



Top cafe sweeps the board



MP Ed Davey praised Raj and Parvin Tank after Wags n Tales won, won... and won again at the annual awards bash. Turn to **p7**



... & there's more market glory

Robyn McAllister, Surbiton farmers' market charities manager (right), ought to keep an acceptance speech in her handbag! The award-winning monthly Maple Road event scooped top prize in the commitment to the community category at the 2018 business awards, with Jennifer Edwards from Kingston Uni doing the presentation honours. The market, now precisely nine years old, goes from strength to strength.

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Sparks fly as store gets the go-ahead

There was drama at a meeting to decide the future of a former garage in Raeburn Avenue.

Feelings ran high as residents, opposed to the plans to change the site into a 392sq m supermarket and four flats, shouted their objections from the public gallery.

One woman collapsed at the Dysart School hall where the Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee meeting was being held, after councillors voted in favour of supporting the three-storey building. The meeting was adjourned until paramedics arrived to attend to her.

Many opponents argued that only flats should be built on the Raeburn Autos site (recently a hand car wash). Others said the supermarket was too big in a residential area and would have a detrimental effect on shops in Alexandra Drive, as well as the local environment.

Alex Chapman, agent for the Kalmax Properties'

application, said the proposal would deliver a number of significant benefits including new homes, new jobs, an increase in footfall to assist with the "vitality and viability of the local centre" and an attractive and sympathetic new building.

Among the conditions imposed by councillors were restrictions on the opening hours – 7am to 10pm seven days a week – and limits on the size and frequency of goods vehicle deliveries, plus a stipulation that when the store is closed and the staff have left, the lights must be switched off to minimise light pollution.

Sainsbury's is said to be interested in the development. **Jane Grove**



A supermarket and four flats will be built on the site of Raeburn Autos



Who's at Last?

Where does The Doctor get her time-travel gear? Surbiton, of course! The top that Jodie Whittaker wore to plug the new Dr Who series came from Shoes At Last, Maple Road; one of the designer garments stocked in the boutique store. Full story on **p3**

The dream Xmas gift?

What do you get the Surbitonian who has everything? Simple! Buy them Surbiton station! Go to **p8** to purchase that iconic art deco look

Good Life on Instagram

If you use a smart phone you can now also get regular Surbiton news and updates in between Good Life publication dates. Follow @thegoodlifesurbiton on Instagram for all the latest



Surbiton Farmers' Market

3rd Saturday of the month
9am-1pm **Maple Road**

2019

Jan 19	Feb 16	Mar 16	Apr 20
May 18	Jun 15	Jul 20	Aug 17
Sep 21	Oct 19	Nov 16	Dec 21

SurbitonFarmersMarket.co.uk

In an act of urban mischief worthy of the artist himself, Berrylands station's sedate sign briefly became Banksylands, before rain washed it away



If the shoe fits...

A Surbiton man has sent 1,000 pairs of used sports shoes to children in Asia.

Steve Blevins set up Conversion to get shoes to Laos, and at half-term visited with son Arran and pal Lorcan Murphy, 11, from Shrewsbury House school.

By chance, Princess Beatrice was there, and met the trio. Steve cheekily asked for her trainers! Laotian children often play sport in bare feet, risking injury.

"The big challenge is transportation," explained Steve. "Seeing the difference a pair of shoes makes strengthens my resolve."

Head Kevin Doble said the school was "enormously proud".

Even the potholes have got potholes in forgotten Rectory Close, Long Ditton – the street which claims to be the most pockmarked of all. Neighbours hope a smidgen of Philip Hammond's promised £420m emergency resurfacing fund, announced in the autumn budget, might be diverted to filling the divots in their neglected cul-de-sac after years of fruitless campaigning to get the job done. Full story on **p10**



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Market is springboard for baking business

Surbiton's farmers' market is providing a springboard for the launch of trendy eateries.

Husband-and-wife team Adam Jones and Elyse Savage have just celebrated their first anniversary of the Lallapolosa Baking Company in Bloomfield Road, near the Surbiton/Kingston boundary.

The café-cum-bakery opened in November last year after the couple built a loyal following for their cookies and brownies among customers at the market, where they have run a stall since December 2009.

"I have now done more than 30 different farmers' markets and Surbiton's is the best," said

lifelong baker Elyse of Lovelace Road. "The first market we did was completely magical. It finally convinced Adam to let me try to turn my passion for baking into a business.

"It was December and it was a really snowy day and I had stayed up late baking the night before to get everything ready. I was so excited. We were so popular, we completely sold out and the feedback was fantastic."

In due course the Lallapolosa Baking Company was born and now occupies a former florist's opposite the Spring Grove pub.

It is the engine room of Elyse's creativity, with two ovens which not only produce her tempting

cakes and pastries to entice customers over the threshold of the rustic coffee shop, but also turn out showstoppers for birthdays, special occasions and celebrations.

"The date square is the most popular treat in Canada but no one is doing them here except me," said the 43-year-old Canadian as this reporter sunk her teeth into the aforementioned generously proportioned square, £2.25, washed down by a mugful of creamy latte, £2.60.

As well as serving delicious bakes, Lallapolosa also offers tasty sandwiches and bagels (from £5.75) and light lunches

(salads, quiche, jacket potato – freshly made and garnished from £6.95).

Lallapolosa also hosts parties, caters for corporate dos, runs cooking parties for children, and leads numerous baking courses including gingerbread house making (Dec 13), festive Christmas baking (Dec 20), and, coming up in the new year, truffle, pastry and tart workshops, and creating the perfect bundt cake.

Lallapolosa Baking Company: Monday-Saturday, 9am to 4pm; Sunday, 10am to 3pm. Tel: 020 3730 7314. Visit www.lallapolosabaking.co.uk

Jane Grove



Elyse Savage of the Lallapolosa Baking Co.

Awanish Roy, left, is crowned Surrey curry king by Pat Chapman



Living legend crowns Saffron Summer no1

The diminutive chef of one of the more intriguing restaurants in the Surbiton area has been crowned king by the author of the curry lovers' bible.

Awanish Roy of the 60-seat Saffron Summer at the Ace of Spades, was anointed by Pat Chapman, editor of the Cobra Good Curry Guide, celebrating excellence since 1984.

At a ceremony attended by The Good Life it was hard to tell who was more in awe of whom.

"For a start, this place is in an unlikely location," said Pat, glancing at the Shell garage across the Hook underpass and raising his voice over the traffic buzz. "You'd expect a menu like this in central London, but few do food this well in the suburbs!"

Awanish exudes pedigree, spending eight years honing his art at the acclaimed Cinnamon Club before decamping to Hook roundabout. Now he has been declared best curry chef

in Surrey, with a certificate to prove it.

"To me it's a great pleasure to see people not offering 'curry house food'," said Pat, an outspoken critic of dull restaurant fare. "I'm not being disparaging about other restaurants, but this is not really a 'curry house'."

Awanish returned the compliment. "We're very pleased – we're all very pleased. And this has been a chance to meet Mr Chapman, a living legend!"

Saffron Summer serves unlikely dishes; mixing experimental creations and authentic street food.

Awanish, executive chef and a business partner, began his training at the Delhi HQ of the Oberoi hotel chain – a seven-year apprenticeship where chefs start as kitchen porters before being entrusted with any cooking.

As well as Cinnamon Club, he has also worked at Roti Chai and Chai Ki.

To celebrate his coronation as top county chef, Awanish produced

an array of starters including mini spherical cauliflower bhajis, bhelupuri (multi-flavour savoury snacks) and golgappa (burst-in-the-mouth liquid-filled light pastries).

Main courses include wild boar vindaloo. Said Pat: "This is not the searingly hot vindaloo curry with potato aloo, swilled down with pints of lager at the curry house... no, Saffron Summer is as far removed from such establishments as is possible!"

Pat added that Awanish's kitchen produces better Indian food "than you'll find anywhere". Whew!

Saffron Summer, 4 Ace Parade, Hook Rd. 020 8391 4477. Visit www.saffronsummer.co.uk Tim Harrison

Daytime curries

The Surbiton curry house with the highest TripAdvisor rating, Doosra at 282 Ewell Road, has relaunched as a daytime cafe, Tues-Fri, noon-6.30pm, with Deliveroo home deliveries. Chef/owner Vinny Patel is also toying with starting specialised supper club evenings. Like other restaurateurs, Vinny laments the problems recruiting good chefs. www.doosra.kitchen

Italian with a twist

Maple Road, the go-to centre for high-end dining in the borough, gets a welcome addition to its range of choice with the arrival of Cento Uno.

The new restaurant, due to open in Feb/March is the brainchild of Sam Berry, the man behind gin bar cum restaurant No97 (next door) and One One Four in Teddington.

Cento Uno (101 in Italian) replaces Da Lucio, the popular pizzeria which closed suddenly in April.

"Maple Road is such a lovely road, it kind of made sense," said Sam who opened No97 two-and-a-half years ago, having managed bars in London. "It's always been an Italian, so why change the formula? And our executive chef is Italian."

"It's going to be a neighbourhood Italian-style, family-friendly, sensibly priced restaurant with a rustic feel – very similar to what was there but with our own twist. We are going to refurbish it, and make it look amazing. You only get one chance to do it so we want to do it right."

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We're so active

St Andrew's and St Mark's junior is officially the council's most active school, "putting pupil health and wellbeing at the heart of the curriculum". Olympic rower Charles Cousins helped present the award.



Track to be paved

The muddy track commuters made to cut the corner in Victoria recreation ground is to be surfaced, while paths that now circle the rec will be remade.

Watch the birdy

Surbiton birders (www.surbitonbirds.org) have a members' slides night at 7.30pm on Tues Dec 18 in the library hall, Ewell Road. Just turn up!

Souper fundraiser

Surbiton Labour Party's soup night raised £400 for Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. Organiser Kezia Coleman said: "KCAH needs volunteers to help run winter night shelters in the borough. Our members showed a keen interest in helping."

Red turning blue

The Red Rose, Brighton Road, is now painted blue. Gone are the Athenian murals (from its 1985 days as a Greek taverna); a 'rose wall' created instead.

Regency dancing

The Regency dance class at St Mark's church hall, Dec 12 at 8pm (beginners welcome, soft shoes, £5 incl tea) has a Christmas theme, practising steps ahead of an afternoon winter tea dance on Jan 20. www.mrsbennet.co.uk

New cafe

Another cafe choice, Surbeanton, arrives at 48 Victoria Road, the former Leon hair salon, providing fresh competition to near neighbours ExCellar and Soprattutto. Daily vegan meal choices have been promised.

Charity's event

A dinner dance at St Matthew's primary school hall, Langley Road, on Sat Dec 8 at 7pm will help the orphan support programme of Surbiton charity African Vision Malawi. A three-course meal is included in the £40pp ticket. Book via www.africanvision.org.uk

Egret is spotted

A rare great white egret swooped low over Effingham Road, reports Surbiton birder Paul Hunter. "Their range has been expanding," he said. He wasn't quick enough with his camera... but took this snap in Kent last year, of the bird, about the size of a grey heron.



Zebra may turn into a 'pelican'

A zebra crossing in Upper Brighton Road could change to traffic lights at a cost of £70,000 because drivers seem reluctant to stop. Around 1,000 cars an hour use the road, with the crossing near the Walpole Road junction busiest in commuter rush-hours. Cllr Malcolm Self called it an issue of concern when it appeared on the area neighbourhood committee agenda. "I've

stepped on to the crossing and have had to step back because, for some reason, cars don't see you; there's a subtle bend on the road," he said. Resident Isabel Porter said what troubled her was "foliage obstructing the signs". When Cllr Hilary Gander recently used the crossing, she was hollered at. "A driver



stopped abruptly, then shouted out of his window: 'You might at least say Thank you,'" she reported. In 2006, a crossing for cyclists and pedestrians was proposed, but abandoned due to the impossibility of widening the road. Councillors unanimously backed spending £70,000 on pedestrian-controlled lights, as well as raising the road level at the mouths of Walpole Road and Lovelace Road to help those with mobility issues. Locals, including the Southborough Residents' Association, will get a final say in a consultation exercise before work is started. **Tim Harrison**



Jo (right) hands over to Laura at Pickled Pantry

Cafe's new queen

As transitions go, it's been as smooth as the filling in the cakes. Laura Yearwood has taken on Pickled Pantry, the St Mark's Hill cafe created and built up over six years by husband-and-wife team George Setchell and Jo Venn. While George now focuses on accountancy and Jo runs catering firm Food by Jo, Laura - a wedding cake specialist - is the new queen of the Pantry, baking all the cakes. The 30-year-old, soon to take

maternity leave, is sticking to the formula which has built a loyal following, with new chef Rob Brooks running the kitchen. "I've always wanted to run a cafe," she said, "and this came up; it fits really well." She plans a gradual evolution in the menu, as well as a 'modest refurbishment' during Christmas week. Meanwhile Jo's catering business is taking off. "I miss the customers at Pickled Pantry," she said. "I thought that I was a hard worker, but Laura's pushed me off my perch!"

Dress like the stars

If you want to make a good impression in other galaxies, the obvious place to shop is Surbiton. Stylist to the stars Helen Sykes, who dresses celebs, went to Shoes At Last in Maple Road for the outfit the new Doctor, Jodie Whittaker, would use when promoting the latest Dr Who series. Helen, who works on TV ad campaigns and collaborates with leading fashion mags, wanted

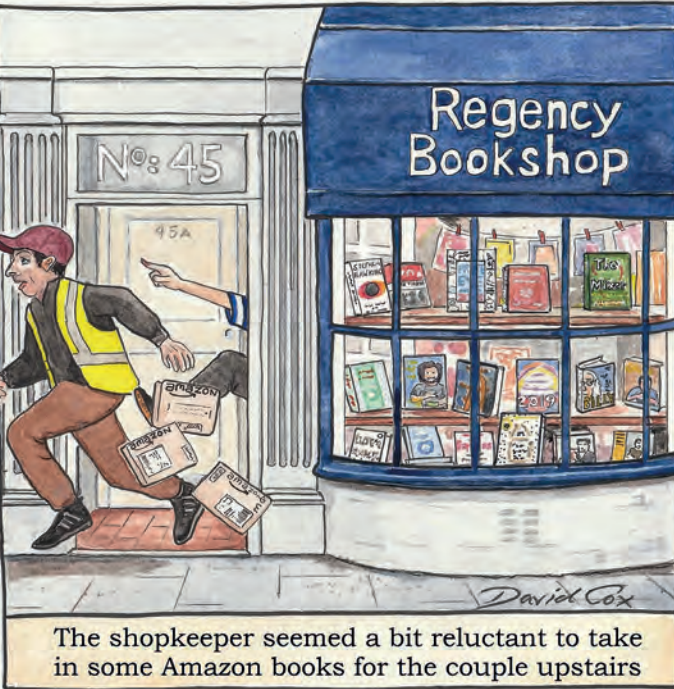
a stand-out garment for the new Doctor, and found just what she wanted at the boutique. Jodie Whittaker sported the cotton guinea fowl shirt in an interview with BBC Breakfast presenter Dan Walker before the premiere of the latest series. He tweeted afterwards: "What a laugh that was! Jodie Whittaker is hilarious, mad and wonderful, and I get the feeling she's going to make an amazing Doctor."



Sarah Taylor, who has been supplying customers with high-end clothing from her shop for 15 years, said: "It was great to see Jodie Whittaker on the TV full of fun, chat and laughter... just like the shirt she was wearing, a Gibson & Birkbeck cotton guinea fowl-motif shirt designed by talented artist Katie Gibson. Katie draws and paints birds, animals and plants by hand, then has them printed on to cotton." If you want to dress like The Doctor, you'll have to visit Shoes At Last with £85 in your purse.

Jane Grove

SURBITON LIFE by David Cox



The shopkeeper seemed a bit reluctant to take in some Amazon books for the couple upstairs

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Mr Green Fingers

The first celebrity gardener, half a century before Alan Titchmarsh or Monty Don, was Mr Middleton. His wartime radio show popularised 'Dig for Victory', launching suburbia's enduring love affair with the allotment.

Few of the 3.5 million Home Service listeners knew he even had a first name, but Cecil Henry Middleton's homespun advice and amiable tone made him the perfect choice to guide the back-garden growers keeping 1940s Britain in carrots and spuds.

Born on February 22 1886 in the village of Weston, Northants, the love of gardening came from his nurseryman dad John. By 17 he was in London, working first for a seed firm, then at Kew Gardens. At the outbreak of the First World War (and by then married to Rosa Jenkins) he landed a job at the Board of Agriculture before becoming Surrey County Council's horticulture instructor. The allotment council he set up named its top competition prize after him.

Cecil and Rosa were the first occupants of 17 Princes Avenue, round the corner from Tolworth Broadway, moving in the moment the semi was finished in 1927.

Needing someone to front a radio show,



the BBC asked the Royal Horticultural Society for ideas. The first try-outs sounded stiff and patronising... but not our Cecil.

His reflective, matter-of-fact delivery (and the odd dropped aitch) hit the mark. He made his debut on May 9 1931 with a 15-minute talk, *The Week in the Garden*. "Good afternoon. Well, it's not much of a day for gardening, is it?" he began, setting the self-deprecating tone. Until then, radio had used the likes of Vita Sackville-West to formally describe stately home gardens, rather than offer listeners practical tips.

Armed only with scribbled notes, Mr Middleton spoke to the nation, addressing his listeners as equals. At his peak he achieved the highest audience figures in broadcasting history.

Middleton had the gift of simplification – a prototype of the character Chauncey Gardiner from the Peter Sellers film *Being There*. Yet his 12 guinea fee per show wasn't paid into his Surbiton bank account, but to the council! No wonder he left to take a £1,000-a-year job with the *Sunday Express*.

In 1937, from a specially created plot at Alexandra Palace, he made television's first gardening outside broadcast, at a time when there were only 2,000 sets in the UK!

TV halted in wartime (Middleton was never on the box again), but his radio show was essential listening. To counter food shortages, he spearheaded *Dig for Victory*, achieving an incredible scale of planting. Parks were dug up, roundabouts sown, and food worth £20m a year was grown – the equivalent of £4.2bn today.

The critics loved him. Wilfrid Ley said he "assumes your soil is poor and your pocket poorer" and that "all he asks is that your hopes are high and your Saturday afternoons are at his service".

During the Blitz, Mr Middleton (who wore a suit and tie, even when digging) did a reading at a special service in St Martin-in-the-Fields, to bless allotments.

In his *Express* column, he wrote that "we can turn our gardens into munitions factories, for potatoes and other vegetables are munitions of war as surely as shells and

bullets". He advised: "Do not think of your allotment as an ordeal or a wartime sacrifice. Regard it as your pleasant and profitable recreation."

Yet for all the veg talk, he adored flowers. A colleague said he found vegetables "dull", adding: "He couldn't love an onion where a dahlia might grow." His own garden disappointed. Neighbours in Tolworth were amused that the man who lectured to the nation had bland plots, front and rear!

"Turn to the right of the Kingston By-Pass when you get to the Ace of Spades corner, and soon you will come to a quiet retreat of London suburbia known to the postman as Princes Avenue," one obituary would read. "Its gardens are kempt and gay... but the least kempt and gay of them all is No17, the house of the greatest and most famous gardener England of this century has known. Our Mr Middleton



17 Princes Avenue

never had enough time for his own small plot, which measured 50 yards!"

Bespectacled and receding, Middleton wielded power. A word on his weekend radio show would lead to mass buying on Monday mornings from seedsmen and sundriesmen – the garden centres of their day.

Ever understated, he rivalled Winston Churchill for bon mots. "Sow, grow, hoe, show, crow!" "How we should miss the poor old humble cabbage if we didn't have it." "There's no substitute for digging, or if there is I haven't found it." "An allotment is like the army; the first month is the worst, after that you begin to enjoy it." In the darkest days of war he said: "The harder we dig for victory, the sooner roses will be with us." But he also suggested "taking a day off from Hitlerism" to enjoy the summer.

The War Office didn't always approve.



Mr Middleton much preferred flowers to veg

He got into trouble when, commenting on a lime shortage, he told listeners not to worry as "the way things are going at the moment there will soon be plenty of mortar rubble about". He was right.

In autumn 1940 his Tolworth home was partly destroyed by a German bomb, and he had to move in with relatives until February 1942, when his semi was rebuilt.

Books became a further source of income. His 1941 bestseller was *Mr Middleton's Garden Book*, a vast 1,024-page tome. Quite what fellow Princes Avenue residents made of its forthright advice isn't known. "Having trouble with a neighbour?" Middleton wrote. "Hit him over the head with a spade!"

The following year, *Digging for Victory*, a wartime gardening book, became a self-sufficiency bible with instructions on what to plant and when to harvest.

After VE Day in May 1945, Mr Middleton urged his new army of garden converts to continue their efforts.

"We may have to change *Dig for Victory* to *Dig for Dear Life*," he said, as food continued to be rationed in post-war Britain. "Whatever we call it, we must not slack our efforts; the need for intense food production is more urgent than ever."

Four months later, Mr Middleton was dead; suffering a fatal heart attack as he closed his garden gate in Princes Avenue.

His last journey was from St Matthew's church; the hearse and limousines decked out with autumn flowers which had been sent by listeners from their suburban gardens across the land.

Mr Middleton died five months short of his 60th birthday, but his widow, Rosa, lived on – alone – in the house in Princes Avenue well into her 80s. **Tim Harrison**

● Cecil Henry Middleton, born February 22 1886, died September 18 1945

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Mr Middleton

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Residents create with paint and plastic bottles, and (below) how the 'poppies' turned out

Memory wall is a tribute to fallen

Painting poppies on the bases of 100 plastic bottles was one way residents of the Royal Star & Garter Home marked the Armistice centenary. The poppies were used on a 'memory wall', paying tribute to each resident at the Upper Brighton Road home who had passed away.

Raquel Pena Aristizabal, activities manager, said: "We wanted to remember members of our Armed Forces who lost their lives in the line of duty, as well as friends who lived with us here in Surbiton that are sadly no longer with us."

Residents have also been pictured in an RSGH Remembers campaign holding photos or medals of relatives who had served in the 1914-1918 conflict, as well as reciting poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy's poem The Wound in Time, written for the centenary and a part of The Pages of the Sea national commemoration led by film director Danny Boyle.

A Remembrance Day service with trumpeter and two-minute silence was held at the home on the day itself, while some of the home's Second World War veterans marched at the Cenotaph parade in Whitehall.

The charity was founded in 1916 to care for severely injured young men returning from the battlefields. The Great War, which lasted for four years, claimed the lives of more than 886,000 British military personnel.

● Watch the residents' recital: www.vimeo.com/297928727

Surbiton remembers

More than 1,000 people gathered at Surbiton war memorial for the open-air remembrance wreath-laying service on the centenary of the day that the Great War guns fell silent.

Officiating was the Rev Stan Brown from the nearby Surbiton Hill Methodist Church. "We meet together today to remember those who have died in the two world wars, and other conflicts since," he said, after the National Anthem was sung, with musical accompaniment from the Royal British Legion youth marching band.

Deputy mayor Cllr Olivia Boulton delivered a Bible reading and – after the Last Post was played on a bugle – the minute's silence was scrupulously observed.

Traffic was diverted during the half-hour service in Ewell Road, beside the library, and buses were made to wait until after the final blessing before resuming their journeys.

A young band member read a poem, Taking a Stand by an Afghanistan conflict veteran, before the final hymn, O Valiant Hearts.

More than 20 wreaths were laid, including one from the deputy mayor on behalf of all

Surbiton residents. Local MP Ed Davey, past mayors, the British Legion, girl guides and others then laid wreaths as well.

Worshippers were served tea and coffee in the church afterwards, where they were able to see a display of First World War memories and memorabilia collected by parishioners.



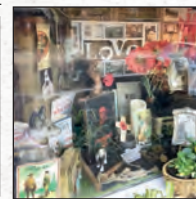
Ewell Road, above, was packed



Derek Hirst, 92, who served on the Arctic convoys in the Second World War, laid a wreath to his comrades... and respectfully saluted

Planted to honour lost sons

Surbiton's war memorials include this line of chestnut trees in Alexandra rec, planted in memory of local sons who never returned from the Great War. Of the 44 century-old trees, 37 survive. Another natural memorial is the long line of trees on the A3, near Kingston Vale, planted in the 1920s. It was an idea borrowed from the Australians, who created tree-lined streets as perpetual tributes to the fallen.



● The Fircroft Trust charity shop window in St Andrew's Road is full of First World War memorabilia, including a trench whistle, and photos of assistant manager Debra Harrop's relatives who served. Many objects are now for sale. The trust aids those with mental health issues.



● Cosy winter evenings loom at the Black Lion pub at the corner of Brighton Road and Maple Road. A vast tented roof has created a heated outdoor room, pictured, with three large TVs for watching sport. This year, for the first time, landlord Mark Sheehy is serving Christmas lunch on the day itself. Strictly limited to 40 people, with turkey, roast beef and veggie options, the meal is £49.95pp including bubbly. 020 8399 8856.



● Two of Surbiton's oldest, cutest cottages have new owners, sold by Seymours for £475,000-£500,000 each. Dover Cottages (originally four, with a fifth added) pre-date railway and water works. Dating from 1820, the homes stand where Seething Wells Lane meets Brighton Road. They were built on a plot of land stretching down to the Thames at the same time as two brick cottages in Portsmouth Road – next to the Majestic Wines car park.

Smile! Waitrose to clock your plates!

Surbiton's largest free car park will soon be able to monitor and record number plates, to time your stay to the second.

Waitrose has applied to site cameras at the entrance and exit of its car park, to replace the hi-viz attendants who currently determine whether you've overstayed the two-hour limit.

The Claremont Road supermarket is being coy about when the change will happen.

Waitrose & Partners told The Good Life: "We're not making any changes at this time, but we have submitted a planning application for an automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system, to understand if this might be an option in the future to help us improve how we manage the car park."

Britannia Parking Group runs the operation at present, with drivers free to use the 214 spaces whether or not they shop at Waitrose.

It could be the prelude to mimicking Sainsbury's, which begins charging drivers who use its 210-space car park after 30 minutes.



Waitrose declined to comment on the use to which collected number plate information would be put.

Council officers were due to approve the ANPR camera application on November 21. Permission was needed as it falls within Surbiton town centre conservation area.

The angled cameras will be 16ft above the ground, on existing lampposts, coated in anti-climb paint to prevent tampering. Both 'in' and 'out' cameras will be near the entrance, by the clocktower.

Britannia Parking says the car park is 'primarily' for Waitrose, although the original agreement said it was to be a public area, open to all cars.

The planning application was lodged by Richard Dance, Waitrose's retail change project manager.

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Vegetables in season:
Broccoli, cauliflower, all types of baby carrots, parsnips and baby parsnips, brussel sprouts, sprout stalks, brussel tops and swede

Looks like curtains

There's apparently no risk of the borassic Guildhall squandering your council tax on such frippery as curtains.

When members of Surbiton's historical society met in the Queen Anne suite (while their usual venue, Surbiton library hall, was being renovated) they were mightily intrigued by the state of the drapes.

Ripped, torn and threadbare, they hung in frayed array at the windows.

"They look like those tattered surviving flags from the Battle of Trafalgar that you sometimes see in museums," said one visitor.



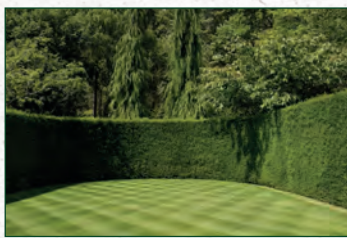
Don't fret if your view is spoilt by a gap. Janice Cripps looks at the options

Screen test? Yes, it's all about yew

Horror of horrors, my neighbour has chopped down a large tree in his garden and now I'm looking at an ugly garden shed and washing line from my living room! My beautiful view is ruined. What can I do?

How do you create a green screen which is stylish, practical and space efficient? It's easy to plant a depressing coniferous hedge which grows to humongous proportions, but I doubt your neighbour would appreciate it. While you want a tree or shrub which is fast growing, this is often horticultural code for fiendishly invasive or high maintenance. So, check the species you choose is right for the growing conditions and will behave.

A much maligned screening plant is bamboo because its rhizomes can quickly spread five or six metres underground and pop up in neighbouring gardens. But if you choose a clump-forming bamboo like *Fargesia Murielae* you will find it very well-behaved. It grows



A yew hedge can be a natural screen

in tight clumps and flops gently outwards. The Japanese often clip it into attractive mounds which look particularly good after a shower of rain. It can also make an attractive focal point if you have an exotic planting scheme.

For screening along a boundary, a formal clipped hedge may be the answer. One favourite is yew which, if trimmed annually, can be maintained as a tight slim hedge.

I also love Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*) with its glossy dark green leaves and maroon stems. It's easy to train and looks good all year, even as a single specimen, but

don't confuse it with its cousin the larger-leaf cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), a brute by comparison.

If you don't have the space for a hedge, plant climbers on a fence, or custom-made screen/trellis. The garden designers' all-time favourite is evergreen jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*), suitable for sun and partial shade. Its perfumed white flowers are a delight in summer and its autumn colour can be stunning.

As with trees and shrubs, check the variety so you know how it will behave. Take honeysuckle (*Lonicera*). If I wanted one to grow on my garden fence, I might choose *Lonicera 'Rhubarb and Custard'*; small, compact and just the right height. For a more demanding job, covering an ugly shed, say, I'd go for the fragrant, irrepressible *Lonicera japonica 'Halliana'*. It would do the job, and then some. As long as I didn't get tangled up in the process!

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

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



Royal Star & Garter residents receive 1,000 tulip bulbs from Squire's Right: The home's garden

Thoughts of spring

Gardeners at Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter home have been out with trowels after the gardening club was given 1,000 tulip bulbs. Volunteers and residents of the Upper Brighton Road home helped plant up their well-tended garden.

Squire's plant manager Sandy Cooley-Brown, from the centre in Woodstock Lane North, Long Ditton, said: "The Royal Star & Garter Homes is our chosen charity for the year so we wanted to give these bulbs. We're looking forward to coming back in the spring to see the beautiful colours on display."

Surbiton home manager Chrissie Heyes said: "Residents love spending time in our beautiful garden, and thanks to this generous donation they will have even more to look at and enjoy in the spring."

It is the latest gift from the garden centre to the home which cares for military veterans and partners living with dementia or disability. In August, Squire's donated two barrels filled with flowers to celebrate the Star & Garter's fifth anniversary.

Pic: Lynch Robertson



The flame trees of KT5 & KT6

Stunning autumnal colours in The Crest (main pic) and in a front garden alongside Long Ditton Infant and Nursery School in Ditton Hill Road (inset). Apparently, the brighter and colder the season, the redder the leaf colours become.

Modest budget boost

The town's small business champion, the Surbiton Business Community, has cautiously welcomed news of a reduction of a third in business rate bills, announced in the Chancellor's budget, a move affecting 500,000 high street shops with a rateable value of under £51,000.

"A cut is welcome, but they are a blunt fundraising instrument as they take no account of a business's turnover or profitability," said SBC chair David Randall.

"Many profitable businesses pay no business rates at all as they are not named tenants. A fairer system would be based on passing a share of corporation tax to local government."

Patricia Harris, Kingston Uni's associate professor of marketing, said the cut "will be very beneficial for small independent retailers which compete with online providers; those who specialise in toys, high-quality clothing and antiques, for example".

She added: "Small service providers such as hairdressers and pubs don't compete with online channels anyway, so they will benefit too. Napoleon called us a nation of shopkeepers but we're not going far enough to defend this."

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'Lake Balaclava'

Draining 'Lake Balaclava'

Lake Michigan, Lake Superior... and now Lake Balaclava. Not officially recognised on maps, but appearing every time there's a serious downpour... a vast expanse of undrained water in the heart of Surbiton.

And it's a real hazard. Anyone attempting to use the pavement at the roundabout by the St James estate risks a drenching if a K3 zips through the watersplash.

Finally, Kingston Council and Thames Water may be doing something about it.

At present, after heavy rain, the stretch of Balaclava Road alongside the Victoria rec floods, often from kerb to kerb.

Pedestrians negotiate it with trepidation. As your Good Life reporter walked along the road just after the last heavy rain, a dog-walker was drenched by a passing car.

"I've heard of that happening to another woman today in Ewell Road," said a Kingston Council highway maintenance man, dealing with the 'Balaclava basin'. "We often get called

out here when there's a lot of rain. There are two drains, one each side of the road by the lampposts, but they are both blocked with mud. There is nowhere for the water to go. Really it's Thames Water's responsibility.

"We were also called out to Surbiton Crescent where there was a lot of water around the drains; but that was just leaves blocking them, not mud."

Thames Water said it was responsible for the sewers, but not the drains that fed them.

"We're due to go and check the surface water sewer along this road in the next few weeks, so until that job has been completed we couldn't say if it's blocked or not," the Good Life was told. "Until we've completed our investigation we wouldn't speculate on where the problems lie; our sewers don't tend to get blocked with mud though."

A spokeswoman for Kingston Council said it was in discussion with Thames Water to try to resolve the issue. "We are working alongside Thames Water to ascertain the cause of the flooding at this location," she said. "If any surface water flooding occurs on this road it needs to be reported to Thames Water on 0800 316 9800."

Jane Grove

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Carol singalong

Enjoy mulled wine, mince pies and singing? A community carol evening, 6pm on Mon Dec 17 at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, is led by the St Matthew's church choir. Entry free. Followed by the monthly social.

Encore for Toby Jug

If you missed hearing Good Life editor Tim Harrison's recent talk to the local history society on the intriguing tale of the Toby Jug pub... you have another chance. The pub stood next to Tolworth's bowling alley from 1934-2002, and the talk takes place 200 yards from the site, at Tolworth Library, 37 The Broadway, 5.30pm, Fri Nov 30. Just turn up. Free.

Tower to be rent-only

Not one of the 239 new flats in the soon-to-be refurbished Tolworth Tower will be sold... all will be rented.

Investment firm Meadow Partners now owns the landmark, built in 1964 and bought out of receivership this year. The price? "Tens of millions."

All windows in the 22-storey block are being replaced, with fresh ceramic tiles giving its shabby appearance a lift.

Renting is, apparently, the new buying. 'Co-living' furnished apartments (with 24-hour concierge, wifi and possibly a restaurant near the top) are aimed at millennials struggling to get on the housing ladder. The trend, popular in the US, is spreading to London.

Mark Ghandhi, vice president of Meadow Partners, said: "We are stripping the

building back to the frame; it will look new from the outside."

The aim is to create a tower community and, as a result, improve the night-time economy of the Broadway.

There will be a mix of one, two and three-bed flats to rent, with an emphasis on the smaller sizes.

There will be 55 car park spaces (there'd have been more if M&S had been persuaded to move further along the Broadway – the store refused), plus seven disabled bays. A fifth of the car spaces will have electric charging points, and there will be car club bays. There will also be 365 secure cycle spaces.

Post-Grenfell, only non-combustible cladding will be used, and each flat will have sprinklers.

Tim Harrison

Shawn has space aim

An 11-year-old film star hopes to visit Saturn!

Lime Tree primary pupil Shawn Sequeira, of Ewell Road, is one of eight kids helping mark the 150th anniversary of the Royal National Institute of Blind People in a film which encourages everyone to see the person, not the sight loss.

Shawn, visually impaired after being born prematurely, says he'd like a swimming pool.

But what will Shawn do? "When I grow up I want to be a maths teacher," he said. "It's my favourite subject and I am good with numbers, so I would love to teach it to children."

He has it all planned! "In the future I would like to have two children and live in a house that is big enough for my whole family. I think we'll have cars that can talk to us, so blind people can drive as well as those who can see."

"We will be able to go to space, which will be good as I'd like to visit the planet Saturn."

Shawn, who recently started receiving support from the RNIB, congratulated the charity on its 150th birthday, but laughed: "I can't imagine being that old!"

Eleanor Southwood, RNIB chair, said the anniversary was a chance to look to "a world free of barriers for people with sight loss". She added: "With the future in the hands of children like Shawn, I know we can do it." Watch Shawn at www.rnib.org.uk/150

Wild West myths

The secrets of the Wild West saloon were revealed by Trevor Strong, speaker at Surbiton Historical Society's recent gathering. A glass of whisky (so rough it was known as coffin varnish) cost the same as a gun cartridge... hence the term 'shot'. Spittoons abounded, but the swinging bat-wing doors beloved of Western films were sadly, said Trevor, a total myth.



Wags tops awards

Surbiton cleaned up at the Royal borough's business awards, with Brighton Road cafe/bar Wags n Tales winning a trio of first prizes; best independent retailer, best marketing and best hospitality and food excellence.

Parvin and Raj Tank will need a new trophy cabinet after the black-tie knees-up on Raven's Ait. "We're delighted," said Raj of a business which trades on dog-friendliness, meat-free cooking and top green credentials.

Best new start-up was A&G Corporate Travel of Claremont Road, with Dotwise (see p8), also of Claremont Road, the customer service winner. Commendations went to Revive, Brighton Road; Story Storks, Victoria Road; Super Sitters, Ravenscar Road; Rock and Rose Photography, Brighton Road; and Holiday Inn of Portsmouth Road.

After the farmers' market was declared top in 'commitment to the community', Robyn McAllister praised "the amazing volunteers, stallholders and shoppers" for making it possible. In nine years it has raised £60,000 for good causes and local charities.

But the night belonged to Wags n Tales. "We love hearing that pet owners can't walk past Wags... they get pulled in, literally, by their dogs," said Parvin.

The cafe's mood shifts through the day; from daytime coffee to business lunches, to an afternoon rendezvous and evening speakeasy, with Surbiton's latest licence.

"We thought we had a chance in one award, but to win three is amazing," said Raj. "Customers say that we've influenced the high street to such an extent that now most businesses in Surbiton are dog friendly!"

Concealed box the 'key' to car theft

A device found in a front garden reveals a worrying new trend in attempted car theft in the Surbiton area.

Hidden in a flowerbed, pointing towards the front door, the 6in by 4in box disguised with artificial grass was being used to capture the signal from a remote car key lock.

Police have taken it away for forensic checks. "It was set to steal the signal from the key which opens and starts

the engine in cars with remote keyless ignition," said a neighbourhood watch spokesman. The householder kept watch and, after dark, two men were spotted, searching the flowerbed. The resident dialled 999... but it was not deemed an emergency.

Fobs for keyless ignition cars should be stored in a metal container so the signal can't be copied. Signal-blocking 'pouches' are available for under £10.

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Six great examples of independent businesses in the Surbiton area

Clare Mannall will take the stress and worry out of your business. The bookkeeper (Institute of Certified Bookkeepers top student in 2014) gives you time and space to grow your business, relieving you of the burden of filling in pesky tax returns, among other things.

"Many small and medium-sized businesses don't have their own accountants, so they employ me," said Clare, who set up the Tolworth-based CEM Bookkeeping and Consultancy Services four years ago. "I help them manage their cash flow, budget, forecasting, that sort of thing – I can even chase up payments from their customers."



Clare said most people weren't experts in finance, and a helping hand can steer them right.

"People worry about HMRC, how their business is doing, how much tax they owe and if they have enough in the bank," she said. "They spend time faffing about doing their finances, or putting it off. I know what I'm doing, and can sort out their finances. I can give them the time and freedom to get on and do what they're actually good at, and what they went into business to do."

Clare also helps with day-to-day invoicing, VAT returns, reconciling bank statements, account management and setting them up digitally.

Four years of hard work has seen a growing clientele of local businesses seeking out the expertise of Clare, who works from her home.

"I am really interested in being local, helping local companies and small businesses and sole traders to really succeed and make sure they have the information that helps them make useful decisions to develop and grow their business," she said.

For details of the full range of financial services which Clare offers visit www.cembusiness.co.uk or email clare@cembusiness.co.uk

It's anything but a hidden gem to those in the know in Berrylands, but it's not as well known to the wider Surbiton public.

CF & MC Stear, the greengrocer and fruiterer of 155 Surbiton Hill Park, is a local legend... a proper, old-fashioned shop full of quality produce which Martyn buys fresh at New Covent Garden.

His dad, Charlie, opened the business in 1962 with his wife, Amy. The couple met after Charlie had rescued her from beneath a pile of rubble during the Second World War!

On Charlie's death, Martyn took over – but the old man still keeps a watchful eye, looking down from a photograph in the shop.

"Mum and dad started it, and I've taken it on over the last 10 years," said Martyn, who – with his close-knit team – always have time for a friendly word.

As well as the shop, the Stears run a thriving wholesale business, supplying restaurants, coffee shops and curry houses in the area. There are also free local deliveries to customers.

"I'd say 70 to 80% of the business is now wholesale," said Martyn, who operates from a 'man cave' in the shop's garden.

The greengrocer's uses paper bags, but most customers simply hold



open their shopping bags to be filled in the traditional way. "It's a nice life; I love it," says Martyn, who is completely at home getting up in the small hours to go to market.

The shop is now in full Christmas swing, with trees, festive wreaths and all the veg for the big day itself.

CF & MC Stear, 155 Surbiton Hill Park, Berrylands

Hidden in plain sight in the heart of Surbiton, the buzzy, busy Sweat Society is in the middle of the high street, between the Nationwide and the Oxfam Shop.

Formerly the hot yoga centre, it has been run by James King and his fiancée Georgia Ray since May 2017.

"I love it," said Georgia. "It's long hours, but we're very lucky with the staff we've got."

From HIIT (high-intensity interval training) to yoga (still the core business), total body workouts to 'sweat' sessions where the heat is turned up to 42°, there are classes to suit everyone. Numbers are capped at 16 in the main studio, but class sizes are usually around a dozen. There is also one-to-one personal training and TRX suspension training is increasingly popular, where your own body weight is harnessed to tone, build, burn and strengthen. In all, more than 30 classes are run every week, among them vinyasa yoga sessions, using breath-synchronisation.

As well as male and female changing rooms and showers, Sweat Society has its principal fitness studio, a therapy room and a reception/seating area.

Sweat Society's introductory offers let newcomers see how they like it before committing. Free water bottles and T-shirts are often handed out.

Early-bird discounts for the 2019 membership deal apply from December, costing £65 per month and including all classes and workshops... with no contract.

Members have access to an online portal to book, log in, chat to other members and find recipes, as nutrition is increasingly important as a factor in fitness and well-being.

Sweat Society, 60 Victoria Road, Surbiton KT6 4NQ. 020 8399 0220. www.sweatsociety.co.uk



The ultimate gift for the Surbiton commuter in your life? A model of the iconic station they traipse to and from every weekday... or even a scaled-down replica of that other local landmark, Tolworth Tower.

They have become, respectively, a letter rack and set of bookends, cut to order from sheet steel by Nick John and Molly Wilson of Windmill Lane, Long Ditton. The couple, collectively Wilhon Design, had a stall at the Surbiton Festival, selling stations and towers as well as postcards and arty screenprints of local locations – some recognisable, some obscure.

"The station letter rack was John's idea," said Molly, generously. The metal designs cost £27.95.

One of her more unusual screenprints, also on sale at the festival, is of a bland, low-rise, utterly unremarkable block of 1960s flats in Maple Road. At first it's difficult to work out why anyone would bother glancing at it, let alone producing a colourful art print of it. Yet it neatly sums up suburbia, and is,

in its way, every bit as powerful as Surbiton's more recognisable buildings.

Everything is finished and packaged at home. Further ideas are in the pipeline. "We both like modernist architecture and simple, functional, elegant design," said John. Visit www.wilhon.co.uk for more information.



I absolutely love my job, said Jo Fitzgerald as she deftly wielded her scissors bringing life back to my flat-as-a-pancake hair. "I am probably one of those rare people who can say I absolutely love my job – and I love my clients too."

And Jo's clients love her back. Julie Pirgon, who had just dropped by to talk shopping with two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Hannah in tow (also one of Jo's adoring clients), said the hairdresser was always funny and lifted everyone's spirits.

"It's uplifting when you come in here," she said. "You always go out feeling better than when you came in. It's like coming in to see a friend."

Jo has been cutting the locks of the good folk of Berrylands and Surbiton at the Hair Salon in Chiltern Drive (just up from Berrylands railway station) for the past 20 years.

"It's a bit like a madhouse in here as I'm so busy," laughed Jo, "but it is great to have so many loyal customers and families over the years."

Jo's clientele extends from very young to very old – both men and women. "I get a lot of teenage girls, and a lot of male clients too," she said.

She even has clients coming from as far afield as Sussex and Woking.

"A lot of people say it's not like coming to a hairdresser's – they feel like they are coming for a bit of entertainment," said Jo, who confessed most people hear her before they see her!

Dry cut £19; wet cut £23; cut and blow dry £29; wash, cut, highlights, blow dry £70; tint, cut and blow dry £59; cut and perm £59; men's cuts £13; children from £7.

Phone **07886 178691** for an appointment.



Gordon Smith helps businesses to be found – found, that is, on Google.

"It's as simple as that," said the director and search engine optimisation specialist at his office opposite Waitrose in Claremont Road. "I use tools and techniques learned over the years to bring companies to the top of internet searches – so potential clients will find them first."

Gordon, who started Dotwise in 2012, works with a range of businesses, from gym installers to bathroom specialists, blind fitters to homewares. There's a cook hire company, e-commerce clothing and art sites, a landscape gardener... the list goes on.

"We usually work for 50-people or less sort of businesses who don't have their own web specialist on the payroll," he explained.

Gordon said the digital marketing company didn't have a blanket approach. "We tailor our service to their needs. Some of our customers are tech-savvy, but others are non-technical and want to focus on running their business, leaving all of the web side of things to us."

Colleague Ros Rowlett looks after the digital advertising side of the business.

"Ros and I work together to make sure they appear at the top of the page whichever way," said Gordon.

The five-person strong team can also retarget ads to make sure customers are reminded of potential purchases; develop, update and maintain websites or build them from scratch; and create a social media presence for companies.

"Whatever works for them," said Gordon. "Their success is our success – it's ongoing and mutually beneficial. We get together and come up with new ideas to make our customers' businesses fly." Visit www.dotwise.uk or phone 020 8399 4920.



Are you a home trader? Do you run a business that's a 'hidden gem'?

To help get you noticed, without breaking the bank, visit: www.surbitonbusiness.com



Bringing order to Surbiton: declutterer Katrina Hassan

The joy of socks

It's not every day a woman I've never met pops up to my bedroom to rummage through my underwear.

But it isn't every day I confront the need to declutter.

Katrina Hassan, of Maple Road, is a professional declutterer. With national decluttering week looming, I'd been instructed to assemble clothes in segregated heaps, a starting point rightly dubbed 'the shock of the pile'.

I'd no idea I even owned 20 pairs of shorts until I saw the mini-mountain.

I expected decluttering to involve a brutal interrogation about why I felt the need for five striped ties when one would do, but it isn't like that at all. Katrina, a 34-year-old mother of two, uses a technique called 'spark joy' – devised by Japanese tidier Marie Kondo. You assess whether each item you own fills you with pleasure (fold, keep) or not (add to charity shop bag). She is one of 16 certified consultants in the UK using the technique.

After an hour or two of sifting, her catchphrase was: "Have you got any more laundry bags? This one's full!"

I filled nine – NINE – large sacks with clothes I didn't need or wouldn't wear again. The clothes I have left are in an order they've never before

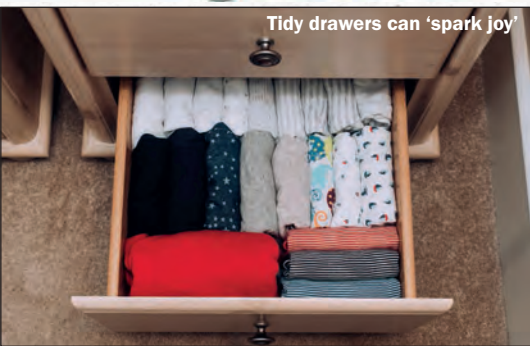
known. Shirts are colour co-ordinated and face the same way. Pants are rolled, snugly fitting in half the space they once occupied. I have a bird's eye view into each drawer and I'm almost dragging complete strangers in off the street to admire my socks.

A qualified teacher who has made Surbiton her home, Katrina discovered 'spark joy' three years ago. It's a cousin of minimalism (which is simply having less), but it's more about determining whether you still have an emotional bond to clothes in your cupboard. "It's a positive process," she stressed... and she's right. Although she put me under no pressure to get rid of things, I found myself questioning the need to own more than I required.

Rather than decluttering room by room, Katrina's technique involves reducing by category with a pre-determined order of approach. "Once you're through, your home should be tidy for a lifetime, and it makes you a more conscious consumer," she said.

Katrina practises what she preaches. "I wasn't a hoarder, but I had too much stuff," she said. "It felt like a weight. Once you start this therapeutic process, you no longer feel weighed down by your stuff."

Katrina likens her role to that of a personal fitness coach – a good



Tidy drawers can 'spark joy'

comparison. She has had success decluttering schools and businesses as well as individuals, and it's catching. Her two-year-old son now appreciates that each owned object has a rightful place.

The trickiest category, which comes towards the end of the tidying process of reducing clothes, books, papers, kitchen equipment, toys etc, is 'sentimental items'.

Katrina cheerfully admits she still has her childhood teddy ("I'm just not ready to part with Kally Baba yet!"), so there is room in this 'less is more' universe for objects that give pleasure... even pleasure that might seem irrational to an outsider.

"My job is guiding the client about what they want to keep," said Katrina, whose Surbiton business has 21,000 Instagram followers. "I'm not a therapist. It's the client's own therapy!"

If tidiness and order come naturally, you can probably look after yourself. But if you fling balled-up socks into drawers, avoid opening cupboards because things might fall out, or you squirrel stuff away rather than confronting decisions on their future use, you may need assistance.

The benefits of a thorough declutter include 'increased creativity, a calmer mind, more productivity and better time management'.

Me? I feel lighter than air, and can't pass my sock drawer without admiring the look. **Tim Harrison**

www.sparkjoylondon.com

Guides plant bulb after bulb

To mark the centenary of the 1st Long Ditton guides, the girls joined forces with Elmbridge Council to plant near Manny's shop.

Hana Mornati, eight, and Annabel Heptonstall, nine, right, from 2nd Hinchley Wood brownies, bounced on their 'pogo' planting tools to drill holes. Parental weight was needed to pierce hard ground on the verges around Rectory Lane and Sugden Road.

"It's shoots up, roots down," instructed the

experts as bulb after bulb disappeared beneath the surface.

Fay Tiplady, a 1st Long Ditton guide leader, said the effort was "part of our 100 years of Long Ditton guiding celebration".

As well as the planting, tea and soft drinks and cakes were served to the workers from a table outside Manny's.

1st Long Ditton guides meet on Wednesdays at Long Ditton St Mary's School in Sugden Road.



Hackles raised over permit parking scheme

Opinion among residents was passionate and divided, but in the end councillors approved a permit parking area in and around Browns Road.

Councillors heard from Browns Road resident Eleanor Porter who had organised a petition which had instigated the latest consultation over the parking problems in the area. To illustrate how difficult it was to park, she told the committee it had recently taken her 40 minutes of driving around the whole area one lunchtime trying to find a parking space, with her one-year-old son in the back of her car.

In the end, Tony Viva of Browns Road Garage came to her rescue, allowing her to park at the garage.

"Commuters are a part of the problem, but they are by no means the sole cause of this problem," explained Eleanor.

She said workers from Millbank House, people visiting the shops and restaurants in Ewell Road, and people parking for the adult education centre in King Charles Road added to the congestion.

With 49 flats to be built on a site in nearby South Place, the problem

would only get worse.

A number of residents voiced their opposition to the proposed scheme, shouting from the public gallery to demand where they would be able to park for free.

One took the microphone to address the councillors, saying she thought a zone would just displace the problem rather than solve it.

"It's not going to fix the problem; it's just going to make the problem get bigger and bigger and you'll pay £90 [for a permit] to not even be guaranteed a parking space.

"I personally think it is a waste of money and a waste of time. It's also going to ruin my friend's business."

Tony Viva said it would pose problems for his garage and his customers.

"I really feel it is going to impact me," he said.

He also said the cost of parking permits was ridiculous, setting him back £1,500 per year.

He asked the council to keep the parking bays near the police station at the Ewell Road end of Browns Road unrestricted.

Councillors voted in favour of implementing the permit parking scheme on a Monday to Friday basis between 11am and 2pm in Browns Road, Warwick Grove, South Place, Mayberry Place and King Charles Crescent.

Beaconsfield used as a 'park and ride'

A petition to introduce a residents' parking scheme in Beaconsfield Road will be considered by the Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee after councillors heard that pressure on parking had already reached "untenable levels".

Carol Buchanan, speaking on behalf of her neighbours, said

commuters used the street as a "park and ride", leaving their cars all day to catch the bus to Surbiton station or Kingston.

Cllr Sushila Abraham said she would speak to ward councillors and the highway engineer and look at parking in the whole area including Birchington, Gordon, Broomfield and Derby Roads.

The sticker vigilante

He operates surreptitiously, and he's saving Kingston Council a lot of money in cleaning costs. With a cap pulled down over his eyes, dark clothes and a paint scraper in his pocket, he is Surbiton's 'sticker vigilante'. Only this hastily snatched photo exists of the man who seems to have made it his mission to rid



lampposts, pillar boxes and street furniture of illegally placed signs and notices in the town centre. After scraping them off, he returns with a squirt of white spirit to get rid of the glue. It's why some lampposts have paint missing in patches... too much enthusiastic Brillo pad work!



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Beach Club rugs up for the winter

Bondi Beach Club, the trendy Aussie eatery at Thames Marina, is Bondi Iceberg Club for winter. Snowboards replace surfboards, with warm comfort food menu to reflect the season.

"There will be sheepskin rugs, blankets and a log fire to cosy the place up," said manager Siim Kutser. "There will be subtle changes; we're going from light summer food to winter comfort food, and we'll serve warm and cold cocktails, and drinks like Tim Tam Slam hot chocolate – an Aussie favourite."

The restaurant in Portsmouth Road replicates ski lodges in Victoria, Australia, famed for winter sport.

Litter pick date is set

The next KT6 community litter pick is on Sun Dec 9, by the tree next to Manny's shop, Long Ditton, 9.30-10.30am. Picking sticks, gloves and bin bags are provided.

Flats 'rumour' is right

Planning permission has been given for 49 flats and underground parking on land formerly owned by the NHS at the South Place/Warwick Grove junction. Alpha Road estate resident Sadiq Mohamed asked councillors to confirm rumours at the neighbourhood committee. They did.



Wojciech Lazarz, left, and Darren Bath plant a horse chestnut in Ashcombe Avenue

Treemendous work

Darren Bath and Wojciech Lazarz enjoy their work... a good job if you're planting 10 to 12 trees a day.

"We are planting for the next generation, and for the next generation of tree surgeons," said Darren, tipping a barrow of earth to cover the base of a 12ft horse chestnut in Ashcombe Avenue.

Wojciech agreed. "It's the best bit about the job – knowing that an oak we've planted in Woodlands Road can live long after we die, perhaps even for a 1,000 years."

"There is lot of moisture in the soil for the next few months, so it's the best time to plant," said Wojciech as he drove in support posts by the sapling.

The arboriculturalists are men on a mission – to plant 500 trees in the borough by the end of February. They then look after their charges for two years, watering every two weeks from April to September while the trees get established.

As well as horse chestnuts they're digging holes for crab apple, maple, flowering cherry, oak, lime and ornamental pear; species suitable for tree pits on

roads and the high street as well as grass verges. The trees are five to seven years old, with a trunk size of 12-14cm. Some will replace those that have died or have had to be removed. Others are in new spots.

The Advanced Tree Services employees have been tasked with doubling sapling planting to fulfil Kingston Council's 'air safe to breathe' manifesto pledge, backed by £175,000.

Council arboricultural officer Leon Parry explained the aim. "We are replacing lost trees and filling empty tree pits as a priority and, where we can, are concentrating on busy trunk roads. We try to spread the planting evenly across all 16 wards."

"Trees that are planted along the highways are an integral and historic component of the urban landscape and its architecture. They contribute to the local character and define a sense of place."

"They add aesthetic value by improving the street appearance, filter traffic pollution and give shade and habitat to urban wildlife."

Jane Grove

Trough: man is looking into it

An Ellerton Road resident has the bit between his teeth over an old horse trough.

At the end of the four-year national commemoration of the First World War centenary, a humble piece of street furniture in Tolworth offers an intriguing link to the conflict.

Council traffic alterations at the end of Ellerton Road have prevented cars parking up against an apparently unremarkable old horse trough, Phil Cooper observes.

A kerb and footway have been installed, keeping vehicles away from the structure, while the area around it has been cleared and tarmacked.

The trough carries a plaque revealing it was placed in

memory of 'the late Janet Charlotte Bennett Mathew, Sole Founder and Originator of Our Dumb Friend's League'.

It was set up in 1897 to encourage farmers and others working with horses to take greater care of their animals.

The league's efforts took on a new dimension at the outbreak of the First World War, in which an estimated six million horses and mules were used as cavalry mounts and to pull field guns, supply wagons and ambulances.

The league, and its successor, Blue Cross, raised funds and sent vets to the war zones to tend thousands of the animals.

Phil Cooper would like to see some of this history reflected, perhaps in an information



The horse trough at the Ewell Road end of Ellerton Road

board near the trough, and is researching Janet Mathew's local connections.

He says: "Although I'm glad to see that the council has now protected the trough from parking, there is clearly a piece of local history here that deserves to be told."

"I'd like to see the tarmac

round the trough replaced with more appropriate paving, especially as one of the things the Our Dumb Friend's League campaigned against was the surfacing of streets with asphalt as it caused distress to horses!"

If you know about the trough, or Janet Mathew, you can email phillipcooper@hotmail.com

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More potholes than tarmac

Marcus Williams and Emma Wilde hope some of the £420m pothole fund, announced in the autumn budget, will trickle down to Rectory Close.

The neighbours and fellow residents of the Long Ditton cul-de-sac have campaigned for years for road resurfacing, but despite lobbying and petitioning Elmbridge Council's Local Committee, the pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

Now residents say the road not only looks terrible, it is also a hazard.

"It has become a safety issue," said Marcus who has lived in Rectory Close since December 2011. "We have lots of kids in the street who cycle to school and use scooters, and an elderly lady has great difficulty crossing the road. Someone could fall, but the council is just leaving the road to deteriorate. It is not just about aesthetics now."

Marcus, head of sales for a tech company, said he had been told by Surrey County Council's highways department that holes in the road had to be a certain depth – 4cm – before the road could be repaired, but because the base below the asphalt is concrete, the holes would never get that deep.

"We feel as if it's a losing battle," he said. "We don't fit their criteria – and it looks like we never will."

Emma said another source of intense frustration for Rectory Close residents was that neighbouring Rectory Lane was resurfaced a couple of years ago, yet their cul-de-sac was ignored by workmen.

Now Dittons councillor Nick Darby, who attended a meeting to hear residents' concerns, is championing their cause, and has agreed to back a new petition to the council.

"The road is in a terrible state," he said. "It looks absolutely dreadful, but under the council's rules, the potholes aren't deep enough to qualify to be repaired. It is a source of enormous frustration."

"However I do think there comes a stage when different criteria should apply. We just need to get on with it."

He said the issue came down to funding (or lack of) and prioritising roads to target. Rectory Lane – a well-used through road – was higher up the pecking order.



Emma Wilde, daughters Maddie and Phoebe, 12, and neighbour Marcus Williams

Cllr Darby said the highways department was considering introducing a trial for roads of a similar construction to Rectory Close.

"The idea is that the failing asphalt surface, which is coming away, will be removed and the road left with a concrete base," he said. "There are a number of other roads like this in the area which are in a poor state."

A Surrey County Council spokesman said any petition would be considered by the Local Committee. "We're looking at a trial treatment for roads with this kind of construction, however we have to prioritise work we do across the county and can't do everything we'd like," he added.

Jane Grove

Festive Ideas for the Surbitonian who has everything? Sparkly socks in pink, gold, navy or black (size 4-7), £5.95 in Shoes at Last, Maple Road. Or push the boat out with a soft grey merino wool crochet sleeved jumper by designer Stella Forest, £175



The Berrylands Belles choir sings at the St Matthew's fundraiser. Also on the bill, right, are Rea Skalec and Agnes Jones of A2mazin



Elaine Blackmore stages an evening of music, song and chat in aid of the St Matthew's Church tower and spire appeal. Acts on the bill at the cornerHOUSE arts centre, Douglas Road, are the Berrylands Belles, a 50-voice choir from (you're ahead of me here) Berrylands, singing pop,

Towering talents gather for spire appeal

rock, gospel, folk and classical to piano accompaniment, and A2mazin, a singing duo performing pop, soul and jazz covers from the 70s to the present. Raconteur Elaine comperes a 'humorous and fun' evening, with other acts in store. An Evening with Elaine and Friends on Friday, February 15 at 7.45pm, hopes to boost a fundraising appeal aiming to raise £700,000 to repair the Grade II listed

St Matthew's Avenue church, now on the 'at risk' register of English Heritage because of the crumbling state of its steeple. Tickets cost £10 (£8 concessions). Visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/573752 For more information on the appeal visit www.tolworthtm.org

Getting your voice heard

A workshop entitled Playing the Scene is a chance for actors to try a new audition speech – contemporary or classical – or revive one that needs freshening up.

The session at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, at 7.30pm on Wed Dec 5, gives feedback and tips on how to approach scripted dialogue. Leading it is David Lawson Lean, pictured, an actor, director, writer and teacher who has worked in the industry for 25 years.

"Actors rarely receive feedback when they attend an audition," said David. "This workshop gives them the opportunity to share their audition pieces in an encouraging group environment, and receive tips and suggestions about developing their scenes, whether auditioning professionally, for a local production, or for a drama school." All levels of experience welcome.

It's one of a series of borough-wide events over the next three weeks for Kingston Arts' Festival of the Voice.

Others include: a **Monologue Masterclass**, 7.30pm, Wed Nov 28, at the Museum of Futures, Brighton Road, led by actor, writer and director Michael Franklin; a



Kingston Arts Meet-Up at Wags n Tales, Brighton Road, the same night, a chance to network with fellow creatives; and a concert at St Andrew's Church, on Sat, Dec 8 (**Handel's Messiah** performed by Kingston Orpheus Choir). Full programme and tickets: www.kingstonarts.co.uk

● The Thames Concert series is in full swing at St Andrew's, Maple Road. On Sat Dec 1, top vocal group Cantabile visit (pictured), singing a seasonal mix from sacred to comedy. The London quartet have been performing together since 1982. It begins at 7.30pm, tickets on door or via www.thamesconcerts.com Then on Sat Jan 19, Daniel Moults makes full use of the church's Hunter organ in a selection of music by Bach and Mozart as well as Widor's 5th Symphony.



Imagineering

What can you learn at a poetry workshop? Indeed, can good poetry writing be taught? The encouraging answer seems to be 'yes'.

Local poet David Loffman led a stimulating free-to-attend Saturday morning ideas exchange at Surbiton's cornerHOUSE arts centre, ahead of one of the Douglas Road building's regular Friday evening poetry nights. His chosen themes were horses, holidays and 'blue'.

By using snippets of film, relayed sounds and lists of associated words, David encouraged nine participants to think of phrases and explore meanings.

Two hours of clearing your mind and letting your imagination wander proved as good as a stretch on a therapist's couch, with suggestions and recounted memories providing ammunition for verse-writing.

To encourage ideas around the colour blue, David passed around a box containing book titles which included the word 'blue'... another way of pump-priming the muse.

As examples of powerful verse, he read aloud Louis MacNeice's Horses, Ted Hughes' The Horses and Vernon Scannell's Hide and Seek, and played Joni Mitchell's haunting Blue.

The most recent poetry evening was staged at the cornerHOUSE last week. For more information about 2019's poetry sessions and workshops, visit www.thecornerhouse.org



Photo: Jon Constant

Toad in a hole

Tales of the riverbank were never like this! There's trouble at t'Hogsmill where the stoats and weasels have won their referendum and decided to chuck the other animals out of the Wild Wood and take over Toad Hall – setting up a hard border in the process.

So what are Ratty, Mole, Toad and Badger to do and how does Winnie the Pooh get involved?

All will be revealed in the cornerHOUSE's panto Wind up the Willows running at the arts centre in Douglas Road, Surbiton, from Tues, Jan 29 to Sat, Feb 2, 7.45pm with a 4pm Saturday matinee. £10/£8. Book at www.ticketsource.co.uk/event/280465

Phil Cooper, who is writing the troupe's 31st panto, said: "All the usual ingredients will be there, the silliness and the double entendres, but with added fur, whiskers and webbed feet!"

● Blame Rod Pearson's missus. Thirty years ago her birthday gift was a box of watercolours, and he's never looked back.

The former architect turns dull road junctions into scenes of suburban wonder, where humble street signs become eye-catching dashes of colour.

Rod has moved about; Norbiton to Long Ditton to Thames Ditton and finally ("the dreaded downsize") to a flat at the river end of Catherine Road, Surbiton.

He works from life, and photos, and is exhibiting at the cornerHOUSE, including the trademark streetscapes, until Dec 2. "I like traffic light scenes and street scenes," said the 74-year-old. "Can't explain it; just like 'em!"

Reflecting his architectural roots, brickwork and roofs are elegantly captured. His guru is watercolourist Joseph Zbukvic, whose week-long workshop in Spain represents Rod's only formal art training. "He taught me that there's actually no such thing as a vanishing point," said Rod. Proceeds from his current show go to Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness.



● From the first honkytonk piano notes to the last chorus of Pack Up Your Troubles, Surbiton's singalong stars Baz & Dave had them dancing round the tables, belting out familiar lyrics at the George Evelyn pub, Ditton Hill Road. With Dave (Naber) on boogie woogie keyboards and Baz (he's really Andy Cade) on vocals, tambourine and kazoo, a Baz & Dave get-together is a chance to be vocal at the local. Performing together for their ninth year, the pair have a Wednesday night residency at Soho's Coach & Horses, and draw on a repertoire of 400 songs, from Do You Love Me? to Delilah, Don't You Want Me Baby to Margate, by their inspiration Chas & Dave. www.bazndave.com

Carol sequence

Bob Chilcott's enchanting sequence of eight original carols, On Christmas Night, forms the centrepiece of Kingston Choral Society's festive concert at St Andrew's church on December 15.

As well as this musical celebration of the Christmas story, there will also be traditional carols for all to sing, a selection of familiar and less familiar seasonal music, and formidable piles of mince pies.

The concert begins at 7.30pm at the church in Maple Road, with tickets ranging from £5 (U18s) to £13 via the box office (020 8977 7936) or www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/surbiton/st-andrews-church/christmas-concert

Andrew Griffiths conducts, Will Vann plays the organ.

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Beth confident of Paris in spring

Chelsea are "quietly confident" of making it through to the semis of the Women's Champions League after being drawn against Paris St-Germain, says in-form striker Bethany England.

Speaking exclusively to The Good Life, the versatile 24-year-old said: "PSG are a great team and really strong opponents but we are quietly confident, and hopefully we can get into the semi-finals."

If the Blues overcome PSG, with the first leg at home in March, the semis could see them face their European nemesis, Wolfsburg.

"It was a bit of a relief we didn't draw Wolfsburg again, like we have in the past few years," said Beth. "It'll be nice to face a different

opponent, and hopefully over the two legs we can get the job done."

For fans of the Kingsmeadow team, there's the prospect of the return trip to Paris in the spring.

Manager Emma Hayes said PSG was "a great draw", adding: "There may have been easier opponents, but we'll go into the tie confident."

PSG have been in two of the last four Women's Champions League finals, but avoiding mighty Lyon and Wolfsburg was a big bonus.

"I feel confident in the team that we can get through to the semi-final and then, of course, we could potentially draw Wolfsburg or Lyon," said Beth England. "But it is a case of taking each game as it comes. If we get it right on the day,

I feel we can beat anyone. We've proven in the Champions League that we can score and play well, and we'll look to continue that."

After impressing in a loan year with Liverpool, where she finished joint third top scorer in the league, Beth returned to the Chelsea first team in the summer.

She was twice a starter and twice a sub in the comprehensive European wins against Sarajevo and Fiorentina, when Chelsea scored 18 times without reply over four matches.

Chelsea Women are next in action against Reading at Kingsmeadow; Sun Dec 2 at 2pm. £6/£3 via www.chelseafc.com/tickets

Tim Harrison



She's 81, speaks her mind, and calls herself Erin Cuthbert's "English nan". Jean Thornton's mobility scooter is bedecked with flags as the Chelsea Women's fan, who lives in a flat in Howard Road, recalls meeting the Chelsea striker over a cuppa at Kingsmeadow. "I was in the bar, and Erin adopted me," she said of the Scotland star. "I'm now her English nan!" On Remembrance Day, Jean watched Surbiton's wreaths being laid. She once placed the St John Ambulance wreath as her mother was the local superintendent; Jean a first-aider. "My first case was someone who passed out at Surbiton Odeon," she said. "I asked my mum what to do. She said: 'Fan her with your hat!'"

How the Corinthian spirit lives on

A heartwarming film summing up the spirit of one of England's most historic football teams has an added poignancy on the centenary of the First World War Armistice.

Brothers in Football describes how Corinthian-Casuals, who play at King George's Field, Tolworth, took football to Brazil. The non-league club sailed there in 1910, championing fair play and made a huge impression on their South American hosts.

They were returning to Brazil in 1914 for a second tour when news reached them of the outbreak of war. They sailed straight back without kicking a ball, dodging torpedoes on the way, to fight in France, losing more men than any club in history.

A century on, the Corinthian name survives. Corinthian-Casuals FC play in Tolworth in the Isthmian League, while SC Corinthian Paulista, a club inspired by the legendary Corinthians' visit, are Brazil's richest, most successful professional club.

The touching documentary, screened on BT Sport, is a reminder of the unifying power of the game, celebrating long-forgotten football missionaries and the sport's true amateur grassroots.

U18s get in free to Corinthian-Casuals games. The team play Potters Bar on Dec 8, before the clash with ground-sharers Kingstonian on Dec 22, 3pm. Meanwhile Kingstonian FC have home games against Haringey on Dec 1 and Bognor Regis on Dec 15. All matches are 3pm starts. The ground is just off Hook Rise South, KT6 7NA.

Limbering up for local half-marathon

Hardy souls are already out pounding the streets in training for the Hampton Court half-marathon on Sun, Feb 17, including the Surbiton stretch of Portsmouth Road. A 13.1

mile closed road loop, it starts and finishes at Giggs Hill Green. A month later it's Kingston's spring race day on Mar 31, on much the same course. www.quicksilver-running.co.uk



Lucas Dinnin, 12, of Douglas Road towers over the model of Diano Marina station, Italy, built by Rod Mackay (left) and Alan French, one of 25 layouts at Tolworth Showtrain, the exhibition at Tolworth Recreation Centre run by Hampton Court Model Railway Society (www.hamptoncourtmrs.com)



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