



Chris Childs' remarkable cake of the station wistfully includes clock hands which have been absent since Feb's gales! See p2 for this gifted baker's story.



Come on... you can't get cuter than a quartet of mini ballerinas! See p8



Meet Anno, gearing up for her 100th birthday party, and bright as a button p5

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Could Berrylands power itself?

Picture this. Free clean power, and no bills. That's the vision of James Richardson, who believes a concerted community effort can take Berrylands off the national grid, and literally generate money.

He's seeking like-minded souls to form a non-profit body to harness the sun via a network of linked panels on roofs, and is convinced it could become a template for other UK neighbourhoods.

James, 45, of The Ridings, set up berrylandscommunitysolar.org.uk to enlist support to make Berrylands a pioneering zero-carbon zone.

Some houses already have solar panels, but his vision involves combining the roof potential of hundreds of homes, storing the



electricity and sharing costs and income. "Household electricity bills keep going up, yet there's huge capacity on people's roofs," he said.

Any aesthetic objections would be outweighed by zero bills and a future of clean, unlimited power.

James argues that different households have different patterns of usage, with some homes empty by day and others occupied.

"Link them together, and you get a more resilient system," he said. He has already calculated which directions local roofs face.

• Continued on p10

Jamie's so calculating

He's shortlisted for a \$1m prize, but if maths whizz Jamie Frost wins he'll put it all into the website that's made him a sensation.

Jamie, 33, of Elmcroft Drive, barely 200 yards from the Ace of Spades roundabout (or as he'd say, \175-42\ + \175-53\ yards), teaches at Tiffin and during lockdown perfected the free learning platform www.drfrostmaths.com, set up to help struggling pupils, and now in use by half the UK's secondaries.

He'll hear on December 3 if he's the 2020 Varkey Foundation global teacher.

"I'm delighted to be in the top 10, and quite content to just have got this far," he modestly told The Good Life, adding he hopes to become a charity, hire staff and roll out the website to other countries.

He pipped 40,000 others to reach the Unesco-backed shortlist. Jamie joined Tiffin's teaching staff in 2013, though he couldn't have got in as a pupil as he failed his 11+! He did, however, prove that there's hope for us all by achieving a first at Oxford before gaining his PhD.



The farmers' market returns

Backed by councillors, Surbiton's farmers' market makes a Covid-safe return this Sat, Oct 17, 9am-1pm; Maple Road closing for four hours to allow distancing.

"We're extremely excited," said market mover David Jacobson.

"Having been rudely interrupted eight months ago by Storm Dennis, then the even more devastating coronavirus cyclone, we're back!"

The stretch of road by the shops will be blocked so stallholders and shoppers won't get under each other's feet on the narrow pavements. "Expect your favourite stalls loaded with the usual yummy treats, a one-way system, hand sanitiser and many, many masks," added David.



• Joy was unbounded as news broke that Surbiton's beloved Victoria recreation ground has been spared the intrusion of an 82ft phone mast on a popular family picnic spot. Comms giant EE lost its planning appeal, and will now have to find a different site, away from the 130-year-old public play space. Full story, p10. News of the rec community tidy on p6 and p12.

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New Covid test centre now open

Surbitonians have a new Covid test centre on their doorstep after a walk-through facility opened at County Hall, Penryn Road, as part of a drive to improve accessibility.

Appointments are available for those with symptoms (high temp, new continuous cough, or loss or change to sense of smell or taste).

Book via the NHS portal (nhs.uk/coronavirus), or phone 119.

Kingston Council public health director Iona Lidington said: "There's high demand, and it's vital

we test people with symptoms to help stop the spread of the virus and protect our community.

"Finding positive cases, and asking these people and their household to self-isolate, is key to breaking the chain of transmission."

The test station is in County Hall's rear car park, seven days a week, 8am-8pm. Visitors must wear masks, socially distance and avoid arrival by taxi or bus.

Extra support is given to people with disabilities and the vulnerable.

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Are there too many McBikes?

Wardens are monitoring 'McBike' numbers in Surbiton as up to 20 straddle the zebra crossing by McDonald's.

The burger chain is powerless to limit numbers, most Deliveroo and Just Eat scooter riders are freelance. Now Kingston Council has stepped in to control the night-and-day moped park resulting from a surge in demand for home deliveries during the pandemic.

Rob Robb raised the issue after he and his wife were driving home from the shops. "I had to stop at the zebra crossing," he said. "There wasn't anyone waiting to cross, but I just couldn't see as three or four fast food delivery boys were sitting on their scooters, obscuring the pavement."

He asked the council why parking was allowed right up to the Victoria Road crossing's dropped kerb, when there is a service road at the back of the shops that scooters could use.

Mervyn Bartlett, council highways manager, visited the site, agreed it



was an issue and confirmed that the road markings dated from a pre-Deliveroo era.

"When the boys were introduced, we did not have the same level of motorcycle usage, or the recent large increase in scooter deliveries associated with fast food companies such as McDonald's," he said.

He pledged to approach the burger giant to see if it was possible for delivery bikes to pick up their cargoes from the rear service road.

"We'll also ask our parking enforcement team to assist by monitoring the parking arrangements here," he said.

It's a piece of cake

We ate slices of red velvet cake (made with buttermilk and a pinch of cocoa) as cake-maker Chris Childs told me how it began four years ago, after he'd moved to his house



in Croylands, Surbiton, and his partner Richard's father was about to celebrate his 70th birthday.

"I've always baked cakes, but I'd never really done much decorating," he said.

The result, based around a vegetable patch with detailed icing marrows and squash, was hailed as a triumph.

"That kick-started it," said Chris, 46. Being a professional designer, he really focuses on minute detail to achieve baking perfection - such as this pug/bulldog cross (right), the illusion birthday bottle (below) and, of course, Surbiton's art deco station (above).



Chris specialises in sponge cakes, and his creations have included an R2D2 cake that lights up, and a centrepiece for a cycle club's anniversary, including cyclists winding around an uphill circuit. He launched as Cool Cakes by Chris after Covid put paid to his work in theatre marketing design. "It's probably the worst time to start a business, but in a way I've nothing to lose," he said. "I

love seeing customers' faces... they're often overwhelmed!" Each cake is a one-off work of art, with prices starting at around £150. And the great thing is, this art tastes delicious too.

Contact Chris via www.coolcakesbychris.co.uk or Instagram @coolcakesbychris



A Dosa heaven on a plate

With music festivals on hold, Dosa Deli has moored its food truck in Douglas Road to bring Surbiton superb 100% vegetarian Asian street flavours.

Amy and Kristian Phillip-Price, who live a samosa's lob away in Draycot Road, began developing Southern Indian-influenced cooking eight years ago after being made redundant from the events trade in the last recession. They were particularly inspired by the food in markets and heritage restaurants in Bangalore, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, and have made dosas (rice pancakes) their speciality.

With festival trade decimated, the enterprising couple have been providing food free of charge for frontline key workers via Meals for the NHS, and are serving up dosas, samosas, bhajis and specials to local folk in Surbiton. "The community's been wonderful," said Amy, bagging up my hearty chilli cheese dosa. "They have been so supportive. I think people have got rather fed up with their own home cooking over the past six months, so want a taste of something different. They are enjoying having mini festivals in their 'new normal' lives working from home."

All the food is prepared fresh, spices are ground and sauces made at their commercial kitchen off Ewell Road.

One regular told me: "It's just the best. It's the most beautiful smell as you walk past. I can't resist it!" Dosa Deli is in Douglas Road, by the Ewell Road junction: Fri, 6-9pm; Sat, 5-9pm. Visit: www.dosadeli.co.uk

Jane Grove

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Chai cafe opens

Berrylands' new cafe, beneath the flats that have taken an eternity to finish, is at the junction of King Charles Road and Berrylands Road. Chai@34 curves around the corner, can seat 36, sells coffees, smoothies, pastries, paninis, toasties, salads, and, says manager Alex Martin, gluten-free and vegan cake. Not on the menu in September's opening week, however, was chai! The sweet spiced tea will be available soon. Chai@34's owner is Russian-born Yana Mann, 36. The cafe, a worthy replacement for the much-missed Jean's Cafe in Berrylands Road, is open 7am-7pm during the week, and 8am-6pm Saturdays. Instagram: [chai_at_34](https://www.instagram.com/chai_at_34)



Spotted the smart rebranding of The Press Room? The Claremont Road cafe - the first to emerge from lockdown - has new logo and awning.

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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: thegoodlifeforurbiton@gmail.com

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

www.thegoodlifeforurbiton.co.uk

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

Donors can help

Had Covid? Struggled to off? Blood donors could provide convalescent plasma to help others recover. Call the transfusion service on 0300 123 23 23.

Life's little acorns

Lockdown helps us cherish little things, says the Rev Kulan Satkumavayagam of St Mary's, Long Ditton. The rector told parishioners he keeps an acorn from the churchyard on his desk, so he "values small everyday gifts in life".



Night on the tiles

How? Why? Staff at Tarte in the Park, Victoria rec, turned up to find a shopping trolley on the cafe roof. Presumably someone having a night on the tiles before the 10pm pub curfew.

Pothole mapping

Delivery drivers from Ocado, Tesco and Deliveroo, together with Uber taxi cabbies, are helping to report 'pothole hot spots' in Surbiton and Long Ditton under a new mapping initiative begun by the Department for Transport.

... and no butts

Stoptober is the time to quit smoking, says Surbiton fire station, which is throwing its support behind a drive which has fresh urgency as smokers have a higher risk of contracting Covid. Smoking-related house fires have increased 20% since lockdown.

Mark your cycle

Looking for bicycle security? Get your bike marked and registered at Kingston nick (you could use the Portsmouth Road cycle lane to get there) by emailing STL.Kingston@met.police.uk or visiting www.bikeregister.com

Hit and run plea

Police still need witnesses to a hit-and-run in Victoria Road on Mon, Sept 14, when an air ambulance landed on Sainsbury's car park. A 29-year-old was knocked down at 3pm. The car was abandoned further down the road. A man in his 20s was arrested. If you saw the incident, or have dashcam footage, call 101 and quote ref 4368/14Sep.

Secretary sought

Long Ditton Residents' Association seeks a secretary to take minutes at monthly virtual committee meetings. Email mark.herbert@longditton.org

Volumes galore

Surbiton library is open again for browsing: Mon 10am-4pm; Tue 10am-4pm; Thu 10am-4pm; Fri 10am-4pm, and on a Saturday rota on Oct 31, 10am-4pm and Nov 28, 10am-4pm.

Cross your legs

Hum a tune and cross your legs in The Good Life's distribution area. Website www.toiletmap.org.uk only lists eight publicly accessible loos at: Waitrose; Surbiton station; Sainsbury's; Victoria rec pavilion; Alexandra Rec; M&S; Tolworth Broadway; Berrylands station and Squires in Long Ditton.

Opinions sought

How could Surbiton and Tolworth libraries do better? A survey (kingstonletstalk.co.uk/libraries) is canvassing views until Wed, Oct 21, to shape the library service in future. You can also see what others are saying.

Hangars agreed

Two cycle hangars, each for six bikes, are to be installed in Lancelot Road (near the Corkran Road junction) and Bond Road (by Tolworth Park Road).

Red-eyed huddle

Speak softly if you encounter any of Surbiton's local councillors. Their last meeting ended at 4 mins before 1am.



● Surbiton acupuncturist Jun Xu has got the needle after bailiffs brandishing court orders entered his Claremont Road centre and changed the locks.

It's been a tough year for Real Herbs, the Chinese remedy shop and clinic, after Covid restrictions put an end to needlework in mid-March.

Xu, a Beijing-trained puncture pro, set up in 2005 selling herbal mixes from his premises between Blue Orchid and the Children's Society charity shop.

Real Herbs claimed to help fix stress, obesity and blurred vision, and declared that acupuncture could turn childless couples into parents.

Barrier splits opinion

Residents are divided about an experimental barrier in King Charles Road designed to control rat-running and encourage safe cycling...

Some believe it's good to block through traffic, others argue it diverts cars down streets such as Broomfield Road and Alexandra Drive, which are less able to cope with extra vehicles.

The barrier of planters and posts between the junctions of Beaconsfield Road and Hollyfield Road will stay for six months, then be reviewed.

At Surbiton's neighbourhood committee, Cllr Hilary Gander said the aim was to enhance the area, and held out the hope of creating space for Coffee on the Corner customers to sit outside.



Cafe owner Kyle Hyams, whose premises are alongside the barrier, said he could see benefits, but feared the end of passing trade might turn it into "a ghost town in winter".

Cllr Gander, a fan of the café, said: "The last thing we want is for the business to suffer, and we can look at making small changes."

The aim of the 'modal filter', as it is known, is to stop cars using the route to dodge Ewell Road jams, and to promote cycling.

Opponent Paul Fisher pointed out that a petition against a barrier had been signed by 1,230 people. Resident Shelley Herrera wanted to know why cycling was being encouraged in King Charles Road when so much was already being spent providing cycle lanes along Ewell Road. "Surely you'd want to encourage them there?"

Cllr Gander responded: "The principle we're following is that cycling and walking should be safe wherever you are. The idea of roads being for cars is changing, and the government is telling us to do that faster."

Food appeal

For seven months, since the start of the Covid crisis, a team of helpers has collected food on a stall near Sainsbury's in the high street... but it needs more donations and volunteer help to cover the second viral wave.

Launched by the Dons local action group (from a nucleus of AFC Wimbledon football fans) on March 25, it has supplied more than 21,000 food parcels to the vulnerable and self-isolating.

Corinne D'Angelo, part of the Dons' volunteer army, said food was distributed from a central hub. "We work with other charities to send out parcels, and supply ingredients to community kitchens too," she said. "We've experienced a real awakening in the community, but we still need more volunteers."

There's always a need for tea, sugar, coffee, cleaning products, too rolls, cereals, soap and pet food, while any specific item shortages are highlighted on a stall notice. Email: DLA@AFCWimbledonfoundation.org.uk



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SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



The vast stage, the bright lights, the expectant audience and another attack of new-extension stage fright

Broomfield Road resident Bob Phillips supports the barrier. "It's enormously important to reduce the number of cars on the roads, and forcing cars off at-roads and on to main through routes is a good thing," he said, adding that

encouraging cycling cut pollution and helped get the nation fit. "It's rather neat to change the pattern of road use at the cost of two planters and a bollard; plaquids to Kingston Council for cost-effectiveness and engineering."

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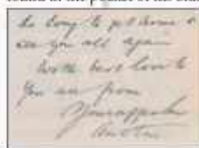
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Perished in Titanic sinking

Austin Partner was a Surbitonian who became a household name in death... one of the 1,514 victims of the Titanic tragedy after the largest liner in the world sank in mid-Atlantic when it struck an iceberg.

Held been the talk of Ewell Road in early 1912; the proud possessor of a first-class ticket for the maiden voyage to the United States of the luxurious all-mod-cons steamship.

Sadly, he became the talk of the whole country in April after he perished in the freezing waters - his body identified by the AP monogram on his silver cigarette case which was found in the pocket of his blue travel suit.



He was travelling alone, his ultimate destination being Toronto, Canada... a journey he'd undertaken 17 times before as Canadian investments was his area of speciality. On an earlier trip he'd written a letter to his dad (left), saying how much he

longed to get home and see everybody again.

Austin was a 40-year-old stockbroker who lived with his wife and two sons, aged 12 and nine, in a house (right) called The Briers in Ewell Road. It's now simply number 332, close to the Egmont Road junction.

The moustachioed moneyman had just lived up to his surname by becoming a partner in the brokerage firm Myer & Robertson. He was moving in rarefied circles in London society, and was best mates with newspaper magnate Harold Harmsworth, later Lord Rothermere of Daily Mail fame.

Held paid £28 10s for his ticket (£3,500 in today's money) to visit one of his new firm's affiliates, and planned to call in on several of the friends and business contacts in North America that he'd made on his annual transatlantic voyages.



Austin and Nellie married in 1897 and settled in Surbiton three years later. Right, Austin as a boy. Letter picture: www.austinsurvivor.com. Other pictures: Henry Watridge & Son.



of only a handful of the Titanic's retrieved victims to be returned to the UK for burial.

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Austin Partner

through the lych gate, turn sharp left and the statue is three plots in; a serene marble guardian, holding a wreath.

The inscription reads: Sacred to the memory of Austin Partner of Tolworth, Surbiton, who lost his life in the foundering of the steamship Titanic in mid-Atlantic on the 15th day of April, 1912, whose body was recovered and interred here, May 23rd, aged 40 years.

In the same grave are the remains of his widow.

Austin was born in White Roding, a village near Harlow, Essex, in 1871. The son of a nonconformist minister, the Rev Richard Partner, and his wife, Charlotte, he was the third of four children.

After an early career in banking, he married draper's daughter Nellie Hilton in 1897. He was 25, she 24. Their first son, Arthur, was just a few weeks old when, in 1900, they

A tribute in The Times spoke of his "genial, unassuming and directly honest character" which "earned him general respect and popularity".

On May 11 1912 his embalmed body was shipped back to England aboard the SS Minnehaha. The coffin remained one night at the Surbiton home before he was interred on May 23 in the graveyard of St Mary's, Long Ditton, watched over by a graceful, elegant statue of an angel.

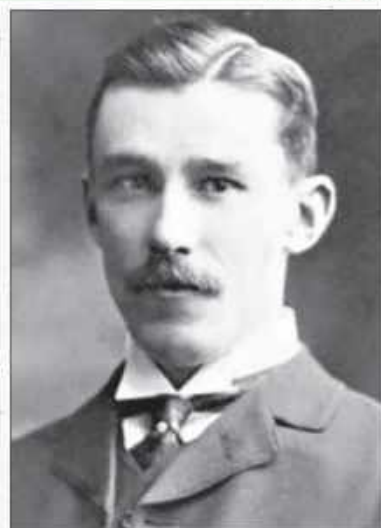
His body was one of only a handful of the Titanic's retrieved victims to be returned to the UK for burial.

The single funeral hymn at the St Mary's service was Nearer My God to Thee; poignantly the hymn that crew and passengers on the ship sang as it slipped below the surface to its own watery grave.

If you enter the churchyard, and pass



Austin: a dapper, genial pipe-smoker, pictured on an earlier voyage.



decided to put down their roots in Ewell Road, Tolworth. A second son, Colin, was born in the house in 1905.

After Austin's death, Nellie stayed put and raised their sons on her own. Lord Rothermere made certain that his old pal's widow was financially secure.

She didn't remarry, and died on July 13 1957, aged 85. Arthur became a hotel manager, and died in 1959. Colin worked as a railway clerk, died in 1982, and was

also buried below the white angel in the Long Ditton churchyard.

Tim Harrison

● Austin Partner, b Nov 30 1871 in Essex, d Apr 15 1912, mid-Atlantic



Austin's Long Ditton grave, and the inscription

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Clock this: a new zone

Surbiton has split into two distinct time zones, according to the clocktower at the lights by Naturally Chinese. When Central Village Time is 10.15, Seething Wells Time is 10.22. "I've always felt that Maple Village has a more laid-back feel," said one resident. "So to find that Balclava Road is seven minutes ahead is no surprise."



Crafty Cafe moves online

After distancing rules forced her to cut capacity from 40 potters to 18, Fiona Kerr reluctantly decided to close The Crafty Cafe at 120 Ewell Road, and focus instead on takeaway pottery. Fiona, 59, right, who has lived in The Ridings for 25 years, explained: "We just couldn't compete. Even when we were full, we couldn't cover the utility bills."

Her studio, where children and adults enjoyed painting plates, unicorns, baby footprints, daleks, moneyboxes and Tardises, may have shut, but she's still operating online at www.crafty-cafe.co.uk, delivering pottery, collecting it to glaze, then returning the completed masterpieces to their proud creators.



Painted pebbles could earn you seeds

Children who paint pebbles to look like veg will get free packets of seeds from Squires garden centre in Woodstock Lane North, Long Ditton.

Under 16s can either get a free pebble from the information desk, or use their own. Varnish them and hand them in to be displayed outside.

You have until Nov 8, each child being rewarded with a free pack of vegetable seeds as an introduction to gardening, and an encouragement to eat more greens.

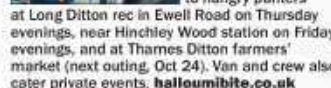
Chairman Sarah Squire said: "This is a fun home craft and gardening activity that I think children will really enjoy."



It's no van ordinaire

Halloumi Bite's vintage van has been shortlisted as one of the 13 best-looking food trucks in the country. The retro Citroën waggon was nominated in the British Street Food Awards contest.

Halloumi Bite, run by Long Ditton's jovial, Greek Cypriot-born Dimitri Sarris, serves authentic Greek fare to hungry punters at Long Ditton rec in Ewell Road on Thursday evenings, near Hinchley Wood station on Friday evenings, and at Thames Ditton farmers' market (next outing, Oct 24). Van and crew also cater private events: halloumibite.co.uk



● A Long Ditton energy consultant believes that if more local businesses shopped around for their power they could achieve savings on bills, and help the environment.

Felicity Leicester, who works with commercial utility consultancy Full Power, believes that switching providers holds the key to reducing costs.

"I'm on a campaign to help make our communities greener through a company that offers green energy, free LED lightbulbs and pays you to have a smart meter, to see where you might be able to reduce usage," she said.

Last year she claims to have cut the energy bills of several local businesses and schools to the tune of £40,000.

You can email her at felicity.leicester@gmail.com

Oranges are the only fruit

As Anne Dale approaches her 100th birthday, she reveals the secret to long life is... oranges. "It's all I'd eat as a girl - my mother used to worry," she said, in her favourite chair in the Surbiton house where she's lived for 70 years.

The town was very different in 1950 when she and husband Fred moved into Arlington Road. "It had lovely little shops all the way up Brighton Road and Victoria Road," she said. "You didn't have to go to Kingston, though on Friday I used to push the baby in the pram to get my fruit and veg from the market place, then walk back again."

"Surbiton had three ladies' shops, two gentlemen's shops, a fish shop... there was never an empty shop. And, of course, there were all the banks. You could get everything you wanted. It was a different generation altogether."

She and Fred (who was 6ft 4in) went to the flicks at the Odeon (now Waitrose) and the Ritz (now Wetherspoons). Though a central Londoner, Fred had discovered Surbiton, and loved it. When he and Anne married (they met on a walking holiday in the Lake District), they settled in Arlington Road, raising three children there. When Fred died in 1993, son Tony, now 62, moved in with her.

Anne loves the community spirit in the road. On November 18 she celebrates her birthday, although Covid



will limit guest numbers. House decorations have been kindly donated by Cannings card shop in Victoria Road. Had these been normal times, Anne would have had a grand gathering in her favourite Surbiton cafe, Allegro, but it still hasn't reopened after lockdown.

Anne is really Audrey, but you wouldn't call her that to her face. "Ugh, what an ugly name!" she blustered. "It may have been fashionable at the time, but I've always preferred Anne, and everyone knows me as that."

They were made of stern stuff in 1920. Anne broke her hip in a fall in 2011, but recovered; had a heart attack in 2017, but bounced back; and beat pneumonia in 2019.

"It's remarkable to reach 100, but the person who'd be most surprised would be my mother. When I was a baby I wouldn't eat," said Anne. "She took me to the doctor. He said: 'Doesn't she eat anything?' My mother said: 'All she'll eat is oranges!' He said: 'Well, give her oranges!'"

A former member of Surbiton's historical society, she grew up in Croydon, and served in the Land Army in the Second World War.

"I learnt to milk cows by hand, and collect eggs which the hens had laid in ditches."

She also got into am dram, appearing in light comedies - one about Henry VIII's wives gathering in Heaven. "I was a keen cyclist; I cycled all over the place. I had lots of boyfriends, and in a way those war years were the five happiest of my life."

Later, she carried on performing in shows with the St Andrew's Players at St Andrew's church hall in Balclava Road. "I got good write-ups as well," she said proudly.

She used to attend the congregational church, which once stood at the Grove Road/Maple Road junction, and later joined Surbiton Hill Methodist church.

How has she coped in the coronavirus? "I've never known such a dreadful year. But, you know, I'm still very fond of oranges!"

Tim Harrison

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Hurrah! The council has replaced trees on Tolworth's Greenway with new specimens and, crucially, given them beds in which to prosper. The original saplings were sunk into tiny holes in the concrete – condemning them to a short, miserable, and life.

Rec is given a spruce

The community rallied to spruce up Victoria rec, trim unruly foliage, pick up litter and dramatically improve the Victoria Avenue entrance flowerbeds.

Fine weather meant 25 volunteers from the Friends group had perfect conditions to use secateurs, shears, loppers and litter-pickers, collecting bagfuls of debris.

The group, set up in March by Helen O'Donovan to fight EE's bid for a mast in the park, gave it a facelift, assisted by Good Gym (on-foot superheroes who run to where they're needed, then muck in) and council contractor idVerde.



Anne Baruch proves she's no slouch with the loppers

"There are things we can do to improve this recreation ground," said Helen. "We're going to renovate the beds at the entrance, and cut back the sycamore and hazel as it's threatening to poke up through the surface of the tennis courts."

Bindweed was removed, but buddleia was left, to encourage butterflies. Ultimately the past-its-prime lonicera hedging will be replaced by beech.

Kingston's biodiversity officer Elliot Newton gave a stirring speech to the volunteers and explained safety procedures before work got under way. The Friends of Victoria Rec would love to contact more willing locals who cherish their open space. Email fovr-surbiton@hotmail.com or find Friends of Victoria Rec – Surbiton on Facebook.



● Could this eccentric home-built 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' be the car of the future? Constructed by Chris King using an old electric forklift chassis, it features a beer barrel bonnet, hooters and whistles to alert pedestrians (as it runs almost silently) and an ordinary three-pin plug charger. Instead of a dash cam there's a 'duck cam', built into a bath toy. "I cleaned out the garage, and made it from the bits," said Chris, who demonstrated it during an open weekend at eco campaigner Des Kay's Circulatory, alongside Berrylands station. "I'm not an engineer," he admitted. "But I've made this work with a simple battery pack." It runs off 24 lithium batteries, is street-legal, can do 50mph, pays no road tax and – as much to amuse other drivers as anything – can blow a cloud of bubbles from a machine behind his head. It also has a mechanical headlight dip which involves moving a large lever. Chris calls his car Sparkle ("it's a girl"). Meanwhile Des's recycling and upcycling centre goes from strength to strength, and now boasts a mirror room – where you can reflect on life. "There's no such thing as waste," insists Des. "Just stuff in the wrong place."



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For a vibrant garden statement, there's one choice, says Janice Cripps

Plant deep, and your tulips can reappear

If you've ever browsed through one of those bulb catalogues which lands with a thump on your doorstep at this time of year, you'll know the choice is quite bewildering, particularly if it's tulips you're after. So here are my recommendations, to help narrow the field.

Tulips can be split into early, mid-season and late flowering, with the shorter, more compact varieties generally more prevalent early in the season. As I prefer tall elegant blooms, even early in the year, I always go for **Exotic Emperor**. It has large, creamy yellow flowers with a striking green flash and, as the name suggests, is quite a stunner.

Even in perfect conditions, tulips are generally considered short-lived and it's advisable to plant annually. But if you choose tulips from the Viridiflora or Darwin group and plant them twice as deeply as recommended,

they can reappear year after year. The blooms are extremely long lasting, making them ideal as cut flowers for a vase.

Good ones to try from the Viridiflora group are **Spring Green**, which is similar in colour to **Exotic Emperor**, **Artist** (golden orange) and **China Town** (pink). Tulips do best in a well-drained soil and full sun, but Viridiflora tulips also perform well in shade.



To make a statement in the garden, nothing beats the vibrancy of a Darwin tulip. My favourites are **Van Eijk** (pinkish red, pictured), **Red Impression**, **Pink Impression** and **Olympic Flame** (which, of course, looks precisely like one!). These tall, imposing tulips with their sturdy stems and huge heads look particularly good in a large pot.

Just as exuberant are the luxuriant peony-like flowers of tulips **Antraciet** (red), **Orange Princess** and the very pretty **Angelique** (pink). For something more graceful and elegant, try one of the lily flowering tulips like white **Triumphator** or orange **Ballerina**, all guaranteed to pack a punch in the border or pot.

A word of advice. While tulips like to be planted in cold, dry weather, usually after the first frosts in early November, it's wise to buy them now to make sure you get the variety you want.

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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Ready for work

Woodchip Wednesday is on Oct 21, 10.30am-12.30pm, at Berrylands Nature Reserve. Help spread wheelbarrows of woodchip on the paths of the five-hectare site, or work with council contractor idverde to repair the fence along Elmbridge Avenue, digging out and replacing old concrete posts and putting in wooden cross beams where they are broken.

"To do this safely we'll temporarily close the area where volunteers will be working, to maintain social distance from each other and other site visitors," said a spokesman for the reserve off Raeburn Avenue.

Meet at the Berrylands Scout Hut, Stirling Walk. Wear wellies or sturdy boots and appropriate clothing. Any time you can give will be appreciated by the Friends of Berrylands Nature Reserve. For track and trace, volunteers must pre-book. Visit www.tinyurl.com/y6abkd57 or email berrylandsr@gmail.com with any questions.

Hail, Nancy!

This is Nancy... a traditional black cab which was winched into the garden of the Hamilton nursing home in Langley Avenue as a 'reminiscence tool' for residents with dementia who were feeling cut off from family during the pandemic.

Visiting relatives came up with the idea of a quirky place to sit in the garden, and spark conversation and memories. The taxi, which simply sits on the lawn and doesn't actually go anywhere, was named Nancy after the resident whose family originally proposed the idea.

"It's a major feature of life at the home now," said manager Andrea Day as she surveyed the redesigned garden and its unusual automotive feature. "We considered how to maximise the existing layout for our dementia residents, and provide areas to allow thoughtful, vibrant, fun for our residents."

"We also changed our tool shed into a seaside ice-cream kiosk with vintage Wall's adverts and signage and colourful deckchairs!"

Then the maintenance and activities shed was turned into a 'post office', accepting letters to loved ones as a way of keeping in touch, even if coronavirus restricts personal visits. "Our activities team uses it as part of the programme to correspond with our community penpals too," said Andrea.



Don't consult, it'll just annoy them!

No point consulting residents on planning applications... you'll only irritate them!

That was the extraordinary justification for not asking neighbours their views on a bid to knock down a detached Berrylands home and replace it with six flats.

Things got heated as the neighbourhood committee considered a plan to demolish the four-bed family house at 19 Alexandra Drive (on the corner with Courtlands Road) and rebuild in a kind-of 'mock' mock-Tudor style.

Rajan Patel, for the applicant, said other roads in Berrylands, such as The Avenue and Avenue South, already had flat conversions.

Asked why neighbours in Alexandra Drive hadn't been consulted, he snapped: "When you consult residents about something people are clearly going to be against, you're not going to get the best response. You'll end up irritating them more, and I'd end up banging my own head!"

Cllr John Sweeney was incredulous. "You've managed to create an application that's generated 95 objections and you argue that there are comparable developments in Berrylands - but they're nowhere near. You've misunderstood the unique characteristics of Berrylands," he said.

Mr Patel was unrepentant. "I grew up at 56 The Avenue in Berrylands," he shot back. "I know the character of the area very well. If a building looks in character, as a larger house, it's not hiding the fact that it's a high-density scheme. It's smaller than a pair of semi-detached houses."

Others weighed in. Cllr Sharron Sumner said involving residents was a key part of the planning process. "I find the lack of community engagement quite disturbing," she said.

Cllr Diane White called the applicant's attitude to consultation 'short-sighted, condescending and lacking in respect'.

A clearly riled Cllr Sweeney added: "This is a family home that's been there a very long time. Are we saying anyone can come along, buy any house in Berrylands and pack it full of flats?" He said the only person to benefit from the plan would be "the one who is selling these properties and making a packet".

Council officers had recommended approval, despite 95 letters of objection. Development officer Alex Rosser-Trokas said the plan "takes design cues from the existing property", was "Tudoresque" and that permission should be granted.

But Paula Carney, speaking for the objectors in the virtual meeting, said the plan clashed with Alexandra Drive's existing mix of detached



19 Alexandra Drive, as it looks today



... and how developers would like it to look

and semi-detached family homes. "There are no flats," she said, adding that the street's character would change, potentially triggering a rash of similar applications.

Fellow objector Peter Kent called the plan "oppressive and overbearing", arguing that 22 flat dwellers would make far more noise than one family.

Cllr Alison Holt queried the size of rooms in the proposed four three-bed and two two-bed flats. Berrylands houses tended to be two double bedrooms and one single, she said, while the proposed mix was one double and two singles.

"Families comprise different numbers," the council officer told her in reply. "Bedrooms don't have to be double bedrooms."

Asked why council officers recommended approval, Ms Rosser-Trokas said units met minimum floorspace requirements, and that density guidelines were only "an indication" and were "not mechanistic".

Cllr Sam Foulde-Hughes said it didn't look enough like other houses in the road; there being no bay windows in the proposed flats, for instance.

Councillors refused the plan, ruling by seven votes to two (with two abstentions) that the proposed density was out of kilter with the area, and would adversely impact neighbours in terms of loss of light and being overlooked.

Tim Harrison

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Room with a view

Is a balcony a genuine outdoor amenity? It divided Surbiton's area committee, which eventually decided that in Covid times any open-air space was to be welcomed.

Facing them, an application to turn a shabby double-fronted house at 311 Ewell Road (corner with Broomfield Road) into four flats; one three-bedroom, the rest smaller. The reconstructed building would be house-like, but with gables featuring porthole windows... and balconies, the main one with a grand view of, er, Ewell Road.

Some neighbours opposed the 74% rise in floorspace, queried the look of the proposed windows, and balked at balconies (one at the back, and one at the side).

"The balconies will overlook us," said resident Nigel Gilroy. "They'll create noise and be a loss of privacy."

Cllr Sharon Summer concurred. "Balconies are not consistent with Broomfield Road," she said, adding that the balcony on the side seemed far too big. "Balconies are not genuine outdoor amenity space. If you have kids, you can't let them play on a balcony."

Cllr Sam Foulde-Hughes disagreed. "We've learnt over the course of Covid-19 that residents should have as much access to outside space as possible; the balcony massively improves my feelings for the scheme."

Cllr Hilary Gander was also a balcony fan. "People may choose not to let their young children play on the balcony, but it's still a valid outdoor space," she said. "Not everyone can have a house with a garden."

The plan to replace 311 Ewell Road with three storeys of flats was agreed, provided the glazing on the side balcony facing Broomfield Road had frosted end panels.



The current house at 311 Ewell Road, Surbiton, and how it will look, rebuilt (contentious balcony arrowed)

Aisles of empty shelves sum up these depressing pandemic days, says Becky Mayhew

Count those sheets, Bert



Seconds out, round two of the worst boxing match in history; one in which we haplessly dodge the invisible upper cuts of a sprightly, elusive opponent in a ring strewn with empty loo rolls and the shattered remains of our hopes and dreams for 2020, while being spluttered at by a blundering clothopper of a referee who orders us to perform a left jab on our opponent, but under no circumstances to perform a left jab on our opponent, and to actually go and sit quietly, but not too quietly, in a corner of the ring... but not that corner.

And as Round 2 looms, there are early signs that the people who feared that chronic dysentery would be a large element of Round 1 are once again fearing that chronic dysentery will besiege them during Round 2, because – yes – Waitrose was void of loo rolls last week.

And this despite the fact that chronic dysentery was in fact not a feature of Round 1 and is unlikely still to be a feature of Round 2.

During the first flurry of panic buying, I was in Sainsbury's in the high street, staring at the empty shelves and shaking my head at the long

and irritating journey of 17 different shops I had ahead of me to buy basic everyday items, when an elderly couple – let's call them Bert and Eileen – crept in and stopped dead.

If you'd seen the look on Bert and Eileen's faces at the sight of the empty shelves, you'd have put back the 379 packets of penne and the crate of loo roll, because on their faces was fear. Pure, aghast, we-have-no-idea-what-we-are-going-to-do-to-feed-ourselves-tonight fear.

For most of us, empty shelves were little more than a baffling annoyance, and I got used to walking miles to find something on which to wipe my bum that wasn't my new duvet cover or next

door's dog. But for a lot of people, especially the Berts and Eileens, facing empty shelves doesn't mean a lengthy walk, it means no dinner. These are horrible, depressing, sad, worrying, frightening times for every one of us.

We can't blame the next person for being more frightened by it than we are, and we must understand that this fear may translate into a need to surround ourselves with provisions, to bunker down, to reduce the need to leave the house as frequently.

But, before we get carried away and stock our garages with enough paracetamol to exist on a psychedelic high for six months, we must think of Bert and Eileen.

They need to eat as much as the rest of us, and it is entirely possible that Bert and Eileen are currently far more frightened than the rest of us.

And let's face it, if anything is going to bring on chronic dysentery, it's consuming those 47 honeydew melons you bought before they go off. www.beckysaysthings.com



Marking 10 years of fairy fun

The little pink fairies at the Bellarinas classes, staged at Surbiton High School, have been celebrating the group's 10th anniversary.

It was established in 2010 by Ellen Maby of St Mary's Road, Long Ditton, after she found that her daughter, Bella, responded much better to fun, as opposed to formal, teaching.

Ellen's pedigree includes stage appearances in the English National Ballet productions of Nutcracker and Copella. She teaches wannabe Billy Elliots as well as girls, and also runs after-school classes for young



pupils at Surbiton High's prep school.

"We offer fun, creative and magical classes for children aged three and upwards," she said. "It's great to celebrate 10 years of fairy wings and wands."

With Covid in mind, Ellen's Saturday morning classes now encompass "tiaras, tutus and Dettol", but when they're pirouetting, her sugar plum fairies appear blissfully untroubled by the current restrictions which limit those of us without wings. www.bellarinas.com

Greenfield

With an already busy start to the year we have returned from the lockdown with an even busier summer period. It seems the Stamp Duty Holiday has had the desired effect and we have been inundated with new buyers. So much so, we have been receiving multiple offers on many of our properties with some even selling for higher than the asking price. The huge demand for property has pushed prices up and we are now finding that property prices have exceeded that of the peak in 2017. It is safe to say that if you have been thinking about moving for some time, then now is most certainly the time to do so.

2020 is a special year for Greenfield as it marks the ten year anniversary for many of its staff. Others have been with us for even longer! We are delighted that so many members of the Greenfield family have stayed with us for so long and we like to think this is a testament to our company. The skills and knowledge of our team are what makes us one of the market leaders in the area and you can trust you will be in safe hands when you sell your property with Greenfield.

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Keep taking the tablets

With much form-filling now online, and shared library internet access limited by Covid, computers are being biked to residents.

Silver surfers and shielders have had tablet-size computers delivered by community library service volunteers like Jane, right.

She dropped off two in her lunch hour. "They were both so delighted and excited it made me quite emotional," she said.

Kingston won funding for 10 via a government initiative. The library's Nat Newirth told The Good Life: "We thought demand would exceed supply, but luckily we secured a batch."

Recipients included two in Ewell Road care homes, who said it was a godsend as they also use them to shop.

"Nowadays residents have to fill in forms online, but that's hard if there's no library access, so this has come at a fortuitous time," said Nat, who said he hadn't expected to see recipients' faces light up with such joy.

Clr Rebekah Moll thanked everyone involved in the initiative. "We hope we can deliver more technology to residents who are in need in our community," she said.

● Could you share your IT skills with people venturing online for the first time? Email Nat at digitallibraries@kingston.gov.uk if you can spare the odd hour.



Charging points arrive

More charging points for electric cars will appear on Surbiton streets, to incentivise motorists to switch from petrol and diesel.

Three new locations have been agreed, and more will follow.

Chiltern Drive, right, by Berrylands station, will get two new charging posts... the first in an area which currently has 21 local plug-in hybrid car owners.

Councillors on Surbiton

neighbourhood committee agreed two further sites: Victoria Road (opposite Sainsbury's), where pay-and-display bays will be replaced by electric vehicle posts, and Dennan Road, at the side of 54 Cotterill Road.



Unlike overnight trickle-chargers which will ultimately sprout from borough lampposts, the new points are quick-chargers, capable of fully powering a car in three hours.

The Dennan Road area currently boasts 36 owners of plug-in hybrid vehicles.

The charge points cost Kingston Council nothing. A private firm stumps up the installation cost, then makes its money from driver payments.

Clr Liz Green welcomed the move as an incentive to persuade people to switch to electric vehicles, saying that any short-term



"Electric gulch in place": new points will appear in the line of cars on the street

the good life Waitrose at war

Surbiton witnessed the first shots in a new supermarket delivery war between Waitrose and M&S.

A three-month trial by Waitrose saw KT5 and KT6 customers offered home deliveries in as little as half an hour, responding to ex-partner Ocado's tie-up with Marks & Sparks. Waitrose is using Deliveroo for rapid local drops of groceries as the two upmarket food giants battle.

Initially there is a list restricted to 500 items, which is why you can now see Waitrose staff at the Claremont Road store scuttling round the aisles, seemingly filling baskets for themselves.

The list includes milk, snacks, beer, wine, ready meals, fruit, veg, meat and cleaning products... which apparently sums up Surbiton.

annoyance at the loss of existing parking bays was worth the long-term benefit of improving borough air quality.

The maximum stay at the charging posts will be four hours. If you overstay, or try to sneak in and nick the space in a petrol-driven car, you'll get a parking ticket.

It's lucky 13

Launching a new hair salon during lockdown is brave or crazy, but it's working for Andrew Thompson, left, at Salon No13.

He used to anip and curl at Hair by Mitch in Brighton Road, but when it closed suddenly he decided to launch on his own. "That was the kick up the bum I needed," said the 35-year-old crimp from Chessington.

His wife (the couple are expecting a baby in Feb) spotted that the ex-Carphone Warehouse shop was vacant, and Andrew pounced. Named after its street number in Victoria Road, it is now a smart, modern salon with separate hair-washing room, staff



basement and even an art gallery (see p11).

With a dozen styling stations (a bevy of self-employed stylists, ages ranging from 20s to 50s, rent chairs from him), 75% of former clients have transferred across. He got the keys on his birthday, March 13... and the next week the country went into lockdown! "I absolutely love Surbiton; I want to live here now," said the Dubliner. "I've become a Surbitonian."

Salon No13 properly opened on July 4, with temperature checks, sanitising and strict rules to ensure customer, and staff, safety. Chairs are a metre apart, and no more than five stylists work at any one time.

The speciality is colour work, there's a book exchange shelf rather than magazines... and it's the only salon in Surbiton with round mirrors. 020 3198 4717, www.salonnumber13.co.uk



● Hats off to Janine Martin, above, at the Sunray community centre in Tolworth, who recycles waste that can't be handled by council collections.

By sifting rubbish into designated bins, she earns cash for charities via TerraCycle, which collects

SunrayRecycle (it's on Facebook) has diverted 600kg of waste from landfill, and raised £1,000 for the Sunray Community, RSPCA and Alzheimer's Society. Drop off recycling in the bins next to the community centre (KT5 9QP).

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House sales are booming - Craig

Dramatic reductions in stamp duty that run to the spring are fuelling a boom in Surbiton property sales, says Craig Humphrey, left, at the independent estate agency Humphrey & Brand next to Waitrose in Claremont Road.

"It's very busy at the moment, and stamp duty is a real spur," said the agent, who turns 34 in November.

He becomes the new partner in the firm set up by Laura Humphrey and Lisa Brand in 2008 at a propitious time.

H&B tops the Rightmove statistics for the most sales agreed in KT5, KT6 and KT7 in the past year.

"There's pent-up demand in the market," he said. "A lot of people are buying, interest rates are low and so much of our business is from personal recommendation."

Craig, who formerly worked in the Surbiton offices of Greenfield and Seymours, has strong local roots. His grandad was the captain of Surbiton Golf Club.

"Being an independent estate agent is important," he added. "Clients deal with real people, not a company."

Elevation to being a partner is, he says, recognition of a dozen years' experience, and his own professional code.

Ever get that Sincing feeling?

Surbiton biodiversity is climbing the agenda after Kingston Council briefed consultants to independently review 'Sinc's' - sites of importance for nature conservation.

The study by Land Use Consultants is reviewing 39 sites including Seething Wells, Berrylands Nature Reserve, The Wood and Richard Jefferies bird sanctuary (near Surbiton station), Tolworth Court Farm and the Hogsline Valley.

Designation raises awareness of a site's importance for wildlife and biodiversity; helps beef up planning decisions and establishes local-ecological corridors.

As well as assessing current status, the review can propose boundary revisions, and scope potential future sites. "Findings will inform planning policies in Kingston's new Local Plan, ensuring sites are protected and negative impacts on sensitive biodiversity areas avoided," said a council spokesperson.

The review will also shape a biodiversity plan to be launched later this year, supporting management of wildlife sites.

Clr Hilary Gander said: "We are immensely proud of our natural heritage and aspire to become a leading borough in how we manage our local environment."

Full list and site map is at www.tinyurl.com/y5ybpr2

● In public questions at Surbiton neighbourhood committee, resident Dan Falchikov asked for an assurance that data on the at-risk Seething Wells site would be made available... but was told by council officers that statistics were not yet ready.

"That's typical of the dither and delay of the council," he fired back. "It's an urgent emergency to save this site." He is urging the council to spend £5m compulsorily purchasing the site, to safeguard its future and enable it to be 'rewilded'.



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The Southborough Arms' heyday, when buses stopped outside; the crumbling Cap in Hand today with its tatty hoardings; and the likely future look... a brick-faced block of flats

Cap in Hand looks set to become seven-storey block of flats

A decision is expected in the coming days on plans to demolish the Cap in Hand at the Ace of Spades and replace it with a seven-storey block with 39 one, two and three-bedroom apartments and a shop underneath.

There would be 20 car spaces... fewer than served the pub, which began life as the Southborough Arms in 1934 (the same year the Toby Jug opened, further along the A3).

Flats would all have lift access, with 'pockets of communal space' to 'let the development breathe', says developer Mendora. Triple glazing would give residents a chance of sleep alongside one of

the busiest day-and-night underpasses in the country, under the Hook roundabout.

There would be 'soft russet' bricks, a split-level planted roof, solar panels and water capture and retention.

A widened footpath and cycleway would link planned new terraced homes ascending the slope of the slip road to the Ace of Spades. A 2018 plan was rejected as objectors criticised its 'monotony' and lack of amenity space. The developer insists the new version 'delivers much-needed local homes to a prominent and underused brownfield site'.

Opponents say too much is being

cramped into a site which backs on to gardens of homes in Haycroft Road, and say the developer is taking a 'let's-go-for-it-and-fill-our-boots' attitude.

Critics argue the building's sheer bulk will block sunlight, and question the air quality on a road regularly jammed with crawling rush-hour traffic.

The Hook Rise North pub has had a chequered history. In 1986 it briefly became Academy, then in 1989 the Cap in Hand. Wetherspoons bought it in 1998, adding the conservatory at the front and pushing weekly takings to £17,000. But that slumped to £8,506 a week in its twilight

years, and in Covid times even that looks halcyon. A surveyor's report calculates it would cost £660,000 to restore and refurbish the building as a viable pub.

It hit the headlines by becoming the first boozer in the area to ban smoking, long before the law changed. But the move backfired, and trade nosedived.

The last pint was pulled in January 2016 and, ringed by scruffy hoardings, it has been crumbling ever since. Attempts to rent it as a pub/restaurant proved fruitless and, as buddleia pushes from nooks and crannies, its life appears doomed.

Tim Harrison

Forget commuting, says Laura Marcus

The stay-at-home suburb

Surbiton is at the centre of a trend keeping Covid at bay. With so many former commuters now working from home we're helping to keep the virus down in the capital.

Thanks to us, the infection rate is lower than other parts of the country, say Richard Harris, professor of quantitative social geography at Bristol University and James Cheshire, professor of geographic information and cartography at University College, London. Writing in the Guardian they say: "Many London jobs can be done remotely, which remains a much more appealing prospect than squeezing on to a rush-hour train."

Surbiton commuters have for decades had to put up with cramped, expensive trains that often arrive too jammed to board. No wonder, having tasted the freedom of working from home, many are in no hurry to go back... which is helping save the suburbs from a spike in Covid.

Estate agents are swamped with demand for homes with enough garden space to add a mini outside office. City-centre sandwich bars may be in decline, but their loss is Surbiton coffee shops' gain.

Working miles from home never made sense. We've come to accept it because it's been this way for so long. Yet even in the Industrial Revolution much work was done at home. You might think that commuting's always been here, but it hasn't.

The average Surbiton commuter spends an hour going one way and an hour coming back; 40 hours a month, equivalent to a week for every month worked. From a logical point of view, it makes no sense.

Harris and Cheshire conclude: "One reason London's doing relatively well is much of its population can better self-isolate by working from home. An obvious conclusion is it's unwise to push people back to offices when rates are on the rise." www.lauramarcus.com

Hall hirers offered olive branch

Hirers of Surbiton library hall, controversially evicted from the meeting space they'd called home for decades, have been offered an olive branch by the council.

In a spirit of compromise they will now be able to share the 60s building in Ewell Road with adult education.

Clubs and societies were dismayed by the abrupt decision to end the hiring of the well-used hall.

But an intervention by Kingston



Council leader Cllr Caroline Kerr has smoothed troubled waters. "I fully accept the situation could have been handled better," she said.

Individual organisations have been approached to find amicable meeting spots, although the hall (pictured) is more cluttered than before as weaving classes need their looms.

The plan had been to move adult education from the King Charles Centre (sold for a new school) to a building behind Kingston's Guildhall, but it proved unsuitable, meaning the library hall became the fallback. Groups such as Surbiton Historical Society have now been welcomed back, with the council confirming its support for such venerable community organisations.

The hall was built in 1964 by the former Surbiton Council before that authority was absorbed into Kingston.

EE loses mast appeal on recreation ground

Supporters of Victoria recreation ground off Balacava Road were jubilant after hearing that planning inspectors had thrown out an appeal by mobile phone giant EE to build an 82ft mast in the well-used park. Helen O'Donovan of Victoria Avenue, treasurer of the Friends of Victoria Rec, formed to fight the mast and help beautify and maintain the eight-acre site, said: "Common sense has prevailed!"

Two hundred and fifty people objected to the bid to build a mast in the section of the rec popular with picnickers, but EE went to appeal, persisting with its assertion that green open space was just the place for a mast the size of two upended double-deckers.

Inspectors ruled that the scheme would cause "significant unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area", and was therefore not a price worth paying so rail passengers to get a better phone signal.



The weekend of the Tolworth arts, crafts and food market in early October was a washout, but organiser Andy Collins said: "Despite the rain, we're really pleased with the turnout. We'd like to thank all of the stallholders for sticking with us."

The next markets in the slip road off Ewell Road are Sun, Nov 1 and Sun, Dec 6, 11am-3pm (the latter with a Christmas theme).



Haven't I seen you somewhere?

New shops are always welcome on Tolworth Broadway and Ewell Road, but there's a familiarity to the latest arrivals. Dallas chicken takes the drumstick takeaway count to six, while a barber shop at the Princes Avenue corner means men now have a choice of nine.



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Generating the power for Berrylands

Continued from p1

Rooftop-generated power could be stored in boxes like the green electric feeder pillars that already proliferate on streets.

Grants would be available, says the software engineer, pointing out that the days of gas are numbered and that the demand for alternative electrical systems is growing.

"It's a project that needs more than the skills of one person," he said. "We'd need engineering, legal, marketing and project management skills... but it's possible as Berrylands is very community-minded. If something like this is to work, this is a good place to try."

Cabling links between houses could also be used for fibre-broadband sharing.



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A fine programme awaits

The popular Thames concert season launches at St Andrew's Church, Maple Road, on Sat Oct 17 with sax and piano duo Jonathan Radford (left) and Ashley Frapp. Artistic director Ben Costello, has ensured distancing and sanitising for audience safety.

Schumann and Bernstein are on the bill, as is Debussy's delightful Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun.

On Nov 14 it's the turn of the all-female Behn

String Quartet, right, formed five years ago by two violinists, a violist and a cellist. Works include Fanny Mendelssohn's String Quartet in E-flat major, and (marking Beethoven's 250th anniversary) his String Quartet No 4.

• Visit www.thamesconcerts.com



Rose rearises

The Rose Theatre re-opens from Oct 28 with a 40th anniversary production of Willy Russell's *Educating Rita*, starring Stephen Tompkinson and Jessica Johnson. Robust risk management is in place, to comply with Covid rules.

It is six months since the Kingston theatre by Queen's Prom had to close.

Other shows on their way include *Live at the Rose* with Russell Kane on Nov 1 and a festive family production of Julia Donaldson's *Stick Man* in Dec. www.rosetheatre.org

• A new one-hander, *Make-Up* by Andy Moseley, became the first proper theatre show at the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road since lockdown, delighting a 40-strong socially distanced audience. Moj Taylor, right, played drag queen Lady Christina, looking back - via his mirror - to a fraught relationship with his dad, Andy, left, who first ventured into play-writing for the venue's oneACT season 11 years ago with *Are You Lonesome*



tonight? took part in an animated Q&A session afterwards, revealing that the show had been booked into the (cancelled) Edinburgh fringe. "It's great to finally have it performed, and it's great it's here... where my career began."

• Whole Lotta Comedy's line-up on Sat, Oct 17 at the cornerHOUSE sees Elaine Blackmore host comedians Alexandria Macleod (right), Horatio Gould, Sean Gorman, Adam Brides, Brandon Palmer, Leila Ladari, Daran Griffiths and Ali Woods. 7.30pm, pay what you want. Book by email: wholelottacomedy@outlook.com



The gallery gallery

The kitchen corridor in hair studio Salon No13 is Surbiton's new gallery, displaying the work of Balacava Road artist Jo Kier, familiar to local Instagram fans via @JOKmyArt

Most pictures look at Surbiton from quirky angles. "I do her hair," said salon owner Andrew Thompson, below. "When her show at St Andrew's church was cancelled because of coronavirus, I gave her the space."

The gallery is at the back of Salon No13 at 13a Victoria Road.



• Do autumn and winter inspire you to write? Wordsmith and eco poet Lucy Furlong is running 'winter warmer writing workshops' in - as she puts it - "an effort to see us through the dark nights".

While online workshops can never be as satisfying as face-to-face events, Lucy says it should appeal to those who usually gather in cafes and pubs to

share writing ideas and try things out.

Her weekly meets will explore different writing genres. "The joy of workshops online is that we can still meet up and do it wherever we are in the world. Sundays, from Nov 1. 7.30pm. www.lucyfurlong.com

• Lockdown 100, musings on the past six months, is published in book form by Nicky Newberry of the cornerHOUSE arts centre. Contributors were limited to 100 words, with poems, whimsical thoughts and darker reflections. The 60-page A5 book was designed by David Le Vay. Nicky thanked everyone for "sharing thoughts and feelings about such an emotive subject". The book can be read online at www.thecornerhouse.org/covid-19-lockdown-100

Sad loss of arts leader

Arts champion Aine Lark has died aged 50. The Verona Drive resident was well known in local and national arts circles. As chair of Kingston Arts she spearheaded Festival of the Voice, a showcase for theatre, poetry, storytelling and music, and the Arts Salon, a networking event for musicians, actors and creatives.

With Kingston Council's Music and Arts Service, she raised the profile of the artistic community and helped launch the International Youth Arts Festival in 2009.

She chaired National Drama, a body representing drama teachers and educators, and was herself a drama teacher for 20 years, campaigning to maintain the subject in schools as a key part of a broad, balanced curriculum.

Her work in drama education was recognised by the Royal Society of Arts, which awarded her a fellowship.

Aine, who grew up in Belfast, daughter of the late



Anne and Pat McGreevy, died from cancer on Sept 27 at the Royal Marsden, husband Alistair and family members at her bedside.

Her sister Mea described her as "a guiding light to all she met", while one of her National Drama colleagues spoke of her big smile and limitless energy, adding: "She had more ideas than an oak tree has acorns."

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*Figures published by Rightmove, 15.9.19-15.9.20



We won't be bowled out!

These were the line-ups as Surbiton Bowling Club defiantly went ahead with its annual President's team v Captain's team competition for the Specsavers Shield at the club's green beside Alexandra rec... and it was captain Dennis Rolfe's side which didn't need its eyes testing, emerging triumphant.

This has been, says the club's Alan Forrest, the most bizarre of seasons as the club approaches its centenary in 2021.

"Everything was ready to start in April, the grass pristine, the huts and clubhouse tidy and spruced up, the fixture list agreed... then lockdown!" he said. Governing body Bowls England issued reams of guidance, the management committee met on Zoom to plan, and with social distancing and sanitising, play resumed.

Members booked timeslots to practise, and held informal competitive games with each other.

No visiting teams were allowed, but the summer weather made home contests a pleasure. "We beat the pandemic in many ways, and gained four new members too!" Interested in joining?

• Call Alan on 07720 652908, or www.surbitonbowlingclub.uk

Zoom, gym and match

Surbiton Rocket & Fitness Club operates in line with government guidelines, recognising that keeping active in a safe setting is vital. "Our gym has specific areas and numbers of users, and we run classes outside and in, and via Zoom, so there are opportunities for all," said director Roy Staniland. www.surbiton.org



• This was the extraordinary haul when volunteers cleared the dense undergrowth around the tennis courts on Victoria recreation ground: 50 lost balls (some slightly chewed).



Can Dominic revive K's?

Kingstonian FC have signed creative midfielder Dominic Vose, left, from Dulwich Hamlet. He began his career in Fulham's youth system, then joined West Ham, playing in their reserves at the age of 16. He has since played for Barnet, Colchester United, Scunthorpe United and Grimsby Town before joining Dulwich Hamlet in August 2018. Boy, do Kingstonian need him! The team, who play in the Isthmian Premier League at King George's Field off Hook Rise South, Tolworth, haven't had a happy start to the season. As the Good Life went to press they were hovering just above the relegation zone. "We've not performed at the level we demand and expect of ourselves," said manager Hayden Bird after his side were thumped in the first two games of the season.



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Away fan ban is 'mad'

Corinthian-Casuals weren't best pleased about new rules limiting FA Cup attendance.

A marked statement on the Tottenham club's website ahead of a match v Dulwich Hamlet read: "Following an announcement from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in conjunction with the FA, Corinthian-Casuals will be unable to admit supporters of Dulwich Hamlet to King George's arena for the FA Cup qualifying fixture on Saturday 3rd October.

"As the coronavirus is clearly clever enough to differentiate between supporters, fans of Dulwich Hamlet are banned from spectating."

• Chelsea Women travel to newly promoted Aston Villa this weekend in the WSL. The Blues managed a 1-0 victory over another Midlands team, Birmingham, at the start of October with 5ft 2in Fran Kirby heading the crucial goal.

The club, which ground-shares with Kingstonian FC, placed on record the fact that "we are not in favour of this utterly baffling ruling, we believe it is wholly unnecessary and we are having to put in place these restrictions under duress".

The post had an avalanche of likes from fans who share the club's assertion that the Covid-19 virus does not pick out one colour scarf over another.

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