

Christmas comes early to this semi



Christmas came in October as a pantechicon fleet sat in Herne Road for four days to film Tesco's festive TV ad in and around a five-bedroom Victorian semi in the Southborough conservation area. The high-ceilinged £2million house saw a parade of actors and technicians coming and going. The film crew was also based at



the Royal British Legion, Betts Way, Long Ditton; the loos a popular feature. "It's already been the season of goodwill for a month," said one.

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Scandal of our lost station art

Gaze around the ticket hall at Surbiton station on your next visit, and feel the chill of those blank white walls. It wasn't always so. Until the turn of the millennium, the iconic building was not just an art deco masterpiece on the outside, but a gallery inside, housing one of London's most impressive grand-scale examples of commissioned public art. At either end of the hall, bold murals

of station staff and Surbiton commuters gazed down from on high; the work of artist Graeme Willson who was invited, in 1983, to create vast wall paintings to enhance the otherwise empty space. Then, in the wake of rail privatisation, the painted panels were pulled down and dumped in a skip in a shocking act of desecration which can now be revealed. For the full story turn to **page 4**



The way we were. A Monday morning queue in 1984... with the murals



More than 1,300 gathered to pay their respects to Surbiton's war dead. Remembrance report on **page 2**

Trouble brews

Protesters gathered at the Surbiton branch of Sainsbury's as part of a campaign to urge the world's largest Fairtrade retailer not to ditch the brand. The supermarket chain is trialling its own 'fairly traded' label, but many fear the benefits will not support farmers and producers in developing countries to the same extent. Residents and councillors were at the demonstration. Full story on **page 10**

Chocs for Christmas jumpers

The YMCA choir leads a carol singalong at the Christmas farmers' market on Saturday December 16 from 9am. Mulled wine is served, with crafts and biscuit decorating for children, while Santa's visit is confidently predicted. There will be chocolates for anyone in a Christmas jumper. The 26 stalls of fresh farm produce and seasonal food include Maple Women's Institute selling home-made jams and

preserves. The Giggly Pig is doing a hog roast, and there is a prize for the best-dressed stall. The Christmas charity is Shooting Star Chase, with a prize draw for four tickets to the Rose Theatre's Alice in Wonderland, plus a meal at Pizza Express. Entry forms at the organisers' stall, with the winner drawn at noon. Visit www.surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk to sign up for the monthly market newsletter email.

Saucy cards delight society

It proved to be one of Surbiton Historical Society's most popular meetings; the story of saucy seaside postcards, related by historian James Taylor with a very special guest in the audience – Patrick Tumber, grandson of the king of the double entendre image, Donald McGill. Among the projected illustrations accompanying the talk was this entertaining row of pert and bulbous bottoms in bathing suits with the caption 'Just a line from Surbiton'. But McGill's most popular postcard of all was to go on to sell more than six million copies. Turn to **page 6**



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Surbiton remembers its war dead



An old soldier lays a wreath, then stands and salutes the comrades he fought alongside... but who never returned. Just one poignant image from Remembrance Sunday at the Surbiton war memorial in Ewell Road, where more than 1,300 people, young and old, stood to observe a minute's silence after the Last Post sounded at 11am. This year, 35 poppy wreaths were laid during the open-air service conducted by the Rev Stan Brown from nearby Surbiton Hill Methodist Church. Among the open-air congregation were Hollyfield schoolchums Maureen Weedon (nee Taylor), below left, and Jean Thornton (nee Kipling), who turned 80 this year and who have attended the annual event for 74 years. "My father, Harry Taylor, was killed at Monte Cassino," said Maureen, producing a picture of her as a little girl with long black hair, sitting proudly by her dad in his uniform.



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Harry's brother died fighting in the First World War, and both appear on the memorial. After the final hymn, the marching bands and service groups (which ranged from scouts and brownies to Royal British Legion and residents of Surbiton's Star & Garter home) paraded past the church steps, where deputy mayor Cllr Mike Head, MP Ed Davey and the parade commander Martin Baker took the salute. The rain held off, but a sharp, cold wind meant there were plenty of takers for tea and coffee in the church after the service.



MP veers sharply to the right

"Oh, I've done it three times before," said MP Ed Davey breezily, as he strapped ice blocks on to his walking boots and prepared for the descent of a suitably slippery St Mark's Hill course on Ski Sunday, one of Surbiton's barmier and more enjoyable days out. The Surbiton MP adopted a shuffling style, perhaps borrowed from scratchy footage of old music hall entertainers in action, to get down the stretch of road near the Pickled Pantry coffee shop without landing on his parliamentary seat. At one stage he veered suddenly to the right, much as he had done in his previous attempts at the perilous journey. "He must have stopped to talk to some of his constituents," guessed Robin Hutchinson, who was providing the commentary. The MP navigated the course in just under 30 seconds. More reckless competitors did it in 11.



Wendy Smithers reads a poem to residents

Veterans' tales inspire poetry

Veterans at Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter homes have inspired a book, *Poems by Post*. The book celebrates their life stories, using correspondence, photos and verse from local poets, following an inter-generational penpal initiative at the home in Upper Brighton Road. Twelve-year-olds from Hinchley Wood School exchanged letters with residents. Despite an age gap of 90-odd years, it demonstrated that residents and pupils had a lot more in common than they'd originally thought. Speaking at the book launch, Tom Mallender, who interviewed residents before sending the results to writers to compose poetry based on their words, said: "Every resident had something to teach me; how to live, to love, and how to look at the world." Wendy Smithers, from book publisher It's Not Your Birthday But, added: "Sharing memories through poetry was more powerful than I'd anticipated, and they are now preserved forever in our book." The project aims to mix communities and encourage a return to an era of sending and receiving written letters. One poem was inspired by a resident, Betty, who had served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Her daughter Pauline said: "It's very easy for mum to think that what she did was nothing special, but we all think it was amazing. All of her family are very proud of her."

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A dry cleaner for 16 years, Salim Mistry took over 249 Ewell Road in 2015 and is marking his second anniversary with 15% discounts for any reader who presents a copy of the Good Life in December. Salim grew up in India, but learnt his trade in Cookham, Berkshire, before opening the Surbiton shop. He now plans a change to the Brodies name originally on his sign. "Business was very slow when I took over, but now I have a lot of loyal customers," said Salim, who has posted several testimonials from satisfied locals on his window. He offers alterations, shoe repairs, shirt laundering (three for £4.50, wash and press), and suit dry cleaning for £8.50. Open 8am-5.15pm Monday-Saturday.

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Enterprising women should head to Kingston University's Tolworth Court sports ground complex in Old Kingston Road, on December 7. From 9.30am-noon Kingston Uni's women's network meets. Open to all. Email d.amin@kingston.ac.uk

Sharing history

History officer Gillian Butler wants Surbiton Historical Society members to share memories and add to the archives in the Guildhall basement. Email gillian.butler@kingston.gov.uk

Tuesday fitness

Boost your fitness at a self-run, multi-activity 7.30pm session on Tuesdays at Hinchley Wood School. A PE teacher leads circuit training and games. Call Neil Murray on 020 8224 0888.

Shop a fly-tipper

If you spot someone fly-tipping in Long Ditton, you could get a £500 reward. Call Elmbridge Council on 01372 474474 and receive a bonus if there is a successful prosecution.

Starlight carols

Come and join a festive service for Surbiton's Royal Star & Garter home at St Matthew's church, Sun Dec 3, 4pm. The starlight service with the Star & Garter Singers ends with mulled wine and mince pies.

Winter clearance

If it snows, volunteers will be needed to assist vulnerable householders. The council is recruiting 'snow friends' who will be trained and given equipment. Email snow.friends@kingston.gov.uk or call 020 8547 5000.

Burglars targeted

Police are prioritising burglaries in Long Ditton after a 35% rise. In 2016 there were 72; in 2017, 97. Antisocial behaviour has, however, fallen 14%.



A snappier image

Victoria Road's Snappy Snaps marks 15 years' trading with a makeover, creating a more sophisticated, less shouty look. A curved counter replaces the stern divide which once split the shop in half, so maximising space.

Dancing the reel

You can celebrate St Andrew's Day on Thu Nov 30 with jigs, strathspeys and reels at St Mark's church hall, Church Hill Road, from 7.30-10.30pm. Details at www.surbitoncaledonian.co.uk

Latest restaurant

The Mayan empire is over. Thali Ho has become the latest incarnation of Surbiton town centre's largest curry house at 31 Brighton Road after Maya closed to be replaced with "a new and exciting concept in homestyle Indian dining". The restaurant has been recruiting waiters and chefs.

Eye-catching lawn

An intriguing micro garden has been planted up in Brighton Road to herald the arrival of the town's newest estate agency, Winkworth. Run by Aussie couple Jon and Claire McGrath in what used to be a branch of Stack & Bonner, the business has a distinctive astroturf 'lawn', chairs and flowerbeds out front, boosting visibility.



Bungalows may become 29 new homes

At a glance it's hard to envisage, but plans are afoot to demolish a pair of semi-detached bungalows behind St Mark's church to replace them with 29 homes.

Today the Church Hill Road houses have four off-street parking spaces... but the proposed scheme includes no car bays.

"It's near the station," planning agent Richard Seaward explained.

If the council approves the scheme, buyers would be barred from applying for Kingston borough on-street permits, and would have to park in unrestricted roads some distance away.

The plan is for a six-storey block of flats, with four 'mews houses' behind. In all, there would be 13 one-bedroom flats, nine

two-beds and seven three-bed homes.

No prices have been set, but there will be some 'affordable housing'... the ratio depending on the council's firmness.

Mr Seaward added: "We think it's fitting to develop the site and we don't think this is overdevelopment."



"We're looking at brick for the building; robust materials."

In height, the block would match the 32-flat St Mark's Court, built opposite in 2012. Had you bought a new three-bedroom flat there, estate agents would now be seeking up to £800,000 for your £500,000 outlay.

One sketch of the proposed block on the bungalow site shows trees in pots on the roof, but the exact look of the roof has still to be finalised. "There might be solar panels," The Good Life was told.

Challenged about an absence of parking, Mr Seaward said there could be one disabled bay. Asked to point it out on the plan, he indicated that it would actually be a designated street space. **Tim Harrison**



1987 revisited

To mark 30 years of running her barber shop in Surbiton town centre, Patricia Collins charged customers 1987 prices for the day.

Dozens of regulars turned up for a £3 trim at Expressions, two doors from the Vic in Victoria Road. A collage of photographs taken on the day now hangs on the salon wall.

Patricia, right, of Raeburn Avenue, who is originally from Armagh in Northern Ireland, also opened the rarely glimpsed back garden of the shop, so people could sit out and enjoy a glass of bubbly.

The shop has raised £25,000 for good causes during Patricia's reign.



Statuesque tribute

This distinctive 10in statuette graces Beverley Beech's windowsill in Grove Road, marking the 40 years she has chaired Aims, the Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services.

She joined in the 1970s after her own experience of hospital childbirth. "It was pretty horrible," she said. "A fit and healthy woman went in, and a physical wreck came out." Her second child proved a breeze, but anger at the difference between the experiences led her to join the group then become chair, advocating a 'Call The Midwife' approach, enabling women to give birth at home or in smaller midwifery units.

As well as the statue, she got an ovation at a Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists conference for championing birthing women's rights and "improving maternity services".

She told The Good Life: "Oh, I'm absolutely thrilled with it!"

Public health guidelines state that women in England and Wales can choose whether to have their baby at home with a midwife present, in a unit staffed by midwives or in hospital with doctors in charge, yet just one baby in 50 is delivered at home... a 15-year low.

SURBITON LIFE by David Cox



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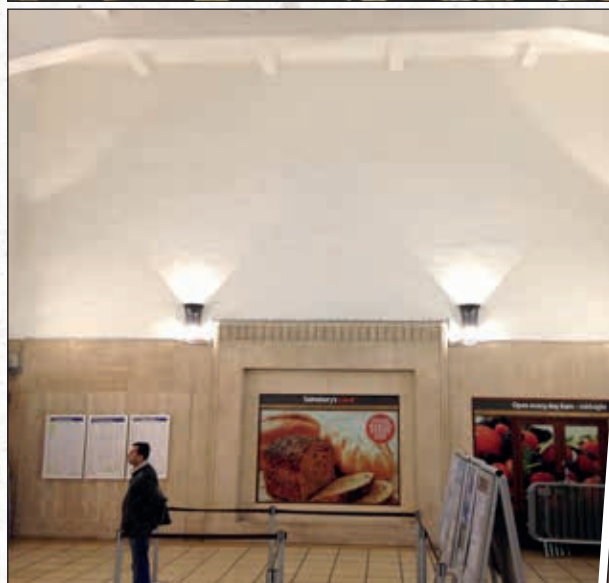
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The scandal of the lost murals



Top: Surbiton station's booking hall in all its glory in 1984
Right: Artist Graeme Willson takes a breather in 1983 in the Leeds church hall in which the mural panels were painted
Above: Stark, cold and bleak – the ticket hall today. The only positive is that the queue appears to have gone down



In early 1999, South West Trains took down the huge murals which had hung in Surbiton station's ticket hall for 15 years. The rail franchise holder (recently replaced by South Western Railway) was meant to be freshening up the paintwork... but the murals were not rehung, and almost certainly ended up in a skip.

The wall work, *Passengers*, was a 1984 public art installation featuring Surbiton residents (including a local GP) and rail staff.

It had won a competition to improve the building's interior, and not only brought smiles to the faces of many of the nine million annual station users but also earned acclaim from art critics.

Their loss brought an abrupt end to an interesting tale of creativity and political intrigue, and deprived London of one of its finest examples of community art.

The saga began in 1983 when Yorkshire mural specialist Graeme Willson won the commission to decorate Surbiton's booking hall walls... despite opposition from an unlikely high-ranking source.

Four years earlier, Margaret Thatcher's 11-year stint as prime minister had started in a climate of conflict with the unions which was to culminate in the bitter, bloody miners' strike. But another thorn in her side was Ken Livingstone, who had run the Greater

London Council since control passed to Labour in May 1981.

One ideological gulf concerned public art. Ken believed in it, but Maggie insisted the market (not taxpayers) should pay.

When Willson's proposed designs were published, she interpreted the inclusion of railway workers standing alongside passengers as a pro-union political statement.

She tried to block the commission, but the Arts Council and GLC refused to back down. With the project confirmed, Willson rapidly got to work. Time was of the essence, as Mrs Thatcher had by then issued a white paper on GLC abolition.

Assisted by students (a stipulation of the enterprise), Willson – then 32 – travelled from his Ilkley home to Leeds,

hired an old church hall and began work, in acrylics and oils.

By 1984, the panels were complete and were sent south. Sue Ridge, a Chelsea School of Art teacher, had been commissioned to paint the ticket hall ceiling in compatible, sympathetic designs and, during the week when the huge room was full of scaffolding, her team went to work on an abstract fresco which echoed the mural's principal colours.

The result was spectacular. Other London stations also had commissioned art (notably Eduardo Paolozzi's Tottenham Court Road mosaics), but only Surbiton had vast-scale, well-observed, witty murals of travellers, local residents and railway staff staring down from on high at any commuter who glanced upwards.

"There's something about a large wall surface that sets my heart pounding," Willson told *The Good Life*. "It was painted in sections as part of a job-creation scheme for the young, while the art deco ambience of the building itself was one of our guiding criteria."

Pre-privatised British Rail donated the site and art materials, while the artistic team was funded by the Greater London Arts

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Gifted baker Annie mourned by town

Neighbours in Cottage Grove are still coming to terms with the tragic death of Annie Morris, the effervescent character who wrote the Good Life cookery column and who was a popular face at the monthly farmers' market. She was 64.

"She was perhaps more fragile than even those close to her realised," said the Rev Robert Stanier at her funeral.

Aptly, for such a gifted cook, she was born Anne Bakes, in December 1952. She grew up near Portsmouth, left school in 1968, worked at the TSB then IBM, and married Paul at the end of the 70s. When they parted in 1985, she moved to Tolworth, first to a flat near the tower, then to Cottage Grove. A subsequent entwined personal and business venture failed, leaving Annie with debts which were to haunt her.

Outwardly she maintained a bubbly image; selling bread at the Flavours of Italy stall at the Maple Road farmers' market, dreaming up the 'planted bra' hanging basket stunt for the WI at the station roundabout, and running classes to encourage older people to enjoy a more varied diet.

By day she was a dependable, trustworthy, funny and much-liked bookkeeper for a local building firm. But beneath the facade she was tormented by the past.

"In May 2017, Annie became distressed by a letter from a solicitor claiming there were still unpaid fees," said coroner Dr Christopher Williams of Southwark Coroner's Court.

Long-term friend Peter Forrester told the court that it had had a very bad effect on her mental state. "As far as she was concerned she had cleared [the debt]. This is what turned the balance in my view of Annie's mind," he said.

Homeless action

An 'art for charity' exhibition is being staged in Surbiton to support the work of Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness.

A rich variety of pictures hangs on the walls of the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road until January 7, with a gala launch night (free admission) on Tuesday December 5 at 7pm. Prices of the artworks for sale start at £25.

The charity works to improve the lives of homeless people and those in housing risk in the borough.



On June 10, after taking an overdose, Annie was taken to hospital, then entered the Priory as a voluntary patient. On June 26, four days after she was discharged, and overwhelmed by anxiety and depression, she hanged herself.

"Ultimately it was Annie's decision," said Mr Stanier. "But there was such fun and spark, such interest and care in her life that this shouldn't be obscured."

A loving, if eccentric, aunt, and a loyal sister to her brother Bern, Annie will be fondly remembered by all who knew her.

"My sister was a unique character. She was very creative. She loved baking, sewing and making jewellery, and she did a lot of voluntary work," said Bern.

"She lived life to the full, though she was like a butterfly; she didn't settle.

"We didn't know she had any mental health issues and neither did others around her; if only we'd known earlier..."

The coroner recorded a verdict of suicide.

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Association. Split thematically, the 'steps' side of the hall featured passengers (including a bored traveller presumably waiting for a delayed train, a child in a buggy and a couple in a passionate see-you-later clinch).

The opposite wall included station staff, among them a guard, parcel handlers, a booking clerk and several track workers wearing fluorescent bibs.

Was Willson aware of the Iron Lady's opposition? "When I won the competition I heard there was some resistance from Margaret Thatcher," he said. "She read the murals as a conflict between passengers and staff! She thought they were members of trade unions, and that it might have had political significance."

For 15 years, the murals were a part of station life.

Then British Rail privatisation passed control of the stations in the region to South West Trains (which recently lost the franchise to South Western Railway).

Someone – it isn't clear who – ordered the murals be

taken down to allow for general repainting. The network's buildings manager at the time, Howard Strongitharm, right, told the Good Life: "In April 1999, I went round all 180 of the South West Trains stations, scoping maintenance works. It was one of the last stations I visited and [the mural] wasn't there then. What tends to happen is that different people come along and do things differently; it's down to the personal taste of whoever's the boss man."

Tragically the murals were lost. "It makes me feel very upset and angry, as you can imagine," Willson said.

The Twentieth Century Society shares that feeling. It acclaims James Robb Scott's art deco station as one of the UK's finest examples of its kind, with its "spacious and electrifying booking hall" looking especially impressive at night, when it is lit up.

The society remains baffled and perplexed by the murals' loss, declaring that Willson's artworks "brought the station to life, even when the booking hall was empty".

The real scandal of the lost murals is that public money paid for their creation, yet the public has been denied continued enjoyment of them. The station's Grade II listing, which was bestowed in October 1983, should have afforded them protection. According to English Heritage, listing applies not just to the exterior fabric of the building, but also to 'the interior, fixtures, fittings and objects within the curtilage of the building, even if they are not fixed'.

"It's incredibly hurtful and demoralising," said Willson. "There was no explanation or apology. It was a fait accompli. I was told that the panels had been taken down, in the process they 'got damaged' and they were then thrown out and destroyed."

In these austere days, the chances of any replacement public art commissioning to fill the blank walls might appear remote... and yet the franchise shift from South West Trains to South Western Railway (SWR), which took effect from August 20 this year, could offer a faint glimmer of hope.

A spokesman for the Blackfriars-based SWR initially told The Good Life: "There are currently no plans to replace it, but thanks for bringing it to our attention. Commissioning professional artists isn't something we would consider."

But then the tone changed slightly. The spokesman added: "In terms of art at stations, going forward, these days such activities tend to be done in association with communities, schools and charities, so we will work with the community on each initiative as and when an opportunity arises."

Could that be read as a hint that if Graeme Willson would be prepared to venture south again, to work on a fresh project in conjunction with artists in the Surbiton community, SWR might be sympathetic?

Tim Harrison Do you have memories of the station murals? Share them by emailing thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com



Clockwise from top: Panel painting in the Leeds church hall; Howard Strongitharm, whose inspection confirmed the murals were missing; figures that Maggie Thatcher saw as subversive; scaffolding in the ticket hall in 1984 for the murals' installation



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Janice Cripps says use your sense of smell when planning a garden

Fragrant shrubs that pack a punch



It happens about this time every year as I saunter down my garden to the shed; the sweetest fragrance stops me in my tracks and instantly transports me to somewhere warm and wonderful. I look around to see the bubbly pink flowers of viburnum (viburnum bodnantense 'Dawn', pictured below) and have to smile. It is a minor miracle as, for most of the year, I find this shrub dull, boring and easy to ignore.

Smell is a powerful sense that can unlock memories and lift our mood,

so I always think about fragrance when planning a garden.

There is no reason for any garden to go without. The smallest plot can usually accommodate a fragrant climber or wall shrub which takes up little ground space. A container planted with narcissi or aromatic herbs, placed on a doorstep or windowsill, will do just as well, and can be moved around at will.

There are scents for every season, but at this time of year we look mainly to flowering shrubs to provide them. The fragrances tend to be stronger and sweeter than in summer, perhaps because there aren't so many pollinating insects around and the flowers have to work harder to attract them.

Of all the scented shrubs, viburnums are particularly useful in the garden as they often have pretty berries (viburnum x burkwoodii) and/or display

brilliant autumn colour (viburnum x carlcephalum). To appreciate their fragrance, plant them in partial shade by a path or near an entrance or seating area where it is not too cold or exposed.

Daphnes and witch hazels are also highly prized for their fragrance, but I suggest you try before you buy. For me, daphnes have a strong spicy perfume, heady and never cloying, and witch hazels smell like freesias.

But for some, certain types of witch hazel smell like loo cleaner!

If you've space for a wall shrub, try wintersweet (Chimonanthus praecox). Originally from China, the cream-coloured starry flowers were used to scent linen cupboards just as we use lavender today.

And for a dark shady corner or an informal hedge, the tiny white flowers of Christmas box (Sarcococca confusa) pack a punch and last well into the new year.



Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer.

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

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There's fun on the cards

The saucy seaside postcards of Donald McGill and his fellow artists made for a fascinating talk by James Taylor at Surbiton Historical Society.

London-born in 1875, McGill's postcard career embarrassed his strait-laced family... his daughters used to sprint past WHSmith in shame! Rivals included Mabel Lucie Attwell, famed for her cherubic babies, and Philip May.

The all-time bestselling card was the (still) hilarious exchange between a rather bookish nerd and a blushing woman under a tree. 'Do you like Kipling?' he inquires. 'I don't know, you naughty boy,' she replies. 'I've never kiplpled!' It sold more than six million copies.

In the audience at the talk was Donald McGill's grandson Patrick Tumber, who opened a postcard museum in Ryde on the Isle of Wight, filled with McGill's postcards. He recounted anecdotes about his grandfather and said local council rules on permissible double entendres varied widely.

"Lots of different local authorities had different morals, and the government wanted to bring back more moral ethics and encouraged 'watch committees' to raise the moral tone," he said, adding that his grandfather's prosecution in 1954 for breaking the Obscene Publications Act 1857 and fine of £50, dented the confidence of all postcard producers to push the boundaries.

By the time he died in 1962, McGill had sold 200 million cards.

● On January 16, Surbiton Historical Society's talk is on The Art of Henry VIII, by Siobhan Clarke. On February 6 it is Hampton Court On Camera – Filming at the Palace, by Ian Franklin.

"Do you like Kipling?"

"I don't know, you naughty boy,
I've never kiplpled!"



A boozy Christmas gift for your beloved

Scratching your head over what to buy your beloved this Christmas?

Erstwhile Surbiton resident and drinks expert Joel Eastman may have the solution.

The former manager of Laithwaite's, Portsmouth Road, has launched Grape & Grain Tours, guiding people on day trips round the Surrey Hills to taste exceptional wine, beer and gin from some of the country's best producers.

"We are the first in the UK to offer this kind of all-inclusive fun and educational experience, supporting independent producers," said Joel, whose tours start in March. "Our premium tours appeal to those who are

passionate about food and drink, particularly its provenance."

He meets you at Guildford station then transports you to Greyfriars Vineyard, Hogs Back Brewery and Silent Pool Distillers (a regular stall at Surbiton farmers' market), where you taste award-winning drinks, learn how they are made and enjoy lunch at a gastro pub.

Tour tickets at £99 per person are available at www.grapeandgraintours.co.uk

Personalised gift vouchers are also available, as a Christmas or birthday gift.

● Joel also offers bespoke private tours for small groups. Phone 07429 498 423 for more details.

Jane Grove



Michael Wagstaff produces award-winning wines at Greyfriars Vineyard

Speak your mind at Festival of the Voice

The borough's annual homage to the spoken word, The Festival of the Voice, will be in full flow in December, with various workshops at the cornerHOUSE



David Rowan leads The Voice and Shakespeare workshop

in Douglas Road to improve vocal skills, articulation and confidence. They include:

● Let's Make, Create and Illustrate (Sunday, December 3, 2-4pm). Fun, practical exercises exploring your creativity, finding your voice and capturing ideas.

● Speak With Confidence (Monday, December 4, 7.30-9.30pm). Clearing negative mind-chatter to find your inner positive voice and express yourself with confidence.

● The Voice and Shakespeare (Friday, December 8, 7-9pm). Explore the vocal demands

required to bring some of Shakespeare's finest speeches and sonnets to life.

There'll also be a workshop at the Sitzler Room in St Matthew's Church, St Matthew's Avenue.

● It's About Time! (Saturday, December 9, 11.30am - 1pm) You will be led through mindfulness techniques to calmly articulate your ideas, promoting a more stress-free life.

Tickets for all these events are £5. Pay on the door, but reserve in advance at www.kingstonarts.co.uk where you can also find out more about the events.

Will commuting become riskier?

Proposed changes to Surbiton's early-morning train timetable could compromise safety, says a worried commuter.

South Western Railway is consulting about making changes to the schedule, but passenger Caroline Wyatt fears alterations will lead to dangerous overcrowding on already busy platforms.

The train company disagrees, and insists a revised timetable will lead to improvements in the overall service.

"They plan to remove a fast train from the peak morning rush hour period," Caroline told The Good Life.

"At Surbiton, that would mean a 15-minute gap between 7.45 and 8am. At the moment we

have two direct trains then.

"They have made it difficult to understand the impact of the changes," added Caroline, pointing out that the consultation process splits the suggested new timetable into lots of little spreadsheets, which are then difficult to compare.

She fears the already congested platforms 1 and 2 will become dangerously full in the morning if any direct Surbiton-Waterloo train is lost.

"In a country so obsessed with health and safety it is weird that public transport overcrowding is overlooked," she said. "As it is, the station is often closed if there are delays, due to safety."

SWR aims to introduce the changes by December 2018.

A spokesman for the train

company denied there would be any gaps, just "a small shift in timings and stopping patterns".

He said there were currently fast trains at 7.53 and 7.57, while the proposed December 2018 timetable showed fast trains at 7.45 and 8am.

Closer examination of the mooted changes seem to show, however, that there would only be one direct Surbiton-Waterloo service between 6.30am and 7am, and only one between 7.05am and 7.30am.

SWR says its changes are 'a major step towards the delivery of improvements to services that we know customers want to see'.

The deadline to give SWR your feedback on the proposed changes (timetable.feedback@swrailway.com) is December 22.



Mud, mud, glorious mud...

That could yet be the rallying call for Surbiton's brownies, guides, rainbows and seniors who, helped by a tribe of volunteers, have been working towards one of the more unusual badges... Growing Up Wild In Mud!

"And there's been a lot of mud," laughed Lara Martin, brown owl for 1st Surbiton brownies. "Our girls have had lots of opportunities from camps, challenges and adventures, to concerts such as Girlguiding's Big Gig at Wembley's SSE Arena, with performances from Pixie Lott, Ella Eyre and Noodlerella. You can imagine the atmosphere created by 10,000 girls and their leaders."

Coming up in 2018 are 'magic and mayhem' events where brownies can brush up on circus skills, while in January, guides will be playing outdoor games and there will be a sparkle and ice camp for seniors.

Girlguiding research reveals 90% of nine and 10-year-olds think women and men have the same job prospects, but only 35% of 17 to 21-year-olds feel the same.

Camp CEO is one example of an event girlguiding stages to support girls' aspirations. "We have girls on our waiting lists for many units, but we need more volunteers to help us keep the units open and re-open others," said Lara. "There are all sorts of roles available and time contribution can start from an hour a week." Email: surbitondivisionguides@outlook.com

Master social media

If you run a small business in Surbiton, an advice session on handling social media might be useful.

Janine Coombes is running a marketing masterclass at ExCellar, at the corner of Brighton Road and Victoria Road, on December 4 from 9.30am.

A local businesswoman, her aim is to help entrepreneurs and small firms get to grips with social media marketing, blogging and podcasting.

"The focus of the session will be planning," she told The Good Life. "I have been working with small businesses for a few years now, and the thing I hear again and again is that people don't know what to post on social media profiles such as Facebook."

Janine, who has worked with brands such as EE, Europcar and Orange, added: "Once you've thought about your marketing strategy for the next year, and plotted in the key dates, the rest will start flowing."

Email janine@janinecoombes.co.uk if you're interested in attending. The first four to get in touch can sit in the 'hot seat', to troubleshoot their online marketing issues.

The session is linked to the launch of Janine's own business, Feelgood Marketing.

Makeover for courts

Work has started on redeveloping the tennis courts at Alexandra recreation ground.

Park Tennis in Kingston, in association with Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club, will be giving the courts a resurface and providing new fencing around them. It is hoped the work will be completed early in the new year.

The aim is to make top-quality public tennis facilities available to the whole community.

Households will be able to buy an annual access pass giving a family unlimited tennis for £50 a year, with no court fees. There will also be a programme of activities for adults and children, from introductory sessions for novices to leagues and tournaments for experienced players. Visit www.parktennisinkingston.co.uk



MICHAEL'S SHOE REPAIRS OF SURBITON

Shout out for directors

The cornerHOUSE needs directors and actors for its festival of original playwriting. Directors, experienced or novice, should apply by Dec 8 to cornerhouseoneacts@gmail.com

Auditions take place on Wednesday, Jan 31 2018 at 7.30pm or Sunday, Feb 4 2018 at 2pm at the arts centre in Douglas Road. Actors only need attend one audition. The oneACTS 2018 festival takes place next April. Visit www.thech.org

Made here for Christmas

There's a festive gift fair at The Lamb pub in Brighton Road on Sunday December 10, starting at 1pm. The Made in Surbiton Christmas market runs until 7pm, with stalls including locally made jewellery and jams.

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Where should we site new homes?

The battle for trees and open space in Long Ditton is moving to a new phase as Elmbridge Council wrestles with the controversial suggestion that it should site thousands of new homes on land behind Surbiton Hockey Club.

The council is trying to identify alternative sites for house-building via an 'urban capacity study', and has appealed to residents for help, reasoning that they know the area best.

If you have any bright ideas for possible locations, email planningpolicy@elmbridge.gov.uk and explain why the land you've identified might be suitable for building (eg it's derelict, vacant, run down or its lease is about to run out).

Suggestions have to be submitted to the council by 5pm on Monday, December 4.

Sites which are found will then form part of the council's new local plan.

It is hoped that by coming forward with positive suggestions for sites for new homes, rather than simply rejecting the notion of any development, the council can strike a balance between the need for maintaining open space and the need for houses.



Open sesame! Thieves target top cars

There has been a spate of break-ins to cars locally, with one Hinchley Wood resident having her vehicle broken into three times in three weeks... despite being certain that she had locked the doors.

Thieves target high-value cars such as BMWs, Audis and Range Rovers, and use

electronic signal boosters, bought on the internet.

Thefts have involved locked vehicles where the owner has set the key fob to unlock remotely. The fraudulent devices persuade the car's computer to unlock doors, believing the rightful owner is nearby.

Break-ins are concentrated around train stations, where vehicles are often left for the entire day.

Police are also investigating the possibility of key fob 'cloning' and have urged drivers not to keep car key fobs near the front wall of their home. The ideal storage place is in a shielded box, or in the fridge... provided you don't mind cold keys in the morning.

'Blame the university for housing shortage'

The council is to start building houses again to counteract the ‘university effect’, leader Kevin Davis has pledged.

Addressing residents at a meet-the-people event in Tolworth, Cllr Davis argued that competing needs of town and gown, and Kingston University’s student number growth, had helped create a shortage of housing land.

He said that to counter the problem, the council had set up its own development company to focus on building homes for key workers. “We are looking at building our own council homes again,” he stated.

Cllr Davis had strong words for what he perceived was Kingston Uni’s distorting effect on the local property market, and he used them after one angry resident had bellowed at him: “Do you care about the university, or residents? There are people sleeping on the street in Kingston!”

Cllr Davis said that the uni had “nicked all the land”, and as a result “all you see is Kingston University buildings”.

He said government rule changes had prompted the university to revise its subject range, rowing back on traditional courses such as English and humanities “because students have gone elsewhere, for example Royal Holloway, which has doubled the number of students studying English”.

He said that Kingston University had planned new student housing as

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- It must have been a heck of a curry! This intriguing snap was taken outside a house in Queen's Drive, Berrylands. Perhaps it simply represents one popadom too many on a Friday night...

Deliver The Good Life and see lots to make you smile

You get to see lots of weird, wonderful, cute and amusing things when you are out delivering The Good Life.

One of our regular helpers, artist Georgina Allen, spotted this little bundle of fluff in a plant pot in Rushett Close, Long Ditton, on

her last delivery round in October.

"I think the earth in the pot was warm, so she decided that would be a good place to sit and soak up the afternoon sun," said the keen gardener. "She looked very cosy there."

Get the opportunity to see other things to make you smile by joining the volunteer band who deliver The Good Life to your road.

Email the editor, Tim Harrison, at thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

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Barge makes Thames doable

The charity stall at November's farmers' market celebrated the River Thames Boat Project – an enterprise dear to the heart of Surbitonian Julian Meers.

Founded in 1988, the project revolves around a 26m converted barge, the Thames Venturer, which enables people with special needs to enjoy a river cruise with their carers.

It is also used as a floating classroom to teach children about the river and the environment.

"She is moored in Kingston, but can be regularly spotted on the Thames in Surbiton, bringing joy to many," said Julian of Chadwick Place. "The charity is taking on a new boat next year, which is a big leap forward."

The stall at the Maple Road market sold souvenirs associated with the charity and raised local awareness and funds.

"I really enjoy being an active member as it involves crewing the barge with volunteers of all backgrounds, socialising with everyone on board the Thames Venturer and assisting on education days when the barge is moored as a classroom on the river," said Julian.

The therapeutic cruises serve all ages, including those with special needs, disability or mental health conditions.

"Enjoying and learning about the river on board our specially adapted, wheelchair-accessible barge is a very special experience," Julian added. "It brings relaxation, health and personal development benefits unique to the river setting; many clients rebook year after year."

The second accessible boat, Thames Discoverer, is due to arrive early in 2018.

More at www.thamesboatproject.org



Simply red: Chelsea pensioners enjoy the Venturer

Enjoying the wreath lecture

Residents are being invited to jolly up their front doors and become the envy of their neighbours this Yuletide with a stunning Christmas wreath.

Create your designs using noble fir branches, holly, fir cones, berries and dried adornments, all provided.

"You are welcome to include foliage from your own garden or your own decorations as well if you wish," says Sarah Carver who is running the workshops at Court Farm Garden Centre in Old Kingston Road. "Bring a group of friends, relatives, or colleagues and just have fun."

Tea, coffee and mince pies will be served afterwards in the garden centre's newly spruced up cafe.

The workshops run on December 2, 3, 9 and 10, from 10am to noon and 2-4pm, and on December 6 and 7 (morning only) and cost £30. Email sarahcarver@ntlworld.com or phone 07598 270 693 to book places.



Should we all defer to four-year-olds?

Could a four-year-old change the world? It's the provocative question posed by David Harkin, right, as part of an evening of themed talks.

The 'entrepreneur-in-residence' at Surbiton High School explores what really makes an idea ground-breaking, and if four-year-olds are best placed to have them.

Having worked with 50,000 students round the world, he says we should pay



more attention to "the uninhibited insight into the world that a four-year-old has".

The talk is part of a TEDx event, organised by Surbiton residents at Kingston's Rose Theatre on January 20, 10am-7pm.

Other local speakers include Lorraine Chademunhu (Life with a man's voice),

GP Dr Robin Fawcett (Saving the NHS), and Ali Hannon (Gender as a Performance).

"The theme of the full-day programme of live talks is Out of Order," says organiser Nicholas Rogers. "The only constant is change; it's all around us, at home, at work, online, offline, in our city streets, on our phones, in the way we view the world. It's exciting, yet disconcerting."

TEDx is a global programme of independently organised events based on the TED Talks model.

"The community in Surbiton and Kingston is at the heart of our events," added Mr Rogers. "We're a group of volunteers who do this because we love TED, and we could not succeed without the support of local people." Tickets are £37 via www.tedxkingstonuponthames.com



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Boutique stocks wonky ceramics

Locally designed jewellery is among Christmas gift offerings at Shoes at Last, the clothing, shoes and accessories emporium in Maple Road.

The boutique also stocks sheepskin gloves and slippers, and a new range of homewear... throws from Bronte by Moon. There are also wonky ceramics bowls and plates by Wonki Ware and, hot off the shelf, hand-poured candles by the aptly named Margo of Surbiton.



Chill zone will help you relax

Are you stressed out, with too much on your mind? A chill zone in Surbiton aims to help you relax.

Darren Yap is running an hour-long mindfulness session on Wednesday, January 17 which explores techniques of beating stress. Gather in the upstairs coffee bar of Surbiton Hill Methodist

church at 39 Ewell Road for "a relaxing, immersive experience with mesmerising lighting and music to set the mood".

The chill zone runs for an hour, from 8pm and costs £10 for two. Arrive 10 mins early to set up either a blanket on the floor or a yoga mat. Full details at www.wimble.com/mindfulmotion/workshops

Pyjama party to catch the post



The Langley Ave pillar box serves weekend letter writers in their jimjams

You have to be up early to catch the post these days.

Freshly privatised Royal Mail has reduced collections to once a day at several boxes which once enjoyed morning and afternoon emptyings.

And many Surbiton pillar boxes are now being cleared at 9am during the week, and 7am at weekends.

Phil Cooper, of Ellerton Road, told the Good Life: "I've scouted around the local pillar boxes, and

it seems many will be following suit, with even earlier collections than usual.

"The 7am weekend collection time seems a particularly bleary-eyed innovation. People will have to be tottering down the street in their pyjamas to catch that one."

He blames the changes, ultimately, on "the decision of Vince Cable to sell off the Royal Mail at a knock-down price when he was business secretary".

Bring the magic inside

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Fairtrade row is a real storm with a teacup

It was a very British protest, staged alongside a large inflatable cup of tea. But Surbiton's branch of Sainsbury's still got the point.

Campaigners interrupted their Saturday morning shopping to try to urge the world's largest retailer of Fairtrade products not to replace the distinctive brand with the supermarket's own 'fairly traded' label.

Doug and Jeannette James, of Woodlands Road, spearheaded the protest, as they did at Sainsbury's agm in July when they appealed to shareholders and the supermarket chain board not to undo all the good that has been done by the widely recognised name and symbol.

The Jameses helped achieve Fairtrade status for the borough back in 2005 during a drive to cement the brand in shoppers' minds as delivering a good deal to struggling farmers in the developing world. The Surbiton action was part of a nationwide campaign supported by Christian Aid, the Catholic aid agency Cafod, The



Fancy a cuppa? Trouble brews outside Sainsbury's

Women's Institute, Traidcraft Exchange and Tearfund, calling on the supermarket to reconsider.

Sainsbury's has been accused of undermining Fairtrade by experimenting with dropping the established ethical mark for its own-label tea.

Doug, a Sainsbury's shareholder, asked to speak on the issue at the summer agm, only for chairman David Tyler to attempt to bring the meeting to a close.

But Doug persisted, marching to the microphone to ask the board: "Are you now reasserting the power of the retailer against that of the producer and putting developing world producers back in the subservient role that Fairtrade redeems them from?"

Sainsbury's has trialled labelling its own-brand teas 'fairly traded', with campaigners fearing an extension to other lines such as coffee or bananas.

The Surbiton protest, attended by several local councillors and supported by a letter from MP Ed Davey, pointed out that Sainsbury's is the largest retailer of Fairtrade products in the world, and that many producers have worked their way out of poverty as a

result of its progressive policies. Ed Davey joined 68 MPs to sign an early day motion urging reconsideration.

Protesters say detail on how Sainsbury's own scheme would work lacks clarity, and that it is not certain how the premium on ethically-traded goods would be distributed.

Doug James argues: "Recognition of the Fairtrade mark outshines that of any other ethical mark, and is the envy of the marketing world; the gold standard."

"What does Sainsbury's hope to achieve by giving up the moral high ground and the kudos currently enjoyed, and going it alone as yet another self-defining brand?"

Sainsbury's stance is that Fairtrade has run its course and needs updating.

A spokesman told The Good Life: "Our fairly traded tea pilot will deliver even more benefits to farmers in Africa than the current Fairtrade model."

"We should be judged on the benefits we can bring to some of the most deprived communities in the world, not by which logo is on the packet of our tea."

Sainsbury's has pledged that tea farmers will receive at least the same amount that they got under Fairtrade, gain more support and can make their own decisions about how they spend the premium that 'fairly traded' gives them.

Doug and Jeannette James, and the campaigners gathered in Victoria Road, remain to be convinced. **Tim Harrison**

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Padded kindness

Another in our series of photos celebrating the generosity of those providing pavement rest to the weary and the less able.

Modestly placed at night (to avoid the embarrassment of being showered with thanks by a grateful town), this well-padded black sofa among the autumn leaves at the junction of Maple Road and Brighton Road must be intended to help senior citizens meet, just as continental towns site benches in central locations to serve communities and counter loneliness.

May others be inspired by such acts of selfless thoughtfulness.



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The Dorella sisters in the cornerHOUSE panto. From left, Donna (Debra Shepherd), Cyn (Richard Williams) and Kim (Sue Lee)

Picture: Jon Constant

Will Cynders go to the ball?

Thirty years ago, a panto tradition was born in Tolworth when Cinderella was performed, to raise money for Africa. Since then, good causes have benefited to the tune of £70,000. Now the cornerHOUSE marks the anniversary with Cyn Dorella – a fresh take on an old chestnut. “With so much smut swirling round Westminster, we’ve decided to make this pantomime innuendo-free,” said writer Tim Harrison. “Cyn Dorella wants a ball, but will anybody give her one?” Yaz Nixon directs the show, which runs nightly from January 23-27 at 7.45pm, plus a 4pm Saturday matinee. It stars foghorn-voiced evergreen

Richard Williams as Cyn, with Sue Lee and Debra Shepherd as the ugly sisters Kim and Donna, and the softly spoken Alex Dinnin as himself. Musical director Nigel Palmer said: “As usual we have been busy working on a special song for the pantomime’s true stalwart Emily Newton; a performer who knows how to get an audience going. Hopefully, this time, some of them might stay beyond the interval.” Featuring live animals and a grand finale, the show is also a homage to recycling. Both gags from the first show will make another appearance. Tickets are £9 (£7 concs) from www.ticketsource.co.uk/event/213070



Still swinging at 90

Good Life readers who are lucky enough to get their favourite paper early will get the chance to see band leader Bob Barter celebrate his 90th with an evening of jazz and swing at The Berrylands pub. The gig will feature, among others, the music of Duke Ellington, Jerome Kern and Cole Porter (“Although he can be a bit smutty”), said Bob, of Elgar Avenue. He will be joined in the Berrylands function room on Sunday November 26 at 5.45pm by Jimmy Hastings on tenor sax, soloist Jenny Howe and Eric Ford on drums. “It won’t be trad jazz, it’ll be modern jazz-cum-swing,” said Bob, one of music’s great survivors, who has led dance bands and orchestras since the early 1950s.



Series curtain-raiser

A free market-day concert at St Andrew’s is a fine way to start the weekend, with Coombe Boys’ School opening the season in October. George Lavender (bass), Ryan Foley (vocals/drum box) and Sam Vaughan (guitar), pictured from left, played Stevie Wonder’s Superstition and Gorillaz’ Feel Good Inc during a 50-minute programme. The concert also included piano recitals, a cappella songs (where the boys were joined by singers from Coombe Girls’) and a string quartet. Ben Costello, Thames Concerts artistic director, introduced it as “an eclectic programme showcasing the musical talent of the borough”, praised the church acoustics, and explained that the free morning sessions were a curtain-raiser for a series of evening concerts. Next up, Claire Martin and Ian Shaw perform at 7.30pm on December 9, while there is another 10.30am free market-day concert on December 16, when Kingston Music Service performs. More at www.thamesconcerts.com



Cecilia McDowall’s Christmas cantata A Winter’s Night is the centrepiece of the Kingston Choral Society concert at St Andrew’s, Maple Road, Saturday December 16 at 7.30pm, with an open rehearsal at 2.30pm. William Vann is at the organ, Andrew Griffiths conducts. As well as the 15-minute cantata with its rousing finale, there are carols to join in and a mountain of mince pies to consume. Adults £13, concs £11, U18s £5. Tickets from the box office, 020 8977 4801, or via www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/404667

Bach soon

Bach’s Christmas Oratorio is performed at St Andrew’s church, Maple Road, on Saturday December 2 at 7pm, by the Kingston Orpheus Choir, conducted by David Condry with the Kingston Orpheus Baroque Players. Elizabeth Weisberg sings soprano, Helen Condry contralto, Mark Dobell tenor and Julian Empett bass. Tickets £14 (concs £12, students £6, U16s free).

Philippa Alexander is keeping it in the family. The artist exhibits at the cornerHOUSE in February, sharing wallspace with works by her mother, sister and two sons. Philippa, of Elmbridge Avenue, her mother Sally Spero, her sister Judith Spero and sons Peter and William Alexander are all represented. Works include this collage, mixing cut-outs, sewing and drawings. “My son Peter died at 28, but I’ve always wanted to show his work too; hopefully people will see the threads linking everyone in the family,” said Philippa. Her other son, William, is a professional photographer.



Death is central to plot

When Elisa Lodato tentatively submitted her first novel to publishers, she was braced for the near inevitability of rejection. Then came the letter. They not only loved it, they were offering a two-book deal. An Unremarkable Body is published in December, partly set in Surbiton and Tolworth, in line with the age-old maxim ‘write what you know about’. Elisa, 37, of Douglas Road, has been playing with the novel’s plot – an unusual tale of a mother/daughter relationship – ever since she began teaching English A-level at Tiffin Girls. “I spent days pulling texts apart, and I thought I should write the story that’s been in my head for years,” said the mother-of-two. “The big step was getting an agent. Then we worked on it for months to polish it before it went on to submission.” The book, with its eye-catching cover of a dead bird, is about a family that lives in Crane View Road (“Yes, it’s a mish-mash a bit like Cranes Park,” said Elisa). The daughter discovers her dead mother, and each chapter is prefaced by an extract from the post-mortem. It entailed medical research, aided by family members who are GPs.



The main character is Katharine, who works at Surbiton Library, and there are several other scenes set in the town, including an attack in a school playground and a road accident outside the fire station in Ewell Road. Elisa is now putting the finishing touches to her second book... which is set in Hinchley Wood and Claygate! An Unremarkable Body is published in hardback by Weidenfeld & Nicolson on December 14 at £14.99. Tim Harrison



Masterclass is a blast

These young musicians were blowing their own trumpets at a brass masterclass at the cornerHOUSE. Coached one-to-one by the London-based Westcombe Brass, they worked on pieces, then performed to relatives and friends. Quintet tuba player Joe Palmer was delighted with the standard of musicianship, and the response to the workshop. “There was a good mix of abilities; some were really good considering ages. Hopefully they will carry on.” The event was part of an initiative by Thames Concerts and Kingston Arts. Next up, a string players’ workshop led by violinist Jack Liebeck and cellist Jamie Walton on Sunday, February 18, 2-5pm, with a performance at 5.15. The workshop is free, with a £10 deposit refundable on the day. Email Simon Hancock at simonhancock29@gmail.com



Fine art, Italian style Emiliano Antonetti flew all the way from Milan to stage his latest exhibition of biro and acrylic drawings at the cornerHOUSE. The artist, a graduate of the highly lauded Brera Academy, a home to fine art in the global capital of design and fashion, brought a small sample of his work – because of luggage restrictions – for an appreciative audience to enjoy. “This is an exploration,” he told The Good Life. “I try to decipher the infinity of endless patterns and yarns which could be a metaphor for life and destiny. “Fabric is surely that everyday thing that everyone has to deal with – although we don’t take that into consideration. But we need clothes and fabric to cover ourselves. For all these reasons, it’s very important to look at their infinite patterns and endless combinations in detail.” The exhibition, staged by the Italian British Association at the Douglas Road arts centre, was a joint enterprise with self-taught artist Consuelo Celluzzi, who has been living in Britain for 11 years. Consuelo, originally from Rome, works in mixed media (“acrylics, spray paint... a bit of everything,” she said). Her work is striking, colourful, fun and, for the past two years, created largely in 3D form. As well as recalling childhood memories in her artwork, Consuelo doesn’t shy away from commenting on today’s issues. “I like to express my opinion about things,” she said.

Poetry please

Surbiton poet Matthew Paul has published his first collection... which has been 30 years in the making. The Evening Entertainment has three distinct sections. The first features an array of people from a medieval monk to Sussex surfers. The second travels back to the poet’s childhood and early adulthood in the suburbs (Matthew was born in New Malden) and Northern Ireland, with topics ranging from football kickabouts to Pinky and Perky. The third deals with the loss of his father during a battle with dementia. Matthew, 51, of Ewell Road, said: “I had my first poem published in 1987, when I was reading philosophy at the University of Ulster, then life intervened!” The book can be bought via <https://store.eyewearpublishing.com> or on Amazon.



THAMES CONCERTS

2017-18 concert series held at St Andrew’s Church in Maple Road, Surbiton. Concerts start at 7:30pm

Saturday 9 December 2017 Claire Martin OBE and Ian Shaw Internationally renowned singers present an early Xmas cracker	Saturday 17 February 2018 Jack Liebeck (violin), Jamie Wallon (cello) and Katya Apklishcheva (piano) Playing Schumann, Mendelssohn & Ravel
Saturday 13 January 2018 Daren Moore (trumpet) & Jeremiah Stephenson (organ) Music by Bach, Eben and Paradies	Farmers’ Market Days: Enjoy our free 50-minute concerts from 10.30am with the following artists. Full programme: www.thamesconcerts.com
Saturday 3 February 2018 Alena Lugovkina (flute) and Pavel Timofeyevsky (piano)	> 16 December (Kingston Music Service) > 20 January (Tiffin School) > 17 February (Kingston University)

WWW.THAMESCONCERTS.COM

7 days, three games, quids in!

Chelsea Ladies, fresh from defeating Rosengard 4-0 over two legs in the Champions League, face a week to test manager Emma Hayes' squad depth to the limit.

Three home games in seven days means every player will get a look-in. It's also a great chance for young fans to experience a match... for just a quid.

On Sun Dec 3, Yeovil Town visit in the Conti Cup at 2pm, then on Wed Dec 6 Spurs Ladies bowl up for a 7pm match in the same competition. Children and OAPs get into each match for a pound coin. Adult entry, £3.

There's a buzz at Kingsmeadow this season, with goals aplenty and good defensive skills on display. The toughest of the trio of matches is on Sun Dec 10, when Manchester City visit at 6.30pm in the league. It's 1st v 2nd, and it's just too close to call. Speaking exclusively to The Good

Life, goalie Hedvig Lindahl, 34, the Swedish international who won league and cup in her first season with the Blues, said: "We have a good squad, and we're going to have to rotate a lot and trust the people we have here, because it's all about freshness."

Hedvig (not to be confused with Harry Potter's owl, Hedwig) added: "If you played the same 11, the third game would be tough to win because you're not fresh."

The three home fixtures ascend

in order of difficulty, though each poses a challenge. So far, in the Conti Cup, Chelsea Ladies have played two and won two, beating Brighton and Bristol City away.

If they do well against Yeovil and Spurs, the team will be fighting on four fronts in 2018, squad depth a critical factor.

"You have to treat every game with respect; every game is as important as the next," said Hedvig. "You have parallel

focuses all the time; you need to be in the 'now' and deal with what comes closest in time.

"It helps if there are more people, because we're human. Sometimes you'll have a bad

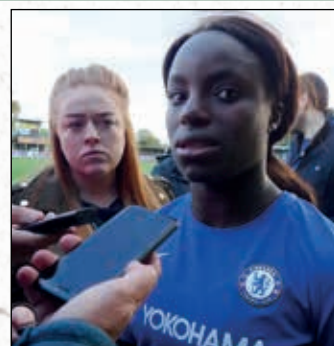
Eni's vow

Striker Eni Aluko says she's putting the stress of the last few months behind her, to do her talking on the pitch.

The 30-year-old Chelsea Ladies forward spoke of the story which has hung over her like a raincloud all summer and said: "Safe to say it's been the most difficult period of my life but that's done now, hopefully."

Aluko was at the centre of a storm involving ex-England women's manager Mark Sampson, sacked for inappropriate behaviour at a previous coaching job.

It followed allegations of racially discriminatory



remarks by Sampson towards Aluko and fellow Chelsea Ladies star Drew Spence which produced formal FA apologies... vindicating the complaints.

Aluko, who is herself a qualified lawyer, says it's all behind her now. "I'd like to do my talking on the pitch," she stated.

day, sometimes you'll be sick. You can't rely on one individual throughout a whole season; you have to rely on the squad."

● Bargain price tickets at www.chelseafc.com or on the door.

Tim Harrison



Hedvig Lindahl signs autographs at Kingsmeadow for some of her young admirers

Surbiton to host hockey's Euro cup

Surbiton – the oldest, most successful hockey club in the country – is hosting the Women's EuroHockey Club Cup, the sport's equivalent of the Champions League.

It will be staged at Sudgen Road from May 17-20, giving spectators a chance to see Olympic champions and international stars do battle ahead of the Women's World Cup.

Four-time English national champions Surbiton Ladies (right) line up against European powerhouses Netherlands and Germany, plus Spain, Ireland and Belarus. Surbiton Ladies is

catching a wave of increased interest in the sport since Team GB's medal success at Rio. The team includes several Rio medallists.

Sarah Haycroft, Surbiton Ladies captain, told The Good Life: "Having qualified for, and played in, the last three tournaments, we're looking forward to competing against

Europe's top teams on our home pitch.

"It's fantastic that we'll be playing in the top European competition in front of our home crowd at Surbiton."

The club has 1,250 members and a busy junior section, and welcomes newcomers. For more, visit www.surbitonhc.com TH



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