



This handsome chap seems to be welcoming children back to Long Ditton Infant & Nursery School... one of 20 scarecrows forming a trail around the area. The full story is on p6

Surbiton artists Giselle, 6, and Arthur, 4, drew a blue whale and helped set a 45,600 world record for an online art class as artist Rob Biddulph raised £52,000 for charity.



Surbiton Farmers' Market aims to return on Sat, Oct 17. Meanwhile, Robyn McAllister and Kate Berry, above, did a great job collecting donations at the last foodbank morning.

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Eviction may kill societies

The future of Surbiton societies and groups is in peril after their overnight eviction from the council-owned hall where they've met for decades.

With no advance warning, 30 clubs were emailed by council contractor Engie to say that hire of the Ewell Road library annexe had ended with immediate effect.

Bird watchers, poets, historians, train buffs, archaeologists, tap dancers... all were suddenly given the heave-ho.

Engie, the £145bn giant contracted to run local services, told hirers: "Kingston Council has decided to take back the hall for permanent use by their staff".

The shock move has already forced two groups to close after a Covid-ruined year.

Others may fold too, robbing Surbiton of the interest groups which contribute so much to community life... exiled from the place specifically built to house them.

MP Ed Davey has been alerted, and councillors are now demanding answers. Toddlers' music, Surbiton Arts Group, Surbiton Historical Society, Surbiton Bird Watchers, the poetry circle, the railway nostalgia group, Kingston Archaeological Society, Kingston Philatelic Society, Young Embroiderers... all are homeless.

The council recently upgraded heating, redecorated and sanded the floors of an annexe built next to the library in 1964 to satisfy societies' demand.

● Cont'd on p9

'Turn Maple Road into a cleaner, safer zone'

A Surbiton councillor wants Maple Road added to the 'low-traffic neighbourhood' list, to create safer walking and cycling space, boost pub and cafe trade, and allow the farmers' market to thrive.

Cllr Sharron Sumner (Green) says a barrier by Maple Infants' and St Andrew's & St Mark's schools could transform life. "We all remember the quiet roads during lockdown," she says. "Local people deserve that all year round." Sharron says it would cut pollution, help Maple Village's bars and restaurants, let the farmers' market operate safely and send through traffic back to Portsmouth Road.



She's pushing at an open door. Kingston Council is about to trial five barriers, including King Charles Road (see p5). But Cllr Sumner wants an even bolder approach.

"Maple Road was blissfully empty in lockdown; my son and I were able to ride along it safely for the first time. He's a bit wobbly!" She said parking, access and delivery issues could be worked out "with a little imagination". "One major benefit would be that the farmers' market could operate more freely, and possibly on a larger scale," she added.

The straight 'A' star

With four predicted A* grades, Mithushan Thiagarajah was set to be Southborough High's first Cambridge success.

Then Gonville & Caius, the 670-year-old college which had pledged him a place to study medicine, withdrew its offer after A-level results were downgraded in the Ofqual algorithm fiasco.

The 18-year-old was interviewed on BBC's Newsnight, telling policy editor Lewis Goodall of his heartbreak at having the



rug pulled from under him. But the government's 11th-hour U-turn led Caius College to an about-face, and the sixth-former has now made history.

● Cont'd on p10

Stand out from the crowd with a water vole mask. INVOLED masks, made from bedsheets by volunteers, are £7.50 (free p&p); profits go to reintroducing voles (think Ratty from Wind in the Willows) to the Hogsmill river, where they were last seen in 2014. Berrylands-based Citizen Zoo is helping reverse a 94% decline in a decade, and has trained 60 volunteers to survey the habitat in Tolworth, Berrylands and Surbiton. Elliot Newton, second left, head of conservation at the rewilding group, said that apart from ecological functions, the mammals were charming. "They're beautiful, charismatic and have a very special place in the culture of the UK," he said. www.citizenzoo.org



It's Lockdown Liza

Meet Eliza Freeman, who weighed in at 8lb 15oz when she was born in a pub on June 22, into a world of social distancing and bubbles.

Mum and dad Heloise and Luke, who run The Limping Fox, are delighted with another sister for Annabelle, five, and Mathilda, three.

The couple, who have run the pub since July 2017, were prepared for a home birth... but not for one during a pandemic!

"It was scary when I was pregnant," said Heloise, cradling Eliza in the garden of the Rushett Road, Long Ditton, inn.

"It's hard not to see friends and relations when you've got a family."

The Freemans delayed post-lockdown reopening until July 29, partly because of the baby and partly as they're renovating a home in Thames Ditton to be near Heloise's parents.

Luke, who also owns a pub in Bristol, says he loves the Long Ditton community. "People are so friendly,"



he said. "We've made such good friends here - right from the opening night! Everyone was so welcoming."

The Limping Fox, known for its large garden, open air cinema nights and award-winning roasts (on pause at the moment), opens Wed & Thu, 4-11pm; Fri & Sat, noon-11.30pm; Sun, noon-10.30pm. thelimpingfox.co.uk

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● Surbiton barbecue chef Richard Hards has teamed up with Jennings the butcher to launch healthy family meals for the Tolworth Road delivery outfit Boxed Local to coincide with the first week back at school. The £44 deal (two boxes for adults, two for kids) includes free range smoked jumbo sausages or chicken thighs, corn on the cob, potato salad and a crunchy mix of seasonal crudites. More at www.boxedlocal.co

Sam takes a punt

If anyone can make a go of the river view bar/restaurant at Thames Ditton Marina just off Portsmouth Road, it's Sam Berry. The restaurateur, below right, who owns No 97 and Cento Uno in Maple Road, as well as One One Four in Teddington, has taken over the hidden gem and called it Hideaway.

Once The River Hut, then Bondi Beach Club in summer, and an alpine 'ski lodge' in winter, it's now a quality brunch/lunch, tapas eatery.

"It's called Hideaway because people have to make an effort to find it," said Sam, who has taken a nine-month initial lease, with options to extend. There's plenty of seating outside, a big free car park... and the brunches are first class.

So while others are going to the wall in the pandemic, why is Sam willing to take a punt?

"You've got to take risks in life," he said. "It's a great location, and we wanted to make the most of summer. It's a relaxed restaurant, you don't have to dress up and we are keeping it simple: brunch/lunch, and then tapas in the evening."

Brunch Wed-Sun, 10am-2pm; dinner Tues-Sat, 5.30-9.30pm, and in between, drinks.

Jane Grove

You can eat rainbows

Emma Egerton of Little Ginger is used to making an impact with her plant-powered catering firm. The Bond Road resident, who preps most of her vegan event food in the community kitchen at Brighton Road's Museum of Futures, has struck the right note with a new menu addition, the rainbow picnic box.

"It's proved particularly popular for socially

distanced meet-ups, and I've just catered a proposal (she said Yes!)," said Emma who started her one-woman business in 2016 after a career in teaching. As with all caterers, every summer booking vanished with Covid.

"It has been incredibly challenging keeping afloat and alive, so I've shaken things up to try to keep my little independent going," she said. "I've switched to doorstep deliveries, and I now offer a range of homemade freezer meals, a vegan barbecue

box and the very popular rainbow picnic box!"

To see what's on offer, and learn more about catering socially-distanced gatherings with plant-based fare, visit www.littleginger.org



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Let's be Frankey

It's hard to keep up with the chopping and changing in the restaurant opposite Bosco on St Mark's Hill.

For 29 years, it was The Magic Wok, Surbiton's trusted source of fried rice, spring rolls and sweet 'n' sour. When that closed at the end of 2018, it remained dark for 10 months, reopening in October 2019 as Sini Mediterranean Grill, a kebab-based eatery 'creating a little corner of Turkey in Surbiton', with a reputation for gargantuan portions, and a busy takeaway counter, supplying blotting paper to Wetherspoons revellers.

Now the 60-cover restaurant has changed again.

It's Tony & Frankey, a Portuguese (specifically Madeira) restaurant which has clung on to most of the old menu's Turkish and Italian dishes... and quirky spellings ('special' drink, anyone?).

It missed the deadline to sign up for Rishi Sunak's £10 August subsidies, but the plates still overflow with generous meat portions, and it's all lubricated with Efes lager from Istanbul.

Mains include burgers, pasta, pizzas and kebab skewers... plus a dozen fish options. The food is heavy but satisfying, the staff chirpy and the prices mid-range.

Tim Harrison



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the good life

Editor: Tim Harrison

Set up in 2012, the community paper for Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands and Long Ditton appears six times a year between March and

November. We deliver to 11,500 homes and the issue is also available to download on our website. We're always delighted to hear from you, whether it's about editorial or advertising, or joining our band of loyal volunteers who help us deliver.

The email address is: thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

Between issues, news appears on Instagram and Facebook (@thegoodlifesurbiton) and on our website, where fresh stories are posted most days, and where back issues are archived.

www.thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk

This paper is also available at Michael's shoe repairs, Shoes At Last, Jennings, the cornerHOUSE, Community Motors & Stear green grocers.



Books bonanza

Running low on summer reading? Surbiton Library has launched a Ready Reads service. State the kind of books you enjoy, and staff will make a selection to safely collect at an agreed time. www.tinyurl.com/yyn8v3jr

Data jobs aplenty

Next year is census year, and recruits are being sought in Surbiton, to work until May 2021. If you speak Somali, Nepali, Mandarin etc, so much the better. www.censusjobs.co.uk

Donor benefits

Free cuppa and biccys? Surbitonians who have recovered from Covid-19 are urged to give blood, as potentially antibody-rich plasma can be transfused into seriously ill people struggling to develop immune response. Call 0300 1232323 or visit www.nhs.uk

Busy bike shop

Andrew Manning of Cyclink, Thames Ditton, reports "a massive increase in demand for bike repairs" and has a fortnight-long waiting list. He hopes to resume popular maintenance classes.

Steve on Cloud 9

Surbiton Star & Garter resident Steve Vause, 33, is delighted his beloved Fulham FC are back in the Premier League. Steve, severely disabled after a mortar attack in Iraq 14 years ago, was visited last year by Fulham players Kevin McDonald and Cyrus Christie.

Agents' delight

Brighton Road estate agents Seymours are celebrating after topping the local house sale charts for a full quarter. In the past three months the independent at the corner of Victoria Avenue has achieved the town's highest figures.

Planning ahead

How has the pandemic affected you? Kingston Council wants residents to fill in an online survey to inform future responses. The exercise closes on Sept 14. www.kingston.gov.uk/covidsurvey

Double seesaw

Oh to be young again! New play equipment has transformed Knollmead Park playground in Southwood Drive, Tolworth. The junior slide has gone, but there's a new cableway and a double-perch seesaw, to stand or sit on.

A jackpot grant

Community Brain (SHEDx, Tolworth market, Museum of Futures) hit the jackpot with a £28,843 Arts Council grant to help weather the pandemic; the only group in Surbiton to share in a £1.57bn arts sector support package.

Can you clock this

Learn about Surbiton's history, the tales behind its grand villas and the story of the Coronation clock on a guided heritage open day tour in September. Search www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Amar is a patron

Blind TV adventurer Amar Latif has become a patron of Surbiton charity SeeAbility, which offers social care to people with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss. "I'm delighted," said Amar. "Social inclusion is a cause close to my heart."

Scrubbers' plea

KT Scrubbers for Carers, Surbiton and Long Ditton's lockdown seamstresses who create laundry bags and scrubs from old pillow cases (725 to date), still need help with gowns. Email Sheelagh Heugh at s.heugh@outlook.com

By Ek, it's a snip

A new barber's shop has opened in the former Hair by Mitch salon, by the Black Lion, Brighton Road. Eknor is Jatinder Singh's first solo shop. Appointments on 07574 622050.

Market returns

Tolworth Broadway's arts/crafts/food market is back! The First in Tolworth market, in limbo since lockdown, will be in the Tolworth Broadway slip road, opposite Our Lady Immaculate church, on Sunday, September 6, 11am-3pm.

Student's heartfelt plea

An enterprising engineering student from Surbiton wants to crowdfund her final year to help others to follow her path. Thillai Chandrasekaran, 20, is supporting herself through her masters year after gaining a degree in aerospace engineering at Kingston uni. The 20-year-old from Broomfield Road works part-time in Greggs, but mobility issues limit her ability to perform many everyday tasks, including climbing steps.

"Due to financial difficulty after Covid, I am struggling hard to pay for my university this year," she told The Good Life. "Despite having a disability, I always work hard. I tried getting a loan for my studies back home, but it was not accepted without property as a guarantee."



Thillai's mother sold the family house in India after the death of her husband, to pay for her two daughters' schooling, but had to endure a backlash from some in her home country, where many girls are still denied an education.

Thillai's goal is to help other women become engineers. "I'd like to inspire other young girls with disabilities to follow their dreams," she said. Fellow student Karyn Miranda added: "She's amazing, and deserves to get an education; she believes in sustainability and wants to use green energy to better the world." www.tinyurl.com/y3fryp9w **Tim Harrison**



Joint enterprise

Alison Holt (left) and Anita Schaper now co-chair Surbiton neighbourhood committee. Both have been councillors since 2018; Cllr Holt for Surbiton Hill, Cllr Schaper for Berrylands. The committee handles highways, planning, grants, parks, community halls and resident engagement. It usually meets at Glenmore House in The Crescent, but is currently online, with live-streaming (plus recordings) at www.youtube.com/user/KingstonCouncil/featured. The next online meeting, for planning applications only, takes place on Thursday, September 17 at 7.30pm.

Bike training

Fancy getting back on a bicycle again? Kingston Council is organising confidence-boosting training, including tuition for family group cycling, with professional instructors who will meet you at your home or in a local park.

It's free (funded by TfL) and it's available seven days a week - including evenings.

You're allowed up to two free training sessions, each of 90 minutes, and it can be one-to-one, in pairs or in a family group with up to three kids and two adults.

If you haven't yet got a bike, that can be organised too. Simply visit the website www.kingston.gov.uk and search for cycle skills training.

● If you hate waste, call Abundance, a project aimed at harvesting and redistributing gluts of fruit from gardens, allotments and street trees, saving it from being thrown away. Last year, 1.3 tons was harvested in and around Surbiton. Toni Izard, left, needs volunteers able to spare a couple of hours in the fresh air. "It's mainly fruit trees, and equipment is provided," she said. "It's a fun way to meet people from the area, and get some of this precious harvest for yourself." To help, or if you know fruit



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SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



Hamming-up a fake call to the office to persuade his family he's an inspirational leader working from home

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the good life

The 999 man

feature

The man who helped devise the UK's best-known telephone number lived in Elgar Avenue. Though humble about the role he played, Tom Fallon takes much of the credit for setting up 999.

Born in London's Docklands at the turn of the 20th century, he joined the police after serving in the Royal Navy in the First World War, beginning his career, as he put it, "pavement pounding in the East End".

He married Mary, began a family and transferred to Scotland Yard in 1934, where he took charge of the information room where calls to the then emergency number, Whitehall 1212, were fielded.

The birth of the 999 service followed a horrific early-morning fire on November 10, 1935 at 27 Wimpole Street. Neighbour Norman Macdonald tried to raise the alarm by ringing the fire brigade but was delayed because the operator at the local telephone exchange was busy dealing with a queue of other callers, and had no way of distinguishing between routine and emergency calls.

People watched helplessly in the street as doctor's wife Julia Franklin, 55, shouted from a top-floor window: "For God's sake get the fire brigade."

Julia perished, as did her niece Lillie; cook Elizabeth Dunkley, 50; housemaid Alex Lamont, 22; and kitchenmaid Evelyn Hardy, 15. The doctor, Philip Franklin, who was away at the time, had the grim task of identifying the bodies.

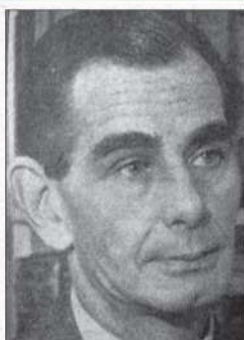
Macdonald wrote to The Times to express his frustration, and the government set up the Belgrave Committee to look into the issue. The first problem they faced was that each local police station had just one telephone line.

As head of the police information room, Fallon's input was key. Working with General Post Office officials (the GPO then controlled the phone network), he ran through options for a memorable number that could be fed through to a central control room from anywhere in London... and eventually anywhere in the UK.



The simpler, snappier 111 was ruled out because when telephone lines flapped together in high winds they generated rogue '1' diallings. Numbers beginning 2-8 had already been commandeered by exchanges, so 999 became the favoured option. Fallon laughed, and called it destiny. His first police shoulder number was 999K.

Modestly, he later played down the significance. "I helped launch the new radio crime-fighting system known as triple nine," he said, adding: "While it was the number I first wore on my tunic collar as a constable on an East End beat, the coincidence of numerology was entirely unconnected with



my early pavement pounding in the force."

Tom and his colleagues also realised that on an old rotary dial it was possible to easily locate 9 in the dark, or in a smoke-filled room, thanks to the metal bar next to the digit.

Assistant postmaster general Sir Walter Womersley announced news of the world's first emergency telephone number

to the Commons on June 30 1937... to scepticism. Sir Sidney Herbert asked: "How does a lady with a burglar in the house remember to dial 999? Why not have some button on the telephone to be pressed?"

Sir Walter assured him that engineers had explored that possibility "but came to the conclusion that 999 was the best method to get a short, direct call".

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS

Tom Fallon

War interrupted a national rollout, and amazingly it wasn't until 1976 that the whole of the UK was covered by an automatic system; the last bastion of manual connection in England being Abingdon.

The 999 service was an instant hit, though initially only covering a 12-mile radius from Oxford Circus. When should it be used? The Evening News was clear. "Only dial 999 if the matter is urgent; if, for instance, the man in the flat next to yours is murdering his wife or you have seen a heavily masked cat-burglar peering round the stack pipe of the local bank building. If the matter is less urgent, if you have merely lost little Towser, or a lorry has come to rest in your front garden, just call the local police."

In the first week, 1,336 calls were made. Today it's half a million.



Fallon transferred to Wapping to take charge of the Thames River Police, and he and Mary bought 166 Elgar Avenue from



Clockwise, from left: Fallon as head of the river police; 166 Elgar Avenue, the family home for 40 years; the Met Police information room, 1934, when dialling Whitehall 1212 got you through; how to work a public phone; Tom Fallon in an old newspaper portrait

the previous owners, Clarence and Lucy Purdy, settling in just as the Second World War broke out.

As head of the river police, he commanded 200 men and 30 boats for six years – right through the war. Elgar Avenue got off lightly. Even on the notorious night of February 23, 1944, when 700 incendiary bombs blanketed Berrylands, the road escaped a direct hit.

Fallon retired in 1948 at the rank of chief superintendent, and he and Mary moved to Africa, where he took a security job in Tanganyika, now part of Tanzania, and helped found the 'peanut police force'.

After a year or so the Fallons returned to Elgar Avenue where he reinvented himself as a writer, publishing River Police – the story of London's waterborne coppers – in 1956, drawing on boyhood memories of the capital.

"I remember with what fascination I watched the Thames policemen in their tiny patrol boats, weaving in and out of the river byways and backwaters," he said.

Fallon was technical adviser to the B-movie River Beat in 1954, and the television series Dial 999 in 1959 (billed as the UK version of hit US show Highway Patrol), its cast including future Doctors William Hartnell and Patrick Troughton. Fallon also wrote a radio crime series.

He lectured to church groups and townswomen's guilds, and took up photography and golf, playing at Surbiton Golf Club for 10 years.

He died in 1964 following brain surgery, the funeral held at the Sacred Heart church, Wimbledon.

Mary continued to live in the Elgar Avenue house for a further 15 years. "We moved here in 1979; I just remember the last owner was an elderly lady," the current occupant told The Good Life.

● Tom Fallon, born c1900, died June 21 1964

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Retailer M&Co dodges the bullet

Staff at the Victoria Road fashion retailer M&Co feared the worst when the chain announced 47 of its 262 shops would close, but breathed again after hearing Surbiton had been spared.

It would have left a gaping hole in a high street already battling the rise of internet shopping and the pandemic.

M&Co chief executive Andy McGeech said Covid-19 had been the biggest challenge for the 60-year-old family firm, but was encouragingly upbeat about Surbiton and similar small-town stores.

"Many people don't feel comfortable travelling on public transport or visiting busy city centres, and that can be good news for local high street stores like M&Co," he said.

"Local economies rely to a huge



degree on their town centres, and we have seen too many high streets hollowed out by successive shop closures.

"More and more people are beginning to realise that, if they don't support their town centres, everyone's quality of living really takes a hit, so we are proud to be playing a part in the drive to shop locally."

Class choices

Enrolment is open for Surbiton adult education autumn courses.

With the King Charles centre no longer available, alternative venues include the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road, the United Reformed Church hall in Elgar Avenue, and (controversially, see p1) Ewell Road's library annexe, due to host art, weaving, photography, flower arranging and soft furnishing.

Many courses, such as languages, have moved online, with the full range including mental wellbeing, employability, independent living, computing and accountancy. Visit www.kingston.gov.uk/adulteducation



Barrier to stop the rats

A barrier will go up this month in King Charles Road to prevent rat-running. It will block the road between the Hollyfield and Beaconsfield road junctions, near the Coffee on the Corner café, to stop drivers zipping along to dodge jams on Ewell Road.

The barrier will let cyclists through but stop motorists using King Charles as a cut-through.

A trial will last six months, then be reviewed. If it's deemed a success, it will be kept for a further year and a half. Residents were not consulted as the traffic measure falls under 'emergency powers'.

Conservation zone? Phooey!

Developers take note. Kingston Council no longer cares about preserving conservation areas. The development control committee (DCC) approved plans for a new housing estate in the Southborough Conservation Area, despite strong objections from the Southborough Residents' Association (SRA) and local councillors who threw out those same proposals at a neighbourhood committee meeting in November.

Andrew Ivison, who spoke for the residents' association and other objectors at the virtual DCC meeting, said: "People are extremely disappointed. Our councillors failed in their duty to preserve or enhance the conservation area, even though they had the ability to do so."

"We want the site developed, but not in a way which ignores the fundamental characteristics of the area, doubles the density relative to the block, damages the street scene and encourages back-garden infill."

"Southborough will, of course, continue to be a pleasant place to live, but with this major development and other schemes that are proposed and/or are under way, the future for the conservation area has become unclear."

The Surbiton Conservation Area Advisory Committee wasn't contacted by the council about the amended plans for the Corkran Road site, so was unable to speak at the meeting.

Chair Vanessa Ross said: "We believe that it will cause demonstrable harm to the character of the conservation area, and inevitably lead to more inappropriate developments."

"The nature of the development is wholly out of



keeping with Southborough and unsustainable in respect of the high number of parking spaces, and cars that will be added as a result."

Despite protests from Surbiton Hill ward councillors Hilary Gander and Alison Holt, and Green party councillor Sharron Sumner, that the new homes would be an overdevelopment of the site and out of keeping with others in the conservation area, the development control committee approved the proposal for nine detached four and five-bed homes on the plot.

The revised layout and access means an additional property would be demolished and incorporated into the estate, allowing all the homes to be detached under the new plan drawn up by Ascot Design (above).

The site also includes a neighbouring bungalow and a large Tudor-style house which was destroyed by fire in August 2015. **Jane Grove**

Come off it mate! Two minutes?

Over-zealous parking enforcement is threatening the survival of hard-pressed Surbiton shops. That's the claim of Robert Helliwell, who believes the council risks killing already fragile trade by its inflexibility.

He emailed Surbiton councillors after a distressing incident outside his dry-cleaners, Roberts. "They booked a 90-year-old man, crippled with arthritis, struggling to bring in his laundry. Congratulations!"

"There is a loading bay outside the Claremont Road shop, but only for vans, not cars. 'For four years I've tried to get 10 minutes drop-off/pick-up for customers. I've been ignored, and shops continue to struggle.'"

As an essential hygiene business, he stayed open in lockdown, but now he feels customers in cars are being unfairly penalised at a time when bus use is being discouraged. "We're urged to get back to normal, but what do we have? Three or four traffic wardens circling all day to catch any poor soul two minutes over their time. They're penalising the motorists who are trying to support the high street."



Covid isn't beaten yet: warning

The borough's Covid rate is creeping up, and Kingston Council leader Clr Caroline Kerr has warned residents to take that seriously.

"The infection rate is going up, and is now as high as in May," she said, reiterating the plea to wear facemasks that cover nose and mouth.

She stressed that it was unsafe to meet in gatherings of more than six from different households, and underlined the need to continue distancing to reduce the risk of spread. "We've done well up to now," she said. "But we can't be complacent."

Despite rumours, Clr Kerr said that there was no evidence of clusters in specific parts of the Royal borough, but in the first week of August there were nine positive tests, and in the second, 21 positives.

● How have you coped in the Covid-19 crisis? Kingston Council is surveying residents (www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk) to get a clearer picture of how Surbitonians have been affected, the support needed and future thoughts. It takes 10 minutes, and it closes on Sept 14.

Anyone for a new mespilus?

Up to 600 new trees will be planted across the borough this winter, with residents urged to suggest locations. It could be roads with existing spaces, or verges, or parks.

A survey also asks what type of tree Surbitonians would like, with a helpful photo library so no one confuses their snowy mespilus from their lucas hornbeam, and you don't end up with a honey locust outside your house when you really wanted a Persian ironwood all along.

There's a big selection. Kingston Council tree planters pick from 263 native species, plus some non-natives that thrive in urban settings, or which support wildlife.

"It goes without saying that residents know their area better than anyone, so we want as many people as possible to get involved," said council leader Clr Caroline Kerr.

You have until Oct 2 to share your arboreal thoughts at: www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/rbk-tree-planting



Such refreshing candour! Many shopkeepers' 'closed' signs lament unforeseen crises, but as the mercury hit 34°, Claremont Road shoe repairer Michael Janes did what we'd all do... locked up the shop and went off to have a drink!

Villa is given green light

A new-build, five-bed home in the heart of Surbiton has been given the green light. The detached property in St Philip's Road will match the street's Victorian villas.

But Surbiton neighbourhood committee worried about a lack of disabled access or garden... and there will be nowhere to park; a parking permit would be denied.

A previous bid for flats was shelved as a covenant on the land only permits a single dwelling. Objector Darren Hedley said the site was cramped and a new-build would affect daylight to 27 and 29 St James' Road.

Clr Malcolm Self said he failed to see how it was a 'family house' with total garden space of 72sqm; front, side and rear. But Clr Diane White said she felt lots of families would be happy to live there. Clr Sharron Sumner was concerned it could still become flats, and didn't like the design in the road of semis. "It'll stick out like a sore thumb," she said. But Clr Liz Green thought it attractive: "I think we should permit," she said.

Developer Conal Campbell said he was "champing at the bit" to start. **Jane Grove**



Plan for semis

Revised plans for two five-bed semis on a site at 6 Lovelace Gardens have been submitted to Kingston Council. In February, councillors rejected a bid to demolish the existing property and build three family homes on the plot.

Now developers have come back with a plan for two semi-detached homes in the back garden. Part of the existing house would be demolished to make a route to the five-bedroom homes, with parking at the rear.

Surbiton neighbourhood committee previously threw out the proposal on the grounds that two semi-detached properties would overlook a new detached house to the front of the plot, and be too near it. They said the development would be contrary to the prevailing character of the surrounding area in mass and scale.

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Round 1: a win for campaigners

The lush, wildlife-friendly vegetation at the Seething Wells filter beds may have been denuded by pesticides, but campaigners have won the first round in what may prove a long fight for their recognition as a key part of borough biodiversity.

Pressure from the Seething Wells Action Group (www.saveseethingwells.org), which is still famously "seething about Seething", means any change of use bid will now have to go through the full planning process, and can't simply be redesignated to suit developers.

Kingston Council is undergoing an independent review of all conservation areas, with SWAG urging the land be declared a nature reserve and community asset.

Several councillors have taken the unusual step of petitioning their own administration, to ensure it stays on the nature conservation list (tinyurl.com/y2wc4rap). Seething Wells oozes history. The filter beds were the first of their kind in the world. See the story on **p9**



The scarecrow trail

Scarecrows popped up all over Long Ditton as part of a fundraiser for two local schools.

The Friends of Long Ditton Infants and Long Ditton St Mary's Junior School created a scarecrow trail, with prizes. "The yarn bombing last year and rainbow trail in lockdown brought



so much joy to the community, we thought we'd spread more over the holidays," said Desiree Harris. "Most people were having a staycation, so they were able to walk around with something fun to look at."

From 20 scarecrows, judges from sponsoring estate agent Humphrey & Brand picked the most original, best dressed and the most outrageous.

The scarecrows were given a badge with a link to a fundraising page, so people could donate. You can still help raise funds for the schools at www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/LDIFriendsScarecrowTrail

The friends' group is looking for somewhere to display all the scarecrows together. If you know of a good place, email longdittonfriends@outlook.com



● Fire destroyed several buildings at a Long Ditton garden centre, leaving the office a charred ruin. Flames were spotted rising behind a line of tall conifers at one edge of Hill Park Roses plant centre in Woodstock Lane North.

Firefighters attended for nine hours, but found no evidence of foul play. The cause is listed as accidental in the dry conditions on July 16.

An Amish-like rally-round, with tree surgeons, suppliers and other volunteers helping, meant that the nursery, which has traded since 1968, is still in business, and its most seriously damaged polytunnel fully restored. Owner Mike, surveying



Picture: Anthony Dowd

the ruins the next day, said: "Pretty much all our stock was outside, so it wasn't affected." The nursery specialises in roses, especially climbers, standards and Old English. Needless to say, the sign for barbecue fuel was untouched by the flames.



Zhuzh up borders, lawns and patios with grassy options, says Janice Cripps

Grasses bring your garden to life with a whisper

Love 'em or hate 'em, ornamental grasses are handsome, versatile and impactful garden additions, especially this time of year, combined with late summer perennials such as echinaceas, rudbeckias and asters.

Grasses come in all sizes from ground-huggers like black mondo, useful as a turf substitute for shady spaces, to super-grasses like pampas, popular in the 70s.

Invaluable for their colour, there is one for every situation, and they rarely need special soil preparation or maintenance.

From a designer's view, they can be used in traditional or contemporary schemes; in drifts, intermittently to punctuate planting or singly as a dramatic statement; upright tufts, mop-headed mounds or elegant arching fountains.

Grasses are uniquely able

to capture light, are thrown into silhouette when the sun is behind them, revealing intricate detail in the foliage, and can sometimes appear to glow from within. They gently sway and whisper in the gentle breeze, bringing your garden alive.

Here are some favourites:

● **'Accent' grass.** Not too big, but big enough, miscanthus looks splendid in isolation, its mound of arching leaves reaching to 1.5m with warm red and orange autumn tints. Miscanthus Morning Light, with its fine silver margins, is particularly graceful and softens any landscape.

● **'See-through' grass.** Tall airy grasses such as Molinia caerulea Transparent or Deschampsia cespitosa have open habits; effective when dotted among large flowering plants or between shrubs and perennials. The fine feathery foliage lends an

ethereal quality.

● **Ground cover grass.** Many ornamental grasses have dwarf forms to quickly cover ground, requiring just a quick annual trim. Festuca glauca Elijah Blue's evergreen, bright silver-blue foliage forms neat mounds topped with upright flower plumes in summer. But my favourite grass is Hakonechloa macra; terrific as an edging plant.

● **Screening grass.** Tall, fast-growing grasses can provide almost instant screening. A good alternative if a traditional



hedge is beyond your budget or too large for your needs. They can be dramatic as boundary plantings, softer than hedges with a rustling sound useful in blocking background noise from the street or neighbours. Use to camouflage trampolines or play equipment. Try Calamagrostis Karl Foerster or Panicum Northwind.

● **Container grass.** A well-chosen grass can zhuzh up a container. They combine well with other plants, for example sedge grass or carex, but they also work well on their own. I particularly like Pennisetum setaceum Rubrum, an amazing grass with rich burgundy red foliage and spikes of red feathery flowers in late summer. Though tender, it can generally be successfully overwintered in a frost-free area.

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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It's spit spot!

Think the Alpha Road estate looks a bit more spit spot these days? You're right.

Residents and councillors with litter pickers, gloves, bags and hi-vis jackets from Surbiton neighbourhood team set to and tidied up the estate off King Charles Road.

"Children and pets were welcome too," said Cllr Anita Schaper, one of the councillors involved in the first litter pick organised by Alpha Road Residents' Association.

"Despite some early rain,



we collected a lot of rubbish – especially plastics and bottles."

Keen to help? Meet at Shamley flats, Howard Road, 10.30am, Sat, Sept 5. All equipment is provided.

● Volunteers are making strides to regenerate the Hazelbank/Vincent Ave alley on the Sunray estate. Next sessions: Fri Sept 4 and Sat Sept 5. www.thevincenthazelproject.wordpress.com



Picture: John Sweeney

● It's worth strolling round Tolworth roundabout these days.

A second stunning wildlife mural has transformed the entrance to one underpass, with a common kingfisher, dragonfly, badger and water vole.

All can be found locally, with inspiration taken from Surbiton-based Citizen Zoo's recent film about the Hogsmill River (www.tinyurl.com/y6wd9d8f).

The mural by WeAreSkyHigh cost £3,500. It was funded by a

2017 £385,239 windfall awarded to the council and Tolworth's Community Brain from the GLA's good growth fund.

It is part of a 'wayfinding' initiative by the Brain's SHEDx project, highlighting green spaces and promoting the wildlife of Tolworth Court Farm nature reserve and the Hogsmill River.

The mural is on the underpass leading to the Hollywood Bowl. Another, painted last November, has a heron, kestrel and butterfly.

Out of character... but it 'looks nice'

A modern flat-roofed four-bed home can be built in an area of special character, as it's a good-looking design, councillors have ruled.

Adam Beamish had applied to build a 1,300sqft three-storey home behind Marlow House, a block of flats in Cranes Park, Surbiton... but seven neighbours objected.

One, Antony Brailsford, who has lived in Marlow House for two decades, said it conflicted with the local 'area of special character' status, its size was "dominant and incongruous", and the materials were not in keeping with nearby buildings.

Planning officers told Surbiton's neighbourhood committee that the contemporary house – to be built near Villiers Path, right, one of Surbiton's oldest winding footpaths – was of quality design.

Old trees on the site would be preserved, although a dozen newish specimens would be lost.

"Trees that are valuable are being retained," said Mr Beamish.

Cllr Malcolm Self said that just because an area had special character "doesn't mean every new building has to be a

pastiche". He added: "I like this design; it will complement and enhance the area, rather than being at odds with it."

Cllr Liz Green agreed, adding that one of her favourite buildings was the modern glass extension to St Andrew's church in Maple Road, which was "out of character in a positive way".

The house will replace several old garages. Approval was given following assurances that biodiversity around Villiers Path would be safeguarded.



Villiers Path in a 1912 postcard

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Nash is town's new tailor

A new tailoring and dry cleaning shop opened in July in the former art shop opposite Sainsbury's.

Nash Aria ensured VIP Surbiton made a splash by making and giving away 1,000 washable facemasks.

The Afghan tailor delivered some to Surbiton homes; others were left on a trestle table outside 35 Victoria Road, formerly Surbiton Art & Stationery. Nash ran a similar business midway between Hampton Wick and Teddington.

"Why Surbiton? It's been my dream for a long time," said the tailor, who lives near Twickenham's rugby stadium.

He specialises in altering bridal dresses; and already has a relationship with Wed2B, a few doors down the high street.

In double-quick time he reconfigured the art supply shop, creating a changing



room large enough for brides to pirouette in privacy.

The art shop, a fixture for two decades, closed after a knock-down summer sale of paints, paper and fittings, including the till.

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'Shelters'? On your bike!

Celebrate, don't denigrate, bike hangars, say Surbiton cyclists, keen to counter naysayers who talk of 'street Anderson shelters'.

"One impediment for cyclists is security, and unfortunately a bike left out overnight may not be there in the morning, despite a sturdy lock," says Oli Creasey. "Hangars are a great option for those in smaller accommodation without bike storage."

"Appearance is subjective, but I've lived opposite one for a year and never felt blighted! They are only noticeable because they're well-used; I think of them as I do wind turbines; a monument to cleaner living."

Fellow cyclist Doug James concurs and says the council should be congratulated. "In lockdown we appreciated the absence of cars polluting the environment," he says.

"It's been a delight to see families with young children gain the confidence to venture out to the roads, but lack of secure storage



is a constraint." He says the capital cost of hangars (the one pictured is in King Charles Road) comes from TfL, so doesn't hit the council's budget.

"Each can hold six bikes and takes up half a parking bay. Twelve potential cyclists against one car seems like progress to me."

Mr Creasey agrees, arguing bike use helps in the battle with obesity, easing the NHS burden.

"Kingston Council rightly prioritises bicycle usage," he says. "Security must be addressed as part of this."

"Peak cycle journeys on Portsmouth Road have doubled since the cycle path was installed; there's an appetite to cycle when it's safe. We should help the people of Surbiton get on their bikes!"

Costly coffee? Pricey pub rounds? I'm missing lockdown, admits Becky Mayhew

While we can all agree that the economy is in a pickle and it's good we've been released back into the wild to resume splurging on clothes we'll never wear and snazzy kitchen contraptions we'll never need, there are some things I preferred in lockdown.

After the Barbarian Horde realised they couldn't fit any more loo rolls in their garage and that 72 melons were going off at an irritating rate, supermarkets became cathedrals of Zen.

Despite feeling immense pressure to do my shopping in supersonic time so my potentially virus-ridden human form could exit quickly to let another potentially virus-ridden human in, I enjoyed drifting around people-free aisles (though not so much the food-free aisles).

I especially enjoyed Sainsbury's inexplicably dimming their glaring store lights, perhaps following speculation that Covid-19 can't see in the dark (speculation from, say, the President of the United States?).

Our social lives took a beating, but I enjoyed much-reduced spendthriftiness. My bank account

swelled with pride in April at the measly amount spent on essentials; now I flinch as my phone chirps every time I buy a round of drinks.

Aren't pubs expensive?! Hell's bells! A tenner for a weekend's lockdown booze is a thing of the past; it now gets a pint and packet of nuts (except at the Vic, where it gets precisely three crisps).

Deserted streets were heavenly, and I miss roads being filled with nothing but people taking daily exercise and the camaraderie that went with it; the smiles and nods of 'This is weird, isn't it?'

I miss hopscotch grids on pavements, and helpful chalked warnings: 'Here is lava'. I applaud community-spirited children who thought to warn of fiery volcanic ooze apparently plaguing Surbiton's paving slabs: your brave social service won't be forgotten.

One thing I don't miss (and this is the most middle-class thing I've ever said) was no access to a Nero's latte. In May I'd have sold my nearest and dearest to the devil for a sip of Nero's steamy milky coffeiness. On the day they reopened I was so excited I dropped all my shopping on their floor, then knocked over their sign.

Let's hope we never again have to wait three months for a Nero's coffee. But if lava warnings could be reinstated, fine; their absence really is an accident waiting to happen.

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Station flats 'too high'

Objectors to a scheme to build two seven-storey blocks of flats on a site near Berrylands railway station got the chance to air their views at an online Surbiton neighbourhood committee meeting before the plan proceeds to Kingston Council's development control committee for the final say-so.

Consisting of 56 one, two and three-bed flats - 10 being 'affordable' - and 288 sqm of ground-floor flexible commercial space, the plot off Chiltern Drive would be at Chiltern Works... currently the site of light industrial units, warehouses and The Circulatory, a community-run upcycling centre.

Thirty parking spaces (28 for the flats and two for the commercial units) would be provided. There would be 103 cycle parking spaces, of which 12 would be allocated to the commercial space.

Residents who spoke at the meeting said they were upset at having to submit a second lot of objections to the proposal, saying the original 143 should stand.

They said their properties would be overlooked by such tall blocks which would be out of keeping with the other two and three-storey buildings in the area. Overdevelopment, loss of sunlight, parking problems and concerns over whether the local infrastructure and transport could cope with the new flats were also raised, as well as a lack of affordable housing.

Light pollution and worries for birds at the nearby Hogsmill Nature Reserve were also concerns.

The neighbourhood committee councillors said the height and design of the flats were unsuitable in a predominantly 1930s art deco area, and reiterated a number of concerns raised by the site's neighbours.

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Well, well, well, well, well

We should treasure the Seething Wells filter beds; in 1847, they were the first of their kind in the world.

They were opened at the end of March 1852; a train chartered to Surbiton for directors and 350 guests to view the bright new future of London's piped water supply.

The band of the Coldstream Guards played and everyone tucked into a celebration meal.

On the old map (right), the Lambeth and Chelsea Water Works are alongside Portsmouth Road. Until then, the Lambeth Waterworks Company had pumped from a position near Hungerford Bridge; the liquid – according to the Morning Post – “leaving much to be desired in quality”.

Dr John Snow had written an essay in 1849, making the connection between drinking water and cholera, formerly thought to be airborne.

A cholera outbreak in 1855 in Soho, where water was raised by a hand pump, vindicated Snow's work... but by then the Long Ditton filter beds had been built.

At the height of their construction, 800 men worked on the site. One had a miraculous escape, falling 40ft down a shaft but managed to climb back up the ladder with the words: “I should be sacked!”

The Lambeth Waterworks Company supplied water, of a somewhat dubious quality, to most of southern London. In 1848 an act had been passed allowing the firm to explore drawing water from the Thames higher upstream.

The investors on board, work proceeded ahead of the 1852 opening. Visitors that

day were shown the method of filtration, with Thames water percolated through layers of decreasing size: wire strainers, large stones, gravel, broken shells and fine sand... methods still used today.

The water was stored in shallow lagoons, where the Sun's ultra violet rays effectively killed the bacteria.

The Victorians were into numbers. The height of the Italianate tower was 100ft. It contained nine cylindrical boilers, providing a force of 600 horsepower to move 10,000,000 gallons of water daily to holding tanks in Brixton, via pipes laid near the Surbiton-London mainline.

It was said that water would be available for places closer at hand, including Long Ditton, Esher and Thames Ditton, but this does not seem to have happened.

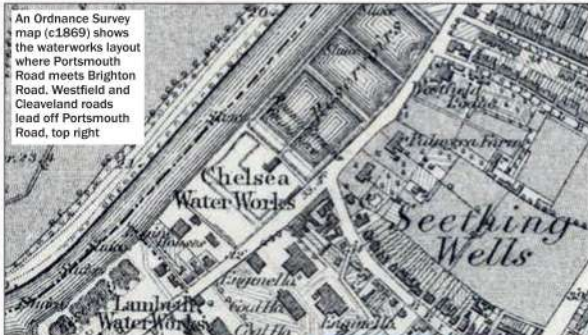
Chelsea Waterworks Company applied for permission to set up another pumping station at Seething Wells in 1856. The water was to be piped to Putney, crossing the Thames to Fulham, then on to Chelsea, Westminster, Buckingham Palace, St James Palace and Bloomsbury.

By 1874 the Chelsea company was the only one drawing water from the Thames at Long Ditton. There were occasions when the River Mole was in flood, bringing down quantities of silt and debris. It happened on 23 days in February 1874.

The filtered water was clean enough, but the filter beds were extended to cover four, rather than two, acres. Those filter beds and lagoons now stand unused between Portsmouth Road and the Thames.

The Surbiton side of the road still has

Developers have their beady eyes fixed on the Seething Wells filter beds in Surbiton. But what are their historical significance? **JANET HESKINS** explores the area's remarkable watery past



many original buildings, put to good use by Kingston University for its halls of residence, the Nuffield Health gym and wellbeing centre, a children's nursery and the Surbiton Golf Studio. Newer buildings are in keeping with the old designs.

The road to the gym is Simpson Way, after engineer-in-chief James Simpson. Travelling alongside the filter beds and lagoons in Portsmouth Road, the railings go on and on, giving an idea of the extent of the works. Such a site, which brought health benefits to so many, deserves to be celebrated; a monument to engineering and far-sighted endeavour.



The opening of the new works of the Lambeth Waterworks Company, Seething Wells, 1852



Seething Wells student rooms get upgrade

Kingston Uni's Seething Wells halls of residence at Seething Wells are undergoing a major refurbishment. In all, £100million is being spent upgrading the Portsmouth Road student accommodation and the Gipsy Hill site (now known as the Kingston Hill campus).

Work is under way on improving existing rooms to make them more energy-efficient, with permission granted for 159 new student rooms. Five listed buildings at Seething Wells will be renovated, creating a cafe and events space.

Vice-chancellor Prof Steven Spier said that, following the opening of the flagship Town House building at the Penrhyn Road campus earlier this year, and a major refurbishment at the Kingston School of Art's Knights Park campus, it further demonstrated the university's commitment to students and to the area.

“The environment and spaces in which students live, study and socialise have a real impact on their time at university,” he said.

Extra storeys are to be added to existing blocks at Seething Wells.

Historic England was consulted, and raised no objection. One building, the Lambeth Water Works coal store, is on the ‘at risk’ list, and is to have its crumbling roof repaired.

Planning permission was granted on condition that the event space and cafe (artist's impression above) will be open to a wider Surbiton community. It should all be finished by 2022.



• Cont'd from p1

Groups are evicted from hall

Tony Drake, who attends historical society meetings and Talking of Trains lectures, said: “Closure of the hall could mean closure of many activities, and a great social loss to the community.”

The Jo Jingles music and movement class has been forced to close. “I’ve hired it for five years,” said a sorrowful Rebecca English. “I’m shocked they now want the hall for themselves.”

Engie offered alternatives in Kingston and New Malden, but it's of little use to Surbiton societies, many of whose members walk to their local meetings.

Is the hall really needed for council staff? One hirer said: “I’m surprised; I didn’t realise they worked at night!”

A Guildhall insider told The Good Life that with many staff still working from home, more space wasn't required.

Oddly, adult education classes, forced to quit the King Charles Centre, are

being listed at the hall this month, with drawing, flower-arranging and photography among the subjects.

Surbiton Historical Society chair Paul Lang called it “a terrible shock”.

Dance instructor Don Rae said: “This is not fair”, while line dance coach Janice Golding said it was “extremely harsh of the council to make us homeless overnight”.

Pat McKenna of Kingston Archaeological Society said: “I find it incomprehensible that in a year which has proved very difficult for all local societies, it's now been made worse. These actions show contempt.”

Brian Sole (Kingston Philatelic Society) who has used it for 30 years, said: “Losing our meeting place could result in the society's closure.”

Clare Rowland of Dancetrans called it “a total nightmare”.

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● Cont'd from p1

"I'm absolutely over the moon," said an ecstatic Mithushan. "It still feels surreal. To think I was devastated and planning revision for the retakes!"

Southborough head of sixth form David

Student first in school to Cambridge

Sanders shared his star student's joy. "Mithushan is in the first generation of his family to attend university, and he's done us all proud, staying humble and thankful

throughout this challenging time. "Now we're supporting those students who haven't been able to return to their conditional offers, due to

oversubscription, but we're getting there; 41 out of 47 students have been placed. We'll make it right for these students because they deserve it."

Jane Grove

Well done, you

The message for GCSE and A-level students from Surbiton councillor and education chair Diane White was: "I'm so impressed by your resilience, dedication and talent!"

She applauded the 1,500 students who received their GCSE results last month, adding: "The current circumstances have made an already challenging situation much more difficult."

● Open days: Ewell Castle, multiple; Hollyfield, by appt; Kingston College, multiple; Kingston Grammar, Sep 26; Oct 10 (virtual); Kingston Uni, Oct 3; Shrewsbury House, Oct 3; Southborough, Oct 5-7; Surbiton High, multiple; Tol Girls', Oct 9

● Children from Muddy Puddles enjoy their weekly nature club session at the Betts Way, Long Ditton, pre-school.

Rated outstanding by Ofsted, the school for two to fives changed its name from Stepping Stones to avoid confusion with a nearby nursery of the same name.

"Thanks to our location by Stokes Field Nature Reserve woodland area, we've embraced what nature offers as a learning environment," said Anna Stebbings. "We're literally off the beaten track. It's perfect for children to play, explore and learn, especially with current guidance that it is safer to be outside."

"We have a forest-school

ethos, encouraging children to build dens, use tools, make campfires, toast marshmallows and role-play."

The pre-school, at Long Ditton cricket club pavilion, runs Mon-Friday, 8.30am-4pm. For places this autumn visit www.steppingstonesurbiton.org.uk



The recent excavation of Portsmouth Road has revealed a century-old chapter in the area's transport history.

When the road was dug up near The Ferry pub at the Thorhill Road junction so corroded metal gas mains could be swapped for yellow plastic pipes, it exposed lengths of tram rails.

Passers-by (among them Julian Meers, who took the top left snap) were intrigued to spot rusty lines a foot below the current road surface level.

Trams ran here from March 1906, starting with number 320 (top right), an open-balcony car built by the United Electric Car Company of Preston. It travelled from Kingston, through Surbiton to Winters Bridge (where Bachmann's bakery stands).

Off the rails!

The 40 trams used on the route were Venetian red and white. They were replaced by trolleybuses in 1931, and motor buses in May 1962. Those rusty old rails revealed by the Portsmouth Road digging were laid by workmen from JG White & Co Ltd between April and December 1905.



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Roddy is president

As musicians tune up for the autumn run of Thames Concerts at St Andrew's church, a new president has been unveiled... baritone and composer Roderick Williams.

He's a man with strong local roots, having been on the staff at Tiffin School, and having conducted a series of lieder and art-song recitals over the road at Kingston Grammar School.

Made an OBE for services to music in June 2017, he assumes his new role as the season begins with saxophonist Jonathan Radford and pianist Ashley Fripp playing in the church in Maple Road on Sat Oct 17 at 7.30pm. Full details of all the concerts in the next issue.

Roderick, currently recording the three Schubert cycles, also composes, with works premiered at the Wigmore and Barbican, and is artist in residence for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. www.thamesconcerts.com

In their own words

Actor Jude Monk McGowan is interviewing celebrities who have succeeded despite having dyslexia.

Jude, who fans of Channel 4 soap Hollyoaks will recognise as gangster Liam Donovan, is recording **Words Fail Me**, a series of podcasts for the Dyslexia Foundation.

With an impressive TV, film and theatre career of his own, despite dyslexia, he talks to others who have overcome challenges.

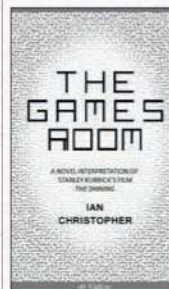
"It's a podcast about thriving with dyslexia," said Jude, who grew up in Bond Road, Surbiton. "It's to support the incredible work of the Dyslexia Foundation, to unlock the full potential of children and adults with dyslexia so they can succeed



and contribute fully to society."

Jude has interviewed ex-Dragon Theo Paphitis, writer Sally Gardner, rugby star Chris Robshaw, MP Peter Kyle and poet Philip Schultz. To hear **Words Fail Me**, search Apple or Spotify.

The sinister scrapbook



Was Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* (which turned 40 this year) simply the tale of a hotel's winter caretaker going mad and trying to kill his wife and son?

No, says lifelong fan Ian Christopher who – intrigued, then immersed, in controversial theories swirling round the film – has written a book about it. "In the Kubrick Archive in London I discovered that a scrapbook, which briefly appears in the film, contains two well-hidden puzzles."

said the 63-year-old who lives near Maple Road. "I was hooked. I later found that Kubrick admitted that the film was indeed constructed as a puzzle."

Ian researched the clues, joined the dots and then wrote the book.

"I believe Kubrick made two films at once, and had a lot of fun in the process. *The Shining* is the horror film you see first, but it also has a comedy underbelly."

The Games Room by Ian Christopher is published by De Vallon and stocked by The Regency bookshop. Also on Kindle.

It's a resounding hit

Resound Girls' Choir has recorded a song it hopes will herald the start of a new season of rehearsals where the 10 to 18-year-olds can get together for real, not just on Zoom.

Formed in 2013 by Surbiton music teacher Bec Gresson, the girls learnt **We Will Rise Up Together** by Jim Papoulis at home and created you [tube.com/watch?v=IS87ZQ_V-to](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS87ZQ_V-to)

"It's beautiful; the girls have done brilliantly singing together 'virtually,'" said Bec, whose choir, pre-Covid, rehearsed at Surbiton Hill Methodist church.

With no auditions, all are made welcome. "We have complete beginners and proficient vocalists who will go on to study music at university," said Bec. It has given high school girls a chance to sing a repertoire from pop



to classical, and to compete.

Formed from pupils at Hollyfield, Coombe Girls', Tolworth, Surbiton High and Grand Avenue, Resound has won the intermediate choral competition at Richmond Music Festival every year since it was formed, and gold medals in the vocal ensemble category of the Kingston Festival... and has performed at Music for Youth competitions. Email: becgresson@hotmail.com

- The next online **Out of the Corner** gig, the unplugged showcase of young musical talent, has Ashley Dee, Emily Lucas, Xander Varty, Marla Molly (her single *Summer Air* is on SoundCloud), and Hollyfield pupil Sophie Edge. Shelley Stevens uploads on evening of Sept 17. www.facebook.com/outofthecorner or Instagram @out_of_the_corner
- Live poetry has returned to the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, with 20 socially distanced visitors reading. Another is planned for Fri, Oct 9. See www.thecornerhouse.org for booking info.
- **The Beginnings of European Art** starts a series of illustrated talks at the cornerHOUSE. Art historian Valerie Nunn will show how European art evolved from the 4th to 8th centuries. Thu, Sept 24, 7.45pm. It's free, but for numbers you have to book by emailing: nickynewberry@blueyonder.co.uk

Your good health!

Politicians say they want health and social care working as a seamless service, but Surbiton author Bob Phillips says the perfect model is here, on our doorstep. **The Story of Your Healthcare** (Broomfield Press, £13), laments that a successful decade-long experiment in Kingston, in which health professionals

have been given the independence to lead their own work, could be strangled by a new NHS restructuring.

"The book is not just a demonstration of the success of Your Healthcare; it makes a strong case for other parts of the NHS to emulate the model of independently-led



teams," said Bob, who has researched the topic with the help of professionals and patients. "It shows how community healthcare can be central to health provision; and that's what the NHS wants."

Bob, who lives in Broomfield Road, knows his topic. He's a founding community governor of the Your Healthcare programme.



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It's Howard's way

An exhausted Howard Leather, right, sank into a chair at Ginger Bees Cafe on Queens Prom and breathed a sigh of relief as he tucked into a hearty afternoon tea.

The paddleboarder from Shrewsbury was on a pit-stop as part of a 900-mile adventure on England's rivers and canals to raise awareness of, and money for, mental health causes. "It's been a hard day," said the bearded adventurer. "The water was choppy and the wind was against me."

Howard, 38, had clocked up a third of his journey when The Good Life spoke to him. "The whole thing has been incredible – it's such an experience; good times and bad," said Howard, who dubbed his first week "brutal". "There was headwind the entire way down the Severn, raining almost non-stop."

A strained back from lifting his 30 kilo bag of luggage through the locks (he even carries a hammock) meant he had to take a couple of weeks off to recover. "Apart from fatigue and exhaustion I've really enjoyed the stretch through Surbiton; it is a beautiful bit of water. There's lots of evidence to show we are approaching London, but there are some



absolutely beautiful places."

Howard doesn't have a deadline for finishing; it depends how his savings hold, and he is currently on a break having some R&R. But he's pledged his many followers on social media that he will finish what he has started. "I will complete this journey, I'll conquer this," he said, adding that he'd been heartened by all the support (@howards_adventure).

To support his efforts for mental health charities, visit JustGiving and search for Howard Leather.

● Long Ditton Cricket Club's Saturday 1st XI's last competitive game in the Challenge Cup is on Sept 5, away at Old Tiffinians' Grist Memorial Ground, Summer Avenue, East Molesey, against Kingstonian CC's 1st XI. 1pm start. But there's still cricket to be had at The Hogs' Stokes Field ground off Betts Way, Long Ditton, as the club's Sunday 1st XI host a series of friendlies. The team take to the crease



Support the Hogs

in 40-overs matches against a Kingstonian Sunday XI side at 1pm on Sept 6, Battersea Eagles Sunday 1st XI on Sept 13 at midday, and Cypos (short for Can You Play on Sunday?) Friendly XI on Sept 20. All welcome, bar open, bring a picnic.

● Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club in Berrylands is slowly opening up to ensure safety. The fact that this year's Surbiton Trophy had to be cancelled for Covid means the grass is immaculate.

"Tennis is very popular; players are loving the grass, clay and hard courts," said director Roy Staniland. "The gym is divided in three, with members booking an hour slot in cardio, free weights or

downstairs for multi-use. Squash is open, but matches are limited to players of the same household. Other squash players can still drill and practise their shots."

Bar and catering are back, tennis and squash coaching is available, and fitness classes are open-air. Want to be shown round? www.surbiton.org or 020 8399 1594.



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● Tolworth Recreation Centre has reopened. Pre-book a visit to the Fullers Way North sports venue via the Places Locker app or www.placesleisure.org

The borough's leisure facilities shut up shop on March 18 due to Covid restrictions, and work has been continuing ever since to ensure a safe resumption.

Berrylands councillor John Sweeney, portfolio holder for business and leisure, said: "I know that many have been frustrated by the delay. I thank them for their patience and look forward to welcoming them back."

● The tennis courts at Alexandra rec are busy again. It's £50 per year, or £4 an hour. Full information at: www.parktennisinkingston.co.uk

Surbiton's football past

The extraordinary tale of how Surbiton FC came to be one of the world's first football clubs has been researched by writer Dominic Bliss, who says they were the first registered association football club in Surrey, and one of the 12 teams present at the formation of the Football Association at a London pub on 26 October 1863.

Surbiton FC's first match (against a nomadic London club called Dingley Dell, who took their name from a fictional team in Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*) was actually on February 15 1862, probably on land near the river where The Mall is today. www.tinyurl.com/yydmyk4

● Socially distanced squash has resumed at Ditton Squash Club, to the relief of players champing at the bit to get back on court. The not-for-profit club urges members to change before arrival. It is at Surbiton Hockey Club, Sugden Road, Long Ditton. www.dittonsquash.com

● Chelsea Women start their defence of the Women's Super League title with a tricky away fixture against Manchester United on the first weekend of September.

Although the Blues have played United twice competitively, each game was decided by a single goal in Chelsea's favour. The first home game at Kingsmeadow is the following weekend, when Bristol City are the visitors. Until coronavirus restrictions ease, fans will have to follow the action via the free streaming platform The FA Player (faplayer.thefa.com)

● Surbiton Hockey Club in Sugden Road, Long Ditton, has its annual play day on Sept 5. Full details at www.surbitonhc.com



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