of Surbiton after this decorating display at the town's food festival. Tina Morris, who chairs the local sugarcraft group, said after the club's first involvement with the event: "Everyone had fun, and our members enjoyed passing on their skills. We were impressed with the standard of the cupcakes." Interested in improving your sugarcraft? Surbiton's branch of the British Sugarcraft Guild next meets at 8pm on June 8 at the United Reformed Church hall, Elgar Avenue. Visit [www.region8bsg.co.uk](http://www.region8bsg.co.uk)

## MP's summit

A summit on homelessness organised by Surbiton MP James Berry has prompted a bid for funds to tackle local rough-sleeping.

He met council leader Kevin Davis and community and church groups after residents raised the issue. Half a dozen people beg regularly in the town centre, and the MP says local feeling is that the problem is getting worse.

The well-attended meeting prompted a lively discussion on the causes and possible remedies.

Now the MP will be setting up a working group to report back on the issues with a view to applying for available government aid.

"There is a perception that rough sleepers and homeless persons are on the rise locally," said Mr Berry. "It is not acceptable to me as the MP that this problem should be so pronounced in one of the more affluent parts of the country."

"In the budget, the chancellor announced £100m to help tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. I called this meeting to see how we can access these funds."

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If Surbiton, for auld lang syne,  
Could just decree, in voice all flirty  
That it had abandoned 30.

If it said the 20 limit  
Would apply to all within it,  
If a blanket zone applied  
To every car and van inside...

Wouldn't life be so much better?  
I would sing an arietta. **Morris Thain**

## The baffling new 20-yard zone



Surbiton's changing speed limits bewilder, but the newest sign has baffled even those who thought they'd seen it all.

It is a 30mph stretch which lasts for 20 yards... barely long enough to change gear.

Motorists in Maple Road are used to the 20mph zone. Now, when they reach the Brighton Road lights, they are given the all clear to speed up to 30mph for 20 yards, revert to 20mph (that's the sign, just beyond the junction) in Balacava Road, then almost immediately speed up to 30mph again. It's the same the other way, when traffic is made to do a rapid 30-20-30-20 quickstep.

To keep pace with Surbiton's bizarre quick-change zones you'd need a Porsche 918 Spyder. It's capable of 0-60 in 2.2 seconds, so might just be able to cope.

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