

**Ticket to ride?**  
 Chug round one of a series of miniature rail tracks in Thames Ditton on a gloriously steamy day out. **p9**

**Did you work the lipstick lines? At one time it was seen as the best job in the area. Turn to p7 to read the story of Gala Cosmetics on the A3**

**A net gain**  
 A new cricket season, and new practice nets. It must mean summer's here! **p12**

**One of the most significant graves in the area, that of Titanic victim Austin Partner, has just had a major facelift. The full story is on p8**

**Victorious!**  
 Visit **p6** to see how the good folk of Long Ditton beat the bulldozers in the Battle of One Tree Hill

**A** bid to turn part of the neglected Seething Wells filter beds into offices has been torpedoed by councillors determined to make the area a nature reserve.

## Filter bid torpedoed

Owner Cascina, which itches to build on the site, applied to hive off a derelict pumping house for commercial use. But Surbiton's neighbourhood committee scuppered the idea, saying it would fragment a site pivotal to the history of clean drinking water. Oh, and bats.

Alison Fure, a monitor of wildlife for 30 years, points out it's a winter roost for Daubenton's bats, and told councillors the site "ticks every box" on nature's checklist.

Four Cascina reps observed the Glenmore House meeting on Apr 25, but declined to participate and sullenly exited after the vote. One councillor called that "a shame".

Significantly, the plan was unanimously ditched without its five sternest critics in the room. Cllrs Green, Holt, White, Yoganathan and Schaper recused themselves as their past

comments might have been seen as conflicts of interest. The applicant wanted to restore the building – vacant for three decades – by installing a mezzanine floor to create 237sqm of office space.

Constructed in the 1850s for Chelsea Water Works, the graffitied structure is the sole survivor of a trio of engine houses alongside a railway which carried coal from river barges to the main Seething Wells buildings.

Councillors agreed it was an embarrassing eyesore, but refused to split off the small rectangle (2% of the total land) as it would break up the entirety of the site, compromise wildlife, impact biodiversity and conflict with several key local protective policies.

Long-time campaigner Cllr Roger Hayes of the Friends of Seething Wells said every element of the riverside south conservation area site had to be preserved. "This [plan] would sever the existing building from the rest of a site of nature conservation interest," he said, adding that even removing one piece of the jigsaw would prejudice the future potential for enhancing the entire seven hectare (17 acre) area.

Only Cllr Jackie Davies wavered, saying she wasn't minded to object "as it's a little building on a small site". But even she was finally won round by the arguments.

So what now for the filter beds? Tai Li Ling and Phil Renton from Seething Wells Action Group still yearn for the land to be shielded by preservation orders, wrested from Cascina's grip and turned into a biodiverse, wildlife-friendly haven to rival, say, London Wetland Centre. A small planning battle may have been won, but the war rages on.

**Tim Harrison**



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## A big hand for Carmen!

Surbiton's bridge queen turns 101 on July 1, and firmly believes card-playing keeps her on the ball.

Carmen Samman, right, first played cards with her grandpa at the kitchen table, shuffled the odd pack in the Second World War while serving with the Women's Royal Air Force, but only began taking it seriously in the late 1940s.

"Bridge and cryptic crosswords keep me sharp," said the spritely centenarian, who walks up the stairs in Glenmore House on Tuesday afternoons while many younger colleagues opt for the lift. "I enjoy puzzles; I like codeword. I used to do sudokus, but I got bored with them! I'm also a telly addict; I watch anything and everything.

"I watch Corrie, Antiques Roadshow and whodunnits.

**Continued on p8**



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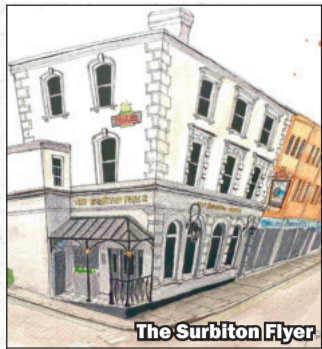
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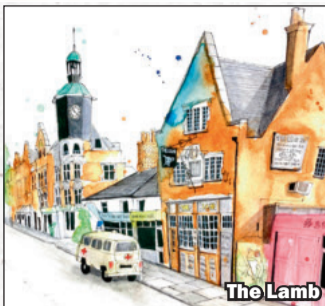
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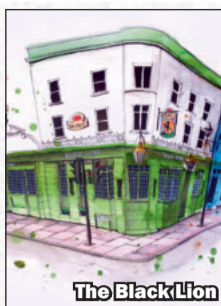
The Surbiton Flyer



The Lamb



The Antelope



The Black Lion

● **Wags n Tales cafe in Brighton Road is reopening as Turkish eatery Renas. Builders have been busy revamping the interior.**

● “It’s going to be fine dining,” said manager Luke Richter about Mem’s, a new restaurant opening in what was No97 in Maple Road. Luke, who has managed Gordon Ramsay’s O2 diner, and Carluccio’s, Walton, is introducing modern European cuisine to the Maple Road food scene. There will be a cocktail bar downstairs. [mem-s.co.uk](http://mem-s.co.uk)



● **The Chai@34 cafe at the corner of Berrylands and King Charles roads, which closed for more than a year, reopened at the start of May as The Brand lounge, with breakfasts a focus.**

● Pizzas and nachos are on offer at Surbiton’s Black Lion, at the Brighton Road/Maple Road lights. Nacho sharing plates accompany the sports events on the pub’s indoor and outdoor screens, while a pop-up pizzeria has 12in pizzas from £12, with toppings including Spitfire (chilli, chorizo, pepperoni, mozzarella and hot honey). Pizzas available Tue-Fri 5-9pm, Sat noon-7pm and Sun noon-6pm.

● Thai Secret, by the health centre at 110 Ewell Road, is now Ploy’s, a new Thai bistro. It’s run by Ploy (real name Warangkana Kanchanarat) with mum Pat cooking and Ploy’s partner Zee delivering. Having worked in restaurants in the UK and Thailand for 20 years, they’ve taken the plunge and started their own.



The focus is on well-presented, authentic Thai food, and it is open every

day for lunch and dinner, and Just Eat deliveries. Lunch is £9.95 for two courses. If you need an excuse to try the homemade ice cream, start your meal with the fragrant, very spicy green curry!

Call 020 8972 1166 or visit [ploysthaibistro.co.uk](http://ploysthaibistro.co.uk) **Rob Steele**

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the good life

**Editor: Tim Harrison**

Set up at the start of 2012, the community paper for Surbiton, Tolworth, Berrylands & Long Ditton appears regularly from March to December. We deliver to 12,300 homes. Issues are also 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. Email [thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com](mailto:thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com) Between editions, follow us on Instagram (scan the QR) and Facebook (@[thegoodlifesurbiton](https://www.facebook.com/thegoodlifesurbiton)) and check our website. Back issues at: [thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk](http://thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk)



*This paper is also available at Michael’s shoe repairs; Shoes at Last; the cornerHOUSE arts centre, and direct by post (see above).*

## Our ‘Banksy’!

Which is your favourite pub? The Antelope? The Lion? The Coronation? Or another that might appeal to the creative talents of the Surbiton Sketcher?

The Sketcher has painted Surbiton’s hostelrys since 2020, as well as people, pets, homes, venues and businesses, with 20% of fees helping the homeless via Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. “It’s so easy for anyone in the current economic climate to find themselves homeless,” said the Sketcher. “It seems apt for people to have a painting helping them appreciate what they have, and help people who aren’t quite so fortunate.”

Sketching anything really makes you stop and look, said the talented artist who, like Banksy,

prefers his or her anonymity.

“It’s easy to walk past buildings and not notice them. Sketching and taking the time to look in detail makes you see just how lucky we are to live in this area. The buildings are really quite beautiful.”

Why pubs? “They’re a huge part of any community and we’re fortunate to have some fantastic ones in Surbiton. Who doesn’t love a pint?” asked the artist, whose background is in architecture and product design.

Prices start at £30 for a signed A3 print, while A4 portraits of pets and people are £75 and A3 paintings of homes and businesses are £100. Paintings are in watercolour and ink. Email [surbitonsketcher@gmail.com](mailto:surbitonsketcher@gmail.com), Instagram @[surbitonsketcher](https://www.instagram.com/surbitonsketcher) or visit [justgiving.com/fundraising/surbiton-sketcher1](http://justgiving.com/fundraising/surbiton-sketcher1) **Jane Grove**

## Thali Ho? Thali No! Delhi Yes!

Thali Ho curry house, struggling for customers since lockdown, has closed. But continuing the left-field naming tradition, it has now become Delhi By Nature.

The menu lists that old favourite butter chicken as its signature dish, and it also serves variations on Delhi street food.

The 31 Brighton Road restaurant reopened on May 6 as part of the Bagheera chain, which also operates in Belmont and Reading. Bagheera’s Mahipal Negi described the Surbiton eatery as “an ode to memories of us growing up in Delhi”. Visit [delhibynature.uk](http://delhibynature.uk)

Thali Ho opened in October 2017 and, incredibly, won the best London suburban curry house title after just three weeks’ trading. In the early 2000s it had been an Italian diner, Olivio. Then it became Maya, an upmarket Indian, before being bought by brothers Shamim and Shah Malek and turned into Thali Ho.

For a decade they’d run Rivaaz, in the New Forest, picking up awards for food quality from the Federation of Bangladeshi Caterers. Thali Ho’s style of serving was a large circular tray containing a series of small dishes in metal pots, ranged around a central serving of rice.

In 2018, MP Sir Ed Davey pitched up to try the food and present the Malek brothers with their award, while Surbiton Cllr Yogan Yoganathan chose Thali Ho to stage his farewell banquet in 2023 at the end of his mayoral year.

But while Rivaaz restaurant continued to win trophies, Thali Ho struggled to fill its cavernous dining space. **Tim Harrison**



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### Door needs filling

Maple dental surgery in Maple Road was burgled after the glass front door was smashed. £20 in cash and three pairs of trainers were taken.

### Tools are targets

Three garden sheds were plundered for tools in Rectory Close, Long Ditton, in a single night. Chainsaws and power drills were the targets.

### Apprentice help

Run a business? Need fresh talent? Kingston College's apprenticeship programme is enrolling, with courses from carpentry to electrical; HR to civil engineering. Funding help available. To see if it could assist your firm, email [business@stcg.ac.uk](mailto:business@stcg.ac.uk)

### Car park cost rises

Charges for the St Philips Road car park rise from £1.40 to £1.50 an hour on May 17, 'to cover costs'. The night flat rate also goes up 10p to £1.80.

### Sparkling secrets

All that glitters isn't gold. Surbiton Historical Society speaker Nicola Tallis told a rapt audience that kings and queens would often use fake gems in their crowns to save money!

### Mercedes stolen

Leave a light on if you go out, police advise, after thieves entered a house in Williams Grove, Long Ditton, in the small hours, found the keys to a Mercedes on the drive, and fled in it.

### Purposeful fun

A Surbiton charity which aids Malawi is staging a day of fun, pampering and indulgence on Jun 29 to help the good cause. Full details: [africanvision.org.uk/events](http://africanvision.org.uk/events)

### A bustard flush

John Hughes talks to Surbiton birdwatchers about feathered creatures on Salisbury Plain on June 18. Details at [surbitonbirds.org](http://surbitonbirds.org)

### Foster care plea

Forty vulnerable children are fostered in Kingston borough, but more full and short-term foster carers are needed. [achievingforchildren.org.uk/pages/fostering](http://achievingforchildren.org.uk/pages/fostering)

### Grove has facelift

Maple Road's Grove pub has had a facelift, its blue exterior replaced by a standstone finish and russet front door. There's a refreshed menu too.

### Residents' news

Updates on Green Belt, local plans, Village Green bid, roads and masts at Long Ditton residents' agm on Wed, May 22, 8pm, at the village hall, Ewell Road, opp Long Ditton rec.

### Table fundraiser

Staff from Maple Road's French Table and French Tarte raised £5,500 for the National Brain Appeal by running the Hampton Court Palace half marathon for colleague Andy Baxter who died, aged 55, from frontotemporal dementia – an uncommon form which affects language and behaviour.

## SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



Like a Wild West hero approaching the saloon, he'd show 'em he's man enough to collect his own lunch

## Liz takes on chain of office

As The Good Life hit the streets, St Mark's and Seething Wells ward councillor Liz Green was due to be appointed the 190th mayor of the Kingston, taking over from her fellow ward councillor Diane White.

Cllr Green has lived in the borough since 1998 and been a councillor for 20+ years, holding many positions in her career including council leader (2013-14 and 2018-2020), deputy leader and opposition leader.

She sits on the Surbiton neighbourhood committee and has chaired planning and audit, governance and standards.

Liz has picked Habitats & Heritage as her mayoral charity. It acts for the natural and historic environment in south and west London.

Information on her first fundraising event, a treasure hunt from Queen's Promenade in Surbiton to Canbury Gardens in Kingston on July 6, will soon be added to the website [kingston.gov.uk/mayor](http://kingston.gov.uk/mayor), where borough residents will also be able to get in touch to invite her to a celebration or a volunteering event.

"We have some fantastic groups of people volunteering to improve our parks, open spaces and heritage," said Liz.



"I want to celebrate the work they do and encourage more to take part or start their own groups."

Liz will be supported by a deputy, Cllr Elizabeth Park, the first time the mayoral team will have a Korean representative.

"I hope to reach out to new people and groups that don't usually think to speak to the mayor, but want to celebrate their successes with us," she added. **Jane Grove**

## Build approved

A house in Southborough conservation area can be extended, as long as windows overlooking neighbours remain opaque.



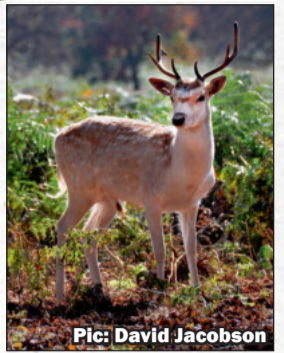
Plans to demolish parts of 91 Ditton Road and rebuild with 130sqm more living space, including a loft cinema, have been approved.

A previous scheme was already agreed, but new owner Mr Abhishek Singhal wanted changes to reflect his family's lifestyle. However, he hadn't consulted or communicated with his neighbours. One, Bob Hayward, told Surbiton neighbourhood committee he feared the project would "impact our quality of life".

While councillors winced at the design of a new front porch, they gave the bid the green light, provided windows facing neighbours "are opaque, for all time".

Cllr Jackie Davies expressed the hope that the neighbours would now be able to live in harmony.

● How much dog poo is deposited in Richmond Park each year, how did the ponds get their names and how many teas are served at Pembroke Lodge? Good Life editor Tim Harrison reveals all in 100 Things You Didn't Know About Richmond Park on Tue, July 2, at Surbiton's historical society, 7.30pm, the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road. Non-members welcome. Bar open from 7pm.



Pic: David Jacobson

## Shh! Secret planning panel revealed

Residents may now learn more about how major building projects are assessed after light was thrown on a secretive group which advises the decision-makers.

It hates publicity and is currently as transparent as a brick, but Kingston Placemaking Panel wields huge influence, reviewing large schemes, then sending confidential reports about them to Kingston Council.

Panel member Kieran Toms, right, emerged from the shadows to confirm to the Kingston Society that it exists, even if the citizens who fund it are denied sight of its conclusions.

He said the review panel, meeting in private rooms at Kingston Guildhall and operating since 2017, writes reports on big projects as "an independent broker" and "critical friend", to improve design quality.

Yet its membership is opaque, its recruitment hush-hush, its community engagement non-existent and its opinions, as well as its annual report, secret. While it doesn't directly approve or reject large-scale projects, its opinions sway decisions.

After learning more about the panel, the Kingston Society urged Kingston Council to address the secrecy "to ensure automatic publication of individual reports and the panel's annual report". A rolling list of schemes which have been reviewed should also be published, it said.

Council planning czar Cllr Roger Hayes now concedes there should be transparency "to ensure design review reports are fully accessible to the public". **Tim Harrison**



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Good Life editor Tim Harrison reveals 100 Things You Didn't Know About Richmond Park



Regular meetings at the cornerHOUSE, 116 Douglas Road  
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Matthew James

# Tolworth's No1 cheerleader

Pat Ward, the writer 'who raised Tolworth from obscurity', has died at the age of 90. The tombstone on her Surbiton Cemetery grave will bear the words Historian of Tolworth.

In 2015 Pat co-wrote The Story of Tolworth with Bob Phillips; a comprehensive history of the town from Stone Age to modern times, emphasising its importance in the Middle Ages as a point on the route from Hampton Court to Nonsuch palace, before Surbiton even rated a mention on a map!

The book was dedicated to the

Surbiton & District Historical Society, of which she was a passionate, long-standing member.

Her place at the top table of local historians was already assured after publication of From Talworth Hamlet to Tolworth Tower, marking the St Matthew's church centenary in 1975.

But not only did she co-write the definitive history of Tolworth 40 years later, but she also left the borough's local history room an indexed, cross-referenced record of her notes,

as a helping hand to future researchers.

Pat was born in 1933; her parents had a dairy in Hampton Wick. When she was five, the family moved to Burpham, near the A3 at Guildford, to run the Green Man. As a youngster she helped her father smuggle whisky to the pub to circumvent tight rationing rules!

In 1944 she went to grammar school in Guildford but, after her father's death two years later, her mother relocated.

## NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Pat Ward

Following sixth form at Aldershot High School she gained a place at Girton College, Cambridge, to read history. At university she met her future husband David Ward who studied history at St John's. He was a former Kingston Grammar School student who would later write the official school history.

They married in 1958 after David had done national service. Pat taught history in Wellingborough, while David joined the civil service, eventually becoming an under-secretary in the then Department of Health and Social Security.

Pat and David set up home in King Charles Road, attending St Matthew's and running the Pathfinders. Children Tim and Sandra were baptised there.

In 1967 the family moved to St Matthew's Avenue. Pat initially did voluntary work with the Citizens

Advice Bureau, then – said son Tim – worked as a welfare rights officer for Kingston Council.

When David was 50 he switched careers and, with support from Pat, a committed Christian, become a clergyman. After a stint at Immanuel, Streatham Common, he served as vicar of St Paul's, Hook, from 1987 to 1993.

Pat was the welcoming face at the vicarage, serving teas and coffees to all after the Sunday 9.45am service.

She helped deliver endless orange leaflets ahead of David being elected a Lib Dem councillor for Alexandra ward in 1994; the couple becoming deputy mayor and mayoress two years later.

In 2011, at the age of 78, David died. Pat, by now living in Elgar Avenue, put



Pat researching her 1975 book which marked the centenary of St Matthew's

her energies into researching and writing The Story of Tolworth.

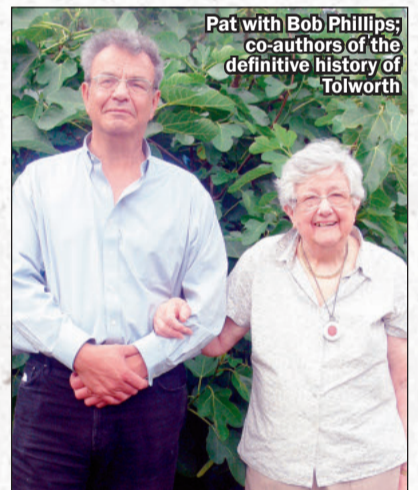
At Pat's memorial service at St George's, Hamilton Avenue, on April 19, co-author Bob Phillips recalled how the book led to numerous dates on the

local speaking circuit, with Pat seizing every opportunity to make the case for Tolworth's local historical superiority. "She was a deeply thoughtful conversationalist on religion, politics and history," he said, recalling that any time her book research unearthed a juicy nugget she'd ring him to shriek: "We've struck oil!"

Pat told a Kingston Society audience in 2017: "Tolworth is seen as an adjunct to Surbiton, which is seen as an adjunct to Kingston. Historically it's not true!"

Unusually for a history book, The Story of Tolworth also looked forward, exploring ways the town might develop in future.

Daughter Sandra spoke of her mother's 'glass half full' outlook on life, while Pat's grandsons, Ben and John, also paid tribute to their grandmother. Ben talked of Pat's "gentle and kind nature, and resilient character", while John recalled being inveigled into electioneering at the tender age of seven.



Pat with Bob Phillips; co-authors of the definitive history of Tolworth

He was handed a pile of Liberal Democrat leaflets before being driven from pillar to post to deliver them, for a payment of 2p per letterbox! He added that Pat had been immensely proud of her two great-grandchildren.

The Rev Nicholas Lebey, St George's curate, said that in her twilight years she attended church online. "It was a long life, well-lived," he said. "She was warm, welcoming and witty."

**Tim Harrison**

● Patricia Jeanette Ward, b Apr 10 1933, d Mar 22 2024

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Michelle Nichols holds her parachutist

# Parachuting in for D-Day : 80th anniversary

Watch out for these crocheted and knitted toppers adorning the wall at Surbiton's Royal British Legion at the end of May.

Twelve toppers including a gunboat, submarine, landing craft, Pegasus bridge, Horsa glider, jeep, motorbike, tank, soldier, and even Winston Churchill, will grace the pillars of the Legion in Hollyfield Road, all marking D-Day and the Normandy landings. There's even a parachutist.

They have been created by members of the social club's Stitch and Natter group to mark the 80th anniversary on June 6.

"We also have the guides, brownies, scouts and cubs making bunting for between the posts, as well as a limited number of keyrings that will raise money for the poppy appeal," said crochet group leader Denise Corbett. "We hope people will remember the sacrifices made on D-Day, and hopefully will stop and read the information under each topper and learn something about what happened on June 6 1944."



A Horsa glider and, above, a Tommy's head



- We'll remember all our heroes
- In 2024
- Marking the Normandy landings
- From 80 years before
- Onwards from August 1943
- Overlord was planned
- Soldiers would head to Normandy
- Five beaches picked to land
- In June of 1944
- The landings went ahead
- 160,000 troops, and all
- By Eisenhower were led
- The US had Utah and Omaha;
- Omaha the hardest, we're told.
- At Juno the Canadians landed.
- The British to Sword and to Gold
- For fighting on those beaches
- The men deserve our praise
- Operation Overlord lasted
- Two months, three weeks, three days
- It didn't end the war
- But victory was on its way
- As Germany surrendered
- The next year, in early May
- The war was finally over
- Through blood and tears and sweat.
- Those heroes fought for all of us;
- We must never, ever forget.

**Kellie Williams (of Tolworth)**

• No wonder headteacher Sarah Martin looks pleased! Ofsted has declared Long Ditton St Mary's juniors in Sugden Road outstanding in all categories – education, behaviour, development and leadership – with happy pupils taking part in numerous after-school activities. It federates in September with the infants in Ditton Hill Road.



Said Sarah: "We're thrilled by the outcome and incredibly proud of the hard work of children and staff." The school marks its 150th birthday with a concert at Kingston's Rose Theatre in June.

## Legion to host events for D-Day anniversary

Bring your own picnic, or just come along and enjoy a barbecue, street food and licensed bar at the Royal British Legion in Betts Way, Long Ditton, as part of its celebrations to mark the anniversary of D-Day.

Music will be provided by a jazz band, and there will be a bouncy castle plus stalls and other attractions to keep the whole family entertained at D-Day 80 Years on Sun, Jun 9, from 12.30pm.

You can even hold your street party at the venue, which has a large garden and big hall; ideal if it's wet weather.

Book your free tables at [rblenquiries@gmail.com](mailto:rblenquiries@gmail.com) or phone Collette Steedman on 07545 225733. Adults £2, U12s £1, pensioners free.

## That's my writing!

The eight-year-old girl who wrote on the walls in Surbiton in the Second World War has been found! The Good Life ran the story of Pamela Higgins, who used the air raid shelter in Effingham Road in the Blitz. Now 90, Pam Ponting, below, is still going strong. Although she has moved from the area, her sister-in-law is still living in Berrylands. Full story in the next Good Life.



Maggie North, Chris Burchill, Cllr White and Bob Shaw

• It's a decade since the council pulled funding for Inspire Sport, which offers over 15s with special learning needs handball, volleyball, racket games... and a chance to mix and have fun. Organiser Maggie North and volunteers were joined at St Philip's school, Chessington, by outgoing mayor Cllr Diane White to tuck into an anniversary cake. Twenty regularly attend on term-time Mondays. [inspire-sport.co.uk](http://inspire-sport.co.uk)

• Ex-soldier Andy Cooke's first London Marathon was cheered on by wife Lucie and children Preston, 8, and Willow, 5. The Surbiton Royal British Legion member raised more than £3,000 for veterans. "The crowd were fantastic from the first mile to the last," said Andy, 41, who served in Iraq, Germany, Cyprus and Northern Ireland.

[royalbritishlegion.enthuse.com/pf/andy-cooke](http://royalbritishlegion.enthuse.com/pf/andy-cooke)



• Tolworth's Community Brain has won a £5,000 green grant from Kingston Council to help tackle climate change; one of nine different groups to receive money. The cash will be spent funding a waste audit and researching ways of stimulating the circular economy. All projects will aim to tackle the impact of climate change on the area, in line with council policy.

Clandon Wood

Burials, ash interments and nature reserve



Wild Carrot (Daucus carota) at Clandon Wood

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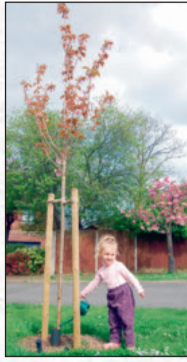


Guildford in Bloom  
2021 & 2019 Gold Award  
– Best Site for Nature Conservation



Cemetery of the Year  
2021, 2020 & 2019  
Winner – Natural Burial Category

● A new group will protect the borough's only Victorian garden square, St Andrew's Square, laid out in the late 1870s. Pressing issues include litter, invasive staghorn ferns and restoring the bruised lawn. Gardening days, coffees with neighbours, projects and tidies are all planned for the Friends of St Andrew's Square. Join a meet-and-greet over cake on Sun, June 2, noon-1.30pm. Email: [st.andrews.sq.surbiton@gmail.com](mailto:st.andrews.sq.surbiton@gmail.com)



● Rosa Killick, three, waters one of 24 cherry trees in Church Meadow, planted to replace losses. A dozen more will go in later. For the past eight years Paul Fagan, Rosa's granddad, has pressed for new trees. Residents will water and weed. "Thanks to all involved in this fantastic community project," he said.

● Replace Ofwat with a tougher regulator, says Surbiton MP Ed Davey, who wants more robust action on sewage dumps in the Hogsmill and Thames after a 112% rise in polluting incidents by Thames Water in the past year. "It's a scandal," he said.

● Work on the ponds at Fishponds Park is progressing well, now that the weather has improved. The top ponds and new woodland stream in the 13.5 acres of green space off Hollyfield Road have been lined and reprofiled; the most complex, time-consuming part of the project so far. Now attention has moved to the lower pond, which has been dredged and had its banks rebuilt. "We're looking to rebuild and enhance a small island in the pond, and need to replant too," said Kingston Council biodiversity officer Elliot Newton.

## Huge grant for nature reserve



Tolworth Court Farm Fields, a 42 hectare mosaic of grazed and ungrazed pasture, ancient hedgerows and small copses off Kingston Road, Tolworth, will become one of London's leading nature reserves, thanks to half a million pounds worth of funding, including £238,000 of lottery cash and over £149,000 from the London Mayor. For two years, field studies have taken place on site to gather data to form the basis of the Wild Tolworth Project.

Plans include the restoration of wetlands and the introduction of grazing and browsing animals such as cows and pigs, to promote ecological recovery. "Working with Citizen Zoo and the Community Brain, we'll also run lots of community engagement to help 'rewild people' and make this the best nature reserve it can be!" said Kingston Council's biodiversity officer Elliot Newton.

Already field recorder surveys have revealed the existence of more than 1,000 species on a site bordered by the Hogsmill River, Jubilee Way and Kingston Road. Get involved in surveys to push the project forward. More are planned on May 29 (pollinators), June 14 (grasses, sedges and rushes) and July 10 (dragonflies). Email [hello@citizenzoo.org](mailto:hello@citizenzoo.org) for details.

## Book a free health call



Hi, I'm Caroline, a nutritional therapist specialising in female hormone health empowering women 35+ to banish monthly skin flare-ups, mood swings, low energy, painful periods, brain fog, bloating and more.



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## Parklands Decorating



[www.parklandsdecorating.co.uk](http://www.parklandsdecorating.co.uk)

● As a Wild Guardian volunteer you can help maintain Edith Gardens, off Raeburn Avenue, Berrylands, improving access to the tranquil reserve. Email [digby@citizenzoo.org](mailto:digby@citizenzoo.org)

## Village green victory feels so good

A hard-fought seven-year campaign to protect local green belt from developers has been won. Save Hinchley Wood and Long Ditton Green Belt, formed by 11 residents, is celebrating after Surrey County Council bestowed Village Green status on One Tree Hill, and areas of land between it and Stokes Field nature reserve.

Councillors sided with inspector Stephen Morgan after a public inquiry saw 25 residents ranged against developer Taylor Wimpey. It means One Tree Hill, the 'northern quadrant' and another sliver of land will be shielded from development.

The only land within the green belt without added protection is the cultivated rose garden and nursery. The inquiry heard it did not meet the test of 20 years' continuous recreational use.

Make Victoria Road one-way, with access for pedestrians, buses & bikes. Fix Surbiton station's rear lift. Extend free parking periods. Let the public use school playgrounds after kids go home. Light up Queen's Prom. Honour town founder Thomas Pooley.

Just some suggestions from residents to improve the town. If you have ideas, the council wants to hear from you at [kingstonletstalk.dialogue-app.com/ideas](http://kingstonletstalk.dialogue-app.com/ideas)

Save HWLD Green Belt, backed by Long Ditton Residents' Association and Hinchley Wood Residents' Association, fundraised £60,000 for a barrister to fight their corner. Before the inquiry began, campaigners and local councillors had already persuaded Elmbridge Council to change its stance on the council-owned Stokes Field nature reserve by voluntarily registering it as a Village Green.

LDRA's Paul Bartlett said: "This shows the strength of feeling for green open spaces. When called upon to help, residents answered in their hundreds. People care about the environment. They volunteer and aren't afraid to stand up for what they believe. We did it!"

More on the David v Goliath battle: [savehwldgreenbelt.co.uk/background](http://savehwldgreenbelt.co.uk/background)

## Improving Surbiton

Post ideas on the forum, and comment on, or rate, others. Surbiton's neighbourhood community plan, now three years old, is being updated, and will be used by the neighbourhood committee to make the area better, and allocate grant cash.

"When the council last consulted, hundreds of ideas helped shape the plan," said committee chair Tom Reeve. "Using

it as a template, we funded activities and projects to benefit the community and environment at places such as Claremont Gardens, Fishponds and Six Acre Meadow, and with new noticeboards, outdoor gym equipment, even a couple of defibrillators.

"Now we need your help again, to refresh the plan. Ideas are rolling in, like improving green spaces. But we want more, then let's see what we can do."

## App counters bike theft

In fear of theft stopping you switching to two wheels? A new app, Hudjo, might be the answer. After having their bikes stolen, David Gamble and Charlie FitzRoy developed the idea of giving bicycle owners peace of mind via secure parking in local shops.

"Like Airbnb for bikes," said Charlie, 25, who has signed up Torque, Victoria Road, and Evolve in Kingston Market as early adopters. "You park with the locals."

The task is to scale up the 600 enlisted cyclists and 20 participating businesses into a worthwhile network.

At uni, Charlie's bike was pinched from outside a pub, despite a strong D-lock. That got he and David thinking.

Cyclists (electric or pedal) pay £1.80 an hour, capped at a fiver, to know their bike will still be there when they return.



There are obstacles. What happens if the shop shuts before your return? But as word spreads and Hudjo grows, who knows? [hudjo.com](http://hudjo.com)



## Is our air the UK's worst?

Had a tickly cough lately? A startling survey claims that in 2023 leafy Surbiton was the worst place to take a deep breath in the whole of the UK!

The (patently absurd) assertion is based on particulate measuring at one monitoring station at Christ Church primary, Pine Gardens – a location not usually twinned with the choking pollution of Jakarta or Delhi.

The report was compiled by Swiss tech firm IQAir. Its stats claim Surbiton's 2023 air quality exceeded World Health Organization guidelines each month. If a zero reading is perfect air (even the cleanest place on the planet in Finland only manages 0.3), Surbiton averaged 13

in 2023; an improvement on a 15.3 average in 2022.

In contrast, Begusarai in India averaged 118.9. Yet IQAir's UK 'chart of shame' names Surbiton as "the most polluted city" in the UK.

We asked IQAir if it could explain why Pine Gardens, Berrylands, supposedly has the worst air in Britain. Spokesperson Natasha Ganes responded from the firm's California office.

"We spoke to our science team," she said. "Yes, the sensor has reliable data. However, it should have been grouped with London instead of Surbiton, and will be categorised with London in next year's report." Hmm...

● Lost or broken your wheely bin? Kingston Council now charges £18 for replacements. "We've provided waste and recycling containers free for as long as possible, but it's no longer sustainable given the economic pressures the council is facing," said a spokesman. [kingston.gov.uk/bins-recycling-rubbish/request-new-containers/2](http://kingston.gov.uk/bins-recycling-rubbish/request-new-containers/2)

## Audio trail begins

An audio tour of Queen's Prom has been tested by Kingston Association for the Blind members, and could be a template for future guided walks.

Smart phones and boom boxes gave commentary, history nuggets, helpful tips and descriptions as the try-it-out party walked from Kingston Market Place to Harts Boatyard. KAB created the guide with VocalEyes and council grant aid. Cakes and cuppas were enjoyed at the riverside pub.

Roy Smith of KAB admitted: "It's been a few years getting this off the ground." He said he hoped it would give more visually impaired walkers the confidence to use the promenade.

I accompanied Berrylands resident Barbara Amess, pictured with some magnificent spring tulips, and had a great natter as we walked. "I think it's going to be useful, but I'm still slightly puzzled about how people discover its existence," she said. More at: [kingstonassociationforblind.org/queens-promenade](http://kingstonassociationforblind.org/queens-promenade) **Tim Harrison**



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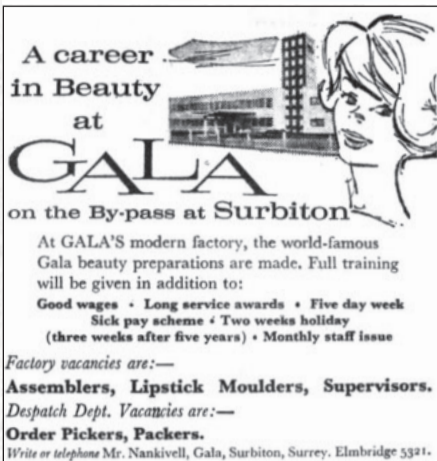
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● Get expert advice on home energy efficiency this Saturday (May 18) at the borough's efficient homes show at Hollyfield School, Surbiton Hill Road, 10am-3pm.

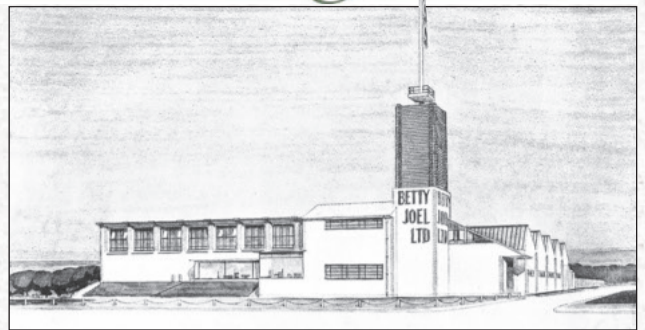
Solar panels, insulation, renewables, retrofit services, thermal proofing, electric car chargers, e-bikes... it's all covered.

Search Kingston Efficient Homes Show at [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) to book your free entry ticket.

There are options for all homes and budgets, and the show also has talks and panel discussions hosted by industry experts.



From left: Want a job? Check out this 1960s ad; Gala's 1952 range; Betty Joel, who had the original factory built; and Betty Joel Ltd, as it looked in 1935



## Working the lipstick lines

Were you a Gala girl? If so, you'll be intrigued by oral history recordings of people who worked on the assembly lines in the lipstick factory which once dominated the By-Pass skyline.... on the bend opposite Tolworth Recreation Centre, where the Big Yellow storage building looms today.

Day and night for two decades the place churned out mass-market cosmetics brands, including Outdoor Girl, Gala of London and Miners, with hundreds of local people – mainly women – clocking in for shifts, putting on white coats and protective hairnets and taking their place on the production lines.

As demand for cosmetics grew, fuelled by baby boomers with cash in their purses, the factory buildings expanded, topped by a distinctive tower bearing the words Gala Cosmetic Group; a navigation point for motorists on the A3.

But it ended abruptly in 1981. Gala was taken over, the factory shut and, in 1982, it was pulled down; a sad end for a landmark which owed its existence to a remarkable woman. It was created in 1934 by architect Harry Goodhart-Rendel for Betty Joel, a pioneering 41-year-old art deco designer whose furniture-making business started in 1921, and whose original pieces command hefty prices at modern auctions.

She and husband David made beautiful items for the home and office, largely using teak and oak... merging the wood names into 'Token'; their early brand. The press nicknamed her the Clarice Cliff of furniture. By 1933 business was so good that the Kingston By-Pass factory was commissioned.

Curiously, given the fact that the buildings were later filled with hundreds of local women, the Joels had a policy of only hiring male craftsmen.

But in 1937, just two years after her grand By-Pass factory opened, it all fell apart. Betty and David split up (their divorce was finalised in 1946), and David tried to make a go of the factory on his own. Every stick of his furniture carried a printed strip proclaiming 'Hand-made on the Kingston By-Pass'. The Second World War changed everything. Timber was needed for war not furniture so, starved of raw materials, David sold up.

Although many of the factories dotted along the By-Pass produced parts for aircraft, tanks and ships, Betty Joel's grand Hook Rise frontage was taken over by Crystal Products, which relocated from London's East End and used the building to manufacture Miners make-up.

The firm was part of a cosmetics empire owned by American entrepreneur Myram Picker, who had weathered the Slump of the 1930s and made a small fortune for his Gala Cosmetics business on the back of mass-producing 10-cent lipsticks. After Myram's son Stanley had finished college in the USA in 1935, dad entrusted him with running the UK arm of Gala.

In 1945, as war drew to a close, Stanley centralised all the firm's British cosmetic production in the Miners factory on the By-Pass, enlarging the existing buildings and adding new ones. The 1950s and 60s were a time of huge expansion on the Cox Lane industrial estate, with factories popping up everywhere as firms located to an area which boasted good transport links for distribution, thanks to the A3, and a large pool of labour in Tolworth and Chessington.

Business boomed at Gala Cosmetics, partly because Stanley abandoned the rigid shift systems that so many factories operated. He took a more enlightened view, offering shorter shift options, including early evenings, to allow local mums to fit paid work around childcare commitments.

In 1962 Stanley, a committed Anglophile who had developed a serious passion

## Gala is a girl like you.



The Gala factory in the 1960s with, below left, a 1969 advert

for art collecting, merged all his brands – Gala of London, Outdoor Girl and Miners – together under the Gala Cosmetic Group umbrella as a first step towards a planned stock-market flotation in 1966.

The peak of production at that Hook Rise factory complex came soon afterwards, as the company flooded the market with trendy but affordable mascara, conditioners, lotions, lip liners, talc, false eyelashes, eye shadow and – yes – lipstick in exotic shade names dreamt up in the ideas office, such as Riviera Tan, Fantasy Pink, Sheer Shimmer, Oyster Shell, Velvet Bloom and Boulevard.

Key to those golden years was a partnership between Stanley Picker and Mary Quant, the fashion queen credited with popularising the mini skirt.

Her name, and the cute flower logo on the packaging of her products, made the cosmetics which she endorsed and developed a serious temptation for teenage girls and their weekly pocket money.

One innovation was to match the shades of nail polish and lipstick, to create a more co-ordinated look. Miners was still perceived as the bargain basement end of the range, with Outdoor Girl and Gala of London having slightly more prestige, and the Mary Quant lines regarded by buyers, and the fashion industry, as top-of-the-range.

When Yvonne Grove got a job on the assembly lines in the late 1960s, it was one of the most popular places to work in the area; friendly and sociable... a contented community with choices of flexible hours, a good canteen and sculptures from Stanley's collection dotted around the buildings.

Now 87, she still recalls starting work on production lines, filling make-up selection boxes which, when packaged up, were sent downstairs to be loaded on to the distribution vans.

It was an era when human beings, rather than the lines of robots of today, performed the

repetitive tasks of placing lipsticks into cylinders and lotion bottles into gift packs. On days when she was due on shift she would join hundreds of women up at the Gala factory, mainly on foot or on bicycles.

So well known was the By-Pass building that anyone entering magazine competitions to win a selection of lipstick, perfume and nail varnish simply addressed their contest coupon: 'Gala Cosmetics, Surbiton.'

"Hubs would come in from his work, and then I'd go out to work at Gala," she recalled, leaving her two children and husband Peter to watch the Andy Williams Show on TV.

"I used to cycle the five or 10 minutes from our home in Chessington. My friend Sylvia lived a couple of doors away, so we'd cycle there together.

"I worked on the belt. Lipsticks would come down and you had to pick out ones that maybe were damaged or had a mark on them, and take them off the belt."

She clearly impressed the bosses. Within a week she'd been elevated to the role of supervisor!

Yvonne, who had been in the grammar stream at

Tolworth Girls' in the early 1950s, just on the other side of the busy By-Pass, is still – 60 years on – boggled by the lightning pace of her promotion.

"There were lots of different belts. Some would be making the boxes, some doing lipstick, some filling the gift boxes – there were so many different lines. I remember I was almost always put in charge of the lipstick belt," added Yvonne.

Bottles of nail polish with skewed labels, or scratched lipstick tubes, were sold cheaply to staff in little pot-luck bags, as a perk. You never knew what you might get. Often it was just a run-of-the-mill Miners eye shadow, but sometimes it was a sought-after Mary Quant lipstick or a 'Galamic' mascara with its own spiral application brush.

In 1968 Gala made nearly half a million pounds profit. But two years later sales were falling, and the firm was sold. It drifted on under different owners, including Max Factor, until the last lipstick tumbled off the belt in 1981, and the building was boarded up before the salvageable bits were stripped out and the wrecking ball moved in.

Stanley Picker's remarkable art collection – built via the profits from cosmetics – was initially housed in his modernist Kingston Hill home. After his death in 1982, the artworks were gathered together in the Stanley Picker Gallery, which opened in Kingston in 1997 as part of the university.

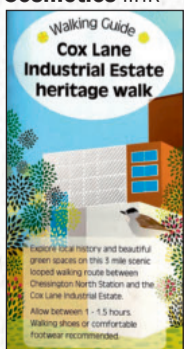
Mary Quant died in April last year at her home in Farley Green, near Guildford. She was 93.

Tim Harrison

Recorded memories of former Gala staff, a guided walk and a new book are at the heart of a project by Tolworth regeneration group Community Brain, with musician Jack Harris drawing on the research material for his song The Miners Line, played at the launch. The book, Exploring Cox Lane, is said to be 'the story of Chessington's industrial estate', although it falls foul of the Trade Descriptions Act. Just 15 of its 120 pages tell the history, and disappointingly there is no picture of the landmark Gala factory. The rest is a patchwork of student art and recent snaps. Another option is to do the two-hour Cox Lane guided walk, which passes many of the factory sites. Download it at [thecommunitybrain.org/walking-routes](http://thecommunitybrain.org/walking-routes), and while you're there, click on the Gala Cosmetics link for lively first-hand accounts by staff. The book is £11.47 via the website.



Jack Harris performs The Miners Line, watched by (right) ex-Gala worker Pat Cann, who inspired the lyrics



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## TLC for Titanic memorial

The memorial to Austin Partner of Tolworth, who died when the Titanic sank 112 years ago, has been spruced up. An Italian marble statue which mourns over the grave at St Mary's, Long Ditton, has been cleaned, as has the Cornish granite blocks on which she stands, and a marble book bearing the name of Austin's wife Nellie, and one of their children, Colin.

Masons at funeral directors Lodge Brothers used a low-pressure, hot steamer to remove dirt and organic growth; a method approved by English Heritage.

Chris Lodge from the firm said: "We're pleased to be involved. The church was looking to raise money to clean the memorial and we were able to contribute the services of our skilled masons for free."

Rector Kuhan Satkunanayagam said he was proud of the grave, "one of only two from the Titanic in the whole country".

Partner, of The Briars, Ewell Road, was a stockbroker specialising in the Canadian market. It was his 17th trip to Canada.

He went first-class and wrote to Nellie from the ship, via telegraph, to say he was pleased with his cabin. "I have a most comfortable room and the ship is quite the most luxurious I have been on. I hope she will get there quickly," he wrote.

Partner, 40, perished when the ship hit an iceberg. He was identified from documents he was carrying.

"The extraordinary thing is how quickly his body was brought back for local burial," said curate Alison Baverstock. "On May 7 1912 the body was forwarded to New York for shipment to England aboard the SS Minnehaha, which sailed on May 11. He was buried at St Mary's on May 23, just over five weeks after the ship sank."

Prof Baverstock said that the church had another link to the Titanic through a congregation member



Curate Alison Baverstock with Chris Lodge

related to bandleader Wallace Hartley, who led his little orchestra to play on as the ship started to sink. His violin case fetched £290,000 at auction last month.

Both Hartley and Partner's bodies were recovered from the icy water still wearing life-jackets. There were enough life-jackets for everyone... just not enough places in lifeboats.

Theirs were the only two bodies which were returned to England after the Titanic sank.

Hartley is buried in Colne, Lancashire, where he had left his fiancée Maria.

"At St Mary's we are very proud of our unique grave, and even prouder that a member of our congregation, Liz Smith, is related to Wallace Hartley," said Prof Baverstock.

"We regularly organise talks about the ship, and what happened that night. At our most recent, our social team recreated the pudding that was actually served to the passengers during the very last dinner."

Jane Grove



Austin Partner

## Floaty dresses are in

Spring has sprung at Sarah Taylor's boutique fashion store in Maple Road.

Shoes at Last's new collection features colourful ranges from Mos Mosh, Dress Addict and Red Button, and customer favourites Foil, Cream Clothing, Soyaconcept and Orientique.

As well as floaty dresses, smart trousers, jeans, jackets, shirts, tops and tees, there are summer shoes, jewellery and accessories.

My personal favourite, new-in-store, is a specially commissioned classy mobile phone bag with shoulder strap, with room for essentials: phone, credit cards, cash, keys and glasses.

It's designed by Surbiton's very own Ingrid Rossi London brand. **JG**



Sarah Taylor with the new spring collection



● Fewer buses mean poorer services, says a former bus driver after The Good Life reported the 281 regularly axed Tolworth-bound buses to instead loop back to Hounslow at Surbiton.

"Many outer London routes have had peak vehicle requirements reduced; the 281 is no exception," says Surbitonian Graham Burnell, who used to drive local buses. "Reducing from 23 buses to 19 explains the extended time gaps," he said. "At one time, routes 281, 406 and 418 turned at the Ewell Road/King Charles Road junction. But the council changed the direction of flow twice last year, despite the fact that King Charles Road is no longer a rat run as tubs of flowers block the route at Alexandra rec!"

He says there's a case for a new 'K6' route to link Tolworth, Hook and Surbiton along the By-Pass.

"In 1990 the 281 was extended to Chessington World of Adventures on Sundays, via the A3 and A243. Now the A3 no longer has a service to Hook, though empty buses run there every day. Is there scope for a K6 if the 281 is now so unreliable?"

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Shaun the Sheep hardly had time to warm the pillar box at the Ditton Hill Road/St Mary's Road junction before he was nicked.

## Shaun shorn

The delightful creation by Sarah Carvalho for the 2024 Long Ditton spring yarn bomb trail disappeared the night he was installed.

"Although it was super disappointing, we took heart from the support we received on Facebook and the appreciation of the community for all the other displays," said an upbeat Jessica Corkan of the Friends of St Mary's School Long Ditton.

The trail was organised by the group's knitty committee to raise money for the Honeypot children's charity, which supports young carers.



St Mark's bridge club, ready to play



## Big hand for queen of cards

Continued from p1

"I've watched both series of Blue Lights – although it's a bit complicated – and I'm very keen on wildlife programmes. Netflix has a lot of good ones!"

Widowed in 2005, Carmen only gave up driving last November. She lives independently in Leatherhead, still mows her own lawn, and has had a regular bridge partner for the past 20 years – a 90-year-old youngster called John Pickering.

If you're interested in having a go at bridge, but are unsure where to start, Carmen recommends checking out the website [nofearbridge.co.uk](http://nofearbridge.co.uk) for novices, learners and players of all levels.

St Mark's bridge club began 40 years ago in St Mark's church hall, Surbiton. It now meets on Tuesdays at 12.30pm at Glenmore House, The Crescent, near Waitrose. There's room for more players. Call Peter Camburn on **020 8398 6811**.

## Celebrating 10 years of service

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How to remain a healthy Surbitonian, with chiropractor Neil Reilly

## Are things getting on your nerves?



Sciatic nerve irritation is probably the best known nerve problem, because it's so painful. Imagine the pain of the dentist drilling into a nerve in your tooth. Then apply that to the longest nerve in the human body. It's making me wince just thinking about it, and I've seen thousands of patients with sciatica.

Things to look for:

- Pain from your low back/buttock radiating down your leg to your foot. Like an old-fashioned thermometer, the further it travels the more trouble you're in.
- Foot numbness or tingling. It's a big clue as to which part of the nerve is irritated.

- Weakness in the leg or foot. The nerve isn't sending the right signal.

● Increased pain with certain activities. Prolonged sitting increases spinal cord pressure and forward bending can push the disc on to the nerve.

- Coughing and sneezing are agonising.

Two red flags. Visit the doctor or hospital if you experience these.

- Loss of bladder control.

● Saddle anaesthesia – imagine sitting on a bike saddle and not being able to feel it.

Neil is based in Berrylands at the Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club. [kingstonchiropracticplus.co.uk](http://kingstonchiropracticplus.co.uk)





It's huge fun chugging round the different tracks

## You'll be chuffed by this steamy day out

**C**hoo choo! If there's a finer way to spend an afternoon than riding Thames Ditton's miniature railway pretending to be Casey Jones, I'd like to find it.

You can't help but smile as you board one of the steam, diesel or electric locomotives for a ride around the extensive grounds at the Malden and District Society of Model Engineers' HQ in Willowbank off Claygate Lane, Thames Ditton – just off the K3 bus route from Surbiton.

There are different rides to choose from, with the larger engines motoring twice around a kilometre of track (7½in gauge), peeling off to negotiate a tunnel, while smaller locos chug around a raised route (5in and 3½in).

It's £3.50 for a ride or you can spend the whole afternoon trying out the different locos for only £9. No charge for children three or under.



Ian Cornish dispenses tickets

Or you can just turn up and watch the fun for free. There's a large area with picnic tables in the middle of the site, where you get a great view of the passenger trains steaming past. And there's no shortage of refreshments: coffee and cakes are served by Doorstep Coffee, ice creams by Jasmine and Asian-inspired food by Meryenda Muna.

Open events are the first Sunday of the month – plus bank holiday Sundays and Mondays – until October. Next to look out

● Want to work in health or social care? A careers fair at Kingston Guildhall on Thu, May 30, 11am-2pm, has info on jobs and skills training. To register, search for the words 'Kingston Health and Social Care Careers Fair' at [eventbrite.co.uk](http://eventbrite.co.uk)

● Surbiton-based and interested in working or volunteering at a school?

The Preparing to Work in Schools adult education course is run online, and at Hook Library, teaching about child safety and communication as a springboard to teaching assistant training.

It runs from June 3-July 8, and is free to eligible learners. Visit [bit.ly/KAE-Childcare2324](http://bit.ly/KAE-Childcare2324)



● A new phone mast is planned by the railway bridge on this grass verge at the junction of Fleece Road and St Mary's Road, Long Ditton. If approved, the BT column would stand 24ft high opposite the drive of the house recently built alongside the railway line.

● Arts for hearts? A defibrillator on the wall of the cornerHOUSE arts centre, Douglas Road, was funded by the centre, Surbiton Rotary and London Hearts charity. "We're very pleased to have this asset for the community," said trustee Ian Davies, pictured below.

● The centre is run by volunteers and is looking for more helpers to staff the bar, box office and front of house at shows and events. Email [cornerhousevolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:cornerhousevolunteers@gmail.com) if you can offer organiser Su Collins any help.



for are on spring bank holiday Sunday and Monday (May 26-27) from 1-4pm, then there's a special Visiting Locos Gala from 11am-4pm on Sun, Jun 2.

Ian Cornish, treasurer of a society which has been operating since 1936, said the open events give the public the chance to enjoy the railway, its engines and facilities, have a chat to the members who run it as well as contribute to the society's fundraising efforts to maintain the locomotives.

"Open days really support the work of our railway and of our engineers and allow us to continue to invest in the locos and maintain them and look after them as the makers



It can get grubby, but volunteers don't mind the odd bit of soot

intended at the time that they were built.

"We have a lot of members who have joined because they have come on an open day – some have even gone on to have proper careers in the rail industry or in engineering," he explained.

Ian said the society welcomed engineers and those interested in being taught how to maintain the locomotives, as well as those who simply have a love of miniature railways.

Members of the society also work with students from local colleges who can learn new engineering skills in the impressive site workshop.

To learn more about Thames Ditton Miniature Railway, or to buy tickets for open days, visit [maldensme.org](http://maldensme.org)

Jane Grove



Engineers get Amy ready for another run



Pulling in to the station to allow the next passengers on



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# What's on at the Surbiton Royal British Legion



Our members' social club in Hollyfield Road, Surbiton, is open 7 days a week. **Come and have a look around!** We have 2 bars, a café, 4 full-size snooker tables and a function suite available for hire. There are bingo sessions, race nights, ballroom dancing and yoga classes, pub quizzes, WeightWatchers workshops, meat and money raffles and more. Live sport is shown on a big screen and we hold regular events throughout the year. **Why not join our club?** There's lots going on.



## ▼ May ▼

**Friday 31 May > Epsom Ladies Day. Watch the races on the big screen.** Gates open 11am

## ▼ June ▼

**Saturday 1 June > Elvis tribute act.** Doors open 7.30pm

**4-9 June > 80th Anniversary of D-Day**

**Tuesday 4 June > Ballroom Dancing.** Starts 7.30pm

**Wednesday 5 June > D-Day Bingo.** Starts 8.30pm

**Thursday 6 June (D-Day) > SRBL Youth Marching Band.** Doors open 7pm

**Friday 7 June > SRBL Film Club: D-Day themed films at 4pm & 8pm. Including a starring role for the Surbiton Legion! More details available from the film club.**



**Saturday 8 June > The Polka Dots. 40s & 50s vocal harmony group.** Doors open 7pm

**Sunday 9 June > The Lavender Club. Rock 'n' roll and swing dance group.** Starts 2.30pm

**Friday 14 June > Race Night. Eight races, 64 horses** Starts 8pm

**Saturday 29 June > Take A Chance on Queen. ABBA and Queen tribute group.** Doors open 7.30pm

Discounted members tickets and guest tickets available. Join the Legion and have access to the events above and more!

## ▼ Plus a special performance! ▼

**Saturday 15 June > Freedom Pulse: fundraising gig by talented Ukrainian band playing popular songs – members £5, non-members £10.** Starts 7.30pm

**Surbiton Royal British Legion Social Club, Hollyfield Road, Surbiton KT5 9AL**

**www.surbitonrbl.club • 020 8399 3993 • surbitonrbl@gmail.com**



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All events considered

Please ask a committee/staff member for further details or a tour of the club facilities

**SURBITON ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**  
HOLLYFIELD ROAD SURBITON KT5 9AL  
020 8399 3993  
EMAIL: surbitonrbl@gmail.com  
WEB: surbitonrbl.club



FIRST YOU NEED TO JOIN THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (RBL). WHEN YOU RECEIVE YOUR RBL MEMBERSHIP CARD THROUGH THE POST, BRING IT TO THE SURBITON BRANCH AND JOIN OUR SOCIAL CLUB.

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## Signed picture riddle

Mystery surrounds a framed, signed photo found in a pack of mount boards given to the cornerHOUSE arts centre.

On the face of it, nothing links the picture of a 1980s car and the names around the margin.

The vehicle is a Fiat Panda. But why would a disparate host of celebs sign a picture like this? Was it destined to be auctioned at a long-forgotten charity event?

The bodywork of the car itself was signed by William Franklyn, Una Stubbs and Anthony Daniels (C-3PO from Star Wars). In fact, he added 'C-3PO!' to his autograph.

The mount board is also signed by them, plus Tomorrow's World's Raymond Baxter, actor Bernard Cribbins, ex-Spurs boss Keith Burkinshaw, actor Iain Cuthbertson, entertainer Dickie Henderson and actress Dinah Sheridan.

As Henderson died in 1985 and the car is a 1983 model, the mounted photograph probably dates from 1984.

Intriguingly, Daniels' original C-3PO helmet from the Star Wars films sold last year at auction for £663,000. But does anyone recognise the autographed mounting board?

● Kickstart your career, expand your skill set and gain recognisable qualifications at Richmond and Hillcroft adult & community college. RHACC has a reputation for teaching, specialised courses and support services to assist learners. Its Hillcroft campus in South Bank is a couple of minutes' walk from Surbiton station. Check out the open day on Tue, Jun 11, 4-7pm. Pick up a course guide, meet the team or visit [rhacc.ac.uk](http://rhacc.ac.uk)

● The next Regency dance class in Surbiton is on Wednesday May 29 at St Mark's church hall in Church Hill Road. Wear comfy shoes and bring a fiver and a spring in your step. Classes run from 8-10pm. It's even possible to join in online from home! Details from organiser Libby: [mrsbennetsballroom@gmail.com](mailto:mrsbennetsballroom@gmail.com)

● Kingston Museum's bestselling book of the past year? **Hello Tolworth, I'm Ziggy**, the story of David Bowie's launch of Ziggy Stardust at Tolworth's Toby Jug pub. Written by Good Life editor Tim Harrison, just 150 of the numbered print run remain. Bag one of the final few via [thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk](http://thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk), and click on the section marked Toby Jug.



● Hollyfield School pupils are a talented lot, and every couple of years they get to shine. Hollyfest celebrates pupils' music and art, and is staged at the Surbiton Hill Road school on Sat, Jul 13, from 4-10pm. A firework display rounds things off with a bang. As well as entertainment on two stages, attractions include stalls, face painting, giant inflatables and food & drink. Early bird discounted tickets (booked by end of May) at [pta-events.co.uk/hollyfield](http://pta-events.co.uk/hollyfield) or buy on the day.



● A three-day celebration of new films made by local, national and international film-makers comes to Kingston on June 21-23, with screenings at the Curzon, Odeon and Rose Theatre. Two films will be shown on an outdoor screen in Canbury Gardens, and 12 workshops will take place at the university Town House.

Highlights include a film, talk and rare footage of David Bowie, a Q&A with musicians who feature on Mike Treen's documentary *The Session Man*, and shorts starring Tom Holland, Lindsay Duncan, Joanna Lumley, Tamsin Outhwaite, Peter Egan and Virginia McKenna.

Kingston International Film Festival (KIFF) was launched in 2022 to inspire and support new film-making talent. It is spearheaded by founder and festival director David Cunningham of Blue Elephant Films and championed by award-winning director Mike Newell, actress Dame Vanessa Redgrave and Kingston-born rising star India Amarteifio. It ends with a glitzy gala award night. For more on the 86 screenings and events, or to book (incl. day or festival passes) visit [kiffest.uk](http://kiffest.uk)



India Amarteifio

## Entertainment is guaranteed

The oneACTS 2024 festival of original playwriting, now in its 15th year, runs from Mon, May 20-Sat, May 25, 7.45pm at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road. The plays, a mix of drama and comedy, each 15 to 30 minutes



Jason Barnett, Abigail Shore and Josh Young in *Not Another Word*

long, are written by local playwrights, and are performed on alternate nights.

Programme, information and tickets, £12 (£10 concs), at [ticketsource.co.uk/the-cornerhouseevents](http://ticketsource.co.uk/the-cornerhouseevents)

● Interested in joining a fairly loose-knit group? You'll fit right in at Surbiton Library where Kingston Stitchers meet on the first Saturday of every month from 10.30am-12.30pm. Informal stitching and nattering is on the agenda. Check the website for full details at [kingstonstitchers.com](http://kingstonstitchers.com) or visit Instagram [kstitchers\\_uk](https://www.instagram.com/kstitchers_uk)



Descent into Svalbard, from left: Rax Lakhani, Rachel Jones, Rob Sanford and Michelle Whitehead

## Minis on parade

It's The Italian Job on steroids. Sixty Minis – one for each year since 1964 when a Mini Cooper won the Monte Carlo Rally – will drive through Tolworth and Surbiton as part of a Mini Moments Festival on Sat, May 18, to honour the car which became a symbol of the swinging sixties.

The Mini Cooper was researched and developed by racing driver and car designer John Cooper with Jack Brabham, Bruce McLaren and Roy Salvadori in Hollyfield Road – now the location of the Charles Ivey Porsche garage.

Minis set off at 1pm from Hollyfield Road, along Ewell Road to the A3, New Malden and Kingston, then back to base in Surbiton via Portsmouth Road, Brighton Road, Victoria Road, St Mark's Hill, Ewell Road, Berrylands Road and King Charles Road. The day starts at 11am and finishes at 5pm and includes screenings of *The Italian Job* at Surbiton Royal British Legion, tours of the garage where the Cooper story started, live music, food and drink. [thecommunitybrain.org/event-details/mini-moments-festival](http://thecommunitybrain.org/event-details/mini-moments-festival)

Heritage researcher Jarek Zaba has compiled a book based on oral histories about Cooper, Brabham and speed record breaker Donald Campbell, who all had connections with Surbiton, Chessington and Kingston – and with each other. **Speed and Suburbia** tells the story of the racing legends. It costs £12 and is available from bookshops, and online.



Jarek Zaba with the new book

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Let's prepare for the new season of Bridgerton's balls!

Entry £5 per class  
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[mrsbennetsballroom@gmail.com](mailto:mrsbennetsballroom@gmail.com)  
[www.MrsBennet.co.uk](http://www.MrsBennet.co.uk) [MrsBennetsBallroom](https://www.facebook.com/MrsBennetsBallroom) 020 8391 1215



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● The men's team at King George Field Indoor Bowls Club clinched their second successive Surrey League title, winning 12 of 14 matches and ending ahead of rivals Sutton.

Team manager Ian Trotter called it a great team effort, adding: "Morale is high and we're looking to make it a treble next year." Early wins over Berkshire, Essex and Devon saw the Tolworth team play Yorkshire in the final at Nottingham. They came out winners 127 to 73.

But the good news didn't stop there. Six of the squad were picked for the Surrey Over 60s team in the Inter-Counties tournament.

New bowlers can try bowls for free at the club, which also gives free coaching. All you need are flat-soled shoes. Bowls are provided. Based in Jubilee Way, it's open seven days a week to 10pm. Visit [kgfindoorbowlsclub.co.uk](http://kgfindoorbowlsclub.co.uk)



● Chelsea Women's manager Emma Hayes leads her final games this week before jetting off to head the USA national team, sad to have missed out on this year's targeted Champions League. Sonia Bompastor of Lyon is ready to take over, as predicted in March's Good Life. The Blues were determined to replace Hayes with a female manager. The brief for Bompastor, 44 next month, is that elusive European glory after guiding Lyon to Champions League success (player & coach). Her English is good, she knows Chelsea defender Eve Perisset and has managed Kadeisha Buchanan and Catarina Macario.



Picture: Jan-Peter Mohwinkel

● Surbiton Hockey Club Women's firsts lift the EuroHockey Club Trophy 1 in Hamburg, ending KHC Dragons of Belgium's two-year grip on the cup. "They've become history-makers," said manager James Baker. "In January, they won the Indoor Super 6s medal. To add a first European Trophy is incredible."

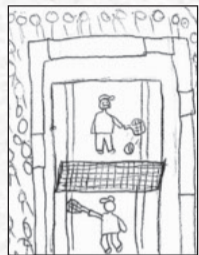
● All-rounder Zain Sawyer, 12, practises at the new nets at Long Ditton Cricket Club in Stokes Field, Betts Way. They're available to the seniors, the colts... and the general public too. "They're really nice; much better than the old ones," said the Surrey League cricketer. Funding came from Elmbridge Council's community levy, a private donor and the LDCC. Club president Les Bond cut the ribbon to declare the nets open at the launch of the new season.



Zain Sawyer tries the new nets



Writers: Leo, Jake, Jessie & Alice



Jake's action image

## Supernatural tennis!

Teacher Ed Hornby set Year 5s at St Matthew's primary the task of writing a Surbiton Trophy news story as many of the pupils' parents play at the Berrylands club. Here are flavours of Jake's and Jessie's articles. All four of our trainee sports journalists' stories can be read in full at [thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk](http://thegoodlifesurbiton.co.uk)

**E**ver wanted to get out of your home and watch some live tennis before your eyes? Come and enjoy the 2024 Lexus Surbiton tennis trophy, just a few streets away. It could be the perfect thing. Located at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club, lots of people around the globe arrive to experience outstanding tennis. Previous winners include Andy Murray. You might get the chance of meeting a player. Many enter in preparation for Wimbledon, and it can get them extra qualification points as well. This is definitely a big deal!

Ponder these brilliant reasons to attend: the supernatural tennis, which is more affordable than Wimbledon; the fact that you can get used match balls; and playing that will dazzle your senses. This could be a socially brilliant event, so serve yourself some tickets! **Jake**

**R**easons to attend? You'll get a taste of Wimbledon, and you won't have to wait in big queues. The staff are extremely friendly and there is an excellent bar. Best of all, you'll have the time of your life! In fact, you'll think you had made the best decision you ever made! What are you waiting for? Come on, let's move to the next paragraph.

It will take place at the Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club, June 2 to June 9. The address is KT5 8JT. I hope I have finally convinced you! It would be such a disappointment if you didn't come. Why are you still reading this? You should be buying tickets! Go on! **Jessie**

Lexus SURBITON TROPHY

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## Alexandra ● Berrylands ● Tolworth ● Surbiton Hill ● St Marks & Seething Wells

# Your ideas to shape the local area

Over the past three years the Surbiton Neighbourhood Community Plan has guided how community grant money is spent to make the neighbourhood ever better for the people who live, work and study here. Your ideas are at the heart of shaping this plan, and now as it's being updated, we need your help again.

Previously the community told us nature and green spaces really matter, and suggested improving Claremont Gardens pond. Over £64,000 of funding was awarded to reshape, re-line and revitalise the pond. Now it's home to new plants and a dipping platform. There is additional seating and paths and local people are enjoying the space. It's just one example of how your input has made a difference.

### Your community, your ideas, your priorities

Kingston Council has set up an online tool for you to view everyone's ideas and share your own. It is simple to register and join the conversation throughout this summer and autumn.



Neighbourhood manager James Geach by Claremont Pond which was improved thanks to the community plan

"With new ideas added by different people all the time we hope individuals will revisit the discussion site over the coming months," says neighbourhood manager James Geach, encouraging everyone in the local area to take part.

You can find out more from the neighbourhood team, who will be at events across the local community throughout the summer.



### Join the conversation

Scan the QR code or follow the link to share your ideas today <https://bit.ly/talksurbiton>

