



One of the most depressing parts of the borough has been upgraded into an inspirational art gallery, thanks to a huge mural celebrating a big anniversary. **p9**



Hedging their bets

The natives are friendly! Volunteers have been carefully choosing hedges to plant at Fishponds in Surbiton, to help improve the biodiversity and help wildlife to thrive. For the full story, turn to **p6**

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Are 'shared' roads really safe for all?



The crushed remains of a bicycle and scattered possessions lie strewn across one of Ewell Road's raised pavements.

The cyclist, a man in his 40s, suffered multiple fractures and head injuries and was airlifted to St George's Hospital after being extracted from under a 7.5 tonne skip lorry which had been making a left turn into Langley Road. It was a miracle he survived. One resident rushed out with a duvet to wrap round him until he could be put in the air ambulance, which landed 100yds away, in the grounds of Dysart School.

Calls are growing to improve clarity on the controversial 'blended' Copenhagen crossings, which have no markings to indicate where pavement ends and road begins. They are meant to improve safety by giving priority to pedestrians.

Shopkeepers in the parade between Langley Road and Oak Hill Crescent have warned of the risk of a serious accident since the old kerbs were removed and shared pedestrian/cyclist/vehicle paving was created.

In addition, two separate sources have said that tactile 'blister' blocks, which alert visually impaired pedestrians to potential danger, were installed when this raised crossing was built last year... but were then promptly dug up and replaced with smooth slabs.

Before The Good Life went to press, Kingston Council was asked for an explanation, but a spokesperson told the paper that four working days was insufficient time to make a comment.

One resident, who watched the new seamless shared paving being laid last year, revealed: "The contractors closed Langley Road for two days to fit 'bobble-style' paving to indicate to visually impaired people where the road starts. Once the work was completed, they came back on the third day and said that it all had to come up again... so they removed the paving and put it back as it was! Crazy!"



Another, a local shopkeeper, told The Good Life: "We've been saying for ages that someone was going to get seriously hurt. No one knows where the road starts and ends, and cars fly across the shared bit."

Continued on **p10**

Eunice blows in

Shoppers in Surbiton high street had a narrow escape when storm Eunice swept through town, felling this tree outside Boots. As the Met Office issued its first-ever red warning for severe weather in London on Fri, Feb 18, South Western Railway suspended trains through Surbiton, wheelie bins made bold bids for freedom, branches crashed on to pavements and debris swirled across the streets.



Fly-tippers flee

Police are on the trail of fly-tippers who dumped a mound of building site waste just yards from Berrylands station after fitting false number plates to their truck in an effort to evade justice. Full story **p9**



The ceiling has fallen in at Surbiton Library. The plaster in two rooms collapsed in early Feb, so the 30s building will be shut for weeks. Tolworth is open, and the community library will deliver books.

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Wake up and smell The Roasting!



It's the cutest little independent Italian coffee shop. The Roasting is turning into a popular meeting place for neighbours and a place to pick up coffee and a pastry en route to the bus stop in Hook Road. You'll have to dress for the weather, though, if you are planning to sit at one of its five tables – they are all outside.

Occupying the former Michael de Carle barbershop (it had been closed for years), it is tiny, but packs a punch with quality Italian produce and ground-in-front-of-you, roasted-in-Milan coffee beans for a takeaway cafelatte or espresso doppio. Or try a café shakerato from the specials.

Not an inch of space is wasted. A pastry counter has an array of almond croissants, custard creams, pasticciotti, raspberry and blueberry muffins, aragostine, Sicilian cannoli filled with ricotta, hazelnut or chocolate, and panini

crammed with Italian meats and cheeses.

Then there is a deli section with fresh pasta, pecorino and mozzarella, and a choice of salami and speck, plus flour and fresh bread including focaccia, seeded wholemeal, white bloomer, olive baguettes and bagels.

The Roasting also sells truffle products, porcini mushrooms, Bolognese sauces, balsamic vinegar and biscotti – ideal with the coffee beans they can grind for your espresso machine or cafetière, or the shop's own blend in a capsule for your Nespresso.

Manager Luiza Marin said residents had been very welcoming and that The Roasting was becoming a place where people meet, grab a cuppa and catch up.

"It's a really nice community," she said. "I love it, I love the area. Everybody comes here and is happy to know each other. A lot of mums come to the coffee shop too."

The Roasting is at 75 Hook Road, and is open Mon-Sun, 8am-6pm. **Jane Grove**

● Veg boxes and heavy laundry liquid bottles are brought to your door as Sage's zero-waste health store in Brighton Road launches doorstep collection and refill deliveries, billed as ideal for those out at work, or customers who struggle with weighty loads. From shower gel to organic milk, empties are collected and returned, same day, in KT6 and KT5. Order at sageshealthstore.com, label containers and leave them out for refill and return. "It makes life a little easier," said Sage.



● The former Raeburn Autos MOT garage (and, more recently, car wash) at 118 Raeburn Avenue – opposite the Alexandra/Raeburn junction – is now a Sainsbury's Local. At around 2,500sqft, it also has a Costa Coffee machine. "I'd like to thank the community for the warm welcome," said manager Evelin Da Silva. The shop is powered by 100% renewable electricity; no fossil fuels for heating, lighting, refrigeration or ventilation.



From Mannys to Annys: a shop returns

Manpreet Singh used to pop into Mannys convenience store in Fleece Road, Long Ditton, on his way into work. Now the entrepreneur – just 20 – is the proud owner of Annys (dropping the M from the old sign!).

"This is my first business," said Manpreet, who left school at 16 to learn accountancy. "I used this shop early in the morning when I worked in Kingston, but one day it shut and I thought here's a gap in the market!"



Manpreet, left, and his brother Sunny

He'd always wanted his own business. "I like a challenge, and this is a challenge for me," said Manpreet, whose brothers help out too, reviving the popular corner shop after the original business

went into receivership. "Everybody asks how you are, and how the business is, and if there is anything they can do to help, rather than just getting their shopping and going and getting on with their day – it's really nice."

Annys News stocks the staples: milk, bread, butter, cheeses and "normal groceries" as well as a range of household goods. There's also an American candy stand, which is proving popular with his younger customers.

"There are lots of old people around here who require this shop as a little support as they can't travel far or they don't have cars or they don't want to travel on the bus," said Manpreet.

"We cater for people's basic needs, whether it be needing a cheese grater, shampoo, toiletries, stamps, or being a pay point for gas and electricity."

"We have applied for the lottery and Oyster cards which are on their way," he added. Open Mon-Sat, 7am-8pm; Sun 8am-8pm, Friday 7am-7pm. Phone 020 8972 9554.

● The mayor's masked ball on Fri, Mar 18, will see masqueraders tuck into a five-course buffet banquet, including a cheeseboard to round off an impressive menu. The £70-a-ticket black tie do at the Guildhall is hosted by the mayor, Berrylands councillor Sushila Abraham, in aid of local groups close to her heart. Both focus on mental health and wellbeing – Anstee Bridge, an alternative learning programme for teenagers who struggle with school, and Milaap multicultural day care centre. Email mayors.office@kingston.gov.uk or call 020 8547 5030 to see if there are still any late tickets.

● You're used to trims... now try the gins. Effervescent high-street hairdresser Andrew Thompson has launched a series of themed monthly Saturday evening events, briefly transforming Salon No.13 into Saloon No.13.

Following the wine night at the end of February, there's a gin club on Sat Mar 26 from 7.30pm – no pre-booking, just bowl up. As with the successful Christmas market in the shop at 13 Victoria Road, the salon chairs are taken out and the space transformed for one night into a pop-up bar.

"All you have to do is decide what flavour tonic you want, and we'll take care of the rest," said Andrew. More on Instagram @saloonnumber13

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the good life

Editor: Tim Harrison

Set up 10 years ago this month, in 2012, the community paper for Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands and Long Ditton appears six times a year between March and December. We deliver to 12,100 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: thegoodlifefurbiton@gmail.com Between issues, follow us on Instagram and Facebook (@thegoodlifefurbiton) and check our website. Back issues archived at: www.thegoodlifefurbiton.co.uk If you want each issue of the paper posted to you (UK only), we're happy to do that. Send an email to thegoodlifefurbiton@gmail.com for details, and we'll add you to the list.



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

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People's panel

The council has set up a citizens' panel to work out ways of meeting a centrally imposed target of building 964 new homes each year in the borough.

A town's origins

Archaeologist Jon Cotton's talk to Surbiton's historical society is on 10,000 Years of Brentford. No, it's not a football lecture, but the tale of the early history of an important riverside town. Tues Apr 5 at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, 7 for 7.30pm. Guests £4.

Curry with a quiz

Surbiton charity African Vision Malawi stages a curry-and-quiz this Sat (Mar 5) at Long Ditton village hall to empower orphans. Solos and couples can join teams of six. www.africanvision.org.uk/events/curry-quiz-night/

Remaining safe

Mindful of lingering Covid concerns, one show in every Rose Theatre production will be socially distanced. For A Monster Calls (the tale of a 13-year-old's wrestle with demons) it's Apr 6. Book at www.rosetheatre.org

Judgement day

Planning inspector Yvonne Wright is aiming to give her decision on whether to allow two new blocks of flats next to Tolworth Tower on Mar 25, having sifted through piles of paper at the appeal by Healey Development in Nov.

Uni on shortlist

Kingston Uni's Town House, winner of the RIBA Stirling Prize, is in the final five of the Mies van der Rohe award – the highest accolade for European Uni architecture. It qualified, despite the UK leaving the EU, as judges look back over two and a half years.

Call my agent

The next Book Box event at St Mary's, Long Ditton, hosted by assistant curate Alison Baverstock, sees literary agent Sheila Crowley give writers tips on representation. Wed Apr 27, 7.30pm. www.stmaryslongditton.org.uk/events

Falkland birdlife

Surbiton's birdwatchers hear from Paul Stanbury on Falklands & South Georgia wildlife, Tue, Mar 15, at St Matthew's primary school hall, Langley Road, 7.30pm. Guests welcome.

Boat deterrent

Mooring fees will be brought in on April 1, in a bid to deter boats from tying up on Queen's Prom (where it's illegal) and avoid Kingston Council having to resort to costly court action.

Watch your bag

Two teenaged girl bag-snatchers have been operating in Surbiton in recent weeks, with town-centre shoppers targeted in Waitrose and nearby shops.

Funding launch

Maple Works, the shared workspace which opened in 2013 at 73 Maple Road, is poised to launch an ambitious crowdfunding venture to raise £550,000 to buy the freehold of its premises, to secure a long-term future.

SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



Getting to know her new neighbours

Let's plant a tree for the Queen's jubilee!

What better way for Surbiton to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee than by planting a tree in the town centre roundabout?

The Good Life made the proposal at a recent meeting of Surbiton councillors after the suggestion gained wide support on the paper's Instagram posts.

The idea? Rather than putting up, then pulping, a fir tree every Christmas on the otherwise barren dome of stones in the centre of the roundabout outside Surbiton station, why not plant a real tree – a year-round splash of greenery, a small contribution to improved air quality and a way of marking the fact that Elizabeth II is the longest-reigning British monarch.

The Woodland Trust makes free trees available to communities, and any maintenance would be small compared to the fag of putting up and taking down a festive tree each year.

If deemed worthwhile as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project to plant celebration trees this year, it could be achieved at modest cost.

The next tree-planting season is in October... in perfect time for Christmas 2022. All that must be checked is that roots wouldn't interfere with underground services.

Councillors pledged to follow up the proposal. Cllr Liz Green called it "a really good idea". Cllr Malcolm Self added the suggestion that solar-powered lights could be used when Christmas comes, and Cllr Yogan Yoganathan suggested that a slow-growing tree would be ideal.

Tim Harrison



The most recent festive tree in the process of being cut down in January... but wouldn't a proper, permanent specimen be nicer, greener and better?

The right tree in the right place?

Habitat destruction, or necessary maintenance? Six mature trees which the council says were dead have been felled at Claremont Gardens for 'health and safety' reasons. Two others have been pruned. The three hollies, a walnut, elm and birch all had the chainsaw treatment, and their stumps ground. A pine and horse chestnut have also been cut back.

Six replacement trees are being planted in their place, with one Scots pine, two rowans and three crab apples.

"The new Scots pine is a great native tree which should do well in that location," said St Mark's ward councillor Liz Green. "The native rowans will provide fruit and flowers for wildlife. The crab apples do well in urban areas, producing a crop of small fruit for wildlife and are great for bees. Crab apples tend to do better on clay soils than flowering cherry, which is why they are suitable for Claremont Gardens."

She said council officers were aiming to plant "the right tree in the right place, and select a wide variety of trees across the borough to give good diversity of species".

But not everyone is happy. Former councillor Sharron Sumner, a neighbour of the gardens, said it was "habitat destruction" and "an example of Kingston council ruining our urban forest and really not caring".

The environmental campaigner said branches of the felled and lopped trees had been through the chipper, and large



logs taken away rather than being left to decompose and form a natural habitat. Ivy and other plants were being "strimmed and tidied" and the new ornamental crab apples were non-native and had a short lifespan. "The council declared a climate emergency two years ago and has done bugger all about it," she added.

● News about the Claremont Gardens pond is on p6

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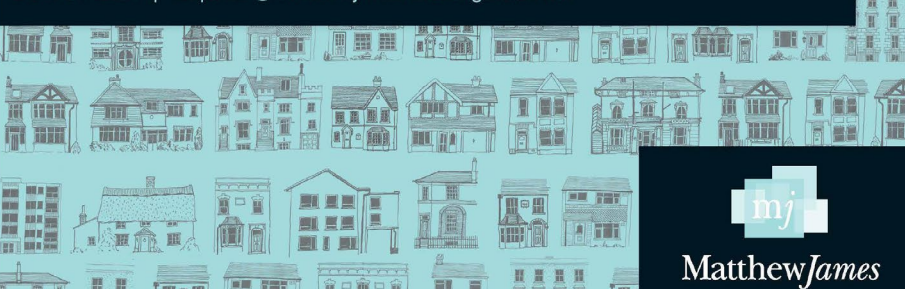


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mj
Matthew James

Take a butcher's at Alan Jennings

From humble beginnings as a delivery lad, the bicycle basket full of string-tied packages of bangers and chops, Alan Jennings has seen much change from the window of his butcher's shop. With younger brother Brian, and son Kevin, he's

a familiar face behind the counter at CD Jennings (CD is for dad Cyril Douglas) at 146 Ewell Road. Back in 1962, Alan was a Southborough schoolboy and the shop (sawdust on floor) still had 'AE Thomas' above the door. "Mum was working in the office,

part-time, for Mr Thomas," said Alan. "Then, when I turned 13, I got some work as a delivery boy."

Deliveries were an important part of the business – freezers were seen as luxury appliances, so people bought small amounts daily, rather than doing a big weekly shop.

It was just as the bitter winter of 1962-63 took hold that Alan's father fulfilled his dream of owning a shop, taking over after Mr Thomas retired. "It started to snow then, and it didn't stop until March," said Alan, who left school at 15 in 1964, and joined dad full-time in the business, doing his training over four years at Smithfield College.

Aside from the name change on the shop fascia board, little altered from Mr Thomas's day.

"There weren't the supermarkets in those days, so people shopped

on a daily basis, and perhaps getting a joint for the weekend," said Alan. "Now people tend to buy for the week."

Although mum had grown up in Tolworth Park Road, the Jennings then lived in Chessington. Today, Alan's home is in Ewell. His younger brother

Brian (there's three years between them) then joined the shop team.

"As butchers we didn't do so much cutting in those days; people would buy a whole chicken and cut it up themselves at home, or cook a whole chicken and make it last two or three days.

"And people have got freezers these days; it's gradually changed how people shop."

Alan married Linda in 1972, and along came children Kevin and Debbie.

Away from the shop, Alan's passion was football. He played for Molesey Swifts on Sunday afternoons – hoping to be an attacker, but finding himself in defence; either as left back or left half. So he's left-footed? "No, I was always put in that position... but I learnt to kick with my left foot," he laughed. "Those were the days, when you had left halves. Now it's all centres."

Jennings – later with son Kevin joining his dad and uncle – has remained a popular shop, despite the gradual rise of vegetarianism and veganism.

What are Alan's thoughts on that, and NHS advice to eat less meat, buy leaner meat and limit processed products such as sausages and beefburgers?

"People may have cut down, but you still have an awful lot of people wanting meat," said Alan. "And a lot of kids don't like vegetables! When we were at school it was always meat and two veg."

He feels TV cookery programmes have altered eating habits, though shoppers invariably turn to a good butcher when a recipe specifies a particular cut. Supermarkets find it harder to make money on meat as it's a labour-intensive product with a short shelf life.

"There's always the argument that you can get more vitamins and minerals from meat," said Alan, whose shop prides itself on buying from sources with the highest standards of animal welfare, and knowing the farmers.

Tim Harrison
● Alan Jennings,
b Mar 7 1949

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Brian, Kevin and Alan Jennings at 146 Ewell Road and, right, the shop in 1935, with old streetlamps and wires from the 601 trolleybus reflected in the window. The fancy ironwork went in the wartime scrap collection. Butcher Mr AE Thomas is with Alan's mum Freda, then a chipolata of 14

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Farewell, old friend

If the old Hollyfield School was your alma mater, or you went to evening classes at the King Charles Centre, you may tut wistfully when the wrecking ball reduces it to rubble.

A glassy three-storey block is to replace the old two-storey brick building in Hollyfield Road which served the area from 1937 to 1966, until the school moved to the Surbiton County Grammar site in Surbiton Hill Road.

A two-form-entry 420-pupil primary is to be built, squished up to King Charles Road. It will have 500sqm more space, with 14 classrooms, hall, library and a green wall.

Car parking provision has come in for criticism. Neighbours fear the school will add pressure to already crowded side roads. At present there are nearly 100 spaces, but the new school's 35 staff will have to fight over just 13. There will be room for bikes and scooters.

One resident said: "The main concern is traffic and parking. The [Hollyfield/King Charles] junction is congested, with 4,000 car journeys already per day in Hollyfield Road."

Others oppose 'excessive' bulk, noise and lack of play space at the Gems academy.

While councillors lamented the loss of mature trees, they didn't feel it was a deal-breaker as 26 replacement trees, plus hedgerows, have been promised.

For the developer, Brian Kavanagh said the school wanted to be a good neighbour.

Cllr Liz Green asked if 26 loos were enough for 420 children, and why the school offices were on the ground floor and classrooms on the top. "Why not swap them?" she asked, adding that she didn't like the design as there was no nod to Surbiton and Berrylands art deco heritage. Architect Stephen Harris

responded that "kids and teachers ultimately don't appreciate such things as art deco".

Cllr Sharron Sumner, speaking before her recent resignation, was angry about the loss of trees, adding: "If I was walking a four-year-old to their first day at school there, I think it would look a massive, intimidating building."

Cllr Hilary Gander said she was "shocked" by the mature tree loss, as they gave natural shade and shelter, while Cllr Diane White underlined the need for a school by revealing that last year 56 children in the area had not been able to go to a local school.

Because of 'high probability' of flooding from nearby Tollworth Brook, rubble from the old building will raise the height of the new.

Already £1m over budget, Gems opens in April 2023... a sister to one in Twickenham judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted. **Tim Harrison**

Deco flats agreed

A new three-storey, plus basement, art deco-style building of seven flats is to be built on the site of a family home in Oak Hill Grove, opposite The Wood park and its bird sanctuary. Despite objections from neighbours, saying the development would be out of scale and out of character with their properties and would be overbearing for those lower down the hill, councillors on the Surbiton neighbourhood committee passed the plan unanimously on the proviso that the developer improves on the reduction of CO2 emissions of the new-build by at least 19%.



Questions based on TV quiz shows like Pointless and The Chase helped raise £240 for Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. St Matthew's church organised the quiz at the cornerHOUSE arts centre, Douglas Road. The quizzing was close, with only five points between first and last places. "The money will make a huge difference in supporting the vulnerable on our streets," said quiz master Dave Farris.

Know an 'inactive' disabled bay?

An objection to the installation of a disabled parking bay in Howard Road has highlighted a little-known fact... if you know of a marked bay that's no longer used, it's down to **you** to report it to the council, for removal.

A resident complained that a proposed bay (it will cost £2,500 for road markings and signage) outside No26 would mean the loss of a public parking space.

"I struggle to park every day, thanks to dumped cars, car dealers and commuters, but there's no thought for residents. If the disabled can get a bay, what about us?" he asked. Cllr John Sweeney had some sympathy, pointing out that disabled bays were installed for individuals, and that if the beneficiary moved from the area, the inactive bay remained.

Council engineer Younes Hamade told him that disabled bays which were no longer required **were** removed, but that he relied on residents to let his department know. "We write to the applicant... but it has to be brought to our attention."

Cllr Sweeney said that Alpha estate residents were becoming increasingly frustrated about parking problems. Councillors on Surbiton's neighbourhood committee unanimously agreed to press ahead with installing the disabled bay outside 26 Howard Road.



Enjoy an evening of dance, music and song showcasing different cultures at Vibrant Kingston in April. Berrylands ward councillor Sushila Abraham, as the borough's first lady, hosts the celebration at the Rose Theatre on Sun, Apr 10, at 6.30pm, with: Bollywood, Chinese Fan, Greek, Kerala & Bulgarian dance; Spring Grove Morris dancers; Korean, Tamil & Jewish choirs; Pielarks (folk); and K-Pop (Korean music). Tickets will benefit the mayor's charitable trust, helping Anstee Bridge and the Milaap multicultural day centre. Tickets £15 and £20. Box office: 020 8174 0090.

The much-loved fox, ladybird and toad murals on Victoria Rec's pavilion have been vandalised. Tags have been daubed across the artwork, painted by urban art outfit We Are Sky High's Tom Ryall and his team in May 2017. The vandals left the other half of the pavilion, with the blue paintwork of the Tarte in the Park cafe, untouched. Tom's artwork has been vandalised before. He had to work his magic to restore his swan mural on the shutters at Ginger Bees Cafe (then named Riverside Cafe) on Queens Prom as it was tagged in large letters in April 2019 – much to the consternation of owners Gavin Wong and Beth Denton. Tom's team also did the Ziggy mural. See **p9**

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The hedge fund

Twenty volunteers from the Friends of Fishponds Park joined a team from Kingston's Park Rangers to plant a native hedgerow along the edge of The Dell. It replaces a fence that had rotted away.

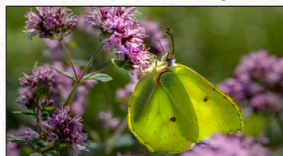
In a few years, the blackthorn, hornbeam and dog rose will form another natural feature in the park off Hollyfield Road, and further enhance its biodiversity.

"Hedgerows are a fantastic habitat, provide nesting and supporting invertebrates and small mammals," said biodiversity officer Elliot Newton. For more on the 13.5 acres or to join the Friends, email fishpondssurb@gmail.com

Newton's Notes

Look out for signs of spring in your garden or park. One sign is butterflies fluttering on the breeze giving colour to our warmer months. Different species emerge at different times depending on their lifecycle. The beautiful brimstone is one of the first to signal a change in the seasons; they hibernate through the winter, normally in evergreen vegetation such as ivy, so can awaken on a warm spring day. It is thought that the word 'butterfly' originates from the yellow colour of male brimstones.

Elliot Newton, Kingston Council biodiversity officer



Pond life

Claremont Gardens is due to get a makeover to the tune of £64,794. The 0.8 hectares of green space between Claremont Road and The Crescent will see 10 of its 15 benches repaired (£6,000), new concrete pathways laid and railings assessed, replaced or removed (£10,000). Other ecological enhancements include biobeds, pollinator-friendly plants, plus habitat and roosting features including a stag beetle loggery, hibernacula, bat boxes and bird boxes (£3,000), refurbishment to the power supply used for events (£2,500), and the removal of the pump house and service cables (£5,720).

However, most of the cash – £37,574 – is being spent on the pond (pictured) which, says the council, is in poor condition. The liner has degraded and the banks are muddy and soft



● Protestors have ratcheted up pressure on Kingston Council to act to protect wildlife and habitat on the stricken Seething Wells ex-waterworks site by Portsmouth Road.

Campaigners from Swag, the Seething Wells Action Group, have condemned the decision to delay any move for three months.

Council leader Andreas Kirsch told BBC London he was fighting for the site, but Swag distrusts his sincerity.

"Kingston agreed to set up another talking shop over its future, but a compulsory purchase

How to remain a healthy Surbitonian, with Neil Reilly

Keep on moving... gently



The reason you're taller first thing in the morning is that your intervertebral discs absorb fluid overnight when you are lying down in a non-weight-bearing position. Each of the 23 discs expands a little bit, and the accumulation of this means that you are taller in the morning.

It's also the reason why low-grade disc sufferers feel worse in the early morning. A bulging disc will bulge more when hydrated – like pumping air into a tyre that already has a bulge.

Many people struggle through the working week expecting their low back pain to get better when they have a lie-in at the weekend, only to find it gets worse. If you have disc irritation, try to stand and move about gently as soon as you can.

● Neil Reilly – once the youngest chiropractor in the UK – has worked in Surbiton for 30+ years. He is based at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club. www.kingstonchiropracticplus.co.uk



Creating herb beds

Sunray Avenue and Woodland Way residents have cleared areas around alleys and created flower and herb beds and installed a bench.

Meanwhile, Sunray Recycle in Tolworth continues to collect hard-to-recycle plastics: toothbrushes, paste tubes, pens and felt tips. Drop off by Sunray Community Hall and Knollmead School by Knollmead Allotments, Tolworth KT5 9QP.

Join on Facebook, [SunrayRecycle](https://www.facebook.com/SunrayRecycle), or email recycling queen Janine Martin. SunrayRecycle@gmail.com

You can set up your own recycling point at home, office or school. Janine has details. Sunray Recycle aims to reduce landfill and earn money for the community by recycling plastics via TerraCycle and other campaigns. "We also encourage repurposing and reusing!" added Janine.

Crisp packets and pet food pouches can be recycled at the Co-op and larger supermarkets. M&S in Tolworth Broadway has been collecting soft plastics since 2019.

from footfall and dog use. The marginal aquatic vegetation is dominating areas which should be open water.

The overgrown 400m² pond will be reshaped and get a new bentonite clay liner. There will be extra planting with native oxygenators and marginal aquatic, emergent and floating plants to support a healthy ecosystem, and a pond-dipping platform will also be installed.

Surbiton neighbourhood committee approved proposals for the revamp from its neighbourhood community infrastructure levy.

The money will supplement the council's £30,000 community parks programme, which is being used in the park to improve soakaways, drainage and paths.

Jane Grove

order was ruled out," said the group, which fears a three-month delay would give site owner Cascina time to destroy the industrial heritage.

Residents are signing a green pledge and petition to protect a site which is home to wild animals including rare birds.

Visit www.saveseethingwells.org or email seethingaboutseething@gmail.com

Swag, which has gained 75 new members since Christmas and is lobbying councillors at the Guildhall, held a fundraising gathering at the Lamb pub this week.



Clandon Wood

Burials, ash interments and nature reserve



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2021, 2020 & 2019
Winner – Natural Burial Category

Converter alerter

The menace of organised catalytic converter theft is again plaguing Surbiton... so beware, especially if you own a Prius, Auris, Lexus SUV, Accord or Jazz. Reader David Ford's daughter left her Honda Accord in the station car park in Glenbuck Road, and returned four hours later to find she was a victim. "They'd jacked the car up and removed a large part of the exhaust system," he said. "Total cost of repair, £900."

The 'cat' filters harmful gases from the exhaust, and contains valuable metals such as platinum and rhodium. If you hear metal being cut, or see suspicious activity near a car, dial 999.

Janine Martin, of Tolworth's Sunray & Egmont Community Residents' Association, also urged residents to keep car keys away from the front of the house. "Thieves can get a signal to open the vehicle," she said.

Green councillor quits

Surbiton's Green councillor, Sharron Sumner, has resigned, making a defiant speech at a Guildhall council meeting in which she claimed to be the victim of bullying, and that she had been gagged over issues including Seething Wells filter beds and Tolworth Court Farm nature reserve. She said a proposed new whistleblower policy gave council officers protection... but not councillors.

She alleged "institutionalised bullying and harassment towards any councillor who dares to speak out" by the ruling party.

Addressing the mayor, who was chairing, she said that "as a private citizen, I will be free to speak out and tell the truth".

Ms Sumner was elected in May 2018 as a Lib Dem, later switching to the Greens. Cllr Jon Tolley has also quit the Lib Dems, to be an independent.

Sharron Sumner's seat in Alexandra ward will remain vacant ahead of local elections on Thu, May 5. To vote, register by Apr 14 at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

16 years in jail for Tolworth drug dealer

A Tolworth man who used an encrypted messaging platform to run an illegal drug supply network has been jailed for 16 years and three months.

Erion Nakdi, 38, was arrested while travelling to Luton Airport on November 12 2020 with £5,000 in his suitcase.

A search of his flat in The Crossways, the block at the Broadway end of Raeburn Avenue, uncovered a further £5,000.

Messages on EncroChat, obtained in Operation Venetic, run by the Met Police and National Crime

Agency as part of the Organised Crime Partnership, revealed how Nakdi used the platform to supply Class A drugs.

Using the handle TabooCrown, Nakdi exchanged more than 4,000 messages detailing plans to supply



areas in London, Kent, Norwich, Manchester and Liverpool.

He said he had contacts in South America, and claimed he could import 50 kilos of cocaine a week.

The messages showed his leading role in the criminal network.

On February 18 at Luton Crown Court, Nakdi was sentenced after pleading guilty to conspiracy to supply cocaine, possessing criminal property and money laundering.

OCP ops manager Andrew Tickner said: "Nakdi played the role of a broker; a middle man in drug deals."



Erion Nakdi and (left) some of the drugs in the kitchen of his flat in Raeburn Ave

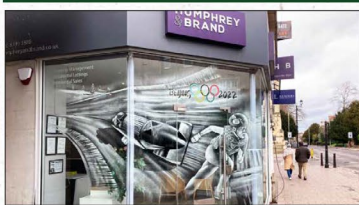
Paint job

"I had to check that it wasn't April 1st," said Mark Herbert, vice chairman of the Long Ditton Residents' Association. "I'm lost for words, as are quite a few residents."

His consternation? Thames Water's paint job on the mini roundabout by the Fleece Road shops. Mark said the water company had "made good" the road surface and white markings after repairing a leak - but had only bothered painting a segment of the centre circle, and the very tip of one of the direction arrows where they had dug their holes.

"OK, they would not be expected to do all the arrows... but you'd think they could do the whole circle while they were at it! Thames Water will no doubt say all they have to do is return the road as they found it."

He said Surrey County Council would have to finish the paint job, when it can be fitted into its busy schedule.



● Medals may have been thin on the snowy ground for Team GB in Beijing, but the window artist at estate agent Humphrey & Brand in Clarendon Road deserved one for this spectacular creation

Lego comes to life

Robots will probably inherit the Earth. In the meantime, youngsters can have fun building them at a robotics workshop at The Lamb over Easter.

The Good Friday event at the pub in Brighton Road is for sevens and over. Parents are encouraged to stay and build with their children.

Participants work in pairs to make a Lego model, then add motors and sensors before learning programming to bring their creations to life.

"Adults can even come along and pair up with each other," said robotics tutor Andy Hoang. "Why let the kids have all the fun?" Andy and his team from Beyond Blocks are building on the success of the workshop they ran in the pub at half-term.

"We had an incredible time and filled the bar with families who built Lego robots non-stop for two and a half hours," he said.

For details, or to book a £20 two-hour session on Fri, Apr 15, visit www.beyondblocks.co.uk/shop

Aside from the workshop, there's an all-ages Easter egg hunt, retro gaming, and food by Emma's Kitchen from noon-5pm.



Pics: Amy Porter, Table Lane

Aspiring to rock around the block

One hundred and forty five years of weathering has taken its toll on the walls of St Matthew's.

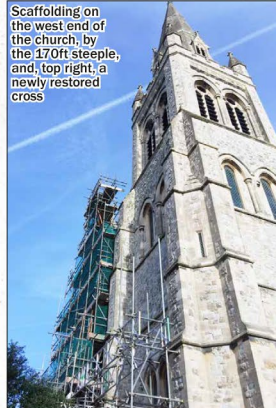
So much so that some stone blocks have had to be replaced. "The new stones have to be carefully sourced and matched to the existing Kentish ragstone which makes up most of the church walls," said church musical director Simon Hancock. "Once the scaffolding was up, the architects found more problems that hadn't been visible from the ground, bringing the total cost to nearly £70,000."

Two stone crosses on the top of the Grade II* listed building which have been missing for many years have also been replaced.

"We're using the same builders and architects [Universal Stone and Oliver West & John Scott Architects] who worked on our tower restoration project in 2018-20," added Simon.

Work began on the church in St Matthew's Avenue in November and is due to finish shortly.

The Allchurches Trust has given £1,500 towards the restoration, while the church won £7,500 from the National Churches Trust's Nayler awards after being named the UK's best maintained church.



Scaffolding on the west end of the church, by the 170ft steeple, and; top right, a newly restored cross



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A glowing report

An inspection of Shrewsbury House prep school in Ditton Road has secured the highest possible rating of 'excellent' in all areas.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate commended teaching and pastoral care, with the work of the staff in fulfilling the school's aims praised to the heights. "The quality of the pupils' academic, personal development is excellent," read the report.

Singled out were 'high levels of independence from a young age' with pupils able to 'speak freely while showing a willingness to engage and achieve'.

ISI also noted 'extremely high levels of perseverance, sustained focus and commitment in lessons, together with team-working'.

"They are eager to learn, and use initiative to direct their own learning," it concluded.

Head Joanna Hubbard was delighted. "We're proud of our rich, varied curriculum which enables [boys] to develop their strengths and ignite new passions," she said.

Coping with grief

If you've suffered bereavement, a support course can guide a way through grief via filmed talks and organised discussion.

The Bereavement Journey starts on Tue April 19, 10.30am-1pm; five weekly sessions and an optional sixth on May 24.

Run by St Matthew's church, it is for people of any faith or none. The faith content is confined to the optional sixth session, looking at bereavement from a Christian perspective.

Only sign up if you are able to attend at least the first five sessions (until May 17).

A typical comment after the last course: "I've learnt that there is light at the end of this very dark tunnel and that with the help and support of others there is hope for the future."

More at www.stmatthewskt6.org and to book call Susan Kang on 07745 795395 or email susan.kang10@gmail.com

Are car owners being outfoxed?



Taxi for Mr Fox! A cabbie resorts to extreme measures

● Berrylands charity RALPHH has placed a public-access defibrillator at Kingston Grammar School, at the Fairfield end, addressing a shortcoming since the council closed the Kingfisher centre two years ago. Robert Allen Life Promotion and Healthy Hearts Trust is named after a former KGS prefect who died of a heart attack in 2018. Rob was a national rower, with the single scull boat in the picture named after him. Head Stephen Lehec (right) is pictured with Rob's brother Laurence and (centre) charity trustee Tim Liversage.



● Help build bikes – even build your own for free – at The Circulatory.

The Full Cycle Bike Project team at the upcycling centre off Chiltern Drive at Unit 5, Chiltern Works, near Berrylands railway station, is looking for volunteers to help assemble bicycles.

"This comes with some benefits for those willing to give us a hand including: improving bike maintenance skills,

access to tools in the workshop to do work on your own bike, a free bike that you can build yourself with our help, and becoming part of our community at The Circulatory!" said project director Gary Lee. No prior experience required. Email info@fulcycle.org.uk or call Gary on 07421 458 835. www.fulcycle.org.uk



Motorists in Elgar Avenue are having to resort to extreme measures to stop foxes squeezing under their vehicles at night and chewing through brake cables.

Many have constructed wooden box barriers to keep them away from the underside of cars. Others use netting to stop foxes causing damage which could lead to dangerous brake failure.

"We're being plagued by foxes. They get under our cars and chew the brake cables as they like the brake fluid," said resident Sue Watson. "Some people have had their cars damaged more than once."

She said that several residents had had to have their cars towed away to be repaired as they were unsafe to drive, and that replacing brake cables can cost as much as £600 a time.

Motoring organisation the AA calculates that serious fox-inflicted brake damage can cost even more than that – potentially as much as £1,300. It recorded 97 fox attacks on brake cables in south-west London in January alone.



Wood you credit it? Another anti-fox barrier

Part of the problem seems to be that the insulation around brake cables is now made of a soya-based material which appeals to nibbling foxes, although it is thought some have also developed a taste for the glycerine and alcohol in the fluid.

When residents appealed to the council for help, they were told that urban foxes are not classed as vermin, and that nothing could be done to help.

● Old joke corner: My friend is hooked on drinking brake fluid. But he says he can stop anytime.

Traffic barrier 'is being monitored': council

Like it or not, the experimental traffic barrier in Tolworth Road to deter rat-runners from jumping the jams WILL remain in place for six months.

So said Kingston's engineering guru Younes Hamade in answer to a blizzard of questions from disgruntled residents of nearby Thornhill Road who say the blockade (put up on December 13) is ruining their air quality by diverting hundreds more vehicles along their street.

A deputation of angry dwellers, led by Liz Mitchell and Alex Oakes, asked Surbiton's neighbourhood committee members more than 20 questions, such as: "Where did you think all the traffic would go?", and "How is this consistent with your air pollution strategy?"

They said Tolworth Road has 93 houses, while other roads now mopping up the extra cars have more than 300.

Mr Hamade told them that numerous electronic monitors were keeping an eye on changing traffic patterns for the next

six months, and that pollution levels would be checked too.

Complicating the equation is the fact that Thornhill Road is a boundary line, and therefore affected by potentially competing decisions by both Surbiton and South of the Borough neighbourhood committees.

"We will look to see what mitigations we can do in the long and the short term," pledged Surbiton chair Cllr Alison Holt.

● The best place for the other controversial barrier, in King Charles Road, is 100yds up the street, so people don't feel "boxed in".

That was the assertion of resident Leo Delitto, who wants it shifted "to halfway up the hill, by the side gate to Fishponds".

He told members of Surbiton's local committee: "We're in danger of being boxed in, and it should be moved up the hill and out of the way. If we've got to have it, could consideration be given to moving it 100 yards?"

Cllr Alison Holt said that his comment had been noted.

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Clockwise from far left: the mural; the looming tower; the renamed station; Thin White Duke; Bowie on the wall



MP Ed Davey is a mural fan

● If you're anywhere near Tolworth roundabout, descend into the once-forbidding subways to admire a proliferation of murals which now include a 100m-long celebration of bands that once played the Toby Jug pub, also marking 50 years since David Bowie launched Ziggy Stardust there on a cold night in winter 1972. The tribute band Thin White Duke played Ziggy numbers on the anniversary, including the energetic Suffragette City, as 120 hardy souls gathered in the open-air car park of Tolworth station (renamed 10 February 1972 by South Western Railway who got in the spirit) after 30 dancers in headphones had bewildered travellers by taking part in a silent disco on the Waterloo concourse. Good Life editor Tim Harrison gave passengers on the 14.21 a talk about the Toby – which stood right above the new mural – based on his book, *Hello Tolworth, I'm Ziggy*, on sale at the Regency bookshop and, for signed copies, via thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk/toby-jug Community Brain coordinated the fun, while #WeAreSkyHigh painted the new mural.

A mock-up of a Toby Jug poster for the Bowie gig in 1972 (above) is in the mural, and (right) a plug for the Yardbirds

Valentine's dump

A meeting to discuss fly-tipping has been called by Berrylands councillor John Sweeney after a truck piled high with building rubbish including pipes, timber and plastic bins dumped its load in Camellia Lane by Berrylands station.

The tipper was caught on video by

ElectroByte director and Camellia Lane resident Ross Carpenter who installs CCTV and alarm systems. Fake plates covered up the real ones.

"The council enforcement team are aware and have begun an investigation, and they have informed the police," said Cllr Sweeney, who was swiftly on the case after the tipper truck left its contents in broad daylight on Valentine's Day by the garages and flats in the lane. "This is a criminal act – and it is a brazen one."

Cllr Sweeney said fly-tipping was an issue in the area. He met residents in December, and some good work is already being done. One Camellia Lane fly-tipper has already been caught, and fined.

Since two council enforcement officers were employed in November to combat fly-tipping, the council has already issued 300 fixed penalty notices and duty-of-care notices – £400 for fly-tipping, and £150 for littering.

"Fines can go up to £50,000," said Cllr Sweeney. "But that's a matter for the courts – which this would be if they are caught."

The meeting is at 7.30pm on Tue, Mar 8 at the Berrylands pub, Chiltern Drive. All are welcome, to discuss the issue and propose ways of tackling it. Meanwhile, you can report fly-tipping at www.kingston.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping



Caught on camera. The van, bearing false plates, drives in



Park your pictures for sharing

Have you any photos of Fishponds Park you'd like to share with others? If so, the Friends of Fishponds Park would like to hear from you.

"We'd love to share more images of Fishponds, and

of what's going on in the park with our community," said the chairman of the group, Rob Eyre-Brook.

"If you take any photos you think would be good to share on our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts, or in our other communications, please email them to fishpondsphotos@gmail.com

"You can also let us know any details about the images if you'd like to, and if you add your name to the email or social media handle we'll let people know who took the image," he added.

The Friends of Fishponds Park is a community group which helps maintain the Hollyfield Road park's orchard, historic ponds, meadow, dell, flower beds, mature trees and open spaces – as well as improving the area's biodiversity.

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New dentist opens wide

As foretold in October's Good Life, the former branch of Starbucks in the high street has gone from flat whites to pearly whites, and reopened as a dental surgery.

Five dentists (two live in the town) are based at Surbiton Smiles, 68 Victoria Road – a tapering shop, oddly like a tooth root at 84ft in length, but 17ft at its widest point.

Though not an NHS dentist, the practice's USP is competitive pricing. A full check-up, including X-rays and a hygiene clean is £58.

Manager Pauline Cross said the dental surgery also offers 0% finance, to allow patients to spread payments, with implants charged at £99 a month.

Estate agent Wallakers (next door) asked £800,000 for the freehold of the shop, which has remained empty for precisely three years. In the distant past it was a cobbler's.



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Tolworth United Reformed Church, KT5 9JR
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Return of pub offers hope of days lost to abandoned merriment, argues Becky Mayhew



It's Bowie's butler's round...

It's good to see the return of an old pal I thought we'd lost to Covid, but who seems to have made a full recovery: the Duke (previously called The Duke of York). No, not that Duke of York – the least said about him the better. I mean the pub on the high street.

It remained ominously shut after the first lockdown, but suddenly opened again in December. I've not visited yet, so I can't testify to its post-Covid health, but I'm pleased to see it back because it's always said to be a pub close, and because one of my favourite days was spent in that pub.

In around 2006, back when it was the Elm Tree, my best mate and I discovered we both had the same day off work and had no plans other than lolling around wasting time, so we decided to put our time to good use and loll around in a pub.

I can't remember why, but we chose the Elm Tree. We got there at opening and left at closing (apparently) and spent the entire day being silly buggers.

We drank in the way that only 21-year-olds can (beer, wine, beer, wine, beer, beer, shot, wine, wine, shot, beer, wine, shot, token sip of water, wine, shot, wine etc).

We talked rubbish in the way that only drinkers can, and we struck



up brief but intense friendships with drifting regulars, including a chap called Gunther who claimed to have once been David Bowie's private butler and an Olympic curling champion (both of which, at the time, me and my seventh pint wholeheartedly believed), and two elderly chain-smokers called Jeanie and Prue with whom we tried to play an unsuccessful game of rummy (unsuccessful because we thought they were playing rummy and they thought we were playing Old Maid), which culminated in Jeanie and Prue having a wonderfully swearsy

argument, downing their half bitters and storming out of the pub (where we saw them happily toddle over the road to the Victoria).

Other notable events of the day included a heated debate with some lecture-bunking uni students about puddings, a game of beermat frisbee with either three middle-aged women (my recollection) or two Polish builders (my mate's recollection). I'm certain I'm right, as I'm sure the Polish builders weren't until later with the tequila and the chat about James Bond.

There was also a game of Hide and Seek with a couple of Liverpoolian scaffolders, during which I spent an extremely long time breathlessly crouched in the cleaning cupboard before creeping back out and finding my mate and the two scaffolders doing shots at the bar.

It was a day entirely without stress or responsibility, so I'm glad to see the pub back and I hope to go and be silly in it very soon. I might even return the four shot glasses and bottle of soup that I found in my bag the next morning.

• www.beckysaysthings.com

Are shared paving areas safe?

Continued from p1

"Many children walk up and down there; we thought the first victim would be a child."

Investigators sealed off Ewell Road from 8.30am until 12.15pm after the incident on Wed Jan 26. The Met said: "Police were called at approximately 8.20. Officers, the London Ambulance Service and London's Air Ambulance all attended."

The driver of the skip lorry, which belongs to Reston Waste, stopped at the scene and was interviewed. "There have been no arrests; inquiries continue," said the police. Fire engines from nearby Surbiton fire station were on the scene in moments, in case they were needed.

The mangled remains of the bicycle – its wheels both bent in half – were removed at 11.30am.

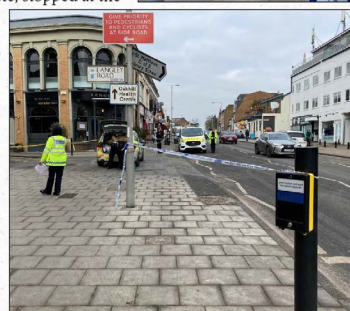
Ewell Road has been the subject of intense debate after it was reduced in width to accommodate new cycle lanes.

This incident came three days before Highway Code changes were made, establishing a hierarchy of road users' to ensure heavy vehicles have greater responsibility to reduce the danger to cyclists and pedestrians.

Roads minister Baroness Vere said: "I'm proud to say we have some of the safest roads in the world, but I'm determined to make them safer still for everyone."

The RAC's Nick Lyes said "drivers turning into a road should now give way to any pedestrians waiting to cross".

• The Good Life will report Kingston Council's response, when it arrives, on Instagram and in the next issue.



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Located by Berrylands train station



• Fifteen children aged four to 10 from Grand Avenue, Christ Church and Weston Green schools took part in a sponsored litter pick in Elmbridge Avenue and Elmbridge Meadows, raising £930, some of which paid for trees to replace those lost last season in the community orchards in Berrylands Park off Raeburn Avenue



(strawberry tree) and in Green Lane near Elmbridge Meadows (a golden glow apricot, a Merryweather damson and a Williams Bon Chrétien pear). The trees were planted by Berrylands Nature Reserve volunteers assisted by some of the children.

• Modestly billed as the world's greatest Cheddar, Pitchfork – a dense, full-on nutty Somerset cheese – generated a queue at Surbiton's farmer's market on Feb 19; the hefty rounds making the table groan.



Fine & points, or a grilling?

Merciless interrogation by 57 Year 4s, or a £100 fine and 3 points? The stark decision for two speeding drivers near Long Ditton Junior as casualty reduction officers PCs Nick Baillie and James Wright pulled over motorists doing 38 and 41 in 30mph Sugden Road. Both, shame-faced, opted to repent in front of the eight and nine-year-olds.

"I think it is an excellent project," said one offender. "The young people asked me what it would feel like if I'd knocked them over!"



The initiative followed a campaign by school parent Emma Sims to introduce a 20mph limit encompassing Long Ditton junior and infant schools, backed by Dittons councillor Nick Darby.

The junior school has built the campaign into its curriculum under 'local geography and history', and hopes to build a tangible legacy for the community via a 20mph zone.

"Learning's better built around real-



life things," said deputy headteacher James Cooper, who praised police who "really engaged with us from the get-go".
• Surbiton's blanket 20mph zone is arriving, with road roundels and signs. Expect speed operations like one last month in Hampton Wick at 10pm, with SEVEN police patrol cars concealed in side streets, issuing scores of tickets.

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Tom steals the show

He may be only 14, but he has a flair for entertaining. Tom Price stole the show at the last of the series of coffee concerts organised by Thames Concerts artistic director Ben Costello in St Andrew's church, Maple Road.

He was one of nine Kingston Grammar pupils performing to a large crowd of proud parents, siblings and local music lovers, playing Cruella De Vil, Mel Leven's jaunty, bluesy instrumental from Walt Disney's 1961 One Hundred and One Dalmatians which broke up a more formal selection curated by the school's music director Mark Laflin.

Also impressing, violinist Zoe Crooks, pianists Max Taylor, Lizzie Clark and Sophie Bailey, cornetist Anya Taylor, clarinetist

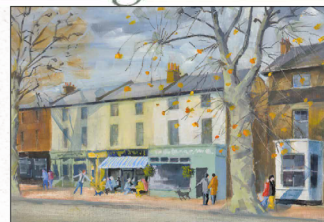


Kiki Zhang (a soaring rendition of part of Carl Maria von Weber's Clarinet Concerto in F minor) and singers Miri Scott and Emma Stoner. www.thamesconcerts.com

Painting for a handbike

Artist Bill Raspin's framed oil painting of restaurants and shops in Maple Road fetched £400 in a silent auction at a charity fundraising lunch at The French Table; part of a drive by the Challenge is an Opportunity Foundation (www.ciaofoundation.com) to buy an off-road handbike for wheelchair-user Sean McCallion, to enable him to go out cycling with his wife Helen and their young daughters Lyra, 5, and Eleni, 3.

The subsidised lunch, supported by restaurateurs Eric and Sarah Guignard, with vouchers from Shoes At Last, No97, Jennings the butchers, Bachmann's Patisserie and Poi Hair Design, raised £4,000 which will also support others determined to overcome



physical or mental challenges. "I was delighted with the price that the painting fetched, particularly as the money is going to such a good cause," said Bill, a recent graduate of the Putney School of Art and Design.

There's some new street art for the Queen's platinum jubilee by artist Paul Don Smith, and you can win a £50 bar tab if yours is judged the best selfie in front of it on Instagram. Tag Hotel Bosco (which commissioned the piece). It's on St Mark's Hill, by the hotel, and has the Queen's head in a starburst, with silhouettes of two corgis below.



To mark the jubilee, Surbiton Library asks residents to trawl through the attic and old photo albums for reminiscence box items. Any regal memorabilia, or coronation ephemera, will be welcomed by Katie Erskine, at the community library alongside the library building in Ewell Road. "If you have something you'd like to donate, email community.library@kingston.gov.uk or call us on 020 8547 6451," she said.



The haunting face of a survivor. This girl from Leatherhead was one of 112 children aboard the Titanic when it set sail from Southampton, bound for New York, on April 10, 1912. Fifty children perished when the ship sank after it hit an iceberg on April 15, 1912. David Lawson Lean, a drama teacher who has researched the lives of children on the ship and what became of those who survived for a youth theatre production, marks the 110th anniversary of the sinking with a talk on his research, and testimonies and images from the time. David, an actor, playwright and storyteller, uses history as the inspiration for much of his work. **Children of the Titanic** is at the cornerHOUSE, Apr 14, 7.45pm. £5. www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-cornerhouseevents

The way I tell 'em

Mike McCabe's one-man show The Frank Carson Story comes to the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road. McCabe worked with rapid-fire gagster Carson, right, in the 1980s and 1990s; a Belfast legend who (said Chris Tarrant) never switched off, even when he was asleep. Thu, Apr 28, 8pm. £10. www.ticketsource.co.uk/wholelottacomedy



Tamiko Dooley is on a roll. After winning the BBC carol competition, the Kings Drive composer's debut poetry book is to be published by Broken Sleep. "I started writing poetry in 2021, inspired by love," she said. Tamiko's winning carol, to Christina Rossetti's Love Came Down At Christmas, was shortlisted by Radio 3 judges from 1,000 entries, picked by the public and broadcast on Christmas Day. She hopes to hear it at St Mark's, Surbiton, next Christmas.



Irish folk singer-songwriter Alistair Sherwood returns to the cornerHOUSE in April with a tribute to the music of Bob Dylan, Simon & Garfunkel, Johnny Cash, John Denver and more, playing the songs of his music heroes on acoustic guitar or banjo in the style of American troubadours of the 70s. "That was an exciting time when a generation of great artists were drawn together in Southern California," said Sherwood. **American Troubadour Songs and Stories**, 8pm, Sat, Apr 16, with guest Naomi Sherwood. It follows a gig at the arts centre last year. £10. www.ticketsource.co.uk/alistaisherwood



Among the acts in Tolworth's open-air Battle of the Bands on Feb 12 were Hampton band Groove Academy, Sonic Daze and the delightfully named Dishevelled Peaches. But one that really impressed was a guy called Rohan Gill, pictured, who regularly busks with his keyboard in the pedestrianised areas of Kingston.

Romance, murder, downsizing, gender reassignment, a homicidal insurance salesman, robots and Kindertransport are among subjects in this year's oneACTS festival.

Expect drama, comedy, mystery and mayhem as local actors, directors, and playwrights bring eight new plays to the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road, Surbiton. The festival, a showcase of original playwriting, is split into two parts this year – four being performed on two nights on April 29-30 and four more on June 10-11.

For both parts of the programme see the cornerHOUSE What's On pages for April and June. Tickets for the festival this year cost £11 (£9 concessions) and are available at www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents



After being forced to skip a year because of Covid, the cornerHOUSE panto returned with Phil Cooper's Lockdown Beauty, directed by Peter Brooker, produced by Jackie Davies, with songs by Tom Wateracre, featuring eternal baddie Jeremy Thorn (above). It raised £3,500 to help replenish the arts centre's depleted coffers, plus a further £800 for Surbiton charity African Vision Malawi.

Now Where Did We Drop That Hat? is a whimsical evening of elegantly irreverent songs from 1950s and 60s musical maestros Flanders & Swann (pictured) and Tom Lehrer, performed by father and son Simon and Jonathan Hancock. Treats include The Gasman Cometh, The Gnu, Have Some Madeira M'Dear, and, of course, the animal novelty song The Hippopotamus. Simon and his brother Nick had previously performed songs by the British

pianist and lyricist and American singer-songwriter at previous shows at the cornerHOUSE, but now it's Jonathan who has taken on his uncle's role. All profits go to the Alzheimer's Society. Sat, Apr 9, 7.45pm, at the arts centre in Douglas Road, Surbiton. Tickets £10 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents



Be a Spielberg!

Chris Haydon, artistic director at Kingston's Rose, has urged wannabe film-makers to be part of a new silver-screen festival this summer. Chris (left) said the line between theatre and cinema had blurred in lockdown, opening avenues to success for anyone with enthusiasm and ideas. KIFF, The Kingston International Film Festival, runs Jun 24-26 in the town, with one category aimed at local folk – the £500 Eadweard Muybridge Prize, only open to those in a KT postcode. Four Weddings director Mike Newell

Music lovers are in for a double treat on Sat, Mar 19, as Yvonne Lyon, a singer-songwriter from Greenock, and Arcelia, a trio from Kent, perform at the cornerHOUSE. Touring in support of her latest album, Growing Wild, Yvonne has an acoustic folk sound with roots rock and folk rock elements. Arcelia (meaning treasure chest in old Spanish), will focus on their recent EP Pick Up the Pieces. 7.30pm, £12 (£8 concs). www.bit.ly/LyonandArcelia

(right) said: "Steven Spielberg made films from age 12, and I hope this festival can develop a pathway for people." Also in the pic (centre), festival guru David Cunningham. Details at www.kiffest.uk/submissions

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Drama in the ring

Pro wrestling returns to Long Ditton as torso-twisters square off. Mark Haskins, a 15-year veteran of bouts in the UK, USA and Canada, takes on Connor Mills (pictured applying a chinlock to Jordan Saeed - also on the bill), who at only 23 has won the Pro Wrestling SOUL Men's Championship in 2019, and the Undisputed British Tag Team Championship in 2021.

Also in the South London Wrestling line-up are: The O.J.M.O, Ava White, Safire Reed, Jordan Breaks, Harry Sefton, Oli Peace, Mark Trew and Kieron Lacey.

Doors open at Long Ditton village hall (opposite the rec) on Sat, Mar 19, at 6.45pm. First bell: 7.15pm. U16s must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets £10-£20 at www.bit.ly/Surbitonwrestling



Twenty fans will get in-ring training with Haskins at a seminar (same day, same venue), 4-6pm. £25, or £30 + show. Email southlondon tickets@gmail.com **Jane Grove**



David is a legend!

● The century-old Surbiton Bowling Club has announced free taster sessions on Apr 30 and May 28 as the start of the new lawn bowling season looms at Alexandra rec. Newcomers can also turn up by arrangement for free coaching at other times. Through winter and spring every blade of grass on the pristine green is fed and trimmed, with the season's official start on Apr 23. www.surbitonbowlingclub.uk



● It's a sport taking the world by storm - a competitive, yet simple blend of tennis and squash - and it's arrived in Surbiton. Two padel courts have opened at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club in Berrylands.

Director Roy Staniland said: "The beauty is it appeals to everyone; families book a court and parents, children, uncles and aunts can all play. It's a great leveller, and it's fun to see families play together."

Serving is underarm, using 'paddles' like beach tennis rackets. The ball can be played off the walls, and the scoring is the same as tennis.

Courts are outdoors with an all-weather surface, have glass sides and low-level floodlights. For more details visit www.surbiton.org



● A roar of triumph from 19-year-old Harry Zain-Prosser of Ditton Road, bronze winner at the British U21 Judo Championships in Sheffield. The first-year history student at University College London is in the 2022 GB squad to build on three British titles, sponsored training in Japan and strong showings at the Euro U18 Championships in Poland and the Euro Youth Olympics, Azerbaijan. The second Dan black belt trains at the Budokwai club, Chelsea, and now focuses on the English Open at U21 and senior men as well as the British Universities Championships.



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Millie notches 200

Chelsea Women's powerhouse defender Millie Bright, 28, who was given a framed shirt by manager Emma Hayes



at Kingsmeadow to mark 200 appearances in blue, scored a top-drawer volley in England's recent 1-1 draw against Canada. Hayes, one of the commentators, revealed: "It's no surprise to me... she used to be a striker!" Chelsea face Man City in the Conti Cup final on Sat, Mar 5, a month after Bright captained the Blues in a 1-0 league win against City.

● Football fans Kingston mayor Sushila Abraham and consort Mathew, pictured, were special guests of Chelsea Women, with the council tweeting that it was "thrilled to have Chelsea as a permanent fixture in the borough".

Also enjoying the action at Kingsmeadow, Cllr Alison Holt, proudly wearing a white ribbon to raise awareness of the issue of male violence against women and girls.



It's the mayor's charity golf tournament on Wed, May 11; a Malden Golf Club event to raise money for Anstee Bridge, for teenagers who struggle with school, and the Milaap multicultural day care centre; the focus on mental wellbeing. www.tinyurl.com/charitygolftournament

● Coaches and clients from HIT35 Bootcamp at Long Ditton rec each ran 56 miles in Feb for Cancer Research UK, with the seven-strong female team raising more than £3,000 aiming to run two miles per day or achieve the target in 28 days. www.bit.ly/Run56



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