

Statuette goes walkies

An art thief is on the prowl. Ginny Colwell's 2ft classical figure (pictured with mask and Santa hat) was nicked from her front garden in Southborough Road. "It's sad; we inherited her from the previous owners 12 years ago," said Ginny, who is alerting other residents in case the same thief is eyeing up their garden statues too.



● A new head librarian is in charge of what must be one of the UK's dinkiest (and busiest) little libraries. It's getting so popular that you may find you have to queue. **p10**



● It was tempting to put this Notable Surbitonian on page 3, but the remarkable story of striptease queen Phyllis Dixey is on **p4**



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It's 20mph... everywhere

The pace of life in Surbiton is about to change; a blanket 20mph speed limit is weeks away. The A3 will be the only road where you can legally do more. Portsmouth Road, Hook Road, Ewell Road, Brighton Road and Upper Brighton Road are included in the new zone after a unanimous vote by councillors, putting Surbiton at odds with Kingston, where some streets remain 30mph. At present, 26%

of Surbiton roads are 20mph. Once the traffic notice is published, and TfL funding arrives, that rises to 100%. It is anticipated it will take effect some time in October or November. The Lib Dems, who enjoy an overwhelming majority, aimed to make most Surbiton roads 20mph, but Green councillor Sharron Sumner pressed to include main roads too. She revealed her niece had been in a coma for months after being hit by a speeding motorist on a 30mph road.

How will it be enforced? Mayor Sadiq Khan has mobile units on duty as 20mph zones proliferate across the capital. Lib Dem Cllr Liz Green said she'd have liked the whole borough to be 20, but each area is autonomous. "We should do everything to get speed down, for safety and pollution." Cllr Sumner added: "This is common

sense! In five years it'll be everywhere [across London]. I'm proud Surbiton is leading the way." The new speed limit is seen as a key part of the council's stated aim of making streets more people-friendly, and encouraging walking and cycling.

Tim Harrison

New plans for Chiltern Works

The would-be developers of two seven-storey blocks of flats on the Chiltern Works warehouse and small commercial unit site by Berrylands railway station have lodged new designs after their previous proposal was refused by Kingston planners. This time it's two blocks; five storeys (20 apartments) with commercial units on the ground floor and a roof garden, and six-storeys (with 23 flats) plus parking on the ground level.

Bugler Homes Ltd first appealed against the council's refusal, but then lodged new plans. See the council's website at publicaccess.kingston.gov.uk Search for **21/01905/FUL**



● Trees, benches, flowerbeds... could this become the new look of King Charles Road now that the controversial traffic barrier beside Alexandra rec has been decreed permanent? Residents are proposing turning a stretch of street into a new 'village square' space. Full story **p9**

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● Creating moonlight above St Philip's Road. A film crew shoot scenes for the Channel 4 mini series *Deceit*, about the bungled hunt for the killer of Rachel Nickell. Story on **p5**

It's bleeping annoying

Staff at Waitrose, Surbiton, are being driven ding-dong by incessant beeping from hand-held Deliveroo terminals. Now customers have joined the chorus of complaints about the Sunmi point-of-sale devices that emit a tortuously repetitive ear-piercing four-note ringtone every few seconds. As staff go round the aisles, filling baskets with orders for home deliveries by Deliveroo scooters, the beeping accompanies them. "It's really annoying," one said. "It's still in my head after work." When shopper Bob Helliwell had a word at the service desk, he was told: "We've had lots of comments; and it drives us mad too!" Waitrose head office told The Good Life that the beep sounds "alert partners to new orders", but claimed nobody had raised the issue. She said she thought it just sounded like a mobile phone. Surbiton was the third of 338 Waitrose stores to trial Deliveroo.



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Allegros returns, pluralised

Welcome back! After closing through the pandemic, Surbiton's Allegro cafe has gained an 's' on the end and reopened, Allegros, at 4 Victoria Road, sandwiched between the carpet shop and rival Caffè Nero, is a seven-day British/Mediterranean eatery, now boasting a refitted kitchen, new loo, reimagined menu, smart signage and expanded storage.

Chirpy Albanian owner Nesti Kolovos (right) was just two when the premises opened as Fortunes in 1973, becoming Allegro in 1999. He is celebrating a decade at the restaurant, which is open mid-morning to late evening. Steak, calves liver, duck and seabass lead the main courses, with pizzas and pasta dishes close behind.

Allegros does brunch each day until 3.30pm for under a tenner, including an excellent vegetarian option. "It feels very good to be back after 16 and a half months," admitted Nesti. "It was hell, but now it's going really well and

we're back on track!" The restaurant is deceptively big, and prides itself on good service and honest, wholesome food. While Nero next door can cope with 45 customers, Allegros' cathedral-like interior can feed 100. **Tim Harrison**



No-waste fruit & veg

Organic, seasonal, package-free fruit and veg from a local supplier is now available outside Sage Parmar's health store in Brighton Road. It's a no-waste concept; don't buy more than you need.

Sage, who expanded her health store in Brighton Road in June to open a refill and recycle centre, has special offers on end-of-line items on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

"We aren't doing anything exotic, it's your usual daily supplies of apples, oranges, bananas, carrots, cauliflower... that sort of thing, and salad, all certified organic. We'll have the best crop available."

The stall complements her dried staple goods such as pasta and rice. "You can make a complete meal, so without overspending, people come in and pick up one onion, one chilli, a cup of rice, and one vegetable; that's their meal done and it costs around £1.50."

Sage said that her store with its bulk foods, grains, pulses, seeds, nuts, dried fruits, olive oils, vinegars, cereals, pasta, rice, flour and loose teas was fulfilling a



massive demand for groceries free from packaging. "People use their own bags or containers, or we give them paper bags."

Some bring their own bottles to get refills of organic milk supplied by Tolworth's Morgans Dairy, and oatmilk (a new addition to the offering), said Sage.

Bring your own box, and half a dozen organic, free range Lohmann Brown hens' eggs will cost you £2.29 (20p less than the boxed item). **Jane Grove**



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● Saffron Summer at the Ace of Spades, known for wild boar vindaloo, is shortlisted in the Asian Restaurant Awards, with 100,000 online votes from curry fans deciding the victors.



● A new stall at Surbiton Farmers' Market stocks mushroom hummus, and lion's mane mushrooms, with a texture akin to lobster. Stefania May started Fabulous Fungi in 2019, tending 14 kilo straw bags, then supplying restaurants and markets. A small punnet of lion's mane fungi is a fiver; they need more growing care and 'food' than regular ceps. Elodie Tweedie is pictured with a trayful of the little beauties. **Ellie Simmer**



● A new Berrylands cafe, El Cafetal, specialises in Colombian coffee. It opened opposite the station on Aug 28. On the menu: pastries, cakes, toasties, soups and empanadas (Latin American fried turnovers). The premises at 166 Chiltern Drive were once the office of Lime estate agents, and more recently a management firm, The Organisers.



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Food is a blessing

Fond of food? Head to St Matthew's church on Sat, Sept 11 from 10.30am.

The church in St Matthew's Avenue has a variety of food-related stalls and activities for adults and children. Try offerings from local restaurants, test your taste buds at the Guess the Vegetable bakes stall, and have a go at still-life drawing of fruit and vegetables (all tastefully arranged).

It's all part of the Heritage Open Days' Edible England theme.

The church's 90ft tower will be open for a limited number of visits (email heritage@stmatthewskt6.org to enjoy the view) and the 146-year-old, three-manual Hedgeland organ will have an airing – you might be able to play it too. And a short concert is planned for 4pm.

A new activity trail will be launched for children, to learn about the history of a building which dates back to 1875. There are also self-guided trails.

Balance Community Cafe, at the church on Wednesday mornings, is providing refreshments, 11am to 4pm.

● Good news for dosa lovers. You can get your fix of the South Indian savoury pancake via a delivery or takeaway kit online. Tolworth's award-winning Amy and Kristian Phillip-Price, who have been serving vegetarian food at music festivals for nine years, do kits which can be collected or delivered from their Douglas Road kitchen. Plant-based ingredients are aimed at the adventurous at-home cook. There are two types, one with a tava and dosa ladle and one without, starting from £28. Sauces and specialist flours are also on offer. www.dosadeli.co.uk

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

12,000 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 local 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 greengrocers.

Chuffed speaker

Dick Crane's annual series of train talks begins at Surbiton Library hall, Ewell Road, on Sep 15, 7pm. Steam to www.talkingoftrains.co.uk First one is free.

Let the binmen in

Temporary parking bans come into effect on Tuesday mornings on short stretches of Lenelby Road, Tolworth, and Lovelace Road, Surbiton, because the binmen can't find places to stop. An 18-month experiment starts this week.

Mini shop is to let

One of Surbiton's smallest shops, the 600sqft former Chinese herb business at 10 Claremont Road, is on offer after acupuncturist Jun Xu got the needle and quit. The annual rent of £22,000 includes a parking space at the back.

Masks on buses

Failing to wear a mask on Surbiton buses no longer lands you in court, but inspectors can eject you for breaking London Mayor rules. In July, refusals were being fined £950 apiece (including costs) by local magistrates.

Fountains open

Having stood, wreathed in plastic, through the pandemic, new water fountains are operating in Victoria Road (left) and Tolworth Broadway; part of a targeted reduction in use of throwaway plastic.

Peaceful taxation

Tax in turmoil? Salmaan Shaikh opened TaxAssist at 57 Brighton Road because "Surbiton is calm and peaceful." Services include tax returns, planning, self-employed accts and VAT.



Chemist expands

Shan Pharmacy at 106 Ewell Road, by Surbiton health centre, has expanded into the old Any Fing bric-a-brac shop next door, but the old fascia lingers!

Isla's big march

Isla Pontone, 18, is walking 100 miles for the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust. The Surbitonian has acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. "It's played a major part in my emotional and mental recovery," she said. www.justgiving.com/fundraising/isla-pontone

Local memories

Surbiton has too few mentions in a year-long digital project, 100 Histories, run by the local heritage service. The aim is to sum up the borough's past in stories, objects, events and people. Redress the balance for Surbiton at: kingstonheritage.org.uk/ourborough

Ices?
An ice cream parlour is what one prospective viewer of this Surbiton station forecourt unit is considering... presumably only if the lolly's right.

Book help plea

Anyone interested in volunteering for Surbiton's community library at the Ewell Road annexe, delivering books and CDs to the housebound, can call Katie Erskine on 020 8547 6451.

Postman pounces

After Santander closed in the high street, the PO is mopping up trade. Signs at the Victoria Road, Alexandra Drive and Red Lion Road branches promise former clients of the Spanish bank free deposits, withdrawals, balance checks and other services.

Quadrilles return

Mrs Bennet's Regency dance classes are back after turning to Zoom in lockdown. If you've missed quadrilles and cotillions, head to St Mark's church hall in Church Hill Road, Surbiton, on Sept 8 at 8pm, and every fortnight. Sessions £5. www.mrsbennet.co.uk

SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



Man loses control of his barbecue to the guest who turned up with his own tools

Festival fun returns

There's a double helping of fun as the Surbiton Food Festival, postponed twice for Covid, straddles the Surbiton Festival, with its stalls, music and parade. The food fest – a fortnight of activities related to food and drink – runs from Fri, Sept 17 to Sat, Oct 2. Events include the Surbiton Village Fete and Beer Festival (Sept 18 & 19, noon-5pm), Super Sunday: Fishfishing Fest (Sept 26, noon-6pm) and the Seething Sports Day (Oct 2, noon-4pm). Visit www.surbitonfoodfestival.org

Meanwhile the main Surbiton Festival, also postponed last year because of the pandemic, returns on Sat Sept 25 with a midday parade through the town and live music stages at St Andrew's Square (rock and pop, 11am-5pm), Claremont Gardens (jazz and contemporary, 11am-4pm), and the station forecourt (brass band, Scottish and Morris dancing and opera).

There are more than 75 stalls, many of them selling arts, crafts and jewellery, and others featuring community groups, services, activities and small businesses. Other attractions include a teddy bears' picnic, dance displays, football shoot-out, face painting, food and drink stalls, plus a beer tent and bar.

The fun starts at 10am. A full timetable of events and map of all locations can be found on the Surbiton Festival website at www.surbitonfestival.co.uk

Jane Grove



● It's the end of an era as one of the best-known motorbike dealerships in the UK, Tippetts Motors of Ewell Road, closes. Generations of bikers used a showroom famed for its pavement display of throaty steeds. "We're closing with a heavy heart," director Mark Alexander told The Good Life, stressing that the decision had nothing to do with the pandemic. "We've been planning this for five years."

A Honda main dealer for 60 years, Tippetts was under pressure from the Japanese giant to undertake a costly showroom upgrade. "When we refitted the showrooms 15 years ago we were told by Kingston Council that this was as far as we could go, and if we wanted more space we'd need to move off the street and on to a trading estate," said Mark.

Personal circumstances played a part in deciding to shut a firm which began life on the site as a centre for British-made motorcycles in the 1940s. "My brother has dementia, and we both agreed that if either of us became ill we would look at selling the company," added Mark. Tippetts will continue to run an online motorbike parts service via eBay.

This day will be electric

The Sensational Electric Parade is a party day out for all the family in Surbiton on Sat, Oct 2, with The Lamb, Black Lion, Fox & Hounds, Surbiton Flyer, Coronation Hall, Gordon Bennett, Antelope, No97 and Blue Orchid all putting on live music.

The driving force behind it is Kevin Dawson, pictured, who aims to put smiles back on people's faces. Dressing up is encouraged, with restaurants and other shops urged to join in.

"If everyone in Surbiton is on the same page, what a good atmosphere we could create," said Kevin. "It's low-cost, low-effort, maximum fun entertainment."

Check out the posters and flyers on the participating pub windows, or visit [electricparade2021](https://www.instagram.com/electricparade2021) on Instagram for details nearer the big day.



Stranded moggy is rescued

Come on! This wouldn't be a real local paper without a cat rescue story! Thanks to Susan Higgins for reporting the drama that shattered the Sunday tranquility of Victoria Avenue.

A black cat climbed into the fireplace of a top-floor flat, emerging – meowing pitifully – among the chimney pots. "The fire brigade was called, and a very long ladder set up," said Susan. A crowd of neighbours gathered.



Several goes were needed to get the ladder high enough. Then the hard bit. How to entice the marooned cat to be saved? Rattling a box of favourite nibbles did the trick.

"A very brave fireman eventually managed to grasp the cat, his thick protective uniform preventing serious scratching, and down it came."



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Matthew James

She was the pioneering performer and impresario who put a smile on the face of wartime London by bringing striptease to the West End stage.

But when English Heritage wanted to honour Phyllis Dixey with a blue plaque at her former home in St Mark's Hill, the response was decidedly buttoned up. "No nudity, please... we're Surbiton."

The Wentworth Court residents' association opposed the plaque's wording, and a decade on we are no closer to saluting the Queen of Striptease.

In the Second World War, Phyllis performed in heavily blitzed places such as Coventry, Plymouth and Bristol before hiring London's Whitehall Theatre where she produced and performed during Peek-A-Boo! revues to packed houses, often full of servicemen.

No one was ashamed of her then. A 1944 British Pathé newsreel shows "one of Britain's wartime stars" drilling her dancers in deportment, and answering mountains of fan mail, before slipping out of a satin gown behind a fan for her saucy star turn.

One newspaper described her as "quietly spoken, rather grave, clear thinking" and "a keen business woman", in a 1947 interview to plug the British film *Dual Alibi*, in which she starred alongside Herbert Lom.

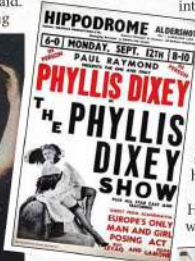
It was striptease, however, that made her a household name.

Dixey was born in Merton in 1914, moving to 137 Tolworth Rise North, on the By-Pass, in the 1920s, and – in the late 1930s – to the flat in Wentworth Court.

The 'theatrical artiste', as she described herself on official forms, took to the stage as a dancer and first appeared in the buff for a skit in 1939. But it proved easier to get permission for an actual striptease show. "So it was really the Lord Chamberlain's office which made me a fan dancer!" she said.



Left: Phyllis poses for a wartime 'glamour' book. Top: Setting pulses racing in Aldershot. Right: The Wentworth Court flats won't let 'striptease' appear on a plaque



Can a plaque be too blue?

new in wartime Soho, with the Windmill Theatre famously staying open with its almost-starkers 'living statues'.

Striptease was new, however, and Phyllis and her troupe played on as the bombs rained down. No one got their kit off in a classier manner than the daring Surbitonian, wielding ostrich feathers like a nude ballet.

Phyllis had married Jack Tracy at the register office in Raynes Park in December 1937, and the pair were regularly seen at the Ace of Spades nightclub in Hook. They later moved to Epsom.

Sadly, postwar tastes left Phyllis behind, as acts became more strip than tease and television took its toll on variety.

Dixey ended her career working as a fully-clothed cook. In March 1961, during an appointment at Surbiton Hospital, Ewell Road, to check a lump, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She died three years later, at the age of

50, in Epsom, and is buried in Epsom cemetery. Husband Jack remarried and moved to Avenue Elmers, Surbiton, where he lived out his days. He worked as a steward at the golf club in Home Park, Hampton Wick.

Phyllis was mourned as a performer... not as an embarrassment. One obituary said that "because of her natural dignity and refinement, both on the stage and in private life, she played a leading part in making striptease into an acceptable entertainment".

Yet the blue plaque was not acceptable to residents of Wentworth Court, who objected to seeing the words 'Striptease Artist' on the front of their building. They proposed the alternative of 'Burlesque Dancer', but English Heritage demurred. "We felt the term 'striptease artiste' was the most appropriate and accurate for the performance that she did," explained a spokeswoman at the time. "She put the 'tease' into stripping, and placed emphasis on the elegance of her act."

Fudging Dixey's claim to fame would, added English Heritage, consign her to "the shadows of a profession of which she was a lead proponent and pioneer".

That stand-off was



Phyllis, as a generation of men knew her
Image: Thames TV

10 years ago. So what happened?

"Nothing's changed because we hit a brick wall," Sara Whines of English Heritage told The Good Life. "Being a historical organisation, we can't put the wrong words. We need to use the correct terminology. We wouldn't use a term that's effectively an American term, and which wouldn't have been used at the time."

So the woman once billed The One And Only Phyllis Dixey remains firmly hidden from view in the place she called home.

Sharon Wright

● Phyllis Dixey, b Merton, Feb 10 1914; d Epsom, Jun 2 1964



The end

... and talking of bird-watching

Surbiton's bird-watching society has a new meeting place – St Matthew's C of E primary school in Langley Road, with the next gathering on Tuesday, September 21 at 7.30pm.

New members are welcome, with the added attraction of "the best fruit cake and Victoria sponge" of any local society, as well as interesting bird topics.

Future meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month.

As well as talks, the club runs a programme of car outings to birding sites throughout the South East, from woodlands and heaths to coasts and marshes.

There are also short midweek walks at local sites such as Bushy Park and Epsom Common.

Car sharing is encouraged, and coach outings will return in future. Membership includes free access to the small but beautifully formed Hogsmill Nature Reserve near Berrylands station.

Members range from those learning to distinguish one little brown bird from another, to those who can name every last feather, let alone all 261 bird species the club has recorded. There is a wealth of friendly knowledge at hand, and the chance to look through some powerful scopes, so beginners will soon improve their birding skills.

The meeting on September 21 has a talk from Ashley Groves on Great British Birds, focusing on the winners and losers of climate change.

Newcomers can attend free (though donations are appreciated), and there's a £1 charge for tea and that famous cake. www.surbitonbirds.org



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Popular brownies

Fancy joining Surbiton's girl guides, brownies or rainbows? They've been busy in Covid, puppeteering, baking and exploring, and will have a stand at the Surbiton Festival on Sat Sept 25.



Charity art offer

Of the £30 cost of this A3-size signed, high-quality mounted print of Brighton Road by the Surbiton Sketcher, 20% will be donated to Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. Visit www.etsy.com/uk/shop/SurbitonSketcher

A birthday talk

As the Good Life's 10th anniversary looms, editor Tim Harrison tells the newspaper's story in a talk, Read All About It, at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, Thurs Sept 23, 7.45pm. Tickets £4 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents

Reducing plastic

A campaign to make Long Ditton plastic-free begins on Fri, Sept 17 from 3pm near Manny's shop at 67 Fleece Road. Christine Manly, Felicity Leicester, Toni Izard and Mie Green put their energies into encouraging alternatives to single-use plastic.

Rec cafe to stay

Unless anyone strongly objects (which seems unlikely), the Tarte in the Park cafe – the offshoot of Maple Road's popular French Tarte, housed in part of the pavilion in the centre of Victoria recreation ground – is to be given a six-year lease extension by the council.

50-year recovery

Launched by brothers Andy and Geoff Lambert, the breakdown service which has recovered more cars from the Surbiton stretch of the A3 than any other – National Rescue – is now 50. It is currently run by Geoff's son, Martin.

Teenagers' yoga

Yoga classes for 13 to 17-year-olds run on Wednesdays (4-5pm) at the BoCo studio, where Electric Parade meets Victoria Avenue. Carina de Wit charges £40 for five classes. "A lot of young people have problems with mental health in post-pandemic times. Yoga will help them believe in themselves," she said. carinadewit@gmail.com

New school zone

On pollution and road safety grounds, a 'school street' scheme for Christ Church primary trials in Pine Gardens, with camera-enforced car restrictions, from Sept 20, 8-9am and 3-4pm. Resident Ian Rowlands said it was unpopular, and would create rat runs.

Specs in the WC?

"I'm sorry, chair, but I've left my glasses in the ladies," declared Cllr Anita Schaper after a comfort break at a council meeting. "They're on your head," she was informed, to hilarity.

Surbiton stars in crime drama

Surbitonians have been enthralled to follow the town's starring role in the four-part Channel 4 crime docudrama *Deceit*, telling the story of the police honeytrap used to try to persuade Colin Stagg to confess to the 1992 murder of Rachel Nickell on Wimbledon Common.

Many of the atmospheric street scenes were filmed in St Philip's Road (and its public car park) at the end of November last year, while other local locations included Richmond Park and Bonner Hill Road, Kingston.

St Philip's Road – between St James' Road and St Andrew's Road, near Surbiton station – was sealed off for five days to allow the night-time shooting to take place, with extras in face masks and wrapped in blankets against the cold being given cups of tea in the nearby Surbiton Club. A huge cherry-picker was used to suspend 'moonlight' above the street.

The drama had the working title of *My Name Is Lizzie*, but was renamed *Deceit* ahead of transmission.

It stars Niamh Algar as the undercover cop who befriends Stagg (Sion Daniel Young) to try to encourage him to admit to a crime that the police were sure he'd committed. Stagg was arrested after being named by Crimewatch viewers, but was later exonerated. He was awarded more than £700,000 damages and was rehoused in Worcester Park, well away from the Roehampton flats where he lived.

Robert Napper was convicted of the manslaughter of Nickell, 16 years after the frenzied stabbing in front of her young son.

'Lizzie' was Lizzie James, the pseudonym of the young blonde policewoman with a resemblance to Nickell, who befriended Stagg



Niamh Algar plays cop Lizzie, with Sion Daniel Young as Colin Stagg. Top right: St Philip's Road during the filming



● Surbiton cab firm Zedcarz has quit its office at 118 Ewell Road, by the Surbitonian Grind, and plans to reopen at 140 Tolworth Broadway, over the road from the tower. "It was quite sudden," admitted one staff member. With signs removed, the curved glass frontage now reveals the ghost of its previous incarnation, Spa Fabulous beauty salon.

● Councillor and mental health champion Anita Schaper, below, has resigned as co-chair of Surbiton's neighbourhood committee on a 'matter of conscience' following the vote which made the King Charles Road barrier permanent. "There's no rancour or ill-feeling, it's just the right decision for me," she said. "It means I can be a bit more vocal, and better represent [Berrylands] residents from a more neutral, backbench position." Cllr Alison Holt is now sole chair.



A guide dog called Dot, modelling a banana-coloured bandana, was the star of Surbiton Farmers' Market, helping boys from Hollyfield School promote an entrepreneur project. Dot, seen here with owner Oliver Westlake, showed off the £4 canine fashion accessory in an annual competition run by charity Young Enterprise. With £38 taken in the market's first hour, the dog bandanas were a hit. And it was a successful day for Dot, attracting lots of attention. **Ellie Simmer**

● 30 kegs, 24 casks, 20 ciders and 100 gins... The Antelope's beer festival in Maple Road made a welcome return on bank hol weekend.



Back to the future?

Developers aim to demolish a two-storey, detached house and build three-storey flats inspired by Surbiton railway station.

The art deco-style development – two one-bed studio flats in a basement, and two one-bed and three three-bed apartments across a further three floors – would be built in Oak Hill Grove in a local area of special character opposite The Wood and Richard Jefferies Bird Sanctuary in Oakhill's conservation area.

Neighbours oppose the plan, which they say would overlook their homes, be overbearing and excessive in size, out of character with local properties, and would negatively impact sunlight and privacy. They are also concerned about the effect of building work on badgers and bats in the nature reserve.



"The size of the building overall is too large," said neighbour Dr Ali Al-Assam. "In every elevation, it is simply out of proportion to neighbouring dwellings and the development is completely out of character, compared to other buildings in Oak Hill Grove and adjacent roads."

Dr Al-Assam said that citing the railway station as the inspiration for the art deco style was a red herring.

"Surbiton station is a commercial building, far removed from the current site. There are no buildings (and particularly no residential buildings) of a similar style in the vicinity."

You can view the plans on Kingston Council's website at publicaccess.kingston.gov.uk/online-applications by looking for reference 21/01585/FUL

Helping with loss

Bereavement is hard to deal with, but St Matthew's aims to lighten the load.

The church in St Matthew's Avenue, which holds more funerals than any other CofE ministry in the borough, starts a six-week course called The Bereavement Journey on Tue, Sept 28.

It is open to those of all faiths or no faith (though it isn't tailored towards those who have been very recently bereaved).

Visit www.stmatthewskt6.org or call pastoral worker Susan Kang on 07745 795395.

It is one of a number of initiatives led by rector Helen Hancock and the Bereavement Friendly Church Team including an opportunity to remember the victims of 9/11 at the heritage open day (see p2) on Sat, Sept 11, and a day dedicated to remembering lost loved ones on Sun, Nov 7.

"Bereavement is something we all go through, but do so in different ways," said Helen. "No one person's experience is the same as any other."

"We know there are limits to what we can do, and sometimes our role will be to signpost to other agencies, but providing someone who will really listen to a grieving person can offer a lifeline."

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Green friends

A Friends of Claremont Gardens group has been launched to improve the green space.

Green councillor Sharron Sumner, who lives by the park near Waitrose in Surbiton, says she and her neighbours launched the group after becoming concerned that the area was looking down at heel.

"We've been struck by the decline of the duck pond, plant cover and state of the rockery," she said. "The pond is of particular concern. I remember feeding ducks and pond-dipping with my son, but for the past few years it has declined, rarely holds water and newts and frogs are no longer seen in good numbers."

Sharron said neighbours had banded together to carry out regular litter picks, and want to improve the space with raised beds for children to grow crops and learn about food production, working with the Save the World Club and Kingston's Environment Centre.

"Lockdown has highlighted the importance of open spaces. Many neighbours near Claremont Gardens live in flats and don't have outdoor spaces; during lockdown the gardens were our sanctuary."



Email friendsofclaremontgardens@gmail.com or search for Friends of Claremont Gardens on Facebook.

• The Lib Dems also want to see improvements to the gardens between Claremont Road and The Crescent, and are asking residents to contribute suggestions via a survey or by emailing St Mark's ward councillors Liz Green, Diane White or Yogan Yoganathan.

"We're suggesting some things we think need doing, but are asking for views of residents," said Cllr Liz Green.

She said the councillors hoped to bring initial costed plans to a Surbiton neighbourhood committee meeting in the autumn. The survey is at www.tinyurl.com/claremontgardens or email Liz: Liz.Green@kingston.gov.uk

Jane Grove



The logic of refills

Like 281 buses, you wait ages for a refill shop, then two appear. The latest arrival is Refillagic, next to the Agra at 140 Ewell Road, a zero-waste shop run by Nadia Dunn (left) and Eva Katona; a first venture for both. Nadia, of Claremont Road, said: "It's about changing the world; we

want to give everyone the chance to change to plastic-free shopping." You bring containers and refill your classic pantry items including olive oil, pulses, nuts, herbs, milk, spices, peanut butter, bars of soap etc. It's back-to-your-roots shopping, minus the layers of packaging. There are even biodegradable twine balls! Worth a visit.





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The balsam bashers

Mayor Sushila Abraham gets stuck into a spot of Himalayan Balsam bashing as she helps tackle the invasive plant which has a stranglehold on Tolworth's Six Acre Meadow, bordering the Hogsmill River.

Cllr Abraham was joined by Kingston's biodiversity officer Elliot Newton, also pictured, as well as Cllr Mark Beynon and volunteers who saw the borough's first lady declare a 70-metre stretch of boardwalk open.

It will eventually form a circular loop through woodland and round a neighbouring wet meadow, and is made out of 50,000 plastic bottles which have been saved from landfill.

"This is a special location, where Sir John Everett Millais painted the background to Ophelia in 1851," said Cllr Abraham. "As one of the borough's oldest hay meadows, it's home to a wealth of exciting biodiversity."

"The Covid pandemic and lockdown has

demonstrated the important role local green spaces play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our communities. We're fortunate to have this natural heritage on our doorstep, and the new walkway will ensure it is accessible to everyone."

The boardwalk has access ramps at both ends, although those who need mobility aids may struggle at present if conditions are muddy. Long term, it is hoped the footpaths and signage will be improved in a similar way to those at Elmbridge Meadows in Berrylands.



• At this rate there could soon be flamingos wading on Lake Cotterill, never mind kids in wellies. Every time the heavens open, Cotterill Road floods. "I've made three requests to Kingston Council via their website for help over four years, and haven't even had a reply," said exasperated resident Mike de Souza, who believes it is the worst road in Surbiton for drainage in a downpour.

Wrapping our trees

We're so fond of our trees in Surbiton that we've started wrapping them! This bizarre sight in Maple Road stems from fears that builders accessing a site might damage the trunk of one of the street's mighty plane trees.



• Shivering, saturated, yet stoical, neighbours in Effingham Road pressed ahead with their summer picnic, despite the threat of rain. And rain it did... incessantly. The monsoon conditions meant everyone who ventured to Long Ditton rec was soaked through in moments, but as no one could get any wetter they danced to the music as the band (beneath a drenched canopy) played on. An apt limerick was composed for the occasion, to thank the ironically named organiser Peter Drysdale for his work and enthusiasm. A picnic supreme called Peter/ Thought outdoor events would be neater/ If held in the rain/ And then found to his pain/ That it bucketed down by the litre.

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Parts of Surbiton and Long Ditton are in danger of flooding regularly in less than a decade, according to Climate Central. The organisation, which conducts scientific research into climate change, has collated peer-reviewed data on areas of the country which could lie below the annual flood level in less than

Is it time to build the Ark?

10 years' time, and has devised a – frankly alarming – interactive map which allows people to chart the effects of a sea-level rise over the next 70 years.

Pictured is the land at risk of flooding in 2030; just eight years away. But by moving a slider on the

map, you can advance the decades and see how the flood risk in Surbiton and Thames Ditton could change between 2030 and 2100. Visit www.tinyurl.com/floodrisk2030

Residents of Portsmouth Road, the river roads, Prospect Road, the St James estate and a chunk of Long Ditton north of the recreation ground may have to get their wellies on if Boris Johnson and 192 other world leaders don't agree rapid action to tackle climate change at the Cop26 United Nations summit in Glasgow in the first two weeks of November.

Jane Grove



Portsmouth Road, Prospect Road, Windmill Lane, the St James estate and much of Thames Ditton could be twinning with Atlantis

• The elderly victim of a vaccine fraudster who pretended to give her a Covid-19 jab feels betrayed.

"I've lived in Surbiton all my life and I've never been subjected to such a deceitful crime," said 93-year-old Kathleen Martin, who lives near Tolworth Broadway. She let in David Chambers, 33, below, on December 30 last year.

She'd earlier been contacted by her GP, and thought the father of three from Hook Rise North was genuine as he wore a lanyard.

She rolled up her sleeve and, Chambers, who has previous for conning the elderly, feigned giving her a jab.

He didn't inject anything into Kathleen's arm or break her skin, but charged her £140, which he said would be reimbursed. He later returned, demanding more.

On August 13 at Kingston Crown Court he was jailed for three and a half years after admitting fraud and battery. The judge called him "despicable".

Kathleen said: "To use Covid 19 vaccinations to scam money from the elderly is harrowing."



Leaping MP

Under fire for his handling of the chaotic Afghan withdrawal, and with his majority under threat from boundary changes and tactical voting, no wonder Long Ditton MP Dominic Raab is throwing himself out of a plane at 15,000ft. His October leap will raise money for the Shooting Star hospice, with the Foreign Secretary aiming for £20,000 to help a charity which supports 700 families a year caring for children with cancer and complex conditions. Chancellor Rishi Sunak was one of the first to sponsor him. Shooting Star's Hampton hospice had to close in the pandemic as funds dried up when its charity shop shut. It needs £8million a year to maintain a full service. Wittingly, the MP said: "Whatever your reasons for wanting me to jump out of a plane, I hope you'll feel able to support this excellent cause."

• tinyurl.com/39erf96r



• A woman suffered minor injuries after being struck by a heavy bin when a car emerging from Surbiton station forecourt rocketed across bustling Victoria Road. Firefighters cut the three shaken occupants of the VW Polo out as the vehicle finished wedged against a tree on the opposite pavement. "If the tree hadn't been there, the car would have been through our window," said Nesti Kolovos at Allegros. Two women were sitting at a table in the car's path at lunchtime on Fri Aug 20. The driver had dropped her daughter off at the station. The car's roof and doors were removed, and the tree still bears the scars.



• One of Surbiton's gentle giants, Paul Atkins, has died at the age of 71. The long-time Cottenill Road resident was a practical and resourceful man, and a fount of positivity despite a decade-long battle with cancer. He was a mainstay and trustee at the cornerHOUSE arts centre in Douglas Road, a churchwarden of St Matthew's (where a well-attended service of thanksgiving was held) and a devoted grandad

to children Melissa and Mark's youngsters.

They described him as "a laid-back, chilled dad". His wife Laxmi, who he married in 1976, died in 2014. They had renewed their marriage vows at St Matthew's in 2001. Known as Lanky to the crew who performed the annual cornerHOUSE pantomime, Paul worked behind the scenes but also had a few memorable roles on stage, notably as an unlikely scout mistress. The "hilariously tuneless singer" (as the Rev Helen Hancock, conducting the service, called him) was gently discouraged from joining in the songs!

He ran several video shops before retraining in computers and discovering an aptitude for IT which saw him travel the world for work, relishing the discovery of new places. An exhibition of his photographs was staged at the cornerHOUSE. Speaking at St Matthew's, Ian Davies described him as having a tremendous sense of service to the community. The Beatles' Octopus's Garden was his choice of exit music. **Paul Atkins, b Jan 27 1950, d Jul 10 2021.**

• Alan Miller, a Surbiton resident for more than two decades, has died at the age of 88.

Born in Co Mayo, he survived a traumatic upbringing in Galway. His mother died when he was two, and the Irish state placed him and his three elder siblings into cruel and brutal religious 'care'. He fled at 16 and made his way to London, where he initially worked in tailoring – a skill ironically learnt at one of the Christian Brothers' industrial schools where he suffered abuse.

He became a market trader, made soft toys and ran greengrocers' shops before

fulfilling his dream of running a pub. In the early 1980s he began a long, successful reign as landlord of The Park Tavern in New Road, Kingston, welcoming customers in his soft Irish accent, with wife Jan by his side.

The pub's walls became a gallery for one of his great loves, boxing, as they filled up with framed memorabilia. Featherweight world champion Barry McGuigan was one notable visitor.

Nearly 22 years ago Alan, Jan and children Tiffany and Grant settled in Elgar Avenue.

A natty dresser (silk tie, highly polished shoes), he had an anecdote for every occasion. In fact, his principal hobby was conversation, particularly if it involved boxing or Tottenham Hotspur.

A recording of Luciano Pavarotti accompanied the coffin into Kingston Crematorium, with Bing Crosby's Galway Bay also played. The wake was held at Al Forno in Portsmouth Road, Kingston; his favourite restaurant. **Alan Miller, b Dec 19 1932, d Jul 4 2021.**



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How to save a life

Millie Green did something amazing last month. The 24-year-old from Wentworth Close, Long Ditton, donated stem cells to help save a life. She and her sister Florence signed up to the Anthony Nolan register in 2013 when their eldest sister, Grace, above, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, a form of blood cancer. Grace relapsed in 2016, and died at just 24. Eight years to the day of Grace's diagnosis, Millie came up as a tissue match on the register, and donated... a procedure like sitting and giving blood. Once on the register, 1 in 1,200 people will get a call if they are a match. You need to be 16 to 55. Find out more at www.anthonynolan.org. Grace and her mother Nicola set up Living With Grace to help others dealing with these situations. Check out livingwithgracecompany.com on Instagram.

● The Save the World Club, at the upcycling Circulatory by Berrylands railway station, is petitioning the government on food waste. It wants a law change so supermarkets must donate past-sell-by-date food to charities who can distribute it to the needy. Instead UK shops bin 200,000 tons of food a year. The Save the World Club distributes surplus food across the borough, supplying 5,000 people a month. The petition has more than 2,300 signatures already. At 10,000, the government must respond. At 100,000 it could be debated in Parliament. To sign, visit www.savetheworldclub.org/campaign. The deadline is October 23.



Hate off to the hat lady? Gail Hutson has left Surbiton after 29 years to move to Malvern. The 63-year-old former radio presenter, seen around town in a wheelchair sporting one of 40 hats and fascinators, lived in Ewell Road and, before that, The Avenue. "Goodbye Surbiton," she said. "Thanks for being part of my life all these years."



Major plans for college site

Hillcroft College plans to turn Grade II listed mansion The Gables in South Bank into flats, then flog them off to pay for new blocks lower down the slope, near the Glenbuck Road station entrance. The proposed new college (top) would replace Powell House (bottom). There would also be a creche and residential block. Neighbours were invited to an open day. Concerned resident Claire Melish worries that Richmond Adult Community College has "gobbled up" historic Hillcroft, a pioneering centre for women's education, and is asset-stripping. The college first wanted five new buildings in the gardens of matchstick mogul Wilberforce Bryant's palatial home, but that is now three. Claire fears harm to an ecologically sensitive site. The college says the scheme will benefit the community and restore The Gables to housing.

● Neighbours 'hate' the proposed new look, right, but the owner of Willow Grange Care Home at 1 Adelaide Road, near the St Mark's Hill junction, faces severe financial strain. Views for and against the demolition of a two-storey, 44-bed Victorian care home and its replacement with a six-storey, 60-bed block were heard at a recent Surbiton neighbourhood committee.

There had already been 71 objections to demolishing the respite, nursing and dementia care home, built in 1840, citing excessive scale, bulk and height, loss of privacy, loss of light, overbearing look, and harm to heritage assets in a conservation area. Only two supported the plan.

Owner Julien Payne said the building had been in his family 80 years, and that it had become a care home 42 years ago. "This is basically to survive the pandemic.



My family business is losing £32,000 a month, and isn't sustainable," he said.

Clr Sharon Sumner said: "My inbox has been overflowing with letters from residents who hate the design; it is too big!" Feedback from the meeting will go to the planning committee, which has the final say, if officers recommend that it be approved. A recording of the meeting is at www.tinyurl.com/AdelaideRoad



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Bin there, done that

The dumping of rubbish at the junction of Brighton Road and Balaclava Road, above, should be a thing of the past thanks to the installation of new storage bins.

It means that residents of flats above the local shops will no longer need to leave their household waste in black sacks beside the street bins – a practice which encouraged others, including businesses, to do the same, creating an unsightly mess on the pavement.

Council officers will monitor and enforce the law to catch anyone dumping rubbish on the pavement, with offenders risking £400 fines.

"As ward councillors, we've been working on this problem for some time and I'm really pleased that residents in the flats now have a suitable solution," said ward councillor Yoganathan, pictured with fellow councillors Diane White, left, and Liz Green. "It has also allowed us to remove the wheellie bins that were blocking access along Balaclava Road."



● The local Embroiderers' Guild branch has reinvented itself as Kingston Stitchers, and resumes meetings at St Mark's hall, Church Hill Road, at 7.30pm on Sept 24, when chair Joan Matthews will speak about A World of Embroidery. In existence for 50 years, the Stitchers also promote classes for children via a young embroidery group run by Karen Hodge (email hello@kingstonstitchers.com). On Oct 22: Amarjeet Nandhra talks on Finding my Visual Language. On Nov 26, Anita Carnell: From Hampton Ct to Saatchi Gallery.

A new 'village square'?

A group has been set up to champion the creation of a village square in King Charles Road. The Community Square group says a pedestrianised area could transform the cul-de-sac created by the barrier near Coffee on the Corner.

Neighbours propose that the stretch of road between Alexandra Drive and Beaconsfield Road be transformed into a green space with seating, wheelchair-friendly paving, community flower beds, a wildflower garden, flowering trees, cycle hoops, a plinth for sculpture, an area for boules, a drinking water fountain, and even electric car charging points to make the 'community safer, greener and more beautiful'.

The area by the coffee shop is already used as a meeting spot by residents.

● A 65ft (20m) mast would tower over homes by Long Ditton recreation ground. The mast, to supply 5G for mobile phone firm Three, would be on the pavement near the Thorhill Road/Ewell Road junction, opposite the village hall and outside the rec gate. Residents say it would blight the park, while its cabinets (see likely look below) would obstruct the path. A 2012 bid for a 41ft mast at the spot was rejected. Cllr Nick Darby said it had been "grossly misleading" to label it as 'street works'. Deadline: Sept 17. Visit www.elmbridge.gov.uk/comment (reference 2021/2703).



Architectural designer Andy Smith, who has lived in Beaconsfield Road for 10 years, came up with the drawings, (p1 and above), as an idea of how the pedestrianised area could look.

"Keeping the modal filter gives us this opportunity to make a real public space and benefit the community in more ways than just managing traffic," he said.

The Community Square group plans to petition the council to back the scheme to come up with funding, a plan and timetable for the project, in consultation with residents.

"They would love to hear other thoughts on the idea. Get in touch via Facebook at The Community Square or follow them via Instagram @thecommunitysquare"

The barrier in King Charles Road is part of a low traffic neighbourhood scheme which was made permanent by the Surbiton neighbourhood committee in July. The committee has tasked the highways department with monitoring its impact, particularly on Raeburn Avenue, Hollyfield Road and Browns Road, as part of a traffic plan for the whole of Berrylands.

Councillors also asked officers to investigate replacing planters with number plate recognition cameras, like those in the unpopular Surbiton Crescent traffic management scheme, so fire engines could get through. Jane Grove



Grange Cottage, built in around 1890

Not on this site, you don't!

A developer's appeal to demolish a two-storey Victorian house in the Southborough conservation area and build two contemporary homes has been thrown out.

Planning inspector Alexander O'Doherty ruled that the bid to build two new houses of up to three storeys on the site of Grange Cottage (built circa 1890) in a lane off Southborough Road would "have an unacceptable and harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the conservation area."

He said that the envisaged bold design with flat roofs would be in marked contrast to surrounding properties. "The combination of significant height and the overall scale of the three-storey cuboid-shaped central portion of each dwelling proposed would create very dominant and bulky features which would visually overpower their neighbours," added Mr O'Doherty.

● No sooner had the Rock and Rose newborns' photography studio closed in Brighton Road, after nine years, than it reopened as the seven-day-a-week T&J Nail Spa. Rock and Rose snappers Cate Harvey and Orli Kopit are still taking commissions online (www.rockandrosephotography.com) and via Instagram. Lockdown forced the 500sqft studio to close, and a rent rise at the shop beside the Black Lion was the last straw. The new nail bar pays £19,000 pa.



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The tale of a remarkable pub



David Bowie launched Ziggy Stardust at The Toby Jug (below), which stood beside the bowling alley



Good Life editor Tim Harrison put lockdown to good use, finishing a project he has worked on for five years... a history of The Toby Jug pub, which used to stand alongside the bowling alley in Tolworth.

The result is *Hello Tolworth, I'm Ziggy*, the story of the night – nearly half a century ago – when David Bowie launched one of his most enduring characters, Ziggy Stardust, and the tale of all the other music acts that played in the pub's side room.

Demolished in 2002, the Toby was one of Britain's first roadhouses, built in 1934 as a pitstop for motorists on the newly opened Kingston By-Pass.

By interviewing more than 250 people who drank there, learned to dance there, had their wedding receptions there, or worked there, Tim has compiled a comprehensive local history, from the architect's early plans to the last swing of the wrecking ball.

But it is the forensically detailed account of Bowie's concert on February 10 1972 that is really the peg for the book, with around a third of those who were present that night adding their memories to the mix as the 50th anniversary approaches.

Led Zeppelin played in the side room, traitors sold Britain's nuclear secrets to Russian spies in the saloon bar, and John Lennon's dad got down on one knee in the sawdust of the larder to propose to a local teenager. Add in others who performed there, including Jethro Tull, The Stranglers, Ultravox, Rod Stewart and Fleetwood Mac, and you start to realise just how special this pub was.

Jane Grove

• The 152-page *Hello Tolworth, I'm Ziggy* is on sale (£15) at The Regency Bookshop, Victoria Road, Surbiton, and you can also buy it via The Good Life website, www.thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk (with free delivery to KT5 and KT6 postcodes until Christmas). Copies are on sale at Michael's Shoes, Claremont Road; the picture framing shop at 33 Tolworth Broadway; and Jennings the butcher, 146 Ewell Road. Tim will also be selling and signing books at Surbiton Farmers' Market in Maple Road on Saturday September 18 from 9am-1pm.

Ordinarily you might be a little wary of a man prowling round Soho in darkness, watching people. But Surbiton photographer David Jacobson loiters in the shadows to capture life behind the condensation of windows in Chinatown



David's night vision

and the reflections of neon signs against drab city backdrops. His images (some are closer to home, such as this picture of Surbiton station forecourt) have been collected into a book,

Night Gallery, selling for £10 at Shoes at Last in Maple Road. You can see more of his pictures, and order prints, at www.andmakeitsnappy.com

"There's something seductive about photographing the city at night," admits David. "Colours intensify, shadows take on mystery, and ghostly silhouettes stare out from steamy windows."

It's the cutest little library

Fancy curling up with an autumnal read without having to splash out on yet another paperback? Then the Crest Little Library is for you, writes **Ellie Simner**.

Founder Sarah Nendick has a passion for reading and, mindful of the rise of community libraries in the States, tasked husband Andy to build a suitable box.

The former accountancy journalist then filled it with the surplus from her own shelves at home, and the new library graces the wall of their front garden in The Crest, Berrylands. Sarah restocks every two or three days, such is its popularity.

"I hope to share the enjoyment of reading and sustain the communal spirit raised in lockdown," she said. "I'm happy that my library helps



Mark Laity's book and, right, the royal visit



150 years of sailing club history

Magnificently illustrated and exhaustively researched, Mark Laity's book celebrating 150 years of the Thames Sailing Club in Portsmouth Road (opposite the junction with Grove Road) is a triumph.

Princess Anne was guest of honour at the launch, her late father Prince Philip having penned a foreword shortly before his death. He had been the club's patron since 1959.

Formed in 1870, the club is Britain's oldest river sailing club. But although it has a rich past, it also has a healthy future. To mark the Princess Royal's visit, youngsters in Topper and Optimist dinghies staged several races. The princess also heard about a redevelopment project involving

new boatsheds and changing rooms.

The history of the club (which also welcomes paddleboarders) mirrors the history of sailing on the upper Thames, with analysis of boats used by past generations; meticulously documented in the 208-page volume, available in both hardback (£29.95) and softback (£19.95).

Club historian, former BBC defence correspondent and ex-Surbitonian Mark Laity has unearthed evocative photos in his research, lingering on the elegant Thames A Raters, which date from the 19th century and now call the Thames Sailing Club their main home. You can order copies of *A Very Happy Little World* via www.thamessailingclub.co.uk

• Why didn't we have an enchanted forest reading area when we were at school? Library renovation usually means new shelving, but the school council at Long Ditton St Mary's (made up of youngsters from each class) had bigger ideas.

On their urging, a new 'quiet zone' has been created, for pupils who rather catch up on reading than hare about in breaks. With bean bags, sofas and forest views, it's proving a huge hit. A bake-off and wear-your-pyjamas day raised £1,000.

Then building firm Tharai chipped in £500 and Humphrey & Brand estate agents gave £1,000 for new books. "It's a great investment in children's learning," said Laura Humphrey from the Surbiton firm. The Regency Bookshop gave a generous discount on new volumes, including non-fiction titles, and volunteers performed the Changing Rooms makeover.

"It's great what you can achieve when the community pulls together," said Rebecca O'Shea of the school's Friends committee.



contribute to the number of books in local circulation."

Not only has the library brought joy to those sampling its offerings through the summer, but there has been an unexpected bonus. Sarah, left, has met more people since it opened than in the 16 years she has lived in The Crest.

Readers can keep books, pass them on, donate or exchange. The contents range from the popular to the obscure.

Top tip: To borrow Richard Osman's debut novel *The Thursday Murder Club*, you have to be swift. It disappears as soon as Sarah restocks it.

Sarah posts updates about new books on The Crest Little Library shelves on Instagram and Facebook.



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Boy from Bog has a story

If you like a good sea shanty, Alistair Sherwood's your man. Originally from Co Offaly in Ireland, he performs shanties, comedy songs, Irish and British folk music and American Troubadour covers at the cornerHOUSE in Surbiton on Sat, Oct 30; part of a British Isles tour to launch his new album, *Boy from the Bog*.

An award-winning singer-songwriter, known for the engaging, mystical storytelling in his songs, Alistair grew up beside the Clara Bog nature reserve. The versatile musician – acoustic and classical guitars, banjo, ukulele and bodhrán (an Irish drum) all feature – plays at the Douglas Road arts centre at 8pm (doors open 7pm). Tickets £10. Book at www.ticketsource.co.uk/Alistairsherwood or phone the box office on 0333 666 3366.



Anna's a swan

Surbiton ballerina Anna Carey, 11, was in the English Youth Ballet's *Swan Lake* in Bromley over the bank holiday weekend. Anna, who was at Our Lady Immaculate primary in Tolworth, and who trains at the Siegeris Dance School, performed in the show as a Mariinsky dancer and cygnet. "I started dancing when I was two and I've loved it ever since," said Anna, who successfully auditioned at White Lodge, Richmond Park, for the Royal Ballet School, starting this month.



Conspiracy meets comedy as Troy Hawke (comic and TV presenter Milo McCabe's alter ego) takes to the stage in two cornerHOUSE shows. Troy is an erudite home-schooled 1930s throwback... a high-street Errol Flynn. Sophisticated, educated but clueless, he has won comedy awards as a sleuthing aristocrat for his Kingston-born creator. Troy Hawke: Tiles



Themes for the poetry night at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road (Fri, Oct 1, 8pm, £5), are angels, fairgrounds and grief. www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/surbiton/the-cornerhouse-theatre



Enjoy Strictly, and fancy a go... without the drops and lifts? Then sequence dancing is the answer: fun, sociable, keeping active, making new friends.

The Broadway Sequence Dancing Club hibernated through Covid, but is back at Raeburn hall, Tolworth United Reformed Church, at the corner of Raeburn and Elgar Avenues. You dance round the floor in a fixed series of steps, with new dances taught by Ken and Brenda Deane.

It's on Mondays from Sept 13 (8-10.15pm). Your first 'taster' is free, then £5 per evening, including a cuppa. Couples or solos welcome. Details at www.broadwaysequencedance.co.uk



An all-women choir launches this month, meeting Tuesday evenings at Surbiton Methodist church, 39 Ewell Road. Sing Now focuses on musical theatre and contemporary, with no nervy auditions. "It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or a regular performer," say Hepz and Sarah, who are assembling a diverse age range. Songs in the repertoire include Can't Get You Out of My Head (Kylie Minogue), Bitter Sweet Symphony (The Verve) and Pompeii (Bastille). Email singnowsurbiton@outlook.com

The Hogsmill winds through Tolworth and Berrylands, but what if a lost community existed, living on a small island on the stream? That was the premise of dance show *The Origin*, by six students from Kingston School of Art at the Stanley Picker Gallery. Uni dance lecturer Dr Beatrice Jarvis helped choreograph.



Saffron Coomber (pictured) takes the lead in the premiere of Alys Metcalf's thriller *Leopards* at the Rose, Kingston. Chris Haydon directs. Until Sept 25. www.rosetheatre.org/whats-on/leopards



Bob Dean (above) gave a fascinating no-notes talk on the realities of climate change, and Jeremy Thorn (below) spoke of his love for The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists; two in a series of talks at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road.



Are you a keen Surbiton film-maker? Your work might be shown at the Odeon. KIFF, the Kingston International Film Festival, in June 2022 gives a platform to new talent. Rose Theatre artistic director Chris Haydon has already made a short film, *Martha*, in Surbiton. More at www.blueelephantfilms.com

The Thames Concert season relaunched at St Andrew's church, Maple Road, with artistic director Ben Costello assembling a stimulating series. First, on Sat Oct 16, the all-girl Behn String Quartet play quartets by Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn and pieces by Beethoven and Schubert. 7.30pm. Tickets online at www.thamesconcerts.com At 10.30am that day (coinciding with the farmers' market) there's a free 50-minute concert by talented Tiffin School musicians.

Her land and seascapes have a desolate beauty, and her still lifes a forensic attention to detail. Long Ditton artist Georgina Allen has a solo exhibition of 88 paintings at the Piers Feetham Gallery, Fulham, Wed, Sept 15 to Sat, Oct 2. Georgina, whose trusty pug Maud sits with her on her painting expeditions to Pembrokeshire, has exhibited all over the country. "Most of the year, in my studio, I work from a huge collection of found objects – they are my vocabulary," she says, adding that her abstracts explore relationships between objects. Meet the artist on Sept 15, 6.30-8.30pm, and Sept 19, noon-2pm. All are welcome at the Fulham Road gallery. www.georginaallenart.co.uk



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Saturday 16 October

The all-female Behn String Quartet (formed in 2015 and acclaimed across Europe) present music by Beethoven, Hensel, Mendelssohn and Schubert.

Saturday 4 December

Joanne Lunn (soprano), Robin Illase (counter-tenor) and Ben Costello (piano) perform Lieder, English art songs and stirring scenes from several Handel oratorios.

Saturday 13 November

Ben Tarlton (cello) and Ljubic Stojanovic (piano) play music by Schubert, Beethoven and Brahms, as well as French composer Dutilleul's 1976 work, *Trois Straphes sur le nom de Sacher* for solo cello.

And more! Concerts on Sat 15 Jan 2022, Sat 29 Jan & Sat 19 Feb. Plus free 10.30am concerts on 16 Oct, 18 Dec & 15 Jan.

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Young climber scales the heights in Russia

She's only 14, but Lucy Garlick, who trains at White Spider Urban Climbing in Tolworth, was picked for the Team GB squad to compete in Russia at the highest level.

As The Good Life went to press, Lucy, who trains three times a week at the centre in Hook Rise South, was in the finals of the boulder competition in the Climbing Youth World Championships at Voronezh.

Her aim? The Olympics. "I couldn't have achieved what I have without White Spider," said Lucy, competing in three disciplines – lead, boulder and speed.

She has excelled in competitions across the UK since starting as a seven-year-old. She has podiumed in most events, and is ranked No1 in the UK for her age group. "I love competing, it gives me a buzz to have a short time to complete the problems," she said. "Getting to finals is amazing, with everyone cheering and only me on the wall; it's a feeling you can't describe, it's the best in the world."

White Spider head performance coach Guy Davenport said: "She is very strong, physically and mentally. The nature of competition climbing is that kids are working at their limit, sometimes at great heights, and Lucy has a great mindset. She climbs with a smile and although training and competitions can be gruelling and stressful, she is always happy."

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Kingstonian diversity champion Emily McCormack

Emily McCormack, right, is setting up an 18+ women's team. Inspired by clubs such as Lewes Women, competing against Liverpool Women this season, she said: "Lewes is a club at our level, so we know what can be achieved if we get this right." Emily says that when she watches women's football she's impressed by the quality of the players and the lack of foul play. When Kingstonian, currently sharing with Corinthian-Casuals in Tolworth, gets its own ground the women's team will use the same pitch and training facilities as the men, she said. "We will give the same profile to both." She added that her love for Kingstonian "comes from my grandad Johnny McCormack, who played for the club in the 1960s and was a top goalscorer. He was also president of the club from 2011 until he passed away in 2017". Email supporters@kingstonian.com or phone 07308 302923.



Join us!

Want to be the next Fran Kirby or Pernille Harder? A girls' football development centre starts this month, run by Surbiton High School, but open to all aspiring young footballers in the area. Sessions are held on Saturdays in term time at the school's playing fields at 65 Manor Road South, Hinchley Wood. Years 3 & 4, 9-10am. Years 5 & 6, 10.15-11.15. Each session is £2 (£10 for a block of six). To book a place, email Zak Elbekri at zak.elbekri@surbitonhigh.com

The padel steamers

Fancy your hand at a new sport? Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club will soon be offering padel, a doubles game which combines the skills of squash, badminton and tennis, and which is played on enclosed courts that are about 25% smaller than tennis courts. The balls used are slightly smaller than regular tennis balls, and the rackets (an example shown here) are usually made of carbon. The club in Berrylands will have two padel courts to add to the existing range of tennis, squash and fitness. "It's a family sport for all; very simple to play and great fun," said club director Roy Staniland. For more information, email info@surbiton.org



Fans chant for the new defender

It took only a couple of minutes for Chelsea Women's fans to start chanting for their new centre back Aniek Nouwen, below, signed in the summer from PSV. She came on for Millie Bright in the second half of the Blues' 1-0 pre-season win against Villa. "I'm happy with my debut for the Blues," she said afterwards. The only goal was a back header by Beth England, steering the ball home via her blonde bun! "Aniek's great; she's got so much quality on the ball. She just needs time to adjust," said manager Emma Hayes afterwards. Less clear is when ex-Man U striker Lauren James will be given match time. "She had a lot of injury last year, so we're trying to take care of her," Hayes said of Reece James's sis. "We're taking our time with Lauren." The Blues' first home game is this Sunday lunchtime, Sept 12.

Did you know Tolworth's Corinthian-Casuals used to be two separate clubs? The histories of the pioneering amateur teams, formed in the 1880s, are on the Tolworth club's www.corinthian-casuals.com website.





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