



Sparrows, yes. Robins, blue tits, starlings, blackbirds, certainly. But now and then you get an odd visitor to Surbiton! **p3**



It's cows week

● This magnificent specimen has just been employed for three weeks to keep the grass down and boost Tolworth's biodiversity. **p6**



● Could a bug search be the answer to your Xmas gift worries? Turn to **p10** for a host of ideas to be found in our local shops.

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The battle over Tolworth's soul

Lawyers have traded blows in a fight over Tolworth Broadway's future. Should two more towers spring up alongside the 1960s original... and, if so, how many flats within them should be 'affordable'?

Healey Development Solutions is playing hardball at a contested appeal into Kingston Council's refusal to grant planning permission to convert the existing 22-storey tower into flats and demolish the old Broadway Bar building, replacing it with two more towers (one 19-storey, one 15), with 500 apartments.

Kingston says too few flats would go to local people. Healey initially wanted no 'affordable' element, then softened to agree 10%. Kingston is demanding 30%.

It's a high-stakes game. Both sides have hired £2,000-a-day QCs, and if inspector Yvonne Wright finds for the developer when she delivers her verdict in January, council taxpayers could face a huge bill.

The appeal was heard remotely (hours of 'highlights' are on Kingston Council's YouTube channel), with residents giving evidence and both sides calling a shoal of experts with contradictory opinions.

Continued on **p8**

Celebs get their jobs

Dragon Theo Paphitis, Palace keeper Jack Butland and a host of Chelsea footballers have rolled up their sleeves at PSM Pharmacy, 388 Ewell Road, Tolworth; now one of the busiest pop-up vaccination centres. Shushma Patel (right) and son Darpan (fourth left) praised their mini army of helpers ("We've had 98 volunteers on a rota," said Shushma proudly) as the running total hit the giddy height of 21,577 vaccinated. Waiting times are minimal (the pavement tent is up



7am-7pm), and chairs beneath the canvas are proving popular for star-spotters. The Patels have run PSM since 2009.

● Good Life deliverer and musician Nathaniel Cartier entertained the great and the good at COP26 – the UN's recent climate change conference in Glasgow.

Nathaniel, a multi-talented instrumentalist and singer-songwriter, played at a Glasgow City Chambers reception showcasing cultural voices.

The 22-year-old, who backed Aberdeen rapper Chef on sax, went down a storm with the audience in the banquet hall.

"It was pretty crazy – a lot of capital in one room!" he joked. "It's an experience I'll never forget."



● Nathaniel Cartier plays at **COP26**

● The bench at Long Ditton's war memorial had a makeover for Remembrance Sunday. Poppies were knitted and crocheted by members of St Mary's church and the wider community, co-ordinated by Lilija Zviraityte who in 2019 made the original poppy blanket for the bench. See **p5**

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Duke set to reopen

One of the most obvious 'blanks' in the high street in nearly two years of the pandemic is reopening. Greene King is giving The Duke a top-to-toe refurb, with a new sign swinging in the breeze. Staff will be pulling pints again before Christmas at the pub opposite the Vic, by the road to Sainsbury's car park.

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Friendly, welcoming, and serving nutritious home-made soup, jacket potatoes (£3) and panini (£3), Surbiton's newest cafe is a partnership between St Matthew's church and the charity Balance. Open on Wednesdays from 10am-2pm (though it's poised to expand), the Community Cafe in the church at the corner of St Matthew's Avenue and Kingsdowne Road offers morning coffee and lunch, and – as part of the national chatty cafe scheme – works to counter pandemic isolation and loneliness by designating one table as a chatter and natter zone, encouraging strangers to become friends through conversation.

Part of the concept is to provide supportive employment to vulnerable people, to promote independence and improve life quality.

Alex Robinson was serving last week. "I love to prepare and cook food for others to eat, especially big cakes, soups and salads," he said, as he was assisted by Charlie Sheridan, under supervision of co-ordinator John Doran, whose tomato and basil soup (above, £2) is top notch.

With produce partly sourced from the Stud Nursery in Home Park, the emphasis is on flavour and goodness. The team lost its home when the King Charles Centre closed. "We looked, but hadn't found anything," said Nicola Brookes of Balance. The Rev Helen Hancock, rector of St Matthew's, had the answer. "We'd been thinking: 'Wouldn't it be great to have a cafe? I wondered if they'd be interested.'"

It's the perfect pairing, with the bright, airy room to the side of the church also offering locally grown produce and even local free range eggs. The cafe is not only wheelchair-accessible, it's wheelchair welcoming, with disabled-friendly loos.

"It's important for people with disabilities to play a part in the community, and the hope is to open the cafe on more days if we can get more supervisors," said Nicola. With a five-star hygiene rating, this is a cafe that builds pride and self-esteem while serving very high quality home-made food.

Tim Harrison



Alex Robinson serves lunch in Surbiton's chatty new Community Cafe

Chef serves up memories



A chef at a Surbiton care home has won a prestigious catering prize. Rida Diab, pictured, of the Royal Star & Garter, Upper Brighton Road, is Catering Manager of the Year at the National Association of Care Catering awards.

The 37-year-old is a popular figure at the home for veterans and partners living with disability or dementia. He often takes personal requests at mealtimes, and spends time getting to know residents.

He recently rolled back the years for one resident, making a gooseberry pie with her mother's recipe. Army wife Wyn had told Rida his pastry wasn't as good, and gave him the recipe! Rida came back with a pie which Wyn dubbed "delicious". She added: "My mum died in 1966 and it reminded me of her."

"This award belongs to all the catering staff at Royal Star & Garter, Surbiton," said Rida. "I love getting to know the residents. It's a privilege to cook for them." Manager Helena Maher said: "Nothing's too much bother for him. I'm delighted his efforts have been recognised."



Where are the hottest chillies grown? I hope you're sitting down. Berrylands! Meet Dave and Rachel from AllotMore of Surbiton Hill Park, Surbiton Farmers' Market first-timers with their hot sauce and chutneys.



For nearly 30 years, it was The Magic Wok, Surbiton's favourite Chinese eatery at 5 Central Parade, St Mark's Hill. When that closed at the end of 2018, nothing happened for 10 months. Then it reopened in October 2019 as the kebab-based Sini Mediterranean Grill. A year later, it was all change again, becoming Madiran diner Tony & Frankey. Another year has rolled by and it's relaunching as the Lebanese Taboullah. Do try to keep up.

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Strange goings-on at Surbiton's oldest pizza parlour, Village Pizza in Claremont Road. It briefly looked as if it had closed for good... then it was revealed that a water leak had brought the ceiling down. All's well, however. It's open once again.



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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 December. 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 loyal volunteers who help us deliver. The email address is: thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com



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

www.thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk



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

Shop vacancies

Should Surbiton follow Kingston's lead and cover the windows of long-term vacant shops with students' murals? Kingston town centre's vacancy rate is 9%, Surbiton's rate is 7.8%, with the UK average currently standing at 11%.

Igloos for movies

Sit on bean bags to enjoy screenings of six Xmas movies, including Elf, drink and snacks in hand, in a heated marquee on Ravens Ait, off Queens Prom, Dec 13-16, or in private, cosy igloos! Email events@ravensait.co.uk

Musical chairs

To lose one council leader may be a misfortune, but losing two smacks of carelessness. A year and a half after ousting Cllr Liz Green, Cllr Caroline Kerr has quit, replaced by Cllr Andreas Kirsch. Kingston has 37 Lib Dems, 9 Tories, 1 Green and 1 Independent.

Market makers

The First in Tolworth market on Sun Dec 5, 11am-3pm, in the slip road opposite Our Lady Immaculate, Ewell Road has festive food and arts & craft stalls full of Christmas present ideas.

New disabled bay

A new disabled parking bay will appear outside 32 Smith Street, off King Charles Road. Blue badge holders can park without charge or time limit.

MP's charity leap

Long Ditton MP Dominic Raab raised £25,460 for the Shooting Star children's hospice by skydiving at 125mph from a light aircraft 15,000 ft above Salisbury.

Regency dancing

Surbiton's Regency dance group, Mrs Bennet's Ballroom, holds its Christmas soiree at St Mark's hall in Church Hill Road, Surbiton, on Dec 15 at 8pm. Full details at www.mrsbennet.co.uk

Estate expansion

Nine business units totalling 68,000 sq ft, with 56 car spaces, are planned for Tolworth's Red Lion Road industrial estate, on land now used for car storage and sales. Plans: tinyurl.com/xn4kjfp

The best building

Kingston Uni's Town House in Penrhyn Road is the best new building of 2021, winning the RIBA Stirling Prize. Jury chair Lord Foster called it "a theatre for life, a warehouse of ideas". As well as students, its libraries, courtyard and cafes are open to Surbiton residents.

Santa's animals

There's animal magic at Santa's grotto on Ravens Ait on Dec 11-12 (noon-4pm), with a Saturday petting zoo on the island off Queens Prom, and donkey rides on Sunday, plus a gin masterclass for adults from Surbiton-based Bone Idyll, and a festive market. www.tinyurl.com/ravensaitChristmas

Raffle prize draw

Shoes at Last, Maple Road, is running a £5-a-ticket raffle for The Royal Marsden Hospital. The draw is at the Dec 18 farmers' market. Prizes include a £50 gift voucher and festive wreath.

SURBITON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ALL WELCOME!

Tuesday December 7:
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SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



Preparing a springtime treat for the squirrels

Historic chapel for sale

One of Surbiton's most important buildings is for sale; one passed by hundreds of people each day, blissfully unaware of its significance. The small, squat structure at 95 Ewell Road – opposite the entrance to Surbiton Health Centre – was the town's original Methodist chapel. A distinctive scrolled design above the door has survived 170 years.

Built in around 1850, not long after the arrival of the railway, it is set back from the street, as if trying to hide from view. Its big ecclesiastical front windows let in maximum light in the days before electricity, and it could accommodate 115 people (if they squashed up) for services.

In 1876, the congregation had outgrown The Old Chapel, and an iron-frame church was built on the present Surbiton Hill Methodist church site, further along Ewell Road. It was succeeded by the present distinctive red-

brick building and spire in May 1882.

After it ceased to be a chapel, 95 Ewell Road became an art school and later a dental laboratory. In recent years it has housed the offices of a cleaning



The old chapel at 95 Ewell Road – a building steeped in history. Below, in Victorian times. Bottom, the building's interior



product firm called Berkshire, which is now based in Norfolk.

The building is just 876 sq ft, but there is also a 321 sq ft mezzanine floor and a small courtyard garden behind. There is a kitchen and shower, and there are four car parking spaces at the front.

The freehold is available for £500,000, or it can be rented for £27,500 per year via property firm SHW.

The interior has been stripped bare, but it retains the original distinctive vaulted roofspace that early worshippers would have gazed up at.

Alternative uses being suggested by property marketers include a coffee shop, dental surgery or restaurant. **Tim Harrison**

A rare visitor

Underlining the diversity of wildlife at Seething Wells, this stylish beauty was spotted near the river in Surbiton... a hoopoe.

The bird, whose distinctive hoo-hoo-hoo hoot gave it its name, was spied by keen-eyed wildlife campaigners from the Seething Wells Action Group, which monitors activity at the disused waterworks site off Portsmouth Road.

"It was snapped in flight, displaying its characteristic exotic plumage and distinctive black and white head crest," reports Sarah Onions from the group.

There are only around 120 sightings a year in the UK, with the theory being that this one was blown off course as it headed to warmer climes.

Surbiton birder Paul Hunter, who took the front-page image of a hoopoe on a visit to Spain, described it as "spectacular", adding: "This one is slightly late, but may have been here for some time. It's possible this is a young bird which simply migrated in the wrong direction!"

● Surbiton & District Birdwatching Society's Christmas social is at St Matthew's School, Langley Road, on Dec 14, 7.30pm, with bird pictures, home-made cake, mince pies and mulled wine.

In January, Autumnwatch contributor Mark Pearson talks on migrant birds. Details: www.surbitonbirds.org



● Several readers wondered why the gardens in the centre of St Andrew's Square appeared to have been rented out. Winkworth agent Ben Wear was quick to reassure them that all was well. "Unfortunately our board company put it in the wrong place," he explained.

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The screen idol of Swinging London

Pin-up actor David Hemmings, best known for his role in Antonioni's achingly trendy 1966 thriller *Blow-Up*, grew up on Tolworth's Sunray estate.

Hemmings' character, a cocky fashion photographer zapping round the capital in an open-top car with dolly birds and models in tow, was loosely based on the lifestyle of snapper David Bailey.

It was director Michelangelo Antonioni's first English-language film, and it propelled its 25-year-old leading man to stardom.

The movie, a Cannes Palme d'Or winner, remains a classic, critics say, because of Hemmings' insolent blue gaze, Herbie Hancock's jazz score, the unsettling charm of Swinging London's backstreets, and the inclusion of a filmed performance by The Yardbirds.

Blow-Up's ending makes little sense; the loose ends later explained by the fact that the production had simply run out of money. It was the making of Hemmings.

"There's been no escaping it," he later wrote when describing how it had dominated his life. Luck played a part. His role had originally been offered to Sean Connery.

His parents, biscuit salesman Arthur and dinner lady Kathleen, were the first occupants of 36 Alpine Avenue, built in autumn 1934. Apart from a wartime spell when they evacuated to Worpleston (which accounts for David being born in Guildford), his parents remained in Tolworth until the spring of 1960, when a family called Stroud moved in.

David later recalled the Sunray estate as "a deeply grey place in which all the gates were the same". One pal was Vic Choules, now 80 and still in Surbiton, who grew up round the corner at 67 Hazel Bank.

In his ghostwritten autobiography Hemmings recalls a fight the pair had while walking home over the Hogsmill from Malden Manor primary. Vic punched David in the eye, so he retaliated by hurling a brick at the back of Vic's head.

"There's a lot of imagination in that book," chuckled Vic, while conceding that he had indeed hit him, and been stunned by a flying brick in response.

What Hemmings didn't add, however, was that

David's mum, incensed by the attack on her precious son, had pinned Vic's arms behind his back so that David could deliver additional revenge punches!

All in all, David Hemmings was OK as a childhood mate, concluded Vic, who was born the same year.

"We had one of those three-wheeler BSA Scout cars which you had to kickstart, and we'd push it up and down Knollmead to try to get it to go... but it never did. We'd also drag old bikes out of the Hogsmill and do them up."

Arthur, a skilled pianist who had a tricky relationship with his son, had ambitions for David beyond bicycle repair. He discouraged his son from fraternising too closely with Tolworth lads, so Vic was one of only a few he got to know. Vic didn't foresee his childhood chum's rise to stardom. "I was surprised; his career just took off," he said.

David had toyed with the notion of professional singing. He'd entered competitions and, encouraged by his proud mother, sang in the Hampton Court chapel choir. He also

enjoyed success as a boy soprano in several of Benjamin Britten's staged operas, being privately tutored between performances. That ended abruptly in 1955, when his voice broke.

At the age of 13 he had made his first film appearance in an Ealing Studios horse-racing drama, *The Rainbow Jacket*. He began taking roles in repertory theatre and, assisted by an agent, landed a string of minor roles in British B-movies. He left Glyn School, Ewell, and switched to stage school, moving from Tolworth to stay with his gran in Woking.

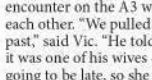
But David regularly returned to the Royal borough after getting part-time work at the Kingston department store Bentalls – initially washing cars in the garage, then working in hardware. He did a stint operating the store's lift (a wood-panelled elevator fondly recalled by locals of a certain age).

In 1958, however, he put any thoughts of a career in retailing behind him after being offered a part in an episode of *Dixon of Dock Green*, the police TV series based on the everyday life of a friendly bobby on the beat.

Vic and David lost touch, although their paths did cross once in later life: a chance encounter on the A3 when their cars stopped alongside each other. "We pulled over, and got chatting about the past," said Vic. "He told the woman he was with – I think it was one of his wives – to ring his producer to say he was going to be late, so she had to go off and find a phonebox!"

As well as small roles in TV dramas, David appeared in a handful of cinema films including the 1960 naval war drama *Sink the Bismarck!* But it was a 1963 music-based film called *Live It Up!* which included contributions from singer Gene Vincent and jazz star Kenny Ball that gave him his first leading role.

On set he palled up with young thespians



David in Tolworth with parents Arthur and Kathleen. Right: the Hampton Court chapel chorister



Pictures from the Hemmings family album

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS

David Hemmings



David Hemmings in 1966

Picture: Midnight Movie Society

Steve Marriott (later one of the Small Faces), Mitch Mitchell (who would become Jimi Hendrix's drummer) and Ritchie Blackmore (a founder member of Deep Purple). Hemmings had become a fully-fledged member of Swinging London's party scene.

After *Blow-Up*, he was never out of work. He was in *Camelot* and *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, turned to directing, played Cassius in *Gladiator* with Russell Crowe, and had more than 100 films and TV credits to his name when he died of a heart attack on the set of the 2004 horror film *Blessed*, being filmed in Romania. He was 62.

Hemmings married four times and had six children, including actor Nolan – now in his early 50s – with Gayle Hunnicutt, to whom he was married from 1968-75. David jokingly referred to Gayle and he as "the poor man's Taylor and Burton". Nolan is best known as Sgt Chuck Grant in the series *Band of Brothers*. He was named after David's Light Brigade character, Capt Nolan.

Tim Harrison
● David Hemmings, b Nov 18 1941 in Guildford, d Dec 3 2003, Bucharest



The Hemmings family home was at 36 Alpine Avenue

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● A Berrylands charity has funded a defibrillator for use by a Devon school. RALPHH was formed by Richard Allen, of The Ridge, after the sudden death of his son Robert, a national junior rowing champion and senior prefect at Kingston Grammar School. Richard, left, presented the defibrillator to West Buckland School, near Barnstaple, North Devon, which has a strong link with former KGS master Berwick Coates, who became the school archivist. Richard is pictured with Mike Newby, the West Buckland assistant bursar. Other RALPHH defibrillators are sited at Honiton and Sidmouth. "We are keen to help schools and sports clubs where young people may be involved in strenuous exercise," said Richard. Surbiton schools wanting to gain their own equipment can visit www.ra-lphh.org

Barrier to block rat-runners

Drivers will get a surprise if they try to turn into Tolworth Road from Fullers Way North/Red Lion Road. Work is starting on a barrier at the junction to stop drivers using Tolworth Road as a rat run to Hook Road, improve air quality and reduce levels of traffic.

The so-called low traffic neighbourhood scheme has been approved by the South of the Borough neighbourhood committee and will be assessed over the next six to 18 months to monitor its effect on Tolworth Road and the immediate area. At the end of the trial period, the committee can either make changes to it, make it permanent or scrap it.

Watching the scheme closely will be Surbiton neighbourhood committee chair Alison Holt. Her ward, Surbiton Hill, covers Thornhill Road – the next main route to Hook Road from Red Lion Road – which could feel the repercussions of the Tolworth Road closure.

"I'm keen to see what the impact will be, so I'll be monitoring it to see what the level of traffic is, how it will impact

on the surrounding area and to hear what residents think," she said.

Cllr Holt said it was easy to think that there could be a negative impact, but the trial period would give councillors the chance to see what worked and what didn't. "It's an issue that has been identified by residents, and we are trying to find a solution," she added.

Cllr Holt said residents would be able to register their views on the council's Let's Talk portal at www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk

Jane Grove



● A group of young people from three local churches slept out overnight to raise money for Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. The 'rough sleepers' were from St George's, Tolworth; St Paul's, Hook; and St Matthew's, Surbiton, and they spent the night in sleeping bags in St Matthew's, raising more than £1,600 for the charity. You can still donate by visiting www.justgiving.com/fundraising/fuel-kcah. To find out more about the work of the charity, visit www.kcah.org.uk

● Four-year-old Ava had fun helping her granddad, Steve Malin, deliver the last Good Life to homes in Tolworth. Could you follow in her footsteps and become a Good Life deliverer, keeping your neighbours informed of the local news? Email Tim, the editor, at thegoodlifefurbiton@gmail.com



Surbiton



Long Ditton

● More than 1,000 gathered at **Surbiton war memorial**, Ewell Road, on Remembrance Sunday where the Surbiton Royal British Legion youth marching band led the parade. The Rev Stan Brown conducted an open-air service, saying it was important to be back after last year's Covid cancellation. Young musicians Harry Martin and Katie Brown did readings. As local MP and Lib Dem leader Ed Davey was on Cenotaph duty, Cllr Hilary Gander laid a wreath on his behalf.

At **Long Ditton war memorial**, the Rev Kuhan Satkunanayagam of St Mary's led the act of remembrance. GK Chesterton's quote on the Long Ditton Residents' Association wreath summed up the sacrifice of those being honoured. 'The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.' Members of 1st Long Ditton Rainbows, 1st & 2nd Long Ditton Brownies and 1st Long Ditton Guides led the procession. Veterans included Yeoman Usher Brigadier Neil Baverstock. Elmbridge Cllrs Barry Fairbanks and Neil Houston, and Surrey County Cllr Nick Darby also attended. St Mary's chorister Daniel Bowyer played the Last Post and Reveille.

Surbiton Royal British Legion in Hollyfield Road was decorated with 5,600 knitted and crocheted poppies throughout Remembrance week. Thirty of the 40 creators (pictured below) gathered for afternoon tea to meet and admire each others' handiwork. There were also 885 name tags tied to the railings, recording the identities of the Surbiton residents who lost their lives while serving in uniform in the two world conflicts. "There were 2,000 poppies on the railings, and over 3,000 on the wall. The purple ones were for the animals who died in the war, to remember them too – the pigeons, the dogs, the horses, any animal you can think of," said Denise Corbett, a trustee of the Surbiton Royal British Legion Youth Marching Band, and the driving force behind a project which began in May. The poppies were later sold to raise funds for the armed services community.

● Learn to knit or crochet on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm at the Legion, where you'll be made welcome.



● Sisters Poppy and Sophia Foley led the way last year, launching a campaign by RBKares volunteers which gave 3,436 gifts and 6,000 homemade children's cards to 2,000 staff in the borough's 44 care homes, including Surbiton's Langley Court. They also gave cards and gifts to 200 care home residents without family or friends. This year the group will do the same with its Christmas Kindness for Care Homes campaign. "We need new and unused gifts (toiletries, chocolates, jigsaws, etc) or money," said Sara Grimshaw. "We also need knitted items: scarves, pom-pom hats and mittens." Visit www.facebook.com/RBKares or email info@rbkares.org

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The last 2 years has seen the greatest challenge in the hospitality industry due to the pandemic and it has been no different here at Wags N Tales! Despite this we have kept going, kept changing, kept innovating and throughout the most difficult times we have remained open.

We now face our most difficult challenge, a challenge that goes beyond the pandemic, the challenge of rising costs due to supply issues, due to energy costs, due to material costs and due to staffing costs in order to attract and retain the best as well as an increase in the minimum wage. All around us our suppliers are increasing their costs at a time when our revenues remain soft. All around us our competitors are increasing their prices.

As a result of this we have made the very difficult decision at Wags N Tales NOT to increase our Draught beer prices. Our prices will remain the same for at least the next SIX months because we understand the challenges and difficulty our loyal customers are going through and we are doing our little bit to help.

So come down and enjoy a pint of Guinness, Orchard Pig Reveller or Grolsch for only £4.50 or Stella Artois, Lowenbrau, Camden Pale Ale or Easy Livin for £5 and finally a refreshing pint of Peroni, Asahi or Neck Oil for only £5.50. With these prices why go down the road where a pint of Peroni or Neck Oil can cost more than £6 or even a pint of Guinness for £6.50!

																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
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Moogan Freeman, Eric and Dibley – three, one-ton Sussex bullocks (Moogan, right, is having his back scratched by Downlands Partnership grazing officer Sean Grufferty) – had a lovely time munching their way around the one-hectare field at Tolworth Court Farm Moated Manor.

Part of a three-week conservation grazing project at the 2.4 hectare nature reserve off Kingston Road, the cattle were introduced to help

Bullocks work magic

improve the biodiversity of the meadow by pulling up and eating the long grass and allowing wildflowers to flourish, as well as preserving the habitat of the yellow meadow ant.

More than 40 volunteers stepped forward to monitor the bullocks' health and wellbeing, checking the stock fence was secure, that they had enough water in their trough, that the salt lick was in good condition and that the animals (part of a 13-strong 'flying flock' which moves from place to place) looked in fine fettle.

The cattle were also being monitored round-the-clock as they wore GPS collars. "It was a fantastic success in every way!" said Kingston's biodiversity officer Elliot Newton. "I was blown away by the response from the community. The cow monitors did a great job and the cattle have worked their magic."

Elliot said it was a historic moment for the borough.

"It's the first conservation grazing the borough has seen in recent memory. The cows did an incredible job grazing the site which will help to enhance the



biodiversity value of the area. It's also been amazing to see how many local people have given up time to support the project and make it the success it's been."

"As the trial worked, conservation grazing will now become a part of the annual management of the site, with bullocks returning every autumn after the summer scything... another traditional meadow-management technique." **Jane Grove**

Merry Christmas!

Free delivery on Christmas trees, holly, mistletoe and fresh Christmas wreaths



A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Martyn and the team!

Made-to-order fruit and veg hampers make ideal Christmas gifts. Please get in touch to discuss your requirements. We also have homemade Christmas puddings, cakes and yule logs, and dairy products including milk, cream, yogurt and cheese. We have a choice of mince pies & fresh bread daily.

Take the stress out of Christmas with our free delivery service. Pop by to collect your Christmas order form.

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Fruits in season:

Satsumas, clementines, melons, all berries, cranberries, fresh figs, fresh dates, avocado, lychees, physalis, chestnuts and other varieties of nuts.

Vegetables in season:

Broccoli, cauliflower, all types of baby carrots, parsnips and baby parsnips, brussel sprouts, sprout stalks, brussel tops and swede.



● Join KT6 litter pickers for their next event on Sunday (5th). Meet at Long Ditton village green (by Manny's in Fleece Road) at 10am. The previous litter pick (the group meets on the first Sunday of the month – same time, same place) netted eight bin bags of rubbish, including drink cans, bottles, disposable face masks and plastic wrappers.

"Some items never cease to amaze; discarded clothing, carpet, hub caps, even a Hoover," said Siân Headley who started organising the picks three years ago after walking with her sons and noticing the amount of rubbish.

"I decided to take positive action. I'm overwhelmed by the support of fellow-minded members of the community who care about making our area a better place," she said.

"Everyone who attends always comments on how good it makes them feel. Picking litter can be incredibly satisfying and passers-by are always incredibly grateful."

Volunteers spread out, but seasoned pickers know the hotspots, including Windmill Lane by the rec, Woodstock Lane North en route to Squires, and St Mary's Road railway bridge.

Sticks, hi-vis jackets and bin bags provided. Wear your own gloves. "Give it a try," said Siân.



Picking up rubbish behind Long Ditton Cricket Club

Garden to aid wellbeing

Volunteers have been digging in a former flower bed at Fishponds Park, planting up a sensory garden. The team, led by local charity Voices of Hope, planted lavender, hot lips and herbs, to attract wildlife and for its scent, and mulched and laid cardboard on another bed to get rid of bindweed, which they'll leave for 10 months while the roots die before replanting.

"We were given £1,000 of plants by John Lewis Kingston after giving them a list of the ones we wanted," said Pippa Coupland, project manager at the charity which helps improve physical and mental health through community projects. "We're also looking at purchasing benches."

Pippa said the idea was to also plant raised veg boxes with a disabled access path as an inclusive community allotment. Bug hotels, loggeries and bio boxes will attract wildlife and improve biodiversity as funds increase.

It is hoped the veg will be used for community lunches or go to local food banks. The project, by the Mayberry Place entrance, will complement the community orchard planted there in January 2020.

"I guess the main hope is bringing people together in a fun and active way," she said. "Gardening really helps people with their mental health, which we focus on."

"Lots of our clients don't have outdoor space, so it gives them a place to be with friends. We want to run more sessions, but need volunteers to run them," she added. Visit www.voh.org.uk/fishponds or to volunteer: www.tinyurl.com/kxm4xa3p

Clandon Wood

Burials, ash interments and nature reserve



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Carols aplenty

Kingston Choral Society's Christmas concert at St Andrew's, Maple Road, on Sat Dec 18, 7.30pm, has mince pies, wine, carol favourites... and Make We Merry by composer David Bednall. www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk

Bentalls history

Local history officer Carolynne Cotton will tell Surbiton's historical society the story of Bentalls department store on Tue Dec 7 at 7.30pm at the cornerHOUSE, 116 Douglas Road. It's open to all. Members free, visitors £2.

Throwing Frosty

How far can you throw Frosty the snowman? Find out at Lime Tree School's Christmas fair, Sat Dec 4, noon-4pm, South Bank Terrace. There's also Santa's grotto, beat the goalie and craft stalls. Suggested adult entry: £1.

Winter stew menu

Emma's Kitchen does hot, flavoured vegan and gluten-free stews and curries for lunch at the Surbitonian Grind, Ewell Road, Mon-Fri. Daily menu on Instagram @emmaskitchenuk

Beauty at theatre

Postponed for Covid, Beauty and the Beast is now at Kingston's Rose until Jan 3 with music and lyrics by Eamonn O'Dwyer. Several Surbiton kids are in the junior cast. www.rosetheatre.org

Ordering the bird

For a second year, Ewell Road butcher Jennings is diverting 250 turkey orders for direct supply, rather than filling the shop with boxed birds. All other produce available from the cool room.

Zoo attends COP

Surbiton's Citizen Zoo went to COP26 "to push the rewinding agenda", said Ben Stockwell. He added that it felt like a major milestone. Read more at www.tinyurl.com/citizenzooatCOP26

Bid for grant aid

Surbiton Rotary Club welcomes grant bids to help disadvantaged children and young adults, funded by a legacy from former member Derek Caporn. "It might include laptops, tablets or school uniforms," said Nigel White. Visit www.surbitonrotary.org.uk

AGM turns lively

Long Ditton Residents' Association's AGM (the first face-to-face one in two years because of you-know-what) proved lively. A full village hall heard heated debate over the content of the group's Facebook page, phone masts and the battle for Green Belt land. PCs Chris Smith and Sarah Wright were grilled on antisocial behaviour rises.

● St Matthew's is the UK's best-maintained place of worship, winning the 2021 Nayler award for excellence in church upkeep. Judges praised the regular volunteer maintenance mornings (including bacon butties) to keep the 1874 Surbiton landmark watertight. "We're delighted,"



said rector Helen Hancock. It follows a three-year spire and tower repair project. The church has also won a silver gong in an environmental scheme run by global conservation body A Rocha. "It's a bit like the outcome of COP26; it's not enough to have received this, our work and commitment need to continue," she said. Left: Mike Taylor, Sheena Evans, Brenda Tyrrell, Jen Houghton, Chika Ripley, Helen, and Joan Scriven.

PM salutes Stephen's courage

A young Army veteran left with severe head injuries from a bomb blast while serving in Iraq has won the Inspiration category at the 2021 Soldiering On Awards.

Stephen Vause, who lives at the Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton, won the Armed Services Community Award in a public vote after the 34-year-old, supported by care home staff, took part in a 60-mile virtual London to Brighton cycling challenge from his room during lockdown, to raise over £5,000 for charity.

Stephen was just 19 and on his first tour with the 4th Battalion The Rifles, when a mortar

explosion near Basra left him fighting for his life in 2007. PM Boris Johnson praised the former rifleman's achievement. "Stephen has shown remarkable courage in dealing with his injuries and great fortitude in raising money for armed forces charities. I take my metaphorical hat off to him for his latest exploit. I'm full of admiration."

Stephen's Help for Heroes fundraising began on Christmas Eve 2020, backed by celebrities including Lord Sugar and Jeremy Vine. The final moments of his ride were captured on film by Royal Star & Garter staff and shared by Lorraine Kelly on her ITV breakfast show.

Stephen, who has round-the-clock care at the home where he has been since 2015, said, via a tablet, that he was amazed to have won the



Pic: Stephen Vause

prestigious award. "I'm stunned. I want to thank everyone who voted for me, but I want to share this award with the other finalists. They all deserved to win."

Finalists and winners will be feted at a black-tie gala dinner event this December.



Pic: Royal Star & Garter

GIFT HAMPERS & FESTIVE WREATHS

Orders are now open for our Gift Hampers and bespoke festive door wreaths (by Clare Marie Jones)

Hampers are available in two sizes and filled with a mix of TFT treats and gifts from some of our favourite small local businesses.

For more details including pricing and collection dates, email the team enquiries@thefrenchtable.co.uk



Holly's the queen of colour

Congrats to Holly Owen-White, queen of colour at the Ward & Cross salon, Maple Road, and a passionate flag-waver for natural products and sustainable brands using ethically sourced materials.

Holly joined the salon after leaving Hinchley Wood School, and has now become a senior stylist after completing a series of colour training courses at the Aveda academy in Holborn, graduating from the Aveda Pure master programme which is only open to a few, and becoming a brand ambassador.

Some tips? "If I want to show your eyes off, I'll take it darker just under the fringe," she said. "If I want to make your face look thinner, I might extend the darkness to the sides, which appears to push the cheeks in a bit. Colour can also offset hair density. If it's thin, for example, layering a deeper colour underneath can create the illusion of fullness."

"Holly is such an asset to us," said proud salon owner Stuart Ward. "She is always wanting to learn!"

Ward & Cross has partnered with the Green Salon Collective to minimise waste, and now claims to be Surbiton's most eco sustainable hair stylist, using cruelty-free, vegan products and recycling the previously unrecyclable.

The metal from colour tubes and dirty hair foils is recycled; the profit going to charity.



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● Pop by Shoes at Last on Fri, Dec 17 to see the work of Long Ditton jewellery designer Ana Van Gansen. A gemologist for 30 years, she is showing off her work as well as the designs of her sister Ingrid at the Maple Road boutique, 11am-4pm. A welcoming glass of organic, vegan Pinot Grigio fizz is on offer as well, while the Royal Marsden Hospital will benefit from Ana's sales.

● The Ewell Road community library volunteer service, which delivers books to housebound Surbiton residents, now has a book of its own: a lockdown life compendium, **Life Itself is a Story**, created with storyteller Richard Neville. A cream tea launch at Hook Library (below) was attended by mayor Cllr Sushila Abraham. For many, a monthly book and audiobook delivery is customers' sole human contact. Katie Erskine explained: "The theme of the book is resilience, following 18 months being stuck at home." She, Diane Gregory and Matt Bowman gave a talk about the service. "That flowed into readings from the book, which brought laughter and tears," added Katie. Copies of the book are at all borough libraries. For monthly book deliveries, call 020 8547 6451.



● A petition for a 20mph limit outside Long Ditton infant and junior schools, and by Long Ditton rec was discussed by councillors. Parents are worried about traffic speed in Ditton Hill Road, Ewell Road and Sugden Road, near school entrances. "There have been a number of 'near misses'," said Emma Sims, who collected over 250 names. "Schools no longer have lollipop people, and the pedestrian crossing on Ditton Hill Road follows a bend, with no warning of it being a school zone." Also of concern, traffic speed in Ewell Road by Long Ditton rec, on the bend opposite Effingham Road, and the Ditton Hill Road/St Mary's Road crossroads, where there have been several crashes. Ditton councillor Nick Darby said: "This has my complete support. It seems the right thing to do."



Fancy playing Santa?

Have you always wanted to play Father Christmas or be one of his little helpers?

Surbiton Rotary Club is looking for volunteers to help with their Christmas charity street collections in December.

You can don the big guy's outfit, complete with white beard, and sit in your 'throne' waving and ho-ho-ing as your sleigh makes its way along the streets of Surbiton, Berrylands, Tolworth or Chessington, piping out Christmas songs and carols.

Or you can accompany Santa along the route and collect donations for good causes along the way.

The club has collected thousands of pounds for local charities from its Christmas collections over the past 50 years, and for many residents the sound of the Rotary sleigh coming down their street is the beginning of Christmas.

The sleigh, a converted milk float, goes out on midweek December evenings from 6-8pm.

If any local charities want to benefit from the collections and are prepared to help one night, then please get in touch with Surbiton Rotary Club. Email Jeremy Thorn (pictured above, about to take the sleigh for a spin) at surbitonrotary@gmail.com for more details.

Donations to the rotary club's charity account can also be made through Text Giving. Just text **rotarysanta** and the amount you wish to donate to 70085. Normal network charges apply.



Twenty-two mini towers (after the number of storeys in the real thing) were given to folk taking part in a 'tower trail'. Made by the 121 Collective in the Farm of Futures at Tolworth allotments, they were placed in shop windows. Trudie Green said it had boosted footfall.

Continued from p1

At one point, a 1959 concept sketch (right) was cited by Healey as evidence that three blocks were envisaged. "I think the long-term plan was for more," claimed architect Mark Taylor, giving evidence.

The inspector, who made incognito site visits to gauge the likely impact on Tolworth, kept the peace between softly spoken Ulsterman Scott Lyness (for the developer) and giggle-prone James Burton (for the council). Mr Lyness said too much affordable housing would make an unacceptable dent in the developer's £13million project profits.

The council (which wants more three-bed homes for families) fears Healey might cash in on converting the existing Tolworth Tower, then scarpers, ditching any commitment for flats that local people need.

Resident Ada Simpson called the proposed new towers "high, ugly and blocky", while Bridget Walker said tower residents would simply use the Sunray estate as their car park.

Most remarkably, the inquiry has heard Tolworth Tower likened to the Eiffel Tower for beauty and elegance. Ironically, had a prolonged and costly legal battle not happened, far more 'affordable' flats could have been costed in. Cllr Alison Holt told the appeal that new buildings "should complement the area".

Tim Harrison



Below, clockwise from top left: Scott Lyness, James Burton, inspector Yvonne Wright, witness Bob McCurry



● A charity which provides support and activities for people across the borough with a wide range of learning disabilities needs more trustees. Surbiton's Rob Eyre-Brook, a driving force behind the Fishponds Park regeneration, also chairs Kingston Mencap, and is on the hunt for those with the know-how or talent, and around three or four hours a week to spare to support its small staff team and volunteers. Skills in demand include HR, digital fundraising and building maintenance but, above all, an ability to help the charity make the strategic decisions to strengthen and secure its future. Email rob.eyrebrook@kingstonmencap.org.uk

Christmas has arrived!



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Church makes plea

The rector of St Mary's, Long Ditton, the Rev Kuan Satkunanayagam, has appealed for help funding the church into the future after the pandemic took a toll on income when the community hall couldn't be hired out.

There has been a church on the Church Road site for more than 1,000 years, and it costs £400 a day to run and maintain. With no outside funding, donations are key. Churchwarden Peter Topp said the church and graveyard are open to visitors every day.

Past worshippers included George Evelyn, born 1526, who had a monopoly on producing gunpowder, and after whom the pub in Ditton Hill Road (once the Plough and Harrow) was named.

The present church building was finished in 1880, designed by the architect of the Law Courts in The Strand. The marble altar was designed by the son of the first Labour prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald. Two of the churchyard's tombs are Grade II listed.

Parochial church council member Chris Howard stressed the importance of the church in the community, and said an extra £30,000 per year had to be raised to make ends meet. Visit www.stmaryslongditton.org.uk/giving for different ways to contribute.

● A packed community hall at St Mary's heard assistant curate the Rev Alison Baverstock's talk about the Titanic. The area has a bond with the doomed ship as Austin Partner, one of the 1,502 who perished in the freezing Atlantic waters on April 15 1912, lived in a semi in Ewell Road (below), by the Red Lion Road junction. Unusually, his Victorian house had a large working organ built into one of the downstairs reception rooms.

The 40-year-old stockbroker was the equivalent of a frequent flyer, having already made 17 transatlantic returns on business before joining the Titanic's maiden voyage. Most victims were laid to rest in Nova Scotia, but 59 were returned by ship for home burials, making Austin Partner's grave in St Mary's churchyard special, with 1,000 people at the funeral. Seven of the 15 vehicles in the cortege were full of flowers.



● Visitors voted for the best model rail layout at Tolworth Showtrain at the recreation centre. A tie saw the Showtrain Cup shared by (left) the Grindley Brook 7mm track by Hillingdon Railway Modellers and by the Epsom & Ewell Model Railway Club. Show manager John Noorani does the honours.



Once a wicked writer



The Daily Mail writer in 1964

As a starstruck 12-year-old, Hilton Tims queued three nights running at the Ellesmere, Shropshire, cinema to gaze up at Margaret Lockwood in *The Wicked Lady*. Forty years later, granted an audience as her biographer, he perched on her bed in Kingston, struggling to keep a straight face as the screen idol let rip an enormous fart.

Far from diminishing his adulation, the episode simply provided the wordsmith with yet another anecdote.

A great supporter of music and the arts in Surbiton, Hilton has died at 88. His regular writing on concerts and plays in the 1970s, 80s and 90s helped fill halls and venues. He was particularly fond of St Andrew's, Maple Road, which he dubbed an acoustic marvel.

In a 55-year career he met The Beatles in the early 60s ("Charming, except for John, who was rude and arrogant") and interviewed Sir John Mills, Richard Burton and Pavarotti.

Born in 1933 to Sidney and Ada Tims, he first wanted to act, but joined the Chester Chronicle as a reporter in 1950. At the Bristol Evening World he mentored a young Tom Stoppard, and met reporter June Sampson, for decades Surrey Comet features editor. They married 10 years later.

After six years on the Daily Mail, Hilton became press officer of BBC2, helping launch colour TV.

He left to become a househusband (long before the word was coined), working on books while bringing up children Anna and Oliver, his typewriter clattering into the night. One was a novel about the life of Wagner, but it was his 1989 Lockwood blog, *Once A Wicked Lady*, that has truly stood the test of time.

Immaculately dressed, impeccably mannered and disarmingly camp, he became news editor of the

● Hilton William Sidney Tims, b Jun 22 1933, d Oct 21 2021



A checkyout from a mischievous Comet news editor, 1985

Surrey Comet in 1985 where his sense of humour – as wicked as the screen goddess he idolised and biographised – was legendary... the cackle accompanying one anecdote blending seamlessly into the helpless giggle that went with the next.

At the wake, Oliver described his father as "polished and sophisticated, but with a bottomless capacity for childish glee", equally at home with high culture and low humour. He was also a gloriously indiscreet gossip.

Robbed of his sight in 2004, he was forced to retire and – deprived of the books and films he adored – never fully regained his boyish mischief.

"I do miss him terribly," said June at his funeral in Sussex, which was conducted by Hilton's son-in-law, Fr Edward Dowler. She soldiers on, in a care home in Crowborough, near her daughter, deprived of independence by a road accident near the family's Kingston home in 2013. **Tim Harrison**

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Let there be light down your high street

Solar power will cheer Tolworth Broadway this festive season. The Community Brain has been granted £1,200 by Surbiton neighbourhood committee for 50 sets of solar-powered lights on both sides of the road, which can be used for other occasions too. They replace battery LEDs from the past. A Christmas tree donated by florist Gardenia will sit at the Ewell Road/Princes Avenue junction, with St George's church providing lights.

● Councillors stumped up £13,500 for a 25ft Christmas tree at the Surbiton station roundabout, and 50 column-mounted light displays in St Mark's Hill, Claremont Road, St James Road, Victoria Road and Brighton Road.

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Presents galore

You don't have to budge from Surbiton to stock up on quirky and original Christmas presents.

In addition to the gift vouchers many local retailers, salons and restaurants offer, a host of unusual wrappable objects is available.

A shop often overlooked (although a part of the town's retail scene for three decades) is Ranger, in the St Mark's Hill parade. It's the kit and clothing centre for outdoors life, with fresh stock arriving every week.

Cold feet? Norwegian Army socks are £12.99, a pocket-sized blowtorch for camping (pic 1) is £9.99, and a rugged dual-purpose paracord bracelet (2) is £4.99; a practical accessory.

Shoes at Last in Maple Road has good gift ideas, including glitter socks, fun cards, festive candles, eco-friendly cork handbags, hand-designed prints, Ingrid Rossi jewellery and very warm gloves (3).

Try Sage in Brighton Road for an advent calendar (4) with a different flavour tea bag concealed behind each window (£9.99), or treat your dog to a Christmas stocking at K9 Paws n Play, 2 Tolworth Broadway. You pick four items that Fido would enjoy, and pop them in a festive sock (5) for £12.

For young kids, head to the zero waste shop Refilologic at 140 Ewell Road. A

beautiful, hand-made wooden Minibeast Hunt set (6) is £18; you conceal the bugs around the house, and put the young explorer to work. For older children, hooked on computer games... book sessions at Code Ninjas, behind Megan's restaurant in Victoria Road, and turn obsession into a possible programming career. www.codeninjas.com

A terrific stocking filler book, edited by Surbiton author Peter Dunkley, is My Favourite Game – a compilation (7) of reports about unusual football matches. It's £4.99 from the Regency Bookshop, Victoria Road.

And while you're in there, don't forget Surbiton's bestselling local history, Hello Tolworth I'm Ziggy, written by Good Life editor Tim Harrison (8), telling the story of Tolworth's Toby Jug pub, the musicians who played there and some truly bizarre goings-on in a much-missed local. It's also available (signed and with your dedication) via www.thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk/toby-jug. Want to make more of the photos



Tom Hooker and Hannah Folland, left, of Wild Reclamation sell handcrafted wooden Christmas decorations and gifts at Salon No 13's pop-up fair on Sun, Dec 12, noon-4pm. Hair stylist Andrew Thompson clears the chairs at 13a Victoria Road to make space for 13 stalls for local arts & crafts creatives. There's also food, coffee, mulled wine and Christmas trees. "Pop it in the diary and support local this Christmas," said Andrew. Free entry. Please wear a mask.

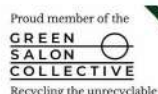


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Call Sophia!

Watch for Maple Road actress Sophia Eleni in the **Call The Midwife** Christmas special. "I'm Maria Kaufopolous, a feisty, colourful character who goes into labour on Christmas Day," she said. One of her one-woman shows, *On Arriving*, will tour the UK next year.



● Based on a true Second World War story, a novel co-written by Sarah Onions of Portsmouth Road, Surbiton, and Kingston writer Laura Meloni, under the pen name St. Roman, has a Dad's Army flavour. **One Year One Night** is a tender, amusing tale of love, resilience and loss, based around rediscovery of a teenage diary. Paperback (£4.99) or Kindle (£1.99).



Orlando's exploring dark acts

Malcolm Drive author and Sherlockian Orlando Pearson's first novel, **Dark Arts, Dark Acts**, weaves together elements of Jack the Ripper and Sherlock Holmes in a tale based on a real-life serial killer who was active on Berlin commuter trains in 1940 and 1941. "The killer was more prolific than Jack the Ripper, so I was keen to investigate," he said. Transplanting Holmes and Dr Watson to wartime Germany proved tricky, but achievable. The book is at Surbiton's Regency Bookshop at £9.99, with part of the proceeds helping restore Arthur Conan Doyle's house near Hindhead. The book is also to be published in Italian.



● Two fine voices lead an evening concert at St Andrew's, Maple Road. Soprano Joanne Lunn, left, and countertenor Robin Blaze sing works by Mahler, Tippett and Britten in the **Thames Concert** accompanied by artistic director Ben Costello on piano. Sat Dec 4, 7.30pm. Tickets on door, or www.thamesconcerts.com



● Meet artist Elinor Rowlands at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, on Thu, Dec 9, 7-9pm. The writer, performer, sound artist and painter will talk about her work and her exhibition **The Magician**, including this dramatic and colourful image, left, which runs at the arts centre until January 9. Elinor tells tales through different mediums, influenced by children's stories, folklore and women's histories, including a soundscape created for the meet-the-artist event. Entry is free, but you are asked to pre-book at www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents

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Well, what a carry on

Oh, stop messing about, and join actor and impressionist Colin Elmer for an engaging evening in the company of a true cult figure, Kenneth Williams. Colin played the beloved comedian in tours of *Round the Horne* and *Hancock's Half Hour*, and reprises his role in a new production, **Cult Figure**, telling the great man's story in his own words via anecdotes, writings and script material. Williams was a rare talent who could turn from broad slapstick to erudite wit in a split second, and had audiences hanging on his every word from more than 20 years starring in the Carry On films to becoming the darling of chat shows. **Cult Figure**, directed by Tim Astley and produced by the Apollo Theatre Company, comes to the cornerHOUSE arts centre, Douglas Road, on Fri, Feb 25, at 7.30pm. Tickets are £12 (£10 cones). Book at www.thecornerhouse.org



● Kate and Peter Horrocks run baroque dance classes at St Raphael's church hall, Portsmouth Road. As members of the Covent Garden Minuet Company, they are well-drilled in mid-18th century dances. Learn minuets, sarabandes and gavottes. The £5 workshops start with tea & coffee and end in bubbles. "It's a good laugh," said Kate, of Jennings Close. The next, on Tue, Dec 7, 6.30pm, has a panto theme. Wear comfy shoes. Phone 07747 465046.



● After being forced to take a year off because of the pandemic, plans are under way to bring panto back to the cornerHOUSE in the last week of January. Scriptwriter Phil Cooper (who played Baron Stoneybroke in the very first Stage Left panto in 1987) has taken the fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty* and given it a "pandemic twist". "It's our tradition to combine topical themes with a well-known story, and this year will be no exception with *The Lockdown Beauty*," said Phil. Visit www.thecornerhouse.org for booking details.



● A hundred years ago, two rival voices in the Marconi Company united art and science to create British broadcasting. Arthur Burrows wants to inform and educate, Peter Eckersley to entertain. Result? The BBC. The duo duel for the soul of British broadcasting – but who will give *The First Broadcast*? Find out in Paul Kerensa's one-man comedy show at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, on Wed, Feb 2, 8pm. Paul is a stand-up comic and scriptwriter of TV programmes *Miranda*, *Not Going Out* and *TFI Friday*. £8. www.ticketsource.co.uk/wholelottacomedy

● Here's your chance to be in the spotlight. The inaugural Kingston International Film Festival takes place over three days in June next year, and it is looking for your contributions. It was launched with an evening of short films at the Rose Theatre, opened by David Cunningham, right, founder and festival director, and Robert O'Dowd, CEO of the Rose. The aim is to give a platform to young and new local filmmakers. Full details at: www.kiffest.uk



● Do you know someone who deserves recognition for selfless community work in the pandemic? Nominate them as a community champion before Fri, Dec 10, by emailing hero@thecommunitybarn.org. Of the nominees, seven will be chosen to have an artwork modelled on them by students from Surbiton High and other schools, and displayed in Tolworth railway station. "In the last 20 months we have seen wonderful people emerge who have led by example, and gone above and beyond," explained project co-ordinator Charlotte Levy.

One of the finest biographies of the past 20 years, **Mother of the Brontës** by Surbiton author Sharon Wright, has been reprinted to mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Maria Branwell Brontë, enigmatic mum of Charlotte, Emily and Anne. Published at £14.99 by Pen & Sword, its research took Sharon all round Britain, blowing the dust off archives. The cover picture is a newly commissioned portrait of a remarkable Regency gentlewoman who searched for adventure... and found it.



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contemporary programme, from Honegger and Enesco to Brahms and Chopin.

Saturday 15 January
D'Arcy Trinkwon, the Nureyev of the organ, puts the pipe organ at St Andrew's through its paces with music by Bach, Rheinberger and Saint Saëns.

Saturday 19 February
The London Sylvan Ensemble singing music by J Strauss, Gounod and Dvořák, conducted by Thames Concerts' vice-president Tom Higgins.

Book ahead at: www.ticketweb.co.uk

Saturday 29 January
Matilda Lloyd (trumpet) and Martin Cousin (piano) perform a classic to

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● The winners of an international IT and technology cartoon competition have been declared, with Somitazhara Setarehaseman picking up a People's Choice award for this pictured example. Over 470 cartoons by 148 artists from 43 countries were submitted to the first UK contest of its kind. It was run by IT support company TechVertu of Hook Rise South, Tolworth. View all the entries, including the winners, at www.techvertu.co.uk/blog



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Tim Williams has completed his mission – to walk the coastline of England and raise thousands for bereaved children. The Tolworth hiker walked 2,250 miles in 124 days, raising £7,500 so far for Grief Encounter, and funding the national helpline GriefTalk for children trying to cope with losing a parent, sibling or close family member. "What an experience! It's been phenomenal," said Tim who has averaged 18.5 miles a day since setting off on May 17 from Skinburness, Cumbria, walking anti-clockwise round the coast (and taking in the Isle of Wight en route). "I have loved every minute; it's been the most enriching experience of my life," he said. The 36-year-old has cleaned 16 beaches, one salt marsh and one estuary, collecting 5,000

Tim really does walk the walk

bits of rubbish and providing the Marine Conservation Society with data on the debris he has found. The recruitment consultant, who is on a career break, has lived in Surbiton since 1998 after his father died unexpectedly when he was 12, and his mum, Susanna, had to move down to London from County Durham to find work. "I wanted to raise money for Grief Encounter and help fund their services so young children get structured professional support to help them through the grieving process," said Tim, who wished he had had the help of a bereavement charity instead of hiding his feelings away when he was young. Tim now lives in Red Lion Road with partner Alex Cappai, who has

met up with him at different stages and spurred him on. "She's been super supportive," said Tim. His biggest takeaway from the trip, apart from stunning views, was the folk he met. "They put me up, gave me food and washed my clothes; it's been pretty mind-blowing to be honest." Fit Tim, who has always been sporty, carried a 20 kilo backpack, tent, clothes and cooking gear. What next? "I'm eyeing up some ultra runs!" Follow Tim's journey with his maps and photos or donate at www.timswalk.co.uk and Instagram @timwilliams

Tim at Flamborough Head, Yorkshire. Left, at the Humber estuary



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Wrestling comes to Long Ditton village hall, opposite the rec, on Sat, Dec 11 with pro wrestlers Ava White, Harry Sefton, Oisin Delaney, Jordan Breaks, Kira Chimera, The OJMO and Oli Peace. Doors open 7pm. The promoters promise a 'family-friendly evening of high-flying action'. U16s must be accompanied. The event supports The British Red Cross. £15 (£8 U12s, £20 ringside, £39 family) www.buyltickets.at/southlondonwrestling



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Sam Kerr caps the week she signs a new contract with a hat-trick, Fran Kirby notches her 100th Blues goal during a 5-0 win and Lauren James, below, makes debuts for Chelsea in the Champions League and Super League. It hardly gets better! Can Chelsea top it all off with a win against Arsenal at Wembley this weekend, in the Covid-delayed FA Cup final? Arguably, it's James's arrival that's the best news. At 20, she's full of potential, and she'll learn so much under gaffer Emma Hayes and alongside Pernille Harder (who is restarting training). Kerr and Kirby. Her cute touches, instinctive ball control and power runs in the dying minutes of the whitewash of Birmingham last week were inspiring. Brother Reece was tipped off that Lauren would make her European debut as a sub against Servette, and was in the stands at Kingsmeadow to cheer her on.

Yet the high points of last week's win over City were Kirby's 99th then 100th goals, and Kerr's hat-trick backflip with triple pike somersault, corkscrew twist and extra marshmallows. Sensational!

Tim Harrison



Fore! Mayor tees off

Mayor Sushila Abraham has been known to swing a club on the fairway with husband and consort Mathew. Now the Berrylands ward councillor is hosting a charity golf tournament to raise money for Anstee Bridge, an alternative learning programme for teenagers who struggle with school, and Millaap multicultural day care centre, both focused on mental health and wellbeing. Form a Stableford foursome to play next year on May 11 at Malden Golf Club. £85pp. With your playing fee will be a bacon roll and tea/coffee on arrival, 18 holes of golf, a three-course lunch, plus competition prizes and presentation. Individuals can be combined into teams. Email Alison Croucher at majors.office@kingston.gov.uk To reserve your place in the tournament visit www.tinyurl.com/charitygolftournament



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